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NOTES

ON

SPORT AND ORNITHOLOGY

BY

HIS IMPERIAL AND ROYAL HIGHNESS THE LATE CROWN PRINCE

RUDOLF, OF AUSTRIA.

(Crown Prince)

TRANSLATED, WITH THE AUTHOR'S PERMISSION,

BY

C. G. DANFORD.

SMITHSONIAN
JUN 27 1987
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"My first Bear."

Munkacs 21st November 1879.

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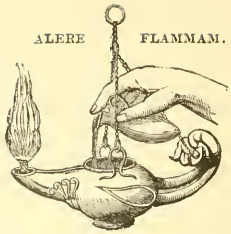

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PREFACE.

The appearance of the present volume in the German original excited on many sides the wish that its contents should be rendered accessible to a wider circle of readers by an English translation. This was due not only to the personality of the Author and the interest in Natural History pursuits which is so generally taken in this country, but also to the fact that the pages of the volume abound in original observations related with singular freshness and attractiveness.

Impressed with the value of the work, Mr. Danford resolved to prepare a translation for publication, if His Imperial and Royal Highness were pleased to grant the required permission. Mr. Danford was willing to undertake this as a labour of love; and no one could have been better qualified for the task, both on account of his acquaintance with the language of the original and

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the numerous technical sporting and scientific terms, and his familiarity with many of the localities visited by the Author.

The translation was commenced last year immediately after the permission had been graciously given; but what was begun as a pleasant task, had to be completed in sorrow. Thus the volume in its present form has to go forth not merely as a vehicle of delightful instruction, but as a regretful tribute to the memory of a man who by his genuine devotion to Nature and by his readiness to impart his experiences to others, had succeeded in establishing a sympathetic bond with the more humble workers in the field of Ornithology.

ALBERT GÜNTHER.

British Museum, Nat. Hist.,
August 4, 1889.

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FIFTEEN DAYS

ON

THE DANUBE.

FIRST DAY.

Early in the month of April 1878 I determined to undertake a shooting-expedition to those districts of the Lower Danube which lie within the boundaries of the Monarchy. This was not the first time that I had thought of exploring these beautiful tracts of country so little known to travellers, and of rambling through them, gun in hand, studying their ornithology.

Years ago Zelebor had extended his collecting journeys for the State Natural-History Museum to these localities; and the well-known naturalist Hodek makes a yearly spring trip down the Danube to Southern Hungary, Slavonia, and often as far as the Dobrudscha, to work mines so extremely productive to the ornithologist and the sportsman. For though they lie within such easy reach of capitals like Vienna and Pest, these wilds offer to the lover of nature the most marvellous scenery, and to the naturalist a fresh field and ample materials for his studies.

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Whenever of late years Hodek returned from his travels and told me of his labours and wonderful successes, his tale sounded in my ears like a siren's song, and I felt irresistibly drawn towards these dark forests with their oaks centuries old and their rich fauna pent within these last refuges by the obliterating civilization of mankind. For the past two years I had intended to visit them myself, but had always lacked time and opportunity; for, near as they are to the heart of Central Europe, a prolonged excursion to these districts involves many difficulties. One may either run quickly down to them in a fast steamer or reach certain points by rail; but in either case there remain great obstacles to be overcome before one can penetrate into the best sporting localities. In order to really enjoy the journey, and accomplish true scientific work, one must fit out a regular expedition; and this is the main reason why these tracts have been so little explored by sportsmen and naturalists. For while most of the scientific Societies, Clubs, Unions, or whatever they are called, equip great expeditions and send them to other quarters of the world whenever they have the means to do so, parts of our own country near at hand are still in many respects shrouded in a veil of mystery.

At last the long-sought opportunity presented itself. Brehm came to Vienna at the end of March, and I think there is no necessity for describing at greater length the man who was the most important personage of our party. The object of his visit was to deliver some lectures, and at the same time to devote himself with all his energy to the solution of the question whether the "Stein"* and Golden Eagles were to be considered separate species or not. I had furnished him with as much material for this

* A form of the Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaëtos*) not recognized by English ornithologists.

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investigation as I possibly could, and had enjoyed the pleasure of passing almost every afternoon in his society. We had a great deal of talk about the eagles, especially of the difficulties attendant on their study and pursuit, and of their greatly decreasing numbers.

At this very time Hodek, who had also assisted us in procuring skins of the "Stein" Eagle, had just received his first and very favourable report from the districts of the Lower Danube. So, again, there arose the exciting question of whether I could or could not manage to visit those localities down the river where the eagles and the great vultures nest, and where so many splendid sporting adventures might be expected.

The answer was not difficult; for I had only to look at Brehm, with his broad shoulders and face tanned by exposure —a man who shunned neither harassing mental desk-work nor the troubles and fatigues of natural-history studies and explorations in the most widely separated parts of the world. Such a favourable opportunity of making an expedition of this sort, with such a companion, was quite enough to decide me; while there was, moreover, another ornithologist staying in Vienna—Eugen von Homeyer, universally known among scientific men as the President of the Ornithological Society of Berlin.

Homeyer, who was a celebrated authority on eagles, had long been trying to solve the problem of the "Stein" and Golden Eagles, and had been invited by Brehm to Vienna to help in working out the materials. He too was attracted by the idea of a trip to those splendid hunting-grounds, and resolved to accompany us.

An excursion which we made a few days before Easter to the "auwälder" * of the Danube, near Vienna, in order

* Both "auen" and "auwälder" are indifferently used in the text to denote the marshy low-lying woods of the Danube.

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to form a rapid idea of the birds of this part of the country, confirmed our determination of proceeding down the river towards the south.

Spring had already come in its full glory: the migratory birds had all arrived at their old nesting-places, and the most charming and attractive season for the ornithologist was just beginning.

The preliminaries of the Expedition had now to be arranged, and as a first step Hodek set off from Vienna to make some preparations in the Apatin district. I then requested permission to shoot from the proprietors of the estates which we were about to visit; and my uncle, the Archduke Albrecht, on whose territory we intended spending the first few days, kindly invited me to make use of his woods, and both Count Otto Chotek and his brother, Count Rudolf, did the same.

A vessel had now to be secured, fitted with all that was necessary, and sent off to wait for us at Pest; Easter Monday, the 22nd of April, being fixed as the time for our departure.

A few days before leaving, I telegraphed to my brother-in-law Leopold, at Munich, to beg him to join the expedition, and he duly arrived at Vienna on the morning of the 22nd.

I was much bent on having him with us on this trip; for being, as he was, a capital shot and a thorough sportsman from top to toe, such as one now but seldom meets with, this excursion was the very thing for him. We were also accompanied by Count Bombelles, another excellent sportsman.

Eight o'clock in the evening was the hour fixed for starting; and many were the hearty wishes for good luck which our more or less sporting friends shouted after us as the engine snorted and whistled, and bore us off to the beautiful land of Hungary.

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We all five sat in one compartment, chatting about the sport and the delightful days that were in store for us; and my brother-in-law and Brehm also imbibed beer, in order that they might sleep soundly and accumulate a store of energy for the hard work that was to come.

We were all soon asleep, and slept the sleep of the just until the immediate surroundings of Pest presented themselves before our drowsy eyes.

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SECOND DAY.

Our train arrived at the Pest Station somewhere between five and six o'clock in the morning, and we at once left the carriage and drove through the town to the quay. It was a beautiful warm April morning, and the sun was gilding with its brightest beams the old castle of Ofen and the venerable Bloxberg, with their sloping gardens and grey walls of fortification running down in all directions. The fair Danube, as the Hungarian in his national songs so rightly calls it, flowed silent and majestic under the splendid suspension-bridge; and the flourishing, busy, commercial city of Pest formed a striking contrast to all the hoary and historic rocks, walls, and buildings of the Ofen side, while the Pest quay, with its lively bustle and many boats, some crossing over and others lying quietly by the bank, gave the whole scene that bright cheerful look which makes it always a pleasure to revisit this beautiful town.

Our steamer lay at anchor just below the great suspension-bridge, and we were much pleased with its general outward appearance, for it was a fine stately craft.

The Danube Steam Navigation Company had very obligingly placed at our disposal this vessel, which bears my name, and is said to be the fastest of all their boats. Its interior arrangements were also excellent, and the way in which the space was apportioned left nothing to be desired. A large dining-room, in which a writing-table was placed, and a little smoking-room near it, which we used for storing our bird-skins, together with the whole of the lower deck, formed our "Casino," while some small cabins near the

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paddle-boxes were occupied by Bombelles, the two naturalists, and Bohuslavek, one of my secretaries.

My brother-in-law and I established ourselves in a large apartment under the saloon, which probably usually served as a domicile for the passengers. There a curtain and a temporary partition gave each of us a separate cabin. A space with several tables was provided for Hodek's laboratory, under an awning of sail-cloth, on the forward part of the lower deck ; and below it were cabins for himself and his son, in which they also did the finer work, while all the other vacant space of the vessel was occupied by the servants.

The elder Hodek was awaiting us at the landing-place, having come to meet us with most cheering news from Apatin ; the younger had already joined us in Vienna.

After we had settled ourselves on the steamer, and all the luggage from the railway had been safely stowed on board, a few telegrams were despatched and we got under weigh, all of us standing on deck, for it was a great moment—the expedition had begun !

As a good omen for the ornithologists, a Black Kite sailed low over the suspension-bridge along the Ofen bank towards the Bloxberg, being the first bird which could be inserted in the ornithological note-books under the heading "seen."

The steamer now began to work through the various vessels and smaller boats, and it was not until she had reached the centre of the river that she went down stream at full speed.

Before describing the further incidents of the first day, I must inflict upon the patient reader a catalogue of the inmates of the vessel.

In addition to the above-mentioned persons, our own people on board were :—My valet, a former keeper from the Upper Austrian Alps, my three jägers, my footman, Leopold's jäger, Bombelles's valet and his jäger. Besides these there

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were the Captain (an exceedingly skilful officer of the Merchant Navy, to whom we all owe our warmest thanks), his Lieutenant and crew, also the *chef* and his assistants.

To complete the list of our travelling-party, I must mention three individuals who have for long done me excellent service on my numerous shooting expeditions. The first was "Blak," my jet-black pointer, though he really does not at all deserve this title, as it is only on the rarest occasions that he points either partridges or hares; but he is, on the other hand, a very good retriever, pursues and catches all wounded game from deer down to rabbits, is very quick after vermin, shows great attachment and cleverness, and, from constant intercourse with mankind, is, as far as his canine intelligence permits, refined and ennobled to quite an extraordinary degree. In consequence of the great attention he bestows on the entire bird-world, and from his lively participation in all ornithological pursuits, Brehm always called my old Blak "the ornithological dog," and this name stuck to him during the whole journey.

The second of the band was my red setter, "Castor," a very good water-dog, of whom there is not much to be said, for he is fonder of sleep and good feeding than of over-exerting himself in noble hunting feats.

My perfectly tame Eagle-Owl, the third of this trio, was a very remarkable domestic creature, and a hero in his way, for over him I have already shot many eagles, whose bold attacks he has proudly awaited with perfect courage. This Owl was an ornament to the vessel, and devoured the bodies of many of the skinned birds, while the quiet and change of air did him a great deal of good; but that was all, for we never had an opportunity of using him in shooting.

Returning to our men, I ought to mention how strange a medley of people from the most different countries there

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was on board our vessel. Bavaria, Pomerania, Anhalt-Dessau, Upper Austria, Lower Austria, Bohemia, Galizia, the Dalmatian Islands, various parts of Hungary, and perhaps other countries also, were represented in this little space. I forgot to ask the *chef's* people and the crew about their birthplaces, or we might have collected more localities.

But to revert to our special theme. The steamer had made its turn skilfully: Ofen was gliding by us on the right, the Bloxberg, with its romantic precipices, followed, and the plain between it and the wooded mountains of Ofen came into view.

On the left bank the splendid quay of Pest had already long passed by, the houses had become smaller, and the region of the market-gardens began. To these succeeded straw huts, and at last the town terminated in sand. This is a characteristic peculiarity of all Hungarian villages, market towns, and cities; they all end in sand, instead of being surrounded by a zone of gardens, country-houses, and promenades.

Beyond the Bloxberg the Danube got wider and wider, and high crumbling banks began alternating with wet meadows, while on the left side large villages appeared on the horizon. A broad plain stretched towards the south-east, the mountains of Waitzen melted more and more into the blue morning mists, and the outlines of the Csomád wood and the Mogyoród hills grew more indistinct, and soon vanished from our sight. I waved them a parting greeting; for they are good old friends, and close behind them lies beautiful Gödöllö. On the right bank there was still a continuous background of wooded mountains, sometimes approaching the river and sometimes receding from it.

Now on our right appeared the little village of Promontor, situated on the ridge of a hill which sloped steeply down to the water's edge; and soon afterwards came the large island

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of Csepel, on which are several important villages. This part of the country is on the whole rather monotonous, but still there is a certain repose in its outlines which gives grandeur to the scenery.

A soft west wind was blowing refreshingly over the water, already warmed by the sun; above us, the clear blue cloudless sky stretched its broad arch; and to our left the great Hungarian plains faded off into the far distance, beyond the range of our vision.

Up to this point the banks were bare, treeless, and generally crumbling, and in places where they were a few yards high we saw many Sand-Martins, with their nests in rows of small holes close together; but, on the whole, there was but little life on the Danube.

Some Rooks and Hooded Crows flew from bank to bank, while Mallards and Teal were swimming about the flooded meadows and flying over the vessel, either singly or in flocks; and on a tongue of land projecting between the main stream and part of the submerged country I recollect having seen about twenty of these birds—all drakes. The females were probably breeding; so it seems that this sensible bird prefers to leave its better half busy with such household matters while it wanders about the neighbourhood with its fellows. We also saw Lapwings, with their eccentric flight, tumbling about everywhere over the wet meadows.

The further south we went the more the tree-growth increased. At first it was sparse, but afterwards became luxuriant and had even an "au"-like character. The villages near the river got scarcer, and as they decreased the banks grew proportionally more lonely and uncivilized. At first we saw only a few very small islands covered with thick "auen," though later on they became more numerous, and along both sides of the stream ran a very narrow but luxuriantly green belt of wood.

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During the first half-hour we had not paid much attention to the scenery; for hardly had we left Pest behind us when we had to satisfy our hungry stomachs, which had been quite out of employment since we left Vienna. But having fortified ourselves with a good breakfast, and lighted our first cigars, we began a careful observance of all the birds which showed themselves along the banks. At first they seemed very scarce, and it was not until we got among the "auen" that we saw the Grey Herons and Cormorants flying from their breeding-places for their morning fishing; while Magpies were fluttering about the trees by the river-side, Jackdaws flying cawing over the vessel, and on a dead tree near the left bank was sitting a pensive Roller with the sun shining on its splendid plumage. In front of the steamer I suddenly noticed three beautifully coloured ducks, which unfortunately would not allow us to come within a fair range, but rose shyly and cautiously, like all the ducks, and ignored with dignified calm the couple of shots fired at them. They had now to be entered in the note-books, but no one was quite sure to which of the many species of duck they belonged. However, we put them down as Shovellers; and this, I believe, they really were.

Yesterday when in Vienna I remembered that, some years ago, Count Johann Zichy had kindly invited me to visit his celebrated heron-island, Adony; and as this seemed just the time to avail ourselves of his courtesy, and to make use of this spot for a brief shooting interlude in our journey, I asked permission to carry out our designs. I had long known the island by name, and had always heard of the great numbers of herons breeding on it, so was firmly convinced that we should find it rich in species; but in this last matter we were somewhat disappointed.

After a run of nearly three hours we came to a large island, thickly wooded with tall silver poplars. None of us

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knew Adony, and even the Captain did not seem to be quite clear about it; but as for some time past we had seen more and more herons and cormorants flying up and down stream, we knew that the colony could not be much further off. On nearing the island, we observed herons on the tops of the trees, while some coming from a distance were disappearing among the dense foliage. We also saw crows wheeling about, and were greeted by the noisy chattering of many birds, and therefore knew that we were near a great breeding-place, but were not quite sure whether it was Adony; so the only thing to do was to land, for the keepers, attracted by the shots, would certainly be kind enough to inform us where we were.

We therefore gave the order "Let go the anchor!" for things were conducted with military precision on board the peaceful steamer of the Danube Steam Navigation Company. The boats were then cleared away, and in a few minutes we were clambering up the crumbling bank.

The first nest was close to the river-side, about halfway up a tree, and from it protruded the forked tail of a Black Kite. We had already marked this nest from the steamer, but before we could reach it its occupant had vanished; for the kite had observed our faultless naval manœuvres with evident interest, and hardly had we set foot on shore when it saved itself from the too-intrusive strangers by flight.

We now separated in various directions, each of us having his gun loaded, and bent on shooting as many interesting birds as he could.

A few paces from the bank stood a large old oak, with a Grey Heron's nest on its topmost branches. I crept up, and a few gentle taps on the trunk of the tree frightened out a fine heron, which flew away with quickly-flapping wings. A shot brought it to the ground, and at this, the first signal, the whole wood became alive: Grey Herons swung them-

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selves off the trees, and circled over them with hoarse cries. A few Night-Herons joined them, at first fluttering through the branches with owl-like flight, then soaring up higher and higher till they swept round with almost imperceptible movements of their wings, looking nearly pure white against the dark blue sky; while Rooks, Hooded Crows, Black Kites, and various small birds flew about in alarmed confusion.

The island is rather large and the scenery, thanks to the luxuriance of the vegetation, may be called very pretty. Its upper part consists of a wood of very high silver poplars mixed with a few solitary oaks, and along the river-side I also found some gnarled old willows, while the undergrowth is formed partly of dense bush and partly of high grass and nettles.

Almost through the middle of this wood ran a small dried-up arm of the river, with pools of water standing in some of its deeper parts and a thick growth of reeds and all sorts of water-plants surrounding the damper spots.

We found a good many nests, but unfortunately all occupied by Grey Herons except two, in which Night-Herons were breeding. Former descriptions had led me to conceive quite a wrong idea of this heronry, and I had made certain of finding many more birds and a greater variety of species.

The colonies in the "auen" below Vienna are almost as well stocked with Grey Herons, though there are no Night-Herons, Adony being in that respect ahead of our woods; but in character the two districts are alike, for in both the marvellous luxuriance of the foliage, the dense undergrowth, and the high silver poplars are almost identical; and the "auen" of Adony resemble much more those of Lower Austria than those either at Draueck or still further down the river near the junction of the Theiss.

At our first shots a keeper came hurrying up, who told us

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that we were on Count Zichy's ground and on the island of Adony. Count Johann Zichy, with two other keepers, followed him a few minutes later. The Count had but just heard of our arrival, and had hastened to receive us in the very kindest manner, and to show us round the island himself.

We stole about the heronry in all directions, our shots rang merrily through the wood, and were duly responded to by the renewed screams of its terrified inhabitants.

At first it was easy work, for the birds hardly understood what was going on, but when some had been already killed the others got shyer and shyer, and were very cautious in coming back to the trees from their aerial heights, so, after shooting some Grey ones, I turned my whole attention to the Night-Herons.

I had never come across this bird before, and according to my pre-conceived ideas would never have looked for it among the lofty "au" woods, for I had imagined that low willows standing among pools of water, thick reeds, and high sedge would be its true breeding-places. I was therefore much astonished at seeing the Night-Herons perched on the tallest silver poplars, evidently still busy building their nests. Whenever I tried to get near them, both pairs of birds were always on the same trees, and when frightened off invariably made short circuits round the same places; but when I discovered these spots, which were some distance from the bank, the whole colony was in such commotion that it was impossible to exactly determine which of the many nests belonged to the Night-Herons.

After having been separated for about an hour, which time we had all spent in diligent search, we chanced to find ourselves on a footpath which ran through the entire length of the island. Here I first met Leopold, who was making vain attempts to shoot down a dead heron that was hanging

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in a tree. Bombelles and Homeyer also appeared, but Brehm was missing. He had killed a Grey Heron when we began shooting, and as this species, which he already knew so well, had no longer any special interest for him, he had gone off to observe the "small stuff" as he always called it, and had taken a line of his own in an opposite direction. We thought it better not to wait for him long, so went off on another ramble through the wood ; and as we were walking under the trees where I had made my first unsuccessful attempts at stalking the Night-Herons, one of these birds flew high over us, and Bombelles knocked it down with a good shot. It was a female, rather small, and not in very fine plumage. I now determined to kill a Night-Heron myself, and therefore looked out for the second pair, which I soon found, near the half-dried arm of the river already alluded to.

They were circling round some trees, on whose tops they now and then settled, and as they seemed much warier than the Grey Herons it was no use attempting to get near them in the ordinary way, so, on reaching the trees which we thought they frequented, I sent Hodek and my jäger a certain distance back, and not until I had done this did one of the birds descend, and, slowly folding its wings, try to alight on a tree near me. My first shot merely wounded it, and it was only on receiving the second that it dropped into a thick silver poplar, and slowly fluttered down the trunk of the tree.

Luckily it was a very fine specimen—an old male with its throat, breast, and underparts pure white, its back a beautiful silver-grey, its head black, ornamented with splendid long crest-feathers, and its beak and legs, when it was freshly killed, had a peculiar reddish tint which, according to Hodek, is a sign of great age. Some hours later they had become perceptibly paler, and now, alas ! there is no longer the slightest

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trace of the red colour to be seen. I was much delighted at adding such a splendid bird to our collection on the first day's shooting, for this Night-Heron was one of the gems of the spoils which we brought home.

Immediately after having been so fortunate as to shoot this long-desired bird, I knocked down another Grey Heron from one of the nests close by, and then waded back across the channel to join the other sportsmen. By the advice of Count Zichy, we now determined to leave the herons, as they had become very shy and suspicious, and to pay a murderous visit to a breeding-place of Cormorants, at no great distance, while both the Hodeks, guided by one of the keepers, went back to the vessel with the slain herons, in order that the birds might not lie too long in the hot sun.

We at first struck into the above-mentioned footpath, and soon reached a luxuriantly green thicket, where the high wood of the heronry gradually disappeared, the trees kept getting smaller and the undergrowth denser. Our way then led us past a nursery-garden, and across a little meadow to the bank of a large arm of the Danube, which bounded one side of the island. There Sand-Martins darted about the steep, crumbling banks, and Mallards rose noisily from the water. The thickets now grew more straggling, and we came to a pasture only studded with a few young trees, most of them chestnuts. This pasture was bordered by fields, and beyond them was a low wood, with a clump of very high elms at its further extremity. These were the trees occupied by the Cormorants' nests, above which we could see the heavy forms of the birds looking like black spots.

As we walked over these fields along the water's edge, a wonderful picture presented itself. On one side was the high rich green wood of the heronry, girt with a seemingly impenetrable fringe of dense thickets ; above it circled the frightened herons, some of them flying so high up that, with

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their breasts lit up by the sun, they looked like bright stars, while others were slowly wheeling about not far above the trees, and stretching out their long necks to examine the ground below.

When the strong gusts of wind that precede a downpour of rain turned up the leaves, the trees shone like silver, the meadows displayed their freshest green, the reeds in the river bent, rustling to the wind, and the little wavelets went dancing over the water. Beyond the opposite bank stretched the broad plains, partly in sunlight and partly shadowed by the swiftly passing clouds. To our front was a bushy wood, the dead leafless elms, and a little arm of the river covered with fresh green sedge ; and on our left the bank of the island, the main stream, and further off the grey-green woods. The east was clear, with a deep blue sky only broken by white clouds gleaming in the warmest light of the midday sun ; but in the south-west towered up a wall of black clouds, from which the wind seemed to detach larger and smaller ball-like masses and roll them towards us.

Some heavy drops of rain fell as we were hurrying along to the colony of Cormorants, for we had to make haste, Apatin, the goal of our day's journey, being still a very long way off, and the hours had flown quickly by on this interesting island of Adony. However, we thought it would be a pity to leave this colony quite undisturbed, not knowing whether we should come across another breeding-place of these birds during our trip. The trees on which they had built were very tall, and although I already knew a good deal about this species, having often observed and killed it at the nest, I had never before seen their dwellings placed at such a height.

There were four or five of these trees, on each of which we found some seven or eight Cormorants' nests, and among them those of a few Hooded Crows ; and though the birds

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were all very tame, and did not move until we had fired an almost simultaneous volley, the incredible height of the trees unfortunately told, for only one of the birds, hit by my brother-in-law, sank slowly down towards the fields, and fell dead among the reeds of the above-mentioned channel. The other sportsmen therefore changed their rather too light shot for heavier, and I took up my rifle, the surest help in such cases.

We now hid ourselves as well as we could in the thick leafy wood behind the nesting-trees, to wait for the Cormorants to come down again. Assembled in a large flock, the frightened birds flew about, high above the wood, and were from time to time joined by others who were hastening home from their fishing. The circles they were describing now grew smaller and smaller, and we could hear the quick beats of their heavy pinions more distinctly, when suddenly there was a great rush, and above us sounded the grunting cry which the Cormorant invariably utters on returning to its nest, while the nervous flapping of the wings, by which the awkward fellow continually strives to keep his balance during the troublesome business of climbing up to the edge of his nest, was clearly audible. In a few moments our shots rang out again, and were immediately followed by the thuds of the slain Cormorants as they fell to the ground.

The poor creatures were really incredibly incautious, for we repeated this manœuvre several times, until they at length found the matter was too serious, and flew round us in ever widening circuits.

At one of the last volleys a hard-hit bird had flown into the dark wood behind us, and was sinking with staggering flight lower and lower among the trees. I at once went to look for it, but unfortunately my trouble was all in vain, the undergrowth of nettles and high grasses being too thick, while my efforts were also impeded by the pools which had to be waded.

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Thanks to this wounded Cormorant I had pushed a good way into this low leafy wood, when I was attracted by a very amorous Cuckoo which was fluttering from tree to tree, and continually retreating further into the depth of the wood. The sprightly bird was so comical that I could not help watching it for some time, for it sounded its monotonous call in all sorts of tones, and at the same time put itself into the most extraordinary positions. I could easily have killed it had not my attention been distracted by a hawk, which I at first took to be a Hobby; but when I at last got a clear view of it as it sat on a dead branch, I saw that it was a Kestrel, and, though my shot brought it down, I was again unfortunate in not being able to find it among the high grass. I now suddenly found myself in a more open place where the low wood ended, and I saw before me a patch of high trees, most of them elms; and as the light was shining through the bushes and the foliage of their lower branches, it seemed as if I had reached the southern end of the island.

On the higher trees I found some herons' nests, but their inmates were flying about, screaming loudly, for a bold Spotted Eagle had swooped majestically through the wood, at just the height of the nests, and terribly alarmed the anxious parents. Never having come across a Spotted Eagle before, I was much interested at being within the range of its distribution, for I had not expected to meet with it before getting a good way further south.

No one who knows the "Stein" Eagle well, and keeps it in his mind's eye as the type of the true eagles, will ever confound the Spotted Eagle, or other members of its genus, with any other class of raptorial birds.

When the eagle flew past me without moving its wings, and with a gliding flight, apparently slow yet swift as an arrow, I was really as much overcome with delight as if I had met with an old friend again after a long absence, for

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since December of the past year, when I had killed my last "Stein" Eagle, I had not seen a single bird of this kind in the open, but only in the Zoological Gardens of London, Dublin, and Berlin, where I made pilgrimages, out of the suffocating foggy town air, to see these noble creatures, and to refresh myself after the turmoil of the world by recalling the happiest of my sporting reminiscences.

The long-suffering reader must not be too indignant at such romantic digressions, for such dangers may always be expected when I touch on the subject of the pursuit of eagles. How willingly would I even then have ignored the whole plan of our journey, and have quietly waited under the herons' nests to see whether the eagle would not come back, to make a closer inspection of their contents, but a glance at my watch compelled me to return to the rest of the party.

We now took the slain Cormorants with us and walked quickly homewards. The clouds had cleared off again, and the woods, refreshed by the rain, were still more splendidly green and fragrant, while the birds were warbling their songs, and many species flew past, which had to be entered in our note-books. We also heard the clear call of the Pheasant sounding among the bushes, and a poor Wryneck fell a victim to Homeyer's zeal in the interests of science. As we were returning to the heronry we found Brehm leaning against a tree. He had just finished his observations, filled many blank pages in his note-book, and had also brought with him some specimens for measuring and skinning. While walking through the heronry with our guns at the ready, a Night-Heron suddenly rose in front of me, and a lucky shot brought it down. On nearing the place where our boat lay by the bank, my brother-in-law and I paid another visit to the kite's nest; but again its churlish proprietor quitted it too soon, and circled over the Danube in a great state of alarm. I wanted to have a close look at the

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nest, so walked up to the steep crumbling bank, where I heard a splashing in the water, and, quickly turning round, saw a Cormorant flying out just below me. I gave it both barrels, but the shot, being rather too light for its thick green mail of feathers, was not immediately fatal, and not until it had reached the middle of the stream did the hard-hit bird take a sweep round, and then fall like a stone into the water, making it spurt up, and was forthwith borne down stream by the light wavelets, in quite a poetic fashion. I now hastened to join my brother-in-law, and we rowed back in the boat together, the other sportsmen following along the footpath more slowly.

While waiting for them we amused ourselves by frightening the Rooks and Hooded Crows out of their nests, and by killing a specimen of each species, and on their arrival loaded the boat with our spoil, and took leave of the exceedingly kind proprietor of the island.

We then pushed off from the bank, and soon gained the deck of our steamer. The anchor was weighed, and we set off again down stream on our way to fresh achievements.

Thanks to the kindly courtesy of Count Zichy, our first shooting excursion had turned out a success, for we had made a pretty good bag, and were now able to describe a beautiful heronry, and a colony of Cormorants, among the scenes of our journey.

At first we followed the bank of the island, the herons circling high above the steamer, seemingly desirous of satisfying themselves that the troublesome strangers had really quitted their domains.

Soon after leaving Adony behind us, we passed some very small thickly-wooded islands, then the "auen" vanished from both sides of the river, and another monotonous district lay spread before us. High crumbling banks alternating with low flat shores, where the river lost itself as it were in mea-

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dows, gnarled willows, marshes, more sand steppes, low hills, isolated villages on the plains, with their brilliant white church-spires visible from afar, countless floating mills, numerous little islands, partly decked with tall trees, and endless droves of pigs, horses, and cattle—all picture in a few words the character of this part of the country which we rapidly ran past, and which really offered few details that were pleasing to the eye, though when viewed as a whole it had in it something undeniably grand. It might not, however, have interested many people, and my judgment may be no criterion, for I have such an admiration for Hungarian scenery in its many various aspects that I am blind to all its monotony.

We had, moreover, but little time for looking at our surroundings, for after luncheon, which, thank goodness, was served as soon as we left Adony, we had a good deal of work to do.

I must yet mention one other incident, as it helped to make our day's voyage more notable. About half an hour after we had left Adony, I was smoking a cigarette on deck, and quietly looking at the play of the ripples, when I suddenly observed a black object floating slowly down beside our steamer, and on closer scrutiny saw that it was a dead Cormorant, the same which I had seen fall into the water while I was standing on the bank of the island. I at once gave the order to stop: a boat was lowered, and in a few minutes the bird lay beside his comrades in a shady corner of the vessel.

When we had changed our things and lunched, we sat comfortably on deck smoking Homeyer's cigars for him in a most friendly way—for his were always the very best.

Life on board ship is most delightful, and it is by far the pleasantest way of travelling. One is at home and has everything that one wants; the pace is good, and the landscape changes like the scenery of a theatre; and not until one travels in this way does one understand that fanatical

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enthusiasm for a sailor's life, to which I myself openly confess.

Our siesta did not last long, for the indefatigable Brehm reminded us of work, and Homeyer and I followed him to the fore part of the vessel. All the birds we had killed were measured, and their dimensions and colours entered in accurately kept books. Then our diaries had to be written up, and the notes which we had collected interchanged. Hodek took possession of the spoils to prepare them with the help of his son. The three Night Herons were skinned for the collection, but only the crests of the eight Grey Herons and the eight Cormorants were kept; while the Hooded Crow, Rook, Wryneck, Reed-Warblers, and Grasshopper-Warblers, which had all been brought back, chiefly for the sake of their measurements, were partly disposed of, feathers and all, by my Eagle-Owl, and partly found their way to the skinning table.

When our work was quite finished, we paced the deck, watching the changing landscapes. The further south we went the more the character of the country altered; and in order that the reader may have an idea of the region to which he must fancy himself transported, I will name some of the villages we passed, and which may be found in any map of Hungary. I remember that we ran by a good many of them, most of which lay on the right bank, for there the immediate neighbourhood of the river was not made impassable by a belt of "auen" or by marshes, but a low chain of hills descended to the water's edge in slopes both gentle and abrupt, and sometimes even in precipitous walls of earth. First we came to Duna-Pentele, then to Duna-Földvár and Paks. As well as we could see from a distance, all these villages were of the true Hungarian type. Long rows of low straw-thatched houses, broad streets full of horse-troughs, high draw-wells, vegetable gardens trailing off into the sand,

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with a few detached plants, the incessant barking of dogs, the clang of cattle-bells, and the wild cries of herdsmen, are the features of scenes that the traveller everywhere meets with throughout the domains belonging to the Crown of St. Stephen. There is in them, however, a thoroughly characteristic individuality which exercises a powerful attraction on everyone who has spent much of his life in this part of the country, and which fills him with a violent home sickness when he finds himself amidst the stereotyped uniformity of Western Europe. We also saw villages clinging to steep vine-clad hills, with their houses in terraces one above another, while their churches stood either on the ridges or at the base of the hills.

The left bank of the river presented a monotonous picture, for at first there was nothing to be seen but willows, patches of sand, and a few very unimportant woods, and it was not until we had passed Duna-Földvár that we came to a rather large swamp, followed by a fine and much flooded "au."

A good way below Paks we were told that we were just passing the town of Kalocsa, the residence of Archbishop Haynald; but unfortunately we could not see the place, as it lay pretty far inland.

Up to this point the Danube flows in one great channel and is not yet split up into various branches. A great many small, but only a few large, islands rise from the middle of the stream, most of them being adorned with beautiful "auen," just like those on the island of Adony and near Vienna. There was, however, no wild primeval growth of forest, and we began to think that the river would be like this all the way down, but we were to become better informed during the course of the afternoon. The true great "auen" of Southern Hungary begin immediately below Kalocsa, where the river divides itself into several channels and forms large thickly wooded islands.

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Here, too, the character of the right bank differs from that of the left, for on the former there are still no "auen" to be seen, while on the latter a broad belt of woods already stretches along the river; and it is only in a few places, where the marshes run down to the bank and leave narrow gaps, that one gets an open view of the wide plain.

On the right the country near the river is also flat, but the banks are steep. Further off one sees a fairly important chain of hills and low mountains: these are the heights round Fünfkirchen—the spurs of the Pannonian range, as the ancients called it. At Szegszárd, where the Sárviz canal joins the Danube, the "auen" first begin to enclose the stream on both sides, but only for a short distance, for above Duna-Szekcsö one sees them only on the left bank, while on the right hills covered with vineyards slope steeply to the river.

The time spent in passing between the wooded banks was truly delightful. On both sides the grey-green trees of the "auen" were reflected in the gently flowing stream, and a network of large and small channels led like avenues into the green wilderness. The woods were of uniform height, and above them there only rose the dead tops of a few ancient oaks, while the heavy foliage of their marginal branches hung low over the water and sometimes even touched it. Great quantities of driftwood driven out of the arms of the river were floating about the main stream, and the fallen tree-trunks, which at this height of the water only showed their upper surfaces, might easily have been mistaken for crocodiles by excited imaginations. All this made up a scene so extraordinary and so unlike anything else in Europe, that we were perfectly astounded, and stood at the bow of the vessel surveying it with wonderment; and I was just thinking whether I had ever seen anything like it before, and how far one could compare it with the beautiful "auen" of Lower Austria, when Brehm, who was also lost in admiration, suddenly

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called out, "That is the Ob, exactly like the Ob!" I had got it at last—it was only to be likened to the descriptions I had read in books of travel of rivers and primeval forests in other parts of the world, and this was confirmed by the living book of travels called "Brehm."

Anyone who fancies that the "auen" of Southern Hungary are pretty pleasant places is much mistaken, for a deep solemnity tinged with melancholy pervades the whole scene, and the large unbroken lines of the broad stream and the monotonous dark green woods produce a gloomy impression, such as one feels when a cloudless sky of uniform tone stretches over a still sea or the loftiest regions of a mighty mountain-range; for where the infinite calm of such a picture is broken by no third colour, one feels oppressed by the vastness of nature and the absence of all enlivening variety. Never during the journey did I feel this so strongly as on this first afternoon, and never again did the tone of the sky so thoroughly harmonize with the character of the country and create such unity and repose. The whole afternoon and evening we lingered on deck, partly to admire the landscape and partly to observe the birds, for there was plenty of life round about us. Herons flew lazily from bank to bank, ducks of various kinds swam about the main stream and were still more numerous in the side channels, while the Black Kite, that most abundant of all the raptorial birds of Southern Hungary, showed itself everywhere above the trees, not to mention Crows and Starlings, so common throughout these districts.

We noticed hardly any hawks, the few seen being invariably the graceful Kestrels; but where the steep friable treeless banks fell down to the stream, Sand-Martins were breeding in great numbers, and I frequently observed Stonechats.

Somewhat above Duna-Szekcsö the "auen" disappear from the right bank, while on the left they cover the whole

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of the large island of Mohács in their full luxuriance. On the former side of the river we also saw steep hills which were separated from the Danube by a narrow strip of level country, which got broader and broader as we approached Mohács itself.

Before reaching this town the Captain had told me that he was very sorry not to be able to get to Apatin by the evening, for it would be impossible to do so as night would overtake us while still two hours above that place.

To this we had to submit, though by so doing the first hours of the morning would be lost for shooting. It was not, however, in the least the Captain's fault, for, thanks to the splendid engines of our steamer, we had already covered quite an incredibly long distance in a very short time, and if Adony had not detained us so long we should have arrived at Apatin in the afternoon.

So far as size goes Mohács is quite a large town, but its character is that of a true Hungarian village, though a few two-storied houses rise proudly in the square near the landing-place of the Danube steamers. We ran by it without stopping, so as to lose no time, passing the crowd of boat-mills just below, which indicate the neighbourhood of a large settlement. The name of Mohács recalls a gloomy incident in the annals of Hungary which is still a matter of common talk, and every Hungarian who travels down the Danube looks with sorrow on the blood-steeped marsh where so many brave Mágyars, headed by their king, perished so heroically.

Immediately below this village a very beautiful and picturesque scene opened out before us.

To the right we saw an extensive plain bounded on the south by a chain of heights, from which rose a conical pointed hill. This hill we now beheld for the first time, but it was to prove a true friend whose acquaintance we were to make from various directions during the next few days. On the

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left stretched meadows and pastures, which, however, already belonged to the district of the "auen," for behind them ran a long belt of woods.

Evening was coming on, the cattle were returning to the villages, and the sun was setting over the hills and soon vanished behind them. Overhead was a cloudless sky, and the impressive silence was only broken by the tinkling bells of the herds and the scream of the Lapwing. We were able to travel on until nearly eight o'clock, so long did the light last; but we had still to cover a good stretch of the way before the Captain could reach the spot where he intended to pass the night.

We soon left behind us the treeless banks and reached the place where the Bega channel separates itself from the main stream, the island thus formed being covered with beautiful woods, with which we were to become more familiar in a few days.

From this point we had again to pass through "au" woods equally luxuriant on both banks. Here the sun went down in the true Hungarian manner, not at all as it does in Western lands, and only those who have seen the splendid sunset effects of Hungary can form any idea of them. In the west was a glowing semicircle of brilliant red, the trees swayed slowly in the evening breeze, the summits of the hills were gilded by the last rays of the setting sun, and the scarlet of the sky was mirrored in the quivering waters of the river. In the east the leaden darkness was separated from the light of the departing day by a belt of orange, and was broken by a few bright isolated stars, while the low-lying woods and swamps wrapped in blue vapours and feathery mists assumed ghostly indefinite shapes as they gradually melted into each other. The whole scene formed a marvellous picture of a truly oriental splendour, which, seen in the deep silence of

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this splendid evening, could not fail to make a lasting impression on any lover of nature.

From the marsh came the strange cry of the Lapwing, which, like that of the Snipe, sounds weird and boding at nightfall, and the sportsman is involuntarily reminded of the Walpurgisnacht and of old hunters' tales. The ducks dropped quacking into the dry channels, and one after another the herons flew from the forests towards the recesses of the inland marshes, all taking the same line, while on the banks the Sand-Martins had been replaced by bats, and crows were flying leisurely to their roosting-places.

This wonderful picture lasted for but a short time, for again the "auen" on the right disappeared and were succeeded by a narrow line of hills running immediately above the river. Beyond and behind these heights we saw, as well as the gathering night would let us, level country, and near the river-bank, close under them, a church, while the barking of dogs and the shouts of the home returning herdsmen showed that there was a village hard by. On the left side of the river we observed a continuous stretch of wood only occasionally broken by marshes.

During the whole evening we had been standing on deck admiring this most enjoyable scenery, and had meanwhile also made a good many ornithological observations. The Captain now came to say that in a few minutes we should be at anchor; and as night had already shrouded everything in its dark uniformity, we decided on sitting down to dinner, and after finishing our coffee, cigars, and sporting stories, we worked a little more at our notes and diaries. The vessel had long been at anchor, and on deck everything was perfectly quiet; I did not look out again, and it was so dark that I should have seen but little if I had done so. I must therefore confess to neither exactly knowing where we spent the night nor what the place looked like, but from what the Captain said

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I fancy that we were as far down as the village of Vörösmarth. About ten o'clock we all stole off to bed, overcome by thoroughly well-earned sleep, and the gentle lapping of the wavelets and the fresh night-air coming in through the cabin windows made our slumbers soft.

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THIRD DAY.

The sun was shining brightly into my cabin when I awoke, and a lively bustle was going on both on the deck overhead and on shore near the vessel, and, on my asking where we were, I learned to my no small astonishment that we had already been lying some minutes at the pier of Apatin.

I had therefore slept soundly through our departure at daybreak from the place where we had passed the night, and during the entire passage to Apatin. My brother-in-law had also done the same. So, hastily dressing, we hurried on deck.

It was the 24th of April, and a splendid morning; the sun had already attained its full strength, above us stretched the cloudless deep blue sky, and for the first time we felt that we had reached warmer and more southerly regions.

There was plenty of work in progress both on board our vessel and on the pier, and Hodek had gone ashore to launch and attach to the steamer his large rowing-boat, which can also be used with sails.

The 'Vienna,' for so his craft was named, had come down to Apatin in advance, and was henceforth to remain with us. Several "csikeln" *—as they usually call the canoe-like punts used in Southern Hungary—were also brought off and stowed away, some in the 'Vienna,' some on board the steamer, while others were made fast to her.

* Flat-bottomed crafts pointed at both ends and worked by a single-bladed paddle with a cross handle. They are chiefly used on the Danube between Pest and the Iron Gates.

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Apatin itself lies on the left side of the Danube, in a perfectly flat but pleasant district. There are several enormous "au" woods, much intersected with arms of the river, on the right bank opposite the village, above and below which are meadows and pastures generally studded with detached willow-bushes.

The village itself does not lie quite by the river, but is connected with the landing-stage by an embankment, the ground on both sides of which is subject to inundations and was now quite under water. Apatin is a very large place, but, being composed of one-storied houses, is quite Hungarian-looking. While we were still busy with our preparations for setting out, a crowd of people assembled at the landing-place who greeted us with cheers and fired off salutes, while a band struck up "Gott erhalte,"* for here the population consists almost exclusively of Germans—descendants of the Swabian immigrants who in the last century were employed to colonize the sparsely-peopled districts of Southern Hungary.

As soon as Hodek's crew had come on board we got under weigh, followed by the cheers of the inhabitants; but before I proceed to detail the events of the day, I must say a few words about these men, for we are all much indebted to their skill and pluckiness.

The whole crew were Swabians of Apatin, who for years have accompanied Hodek on his journeys, and whom he has thoroughly trained in all sorts of work. They are as skilful in skinning as in rowing, in climbing up the trees for nests as in finding them, and in all other occupations useful on such expeditions. The leader of this little band is a certain Ferencz, who, in spite of his Hungarian name, is a true Swabian. He is coxswain of the 'Vienna' and the best educated and cleverest of the crew. All the others are

* The Austrian National Anthem.

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worthy, able fellows, chiefly fishermen by profession, who, from the trips which they have made in Hodek's company, have attained a certain practical knowledge of ornithology. One of them merits a short description, as he often contributed to our amusement. I never saw such a wretched stunted being as this poor climber of Apatin; and when one looked at him, springing merrily about the topmost branches of the trees, one could not help thinking that he must be closely related to the chimpanzee. His face beardless but for a few bristles, his flat coal-black hair, thin arms and legs, and distorted figure, which was mere skin and bone, made him look most remarkable, and to all this was added an intelligence which was in the lowest stage of development and just verged on idiotcy. His sole enjoyment was the perpetual smoking of a little clay pipe, and he laughed incessantly, but never spoke, obeying all orders blindly; yet we all liked him, for he was the cleverest climber.

But to return to our subject. After leaving Apatin we ran up-stream again to the best shooting-ground. The passage might be called pretty, for on the left bank was a marshy tract intersected by arms of the river, where low willow-bushes reached close down to the water's edge. On the boggy meadows there were a good many birds. Lapwings tumbled about, Ducks rose from the pools, Grey Herons flew leisurely over the marshes, and we here saw the first Purple Herons. Marsh-Harriers were also dancing over the meadows, and a pretty fair number of smaller birds, such as Wild Pigeons, Crows, Starlings, &c., passed over our vessel. On the right we saw splendid "au" woods running down to the bank, and it was only where the numerous arms of the river joined the main stream that we obtained glimpses into these dark green labyrinths.

A good many Kites were flying about over the woods; we often saw four or five together, all merrily going through

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their aerial evolutions, and a Peregrine also crossed the river not far from us. This noble bird of prey, so seldom met with in western lands, was all the more interesting to us as I had shot one in the Lower Austrian "auen" when Brehm and I were there a few days ago. We were already a good bit above Apatin, when to our great delight there appeared far away above the lofty woods the first pair of Sea-Eagles, quietly flying towards the interior of the woods, their huge forms being plainly visible against the sky in spite of the great distance. The field-glass was at once put in requisition, and a veritable fever of excitement was caused by the sight of these great birds of prey, and the thoughts of what might happen during the ensuing hours.

We now soon sighted an opening in the woods, where an arm of the river branched off to the right and formed a broad passage into the heart of the "auen." Here Hodek told us that we were at the proper place, and the Captain gave the order to anchor above this channel.

The 'Vienna' was cast off, and we rowed to the bank to get the "csikeln" in order. There, among the bushes, we found a miserable dilapidated fishing-hut, out of which crawled some wild sunburnt people, who looked at us with amazement. A numerous family of pigs lay sunning themselves at the entrance of this human habitation, and when Brehm saw them he rapturously called out, "Ah, my favourite beasts!" and on account of that exclamation he was chaffed whenever we encountered a herd of swine.

As soon as all was ready, and the steamer had anchored, we got into the 'Vienna' and entered this arm of the Danube, Hodek's men following, distributed among the "csikeln."

It must not be imagined that this was a small branch of the Danube, for it was, on the contrary, a broad and rather rapid stream about the size of our larger rivers. It takes a wide bend through the wood, and joins the main stream far below

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Apatin, and is the great artery round which is grouped the network of the innumerable smaller channels of the great Bellye and Draueck "auen."

We now began a most beautiful passage, the air on the water being pleasantly cool, for a gentle breeze counteracted the heat of the morning sun, and as we swung down the quick stream the most charming pictures of silent woodland solitude unfolded themselves before us.

First we passed through low willow copses, where the dense foliage trailed in the water, and where it was almost impossible to see into the bushes. We could hear the enlivening notes, uttered by all sorts of birds, while, frightened by the noise of the oars, Cuckoos, Orioles, Turtle-Doves, and various other children of the woods fluttered up out of the thickets, into which they again immediately vanished.

After a time the scene changed, and to our right appeared tall woods, here and there diversified by little meadows and low copses, while old oaks and black poplars pushed their gnarled branches out of the immense sea of rustling silver poplars, and wild fruit-trees showed their blossom-laden crowns.

At one spot we even saw a road, if one might so call it, which ran a little way along the bank. There must have been a market going on in one of the villages outside the woods, for a string of carts full of gaily-dressed men and women were struggling along this miry track.

From an ornithological point of view this passage offered but little of interest, though numbers of the birds already noted showed themselves, and here, as everywhere else on the Danube, the Grey Herons played an important part, for various representatives of this species were standing, stiff and patient, watching for fish in the shallows by the banks, while Common Mallards flapped up quacking in front of us.

After we had been rather more than half an hour on the

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way, the channel took a wide bend and changed its direction. At first it had led us westwards almost at right angles to the main stream, but now it turned to the sou'-sou'-west, and we could see it flowing straight before us like a broad avenue, both its banks being covered with imposing woods of a grander and gloomier character than those which we had at first encountered.

The 'Vienna' loaded with men, and its attendant swarm of low "csikeln" that hardly rose above the surface of the water, formed a striking picture as they glided so quietly through this silent lonely scene.

In the distance to the right we saw quite a colony of fishermen, whose curiously built huts had a look of the South Sea Islands, being made of long thick reeds and shaped like inverted funnels, a very low door serving as an entrance into these peculiar structures.

After a few more strokes of the oars Hodek ordered his men to land at this fishing colony, whither the Archduke Albrecht's Land-Steward had come from Mohács on purpose to receive us.

Herr Rampelt, formerly an officer in the army, is a particularly agreeable, well-informed man, and to his great courtesy we are indebted for much pleasure and many interesting experiences. Other members of the admirable Archducal forestry-staff also came to offer their services; and as for the fishermen, they stood up in their "csikeln" by the bank gazing at us in amazement, while some wolf-dogs sprang yelping towards us.

Now followed a short consultation, the "csikeln" were distributed, every one chose his special district, a guide, a paddler, and a climber were allotted to each, and we separated with many a hearty wish for good luck, this spot being fixed upon as the rendezvous for the evening, when we had finished shooting. We were all somewhat excited at parting,

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for to each of us there involuntarily presented itself the question, Shall we kill any eagles, and with the best of luck how many shall we bring back to this place after hours of hard work?

A boat and a couple of "esikeln" were assigned to me. My jäger Beck and I got into the former, which was rowed by two men, while Hodek and his man Ferencz followed in the latter. We had hardly left the rest of the party, and gone a little way down the broad stream, when a huge Sea-Eagle flew slowly over the wood within rifle-shot of my boat, and I, who am so very superstitious when out shooting, accepted this as a good omen and a propitious sign from St. Hubert, who has always favoured me so greatly in my pursuit of eagles. As we were merrily hurrying down-stream I suddenly perceived on our left a small break in the loamy crumbling bank through which the water was rushing into a narrow channel. "Here," said my boatmen, "we must enter;" and I confess that at first I watched the manœuvre with some anxiety; however, the turn was made, and the water carried us into the deeply cut channel. Rowing was quite impossible, for on both sides there were but a few inches between boat and bank, while on either hand were loamy walls several feet high. Here I noticed, imbedded in the ooze and mud, a huge tree which had probably lain buried in this place for many many years. Above us closed the branches of the bushes which grew in wild luxuriance on both sides; and I cannot remember having ever seen anything like it, for the whole defile had quite a character of its own. Yet, interesting as it was, we felt relieved on getting well out of it, since even with both arms it was difficult to guard one's face from rough contact with the low drooping boughs. Suddenly both the banks came to an end as if they had been cut off, and all trace of dry land vanished, for we had reached the district of the yearly inundations and the very wilderness itself.

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I should be glad if my pen could give the reader even a slight idea of the marvellous scenes which here stamped themselves so indelibly on my memory. The landscape was the more interesting from the picturesqueness of the vegetation, for open expanses of water alternated with great forests of reeds, half submerged thickets, and clumps of tall silver poplars, oaks, willows, and elms; fallen stems lay with their highest parts out of the water, and dead oaks, black poplars, and wild fruit-trees stood isolated among the rustling reed-beds. All was flooded, and a gentle breeze played over the ripples and the rich verdure in which this exuberant vegetation was decked. Little Grebes, Ducks, and Moorhens flapped up in front of us. The latter are the characteristic birds of all these "auen," and their incessant cries, mingled with the croaking of countless frogs, made a deafening noise. Here I everywhere found Marsh-Harriers, Hooded Crows, Cuckoos, Wood-Pigeons, and Stock-Doves, and also some of their nests; but it was not until we had penetrated a long way into this wilderness that I saw two majestic Sea-Eagles flying low over the water, and observed one of them settle on a dead tree not far off, its yellowish plumage glistening in the sun. After half an hour's rowing we gradually came into a drier district, some patches of unsubmerged wood appeared, and on one of them I saw from afar the first Sea-Eagle's eyrie, situated upon a tall, very thin, and branchless black poplar. It was a huge strong structure, and any one who had never seen an eagle's nest before would have thought it incredibly large.

Stepping cautiously into the "csikel," which Ferencz was working, Hodek and I approached the tree, our boat remaining behind hidden in the sedge, for we had to cross an open sheet of water, succeeded by a tract of thick reeds, before we got to the narrow tongue of land on which the nest stood.

Propelled by quiet strokes of the paddle the "csikel"

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glided through the bending reeds. I had got my gun ready to shoot, for Ferencz whispered that the eagle was on its nest; but I was in such a fever of excitement that I scarcely dared to breathe or to look at the tree, for it is an anxious moment for any sportsman when he nears for the first time that great structure, the pirate stronghold of a mighty eagle. Ferencz most skilfully guided the craft under the tree to a spot where I could get a good open shot. There he stopped, and begged me to be prepared to fire, as he was going to frighten the eagle off the nest by clapping his hands. However, thank goodness, nothing moved, for the eagle was not at home, and it was only the head of the rather large young one which he had seen and mistaken for the old bird.

I was glad that the eagle was not there, for shooting out of a shaky "csikel" is always a very uncertain business, and I could really hardly see for excitement.

We now had to land quickly and to wait for the eagle at its dwelling, the depth of the water allowing us to come quite close to the dry land, so that we only had to wade a few steps.

Hodek ordered the two men to conceal themselves with the "csikeln" at different points, in case of having to follow up a hard-hit eagle, and when both crafts had quietly vanished into the thick reeds, he and I hid ourselves as well as we could.

The tree with the nest was on a longish strip of land, nowhere more than twenty yards wide, and though not now under water, the muddiness of the ground showed that the floods had but recently left this more elevated spot. Here stood huge ancient oaks with their thick foliage and dead twisted upper branches, and there were also a few gigantic silver poplars, but the only black poplar was the one on which the nest was placed, and its peculiar form made it conspicuous among all the other trees.

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Wild vines and hops had wound themselves round the trunks of the trees, and the ground was covered by a mixture of high rank grass, sedge, and other aquatic plants. Looking towards the direction from which we had come, I had a view of the inundated district, with its reed-beds, thickets, clumps of wood, open sheets of water, and all the wild medley of this remarkable locality. In the opposite direction I could see a narrow reed-covered channel with a wood of lofty trees behind it, which, so far as I could make out, rose from dry ground. A few paces from the nest were some of the enormous oaks centuries old, whose broad trunks we selected as our hiding-places, while a few leafy boughs laid above us were to serve as a screen. As a place for shooting from, this spot left much to be desired, for the broad branches of the trees covered us like a tent. How long I crouched there I know not, but I found the time pass pretty quickly, surrounded as we were by merry life.

The Wood-Pigeons and Stock-Doves fluttered about the oak trees, and cooed so peacefully, while, urged by their amatory feelings, the cock birds mounted high into the blue ether, and dropped whirring down to the dead tree-tops of the opposite wood. Crows and Jackdaws flew to and fro, and a joyous crowd of songsters were warbling their most melodious ditties, though unhappily the monotonous cries of the Coots, Ducks, and green-footed Moorhens, as well as the perpetual croaking of the frogs, almost drowned their melody. These creatures are the regular pests of the "auen," but how agreeable they are compared to those arch-torments of the sportsman—the bloodthirsty mosquitoes which swarm in these woods! Hardly were we quietly settled in our hiding-place when a humming began round us, and the wretched insects commenced their fiercest attacks on my face and hands; and what would it be like in the evening, when the exhalations rose from the moist ground and floated in ghostly

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fashion over the steaming surface of the water! These reflections were not pleasant; but still an eagle was worth all that, and any one who really wants to shoot noble game must shun neither troubles nor discomforts.

The hoarse cry of the young Sea-Eagle now indicated that it was about the hour at which the pampered young gentleman was accustomed to be fed, and he was giving us accurate notice of the fact.

Hodek, who had just looked round, whispered to me, "He is coming!" I heard a whiz above me, and a great shadow swept over the ground; but by the time I had got my gun up it was already too late, and I merely saw the eagle glide into the nest with folded wings. I had not credited the mighty bird with such great activity and quickness, and had fancied the matter easier than it really was.

After a few moments we heard the cracking of bones and the cries of the young bird; but whether the bones were those of a fish or of some other creature we unfortunately could not say, owing to the surprising speed at which the eagle had come.

I now slipped quietly out of my ambush ready to fire, and stationed myself at a spot where I could get a comparatively open shot, while Hodek crept warily to the other side of the nesting-tree and tapped its stem with his hunting-knife.

He had hardly touched the bark when I heard the bustle of the eagle as it flew out; but a leafy branch prevented my observing the bird at the first moment of its flight, and I did not see it until it was a few yards from the nest. It was struck by my first shot and fell halfway to the ground, and at the second drooped its head and legs and sailed like a parachute over the water behind us, to a flooded patch of wood.

Shortly after it had vanished from our sight among the branches we heard something heavy fall into the water, and Hodek hastening up found the eagle already in Ferencz's

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"esikel," the bird having dropped within a few yards of it.

It was a most unpleasant time that I spent alone under the nest waiting for Hodek, and, short as it was, seemed to me like long hours. My hands trembled with excitement as I held my gun, and, harassed by the most uncomfortable thoughts, I kept asking myself why I had not killed the eagle outright, and whether the fall on the water had not been an illusion. Fortunately Hodek soon put an end to these distressing moments by hurrying to me holding up the eagle. It was a very old powerful bird, with the pale plumage and light yellow beak and feet indicative of great age; but, to our astonishment, it was not the faithful mother but the father which I had bagged.

Induced by this circumstance to persevere, we determined to wait two hours longer for the female, and, hiding the dead Sea-Eagle in the shade of a tree, we again crept into our ambush.

Our hopes and expectations had risen, and the time passed still more quickly and pleasantly, relieved as I was of my most feverish excitement and of my distressing doubts about the success of the matter.

The cheerful bustle of the bird-world again began around us, and I had the pleasure of thoroughly studying the Moorhens as they crept slowly out of their places of concealment and swam about, a few yards from me, diving and playfully pursuing one another.

We several times heard the shrill cry of the Sea-Eagle, but all remained quiet at the nest; so as it was already past noon, and Hodek thought that we ought to pay a visit to the second Sea-Eagle's nest, we whistled sharply, and in a few minutes both our "esikeln" came up.

Having laid the slain eagle in my craft, we pushed off from the land and penetrated into the thick reeds, circum-

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navigated the wood behind us, crossed an open sheet of water, and soon reached a large patch of trees.

Ferencz whispered to me that this was the abode of the second pair of eagles, and with my gun ready I approached the edge of the wood. The tree on which the nest was built did not stand quite on the margin of the clump, but a few yards within it, where there was a group of huge black poplars still higher than the one at the previously described nesting-place. To our horror we noticed that everything was under water; so I went in the "csikel" right under the nest, which was much smaller than the first, and was placed in the upper part of a leafy black poplar, being pretty well screened by branches.

The eagle was not at home, and as we were discussing the possibility of concealing ourselves under the very unfavourable circumstances, the pair of birds, already disturbed by our presence, were sailing about over the tree-trops, screaming loudly. For a moment all seemed to be lost, for they mounted in ever-widening circles up to the highest regions, closely following all our movements. All at once we remarked a large old oak lying prone, with only some parts of it projecting above the surface of the water. To this tree we got the "csikel" as near as we could, and, with my gun on my back, I crept along on all fours to its driest part. It was not a very comfortable seat, and it required some exertion to maintain my position on the sloping surface. Moreover ants and insects of all kinds were using the place as a refuge from the rising waters, and showed very plainly how unwelcome my visit was to them.

Hodek had gone off some distance with the crafts, and when the eagles noticed this they sank towards the nest; but my position was unfortunately too evident, for the shy birds again rose high in the air, sounding their cries of alarm. I now quickly called for the "csikeln," and getting into one of them looked about for another place; and a hundred yards from the

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nest, and therefore quite out of shot-range, we discovered at the foot of a tree a small dry spot just large enough to serve as a hiding-place for two people if they crouched close together. Here Hodek and I sat down covered with leafy branches, while Ferencz hurried away with the "csikeln" to conceal himself a good way off. Our island was close to the edge of the wood, so that we had a clear outlook over the open water on one side, while a few hundred paces behind it stood a group of trees, most of them dead.

The gun was now placed beside me ready for use, and a cartridge inserted in the rifle, which would here have to play the chief part; and then there began a very interesting time for the observer, but a very trying one for the enthusiastic sportsman, for through the twigs we frequently saw the eagles, which had become very suspicious, and constantly heard their shrill cries of anxiety.

Both birds flew majestically over our heads, now sailing slowly along and now darting from one end of the wood to the other. Often they sank so low that I could plainly see their yellow feet shining in the sun, and the way in which their great powerfully-beaked heads were bent downwards, while sometimes they mounted to such a height that they looked like mere black dots in the sky; but they never ceased sounding their ominous cries, and though the pangs of hunger kept the young eagles calling to their parents, the old birds never came near the nest until another hour had elapsed.

At last they ceased to show their mistrust by shrill notes of alarm, and dropping into another part of the woods vanished from our sight. They had quieted down and gone off after plunder, their usual business, and our hopes, which had already fallen very low, began to rise again a little. A quarter of an hour of perfect quiet had elapsed, when I suddenly heard the piercing screams of the eagles, now here and now there, but already pretty close to me, while I sometimes saw them pass

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like shadows over the tree-tops and again disappear into the depths of the foliage.

At length I heard the heavy thud of the feet and the rush of the flapping wings, such as one always hears when an eagle perches hard by. The sound did not come from the nest, but from quite the opposite direction, and, looking cautiously out, I saw behind me a huge Sea-Eagle on the top of a dead tree at the other side of the water.

I quickly grasped my rifle, but before I could aim the eagle stooped several times, lowered its head, and, slowly extending its wings, flew off the branch.

It was coming in a direct line to our hiding-place, but just before reaching the wood it rose a little and hovered like a hawk over the nest, turning its head from side to side, and this it doubtless did in order to first thoroughly examine the nest and its surroundings and to see whether all was in its old condition. All of a sudden it contracted its wings and flew straight to the top of a dead tree close to the nest and about a hundred paces from my position.

There sat the eagle facing us, bolt upright, and reconnoitring in all directions. I quietly raised the rifle, fired, and the ball passing fair through its breast, knocked the bird off the tree, the dull sound of its fall on the water following the echoes of the shot.

Hardly had I begun to wade to the dead bird, carrying my empty rifle, when the female came flying low over my head. How easily I could also have bagged this second eagle had the gun been in my hand!

For to-day all was over at this nest, as the bird had seen us lift up its slain mate, and was now fully alive to the wiles of man, and a few minutes afterwards we saw it circling round at a great height, uttering its cries of alarm. I therefore immediately left the place to pay a parting visit to the first nest. There my jäger, who had been waiting all the time in

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the boat, which was concealed among the reeds, told us that, shortly after we had left, the eagle had flown back laden with food for the well-grown young—for he declared that there were at least two, though we had before only made out one; so I at once hastened to my ambush, determined to devote another hour to this nest.

The Moorhens and all the small birds were now still livelier than in the noontide hours, and there was an incessant flapping going on in the water around me. A Mallard had her nest quite close to our hiding-place, and at first she sat immovable, but afterwards got up and began to swim about the reeds and hunt for insects, keeping all the while a strict watch on her nest. Every Moorhen which dared to come too near was vigorously chased away, and after each short absence she came back to reinspect her dwelling. The concert, too, in these woods during the latter part of the afternoon was very remarkable—the screams of the young eagles, the cooings of the pigeons, the cawing of the crows, the quacking of the ducks, the whistling of the Moorhens, and the croaking of the frogs, all made up a Babel of sound which, accompanied by the melodious notes of the Nightingales and Blackcaps, the songs of the Finches, and the short warbles of the Willow-Wrens, gave the wilderness a strange and very enchanting character.

The afternoon was drawing to a close, the sun sank towards the west, the shadows grew longer and longer, but still the eagle did not come; so we had to leave the place, as time was pressing, and we were a good long way from the steamer. We therefore called up the "csikeln," and began our homeward route, and I felt proud at leaving this ground with two Sea-Eagles in my boat—a bag which falls to the lot of but few sportsmen in the whole course of their shooting experiences.

A beautiful picture presented itself as the last rays of the

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sun gilded the dead branches of the ancient oaks and the leafy clumps of wood ; a gentle evening air was breathing through the rustling brakes and reed-beds, and before us lay the broad oily sheets of water only broken by the rings made by the rising fish and the diving of ducks and Moorhens. Crows were settling on the trees preparing for their night's rest, the songs of the smaller birds had gradually ceased, and just a few warbling sounds rose from sedge and bush, while light vapours hung over the water and the mosquitoes tormented us with all their might. Some Marsh-Harriers glided over the thickets with their reeling flight, in search of their evening meal of Moorhens; and would that they had devoured all those noisy ear-torturing brutes! An Osprey also passed slowly over a clump of trees near our boat, and though it was rather too far off I relied on the powers of my gun and fired both barrels at this beautiful light-flying eagle, and it dropped into a thicket of reeds and bushes, rather hard hit. Ferencz hurried up in his "csikel ;" but all his searching was fruitless, which I greatly regretted, as I had never killed an Osprey, and this smallish finely-coloured eagle, with its Lapwing-like flight, is an attraction to all sportsmen ; we were, however, to form a closer acquaintance with it two days later.

We went back the same way that we had come in the morning, and on reaching the picturesque but not over agreeable passage between the banks of earth near the junction of the channel with the main arm of the river I saw fresh tracks of Red Deer in the soft loam, evidently made by some very heavy animals.

A few more strokes of the oars brought us into the broad stream, where the men had to pull lustily to get up to the fishing-colony now visible in the distance, and on reaching it we found all the sportsmen already assembled round their spoils. Three Sea-Eagles, one Mallard, one White-eyed Duck, a Tawny Owl, and a variety of small birds shot by Brehm for

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scientific purposes decorated the place. My two Sea-Eagles were at once laid beside them, and we had the rare good fortune of standing by a row of five eagles. My brother-in-law had killed two very large ones, and severely wounded another. He had also brought for the menagerie which we were going to form on deck three young eagles from the nest, tolerably large, but still in down.

The third bird, also a grand specimen, had been bagged by Homeyer; but Brehm and Bombelles had been unlucky at the nests, especially the latter, who had made the acquaintance of a very suspicious eagle, which the keepers said Baron Schloissnigg had some weeks ago fired at with small shot while it was at its nest. This probably occurred during the Woodcock-shooting. All the eagles we had killed were very old birds, having the fully-mature pale brownish-yellow plumage and light yellow beak and feet indicative of great age.

While the men were busy putting our booty and effects on board the 'Vienna,' Brehm lured a Cuckoo, which was calling near us, in the most scientific way, and so deceived the poor fellow that it allowed itself to be enticed out of the wood to the fishermen's huts, where it circled over the heads of the large assemblage of people, and I fired a shot which brought it dead to the ground.

After this short interlude we took leave of the Land Steward, and embarked on board the 'Vienna,' again followed by the "csikeln."

We now went rapidly down-stream through the most splendid forests; right and left were thick woods of willows and silver poplars with low drooping branches, and from time to time we got slight glimpses into these "auen" at the junctions of the channels. Purple and Grey Herons often flew over our heads, and a whole flock of marsh-birds, variously determined by us as Ibises, Purple Herons or Night-Herons, were

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winging their way to some other ground. Evening was far advanced, the night was struggling with the last vestiges of day, and bats were flitting restlessly along the banks. It was a lovely passage; the woods exhaled their perfumes, and the very perceptible sunset chill of these regions, which gives such colds and fevers to the imprudent, had mellowed to a soft night air.

After a very quick run of an hour and a half, the woods to our left grew thinner and more open, and in front of us appeared a tract of country only studded with a few trees. In the distance shone the lights of our steamer: a few more good strokes of the oars brought us alongside the accommodation-ladder, and we were soon standing on the deck of our comfortable dwelling.

The steamer had, after we had left it in the morning, returned to Apatin to take in coals and provisions, and then continued its journey a long way further down the river to the point where the broad arm of the Danube joins the main stream above the Hulló Marsh, and therefore not far from Draueck. Here the vessel turned into the arm, and went a little way up-stream to a fishing-colony at the edge of a great "au" wood on the right bank, and there anchored to wait for us, for this was the spot where we were to take up our quarters for the night.

Immediately after our arrival the much-desired dinner was served, and some food was welcome, for the whole day long since breakfast we had eaten nothing but some pieces of milk-bread which had been put into the game-bag: this, however, was but a short day compared with those which were to follow.

The prudent Brehm had conceived the splendid idea of bargaining for crayfish at one of the fisher-colonies, for the crayfish of the Danube has a very good flavour, and also

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differs somewhat in its outward appearance from the brook crayfish.

Dinner being over, the measurements were at once taken, notes exchanged, and every one recounted their adventures. The various tales of what took place at the nests were almost identical; and as no special experiences happened to any of the sportsmen, I have no compunctions in omitting a summary of these accounts and almost entirely confining myself to my own doings.

After our work was finished, and the spoils made over to Hodek for preservation, we all betook ourselves to our well-earned rest.

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FOURTH DAY.

Day was breaking on the morning of the 25th of April, and the first glimmer of light was shining through the cloud-drifts over the silent woods still enveloped in the darkness of the night, while a wall of black clouds towering on the western horizon was the only too certain warning of an approaching change of weather.

My brother-in-law and I were the first on deck, and were waiting for breakfast, our example being soon followed by Brehm and Homeyer.

Bombelles had set off in a "csikel" still earlier in the morning, for he was going back all the way up-stream to the nests which I had visited yesterday, intent upon shooting the hen-bird of the first, which had been quite undisturbed.

After breakfast Hodek settled what we were to do, and each of us had a separate district allotted to him. Leopold was to go to a Sea-Eagle's nest not far from the steamer, and the two "Savants," as we always called them, were detailed for a distant but interesting excursion. They were to travel down the arm of the river to its junction with the main stream, where begins the wide and really gigantic Hulló Marsh, which I shall fully describe elsewhere. At its southern extremity is Draueck, that point of such special geographical interest where the majestic Drave commits its waters to the Danube. Just at the spot where the two rivers meet, the marsh ends in a small wood, generally flooded, and which bears the name of Szrebernicza. There stood the Sea-Eagle's nest that had been assigned to the Savants.

Hardly had my two friends examined the position of this

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locality on the map, when they began to talk of it as a district splendidly adapted for ornithological researches, and to form high scientific expectations in connexion with this trip. The more they dreamed of these prospects, the smaller were my hopes of seeing these gentlemen return laden with an eagle, for the sporting proclivities of the true naturalist, however great they may be, always give way whenever a question of scientific interest arises.

Breakfast was soon despatched, and we separated with hearty wishes for good luck. I got into a boat with Hodek and my jäger, three "csikeln" followed us, and we started on our expedition.

We began by rowing slowly up-stream for about a quarter of an hour, till we got to a high wood chiefly composed of willows; were we put into the bank, and I seated myself in a "csikel" paddled by the sturdy Ferencz. Hodek and my jäger settled themselves in the two others, and, taking the boat along with us, we pushed into the wood at a flooded spot only a few yards broad. Here a narrow strip of dry ground running along the edge of the trees divided the arm of the river from the interior of the wood, which was so completely under water that we could easily pass between the tall stems—this sort of inundated forest, devoid of bushes or undergrowths, having a very singular look. A little way further on the high trees became scarcer, being replaced by thickets, and the difficulties of the already unpleasant navigation were increased by the drift-wood which was floating about. However, light soon shone through the bushes, and we reached an open sheet of water about a thousand yards long by a few hundred broad, and bounded on the left by bushes with only a few high trees rising among them, and on the right by a very singular and lofty forest, while to the front the view was also closed by woods. I fancy that in the height of summer, when the floods recede, this open is transformed either into one of

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those dry channels so common in the "auen" or into a moist and verdant forest glade.

Our "csikeln" glided silently but swiftly over the smooth waters, the clouds hung low, the air, saturated with the exhalations of the rich vegetation, was oppressive, and the prevailing tones of dull green gave a melancholy aspect to the scene.

There was little bird-life to be seen around us, but the insects, especially the troublesome mosquitoes, drawn out by the damp warmth of the weather, were buzzing about everywhere, while innumerable frogs were throwing up air-bubbles and protruding their heads above the water.

A brilliantly white Egret passed slowly over me, and was at once entered in my note-book, as it was the first which I had seen on this journey, nor had I met with any since last year, when I found them in the marshes of Lake Butrinto in Albania.

A few more vigorous strokes of the paddles brought us to the end of the open water, where, turning to the right, we entered a splendid wood of high trees. Of all the "au" woods which I have ever seen this was unquestionably the most beautiful and the most interesting, being the very acme of the unfettered virgin growth of nature. Tall willows were its characteristic trees, and some huge black and silver poplars with dead branches stood out among them. In many places there was no undergrowth, in others thick bushes grew rampantly. Old trees, overcome by the weight of years and choked by the younger ones, were bent and twisted into the most gnarled shapes; others, blackened by lightning, stood like ruins, half overthrown; stems that had been hurled down by storms lay firmly imbedded in the ground and partly submerged, their decayed bark serving as a fruitful soil for younger generations, for high grasses and whole trees were growing from the dead bodies of their predecessors, while other trunks, uprooted by the floods, were drifting about

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with flourishing islands forming themselves on their broad upper surfaces.

Hodek had already told me of the floating islands of this wood. I have now seen them, and am greatly delighted at having explored this true primeval forest, on which no axe or hatchet has ever been laid by man. Our way was often blocked by quantities of drift-wood as well as by these floating islands, and we were often in immediate danger of a ducking, for we had much difficulty in forcing the "csikeln" through the stems and branches; but where the obstacles were altogether too great, we could only progress by making a long detour, and in spite of the extraordinary dexterity of the paddlers, their task was a very hard one.

Slowly we neared a little opening, in the midst of which stood an old rotten willow, and seldom have I seen so remarkable a tree. Its twisted trunk only rose a couple of yards above the water, and was quite branchless and leafless, and also blackened by lightning and split down the middle; while at its upper end was a large hole leading into the hollow stem. This willow served as a fit abode for the gloomy Eagle-Owl, the king of its race. I glided on in the "csikel" until I got under the tree, and Hodek also hurried up in his craft, and with a blow of his hunting-knife frightened the great night-bird out of its retreat. Unfortunately, I had posted myself too near, and the cunning owl flew away so covered by the tree that I could not see it until it was a good way off, and both my shots were ineffective; for though it drooped in its flight and dropped a few feathers, yet it nevertheless vanished into the depths of the wood. I was quite in despair, for it was the first time that I had seen a wild Eagle-Owl, and the sight of it made me still more eager to shoot one of these powerful fellows, who are certainly among our finest raptorial creatures.

It is a splendid primitive sort of bird, with a spectral weird

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look suggestive of all the old hunting-tales, the "Walpurgisnacht" and long by-gone days, and has perhaps suffered more from the inroads of civilization than even the Eagle, for it demands perfect quiet, and vast wildernesses are its true home.

There I sat in my "csikel" with my empty gun, the picture of misery; but Hodek assured me that when the Eagle-Owl is clean missed, it soon comes back to its nest, and that even when it is wounded, but is still strong enough to drag itself back to its retreat, it does so that it may die in its own dwelling, surrounded by its belongings, he having seen instances of both cases in the course of his many years' experience.

For this ray of hope I was very thankful, and though I did not set much faith on the result, I determined to return to the nest in a few hours. As we were leaving the place, in depressed spirits, a beautiful Osprey flew over us and settled on a high black poplar, whose dead top was decorated with an old abandoned Sea-Eagle's nest. Ducks were getting up everywhere among the stems of the trees, and a lively bustle was going on amongst the crowd of Moorhens. Our object now was to get out of this wood as quickly as we could, in order to pay a visit to a Sea-Eagle, so we directed that the boat, which had remained by the open water, should be hidden in the thickets and kept in waiting for us.

We then advanced in an opposite direction through another flooded thicket, and soon reached an open arm of the river with dense copses running along its right bank and on its left a high wood, most of which was under water.

After paddling about a quarter of an hour, Hodek announced that we must be close to the first eagle's nest, so we put into the left bank at a place where most of the high wood was free of water, and entered a grove composed of silver poplars, black poplars, and a few oaks, where there was little undergrowth and but few pools, a state of matters which much facilitated our progress.

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We began by walking a little way straight along the dry bank of the arm, and then, accompanied only by Hodek, I turned into the wood, and wading through some largish pools gained an opening, where I already saw from afar a huge eagle's nest situated among the upper branches of a tall black poplar. To the left of this tree was an open channel, mostly covered with sedge, and on its further side ran a long stretch of bush varied with high solitary trees.

On some drier and more elevated patches of ground quite close to the nest were some lower trees, under one of which I hid myself while Hodek went below the nest to drive out the eagle should it chance to be sitting therein; but in vain he hammered at the stem, the bird was not at home; so we stayed quietly in our ambush, which, lying as it did among pools of water, only afforded us very damp and wretched accommodation.

The wood in the immediate neighbourhood of the nest had, as one might say, narrowed to a thin strip, so that from our position we could easily see through it, and even get an open view as far as the bushes on the other side of the channel. This wood was not at all like that above described, being far less wild, and not so like a primeval forest. There was also plenty of life in it, for a number of songsters charmed us with their early morning carols; and again the lively Moorhens kept uttering their incessant cries among the rushes of the channel, while ducks were flying to and fro and splashing noisily into the water close beside us.

We had hardly been sitting a quarter of an hour under the nest, when the young eagles began to cry lustily for food, and were answered by both the old ones quite near our hiding-place. We next saw the shadows of the huge creatures gliding over the ground, but did not get a clear view of the birds themselves until they were above the low bushes of the opposite bank; and there we observed three eagles, evidently a

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pair who were trying to drive away an intruder from their territory. It was a splendid sight to see the three great birds pursuing each other in low circles over the bushes and then mounting into higher regions and swooping down in playful fashion, all the while sounding their loud cries. I was delighted at this sign of their perfect feeling of security and absence of suspicion, as it showed me that the owners of the nest had not the slightest inkling of our presence. In a few minutes the three eagles disappeared in different directions, doubtless going about their usual business of seeking food for their young ones.

Another half-hour of perfect quiet passed by, giving me time to make a thorough study of my surroundings, and of the lively interesting habits of the marsh- and water-birds, and the various songsters which were flying about. A pair of Pygmy Eagles passed very low over our heads, and had I not been waiting for the Sea-Eagle I could easily have shot them right and left. These small but particularly rare and interesting eagles were carefully entered in my note-book, as I knew that their appearance would be of great interest, especially to Homeyer, who was much occupied with the Pygmy Eagle, and hoped great things of our journey in connexion with this bird.

The fact that they were a paired couple, one perfectly dark and the other quite light-coloured, formed another argument against the separation of the Booted from the Pygmy Eagle—a question in which we were much interested, and which has so long been a matter of dispute.

The cries of the hungry young Sea-Eagles kept getting louder, and the moment when the old birds would return to the nest with plunder seemed to be approaching. Suddenly I saw an eagle above the bushes on the other side of the channel, but still a long way off. It darted straight towards the nest, took a sweep round the high wood, and a few seconds

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afterwards its broad shadow was gliding over our heads. There was unhappily no chance of a safe shot at the bird as it went into the nest, although there was an opening in the branches just above me which allowed of my seeing that it was carrying a pretty large fish in its claws.

Directly we heard the noise made by the huge bird as it folded its wings and hopped inside from the edge of the nest I crept out of our ambush, stepped quietly to the opposite side of the tree to look for a place where I could get a perfectly open shot, and as soon as I had been lucky enough to find one I sent Hodek to tap the stem.

The eagle was so busy feeding its young that it did not hear our steps as we splashed through a deep water-hole, and it was only after the trunk of the tree had been repeatedly struck that I distinctly heard movements in the nest. The boughs bent, some small twigs fell from its edge, and with a loud bustle the great Sea-Eagle slowly spread its wings, and glided quickly through the topmost branches of the trees in a slanting direction close past me. I had for an instant a clear sight of it between the two trees, and, availing myself of that moment, I fired, and the bird, contracting its wings, crashed through the twigs and foliage and fell with a sharp thud to the ground.

In a few strides we got up to it, and dragged it into our hiding-place. It was another very fine specimen, with the pale-yellowish plumage, bleached beak, and wax-coloured feet, which plainly showed great age.

As the other bird had not witnessed the death of its spouse, Hodek advised me to repair to my ambush, and wait for it at least an hour; nor was it long before the very large powerful female appeared on the outskirts of the wood, flying slowly up low over the water.

The Ducks and Moorhens which had been scared by the shot were still fluttering about and making a great noise. This seemed to rouse the suspicions of the eagle, for it took

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some great sweeps round the wood, screaming the while; and we passed an anxious hour, as not for an instant did the wary bird quit our neighbourhood, though it never allowed the cries of its young to attract it within a fair range.

At one time we saw it circling high above us, at another it flew low over the bushes, then showed itself among the tree-stems only a few yards above the ground, and sometimes perched on the isolated trees along the bank or in the middle of the wood, but never came close to the nest.

I waited perhaps more than an hour without stirring in the least, and attentively followed every movement of the noble bird, for it was a beautiful sight to watch the intense anxiety, excitement, and mistrust of this shy robber, who, without having really detected our presence, was nevertheless suspicious of some great danger. At times it vanished for a little while in the upper parts of the wood, and came back regularly attended by two other Sea-Eagles, who, having no idea of the cause of its alarm, playfully followed it about.

After about an hour had passed, Hodek thought that it was evidently quite useless to wait for the return of this wary bird, and we therefore resolved to visit another Sea-Eagle's nest in the woods straight in front of us about a mile further on. The way to this second nest was somewhat difficult and fatiguing, for at every step our progress was impeded by dense underwood, and by the broad pools, which had to be waded, while in many places we had to hack out a path with our hunting-knives; however, after a somewhat long tramp, Hodek imagined that we must be near the nest. Here the wood was broader, and extended so far to the left that it quite shut out the view towards the other cover, while to the right it was still bounded by the broad arm of the river, along the opposite bank of which ran an unbroken stretch of willow-thickets, with a high wood of the same trees in the background.

The tree on which this nest was placed stood close to the

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channel, and even drooped over its crumbling bank, which was here several yards high.

The nest appeared to have been just built, the many green branches at its edge showing that it was not long since the eagle had put the finishing touches to its abode. We approached it cautiously until we were under the tree, where I became anxious about the outcome of the affair, for on the side next the wood there was not the smallest opening from which I could get a good shot, while if the bird were to fly out across the water, the bushy branches of the tree on which the nest was placed would prevent my having any better chance of killing it.

Hodek at once feared that here the eagle would be in its nest, so I posted myself in the best place I could find, ready to shoot; but though he repeatedly tapped the trunk of the tree, all was quiet. His practised eye had nevertheless recognized the probability that, in spite of all this evidence to the contrary, the mighty owner of the nest might still be in it, yet it was not until he had clapped his hands for some time and had thrown up bits of stick that the eagle suddenly rose.

The sharp cracking of the branches, the spreading of its wings, and its flight towards the water, all took place in an instant, and quickly as I put up my gun, the best moment was already lost, and only a few twigs and leaves fell to the discharge of both my barrels.

Terrified and scared by the unseen danger (for we were well concealed), the huge bird flew high and low over the trees and bushes of the opposite bank, and at its cries of alarm the male appeared, soon followed by the remaining eagle from the previous nest; and all three birds now cautiously cruised round us in wide circles. We had quickly cowered down behind a great tree, and had covered ourselves with some branches, for, annoyed as I was at this my first failure in eagle-shooting, there was still a ray of hope that as the eagle

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had not seen us it would return ; and we were not wrong, for after a few minutes the female which had just been missed separated itself from the other two birds, and flying straight towards the nest settled on the withered top of a black poplar about sixty yards from our ambush. Though the distance was rather great, I trusted to my good gun and fired ; but just as the shot left the barrel the eagle saw us and dropped down among the branches of the tall tree, so that the charge passed some yards behind the bird, and the pellets only rattled against the bough on which it had been sitting.

Depressed by the many mishaps I had to-day encountered, first at the owl's nest, and now with this pair of Sea-Eagles, I wanted to leave the place, but Hodek begged me to wait a little longer, and we spent another perfectly blank half-hour, while the eagles circled round the wood and its immediate neighbourhood, unceasingly uttering their shrill cries of alarm and perpetually examining our hiding-place, for they had at last discovered the danger, and there was no longer the slightest chance of their coming near us for the next few hours.

Hodek now advised me to return to the " esikeln " and to make a fresh visit to the Eagle-Owl's nest ; so I left this place much disheartened and abashed by my many failures. The wearisome way through the thick underwood back to the first eagle's nest now seemed doubly long and disagreeable, and on our trying to curtail it by a short cut to the bank, we went quite astray, and it was not until we had searched about for some time that we reached the first nest, and thence got back to our " esikeln," where I was ashamed at being obliged to tell what had happened to our men, who, having heard so many shots, had expected to see us return with several eagles.

Quickly getting into our crafts, we went back along the route by which we had so lately come ; but it was in a different frame of mind from that of this morning that we pene-

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trated into the virgin forest, where stood the nest of the Eagle-Owl. I now carefully slipped up in my "csikel" to the opposite side of the old dead willow, and tried, by getting into a more favourable position, to secure a better result than that of some hours ago.

Again Hodek went to the trunk of the tree, but all his attempts to drive out the owl were fruitless; the bird had been too hard hit, and was probably lying dead in some safe hiding-place near its dwelling.

Quite undecided what to do next, we were waiting round the nest in our "csikeln," when my jäger, who had been called up, recommended a search through the thickets for the wounded owl; so we at once separated, to range through the wood in various directions.

This was in itself a difficult enough plan to carry out, but the numerous islands, already described, often made it quite impossible to get forward, and we were in constant dread of losing our bearings and going entirely astray.

However, in a roundabout fashion we went through a great deal of this wild intricate wood, often getting altogether stuck among the boughs of the thick bushes, and between the floating tree-stems or the narrow alleys of the old willows. and only by perpetual labour with the paddles, and often with the hands, could we work our crafts slowly forward. It was troublesome and bootless toil, for we neither got a glimpse of the wounded owl nor of the male on which Hodek had set much store; but we were nevertheless repaid by a splendid insight into this, the very densest part of the virgin forest.

On our way back to the nest I observed a good many water-fowl, for the ducks which breed here, in great numbers. often flapped up noisily, while some couples of the first wild geese we had seen during this trip rose in alarm a long way off.

I now resolved to inspect the Sea-Eagle's nest which I had

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noticed early in the morning, where an Osprey seemed to have taken up its abode, but our futile attempts to drive out the possible occupant of the nest showed that our hopes were ill-founded.

After a number of shooting misadventures, a keen sportsman seizes the smallest prospect afforded him of retrieving his failures by a success of some kind; so I even thought of the wild geese, and wanted to try to get near them, but Hodek thought this would be a perfectly useless attempt.

On getting back to the old willow, the abandoned dwelling of the Eagle-Owl, we determined to take the nest, a troublesome but remunerative task; so I made Ferencz bring my craft up to the trunk of a fallen old willow that was only partly submerged, for I was obliged to get out, as the men required two "csikeln" as a first step towards climbing the tree, and this prostrate stem was for far and wide the only island. I then tried to crawl slowly up its slanting and rather slippery surface, and after some trouble and the frequent prospect of a cold bath I fortunately succeeded in so doing, and seated myself on the gnarled branches furthest from the water to watch the taking of the nest.

Ferencz, who was a particularly clever climber, swung himself from the edge of the "csikel" up the stem of the tree with the assistance of the climbing-irons. The upper part of the old willow was so broad that he could move quite easily along its slanting surface, and on reaching the hole which served as the entrance to the nest he felt cautiously inside, and first carefully pulled out the newly-killed bodies of four Moorhens, which the owl had probably brought this very day as food for the young. The bodies were quite intact, but, curiously enough, all the heads were gone. We then called out to him to throw down some of the materials of the nest into a sack, and out came a mass consisting of feathers, twigs, bones of defunct creatures, and quantities of maggots

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and vermin. Finally, he lowered into my "csikel" one by one the four young birds, which were rather small and covered with light grey down.

When the taking of the nest was happily accomplished, I got Ferencz to fetch me from my very unpleasant position, and we began to retrace our way to the boat on the open water.

Some hours still remained at our disposal, and as it would have been too early to return to the steamer, we determined to go back again to the Sea-Eagle's nests, although a storm was threatening in the west. This time we hurried straight up to the second nest in the "csikel," and halted below it, intending to drive out the bird by clapping our hands should it chance to have returned.

Had I done this on the first occasion I should have bagged it, for the outlook towards the nest was much more open from the water; but now the eagle was not at home, so we at once sent back the crafts and, betaking ourselves to our former ambush, sacrificed another hour.

At times I heard the eagles screaming, and occasionally saw them gliding over the low wood a long way off, but they had now become quite shy.

During the time so spent I had leisure to observe the Moorhens, and even a very beautifully coloured Hen-Harrier, as it passed along the arm of the river with its wavering flight. Meanwhile a pretty strong wind had risen, the sultry air had become still more oppressive, the sky had grown very dark, and the mosquitoes, with all the other heralds of bad weather, had made their appearance. At first light grey storm-clouds towered up, followed by heavy black rainy masses, which spread themselves more and more over the heavens. The gusts of wind then kept increasing in violence, bending the trees, and some thunder-claps plainly announced the bursting of the storm.

In a few minutes the rain descended in torrents, and we

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were forced to leave our hiding-place. Our time, too, was pretty nearly exhausted, and we had to think of returning.

Great drops were falling from the trees, and all the bushes were loaded with water, so one can easily imagine how much more disagreeable was the return journey through the deep mud and wet undergrowth. As fast as we could work through it we hurried along to our "csikeln," which had come a good bit of the way to meet us, and, wet to the skin, stepped into them and began our homeward route. In my craft lay a Sea-Eagle and the young owls, a scanty booty considering the many splendid chances I had been favoured with during the day.

We went back to our boat by the same way, and after paddling along the first channel, and through the narrow places among the bushes, we got along much faster across the broad sheet of open water. I preferred travelling in my "csikel" rather than in the slow heavy boat, although the wind had raised high waves, and my men advised me not to do so.

The storm was already over, the heavens had emptied themselves in waterspouts, and a fine rain was falling instead of the heavy torrents. The black clouds also gradually disappeared towards the east, the whole sky grew clearer, and the wind fell, while the rain had driven off the swarms of troublesome mosquitoes, and a pure delightfully cool spring air had replaced the heavy fatiguing atmosphere which had hitherto prevailed.

Thanks to the vigorous strokes of the very adroit Ferencz, we glided over the open water towards the wood far in advance of the other boats, but had then to proceed rather more slowly and carefully through the thick bushes and the wood of tall trees. However, by following this morning's route we soon reached the narrow lane of water which opened into the main branch of the river where our steamer lay.

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The current now bore us rapidly down-stream, we soon saw the steamer in the distance, and a few more strokes of the paddle brought us up to her side. The other "csikeln" speedily followed, but the boat with Hodek and my jäger was far behind.

Now came the ticklish moment of getting up the accommodation ladder out of the low rocking craft. This, too, was happily accomplished without an involuntary bath, and in a few seconds I reached the deck, out of spirits at the many mishaps of the day, and wet to the skin. My brother-in-law was already sitting comfortably in the saloon with Brehm and Homeyer, and before him lay a large Eagle-Owl. He had to-day gone after a Sea-Eagle, which proved unusually shy and would not let him get a shot. As for the owl he had never thought of it, but had bagged it by accident, for he had found this nocturnal robber sitting asleep on one of the lower branches of the same tree on which stood the eagle's nest, and brought it down with an easy shot, thus adding a beautiful specimen to our collection.

I was ashamed at having to relate to these gentlemen my experiences at the owl's nest; but I found that Brehm and Homeyer were also not in the most rosy spirits, and that I had made no mistake this morning, for they had been intent on various ornithological studies in the Hulló Marsh, and had thus managed to miss the eagle altogether. Brehm, in particular, spoke with the warmest enthusiasm of the beautiful things he had seen this day, of the splendid views at Draneck, and of the enormous size of the swamp. He was also very desirous that we should, in passing it, devote a morning to this marsh, but considered that it would be better to do so on the return journey, as it was rather too early for the various species of herons and gulls, and that there would be no great improvement in the state of affairs

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before the time of our going home. He had found the entire marsh well stocked with birds.

We had arranged with Bombelles that we would pick him up, and that he was to wait for us at the fishing-colony, our starting point of yesterday ; so as soon as my men were safe on board I gave the order to start.

We made rather slow progress against the swift current of this arm of the river, but after an hour's run, during which we lunched and took the preliminary measurements of the slain birds, we reached the rendezvous with Bombelles, and somewhere between five and six in the afternoon got to the place where we were to pass the night.

As we approached the colony, Bombelles stepped out of a fisherman's hut, perfectly drenched and empty-handed. He had found the second nest of the previous day quite deserted, but at the first succeeded in getting a shot, hitting the eagle rather hard. He had, however, by an unlucky accident, loaded with shot so small that it had not strength enough to kill the powerful bird outright.

From this nest he had brought with him the young eagles, which were already fairly large and showed the first traces of feathers.

There were still some hours of daylight before us; the weather had cleared, the rain had been followed by a beautiful evening, the ruddy gold rays of the setting sun were piercing through the torn clouds, and a wondrous glow lit up the whole sky.

Brehm, Homeyer, and I therefore decided not to lose the time, but to make a little excursion into the flooded wilderness, where I had yesterday killed the two eagles, though merely for the sake of observing the ways and habits of the Moorhens and the other waterfowl. So we got into a pair-oared boat, in which there was room for all three of us, and

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slowly penetrated into the thickets by the now familiar way, often stopping to observe the Moorhens as they were swimming about.

Frightened Wild Ducks were everywhere getting up in front of us, and we saw a pair of Wild Geese flying over the reeds at no great distance. Missel-Thrushes and Moorhens fluttered about the bushy clumps of wood, a few Warblers were singing their sweetest songs among the trees, while Crows and Pigeons were sitting on the dead branches of the old oaks with their heads under their wings preparing for sleep.

Some Marsh-Harriers too were cruising about in search of prey; and Grey and Purple Herons were flying from the "auen" to the plains, high in the air. The shadows grew longer and longer, the last rays of the sun vanished behind the western woods, and the first stars shone out in the few patches of cloudless sky.

We had intended to push on as far as the eagles' nests, for I wished to show the two gentlemen where they were; but we turned back at the urgent entreaties of our boatmen, who had a well-grounded fear of missing, in the darkness, the very narrow and intricate passage through the reeds and bushes. While going quickly back by the same route I killed a Coot which swam confidingly round our boat, and slightly wounded a duck and a heron which rose in front of us, but unluckily too far off.

Brehm was greatly interested in observing the various species of bats, and was much struck by one which was particularly small, but as night was falling it was unfortunately no longer possible to kill a specimen.

We soon reached the broad arm of the Danube again, and were glad when we had got through the thick bushes all right, for this passage was still more disagreeable by night than by day.

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A few more vigorous strokes of the oars brought us back to the steamer, and as it was already rather late we hastened to dine in order that we might snatch a few hours from the night for exchanging notes, making final measurements of the birds killed, and writing up our diaries accurately. About ten o'clock all was quiet on board, and every one was recruiting himself for the morrow, as it was to be a somewhat stiff day.

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FIFTH DAY.

It was about five o'clock in the morning when we left our cabins and went on deck. The sun was shining with its full vigour, warm and enlivening, the sky was cloudless, and the air combined the refreshing savour of spring with the coolness due to the rain of yesterday. How different one feels when the atmosphere is pure and invigorating, and not saturated with the fever-generating exhalations and heavy vapours of the marshes! We had now learnt to value every fresh clear morning in these districts, where the oppressive debilitating air which generally prevails exercises such an unpleasant effect on any one who lives either in the Alps or the lower mountains, the hilly country, or even on the elevated plains.

Breakfast was quickly disposed of, our shooting-gear was packed, and we set out towards fresh adventures in high spirits, for this promised to be an exceedingly interesting and delightful day, as we were to quit the "auen" and shoot through a wood lying pretty far inland.

Leaving the steamer, we all got into one boat and rowed along a canal-like arm of the river, which branched off from the right bank a little way above the fishing-settlement, and soon reached a bridge which sprang from high embankments and spanned the arm. There we stopped and went ashore, Herr Rampelt receiving us and accompanying us to the well-horsed private carriages which were standing on the embankment, and which had been put at our disposal for the entire day.

Without mentioning it as anything exceptional, this great kindness and also the whole arrangements for the day showed

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how largely the administration of the estate and all its officials are imbued with the extremely noble and hospitable spirit of its proprietor.

Our drive now began. In the first carriage went the Land Steward, to show the way. My brother-in-law and I followed him, and behind us stretched a whole caravan of vehicles, for we had taken a good many men with us, all of whom we certainly required for our sport.

The road at first ran straight along the embankment, and was somewhat rough and fatiguing; but in Slavonia, a few days later, we should assuredly have called it a highway. Here the stately and partly-flooded woods that at first rose on either hand gradually disappeared on the right, and were replaced by stubbed-up clearings and marshy pastures; for we had reached the outskirts of the forests, and my great desire of seeing what the outer surroundings of these Hungarian "auen" looked like was now gratified.

I found that the character of this district strongly reminded me of the northern fringe of our splendid Lower Austrian "auen" at Stadll-Enzersdorf and Mühllenten; for the connected forests tailed off in willow woods, succeeded by almost stagnant watercourses, damp pastures, copses well stocked with singing birds and ornamented with a few high trees, and finally by detached patches of beautiful oak woods with a bushy undergrowth. Our way led through the whole of this park-like country, from the "auen" themselves to their outermost borders, and the further we got into the region of the inland woods the more animated and rich in species was the world of small birds and the more did the entries in our note-books resemble hieroglyphics; for the increasing roughness of this very Hungarian road allowed of nothing better.

The true "auen" of the islands and wildernesses are poor in small birds; for though they harbour many stately

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representatives of the feathered tribe, they are nevertheless but sparingly stocked with those species which give life to the scene, such as the many different kinds of warblers and finches.

Our road now wound through the most charming woods, and I was particularly struck by a little grove of gigantic oaks with a thick undergrowth. It was exceedingly lovely, and the merry notes of its countless songsters rang out splendidly; but as soon as we had left it we found ourselves quite in the open, for we had reached the plains. To our right were fields and marshes; to our left a little stream was bearing its modest waters to the Danube between deeply cut banks, and beyond it lay another stretch of flat land. Far before us we saw a chain of heights, with their blue-grey outlines floating indistinctly in the haze; and at a considerable distance to our right front I again got a glimpse of another side of that well-defined peak which I had observed two days ago from the deck of our vessel.

Everywhere Wild Ducks were flying over the marsh, countless flocks of Lapwings were whirling their gay plumage in the air, and at each step we saw Marsh-Harriers and Black Kites; while Hooded Crows, Magpies, Sparrows, Larks, Buntings, Wagtails, and various other birds enlivened the scene. Jackdaws, too, were nesting in great numbers, both in some high oaks which stood at intervals along the roadside, and in a little wood of the same trees near a farmhouse.

The road now brought us to another brook; and this little fellow, mimicking the Danube, bore on both its banks a narrow belt of "auen," consisting of a few willows. Purple and Grey Herons were flying up and down it, and a splendid Osprey sailed along over the water; and while we were delightedly watching this lively bird of prey catching fish, it was quickly followed by another, and soon afterwards by a

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third—this being evidently a particularly good spot for fishing.

After a while we came to swampy flooded meadows, where our road again ran along a high embankment. There great numbers of Coots were swimming about on both sides, although there were no reeds to give them cover; while Herons stood pensively in the water, and both Black and Common Terns were busy fishing. Starlings and Wagtails, too, were running about among the herds of cattle and horses which were grazing on the banks, and a White Stork was heavily winging its way towards the neighbouring village.

A little way in front of us we saw a steep unbroken rise of uniform height—the first elevation of the surface of the country above the level of the Danube. On the brow of this slope stood a large village of the true Hungarian and somewhat primitive type; and when we got up to it the road led us past its outskirts into a long straight avenue of acacias.

There we observed a large forest about a thousand yards ahead of us; and on my asking whether this was the "Keskendi erdö," the coachman, a true Magyar, only answered with a silent nod. So this was the celebrated Keskend Wood, which was to be our shooting-ground of to-day. Black Storks were flying from it to the fields, and they were the first that I had ever seen. This large bird, when it is on the wing, and its colours are lost in the distance, cannot be distinguished from the Common Stork. There were also some Bustards standing in the fields of young corn; while Cuckoos and Kestrels, frightened by the carriages, flew from tree to tree in the acacia avenue, and a beautiful Hobby had the impudence to seize and carry off a poor Wagtail quite close to us.

In a few minutes we reached the edge of the wood, our road conducting us into a long broad ride, which extended

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literally further than the eye could reach. Right and left rose wonderfully well-kept oak woods, of uniform height, and with a rather thick undergrowth; for we were now in an admirably forested wood belonging to the State, which resembled neither the "auen" nor the wild stunted oak woods of other parts of Hungary, but chiefly reminded me of some of the deciduous forests in Bohemia.

The scenery of this district could not be called either grand or picturesque, though the fresh luxuriant verdure threw a certain pleasant tone over the whole landscape. I have such a general dislike for straight lines, as being the palpable evidences of the all-levelling hand of man, that even a splendid rich green forest, when parcelled out by the regular and perfectly straight avenues devised by skilled foresters, loses all charm for me; and, on the same principle, I hold all cut-and-dried shooting, where the guns stand in straight rides, to be a thorough abomination.

I can understand that calculating officials, who try to get as much wood and game out of Nature as they can, think such forests and such shooting the most delightful; but, as a modest traveller and lover of Nature, I find them anything but attractive. I therefore found it difficult to join in the praise and admiration bestowed on this Keskend Wood—the so-called gem of the State forests; for I was still far too full of the splendid "auen" of Apatin.

But why be absorbed in such useless reflections? "Hic Rhodus hic salta," thought I, and concealed my disappointment. But great was my astonishment at finding that, although the whole of the enormous forest was cultivated in this manner, it was nevertheless inhabited by such unquestionably shy birds as the Osprey, the Short-toed Eagle, and the pensive Black Stork. This further confirmed what I had so often noticed in Middle Hungary, viz. that in that country all game, and even the wariest birds of prey, permit the

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approach of man with almost incredible confidence. This Paradisiacal state of things reminds one much of the East, and may be accounted for by the absence of all keenness for sport in the Hungarian nation; for even the gamekeepers (where there are any) never keep down the vermin, hardly any value being set on the preservation of small game.

We drove a good way further down this straight avenue, where some Kites flew past overhead, and we were welcomed by the merry songs of all the larger and smaller inhabitants of an inland forest; and after a while we turned into another divergent but equally straight ride.

The character of the forest remained the same on our left; but on the right it dwindled to a young plantation, thickly interspersed with firs. This cover seemed to be just the very place for Roe, Foxes, Wild Cats, and even Red Deer, and strongly reminded me of a little forest on the Valkö ground, near beautiful Gödöllö, which alone among its wild companions has been subjected to the training of man. Here, as well as there, the woods which are thus tended seem to be well stocked with Woodcock, both in spring and autumn.

We drove along this second avenue for a good quarter of an hour until we came to a meadow laid out in a perfect circle, with a little pavilion-like shooting-lodge in its centre, from which we had an extensive view of the avenues which radiated from it. Here some keepers, headed by a forester, were awaiting us, and we came to a halt, for we had reached the place where we all were to separate in various directions.

As there was only one pair of Short-toed Eagles nesting in the entire wood, and Hodek had repeatedly said that he thought we should have more trouble in obtaining this bird of prey for the completion of our collection of Eagles than any of the others, we determined on no account to shoot at anything else until a Short-toed Eagle had been bagged.

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I therefore drove down a broad avenue, towards the nest alluded to, in a country cart, accompanied by the forester.

After a few minutes we stopped, and continued our way on foot by a cross ride. When we had gone a few hundred yards the forester begged me to enter the wood on my right with my gun ready; and under the skilful direction of my guide I was cautiously creeping through the luxuriant foliage of this young cover, when I suddenly saw the heavy form of a Short-toed Eagle on the top of a dead tree.

The beautifully marked bird of prey, with its dazzling white breast, coffee-brown back, and thick Buzzard-like head armed with a powerful beak, was at that moment diligently occupied in preening its feathers, and had not observed us, but was looking carelessly about. I leant against a young oak, and had time enough to get a thorough impression of the singular appearance of this highly interesting raptorial bird. At the very first sight it strikes the observer as peculiar; for there is something quite distinctive in its appearance, which neither reminds one of the larger nor of the smaller Eagles, but much more of the Buzzards and even somewhat of the Owls. It does not, however, resemble these latter groups of raptorial birds in so decided a manner as to admit of a precise definition of their common characteristics. Its size is the principal reason why the Short-toed Eagle seems such a new and strange sort of type; for it cannot possibly remind one of our larger eagles, such as the Rock, Golden, Imperial, or Sea; and it is equally unlike the Osprey, Spotted and Pygmy Eagles, or the Buzzard, Harriers, Goshawk, and the large Falcons. It strikes one as much bigger and more powerful than these latter birds, and as occupying a perfectly isolated position in the European fauna—a fact demanding the thorough investigation of ornithologists.

I approached the nest with great care, intending to study the minutest details of the movements and character of this

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bird; but the forester entreated me to fire at it, and I unfortunately followed his advice. We had, however, miscalculated the distance; and the eagle flew off, perfectly uninjured. Somewhat depressed by this failure, I crept under the nest, which was placed on the middle branches of a young oak thickly entwined with ivy, and was remarkably small compared with the size of the bird.

In a few moments I saw the pair of Eagles circling aloft, playfully pursued by some Black Kites and Hooded Crows. Their beautiful plumage was brilliantly relieved against the sky, and I had a good opportunity of watching their flight, which was unquestionably not the easy gliding motion which characterizes all the eagles, but an unmistakable buzzard-like flapping of the wings, so often repeated that this so-called eagle ought not to be allowed to retain the honourable but undeserved position assigned to it by the earlier naturalists. Some plucky Hooded Crows swooped at the circling couple in the most impertinent way; and the female, anxious about her brood, shot down to the wood like an arrow. I never saw a bird of prey alight on its nest in such a singular manner; for, instead of first settling on the edge of the structure, the Short-toed Eagle clung outside it like a Swift, and remained some seconds in that position.

I am ashamed at having to confess that my ornithological zeal entirely vanished at this moment, and, overpowered by my sporting ardour, I fired, instead of waiting for the further development of this interesting observation. Shot dead, the beautiful bird fell to the ground; and, to my great delight, I found that I had killed an old and very finely plumaged female. A broad head like an owl, large bright yellow eyes, a snow-white breast, lengthy powerful blue-grey legs covered with a snake-like skin, long broad wings, and a wide, moderately sized tail are the principal characteristics of the Short-toed Eagle.

In my humble opinion, this bird does not deserve its

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name, for it is no eagle; and I quite agree with my friend Brehm that, despite all the earlier naturalists, it must be separated from the eagle group, and it seems to me that the name of "Snake-Buzzard," applied to it by him, is far more correct.

The patient reader will, with perfect justice, smile at my here entering the lists against the first of all ornithologists; but why not try?

My idea is that one should not be in such a hurry to place the "Schlangen Alder"* (I retain the name in this work, because it is the only one universally known) in the Buzzard group as Brehm is; and I think that it would be much more to the point to separate it from the Buzzards as well as from the Eagles, and to assign to it a special place just before the former. In Europe this bird is the only representative of its kind; but it may perhaps be possible to find, among the numerous and not so thoroughly known raptorial birds of the other quarters of the globe, one or two which have similar characteristics and may be placed in the same genus as the Short-toed Eagle.

But enough of this gruesome game! No longer will I tax my reader's patience with theoretical controversies, but hasten back to the greenwood under the eagle's nest.

Laden with my splendid spoil I returned to the cart, in order to pay my first visit to the Black Storks in a neighbouring part of the forest, also intersected with rides. When the eagle had been packed among hay and straw in the high, long, and very uncomfortable country cart, we set off, and in a few minutes again left our vehicle and pushed into the wood.

Among the low saplings rose some tall isolated and excessively old trees, all of them oaks. On one of these stood the simple and very small nest of a Black Stork.

* Snake-Eagle.

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This was the first time I had ever had a chance of closely inspecting this bird, which has been so hardly dealt with by civilization, and has now become so very scarce.

We, who were accustomed to the poor fauna of the Central-European forested woods, which generally consists of unimportant birds, could not help wondering at seeing this huge and very handsomely coloured marsh-bird in the midst of dense deciduous woods. I had always thought of the Black Stork as congregated in colonies on the silver poplars of the "auen," and as resembling the Common Heron in habits and customs; but I was much mistaken, for the inland woods are its true habitat, and each pair breeds apart from the others on the lower branches of old oaks. This beautiful and, I might say, almost exotic-looking bird is a great ornament to the lonely forest solitudes, with which it completely harmonizes. One sees from afar its tall form, pure white breast, dark sheeny-green back and neck, purple-red bill, and similarly coloured legs, supported on one of which, and holding the other high up, the female stands on the nest, while the male generally takes up his position on a thick branch close by.

They do not look much about them, and in districts where they are not disturbed betray not the slightest interest even at the approach of man; and I know of no other of our European birds in whose whole being the idea of *ennui* is so completely personified as in the Black Stork.

I found three nests pretty near each other, and from the first I shot the female as it flew off—a splendid specimen. At the report of my gun all the others rose and circled round, with their long outstretched necks. Some Black Kites were also playing about over the tops of the trees, and I brought down one which was bold enough to come very near me.

There was nothing more to do for the present in this part of the wood, for the storks had much resented this dis-

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turbance; so I hastened back to the cart, that I might turn my attention to an Osprey's nest, situated quite close to the abode of the Short-toed Eagle, before betaking myself to a more distant part of the forest. Unfortunately I did not find the Osprey at home, and the male Short-toed Eagle was still shyly wheeling about in the highest regions.

While driving further on I met my brother-in-law returning from an Osprey's nest, where he had, at short intervals, fired two ineffectual shots at the female, which kept returning; and as he was now hurrying off in rather bad spirits to visit another pair of the same birds, I gave directions that I should be driven to the spot where he had just been shooting.

The large, strongly built nest of the Osprey was placed high amongst the topmost dead branches of a huge oak. After carefully selecting a good position, I gave the order to tap the stem, and found, to my great delight, that the Eagle had allowed itself to be a third time surprised within less than half an hour, for it came gliding over the tops of the trees with an easy sailing flight, and a lucky shot brought it down. It was my first Osprey; and I had at last attained my ardent wish, and had shot one of these bold robbers, whose strikingly fine plumage, strong scaly legs, powerful hooked beak, and lively habits certainly rank them as among the most ornamental of the European eagles.

There were now some more storks' nests to go to; so we turned out of the ride and penetrated into the depths of the forest, driving along an abominable road. There a roe, with a fine head, bounded past the horses: my rifle was lying near me, and at the forester's suggestion I quickly slipped a cartridge into the chamber. The buck stood still for a moment and looked about him confidingly, after the manner of all Hungarian game, and so gave me time to send a ball through his shoulder. The sounding thud of the fatal bullet

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was followed by the usual spring, and after a few more bounds the buck rolled over—dead.

I got up to him in a moment, and with the forester's help dragged him into the cart, where he found a place near the Eagle and the Black Stork.

Continuing our way in a slanting direction through a coppice, we soon came to a more open place, where there were a good many large old trees crowned with dead branches, and on one of them I noticed a big nest, which I thought must belong to an Osprey. The forester had not seen it before; and, while we were still sitting together in the cart and discussing this new find, a pair of Ospreys came flying gracefully overhead. I quickly covered one of them, fired, and the bird fell dead, but unluckily hung in the top of a young beech, and as all our attempts to get down our booty by shaking the tree were unavailing, there was nothing left but to fell it; and this our driver attended to in the most scientific manner, after he had tied up his horses. I was highly delighted at this lucky incident; for we had found the nest, pulled up the horses at a sharp trot, seen the eagle, and shot it—all in less than a minute.

As the next Black Stork's nest was close by, I proceeded to it on foot. We found the long-legged bird at home, and a few blows on the stem of the tree sufficed to drive it out; but I unfortunately missed, for the thickness of the foliage allowed too little space for shooting. Time was pressing; so I quickly returned to the cart, where the driver had meanwhile felled the tree, and now brought me the large finely plumaged Osprey.

We still kept on through the thick wood, and soon came to a broad ride, and, after driving a little way down it, again halted, and plunged on foot into the depths of a young cover varied with a few high trees.

Here there were reported to be several nests of the

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melancholy Black Storks within a small radius. I carefully approached the first; and when I had got under the tree I told the forester to frighten out the bird. But all his efforts to do so were vain; so, slinging my gun, I left the place, and had hardly got forty paces from the nest when I saw the lazy bird sitting quietly on its eggs.

On seeing us it slowly rose, and a shot buried it within its dwelling. A few moments afterwards a large male came flying pretty high above the trees, and a snap shot luckily winged it so that it fell, crashing through the branches, and plumped down close beside us.

The neighbouring nests were empty, for the parent birds, frightened by the shots and concerned about their broods, were circling anxiously round. I therefore left the place, and, returning to the cart, we drove along another broad ride to the spot where I had killed my first stork about an hour ago.

As we rattled over the turf at a fast trot, one of these great marsh-birds flew over the cart. I fired and hit it, but unfortunately not hard enough to kill the tough fellow, and, though it sank slowly down to the wood, we soon lost sight of it.

A short drive brought us close to the nests which I had previously visited. Here we frightened a Black Stork out of its dwelling, and it fell dead at my first shot; but remained so tightly jammed between the branches of a young beech that we again had to cut down the tree, and at this disturbance all the other storks left their nests and cruised about overhead out of range.

The forester now suggested that we should visit a rather distant part of the wood, for though he only knew of a kite's nest there, he thought the drive would well repay me, as the way to it passed through the densest part of the forest, and there would be a good chance of seeing roe, or even red deer.

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We got into the cart and began by driving along several rides, and after about a quarter of an hour turned into the heart of the woods by a terribly rough forest-track, rankly overgrown with branches. Everywhere the covers were of the same type, the various sections only differing in the age of the trees.

Suddenly I observed a roebuck lying in a thick coppice, not more than thirty yards away. We at once pulled up ; I loaded the rifle and aimed, but it missed fire the first, second, and even third time ; for I had got an attack of buck-fever, and had entirely forgotten that the rifle was still locked. In my excitement I took up the gun which was lying beside me and fired at the roe, which staggered off hard hit, and tumbled over dead at the second barrel.

Never in the course of my rather extensive shooting experiences had it happened to me to stop in a trap in front of game usually so shy, to load a rifle, change the cartridges three times, and after some minutes kill a buck which was still lying down and looking at us quite unconcernedly. That was a state of things which really made one think of Paradise.

After hauling the roe—a large brocket with remarkably long horns—into the heavily loaded cart we continued our drive, and presently saw a herd of Red Deer close to us, which made a most beautiful picture. The deer of this part of Hungary are all unusually large, much bigger and stronger than in the woods round Gödöllö, which is saying a good deal, while altogether the Hungarian Red Deer differ from those of the other civilized countries of Europe ; for the quiet and the extraordinary good feeding have produced quite a peculiar and characteristic race, the many essential differences of which cannot fail to attract the attention of every careful observer.

As soon as we got near the deer, I stopped the cart, and

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counted eight or ten stags and several hinds lying in the shade of the trees—some of the former being exceptionally large, so far as one could judge from their horns, which were by no means fully developed.

After I had thoroughly examined them with the glass we drove on, and our forest-track soon came to an end, for we had reached a broad ride, at the extremity of which we could see the shooting-lodge, though it was still a long way off. Here, on a leafy tree at the edge of the ride, was the Black Kite's nest, with the forked tail of this fine bird of prey protruding far beyond it. The slightest clap of the hands sent it off the nest, and a shot brought it dead to the ground.

After this short episode we drove on to the shooting-lodge, and on urging my driver to make haste, he put his little Hungarian horses to the gallop, and we flew lightly and quickly over the turf. In a few minutes I had reached the shooting-lodge, where my companions, who were already assembled there, were not a little surprised at the sight of my heavily-laden cart; and it certainly was a varied collection which lay within that small space in the still repose of death, for two Roe, one Short-toed Eagle, two Ospreys, and three Black Storks were taken out of the cart. I at once sent the climber into the wood to bring down the Black Stork which I had killed and left lying in the nest; and in about an hour he returned with the bird.

My brother-in-law had killed a small roe, and owing to a violent attack of buck-fever had missed a very large one. It had been an unfortunate day for him altogether, as he had only brought back one Black Stork and a Common Buzzard from all the nests which had been allotted to him, the desperately bad luck which had pursued him at the two Ospreys' nests having been the worst part of all.

Homeyer had returned with one Black Stork, while Bombelles and Brehm had experienced many misfortunes at the

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larger nests. The former had also missed a fine roe, and the latter brought as his bag four small birds which he had shot for scientific purposes.

As soon as our spoils had been committed to Hodek's careful hands for packing, we sat down to an ample, excellent, and refreshing lunch, which Herr Rampelt, with his kind consideration for our wants, had ordered to be specially prepared for us. Our large table stood in a shady place near the shooting-lodge, and round us was ranged the caravan of unharnessed carriages. The horses were grazing, and the peasants and drivers, as well as our own retainers, were resting under the trees. The whole scene had a very singular appearance, and but for the sharp contrast formed by the well-covered table in the centre our camping-ground might have been taken for the resting-place of a band of gipsies. It had grown very hot and oppressive, the insects were swarming round us most unpleasantly, heavy clouds were piling themselves up in the west, and far away we heard the low rumbling of the thunder. This made us look anxiously at the sky, for the prospect of a heavy storm was extremely disagreeable, as a good many miles lay between us and our steamer.

After tasting the various truly delicious wines grown on my uncle's Hungarian estates, we ordered the carts to be got ready, and started again in the best of spirits for another little ramble through the woods. Bombelles was to combine a visit to a Black Stork's nest with a short stalk after roe; Homeyer wished to remain a little longer at the shooting-lodge to put his notes in order; while my brother-in-law, Brehm, and I took a couple of carts, and drove off in the same direction, intending to make a joint inspection of some nests.

The first part of our way lay through a long ride, where we passed a deserted Osprey's nest. In these afternoon hours there was plenty of life in the woods. Black Kites and

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smaller hawks, storks, and many ordinary forest birds flew past us, and even a Spotted Eagle rose from the top of a tree at no great distance. Brehm had already observed one of these birds in the morning, and the forester told us that this beautiful eagle is pretty often seen in the Keskend forest, though it rarely breeds in it.

After a short drive we halted and cautiously entered the wood, and first came across a Black Stork's nest, where my brother-in-law brought down the long-legged bird with his shot-gun. Then we stole noiselessly on towards a huge oak, on the top of which stood the great nest of an Osprey; but as the cunning bird was unfortunately absent, Leopold determined to hide in a thicket and await its return. Meanwhile Brehm and I followed a little footpath, which soon brought us to a Black Stork's nest, which was placed on the lowest boughs of an ancient oak. We saw the red beak of the beautiful wader protruding from the nest, so my companion got ready to shoot, and his murderous weapon immediately brought down the bird, which flew from its dwelling at the first noise.

Quickly leaving the place we plunged deeper into this wood, which was undoubtedly the most beautiful and least cultivated part of the entire forest, for here the dense undergrowth, only broken by a few isolated oaks, gave a wild primitive look to the scene.

After a short search we found another stork's nest, which even the forester did not know of; but the bird, made wary by the shots, flew away too soon, and, being a long way off, I failed to kill it.

A few paces further on I discovered a smaller nest, belonging to some species of hawk, and from it a bird about the size of a Buzzard glided out with a quick owl-like flight, and at once disappeared among the bushes. My first barrel wounded it, and it sank towards the ground, but all our efforts to find

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it were unhappily fruitless. A pair of Black Kites, still busy nest-building, were cruising about over the trees, the songs of the Orioles and the cooing of the Turtle-Doves resounded on every side, and the choicest of our feathered songsters were tuning their lovely pipes among the bushes.

A fortunate wind had driven the storm southwards; again the deep blue sky shone overhead, and if the mosquitoes had not been so savage and the heat so oppressive we should have heartily enjoyed this beautiful afternoon. While thus occupied in observing and in searching for nests, Brehm and I had penetrated a long way into the wood, when a glance at the time compelled us to hurry back, and, streaming with perspiration, we reached the ambush where Leopold was still waiting for the unaccommodating Osprey. Accompanied by him, we continued our homeward route, taking, however, this opportunity of visiting a neighbouring Black Stork's nest, where I missed the bird as it flew off.

A few hundred yards further on we saw six or seven of these splendid waders, standing motionless on the lower branches of some oaks at the edge of a high wood opposite a young plantation. I imagine that these were birds which had been scared from their nests, and had chanced to meet at this favourable point of outlook, where they were now waiting to see what was going to happen. We crept cautiously up. The storks were standing like leaden soldiers, near each other, and just at the same height from the ground. My brother-in-law put up his rifle, and, after a long careful aim, fired, and the bullet striking one of the long-legged fellows in the side, brought him to the ground. I was also ready to shoot, and hardly had Leopold achieved his masterly shot when I let drive both barrels at the birds as they flapped away, and a hard-hit stork separated itself from its comrades, and, taking a great circular sweep, dropped in the high wood. We hurried off towards the place where we had lost sight of it, and were lucky enough

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to find it after a short search. Heavily laden with four Black Storks, we now returned to our carts, and drove off to the shooting-lodge as fast as possible. There we found Bombelles and Homeyer waiting for us with great impatience, for it was already high time to start on our long drive to the "auen" at Mohács. Neither of them had shot anything, the former having only wounded a roe. After packing our spoils and drinking a few more glasses of the capital Giesshübler water—our faithful companion on all expeditions—we got into the carriages in which we had driven to Keskend in the morning.

A long ride running through young covers brought us to the northernmost end of this great forest, which was fringed by rich green meadows, while some patches of wood adorned with high trees formed the transition stage between it and the bare flat land.

We now proceeded in a northerly direction, along a very good driving-road. On our right we saw the open country descending to the "auen" of the Danube in terraces of meadows, fields, and marshes. On our left we could still discern the dark outlines of a few large and distant woods, all divided from each other by open country. In one of them the Imperial Eagle is said to breed pretty often: at least so the keepers told me; but I put but slight faith in this assertion, as we never found the nest of this beautiful eagle until we had got much further south.

The flattish undulating ground in front of us stretched up to a rather distant barren ridge which ran down to the bank of the Danube in a slanting direction. In the south rose a somewhat important chain of heights; and to the east were other mountains, among which the conical hill so often mentioned now showed itself at no great distance.

From this point the whole landscape was undeniably beautiful, and being on such a large scale offered much

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variety, while the extent of the view gave it a very imposing character.

The road continued to run between miserable acacias intended to form an avenue, and all sorts of birds utilized these solitary elevated points as perches. I had taken my gun with me in the carriage, and while driving along my brother-in-law and I killed, in the first two hours, four Kestrels, one Corn-Bunting, and four splendid Rollers. The incredible tameness of all these birds was most remarkable, for we stopped the carriage within a few yards of them, and shot them sitting. After a very long drive we reached the above-mentioned chain of heights, which forms a singularly long narrow ridge sloping abruptly on both sides. Where these declivities were not mere perpendicular walls of earth they were planted with vines, while some villages, and many orchards in full bloom, formed the only other ornaments of this barren line of hills.

Our road led us pretty steeply up one side of this ridge and rather more gently down the other, running all the time through the broad street of a large but truly wretched village, and at the base of the northern slope it passed along an embankment bordered on both sides by extensive marshes, which at one place reached up to the houses. To our great astonishment we here noticed some women washing clothes in the loathsome stinking marsh-water, attired in a somewhat Adamitic simplicity of costume, and quite oblivious even of such childish ideas of decency as generally prevail in these districts.

Marsh, Hen, and Montagu's Harriers were skimming over the swamps, great numbers of Rooks, Hooded Crows, and Jackdaws were nesting in the high elms along the roadside, and we here shot three Hooded Crows and one Jackdaw from the carriage.

A beautiful plain now opened to our view, which was

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bounded on the north by the chain of hills which runs from behind Mohács down to the Danube, on the west by the spurs of the Pannonian mountains, on the east by the woods of the Danube, and on the south by the heights which we had just crossed. Marshes, meadows, fields, some clumps of wood, and a few villages filled up the interior of this little plain, which sloped towards the Danube in gentle undulations.

The more distant view that presented itself from the road was of the true Hungarian type, having a wide horizon and being on a grand scale, but its nearer details were monotonous and uninteresting.

We had been steadily bowling along for nearly two hours and a half, when we reached a cheerful-looking country house situated in front of a large garden, the whole having the clean smart look of one of the summer villas one so often sees in the beautiful outskirts of Vienna or on the shores of the Upper Austrian lakes, and not at all the appearance of the small Hungarian country residences. A number of fine horses all well harnessed were here awaiting us, for we had arrived at Herr Rampelt's abode, where we were to have a relay.

In a few minutes we were off again. The afternoon had come to a close, and the sultry day was succeeded by a very chilly evening, for the air had been thoroughly cooled by several storms which had threatened to come up, but which had all passed away to the south and there burst. A uniform grey mantle of clouds gradually spread over the sky, and it seemed as if heavy rain was coming.

Our road now conducted us close to a little wood of high trees. There the Land Steward begged us to halt and pay a hurried visit to a pair of Ravens which had chosen it as their nesting-place. I hardly believed my ears when I heard that this shy bird was breeding in such a miserable little wood, close to a road in the open plain, and far away from any large forest, so feeling somewhat incredulous I walked about two

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hundred yards into the wood. Herr Rampelt himself did not precisely know where the nest was; and while I was looking about for it, I suddenly observed a fine Raven roosting on a dead branch of a tall elm, with its head under its wing, although it was still quite light, and cautiously creeping within a fair range, shot down the powerful bird.

I was quite amazed at having really killed, close to a village and a high road in Southern Hungary, a bird which I had seen in the loneliest cliffs of our Alps, in the desolate oak-forests of Central Hungary during snow and storm, on the barren peak of the Santi Deka mountain near Corfu, among the precipices of the Dalmatian hills, and on the desolate Karst—everywhere far from human habitations.

I turned back to the carriages with my spoil; but Brehm did not seem to be so much impressed by the Raven, as he had seen this bird even sitting on the houses in the villages of Siberia.

This unimportant little wood, as I was further informed, harbours many Woodcock in spring, and is tenanted by some Wild Cats throughout the year.

We now resumed our journey, and instead of keeping to the northerly direction we had hitherto followed, we gradually inclined towards the north-east, and soon leaving the main road turned off into a very rough track which led to the "auen" already visible in the distance.

In a little while we came to a miserable village straggling along the banks of a marshy stream. Its clay-built, straw-thatched dwellings hardly deserved the name of houses, and our progress along the broad street which ran through them was impeded by horse-troughs and great heaps of dirt and manure, while shaggy wolf-dogs sprang barking at the carriages, and wretchedly-clad children were running about. This was a village of Schokats, Catholic Servians who long ago migrated from Turkey, and who, curiously enough, still show

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striking traces of their Eastern origin in certain parts of their costume.

As it was now evening, almost the whole community had returned from their work, and were to be seen in the main street. Some of the figures were fine, tall, and very beautiful, especially those of the women, whose costume is very comical, and, according to civilized ideas, rather indelicate. Here was a plain proof that all the customs of social life are mere conventions, for with us there is nothing objectionable in women showing their faces unveiled, but it is not customary to see them with only a single skirt reaching no further than the knee, and which has, moreover, an opening on both sides up to the hips—à la belle Hélène.

The Schokats, on the other hand, consider it improper to go about with the face exposed, and muffle it in prettily embroidered linen, leaving only a small opening for the eyes. The whole upper part of the body is also covered with similar wraps as far as the hips; then comes the skirt, which really consists of nothing but two aprons, one hanging in front and one behind, but hardly reaching the knee, while the interval along the thighs is quite bare, for the institution of the shift has not yet penetrated to these villages. Friend Brehm was quite charmed, and bitterly regretted that we could not stop in this village, as it would have been so well worth his while to have studied the customs and costumes of the country—of course only in the interests of ethnographical science!

We left the village behind us only too quickly, and drew nearer and nearer to the "auen," our road passing through fields and pastures close to a large and very fine Archducal farm. Twilight had begun; herons were flying from the "auen" to the flats, and the other birds had already gone to roost.

A few hundred yards from the edge of the woods was a pasture, where a bird about the size of a Merlin was flitting

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merrily about. In the darkness of the gathering night we all took it to be the much-desired Red-footed or Evening Falcon; so I jumped out of the carriage, fired at it, and missed with both barrels, whereupon the foolish creature flew past much nearer, and I killed it with a lucky shot; but on proudly hurrying to my spoil, which I imagined to be of such interest, I found, instead of a noble falcon, only a common Nightjar!

Somewhat disappointed, we drove on again, and soon reached a high embankment extending along the right side of the Bega Canal. Steep as its slope was, we had to drive up it, and our road now ran a little way along this dyke. Towards the plain on our right were old willows at the base of the embankment, and on the opposite side of the canal rose splendid woods. We then crossed a bridge to a large island formed by an arm of the Danube, falsely called a canal, and to which channel the Hungarians give the name of Bega Duna.

A road running along another embankment, which stretches diagonally through the island, now conducted us among very beautiful "auen;" and after a while we got to a wretched hut, round which crouched some exceedingly wild-looking fellows with their dogs, and in a few minutes more we arrived at our vessel, after a four hours' drive.

It had meanwhile got quite dark, for the sky was covered with heavy clouds, and not a star gladdened us with its silent splendour.

On reaching the deck we hastened into the snug saloon and had dinner served, and there is no dwelling on shore which seems so home-like and comfortable after a hard day as a pretty saloon on board-ship.

Dinner being over, numerous measurements were taken, diaries written up, and notes exchanged, over black coffee and one of Homeyer's cigars, and by ten o'clock all the inmates of the steamer were fast asleep.

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SIXTH DAY.

The first rosy flush of the dawning day was visible in the far east when we assembled on deck, for there was no time to be lost to-day, as we should have to leave off shooting at noon, and continue our journey towards the south.

Breakfast was quickly despatched, and now we had to hurry out of the warm comfortable cabin into the very wet disagreeable weather. The sky was obscured with heavy clouds, and the steady rain which had been incessantly falling all the morning had already softened the ground to a considerable depth, and perceptibly lowered the temperature.

Each of us had his shooting district assigned to him in the usual way, except Bombelles, who had a good deal of business to attend to, and was therefore obliged to remain on board.

The two Savants were to betake themselves to a distant locality, where the nests of a Sea-Eagle and some smaller raptorial birds were awaiting them ; while my brother-in-law and I had both determined to shoot through the large island formed by the Bega Canal, each of us having a Sea-Eagle's nest to visit, and some others tenanted by smaller birds.

The Savants set off somewhat in advance, as they had further to go; but my brother-in-law and I soon followed them, and drove along the embankment described yesterday for about ten minutes, and then, getting out of the carriage, separated and entered the lofty woods at different points.

These "auen" are quite unlike those of the Apatin district, for, being more cultivated and better forested, they have lost the primitive character of a virgin forest, and very much

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resemble the island of Adony and certain parts of the Lower Austrian "auen."

A narrow muddy path, which ran through high willow woods and low copses, led me at first to a forest-glade. Some small arms of the river wound about through the island, and there were still a few pools of water (the last vestiges of the spring inundations); but most of the channels and flooded places were provided with well-built boats, a plain proof that we were further north and nearer human habitations.

This glade ran in a long unbroken stretch right through the island up to the so-called Bega Canal, on both sides of which rose high woods, chiefly consisting of willows and silver poplars, while a little nursery-garden, and the woodsmen who were at work in various places, showed that they are scientifically handled by the staff of foresters.

We walked quickly across the glade in a slanting direction, and before entering the wood on our right the resident forester, a very skilful woodsman, who had formerly served many years on the Archducal estates in Silesia, begged me to leave Hodek's climber and my jäger behind; so, accompanied by him alone, I went along a narrow footpath into the wood, which was covered with thick undergrowth, and in about ten minutes the forester announced that we were close to the eyrie of the Sea-Eagle.

The huge nest was constructed of large branches and placed on a tall black poplar, which stood in the middle of a little open, only surrounded by willows. It was raining harder than ever, so that I was in hopes the eagle would be on the nest protecting its young ones from the wet. I therefore chose a good place where the branches were open, and posted myself ready to shoot.

This eagle was so remarkably tame that neither repeated blows with the hunting-knife on the tree nor even loud shouts drove it from its retreat; so the forester came back,

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saying that the bird could not be there. But some sort of happy inspiration led me to ask him to make yet another attempt by throwing up bits of stick; and I was right, for the boughs at the edge of the nest suddenly moved, and the eagle rose with a great bustle, extended its wings, and dashed out.

My first shot brought it dead to the ground, the branches crashing under the weight of its heavy body, and the dull thud of its fall echoing loudly. I hurried up to it, and found to my great joy an enormous female Sea-Eagle lying at my feet—one of the largest killed during the whole trip, and undoubtedly the biggest I had ever shot.

As no anxious cries announced that the male was near, I had good hopes of its return from some marauding expedition; so I crouched down behind the trunk of a fallen tree near the nest, a very damp and uncomfortable seat, for the sedge was several feet high and dripping wet.

The woods round about me were not grand or wildly romantic like those of Apatin, but pretty and pleasant like the "auen" of the Prater or those close to Vienna. They were also well stocked with Warblers, Starlings, Orioles, Turtle-Doves, and other small birds. Songs of all sorts sounded in our ears; Woodpeckers tapped diligently at the trees, Black Kites circled overhead, little birds darted about among the lower branches, tree-frogs lustily croaked their monotonous ditties, and as the rain gradually ceased the insects sallied out of their hiding-places and tormented us with their stings.

After about half an hour of patient waiting I suddenly heard a rushing sound near me, and saw a particularly small but beautiful Sea-Eagle flying past under the nest only a few yards above the ground; but it went by so quickly, that near as I was I could not get a sure shot.

Behind me I quite distinctly heard its feet strike a branch

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heavily, and the folding of its great wings; so I cautiously looked round, and saw the bird sitting on a dead branch a hundred paces off. Seizing my rifle, I aimed and fired, and the eagle spread its wings and flew away low over the ground, disappearing among the bushes. I had got the shot off so well, and the bird had flown so very low, that both the forester and I made sure that the ball had hit it; but though we carefully searched near the nest, all our trouble was in vain.

I now returned to my attendants, and as they had never seen the eagle leave the wood after the shot, our opinions were confirmed; so we sent them off to look again. While under the nest, I had heard two shots from my brother-in-law, about a mile away. This seemed to me a bad sign, but I was soon reassured when the sharp crack of his Werder rifle rang through the wood about half an hour afterwards.

As soon as all my men had gone off to search, and even the climber was rummaging about, the forester and I walked along the meadows by the edge of the wood to the Bega Canal. A few hundred yards down it I found a Black Stork's nest on an old oak near the edge of the cover. The long-legged bird had built on the lower branches of the tree, and I could see its red bill protruding over the edge of the nest; so I posted myself in a good position close to the wood and sent the forester to the stem of the tree; but his attempts to frighten it off by making a noise were ineffectual, nor have I ever seen any of our larger woodland birds so confiding and tame.

As all our efforts were fruitless, I fired my first barrel at the long bill of the stork, and unfortunately only with too good an aim, for it hung down broken, and the bird, quite disfigured and bewildered, flew out straight over my head, the second barrel bringing it to the ground.

A few minutes afterwards the male came cruising high

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above us, but in vain we waited to see whether it would descend, for it never came any nearer.

Keeping along the path by the outskirts of the wood, we soon came to the dwelling-place of some Schokat shepherds, who, in company with their sheep, pigs, and dogs, were leading a miserable existence in wretched straw huts surrounded by mire and filth.

As we approached, three or four of these wild fellows, startled by the barking of their dogs, sprang out of the huts. They were indeed almost savages, for their tattered clothes but scantily covered their brown bodies, and their black hair clogged with grease hung far below their shoulders. Each of them had an axe-headed stick in his hand and a knife stuck in his belt; and one might really have fancied one's self transported from one's own country into the region of Khartoum, or somewhere still further south.

They seemed to know the forester, for they at once took off their hats to him, and when he told them who I was, they came to kiss my hand. My guide said that they would be the best men to employ for finding the nests of the birds of prey, as they wandered about the woods the whole day, occupying themselves while tending their flocks by finding the nests of the larger birds and taking those of the smaller, and eating the eggs.

They wanted to go with us, but the forester sent them back, and we continued our walk along the meadow, which was here bounded on one side by lofty woods and on the other by the Bega Canal.

This channel, wrongly called a canal, is an ordinary arm of the Danube, quite unregulated. It flows between high crumbling banks, and is in most places thickly covered with sedge and well stocked with Sand-Martins and Wild Ducks.

We had still a few hundred yards to go before turning again to the right into the wood, where a narrow footpath led

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us past a marshy little glade, much frequented as a breeding-place by Mallards and Moorhens.

At the end of this glade was a tolerably large nest on a high oak, and the forester said that he had never managed to make out what bird it belonged to, but at first sight the whole fabric looked to me like the abode of a Common Buzzard.

The first tap on the stem of the tree frightened out a little Hobby, which I hit pretty hard with my first barrel, but unluckily failed to find in the thick, almost impenetrable underwood. It seemed to me incredible that a construction of this size could belong to so small a bird, and the forester also thought that the hawk which he had seen here before was much bigger. I therefore resolved to conceal myself under the nest, and sent him back to the meadow.

After a while a Peregrine flew high overhead, and I hoped that this rare bird of prey would prove to be the owner of the nest, but it soon vanished; and a few minutes later a good-sized hawk, about as big as a Common Buzzard, came flying through the trees, close to the ground, but so fast that I had no time to identify it. Before it could settle in the nest, I wounded it with my first barrel, and it sank slowly down among the trunks of the trees, where I lost sight of it in a thicket; and though we searched most carefully tuft by tuft, the high sedgy grass baffled all our efforts to find it. This mishap I much regretted, as it would have been highly interesting to have discovered the species to which this large hawk belonged, and what had induced the little Hobby to take possession of its nest, a fact I can in no way account for.

As well as I could make out during the few moments before I fired my second shot, it was a Pygmy Eagle; but of this I cannot be certain, as I have so seldom met with this rare species, and am therefore very imperfectly acquainted with it.

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After this unsuccessful attempt we retraced our steps to the huts of the herdsmen. A few yards in front of them was a nest of one of the smaller hawks, but all our attempts to drive the bird out of it failed ; the forester therefore advised me to wait a little while at it, as he had also never been able to identify its owner.

I crouched down in the dense dripping wet bushes, for, damp and unpleasant though my position was, I had still an hour to spare, and intended to devote a quarter of it to this nest. While so employed I observed a pair of Black Kites circling close above me, and evidently much annoyed at my presence, as they had begun building their nest a few paces off.

It had gradually left off raining, and though short but heavy showers occasionally passed over us, the clouds had broken up. There were some patches of blue sky, and the sun itself appeared for a minute now and again.

After waiting about half an hour the affair grew too tedious, and I felt convinced that the little hawk was quietly sitting in its nest; and as all these raptorial birds of Southern Hungary, being hardly ever disturbed, are unusually tame, I had good grounds for coming to this conclusion.

I therefore quickly fired my first barrel into the middle of the nest, knocking the flimsy structure all to bits, and a bird flew out hard hit, but had still strength enough to fly a good way off into the thickets, so that I lost sight of it ; and as all search in that impenetrable undergrowth would have been useless, I returned to the forester, and we continued our homeward route.

From my men I heard that not only had their efforts to find the Sea-Eagle been unrewarded, but that while the climber was taking the nest the angry bird had come up low over the ground, and swooped several times close above the head of our Apatin German. My jäger assured me that I

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could easily have shot it, so closely and steadily did it hover like a hawk over the nest, screaming loudly.

The two young ones were already a good size, but still covered with down. We rolled them carefully in my plaid, put the dead eagle beside them, and were going onwards when my jäger begged me to visit a buzzard's nest which he had discovered a little way off.

I found this very common inhabitant of all the Lower Austrian woods in its nest, and though I had so often killed it in the most varied localities, it was the first time that we had met with it in the "auen" during this trip; for in the forests of Apatin we had not seen a single individual of this species, either nesting or even flying about. Directly the stem of the tree was lightly tapped, the bird left its nest and fell to my first shot.

Time was now pressing, as we were to begin our onward journey before noon; so we hurried back, and in about half an hour I reached the deck of the steamer, with my Sea-Eagle, Black Stork, Common Buzzard, and the two live young Sea-Eagles.

My brother-in-law, who had got back before me, had also killed a remarkably large Sea-Eagle.

My conjecture had been well grounded, for the first two gun-shots which I had heard had not done the least damage to the eagle, which my brother-in-law had found at its nest; but about half an hour afterwards the bird had returned, and as it was settling on the edge of its eyrie Leopold's unerring rifle brought it down. He had also visited the nests of a Goshawk and of some Kites, at which, however, he had not met with any further success.

The two Savants had again been unlucky with their Sea-Eagles, and returned with only one Goshawk, which Homeyer had shot, and with some small birds killed for scientific purposes.

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When we were all on board we took leave of the Land-Steward and the somewhat numerous staff of foresters; and I must here acknowledge with many thanks the kindly care in arranging and facilitating our troublesome shooting excursions which was so largely displayed by all the Archducal officials during our several days' stay in this neighbourhood.

In order to give the reader some idea of the wealth of raptorial birds in these Archducal forests, I will here enumerate the nests which the keepers said they knew of. Most of these we visited, only omitting a few which were too far off our beat. When such a number were found in such dense and almost impassable woods, how many must there still have been in these immense wildernesses that the keepers could not possibly have known anything about!

Those well known were :—Twelve Sea-Eagles', one Short-toed Eagle's, three Ospreys', one Eagle-Owl's, eight or nine Ravens', twenty to thirty Black Storks', and some twenty nests belonging to smaller hawks. What a number of feathered vermin on one and the same estate! And in what part of Central Europe so near such a large town as Pest does there exist a similar refuge for such uncommonly shy birds of prey?

The Archducal estates are, however, the most northerly points on the Danube where the large eagles breed, and the "auen" of the Bega Canal are the very nearest woods to Pest where the Sea-Eagle can be found nesting; but from what I know of the character of these districts and of their advancing civilization, I think I may safely predict that ten or twenty years hence no Sea-Eagles will be found there, while in the wilds round Apatin they will long be able to carry on their predatory pursuits quite unmolested.

The weather had cleared during the morning, so we had every reason to look forward to a pleasant and interesting

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journey; and as soon as we had lunched, measured the slain birds, and finished our interchange of notes, we went on deck and there remained almost throughout the rest of the passage.

First we ran through the now pretty familiar stretch of the river from the woods below Mohács down to Apatin. In the early part of the afternoon the sultriness was rather oppressive, the great heat indicating the approach of another storm, while heavy clouds were towering up in the west, and we already heard, though indistinctly, the rumbling of the thunder.

Passing by Apatin without stopping, we went on towards Draueck; the intermediate "auen," whose inner parts we now had a pretty fair knowledge of, but which we had not yet seen from the main stream, affording some wonderfully picturesque views, especially the last woods just before the Hulló marsh. The narrow belt of trees which divides this huge swamp from the Danube, and through which we could occasionally get a good glimpse of the mountains to the west and of broad sheets of water, also interested us much; and we determined to devote an entire morning to this marsh on our way back from Slavonia in a week's time.

About five o'clock in the afternoon we reached Draueck, one of the grandest and most beautiful spots I have ever seen; for the dark lofty "au" woods that run along both banks are entirely composed of high trees, and have a strikingly imposing character. Here the Drave, an exceedingly large stream, comes in at right angles to join the Danube, and the united streams flow onward in a direct continuation of the course of the former river.

We also had the good fortune to see an exceedingly beautiful natural spectacle just at the junction of the rivers, for the long-expected storm now burst with full force. A furious gale roared through the woods, hurling the branches from the trees, the waves where the two streams met were lashed by the wind, and rose high up against the steamer, the thunder

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pealed loudly, and the lightning flashed in all directions, while away, beyond the arm of the river, we could already see the rounded summits of the Slavonian mountains partly enveloped in clouds, and partly lit up by the sun, which was just vanishing.

The two huge streams and their "auen" have here a Mississippi-like character, and one can hardly imagine that the mighty rivers of America can be more beautiful and imposing. Heavy logs of driftwood, driven out of the dense woods of the Drave, were here floating about in multitudes, for the many interlacing channels of the extensive network of water belonging to the forests of both rivers all converge at this one point. We were able to remain a long time on deck, for the storm had burst with full fury before the rain came down; but suddenly the heavens opened their flood-gates, and a torrent of rain fell like a waterspout, driving us into the cabin.

As well as we could make out during the next hour, enormous "auen" still ran along the left side of the river, while the right consisted partly of a chain of hills and partly of crumbling banks, now and then varied by smaller woods and meadows. There were not many settlements, only a few bare-looking villages on the right bank, while the left, which was completely wooded and broken up by channels, had a very wild appearance and no trace of human habitations except some fishing-colonies. Dalya was the first largish village which we observed on the right, and later came Alt Vukovár, but beyond this there were only a few unimportant places.

The right or Slavonian side had a rather uniform monotonous look, but though its vine-clad slopes were only from time to time varied by stony cliffs and detached masses of rock, and offered but few scenic beauties, it was altogether of a new type, and unlike those barren banks which we had seen above and below Mohács.

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As evening advanced, the "auen" disappeared more and more, even from the left side of the river, and low banks with occasional meadows and pastures came into view, while before us lay the sea-like expanse of the great Hungarian plain.

During this part of the journey we saw but little of ornithological interest: the Black Kites, and the Purple and Grey Herons so often mentioned, with two or three kinds of Ducks, a few Terns, and other equally common birds flew over our vessel. We also noticed more Cormorants fishing than we had met with on the whole stretch of the river, either above or below Adony.

Towards evening the storm had altogether passed over, and though the thunder was still rolling in the east, the clouds in the west broke up, the disk of the sun showed itself just before it vanished behind the range of the Slavonian heights, and we saw a splendid effect. To our right the hills were lit up with the most brilliant red, like the Alpine glow of our Lower Austrian mountains, on our left the gilded foliage of the few isolated little "au" woods was quivering in the last evening breeze, while the clouds assumed a purple-red splendour, and mirrored their colours in the waters of the Danube.

The sun sank slowly in a blaze of light, the ruddy glow lingering long above the western hills. Night was falling, the birds were flying to their roosting-places, and only the storks and herons were winging their way towards the inland marshes to begin their nocturnal hunts.

Although we had, thanks to the extraordinary speed of our steamer, traversed such a great stretch of the river in so short a time, it would nevertheless have been impossible to reach Čerevič by the evening; so we were obliged to anchor, and pass the night at the little village of Gombos. Just before it had got quite dark we had seen far away, in a southerly direction, the heights of the Fruška-Gora mountains, so celebrated for

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their natural beauties, and to which we were to devote the next few days. The whole run from the "auen" at Mohács had been very interesting and we had enjoyed many beautiful views, the hours that we had spent on deck, field-glass in hand, having flown so quickly that it was already pretty late when we sat down to dinner.

Brehm had long promised that while we were on board the vessel he would some day repeat his very interesting lecture on the primeval forests of Africa, which I had unfortunately been prevented from hearing when he had delivered it before a large audience in Vienna; and after the glorious days spent in the woods of Apatin we were all in the right mood to listen to it with enthusiasm. Brehm spoke a long time with his usual fluency, and in that peculiar style of his which never fatigues either himself or his hearers; while we followed his words with the most rapt attention, for he has a gift of speech such as I have never before met with among scientific men, and an especially wonderful talent of recalling striking impressions and observations of Nature and of making others realize them.

It was already rather late when we separated and retired to rest in our cabins. Interesting and probably very toilsome days lay before us.

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SEVENTH DAY.

Next morning, Sunday, April 28th, we were awakened pretty early by the sun striking into our cabins, and, dressing hastily, we all hurried on deck. It was a splendid day. The sun was already pouring its hot rays upon the earth, the dark blue of a true southern sky spread over us, and not a cloud troubled the pure air. A refreshing east wind was blowing over the river, and our steamer was hurrying along at full speed between the steep hills of the Slavonian side and the low-lying Hungarian plains. On our left the Danube formed a good many wooded islands, and on the banks we observed a few patches of "auen," between which a succession of marshes and meadows ran down to the river's edge.

The Captain assured us that we should get to Čerevič in about an hour, so we breakfasted and then sat on deck, comfortably smoking our first cigars and enjoying the refreshing influence of this glorious morning.

There was a lively bustle in the villages situated on the hillsides to the right, bells were ringing, crowds of gaily-dressed people were moving about the vineyards and streets, and there was a firing of salutes, for the members of the Orthodox Greek Church were holiday-making on the second day of their Easter feast. On the Hungarian side, inhabited partly by Germans and partly by Catholic and Calvanistic Hungarians, all was as quiet as on an ordinary Sunday morning; but the beauty of the day had set the bird-world in full activity, and we saw numbers of Herons and Lapwings flying about the marshes of the left bank, while many majestic birds

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of prey passed leisurely over our steamer, but all unfortunately out of shot.

To our very great delight we observed a "Stein" Eagle sailing through the blue ether with a quiet and imposing flight. It was the only one we had seen; and a pair of Imperial Eagles, which soon followed it, were also the first of their species which we had met with on this journey. We were charmed at finding that we had at last got within the range of these eastern eagles, and their bright plumage glancing in the sun seemed like a brilliant promise of splendid sporting adventures. Later on Sea-Eagles repeatedly flew over us, both singly and in parties of three or four. Some of them were powerful old birds, with the pale yellowish plumage, and some young ones, one or two years old, in the dark immature dress.

Though the Apatin "auen" would seem very rich in eagles to any one coming from the forests of Central Europe, one might really say that they are but sparsely peopled with raptorial birds in comparison with the Danubian districts of Slavonia.

It was interesting to note that the eagles from the Slavonian mountains on the right bank were thronging to the low-lying Hungarian plains on the left, all taking exactly the same line; for they seem to have established their regular hunting-grounds in the woods and marshes of that district, while their dwellings were placed in the wild heights of the Fruška-Gora.

The Captain had kept his word, for in a hour's time a picturesquely situated village opened to our view, and on our asking if this was Čerevič, he replied in the affirmative. Some rather extensive "auen" run along the left bank of the river opposite the village, and before coming to the place itself one passes close to some large thickly wooded islands. On the right side are crumbling banks and abrupt walls of earth, and above them rises a chain of steep hills with bare rounded tops.

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Čerevič lies partly at the foot of these hills, and is partly built upon them in terraces, the houses situated among the fissures and earthy cliffs, and the two churches standing on the slope, having a very picturesque appearance. The high ridges behind the village are stony, quite treeless, and planted with vines, while yellow soil, which, when lit up by the sun, glows with true oriental richness of colour, forms the background of the picture.

We put in to the pier of the village, where the large gaily-dressed crowd which had assembled by the bank received us in the heartiest manner, and Count Rudolf Chotek, one of the proprietors of the greater part of the Fruška-Gora mountains and all the adjoining lands, hastened on board to welcome us, almost before the steamer had reached her moorings. He and his brother Otto are the joint lords of all these estates. Count Rudolf has, however, the larger share of their management, and spends almost the entire year in this part of the country.

Let me begin by saying that Count Rudolf, who accompanied us on our shooting-expeditions during our whole stay in Čerevič, made all the arrangements for our excursions, and exerted himself to further our sport in the most assiduous and amiable way, is one of the kindest and most thoughtful of hosts one could possibly meet with, and we all owe him our warmest thanks.

After a short greeting he told us what kinds of birds of prey the woods contained, and pressed us to spend a few days here. He spoke of huge Cinereous Vultures, Sea-Eagles, Imperial Eagles, and of all the lesser hawks, of Eagle-Owls, Black Storks, and many other birds which inhabited his domains. We were to make a shooting-excursion into the Fruška-Gora this very day, but, unfortunately, as it was Sunday and a great Greek festival, we could not set out before eleven o'clock. At nine my brother-in-law, Bombelles, Count Chotek,

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and I went to the Catholic church to hear Mass. The church is very plain, and may really be said to be rather poor and neglected. A lean and hungry-looking priest said low mass and preached the Gospel in Servian. The Catholic community is very small, for, with the exception of a few families, the whole population belongs to the Orthodox Greek Church.

After service we went back to our vessel for lunch. During our absence the two Savants had observed many large birds of prey flying pretty low towards the Hungarian plains, and quite undisturbed by the noise and bustle, the firing of cannon, and the ringing of bells. Sea-Eagles, Imperial Eagles, and, according to Hodek, also a Griffon Vulture had been seen, and a White Stork, which was nesting on one of the houses of the village, had come repeatedly to the steamer and flown round it in amazement. As Hodek had no personal knowledge of the Fruška-Gora, and was well aware that we should be quite safe in the hands of Count Chotek and his splendid staff of foresters, he asked for a few days' leave of absence, and leaving the 'Vienna' behind him, and abandoning all his work to his son, disappeared before we quitted the vessel. He intended to betake himself to the district of Tittel and there look for nests in the Kovil and Šačer forests, which both belong to the Hungarian Crown, and we were to follow him a few days later.

After breakfast we got ready for our very interesting shooting-excursion into the mountain valleys. The population of Ćerevič meanwhile stood about the bank, looking with amazement at our remarkable vessel; and the steamer had indeed assumed a very quaint character, for the deck abounded with all sorts of weapons—guns, rifles, and boxes of ammunition, the forward part of the upper deck being tenanted by a regular menagerie, consisting of young Sea-Eagles, young Eagle-Owls, Tawny Owls, my Eagle-Owl, and the two dogs. Upon it there was also a large operating-table, where the men

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were working at the skins under the supervision of Hodek junior, while the already finished specimens were drying in the sun. The blood of the slain birds, moreover, and the feathers, bones, and dirt of the whole menagerie gave our floating home anything but a clean appearance.

At length the wished-for hour arrived, and we left the steamer and got into the carts which Count Chotek had ordered to the bank. Great was the astonishment of the natives when they suddenly saw the costume of a Styrian sportsman—the chamois leather and the bare knees—so totally unknown in these districts; for on learning that the slopes of the Fruška-Gora were pretty steep and difficult, I had changed my ordinary shooting-suit for the attire of an Alpine hunter, undoubtedly the most comfortable dress that exists.

Count Chotek and Bombelles drove in the first vehicle, followed by my brother-in-law and myself, the two Savants, and lastly by the Count's Land-Steward—a capital sportsman—and some other members of the Count's shooting staff. The light carts were all drawn by pony-like home-bred horses, whose extraordinary qualities we learnt to thoroughly admire and appreciate during the next few hours, and still more so in the following days.

At first the way wound through several streets of this tolerably extensive village, which lies upon a steep slope, down which the water runs and reduces the streets to the primitive condition of a swamp. Here we progressed but slowly and roughly; so how would it be when we got into the interior of the country occupied our thoughts at the beginning of this expedition.

Hardly were we out of the village when the road passed between vine-clad hills and stony slopes. No civilized town-bred horse could have surmounted the ascents which the Slavonian ponies were playfully pulling us up. In a quarter of an hour we had reached the crest of this bare chain of heights,

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and before us lay a narrow plateau decked with fields and a few trees, while beyond it rose the high, splendidly wooded summits of the Fruška-Gora mountains stretching in long lines from east to west. It was a wonderful view. Behind us was the steep slope with the terraced village of Čerevič, looking picturesque from above ; below it the broad Danube, bordered on one side by rich meadows and vine-clad hills, and on the other by the low-lying Hungarian plains, on which were shining solitary villages lit up by the sun, while in the distance the curved horizon melted into the dark blue sky as it does at sea. To our right and left we could see the blue line of the river winding along, with its fringe of hills and "au" woods, and far away to the east the scene was bounded by the hill on which rose the finely situated fortress of Peterwardein. Still, the most beautiful part of this extraordinarily grand panorama was undoubtedly the range of the Fruška-Gora itself, for from this point we already saw a maze of wild valleys and hillsides, all clothed with the most magnificent deciduous woods.

After spending about half an hour in driving across the bare plateau and through deep hollows, we reached a valley with a little stream winding along it, where the beginning of a lovely woodland glade opened to our view, for we had got to the fringe of the forests.

A road reduced to a frightful condition by the recent rains led us over a little brook, across pools of water, up steep slopes, and through deep hollows, towards the interior of the woods, and the further up the valley we went the more lovely and charming grew the surrounding landscape. Right and left steep wooded slopes, high hilltops covered with the most superb beech woods, and now and then varied by copses, rampantly overgrown clearings, and small marshy glades, were the principal characteristics of this strikingly beautiful district. The style of the whole scene chiefly reminded me of

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the wooded valleys of the Wiener Wald and the neighbourhood of Purkersdorf and Hainbach. The glades, woods, streams, and steep slopes were very much the same, only here in the Fruška-Gora the mountain-ridges were much higher and more imposing than they are in the Wiener Wald.

When we had driven a little way we came to a wire fence, which ran right across the glade and up the slopes on both sides. Here we passed through a gate, and Count Chotek told us that he had made this fence to assist in preventing the Roe and Red Deer from straying into the vineyards and fields, for this was the principal pass towards the peasants' holdings, as the woods here advanced more into the open country than at any other part. The further we went along the bottom of the valley the more silent and lonely the country became, and not the slightest sign of a house or the least trace of attention to the roads or the management of the woods indicated the neighbourhood of human settlements. I have never come across a more uninhabited woodland solitude even in the most remote valleys of our Alps.

We soon arrived at a charmingly situated little shooting-lodge, with a stag's head over the gate, the well laid-out gardens in front of the house showing that it must often be occupied by the owners of the shooting, while some small huts belonging to the keepers and the woodmen gave a little additional life to the scene. This is the place where the Count and his guests pass a few days during the rutting-season of the stags, using it as a starting-point for their shooting expeditions. It contained only one simply furnished room, with two beds, a kitchen, and some accommodation for servants. The Count proudly directed our attention to a Griffon Vulture which was stuffed and placed in the gentlemen's apartment. This bird is very rare in the Fruška-Gora, and he had killed it with the rifle some years ago when returning from deer-stalking. Lower down the Danube this vulture is common

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enough, and it there breeds almost exclusively in the cliffs near villages, and usually avoids lonely wooded mountains. Brehm confirmed this statement of the Count's, and was much surprised at seeing the bird and at hearing that it had been killed in these woods; he also gave it as his opinion that the Griffon Vulture never builds its nest on trees, but some hours later we were to have ample proof that Brehm was for once wrong. We left the house in a few minutes and were all despatched in totally different directions. My brother-in-law drove off into the woods to the left in a little country cart; Bombelles and the two Savants also vanished among the thick cover by various routes; while Count Chotek and I continued our drive along the stream up the valley already described, the road often crossing the little brook, and leading us through the woods and small marshy glades of this mountain glen, which kept getting narrower and narrower.

The deeper we penetrated into it the higher grew the surrounding summits and the steeper the slopes, and as we were passing along a hillside where there was a long and very broad clearing covered with thick bushes, I suddenly caught sight of a huge black bird of prey flying majestically over one of the heights. I was just thinking that it was too large for an eagle, and its flight was also strange to me, when Count Chotek called out that it was a Cinereous Vulture. It was the first that I had ever seen in a wild state, and its gigantic pinions, with their primaries standing apart like the fingers of an outstretched hand, its cuneate tail, its long neck doubled back among the feathers of its neck-ruffle, and the way in which it sailed through the blue ether, without the slightest visible movement of its wings, made this heavy bird, which seems so disgusting near at hand, look splendid in the distance. A few moments afterwards I saw another, and again another, while wherever one looked one noticed either a young Sea-Eagle flying heavily over the tree-tops, a "Stein" Eagle

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playing with Imperial Eagles high in the air, or Cinereous Vultures winging their way from the lonely forest valleys in search of plunder. Such a wealth of large raptorial birds it would surely be hard to find elsewhere!

Among these mighty birds of prey a Black Stork was circling towards the interior of the woods with long outstretched neck, and astonishing it was to see this marsh-bird in those silent mountain glens so far from all large swamps. The group of smaller hawks was represented by Common Kites, a Peregrine, and a few of the lesser falcons.

On a meadow close to the road we saw the skeleton of a horse, and in the thick cover which bordered the track was an old wolf decoy-hut built of boards and faggots. I had a good look at this spot, where many of the larger wild beasts had doubtless been killed, for it reminded me of my splendid hunts after eagles in the woods round Gödöllö, and I at once thought whether we could not try the same plan here.

Driving a few hundred yards further through meadows and bushy woods we reached the end of the valley, at a spot where smaller woodland glens enclosed by steep hillsides ran into the mountains in various directions. Here we halted, and the Count begged me to get out and to follow the forester along a footpath which conducted us into the depths of an exceedingly fine wood of high beeches. Then we climbed up an uncommonly steep slope by the side of a narrow little watercourse, and I was thankful that I had got on mountain-boots such as we use in Upper Austria, for they did me remarkably good service in the Fruška-Gora both on this and the subsequent days.

First we came to the nest of a Common Kite, and the forester asked me if I wished to shoot the bird, but I preferred paying my first visit to a Black Stork, which was breeding close by. The nest of this great wader was placed on a high leafy oak which grew from the bottom of a steep wooded

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valley. I crept cautiously up to it, and from the slope on which I stood had a good view into it.

The Black Stork was standing on one leg within its dwelling and took not the slightest notice of my approach. My shot dropped it dead into the nest; so I called up Hodek's climber, whom we had taken with us, but he was unsuccessful in all his attempts to get up the trunk of the tree, for the recent rain had made it very slippery, and it was not until the following day that a wretched half-crippled peasant of Čerevič brought down the bird.

When I got back Count Chotek told me that if I had come down a few minutes before I could have easily shot a "Stein" Eagle, which had flown quite low over the cart. The Count and my jäger had seen it settle down on a meadow a few hundred yards away in the direction of the above-mentioned decoy-hut; so I stealthily crept along under the crumbling bank of the brook, thinking that the bird would be sitting on the skeleton of the horse, but as I slowly crawled out of the hollow within good shot of the skeleton, the eagle rose in front of me from the opposite side of the stream, where it had probably been drinking and bathing. It was already about a hundred paces away, and the shot which I let drive at it had no effect.

We now set out again, first driving back some distance along the valley, then turning to our left into a wretched forest-track, and keeping on in the same direction across a long clearing for nearly an hour and a half. The way was steep, and so rough in the dry parts that one could hardly keep one's seat in the cart, while in the shaded places pits and almost bottomless pools had been formed in the deep loamy soil.

The endurance and cleverness of the horses were amazing, for the drivers, who, according to the custom of the country, had got down to lighten the loads, had been left far behind,

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as they could not keep up with these untiring Slavonian animals, while the reins remained tied to the box; so that these intelligent ponies followed the road so familiar to them entirely without guidance, and on reaching the crest of the hill stood still and waited for their drivers to come up.

Sometimes we saw vultures and various eagles circling high up, and I fired a ball at a Sea-Eagle which flew past within about two hundred yards. The bullet must have almost grazed the great bird, for it gave a turn over, and my companion congratulated me with joyful exclamations on my successful shot; however, it rose again and flew on uninjured. In the same way I also missed a Cinereous Vulture. During the last mile the road was incredibly steep, and I should never have imagined that one could get up such hills with a vehicle; there was also a good chance of rolling pretty far down into a valley, either to the right or left, if matters went wrong.

When we had got on to the ridge we had a wonderful view, in various directions, over the wide preserves of woods, mountains, and lonely glens. Cinereous Vultures were sweeping mute and noiseless over the trees below us, and seen from above this bird looks even much grander than when soaring overhead.

Our road now led us along the very narrow and perfectly flat crest of the mountain, where, after proceeding a few hundred yards, we halted, as the forester said that we were quite close to the first Cinereous Vulture's nest. At Count Chotek's suggestion, I slung my rifle on my shoulder and gave my gun to the forester, as the Cinereous Vulture was said to be so tough that shot had no effect whatever on its thick doublet of feathers, and my only chance of succeeding would be with ball.

I must confess that my heart beat pretty fast as I ascended a very steep slope to the first nest of this, the largest of our

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European birds of prey. For how difficult is it for any one living in the middle of our continent to get a shot at such a raptorial bird! and how few are even the thorough sportsmen who have, in the whole course of their existence, ever met with this creature, compared to those who only know it from hearsay!

The nest of the Cinereous Vulture was placed at the top of a huge oak, which stood on a slope so steep that one could see right into the gigantic structure from a distance of about a hundred paces. The abode of this bird has a very different appearance to that of the eagle, as its exterior is chiefly formed of clay, dirty mud, and quite large boughs of oak, and is more compactly built, and of course much larger, while the light grey colour of the mud makes it visible among the branches a long way off.

It augured ill for the immediate success of my sport that at the first steps I took along the slope I saw the two vultures cruising over the hillside at no great distance. They had probably just fed their young, and were off again in search of plunder; so I sat down, well concealed, at a spot where I could get the best view of the edge of the nest, and, laying the shotgun beside me loaded and cocked, awaited their coming, while the forester wished me good luck, and walked back to send away the cart and hide himself a long way aff.

Trembling with excitement, I patiently waited to see what would happen. Several times I saw the vultures flying among the tree-tops in the deep woodland glen below me; and this bird is so extremely imposing in its flight that in comparison with it the great Sea and "Stein" Eagles suffer, if one may so say, just as much as the Buzzard and Kite do when compared with them.

I had not been sitting long in my hiding-place when there was a great noise among the bushes near me, and a large stag emerging from the cover, a few yards in front of me,

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went leisurely feeding along until he was close to the tree with the nest. The wind was blowing down the valley, and when he got in a direct line with me he raised his head, looked in my direction, and plunged down the slope in a few bounds. Soon afterwards my constancy in the pursuit of the Cinereous Vultures was put to a severe test, for a large Sea-Eagle flew past low down among the branches of the trees, between the nesting-tree and my ambush, and only about thirty yards off. A few moments later it was followed by another Sea-Eagle, and in some ten minutes more a splendid "Stein" Eagle passed close by me in the same direction. How easily I could have killed two, perhaps even three, of these grand birds, for the shot-gun was lying cocked at my side; but to-day I was determined to resist all temptations and to bring home a Cinereous Vulture.

I had not to wait much longer, for suddenly there was a loud rushing sound near me, such as I had never heard at any eagle's nest, and at first I did not know what to make of it; but it was immediately followed by the appearance of both the vultures on a tree near the nest, through the branches of which they, with difficulty, worked themselves with their broad wings.

The disgusting creatures held their necks at full stretch, their flesh-coloured legs hung loosely down, and they rapidly flapped their arched contracted wings, seeking a support to perch on. The female settled herself at once on the edge of the nest, the male on an adjacent tree.

The dark forest, the grand sweeps of the mountain valleys, and my first meeting with the mighty owners of this gigantic structure, all contributed to put me into such an uncontrollable state of excitement, that before I aimed I knew that it was all over as regarded this nest. The rifle shook like a reed in my hands, and in vain I tried to keep the sight steady on the breast of the vulture, which was still standing upright on the

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edge of its dwelling. I fired, both vultures flew down into the valley unhurt, and I long heard the beating of their wings as they rushed through the air.

In a state of utter despondency I remained quietly crouching in my hiding-place, for I wanted to see whether the vultures would not return. Then I heard steps behind me. It was the forester, who had hurried up on hearing the shot, and while I was telling him of the miserable result of it, the female bird again appeared near the nest, and was coming straight towards me, but on seeing us turned off in another direction. The forester now begged me to go to the second nest; so we quickly climbed up the steep slope, walked a good way on the ridge of the mountain, and then, after going a few hundred yards along a narrow footpath, which wound down the opposite side of the hill, found ourselves at the nest.

This second nest was placed in a more awkward position than the first, as the slope, being less steep, did not allow one to see so well into it. I loaded my gun, for I had resolved to rely on its powers and to abandon the rifle. On getting within a few paces of the nest, a vulture flew off one of the neighbouring oaks with a great bustle. Thinking that it was the owner of the nest, I was looking out for a good hiding-place, and preparing to pass a quiet half-hour, when a Slavonian woodman, a true Serb, with whom I managed to communicate by the help of the Bohemian language, besought me to keep my gun ready, as he thought the hen bird was in the nest; and he was right, for after a few blows with a stick on the trunk of the tree, the vulture dropped off the edge of its abode with a noisy bustle. There were branches above me, and I did not wish to make another doubtful shot, though I could distinguish the form of the great bird through the foliage. With outstretched head it looked carefully round, and then, gradually expanding its wings, gave itself a strong

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upward jerk from the branch and flew away down the valley, making a great deal of noise and vanishing among the trees, for it took but little notice of the two shots which I let drive at it, though a few feathers fell, and the Slavonian woodman thought that it was hard hit in the side. I waited vainly for another half-hour, and was quite disheartened by this mishap; for I had now bungled both the pairs of vultures which had been shown to me, and I did not know whether I should have any further chance of killing one to-day. However, the great good fortune which always favours me out shooting helped me over the difficulty later on in the afternoon.

While sitting at the first nest I had noticed that a young "Stein" Eagle, and often also a young Sea-Eagle, kept stooping at a certain heavily foliaged oak in the middle of a beech wood; and as the forester had already told me that the eagles detested the vultures, and were in the habit of tormenting them at every opportunity, I had a lucky inspiration, and resolved to make a final effort and go to the place at which I had seen the eagles so constantly swooping. The Servian woodman, who had noted this even before I did, had gone off to the spot without saying anything, and now came back with the news that he had, from a distance, seen a light-coloured head projecting from the nest, and thought that it must be that of an eagle; but the ornithological knowledge of all these people being so very defective, my hopes of again encountering a vulture revived, and I hurried off to the place along a spur of the mountain-ridge. On reaching an open spot, where I had a wonderful view, I saw in the distance seven Cinereous Vultures rise into the air and fly one after another straight towards the place where we were standing.

I made ready to shoot without concealing myself, and as the first vulture passed over my head within twenty to twenty-five yards I fired both barrels, and certainly hit it,

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for some feathers dropped, but again the shot rattled off it without taking effect, and for a moment I thought with horror that my cartridges could only be loaded with powder, as such a thing had never happened to me before. The other six vultures were not the least frightened by the shots, and came sweeping over me one after another; but I had lost all desire to shoot at these huge birds, and let them fly quietly past.

We now hastened up a steep slope to the nest, and as it was not quite so strongly constructed as the one above described, I really thought for a moment that we should here find a noble "Stein" Eagle, nor was it until the tree had been repeatedly struck that the heavy form of a Cinereous Vulture emerged from the nest. Luckily I had chosen a good look-out, and gave it my first barrel loaded with B.B. full in the breast, and as it crashed down through the branches hard hit the second shot broke its wing.

Now, thought I, that is at last enough for this bird; but, no, it caught hold of a branch, and as it stood upright with its broken wing hanging down, its bare neck and head full of wounds and covered with blood, and its beak wide agape, it presented a striking picture. Another shot was required to bring it quite down to the ground, and a good many blows with a thick stick to give it its final quietus.

I hurried up to my spoil, pleased and proud at having at last succeeded in killing a Cinereous Vulture; but my enthusiasm was promptly checked when I got close to the dead bird, for such an insupportable stench of carrion surrounded the body of the disgusting creature, that I was compelled to retire several paces. How often had I previously laughed at Brehm when he protested that not for all the wealth of the world would he ever again skin one of these vultures with his own hands!

This ignoble bird, with its very weak claws, never lives

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upon what it kills itself, but only upon the most disgusting carrion. During the day they fly many miles away over the plains of the Save into the adjacent country of Servia, as well as into the Bosnian mountain-gorges, to devour the numerous carcasses which are there lying about. Every one of the vultures which we killed had its crop still stuffed with the most unsavoury remains of carrion, and their beaks gave out a stench which would have been quite enough to make any one faint who was afflicted with weak nerves. On what exciting battle-fields and on how many Turk and Russian corpses may not these vultures have sat during the last campaign! for, thanks to its splendid powers of flight, there is no bird which makes such incredibly long journeys as the vulture. The thoughts of such things made the slain creature seem still more repulsive, and even the case-hardened woodman carried the heavy bird on his back with loathing.

To shorten the way we crept slowly down the steep hillside, and through a glen thickly overgrown with bushes, wild vines, and hops, and then up another still more abrupt slope, the poor woodman panting under his burden, while even we made but poor progress. Before getting to the carts I met Leopold, who was obliged to return from his shooting-ground by the same route. At his feet lay a very large vulture, for my brother-in-law had been luckier than I, for on approaching the nest he had seen the bird sitting on a bare branch, and getting within good rifle-shot had brought it down with a well-directed ball. His spoil, which stank much worse than the vulture I had killed, disgusted him so much that he would have nothing more to do with Cinereous Vultures, so repulsive did he find the bird when dead which had seemed so beautiful and imposing when soaring aloft.

Evening was now coming on, and Count Chotek urged us to begin our homeward journey as soon as possible, as it would

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not be pleasant to be driving down the steep hills just as it was getting dark. The sky was clear again, for the threatening clouds which had come up in the afternoon had all been dispersed by a strongish east wind, and though a storm was still rumbling in the far south, there seemed to be every prospect that we were at the beginning of a series of fine days.

The drive home through the loneliest districts of the thick luxuriant mountain woods, by the sides of rushing brooks and across pretty glades, lasted at least two hours, and had a great fascination for us, for we felt ourselves in our true element in this wild primitive country, far from all traces of civilization. The Fruška-Gora is really a wonderfully striking wilderness, and when gazing on its silent mountain-valleys we almost forgot the splendid impressions made by the Apatin "auen." As we were passing the shooting-lodge, after a long drive, it began to get dark, the shadows deepened, bats were flitting around, roe and red deer were moving warily about the glades, and love-lorn owls were calling to their mates from the high trees.

Among the small birds I saw little of ornithological interest during the entire day. Here, as everywhere else, the beech woods are but sparingly stocked with songsters, and the commonest notes were those of the Blackcap, Chaffinch, and Oriole, while I often heard the monotonous call of the Cuckoo. As it grew later even the Wood-Pigeons were silent, and we soon heard nothing but the buzzing of the insects and the chirping of the grasshoppers.

The darker it became the more slowly we advanced, and just as we got clear of the woods, and began the drive across the plateau and through the vineyards, the most tiresome and perhaps very worst part of the whole road, the trap in which we were sitting broke down. All the way back it had been a matter of astonishment to me that every one of these country carts had not gone to pieces long ago; but it was just the fact

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that they had no springs, and consisted of a simple wooden framework bound together with ropes, that saved them from destruction. Count Chotek now kindly offered us his cart, and seated himself in one of those which were following.

It was a splendid cloudless night, and countless stars were shining in the heavens. Behind us lay the summits of the Fruška-Gora enveloped in the blue mists of evening, and before us, towards the Hungarian plains, everything was indistinctly blended together. We reached Čerevič after a wearisome and apparently endless drive, and blessed the moment when we stepped on board. Delightful as these regions are, the getting about in them is miserable, and we were more tired from the incessant shaking than if we had walked twice as many hours. Just before arriving at the place where our vessel lay, we met Brehm and Homeyer, who had but that moment returned from the nests. I shouted out to them a long way off to ask what they had shot, and to our great, and Count Chotek's still greater, astonishment, Homeyer quickly answered that he had bagged a Griffon Vulture. Brehm and his friend had both visited the same nest, and had clambered up towards it in the full expectation of seeing a Cinereous Vulture; but on nearing the place a great Griffon Vulture whizzed out of it, and Homeyer had luckily brought it down with shot. He was justly proud of this rare booty, which was so highly interesting to all of us, especially as only a few hours ago this very bird had been pointed out to us by Count Chotek as being a rare inhabitant of these mountains. Brehm was quite undeceived, and had to admit that he was wrong, for the nest of the Griffon Vulture was simply situated on an oak tree, in a place where for far and wide no rocks were to be found.

The Griffon Vulture is characterized by its coffee-brown plumage, yellowish neck-ruffle, white head and neck, and broad rounded tail, and is, on the whole, only slightly smaller

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than its nearest relative, the Cinereous Vulture. The light colouring of the former is more richly gradated, but the mixture of deep black and dark brown, the pointed tail, and the somewhat larger size of the latter bird give it altogether a more imposing appearance.

Well satisfied, we stepped on to the deck of our steamer again, and our crew gazed with amazement at the huge birds which some of the people were with difficulty lugging up. We found Bombelles already on board. The keepers had been mistaken, for the nest which they had believed to be that of a Cinereous Vulture, and from which Prince Hohenlohe had shot one of these birds only a few years before, was now inhabited by Sea-Eagles. Bombelles had got some very difficult shots at the eagles as they flew towards the nest, but thought that he had wounded one of them in the wing; and some days later his conjecture was verified, for a Slavonian peasant found a badly wounded eagle sitting in a stream, and brought it on deck alive.

At first we did not know where to put our vultures, for their horrible stench poisoned the whole vessel. My cabin window was open, and above it, on the upper deck, lay the dead birds, yet in the short space of five minutes the whole place was completely permeated with the stench of carrion.

After dinner Brehm and I took their measurements, but without a cigar in one's mouth one really could not go near the birds; and the taking of their exact dimensions was an act of great self-sacrifice, for whenever they were moved, especially when the stiffened wings were pulled apart, gases escaped which compelled the bystanders to retire involuntarily a few paces. By young Hodek's advice they were put at the extreme point of the bow, and left there all night, while we, tired by the toils of the day's shooting, vanished into our sleeping-quarters one by one shortly after dinner, and complete quiet soon reigned on board the steamer.

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EIGHTH DAY.

Leaving our cabins very early in the morning, we breakfasted quickly, and then hastened to quit the vessel. Before we got back last evening the Captain had been obliged to vacate his moorings at the pier, where he was in the way of the other Lloyd steamers, and to proceed a little distance upstream behind the village and there anchor. This was also far pleasanter for us, as our surroundings were now much quieter and less frequented by people. A gangway had been constructed to facilitate communication between the shore and the vessel, close to which was a meadow, from which we had to walk a short distance along a footpath before getting to the road near the outermost houses of the village, where our traps were henceforth always to wait for us.

To-day we set out at different times, every one doing just as he felt disposed. My brother-in-law and I were the most diligent of the party, so far as the noble chase was concerned, for we left the steamer even far too soon, and had to walk about the bank waiting for the carts, the excuse for their lateness being the Greek festival of yesterday. It was a splendid day, but even in the early morning the heat was oppressive, and we thought with some misgivings of how it would torment us in the noontide hours.

Brehm and Homeyer intended to separate on this occasion, and to pursue their researches in different directions. The former had yesterday descried with his practised eye a fine picturesque mass of rocks at the top of a wooded hill a long way off. There he had observed a great many eagles and vultures sunning themselves and diligently preening their

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feathers after feeding. He had therefore begged Count Chotek to get a little hiding-place of boughs hastily rigged up as well as was possible, and to have a kid exposed as a bait for the birds of prey. He expected great results from this enterprise, and we were all curious to see how he would succeed.

Homeyer intended to devote the whole day to the smaller species of birds, and at the same time to rest a little. He meant to stroll about the vineyards and outlying hills close to our steamer, while Bombelles wished to return to the nest which had been supposed to belong to a vulture and to try his luck afresh.

My brother-in-law and I, each in his own cart, drove off one behind the other in the same direction. At first our way led us up-stream, along what was called a highroad, but which was really a badly ballasted rough construction, no better than a country by-road. On this south bank of the Danube the slopes descending towards the river on our right were formed by some meadows, and the hillsides rising on our left were decked with vineyards and a few fruit-trees in splendid bloom. By the roadside I noticed numbers of Greenfinches, Corn-Buntings, Wagtails, Red-backed Shrikes, and various Warblers, and on the meadows also some Green Woodpeckers and Wrynecks.

After a good half-hour's drive we reached a village, where on our left a deep valley bounded by treeless slopes led towards the interior of the country. There we separated, my brother-in-law going a good way further on before turning into the next valley, while I passed through the village and drove on towards the Fruška-Gora by a very rough road, which ran by the side of a little mountain-brook, and conducted me to the very verge of the woods. I passed through a charming district of meadows, vineyards, isolated little patches of rock, and steep loamy slopes covered with almond

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and fruit trees of all sorts, and in about half an hour more had left the bare outer hills behind me, and had penetrated into the mountain valleys.

At first we went straight along the beautiful glades of a wooded glen, then turned to the right and began the ascent of a hill as steep as that of yesterday; but after we had gone about a mile the ascent got too abrupt for even the Slavonian horses, for they panted more and more and kept stopping every moment. The rougher the way became, the louder creaked the cart in every joint, and at last some of its component parts literally came to pieces. To have waited till the vehicle was put in order again, and all its breakages bound together with ropes in the usual way, would have been too tedious for me, for I did not want to lose a moment. I therefore determined to walk the whole way, only accompanied by my jäger and the very expert forester of the place.

We now began a thoroughly good tramp, taking two hours and a half to cover a distance which the forester had estimated at three hours; but the thoughts of the eagles which awaited me hastened my steps, and we climbed quickly up the steep hillsides. The way was exceedingly beautiful, and took us through the most wonderful beech woods covered with thick undergrowth, and occasionally varied by a few huge isolated oaks adorned with dead branches. At a sharp pace we went on up and down hill, across marshy woodland glades, which vividly reminded me of the higher parts of the Wiener Wald and even of some of our Alpine localities, over swift little mountain-streams, and through narrow forest valleys, but only now and then got a clear view of the splendid wooded mountains lying below us. Though I looked carefully about, I saw nothing of ornithological interest. There were Orioles, Cuckoos, and a few Hoopoes at the bottom of the valley; higher up the sole inhabitants of the woods were Chaffinches, Yellow Hammers, and the commonest song-birds. A Common

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Kite, too, dropped off an oak and flew lightly past me, and some smaller hawks were circling above us. In the morning all the eagles and vultures seem to go off to more remote districts in search of plunder, for to my great astonishment I did not see one of them.

At last light shimmered through the stems of the trees, for we were nearing the crest of the mountain, and on gaining it the forester told me that we were now on the highest watershed of the Fruška-Gora. A broad road here runs right along the almost uniformly level ridge of the mountains, and is known as "Prince Eugene's road;" for the hero of the Turkish war is said to have gone by this route in order to conceal his troops on the march to Karlowitz.

In the soft mud of the road I noticed the tracks of two large wolves, so very fresh that they could not have been made more than two or three hours ago. These footprints ran close together in the direction we were following, and the beasts had gone a good mile before they appeared to have sprung into the wood. The forester informed me that wolves were unfortunately very common in these mountains, and did much damage among the deer and roe. It certainly seemed to me that the difficulties of pursuing them here almost verged on the impossible, and I could easily understand that the Count's keepers very seldom succeeded in shooting them.

The view we now had from a small open glade was marvellous; seldom have I ever seen a more superb panorama, and this morning has made an indelible impression on my memory. From where we stood we could overlook both sides of the network of the wooded valleys, heights, and summits of the Fruška-Gora, as they descended in terraces to the plains on either hand. To the north the broad line of the Danube, broken by many islands, wound along both east and west, following the narrow strip of treeless plain. On its further

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bank we saw the splendid Hungarian "auen," and beyond them the vast low-lying plains, curving like the sea and finally vanishing from our sight, lost among the clouds and sky.

We could look over Southern Hungary as over a map. There blue-looking marshes alternated with green strips of cultivation and golden sandy heaths, while the villages stood out like white dots. To the south the narrow plain of the Save lay at our feet, and through it flowed the broad river in its many windings. In the south-east rose the grand Servian hills with their countless peaks and summits, and to the south-west we saw through the blue haze the marvellously fine Alpine heights of Bosnia, those lofty mountains of the Balkan peninsula which are so rich in natural beauties, and whose picturesque forms make them so exceptionally striking.

That part of the country forcibly recalled to my recollection the still more imposing heights of Albania, Montenegro, and Dalmatia, and I stayed a long time at this spot enjoying the magnificent scene, while the forester told me the names of each separate hill, and showed me the position of the Servian town of Šabac, and where Belgrade, the capital of that principality, lay; for the hill which rises near that city has a very decided shape and is visible a long way off. He also told me that from this point the thunder of the cannon during the Turko-Servian war had been distinctly heard.

Having rested, we proceeded on our way to the nest of a so-called Golden Eagle, keeping steadily along the mountain-ridge between thick bushes for some time, until the forester said that we must again turn towards the north side. Not knowing what the jägers here call Golden Eagle, I imagined that it was *Aquila chrysaëtus*, and was very eager to observe at its nest a bird which I had only known in its winter-quarters.

A narrow footpath running along steep slopes covered with

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high trees now brought us into a lonely forest glen, where a large eagle's nest stood on a very low oak and in a most charming situation. I crept up below it, but on trying to drive out the bird found that it was not at home, so I sat down in the hut, which had been specially arranged beforehand, but which, having been too artistically built, had probably scared the eagles.

In about half an hour both the birds came up and circled round with anxious cries, for they had detected my presence. I thought of waiting to see whether they would not quiet down, but they were too thoroughly alarmed to allow of my hoping that they would come within shot. On one of them I could distinctly distinguish the mark of the Imperial Eagle, and now saw that all the birds which the keepers here called Golden Eagles were not *Aquila chrysaëtus* but *Aquila imperialis*, which seems to be pretty common in this district.

As this was the first time that I had visited the nest of this southern bird, which is unquestionably the most beautiful of all the large eagles, I was much vexed at having to leave it, and only did so after fully convincing myself that it would be useless to take any further trouble.

Again I hastened up the hillside to the ridge, where the carts had meanwhile arrived, the drivers having repaired the damages, and we now made a fresh attempt at driving down the steep slopes of this wretched road. After spending another hour in rattling about in all directions along the ridge and over the tops of the most magnificent wooded hills, the forester told the driver to stop.

A footpath which followed a continuous level now led me into a damp wood of fine large beeches and oaks, with an undergrowth of rank grass and hawthorn bushes. Here the little brooks and rivulets which ran down to the valley prattled merrily among the stones, and through the trees we

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caught occasional glimpses of the Hungarian plains and the deep wooded valley below us.

On the topmost branches of a huge beech stood a Sea-Eagle's nest, the only one which I had myself seen in these mountains, for it is quite a rare occurrence for a Sea-Eagle to retire from the woods of the Danube into the heights of the Fruška-Gora, and I cannot understand what could have induced the two or three pairs which I and my companions found nesting in these hills to have left the splendid "auen" and their hunting-grounds on the river. The Danube and its forests offer the Sea-Eagle all that it needs, and even the eagles which breed in the mountains fly down to the river whenever they want to fetch food for their young.

The eagle was not in its nest, but unfortunately it came flying up before I could get well concealed, and circled round, uttering cries of alarm. As the ambush which the keepers had previously constructed was rather out of shot-range, I requested the forester to stay in it, and crept right up under the nesting-tree, where, as neither bushes nor tree-stems afforded any hiding-place, I lay down between two large stones, and covered myself with my earth-coloured Tyrolese cloak.

I had been thus lying on my back for about half an hour, when the female Sea-Eagle, a very old and powerful bird, sailed up, the loud flapping of its wings above my head making me aware of its arrival; but as it disappeared into the nest with the usual rapidity, it was quite impossible for me to succeed in getting a good shot. The forester, whom I had beckoned to come up, now gave several knocks on the trunk of the tree; but the crafty bird, instead of leaving the nest on my side, flew out towards the hillside in just the opposite direction. The thick branches prevented my getting a certain shot, and I was also unlucky enough to catch my gun in my cloak, so that the first barrel went off

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before I could aim, and when I fired the second, the bird was already too far off.

Attracted by the noise the male eagle also appeared, and the pair now circled overhead screaming loudly. My previous experiences had made me well acquainted with this ominous cry, for the shrill clear scream of the Sea-Eagle is always an unfavourable sign to the sportsman.

A Common Kite now joined the eagles, and went through its evolutions above them; and as I saw that there was no further hope, I walked off, feeling very dejected. On the way back to the carts we came across two smaller nests, which the forester said were occupied by Common Kites. He had himself several times seen these birds sitting on them, and the slightness and looseness of their construction seemed to me evident proof that they were only tenanted by that species.

The first nest was empty, its owner having probably been frightened off by the shots, as there were only a few trees between it and the great eyrie of the eagle. At the second had the tree repeatedly struck, but nothing stirred, and the forester advised me to leave the place and pay a visit to another Cinereous Vulture; but, led by some fortunate inspiration, I shot at the nest, and, sure enough, a hawk about the size of a Common Buzzard flew out of it, hard hit. No sooner had I fired than the forester, who was also much amazed, called out "That is not the Kite that always used to be here!" I, too, had seen the brilliant white breast and light brown back of the bird, so quickly gave it my second barrel, and it fell slanting to the ground. I hurried up and found, only a few yards off among the bushes, a beautifully plumaged male Pygmy Eagle; and was much delighted thereat, for it is undoubtedly more difficult to shoot a Pygmy Eagle in this district than a considerable number of Sea-Eagles.

This very rare and finely marked little eagle has long interested me, and it was especially surprising to find it for the

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second time in an inhabited nest of the Common Kite. On the first occasion of my doing so the nest was in a beech tree in the Wiener Wald, near Weidlingen, and here was the bird again in a perfectly similar nest on the same sort of tree in the Fruška-Gora mountains. I already counted on the pleasure of detailing my observations and presenting the specimen to Homeyer, who was particularly anxious to take home this species of eagle, which he had never observed at its nest or even seen in the flesh.

I now hurried back to the carts, and we continued our wanderings, driving up and down steep slopes and over shady wooded summits until we got to the conical top of a hill thinly covered with oaks. Here we halted, and, accompanied only by the forester, I walked along the west side of the hill and then climbed slowly up a slope covered with sun-scorched grass. Some hundreds of feet below us lay a small damp glade, through which wound a noisy little brook, and on the opposite side of this open rose a high and very abrupt hill-side wooded with beeches and young oaks. Halfway up it a tall enormous pear-tree stood out prominently, and this tree, which must have been hundreds of years old, bore on its dead upper branches the great nest of a Cinereous Vulture. From our position on the opposite slope we could, with the glass, see the huge bird perfectly and follow all its movements as it lay flat in the nest, drooping its head as if tired by the heat. We now sat down for a moment's rest; for the midday hours were so insupportably hot that we already felt somewhat fatigued.

In a little while the vulture raised its head, looked back attentively, left its nest, and passed quickly out of the valley low over the brook. We had hardly lost sight of it when a second and much larger bird, evidently the female, flew from the opposite direction straight to the nest, settled on its edge and hopped clumsily in to sit on the eggs.

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Thereupon we got up, hurried down the slope, crossed the glade, began to ascend the opposite hill, and in about half an hour reached the great pear-tree, which stood on such a steep incline that from a hundred yards above it one could see straight into the nest. There was a small open covered with hawthorn bushes on one side of the tree, and on the other we noticed, at a few paces from the nest, a glade through which flowed a babbling little brook. As we had neither seen nor heard the bird fly off, we were sure that it must be in its dwelling, so I looked about for a good place from which to fire at it with the rifle in case it rose at the first noise.

I must have stood motionless, with my gun up, for at least ten minutes; for breaking sticks, shouting, hammering the tree with the hunting-knife, and throwing up bits of wood were all ineffectual—the lazy bird would not stir.

I was shaking with excitement to such a degree that I was obliged to come to some decision as soon as possible; for being on the watch so incessantly had made me quite incapable of firing a straight shot; so by the forester's advice I hastened up the slope to see if I could not look into the nest from above, and, rightly enough, found a place from which I could plainly see the bald grey-blue head, large round back, and the point of the tail. I sat down in order to get my wind again, and followed all the movements of the bird with the glass. The vulture must have been quite gorged, for it was evidently indifferent to all that went on around it, and every effort that we made to rouse it from its lethargy had no effect. There it lay, with its head thrown back on its shoulders, and its beak held straight down and gaping. It was probably distressed by the burning heat of the sun, and only shook its head from time to time to keep off the insects which were swarming round the stinking nest. Relying on the steadiness of my hand, I resolved to risk a shot at the small mark of the vulture's head. The rifle cracked, the mud at the edge of the

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nest flew up into the branches, and the vulture slowly rose without showing any great signs of alarm, shook out its wings, and flew deliberately down the hillside.

Vexed at my mishap, I wanted to hurry away from the place, as I thought I should not get another chance for several hours, but the forester besought me to remain and to seat myself nearer the nest. I did as he wished, and even before I could conceal myself in my newly selected place, I heard the grunting croaking cry of the vulture. It is an extraordinary noise, unlike the call of any other bird of prey, and in the evening this hoarse croak of the Cinereous Vulture, accompanied by the dull heavy beats of its wings, sounds very strange. I had hardly looked up when there was a rush over my head, and the enormous female vulture was standing erect on the edge of the nest. I took a quick aim, but just at the instant that I pulled, it crept into its nest and the ball passed over it. A loud bustle among the branches instantly followed, and again the great bird flew off and circled slowly round me.

The forester, taking an accurate view of the situation, now said that the vulture must have an egg which was on the point of hatching, and begged me not to leave the nest, consoling me with the idea that the bird would come back in a few minutes; so I sat down just where I was, close to a thorny bush in the open, without any cover, and directed him to leave the place and walk carelessly past the nest towards our carts.

Meanwhile the male had also come up, and both the vultures circled, croaking, round us; but before the forester had gone a couple of hundred paces one of them again drew in its wings and flew to the tree as fast as its heavy build would allow. It settled on a thick branch near the nest, but noticed my position, and no sooner had it seen me than it at once spread its pinions and vanished among the branches of the nearest tree before I could get another shot. I now hit

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upon a lucky plan, on the success of which I pride myself to this day; for I slung my rifle on my back, loaded my gun with heavy shot, and quitting the place noisily to attract the attention of the vultures, I went down towards the valley.

My stratagem succeeded from the very first, for the birds followed all my movements from above, and when they saw me near the brook set up a satisfied croaking, made a few sweeps round the hill-top, and disappeared in different directions, probably in order to examine the neighbourhood.

This moment I utilized in getting back again along the little glade to the tree, and, lying down under it, covered myself with branches as well as I could and remained quietly on my back with my gun ready pointed. A distressing quarter of an hour now went by, and I was already beginning to doubt whether, tired as I was and tormented by the bites of ants and mosquitoes, I could hold out any longer in this trying position, when I heard the croaking of the vultures, and the pair flew rapidly over my head, followed by a bold "Stein" Eagle.

I now had an opportunity of enjoying the interesting spectacle of this noble eagle chasing one of these great heavy birds through the air and swooping down under it close to the nest. The vulture, alarmed for the safety of its eggs, and also very frightened at the prospect of an aerial encounter with the far smaller but more active eagle, now shot straight down the slope, took a circuit round the nest, and, stretching out its long neck, looked directly at the place where I had formerly sat, but did not pay the slightest attention to the open spot where I had been recently standing. It then made a second sweep round, and as it plunged close over my head to get into the nest I gave it both barrels. I saw some feathers fall, and noticed a convulsive twitch of the wings and a sinking of the bare head; but I again feared that the shot had rebounded from the strong feathers without taking effect, for it flew

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steadily on in a wide sweep, and passing close by me to the right disappeared in the wood at my back.

Some moments of suspense had passed, when I suddenly heard on the hillside, a few hundred yards above me, a loud disturbance like the noise of a stag rolling down through the bushes. I did not know what this could be, and never for an instant thought of the vulture; but fancying that a wolf had got hold of a deer, I hurried down to the valley to ask the forester about it. I met him coming along breathless, for he had heard the sharp cracking of the branches half a mile away, and said to me, with a satisfied look, that he thought it was caused by the falling vulture.

We now climbed up the hill again to the place whence the noise had appeared to come. Just above the nest the slope of the hill was almost perpendicular, and we had some difficulty in forcing our way through the thick copses of hazel; but on reaching a point several hundred yards above my former ambush, we saw in one of them the vulture jammed between two young beeches, with its wings stretched out and quite dead. We hurried up to it in a pleasant state of excitement, and by dint of hard work dragged it down the rough hillside to our carts, which were standing by the brook just at the very edge of the forest, about half a mile away.

We had been shooting to-day a long distance from Čerevič, in a district where the mountain-woods run pretty far back into the interior of the country, and a broad belt of bare stony outlying hills divides the true Fruška-Gora from the Danube. Towards these hills we now drove through a charming valley diversified with stony slopes, meadows, pastures, vineyards, walnut-trees, and blossoming orchards.

In about half an hour we came in sight of a village picturesquely situated on the crest of the height. Flags were flying on the church-towers, and merry music sounding in the streets, for there was a sort of country fair going on after

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the Easter holidays. Our road should have led us under this village, but we suddenly saw that all further communication had been cut off by the stream, and instead of a road there remained nothing but large stones and broken banks. There we stood, not knowing what to do; but at last we discovered a dreadful-looking ascent, almost impracticable for vehicles, which wound up the slope to the village. There was nothing left but to follow this; so we all got out, and with our united strength helped the horses by pushing behind the carts. Halfway up the hill my trap broke down again, thus necessitating tedious and troublesome repairs with ropes and string.

While the driver and some peasants who had run up were busy putting our splendid equipage in order, I employed the time in making a few ornithological notes. In the distance I noticed a "Stein" Eagle cruising near the ground, probably pursuing small birds in the vineyards, while some Ravens were flying about croaking, and above the summits of the Fruška-Gora I saw several Cinereous Vultures. Among the lesser birds I observed little that was interesting. Cuckoos darted about the fruit-trees, Larks were singing as they mounted into the air, and on the pastures were hopping numberless Hoopoes, one of which came boldly within a few paces, and I shot it for the Savants. Corn-Buntings, Yellow Hammers, Goldfinches, Grasshopper and a few other Warblers twittered their songs from the wild rose-bushes, and myriads of Red-backed Shrikes were sitting on the tops of the thickets turning their white breasts towards us and merrily twitching their tails.

In a quarter of an hour or thereabouts our conveyances were set going again, and our troubles began afresh; but at last we got to the village, where I was interested in seeing its inhabitants. Black-haired Slavonians, as strong as trees, were standing about the streets in the beautiful costume of their

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country, and a ring of peasant girls in their gay dresses were dancing the national dance called "Kolo" in the square in front of the church, a harshly sounding bagpipe being the sole musical accompaniment to this wild and singular performance, which somewhat reminded one of the dances of the South-Sea islanders. The people had heard of my arrival in this part of the country, and, recognizing me by my Styrian attire, which they evidently regarded with the greatest astonishment, greeted me in the heartiest manner, and the whole population followed our traps far beyond the village—an easy thing to do, for with our tired horses we could only crawl along this miserable road at a walk.

After a long drive up and down hill over the little outlying heights, we caught sight of the Danube just beyond them; and I must confess to being rather glad to see it, reminding me, as it did, of the steamer and of a good hot dinner. We now soon got on to the main road at the river's edge, and as our tired horses would no longer trot we galloped along down-stream, with the water on our left and a succession of steep hills on our right, reaching Čerevič in an hour. During the last part of the drive I noticed a good many birds, for herons and ducks of all sorts were flying over the river, while close to the road were Red-backed Shrikes and a great variety of small birds. Near the meadow by which our steamer lay I saw on the solitary telegraph-wire which the posts carried a gaily-coloured little bird, which subsequently turned out to be a somewhat peculiar variety of the Whinchat; but taking it, at first sight, for a Stonechat I jumped out and quickly shot it.

A few minutes after this last incident we arrived on board the steamer all right. There my companions were already assembled, and were awaiting my rather tardy return with lively expectations. I produced a pretty good effect on the sportsmen by the huge Cinereous Vulture, but the Pygmy

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Eagle evoked the surprise and delight of my friend Homeyer. To my great astonishment Brehm had not yet arrived, the rocks which he had baited with his kid seeming to have had uncommon attractions for him. Bombelles had been lucky enough to bring home a Sea-Eagle, singularly small but very interesting in colour. I had never before seen a bird of this species in similar plumage, for it was in the intermediate stage between the brown-grey immature dress and the pale yellow of the adult, and one might even have called it mottled. The beak was still black, the feet light flaxen-yellow, the back had a pronounced brownish colour, and the breast was already light yellow. My brother-in-law had likewise brought back another very interesting bird, and by so doing had added a new species of eagle to our collection; for to our universal admiration a very large female Imperial Eagle was lying on the deck with a bullet-hole through the centre of its breast. Leopold had also killed it at a nest in the Fruška-Gora. While at a Cinereous Vulture's nest his experiences had been similar to mine of to-day, for the great bird would not leave its dwelling, and though he had often seen its head protruding, he had thought it unsportsmanlike to attempt so uncertain a shot at so small a mark, and, after fruitless efforts, had left the place. He had a further bit of bad luck at a Short-toed Eagle's nest to which he had been taken, and where he had unfortunately wounded the bird and had failed to find it. This was the second and last inhabited nest of the Short-toed Eagle which we came across during the whole trip.

Homeyer had remained faithful to his scientific studies, for he had devoted his whole attention to the small birds, and had come back with a beautifully coloured Oriole, a Turtle-Dove, and a variety of other smaller birds. We could wait no longer for Brehm, for time was pressing, and it was already late in the afternoon; so we had a hasty dinner, and then my

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brother-in-law and I at once set off again and drove to the shooting-lodge in the Fruška-Gora along the now familiar road. The other gentlemen stayed on board to rest, only Brehm being absent; and for his arrival, as I have already said, we unfortunately could not wait, so for to-day we remained in ignorance of his achievements.

It was a glorious afternoon, and the view from the high plateau of the outlying mountains, lit up by the evening sun, was a splendid sight. We arrived at the shooting-lodge without any mishap or interesting experiences, and Count Chotek, who had kindly accompanied us thither, now suggested that we should still try a stalk after roe.

To my brother-in-law was assigned a meadow lying in front of the lodge, so, accompanied by the forester, he climbed up the hill through a dark beech wood, while my route led me along charming glades and streams to a large clearing. The sun was sinking, the shadows lengthening, and the last remnants of the daylight were struggling with the gathering night, the birds had all ceased to sing, the crickets had begun to chirp, the bats were flitting around us, and the head forester was just recommending me to turn back, when I saw a roebuck standing in a little meadow at the edge of a beech wood some way off. I stalked up pretty close, and tried to aim as well as I could, though it was already rather dark. The rifle cracked, and the roe took a short sweep round, and then vanished into the depths of the wood; but though I thought it was slightly wounded, the search made for it the next day by the keepers proved a complete failure.

I now hastened down to the valley, where I met my brother-in-law, who had seen no roe, but had been lucky enough to kill with a good rifle-shot a fox which was out mouse-hunting. As it had now got quite dark we returned to the shooting-lodge together, where our very kind host,

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Count Chotek, stayed with us until he had seen that we were comfortably housed, and then left us and went back to Čerevič.

We now had supper served, our cook being Bombelles' valet, a worthy Dalmatian, who had been lent to us by his master, and who displayed a truly delightful skill. Our meal being over, both we and the jägers retired to rest, fatigued with the day's exertions, and perfect silence reigned in the shooting-lodge.

The windows were low, the house had but one ordinary door, the surrounding fence was not high, and the remoteness of the district suggested all sorts of ideas of wandering robber bands both to my brother-in-law and myself. Southern Hungary and, still more, Slavonia where it borders on Bosnia and Servia are in this respect by no means safe, and it would be hard to find a mountain-region offering greater facilities to such rascals than the Fruška-Gora.

We had taken my black pointer into the room for our protection, and he slept on one of the two wolf-skins which decorated the chamber, and which had been taken from animals killed in these mountains. My brother-in-law also placed his gun beside his bed and laid out some cartridges; but unfortunately all these precautions were made in vain, for a little adventure with robbers would have been very entertaining, and before going to sleep we really longed for the possibility of such an occurrence.

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NINTH DAY.

We were not allowed to enjoy our rest long, for about three o'clock our men awoke us, and, quickly disposing of breakfast, we went out into the very cool night air. Above us stretched a sky splendidly strewn with stars, and we could see the dark outlines of the mountain-tops floating before us in spectral forms.

We had quitted our dwelling thus early in order to carry out a plan of my own, for I had begged Count Chotek to have a freshly killed horse exposed in front of the wolf-decoy hut near the meadow; and as the distance from that old dilapidated ambush was too great for shot, I had further requested him to have a new screen of boughs built somewhat nearer the bait. We drove part of the way along the valley in carts, and then followed a steep path fringed with bushes, which brought us to the well-known spot; and by the time we reached it the day was breaking in the east, the stars were vanishing faster and faster, and the sun soon rose grandly above the mountain-peaks.

We had sent all the jägers away, and my brother-in-law and I were now crouching close together with our guns ready, and had been sitting in this fashion for about half an hour, when we suddenly saw a brown-coloured eagle passing over the opposite wood. It perched not far from the hut, and at first seemed to be looking at the carcass. Shortly afterwards a second eagle of a similar colour came and circled a few times round the place, and the first arrival now rose slowly and lazily from its perch, and both flew straight

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to the dead horse, while we watched the noble birds in the greatest state of excitement, even holding in our breath.

From several years' experience I knew all about shooting from a decoy-hut, and in winter I had killed many eagles as they sat on the back of a dead deer or horse, and being aware how shy these lordly birds of prey are, and how cautiously they always approach a decoy-hut, it seemed to me that our wretched place of concealment, which only consisted of a few leafy branches, was very insufficient.

Nevertheless the eagles settled themselves near the dead horse, one of them close to it, the other only four or five yards from our ambush. We had agreed that Leopold should shoot at all sorts of eagles except Imperial, as I had not killed one of that species; so, as we both took these dark-coloured birds for young Imperial Eagles, I quickly put up my gun. This movement seemed to have been observed by the bird, for it slowly got up and flapped away close to the ground, and on my firing both barrels it dropped on the opposite side of the meadow hard hit. I quickly hurried out, and the eagle rose again; but a third shot brought it down into the middle of the adjacent stream, and on pulling it out I saw, to my no small disappointment, that, instead of an Imperial, I had killed a dark-plumaged Sea-Eagle about two years old; so I slipped back into the ambush, and again we waited patiently for coming events.

Two hours passed thus, but far and wide nothing showed itself in our neighbourhood; the heat, too, had already become quite unbearable, and numberless flies, attracted by the body of the slain bird, were buzzing about us in this confined space. By the time it was nine o'clock the amusement became rather tedious, and as we also thought that our chances during the ensuing hot hours before midday would be but poor, we determined to leave our hiding-place, and returning by the same path reached our vehicles in about a

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quarter of an hour. There we found Count Chotek himself awaiting us, for he had very kindly come back from Čerevič to talk over the plans for the rest of the day.

My jäger informed me that, while we were patiently watching in our ambush, fourteen Eagles, "Stein," Imperial, and Sea, in every variety of plumage, had passed close by him, all taking the same direction towards the plains, and that several had even rested a few minutes on some isolated trees within fair rifle-shot.

By Count Chotek's advice we now returned to Čerevič to make an excursion further up-stream, and after a pretty long and warm drive over the high plateau and the steep hills, reached our steamer. There we found the other three gentlemen on deck, for they had taken a rest this morning and were waiting for us. Among them was Brehm, who looked very unwell, and from his dejected expression I could tell, before I got near him, that he must have yesterday met with some very disappointing experiences; and I was right, for he had a series of interesting adventures to relate. He had passed the whole day at the rocks near the dead kid, and both vultures and eagles of various kinds had flown past him, but his hiding-place had been too evident to permit of their settling. Only one large Sea-Eagle had alighted near the lure; this bird he had fired at, and it flew down towards the valley badly wounded. He sent the keeper who was with him after it, and the man managed to come up with the injured bird and to give it a finishing shot; but when he was going to lift it from the ground, they both observed another Sea-Eagle circling high overhead. As soon as this bird saw the keeper pick up its slain comrade it folded its wings and swooped down like an arrow, and the keeper, whose attention was attracted by the noisy flappings of its heavy wings, looked up and saw the eagle only a few feet above his head, with its claws ready extended for attack. The charge was so

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furious, and the bird was so close, that the keeper, although a perfectly courageous man, was obliged to spring behind the trunk of an adjacent beech tree to guard himself against a fresh assault. I had often heard of such madly daring and dangerous attacks having been made by the parent eagles close to their nests; but quite out in the open wood, and only near the body of a dead companion, it was quite a new phenomenon both to Brehm and myself, and a very interesting one.

Brehm further told us that after this episode he had waited a good many hours in his hiding-place, until at last there came a "Stein" Eagle, a big powerful bird, at which he was induced to fire as it sat on a rock rather too far away, and though it flew off hard hit, all attempts to find it were ineffectual. This was a great pity, not only for Brehm, but for all of us, for if he had killed the bird we should have brought home with us all the species of Austrian eagles; as it was, there remained a palpable blank in our collection, for we did not find a nest of this shy species anywhere. It would, moreover, have been a matter of great interest for the two Savants to have secured just at this moment a freshly-killed "Stein" Eagle, in order to have taken its measurements, and to have made use of it for the monograph on the "Stein" and Golden Eagles which they were now writing.

This was the cause of our finding Brehm in such a dejected frame of mind, a state of depression greatly aggravated by a bad headache from which he was suffering, and which compelled him to pass the entire day quietly in his cabin, all he had been able to do having been to take a little morning stroll through the vineyards, where he had bagged a beautiful Rock-Thrush, another new addition to our collection.

As soon as the steamer had got under weigh we had luncheon served, for Count Chotek wished us to make a short voyage up-stream, first to pay a visit to the nests along the

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riverside, and then to a chain of hills running in a westerly direction, and which were really the spurs and outlying heights of the Fruška-Gora. We had put Homeyer ashore, for he had planned a ramble through the "auen" opposite Čerevič in order to study the smaller birds.

After an hour's run we stopped, the steamer anchored, and my jäger and I got out and went ashore in the 'Vienna.' A little marshy meadow and the main road here separated the Danube from a high steep wall of earth, bordered at some places by dense thorny thickets; and at one spot this cliff formed a caldron-shaped ravine, where there was an Eagle-Owl's nest well known to the keepers. It was situated in a cleft of the earthy wall, so I walked up close under the almost perpendicular cliff, and there stationed myself behind a bush, while some peasants who had come up threw stones at the owl's nest. A very large female Eagle-Owl flew slowly out, and sweeping round above my head with its widely extended wings, was just going to return to the nest from the other side, when a successful shot brought it to the ground. Frightened by the noise, the male, which had been sitting in a thicket, also came past; but being too far off, I unfortunately failed to kill it, and after the shots it flew away along the earthy wall and disappeared in the far distance.

We now told a peasant who was standing on the top of the cliff to take the nest, and with great cleverness, evidently the result of much practice, this Slavonian climbed along the cliff with his sandalled feet, getting a foothold in the bushes and little cracks, and so managed to get to the nest and bring us out a little owl, quite young, perhaps not more than a few days old; but we made him put it back into the nest, as it would probably have died in a few hours.

The Eagle-Owl I had shot was a singularly large female and a splendid specimen. This was the first time that I

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had ever had the opportunity of observing in the open the flight of this bird, which unites the quiet, almost imperceptible wing-motion of the largest diurnal birds of prey with the easy swift gliding movements of the owls, while there is in its whole appearance something grand and striking which makes it undeniably an eagle among the owls.

As we were hurrying back to the steamer through the thickets we saw a whole flock of Jackdaws, which, scared by the noise we were making, had come out of holes in the bank of the Danube, where they were breeding in close proximity to the predatory Eagle-Owls. I also found among the bushes a snake of quite exceptional size; indeed I have never seen so large a reptile in a wild state. It quickly coiled itself round a tree and tried to hide among the grass; but though Brehm had asked us to bring back reptiles from our excursions, I would not allow this creature to be taken up and brought on board, as it might have been venomous.

Close to the bank of the river a Cuckoo fluttered up into a fruit-tree, calling loudly, and I shot it for the sake of the measurements.

As soon as we were on board, the steamer again got under weigh, and in another quarter of an hour we rounded an island near the left side of the Danube where the stream was fringed by a continuous belt of beautiful thick "auen." We anchored near the middle of this island, which was not very large, and being but thinly studded with enormous old willows and a few silver poplars, and not having the slightest trace of undergrowth, was the very type of a wooded pasture, a peculiar style of country quite new to us.

On an old willow stood a huge Sea-Eagle's nest not far from the ground, and the keepers were almost sure that we should shoot the eagle; but when my brother-in-law and I were getting near the nest we met numbers of the inhabitants of the neighbouring village hurrying up in carts, which they

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had brought over the Danube in barges as soon as they heard of our arrival, while the millers belonging to the floating boat-mills near the island, and their entire families, were streaming towards us. These people cheered us in the heartiest way, and ran after us at every step, even following us up to the nest; so of course it was all up with the eagle, and we did not even get a sight of it.

As we could do nothing here, we wasted no more time, but crossed the river, landed on the right bank, got into the vehicles which were ready waiting, drove a little way along a highroad, and then, turning in among the steep outlying hills by a valley almost as narrow as a ravine, reached the plateau above by an incredibly rough track, and afterwards followed a remarkably well-kept avenue to one of Count Chotek's farms. To the south-east we saw in the distance the mountains of the Fruška-Gora, separated from the perfectly level plateau on which we were by a thickly wooded chain of very low hills that might really be regarded as their spurs.

Close behind the farm, where we now separated in various directions, was a very pretty oak wood, the character of which, as well as that of the sandy roads of this district, reminded me of the neighbourhoods of Pest and Gödöllö.

My brother-in-law struck off by another road to an Imperial Eagle's nest, Bombelles was to have some smaller ones shown to him, and I was also to pay a visit to the eyrie of an Imperial Eagle. For about three quarters of an hour I drove over little hills and dales, where the valleys were covered by meadows, fields, and pastures, and the woods were all composed of stunted oaks, while the roads, where they crossed the many open tracts of country, were ornamented by avenues of acacias. After some time we reached a higher point, whence we could see the whole of this outlying land, with the Fruška-Gora in the background, and, far away in another direction, the Servian mountains, and even the

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heights of Bosnia. On the top of this hill was a shooting-lodge, and here we halted, while I got out and, accompanied by the head forester, walked a few hundred yards across a meadow to a line of still smaller hills beyond it, on the very ridge of which stood the Imperial Eagle's nest which I had been told of.

A little footpath wound right up to it, and along this I cautiously stole; but before I got within shot I heard the noise made by the bird as it flew away. I now requested the forester to go back, that his departure might reassure the eagle, while I concealed myself in a hut of branches which had been here constructed, but which was unfortunately too large and too visible. It was a very pretty spot, but neither grand nor striking, and the oak tree in which the nest was placed seemed particularly low for the stately dwelling which it supported on its topmost branches. A thick undergrowth of all sorts covered the ground, and the mosquitoes swarmed round me in such countless myriads, and tormented me so terribly, that I had the greatest difficulty in keeping quiet for a moment. In about ten minutes I saw the eagle cruising in the distance; it wheeled round several times in the direction of the wood, and then flew straight towards the nest, on the edge of which it had hardly settled before it noticed me and my much too obtrusive hiding-place, and flew quickly off again in the opposite direction.

It was now quite evident that there was nothing to be done in this way, so as soon as I thought that the eagle was well away, I slipped out of the hut, crept under the nesting-tree, hid among the thick bushes, and in order to make myself as invisible as possible lay flat on my back, with my gun ready cocked and pointed, and covered myself with some branches which I had cut. I must have lain a good quarter of an hour in this position, most horribly tortured by the insects, when I at last heard the rush of the eagle's wings, and saw the bird

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take a turn round the edge of the wood close behind me, and then settle on the top of an oak a little way off. For some minutes it cautiously examined the whole locality, but luckily did not discover my new ambush. Then it flew quickly to the nest, and for a moment remained hovering like a hawk just above me, that it might make a close inspection of my former hiding-place. I fired, and the majestic bird fell to the ground, and hopped down the slope with a broken wing, but not body-hit. I followed it as hard as I could, and the chase brought me to the bottom of the low hill, the eagle thus sparing me the trouble of dragging it down the long slope. There I gave it a finishing shot, and with my booty on my back hurried off towards the aforesaid shooting-lodge. From the place where they were standing, Count Chotek and the jäger had been perfectly able to follow the whole affair with the glass, and on seeing its fortunate termination had come quickly up with the traps.

It proved to be a large female Imperial Eagle in fine plumage, with the yellowish head, black-brown breast, whitish neck, pointed tail, powerful claws, and short hooked beak which are the principal characteristics of this bird (the nearest relative of the "Stein" Eagle), whose true range is the Eastern countries of Europe.

Opposite the eagle's nest was a steep stony hillside covered with pastures, and crowned by a few vineyards and scattered fruit-trees. Behind this hill my jäger had seen the male eagle settle on a distant tree, so I now climbed up its abrupt and slippery slope as fast as I could; but on reaching the ridge I failed in my stalk, for the eagle saw me too soon and sought safety in flight. Still, although this very tiring climb turned out unlucky, I did not much regret having undertaken it, for from the top of the hill there was a splendid and distant view of the great treeless plains of Slavonia and of the mountains which rise behind them.

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When I had satisfied myself with looking at this scene, I descended to the carriages by another route, and then set off with the head forester in a small country cart, our object being to look for Wild Cats, these fine strong animals being among the commonest inhabitants of this district. At first our road led through a very pretty woodland valley, with marshy meadows bordered on both sides by low oak-covered hills, and in a thicket of thorns by the edge of one of these woods was an old fox-earth, which the keepers had discovered to be the abode of a large Wild Cat. They had seen the beast hunting mice near its dwelling almost daily, but not to-day, and though we searched for it in every direction, all our trouble was in vain. The forester knew of another much larger one in this thoroughly well-looked-after ground, but to get to its haunt we had still to tramp a long way through some oak woods and swampy little glades.

During the whole of this time I had seen but little of interest, for the woods were particularly silent, and I noticed hardly any raptorial birds, only here and there a little Kestrel. There were also a few Hoopoes on the meadows, and some Orioles flying about among the bushy oaks, and by the edge of a lonely valley a Roe was feeding, which on seeing us sprang frightened into the cover.

After surmounting one more little range of hills we reached the most northerly extremity of these woods, just as night was beginning to fall and it was getting too dark for shooting. Before us stretched broad fields of corn already pretty high, and the forester informed me that the cats came out here almost every evening to hunt among the fields and meadows; I waited till it was quite dark, but the much desired beasts of prey did not show themselves.

About half an hour afterwards I heard a carriage rumbling behind me, which proved to be Leopold's, who was returning from the opposite direction. I got in with him, and accom-

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panied by Count Chotek and Bombelles, who had also arrived, we drove back to the farm. Leopold was very downcast, for he had missed an Imperial Eagle at the nest, and instead of this noble bird of prey had only brought back a Common Buzzard, which was breeding close by. Bombelles, who had chiefly gone out to stalk roe, also returned empty-handed.

We now began the long homeward journey as quickly as possible, at first driving through fields and meadows towards the avenue of acacias which ran along the margin of the steep cliff facing the Danube. Having turned into it we kept along above the bank of the river in an easterly direction, and soon got to a village where we were received by the loud barking of the vagrant peasant dogs, and then passing through a difficult defile reached the river in about an hour. There the steamer was waiting at the appointed place. A boat brought us to the accommodation ladder, and we were soon back in our comfortable quarters safe and sound.

Although it was quite dark, indeed an uncommonly dark night, for only a few stars were shining, and most of the sky was covered with heavy clouds, our Captain nevertheless undertook the passage to Čerevič, where our friend Homeyer was waiting for us. If my brother-in-law and I had now followed out the plan previously agreed upon, we should have driven this same evening to the shooting-lodge in the Fruška-Gora, whither our men had preceded us in the afternoon; but by the time we had got to Čerevič it was already ten o'clock, and the dark drive at this late hour over the long bad road between the village and the shooting-lodge frightened us, so we determined to remain on board and have supper.

Homeyer had pursued his ornithological studies in the "auen" on the Hungarian side of the river all day long, and had returned with a Goshawk and a Black Kite.

A hasty meal was followed by the taking of the measure-

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ments, at which Brehm, whose headache had slowly passed off, also assisted.

All our plans had now to be changed, for it was impossible to get to Brehm's decoy-hut at the hour that I and my brother-in-law had proposed, as the road from here would be much too long in the night-time, so Count Chotek suggested that we should in the morning carry out an entirely new plan, which had been originally reserved for the day after.

When everything had been thoroughly discussed, our very kind host left the steamer and went home, and we also sought the repose which we had so long been in need of, for Leopold and I had passed a fatiguing day, having been constantly moving about in this terrible heat since three o'clock in the morning.

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TENTH DAY.

It was early in the morning, and the sun had hardly risen, when my brother-in-law and I left our cabins and hastened on deck to look at the weather. Yesterday evening we had been afraid that it would be a wet disagreeable day, for the sky was heavily overcast when we retired to rest. However, a pretty strong east wind had kept off the rain, and only a thin light grey covering of cloud lay over the horizon, while in the east one could already see various patches of clear blue sky. There was therefore every prospect of the weather becoming quite clear towards noon, and of our having a very fine day for shooting.

By degrees all the gentlemen assembled on deck, and after breakfast Count Chotek came to fetch us for our excursion. My brother-in-law was to visit the nests of a Cinereous Vulture and of some other birds. Bombelles wished to take with him my clever jäger, Beck, and to go to the very shy pair of Sea-Eagles which I had missed two days ago. Brehm was anxious to betake himself to the Cinereous Vulture's nest where I had been so unlucky on the first afternoon of our arrival in the Fruška-Gora; and Homeyer felt an attraction towards the place where he had so fortunately bagged the rare Griffon Vulture, and resolved to go back and see whether the male bird would return to its nest.

Before me lay a long and distant expedition, for I was to go beyond the domains of Count Chotek, which extend over the northern and southern slopes and ridges of the Fruška-Gora, and to shoot in the forests belonging to some Greek

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monasteries. In the evening I was to drive back to the shooting-lodge and there meet my brother-in-law.

We left the steamer about six in the morning, and getting into the carts which were ready waiting, separated in various directions. My brother-in-law and I went straight towards the Fruška-Gora, and I then turned eastwards down-stream and drove a good way along the so-called highroad at the base of the hills. There the flats by the river bank widen out, and the space between the steep outlying heights and the Danube is chiefly occupied by marshy meadows and pastures. Lapwings and ducks peopled this ground, and I noticed a White Stork standing bolt upright on one leg a long way off. As this bird has now become rather rare in other parts of the Empire, and I had never shot it, I determined to try and approach it in the carriage, a manœuvre which succeeded fairly well, for it allowed us to come remarkably near. My jäger, however, persuaded me to fire a risky shot before we had got within really good range of it, and the poor bird flew over the river to the Hungarian plains only slightly wounded, while we regained the highroad by following a miserable and almost bottomless track through the marshes.

An extraordinary sort of cart had followed us from Čerevič with two fat and not over-clean Greek priests, who had most kindly invited us to shoot in their woods, by a letter written half in Servian and half in Latin, and very badly spelt. One of these priests had an extremely beautiful head, with long black hair falling in ringlets over his shoulders and a glossy black beard hanging down below his chest. The other was an old gentleman already rather bent.

Our way led us past a rather dilapidated farm-yard, also belonging to the monasteries, where pigs, miserable cattle, and emaciated horses were wandering about a meadow; and after a good half-hour we reached a village, drove through it, and passing a rather singular gipsy encampment penetrated

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into the interior of the outlying hills. The steep road now ran through a valley up to a high plateau, and then went on up and down hill through vineyards, stony pastures, and meadows to the Fruška-Gora.

Here the wooded heights receded further than at Čerevič, and much time was lost in getting to the true mountains, but the scenery was at many points very attractive. At a very awkward place in one of the defiles I noticed a beautifully coloured bird which I at once recognized as a Rock-Thrush, and thinking its plumage so very pretty, and that it would also be useful to the Savants for their measurements, I shot it.

In this district the margin of the forest is on the high plateau itself, and is not separated from the outlying hills by a valley as it is at Čerevič. First came hazel-copses and a few thorny thickets covered with wild roses, while the masses of rock which lay scattered among them gave this part of the country a very singular appearance. A pair of Common Kites were playing about above us, and we also saw a "Stein" Eagle cruising in the distance.

On reaching the forest the road became worse than the very worst I have ever driven on. Count Chotek had already taken leave of me, saying that he would await me at the shooting-lodge in the evening.

The Greek monastery, where these poor monks must lead a most monotonous and miserable existence, lay in a lonely glen to our right, almost hidden among the trees; and after we had been driving towards it for about half an hour along this most abominable road, which was bordered by thick bushes, the forester begged me to stop, as we were near an Imperial Eagle's nest. We now stole cautiously along a steep slope in the direction of the glen where the monastery was situated. The whole hillside was covered with dense underwood, above which rose a few very tall young oaks, on one of which stood the eagle's nest. It was useless to think

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of stalking up to it, for the bushes were too low to offer sufficient cover, and as soon as I had got within some two hundred yards the eagle, a very large and finely marked female, flew quickly out of the nest. A hut of boughs had been far too hastily arranged by the jägers, for I well knew that the place where they had put it was so visible that the bird would be sure to discover me. I therefore sent away the men, and crouched down close to the nest among the thick bushes that grew by the side of a little stream.

The female eagle kept constantly circling round the neighbourhood, and I often heard it uttering its clear sharp call, its whole behaviour being very restless and mistrustful. However, at last the great bird quieted down and came rapidly to the nest, flying once round the tree. It was a bad place to shoot from, and I was in a particularly unpleasant position when I fired. My first barrel evidently wounded it, but when I fired again it was already rather too far off. I sprang up to see where it would fall, but soon lost sight of it down the valley, and though I knew the direction in which it had doubtless dropped, the almost impenetrable nature of the undergrowth made all search useless.

By the advice of the jäger I now changed my position, and patiently waited to see what would happen, for there was still a good chance that the male, which had not shown itself near the nest for a long time, would come back to it with food; and this was just what took place, for the handsome bird, which was recognizable at a distance by its smaller size and less powerful build, soon approached my hiding-place, at first circling cautiously round it, sometimes settling on a distant oak, and only drawing nearer by degrees. Suddenly I heard a rush above my head—the eagle was at its nest.

Before I could get a good shot I heard the bird perch in a very leafy part of the tree, but could not see it from where I was, and to have taken the slightest step forwards would have

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been perfectly useless, for before I could have put up my gun it would have vanished among the thickets, so there was nothing for it but to wait quietly. A trying quarter of an hour went by, and I was shaking with excitement to such a degree that I could stand it no longer; the heat, too, was very oppressive, and the mosquitoes were torturing me. So, cocking my gun, I ran in as near as I could, thinking that the eagle might possibly be frightened by my sudden movement, and might sit long enough to allow of my shooting it. I succeeded in getting close up to the tree; but as the frightened bird dashed off I could neither see it properly nor raise my gun on account of the thick bushes, and when I at length tried to fire, the hammer caught in a branch and one barrel went off before I could aim.

There was now nothing more to hope for at this nest, so I returned to the cart much dejected, after telling some woodcutters and the herdsmen, who were going about with their large flocks, to make a still closer search for the wounded eagle. All their efforts, however, were unhappily unsuccessful.

There now began an hour of trouble and torture, for the road was so vile and so steep that the cart often stood at such an angle that it threatened to topple over, and we had finally to get out of it and follow a long way on foot; but luckily it was shady in the woods, so the sun could not torment us with its full power.

A slight refreshing shower also passed quickly over us, and then the sky gradually cleared until the deep blue above was perfectly cloudless.

We were driving through a splendid country, where the hills were higher than in the neighbourhood of Čerevič, and we went up and down along the most wonderful woodland valleys, and often through the most magnificent beech and oak woods. At last we reached the ridge of the mountain,

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where we could see through the branches another grand view of the distant heights of Servia.

On the very crest of the hill we were met by the entire staff of keepers belonging to the three monasteries of this district. It consisted of two brigand-looking fellows whom it would certainly have been imprudent to have encountered alone on a dark night. These men are appointed by all the monasteries in common, and, as we were informed by the forester, do not receive any pay whatever; so the poor fellows have to live upon the game, which they kill all the year round, without the slightest respect for any game-laws or close-time, selling some of it and eating the rest.

They were a couple of big robust men, with dark brown weather-beaten faces, long drooping moustaches, and jet-black ringleted hair, and would have served as fine characteristic models for the South Slavonian type of face. They wore a sort of spencer-like coat, with a thick leather waistcoat under it, and short wide trousers, while a big hunting-knife stuck in a belt, a wretched single-barrelled muzzle-loading rifle, a large ammunition-wallet, leggings, sandals, and finally a large hat and a twisted vine-stick formed the other accoutrements of these two very singular fellows.

The most striking thing about their attire was that it consisted of nothing but bits of rags which they had picked up and then sewn together; it therefore had a spotted harlequin sort of look, the general tone of the whole being dirty yellow.

One of the men had a kind of hound, which he led by a cord, a wolfish-looking beast—indeed so like a wolf that if one had met it in the dusk, one would undoubtedly have shot it as such. Both of them were very polite and even rather servile, for they at first wanted to kneel down, and they made all sorts of signs of the greatest devotion. Count Chotek's forester detested them and treated them with the greatest brusqueness, for these cloister-keepers are the very worst

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neighbours imaginable: no game-laws or sporting-rules are sacred to them, nor have they the slightest consideration for the adjoining proprietors.

We now drove along the crest of the mountain for a good half-hour more, the road being in some places so narrow that it fell away in steep slopes on either hand, and then we halted where the ridge of another chain of hills branched off obliquely towards the south. As we were out of the forester's domains he did not know what sort of a nest there was at this place, but the charming jägers of the monastery informed us that a large eagle with a bare head was here nesting on an oak tree. I naturally thought that we were going to encounter a Cinereous Vulture, especially as we had recently seen a pair of these birds flying swiftly along the side of the valley, and had also observed some others cruising about the outskirts of the mountains early in the morning.

Accompanied by the forester, I hastened along a wretched road leading down to the plains of the Save, which passed just under the tree on which the nest was situated, and I was still a few hundred yards away when I caught sight of it on the dead branches at the top of a huge oak. Neither its size nor its general construction led me to think that it was inhabited by a Cinereous Vulture; and I was right, for a dark-coloured eagle suddenly dashed out of it towards the valley, and the forester thought at the first glance that it was a "Stein" Eagle.

I now sent my attendant back to the trap, and crouched down near the nest, hidden by the stem of the tree; but hardly had I loaded my gun and got ready a little screen of branches, prepared for a long wait, when I saw a large shadow on the ground, and looking up as well as the glare of the sun would allow me, I noticed the great form of the eagle as it disappeared among the branches of the tree. I also soon heard the folding of its wings and the bustle it made inside its

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dwelling; so jumped up, holding my gun ready, and got close under the nest in a few strides. The eagle, however, heard me, and flew out of its abode on the side furthest away from me; but the first shot which I fired hit it hard, and the second brought it down to the ground with a broken wing, and sent it rolling down the slope.

I soon got up to it, but there was still plenty of life in the bird; so, not wishing to damage its plumage by a shot at close quarters, I tried to finish it with a knife, but it kept me off by striking out in all directions with beak and claws. I then cut a strong stick, but on approaching the eagle with this it darted towards me full of fight; so I called up my attendants, and it was only by the united efforts of three persons that the bird was at last suffocated.

It was not a "Stein" Eagle as I had confidently expected, for that shy bird seems never to breed in the Fruška-Gora; but I had, on the other hand, again met with a very finely marked Imperial Eagle.

Leaving the place, I went back to the trap and began another abominably rough drive to the next nest, uphill and downhill along the forest-track, keeping as well as I could make out to the east, and therefore quite in the opposite direction to Čerevič. In consequence of the wretched way in which the forests of these monasteries are managed, the woods were here much thinner, and instead of the century-old oaks of Čerevič, there were extensive clearings and low saplings; but one result of this was that we had a splendid open view.

We now again came to a very narrow ridge of the mountains. Right and left below us lay the broad valleys, meadows, woods, thickets, and glens of the Fruška-Gora, while the distant Hungarian plain presented itself before us like a mirage, and towards the south the Alps of Servia and Bosnia stood out clear and sharp, separated from us by the blue-green valley of the Save. It was, indeed, a noble view!

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Meanwhile we had reached the spot where we had to climb to another nest on the southern slope. I followed my guide up the hillside along a little footpath, and he soon pointed out to me the eyrie of an Imperial Eagle, placed on a young oak tree, in a very steep ravine, just at the level of the spot where we were standing. To my great astonishment I saw the splendidly plumaged bird on the edge of its nest; but as the distance was too great for shot, I grasped my rifle, and putting my arm round a young oak to steady myself, took a deliberate aim, fired, and the eagle fell crumpled up into its dwelling, the jäger crying out with delight, "There he lies in the nest!"

Hardly had he uttered the words when an unpleasant surprise followed, for the wounded eagle was thrown out of the nest, and the female flew off it from under him, the shot having knocked the male down on to the back of its mate, and both birds having remained for some seconds in that position. When it had fallen about halfway down the tree, the wounded eagle recovered its powers of flight, and sailed off towards the valley after its frightened spouse. Searching for anything in these intricate, thickly wooded hills is generally useless, and here, where Count Chotek's forester was not so well acquainted with the ground, there would certainly have been no hope of finding a wounded bird. I therefore crept under the nest to wait for the return of the uninjured female. Almost immediately below me was a beautiful woodland glade, where Cuckoos were flying up and down, and the most charming songs from the merry throats of many birds were wafted up from the valley, while now and again a Common Kite or a Buzzard flew past the place where I was sitting.

In about half an hour I saw the eagle returning, and heard its shrill call and the loud rush of its wings, now before me and now behind me. At last it came close, but I was so very well hidden behind a thick oak, that I could only

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hear the bustle it made as it settled on the edge of the nest, without seeing the arrival of the bird itself.. On hearing the noise I remained perfectly quiet, as I wanted to let the eagle get quite confident before I frightened it out of its dwelling; but, as I afterwards learnt from the jägers, it stayed a long time on the edge of its nest, and if I had bent forward a little I could easily have shot it down at a short range. When, after a few minutes, I did look out, the bird was again on the alert, having perhaps noticed the forester, who was concealed a few hundred yards away; and hardly had I stepped out of my ambush, when it dashed off, and the two shots which I fired at it were ineffective, for, though a few feathers fell, the eagle seemed to be quite sound.

There was therefore no further chance of a shot at the pair belonging to this nest, and they were quite lost to me; so I walked slowly up the hillside to the trap, much annoyed and blaming myself for my clumsiness.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the sun was burning fiercely, while far away in the south a storm was passing over the Bosnian mountains. We had now come to the end of the nests that we already knew of; but these excellent keepers declared that a few days ago they had found another nest, where, according to their account, a smaller hawk was breeding, but such was their entire lack of sporting and ornithological knowledge, that they could not describe what it looked like. I therefore resolved to hurry to it as quickly as I could, and try to retrieve by a fresh success my mishaps at the two nests of the Imperial Eagles.

Our road now took us back along the mountain-ridge in an easterly direction; and this part of the drive I employed in devouring a bit of bread which was all that had been put in the game-bag, for I was terribly hungry, and there was no other food obtainable for far and wide.

For about half an hour we drove obliquely down the

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southern slope, along a wretched road, and halted near a spur of the mountain which jutted out a good way towards the valley of the Save. This was a singularly beautiful point, for to the left we beheld extensive clearings, surrounded on all sides by forests, and to the right, below the hills, lay wooded valleys, terminating in fields and meadows, so that we were quite close to the most southerly slopes of this steep mountain-range.

It took me another quarter of an hour to walk through a thin oak wood before I got to a pulpit-like projection of the mountain, with almost perpendicular sides. On the very top of this stood a huge and extremely old oak, incredibly broad, but very low, a tree of that variety so common in Northern Hungary which always grows laterally instead of vertically, and whose trunks get thicker and thicker, but never attain any height.

While still a long way off I could see on its topmost branches a great grey-brown nest, with a Cinereous Vulture standing in it; and at our approach the bird flew slowly off, being followed by its mate from the interior of the nest. I was now lost in admiration of the marvellous knowledge of birds displayed by one of these keepers, who, on seeing the vultures, said to me that these were the little hawks which he had always seen here; for, as well as I could understand him, by the help of Bohemian, the Cinereous Vulture was, in his estimation, a smaller and less important bird than the Imperial Eagle.

Concealing myself as well as I could close to the stem of the nesting-tree, I waited to see what would happen, the forester and the local keepers meanwhile going back some distance to hide themselves: I had now leisure to take an accurate survey of my surroundings, and saw through the tree-tops a pretty good view of the luxuriantly green valley of the Save, through which the mighty river wound in sharp curves, and of the

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Servian mountains, which, lit up by the afternoon sun, were shining in their loveliest colours, while from the vale below me sounded the tinkling of the cattle-bells and the merry shouts of the herdsmen ringing up into the hills.

I must have been quite close to the outskirts of the woods, and I fancy that this was undoubtedly the furthest point reached by us during all our excursions in the Fruška-Gora. One of the Cinereous Vultures was circling round the hill-tops, and seemed to have already become quite unsuspicious; but though I sometimes heard the rush of its wings, and its croaking cry, yet it did not approach the nest for a good half-hour.

Several times it seemed to me as if there was a smaller bird in company with the vulture, and I was thinking whether it could be an eagle, when all at once my attention was attracted by a tremendous rush above my head. It was not at all like the steady wing-beats of an approaching vulture, but much the same sort of noise as one often hears out chamois-shooting, when a stone, loosened by the game, rolls down a precipice. This sound came nearer and nearer, and suddenly I saw a ball, formed of two birds entangled together with their huge wings hanging loosely down. At first I did not know what to make of the whole affair, for this extraordinary apparition instantly vanished, and I heard it heavily strike the nest, from the edge of which such quantities of twigs were falling, that, sitting as I was so very close to the tree, I could not look up without getting some of them in my face.

There I sat in utter amazement, while the disturbance inside the nest kept increasing, for I had no idea of what was going on above me, and more than a minute must have passed before I cautiously looked up, and saw at one time the great wing of a Cinereous Vulture, and at another a smaller pinion projecting from the nest. At last the bald head of the

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vulture, with its gaping beak, appeared, instantly vanished again, and was followed by the yellowish feathered head of a noble "Stein" Eagle, with its powerful beak open and ready for fighting.

Extraordinary and unexpected as this was, I now knew what it all meant, especially from its occurring at this nest; for, as our collective observations showed, the "Stein" Eagle pursues the Cinereous Vulture wherever it finds it, the hatred of these birds towards each other being quite remarkable; but it is chiefly near the nest that the eagle endeavours to annoy its larger, but less powerfully armed opponent in every conceivable way. These birds had evidently had an aerial quarrel about something, and had come down fighting and entangled together, while the battle was now going on inside the nest of the vulture.

I wanted to kill the more active eagle during the fight, but it was only for an instant that I saw either the head of the vulture or that of the eagle, so, as it would have been far too great a risk to have shot, I waited.

Presently the nest swayed, the branches cracked, and amid a cloud of dust and small twigs a gigantic Cinereous Vulture fell out of the nest straight towards me, with loosely hanging wings. It did not fly away at once, but tumbled like a wounded bird down the stem of the tree on to one of the thickest branches, and there tried to spread its wings and seek safety in flight. I took advantage of this moment, and gave it a full dose of BB in its breast, which was facing me, within a few paces. This knocked it down again, and in an instant it lay dead at my feet.

The echo of the shot was still booming through the lonely woodland valleys when another loud disturbance took place in the nest, and a powerful "Stein" Eagle dashed away from the further side of the oak, followed by a great Cinereous Vulture. Perfectly staggered by this extraordinary sight

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and trembling with excitement, I let slip the best moment for firing my second barrel at the eagle, and it was not until the bird was a good way off that I shot, but unfortunately without any result.

The fact of the fight between the eagle and the vulture having taken place inside the nest, on the back of the sitting vulture was the most interesting part of the whole affair, and if, instead of having witnessed it myself, it had been told me by any other sportsman, I should never have believed it.

There I had been, too, hiding under the nest, thinking that both the vultures had left the place, while the faithful mother, heedless of my proximity, had been squatting on her eggs the whole time.

I can easily understand that everybody will think this tale most incredible ; but on telling it to Brehm, he very justly said:—"How little we know of the rarer birds of prey, confined as they are to these wild districts, where so few people have had an opportunity of observing their habits ; and how many interesting and curious scenes doubtless take place among these raptorial creatures, who, fully conscious of their great strength, fight furiously with each other, either about plunder or their nesting-places."

I dragged the very unsavoury vulture, as best I could, to the spot where the forester was hidden, and one can hardly believe what a burden such a bird is ; for its broad loose wings, plump body, and its very repulsive character make it seem almost heavier to carry than a gralloched roebuck.

The forester was also much astonished at what he had seen, for he had an open view from the edge of the clearing, and told me that long before the final battle was fought out at the nest he had observed the Cinereous Vulture and the Eagle struggling in the air, and had noticed their disappearance among the trees, in the direction of my ambush. As we were returning by the same path, along the crest of the mountain,

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the shadow of a vulture glided over the ground in front of us, and we soon heard the great bird settle on an oak not far off, but it had already been made wary by the shots, and, on my trying to steal up, flew away before I could get a clear sight of it.

On reaching the edge of the clearing I observed a beautiful pair of Pygmy Eagles playfully wheeling about. The smaller bird had a dazzling white breast, and was evidently the male, while the female was clad in a homely dress of dark brown; this being the second time that I had seen a paired couple of these birds varying in colour. When they came pretty near me I fired, first at the male and then at the female; but I had miscalculated the distance, and the shots were quite ineffectual. I also saw some Imperial Eagles cruising round the mountain-tops a long way off.

In somewhat less than a quarter of an hour we got to our cart, and I said good-bye to the very superior jägers of the Greek monasteries, who, made happy with their gratuities, overflowed with compliments and farewell speeches, and kept shouting out their thanks long after the trap had driven off.

Our road now conducted us in a westerly direction, along the highest ridge of the mountains. It was a glorious afternoon: the sun was sinking towards the west; a gentle breeze rustled through the tree-tops, and the oppressive heat of the day gradually began to subside. We rattled along, mostly through the luxuriantly green woods, where a clearing or a low coppice now and then afforded us an open view of the splendid heights of Servia and the adjacent Turkish provinces. On our right the mountains sloped more gently, only becoming steeper a long way off, and from time to time we caught a distant glimpse of the blue line of the Danube and of the Hungarian plains.

After we had been driving for about half an hour, we met

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a couple of queer-looking men, not calculated to inspire much confidence; and these were, with the exception of a few herdsmen, the only human beings not belonging to our party whom we had encountered during the whole of our wanderings in the Fruška-Gora. Wretched clothes in perfect tatters covered their sturdy forms, and their whole appearance was of the thorough South Slavonic type. They asked us the way to Čerevič, and a little while afterwards again emerged from the wood, having apparently taken a short cut, and run after us. One of them, a young man of about twenty, drew himself up in good military style, and told me that he belonged to the reserve of the Grand Duke Leopold's 53rd Regiment of Infantry, and that he was now on his way to the manœuvres, but had no money for continuing his journey, as he had been driven away by the cholera from Southern Bulgaria, where throughout the winter he had been in service with the Russians as a woodcutter in their various camps. After receiving a slight gratuity they vanished as quickly as they had appeared.

Our road now led us up and down, along steep hillsides, over wooded summits, and through little glades and thickets to the "Prince Eugene's road" already mentioned. Along this we drove a short way, and then turned towards the northern slopes of the mountains, where a steep wretched track, along part of which we had to walk, brought us into regions already familiar to us; for we passed a Sea-Eagle's nest lately visited by Bombelles, at which the forester said Prince Hohenlohe had killed a Cinereous Vulture some years ago, and which was now inhabited by Sea-Eagles. We afterwards arrived at the place where I had pursued the Cinereous Vultures on the first afternoon. The terrible condition of the forest-roads that we traversed during this drive baffles all description; but the views they afforded us of the lonely woodland valleys and the lofty rustling beech woods

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were wonderfully picturesque. I here often noticed the tracks of large wolves imprinted in the deep mud.

Further and further we penetrated into these already known districts, though I had some difficulty in recognizing them, as all these woody valleys are so much alike; and at last, after nearly three hours of driving, we saw far below us, in a lonely grassy valley, the very place where the decoy-hut stood at which I had yesterday shot the young Sea-Eagle. Our driver now touched up the tired horses, and we drove at a quick gallop along the verge of an almost perpendicular slope, and over the most breakneck places, down to the bottom of the valley, and in another quarter of an hour reached the shooting-lodge.

It was half-past seven in the evening, the sun had already vanished behind the mountain-tops, the shades were deepening, the last of the birds singing, and the still repose of a lovely night soon fell. I found my brother-in-law and Count Chotek waiting for me in front of the house, where I unloaded my spoils, and briefly related the interesting events of this splendid day, the memory of which will be among the most permanent of my many sporting recollections.

Leopold had to-day been very unlucky at the nests allotted to him, and had, for the first time, come back empty-handed. He had severely wounded a Cinereous Vulture in the side with ball, and had distinctly seen the great bird drop in the valley; but all the efforts that were made to find it were, for the first day or two, unsuccessful, and when it was at last found, and sent after us to Vienna, it unfortunately arrived in a very high condition.

It was a wonderful evening, and until the long-desired meal was quite ready we sat in front of the house consulting with Count Chotek over the plans for the morrow, and came to the conclusion that we would set off again during the night and go to the rocks which Brehm thought so much of,

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although the darkness would make the road thither difficult and even somewhat dangerous. There we intended to hide ourselves for a few hours near the kid which the Savants had left lying in front of the decoy-hut, and then to go back to the steamer and make an afternoon excursion for Spotted Eagles among the "au" woods on the Hungarian side of the river. This would, alas! be the last day that we could spend with Count Chotek, as time was pressing and the Kovil forest was awaiting us; so, in spite of our very kind host's friendly invitations to prolong our stay, we resolved to leave this district to-morrow and to travel further down-stream.

When the plans for the ensuing morning had been thoroughly settled, the Count left us, and drove back to Čerevič to put the further arrangements in train, and we retired into the snug little shooting-lodge, took a hasty meal, and, after a pleasant chat and a cigar, sought the repose which we stood pretty much in need of.

My "Blak" was made to lie down on the wolf-skin under my bed, just as on the first night that we slept here, and my brother-in-law carefully arranged his gun and cartridges; but again all our preparations were in vain, for nothing would induce the famous robbers to attack us.

By nine o'clock all was quiet in the lodge, and every one was trying to recruit himself for the fatigues of the morrow.

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ELEVENTH DAY.

About half-past two our jägers awoke us; and when we had quickly disposed of the chocolate prepared by the worthy Dionisio, our guns and ammunition were got ready, and again we sallied out into the dark woods of the Fruška-Gora. It was a disagreeable morning, for the sky had clouded over during the night and not a star was visible. We drove along the bottom of the valley at a slow trot, followed by two grooms riding the ponies with which we had been furnished, our route being precisely the same as that by which I had descended last evening; and if it had proved unpleasant in the daylight, one can imagine what it was at night—especially those steep narrow slopes which led up to the mountain-heights.

We often had to get out of the carts and walk behind them a long way, while woodcutters with lanterns ran in front of the horses to show the road. I remember one place which neither Leopold nor I much liked, though we are not at all nervous or afraid of bad roads; for on the right, close to the road, a steep slope descended into a deep valley, and on the left the hillside dropped sheer down into the depths below within a foot of the track. There was, however, but a small stretch of this sort of thing.

After driving about two hours, we began the last steep incline before reaching "Prince Eugene's road" on the crest of the mountains, and here we resolved to abandon the carts; so, calling up the grooms, we mounted Count Chotek's capital ponies and hurried on in front, our jägers following on foot more quickly than if they had stuck to the

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vehicles. Tiresome and disagreeable as this drive was, I shall never forget it; for it was a fine wild expedition, utterly unlike the modern civilized form of shooting which we have to put up with in most European countries, and the dark lofty forests, the lonely woodland valleys, and the marvellous mountain-ranges, all enveloped in the deep gloom of an inhospitable night, made the scene look most romantic.

Day was breaking when we reached the ridge; for faint glimmerings of light—the heralds of the rising sun—were visible in the east, and a fresh morning wind was dispersing the clouds. The woods and valleys beneath us, the Save, and the low-lying Hungarian plains were still merged in the darkness of the night; while the mountains of Servia and Bosnia rose before us, indistinct and ghostly in their outlines. It was a grandly picturesque view.

The earliest of the birds now began to bestir themselves: Tree-Pipits and Blackbirds broke into song, Thrushes hopped about under the bushes, and Robins, frightened by our horses, flew chirping across the road; while the notes of a few Cuckoos heralded the sunrise among the lonely woodland glens, and the Owls were winding up their nocturnal ditties.

It was past four o'clock, and the twilight was pretty well advanced, when we struck towards the northern slope of the mountains, along a path so overgrown with thick bushes as to make riding very disagreeable, for we had great difficulty in protecting our faces, and especially our eyes, from rough contact with the branches.

On the highest part of the ridge was a little glade surrounded by a thick copse. Here we halted, took our guns and cartridge-bags, and, accompanied by the head forester, walked along a steep, stony, and thinly-wooded hillside, and in about ten minutes saw the forms of the aforesaid rocks. At this remarkably interesting spot the

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hillsides all descend to the valley from a certain point at a sharp incline; and where the wood finishes off with a few great oaks, beeches, and hawthorn thickets, there begins a regular moraine, such as one so often meets with in the glorious Alps. The breadth of this moraine is not greater than two hundred yards, and on both sides it is bordered by very stony woods. Some forty paces from the place where the trees terminate there rises from this débris of stones a group of rocky pinnacles like the dolomitic rocks occurring in some of the southern valleys of Tyrol or the remarkable formations of the Saxon and Bohemian Switzerland.

Below these pinnacles the moraine runs down to the valley still more abruptly, and at its base is a lovely green glade through which flows a noisy and stony brook, while the face of the opposite hill is covered with splendid beech woods. The place has altogether a remarkably picturesque character, and from the rocks there is a wonderful view along this wooded valley, and over the lower heights and summits down to the Hungarian plains.

We easily found Brehm's leafy hut and the kid, which already smelt very bad; and as soon as the forester had departed, we crept into the hiding-place and, getting our guns ready, waited patiently for something to come: but two or three hours passed without our seeing either an eagle or a vulture, even in the far distance. Some Wood-Pigeons and other forest-birds were playing merrily about, and we once heard the shrill call of the beautiful Imperial Eagle, but that was all. We had evidently come too early; for it was probably at some other time of the day that the raptorial birds frequented this spot, and it is remarkable with what regularity these creatures keep to their hours. We therefore recognized the futility of remaining, and left our ambush in very depressed spirits.

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Before going away we determined to make a close inspection of the place, and descending the moraine clambered about the various pinnacles. Both rocks and stones were all thickly covered with droppings, especially with those of eagles and vultures; for it seemed to be a place where the birds were in the habit of taking a siesta after dinner. Bones of birds and other vertebrate creatures, and castings of wool, were lying round about; and we found a good deal of hair and some fragments of a dismembered roe. I also collected some fine wing-feathers of the Cinereous Vulture and the down both of the Sea- and the noble Eagles, which the birds had torn from each other in fighting for their perches.

Having finished our inspection, we went back to the glade by the same route, and after looking about a little while found the carts and the saddle-horses. Giving the jägers directions to follow us in the former, and taking our guns and cartridge-bags, my brother-in-law and I mounted the ponies and trotted down the steepish path, under the guidance of Count Chotek's trainer, who followed us on a third pony. We soon lost sight of the carts, and had a very interesting ride, sometimes trotting and sometimes galloping, along the crest of the mountain, and then uphill and downhill through valleys, forest-glades, and most beautiful beech woods. The ponies went capitally at the quicker paces, and it was a singular sight to see the riders tearing through the quiet solitudes of these woods, with their guns and cartridge-bags slung over their shoulders.

The weather had meanwhile cleared, the clouds had broken up, and the sun from time to time poured its fierce rays upon the earth. After a good long ride we had got utterly astray, and found ourselves in a magnificent valley which we had never before visited. To the left it was bounded by wooded slopes, and to the right by a long bushy

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clearing, where there were only a few somewhat taller trees, on the tops of which were sitting eight or ten Cinereous Vultures. Such a number of big birds all together looked very imposing; and on one oak sapling I remember having seen four of these heavy creatures, their weight making the tree literally bend. We at once determined to ride up to them; but as it was very hard work for the poor horses to get through the thick scrub, we dismounted and, leaving them with the trainer, hurried up to the aforesaid trees as fast as we could—I armed with my double-barrelled gun, and my brother-in-law carrying his rifle.

When we had got within about a hundred and fifty paces, the vultures flew off one after another, and only one remained sitting on a dead branch with its breast turned towards us. To have shot at it with the gun would have been utterly useless; so, as my brother-in-law was even still more out of breath than I was, he unslung his rifle and gave it to me, and, aiming as well as I could, I fired, but unfortunately missed, and the vulture spread its heavy wings and slowly flew off to a neighbouring wood.

Returning to our horses we mounted again, and soon afterwards saw the same flock of vultures perched in just the same fashion on the edge of another wood not far off, and on trying to approach them very nearly succeeded in getting within shot.

We now found ourselves standing on the top of a hill, quite at a loss what to do; for the thick wooded valleys and clearings by which we were quite surrounded were so very like each other that we had no idea in what part of the country we really were. Even the trainer had lost his bearings. We therefore just rode on in the line which seemed most likely to be right.

While trotting along we were lucky enough to meet with the head forester, who, on hearing our shots, had hurried

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up in his cart to guide us back to the right road, and we now went on, over stock and stone, the cart following as well as it could, and in half an hour reached the decoy-hut in the well-known valley. There we determined to lie in wait, as we had still some time to spare; and on getting within a few yards of our ambush, we saw, wheeling round at a great height, a flock of ten or twelve vultures and several eagles, who had doubtless detected the dead horse, and were looking about to see whether there was any appearance of danger, while two other large birds of prey were cruising over a clearing nearer the ground. An hour passed quickly by, and though we distinctly heard the hoarse cries of the birds, and saw them circling high overhead, still none of them would come down to the exposed bait.

We therefore left the place, went back to the carts, and drove towards the outlying hills, past the shooting-lodge, to which we bade a last sad farewell; for the few days that we had spent among these charming woods and mountains had made us both very fond of them, and it was with feelings of great regret that we looked back at the summits of the Fruška-Gora when we had got outside the woods. Such hunting-grounds as these Slavonian mountains are now indeed but rarely to be met with in our realms, and they offer to the sportsman, who prefers hard work and wild interesting game to easy civilized shooting, everything that he can desire.

The day had now become quite fine, the heat grew more and more unbearable, the insects kept buzzing about, and the air was so sultry and oppressive that we had hopes that there would soon be a storm to clear and cool it.

The well-known way was quickly traversed, the village of Čerevič rapidly passed, and we reached the steamer, where we found the gentlemen waiting on deck to tell us what they had done yesterday. Brehm had just come back from a

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search for small birds in the vineyards, and had brought with him a fine Lesser Grey Shrike and three other little birds, shot for scientific purposes. We had seen none of our companions since yesterday morning, and found that Bombelles had in the interim killed at the nest the Sea-Eagle which I had missed some days ago, but had unfortunately failed to shoot its mate. He had seen how these birds carried large carp to their young, and how they left the fish lying for them on a thick branch when they detected the presence of danger. The eagle which Bombelles had killed dropped one of these big fish, which the man who was with him took home to eat. He had also shot a Black Kite from a nest close by; and on his way back the keepers took him to a nest which they had always pointed out as the abode of a Kite, and to which I was to have gone a couple of days ago, but had declined to do so, as I had so often killed that very common bird and wanted to economize my time for the pursuit of Cinereous Vultures. Bombelles had shot the so-called Kite, which turned out to be a very beautiful Spotted Eagle. This added a new bird to our collection, as it was the first specimen of this very dark-coloured eagle which we had obtained. Brehm had also distinguished himself yesterday; for he had gone to the vulture's nest to which I had already paid a fruitless visit, and had killed the very large female with a lucky rifle-shot. It had, however, remained lying in the nest, and was only got out the following morning, and, curiously enough, brought by the keepers to our cart; so that we had the pleasure of handing it over to Brehm. He had also severely wounded the male of this nest with shot; but it got away, and though at the time all search for it was unsuccessful, it afterwards reached Vienna in a rather high condition. Homeyer had employed the day in making notes, and had returned empty-handed.

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When we also had related our experiences and exchanged our notes, we had luncheon served—the steamer all the while lying quietly behind Čerevič; for we had decided to defer our excursion to the Hungarian side for a couple of hours.

We were all very sorry at having to leave this splendid mountain-range, with which were connected perhaps the most delightful of the many charming incidents of our journey.

The village of Čerevič, too, has a bright friendly look and is inhabited by good patriotic people. Brehm felt the parting much; and long will this naturalist live in the memories of these honest Slavonians, as he greatly contributed to their enjoyment by improvising country fêtes; for on the evenings when my brother-in-law and I slept in the shooting-lodge, our friend Brehm collected the female population of Čerevič on the meadow near our steamer, and got the girls to perform the national "Kolo" dance for him. A wretched bagpiper, who had once played on board, was soon unearthed, and to the accompaniment of his ear-splitting instrument the loveliest ladies of Čerevič bobbed round this German naturalist, who, seated on a stool within the circle, kept encouraging the dancers by presents. Naturally the whole village soon turned out, and so regular public festivities were organized—the country-people standing dumbfounded round this stranger, who conversed with them in a language of signs, and whom they probably took for a magician. In afterdays, songs will doubtless be sung in Čerevič in praise of this kindly visitor.

In the evening we summoned the band of gipsy musicians who live in Čerevič, and made them play to us during dinner in their mournful fashion; for there is no kind of music which I find so fascinating as the sad wild strains of the violins and cymbalos of these swarthy sons of the "Puszta."

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The time for saying good-bye at last came; so we all got into the 'Vienna,' and prepared to go over to the Hungarian side. The inhabitants were all assembled on the meadow outside the village; and at the last moment a young Servian girl gave me a bouquet, while all waved their hats as a parting greeting. We now slanted towards the left bank, and, rounding an island thickly overgrown with willow bushes, turned into one of the arms of the river, and approached the village of Futak through a narrow belt of woods. Grey, Purple, and Squacco Herons, Terns, and Kites flew over us, and White Storks were standing by the bank and on the tops of the houses. A number of people who had assembled at the landing-place gave me an enthusiastic welcome; and among the carriages which were there awaiting us was a very smart four-in-hand, belonging to Count Chotek. Our arrangements were now quickly made. The two Savants were sent off by the Count to the little stretch of "auen" up-stream, where there were some nests of the smaller hawks; while my brother-in-law and I, accompanied by our kind host, were to take a drive to the woods below the village, instructions having been given that the steamer should meet us at Futak by a certain hour, in order that we might resume our journey.

Everything being settled, we drove in the four-in-hand through the village, where the breadth of the streets and the style of the buildings were thoroughly Hungarian; but the cleanliness of the houses and gardens clearly showed that they belonged to Swabian colonists, by whom Futak is altogether peopled.

The Count's castle stands in a park at the further end of the village; but it was at present in a very woful condition, having been much damaged by a recent fire. Close behind it we turned to the north, and drove out into the "puszta." Before us lay the broad Hungarian plains, the

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vast monotony of their lonely sand-flats being only broken by high draw-wells and scattered troops of horses. Behind us were the gay gables and the thatched roofs of Futak, with the luxuriantly green woods of the riverside both above and below it, while in the distance the whole range of the Fruška-Gora with its many heights and summits rose in such solemn grandeur that it was long before I could turn away my eyes from those splendid mountains; for when gazing on their dark woods the memories of delightful days of sport floated past me like dreams, and awakened within me a feeling that was somewhat akin to home sickness.

Still the picture of the "puszta" which now unrolled itself before us was also beautiful and singularly imposing; and the lowering grey sky, the heavy thunder-clouds slowly piling themselves up, and the oppressive sultriness of the air all combined to give the scene a true melancholy Hungarian character.

Lapwings and Larks were uttering their cries as they flew over the plains; and round a solitary well a whole flock of thirsty Storks were standing with open bills.

Never having killed a White Stork, I resolved to bag one of these poor fellows; and as there was a very fine specimen standing just on the top of the well, I waited till the carriage got close up, and then fired, the stork falling dead; while all the comrades of the unlucky victim rose in affright and circled round us at a great height before gradually dropping down to the village.

We now struck eastwards and soon reached a little wood, where a keeper who knew of some nests was awaiting us.

Though there are some unimportant "auen" close to the river and on the islands formed by its arms, the few large and small patches of wood between these "auen" and the plains are true inland woods, chiefly composed of oaks, with a thick undergrowth.

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Into one of these covers, which was formed of very fine high trees and surrounded by fields, my brother-in-law and I now entered and crept cautiously forwards.

This wood, like all those situated among fields, was richly stocked with a great variety of birds, such as Wood-Pigeons, Stock-Doves, Turtle-Doves, Jackdaws, Orioles, Hoopoes, Kestrels, Woodpeckers, &c.; and quite a multitude of small songsters of all sorts were fluttering among the leafy tree-tops. We could already see in the distance the medium-sized nest of some sort of hawk; but the old keeper, who did not seem much versed in ornithology, declared that, though he had often seen its owner, he did not know what it was. We therefore cautiously approached the place; and when we had got within a few yards of the tree a tolerably large bird glided quickly from the nest and fell to the first shot. It proved to be a fine powerful Spotted Eagle—at which I was much delighted, for it was the first time that I had ever been fortunate enough to shoot this beautiful inhabitant of the eastern part of our continent.

Only a few yards away there was a Raven's nest upon a very high elm; so that we again found this shy and interesting bird in a perfectly flat district, and close to the edge of a little wood surrounded by fields. The two Ravens, much more wary than any eagle, swept round over our heads in great circles, uttering their monotonous grating cry; and in vain we hid for some time near the nest, for the birds would not come near us.

Before leaving the place I struck the stem of an oak tree, whereupon one of the young Ravens, which were already quite big and fully feathered, hopped out of the nest, and I shot the plump fellow; while the two others were brought down by our climber, as an addition to our menagerie.

A little further on, the keeper showed us a second

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Spotted Eagle's nest; but unfortunately the bird, having been put on the alert by the previous shots, flew off before we could get near enough to it.

My brother-in-law now hid himself in a thicket to await the Eagle's return; while I slanted across the wood to the carriages, finding on the way several empty nests, but only one tenanted, and that by a Crow, whom I let live in peace, as I did not want to frighten away any better bird by shooting. Two shots soon sounded, in suspiciously quick succession; and in a few minutes my brother-in-law appeared, without an eagle, having missed the bird as it was flying up to the nest. We now got into the carriages and drove along a road running through waving corn-fields and little woods, towards another cover of somewhat larger dimensions.

During the drive we saw two very fine roebucks crossing the fields from wood to wood, while a Short-toed Eagle, some Spotted Eagles, and some Black Kites were circling aloft, and great numbers of Wood-Pigeons were whirring about between the fields and the trees.

We now halted at the edge of a beautiful little wood, where the undergrowth was very dense, and where a narrow footpath led us into dark shady recesses covered with a perfect roof of leaves.

The first nest we came to was a Spotted Eagle's, and my brother-in-law posted himself ready to shoot, while I stole up to the tree to drive out the bird; and scarcely had the frightened eagle quitted its dwelling, when Leopold knocked it down with a good shot.

A little way further on we found a Kite's nest, from which the forked tail of the beautiful bird protruded a long way. I was quite sure that it was the Black Kite, which is so very abundant in Hungary, and not the Common Kite, which we had so seldom met with during our journey.

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However, to our great astonishment, one of the latter birds dashed out at the first noise; and though we both fired a couple of shots at this wide-awake hawk it did not fall, but disappeared among the bushes hard hit, and, not being found by the keepers for some days, it arrived at Vienna in a useless state—the only result attained being the filling-up of the gap in our shooting-list which the Common Kite had threatened to create.

I now hurried off to another Spotted Eagle's nest, a few hundred yards further on. The dwelling of this handsome bird was placed in the middle of a very thick and leafy tree, surrounded by dense almost impenetrable underwood, and I had difficulty in finding a spot sufficiently open to shoot from. The eagle did not fly off until the tree had been repeatedly struck; and though both my shots hit it, they were unfortunately not fatal. It then settled on a tree not far off, but on my coming up fluttered on again somewhat further; and in this way I several times caught sight of it, but never got sufficiently near to give it a finishing shot, nor was it ever subsequently found. As time was now pressing, we hastened along to the edge of the wood, scrambling through the thick bushes as best we could, and putting up on the way a big roebuck, which instantly vanished into the depths of the cover.

We soon reached the border of the wood, where, to our left, stretched billowy corn-fields, with their wind-swept ears swishing like the waves of the sea. Heavy clouds were coming up over the summits of the Slavonian mountains, and the distant rumbling of the thunder mingled harmoniously with the shrill cries of the birds. In a few minutes we got to the carriages, and as the time for our departure was approaching we abandoned some kites' nests in the opposite wood, and drove off along a beautiful road, which, beginning by passing through woods, meadows, and cornfields, and

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finishing by winding through a short stretch of sandy "Puszta," brought us to Futak.

Rattling through the long street of the village, we arrived at the landing-place, where Brehm and Homeyer were already waiting. The former had severely wounded a Goshawk at its nest, the bird being found some days later, but unfortunately reaching Vienna in a useless condition.

A great crowd of people had assembled at the pier: the notables of the village gave me a hearty greeting, and the maidens presented me with posies; and then came the sorrowful moment of bidding farewell to our very kind host, Count Chotek, who, throughout our stay in his domains, had welcomed us all in the kindest possible way, and had been most indefatigable in taking care of his guests. He is the type of a noble hospitable host and of a true *Grand Seigneur*. When we were all on board, we got under weigh and moved off, followed by the friendly cheers of the crowd.

Our menagerie had also here received a material addition; for, while we were busy shooting at Futak, a peasant boarded the steamer shortly before it left Čerevič, bringing with him the Sea-Eagle which Bombelles had winged with a ball on the afternoon of our arrival. He had found the bird sitting below its nest in a woodland stream of the Fruška-Gora and had at once secured it. Its fast of several days had made the noble robber so tame that it quietly allowed itself to be touched and stroked, nor was it until the following day that it recovered and again displayed its ordinary ferocity and strength. It is now an inmate of the Schönbrunn Menagerie.

We soon lost sight of Futak, and the mountains near Čerevič retreated further and further, while we stood on deck regretfully looking back at these splendid wooded heights to which we had now said adieu.

On the right bank the barren outlying hills, with their

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steep slopes and numerous villages, approached close to the river; while the left side was bordered by woods, islands, and, in some places, by the open country.

On the right we also saw a large park, adorned with tall trees, in the midst of which rose a castle. This beautiful residence belongs to Count Pejacsevich.

Peterwardein, with its steep heights crowned with ramparts, soon came into view. This venerable grey old fortress, with its picturesque situation, looks very fine from the Danube; and with all the accessories of the setting sun gleaming through the ragged sky, the huge heavy storm-clouds rolling up, and the distant thunder, the old stronghold made quite a splendid picture. We passed it without stopping.

There were some steamers lying by the bank, and among them two of the Danube monitors. A number of officers were standing on the bridge of boats, and in the fortress the bugle was just sounding to prayers, while the guards on the decks of the monitors were firing a salute at the lowering of the colours at sundown. Opposite Peterwardein an arm of the river forms the large slightly wooded "Kriegs Insel."

This evening the sunset was a really wonderful sight—the last rays of the sun shining through the woods and gilding the waters of the Danube, while a gentle breeze rustled through the trees, and the western sky was glowing with purple-red. As soon as we had passed Peterwardein we all left the deck and sat down to dinner; and shortly afterwards the steamer stopped at Karlowitz, for the darkness prevented our journeying any further.

The evening flew quickly by in talking over the glorious days in the Fruška-Gora; and after getting our measurements and note-books into order, we all retired to our cabins for our much-desired repose.

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TWELFTH DAY.

About six o'clock we were awakened by our men, and, speedily donning our shooting-attire, we hastened on deck and found that it was a cold, rainy, and most disagreeable morning, everything being enveloped in a uniform, detestable, light grey, while thin mists were floating up and down the river.

The steamer had left Karlowitz very early, and when we sat down to breakfast we were only a little way from the village of Kovil, the final goal of our journey. Hodek had already come to meet us at Karlowitz, bringing very good news from the forests which were now to serve as our hunting-grounds for a couple of days.

To our great regret we learned from our men that while we were still asleep the steamer had, on several occasions, passed within easy shot of Sea-Eagles on the sandbanks, and at one spot my jäger had counted as many as six of these great birds sitting bolt upright; but while pacing the deck and smoking our after-breakfast cigars, we saw nothing but a few flocks of Grey and Purple Herons and some Black Terns still on their upstream migration to their breeding-places.

The character of the country was very monotonous and almost ugly, with its low grey-green "auen" on the left bank, and on the right broad fields and heaths, alternating with equally insignificant woods.

We soon reached Kovil, which lies among fields and sand-hills on the left side of a broad arm of the river, and is separated from the main stream by a large island.

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The whole surroundings of this village are of the true Hungarian type, for wide plains stretch towards the north, and the monotony of the scene is only slightly varied by a number of small islands covered with copses.

To the south we saw the chain of the Kalahač hills floating indistinctly before us, with their tops swathed in grey rain-clouds. These low ugly heights extend nearly as far as Slankamen, and are really the eastern spurs of the Fruška-Gora.

The immediate neighbourhood of our anchorage had a rather cheerless look, for an island, most of which was flooded, and across which we had to construct a very primitive bridge, separated us from the village, where the low houses were swimming in mire and muck, and the only high buildings which gave the place a slight varnish of civilization were its two churches, and the Greek monastery close to our vessel. Behind the village there was also a little wood of very fine trees.

On our arrival we at once left the steamer, and getting into wretched country carts drove off to the Kovil forest, so renowned for its wealth of raptorial birds.

While we were away shooting, our vessel was to go down the river to coal at Tittel, and we were to find it at its present anchorage when we returned in the evening.

My brother-in-law and I decided to pursue the birds of prey in the same wood, the two Savants preferring to look for marsh and water-fowl in the swamps running along the river near our landing-place, while Bombelles, having special work to do, remained on board.

We were most warmly greeted by the inhabitants, and drove off, followed by patriotic cheers. The vehicle in which Leopold and I had established ourselves was so peculiar that I must honour it with a short description. It was horsed by a couple of small, lean, and thoroughly miserable ponies.

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and to look at them nobody would have thought that such exceedingly pitiful animals could have dragged it even a few hundred yards; but they nevertheless remained harnessed during the entire day, and drew the trap over the heavy ground at a very good pace until the evening, and that without once shirking their work. The vehicle itself was a common peasant's cart of the poorest description, its various parts being held together by ropes, while a couple of boards were arranged for our seats. The driver, a true South Slavonian, large and lean, with long, smooth, jet-black hair and drooping moustache, sat just in front of us, holding the thin wretchedly made reins, his form being enveloped in a dirty white cloak, which fell to his feet in folds, and his head covered with a broad-brimmed black hat. What we had to endure from the fearful atmosphere of garlic which surrounded this worthy coachman of ours is indescribable, and every time we got into the trap we yearned for the moment of deliverance from his nauseous neighbourhood.

Our cart rattled merrily through the village, and the rain poured steadily down in regular streams, as, wrapped in our waterproofs, we and our jägers sat huddled together in the narrow vehicle, and took stock of the magnificent buildings of Kovil. It was not just the most favourable moment for seeing them, for the heavy rain had softened the deep black loam, and had made the whole place look more like a morass than a human settlement; but I fancy that this market town can never present a very cheerful appearance, not even in the height of summer.

On we drove through two very long broad streets, passing by sand-heaps, pools, and mud-huts still more squat and squalid, till we at last got to the open country, where we proceeded along a wide road, bordered with low acacias and running through fields and uncultivated heaths. This high-road, however, was not very well kept, and what with the

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springless carts and the deep ruts, we managed to get some very hard knocks.

We were soon out into the "puszta," and could already see in the distance the outlines of the large wood which was to be our shooting-ground of to-day. Turtle-Doves were sitting on the trees close to the road, and I also shot from the cart a Roller, which was sulkily puffing out its bedraggled plumage. Crows, Magpies, and smaller birds were flying about the fields, and the nearer we got to the wood the more the birds of prey, which were out foraging, showed themselves. A splendid Imperial Eagle sailed along with its majestic flight, and another, which was sitting upright on an acacia tree by the road-side, singularly enough allowed the leading cart to come close up to it, and if that vehicle had not halted we should certainly have got a shot.

After an hour's drive we reached the beginning of the woods, the road running along the southern fringe of this extensive forest, and only separated from it by a few fields of Indian corn.

Hodek, who was in the first cart, now stopped and pointed out an Imperial Eagle's nest at the edge of the wood, a few hundred yards away; so I quickly jumped out, took my gun and cartridge-bag, and began to approach the dwelling of this great bird of prey, while my brother-in-law went on to another Imperial Eagle's nest, which was waiting for him more towards the interior of the forest.

A few minutes brought me quite close to the nest, and then a bustle took place inside it, and a magnificent Imperial Eagle darted out, covered by the stem of the tree; but I did not wish to fire a doubtful shot at the noble bird, and preferred to wait for its return. I therefore concealed myself in an ambush which was rapidly put together under a thick hawthorn, and sat down in the wet grass wrapped in my Alpine cloak. This was a very damp amusement, for the

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rain was falling in torrents, and everything was dripping wet. Still the majestic eagle was worth all the trouble.

I had now time enough to accurately observe the nest and the immediate surroundings of the place. The whole wood was formed of very poor oaks, and much overgrown with low bushes; in short, it was just an inland wood such as one finds in any ordinary flat district, and had no special characteristics. The nest was supported by a young oak with but little foliage, and I was quite astonished that an eagle should have chosen such a poor tree for its dwelling, as they usually only do this from sheer necessity, when there are no better to be found.

The structure itself was adapted to the tree, as it was also of no great size, and I observed that the nest of the Imperial Eagle was, as a rule, small as compared with the size of the bird.

A good quarter of an hour passed by in patient waiting, Orioles flew to and fro and uttered their joyous notes just above the dwelling of this mighty robber, while warblers, the true children of the woods, and many other small birds, were singing and hopping about the bushes in full activity.

Sometimes I saw both the eagles sweeping over the trees, pursued by crows, and at last the female, which was much the larger bird, flew quickly up to the tree and settled on a branch, where it was pretty well concealed by the foliage. I fired and, wounded by the first shot, the eagle sank towards the bushes, the second barrel bringing it down to the ground.

Greatly delighted I hurried up to my splendid booty, which Hodek at once carried off to the cart, while I remained in my ambush to await the coming of the male; but though I stayed there patiently for half an hour, and sometimes plainly saw the stately bird cruising in the distance, it never came within shot.

At last I could stand it no longer, and left the place, it

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being high time that I did so, for I had still a very wide extent of country to explore. Having got back to the cart I drove a little further along the borders of the wood, and then turned into a broad and perfectly straight road, the only one which traverses the entire length of the Kovil forest. Throughout its course it runs through dense scrub, low, almost impenetrable copses, and high woods, and being bordered by ditches on both sides shows a certain trace of human care. I must have driven along it for another good half-hour before Hodek begged me to leave the cart and to enter the wood by a narrow footpath, which led away from the road in an easterly direction.

This track at first took us through bushes and across little glades, where there was everywhere plenty of life; for Warblers, Thrushes, Finches, Buntings, Orioles, Turtle-Doves, and Cuckoos were uttering their various notes and flitting merrily about among the branches, while the thickets kept getting still denser, and a few thin ugly oaks rose above them.

On one of these oaks stood the large well-built nest of a Sea-Eagle, and I could hardly have believed it possible that so large a bird could have constructed so heavy a nest on such a slender miserable tree; but a dearth of more suitable places had compelled it to do so. This was the only Sea-Eagle's nest which we discovered in the woods round Kovil.

Unfortunately the herdsmen, who wander about with their flocks all day long, had made this pair of eagles quite shy and unapproachable with their pistol-shots; for as soon as the birds detected us they rose high in the air and circled round uttering their ominous screams of alarm; and though I crouched down below the nest, well concealed among the thick bushes, and waited for a good hour, the shy creatures never left the place for a moment, but kept wheeling overhead at a uniform height, looking down at me all the while. I had thus an

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opportunity of watching their truly majestic flight, as without any visible movement of their wings they sailed through the air; but not even the hungry cries of the two almost fledged young ones ever induced the parents to come near the nest.

Both the old eagles were particularly large and finely coloured, and their pale plumage looked so attractive that I should have had great pleasure in adding one of them to our collection; but my patience was all in vain, and when Hodek came up to my hiding-place, and besought me to leave it and to go further on, I yielded to his advice, and proceeded towards the interior of the forest, following the same path.

After walking a little way through the thickets, we reached a high oak wood where a few white poplars and wild fruit-trees with an undergrowth of hawthorn diversified the otherwise rather common-place-looking cover.

Unhappily this locality, like all other parts of these forests, was swarming with wandering herds of pigs, sheep, and cattle, while wild cut-throat-looking herdsmen, with their grey, shaggy wolf-dogs, loafed after the pasturing beasts. All these men are armed with pistols, partly for scaring the wolves, which range about these districts, and partly for protecting themselves against the powerful wild-boar-like males of the so-called tame pigs; for every year, as I was told by people on the spot, several of these herdsmen are attacked while asleep and killed by their own pigs in the most horrible way. They also use their pistols during their leisure hours for firing useless shots at the birds of prey and the nests, the result being that all the raptorial birds become uncommonly shy, especially in these forests.

Close to the head-quarters of the great herds I found many large wolf-tracks, and near the path were the remains of a mangled lamb.

The part of the forest which we had now got to harbours

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such large numbers of raptorial birds that one might really call it a colony of them, for nest after nest decorated the tree-tops. First we found a pair of Imperial Eagles still busy building, and a little way further on was the basket-like nest of an Eagle-Owl on the topmost branches of a small oak. The rather small but beautifully plumaged male was sitting on the tree somewhat below the nest; and as my careful attempt to stalk it was quite unsuccessful, we tried to get a shot at the female by hammering at the stem of the tree, but nothing moved; and we were just going away when all at once the splendid large owl slipped quietly out of the nest and flew off through the trees, where I caught sight of it too late, and made the mistake of firing an uncertain shot at too great a range. Some pellets must, however, have hit it, for there were feathers floating about, and the bird did not return to its nest.

A few paces further on the real colony began, and here there was a nest on almost every tree, but of course not all occupied, for many were hanging down, having been half destroyed by the herdsmen, and others either had no tenants this year, or had more probably been already robbed of their eggs, while at some the birds were still building.

Scared by the shots, the inhabitants of the wood were flying about over the tops of the trees—Imperial, Spotted, Pygmy, and Short-toed Eagles, Common and Black Kites, Goshawks, and Kestrels wheeling about in wild disorder, like the inmates of a heronry or of a colony of cormorants.

Concealing myself under a tree I sat down to allow them to get a little quieter, and to study the distribution of the nests. Imperial and Spotted Eagles were still busily building, and the nest of a Short-toed Eagle had unfortunately been destroyed by the herdsmen. Of the two pairs of Pygmy Eagles, one was still employed in the construction of its nest, and the other occupied in the duties of breeding. The Gos-

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hawks and Common Kites, one or two pairs of each species, seemed to be nesting at the other end of the wood, for when things got quieter they dropped down in that direction. As for the Black Kites, here, as elsewhere, the commonest raptorial birds of Southern Hungary and Slavonia, they were breeding in all parts of the wood; but I did not vouchsafe them the slightest attention, my object being to secure for our collection a Pygmy Eagle in the dark plumage.

It was so very interesting to watch the various doings of all these birds, that I stayed a long time in my hiding-place while Hodek went back to make a more thorough search for the wounded Eagle-Owl, though he unhappily met with no success. At last the birds quieted down, and I had pretty well made out in what direction I should have to look for the Pygmy Eagles, and was just preparing to move off, when a herd of swine appeared so suddenly that they seemed to have sprung out of the ground. These disgusting beasts, covered with a thick coating of dirt, crept out of the bushes, grunting and looking at me in amazement, and I must confess that, after all I had heard of the amiability of the Slavonian pigs, I was not much charmed at this sudden visit; but they seemed to be in a good humour to-day, as they passed close to me snuffling about, without honouring me with any further attentions.

After this interlude I left the place, and soon discovered, on the lower branches of a thick oak, a nest which I at first took to be the abode of a Spotted Eagle. Hodek, who had come up after me, tried to drive out its occupant by striking the tree, but it was not until he had done this repeatedly that a brown bird dashed out through the trees with a quick irregular flight. My first barrel brought it down, and on hurrying up to it I found that my wish was gratified, and that I had secured a fine and perfectly dark-coloured female Pygmy Eagle. I now at once hid myself under the nest to await the probable return of the male, as I was anxious

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to see whether its plumage would be light or dark; and indeed the little eagle did not keep me waiting long, for I suddenly heard its melodious notes on my right. The sound made by the Pygmy Eagle is more than a call, for one might really say that the consecutive and very different notes which it utters amount to a short song; while the bird itself is, in my opinion, undoubtedly the most interesting and least known of all our raptorial species, and the one which offers to our ever-combative ornithologists the greatest field for discussion.

Cautiously looking in the direction whence the notes of the eagle proceeded, I saw the splendid male, in its pale glistening plumage, sitting bolt upright on a dead branch, and unfortunately fired at it, although it was rather too far off, for though it fell to the ground severely wounded, it fluttered off among the thick undergrowth, where I soon lost sight of it; and the most careful search proving fruitless, my hopes of adding to our collection a paired couple of Pygmy Eagles in different plumages were quite frustrated.

Frightened by the last shots, the inhabitants of this interesting colony were flying about in the wildest disorder, and among them I noticed a pair of Black Storks, which had set up their abode in the midst of these birds of prey, but had not yet finished building.

As there seemed, for the present, to be no more chance of doing any good in the outskirts of the wood, I pushed further into it, and soon found a medium-sized nest on the upper branches of a young oak, and from it there dashed out a dark-coloured hawk while I was still some distance off. The bird disappeared so rapidly that I did not recognize it, and I therefore concealed myself behind a tree to await its return. In a few minutes it came back, approaching through the trees close to the ground, and the owner of the nest, falling to my shot, lay in its death-struggle on the grass, and proved to be an exceedingly handsome Goshawk.

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Meanwhile the rain had stopped, the clouds had broken up, and scorching sunbeams, the precursors of an approaching storm, were shining down on forests dripping with the long continued rain. Our clothes, which were quite soaked through, now slowly dried; and, tired with our many hours of shooting, we plodded on through the woods to the carts, for it seemed useless to return to the colony, which we had so thoroughly ransacked, and the inhabitants of which had now become so restless.

At the carts I found my brother-in-law, who had brought back a fine bag of two magnificent Imperial Eagles from the other part of the forest; and, after taking a hasty lunch of bread, we got into the traps and drove to the Šačer wood, following the road by which we had come in the morning as far as the outer houses of Kovil.

In the avenues of acacias already mentioned we found Crows, Magpies, Kestrels, Larks, and numbers of Yellow Hammers and Tree-Sparrows; Turtle-Doves, too, were sitting about the fields, and some of them flew past so close that I easily brought down a couple right and left from the cart.

Towards the afternoon the sun was still more scorching; heavy storm-clouds towered up in all directions, and distant thunder announced the approach of bad weather, and as we were driving past Kovil the first large drops of rain fell, and three heavy storms burst above us with a terrific noise.

Seldom have I seen such a tempest, for the violent gusts of wind bent the trees, thunderclap followed thunderclap, lightning flashed vividly in all directions, and soon came a torrent of rain like a waterspout. We were wet to the skin again in a few minutes, and though this involuntary bath was by no means pleasant, we nevertheless enjoyed the magnificent spectacle of the storm as it passed away over the vast plains in low layers of cloud.

Despite the unfavourable weather, we held on our way, and,

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passing the outermost houses of Kovil, soon reached the northern fringe of the great Šačer forest. Here, at Hodek's desire, I left the cart, while Leopold drove on towards the interior of the woods to visit an Imperial Eagle's nest.

Walking through a little hollow I struck into a path that in a few minutes brought me into these woods, which much resemble those of Kovil in their main characteristics, but have not such a heavy undergrowth or such impenetrable copses.

The first nest which I encountered was a Pygmy Eagle's; but unluckily the handsome light-coloured bird was sitting on a branch near its dwelling and flew off as we approached, and though hit by the shot which I fired, it skimmed away close to the ground and we failed to find it. The rain was falling in torrents and pattering noisily on the leaves as I penetrated deeper into the wood, and the sodden state of the deep loamy soil much increased the difficulties of walking during this wet and fatiguing excursion.

There are, in the depths of this Šačer forest, some most lovely picturesque spots, where low oak woods adorned with a few tall old trees, twisted into the strangest forms, alternate with flowery little glades, through which run the rills which feed the marshes. Invigorated by these warm summery rains all was fresh and blooming in the most luxuriant way, and the many-noted songs of the Nightingales and other warblers enlivened the wood, while the rain gradually ceased, the clouds broke up, and it looked as if we were going to have a fine evening.

My way led me past a Pygmy Eagle's nest still in course of construction, then followed a Goshawk's, where this usually shy bird could only be frightened out of its dwelling by repeated blows on the trunk of the tree, but, flying off at last, fell to my shot.

At the edge of a very charmingly situated glade stood the

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nest of a splendid pair of Peregrines; but these rare and noble falcons did not permit me to come within even the most distant range. This pirate Peregrine, the very ideal of a true powerful falcon, and the bird which in the heron-hawking of the Middle Ages graced so many beautiful wrists, was the very species which would have been so valuable an addition to our collection, yet all our efforts to obtain it were unsuccessful. The female came, indeed, and circled a few times round my hiding-place, screaming loudly, but she always kept carefully out of shot, so after a long futile wait I quitted the place and went to a little wood surrounded by meadows. There several Black Kites were nesting; but in this forest, just as in the Kovil woods, the herdsmen had made the birds of prey so thoroughly acquainted with the wiles of man, that I did not succeed in getting a fair shot.

Behind this little colony of Kites was a thin wood of tall trees and some forest-glades, where large herds of cattle were grazing, and high up in one of the trees was the broad nest of the king of the Crow kind, the great Raven. Both the old birds had noticed our approach and circled croaking overhead, nor was there any immediate prospect of their coming nearer the nest; for the four already fledged and full-grown young ones were sitting on the neighbouring trees uttering cries of alarm, and as the stupid clumsy creatures made no use of their well-developed wings, I was able to finish off the whole brood of young robbers with the rifle.

Attracted by the shots my brother-in-law suddenly emerged from the opposite wood in a rather discontented frame of mind, for his guide, a not very bright inhabitant of Kovil, had lost his way, so they had been wandering about in an aimless sort of manner without getting to the nests. I have therefore the more reason for here singing the praises of my own guide, Tarcza, a peasant of the Kovil district, whose outward appearance gave rise to serious doubts as to whether he

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really belonged to the human species or was not still closely related to our cousins the apes. His face, framed by hair dripping with grease, was a perfect caricature, and his plump body, long, loose arms, and gigantic feet were enveloped in skins, while such an atmosphere surrounded the worthy fellow that one could not stand it, even yards away. Spirits and chewing tobacco were his sole ideals, and to get them he has hunted out nests for Hodek in these woods for many years, and for but little pay.

His skill in this, as well as in stalking game, was quite incredible; and it was amusing to ramble about the woods with him, for when he had found a nest he lay down and crawled on all fours, like a cat about to spring, until he got under the tree, and his burst of wild delight when I shot one of the birds which he had discovered was most remarkable. He could also describe the various species of eagles quite delightfully in his South Slavonian tongue, and gave the Pygmy Eagle the very expressive name of "the eagle with the breeches," on account of its white thickly feathered legs.

A scene which I witnessed while in his company was too comical to be here omitted. While creeping from one kite's nest to another Tareza suddenly made signs to me to stop and not to follow him, and I was sure that he had at least caught sight of an eagle, for he slowly crouched down and took his broad hat off his head; but all at once he gave a tremendous spring, throwing himself flat on the ground, and then stood up, swore loudly, and jumped about, scratching himself behind the ears. I thought the worthy man had gone mad, but when he had exhausted himself he explained that he had seen a Blackbird nesting on the ground, and wanted so much to have caught it to eat, but it had, during his bold manœuvre, escaped just as his hand was upon it.

After resting a little while we turned homewards, and as

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we passed by a Kite's nest I brought down the bird as it flew over our heads. Our path now led us close to the Peregrine's nest, and we sent Hodek's climber up the not very high oak to take it, the pair of falcons meanwhile flying about, screaming loudly, but unfortunately always keeping so far away that I could not get a certain shot.

In a few moments the four young ones were in our hands; they were very small, and still covered with the first woolly down, so we packed them up in a bag as best we could, and then continued our walk through the thick oak woods, which smelt very sweet after the warm spring rain.

The sun had already set, and heavy storm-clouds were once more forming in dense rounded masses, while as night came on, and it was getting dark, the rain again began; so we hastened to our carts, which were standing by the edge of the wood quite close to Kovil, and drove on as fast as possible to the spot outside the village where our steamer was anchored.

The water was much swollen by the many heavy storms of rain, so the rather shaky planks which connected our floating abode with the dry land had to be advanced still further into the flooded meadow; and I must confess to feeling a certain pleasurable sensation on stepping into the warm comfortable cabin, where a good hot dinner was awaiting us, after a long fatiguing day, during which we had been wet to the skin several times.

The two Savants had spent the day in the large swamp and inundated woods close to the village, and had bagged a Bittern, a Purple Heron, a Night-Heron, three Terns, and a great Sedge-Warbler, while some interesting observations on the migration of the Terns and Glossy Ibises had recompensed them for the many difficulties and exertions attendant on an exploration of these flooded districts.

Brehm had also to-day proved himself a thorough natu-

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ralist, in the strict sense of the word, for he had found the nest of a Penduline Tit in the midst of an almost impenetrable submerged thicket, where this truly artistic construction was hanging from the top of a willow-bush.

It was with great difficulty that he had forced his "csikel" up to the place, and then, instead of allowing himself to be led away by a hankering after the shooting of wild-fowl or birds of prey, he had resolved to spend some hours at the nest of these Tits, which he had never before seen in a wild state. To-day he only studied their habits and customs, and did not shoot these rare birds for our collection until the morrow.

Dinner was now quickly despatched, and after the measurements and the notes were jotted down, perfect quiet soon prevailed on board the steamer.

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THIRTEENTH DAY.

THERE was a general stir on board the steamer at the first break of day, and with very sleepy eyes we went on deck to admire the lovely sunrise and to get ready for the chase.

At nine o'clock a great wolf-drive was to come off in a more distant part of the Kovil forest; so we had arranged that each of us should pursue his ornithological sport before the commencement of the official manœuvres organized by the Corporation. Brehm was anxious to return to the flooded wood, in order to again study and afterwards shoot the Penduline Tits. Leopold and I wished to pay a morning visit to the Imperial and Sea-Eagles in the Kovil forest; while Bombelles and Homeyer intended to remain on board, and not to join us until the wolf-drive took place.

Breakfast was soon over, and we were now ready to land and set off, but found to our horror that there were no carts, though precise orders had been given about them yesterday, and the forester, who is appointed by the Hungarian Government, had been kind enough to take the personal direction of the whole business, and had promised that they should certainly be ready at the appointed time.

There we stood waiting on the bank for a whole long hour, not in the most amiable tempers, for we had lost the best time of the morning both for sleeping and for the eagles' nests in a most unnecessary way. At last Mr. Forester—a Hungarian sportsman in the full and terrible sense of the word—appeared with the carts; and on our asking him in pretty plain terms why he was so late, he replied with a perfectly satisfied look,

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"Well, but here I am!" There he was most assuredly, but he could not give us back our lost hour.

We now set off, my brother-in-law and I sitting in the same cart, and again exposed to the frightful torments caused by the too immediate proximity of our Slavonian coachman, our only solace being the beauty of the weather, for it had stopped raining during the night, and we felt refreshed and invigorated by this fine fresh morning with its light mists, which almost reminded us of an October day.

We urged our driver to do his very best, and by a constant thrashing of his cat-like horses he very soon managed to bring us into the Kovil forest.

On getting near the Sea-Eagle's nest, at which I had vainly waited yesterday, I stopped the cart and got out, while my brother-in-law drove on to the Imperial Eagle's nest, where he had shot the female, and at which he now proposed to watch for the male.

I stole cautiously through the bushes up to the Sea-Eagle's dwelling, but hardly had I got within measurable distance of it, when both the eagles rose and circled round, screaming loudly.

The unpunctuality of the forester had thus frustrated my plan of hiding myself near the nest very early, while the eagles were away on their first foraging expedition, a daily event which always occurs immediately after sunrise, and I arrived just at the moment when they had finished giving the young birds their morning meal. This is precisely the most inauspicious moment, for both the old birds have by that time already breakfasted, and after attending to their parental duties, sit lazily on the trees near their nest, and there is then no chance of success, especially with a pair of eagles which have had their wits somewhat sharpened. My prospects were therefore most unfavourable when I betook myself to my place of concealment in a thick bush.

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The eagles kept wheeling about overhead incessantly, and I saw their great shadows gliding over the ground, while they never ceased uttering their ominous cries of alarm.

The sun was burning very fiercely, and thin wreaths of vapour were rising from the ground, which was saturated with yesterday's rain. I had chosen a very comfortable seat, and the buzzing of the insects and the charming carols of the countless song-birds had such a drowsy influence that I suddenly fell fast asleep, and must have been in that condition for a good hour, when I awoke and looking quickly up at the nest saw a large brown bird moving about inside it. I could only see the outline of its back from time to time, and made sure that it was the old eagle supplying its young with food; so I took up my rifle and fired at this grey-brown form, as soon as I again got a distinct glimpse of it. As nothing moved at the shot, and a few small feathers were lifted by the wind and carried over the edge of the nest, I felt sure that I had hit the bird, so hastened back to my guide, feeling proud of my successful shot; and as it was now time to get ready for the wolf-hunt, sent the climber to the nest to bring down the dead eagle.

On reaching the broad driving-road I found my brother-in-law, who had returned empty-handed from an unsuccessful attempt to shoot the Imperial Eagle.

The rendezvous for the sportsmen was just at the spot where the path leading from the Sea-Eagle's nest joined the broad road which bisects the forest. The beaters were already stationed by the fields at the edge of the woods, and the guns came driving up in carts. Most of these sportsmen were notables of the village, and their whole appearance and armament were so singular and primitive that we most fervently prayed that Providence would prevent these fine fellows from getting shots, otherwise our lives would be somewhat insecure. With one of these sporting gentlemen I was particularly

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amused; but he, alas! immediately left the rendezvous and hurried off to his post a good half-hour too soon, for a noble thirst for the battle and a longing to measure himself in single combat with the Wolf seemed to leave him no peace. He was also armed to the teeth, for, besides a variety of knives and daggers, he carried with great spirit and dignity a long antique muzzle-loader, such as was formerly used for duck-shooting, the brave fellow being evidently prepared for the most terrible encounters.

The numerous tracks one sees in the sand and damp loamy soil, as well as the remains of mangled lambs, give evident proof that large numbers of wolves do exist in these districts; and the great dread which all the natives have of these ravenous wild beasts is a clear indication of the regularity with which they carry on their depredations, for wolves only become impudent and commit open robberies when they are in troops and feel quite at home.

Our chances therefore of a successful drive did not look so doubtful until we saw the noisy disorderly gang of sportsmen with the above-mentioned forester as manager; for, like most Hungarian foresters, this man understood nothing about his business, and neither knew his ground nor what game it held; indeed it was with the greatest astonishment that he learned from us that eagles existed in this neighbourhood, and he proudly told us that, in his capacity of forester, he did not trouble himself about the game, but only about the wood. Unfortunately these wretched forests also bore the stamp of his careful handling.

Brehm soon drove up to the rendezvous from his excursion among the marshes, where he had again found the Penduline Tits, and after a further study of them had shot and brought them back, together with their marvellously constructed nest, a capital and interesting achievement, which he had supplemented by bagging a heron. A little later Bombelles and

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Homeyer also appeared at the trysting-place, so the exciting drive could now begin.

We had got the forester to place the whole of our party along a narrow forest by-road, while all the other guns remained on the broad ride; for we valued our lives far too much to stand in the same line with these excessively dangerous sportsmen.

The disorderly way in which the final arrangements were made and the guns posted was most extraordinary, and there was such a chattering and shouting that I should have marvelled at any wolf who came there to be shot at.

My brother-in-law and I stood next each other at the corners of a little glade, and in front of us was a stretch of dense, almost impenetrable thickets of hawthorn diversified with a few tallish oaks, a sort of cover that seemed just made for all sorts of vermin; and I quite believed an old keeper (the only real sportsman in the whole district), who assured me that these thickets were the favourite retreats of numbers of Wolves, Wild Cats, and Foxes.

Hardly were we posted when there was a shot from the other line of guns. It was the first and last during the entire beat, and turned out to have been ineffectually fired at a sly fox that crossed the broad ride.

We must have been standing motionless for about half an hour, with our guns cocked and loaded with slugs, when the beaters came up with loud shouts and endless curses. Instead of working through the bushes, a dread of the thorns and an infinite respect for the wolves had kept them to the more open places, and they were following each other in gangs of ten to twenty; nor did these individual bands even break cover at the same time, but appeared at irregular intervals, and then vanished into the woods beyond the beat, utterly ignoring our line of guns. One knot of beaters made themselves particularly comfortable; for half a dozen of these

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sturdy fellows, with long white cloaks, knives in their belts, and faces tanned by exposure, sat down close to me on the little meadow, leisurely smoking their pipes, and now and then yelling out as if they wished to strike terror into the wolves.

If the whole proceedings connected with this drive had not been so utterly comic, one would have been intensely annoyed, for the great beat was really not driven at all, and we had been steadily standing at our posts all this time quite needlessly exposed to the burning sun, and with our attention kept on the constant stretch by the possible proximity of such interesting game.

As there was no regular signal to give notice that the beat was over, we left our posts one by one, and following the example of the beaters lay down on the little meadow. A frugal lunch of bread, cheese, and wine was produced from the game-bags, and we here rested for an hour, heartily laughing at this charmingly conducted wolf-drive, and especially amused by the excellent forester, who, in spite of its total failure, went about with his face beaming with satisfaction and telling of the many wolves which ought to have shown in the beat.

The other guests had meanwhile gone back to Kovil, and the beaters were also returning, only one remaining—a very long fellow with a very red nose, who, in order to fortify himself in case of an encounter with a wolf, had been apparently imbibing before the beat, and now lay motionless in the shade of a bush, sunk in a drunken torpor, and taking not the slightest notice of what was going on around him.

Having eaten our lunch we busied ourselves with interchanging ornithological notes and studying the brisk life round about us; for it was a splendid warm day, and after the beneficial rain of yesterday everything was flourishing with renewed vigour and luxuriance.

High in the blue ether a huge Griffon Vulture was

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soaring in great circles, Hawks and Kites were wheeling about lower down, while Doves were cooing among the trees and bushes; and Orioles, Thrushes, Shrikes, Starlings, and many other birds were whistling and singing in full concert. The lower forms of life were also well represented; for the smooth clammy bodies of snakes and lizards, some of them of very considerable size, were gleaming among the grass, and a great variety of butterflies and insects were fluttering about.

I brought down a Turtle-Dove which came very near our resting-place; and after this incident we ended our siesta, and went for another ramble through the woods. Leopold returned to the Imperial Eagle's nest; Bombelles drove off to a distant part of the Šačer forest, where there was a colony of Kites; Homeyer intended to visit the skirts of the Kovil woods, to study the smaller birds of the copses and fields; Brehm wished to explore a portion of the same forest; and I went back to my colony of raptorial birds to observe their habits at the nest from some quiet place of concealment. So we all separated in different directions.

On reaching the broad ride I met the climber who had, during the drive, taken the young Eagle-Owls from the nest, and instead of the old Sea-Eagle which I expected, brought me a young one, fully feathered but not yet fledged, the ball having been planted fairly enough in the middle of its back.

I now continued my walk along the footpath until I got near the Owl's nest, near which I had yesterday seen an Imperial Eagle building, and concealing myself behind the thick trunk of a tree sat down and watched the numerous birds of prey that were flying about. Imperial and Pygmy Eagles, Goshawks, and Kites kept passing by, but always out of shot, and I had, moreover, concentrated my attention on a dark-coloured Pygmy Eagle. This bird was flying about low

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down between the trees, heavily laden with materials for giving the finishing touches to its nest, which it visited several times, always vanishing again in the same direction.

Hodek, who had accompanied me, had also hidden himself, and was sitting watching a few hundred yards off. Close to him a Blackbird with white wings was hopping about the bushes ; and on seeing this rare freak of Nature he hastened to fetch me, but when we got to the place there was no Blackbird to be found.

The time was passing quickly, and a glance at my watch showed me that I should have to return; so after strolling through the whole of this part of the wood, I went back with Hodek and the excellent Tarcza to the broad ride, where the carts were waiting, and, starting on our homeward drive, soon reached the spot at the edge of the forest where I had killed the Imperial Eagle at the commencement of our yesterday's ramblings.

Having still half an hour to spare, I went under the tree and waited to see whether a lucky chance might not bring the male bird within reach of my gun ; but as the eagle very soon appeared and swept round our ambush in wide circles, it seemed useless to stay any longer, so I sent the climber up to the nest, and to my great astonishment he found it was quite empty, the eggs having most probably been carried off by some other bird of prey or by the thievish Hooded Crows, after the female had been shot.

I now quickly returned to the cart, where I found my brother-in-law, who had been well repaid for his great perseverance, for he had brought back with him a magnificent male Imperial Eagle.

Continuing our homeward route together, we rattled over the field-roads at a good pace, and I had only a cursory opportunity of observing the numerous birds which had been enticed out of the woods by the splendid sunny afternoon

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and were now flying about the fields. I also shot from the cart a Lesser Grey Shrike that was sitting on an acacia, and was much amazed at the extraordinary number of "Ziesel"*, for at every step these comparatively large creatures were scurrying about the fields. Indeed, they were quite as numerous as are, in some seasons, the field-mice of more western countries.

We soon got close to Kovil, and saw the plain, the mountains far away to the south, and the vast magnificent oak-forests all bathed in the most glorious light of the evening sun; while a deep blue sky overspread the whole of the splendid landscape, and a soft summer-like air gladdened the travellers who had come from colder regions; for although this part of the country is not picturesque, it nevertheless has an air of beauty and repose, and, being laid out in large lines, it is by no means wanting in grandeur.

Rattling along through the village we very soon came to the place where our steamer lay, and where a rather large crowd had assembled; for Brehm had here been busy with his studies of the national dances, and had yesterday arranged a "Kolo" dance on the meadow in front of our steamer, the village maidens having hospitably acceded to the travelling stranger's wishes; but as he had returned much earlier than ourselves, he had for to-day organized a small country fête.

During the night the water had so flooded the meadows that he had to conduct the entertainment from the bow of the vessel, and it took place in knee-deep water; this, however, only added to the charm of the affair, as it obliged the dancers to keep their garments from getting wet by very graceful movements. The dance was just finishing as we got on board, so some of the village maidens came on deck to present bouquets, and a few minutes afterwards our vessel moved off amidst the loud cheers of the population.

* *Spermophilus citillus.*

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Kovil, the furthest point of our journey, had been reached, and as we were now going up-stream towards the north, we looked at each other somewhat dolefully, for we keenly felt this first reminder of the approaching termination of our expedition and of the close of many delightful and interesting days.

When we had lost sight of the village we examined our spoil :—a Sea-Eagle in the nestling-plumage, a splendid Imperial Eagle, a Heron, four Black Kites shot by Bombelles in the Šačer wood, a Jay, a Turtle-Dove, a Magpie, a Hoopoe, a Lesser Grey Shrike, a Great Spotted Woodpecker, a Greenfinch, a Marsh-Tit, a Penduline Tit, a Blackcap, two House- and four Tree-Sparrows lay on the deck. Homeyer had also shot five Ziesels, for these rodents, which are here so common, rarely occur in any part of Germany; and as he had never seen them before, he found them very interesting.

We spent the first part of the run on deck, enlivened by a magnificent sunset and a glorious evening, for the western sky was brilliant with ruddy tints, and its reflections quivered in the waters of the Danube with glittering effects of colour.

As we passed Peterwardein it began to get dark; but we went on up-stream without any stoppage, while at dinner-time we discussed the many sporting experiences and the observations of this journey, and after comfortably smoking a cigar and cataloguing the notes and measurements, we all went off to our cabins to enjoy our well-earned rest.

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FOURTEENTH DAY.

The sun was just rising brilliantly in the eastern sky and gilding with its first beams the splendid woods of Draueck, when we stepped on deck to enjoy the invigorating morning air.

All night long the steamer had been continuously going up-stream, and we had slipped quickly past Čerevič and the splendid mountains of the Fruška-Gora. We now intended to halt somewhere above Draueck, and to ramble through the Hulló swamp from that point—a plan really originated by Brehm, who, while we were engaged in our excursions in the Apatin "auen," had, on one of his trips, reached this large and imposing wooded marsh, and was now desirous of investigating it more thoroughly.

Our steamer stopped at a charming spot about a mile above the junction of the Drave with the Danube, where we saw on the left bank the great "auen," which extended to Draueck, while on the right a thin strip of wood ran between the bank and the marsh. Looking upwards, there was a wonderful view of the river girt by its splendid forests of the deepest green; but downwards the prospect, which was also bounded by woods, only extended as far as the great bend of the stream.

Once more we were in the midst of this striking district, that had so enchanted us a week ago, and on seeing these grand scenes again we were filled with such an increase of wonder and admiration that we stood spellbound on the deck.

Breakfast having been despatched, the arrangements for

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the morning were made. Leopold got into a boat and went off to the dense wood of gigantic willows which at the true Draueck separates both the Danube and the Drave from the Hulló swamp, and where the Sea-Eagle's nest was situated at which the two Savants had made an unsuccessful attempt some days ago.

A few minutes later Brehm, Homeyer, Bombelles, and I, with the jägers and Hodek's crew, also quitted the steamer in the 'Vienna,' and leaving the Danube rowed up a side channel to a keeper's house.

A belt of trees, so narrow that one could everywhere see through it, ran between the right bank of this arm of the river and the Hulló marsh, and on the left it was separated from the main stream by a much-flooded island walled-in by reeds and covered with a wild tangle of woods.

The keeper's house stood upon an artificial mound raised to protect it from the great inundations, and the aforesaid strip of wood stretched up to and beyond it; but being somewhat above the level of the marsh it was, at this spring season of the year, only partially submerged. Nevertheless we could not reach the house altogether dryshod, and its inmates could only communicate with the rest of the world by boat.

Singularly enough, we found great numbers of Starlings in this watery wilderness; for this tame bird seems to affect the companionship of man and follows him into the most out-of-the-way places. The trees surrounding this solitary dwelling were thickly peopled with them, while Falcons and Kites were circling over the water, and Crows and Herons were leisurely winging their way from wood to wood; but, unfortunately, our time was short, and we had to hasten on towards the interior of the marsh.

On rowing round the keeper's house we at once saw that it would be impossible to get the large 'Vienna' across the shallows under the trees between us and the swamp; so

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telling the keeper and some fishermen to bring up their boats as quickly as possible, and taking with us a "csikel," we left the 'Vienna' at the house and went on.

The scene which now presented itself to us at the edge of the swamp was really grand and highly characteristic. Before us lay the broad so-called Hulló marsh, or rather *lake*, since it does not at all correspond to one's ideas of a marsh; for what the people here mean by "the Hulló" is an inundated district more or less filled throughout the year with water so stagnant as to have hardly any perceptible current. This lake is bounded on the east by the Danube, on the south by the Drave, on the west by open treeless country, and on the north by the great forests of the "auen." It is very large, stretching towards the west further than the eye can reach, and its interior consists partly of perfectly open sheets of water and partly of regular forests of thick reeds above the height of a man; but the water is everywhere too deep for wading, the whole character of this very interesting submerged district vividly reminding me of the Narenta in Dalmatia.

From its eastern edge we had a wonderful view of this wide expanse of water, with its pale yellow beds of reeds rustling and swaying in the wind like fields of corn; while the grey-green woods to the north, the narrow fringe of willows to the south, and the broad plains to the west which seemed to melt into the marsh, together with the incessant cries of all sorts of waterfowl flying to and fro, and the lapping in the reeds of the water rippled by the gentle morning breeze—all made up a very beautiful and picturesque scene.

As our boats glided quietly on towards the inner parts of this lake, Terns danced lightly around us, and various kinds of Ducks rose noisily in front of us, while Purple Herons, Grey Herons, and a few Egrets flew slowly away over the reeds; but we were soon convinced that it would be quite

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impossible to get within shot of anything on the open water, and that we should have to force our crafts through these thickets of reeds if we wished to meet with any success. Unfortunately this proved impossible with the larger boats, so both the keeper and I got into the little "csikel," in which there was hardly room for two people, and the other gentlemen rowed along the edge of the reeds in the boats.

By dint of the greatest exertions the keeper forced the small and very rickety craft through the great rushes, which kept closing over our heads again, and completely covered us with their cold wet stems. During this exciting voyage we were often nearly upset, and the thought of the impossibility of any one coming to our assistance if we really did tumble into the water was rather suggestive; for no boat could penetrate in here, nor could there be any question of swimming, while to have brought up other crafts from the keeper's house or from the steamer and to have found us out would have taken a long time. All these ideas impelled the keeper and myself to work as hard as we could and, after advancing little by little, we found to our great delight and relief that at every few hundred yards there were reaches of perfectly open water surrounded by sedge, like glades in a forest.

In the midst of the reed-beds we everywhere found floating nests of the Purple Herons, and at first the birds let us come so near that I easily shot one of them within a few yards.

Penetrating a little further I saw among the colony of Herons several bigger and more solidly built nests, and on getting quite close to them some large wild geese flew up, making a great noise, and I was lucky enough to bring down a splendid Grey Lag Goose with a well-directed shot, although I had only loaded with No. 5 for smaller birds. We then reached the nest with a good deal of trouble and took the eggs, while, scared by the shot, herons, wild geese, and

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ducks flew about over our heads in great numbers, but unfortunately always took care to keep well out of range.

I now thought of getting back to the open water to look for the companions whom I had left behind, and on my way across the lonely little sheets of quiet water among the reeds I saw Crested Grebes, Little Grebes, Moorhens, and Ducks of various species, but unluckily all too far away to allow of my getting good shots. The scene, however, was both striking and peculiar, for above was the dark-blue sky, and below the clear water, only here and there varied by bright green aquatic plants, while the rustling of the tall pale yellow reeds that closed every outlook and the monotonous call of the Moorhens were the only sounds that broke the deep impressive silence.

By dint of much exertion we reached the rest of the party, who had meanwhile been rowing round the edges of the thicker reed-beds and observing the passing waterfowl; and when I had exhibited the splendid wild goose to the astonished sportsmen and had got into one of the boats, we began our homeward route, and soon found ourselves at the keeper's house, where we went on board the 'Vienna.' On our way to the Danube we caught sight of a Hobby darting swiftly along the bank, and bagged the beautiful bird, Brehm and I both firing at precisely the same moment.

After this short interlude we went on again and soon brought our last excursion to an end, for we now went on board our steamer, and did not leave her again until we got to the quay at Pest.

My brother-in-law had already returned, having unfortunately missed the eagle as it was flying up to its nest, so that our day's bag only consisted of a Grey Lag Goose, a Purple Heron, a couple of Black Terns, and a Hobby.

As soon as all the men were on board, the steamer got

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under weigh, and we set off on our return journey, which was to be performed without a break.

We remained on deck, for we could not tear ourselves away from the sight of the splendid woods in which we had spent such pleasant and highly interesting hours. All the well-known spots were quickly passed, and we saw the beautiful pictures changing like shifting scenes, while the beauty of the day had also enticed the birds from their retreats, and we were able to make many interesting observations.

We soon reached Apatin, where we had to make a little halt, as Hodek and his men were going to land. The 'Vienna' was also cast loose from the steamer, as the enterprising naturalist and his crew were about to engage in a fresh expedition and were going back in her the same day, first to Kovil, thence up the Theiss, and then further down the Danube. The younger Hodek, however, travelled back with us to take our spoils to his workshop in Vienna. Both the Hodeks, father and son, as well as their men, had done us much skilful service throughout the expedition; and the number of large birds which they had often skinned in a very short time was quite astonishing.

While the steamer was lying at the Apatin pier we were all sitting on deck observing the neighbourhood, when some Hooded Crows came flying round the vessel on the outlook for kitchen-scraps. One of them ventured particularly near, and I shot it, whereupon a miller's lad, who was proceeding to his floating mill in a boat, carried it off as a remembrance, without leave or licence. This was the last bird we killed.

After a stay of about ten minutes we again got under weigh and now ran rapidly through all these splendid districts.

At Mohács, where the character of the scenery becomes monotonous, we set ourselves the task of taking the last measurements and of getting into order the note-books which

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we had kept during the whole trip, while the letters and the various belongings, which lay all about the cabin in wild confusion, were also collected and packed. In the afternoon we spent some time in the smoking-room near the saloon, which had been fitted up as a magazine for the bird-skins. There lay the large vultures, the eagles, the other hawks, and many smaller birds piled up upon one another, and we ourselves were astonished at the number which had been brought together within the time, while it was very interesting work to turn over the beautiful specimens one by one and to catalogue and put them in order. The whole vessel had a singular appearance; for under an awning on the deck stood the large table at which Hodek and his men always worked, everything round about it being covered with tow, hay, blood, bones, and feathers in various stages of decay, according to the time that they had been lying about. Towards the bow of the vessel was the large coop in which the live birds of prey were housed; and I can hardly describe what this menagerie looked like close by, or what an odour surrounded it. Altogether our steamer was exceedingly dirty, the whole upper deck being full of live creatures, skins, shooting-gear, and all sorts of things; for while work was going on there from morning till night it was quite impossible to keep it clean.

Later in the evening, when we had finished our work and had made our final preparations for shortly quitting the steamer, we went on deck to enjoy the delightful air. There was not a breath of wind, and overhead stretched a cloudless deep blue sky, while the "auen" above Baja, and afterwards the country round Tolna, presented themselves, most beautifully lit up. It was like a splendid summer evening, such as one never gets in more northern lands until about the middle of June, and the hours which we spent on deck admiring the lovely landscapes gilded by the setting sun were truly delightful.

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Our steamer ran quickly past all the lonely forests of the "auen;" and the throbbing of the engine and the puffing of the funnel formed a sharp contrast to the infinite repose of these uninhabited districts.

Sadly we gazed at the beautiful woods and the grand river, and there was not one of us who would not willingly have turned back to ramble through these interesting localities on fresh shooting-excursions, and to lead for a long time a life so full of variety and so different from the monotony of ordinary everyday existence. It is on such expeditions that one first learns what it is to enjoy real sport; for when shooting is combined with scientific studies and the exploration of unknown tracts of country, and is also attended by frequent privations and hard work, it becomes an exciting pursuit which reaches beyond the limits of empty pleasures. But in all Central Europe, excepting our noble Alps, there is no longer any sport to be found which offers this higher kind of interest; for in all the ordinary districts which civilization has reduced to such a dead level of uniformity, the poor game has been forced by man into little retreats, and is by some people so systematically tended that it has become almost domesticated. There is no real pleasure in an easy day's shooting well arranged by a large staff of keepers, for it demands no personal effort and no hard work. It is only shooting-practice, a mere stroll with a gun. Therefore if any one wants to shoot in a fine manly way, let him go to places where the game lives free and fetterless, and where sport involves exertions that are not within every one's powers of endurance.

Let the kindly reader pardon this digression, for it has all slipped from my pen while thinking of the many effeminate young men of the day who pose as hardy sportsmen because with a certain amount of skill they slaughter the poor game in well-organized battues!

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But I must now return to our steamer. When it began to get darker we retired to the cabin to take our last dinner on board, and having finished our meal, went on deck again to enjoy the delightful air.

It was just like a beautiful summer night; crickets were chirping on the river-banks, the water rippled softly past, and before us lay the boundless plains of Hungary melting away into the distance, while countless stars glittered in the heavens, and the crescent moon stood out clear and silver-bright, mirroring itself in the waters of the stream.

Brehm and I, fascinated by the beauty of the night, stayed long on deck, talking over the charming incidents of this journey and planning fresh expeditions, and it was late when we retired to rest, while the steamer ran up-stream all night long without stopping.

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FIFTEENTH DAY.

The sun was already shining pleasantly into our cabins when we awoke, and found to our great astonishment that the steamer was at a standstill, and that we were quietly lying at the quay of Pest, just at the very place below the suspension bridge from which we had set off a fortnight ago. When breakfast was over we went on deck to admire this beautiful town, which looked very fine in the morning sunlight, and then gave our people their final orders ; for the steamer, with all our effects, skins, and tolerably large menagerie, was to go on to Vienna in order to facilitate their transport.

When all was in order we left the vessel, and I confess that it was not without a twinge of regret that I took leave of this brave craft which had done us such good service, and on which we had spent so many pleasant hours.

From the landing-place we drove to the station, where, to our great delight, we found Count Rudolf Chotek, the amiable proprietor of the Fruška-Gora. He was on his way to his other estates in the north-eastern part of Hungary, so we travelled together, and the journey passed quickly and pleasantly except for the great heat.

We had a good deal of talk about the incidents of the expedition, with which we had certainly reason to be well satisfied, seeing what we had accomplished in so short a time.

The proceeds of the journey were :—

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Cinereous Vulture	8
Griffon Vulture	1
Imperial Eagle	7
Spotted Eagle	3
Pygmy Eagle	2
Sea-Eagle	14
Osprey	2
Short-toed Eagle	1
Common Buzzard	3
Common Kite	1
Black Kite	9
Goshawk	5
Hobby	1
Kestrel	4
Marsh-Harrier	1
Eagle-Owl	2
Tawny Owl	1
Raven	6
Hooded Crow	7
Rook	1
Jackdaw	1
Magpie	1
Jay	1
Roller	5
Lesser Grey Shrike	2
Nightjar	1
Cuckoo	3
Hoopoe	2
Turtle-Dove	4
Rock-Thrush	2
Coot	1
White-eyed Duck	1
Mallard	1
Grey-lag Goose	1
Cormorant	8
Black Tern	5
Black Stork	11
White Stork	1
Grey Heron	9
Purple Heron	2
Night-Heron	4

And an additional list of 26 other species of less interesting birds, which have been elsewhere alluded to; while the only mammals shot were 1 Fox, 3 Roe, and 5 Ziesel—in all a total of 211 head.

Besides a large number of skins, some of which were very fine, there was also a small collection of eggs and other objects of Natural History, such as nests and a few plants and insects, while our spoils were still further augmented by quite an interesting little menagerie of 8 Sea-Eagles, 6 Eagle-Owls, 4 Peregrines, 3 Ravens, and 4 Tawny Owls.

We got over our journey quickly, for the express went at a capital rate, and we soon reached a station near Presburg, where Count Chotek left us, and in a couple of hours more

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we saw the dome of the Rotunda and the venerable spire of St. Stephen's, while before us lay our grand Capital, beautiful and smiling, and surrounded by the hilly girdle of the Wiener Wald. Away we went across the Danube, and in a few minutes the train rattled into the Staatsbahn terminus.

Our Expedition was over, with its glorious days full of interesting experiences, and we shall all look back with pleasure to our trip down the Danube.

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EXTRACTS

FROM

'A JOURNEY IN THE EAST.'*

On the 9th of February, 1881, a cold winter's day, a small but enterprising party of travellers started. It consisted of my uncle the Grand Duke of Tuscany, General Count Waldburg, Abbot Mayer the Court Chaplain, Major von Eschenbacher, Count Josef Hoyos, the painter Pausinger, and myself.

In Miramar our old friend the ship of the same name was awaiting us, with Captain Rödiger, L.S., and Lieutenants Count Chorinsky, Hahn, Sachs, and Resniček, and also our travelling physician, Doctor Hirsch.

Lissa was passed on Feb. 11th, and on the 12th the vessel reached Corfu, where we did not land on account of the prevalence of confluent smallpox in the island, but steamed further on to the bay of Kardaki, which we intended to explore in our boats.

There a few herons, some large and small cormorants, and various ducks and divers took wing as soon as we tried to get

* 'Eine Orient Reise,' pub. Vienna, 1884.

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near them, shooting in this part of the world being a very uncertain amusement, for the Greeks, like the Italians, kill and devour everything.

At last, after much trouble, I managed to bag a Pygmy Cormorant, and contenting ourselves with this we returned homewards somewhat consoled for the lack of sport by a beautiful view of the green coast of Benizza and the lofty Hagi Deka mountain.

On the 13th we resumed our voyage, but a violent gale compelled us to put into Zante; and as the storm continued to rage, I utilized the unavoidable delay by spending the day on the island and ascending the high mountain of Skopos.

It was a toilsome and uninteresting climb and the sun burned fiercely, while we might have saved ourselves the trouble of carrying our guns, for there was no game, even birds were scarce, and we saw nothing but a few Central-European forms, which were here in their winter-quarters.

Even on the 15th the weather did not allow of our weighing anchor, so we set out early in the morning and made for the northern point of the island, and on reaching it had a splendid view. To the north lay beautiful Cephalonia, and just in front of us was a deep valley wooded with rustling oaks, in the midst of which stood a charmingly situated monastery almost hidden by the high hillsides.

We inspected the chapel belonging to it, which seemed to be a great place of pilgrimage, for it was richly adorned with many gilded reliquaries and dusky pictures of saints. Some of the priests then kindly invited us to take luncheon in the monastery, and on our inquiring about the sporting resources of the island, the holy men at once proposed a hunt for hares; so, as soon as lunch was over, we set out under the guidance of the youngest priest, who was attired in a short frock, wide blue trousers, and slippers ; the priestly biretta

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graced his head, and he carried a long gun, while he was attended by a peasant and a couple of very unsporting-looking curs.

For more than an hour we toiled up a desolate mountain-ravine, where high hill-slopes quite shut out the view on both sides, and there was nothing to be seen but bare dazzling white masses of rock surrounded by narrow belts of evergreen bushes, the whole place having the true sunburnt look of so many mountain districts of the south, such as those of Dalmatia and Spain.

The dogs hunted among the stones, and the priest bounded about the rocks with tremendous energy, his gun loaded and at full cock. Still nothing stirred, only high above us circled some Imperial Eagles.

At last we reached the ridge of the mountain, where we had a fine view of the sea and of the high plateau with its medley of stones, rocks, peaks, and summits. While resting there for a quarter of an hour we heard several shots at no great distance, which were followed by the appearance of some peasants with their guns—they had missed one of the few hares of the island.

On the way back I struck across the hill and was taking the most direct line to the monastery, when suddenly a little hare (probably *Lepus mediterraneus*) jumped up in front of me, but as it was too far off I did not fire. Thereupon the dogs gave chase and the priest, too, pursued the noble animal with long strides; but of course the hare outran them and soon vanished, and the poor priest came back panting and haranguing me in Greek, for, thanks to its great rarity, a hare plays a very important part in Zante.

On the 16th the weather was favourable and we left this island, arriving at Alexandria on the 18th. Leaving the 'Miramar' on the 19th, we travelled by Tantah from Alexandria to Cairo in a special train of the Viceroy's, which went

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so fast that we had but a fleeting glimpse of many interesting scenes.

At first the line runs along a low ridge of land between the great marshy lakes of Mareotis on the right and of Aboukir on the left. These broad sheets of water are covered with all sorts of wild fowl, while on the yellow sand-hills stand melancholy herons with long outstretched necks.

After a time the marshes and lakes of the northern delta disappear and are replaced by highly cultivated land. Everywhere is tillage, with the broad fields of green corn, perfect forests of cotton-plants, deep canals, high embankments, occasional clumps of slender palms, shady gardens, and brown ruinous-looking mud-built villages with high minarets, which form the typical features of cultivated Lower Egypt.

There is plenty of life in the fields and along the embankments, which also serve as roads. Labourers working and ploughing, and half-nude figures busy at the water-wheels. Women in narrow blue garments leading naked children, and brown fellaheen walking beside the caravans of stately camels. Troops of Bedouin—that proud, independent, and isolated little race—passing from desert to desert across the cultivated land, the women on camels, the men both on horseback and afoot. Pure Arabs with their white burnouses, fine horses, long guns, and curved sabres. Turbans and common tarbooshes, long-eared goats, and wolfish dogs, the grey stunted donkeys of the peasants, and the well-cared-for white or black riding asses of the rich, with trains of well-to-do people, the men riding in gay attire, the women on camels in tower-like receptacles which hide them from the eyes of the unbelievers The fields swarm with Buff-backed Herons following the husbandman as he ploughs, and with active Spur-winged Plovers. Ruddy-coloured Palm-Doves coo among the bushes by the banks, over which hover long-billed Pied

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Kingfishers, those true Egyptian birds, while, scared by the train, a wolf scurries across the fields, and hawks, vultures, and myriads of kites are cruising round the villages.

Varied and gorgeous in colour, full of life, rich in human interests, remarkable in its fauna, and swathed in the haze of the noontide heat—'tis thus old Lower Egypt presents itself to the traveller.

It was in the neighbourhood of Cairo, which we reached on the 19th, that we had our first shooting-excursion.

After a hasty lunch some of us went out with Baron Saurma. The town had first to be traversed, so we crossed the canal and drove through the broad streets of the European part of the city, passing the pretty houses and luxuriant gardens of the wealthier inhabitants, and getting a distant glimpse of the entrance to the Arab quarter. The streets were very amusing with their wild confusion of European carriages, wretched cabs, pack and saddle asses, mules, camels, rich and poor, beggars and showy Orientals, true believers and semi-European Levantines, and added to all this a great throng of real western folk—tourists and the like. Passing Kasr-el-Nil and driving over the bridge, we soon reached the embankments and high avenues which run through the large gardens outside the town, and came to some extensive sugar-cane plantations near Tassum Pasha's palace, which were surrounded by canals and half-flooded fields. In one of these plantations we intended to hunt.

Prince Taxis and Baron Saurma's brother were awaiting us, so the guns were at once posted and the dogs uncoupled. For a long time the dachshunds seemed to find no scent, but at last they began to hunt and approached the edge of the field, giving tongue loudly; but unfortunately the wolf broke from the cover at an unguarded point, so we went off to another cane-field which lay beyond a broad canal. The dogs were again let loose, but we soon had to take them up,

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as, while they were working, we made the painful discovery that on one side of the field the cutting of the canes had already begun.

A large number of labourers, wretchedly poor, slightly clad fellaheen, some of whom had splendid figures, were here toiling under the superintendence of an overseer arrayed in long flowing garments and armed with a whip of rhinoceros hide. This fine fellow walked up to me while the hunt was going on, and delivered an oration accompanied with haughty gestures, and, after much trouble, I at last understood him to mean that he wished me to leave the place.

As the tone of his voice and the movements of his hand began to be more energetic I called up Osman, Baron Saurma's black kawass, and as soon as the worthy Oriental saw the rich livery of a consular servant, his voice sank into mild suppliant tones, and he hurried in among the sugar-canes to avoid further unpleasantness. We then returned to the carriages, having failed in our first brief attempt at killing wolves, though we had shot some small game.

Baron Saurma now took us to Old Cairo, which lies towards the south and is the most ancient part of the town. The bridge had to be crossed again, and then the road turned to the right, and running close to the Nile and near a viceregal palace, soon brought us into a most interesting maze of rubbish and ruins, dirt and débris. There the poorest part of the population were living in miserable dilapidated houses, and there the driving-road came to an end among stones and sand-hills, so we had to get out of the carriages near two tall palm-trees and continue our way on foot.

The outermost house of the town was formed by the ruins of an old wall and a high heap of rubbish, and from this spot, where the hyænas, jackals, and half-wild dogs hold their nightly concerts, we had a splendid view. Wreathed in

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misty vapours and surrounded by the most vivid hues, the sun was just sinking below the yellow Libyan desert, and gilding the Pyramids, the high battlements and minarets of the city, the citadel, and the stern cliffs of the Mokattam mountains. It was a scene so rich and splendid in effects of colour, and so adorned by points of natural and architectural interest, that it would be hard even to imagine anything grander.

Amidst the refuse and rubbish stands the deserted and ruinous mosque of Kasr-el-Ain, and in its walls dwell numbers of Stone-Curlews, those singular birds of nocturnal habits which in the evening leave their hiding-places and fly down to the neighbouring Nile, uttering those incessant whistling cries which one nightly hears throughout Egypt.

We posted ourselves along the wall of the mosque, and as soon as it began to get dark several of these strange birds darted out of their retreats, but so quickly that Hoyos was the only one of us who managed to bring down a specimen. We then scrambled back to our carriages over the heaps of ruins and refuse, followed by the yelpings of frightened dogs, and stared at by the wondering Arabs who had crept out of their dens.

The first part of the homeward drive was very slow, for we had to pass through the labyrinthine ruins of Old Cairo in complete darkness before we came to some gardens, and at last got to the fashionable part of the town, where the well-lighted streets were pretty lively.

On reaching home we dined, and then came a brilliant torchlight procession got up by our countrymen in the gardens of Kasr-el-Nusha, where our national anthem of "Gott erhalte" and the shouts of Hoch! Éljen! and Živio! sounded strange as they rang through the quiet splendour of an African night.

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The following day our way again led us through the entire European quarter, where I was much charmed with the happy admixture of Eastern and Western architecture in the houses, which were built in country-house style, picked out with Oriental decorations, and with the rustling palm-trees and the luxuriant gardens with their fragrant flowers and shrubs. I was also amazed at the sight of innumerable birds of prey in the very middle of the town, for thousands of Parasitic Kites were flying about or sitting on the roofs, and Egyptian Vultures were sailing low over the streets. I heard, too, the singing of birds, the cooing of Turtle-Doves, and breathed with delight the delicious air of divine Egypt, congratulating myself on having for once escaped the hardships of a European winter.

Close to the large buildings of Kasr-el-Nil we crossed the sacred river and the island of Geziret-Bulak, and driving past some viceregal palaces and magnificent gardens, soon reached an embankment, along which a highroad bordered with trees ran straight through the fields and half-submerged ground of the cultivated land, and passing a wretched Arab village led up to the very edge of the desert.

Having inspected the Pyramids of Cheops, Chêfren, and Menkera, and the Sphinx with its body buried in the desert sands, we got some Arabs to go up the second Pyramid and drive down the jackals which it harbours. We were, however, badly posted; so a couple of jackals broke through unhurt and scurried off into the boundless waste, which is here intersected by hills and valleys. Several ineffectual shots had, however, been fired at them from below as they sprang about among the stones with extraordinary agility halfway up, and therefore much too far off.

The Pyramids looked to me more like artificial hills than architectural monuments, especially when men and animals were clambering about them.

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On the following morning, after spending some hours in ceremonial duties, we were able to change our full-dress uniforms for our shooting-coats, and after taking an early lunch we set out to shoot at Heliopolis, and ere long came in sight of the celebrated obelisk with its surroundings of bushes and green meadows.

Near the obelisk is a garden belonging to the Khedive, which contains a well-kept orange-grove with beautiful walks, and is adorned with flowers and luxuriant African vegetation. This garden, which is not larger than those often attached to European country houses, is surrounded by a low mud wall, and situated among well-tilled fields near a village.

Baron Saurma now proposed that we should beat it, but as we entered the gate I could not help thinking that we should not find anything more worth shooting at than the pretty Egyptian Turtle-Doves, but we were soon to be better informed.

Some of the gentlemen stationed themselves on one of the principal paths that intersected the garden, hiding behind the orange-trees, now loaded with fruit, while to me was assigned the last post near the wall. Saurma's eight capital dachshunds were then let loose, and their merry music soon reminded us of our hunting-grounds at home.

With strained attention I followed the progress of the hunt, and in a few minutes a shot was fired on the path. It was succeeded by a short silence, but the dogs soon gave tongue again in the opposite direction and came nearer and nearer to my post. Suddenly I heard an animal rushing through the bushes towards me, and immediately afterwards a jackal came galloping along the wall as hard as he could. A lucky shot knocked him over, and I had a good deal of difficulty in rescuing my booty from the onslaughts of the furious dachshunds, which had followed closely on the track. It was a true African Jackal that I had killed—a lean, reddish-

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yellow, long-legged animal with pointed ears. On hastening back to the other gentlemen, I found that Hoyos had been so lucky as to shoot a fairly large she-wolf of the African species (*Canis lupaster*).

On driving the garden again with the help of some natives, another wolf was started. I heard it rustling through the bushes, and my jäger even saw it, but unfortunately the sly brute slipped over the wall without being fired at. A couple of Woodcock were also seen, but not within shot; some Cranes, too, passed high overhead, and the dense foliage of the orange-trees was enlivened by a variety of birds.

After this short but very successful beat we left the garden and started for home. The sun had set, the shadows were deepening, twilight was coming on, and as the road along the top of the high narrow embankment, which was dangerous enough by day, did not seem at all suitable for driving on at night, we determined to leave the cultivated country traversed by the canal and strike straight across the desert. At first all went well, but the horses soon exhausted their strength and could only drag the heavy vehicles through the deep sand at a slow walk. The desert, too, began to get somewhat uneven, and as it would have taken us several hours to get to Cairo in this fashion, we made our way back to the arable ground with the help of some torch-bearers.

As we passed by the gardens of the Kubbeh Palace, bats were flitting round the rustling palms and thick sycamores, and from the shrubs and fruit-laden orange-groves rose most delicious perfumes—the intoxicating aromas of Eastern vegetation. Countless stars gemmed the heavens, and the soft delicious air had the effect of enchantment on us poor Europeans. It was a true African night in its full splendour; and one must experience the winning magic of these blest lands before one can understand their indescribable charms, their infinite powers of fascination, and the yearning for them

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which seizes upon every one who has lived within their bounds. Not in the raw, gloomy, frozen North, but in the smiling ever-blooming East, in the land of eternal summer, and there alone, could have stood the cradle of the human race.

A very good road runs from Kubbeh to Cairo ; so we soon reached Kasr-el-Nusha, where dinner, followed by a refreshing night's rest, invigorated us for the morrow.

On the 22nd we started in the morning with Baron Saurma, and drove through part of the European quarter and then up the long Muski to the last houses of the town, where the carriage-road ends and the waste barren district of the old tombs begins. There the broad tract of stones and sand that lies between Cairo and the steep cliffs of the Mokattam hills is completely filled up by a regular city of old mosque-like tombs and Mussulman graves of every description, some of which are very fine. A similar colony of the dead containing the tombs of the Mamelukes lies on the further side of the Citadel, but it is far less worthy of inspection.

Among the many large and small mosques of the tombs of the Caliphs, the most remarkable is the Gâmah Kait-Bey—a tolerably well-preserved building, with a richly ornamented dome, and in its sanctuary two blocks of stone on which are the prints of the Prophet's feet ! These stones are said to have been brought from Mecca by Kait-Bey himself, the builder of the mosque.

Altogether this ride through the city of tombs presented many highly interesting points of view. In front of us were the frowning precipices of the mountain, to our right the rock-built Citadel adorned with slender towering minarets, and around us a maze of tombs, gravestones, and mosques, all in a ruinous condition and half-buried by the desert sands. Among them rose bare mounds, crowned with tower-like Arab windmills built of stone ; while the whole scene bore the stamp of gloom, and the many tracks of hyænas, jackals, wolves, and

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dogs showed what uncleanly visitors there howl the night dirges of the departed Moslems.

We soon got to the great quarries, with their huge walls of rock and large blocks of stone scattered about in wild confusion. The donkeys were now left behind, and we climbed slowly halfway up the mountain-side by a narrow path among the stones and cliffs, where at some places it would have been awkward to have been seized with giddiness, while the scrambling about the slippery yellow-grey and dark-brown rocks of this true desert mountain demanded a certain display of dexterity.

In a narrow ravine enclosed by precipices, and not far from the fortress-like crest of the mountain, we found an Arab sitting beside a dead donkey.

Here Baron Saurma had caused the entrance to a cave in one of the cliffs to be built up with stones and loop-holed, thus forming a masked mountain-battery at the very best shot-range from the bait at the bottom of the ravine.

Into this small and very uncomfortable hiding-place my uncle, Saurma's clever Nubian servant Osman, my jäger, and I clambered on our hands and knees along a narrow ledge, while the Baron and the Arabs immediately returned to the quarry to see what would happen.

The sky had unfortunately become overcast and fine rain was falling—a very rare occurrence in Cairo, where it is said to rain only seven times a year; so we had just pitched upon one of these seven days for a kind of sport which requires a perfectly clear sky.

For a long time nothing came. The incessant practising of the buglers and trumpeters resounded from the Citadel, and the heavy air, in a space so confined as to impede all free movement, made us drowsy.

The countless fossils in the limestone were the only objects which afforded any interest, until at last a pair of Ravens

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flapped down, followed by a few Kites, and these birds at once began their breakfast. Later on came the disgusting Egyptian Vultures, with their bald heads; and the time was passing so tediously that I recommended my uncle to shoot, as he had never killed one of these birds. No sooner said than done; and after the smoke had rolled down the valley, I hastened to the spot where the bird lay, and descended to the quarry with the very unsavoury spoil, having advised my uncle to wait a little longer, as the sun had meanwhile broken through the clouds.

Baron Saurma and I now selected a good post of observation, and with our field-glasses in our hands awaited coming events.

It was a quarter of an hour before the first great vultures appeared. They were the huge *Vultur fulvus*, and with slow beats of their wings they came sweeping round the mountain-top one after another, until more than sixty had gathered in the air. Then came the exciting moment when the leading bird folded its wings and plunged into the ravine; for at this signal all the others followed suit, and, like an avalanche of stones, vulture after vulture came hurtling down from the dizzy heights. The last had hardly reached their goal when we saw the smoke rise from the rock-battery, and a swift dispersion and wild disorder in the ranks of the great birds were the immediate consequences of the shot.

With the help of the glass I saw a hard-hit vulture rolling down over the stones, and Osman soon appeared in pursuit of it; and as the other hungry fellows would not leave the spot, but kept circling round it, I hurried up the narrow rocky path which led to the ambush as fast as I could.

The Grand Duke had killed at a single shot five enormous vultures, having taken them just at the moment when their heads were all huddled together over the carcass; and as this great heap of birds was now lying in the little battery, one

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may imagine what a horrible stench pervaded that confined space.

Though the greedy birds of prey kept cruising round the edges of the ravine for fully half an hour, they would not descend again, but one by one left the place and flew back to the mountains. We, too, set out on our return; and as Osman had been sent away, and my jäger was waiting in the valley, the troublesome and unsavoury task of carrying the heavy booty on our backs down the difficult path devolved on the Grand Duke and myself.

It was already afternoon when we reached the quarry, and the other sportsmen had long since returned. They had laid out a carcass near a half-ruined mosque, on a plateau of the Mokattam hills; but their bag only consisted of an Egyptian Vulture and some kites, no large vultures having come to them.

We now rode back through the tombs of the Caliphs to the outer houses of the town, where our carriages were awaiting us. Next day we were to leave Cairo and start on our shooting-trip to the province of Fayûm, and after that was to come the journey up the Nile.

Early on the morning of the 23rd of February the whole of our travelling party, together with Baron Saurma and his brother, assembled at the station of that southern line of railway which is connected with the province of Fayûm as well as with Siut.

Herr Zimmerman was again kind enough to conduct our train, and to accompany us to Abouksor, the last station. Prince Taxis, with a dragoman, had left the day before for the Lake of Birket-el-Karun to pitch the tent and make arrangements for several days' shooting.

At first the line ran along the narrow strip of arable land which extends, chiefly on the western bank, between the Nile and the desert. Here was represented the regular type of

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Egyptian cultivation—high farming, pent within narrow bounds. True fellaheen villages alternated with palm-groves larger than those of Lower Egypt, and our attention was attracted by whole towns of round dovecotes built in real Arab style. Thousands of Rock-Doves here find shelter and protection simply for the sake of their valuable guano, their eggs and down being also occasionally taken. These birds never become quite domesticated, but are semi-wild in their habits, and in size and colour remain true Rock-Doves.

The rail runs on the left side of the Nile, often close to the bank. To the east one sees the desert mountains approaching the river, and to the west the undulating, almost flat, Libyan desert: it also passes all the Pyramids, quite near enough to admit of their being well seen. First come the hoary piles of Gizeh, the proudest of their race; and these are soon followed by their smaller relatives of Sakkara, while the extensive palm-forests of Bedrascheen and Memphis heighten the thoroughly African character of the landscape. We Europeans are accustomed to look with wonder at solitary palms in hot-houses or on the southern coasts of our ill-dowered quarter of the globe; but only in the great rustling palm-forests is this tree invested with its full force as the symbol of glowing Africa.

About 10 A.M. we branched off from the main line which follows the Nile to Siut, turning due west into the lonely barren waste; and strange and wonderful it seemed to be travelling by rail through these grandly desolate regions.

At a single stride one steps beyond the limit of the Nile inundations, and passes from a vegetation blessed with moisture, and teeming with a luxuriance such as the Dark Continent alone can generate, into the death-like stillness of the lifeless waste.

Any one who imagines the desert to be flat and quite level, like many of the Hungarian "pusztas" or the marshy land in

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the north of Germany, is very much mistaken ; for it is always undulating, often deeply intersected by valleys and crowned by hills. But it is always lonely, without the smallest vestige of plant life, and inhabited on its outskirts only by most peculiar animal forms specially adapted to it.

Still, to the traveller the desert seems grand and beautiful—a type of eternal rest : lovely, too, in tone, glowing under the scorching African sun, and tinted by stones of varied hues—bright yellow, dark, and sometimes even mottled—which form singular and charming combinations of colour.

No living thing did we see as the train rattled through the wilderness, except some Bedouins with white burnouses and long guns, who appeared from behind a hillock. Pure Berbers live in this part of the desert—free sons of the soil, brave, predatory, utterly unrestrained and lawless, and in their way the happiest of men. The various tribes differ much in appearance and costume, as well as in their weapons and their individual characteristics. Still Egypt, so far as the beauty and picturesqueness of its free races is concerned, is very inferior to Morocco on the one hand and Asia on the other ; for the south-western part of that quarter of the globe is also inhabited by Semitic Arabs.

Towards noon cultivation again appeared, in the form of a moist green spot in the midst of the yellow waste. This was the great oasis of El-Fayûm, a thoroughly well-tilled circular patch of land, surrounded on all sides by the desert, the large lake of Birket-el-Kârun forming its boundary on the west and separating the arable ground from the waste. Before arriving at the station of Abouksor we passed through a small portion of this oasis, which was well-farmed, fruitful, and chiefly planted with sugar-cane. We had now reached the terminus of the line, where a dilapidated station and a few buildings belonging to it, together with a sugar factory, form a little colony. The reader must not suppose that this is an establishment on the

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European pattern, such as a Bohemian beetroot-sugar factory; for it is a very plain neglected sort of building, with some low chimneys, which only give it something of the look of a factory. In it the produce of the numerous sugar-cane fields is turned to account.

We took a hasty breakfast in the very primitively arranged waiting-room of the station, and then hurried to get our caravan together. This is no easy business in the East; for every one offers the services of himself, his horse, or his donkey in the most impetuous way. They all shout, gesticulate, and jostle each other till the unfortunate stranger is perfectly deafened and throws himself into the arms of the nearest. However, with the assistance of some gendarmes and our trusty sticks, we soon managed to get this wild chaos into order.

The gentlemen and the attendants were all provided with horses, and we also engaged some men to carry the dachshunds, which are so necessary to the sportsman in this country. On this occasion a regular pack had been got together; for Baron Saurma had brought ten, and we four of these plucky pugnacious animals.

With some difficulty the crowds of inquisitive gaping people who had gathered round us were pushed back and prevented from running after us. The Bedouin sportsmen, whom we really needed, rode and walked in front, forming a little company, all clad in white, or rather in dirty yellow burnouses, and armed with long guns and curved knives. At their waists hung primitive tobacco-pouches and bags of powder and hacked lead, their long lean legs being bare and their feet thrust into red slippers. Here, as throughout Northern Africa, they were wretchedly poor, wearing no colours or pretty stuffs, not even turbans, but only the brown close-fitting tarbooshes, the younger men being even quite bare-headed.

These people are of an interesting type, for they are true

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Berbers of the Libyan desert, dark brown, much darker than those of Lower Egypt, generally tall and slight in figure, and with features less noble and handsome than those of the more northerly Bedouin tribes. They show an evident admixture of southern and even of negro blood ; and among them are some real negroes, perfectly black fellows, with curly hair. These men have in their childhood been carried off from the interior of Africa as slaves, have regained their freedom among the tribes, and have adopted the language, costume, and habits of the Bedouins, forgetting their origin and even the country of their birth. Such individuals I found among all the tribes with which I became acquainted, both in Africa and Asia. Even the agricultural labourers at Abouksor struck me as differing from the type of the fellaheen inhabiting the valley of the Lower Nile ; for they were bigger and generally darker, a sort of mixed race, with a good many negroes among them, and more like the Bedouins, with whom, in these isolated oases, they are much thrown together.

Our caravan had hardly been formed when shooting began. In the garden near the factory we found a flock of the striking and truly African Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, a lovely green bird with a long tail and blue cheek-stripes, and succeeded in killing some of them. It is a native of the interior of Africa, and very common in Upper Egypt, but never reaches Cairo, which seems to be too far north for it. The pretty Spur-winged Plovers, those characteristic Egyptian birds, were also running about the fields, together with flocks of Buff-backed Herons ; for here, as throughout Africa, the rich fauna is congregated within the well-watered and verdant districts in astonishing numbers. Altogether the first look of things seemed to promise some good days of sport.

We were soon blazing away, and a number of birds were well retrieved from the wet fields by our Arabs. Sportsmen seldom come out as far as this part of the country, so we had

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the pleasure of giving a lesson to birds which had not become the least shy of the devices of Europeans.

The caravan had marched on with the horses, servants, and baggage; but the sportsmen were shooting in various directions, when Baron Saurma shouted to us to come up to him, for he had discovered a large field of sugar-canes and wished to hunt it with the dogs. But before we could get room to shoot, the numerous labourers had to be sent away, and this was a difficult business. The guns were now to station themselves round the field, while Saurma, my jäger, and the pack of fourteen dachshunds were to work through the canes, which were as high as a man. Even before we were all at our posts the dogs gave tongue merrily, and a couple of shots were fired; for one of the party, having a good idea of the right thing to do, had hurried forward at a tremendous pace, hoping to be the first to reach the opposite side of the field. Before he got there the dogs brought a large wolf out into the open, within a few yards of him; but as his gun was, most unfortunately, still loaded with small shot for plovers and Buff-backed Herons, the couple of shots which he fired had no effect on Master "Isegrimm," who scurried across the bare country to the next standing fields.

The dogs were soon scouring all parts of the canes in full cry, and there was plenty of firing, two of the sportsmen having twice shot at wolves, but without any success, for the cunning brutes only just showed themselves outside the cover, and instantly vanished into it again, while many chance shots were fired at them as they were rushing through the dense canes. However, the frequent baying of the dogs and the traces of blood showed that several of the shots had taken effect, and some of the guns were so overcome by excitement, that they left their posts, and tried to reach the places where the dogs were baying; but, as one could hardly see a couple of paces in front, these were but vain attempts.

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During the whole of this wild and somewhat irregular hunt I had not got a single shot; and it was not until half an hour had gone by, and most of the guns had left their posts and were trying to get up to the dogs which were now running a wolf, that I discovered a cross road which led right through the field. Along this I hastened, until I got to a place where an irrigation-ditch ran into the interior of the plantation, and made a narrow lane only a yard wide, down which I could shoot. There I stationed myself, and waited for the dogs to bring up the wolf; but this they did slowly, for it was badly wounded, and often stood at bay, and when it at last crossed my line I could not fire, on account of their surrounding it. On the other side of the ditch the fight now began again, and I heard the snarls of the wolf mingled with the sharp barks of the dachshunds, but in a few minutes they ceased their pursuit and all was quiet. Dachshunds hunt wolves unwillingly, and one can neither count upon their following up a wounded one long, nor on their giving tongue at all at a dead one; so that the wolf which is not killed outright is generally lost.

A few minutes later the barking of other dogs from the opposite corner of the field announced the commencement of a fresh hunt, and again the chase came straight towards me through the canes; but, as before, it advanced very slowly, and it was evident that the dogs were busy with another wounded wolf. They were baying furiously not more than a hundred yards off, and I was attentively listening to the fight, when I heard a slight rustling close beside me, and immediately caught sight of an unwounded wolf stealing across the narrow path. I instantly fired, and hearing the glad sound of its fall I hurried up to the spot, and found it snarling and dragging itself away, half lying, half sitting, for its back was broken. Attracted by the shot, some of the dogs now came up, and a savage battle began, which I put an end to by

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giving the beast a finishing shot as soon as I got a good chance.

A single wolf was the total result of this hunt, which might easily have been a brilliant success, as at least four separate wolves were shot at. We could not, however, continue it, for one by one the dogs came out at the edge of the field dead beat, the plucky animals having worked bravely in the scorching heat. We therefore returned to our horses, more or less satisfied, and expressing our surprise at the number of wild animals inhabiting this district, and the comical way of hunting them in well-cultivated fields, as we do partridges at home.

The caravan was soon in motion again, and wound through the luxuriantly green fields by a bad and often marshy road. The sun poured its burning rays upon us in a true African fashion, the warmth of the atmosphere being shown by a beautiful mirage. Even a Berber who was walking beside my horse swore at the heat and perspired profusely. He was a singular-looking fellow, for his black scarred face and pointed curly beard showed that negro blood ran in his veins, while his fine features indicated that he partly came of an Arab stock. I had given him my gun to carry, and he grinned with delight and showed his white teeth, while he examined the European weapon with the air of a connoisseur.

From our path we had a lovely view of the smiling fields, the grey-green bushes by the water, and beyond them of the broad surface of the lake itself, backed by the orange lines of the Saharan desert.

A Long-legged Buzzard, one of the characteristic birds of this country, was sitting on a hillock near our line of march. I jumped off my horse and crept up to it, but failed to kill it, as my shot was too small, whereupon the confiding bird came nearer. Again I fired without success, and so it went on until, in spite of the light shot, my fourth attempt brought it to the ground.

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Soon after this short interlude we arrived at a wretched miserable-looking village, the low ruinous mud hovels of which were not worthy of its splendid surroundings of lofty palms and wide-spreading sycamores. The inhabitants came running out to look at us, the older ones in airy costumes, the children in none at all. Near this village the road took a turn and soon brought us to the margin of the lake.

When everything had been unloaded from the horses and the pack animals we got into the boats. These were truly wretched crafts, nor could our lake-dwelling ancestors have used anything worse than these flat four-cornered boxes, which were slowly propelled with the most primitive oars by five or six sturdy fellows. Inside them everything was full of old fish-bones, and there was such a stench of dirt of all sorts, and particularly of stinking fish, that we could only partially protect ourselves from it by the perpetual smoking of cigarettes. The fishermen of the earliest Egyptian eras probably used the same sort of boats as their descendants of to-day at Birket-el-Kârun.

With melancholy songs and splashing oars we glided over the blue surface of this large interesting lake, which is bordered on one side by the cultivated ground and on the others by the true desert. All along its shores runs a belt of dense luxuriant bushes, sometimes narrow, sometimes broad, and this gives it a distinctive character. Nowhere does one see human habitations, and the grand but undeniably depressing effect of the scene is heightened by the deep leaden blue of the salt water. It seems strange to the traveller to find a lake so far from the sea (the reader will kindly look at a map) in whose depths live true marine fish and other sorts of creatures; but as the entire desert is salt, the lakes on its borders are naturally the same.

When we had been half an hour on the way we perceived

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some Pelicans swimming proudly about, and shaped our course towards them, but we could barely keep pace with the rapid paddling of the birds. At last we fired some long shots with ball from these rickety boats, and after prolonged efforts the clumsy creatures rose heavily and flew off to an undisturbed part of the lake. The only other birds we saw were some Wild Ducks, Divers, Gulls, and a strikingly large number of Ospreys.

Evening was coming on, the sun was sinking, vanishing into the desert with the most splendid effects of light, and an impressive stillness reigned over the broad landscape as we now approached the island of Beziré-Kârun, whose rocky cone was picturesquely relieved against the dark blue sky, and landed on its flat eastern shore, where the tents of our imposing camp were standing within a hundred yards of the water. Fires, too, were in full blaze, and Arabs were sitting among the bushes on the strand. There we were greeted by Prince Taxis, who had arrived in the morning with the heavy caravan; and immediately after we had landed a capital dinner, dressed by an Arab cook, was served in a specially arranged mess tent.

Our tents were made of pretty materials and were thoroughly comfortable. There were beds and even tables in these airy abodes, each of which was tenanted by two gentlemen. It is only Orientals who understand the art of cooking properly at an open fire, and how to pitch a tent quickly and comfortably; so all who can manage to do so had better travel among these excellent people.

After dinner we smoked, chatted, and arranged our plans for the morrow, and by ten o'clock all was quiet in the camp; the Arabs, too, were lying on the sand in the open air, wrapped in their ghostly white burnouses.

The night did not pass quite so smoothly as the lovely evening had led us to expect, for a violent storm rose and

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swept wildly over the camp. Our dragoman Hassan crept from tent to tent, and hammered the pegs more firmly into the ground; but a side of the one in which my uncle and I were sleeping was torn away by the squall, and wakened by the cold current of air we saw the starry sky smiling down into our dwelling. Luckily all damages were soon repaired, and towards morning the storm abated.

We breakfasted at a very early hour, before sunrise, as we intended to distribute ourselves along the shore of the island to watch the flight of the waterfowl and to select good positions where we could lie in wait for them.

As soon as we left the tents we saw numbers of birds already on the wing, such as cormorants, various kinds of ducks, herons, and pelicans. The latter have a very funny appearance, for their long bills hang down in a comical fashion, and they evidently find it difficult to buoy up their great heavy bodies, even with such enormous wings as they possess. Nevertheless their powers of flight are strong and enduring.

The Grand Duke and I went to the flat shore near the camp and hid ourselves as well as we could. Many sorts of birds came past, some of which we shot, and altogether the flight was a remunerative one, for we had only to wait a short time between the shots. We also obtained the Pied Kingfisher, that large but inferior edition of our kingfisher, but unfortunately no pelicans, for they passed us out of range.

Shots sounded from all sides, so we had hopes of a good bag. On this first occasion the birds were not at all shy, but in a couple of days we had exterminated the stock of game on the island, and the flocks avoided the dangerous rocks by making long detours.

The morning flight was over in an hour, and we returned to

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the camp, close to which I shot within a few minutes a couple of Ospreys as they flew overhead.

The gentlemen came back one by one, each with some spoil, but Pausinger had done best, for he had hidden himself behind a bush, not far from the camp, and after waiting a little while a Pelican had come past flying low, and our accomplished artist had brought it down with a lucky shot.

Before relating the further incidents of the day's sport, I must describe the island itself. Parts of the eastern and southern shores are flat and covered with bushes, the remainder formed of steep crumbling cliffs, except at the most northerly point, where there is a small strip of flat coast and a marsh like a miniature lagoon.

Between the strand and the rocky cone is a perfectly level tract, hardly ever more than three hundred yards broad, and covered with fine sand.

On the north side of the island this little plain is in many places full of large stones and masses of rock, which have become detached from the cone itself and have rolled down. There all is barren, with the exception of a few bushes along the shore, and not even the scantiest grass thrives. The waters of the lake are perpetually undermining the friable coast, so it cannot be long before there will be nothing left of the whole island but the indestructible rocky cone.

After a short rest the Grand Duke and Prince Taxis left the camp, and were soon followed by Baron Saurma and myself. Our plan was to divide our forces at a certain point, each party taking some dachshunds, and to beat round the central hill in different directions, and so meet at the north side.

Two Stone-Curlews got up among the first rocks, and one of them I shot. The worthy Osman who was leading the dogs now let them loose among the stones, and forthwith an exciting, but somewhat difficult hunt began, for to follow the

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dogs one had to spring about the flat rocks and the loose stones.

The formation of the hill was very remarkable. We found rocks of the most extraordinary shapes, many of them like large mushrooms. Below them all was hollowed out and traversed by passages, and through the clefts and wide cracks, which had to be jumped, we often caught a glimpse of the dark tunnels in which the dachshunds were hunting, and out of which they now and again crept.

In front of one of these countless fissures the dogs gave tongue, and then vanished into the rock, and a few seconds afterwards a Lynx came bounding out of its hiding-place. I was standing on a projection, under which it would have to pass, and at my first shot it doubled up, but pulled itself together again, and had to be finished off with a second dose of B.B. It was a very powerful grey-coloured beast with tufted ears—a true African Desert Lynx, larger and stronger than its European congener.

The Grand Duke had meanwhile been trying the opposite side of the hill and had seen two lynxes, but the glimpses that he had got of them were so momentary that shooting was out of the question. We met at the prearranged point, and now worked the ground together with all the dachshunds.

The merry music of the dogs was soon heard again, and we hurried forward; but unfortunately my uncle, whose turn it was to shoot, did not get over the stones fast enough, so the lynx left its cover unmolested and disappeared again among the rocks. The dogs followed the trail over these shelving obstructions as well as their short legs would let them, and in a few minutes they began baying in front of a bolt-hole which ran underneath a great mass of rock, on the other side of which was the wide entrance to the den. With a little persuasion several of them pressed into the dark tunnel, where they seemed to pen the lynx into a sort of blind alley,

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for a brisk fight began, and we could hear the plaintive whines of the wounded dogs, the sharp barks of those that were fighting bravely, and the savage snarling lynx.

For nearly an hour we stood by the den and there was no change in the situation, so we now tried to call out the dogs, in order that the lynx might have room to slip past. At last they appeared one after another covered with dust, and weary with the exertions of the fight; only two very keen ones would not come out. Suddenly we discovered a cleft in the rock, at the bottom of which we could distinctly hear the barking of the dogs. This crevice we enlarged as well as we could, and on probing the hole with a stick, I encountered a soft obstacle. When the stick was withdrawn there were grey lynx-hairs hanging to it, and looking carefully into the hole I saw the shining green eyes of the animal. I now drove the stick in against it as hard as I could, and soon felt that the soft body had disappeared, while the underground hunt was now audible, as the lynx retreated followed by the dogs.

In a few seconds more the grey beast bolted out of the hole near which the Grand Duke was standing, and was met by a well-directed shot. Half rolling and half dragging itself along, the hard-hit creature was retreating under a large rock; but luckily the plucky dogs held on to its hind quarters, and so Prince Taxis, by crawling in below the rock, managed to give it a finishing thrust with his hunting-knife. It was a fine female, but not nearly so large and powerful as the male which I had killed.

After this success we gave up further search, and returned to the camp with the tired and more or less wounded dogs.

During the morning the weather had grown worse, for the sky was covered with light grey clouds, and fine rain occasionally fell—a very rare occurrence in these regions. The

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north wind also became more violent, and there was a coolness in the air which the sudden change from the scorching heat of the previous day made very perceptible. High waves rose on the lake, and the fishermen declared that in this weather it was quite impossible to go away; so here we were, like Robinson Crusoe, cut off from all the world and confined to this little island.

In the camp our jägers arranged a fine and unusual display by hanging the slain game on to the tent-ropes, where the two Lynxes, the skin of yesterday's Wolf, Pausinger's Pelican, the two Ospreys, and a variety of wildfowl made a capital show, and our stuffer, who worked well and quickly, had plenty to do.

After a first-rate lunch, served by our worthy Hassan, we were comfortably smoking in front of the tents, and enjoying the glorious camp-life of the East, when I suddenly perceived that the level tract at the northern end of the island, between the shore and the rocky cone, was completely covered with a variety of birds. I could distinguish, by the aid of the glass, flocks of herons, pelicans, gulls, and among them some Ospreys.

Under cover of the bushes I stalked up along the shore towards these masses of birds, that were sitting half asleep and digesting their food, and had already got pretty close to it when to my great dismay I saw a couple of pelicans swimming about as sentries. On two sides I had nothing to hide me, so it was all up, for the wily birds had already seen me and rose. This was the signal for the flocks on shore, and with a noisy flapping of their wings the whole assembly dispersed in wild disorder and in all directions.

The inquisitive gulls alone wanted to find out what was the matter, and circled screeching around me, and among a lot of smaller birds I noticed a Great Black-headed Gull. This splendid species was quite new to me, and I secured it by a lucky shot.

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The spot where the flocks had been resting must be daily frequented for digestive purposes, for the whole ground was thickly covered with white guano and feathers, while the stinking remains of fish were lying about in great profusion.

On my return to camp we decided to distribute ourselves along the shore again for the afternoon and evening flight. I chose the place where our friend Pausinger had shot his pelican in the morning, and concealed myself as best I could by crouching under a bush, with my retrieving Arab beside me. Each of us had one of these dusky fellows with him: they fetch everything that falls in the water; but one must never argue with these money-loving people, nor show great delight at having shot any particular bird, otherwise they begin bargaining at the water's edge, demanding more and more, and calculating with cunning astuteness on one's increasing eagerness to obtain the spoil. As soon as anything falls, one must show them a coin and force them into the water with a few friendly shoves before the bargaining begins.

I must have been vainly waiting for a good half-hour when I saw a Pelican a long way off which was taking a direct line towards my ambush, and as soon as it came near enough I gave it both barrels. The shot rattled loudly on its thick mail of feathers, and feebly flapping its wings it dropped into the water severely wounded. For some minutes it swam about slowly, but the head with its heavy bill kept sinking lower and lower, until at last the waves turned the bird over, and it lay on its back quite dead.

Neither money nor threats would induce my Arab to go into the water, as the Pelican was really rather far out. I therefore hurried back to the camp to get other men, but on my return I saw, to my great delight, that a dusky fellow was already approaching it through the foaming waves. The Grand Duke had been hidden not far from me, and on seeing

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the dead bird had sent his attendant, who was a bold swimmer, into the water; and in a few minutes the plucky Arab came swimming towards us, dragging the heavy bird behind him by its bill. I was delighted with my first Pelican, for it was quite an enormous specimen.

In the evening I walked up and down the strand in pursuit of the smaller shore-birds; and as soon as it became too dark for shooting, all the sportsmen came into dinner, bringing home with them another fairly good bag. After this interesting day all was soon quiet in the camp.

Next morning we were to have started at an early hour, and to have rowed over to a tongue of land on the opposite shore of the lake for the flight of the birds; but the night unfortunately brought with it worse weather, and before sunrise the wind had risen to such a height that the fishermen refused to put out, so we were obliged to spend another day on the island. We all slept late, and went in the morning to the rocks with the dachshunds, where we hunted about in vain, for not another lynx was to be found. We therefore devoted the rest of the day to the shores.

The waterfowl took very unfavourable lines of flight and carefully avoided the island, so towards evening I took a walk right round it, and killed a fine Barbary Falcon, some Sandpipers, and a Raven.

The storm now moderated, the sky cleared, and we were gladdened by some inspiriting sunshine and splendid effects of light; but it was not until I saw a fishing-craft slip tolerably quietly past the western point of the island that I was quite satisfied and free from anxiety about the sport of the morrow.

The boat coming from the desert side of the lake and proceeding towards the cultivated country passed close to my hiding-place, and was rowed by wild-looking dusky fellows clad in miserable rags, who were singing weird and doleful songs. It was a strange picture; far and wide not a trace of

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human industry; away beyond the lake the boundless desert, and on its waters the truly African bark with its swarthy occupants. These good people were just as much astonished at seeing me, a European "pale-face," on this barren island, usually only inhabited by pensive pelicans. My attendant had a long conversation with the wayfarers, which, so far as I could make out, referred to the weather and the crossing.

Our day's bag was comparatively small, for the island itself was thoroughly shot out. After dinner our Arab retainers let off some of the fireworks, which have such special charms for all Orientals, and made a diabolical din; but we did not allow that sort of thing to go on long, for we preferred a quiet night's rest to the finest fireworks of our worthy dragoman, and we did not wish the waterfowl to be disturbed by the sudden glare.

On the 26th we left our tents at a very early hour, long before daybreak, and set out after a hasty breakfast. The lake was quite calm, so we were able to cross over to the desert side, and in the evening we were to find our camp on the cultivated land of the opposite shore. As all Orientals are unpunctual, it was long before our fishermen appeared to get the boats ready, and then they shuffled about the beach in a very sleepy manner, so that we had a deal of trouble in getting this chaos into a certain degree of order. However, after a time the party, consisting of the gentlemen, the jägers, and the dachshunds, pushed off in three boats. Our Arabs rowed in their usual way, singing songs with their hoarse voices, while the stench in the boats was almost insupportable.

Luckily the surface of the lake was calm and quiet, for with boats like these, manned by sleepy Arabs, and in the pitch-dark night, we might have had some disagreeable experiences if a storm had got up. After about an hour's rowing we reached the shore, where a promontory, formed of

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a somewhat large mass of rock, juts out into the lake, and is only connected with the shore by a narrow neck of land. There we got out and sent the Arabs and the boats behind the rock. It took some time before our energetic and authoritative orders succeeded in imposing silence on our swarthy companions; and we had no time to lose, for as the first glimmer of daylight was visible in the east it was necessary that everything should be perfectly quiet on the neck of land. We therefore made short work of it, drove the Arabs into their place of concealment, and left Osman behind as a guard.

We now lined the neck of land and the rock, crouching down behind the bushes and the blocks of stone. At daybreak the flight of the waterfowl began. First came the Herons, followed by the Cormorants, Ducks, Pelicans, Gulls, Sandpipers, and a few Marsh-Harriers and Ospreys. Many shots were fired by the long line of guns, the large flocks of Pelicans being especially greeted with a well-sustained fire; but unfortunately they were too far away, and only a couple of these great birds were foolish enough to fly low, and were bagged by two of the sportsmen. The stars had already vanished, and the night was succeeded by a glorious African sunrise, while the heat of the perfectly cloudless day already began to make itself felt. When we left our posts the flight was over, and every one picked up his spoil and made his way to the quickly improvised landing-place by the rock, where the boats were lying with the Arabs beside them and Osman taking charge of them all.

Two Pelicans and various other birds had fallen, besides a poor Egyptian Vulture, which had inquisitively flown over the line of guns and had lost his life.

After resting a little while we again set off to beat the bushes along the shore, which stretch both north and south of the neck of land, and form a dense undergrowth of tamarisks,

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high rushes, and grass. In many places this narrow impenetrable belt of vegetation is hardly more than ten to twenty yards broad, and right up to the herbage reaches the great desert itself, with its hills and valleys, flats and undulations, partly covered with very fine sand and partly with rough variegated stones.

Baron Saurma stayed behind with the dachshunds close to the neck of land where the bushes began, and, following his suggestion, the other guns stationed themselves at certain distances from each other along the edge of the desert, while I took the furthest post at a spot where a break in the bushes left a narrow lane, which gave me an open shot down to the shore, and thus formed the natural limit to the first beat.

On our way through the sand we had an opportunity of examining a great many tracks, which seemed to show that the beasts of prey come down every night from the desert to the shore to drink, and probably to surprise the sleeping waterfowl. There was track upon track, footprints of Hyænas, Wolves, Jackals, and Fennecs or Desert-Foxes; we also saw in the fine sand the lines drawn by the great Lizards, and the broad trail of the repulsive Spectacled Snake.

I had hardly got to my post when the dogs began to give tongue, though still a long way off; but the hunt came along quickly, and there was soon a loud barking close to me. Suddenly I saw a grey-brown shaggy beast, with a pointed head and a long thin ugly tail, going along at a quick trot close to the sandy shore. A lucky shot bowled it over, and before me lay an Ichneumon, that thoroughly African and very ugly creature, which has no resemblance to any of our European predatory animals, either in appearance or habits. The dogs soon appeared following on its track, and as these narrow thickets were now beaten out we decided on making another drive in the adjoining cover; but this second attempt was unhappily attended with no success.

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Some camel-tracks in the sand betokened that a tribe of Bedouin were not far off, and indeed we soon observed camels browsing among the bushes. We also heard dogs barking, and saw in the distance some dusky figures walking towards an encampment.

These wild tribes are, as I was told, extremely poor; but the desert being so very near they are perfectly independent and unassailable, and therefore not always very friendly.

The party of sportsmen now divided into two sections. Baron Saurma, the Grand Duke, and I proposed to get into a boat, which had followed us, and row after some Pelicans which were swimming about near the shore, while the other gentlemen were to occupy themselves with the myriads of Coots which frequented the reeds by the water's edge.

All our attempts to get near the shy Pelicans were unsuccessful, nor would the Great White Egrets that were standing by the shore allow us to approach them. The further we went the broader and thicker were the reeds, that covered the water to a distance of about a hundred yards from the shore. The beautiful White-eyed Ducks seemed here to be on migration, for flocks of that species continually rose in front of our boat, and Grey and Purple Herons, Great and Little Egrets also flew up from the beds of reeds.

A fair lot of ducks were shot as a provision for the larder, our fishermen sitting naked in the boat and jumping into the water to retrieve everything that was killed. We were rocking about a little way from the shore when the reeds suddenly parted, and there appeared a big Bedouin, a fine warlike-looking fellow, armed with a long gun. He offered to sell us some waterfowl which he had shot in the morning, and on receiving a few silver coins vanished as quickly and noiselessly as he had come.

It was getting on towards noon, so we made the men row us back to the headland. The heat was frightful, and under

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this midday sun our craft stank even worse than at night. An old man, too, blind of one eye, somewhat humpbacked, with a curling white beard and a turban, had planted himself close beside us. He was uncommonly repulsive in his general appearance, and did not row, but had only come out of curiosity. This unwelcome stranger was a great source of annoyance, and indeed a dangerous neighbour, for he hunted in his flowing garments incessantly and with much success.

Happily we got to the rock in half an hour, where we found the other sportsmen, who had shot a good many Coots.

All the spoils of the first half of the day were now put into a boat and despatched under the care of my jäger to the opposite side of the lake, where our new camp had meanwhile been pitched.

We now determined to rest for an hour on the slope of the rocky headland near the shore, where we took a frugal lunch of cold meat, bread, flat lemonade, and various preserves more or less spoilt by the heat. Our men amused themselves by catching Geckos, those curious little grey lizards with high combs on their backs, and there were also lots of scorpions lying under the stones. The halt, however, did not refresh us, for the sun burnt fearfully on the steep rocky hillside, where the ground was glowing and the air quivering in the scorching heat. It was the hottest day that we had hitherto endured on our journey, far hotter than the warmest day of a European summer.

We soon started again, and walked along the bushes by the shore in a northerly direction, the tramp through the burning sands of the desert, which radiated a most terrific heat, being by no means pleasant. Once more we posted ourselves at intervals round the bushes, and again a merry hunt began; but this time the baited beast did not show itself so readily, and the chase went up and down several times. At last,

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after it had been brought to bay for a little while, an Ichneumon broke from the cover in front of the Grand Duke, who rolled the comical creature over, but it dragged itself back into the thickets, where a sharp fight took place between it and the dogs, who were following up the trail. One big long-legged dachshund and the Ichneumon had got such a grip of each other that they could be lifted up together, and it was hard work to separate the combatants. In doing this one of the gentlemen was bitten in the hand by the dog, and another by the Ichneumon.

During the beat a good many cormorants and herons had flown past me along the shore, but I had not fired at them on account of the larger game.

It was now afternoon, so we decided to start on our long passage straight across the lake to the opposite shore. We rowed over in several boats, and as the air began to get cooler, the splendid views of the lake and the desert afforded us greater pleasure than they had hitherto given us. Our boatmen, too, were in high spirits, and, casting off every scrap of their clothing, raced the boats against each other, with incessant shouts and wild inarticulate yells—a sport which suited us very well, as it brought us along much faster.

After two hours of rowing we passed a small strip of willow-bushes and came to a great sandbank, on which stood our new camp, all in order and comfortably arranged, its position having been judiciously chosen, for this perfectly dry sandbank separated the lake from a tolerably large marsh.

As dinner was not yet ready, some of us at once went to the marsh, which lay between our camping-ground and the outermost fields of the cultivated land. It was a tract of brown, bad-smelling, boggy soil, covered with reeds, water-plants, and willow-bushes, and swarming with snipe and waders, toads and poisonous insects. We also flushed a few ducks and two kinds of plovers, and after hastily shooting a few birds, left

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its reeking feverish atmosphere before twilight came on. A splendid sunset, which was followed by a right good dinner, wound up this busy day, and all was soon quiet in the camp.

Early on the 27th we set out, intending to shoot our way back to the Abouksor Station, and began by rambling through the marsh, where we bagged some snipe and various kinds of waders. We next crossed a field, where we got some Buff-backed Herons and Spur-winged Plovers, and then reached the region of low sandhills, covered with scanty grass and stunted bushes, which divides the marsh from the arable land. There the dachshunds routed up some hares, and another gentleman and I were each of us lucky enough to kill one of these strange-looking creatures.

They were true Desert-Hares—small, lean, long-legged animals, like a roe in colour, and with absurdly large, almost transparent ears. While in pursuit of the hares we also shot a few Egyptian Turtle-Doves and Lesser Kestrels, and then sat down for half an hour's rest just where the zone of sand-hills and bushes ended and the cultivated land began. There we breakfasted on the cold viands which had been carried after us by the Arabs.

After a frugal meal we pursued our way across fields and irrigation-ditches, impressing as beaters all the fellaheen labourers whom we could find. Women, children, camels, buffaloes, and ploughs were all left standing in the fields, and a motley crowd followed us for a promised backsheesh. In the distance we saw a fairly large patch of sugar-canes still uncut, though the harvest was well forward, and towards this we steered with all haste, animated by the highest expectations.

While tramping along the embankment of a broad but dry canal, we discussed the best way of arranging the beat, and as soon as we got to the place posted the guns.

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The Grand Duke remained at one corner next the canal, and Hoyos and I stood along the side of the field which came up to the embankment, the rest of the gentlemen stationing themselves round its other borders; but we were unfortunately short of guns, and the gaps between the sportsmen were too wide. Buffaloes and camels were grazing close to our posts, and the whole affair certainly by no means corresponded with the European idea of a wolf-hunt.

Hardly had the swarthy beaters pushed in among the canes with a most infernal yelling, when my neighbour fired into the field, and a very large wolf immediately broke between us and scoured across the canal with long bounds. I ran up the embankment and fired both barrels at the beast, although it was rather too far off; but it went on straight over the fields, dragging its hind leg.

The beaters soon appeared, the brown fellaheen and the numerous negroes looking very strange as they came along through the yellow canes in their scanty costume, each of them gnawing a broken-off stalk.

We now had the field driven again, and this time my left-hand neighbour was the first to fire, and killed a fairly large wolf with a single shot. Immediately afterwards one of the guns on the left flank rolled over a wolf, which picked itself up and, though bleeding freely, broke through the canes near the next sportsman, who gave it another shot as it bolted away.

A few minutes later the gun on my right killed a fair-sized wolf with one shot, and the next instant another wolf jumped out between us and went off over the canal. It was a long shot for both of us, and though evidently hard hit, the beast dragged itself away through the grazing buffaloes to some thick fields of young corn.

The beaters now came out again, and we made them drive the field a third time. I soon heard something coming up in

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my direction, and saw a tolerably large wolf slipping through the canes, and rolled it over with a lucky shot; a few minutes later my left-hand neighbour wounded another so severely that it could hardly crawl off to the adjacent bean-fields, while two more managed to escape uninjured at points where the guns were too far apart.

In the last beat one of the sportsmen also wounded an ichneumon, but it crept back into the thick canes. As for the short search made for the wounded wolves, that was naturally unsuccessful in these great green fields, which extended further than the eye could reach.

We now went off to the opposite side of the plantation, where our excellent dragoman had ordered some horses and donkeys to await us. The wolves were carefully tied together and slung over the donkeys, and the caravan soon got under weigh—the beaters disappearing in various directions, the guides and donkey-drivers alone accompanying us.

One of these fellows appeared to pursue in his leisure hours the occupation of snake-charmer, so much beloved of Orientals, for during the march he pulled out of a leather bag which was hidden under his loose garments two very large and imposing Spectacled Snakes which he had yesterday caught near the lake. Of course he showed off the usual trick of breathing on the serpents, which made them lie quite stiff, as if dead; but after a few minutes the much-tormented creatures, whose fangs had been extracted and who were therefore quite harmless, recovered and wriggled back into the brown sack.

As we were walking our horses the dachshunds ran beside us, and when the caravan neared a small wretched village only adorned by some singularly fine palms and sycamores, the eager dogs vanished into a small square bean-field and at once began to hunt merrily. We jumped off our horses and surrounded the field, which might have been shot across from side to side, yet within this narrow space the hunt went up

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and down for a quarter of an hour. Twice an ichneumon put its head out close to the guns, but no one could fire for fear of his neighbour, and the cunning beast, recognizing the danger it was in, let itself be driven backwards and forwards by the dogs, but would not leave its safe cover; so, as time was pressing, we had to whip off the dogs and continue our journey without getting it.

Our road led us to a short branch line of rail used for transport purposes, which runs from the factory at Abouksor to the largest of the sugar-cane fields.

We stopped an engine that was passing by, and got into an empty truck that was attached to it, thus reaching Abouksor very speedily, while our Arabs rode down between the rails at full gallop, and followed us up with incredible quickness.

Having still some time to spare, we resolved to try another beat through the cane-field which we had driven the first day, so we hastily got together as many beaters as possible and surrounded it.

The beat had only just begun when a wolf broke at a corner near one of the guns; but there were such a number of people loafing about that he could not shoot while the beast was near, and when he did fire both barrels it was too far away.

A few moments later another sportsman shot an enormous wolf, the largest we had as yet bagged, just at the instant when it was crossing a path which ran through the field, and before the beat was finished two other guns each shot a wolf, and a Woodcock was missed.

We now left the field, which had afforded us better sport than when we had first hunted it three days ago. At the station there was a row of six Wolves laid out, all shot in one day; and if we had also got the wounded ones we should have had quite an extraordinary bag.

On the whole, we had every reason to be satisfied with the proceeds of our shooting-excursion into the oasis of Fayûm,

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for we had shot two Lynxes, seven Wolves, two Ichneumons, two Desert-Hares, four Pelicans, two Ospreys, one Egyptian Vulture, one Long-legged Buzzard, and one hundred and seventy-two head of smaller game, among which were many interesting specimens.

We dined in the so-called waiting-room, and as it was now evening and our train stood ready, we had all the traps put into the carriages and soon left Abouksor on our way to a new expedition. Baron Saurma, his brother, and Prince Taxis travelled with us for the first two hours; but when we reached the valley of the Nile and the station where the line goes north to Cairo and south to Siut these three gentlemen left us.

After a hearty farewell we proceeded southwards towards Siut, the next stage on our way to the charming journey up the Nile, and making ourselves as comfortable as we could in the carriages, we all slept the sleep that had been earned by hard work.

We reached Siut very early in the morning, and, going on board our Nile steamer, began the journey up the waters of the river of Egypt—an expedition undeniably one of the richest in historical, ethnographical, and scenic attractions that can possibly be undertaken.

We hurried past towns and hamlets, where light-green palms, lofty minarets, and broad pigeon-towers form the leading features of the clay-built villages, in whose ruinous confusion there lies an undoubted artistic charm. Countless kites fly round these human settlements, and the barking of dogs, the braying of donkeys, the bellowing of buffaloes, the groaning of camels, the screams of the Arabs, the creaking of the water-wheels, and dust, dirt, and disorder are their usual accessories.

On the long sandbanks the white Egyptian Vultures and their larger relatives sit by the stranded carcasses, and flocks

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of Cranes, Storks, Spoonbills, Grey Herons, Pelicans, Egyptian Geese, and various kinds of Ducks enliven the scene. From every steamer and every dahabeeyah the Europeans shoot at the waterfowl, which are here in their winter-quarters, the result being that one cannot count on any sport from the deck, for at the approach of a vessel the shy birds rise a long way off.

We now passed the little town of Abu Tîg, where the mountains recede and leave room for a well-tilled plain; but soon afterwards the high Gebel-Sheikh-Haûde, hollowed out with ancient quarries and tombs, comes forward again to the edge of the stream.

There our steamer stopped, and a boat came off to her, and on my asking what this meant, I learnt, to my no small surprise, that in a high watch-tower above the Nile there dwells among these barren hills a holy man, a so-called Sheikh, who claims a toll, and that the vessel which ignores his demands is, according to popular belief, almost certain to be wrecked on its journey, but that the honest man who pays will be followed by the devout prayers of this saintly beggar.

There now appeared in pretty quick succession the villages of Tahtah, Faubas, Schidawin, and the large and charmingly-situated town of Sohag, with its picturesque houses and minarets.

One lovely scene followed another; splendid mountains with abrupt cliffs slipped past and gave place to luxuriant palm-forests and gaily coloured towns. We sat comfortably on deck, smoking, chatting, or reading, while enjoying the balmy perfumes of the African vegetation and the pure air, which on the river was not too hot, and now and then firing a rifle-shot at the distant waterfowl, but almost invariably without success—an indolent existence, but interesting and instructive withal.

We spent one night at the large and prosperous town of

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Girgeh, but at daybreak the steamer got under weigh again, and early in the morning we lay-to beside the large and beautiful palm-forest of the insignificant mud-built village of Beliane, where we had an opportunity of visiting one of the temples built by Rameses and of experiencing the magic charms of these monuments thousands of years old.

While we were inspecting the halls and chambers of the temple, some vultures flew over from the neighbouring desert mountains and circled high above us. We immediately resolved to decoy these huge birds of prey, and the first thing to be done was to look out for a proper place on which to expose the bait.

Behind the temple are some high heaps of ruins and rubbish, from which there is an open view of the wide desert plains, which extend from the margin of the cultivated land up to the base of the barren mountains, with their beautiful forms and high precipices. This plain I now proceeded to explore, looking for a suitable place, and while so doing I found the remains of some old walls and half-ruined tombs, while a few hundred yards from the temple there was a regular field of the dead.

In the days of the Roman emperors an entire legion had here fallen victims to famine and epidemics, and the unburied bodies of the Roman warriors are still lying about in wild confusion,—bodies one may literally say; for the African sun, the burning sand, and the purity of the air have preserved and turned them into natural mummies. I came across entire bodies and detached legs, arms, and hands to which the brown shrivelled flesh still adhered, and I was especially impressed by a grinning skull with a scalp and dark lumps of flesh on the cheek-bones; another, which was less repellent, I took with me as a memento. One had absolutely to wade through skeletons and the dust of bodies.

It was a true desert scene, with the dazzling white plain,

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the sands that scorched the feet, the bleached bones scattered about, the tracks of hyænas and jackals, the bald-headed vultures circling round, and for background the high utterly barren mountain-sides. Not a blade of grass refreshed the eye, and nothing broke the glare of the burning sun reflected from the wastes of sand and the white and yellow rocks that stood out in sharp relief against the dark blue sky. There was, however, an undeniable poetic charm in this truly monotonous but grand district.

Suitable cover for creeping up to a bait unseen seemed to be afforded by a little hillock; so I forthwith bought a sheep and had it taken to this place, where it was killed and its inside taken out as a first dainty morsel for the vultures. I then hurried back to my companions at the temple, and after thoroughly investigating all the ancient remains we breakfasted in one of its halls.

As soon as we had finished our meal Hoyos and I set off again to pay a visit to the dead sheep, but before we had got well within shot of it a wary vulture detected us, and flapped up heavily from the ground, followed by about twenty of his great unwieldy comrades. Hoyos was lucky enough to knock down one of these big Griffon Vultures from the dense mass; but I was less fortunate and only wounded another very large one, which flew away across the plain hard hit. The ravenous birds had made a tremendous onslaught on the poor sheep, for nothing was left of it but the wool and a few dismembered fragments.

After this successful sporting interlude we returned to the rest of the party, and went with them to the village, where we paid a visit to a blind peasant. This worthy man is one of the richest householders in the place, and also drives a trade in Egyptian antiquities, which are dug up for him in and about the temple, though quite illegally. Advised by Brugsch Pasha we bought some of the better objects, and had at the

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same time an opportunity of seeing the highly primitive and dirty abode of a dweller in the valley of the Nile.

From Arabat-el-Madfune we rode through the cultivated country back to Beliane, shooting as we went along. A variety of small game was killed, the most interesting bird being the Black-winged Kite, that truly African white-and-bluish-grey-coloured hawk which is by no means uncommon among the palm-groves and near the draw-wells.

We reached the steamer in the afternoon, and ran two hours up-stream before it began to get dark, resuming our journey at daybreak next morning. The forenoon we passed on deck looking at the beautiful but somewhat undiversified scenery. Green fields, groves of dom and date-palms, a few little towns, and the high mountains which bound the valley of the Nile glided by us in monotonous succession ; but on the long sandbanks there was this morning an unusual amount of life, for large flocks of pelicans, herons, and geese were observed, and my jäger was sure that he had seen a crocodile.

At noon we got to Keneh, a rather large town of grey-brown mud-built houses, and adorned with lofty minarets. There we lay to by the crumbling banks of the Libyan side of the river opposite the town, and immediately landed. We then mounted some donkeys, and riding past a fine palm-grove and a miserable-looking village, where the disgusting Egyptian Vultures were sitting among the dirt and rubbish like domestic fowls, we soon reached a well-cultivated plain.

At this point the Nile makes a bend and comes close up to the Libyan mountains, so that the belt of arable land is very narrow. A ride of half an hour brought us to the large and celebrated temple of Dendera, which, like the ruins of Abydus, lies among the sands of the desert close to the margin of the fertile ground.

By the light of torches we examined all the halls, narrow

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crypts, stairs, and passages of the great building, and I spent a long time in the vast gloomy pillared hall, where the grey colossal unpainted blocks of stone, covered with a rich decoration of hieroglyphics, recall the long-past ages. One cannot imagine any more striking memorial of ancient days than this mysteriously beautiful temple of Dendera; and in fancy one could see the priests of this mighty cult, with their long white robes, high caps, and black curling beards, bringing offerings to the all-powerful deity of the old realm of the Nile.

Incredible numbers of bats now dwell in the empty galleries, and in a dark corner of the great hall was sitting an owl, while a pair of ravens had made their nest on the cornice within the building. I shot the large jet-black female just as she was flying out through the entrance.

From the flat roof of the temple we had a magnificent distant view of the green cultivated land on the one side, and on the other of a long stretch of desert backed by towering mountains. It was a stern solemn scene: grey ruins, desert wastes, lonely crags, nothing green, not even a genial gleam of sunshine to gladden the eye.

The brilliant colour of the sky and the splendid effects of light were absent on this afternoon, for all was grey in tone, and the heavens were darkened, but not by clouds, since these are unknown in Upper Egypt, but by the heavy vapours and dense dust which, together with the oppressive enervating air, were the first signs of an approaching "Khamsîn," the dreaded storm of the desert.

In the evening we shot our way back to the steamer, and passed the night at the same station, proceeding on our journey early in the morning.

A furious "Khamsîn" was hurtling through the valley of the Nile, and the sand-clouds of the Sahara were rolling round the mountains like mists; while the sun, unable to force its

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rays through the dense dust, looked like a red disk. Everything was covered with sand; it even penetrated into the closed cabins, annoying us terribly. The air, too, which had lately been so beautiful, was now heavy and depressing; and we gazed with wonder upon this phase of nature, which was so entirely new to us.

Long and ineffective shots were fired at Pelicans, huge Sea-Eagles, and a variety of waterfowl; and we passed several towns, among which were Kuft and Kus. The character of the country remained the same; but the mountains kept receding, to leave room for the plains of Thebes, so famed in ancient chronicles for its wealth and civilization.

At twelve o'clock we put in to the landing-place of the somewhat important town of Luxor, and immediately going ashore, climbed up the steep sandy bank and hired some donkeys at the primitive square in front of the dirty little "Hôtel Luxor." We soon reached the open country and trotted merrily along an embankment which ran through palm woods and well-tilled fields towards the high gates, columns, and walls of the celebrated ruins of Karnak, which we could already see in the distance.

At the entrance to the ruins there is a small village and a plantation of young trees, where we found a flock of the lively Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters whirring about with their butterfly-like flight, and shot a good many of these lovely African birds for the sake of their plumage.

After this little interlude of sport we entered the field of majestic ruins, and when we had rambled through the great halls and the forest of columns, as well as the huge heaps of débris surrounding the temple, we all returned to Luxor by the same road.

In the evening the Grand Duke and I again rode out to Karnak to shoot, while the other gentlemen remained at Luxor. An Arab sportsman, named Khalîl, took us close up

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to the ruins, and then turning into the fields, near the first houses of the village, we soon reached a sandy hillock on which stood the tomb of an old Mahommedan sheikh.

The Arab now posted us at two different points in the shadow of a small grove of palms, telling us to keep perfectly quiet and to be ready to shoot at whatever came. The "Khamsîn" had lulled in the afternoon, and the wild day had been followed by a beautiful evening and a marvellous sunset, which lit up with the most glowing colours the splendid ruins and the desert mountains, which are here particularly high. A gentle breeze ruffled the tops of the palms, balmy perfumes rose from the luxuriant vegetation, the doves cooed plaintively among the bushes, and the grand repose of the lovely landscape had such a drowsy influence upon me that I fell fast asleep. Suddenly Khalîl, who was crouching hard by, shook me roughly, telling me in sharp words that I had let a jackal slip past.

Meanwhile it had got pretty dark; so the Grand Duke and I set out on our return, and while walking homewards across the fields I saw something glide past in a ghostly fashion, and letting drive a chance shot at it, found, to my great delight, a jackal tumbling about in its last struggles. This booty we took with us, and soon reaching the place where the donkeys were waiting we trotted contentedly back to our steamer.

Following Khalîl's advice, some of us set out next morning long ere sunrise and rode across the fields, past the ruins of Karnak, to a pool where the larger wild animals usually come to drink at dawn.

The way was long, and the wide plains were lapped in a death-like stillness, only now and then broken by the howling of the jackals and the barking of the half-wild dogs. At last we got to the pool, or, more correctly speaking, the water left in a hollow by the inundation of the Nile. Khalîl quickly posted the guns, and we watched with the most strained

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attention until the sun rose golden-red over the mountains; but nothing came, except one jackal which Herr Rath let slip.

A glorious morning consoled us for our fruitless trial of patience, the short transition from night through twilight to sunrise having a richness in changing effects of light and a glow of colour such as only the interior of Africa can conjure up.

As we saw numbers of birds coming down to the water to drink, we resolved to pass the forenoon in shooting round this locality, and killed plenty of small game, including some Quails, vast numbers of which here spend the winter. Rambling over the fields, we reached the ruins of Karnak; and then several of the gentlemen returned to Luxor, while I selected a hiding-place among the heaps of débris and rubbish, in which to lie in wait for the large vultures near a carcass; but unfortunately nothing came except some Kites and Egyptian Vultures, at which I did not care to shoot.

The day was not suitable for this kind of sport; for the "Khamsîn" had begun again with renewed vigour, and the air was filled with clouds of sand so thick that they even hid the neighbouring mountains. I therefore soon quitted my ambush and went to a little water-tank, bordered with slabs of stone, which lies among the ruins and is of ancient origin. There I found several snipe and sandpipers sitting in a miserable sort of way on the bare stones, and probably overcome by the fatigues of travel; a few shots soon put an end to the troubles of their existence.

I now rode back to Luxor and the steamer by the shortest route; for we had intended to make our first excursion to the monuments on the western side of the river during the afternoon; but as the storm kept increasing in violence, we changed our plans, and determined to proceed on our journey next day and postpone our visit to the west side of Thebes until our return from the Cataracts.

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The afternoon was spent partly on board and partly in Luxor itself, and after passing a quiet evening we retired early to rest.

On the 5th we resumed our travels at sunrise, intending to follow the advice of some European residents at Luxor, and to halt and devote a few hours to sport at Ermant, a village well known for its sugar factory and extensive cane-fields.

After a two hours' run we reached the village, where some of the French officials of the factory, which is arranged quite on the European system, received us most kindly, placed at our disposal as many men as we required for beating the canes, and at once got ready a train to take us to the spot.

Passing by the buildings of the factory and along a splendid avenue of sycamores, we soon came to the little station of the short line of rail which connects the factory with the largest of the plantations. We had now to pick up the beaters; and a gang of fellaheen, coming from work at the mills, were soon collected and forthwith bundled on to the trucks used for the transport of the canes. We seated ourselves in the last of these conveyances and started for the plains, passing on the way the pretty gardens of the officials, a most miserable fellaheen village, and a little palm-grove.

Our journey was but short; for here the desert comes pretty close to the Nile, so that the intervening strip of cultivated country is but narrow.

We now attempted to drive the nearest field of canes, but it was unfortunately too large and too thick. The beaters also worked badly, and only brought out one wolf, which left the cover unshot at; so we soon recognized the futility of our endeavours and returned to the train, from which I shot an Egyptian Vulture, one of a number that were sitting near the mud hovels of the above-mentioned village, just like domestic fowls.

In a garden belonging to one of the French officials we

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were shown several jackals' earths, and some which, according to the good people, belonged to wolves; but as we could not get the dachshunds to go into them, we went back to the steamer and soon resumed our journey.

Before long we came to a point where the Nile makes a sharp bend, and the mountains on both sides keep drawing in, until at Gebeleh they descend to the stream in abrupt cliffs, the rocks, ravines, and stony slopes of the high and barren Gebel-nisse, on the Arab side, being particularly fine and picturesque.

We were enjoying this beautiful landscape from the deck, when I observed a dead buffalo lying on a sandbank surrounded by vultures; and by the help of the glass I could see among the Griffon Vultures the enormous Sociable Vulture, that true native of inner Africa.

Unfortunately the wary birds would not let the steamer come within range of them; so we at once stopped, and the Grand Duke and I went ashore. Some bushes near the bank afforded sufficient cover; and there we patiently waited, hoping that the imposing Sociable Vultures would return to their interrupted meal. But, alas! nothing came but a pair of greedy Egyptian Vultures, one of which I killed with the rifle. At the noise of the shot several swarthy and almost naked fellaheen came running up inquisitively, to whom we gave directions to lay out carrion for the vultures at this spot every day, and in no wise to disturb them, as I wanted to try my luck with the Sociable Vultures on my way back. In consideration of a good backsheesh the worthy people promised to carry out our wishes.

On the 6th of March the steamer arrived at Edfu, where we at once rode across the fields to the poor-looking village close by, and passing through some narrow dirty streets reached its further side, where, amidst heaps of dirt and débris, stands the best-preserved temple of Upper Egypt, and one

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of the most beautiful architectural memorials of all the ages.

After examining every part of the building we went up to its flat roof, where we had a lovely view of the Nile, the green plains, the wide flats of the desert, which begin near the temple, and the pyramidal sandstone hills, which rise behind them.

Some vultures were circling overhead; so I laid out a carcass behind a heap of ruins, and sat waiting on the battlements of the temple for the coming of the great birds of prey; but unfortunately no large vultures appeared, and as time was pressing I had to content myself with the smaller fry.

We now rode back by the same route through this filthy village, and a few minutes later our vessel was steaming upstream again.

The general appearance of the country continued to be pretty much the same. The eastern Arab mountains, which are here low, jagged, and whitish grey in colour, everywhere advanced close to the stream, leaving little or almost no margin of cultivated land. The western Libyan hills, also low, yellow, and strangely shaped, kept drawing nearer to the river south of Edfu; and on this side the green country got narrower and presented a scene of luxuriant but neglected vegetation, while there were no towns whatever and even the few wretched villages were very far apart.

Large flocks of Storks were flying northwards along the Nile valley, birds of prey were sitting on the rocks or circling above them, and the few sandbanks of the river were peopled by wildfowl.

In the afternoon we came to the rocky narrows of Gebel-Silsileh, where the sandstone mountains converge from both sides, and delight the traveller who gazes at these picturesque but stern and gloomy desert regions from the deck of his vessel. By sunset we reached the northern extremity of a

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large and well-cultivated island, where we steamed up the eastern arm of the river, and soon saw the small but charmingly situated temple of Kum-Ombu; and as night was falling we lay to below the temple, near a dahabeeyah occupied by Europeans.

The dragoman belonging to this party—a clever Dalmatian sportsman, called Paulovich—came on board the steamer after dinner and advised us to get a bleating kid and go to the temple, hide ourselves well, and watch for wolves. No sooner said than done; and at nine o'clock I crept with Hoyos up the steep banks, and rambling about the desolate temple we found, on its western side, a pillar which would serve as a good hiding-place. So we tied the kid up a few paces in front of it, and watched for two hours with the greatest attention; but nothing stirred.

It was a weirdly beautiful scene: the old temple, with its gloomy colonnades, and the boundless desert, broken only by a few rocks and ruins, all illumined by the splendid African moon—not with the pale lamplight moonshine of Europe, but with a brightness like that of day, which showed the smallest stone, and allowed the sportsman on the watch and even the artist at his drawing to see quite clearly.

Unluckily the Europeans from the dahabeeyah were also out shooting near our hiding-place, and came past the temple with the cackling hens that they had taken with them as lures; so that our best hopes vanished, and we returned to our steamer. Still, I shall never forget that beautiful moonlight night.

The ruins of the temple are exceptionally picturesque, but half-buried in the sand; and Kum-Ombi (*i.e.* the hill of Ombu; hieroglyphic Nubi, *i.e.* the golden town; Greek Ombos or Ombi) was the capital of the district, afterwards called Ombites. Both the town and the temple were detested by the rest of Egypt; for here Set, the ancient Egyptian Typhon, was worshipped in one of his principal forms. The

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crocodile, which was the creature consecrated to this god, is therefore often represented in the sculptures and alluded to in the inscriptions of this place.

At sunrise we left the beautiful Kum-Ombu and continued our journey to Assuan. Towards noon the scenery assumed a still wilder character, and ahead of us the river seemed to be blocked by the mountains. Large stones, masses of rock, and rubble bordered the stream, which kept getting narrower and narrower; while the mountains on the right bank gave place to a barren plain strewn with masses of rock and studded with jagged pinnacles. On all sides sharp ledges of rock, the first indications of the adjacent cataracts, rose above the water, and the steamer had to make its way slowly through these difficult places before it could lay to under a high dusty bank in front of the town of Assuan. As soon as it had done so, we landed.

Assuan is undoubtedly one of the most interesting spots of the whole Nile journey. Our first visit was paid to the bazaar, where the life and bustle of the place offered much that was interesting; and I was especially struck with the war-like look of the Ababdehs, who were armed to the teeth, clad in scanty rags, and had their hair arranged in a peculiar fashion. The various races of wild folk regarded us with curiosity; and the crafty Arabs sold us wares from the interior at a high price, cleverly profiting by the interest we displayed in them.

The Ababdehs also performed their war-dance before us, on an open space between the houses and the landing-place; and the brown fellows, with their scanty garments, nose-, ear-, and arm-rings, and hair wound round sticks, which stood out like rays, looked most original: it was a dance of savages, as fantastic as could be imagined.

After a time we returned to the steamer, with a rich store of purchases and highly interesting impressions.

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While we were at lunch the kites, which live here in myriads, kept cruising about over the vessel and eagerly picked up the bits of bread that were thrown into the water; nor were the greedy creatures even scared by being fired at. As soon as our meal was finished we started off again to make an excursion to the quarries so celebrated since the days of antiquity.

The town was quickly traversed, and we came to a broad valley, very uneven at the bottom and bounded by low hills adorned with the burial-places of sheikhs. This valley is, from its commencement at Assuan and for about two miles inland, a literal city of tombs.

There the party divided, some riding home, while Hoyos and I climbed up the rather high, stony, and utterly barren hill that bounds the valley near Assuan.

At the top of it stands the old tomb of a sheikh—a round domed building, in front of which we had already had a carcass laid, as some large vultures were soaring overhead.

We at once took possession of this capital place of concealment, and in a few minutes the Kites and Egyptian Vultures began pecking at the dead sheep; but the hour was too late for the larger birds of prey, and I shot nothing but an Egyptian Vulture.

Time was now pressing; so we left the gloomy tomb and had a good look at the splendid landscape. To the north, just below us, was the narrow valley of the Nile, enclosed by mountains, with the river forcing its way through the wild rifts of the cataracts. Behind us lay the tropical island of Elephantine, the picturesquely situated town of Assuan, and the dismal city of the dead; while on all sides was an endless maze of hills, valleys, plains, and plateaus, all desolate and barren, true deserts of stone and sand. Bathed in the fierce sunlight, everything quivered in a glow of reflected heat and was of a dazzling white, only here

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and there broken by orange rocks and masses of black granite; while over all stretched the ever-blue sky, cloudless and clear as crystal.

We quickly got back to Assuan; but as soon as the sun was sinking and flooding the lovely landscape with the most glorious colour, Hoyos and I again left the vessel.

A white-robed Nubian with a long gun, well known as a sportsman in Assuan, guided us through the town to its outermost houses, where he advised us to wait a little while, as the wild beasts come every evening to the outskirts of the town to look for plunder.

Dogs were barking, children screaming, and a band of Ababdehs were bawling out as they went along to their home in the desert; yet, in spite of all this noise, a jackal showed itself on the mound of a little windmill, but instantly vanished again among the stones.

As twilight was now fast advancing, we hurried on to the cemetery, where I knocked over a jackal that ran by, with a lucky shot. We then proceeded to an old tank situated in a little depression among the sandhills near the beginning of the tombs, and not far from the foot of the mountain at the top of which we had shot the Egyptian Vulture in the afternoon. There a carcass had been already exposed, and a hiding-place dug out in which we now secreted ourselves.

The moon rose, and in this pure air shed a brilliant radiance over the weird and solemn landscape. The desert, the gravestones, and the old domed tombs of the sheikhs glistened in its white light; while a death-like silence that reigned around was only broken by the howling of the dogs and jackals.

We had hardly been sitting half an hour in our very uncomfortable ambush when I heard the rustle of an approaching animal, and soon saw it glide past like a shadow several times; but at last I made out its form, and, trusting to luck, aimed

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as well as I could and fired. My shot was responded to by a piteous howling, and on hurrying to the spot I found a large wolf making painful efforts to drag itself away. I stopped the tough brute with a second dose of heavy shot, and taking it on my back walked at least a hundred yards towards my companion, who was hiding in another place. The apparently dead beast was, however, heavy, and the heat, even at night, considerable; so I threw down my booty and waited for the Nubian sportsman to come up: but hardly had the wolf lain a few moments on the ground when it began to move again, and kicked about until it got on to its feet, and I had to finish it off with another shot.

With this capital bag of a wolf and a jackal we now returned to the steamer and had supper. The Grand Duke and Eschenbacher, who had been hiding in one of the domed tombs on the other side of the cemetery, unfortunately came back empty-handed.

On the 8th of March we all started at seven in the morning, most of us mounted on donkeys; for only Hoyos and Pausinger cared to ride perched up on camels.

Riding round Assuan, we reached the desert by a short cut through the city of tombs. Valleys, hills, sands, rocks, and ravines followed each other in pleasant succession, and a deep gorge brought us out into the narrow valley of the Nile, here pent in by rugged mountains, varied in colour and ornamented with black granite. A magnificent view now burst upon us: the dark stern rocks, the river tearing through the narrows, the green island of Philæ with the ruins of its lofty temple, and southward the broadening valley with its belts of rich vegetation along the waterside, all unrolled themselves in a moment before our eyes. We were in Nubia.

There lay the lovely island of Philæ, surrounded by dark rocks that rose straight up from the water. A large boat took us over to it, and in a few minutes we had reached

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its steep bank and were hastening up the bushy slope to the magnificent temple. After inspecting every part of it we walked to the most southerly point of the island ; and it was with sorrowful feelings that I clambered out to the very brink of its precipitous shore, and looked up the sacred stream over the widening valley and the plains of Nubia.

A large portion of our journey was now accomplished, for we had reached our southernmost goal, and though the intertropical region of Nubia, the tropics, and by night the highest stars of the famous Southern Cross were luring and enticing us onward, we could follow them no longer.

We ate the lunch which we had brought with us, in one of the ancient pavilions of the temple, now known as the kiosk. This building, with the terrace in front of it, rears itself proudly above the rushing stream on a high embankment, and is still in perfect preservation.

From the entrance of its pillared hall one enjoys a distant view of exceptionally picturesque beauty, and there is an indescribable poetic charm in this wilderness and in the luxuriantly green island with its grand memorials of a time long past away, which rises in its midst from the waters of the sacred stream. Philæ is a picture which impresses itself upon the memory as one of the brightest points of the journey, and one that can never be forgotten.

Descending from the temple to the bank, we rowed upstream to the Cataracts in a very primitive boat, and for a long time we could still see the rocky island, the black-granite cliffs, the flowering shrubs, and the towering temple, while the brown oarsmen sang melancholy songs that harmonized with the grandeur and beauty of the scene.

Landing below the actual commencement of the Cataract, where the stream is split up into different branches, we walked along the rocky bank to a point from which one can see the whole of this wild confusion of rocks and water. The Cata-

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racts are not waterfalls but rapids, where the river foams and roars as it seeks a way through the thousands of rocky islets, crags, and reefs with which its bed is studded for more than half a mile. The whole scene is undeniably magnificent, and its peculiar charm is still further heightened by the remarkable forms and the blackness of the reefs and ridges which rise above the white seething waters. It is also interesting to see the Nile, usually so sluggish and turbid, changed for a short time into a wild mountain-torrent.

As soon as we had reached the best point of view a number of naked Nubians appeared, who sprang into the water and, avoiding the rocks, let themselves be carried through the most furious of the channels. In a few moments they were swept down a long way with the speed of an arrow, and then they emerged from the water dripping and clamouring for backsheesh. We now went back to the boat, and after rowing a little further up-stream mounted our donkeys, which were ready waiting, and returned to Assuan by the same route that we had taken in the morning.

This excursion had occupied the entire day, and not until late in afternoon did we reach our steamer. We then dined at once, and afterwards Hoyos and I went out, just as twilight was coming on, to the hiding-places which we had made use of last evening. This we did by the advice of my jäger, who, while we were at Philæ, had found the fresh tracks of a Hyæna near the remains of the carcass.

It was a fine night, and as I had determined to shoot at nothing but hyænas, and to wait until they came, I was prepared to remain out until a late hour. Several jackals appeared, and were allowed to pass unmolested; but just as it was getting on for midnight, and I was having a hard fight against sleep, I saw in the clear moonlight some people slink by not far from my ambush, and soon heard several shots and the familiar cackle of the unlucky decoy-hens.

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It was therefore all over with the perfect quiet which the hyæna demands, so instead of uselessly waiting, I went home, meeting on the way the dragoman Paulovich, who had unfortunately gone out to shoot with Baron Seckendorf at the very place where I had been watching. Hoyos at his post near the town had killed one jackal and wounded another, and the Grand Duke and Eschenbacher were at one time actually surrounded by howling jackals, but could not get a shot owing to the unfavourable nature of the ground. On my way back at midnight I had a beautiful view of the picturesque town of Assuan, the river, and the fairy-like island of Elephantine, all steeped in a magic flood of the purest moonlight.

At seven o'clock on the morning of the 9th the steamer left Assuan, that charming place, so thoroughly African and so full of ethnographical interest. We glided down-stream at great speed through the now familiar districts, and the hours we spent on deck passed quickly, for the return journey afforded the desired opportunity of arranging the many notes we had collected, and of jotting down the various reminiscences of our travels.

We were sitting in the cabin about the middle of the day when the steamer came to a sudden and violent stop, and we could distinctly feel the heavy vessel boring into the mud. While going up-stream she had frequently run aground, a thing which happens to every Nile steamer, owing to the continual shifting of the sandbanks, but the rapidity of our downward course had now driven us in more firmly than ever, and as the old Admiral declared that it would take at least two hours to get the vessel afloat again, we immediately had ourselves rowed ashore.

We were at a point called Kom-el-Emir, where high, steep, rocky mountains closely approach the stream, forming a short but beautiful gorge, succeeded by a well-cultivated plain.

Our party now separated to shoot in various directions. I

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at first tried to stalk some large birds of prey by clambering about the bare rocks; but as this did not succeed I took to hunting about for small game among the bushes on the plain and along the bank of the river, bagging during this short ramble a number of water-birds and also a Pygmy Dove, that charming and beautifully plumaged tropical species of African pigeon, which is no larger than a lark and is adorned with a long tail *.

A couple of hours had gone by, and we were looking for sandpipers along the bank, when we perceived that our steamer was ready to go on; so we at once rowed back to her, and resumed the journey which had been so pleasantly broken by this excursion.

In the evening after sundown we lay to at El-Kaab on the eastern bank, where a narrow strip of cultivation runs between the river and the not very broad desert-plains, behind which rise splendid mountains. Soon after our arrival we resolved to utilize the moonlight, so favourable for shooting wild animals, and separated in various directions to search for good places in which to lie in wait.

Pausinger and I, guided by a peasant, strolled through the cultivated land, and passing a miserable village, got out into the desert, where we could see in dim blurred outlines the ruins of the ancient Egyptian city of Nechebt, the Eileithyia of the Greeks. Its great outer walls of unburnt bricks rise above everything else, and show that this place was an important fortress in ancient days. On the skirts of the mountains there are also some rock-tombs, and a rock-temple founded by Ptolemy Euergetes, and further on a little sanctuary dedicated to the goddess Nechebt by Amenhotep III.

This part of the desert contains a great deal of natron, and one breaks through a crackling crust at every step. We

* [*Chalcopelia afra* (Linn.). Emerald-spotted Dove.]

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walked close up to the base of the high mountain and concealed ourselves between two large masses of rock, after tying up a bleating kid a few yards in front to a stake which we had brought with us. A quarter of an hour had hardly gone by when a white-robed Bedouin came riding along on a camel, singing doleful ditties—this strange rider on his tall steed having a fine effect in the monotonous desert.

The bleating of the kid seemed to attract the Bedouin's attention, for he stopped, looked about, and began muttering to himself, but then rode on again without having seen us. Not long afterwards, when all was quite quiet again, I heard the sound of an animal creeping up. The kid began to bleat and jump about in terror, and I soon saw a dark form larger than a wolf approaching the decoy ; so, taking a good aim, I fired, and the shot was followed by an angry howl of pain ; but on hastening up to the place, we found nothing but a trail, which led towards the mountains. Much vexed at this, we returned to the steamer, and as I felt sure that it was a Hyæna, I told my jäger to go out at daybreak and follow the tracks of the wounded beast.

By the time we reached the vessel all the other gentlemen had returned. The Grand Duke had seen jackals, but had unfortunately failed to kill any, while Hoyos had been lucky enough to bag one.

On the 10th the sun was high in the heavens when I awoke, and we had already been going down-stream for an hour. Asking after my jäger, I heard that he had found the wounded animal a few hundred yards from the place where it was shot at ; but, alas ! it was no Hyæna, but one of those half-wild savage village dogs which throughout Egypt roam about near the towns the whole night long, on the look-out for plunder. My jäger had also seen a very large Lynx, which ran into a hole in the outer wall of El-Kaab, a few paces in front of him.

Perhaps I may here be allowed to say a few words about

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the races of Egyptian dogs. While in this country I noticed the singular fact that the village dog, the African Wolf (*Canis lupaster*), "Abu el Hussein" or "Deeb" of the Arabs, and the Jackal (*Canis aureus*), "Talib" of the Egyptians and "Wawi" of the Syrians, are much mixed by cross-breeding. We never killed two wolves or two jackals which were exactly like each other, either in size or colour; and in Palestine the variations among the jackals were still more marked. On the whole, the Asiatic Jackal is larger than the North-African. Among a number which were fairly alike, I shot one which differed from all the others both in form and coloration, and yet one could not say that this singular creature was a wolf.

The dogs of the East also frequently show traces of a wild origin, which is not surprising when one considers what a free ownerless life they lead, and how the wolves and jackals prowl about the outskirts of the towns and villages every night, and often every evening.

I will even go so far as to assert that in those parts of Africa and Asia where dogs, wolves, and jackals live close together, one cannot speak of the jackal as being a good and separate species. Dogs and wolves keep their breeds purer; but I have failed to find that the *Canis aureus* of scientific works is a true and distinctly characterized species.

But to return to the incidents of our journey. The steamer ran on until ten o'clock in the forenoon, when she stopped above the sandbank at Dabbabiéh, on which I had seen the great Sociable Vultures when going up the river On landing we at once found that the fellaheen had faithfully carried out our directions, for a little reed-hut had been erected, and the bones of dogs and sheep showed that the vultures had been daily fed.

We had great difficulty in keeping off the inquisitive natives, who, proud of their achievements, now wished to participate in the sport. Some Egyptian Vultures soon

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appeared, followed by three Pileated Vultures, those black medium-sized birds with dark bald heads which belong so exclusively to Africa. As I had never before seen this extremely repulsive species, I hastened to shoot a specimen, and at the report of the gun the fellaheen came running up from all quarters curious to see what I had shot and clamorous for backsheesh.

Large vultures were circling high overhead, and the best time of day for this kind of shooting was just beginning, so that we might have been very successful, but we had, nevertheless, to retire, for we could no longer keep off the people, and fresh arrivals were coming up from all sides; so we signalled for the steamer to near the bank and resumed our journey.

At Ermant, which was reached in the afternoon, we had to make a short halt in order to ship the famous block of granite*; and during this stoppage I had some practice at the wild pigeons which were flying from side to side of the river just over our vessel. One after another they came, and within a short time I managed to kill forty-six of them.

We soon started again, and by sunset were once more at Luxor, and our steamer had hardly put in to the landing-place below the hotel, when Khalîl appeared with some saddled donkeys, and several of us rode off to Karnak as fast as we could along the well-known way, intending to watch for jackals at various spots.

I had taken a live fowl with me, and had sat down near one of the ancient tanks on the south side of the ruins, and was enjoying the beauty of the evening, and constantly twitching at my hen in order that its cries might attract the jackals, when, instead of these animals there unfortunately appeared three Englishmen, who regarded me with amazement, but soon went on their way.

* An inscribed tablet of the time of Amenhotep II. Now in Vienna.

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Just as it was getting quite dark, a large bird swept down to the tank like a shadow, and on firing a chance shot at it, I found a heron lying dead upon the bank. I then left my post and rode back to Luxor, where I learnt that the other gentlemen had returned empty-handed.

Early next morning we all rode over to the opposite Libyan banks for our long and highly interesting excursion to the Tombs of the Kings. Riding on donkeys, we first crossed a well-tilled plain where fellaheen were working industriously in the fields, and camels, long-eared goats, buffaloes, donkeys, and sheep were browsing on the yellowish pastures, while numbers of Egyptian Vultures were sitting near the scattered mud-hovels. The way then led to a very poor little village, past some pools still filled with the water of the inundations, and over a shallow arm of the Nile much silted-up with sand. The palms and bushes were now followed by the desolate sands of the desert, and we soon reached the base of the high towering mountains, where a narrow valley enclosed by precipices and steep slopes opened out before us. Along the bottom of the valley ran the bridle-path to the Tombs of the Kings. This road most of the gentlemen followed, but the Grand Duke and I decided to reach the same destination by taking a slightly roundabout way through the mountains.

Guided by an Arab well known in this district as an excellent sportsman, we clambered over some hillocks of sand and rubble, beyond which the real ascent began, and a narrow path wound up along the cliffs over flat rocks and loose stones.

Right and left we saw countless graves and rock-tombs, for the lower slopes of the whole mountain-chain west of ancient Thebes are hollowed out with burial-places of extreme antiquity.

From one of the excavations a wolf sprang out at our approach and fled up the steep hillside, but unfortunately he was too far off for shot.

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We now tried climbing up to the crest of the mountain by different paths, hoping that by so doing we might perchance get a shot.

The ridge was soon attained, and from it there opened a splendid view of the verdant valley of the Nile, with the mighty river, the town of Luxor, the ruins of Karnak, and the Arabian mountains; while in front of us was a high plateau, with a wild assemblage of summits, peaks, precipices, ravines, and valleys, slopes of sand and loose stones, slabs of rock and masses of limestone. All was dazzling white or yellowish in colour, without a trace of vegetation, glittering with the most brilliant reflections, and baked through and through by the rays of the African sun. One can hardly imagine a more desolate, but at the same time more magnificent picture of a true desert mountain.

In the sand I found tracks of hyænas, wolves, and jackals, also numberless holes belonging to various beasts of prey; vultures were sitting in the shaded crannies of the rocks, swifts were whirling about the barren pinnacles, and a wolf ran across the path in front of me, but too far off for my shot to take effect, nor was the Grand Duke more fortunate with a jackal.

Following a narrow track we now descended over some awkward places to the spot in the main valley where we had previously arranged that the donkeys should be waiting for us, and we then rode along a gloomy ravine closely confined by glaring white hillsides, to the Tombs of the Kings at Biban-el-Moluk. There both path and valley end in a *cul-de-sac* of abrupt slopes and cliffs, and the dark chasm opens which leads into the vaults of the most ancient dynasties.

Armed with torches we penetrated into the sanctuaries of the long-past ages, and after carefully examining these most remarkable Tombs of the Kings we took a frugal lunch outside the entrance.

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This short rest was followed by a fatiguing climb along a narrow mountain-path to Medinet Abu, and again we crossed over a miserable stony desert on which the midday sun was pouring down with a scorching power. We now had to clamber about some steep cliffs, and not until we had tramped a long way did we get to the ridge of the hill, and soon afterwards to the region of the rock-tombs, and then passing dilapidated houses, heaps of rubbish, and ruins, all belonging to Moslem times, we reached the cultivated country, where our donkeys were awaiting us under a shady wall.

A still longer ride than that of the morning brought us to the bank of the Nile past the Colossi of Memnon, which are truly imposing and surpass all one's expectations. Having got back to our steamer by boat, we immediately proceeded to dine.

The Arab sportsman had persuaded me to lie in wait again for beasts of prey near Medinet Abu, so, as soon as dinner was over, I took my jäger with me and rode back by the long road through the cultivated country and past the Colossi to that wretched mud-built village, just behind which a pretty broad and perfectly level stretch of desert separates the arable land from the base of the mountains.

Some much-trodden trails, which showed the tracks of hyænas, wolves, and jackals, here ran between the hills and the game-frequented lowlands. Near one of these runs I hid myself behind some large stones just as the setting sun was flooding with its glorious light the desert sands, the high rocky mountains, the ruins, and the palms and villages of the plains.

A great tawny Egyptian Eagle-Owl flew noiselessly from its dark retreat to look for plunder, and soon afterwards appeared a jackal keeping closely to the track. I fired at the beast as it came running along unsuspiciously, but it was rather far off, and though it rolled over, it immediately got on

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its legs again and scurried back to the mountains. I found some traces of blood, and searched for it a little while with no success; time, too, was pressing, for twilight had already begun, and I had to hurry off to the right place for the hyænas.

Guided by the Arab, I rode through the desert, which kept widening out into the plain, until I reached a little sand-hill. The ambush was well chosen, and the dead donkey on the white sand was visible a long way off.

The mountains rose in misty outlines; the yellow desert looked interminable, and a profound silence reigned over all the monotonous surroundings. We heard several jackals prowling about, and even saw them flit by like shadows, while I once even made out the form of a wolf, but the much-desired Hyæna did not appear.

The proper time for this shy creature does not begin until about an hour after midnight; but by eleven o'clock I was again so overcome by sleep that I could no longer struggle against it and left the ambush, the Arab dismissing me with a reproachful look and sitting down again to watch.

It was a long but beautiful ride that I now began, and the moonlit nights of Egypt are among the most charming of the recollections that I have carried away from the land of the Pharaohs. The huge Colossi loomed grand and ghostly by night among the fields; and near the Nile a wolf ran by within a few yards, but unluckily my gun was not loaded. It was at a very late hour that I reached the steamer and my long-desired rest.

On the morning of the 12th we all rode again to Medinet Abu by the same road. Large flocks of storks were standing on the sandbanks and by the pools, as well as snipe and sandpipers, at which I shot from the back of my donkey.

After an hour's ride we arrived at the village, where the Arab sportsman was waiting to tell us that the Hyæna had at

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last come, somewhat after one o'clock, but that he had missed it. I did not credit his assertion, and determined to look at the place myself and at the same time to pay some attention to the vultures, which, according to the Arab, had there assembled in large numbers. Unfortunately, by the time I got to the spot the great birds of prey had finished their meal and were sitting in the desert a few hundred yards away—lazy but unapproachable. The donkey was terribly mangled, whole limbs were gone, and everything was covered with the droppings and feathers of the Vultures.

I had done the Arab an injustice, for I at once found the track of the Hyæna, leading to the carcass on one side and to the desert on the other. On the way back to Medinet Abu I also noticed the perfectly fresh footprints of Gazelles.

As soon as I had got back to the rest of the party we began our inspection of the Ramesseum, that marvellously fine and well-preserved sepulchral temple which lies near the village.

We had now to bid adieu to beautiful Luxor, the splendid ruins of hundred-gated Thebes, and the Theban plain, which, swathed in the noontide haze and girt with lofty blue mountains, made a wonderful farewell picture.

We journeyed all the afternoon, spending some pleasant hours on deck, for there was a cool breeze on the river, and a succession of lovely landscapes unfolded themselves before us; and by six o'clock we had reached Keneh, where we now landed at the modern town on the eastern bank, instead of at Dendera on the western.

The evening was passed in a sporting ramble round the neighbourhood, Hoyos and I riding across the broad and well-tilled plain, and then following the course of a canal well stocked with birds, of which we shot a great variety of species.

Fording the water at a shallow place, we returned to the town, on the outskirts of which a palm-grove rears its proud

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crests among the flowery gardens. Kites, Falcons, Black-winged Kites, Ravens, Crows, Night-Herons, and all sorts of small birds come to roost in the shelter of this cover, and being aware of this we hid ourselves behind the thick stems of the date-palms, and had some easy and very productive sport; but as soon as twilight had succeeded to a glowing gorgeous sunset we rode back along an embankment to the tolerably large town.

On the 13th we resumed our journey in splendid weather, and travelled down-stream from sunrise to noon without a halt. Arrived at the place where the mountains of Gebel-Tuk come close up to the east side of the stream, the country looked so promising, that we resolved to lie to near the crumbling bank and go ashore for a little exercise.

There was neither village nor house in this neighbourhood, nothing but rugged rocky mountains separated from the river by a meadow not more than a hundred yards broad. On climbing up the stony slopes and barren ravines I found plenty of jackal-tracks and some earths, so I made the dachshunds hunt the deep gullies, but unfortunately without any good result. I also failed in my attempt to stalk the birds of prey which were sitting on the peaks and pinnacles; but while pursuing this unsuccessful hunt I found some old tombs containing bones and also what were either fragments of a mummy or pieces of muscular flesh desiccated by the pure hot air.

On returning from the mountains we killed a few Quail which, tired with some long flight, had pitched on the narrow meadow, and after a halt of some two hours resumed our journey, reaching the large and prettily situated town of Sohag about two o'clock.

Here we at once landed for a ramble through the neighbourhood, and the Grand Duke and I went round beyond the town to some large pools near the barracks of its small garrison, where we found a great variety of birds. The many

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onlookers, however, and the herds of buffaloes and camels which were being watered drove us away; so we followed the embankment of the celebrated Bahr Yusuf, and passing by solitary mud-huts, fields, and flourishing gardens came to a wood composed of high tamarisks, sycamores, and palms.

This capital cover served as the roosting-place of an extraordinary number of birds; and as soon as the sun had set and twilight had begun, we slew many of the astonished sleepers—a Pygmy Eagle, several Kites, Hawks, Owls, Crows, and a lot of Egyptian Turtle-Doves falling victims to our guns in the course of a few minutes.

This wood of thoroughly African trees was also charmingly picturesque, and we were sorry to leave such a fragrant rich green spot, where the wild luxuriance of the vegetation reminded us of the fanciful tales of the 'Thousand and one Nights.' Keeping along the embankment we soon reached the town, and passing through some of its narrow busy streets got back to our steamer.

Mudir Ali Pasha had kindly lent me his large milk-white ass, called Abu Gebel, an animal of the purest Arab breed; and as I was delighted with its excellent paces during the ride he presented me with this really fine creature, for which we now had to find a place on deck.

The following morning we started again at a very early hour, and the steamer went on to its last station at Siut without stopping. We arrived there at noon, and passing straight through the town and across the well-known Bahr Yusuf, reached the feet of the steep desert mountains. There the party separated, some of the gentlemen shooting their way home again, while I clambered up a narrow ravine to the top of the heights, where I had a beautiful view of the town, the green valley of the Nile, the Arabian mountains in front of me, and the tawny plateau of the Libyan hills at my back. I then descended to the valley by another

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path among dangerous crags, flat rocks, and loose stones passing many graves and skeletons, before I got to the Mohammedan cemetery. This city of the Moslem dead, with its remarkable mausoleums, is very large and lies westward of Siut, extending from the flourishing gardens of the cultivated land into the barren desert.

I now walked back to the town and sauntered about its outskirts, observing the life of the place and shooting a few of the Egyptian Vultures which had assembled in great numbers near the killing-yards, and then returned through the better parts of the town to dine on board the steamer.

At sunset we all rode out again to the foot of the mountain, and stationed ourselves at various points, some of the gentlemen going to the rock-tombs, while I concealed myself in one of the buildings of the Mohammedan cemetery. It was a lovely evening, all was still, and only a gentle breeze rustled in the leafy tops of the sycamores.

Unfortunately no four-footed creatures came to my hiding-place, but I saw in the distance more than twenty great vultures flying one after another to roost in a high cliff. It was amusing to see how these birds quarrelled about their sleeping-quarters, for naturally they did not care to sit below each other, and it was some time before they all managed to squat side by side on a long ledge of the rock.

I had to leave the cemetery in an hour, as it was getting nearly time for us to continue our journey. My companions, whom I joined at the Bahr Yusuf, had seen jackals and even a large wolf, but all unluckily out of shot among the rocks. The Grand Duke had also observed a Vampire coming out of a tomb, the disgusting creature being as large as a raven.

We now rode quickly back to the landing-place, where we bade a hearty farewell to our worthy Admiral and the good ship, which had served as our abode during such delightful

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unforgettable days, and then went on to the adjacent station, from which the train soon bore us off to the North, and in a little while the whole party were fast asleep.

When I awoke early on the morning of the 15th the sun was peeping into the carriage, and we had come to a standstill in the small and very neglected station of Bedrascheen, where we breakfasted in the dirty waiting-room, and then rode off to Memphis on donkeys. The road ran by marshy pools, well-tilled fields, and large palm-forests, to the little village of Mitrahenne, which lay hidden among the luxuriant verdure of the African vegetation. There stood the temple of the god Ptah, the great fashioner and maker of all created things.

From Memphis we rode out of the cultivated country to the pyramids of Sakkara, in the great Libyan desert, and past Mariette's house to the Apis tombs.

Here the character of the country is just the same as at the pyramids of Gizeh, which one sees at no great distance, together with the town and citadel of Cairo and the terraces of the Mokattam hills.

We had a light lunch in the little house near the Apis tombs which the late celebrated Egyptologist Mariette Bey built for the pursuance of his researches, and then went to the singular low Step-Pyramid to hunt for jackals. Hardly had the Arabs begun to climb up the stones, when down came a jackal in full flight and fell to my gun.

After this successful little bit of sport we visited the other pyramids of this district, including the small one of King Pepi I., recently opened ; and after scrambling in and out of it with some difficulty, we left the desert with its ancient monuments and rode back to the cultivated country.

The road led past a berseem field, a very attractive-looking cover for game, so we determined to get our servants and some fellaheen to beat it, but unluckily the owner

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thereof suddenly appeared and forbade our trespassing on his property.

This lordly personage was an old negro, a eunuch, enormously tall but very lank, with flabby features, and clad in long loose garments—one of the ugliest and most repulsive men I have ever seen. He had in his glorious career among the harems acquired much wealth, and was now spending his old age on his own large estates.

Avoiding any dispute with this individual, we rode straight on to Bedrascheen, whence the railway took us all to Cairo in less than an hour. Thus after a pretty long expedition full of the most delightful experiences, we again entered the beautiful city of the Caliphs.

Next morning we called on the Viceroy to thank him for the great hospitality he had extended to us during our journey on the Nile. As this was not a visit of ceremony, we drove quite quietly to the palace through streets which in the morning were not at all crowded. We spent a quarter of an hour with the Viceroy, drinking the customary coffee and smoking capital cigarettes, while he inquired with much interest about the incidents of our charming trip.

From the palace we returned to Kasr-el-Nusha by the nearest way, and after putting on our comfortable shooting things the whole party soon set out to pay a visit to the viceregal summer-palaces of Gezíreh and Gizeh outside the town.

After thoroughly inspecting the gardens and palaces we drove on to the pyramids of Gizeh. The heat was most oppressive, and a strong wind blew such quantities of sand into our eyes and noses that we were glad when we had got over the interminable road along the embankment and had reached the gigantic structures.

On this second visit we intended to have a jackal hunt and

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to ascend the great pyramid of Cheops. Some Arabs at once began to rummage about the venerable piles, but only two jackals were routed out, one of which the Grand Duke shot, while I fired at the other, but too far away, and the wounded beast dragged itself off into the desert. There was nothing on the third pyramid, so after a short hunt we were at liberty to begin the ascent of this artificial mountain.

My companions accomplished the somewhat fatiguing but not at all dangerous climb in twenty minutes, but I wanted to give some lively exercise to the Arabs who swarm round tourists and hoist them up step by step, so I sprang from stone to stone and reached the top in nine minutes. From the little platform at the summit there is a splendid view of the Nile, the extensive cultivated country of Lower Egypt, the tawny deserts on both sides, and the noble town of Cairo with its sea of houses and its high minarets.

The sun was just setting, and seen through the golden haze of the heated atmosphere and the whirling sand of the desert looked like a ball of fire as it slowly vanished into the Libyan waste, while dark shadows lay upon the eastern mountains, and the old citadel and the cliffs of the Mokattam hills were bathed in a rosy light like our Alpine glow.

Some of the pyramid guides, who were particularly swift of foot, ran for a good backsheesh down the Cheops pyramid and up to the top of the Chêfren in eight minutes, the upper part of the latter being very dangerous to climb on account of its smooth surface.

After this entertaining exhibition we, too, clambered down from our elevated position, and while making the descent a young guide, with a fine thoroughly Arab face, told me in broken French that he was not an Egyptian or one of the miserable fellaheen, but had the honour of being a scion of a noble family in Algiers, and was also a far-travelled man, who knew both Tunis and Morocco, where true Arabs lived, and

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not wretched mongrel races like those of the Nile valley. The worthy fellow appeared to be much disgusted with his present compatriots, and seeing that I was amused with his conversation gave full vent to his feelings.

At the foot of the pyramid we had to witness a fantasia performed by some Bedouins, who rode past each other at full speed, firing off their guns. Neither the men nor their horses, weapons, or garments were either fine or genuine, for wherever the great swarm of Baedeker-reading tourists rush, one finds swindlers, sharpers, and fictitious displays of primitive life.

The pyramids are just as much haunted by tourists as the Rigi; and the hired Bedouins with their silly tricks come under the same category as the wooden chamois which are stuck about all over Switzerland.

It was now getting late, so we had to hasten home along the road by which we had come, and through the streets of the town, which at this hour were very lively; and as soon as dinner was over we drove off to the railway-station to start on our expedition to Menzaleh.

Among the gentlemen who had assembled at the Cairo station to bid us farewell was our friend Brugsch Pasha. Baron Saurma was also there, ready to accompany us to the Lake, and in a few minutes Herr Zimmerman, our trusty attendant on all our railway journeys, told us that it was time to start.

After keeping up a lively conversation in the carriage for about an hour we one by one lay down to rest, and in order that our slumbers might not be disturbed they kindly shunted our carriage at Damietta, which we reached during the night, so that when we awoke before sunrise on the 17th of March we found ourselves alone upon a siding.

As soon as all the party had assembled we went to the bank of the canal, where our servants were busy with the transport

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of our effects, and where a steam-launch took us over to the other side.

I was greatly pleased with this old and thoroughly Arab town, and some parts of it, near the bank of the canal, where numbers of little sailing-crafts, with their smart masts and flags, were moving to and fro, reminded one so much of a Dutch or Belgian seaport that one might even call Damietta an Arabian Antwerp.

We walked from the landing-place to the house of our Consular Agent, a very kindly and extremely amusing old man. The interior of the town is pretty and quite Oriental, the houses being much decorated with wooden lattice-work; but the streets are, if possible, narrower and dirtier than those of other Arab towns, and where there is no water near the houses the old Dutch look of the place disappears. Still Damietta has unquestionably a more northerly appearance (if one may use such an expression in speaking of Africa) than the Arab quarter of Cairo or the towns of Upper Egypt. One sees, too, that it can be quite cold here, and that the sea often causes moisture to fall, for the houses are much more solidly built, better roofed, and altogether more meant to be lived in.

At our worthy representative's all was in brilliant order—European rooms, Turkish carpets, and Arab servants, with attar of roses, that terrible Eastern perfume, pervading the whole house—everything showing that its owner was a true Levantine.

After a hasty breakfast, during which our light baggage was put on pack-animals, we again set off. Some rode donkeys; two of the gentlemen drove in an antiquated coach, the pride of the town; and in a few minutes the whole caravan was moving on, accompanied by the customary yelling of the donkey-drivers. After passing through some streets, a good road, that ran along the embankment of a canal, led us by

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pretty gardens, country houses, and little palm-groves to the shore of the lake. On its sandy margin stood three miserable fishermen's huts, behind us were lofty palms, thick hedges, and rich vegetation, and before us lay the broad interminable grey-brown lake, with its dunes and flat marshy shores—a scene of melancholy monotony and drowsy dullness.

At Lake Menzaleh I could hardly believe that I was still in gorgeous Egypt; the weather, too, was unpropitious, for the moist climate of the sea was making itself felt, and an unpleasantly cold wind was driving about the grey rain-clouds with which the whole sky was covered as with a sombre garment. It seemed just as if we were in the north, and we regretfully thought of the eternal sunshine of Assuan. This ugly lake might very well belong to one of the plains of Northern Europe; at least it was dull and dreary enough to have been worthy of such a situation.

In front of the fishermen's huts lay a flotilla of small sailing dahabeeyahs. I fancy that the reef-pirates of olden days could not have used worse crafts; our Istrian trabakels are perfect frigates in comparison with them. From these vessels, however, we had to choose. The Grand Duke, Baron Saurma, the Court Chaplain, and I established ourselves in the largest, and two gentlemen in each of the others. There was also an extra boat for the cook and the provisions.

All of them were uncomfortable, and a description of one will be quite sufficient. In the fore part of the vessel a raised deck round the mast was provided with some cane chairs and a little table. There we spent the day, and there the two jägers and part of the crew had to sleep. This arrangement lifted up like a hatch, and displayed a small hold, which served as a receptacle for the baggage. Amidships, down a couple of steps, was a small deck-house, fitted with glass windows, and divided into two compartments, the first large enough for two small beds and nothing more; while the other

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contained a sort of high cupboard, into which one had to dexterously scramble through a narrow door, and was so low that one could only lie in it. Inside it there was just room enough for a couple of mattresses, on which two short men might sleep side by side if they doubled up their legs. Some of the crew also passed the night on the flat roof of this cabin.

The people belonging to the boat were all fishermen of the lake, not over-clean, smelling of stale fish, and attired in loose gay robes, with turbans on their heads. None of them were of the Arab type, but were yellowish-brown in colour, with broad faces and flat noses, muscular in build, but not so thin and wiry as most Arabs. One could see at a glance that they belonged to a different race; and in fact these dwellers on the shores of Lake Menzaleh are said to be the pure descendants of the Hyksos, that Cushite people who overthrew the reigning power in the time of the fourteenth dynasty. It was with these ethnologically interesting, but personally somewhat unattractive people, that we had to live in close contact on board this little vessel.

Just before our departure a blinded Pelican was brought on board as a decoy-bird, but it struck about so with its bill and was so dirty that we soon sent it back to shore.

A small boat was now made fast to each vessel, and then the voyage began. Our worthy fellows handled the sails most skilfully, and the strong west wind sent our little flotilla through the water at a good speed.

The great lake of Menzaleh, which is certainly one of the largest sheets of brackish water in the world, is a colossal lagoon, only separated from the sea by a narrow belt of dunes, while its western and southern boundaries are formed by extensive marshes, and its eastern by the embankment that protects the Suez Canal.

On leaving Damietta one sees to the north a line of yellow

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dunes, and further off to the south the green margin of the land, but towards the east the extent of the lake is so great that the sky and the water melt into each other as they do at sea, while the few islands which are visible at first are a long way off.

In no part of this great lake of forty-five square miles* does the depth of the water come above a man's middle, and the bottom being formed of hard clay, one can stand or walk about everywhere. It would therefore be impossible to get drowned even during its sudden and violent storms, and the worst thing that could befall anybody would be a good ducking.

In the winter months this lagoon is said to be literally covered with all sorts of migratory birds, especially ducks and geese; but towards the end of March one can only count upon finding the resident waterfowl and a few late-travelling northern species, while the great numbers of Sea and Imperial Eagles which live here in winter are all absent, and there are only a few Spotted Eagles flying about the islands.

We decided to separate at once and to take different lines, but not to lose sight of each other, and to meet for lunch in the middle of the day at a given signal.

Some Pelicans were soon seen swimming about, but an attempt to approach them in a small boat failed as usual, so we continued our course in the dahabeeyah, and after a short sail got into the region of the large and small islands with which the centre of the lake abounds. They are all perfectly flat, and generally surrounded by a ring of sandbanks, on which are seen incredibly large flocks of Pelicans, much larger than the islands themselves—great rosy-white patches glittering splendidly in the sun—living islands, visible miles away; that is what the great flocks of birds look like in Africa.

* German.

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Slowly and cautiously we proceeded towards one of these congregations of many thousands of individuals, examining it carefully with the glass, but finding only Pelicans, and none of the Flamingoes which we were so intent on pursuing.

As soon as we had got within five hundred yards the birds began to get restless and to stretch out their long necks and move their wings. At the word of command four rifles astonished them with a morning salute, and this was responded to by a great commotion, a vigorous flapping of wings and a general rising, the white island changing into a great cloud, which cast a perfectly compact shadow on the water.

Now began a lively dropping fire, which curiously enough took no effect. In this sort of shooting, however, the distance is enormous, and among the masses of birds which are apparently so closely packed there are, nevertheless, many gaps and interspaces through which a ball can easily pass. Only one solitary Pelican floated dead upon the water, and this bird, which had been hit in the first volley, was fetched by one of the crew, who waded across for it.

The further we penetrated among the islands the livelier grew the scene. Gulls and Terns were tumbling about over the water. Myriads of Coots, a few Shovellers, with some divers and smaller ducks, which were too far off to be identified, were swimming to and fro, and on the islands were standing Great Egrets, Little Egrets, and Grey Herons, while the sand-banks swarmed with flocks of various kinds of Sandpipers. None of the islands were so attractive as to make us halt, and it was not until noon, after the fleet had reunited, and all the gentlemen had come on board our dahabeeyah to eat the lunch prepared on the cook's vessel, that we sighted a larger island adorned with a white tower.

This was an old Sheikh's tomb, the burial-place of a holy man of great celebrity at Lake Menzaleh. A narrow channel there ran between two islands, and a fisherman's miserable little

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hut stood near the dilapidated building with its round dome and lighthouse-looking minaret.

At this place we resolved to stop and pursue our shooting on foot. The various kinds of herons instantly vanished at our first attempt to get near them; but we found by the water's edge many smaller shore-birds, among them some Avocets, those remarkable black-and-white birds, with long stilted legs and recurved bills, also Ruffs, and four or five sorts of sandpipers.

We now separated, rambling in various directions; our guns were soon cracking merrily, and in less than half an hour the little island was quite shot out.

The formation of these islands is peculiar, and they merit a few words of description. Almost all of them are very long, narrow, and covered with shells—one might almost say formed of them. Thick dark green tamarisk-bushes grow all over them, and their shores are flat, sandy, and in some places clayey, while the feathers and down of the great Pelicans, the Rosy Flamingoes, and all kinds of waterfowl are everywhere strewn about. Some of them, especially those which are characterized by large sandbanks, are quite plastered over with thick deposits of guano, and one sees in the clay the footprints of every variety of marsh- and water-bird; at one spot I even found the tracks of an Ichneumon.

After a short but pretty productive spell of shooting we continued our voyage in an easterly direction, in order to get to the Flamingo district, and indeed we soon perceived among the islands a long rosy bank of these peculiar creatures—a lovely sight.

A narrow tongue of land had to be crossed, so we stopped the dahabeeyahs; and as the afternoon was now far advanced, we advised the other gentlemen to disperse among the islands, and settled that this was to be the place for our night-quarters.

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Our little boat was now dragged across the island in order that we might approach the flock from the opposite side; but when we had got within about four hundred yards the Flamingoes, which had hitherto been standing motionless, began to move about restlessly, whereupon we fired our first volley, and immediately the wonderful rosy cloud of birds got up and flew far away.

Only one remained behind, and supported itself with difficulty, half standing, half swimming. We could see with the glass that it was wounded, and were rowing up to it highly delighted, when the bird began beating its wings and flapped away low over the water, disappearing from view behind some islands.

Much disappointed we went on to a long island with a large white sandbank, shooting some smaller birds on the way. There we intended to choose good positions for lying in wait for the evening flight, as the waterfowl were already beginning to collect.

Unfortunately this capital-looking island was already occupied by a very tattered old birdcatcher, who was sitting in a hut made of small branches, while beside him crouched his child, an urchin covered with flies, gnats, and all manner of vermin. From his hut he was working some large fall-nets by means of cords, using as decoy-birds a poor blind miserable-looking Pelican and about a dozen Cormorants, which were tied to stakes, and had all been deprived of sight.

It really seemed to be an excellent place for birds, as the ground was covered with rotten fish, guano, and feathers, but no European nose could have stood it long. Moreover the poor bird-snarer seemed to be by no means pleased at our visit, and muttered some surly words into his shaggy beard; so we did not disturb him long, but soon rowed over to another narrow island which lay opposite. There we took up

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various positions among the thick bushes, which formed capital cover, and all was soon perfectly quiet.

The flight now began. Cormorants, Shovellers, some Herons, a good many Marsh-Harriers, and various kinds of shore-birds flew past, but most of them were a long way off. A few were killed, but on the whole the shooting was not successful. Flamingoes singly and in knots of as many as ten also flew up and down out of shot, but no large flocks were seen until after sunset. This bird has a most ridiculous appearance when flying, for its long neck and legs, which are carried quite horizontally, look like a long stick with two wings hung on to it.

In the evening the wind increased and the waves beat heavily upon the shore of the island, but the clouds broke a little, and we enjoyed the spectacle of a lovely sunset, the purple-red of the western sky mirroring itself in the lake as the sun sank slowly into the agitated waters.

As soon as it began to get quite dark we set out to return to our vessel, having first to tramp through the thick knee-deep bushes of this long island before reaching our boat at its western extremity, and then, after a short row, we got to the small island, where our dahabeeyah lay fast moored close to the shore. All the gentlemen had arrived, and each had brought back something, but nobody much, nor had any one killed a Flamingo, although a good many long shots had been fired at these incredibly shy birds.

The evening was so chilly that when dining on board our dahabeeyah we had to sit wrapped in our cloaks. Some lanterns lit up the curious and impressive scene produced by the little flotilla as it lay in the dark night close to a barren island of this desolate lake, far away from all human habitations, while the perfect silence that reigned around was only broken by the lapping of the waves and the hoarse voices of the Arabs.

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Soon there was no more talking, and the only sounds were the snores of Europeans and Arabs mingling harmoniously. Never shall I forget that night in the cramped deck-house, for we had got into a perfect menagerie of vermin, and our poor bodies were devoured by gigantic fleas.

On the 18th we left our dahabeeyah while it was still quite dark, intending to disperse again among the islands and to wait for the morning flight. I had myself rowed to a small island, where, at the first glimmer of daylight, I stalked a little flock of Flamingoes, missed them with the rifle a very long way off, and then hid myself among the bushes. Birds of all sorts flew past, and I bagged several, among them a Lesser Egret; but though the Flamingoes kept flying to and fro in every direction, and in such swarms that they formed rosy clouds composed of thousands of birds, every one of them kept out of shot.

When the flight was over we again assembled on board the vessels. It was a most unpleasant day, for the sky was covered with heavy clouds, a keen wind whistled over the water, and we were now and again drenched by showers of rain as we slipped along towards the southern part of the lake on a side wind.

There we saw enormous flocks of Pelicans and Flamingoes standing on the sandbanks, and while trying to approach one of them in the boat we passed an island perfectly covered with Gulls and Shovellers. At the ineffectual volley which we fired at the Flamingoes, gigantic clouds of birds rose and settled again a long way off all together.

We now stopped for lunch at a little island, and as the storm was still increasing, debated what it would be best to do. Our first idea was to return to Damietta; but the Arabs said that with the wind in its present quarter they would have to row and tow us, which would have been a long tiresome proceeding, for we had already reached the middle of the

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lake, and from our present southerly position we could see with the naked eye a minaret and the many palm-trees of the little town of El-Menzaleh in the far distance.

The sailors therefore advised us to abandon our old programme and to go on to Port Said. This was certainly a considerable alteration in the plan of our journey; but it seemed to be the only sensible course to pursue, especially as the chief steersman guaranteed that if the present favourable west wind continued we should reach Port Said the same evening.

No sooner said than done, we got on board our crafts, and the light dahabeeyahs sped like arrows through the islands without stopping. The eastern parts of the lake were richer in wildfowl than the western, for myriads of coots, ducks, gulls, herons, and cormorants were seen, and a flock of pelicans was successfully shot at, a splendid rosy specimen finding its way to the deck of our dahabeeyah.

In the afternoon the shining white lighthouse of Port Said showed on the horizon. We saw some flocks of Flamingoes standing a long way off and others flying slowly away. The sky cleared and we enjoyed the warm sunshine and another sunset full of beautiful effects. Our crew handled the sails very cleverly, and were fine hard-working fellows whom we grew quite fond of in these two days. By the time that twilight began we could distinguish the houses of the town and the embankment of the Suez Canal, and at nightfall we arrived at our goal. We were within a few hundred yards of the shore, but the water was so shallow that both we ourselves and all our baggage had to be gradually transported to the embankment of the canal by our brave Arabs.

The quickest of the dahabeeyahs had been sent forward with a letter, so that a small steamer was already waiting at the canal, and on the shore were our Consul and the harbour-master, a Dalmatian by birth.

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We now saw for the first time the Suez Canal, with Asia on its further side. Our first sight, however, of that quarter of the globe was not very imposing, for Asia appeared in the form of an embankment.

The steamer brought us quickly to the town and landed us near the hotel. There were only Europeans in the streets, and everything we saw might very well have belonged to an English seaport. The hotel was a large and quite modern building, very well managed, and greatly reminded us of Switzerland; not a single object in it savoured of the East, and we were, with the exception of an English family, its sole guests this evening. Soon after our arrival a capital supper was served, and by ten o'clock we were all sound asleep in bed.

Next morning we left the hotel and went on board a Suez Canal steamer. The captain, a gruff old man, was French, so were his whole crew; and take it altogether the Suez Canal and its belongings are really a bit of France.

At the outset the African lake Menzaleh is seen beyond the embankments on the west, the Asiatic plain of Pelusium on the east; and the feeling of travelling between two quarters of the globe is at first exciting, but one at last gets used even to this grand idea, and finds the reality extremely wearisome.

Gigantic swarms of Pelicans and Flamingoes, containing thousands and thousands of birds, were standing on the marshy southern parts of Lake Menzaleh; but the sole result of a volley which we poured into them was the rise of a living cloud, larger than one could possibly imagine.

The country on the right, after the lake had come to an end, appeared to be utterly desolate, but the high banks of the canal shut out the view, and well-built earthworks alone both right and left do not make a pleasing picture. The only diversion which we had was an encounter with a large East

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Indiaman, which had awkwardly got across the canal and was blocking the way.

Our captain thought that we could pass and went boldly on; then came a severe shock, a slight rasping of the vessels' sides, and there we were, entangled with our English neighbour. For half an hour we worked to get clear, and all the time the rough English captain turned his back on us and acted as though the whole affair was no concern of his. At last there came a slight movement and a creaking and grating of the jammed vessels, then another violent jerk, and we were free. The English ship had also been floated by the shock, so each vessel went off in her own direction.

On the 20th we decided to make a shooting excursion to Heliopolis. The weather was splendid and the air pure and warm. After a long drive on the same bad road which we had traversed a month ago, we reached the "Virgin's Tree." The dachshunds were let loose in the little garden and the thick cactus hedges to look for Jackals and Ichneumons; but we soon saw the futility of our efforts, for the Quail season had already begun, and shots were being fired in all directions. Moreover, as the holiday gunners of the East and all sorts of unsportsmanlike Levantines were ranging through the fields and bushes, it seemed advisable to leave this locality.

Among the gardens and shady trees near the "Virgin's Tree" is a little restaurant much frequented by the Cairenes. There we breakfasted, and then went on between fields and garden walls to the Ostrich farm. This establishment, which is situated on the edge of the desert, belongs to a company, and seems to be a flourishing business, at least everything is most comfortably arranged. The manager, a German-Swiss, showed us the pens, the open sandy spaces, the inner enclosures, the artificial hatching apparatus, and all his ostriches both old and young. The stately birds were of two varieties and in the full glory of their beautiful feathers.

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After inspecting everything we took the nearest road to the well-known orange-gardens at Heliopolis. There we found some tracks of wolves, but the beasts themselves were not at home on this occasion; so it was all to no purpose that we ransacked the bushes and plantations of this beautiful orange-grove. On the way back we stopped and made equally unsuccessful attempts in several gardens and one sugarcane-field; Diana was not propitious on this occasion, and we returned to Cairo empty-handed.

On the 21st of March we drove in the morning through the old town up to the celebrated citadel, having to pass through several gates on the steep slope, at all of which were stationed guards, who received us with the lively strains of the Egyptian khedivial march.

When we had got home again and had donned our shooting things, the Grand Duke and I drove with Baron Saurma through the town and over the great Nile bridge to the neighbourhood of the viceregal summer palaces. There a sugarcane-field was still standing, and taking with us a bleating kid we posted ourselves well concealed among the high canes.

Unfortunately neither wolves nor any other beasts of prey came, though Baron Saurma had often had good sport at the same spot and in the same way; so again Diana did not favour us, and as soon as it began to get dark we left the place and drove home. It was a lovely evening, and the wonderful sunset was followed by the splendour of an African spring night. Insects chirped and buzzed about, bats skimmed round the gently rustling tree-tops, a sea of stars was strewn over the heavens, and the grand repose of the scene was only broken by the barking of dogs and the cries of the waterfowl as they flew to the Nile.

In the town things were livelier, and we had to push our way to Kasr-el-Nusha through the bustle of southern night-life.

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The following morning we drove at an early hour to the large barracks of Kasr-el-Nil, and went on board the steamer, which was lying below them. It was our good old vessel the 'Feruz,' with which were connected so many delightful recollections of the happy plains of Upper Egypt. The dusky Admiral was again in command of his trusty boat, and in a few minutes we were moving down-stream.

To eyes accustomed to far greater charms, Cairo and Lower Egypt, at first so enchanting, now looked tame and dull; and it is not until one returns to them that one learns to fully appreciate the glorious colouring and the striking, almost tropical aspects of nature in Upper Egypt.

We were now on our way to the famous Barrage of the Nile. We first passed a number of old houses leading down to the water's edge, and then came to the place where several of the Viceroy's yachts, the mail steamers, and a perfect fleet of dahabeeyahs were lying side by side. On the left bank were country houses and luxuriant gardens; on the right the town, the Shûbra Avenue, the palace of the same name, and the lofty trees of the great park. These interesting scenes, however, soon vanished, and we saw over the crumbling banks of the river the monotonous cultivated districts of Lower Egypt.

Several solitary Egyptian Geese and numbers of ducks, but not many other water-birds, were observed as we steamed past various long sandy islands, and we soon came in sight of the singular bridge-like construction of the Barrage.

At this southernmost point of the delta the Rosetta and Damietta arms of the Nile separate, and the tongue of land dividing the two channels is connected with the mainland by iron bridges and gigantic dams. These were built by Mohammed Ali to keep back the Nile when it is low, so that the innumerable canals of the delta might then be supplied with water as well as during the time of the inundation.

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We had to look at every bit of it, and were conducted over the fort as well; and after our inspection went home in the steamer, stopping on the way and rambling with our guns through a long narrow island covered with sand and studded with clumps of thick bushes. There I shot a specimen of the beautiful Pallid Harrier and a few small water-birds.

This island is separated from the mainland by a muddy branch of the river, so shallow that the great flocks of sheep and goats which feed on its bushes can easily be driven over. On its banks we also found some most miserable fishing-huts; but we soon left this shooting-ground and returned to the steamer, lunching on our way home.

On the morning of the 23rd, I drove through the town and the Arab quarter to the tombs of the Caliphs. At the outermost houses where the carriage road ends we mounted donkeys, and riding through the cemetery soon reached the foot of the high cliffs of the Mokattam hills. We had now again to follow the same path that we had trodden some weeks before, and, climbing up the cliffs, were soon seated in the small and very uncomfortable ambush.

After three long hours of perfect quiet some Kites and Egyptian Vultures appeared, and these creatures were just in the middle of their meal, when I heard the heavy flapping of some great bird's wings. The smaller visitors at once dispersed in alarm, and a large Griffon Vulture settled with half-closed wings on the back of the ass, and forthwith began its breakfast.

Without a moment's delay I knocked it over, and creeping out of the cave took the heavy bird on my back and clambered down the crags, rocks, and loose stones to the spot where the servants were waiting with the donkeys. Thence we proceeded homewards, and returned to Kasr-el-Nusha by noon.

After lunch and a short rest the Grand Duke and I resolved to pay a visit to the Shûbra gardens; so, taking our guns with

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us, we got into one of the ordinary carriages of the place and drove along the splendid Shûbra Avenue, past gardens and flourishing fields, to the high wall of the park, which encloses a large extent of ground. The fine palace stands amidst lofty trees and well-nigh impenetrable shrubberies of almost tropical growth, and is surrounded by ponds and kiosks. There were flower-beds in full bloom, and a considerable space was occupied by kitchen-gardens, orange-groves, and even by fields of green corn. The irrigated portions of the grounds were well stocked with large flocks of pretty Buff-backed Herons, and incredible numbers of heavy-looking Night-Herons nested in the tall pines that adorned an artificial mound near the palace.

We gave the various kinds of herons an unpleasant hour of it, but as we had to be back in time for dinner we had to hurry away from these lovely and enchanting gardens, where the rustling trees were all flooded with the golden light of the setting sun. I looked longingly at the thick shrubberies and waving corn-fields, for I had a great notion that these perfectly quiet enclosures must be very good cover for the larger beasts of prey; and in fact Saurma, acting on my advice, shot them a few days afterwards, and bagged a Lynx and an Ichneumon.

On reaching Kasr-el-Nusha we dined with the two brothers Saurma, the younger of whom, with Prince Taxis, had only yesterday returned from a long and very fatiguing expedition into the mountains near the Red Sea, where they had been vainly attempting to shoot Arabian Ibex.

Early on the 24th of March the whole party drove out along the Heliopolis road to the very end of the town, where a large tent had been pitched on an open space gaily decorated with flags. There a number of people had assembled, for the whole Austro-Hungarian colony had turned out to celebrate by a fête the laying of the foundation-stone of an Austrian hospital. As soon as the ceremony was over we drove off to take leave of the Khedive and to tender him our thanks. He

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soon paid us a return visit at Kasr-el-Nusha, and afterwards accompanied us to the railway station.

As the train moved slowly off we took a last regretful look at the noble city of the Caliphs, the stern cliffs of the Mokattam mountains, the towering citadel, and the mysterious Pyramids, for we were now about to make a pilgrimage to new scenes and other lands.

Next day we reached the Bitter Lakes, which have a certain undeniably picturesque charm, and the contrast between their dark brown waters and the dazzling white of the desert cannot fail to arrest the attention of the traveller.

While passing along the short stretch of canal between the Bitter and the Timsah Lakes, we noticed a jackal hunting for shell-fish by the bank, and fired some ineffectual shots at him, and while on the deep blue waters of the latter lake we enjoyed the splendid effects of an African sunset.

The houses of Ismailia now appeared on the sandy shores to the north, and our steamer was soon lying at the quay of the great French station of the Suez Canal. There M. de Lesseps, the famous originator and constructor of this gigantic work which connects two seas, was awaiting us with his son and several officials of the French company. I was delighted to make the acquaintance of this indomitable and still vigorous old man. We drove to his country house, which was charmingly situated in a little garden, and were received by his beautiful daughter-in-law, who is by birth a Cairene Greek of the wealthy Sinadino family; her brother, an agreeable young man, and an English lady were also present. We dined soon after our arrival, and afterwards spent a pleasant social evening.

Next morning we all left the house at a very early hour, and accompanied by M. de Lesseps went to the station and proceeded to Maksamah, a short distance along the Cairo line. There we stopped and had a good deal of difficulty in getting

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our horses out of the train, for the mettlesome stallions neighed and sprang about so wildly that a good deal of time was lost before we were ready for our sport.

A tribe of hunting Bedouins had pitched their tents near the station, and on our arrival these splendid fellows left their camp mounted on horses and camels, the Sheikh riding at their head on a superb chestnut mare.

M. de Lesseps had been kind enough to invite to the neighbourhood of Ismailia this well-known tribe of hunting Arabs, in order that we might witness the fine spectacle of a Bedouin hunt for gazelles.

The ride through the desert was truly picturesque. In front was the Sheikh with his pure white burnous, handsome saddle-equipments, and curved sabre buckled to his loins, while on his thickly-gloved hand sat a noble and gaily hooded falcon. A crowd of Bedouins, armed with long guns, sabres, and daggers, and all clad in flowing white robes, followed him on foot, on horseback, and on camels; brown warlike-looking fellows they were, with expressive features. Some very fine long-haired Persian greyhounds accompanied their masters, and several young falcons not yet worthy of the sheikh's hand were carried after us.

The tribe with which we were now ranging through the desert near the railway had been wandering about Africa for some time past, but really belonged to Arabia, as was easily seen by their high-bred horses and more sumptuous weapons and dress.

Deployed in a long line we rode over the sandy ground, among the hills and valleys of the waste, and though we had started with the intention of hunting Gazelles, we should now have been contented even with a Desert Hare. For more than two hours all search had proved fruitless, and the Bedouins were beginning to career about impatiently and to take a wider range, when one of them suddenly started a

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gazelle from some thick bushes. Away went every one after it in wild disorder, the dogs were let loose, the scattered horsemen came in from all sides, some even riding towards the frightened animal, so that it no longer knew which way to turn and ran amongst the horses. A Bedouin, however, brought the hunt to a speedy conclusion, for he fired a ball at the creature as it was springing wildly about, and knocked it over dead.

We were now to have tried for hares; but as the heat was so great, and our chances of success so small, we rode back towards the station. To show us its skill the Sheikh let his noble companion fly at a pigeon, which in a few moments fell to the ground struck by the deadly blow of the falcon's talons.

We soon arrived at the station, where we took a light breakfast in the railway carriage, and then some of the party returned to Ismailia, while, with the rest of the gentlemen, I went a little way up the Sweet-water Canal in a steam-launch. Halting at a ruinous old house, we crossed the sand-hills to a narrow marsh, which is closely bounded by the desert, and runs along parallel to the canal as far as the Crocodile Lake, near Ismailia.

It was one of the French gentlemen, a very agreeable man and a keen sportsman, who took us to this ground, which he had often shot over. As soon as we got to the marsh we found plenty of Painted Snipe, a very characteristic African bird, quite new to us, and bagged a good many of them in a very short time. There were also numbers of Common Snipe in the boggy places, and several kinds of marsh and wading birds, as well as Ducks and Spur-winged Plovers, while among the high grass we flushed some Quail. The great locusts were also interesting, for they were the largest insects of the kind that I had ever seen. These creatures rose with a loud whirring noise long before one got near them, and in

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order to examine one closely I had to shoot the wary insect like a quail—a truly extraordinary kind of game.

In this valley, surrounded as it was by the desert sands, the sun burnt fiercely, and drew feverish vapours from the marshy ground, so after several hours of fatiguing shooting we retraced our steps to the Sweet-water Canal, well laden with spoils, and getting into the steam-launch again, went quickly back to Ismailia. Soon after our return we dined, at M. de Lessep's suggestion, on one of the French steamers, instead of in the house, and retired early to rest.

Next morning we all went to the small but very pretty church, where a Franciscan said Mass for the whole French colony, and then M. de Lesseps took us through the streets and gardens of this thoroughly French town, proudly showing us all that he has conjured up from the apparently unproductive desert.

The time for our departure had now come, and at the quay we took leave of M. de Lesseps and Herr Zimmerman, to whom we were so much indebted on all our Egyptian railway journeys ; and then set out accompanied by the young M. de Lesseps, his wife, and some French gentlemen.

The journey was pretty quickly got over, and the dreariness of the scenery counteracted by lively conversation. I also shot some Gulls and an Egyptian Vulture from the deck of the vessel, and saw thousands of Pelicans and Flamingoes standing in the shallow parts of Lake Menzaleh, with their rosy plumage lit up by the sun.

The Austro-Hungarian colony at Port Said had arranged a brilliant reception for us, and accompanied by gaily-decked boats and steamers, we proceeded to the spot where our 'Miramar' was lying. In a few minutes we were again on board the good ship, and, greeted by the strains of our National Anthem, were once more standing on a spot belonging to our Fatherland.

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Port Said is quite a European town, and the magnificent harbour, with the buildings belonging to the Canal, the docks, building-yards, workshops, and especially the East Indiamen and other ships gave the whole scene a thoroughly Western look.

In the evening we gave a dinner on board the 'Miramar,' to which we invited Abd-el-Kader Pasha and the French gentlemen; and when it got dark our countrymen who resided here got up a charming illumination of the harbour and a procession of boats, while brilliantly-lighted crafts carrying bands of musicians flitted round our vessel, and splendid fireworks were let off on shore.

The time for our departure soon came. Our guests left the 'Miramar,' and with them Abd-el-Kader Pasha, whom we had all learnt to value and esteem, for he had been both a faithful travelling companion and a true friend.

Never can we forget the glorious days which we spent in Africa; and as the vessel moved slowly on we bore away with us glorious memories of the Dark Continent, of glowing Egypt, and of the burial-places of an ancient civilization which passed away thousands of years ago.

The morning of the 28th of March found us on the open sea. "No land in sight yet?" was the question so often asked, as we longingly waited for the outlines of Asia to rise above the waves. At last there appeared in the forenoon the blue misty heights of the mountains of Judæa, and we soon afterwards saw the yellow shore and the hill on which rises the terraced fortress-like town of Jaffa.

At first the country looks barren and desolate, a land of yellow dunes and grey mountains unpleasing to the eye; but when the vessel nears this town of a hoary historic past, one sees the splendid garland of wood-like gardens by which it is encircled.

As Jaffa has no harbour for large vessels, we had to anchor

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about a mile from the dangerous fringe of rocks which lie outside it.

The scene as we approached the landing-place was very pretty, for all the terraces, steps, and narrow windows were crowded with people, while the road was lined with Turkish soldiers in green uniform—fine martial-looking natives of Asia Minor, quite unlike the Egyptians. Their presence was a necessity, for the people pressed forward with the utmost inquisitiveness.

At the gate of the Hospice some aged Franciscans were awaiting us, who led us to the church by the innumerable steps of a thoroughly Oriental house, the way being very fatiguing and dirty, and the smells that we had to pass through indescribable. The church is old, but neither very beautiful nor interesting.

Our horses were standing at its entrance, and it was no easy matter to get the caravan together in the crowd of noisy Orientals and Jews. However it was managed at last, and a troop of Turkish cavalry led the way, followed by ourselves and our servants, while the rear was brought up by more soldiers.

In this order we rode through some narrow streets where the pavement was formed of smooth flat stones, and after passing the extremely dirty market-place got out of the town.

At first the road ran among splendid gardens, thick hedges, and luxuriant orange-groves, where the trees were bending under the weight of the fruit; and one could easily see how great was the difference in climate between the coasts of Palestine and Egypt, for at the end of February we saw the orange harvest at Cairo, but in Jaffa it had not even begun at the close of March.

The fragrant gardens soon disappeared, and we reached a most monotonous grey-green plain, where nothing was visible

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but poorly cultivated fields, occasional draw-wells, a few palms, stony tracts, a very ill-kept Moslem cemetery, and as a background to the barren scene the blue mountains of Judæa in the far distance.

Among the fields one might have imagined one's self in Europe, for the vegetation lacked the almost tropical character of that of the Nile and everything was backward. Storks, too, were standing about them in numbers, but of other animal life there was but little to be seen.

We soon came to a few small wretched-looking villages, passed some burial-places and the watch-towers of the Turkish Gendarmes, and in three hours arrived at the ruinous little town of Ramleh. Our caravan merely skirted its outer houses, although it is the usual place where travellers to Jerusalem pass the night, for we had no desire to sleep in the neighbourhood of such a notoriously dirty place, and had decided to go on to the village of Latrun, which lies at the foot of the hills.

By degrees the character of the country began to change and the road descended in a gentle slope to a broad valley, on the further side of which rose the mountains of Judæa. The fields began to be here and there studded with large masses of stone, and perfectly smooth slabs of rock peeped out from among the evergreen bushes.

Near a sheikh's tomb I bagged a brace of fine large Chukar Partridges with a lucky right and left; and soon after sunset we reached the village of Latrun, which is picturesquely situated among rocks and green bushes at the base of the hills.

Our splendid camp stood close to the ruins of an old fortress of very uncertain origin, and formed a regular town of Turkish tents, made of such beautiful materials, and so provided with every comfort that it made one think of the days of Soliman; while the numerous pack-animals, mostly

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mules and ponies, and a host of servants—sun-worshipping Druses of the Lebanon—hung about the camp, among the rocks.

Mr. Howard of Beyrout, a general fitter-out of caravans and expeditions, was our dragoman. He is a genuine Oriental, who in the course of his varied experiences has assumed an English name and has put himself under English protection; and we all learnt to appreciate his excellent qualities, and the indomitable energy which he displayed on occasions when difficult work fell to his share. Howard had brought with him two Bedouins—one a negro who had been carried off from Africa when quite young, and had been wandering about with a tribe of Asiatic Arabs; the other a true Bedouin of the Jordan, hardly darker than a European. Both wore the ordinary thick white-and-brown striped burnous of the Asiatic tribes, and their duty was to bring in a daily supply of partridges for the larder.

In the evening my uncle and I went out with the pale-faced fellow to watch for jackals. We scrambled over hedges and walls to a water-tank near the village; but unfortunately there was no moon, and nothing appeared before it got dark, though we heard the beasts howling at a distance. We therefore stumbled back to camp, along the same wretched road, stared at by the people of Latrun, who were standing about in their long robes, looking like spectres. On our return we had a regular dinner in the large mess-tent, followed by Turkish coffee and the refreshing repose of well-earned sleep.

Early next morning the camp was all astir. The tents were struck, everything packed on the mules, and the caravan moved off, with the usual tinkling of bells, shouting of muleteers, and neighing of horses. At first the way led through narrow mountain valleys, whose steep slopes were covered with masses of rock and dense evergreen shrubs. There both the country and its flora were of the true Mediterranean type,

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such as one finds on the coasts of Spain, Greece, Italy, and the western parts of North Africa, especially in Morocco. This zone is rather narrow in Palestine, and gradually disappears at Jerusalem, while east of Bethany it is replaced by the steppe vegetation of the interior of Asia.

Passing by the ancient well of Bir Egyub (well of Job), the ravine of Wadi Ali, and the ruins of an old mosque, we reached the ridge of the hills. The character of the country remained the same—dazzling white rocks separated from each other by thorny bushes, with here and there ruins and dilapidated houses appearing among the stones. Cliffs were rare, but on the other hand one saw many long and perfectly smooth rocky flats on the hillsides.

Countless eagles and vultures were soaring overhead, but we noticed but few birds among the bushes, only very occasional partridges which ran swiftly up the slopes, and after travelling for two hours we tried a little beat along the ridge with our Arabs.

There we had a splendid view over a maze of valleys and ravines, all of the same type, with a true Mediterranean flora very like that of the Zante mountains. Far to the east we saw the greyish-yellow ridges and heights of the plateau on which Jerusalem lies, and the commencement of a very different looking range of hills in the interior of the country.

It was not very pleasant walking among the innumerable rocks, stones, and the long thorns of the almost impenetrable bushes; so as we found no partridges, and could not get near the large birds of prey which were cruising about in all directions, we speedily returned to the caravan.

After crossing the ridge the country grew still more desolate, even the bushes gave place to dry grass, and the picturesque rocks to loose stones, while before us lay a wide valley, down to which the road wound in serpentine curves.

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We passed some ruinous inns for pilgrims which stood amidst miserable stony olive-yards that vividly reminded us of the little *fondas* of the Spanish mountains; and after a long journey reached the bottom of the broad valley known as the Wadi Kuloniyeh, about eleven in the forenoon. The village of the same name lies on the hillside, and below it stands a one-storied European hotel; for Palestine, as long as one travels along the regular pilgrim-routes, is a tourist-beridden land, a sort of sanctified Switzerland. In the one country the stranger's love for the beauties of nature is turned to account; in the other it is his faith and devotion that are traded upon.

At Kuloniyeh we halted, as our arrival in Jerusalem was arranged for the afternoon, so in the meantime we took a ramble about the hillsides, which were covered with grey-green olive-woods growing on terraces, and a few bushes and flat rocks. The barren country was burning under the fiercest midday heat, and toiling about the steep slopes was tiring work. All we saw was a Black-headed Jay, and a grey Syrian hare which the Grand Duke wounded, but could not find among the stones; nor had Hoyos any better luck with a jackal on the other side of the valley; while I only killed some of those ugly large black lizards that are everywhere to be found in the rocky parts of Palestine.

As the heat was getting quite unbearable we all returned to the pilgrim's house, and lunched under some olive-trees at the place where the Emmaus of the New Testament stood, and not far from the spot where David slew Goliath. Count Caboga, our Consul-General, had come from Jerusalem to meet us, and we were much interested in discussing with him our future plans. After luncheon the whole party put on full uniform, and the clergy of the different sects, with the dragomen of the Consulates, who had already met us here, rode back to Jerusalem to prepare for the grand reception.

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We too soon set off, as the time was getting on, and our entry had to be made punctually to the minute.

Soon after our arrival we had to receive the Consuls, then the Turkish authorities, the notables of the town in their Eastern costumes, and afterwards all the heads of the Christian and Jewish Churches.

When all these very interesting visitors had left us, we went out of the hospice and passed through one of the streets and the old Damascus Gate to our imposing camp, which had been pitched just outside the city walls, in a grove of stunted olives near stony ground and heaps of ruins. Everything had already been unpacked by the servants, so we at once made ourselves comfortable, and it was very pleasant to get a little rest after the fatigues and heat of the day. The sunset was beautiful, the evening refreshingly cool, and dinner having been despatched all was soon quiet in the camp. As we were going to sleep, however, our ears were saluted with the incessant howling of the half-wild dogs within the walls, and of the jackals which swarm round Jerusalem, especially in the neighbourhood of the slaughter-yards, which were situated on the further side of a little valley near our camp.

Early on the morning of the 30th we all went, both masters and servants, to the Hospice, and thence made a pilgrimage to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Leaving the chapel, we visited the great church and another little chapel belonging to the small Franciscan monastery, which also forms part of the buildings of the Church of the Sepulchre.

From the monastery we descended to the Church, and examined the various relics, the points of historical interest, the numerous side chapels, and all the spots connected with legends or religious beliefs. Up the steps and down the

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steps, through the whole church did we go, until there was not a corner left unvisited.

We then walked through the narrow crowded streets to the house of the Greek Patriarch, inspected the synagogue and the celebrated Mosque of Omar, and, returning to the camp, mounted our horses for a ride round the city.

In the glorious evening light we passed the burial-places of the old Jewish Kings and the tomb of Absalom ; we also saw Aceldama, the field of blood, and the barren, stony, grandly gloomy valley of Kedron : all is there just as it is described in Holy Writ, and I found Jerusalem and its surroundings just what I had pictured them to be. Twilight was coming on as we slowly rode back to camp under the old walls, enjoying these deeply impressive scenes.

On the 31st of March the whole party attended mass in one of the side chapels of the Church of the Sepulchre, and after service we went to Government House to call on the Pasha. We next visited the Cœnaculum, the chamber of the Last Supper, which is situated on the outskirts of the town in a house arranged quite after the Eastern fashion. There we stayed but a short time, and then betook ourselves to our horses, which were waiting outside an adjacent gate of the town.

The Grand Duke and the other gentlemen rode back to the camp, but Count Caboga and I followed the rough road leading to the valley of Kedron, for we intended to ascend the Mount of Olives.

The lowest slopes of this grey-green melancholy-looking hill are steep and very rocky, but higher up they are more gentle and are covered with flat rocks, loose stones, and gnarled olive-trees of immense age. At the summit of the hill, which we reached by a rough winding path, there is a small circular chapel with a little dome; this covers the spot from which Christ ascended to heaven, and one is shown on a marble slab the

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footprints of the Redeemer. Near the chapel stands a minaret, and from its top there is a splendid view of Jerusalem and of the chain of grey-green steppe-like hills which separate the plateau, the immediate neighbourhood of the Holy City, and Bethlehem, from the valley of the Jordan. In the far distance one gets a glimpse of the high mountains east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, and, through the dip of a valley, even of a little bit of the dark blue surface of that lonely inland sea.

From the valley of Kedron we rode back towards our camp by the walls of the city, but at the slaughter-yards I dismounted and made an unsuccessful attempt to stalk an Egyptian Vulture. Hundreds of large vultures were circling overhead, and dogs were wandering about the blood-stained place, which had such an abominable smell that I was compelled to beat a hasty retreat and get back to the tents through some olive-gardens.

We dined early, as Count Caboga and I intended to go on to the Maltese Hospice at Tantur in the afternoon, while the rest of the party were to join us at Bethlehem, though not until the following day.

I had now to leave Jerusalem, and, taking a farewell look at the grey walls of venerable Zion, I drove away with Count Caboga along the excellent road to Bethlehem, which runs from the Damascus Gate near our camp, and passes close under the ramparts of the western part of the city.

At the entrance to the valley of Kedron the road winds among stony flats, sparingly covered with bushes and scanty grass, and by ruinous garden-walls, stunted olive-yards, and dilapidated houses. On the right one sees the barrack-like buildings of the German colony, and on the left barren desolate hills, the prettiest view being the look back at the high walls, battlements, and towers of the Holy City.

The road then gradually ascends the opposite slope of the

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valley, where a bare hill close by is pointed out as the place where the house of Caiaphas stood. We also passed the place where the Philistines were encamped when David smote them; while later on came the ruins of the house of the aged Simeon, and the well of the Magi, where the Wise Men again beheld the Star in the East.

This brought us to the saddle of the hill, where we found ourselves close to the garden-wall of the large Greek monastery of Mar-Elyás, which stands among olive-trees. From this spot there is a charming view of the broad stony grey-green valley traversed by deep gullies, which extends up to the heights on which Bethlehem is so picturesquely situated.

These gullies and small valleys, as well as the general fall of the ground, all trend towards the mountains that enclose the valley of the Jordan and form ravines which pass through them down to the Dead Sea.

To the south-west we saw in the distance a somewhat extensive olive-wood with the spires of the Latin Patriarch's summer residence towering above its dark masses. To the north the view was closed by the range of hills which we had just traversed, and to the west a maze of stony elevations, little valleys, and plateaus gave an interest to the landscape.

After driving downhill for another quarter of an hour we reached the garden-walls of the small Maltese fortress of Tantur, a well-built mediæval castle which recalls the days of the Crusaders; it stood on a hillside, with the white-cross flag of Malta waving above its battlements, and the adjoining buildings of the hospice bore witness to the benevolence of this old order of knights.

Going uphill through the garden we came to the second wall and entered the paved courtyard, in the centre of which is a deep well. Count Caboga has converted this castle and hospice into an establishment for the relief of the country-people and sick pilgrims, and there he leads a pleasant

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country life the whole year round, devoting himself to serious studies and charitable deeds. His servant, Ferdinand Nicodemus, a Syrian Christian, and a very well educated young man, does good service in the hospice as a skilled apothecary. He is also a very smart fellow, an excellent horseman, and sharp and adroit in dealing with the natives. He accompanied us throughout our tour in Palestine and won our universal esteem.

As soon as we entered the courtyard a number of fine large Arab dogs, very like our Hungarian wolf-dogs, sprang out on all sides, and welcomed their master with joyful whimpers. Count Caboga is a great lover of animals, and tames the most varied kinds. He long had a perfectly tame Hyæna, and now a handsome Asiatic Sheep ran about the house after him, while a Cockatoo, that lived wild among the pigeons in the tower of the castle, flew lightly down on its master's shoulder.

After inspecting the comfortably arranged castle I went out with Ferdinand and my jäger to the place where Hyænas are generally shot at night.

We walked a little way back along the Jerusalem road until we were a few hundred yards below the Monastery of Mar-Elyas, where there were some old walls constructed of large loose stones. In one of these an ambush had been so cleverly made as to be quite invisible, while before it lay a dead donkey in the very unsavoury condition that the Hyæna loves.

There was now unfortunately no moonlight, and the nights were so dark that one could hardly expect to see the wild animals, much less to shoot them, so in order to get hold of a hyæna I had brought plenty of poison with me in the form of strong strychnine. We therefore put on thick leather gloves and artistically prepared the leg of the jackass, laying, according to old usage, some poisoned fragments round the

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principal bait, as it is the habit of most wild beasts to eat small morsels before settling down to heavy work.

This disgusting business of preparing the lure was just finished, and we were arranging the loopholes in the ambuscade, when an Arab with a long gun came up and offered his services. He insisted upon sharing the night-watch with us, gave us much good advice, related all his successes in hyæna-shooting, and could hardly be made to hold his tongue.

As it was not nearly time to watch we decided to return and to take the precaution of bringing the Arab with us, as we were afraid that if we sent him about his business he might spoil our sport out of revenge, for Ferdinand knew him to be a bad untrustworthy fellow who lived by shooting partridges, and who roamed about the neighbourhood of Bethlehem in a vagabond sort of way. His cunning treacherous-looking face confirmed this account, so I determined to make him harmless for the night.

I left young Hodek to look after the ambush and to watch until we came back. The sun was just setting, and gilding with its magic light the stony hills, the castle of Tantur, the picturesque town of Bethlehem, and the heights of the Jordan valley, while the lofty barren steeps of the beautiful mountains beyond the Dead Sea were glowing in a way that reminded me of our Alps; there were only a few thin fleecy clouds in the sky, and a cool breeze swept across the plateau.

The air of the country round Jerusalem and of the hills between Bethlehem and the sea cannot be compared to the mild and delightfully equable temperature of Egypt. Raw winds here remind one of the high elevation of this barren plateau, and snowfalls in March are not of rare occurrence near the Holy City; but at Bethlehem, only a few miles eastward of this place, the climate and the flora change, and the

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terribly heavy air of the valley of the Jordan is quite perceptible.

We walked back to the castle with our Arab, and on arriving there he was entertained with food and drink, but at the same time deprived of his freedom for twelve hours in a closely-barred room. We, too, had a capital supper, the Count's servants who waited on us being dressed in the costume of the country. I then hurried back to lie in wait for the Hyænas.

Meanwhile night had fallen, and the darkness which enveloped the country was unfortunately made still more intense by the gathering clouds. Hodek, whom we found crouching in the ambush, said that some jackals had appeared soon after sunset.

With iron endurance we lay waiting in our hiding-place until midnight, but as we could then hardly make out the place where the dead donkey was lying, we saw the hopelessness of the business. Had the ground been bare rock or the desert-sand of Egypt, our chances would have been better, but here, as throughout the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, it was covered with flat rocks and loose stones, mixed with dark grass. Our pleasant anticipations were thus destroyed, and we were moreover enduring perfect torments in this dark confined place of concealment, for the wind being good for our sport blew straight from the carrion, sending the most horrible stench through the loop-holes. Sometimes we thought that we heard beasts prowling round, while several people passed along the road singing, and the watch-dogs of the monastery and the castle howled piteously in the true Eastern fashion; but at midnight, as already said, I lost patience, and we all cautiously groped our way back to the castle.

On the 1st of April I was called at sunrise and went out to see how the strychnine had worked; great was my

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astonishment at finding that the large heavy donkey had simply vanished! No traces of its having been dragged away were to be seen on the ground, nor did the grass appear to have been bent down—facts which seemed to show that some exceptionally powerful beast of prey must have carried off the carcass bodily.

As some of the small scraps were also gone, we searched about and soon found a large jackal not twenty yards off. Bigger, longer in the legs, with a shorter and more bushy tail than the jackal of Egypt, and of a yellowish colour only broken by a bluish-grey saddle, this extraordinary creature seemed to me unlike any of the jackals which I had hitherto seen or killed.

We also discovered a trail of blood leading straight to the road and to the wall on its further side, where the blood and hair that were sticking to the sharp edges of the stones plainly showed that the donkey had been dragged over it. On the other side the carcass had again been carried, and the trail then led towards one of the deep ravines in the direction of the mountains of the Jordan valley.

I now stole cautiously forward, and on looking over a hillock I saw a dark object about fifty yards away, and near it a small reddish-yellow animal. A lucky rifle-shot laid the little fellow low, and on hastening to the spot I found that it was one of the extremely pretty Fennecs, or desert-foxes, and that it had been comfortably breakfasting off the donkey's head. Carefully examining this great heavy head, which belonged to a donkey of the large Asiatic breed, we saw that it had been simply bitten off, for the marks of teeth were quite visible. Hitherto the wild beast had not dragged but carried on its back the entire donkey, and from this point it had gone off with the rest of the body. Hyænas are very large and powerful, but I hardly think they are capable of so great an effort, nor is it their habit to carry away plunder in

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this way. It is, however, just what bears do, and I feel convinced that it was one of the Syrian isabelline-coloured bears, mentioned by Brehm in his 'Thierleben' as occurring in Palestine, that had played us this trick. Had there been a full moon we should have had a splendid night's sport, but as it was I went back to breakfast at the castle annoyed and out of spirits.

There was a good deal of life on the road. Caravans of asses and camels coming in from the country laden with provisions for the market at Jerusalem, and interesting types of men and women in their gay costumes. Our baggage and the whole train of pack-animals, under the leadership of Mr. Howard, soon came up from the Holy City, where the camp had been struck in the morning. They passed the castle on their way to Bethlehem, where our next camp was to be pitched. The gentlemen, however, were to spend the morning in the city, and would not get to Tantur before noon. I employed the spare time in watching for large birds of prey at an ambush, and had the donkey's head brought up to the hut, as I intended to poison this last remnant of our noble jackass and use it the following night.

Large flocks of storks were passing from south to north, and soon appeared the daily string of vultures, which come from the mountains round the Dead Sea to pick up carrion at the towns, especially at Jerusalem. We saw hundreds of them, flying one after another, and also a few eagles, in the course of the forenoon; but unfortunately our hiding-place was too near the highroad where there was a good deal of traffic, and numbers of these great birds circled round without daring to descend. Only one Egyptian Vulture had the temerity to pass close to the hut several times, and at last forfeited his life.

After this I went back to the castle, and with Count Caboga awaited the arrival of my fellow-travellers, who soon came

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riding full tilt into the courtyard, and I had forthwith to give them a full account of my sporting experiences of the last few hours. Count Caboga gave us an excellent lunch, after which we set out on our short journey to Bethlehem, some of us driving and some riding along the rough stony road, which kept winding down-hill among old walls, olive-yards, and ruinous houses towards the steep hillside on which lies that famous town, the birthplace of our Saviour.

The white stone-built houses with their flat roofs, the domes of the church, and the terraces of the monastery make this sacred place look much larger than it really is. After passing its outskirts one reaches a narrow street, where the first things that strike the traveller are the rough pavements, latticed woodwork, gloomy walls, and the perpetual up- and down-hill.

Leaving the street one comes to a square surrounded by thoroughly Oriental houses, on one side of which is the great Church of the Virgin and the buildings attached to it. The most important of the sacred places are under one roof, and belong to the Latins, Greeks, and Armenians in common. The church is very fine and extremely old, both the main building and the chapels being Byzantine, and therefore dating from the earliest Christian times. After taking leave of the Greek and Latin clergy we left the town and went along the hillside between walls and olive-yards to our camp, which was pitched on some open ground near the uncommonly dirty but picturesquely-situated village of Betsahur. Its inhabitants pressed round us most inquisitively, and the Turkish gendarmes had difficulty in keeping the camp clear. Everything was already unpacked and arranged, so we soon settled ourselves comfortably.

Two sportsmen now appeared, offering their services ; they were a fine-looking pair of brothers, citizens of Bethlehem,

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and real Jews, attired in the old costume. There was, however, a good deal of the vagabond about them, and they appeared to live by shooting partridges. One of them spoke French well, and seemed to have sporting dealings with many of the Bedouin tribes, for he promised to arrange an Ibex hunt for us and to procure us some of these animals alive. He was a Christian, like all the inhabitants of Bethlehem, and had fought bravely in the French army against the Germans, for M. de Lesseps, when travelling in Palestine, came across him and carried him off as a servant to France. There he entered the ranks of the army which was marching to the Rhine, took part in the campaign of 1870, and came home again soon after the conclusion of peace to shoot partridges as before.

With these men Hoyos and I went out for an afternoon ramble over the ground close at hand, and while walking along the valley in an easterly direction we came across some delightfully picturesquely-clad shepherds with their flocks. Surely those shepherds who were the first to worship at the manger of the Son of God must have looked just like these men, who were now wandering about the hillsides with their goats, singing their monotonous songs.

Here the hills were higher and steeper, but less stony, and were quite covered with yellowish grass, while there was already a perceptible difference in the flora. Betsahur is the last village in this direction, and with the beginning of the grey-green mountains and the Jordan vegetation the territory of the Bedouin tribes is reached, where certain precautions must be taken.

Some partridges were seen and heard as we clambered about the hills, but the few that we came across in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem were so shy that getting near them was quite out of the question; so we beat back over some hills towards the village with our local sportsmen, and on nearing

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it again entered the region of olive-trees and neglected gardens.

To the south of the ridge on which Bethlehem and Betsahur stand is a deep valley with terraces of olives and vines on both sides; among these are crags and rocks like those of the Karst, which form clefts, hollows, and caves, and being covered with evergreen bushes give a very picturesque appearance to the whole scene. The narrow bed of the valley is filled up with old walls, cisterns, and stones, and a rocky path used by the flocks winds up to the town. Hoyos and I were clambering about looking for some partridges that were calling among the rocks and olive-trees, when the Grand Duke and some of the other gentlemen suddenly appeared on the opposite side near the village, and tried to make us understand by signs that some game was on foot below us. Unluckily the terraced nature of the ground prevented our looking down, so we hurried across to our friends, who told us that a large jackal had passed slowly along the terrace just below us.

Thereupon we separated and took up different positions to wait for the wild animals as they came out at sunset. My Eastern attendant said that this was a favourite haunt of the "Wawi," as the Arabs of Palestine call the Jackal, the "Talib" of the Egyptians, and, generally speaking, the Arabic of this country differs from that of Egypt so greatly as to be unintelligible.

It was a lovely evening. The sun was just setting, the melancholy songs of the picturesque shepherds mingled with the tinkling bells of the flocks that they were leading past, and the chimes of the Angelus were ringing out from Bethlehem. The shadows, too, were deepening, the last rosy flush had left the mountains of the Dead Sea, and the eagles were flying to their roosting-places, as a jackal glided ghost-like down the valley. It was coming

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straight towards my hiding-place, but unfortunately the wind was bad, and the cunning beast disappeared behind some rocks.

A strange, weird melancholy haunts these desolate ravines of Palestine, especially in the evening, and one can imagine what suitable places they are for the wolves, jackals, and hyænas, that howl in concert among the old tombs. I left this damp chilly place before it grew quite dark, and was hastening past the village to the camp, when a shadow swept over me, and on firing at it a poor Stork fell dead to the ground. On reaching the camp we dined and then speedily retired to rest.

Next morning we started pretty early and rode to Bethlehem. There were crowds of people in the square, and we had great difficulty in getting our neighing and capering Arab horses through them to the church door. The Franciscans accompanied our party into the Chapel of the Nativity, where the Chaplain said Mass. The public followed us even into the holy places underground, and among the people who were kneeling on the bare rock, lit up by the dull glow of the lamps, were some wonderfully beautiful women of Bethlehem, with true Madonna faces.

When the service was over we returned to the square where our horses were standing. There a great surprise was awaiting us, for on the terrace of a house lay an enormous Hyæna, with a splendid skin and a long mane, while by its side were two Jackals, smaller and different in colour to the one of the previous day, but nevertheless larger than the *Canis aureus* of Egypt, and unlike it in general appearance. It was the work of the poison, for we had yesterday prepared the head of the donkey with a strong dose of strychnine and had laid it out as the only bait. Naturally the ravenous animals of that barren district had greedily fallen upon the tasty morsel and had thus come to a speedy end. I sent the

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beasts off to the camp on a donkey, where they were taken to the tent of our stuffer.

We then rode back to the pretty castle of Tantur by yesterday's road, and on reaching it proceeded to beat one of the bare stony hills of its neighbourhood in a systematic way, impressing as many men as possible. Count Caboga's servants, our grooms from the camp, the shepherds and the peasants who were walking along the road, all were taken along with us. Some of the gentlemen lined the southern side of the valley, while Hoyos, the jägers, and I posted the beaters, and began the drive at a given signal. We were also assisted by several Turkish gendarmes, who showed considerable talent for such diversions.

A few partridges, a poor quail, and a jackal were put up, but they unfortunately did not take the right line, and the beat was nearly at an end when several partridges flew over the guns, one of which was killed; a hare also came within range, and was shot by Chorinsky. It was a true grey Syrian Hare—thinner, smaller, and much darker than our ordinary species, but altogether with a much greater resemblance to it than to the African Desert Hare.

After this not very brilliantly successful drive we passed the hyæna-ambush, and leaving Tantur on the left, went to the Mar-Elyas monastery, from which there was a splendid view of Jerusalem. It was our last look at the Holy City and its environs, for we were now to go steadily eastwards, and afterwards to turn to the north.

There we decided to make a long continuous beat, on the principle of the Bohemian partridge-drives, from the monastery to the camp. The distance was great and the ground very broken, for there were a number of hills, all separated by deep valleys with steeply sloping sides. The beaters were now spread out, and the gentlemen and the jägers distributed among them so as to cover a broader line of country.

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The sun was scorchingly hot, not a breath of air stirred, and the blue cloudless sky was wrapt in the hazy noonday heat. The very first hill made us perspire freely, for the short grass on the steep slopes was very slippery, and there were no stones to give a foothold. A few partridges rose a long way off, a very fine jackal was missed by Chorinsky, and the Grand Duke killed a particularly large snake, which took a good dose of shot before it could be secured.

We got over a couple of these grey-green grassy hills pretty well, but the beaters were lazy, allowing gaps to occur, and the form of a proper drive in line, after the European fashion, got more and more lost. The country then began to assume another character—flat rocks, cliffs, caves, old walls enclosing terraces for vines and olives, and rocky valleys, such as that behind the village of Betsahur, succeeded to the bare hills. Hardly had we entered this ground when a jackal jumped up from the rocks just below me, and though my shot rolled him over, the nimble beast at once disappeared into a deep earth mortally wounded.

As I wanted to get my booty I sent my jäger to the camp to fetch the dachshunds, and waited at the place, refreshing myself with some lemonade which the faithful and ever-ready Achmed had produced. The rest of the gentlemen continued their homeward beat, and Count Waldburg shot another partridge which got up in front of him.

My jäger soon arrived with three dachshunds. A Slavonian bred dog called Scheck, the largest and strongest of them, at once dashed into the earth with the greatest eagerness, followed by his Croatian comrades Croat and Opeka. In a few moments we heard a rumbling under the stones, and I at first thought that they were fighting with the wounded animal; but I soon found that I was wrong, for on looking down the hole I saw that they were dragging out the dead

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jackal with all their might, a good proof of the capabilities of these plucky dogs.

We now set off for home across a very rugged hill, where the dogs were made to try some holes, outside which there were fresh tracks of foxes, jackals, and even of hyænas, but these attempts were unhappily unsuccessful. The heat, too, was frightful, and the dogs soon got tired on the burning rocks.

On reaching the camp we recruited ourselves with a few hours of rest; before sunset, however, Waldburg and I clambered about the slopes of the valley, in which we had watched for jackals the previous evening; but as neither our efforts to rout out something with the dogs, nor our careful attempt to stalk an old cock partridge, which was drumming on a flat rock, succeeded, we had to content ourselves with a fine view of the mountains by the Dead Sea, which we obtained by climbing to the high ridge on the opposite side of the valley. As soon as it began to get dark we returned to the camp and retired early to rest, in order to prepare ourselves for the coming journey to the valley of the Jordan.

On the morning of the 3rd the whole camp was astir at an early hour. The tents were struck, and the baggage put on the pack-animals. Two more hyænas had been brought in from Tantur, fine large specimens, which had poisoned themselves in the night with the same donkey's head.

Some Bedouins from the south-western mountains of the Dead Sea came into camp. They were fine manly fellows with noble features, muscular, sinewy, and rather dark. The tribe to which they belonged was wild, perfectly lawless, but very poor, and both their clothing and weapons were indicative of the narrow circumstances of their life. One of them, who was probably the Sheikh, wore a bright-coloured turban, a loose white robe, and yellow slippers, and had a large curved Turkish sabre at his waist. The expression of his thin

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face, with its piercing black eyes and sharply drawn mouth, on which played a mocking smile, was by no means calculated to inspire confidence.

These men, genuine Arabs both in their habits and appearance, and utterly unlike the Hebraic natives of Bethlehem, had come to sell me three young ibex, and were also desirous of arranging a shooting-excursion for us in their barren mountains, where the Arabian Ibex, a fine animal with long knobby horns, is very abundant. I bought the young ibex; but as for the excursion, that was, alas! out of the question, for it would have drawn us away from the Jordan valley, and several days of our already very circumscribed time would have been spent in going along the shore of the Dead Sea down to its south-western extremity. I was therefore forced, though with a heavy heart, to console the dusky sons of the steppe with a backsheesh and send them home again.

The camp was struck with the usual incredible quickness, and the large caravan started for Mar-Saba under the leadership of Mr. Howard. Riding down a narrow valley between grey-green hills, we soon lost sight of Bethlehem, Tantur, Mar-Elyas, the stony mountains, the plateaus, and the cultivated slopes, and exchanged the Mediterranean type of country for that of the Asiatic steppes, with their monotonous hills covered with short grass, and their winding valleys, where one could never get a distant view. The road was very good at first, and one could sometimes even ride over the little meadows at a fast pace; but the further we went the higher grew the mountains and the narrower the path, which at length ran along the steep hillsides, as the bottom of the valley was nothing but a stony ravine. A Bedouin on a badly groomed, but very handsome bay rode in front as our guide. He was the Sheikh of a tribe living in these mountains, and his attire, consisting of a loose dark cloak thrown over light-coloured under garments, as well as his

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yellow slippers and plain sabre, showed that he was not very well off.

There was not much variety in our passage through this narrow valley, though here and there very bad bits of the road had to be traversed with caution, and we had plenty of opportunities of admiring the skill with which the Arab horses crossed the slippery grass and slanting rocks, in places where a false step would have entailed a fall into the abyss below. The bird-world was also but poorly represented in these desolate mountains, for with the exception of one or two solitary storks and a few vultures and eagles that flew over our heads, there was nothing moving.

After a long ride the valley ended, and the path brought us to the brow of a high mountain, from which there opened a splendid prospect. Immediately below us was the steep slope of a deep basin-like valley quite surrounded by high hills; and right and left were innumerable summits and long ridges, all of a uniform grey-green—a true steppe landscape. From the bottom of the valley a narrow gorge led in a south-westerly direction, and through it one got a little glimpse of the deep blue waters of the Dead Sea and of the bare white cliffs of the high, finely-formed mountains on its further shore.

The path wound down the abrupt declivity in steep zigzags, and most of the pack-animals of the large caravan were just making this difficult descent with an incessant tinkling of their bells, while the foremost of them had already reached the bottom of the valley, where our indefatigable servants had begun to put up the tents on a stony meadow.

All the gentlemen went on except the Grand Duke and myself, and we waited on the ridge until the entire camp was pitched, utilizing the time by laying out a dead kid behind a hill-top, which would allow us to approach unseen.

Hundreds of vultures and eagles were flying over from the

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mountains of the Dead Sea one after another, all taking their daily route to Jerusalem with perfect punctuality. They did not deign to look at our kid, and only a couple of Ravens and an Egyptian Vulture cruised round it, but without settling.

The heat was terrific, there was not a breath of air or the smallest cloud in the dark blue sky, so when an hour had gone by we left this unfavourable spot and walked down to the bottom of the valley, taking with us the kid, which we intended to expose next day. The lower we went the heavier and the more oppressive became the air, and as a first greeting from the Dead Sea and the Jordan valley there came up from the side valley a leaden atmosphere, which we learned to dread during the subsequent days.

We soon got to the tents, which were now all pitched. It was quite a little town, and this otherwise desolate region was now a scene of the greatest activity.

The two Arab sportsmen, who had followed the caravan from Latrun, shooting by the way, now appeared richly laden with spoils for the larder. Besides a number of Red-legs they had also brought some of the little Hey's Partridges, for we had now, for the first time, got within the range of these beautiful birds. The Arabs, who, with their defective weapons, can only shoot sitting, stalk the partridges by concealing themselves behind a brown-and-yellow screen extended by sugar-canes, and furnished with two holes for the eyes and one for the gun. The stupid birds see no one, and keep staring at the moving screen until the fatal shot is fired from it.

We lunched as soon as we arrived, while our Oriental servants prepared the camping-ground for the night with much dexterity. Every stone had to be lifted and all the grass well searched, for the place was infested with large

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scorpions, with whose evil propensities we became thoroughly acquainted during the latter days of our journey.

After lunch we resolved to pay a visit to the celebrated rock monastery of Mar-Saba. The way to it led through the above-mentioned narrow valley. Right and left were steep grassy slopes which suddenly changed their form and terminated as the vertical rocky walls of a deep stony ravine, the path continuing to wind just above the precipices on the lowest fringe of the green slope. The walls of this dark dismal ravine were hollowed out below by the action of water, and were full of holes and clefts, in which numbers of Rock-Pigeons and Lesser Kestrels were peacefully breeding together. At every step they flew out and dashed from side to side of the narrow gorge in a great state of alarm.

The rocks close to the monastery are inhabited by myriads of Grackles (*Amydrus tristrami*), a bird which I never met with in any other part of Palestine. All the pinnacles, terraces, roofs, and rocks are literally covered with these brilliant blue-black birds with red-brown wings, and their pretty song resounds on every side. They have been so tamed by one of the monks that when he whistles and calls at a certain hour every day they come fluttering down and light at his feet, or even on his head and shoulders, and take the bread-crumbs from his hands. The wild beasts, too, are enticed to come here, for every evening when the bell rings for prayers the jackals appear in the ravine and wait until bits of bread are thrown down to them.

I was much interested in this account of the jackals, and having got permission from the monks, I descended by steps and passages down to the ravine, and concealed myself between two large stones near an old tank. It was a most weird spot; in front was the bare precipice, behind me the rocky dwellings of the monks, and overhead only a narrow strip of dark blue sky. As evening came on the Grackles,

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Hawks, and Pigeons flew to their holes, and only now and then the short song of a bird was to be heard.

It now began to get dark, and the clear sounding bells were calling to prayer. Hardly had the last sound died away when a piece of bread fell close beside me, and a jackal appeared within twenty paces.

I was glad to get out of this terrible place, which lies at the level of the Mediterranean, for in it a leaden atmosphere, such as I had never before felt, seemed to check my breathing and to weigh down my whole frame—a feeling of lassitude which we experienced in a still greater degree in the lower levels that we frequented during the next few days.

Having taken leave of the pious monks, we clambered through the domains of the monastery right up to the tower, and then hurried off to the camp, which we did not reach until it was quite dark. We then dined, sketched out our plans for the morrow, and by ten o'clock all was again quiet in the desolate valley.

At sunrise the party assembled to breakfast, and we were sitting at table when an Egyptian Vulture had the impudence to fly into the camp and settle among the tents to devour some of the kitchen scraps. The Grand Duke, however, quickly fetched his gun and shot the audacious bird.

During the early hours of the morning we separated our forces, the Grand Duke and I ascending one of the highest of the hills that enclosed the valley, in order to expose our kid on its summit, while the other gentlemen went off to shoot pigeons in the Mar-Saba ravine.

We had a long fatiguing climb, for the slopes were smooth and slippery, and we had to clamber over flat rocks and reddish flinty steeps; the heat, too, was already rather oppressive. On reaching the summit we found a capital hiding-place, which had been yesterday made by my jäger. There we watched for two hours, grievously tormented by insects,

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but nothing came except some Egyptian Vultures, and at them we had no desire to shoot. The flight of the larger birds of prey began towards the forenoon; but they kept on in a direct line to Jerusalem, for no bait has sufficient attractions to make them deviate from their course.

We scrambled down again to the camp by the shortest way without having shot anything, and found that the tents had meanwhile been struck, and that the greater part of the caravan was already moving on. Only a portion of the cook's battery had been left, and a scanty lunch wherewith to recruit ourselves for our further journey. The gentlemen had shot a considerable number of pigeons in the ravine, and had also killed some hawks and various smaller birds.

After a frugal meal we took leave of Count Caboga, to whose kindness we were much indebted. He intended to return to Tantur the same day, but lent me for all the rest of our journey his servant Ferdinand, and the good horse which I had been daily riding since our entry into Jerusalem. It was a marvellously fine Arab stallion that he had bought from a Bedouin tribe, and I was most grateful to the Count for this attention, as the handsome animal was very sure-footed on the hills, unusually fleet on the plains, and inured both to hard work by day and exposure by night.

As soon as every one was mounted our train moved forward with the Bedouins at its head. At first the character of the country was like that near our camping-ground, but the valley soon became narrower, the hillsides higher, and instead of grass alone, we had to ride over bare yellow soil and flat smooth slabs of rock. In the midst of this wilderness two Storks were standing on a little patch of grass surrounded by rocks, and one of them I shot as it rose. They were probably on migration, and taking a rest by the way.

The path was exceedingly difficult for the horses, and they had to go very cautiously, for the ground was of such a

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nature that a fall into the depths below might easily have occurred. We passed countless peaks and summits, and were perpetually riding up and down over mountain-ridges and through valleys and ravines. Ground more broken up it is impossible to imagine, nor was there a single tree or the slightest trace of the presence of man.

After a long ride the formation of the country changed, the slopes grew more gentle, the stones entirely vanished, and the steppe appeared, decked in its spring array of high green grass and flowers. The greyish-yellow mountains which we had just passed through ran due north and south, shutting out all the outlook towards the west; and we came to a fragrant flowery plateau over which we galloped, for the ground was good, and the horses, glad to have got rid of the smooth rocks and steep paths, sprang about in a lively fashion.

The steppes are grand, but undeniably monotonous, though not so lonesome as the far more impressive desert, for in spring the former has the advantage of being beautified with flowers, while the latter is utterly devoid of vegetation and has nothing to show but bright coloured stones.

Another steep hill of most peculiar form and colour now rose in front of us. It belongs to the so-called mountains of "Juda," but has left their line, and advanced further into the plateau. This sharp, perfectly barren cone is entirely formed of a conglomerate of yellow clay, red rock, and brown and grey stones. We had to pass along a deep gorge between it and the other mountains by a dangerous path over smooth rocks and close to precipices. Even our Bedouins dismounted, and at one part of the way the clever horses simply followed their masters, for they could not be led. It is on occasions like this that one learns to appreciate the high intelligence of the Arab horse. At this bad place one of our pack-animals slipped down an incredible distance, but luckily

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fell on its back with its load underneath it, and thus marvellously escaped with only a few bruises.

The ascent from the gorge was easier than the descent, and after crossing a grassy flat by the northern base of the hill we reached Nebi-Musa, a place of pilgrimage much frequented by the Mohammedans, who here point out the grave of the Prophet Moses. This spot, marked by a small ruinous mosque and a wretched house for the pilgrims, is yearly visited by thousands of devotees.

Our camp had been already pitched near the mosque on a singularly picturesque little plateau, covered with grass and bushes, which was bounded on the south by the reddish, and on the west by the grey-green mountains which follow the valley of the Jordan, while its shaly sides sloped down to the valley, gently towards the north and more abruptly towards the east. There we had a splendid view of the broad fresh green plain and the luxuriant vegetation of the Jordan, for we had at last happily got near the sacred stream which gives life to this region, and which was to provide sport for us.

Partridges were calling in all directions, so we dispersed in pursuit of these beautiful birds ; but the sun had unfortunately already set, and twilight was coming on. I flushed some Quails from the long grass, and saw flocks of small birds flitting from bush to bush ; but it was impossible to shoot, so we all returned to the camp to dine and rest by the tomb of the great sage and prophet Moses.

Next morning the whole party started before sunrise, the heavy caravan being directed to take the shortest route by Jericho to Ain-es-Sultan, while we, under the guidance of the Bedouins and accompanied by several guards, were to make an interesting excursion to the Dead Sea.

From Nebi-Musa we rode due east by very narrow tracks over the steep hillsides and water-worn gullies of a shaly region, perfectly devoid of vegetation. A few eagles and

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vultures were sitting on the narrow ledges of the rocks and the sharp parallel ridges that here run down from the mountain and are separated from each other by ravines. After about an hour we reached the foot of the mountain, and all at once found ourselves amongst thick bushes and on sandy ground, capital for riding over. Dense thickets alternated with grassy flats, which we crossed at full gallop, and after descending the bed of a now dried-up torrent we rode through tall reeds, long grass, and high bushes to the flat shores of the Dead Sea.

Every step that the horses made sounded as if they were breaking through a crust of frozen snow, for here the sand, and also the bits of wood which had been washed up, are all coated with saltpetre. The Bahr-Lut (Lot's Lake), as the Dead Sea is called by the Arabs, is a wonderful mountain lake—large, deep blue, and fine in form. It is bounded on the east by the rugged grey-green hills with which we had become acquainted during the last few days, and on the west by really lofty mountains with whitish-grey cliffs. The water itself is a thick heavy solution, so strongly saturated with mineral matter that it is impossible for any living thing to exist in it, and the lake is truly dead. Bathing, which some of the gentlemen now indulged in, was unattended by any risk of drowning, for its waters are so buoyant that one cannot sink, but, on the other hand, they leave a thick deposit of salt on the skin that is by no means pleasant.

The air of the Dead Sea, like that of deep mines, is as heavy as lead, and has an enervating influence on every one. This is caused by its low level, for it lies 394 metres below the Mediterranean.

We rode along it a little way close to the shore, and then turned northwards across some loamy and sandy flats. To our right was a plain, extending to the thickly overgrown meadows of the Jordan, to our left a slope of

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friable earth, and below it a marshy depression covered with almost impenetrable thickets of reeds and underwood.

A large wild boar crossed over into one of these dense clumps of bushes close to the riders. As soon as I saw the big beast I jumped off my horse to examine its tracks; and finding that it had not left this patch of cover, which was not above a few hundred yards in circumference, I quickly posted the gentlemen, and got the guards to drive it; but we soon saw how hard it was to force game out of even such a small portion of these truly impenetrable thickets of reeds, undergrowth, and grass, for all our efforts were fruitless. Even firing it was no use, as only the grass burnt and sent up enormous columns of smoke, while the inner bushes, full of spring sap, would not kindle, and so afforded the game a safe retreat. It was a pity that this attempt failed, for these spendidly luxuriant thickets of the Jordan plains, which are quite undisturbed by man, harbour all the animals of the steppes and the barren rocky mountains. The tracks which we found in the muddy soil showed what numbers of wild beasts frequent them; and I saw, within a small area, the footprints of various Wild Boars, Hyænas, Wolves, Jackals, Asiatic Panthers, Lynxes, and other smaller predatory animals which I could not identify. A pair of Wild Geese, too, and several Sandpipers rose from a pool of water, and a flock of Pelicans and an inquisitive Osprey cruised about over the fire in the clouds of smoke.

These Pelicans came suddenly up from the Dead Sea, circled round the fire for a few minutes, and having been greeted by some ineffectual rifle-shots flew heavily up the valley northwards.

As we had but little time to spare, we quitted this locality, and rode on at a steady gallop over splendid ground consisting of sandy stretches and grassy flats, past thick bushes and small patches of very low trees, almost like miniature

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woods, and across several of the mountain torrents which hurry down to the Jordan through crumbling banks big stones and rich vegetation, till we came to the village of Jericho.

Wretched and decayed is now the place where in ancient days stood a city which flourished even down to the times of the Crusaders. We rode by the hovels on its outskirts, and after passing through really garden-like vegetation, fields of wild oats and flowering shrubs, we reached the base of the western mountains, where before us lay the large and famous spring of Ain-es-Sultan, our present goal. From this point the real expedition up the valley of the Jordan was to begin.

Just at the edge of the vegetation, where the sharply defined line of bushes gives place to the stony mountains, a spring of great volume bubbles up from the ground and flows into an ancient stone basin. Near this spring our camp had been pitched, at the foot of the mountain. We had a hasty lunch, but no one could eat much, for the oppressiveness of the air was terrible in the middle of the day, and the insatiable thirst which one feels in these regions below the level of the sea does away with all one's appetite.

After an hour's rest some of the party again set out to spend the afternoon and evening in shooting. Salim, the leader of a band of hunting Bedouins, was to show us a locality well stocked with game. He was a fine plucky fellow, whom I soon grew to like and to appreciate as a sportsman. Accustomed as he had been from his youth to ride, hunt, and fight, he might have served as the model of a genuine absolutely free Arab. His frame was slight, but sinewy, and his face, with its energetic features, short beard, and falcon eyes, was exceptionally dark for this part of the country, and resembled the complexion of an African Arab. His attire consisted of a white burnous tucked high up and a little turban, while his skinny legs terminated in yellow

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shoes, and for arms he carried a short knife in his girdle and a whip in his hand. His companions, of whom there were about fifteen, were tall and gaunt, mostly bearded, and with brownish-yellow skins. Their turbans and tattered garments were partly white and partly striped with white and brown, their weapons being long guns, old pistols, and short knives. These good-hearted, very sporting fellows were also provided with sticks or whips, and were followed by mongrel wolf-like dogs, whose good qualities we soon discovered. Some of these Bedouins had curly hair and very dark skins—evident traces of Negro blood.

With these men we left the camp and started for a somewhat long tramp, for we unfortunately could not use the horses, which had been hard at work since the early morning, as we wanted them to be fresh and sound for the following days. Salim at first led us through the so-called woods, which are really green luxuriant meadows and fields of wild oats, more or less covered with bushes and low stunted trees. Everything in the Jordan valley is thorny, even the high grass has long hooked prickles, which fasten in the flesh, and all the shrubs and trees are armed with thorns, so it may be imagined what one's skin and clothes look like and what really severe sufferings the sportsman must be content to endure in these regions. The trees and bushes were all alive with many kinds of birds, for in these happy tracts of country the animal creation is pent within narrow bounds, and we found a number of beautiful species which were quite new to us. Everywhere we heard the cooing of the Asiatic Turtle-Doves, and saw the amorous males going through their aerial evolutions. The large Southern Grey Shrike and many song-birds were uttering their notes among the thickets; Quails rose from the wild oats at every step, and there was no lack of birds of prey, such as Eagles, Kites, and Hawks. The lower forms of life were also fully represented by

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numbers of slender lizards and fat frogs, while swarms of insects, big and little, infested the place.

Suddenly Salim stopped and announced that we had reached our destination ; and we saw before us a stream that came down from the mountains, and flowed between steep earthy banks straight through the plain to the Jordan.

These watercourses are of an interesting formation. Confined on both sides by perpendicular crumbling walls of earth, they present a scene of the wildest confusion. In the middle flows a stream, small at this dry season of the year, and about it is a medley of big stones, muddy places, dense, literally impenetrable thickets, trees, rotten trunks, mould, and débris of every description—a primeval forest within a small space, for nowhere does the distance from bank to bank exceed two hundred yards.

Some of the guns were now to keep on the top of the right bank and others on the left ; the Bedouins with their dogs were to remain on the lower level and beat through the stones and bushes in line ; while Salim was to stay beside me and direct the whole proceedings.

The beaters ran and sprang about the bed of the stream, hurling stones and shouting incessantly ; and the shots cracked merrily as one Partridge after another got up and soon fell again among the bushes. Chukar and Hey's Partridges, Quails, and song-birds of various kinds flew out of their hiding-places. Rollers and Bee-eaters were nesting in the crumbling banks, and in the muddy places we found the tracks of Wild Boars and Porcupines, also the quills and earths of the latter ; but unfortunately this shy animal creeps underground at the slightest noise, so that one can hardly ever kill it during the day.

We had been shooting for some time and had gone a good way along the banks, when the dogs all at once gave tongue in an almost impenetrable thicket. I happened to be at the

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moment in the bed of the watercourse looking for a Hey's Partridge which I had winged, when a shot was fired from the opposite bank and one of the sportsmen called out that an Armadillo (!) had just been missed and that it was running before the dogs. The Bedouins and I were following the chase as fast as we could, when suddenly all was quiet, and we came to a tree round the stem and roots of which an edifice of branches had been built up several feet high. It was like a beaver's dam ; indeed there is no other way of describing this admirable piece of animal architecture, which had circular entrances on two sides.

When the Bedouins saw this erection they drew back rather uneasily, and Salim posted me close to one of the openings, while he ordered his men to light a fire at the other. As soon as the flames burnt up brightly and the building began to crackle a curious dragon-like creature, certainly more than four feet long, crept cautiously out, and was moving off at a most comical kind of trot when a well-directed shot put an end to its life. My interesting spoil was a lizard, and though I am not well up in reptiles, I fancied that we had one of the great Waran Lizards lying before us. Now came the question how to send the rare specimen back to camp uninjured; and as the Arabs positively refused to touch its clammy body with their hands, we had to make a little litter of sticks on which to lay the mighty dead, and so sent it home by a Bedouin. We then went on with our sport, but soon found that the partridges had become shy from being so much shot at; and as there seemed to be no luck for us to-day with the wild boars, the whole party sought out a shady place under a tree and lay down on the grass tired with the great and oppressive heat. Even the Bedouins and their hardy dogs were thirsty and panting, but there was only a little water in the bed of the stream, and that not very clean. However, the worthy Achmed produced, as usual, some bottles of

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lemonade from the alpine haversack which he carried on his back.

After half an hour's rest Salim urged us to try a fresh place, but the Grand Duke, Hoyos, Eschenbacher, and Rath decided to shoot their way back to the camp. Chorinsky and I, however, were still keen to go on, and followed the Bedouins out into the steppe, where after a long tramp we got to some little bushes succeeded by marshy ground and a circular patch of reeds only a few hundred yards in circumference. Salim posted the guns on one side, the beaters on the other, in such a way that any game which was lying in this cover must come to shot as soon as it broke.

Achmed is a fine fellow, but has no liking for encounters with dangerous animals, and as soon as he realized the situation he begged me to allow him to sit down behind a bush some distance off, and hastily disappeared without waiting for an answer.

I placed myself near a well-beaten run of the wild boars, and hardly had the dogs entered the reeds when they began to hunt furiously. Hunting and baying went on alternately, the infernal yells of the beaters mingling with the barks of the dogs, till at last, after a long quarter of an hour of excitement, a large sow broke from the thicket and rushed at full speed along the run near which I was standing.

Shot through and through with a ball below the back, it rolled over at once, but picked itself up again and went on grunting with rage. The worthy Achmed, not recognizing the signs of an animal's run, had lain down directly across this identical track, and so it chanced that the wounded beast came tearing down and attacked the wretched man with blind fury. Luckily I had followed it as hard as I could run, and found Achmed shrieking and brandishing his knife while standing on one leg and stretching out the other to keep the angry brute at bay. The sow was just making a furious

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charge, but before it could reach our hero it was lying on the ground; for, recognizing the great danger that the man was in, I gave the powerful beast a ball which rolled it over stone dead just at the moment when it was trying to rip up Achmed's trousers. The pig and the Egyptian were now peacefully stretched beside each other, the latter green with fear and trembling in every limb, nor was he able to speak for some minutes. The Bedouins soon appeared upon the scene, their eyes sparkling with delight.

The Wild Boar of this region is quite unlike the much smaller and more slightly built pitch-black variety of Northern Africa, and very much resembles that of our own country, especially the large race inhabiting the Hungarian forests.

The animal having been artistically gralloched by my jäger, was laid on the sticks which the Arabs had tied together, and the heavy burden was borne off to the camp by four men.

During the long tramp which we had now to make, Chorinsky missed among the bushes one of the small yellow Desert Hares which we had met with in Africa. This walk across the steppe in the burning heat was not over-pleasant, and by the time that the sun had sunk in orange vapours behind the border mountains we had only reached the woods and bushes, and there still remained another hour of it to do. Quails flew up at every step, but we were too tired to shoot, and thought of nothing but getting to the camp. A merry prattling little brook of fairly clear water afforded us temporary refreshment, and then on we went, yet not before it had got quite dark did we come to some fires which were gleaming among the bushes. This was the camp of our Bedouins, whose tall figures, clad in long white burnouses, had a ghostly look in the dull glow of the dying embers. Their lances were ranged upright, and their hoarse gutturals and melancholy songs resounded through the night, while their horses were rolling on the ground and their dogs ran out at us barking.

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Chorinsky and I walked through the midst of these sons of the desert, who welcomed us cordially, and offered us refreshing drinks. One more quarter of an hour, and we came to our gay Druses, Howard's servants, and the mules, with the camp of the Turkish Cavalry close by, and another hundred paces brought us to our tents, where dinner was at once served.

After sunset the oppressive heat increased to such an extent that even during the night we all lay bathed in perspiration, and some of the gentlemen and servants were made ill by the unwonted closeness of the air; therefore in spite of the very interesting experiences of the day and the highly successful sport, we were all in somewhat low spirits—a feeling of depression, which was to be intensified during the following days, for the climate of the Jordan valley has a distressing effect upon all Europeans.

On the 6th, after an early breakfast, we determined to go out shooting in detachments. Several of the sportsmen went in the direction which we had taken the previous day, while the Grand Duke and I, accompanied by Salim and his men, rode through the luxuriant garden-like country towards Jericho. Not far from the village a rapid stream flows down from the hills and crosses the plain to the Jordan. Again we found steep earthy banks, large stones, running water, and a vegetation even much denser than that of the watercourse which we had driven yesterday.

The Grand Duke remained on the left bank, while I went over to the right. The Bedouins then forced their way into the thickets and some brisk shooting began. In a few minutes we had killed several partridges; but as the beaters found some fresh tracks of wild boars, we quickly left off shooting at the small game. Soon afterwards the dogs gave tongue, and a large boar broke away through the bushes, but as it was only visible for an instant no shot could be fired.

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It was soon followed by another, which bounded like a hare through the long grass in front of the beaters, and was knocked over with one ball by the Grand Duke. It proved to be a middling-sized sow, and having dragged it out of the watercourse we sent it off to the camp on a donkey. On continuing the beat several wild boar escaped us either by breaking back through the beaters among the thick undergrowth or by bolting off too far ahead. One, too, was missed by the Grand Duke in the middle of the stream.

Before long the dogs again gave tongue, and a very large boar, with long gleaming white tusks, came climbing up the slope between me and the beaters with a great deal of noise and bustle. He tried to get away to the steppe, but a lucky shot behind the shoulder brought him down, and highly delighted I despatched my splendid spoil to the camp.

We now began shooting again at the small game, here very abundant, and killed Chukar and Hey's Partridges, Purple and Night-Herons, as well as Quails and Snipe. We also fired some long ineffectual shots at Eagles; but as the midday heat began to be very trying, we resolved to leave off shooting for awhile.

On going down to the stream I found in the muddy places tracks of Hyænas, Wolves, Lynxes, and smaller Cats. According to the Bedouins, the canine animals only come at night from the mountains to drink, but the feline species live in the thickets and hollow trees, and can never be driven out of their hiding-places even by dogs. The traces of Porcupines were also frequently met with, and the dogs once hunted up to an earth outside of which we found the fresh tracks and some quills of this singular creature. We therefore resolved to dig him out of his dwelling, and sent my jäger back to the camp on a fast horse with instructions to bring the dachshunds and some shovels.

Meanwhile we lay down under a tree, drinking lemonade,

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smoking cigarettes, and examining a specimen of the curious kangaroo-like Jerboa which the Grand Duke had shot in the course of the morning.

As soon as the dachshunds arrived we let them go at once into the hole, and immediately heard growling and barking; but, alas! the dogs, usually so plucky, hurried out into the light of day, frightened and with their tails between their legs, nor would they return to the burrow. We now told the Bedouins to dig, a proceeding that did not get on very rapidly, for the heat was scorching, and free wild sport seemed more in accordance with their taste than servile digging.

Recognizing the futility of our endeavours, we left off this amusement, but not before we had made an interesting discovery, for we found in the hole a Protestant hymn-book, which the creature had probably dragged into it—this habit of pulling things into their holes being a characteristic of many of the burrowing animals. The volume contained the ordinary evangelical hymns and psalms, such as "Eine feste Burg," and the prayer for the Emperor William, both binding and text being well preserved. There were, however, a few red blood-like spots on the leaves, and God alone knows how this European book had found its way into that desolate place and how its owner had lost it; perchance his bones may have been bleaching hard by in the impenetrable thickets!

We rode home, Salim leading the way at full gallop, and sitting his little bay without saddle or pad, while he guided the fiery animal by a single rope.

Close to Jericho I observed a Short-toed Eagle taking a bath in the brook, and so covered by the overhanging bank that I easily managed to stalk up to it and soon bagged the splendid specimen. After this little episode I rode off again, and, thanks to the great speed of my grey, quickly reached the camp.

The other sportsmen had also killed a goodly supply of

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small game, and when all our spoils had been laid out in due order we had lunch, a meal during which we were more occupied in driving away the flies than in eating, for one can form no idea of the myriads of these insects that swarmed round our food. The hottest hours of the day we spent in camp, trying to rest; but unhappily the terrible heat made the time one continuous torture, and we could hardly so far collect our thoughts as to be able to jot down the necessary notes and to write some letters home, the noontide heat that we daily enjoyed in the Jordan valley being of the agreeable temperature of 105° Fahr.

About five o'clock I again went out, but this time only accompanied by Salim and some of his Bedouins. After beginning by shooting Turtle-Doves among the trees I rambled through some patches of wild oats, where I killed a good supply of Quails for the larder, a very desirable addition to it, as our provisions already smelt rather badly, especially the much-belauded preserved meats, which were spreading their evil odours through the camp.

While beating about the bushes and groves I had an opportunity of observing the glorious vegetation of this part of the country, and was most struck by the *Zizyphus lotus* and *Z. spina-Christi*, from the fruits of which the jujubes so well known to all Europeans who suffer from coughs are said to be made, and also by the Zakkum or balsam-tree and the Sodom apple (*Solanum sanctum*). The celebrated rose of Jericho (*Anastatica hierochuntica*) is only found close to the shores of the Dead Sea. At sunset I returned to the camp, where we had dinner, and soon retired to rest.

Next morning the camp was struck before sunrise, the tents packed, and the caravan set off with the usual noise and shouting. We, too, followed soon after breakfast, led by a Bedouin, who, mounted on his handsome chestnut horse, with his long lance and flying robe, might have served as the

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model of a true Arab. At first we rode along the edge of the vegetation at the base of the mountains, through thick bushes and low trees, which were literally covered with Storks just awakening from their slumbers; but after a while the shrubs and the garden-like country round the springs of Ain-es-Sultan came to an end, and we again entered the true steppe. It was good riding-ground on the whole, and, excepting where the stony tracts and the dry watercourses near the mountains had to be crossed, one could always gallop. After a ride of two hours there opened on our left a tolerably wide mountain valley, far away up which lay the spring of El-Audje, while along it ran a fertilizing stream, which afterwards traversed the plain beyond down to the Jordan.

Through the low trees and scrub of this narrow strip of vegetation we had to pass, and on the other side found Salim and his men awaiting us, keen for sport and ready to show us ground well stocked with game.

The large caravan with most of the gentlemen turned to the left up the valley to the springs of El-Audje, but the Grand Duke, Hoyos, and I followed the Bedouins. Here we found great numbers of birds of prey sitting on the trees, and I killed a Short-toed and a Pygmy Eagle within a few minutes, while the patches of wild oats and high grass among the bushes were swarming with Quails; they rose at every step, and if we had taken with us enough ammunition we might have made a splendid bag of these birds. Red-legs, however, were scarce, and there were no Hey's Partridges at all.

After shooting a long way eastwards, well into the plains of the Jordan, we again returned to the edge of the steppe, and having rested in the shade of a tree for half an hour we mounted our horses and rode over the yellowish grassy plains, the Bedouins running behind us on foot.

In about half an hour we came to the edge of a deep rift in the elevated plateau, where far below us a stream was

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tumbling along between high banks of brown earth, the sudden appearance of this singular scene being most surprising. Here we had to leave our horses and scramble down the steep slope to the water, the saltness of which was a great disappointment. We then proceeded up the very narrow gully until we got to a small valley surrounded by almost perpendicular walls of clay several feet high, and filled up with marshy patches of grass, low bushes, and a reed swamp, the only outlet from it being a narrow trail which wound up the slope to the ridge on the left.

Salim now told us to station ourselves on the opposite side of the reeds, while he beat them with his men and dogs; but before we had reached our posts a large sow left the thick cover and took the only means of exit by the hill-track, climbing it with the agility of a chamois, and uninjured by several shots which were fired at it from a distance of about four hundred yards. I now ran quickly towards this pass, which the beasts were obliged to take, and was still a couple of hundred paces from it, when a big boar took to the narrow path. I sent a couple of balls into his hide, but neither of them proved fatal, and the badly wounded animal slowly dragged itself over the mountain-ridge with an injured hind leg.

The beaters now came running up, and I took care to make them keep a certain distance behind me, as I wished to follow up the traces of blood myself.

At first I found the fresh tracks of a panther, and immediately afterwards those of the wounded boar, with plenty of blood. I soon reached the crest of the hill, where I had a splendid view of a valley not very broad, but rich in vegetation of all kinds—bushes, meadows, and high trees—and enclosed on its further side by steep earthy slopes.

Still following the tracks and the traces of blood, I hurried down the very abrupt hillside to the bottom of the valley, and

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on reaching it the trail led me over a meadow, through bushes, and along a stony stream with some muddy spots, to the edge of a thicket. There I awaited the arrival of my two companions and the Bedouins.

The dogs were immediately put upon the trail, and in a few minutes I heard the joyful sound of their baying and of a fierce fight, and hurrying through the dense undergrowth I reached a little glade surrounded by trees and bushes, in the middle of which a violent struggle was going on. The dogs were behaving bravely, barking savagely, and tugging and biting at the boar, which was still defending itself with pluck and vigour. Seizing a favourable moment I gave the powerful finely-tusked animal a finishing shot.

I had now time to look about me, and saw through the high trees and dense bushes the sparkle of water, and heard the rushing sound of a river. I quickly called out to my companions to tell them of the happy discovery, for, thanks to our pursuit of the wounded boar, our desires had at last been gratified, and we had reached the far-famed Jordan, the sacred stream, which we had imagined to be much further away.

The river has quite the character of a true mountain-stream, and seeing it rushing along and splashing merrily about the rocks and stones, one might have thought one's self transported to the banks of the Enns or the Traun, among our beautiful Alps.

After bathing in the Jordan we felt strengthened and refreshed, and, followed by our Bedouins, went back along the boar's track, and through the valley up to the edge of the plateau, from which we had descended. There we mounted our horses, and guided by Salim rode off at full gallop straight across the steppe. Passing the spot where we had begun to shoot in the morning, we proceeded up the valley, the bottom of which was clothed with luxuriant vegetation, while the heights which enclosed it were of the invariable character of

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the border mountains—long steep slopes thinly covered with grass. The narrow track led us an endless distance through thorny bushes, and often crossed from one side of the stony brook to the other. Storks were standing on the hillsides in perfectly incredible numbers. In no region have I ever seen such masses of these birds as were assembled throughout the whole valley of the Jordan, especially in this valley of El-Audje.

After a long ride we at last arrived at our camping-ground, where the tents were pitched at the foot of the hill, among the steppe-grass and prickly wild oats, but still not far from the edge of the rich verdure and the banks of the little brook. We were here almost at the head of the valley, which ends in a picturesque basin shut in by high slopes.

It was with a sharp appetite that we attacked our lunch, for it was now three o'clock, and we had not eaten a morsel of food since five in the morning, while we had, moreover, gone through a great deal of exercise. The afternoon was spent in camp.

Life in the open air, with a caravan and tents, is most charming, and very different to the cut-and-dried routine of European existence; but unfortunately the camping-ground of El-Audje had some drawbacks, for the tents stood among the dry and highly inflammable grass, and a cigarette which had been thrown away kindled in a few moments a fire which was only extinguished by very energetic efforts. The large amount of ammunition which we had with us rendered double precautions necessary, so there was nothing for it but to greatly curtail our smoking.

In the evening several of the sportsmen went out for a short stroll with their guns, and I succeeded in shooting a cock partridge as it was drumming, and also a stork which was flying to its sleeping-quarters. Thousands of these long-

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bills passed over our camp, and as many as could find room settled on the low trees to roost. At sunset we all returned to dine, and though silence soon reigned throughout the camp, I heard, just as I was falling asleep, the howling of the hungry jackals quite close to the tents.

Early on the 8th of April the servants struck the tents, and the caravan soon got under weigh. At first we had to traverse the tiresome track down this side valley; but in the main valley it was better going, and keeping to the base of the hills we galloped over the good steppe-ground, till after a ride of two hours we reached a marshy hollow. Some clumps of bushes and a reedy swamp, unhappily rather too large, showed that this was a likely place for game. Salim and his fleet-footed men were already there, but as his district now came to an end, another troop of Bedouins, led by a handsome Sheikh, and followed by some large dogs, were awaiting our arrival.

The men on foot were dressed just like Salim's followers, but their leader seemed to be more well-to-do, for he had a fine chestnut horse, with richly ornamented saddle-trappings, and wore gay garments, a large coloured turban, high yellow morocco-leather boots, and a handsome Turkish sabre, while his whole appearance was more suggestive of the Central Asiatic tribes than of the true Arabs.

He escorted the Grand Duke, Hoyos, and myself to our posts on the further side of the reed-bed with great politeness, the other gentlemen continuing their long march with the caravan.

Some tracks of wild boars and hyænas filled us with great hopes; but we were, however, doomed to be sadly disappointed, for the tract of reeds proved to be so large and marshy that the men could not drive it, and the whole beat consisted in their running round its outskirts with a great

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deal of yelling, the natural result being that not a single head of game left its safe retreat.

We therefore remounted our horses and followed the rest of the party, riding over bad stony ground to the ridge of a projecting hill, from the northern slope of which we obtained a splendid view of the plains, the grey mountains to the west, and the rocky heights on the eastern side of the Jordan. Before us lay the entrance to the valley and the springs of Abd-el-Kader, the immediate goal of this day's journey; but in these plains it takes a great deal of time to get to one's destination, for it is often visible a long way off—a fact that was to be thoroughly impressed upon us to-day.

The path led uninterruptedly over the steppe, always at the foot of the hills. Wherever one looked nothing but Storks were to be seen, and they allowed the horsemen to pass close by without even deigning to glance at them. Some birds of prey were also playing about in the air, and a pair of the large Asiatic Steppe Eagles flew low over my head; but though I quickly unslung my gun, I could find nothing but ball-cartridges in my bag.

The sun burnt frightfully, and the grey clouds which had darkened the sky in the morning had unfortunately entirely disappeared. We soon overtook the caravan, which presented a piteous spectacle, for the mules, urged on by the blows of their drivers, were painfully dragging themselves along at intervals of several hundred yards; the effects of the great heat, the toilsome marches from Latrun on the other side of Jerusalem, and the scarcity of water yesterday being very evident, while almost all of them had sore backs from the pressure of the heavy baggage, as well as broken knees.

After riding several hours we reached the entrance to the valley of Abd-el-Kader, which runs in a north-westerly direction between high mountains. The banks of the usual stream which flowed down the middle of it were covered with

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an exceptionally exuberant growth of vegetation, which formed a green band extending across the plains and down to the Jordan. There being only one spot where the stream could be forded, we had to ride a long way up the south side of the valley, and then just the same distance back along the north to the place where it debouches into the great plain. There our camp was to be pitched under a curiously shaped rocky cone, close to the edge of the vegetation.

The gentlemen had already reached the spot, but the caravan had not nearly come up, so we had the pleasure of awaiting the arrival of the pack-animals in a hollow which afforded a little shade. Some of the party employed the time in looking for a place to bathe in; but the large stream was so overgrown with succulent plants much above a man's height, and sweet-smelling oleanders with large red flowers, that one could hardly get to the water. Moreover, the whole surroundings of the place looked like a stage-scene of a serpent's haunt in the tropics; and I have such an immense respect for the venomous reptiles of such regions, that I preferred bathing in a small though somewhat dirty branch of the stream, where I could first thoroughly examine the locality, and where I should only have the society of harmless toads and frogs.

On returning from bathing we found that one of the tents and the canteen were already on the ground, so that we were soon able to breakfast, though the heat was terrible, and we were surrounded by swarms of large and disgusting flies. We arranged that the afternoon was to be devoted to sport, and that some of the gentlemen were to follow the stream downwards into the great plain, while the Grand Duke and I were to proceed upwards towards the interior of the valley.

Guided by Salim and the other sheikh, we tried to beat the thickets along the banks, being further encouraged to do so by the sight of some wild boars' tracks. It was a perfect garden that we entered, full of flowers, luxuriant bushes, large-

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leaved plants, and oleanders with their topmost shoots covered with splendid crimson blossoms. Odours such as we had never dreamt of, the true perfumes of the heaven-blessed East, a paradise after the fashion of the 'Arabian Nights,' ravished our senses. Still there is nothing earthly that has not its darker side, and there the trees, bushes, leaves, and grass were all beset with thorns and prickles. Even the dogs refused to work, and under these circumstances sport was quite out of the question. Every step we took brought fresh tortures, so we fled from this paradise as soon as possible, and hurried off to places where the vegetation was less luxuriant.

I was much struck with the numbers and the variety of brilliant lizards in this garden of torment, for at every step the reptiles rustled through the grass.

After making a little round and shooting a few head of small game, we returned in the evening to the camp. The other sportsmen had been more fortunate and had brought in two Francolins—large birds, somewhat like a guinea-fowl in colour, and with a reddish-brown ring round the neck; we had therefore now got within the range of this new species of game, with which we were to become better acquainted during the next few days.

We here took a hearty leave of Salim and his men, for those fine fellows were now returning to their home. I was quite delighted with the picturesque look of the camp after dinner, and the beautiful way in which the fires lighted up the cliffs, and the gay figures of the servants and Bedouins that were moving about. A very long march lay before us tomorrow, as we intended to cover two days' journey at a single stretch.

The camp was already astir before sunrise, even while it was still quite dark. The tents were struck, everything was packed, and the heavy caravan moved off. We also soon followed it, and riding round the rocky cone, got into the

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steppe country. At this point the valley becomes narrower, for the mountains which border it on the west advance into the plain, and one has to cross steep slopes, deep ravines, and stony tracts. We enjoyed some splendid views of the valley of the Jordan, which is here much cut up with gullies and mountain-streams, and of the grand hills on its further side, with their high grey cliffs and picturesque forms. Nowhere in the whole valley did we find ground so broken and so devoid of vegetation as that which we traversed during the first hours of this day.

Great numbers of large birds of prey were cruising about, and close over my head flew a Steppe Eagle, which I brought down with a lucky shot in such a way that it fell among the horses with a heavy thud.

We next had a troublesome climb up a narrow spur of the mountains, but on reaching its crest there lay before us a splendid view. The valley of the Jordan now began to broaden out, and one could overlook the green plains up to the hilly country on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias. Right and left were the finely formed mountains which border the valley, and to the north the view was closed by the high peaks of the Lebanon and the broad snow-fields of Hermon. It was a truly remarkable contrast: here we were languishing in the most terrible heat, such as is only to be found in the valley of the Jordan, and before us, on the far mountains, the snow was shining clear as crystal.

At this interesting point of view we halted for a little rest, intending to ride down to the Jordan and spend some hours on the banks of the sacred stream, while the caravan pursued its long and toilsome way.

The Bedouin with his flying mantle and long spear, who had hitherto guided us so well, did not, however, know the nearest route to the river, and frankly admitted it; so we dispersed to search for the most direct way of getting down to

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it. I galloped over the steppe, having to clamber across some gullies, and then came to a spot where a little spring bubbled out merrily among low cliffs and a perfect garden of luxuriant shrubs and flowers. Following the course of the water along the top of the rocks, I reached the edge of the plateau, where a steep slope fell away in front of me, and below it I saw to my great joy green meadows and wooded pastures with the silver thread of the Jordan running through them.

I soon got to the riverside, the gentlemen came up one after another, and we selected good places for resting and bathing. At this spot the river made a considerable bend, forming a peninsula covered with woods denser and more exuberant in growth than any I had hitherto seen. We rested on the meadow-land by the edge of this wood, in the shade of the trees and bushes, and let the horses graze ; and after bathing in the cool rushing waters, disposed of a modest lunch consisting of bread and cold meat. Here, as throughout its course, the Jordan has quite the character of a mountain-stream, and tears along among rocks and large stones.

After our frugal meal I determined to have a look at the wood, and to try to get up a little beat. The first half of the peninsula was covered with bushes somewhat above the height of a man and closely bound together with creepers, while the ground was thickly overgrown with large-leaved plants of all sorts, the whole being so dense and luxuriant that it was hardly possible to push through it, and every step forward required the exercise of one's whole strength. Having managed to get through the first part of the cover, we reached an opening which bisected the wood, and there I found in the loamy soil an incredible number of fresh traces of Panthers, Lynxes, Wild Cats, Wild Boars, Porcupines, Wolves, and Jackals. There were also the tracks of two kinds of Deer, and these, which appeared to belong to a small roe-like animal and to a larger fallow-deer sort of beast, interested us much,

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especially as Herr Rath said that while riding down one of the ravines which led to the Jordan he had seen a small stag with short horns.

The second part of the wood was composed of high leafy trees of an almost tropical character and a nearly impenetrable undergrowth ; but there were such numbers of tracks that I could not resist trying a beat just for luck, so I posted the gentlemen in the opening by the best-trodden runs, and got the Turkish guards and some of the servants to go through the wood under the direction of my jäger. In such undergrowth an orderly line of beaters was out of the question, and we very soon saw that all attempts to drive game out of these thickets would be useless. The only birds which I saw in this wood were a pair of Stone-Curlews and several Kites.

We now went back to our horses, had them saddled, and rode back to the edge of the plateau by the same way. We had already noticed from below some peculiar dark clouds whirling up into the sky, but could not make out what they were ; but on getting to the top of the plateau we saw a very remarkable spectacle, for the whole steppe from the Jordan to the foot of the eastern border hills was enveloped in a cloud of smoke with bright flames shooting out here and there from the black vapours. The country through which we had ridden in the morning was now a sea of smoke and fire, for the grass of the steppe burnt with incredible rapidity, and every minute we could see how the fire was advancing by the columns of smoke that were following us up.

Jussuf, a Turkish cavalry officer born in Turkestan, a vigorous grey-bearded old man, with a leather-thonged whip slung round his wrist as a sign of authority, rode in front to show the best way. It was a splendid gallop straight across country over the steppe, pursued by the great fire—a scene not to be witnessed in Europe, but only in the vast tracts of

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the other quarters of the globe. A wild boar, also flying from the flames, ran past my horse within a few paces.

A long hard gallop took us quickly across the steppe and through a region overgrown by tall thistles with long spines which severely punished both ourselves and our horses; but at the end of a couple of hours the character of the country began to change, for the valley kept getting broader, and in the middle of it rose low green hills, covered with bushes and dwarf oaks.

To the north the view was closed by fine mountains, and one could see the spurs of Carmel, the hills of Nazareth, the lofty Tabor, with its singular form, the Anti-Lebanon, the snow-clad Hermon, the mountains bordering the Lake of Gennesaret (the Tabariye of the Arabs), and to the north-east the heights of Djebel-Adjlun—all standing out in strong relief.

Our way led us past a little Bedouin burial-ground, where two wonderful and extremely old sycamores gave a still more mournful aspect to the gloomy spot; and then we gradually drew near the goal of our day's journey, the village of Baisân. The famous springs of this place lie round it in a wide circle; little watercourses trickle down from the plateau on all sides, and the whole neighbourhood is covered with low thick bushes, high rushy grass, reedy swamps, and tracts of marshy ground, while everywhere one hears the call of the Francolin, here so very abundant.

We found our camp ready pitched, in the best of order, on a grassy flat at the north side of the village. Close beside it was a steep ravine, at the bottom of which a spring prattled merrily along among rocks, thickets, and wide-spreading sycamores. There we saw traces of Roman baths hewn in the rock. Above the camp to the west of the village was the plateau and the district of the springs.

Immediately after our arrival I went to the marshes with a

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Bedouin sportsman, who was already waiting at my tent. Water was oozing out everywhere, for the ground was like a sponge, and sedge and bushes sprouted up from the swampy soil. Numerous tracks of wild boars and well-trodden runs showed that there was plenty of game in this locality, while an old Roman column was quite worn by the wild pigs, who, for lack of trees, come to rub themselves against it every evening after their fashion. The Bedouin wished me to hide behind a bush, and wait till the beasts came; but I felt not the slightest inclination to remain in the malarious atmosphere of the marsh at the dangerous hour of sunset, so I quickly returned to the camp.

The great caravan had a melancholy appearance—horses and mules were lying about dead beat, and the men were in depressed spirits, a state of affairs caused by the unusually long march and the enervating air of this swampy place. After dinner we all retired drowsily to our tents.

On the 10th of April (Palm Sunday) we were all up at sunrise, and having arranged the large tent as a chapel, and decorated it as well as we could, the Court Chaplain said Mass and then blessed the palm-branches, which were distributed among all the Christian members of the caravan.

After breakfast we decided on going out to shoot, some of the gentlemen proposing to beat about the country north of the camp; while the Grand Duke and I, with a band of fine wild-looking Bedouin sportsmen belonging to the place, intended to hunt after wild boar, in the direction of the Jordan.

Passing through the village we got to the east side of the plateau, and traversing tracts of marsh and bushes, reached a stream, where the steep banks and luxuriant vegetation led us to expect the same sort of sport that we had enjoyed with Salim in the lower districts of the Jordan; but we saw, alas! after many vain attempts, that neither the Bedouins nor their dogs would penetrate into the thickets; so we started on a

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long tramp across the steppe to a reedy swamp, which the Sheikh described as a splendid place. From the grass of the steppe we first flushed a few Quail, and then a flock of Stone-Curlews. The nearer we got to the reeds, which were visible a long way off, the thicker grew the bushes, and from among them there jumped up two singular little animals, smaller than Roe, yellowish in colour, with roe-like horns, and the lopping gait and long tail of the Fallow Deer; but they were unfortunately so far off that we could not get a good shot at them. The outskirts of the reed-bed consisted of marshy places covered with high green sedge, and in this boggy ground we shot some handsomely-coloured Francolin cocks and a hen with plain brown plumage, like that of the hen Pheasant.

The Grand Duke was now despatched to the further side of this forest of pale yellow reeds, while I pushed into it with the Bedouins. The reeds and sedge were above the height of a man, and closed over our heads as we waded through bog, marsh, mire, and the mould of decaying plants nearly up to our knees. After a long tramp through this abominable ground, which swarmed with toads, I reached an open space, where the Bedouins wished me to await the further course of the hunt. I was standing in the water, with myriads of disgusting insects swarming round me, and the place was so thoroughly disagreeable, that I shall not forget it in a hurry. The Arabs now tried to beat the reeds in all directions; but all our trouble was in vain, for though we heard the wild boars crashing through the brake, not one of them would leave the protection of the cover, and only a few Purple Herons flew lazily round us. I therefore tried to get out of this horrible place as quickly as possible, for I already felt that I had inhaled too much of the malarious air of the marsh and the exhalations of decaying matter, but in the evening I was to experience their evil effects more fully. The Grand

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Duke, too, soon came back from the other side of the swamp, also driven away by the foul air, so we mounted the horses which the excellent Ferdinand had brought and rode homewards.

We often put up Francolins from the thick sedge, and killed several of them. While riding over the steppe grass I wanted to see how soon it could be fired, so threw down some lighted matches, and in a few instants a great fire was kindled, which spread so rapidly that we were obliged to ride away from it at a gallop; and next morning we still saw in the distance a large extent of that part of the steppe enveloped in clouds of smoke. We soon got back to Baisân, whither the other sportsmen had also returned with a certain amount of spoil.

In the afternoon we all left the camp again, and dispersed among the grass-covered tracts near the village, where the Francolins had been calling the whole day. This fine large game-bird is easy to shoot and exceedingly good to eat, and is therefore greatly coveted by the travelling sportsman. Each of us took some Bedouins or servants to beat a certain place, for we had divided the best localities near the village into definite beats, so that we might not interfere with each other.

I was just in the thick of the shooting, when I was suddenly seized with a violent attack of giddiness, while a feeling akin to paralysis in my feet, a bad headache, and, in spite of the heat, an icy cold sensation throughout my body, compelled me to crawl home as best I could. An attack of fever, such as comes on in this climate in the course of a few minutes, had suddenly struck me down while in the best of health; every muscle ached and every step was painful. On reaching the camp I had to take a large dose of quinine, after which I crept into bed in a pitiful state. The other sportsmen came back well laden with Francolin.

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During the night poor Chorinsky, and afterwards Sachs, were both stung by a large scorpion. The former received the full undiluted dose of venom from the repulsive creature, and lay suffering from symptoms of severe poisoning, in a state which caused the greatest anxiety.

Next morning the whole camp was in a most dejected condition; nobody felt well, for all were suffering in some measure from the effects of the bad air. Chorinsky and I, being still feeble and wretchedly out of sorts, had to be kept on the sick list, and there were also some victims to the climate among the servants. At any moment fresh attacks of fever might occur, and our experience of the Asiatic scorpion also caused a certain amount of panic in the caravan.

We originally intended to spend this day also in Baisân, and afterwards to make an expedition to the Lake of Gennesaret. Thence we meant to go on to Nazareth, where we were to take part in the services of Passion Week, and to remain until Easter Monday. In order, however, to get rid of the fever, we now resolved to pass the night in the mountain air, on the summit of Tabor, and to travel next day to Jaffa, whither the 'Miramar,' which was lying at Beyrout, was to be forthwith ordered to proceed. It was therefore a long road which lay before us, and we all set off immediately after breakfast.

I felt so languid that I could hardly sit my horse, and it will be long before I forget that ride, during which we had to traverse a most monotonous part of the country in the scorching heat. The steppes of the Jordan Valley were left behind, and were replaced by long flat ridges and interminable valleys. Stony flats, sparingly covered with bushes, alternated with poorly cultivated land, and we passed herds of camels and goats.

It was a tedious journey, for the invalids could only ride at a foot pace, and the only pleasant thing about it was the

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view of the beautiful mountains beyond the miserable country around us. At last we reached the foot of Mount Tabor. which is conical in form, everywhere equally steep, quite isolated from all the other heights, and has its slopes up to the very summit covered with rocks, loose stones, and stunted oaks. The road which winds up it passes through a wretched little village of stone-built hovels, and is formed of rocks so bare and slanting that one can hardly understand how horses manage to get up it, and the evergreen bushes and low gnarled oaks that grow among the stones are not very ornamental. The type of the vegetation is precisely that of the Mediterranean coasts, the far more interesting Asiatic flora having been already left behind.

As the finale to our long journey, the ride up the high mountain of Tabor was no great pleasure, but slipping and stumbling, our tired horses at last reached the outer walls of the little convent. I was so fatigued that I could hardly keep my eyes open, for I was still suffering severely from the effects of the fever. The Grand Duke also became unwell during the long ride ; and in the evening had a still more violent attack of the same sort as that which I had to endure the previous day.

A tent had been sent on ahead up Mount Tabor, but the rest of the caravan remained at Nazareth, for we could not have got many of the hard-worked mules up alive. In this tent we lay down to sleep until dinner-time. We had all at once left the heavy oppressive atmosphere of the Jordan, and the regions lying below the level of the sea, for fresh mountain air ; a somewhat cool evening and a sharp breeze succeeded the heat of the day.

From the summit of Mount Tabor there was a glorious view. To the south-east lay the broad plains of the Jordan, swathed in the vapours of the heated air, with mountains bordering them on either side—the western, grey-green, with countless

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peaks and summits; the eastern high, bare and stern, the territory belonging to the free and noble Bedouin tribes. In the north-east shone the surface of the great Lake of Gennesaret, girt by pleasant hills. To the north rose the snow-clad heights of Hermon and the Lebanon, and from the foot of Tabor stretched the hilly country, intersected with valleys and ravines and covered with stones and oak woods, which reaches up to the high mountains; while towards the west an undulating ugly region extended to the lofty isolated mountain of Djebel-mar-Eliâs or Mount Carmel.

This splendid scene we enjoyed during the evening hours. Over the quiet wooded valleys were circling some Imperial Eagles and Cinereous Vultures; while the perfect stillness that reigned around was only broken by the clear sounding bells of the little convent wafting the Angelus through these lonely regions.

I now felt able to crawl slowly round the top of the mountain to look at the interesting buildings and ruins. A Greek convent stands opposite the Latin one, in the courtyard of which our tent had been pitched. In the evening we dined in the refectory of the convent, and retired early to rest. The Grand Duke was suffering severely from fever and had to be well dosed with quinine.

On the 12th of April we awoke at sunrise, having now passed our last night under canvas, and not without regret did I bid adieu to my airy dwelling. As riding was hardly practicable we walked down the hill from the convent, our train with its sick and barely convalescent descending but slowly through the oak woods and over the flat rocks and loose stones. The air was cool and pleasant, and the mountains around us were lit up with the most lovely colours by the morning sun. After a fatiguing walk we at last reached the valley, where we mounted our horses.

We were able to ride over the next chain of hills with its

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flat rocks, bushes, and oak woods; and from the slope on its further side we had our first view of Nazareth, lying deep down in a bare stony valley. Passing through some wretchedly paved narrow streets we reached the other end of the little town; but I was unable to visit the Church, the famous Chapel of the Annunciation, and all the other holy places, as the doctor had forbidden me, on account of the fever, to go into any cold cellar-like buildings.

We found our mess tent pitched on an open space, and part of the caravan spread about among the grass, but most of the mules had already gone on to Jaffa with our baggage. A hasty lunch was now taken, and we then got into some low vehicles drawn by horses, which were here awaiting us.

It is a good many years since this carriage communication between Jaffa and Nazareth was established by a Swiss contractor. The road, if one can so call it, defies all description, and we were almost shaken to bits over the stones and rocks in going up and down the steep hillsides. We crossed some chains of little hills covered with stunted oak woods and evergreen shrubs, and in the valleys between them were marshy meadows in which the vehicles threatened to stick fast. Fortunately the weather was fine and not too hot, and the country was rather pleasant looking, for many of the woods were even fairly luxuriant and full of flowers.

After a long drive we reached the wide plain which extends along the bay, at the northern point of which is the celebrated town of Acre; while the southern cape is formed by the high Mount Carmel, which slopes down abruptly to the sea at Jaffa. The plain is well cultivated, and even pretty fruitful along the banks of the little river of Nahr-el-Mukatta.

During the last hour that we spent in Asia we suffered tortures from the deep ruts of the terrible roads. Heavy clouds were forming on the horizon, the sun became obscured, and a cold sea-breeze seemed like a first greeting from that

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chilly Europe to which we were soon to return. The strings of camels, the long-eared goats, the Arab horses, the picturesque figures in their burnouses, the gay garments and large turbans, the Eastern houses and burial-grounds, and all the peculiar and attractive surroundings of Eastern life, which had so long interested and charmed us, and to which we had become so familiar and attached, were once more eagerly gazed upon; and we all strove to impress upon our memories our last look at them, so that, hereafter, in the cold grey winter days, when we poor Europeans are harassed and tormented by the storms of the North, those scenes might rise before our mental vision, and we might fancy ourselves transported to the cradle of the human race, where Paradise stood in the sacred golden and gorgeous East.

Passing through one of the narrow streets of the small town of Jaffa, which is built in terraces on the steep sides of Mount Carmel, we soon reached the quay. One more step on Eastern soil, one last look at the gay throng of people, and the hard parting from the East, which we had learned to admire and to love, was over. A boat from the 'Miramar' bore our party over the dancing waves to the ship, which was here lying at anchor.

Before nightfall we were under weigh, and the hazy outlines of the high mountains of the Asiatic coast vanished in the shades of evening. The sea was rough, and we had an uncomfortable time of it, the whole of the 13th of April being spent in the open sea in chilly disagreeable weather. Heavy clouds overcast the sky, and all was quiet on the deck of the 'Miramar,' for many of us suffered much, and the few who were all right watched the play of the waves, lost in thoughts of the glorious East. After a life so full of excitement and variety there is a certain reaction, and one passes much time in dwelling on the memories of happy days.

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The 14th of April was like its predecessor in every respect, but the 15th brought us calmer waters and a view of Crete, an island rich in picturesque charms. We passed close along its coast, admiring its high mountains and the snow-clad Ida. On the 16th we beheld Cape Matapan, with the hills of Greece, and saw Zante in the afternoon. We shaped our course between this island, decked in its full garb of spring, and the mainland of Greece, to the mountainous island of Cephalonia, and passing, in splendid moonlight, through the famous straits of Ithaca, the home of Ulysses, saw the rock of Sappho and all the high mountains dedicated to the gods of the old Greek mythology.

Early on the 17th the 'Miramar' put into the harbour of Corfu. There coal had to be taken in, so we employed the time in making an excursion to the Bay of Ipsa; and after a short stay returned to the vessel and continued our journey.

On the 18th we awoke at Punta d'Ostro, and as most of my fellow travellers had never seen the Bocchi di Cattaro, the 'Miramar' steamed in between the high grey cliffs to the melancholy, but splendidly situated little town of Cattaro. In the afternoon we reached Lacroma, and at once landed on my small though enchantingly beautiful island. All was green and flowery, and for the last time we enjoyed the true air of the South and the warm sunshine of a perfect spring day. We afterwards passed the night on board the 'Miramar,' in the harbour of Gravosa.

The 19th brought us a rough sea, a dull gloomy sky, showers of rain, and a piercingly cold wind, so that the usually lovely passage through the Dalmatian islands afforded us but little enjoyment. The evening and the night were spent at Zara.

On the 20th we left the Dalmatian capital at a very early hour, and when we got to Triest in the afternoon it was raining hard and the sky was heavily overcast. There we

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spent a pleasant day, and after bidding a hearty farewell to the Captain and the officers of the good ship 'Miramar,' we left on the 21st, waving from Karst a last adieu to the beautiful sea.

The night passed quickly in dreams of Bedouins, Arab horses, slender minarets, lofty mountains, boundless deserts, the sacred Nile, the rustling groves of palms and sycamores, and the mysterious temples of Isis. Soon came the stern reality, for on waking at the Semmering we were greeted by a rough northerly gale, ice, and a country covered with a light mantle of snow. Nor was it much better in Vienna, where the sky was heavily clouded over, and the cold damp air chilled to the very bones the travellers accustomed to the Southern sun.

The Expedition was over, and the party separated, but their thoughts still involuntarily turned back to the far Orient.

Farewell! O golden, gorgeous, glowing East!

Complete List of the Specimens obtained.

Hyæna	3	Small Vampire	1
Wolf	9	Gazelle	1
African Jackal	7	Wild Boar	4
Large Asiatic Jackal	1	Great Spotted Cuckoo	1
Small Asiatic Jackal	4	Pied Kingfisher	25
Fennec (Desert Fox)	1	Blue-cheeked Bee-Eater	38
Desert Lynx	2	Egyptian Swift	3
Ichneumon	2	Little Grey Swift	8
Desert Hare	2	Barbary Falcon	2
Syrian Hare	1	Lesser Kestrel	20
Jerboa	1	Sparrow-Hawk	1

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Steppe-Eagle	1
Pygmy Eagle	3
Osprey	2
Black-winged Kite	5
Black Kite	15
Parasitic Kite	16
Pallid Harrier	2
Marsh-Harrier	20
Short-toed Eagle	2
Long-legged Buzzard	2
Hawk, sp.?	2
Egyptian Vulture	15
Pileated Vulture	1
Griffon Vulture	7
Little Owl	3
Robin	1
Blue Rock-Thrush	3
Black Chat	2
Common Wheatear	3
Black-eared Chat	1
Russet Chat	1
Pied Chat	7
Yellow-vented Bulbul	7
Palestine Bush-Babbler	7
Grey-backed Warbler	2
Fantail Warbler	1
Great Sedge-Warbler	1
Moustached Warbler	3
Aquatic Warbler	2
Hedge-Sparrow	1
White Wagtail	5
Grey-headed Yellow Wagtail	1
Yellow Wagtail	5
Meadow-Pipit	2
Tawny Pipit	2
Egyptian Crested Lark	19
Dupont's Lark	2
Short-toed Lark	1
Desert-Lark	1
Gould's Desert-Lark	1
Ortolan Bunting	1
Cretzschmar's Bunting	6
Italian Sparrow	3
Spanish Sparrow	7
Desert Bullfinch	8
Tristram's Grackle	1
Common Starling	3
Raven	2
Hooded Crow	17
Syrian Jay	1
Southern Grey Shrike	11
Woodchat Shrike	1
Masked Shrike	8
Oriental Chimney-Swallow	1
Rufous Swallow	1
Crag-Swallow *	5
Hoopoe	12
Rock-Dove	60
Turtle-Dove	1
Asiatic Turtle-Dove	10
Egyptian Turtle-Dove	26
Emerald Spotted Dove	1
Chukar Partridge	27
Hey's Partridge	40
Francolin	22
Quail	88
Stone-Curlew	5

[* Pale Crag Swallow (*Cotyle obsoleta*, Cab.)?]

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White-tailed Plover	1
Spur-winged Plover	25
Golden Plover	8
Ringed Plover	6
Kentish Plover	1
Cream-coloured Courser	1
Black-headed Plover	2
Turnstone	6
Common Snipe	19
Jack Snipe	4
Sanderling	2
Purple Sandpiper	2
Pygmy Curlew	2
Dunlin	15
Schinz's Sandpiper	3
Temminck's Stint	3
Ruff	1
Terek Sandpiper	13
Marsh-Sandpiper	2
Wood-Sandpiper	7
Green Sandpiper	2
Bar-tailed Godwit	5
Black-tailed Godwit	1
Avocet	1
Common Stork	9
Grey Heron	8
Purple Heron	3
Little Egret	2
Buff-backed Heron	22
Squacco Heron	1
Night-Heron	7
Painted Snipe	10
Moorhen	41
Mallard	2
Garganey Teal	4
Shoveller	2
White-eyed Duck	13
Tufted Duck	1
Yellow-legged Herring-Gull	26
Herring-Gull	9
Great Black-headed Gull	7
Black-headed Gull	10
Mediterranean Black-headed Gull	1
Tern, sp.?	2
Common Cormorant	14
Pygmy Cormorant	1
Roseate Pelican	4
Dalmatian Pelican	2
Lace Lizard (96 centim. long)	1
Large Snake	1
Large Black Lizard	2

Grand Total, 1020 Head.

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SKETCHES

OF

SPORT IN HUNGARY.

AUTUMN 1880.

I HAD long wished to make myself acquainted with some of the interesting sporting districts of Hungary, and on my last autumn trip I had both leisure and opportunity to do so. I also managed to find a small party of keen sportsmen, who were ready and willing to join my short but interesting excursion.

We arranged to visit two different parts of the country, one of which, in consequence of a kind invitation from Counts Rudolf and Otto Chotek, was to be the splendid hunting-grounds of Slavonia and Dalmatia, the other the fine but less known forests of the Marmaros belonging to the State.

On the morning of the 1st of November, my brother-in-law Duke Leopold of Bavaria, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Count Bombelles, and I left the station of Gödöllö, and about noon reached the wharf of the Danube Steam Navigation Company at Buda-Pest. On the deck of the steamer 'Marie Valerie,' which we had chartered for the short time to be

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devoted to our first journey, we met Count Hans Wilczek and the painter Pausinger; so our party was now complete, and in a few minutes the vessel got under weigh. Besides some jägers we also took with us the son of Hodek the naturalist, who had already accompanied me during my first trip down the Danube in 1878.

We soon made ourselves at home on board the comfortable vessel, and after a hasty lunch went on deck to observe the country through which we were so rapidly passing. The scenery was all familiar, yet how different it had looked in that glorious springtide when nature in the full bloom of her beauty had greeted our small but pleasant shooting-party. Two years and a half had passed since that time, and heavy grey clouds, leafless trees, bare fields, and a cold north-easter had taken the place of spring. The Danube alone remained steadfast, and in quiet profound majesty still patiently rolled its waters towards the far east.

There was but little life on the river, the waterfowl had flown to other regions, and nothing but dusky birds of prey and magpies showed themselves on its banks. In the evening, however, the scene became more smiling and pleasant, the principal reason being that the further south we pushed the warmer it became, especially late in the afternoon. Large flights of Ducks and a flock of Lapwings flying southwards on their winter migration also lent some ornithological interest to this stretch of the journey, while the sinking of the fiery globe of the sun through the narrow bands of cloud delighted all of us, my friend Pausinger in particular. It was one of those lovely evenings such as are only to be seen in easterly lands, and more especially on the plains of beautiful Hungary.

After passing a long time amidst the monotony of civilized life and the perpetual uninspiriting grey of the west, one feels a longing to return to those primitive regions, where alone one can gaze upon the grandeurs of the glorious colour and

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the ever beautiful effects with which nature has dowered the east.

Splendid it is indeed when the low heavy clouds are robed in crimson as the sun sinks behind the hills in a blaze of gold, and the purple of the twilight fades into the deep blue of night, which already broods mysteriously over the broad pusztas, and a thin veil of mist settles on the gliding waters of the great river !—

Flocks of hundreds upon hundreds of crows were flying from the plain to their roosting-places, long strings of geese with plaintive cries were hastening southwards in their usual V-shaped formation, and, just as it was getting dark, we reached Mohács, where we stopped for the night, resuming our journey at dawn.

When I awoke day had already broken, so I hurried on deck to look at the districts which I knew so well. It was a sharp but fine morning, a thin mist was floating over the water, and the sun was making vain attempts to warm this poor earth. With Pausinger for my companion I gazed upon the beautiful scenes around me, and as we were passing the already described marsh of Hulló, with its gigantic reed-beds swaying to and fro in the wind like yellow waves, we saw a fine picture of bird-life. A huge Eagle was sitting on the summit of an old dead tree which rose from the reeds, and another was circling high above us on the outlook for plunder. I fired a pistol, and all at once the whole of the great swamp became alive with flocks of birds flying hither and thither over the reeds.

On getting beyond the bend at the junction of the Drave the high steep banks of the Slavonian side appeared, and Ospreys, an Imperial Eagle, and huge imposing Vultures gave us opportunities for making some ornithological observations.

At noon we reached Čerevič, and were all heartily glad to see this village again with its two churches and its shining

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white houses perched among the steep slopes and gardens of the Slavonian bank, as well as the Fruška-Gora beckoning to us from afar, and the wide low-lying plains of Hungary on the other side of the river.

Our vessel steamed slowly up and put into the landing-place, where the friendly inhabitants of the place welcomed us with shouts of "Zivio!" the firing of guns and the ringing of bells, and the two kind proprietors of the Fruška-Gora came on deck to escort us to the carriages which were waiting close by.

Count Rudolf Chotek wished my brother-in-law, the Grand Duke, and myself to visit the nightly roosting-place of a colony of Eagles, so we got into the carriages for the short bit of the road that leads deep down into the valley, while the ponies, most of which were of Bosnian breed, followed us under the superintendence of my old acquaintance Petrovics, the manager of the stables.

The deeper we penetrated into the labyrinth of wooded mountains the more beautiful was the scenery, and I was soon convinced that this splendid region has especial charms not only in spring but also in autumn. We halted at a turn of the road, and mounting the ponies continued our way under the guidance of the excellent keeper Dolezal and the forester Kafka, two old acquaintances with whom I had rambled through these districts a couple of years ago.

The ponies almost sank in a sea of rustling leaves and we made but slow progress, but at last reached our destination, where the Grand Duke and Pausinger were posted on one side of a meadow, and my brother-in-law on the other. I, however, had to make a detour in order to get to the place allotted to me.

While there, a very heavy fourteen-pointed stag appeared in front of me within a few paces. The wind was good and the noble animal was browsing quietly, but the Hungarian

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game-laws protected him, and I confined myself to watching him attentively.

He was a true wild stag reared in the open forest, with horns such as one no longer sees in the woods of central Europe, where the deer are huddled together within a small area and have degenerated to miserable shadows of their former selves. It is only in more eastern countries, where the woods have not been turned into promenades, that real Red Deer are still to be found.

The following day my brother-in-law and I breakfasted while it was still quite dark, and then left the shooting-lodge. He drove back along the greater part of the valley, and I walked after one of the keepers, who led me along a steep slope through a thick wood.

My guide, a dark-looking fellow whom I had previously known, strode silently in front of me wrapped in his long grey cloak—his expressive eyes, tanned visage framed by black ringlets, powerful muscular frame, easy movements, and noiseless way of gliding through the cover being all thoroughly characteristic of the fine strong race of the Southern Slavonians.

A splendid hiding-place near an exposed bait had been prepared for me, and almost before daybreak a pair of large Ravens appeared, which flew to the lure without much ceremony and began to enjoy themselves heartily. Suddenly they croaked hoarsely and cast frightened glances towards the edge of the wood hard by, and on looking in that direction I saw a wolf peeping slyly out.

I cautiously took up my rifle, hoping that the fellow would feel appetized for a little breakfast, in which case I would willingly have served him with some lead; but my expectations vanished on seeing his worship, who was probably returning from his nightly raid with a full stomach, move on at a quiet trot and vanish from my sight into the wood.

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A quarter of an hour later the renewed croaking of the Ravens notified the proximity of a large bird of prey, and I soon heard the rush of powerful pinions and the noise made by an eagle as it settled heavily on one of the neighbouring trees; so I quietly took up my gun and cocked it.

More disturbance among the branches and a couple of dull thuds warned me that there must be two big birds near the exposed carcass; and taking a cautious look through a natural loophole, I saw to my delight a great Sea-Eagle, and a few paces further off an extremely large Vulture. Both were trying to get at the dainty meal ; but no sooner did one of them make a move towards it, than the other sprang in front of him and checked his further advance.

It was comical to see the enormous Vulture hopping up and down with its bare bluish turkey-like neck, and its plumage ruffled and puffed out with rage ; while the Sea-Eagle, on the contrary, drew in its feathers close to its body, and bending its head backwards uttered its angry "glik, glik" with widely opened beak.

Taking a rapid survey of the situation, I fired at the vulture, and the distinctly audible thud of the bullet told me that I had hit it, and when the smoke cleared away the bird was flapping its huge wings in its last convulsions.

On jumping out of my ambush to hide it, I saw two other vultures and the eagle which had been scared by the shot soaring in the pure ether, so I dragged the exceptionally large and heavy bird into my retreat and awaited further visits.

Another half-hour went by before the anxious croaks of the Ravens, who had meanwhile returned, indicated the approach of a bird of prey; and in a few moments I saw an eagle pitch upon a beech tree, where it rested quietly for several minutes and then dropped deliberately from the branch, frightening away the Ravens.

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As soon as I heard the heavy beats of the eagle's wings and caught sight of it in the high grass I fired, killing the bird dead, and on hurrying up I found a splendid old Imperial Eagle.

The Ravens were still flying round the confines of the place, so I sent some shot after them, but missed, the distance being too great; and as it was now time to depart, I fired a ball at a vulture which was circling high over my head. It seemed as if the bullet had grazed either its wing or its body, for the bird turned in the air and fell so far that both I and my jäger thought it was already ours; but it recovered, and flapping up again flew away in a straight line over the hills.

We now had to hasten home, for a fox hunt had been arranged for the same day; so a sapling was quickly procured to be used as a carrying-pole, and hanging my spoil upon it we marched down the valley, my jäger shouldering one end and I the other.

I have often carried Griffon and other vultures, and even on one occasion a Lämmergeyer, besides all the different species of European eagles, but none of them ever seemed to be so heavy as this vulture, and I was much delighted with my booty.

On that day my brother-in-law and the Grand Duke had but little luck, and unfortunately returned empty-handed.

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BEAR-SHOOTING

IN

TRANSYLVANIA.

AUTUMN 1882.

On the 21st of September our small party of sportsmen arrived at the castle, situated near the village of Görgény St. Imre, but there found unfortunately that the weather was still like summer, the heat great, and the trees and bushes yet green and in full leaf, a state of matters that appeared to indicate that it was rather too early for bear-shooting. We determined, however, to begin on the 22nd, for the trackers had found the traces of two or three bears in the neighbourhood of the fields and villages.

It rained in torrents, the ground was very sodden, and the thickets of the lower woods, besides being almost impenetrable, were dripping wet. Consequently the beaters drove very badly, and possibly a bear may have remained lying quite undisturbed in the first beat, which was especially thick. Three covers were tried one after another, but all with the same negative results, the tracks of two small bears on the paths being all that saw seen during the day.

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A violent storm, succeeded by a striking change of the temperature, now brought the summer to a close. Cool days followed, the foliage changed its colour, and autumn quickly made its appearance. On the morning of the 23rd we observed with pleasure how very much colder it had become, while favourable reports of tracks came from various localities, and the first woodcocks were seen in the Görgény valley.

The beat selected adjoined the ground of the preceding day, and, though rather small, was very thickly wooded with young trees. The guns were posted, as they invariably are when driving these lower woods, on a narrow path where there was very little room for shooting. The beaters had already come out at the centre and the right wing of the line without having seen anything whatever; but on the left they were still in the cover, and suddenly set up a tremendous yelling. A young sportsman, Herr v. M., thinking that the beat was finished, left his post, but hardly had he got up to his neighbour when a big black bear broke just in front of the beaters, and crossed at the very spot which he had just quitted. There it stopped for a moment in the middle of the path, but vanished into the opposite thickets before the astounded sportsmen could unsling their rifles and fire.

We now held a quick consultation as to what was to be done, and decided to station ourselves on a hill in a rather open copse, and to drive the wood into which the bear had crossed along the slope. Unfortunately many of the beaters, and even some of the keepers, did not know the ground, as it lay over the March in the estate of Baron K., and was usually driven in another way; so that they made a mistake, and brought the bear out at a place where it was only heard but not seen by the outside guns. The next three beats of the day, which were made in pouring rain, were blank, in spite of our having found the fresh tracks of three bears on the soaking wet roads.

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On the 24th we amused ourselves during the middle of the day with a little woodcock-shooting. The localities most affected by the long-bills in that part of the country are the large damp pastures, on which grow nothing but detached birch and alder bushes, each bush being separated from the next by a few yards of meadow. Nowhere does one find a regular thicket, and as the ground is, moreover, very uneven it is very difficult to divide it into beats and to post the guns. The Woodcock, too, seldom fly much above the bushes, which are about the height of a man, so that it is necessary to be very careful, not only of the beaters, but also of one's neighbours, and many birds escape without being shot at.

On that day we found between thirty and forty cock, but only bagged ten. We also shot a couple of Jays and two hares—rare and much-prized animals in Transylvania. A fine Spotted Eagle, which came sailing along quite unconcernedly in one of the beats, also received a heavy dose of small shot, but though its plumage was much cut up it managed to get away.

On the 25th we arranged to try for bears in a side valley close to Görgény, which being divided into natural beats is one of the easiest bits of ground to drive in that locality. The left slope of this valley is long, rather steep, but not high, and is densely wooded, while the villages and meadows at its base, and the broad plateau of pastures and fields above it, prevent the bears from leaving the covers during the day, and when it is well driven they must come to the guns.

We divided it into three beats, and began with the middle one, which was the thickest, the guns being posted along a path partly among the bushes and partly in a copse.

Nothing was seen but some fresh tracks of a largish bear, which had probably withdrawn from the woods frightened by the noise, for they were not there in the morning, so at the

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approach of twilight we returned from this interesting but unsuccessful hunt.

Following the wishes of several of the gentlemen, we betook ourselves early on the 26th to the virgin forests higher up the mountains, where we saw splendid woods but no bears. In the three beats, which were made in the most wonderful old beech woods, a Wild Boar, a Stag, a Roebuck, and a good many Hazel-hens were encountered, some of them by us and some by the beaters, and there were also a few traces of bears.

The 27th was also devoted to the old woods, but fortunately to those parts of them which lay nearer to the fields. The first beat was quite blank, but the second, where there were a great many hazels, and which was driven from the edge of the forest, was more successful.

We were standing in a ravine full of marvellous old trees, when towards the end of the beat a large Eagle-Owl flew close past me, and soon afterwards a dark-coloured two-year-old bear came down the slope between Count M. and Baron J. On reaching the bottom it stopped, receiving from the Baron at the same instant a shot low down in the shoulder, upon which it turned straight towards the Count, who missed it while it was going at full tilt. As it then held on its way without stopping, and the sportsman had slipped in turning quickly to change his gun, his jäger, who was standing beside him, felt it to be his duty to roll over Master "Petz" with a high shoulder-shot, and hardly had the animal regained its feet, when a dose of slugs in the neck, at a distance of not more than five paces, brought its tough life to a conclusion, and it was carried home in triumph.

As the reports which came in on the 28th were again very favourable, we drove the opposite side of the same valley that we had tried on the 25th, selecting for our first beat a cover lying near meadows, pastures, and woods of high oak trees.

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We were standing on a road where there was not too much room for shooting, when just at the beginning of the beat a very large roebuck came to me ; but I of course allowed it to pass, and soon afterwards two shots were fired in rapid succession from the right wing of the line of guns. During the last minutes of the drive I also heard something moving rapidly about between my brother-in-law and myself, and immediately the beaters made a terrific noise. Two wolves were there which had probably winded the guns and preferred breaking back to going forward, although the beaters were very close together.

On hastening to the right wing I learnt that first Count N. and afterwards Baron J. B. had let drive at a bear. Near the place where the first shot had been fired we found a great deal of blood, and close behind the line of guns lay the bear itself, a dark-coloured animal, from two to three years old, quite dead, with both balls planted in its shoulder.

For the second beat we took a rather higher and thinner wood, and again the guns stood on a somewhat narrow path. In the middle of this drive a tolerably large grey bear again came towards Count N., but changing its direction before he could shoot at it, passed in front of Baron J. so covered by the bushes that he was unable to fire. At last it sprang across the path near young Herr v. M., who gave it a ball, but unfortunately not in a fatal place.

Towards the end of the beat a large bear broke by Count T. at the narrowest place, where the thickets on each side only left a small lane, so that he could get nothing but a very uncertain shot, and probably either missed the animal altogether or only wounded it slightly.

We now determined to try the beat into which the bear had crossed. This was the broadest on that long chain of heights, and was connected with the great forest itself by a somewhat thinly wooded ridge. On this ridge the guns were

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posted, while the beaters had to wait on the path where the sportsmen had been stationed in the previous drive, until a given time had elapsed.

Thinking that Count T. might have wounded the bear I gave orders that my Transylvanian hounds were to be let loose at the beginning of the beat, and a merry hunt soon began in all directions, for the dogs separated after foxes, numbers of which came out by the line of guns; while the beaters and the keepers, imagining that the wounded beast was in front of them, set up a tremendous yelling, which, together with the blasts of the horns, formed a wild concert.

The drive must have been more than half over when some shouts, which rose above the general din, undoubtedly indicated that a bear was near. Immediately afterwards I heard the movements of a heavy animal, but at the same time plainly perceived that it was making towards my brother-in-law, who was posted fifty yards from me at the most, there being only a little ridge between us. In a few moments there came a shot, after which I heard nothing but a few heavy bounds. A minute went by, during which my attention was strained to the utmost; then two shots sounded in quick succession from some of the posts lower down the line, and the beaters soon raised a diabolical noise.

When the beat was over I found that the large black bear which Count T. had shot at had not been encountered, so it must have crossed over the ridge to the adjoining forest before we had got to our places. A smaller lighter-coloured animal had, however, come to Count T. in the middle of the beat, who drove it back, in order that one of the other guns might get a shot at him; the same thing had also been done by Herr v. P. and the painter M.

Master "Petz," who had thus been repeatedly baulked, now broke back to the beaters, who successfully turned him; then it was that he had come very much out of breath, and

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with his tongue hanging out, to my brother-in-law, who most likely gave him a shot low down in the shoulder. From that point he made a slight curve through the beat, and came out by Baron S., who missed him with both barrels; but by this time he had had about enough of it, so bursting impetuously through the line of beaters, he plunged down the steep hillside followed by one of my dogs.

We found a good deal of blood at my brother-in-law's post, where the first shot had been fired, and with others of the party I now followed up the trail, which led us down to the valley, where some labourers had seen the bear, and then unfortunately uphill again into the first beat of the day. To go on would have been useless, and we could only hope to get a second shot at the wounded beast by making another drive.

As the bear was not very hard-hit we thought that it would never stop in the first beat through which so many men had passed, so we took the most outlying wood of this chain of heights, in the direction of the main valley; but this beat, alas! was unsuccessful, as was also the first, which we made over again as a precautionary measure.

When the beat was finished we again took up the trail where we found plenty of blood, and at first even some splinters of bone; but on seeing that the wounded animal had, after descending the slope and crossing a brook, held on up the steep hillside, we gave up the pursuit, and sent a couple of trackers to follow it up, who returned in the evening equally unlucky.

The third beat was blank; in the fourth, which was not a very large cover, a bear passed near Baron K., but out of shot and often concealed by the bushes. The cunning beast must then have found a spot where no gun was posted, for it got away unseen.

On the 29th we tried the lower woods, and began by taking the beat into which the bear had crossed without being shot

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at on the 23rd; this time, however, we did not stand on the hillside, but on the main road above.

I had hardly been a quarter of an hour at my post when I heard a bear moving slowly by in front of me, not more than twenty yards off. I put up my gun and followed him; but though Master "Petz" kept before me like a shadow, the foliage was so thick that there was not a hand's breadth of open space, and it would have been impossible to make a certain shot.

For some minutes I lost sight of him, and only heard his heavy tread in front of my neighbour; but he soon came back again, and now passed before me rather faster; but again it was impossible to shoot. However, when he had vanished for the second time, I consoled myself with the idea that he would end by bolting across the path near my post, though unfortunately my expectations were not realized.

Towards the close of the beat a large black bear broke back through the beaters, and a small two-year-old crossed the path close to Baron S., the second gun on my left, who rolled it over with a well-aimed ball through its head.

We next drove an adjoining cover, where a medium-sized bear crossed the little footpath near Baron A. B. It received a ball probably in the intestines, and responded to the shot with loud growls; but as it was raining rather hard the traces of blood, which, after all, were but slight, could not be followed long, so we determined to drive the copse-wood which was connected with this beat.

The wounded bear was not encountered, but an uninjured and somewhat larger one crossed the path close to my neighbour Count M., and even halted at the edge of the opposite cover; but it was unluckily so directly in a line with the next gun that it could not be fired at. We had therefore met with four bears on this one day.

On the 30th the rain fell in torrents, the mist hung low

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and the sky was covered with grey clouds. We went out notwithstanding to make the same beats in the valley where two bears had been shot at on the 25th, and where the trackers had announced that there were fresh traces.

The first beat taken on this occasion was the one nearest to the fields and the main valley, the guns being posted on the slope of the hill among the high wood and on the little meadows. Unfortunately we had a thoroughly bad wind, and so it happened that at the very beginning of the beat the last guns on the right wing heard a beast go by which they could not see, and soon afterwards a bear passed at a good speed and out of range in front of an old gentleman, Herr v. M. It did not, however, leave the beat, but crossed back into it over some meadows.

In this wretched weather, with all the bushes dripping wet, the beaters drove badly, their line broke in the middle, and they came up to the guns a quarter of an hour too soon.

Several of us were standing together at my brother-in-law's post when there arose a great shouting on the left flank, and soon afterwards a large wolf coming from below burst through the assembled beaters and instantly vanished among the bushes. It passed so near to one of the men that he struck at it with his stick.

We now tried another beat, but as the rain kept getting heavier, and the thoroughly drenched beaters came out of the cover in disconnected batches, we left off shooting and turned homewards.

On the 1st of October we decided to go after woodcock. The cold weather had driven them down from the hills, and there were certainly great numbers of them, for we found more than a hundred within a small area. Wherever one turned a woodcock got up; but unfortunately the ground was still more hilly, and the difficulties of shooting and placing the guns still greater than on the first day; so that we only

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killed twenty-nine Woodcock, two Hares, one Sparrow-Hawk, one Goatsucker, and three Jays.

On the 2nd of October we could only devote a small part of the morning to shooting, as we had to leave in the afternoon. We therefore chose the nearer ground, which we had shot over on the first occasion, and where we now found a great many Cock, and killed seventeen of them, besides one Hare and a Sparrow-Hawk. This brought our shooting in Transylvania to a close for the time being.

I had unhappily not selected the right season, for we had come at least a week too early, and ought to have waited until about the middle of October. It was only during the last days of our shooting that the bears began to leave the virgin forests higher up, and to betake themselves to the outlying woods, and one could very well see how from day to day they were changing their quarters, for more were reported by the trackers, and more were seen and encountered by us.

A telegram which I received from Transylvania on the 12th of October further confirmed my view of the matter, for on the 11th my neighbour Baron K. shot an outlying wood situated a few miles from my march, and met with seven bears in the course of the day. Count T. killed a large female and a medium-sized one. A young male fell to old Herr v. M., and a fairly well-grown female to a keeper, while two were missed and one escaped without being shot at.

Still we had reason to be well satisfied with our shooting trip, though it was unfortunately rather premature, for three Bears had been killed and four wounded, while the guns had seen four others, but had allowed them to pass without firing, and one had broken back through the beaters.

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MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

ON

ORNITHOLOGY.

I.

Ornithological research is a pursuit which I have often followed very keenly, and though I am well aware how slight and unimportant this collection of notes is, I solace myself with the hope that under much mud and sand there may lie a grain of gold which more able naturalists than I may consider valuable and capable of being turned to account.

I will begin by devoting a few words to the group of the Raptorial birds.

I have had frequent opportunities of both seeing and studying that huge and imposing bird the Cinereous Vulture (*Vultur cinereus*) in a state of freedom, and first met with it on a very mild snowless December day shortly before Christmas. I was shooting foxes, with some other gentlemen, in the large forest of St. Király, a few miles from the village of Gödöllö in Central Hungary, when, just as the beaters were entering the cover, a large bird of prey rose slowly from the ground, and flying into the wood about two hundred paces from my post vanished from my sight. I knew that it was a

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Cinereous Vulture, having often seen that species in confinement.

On the same day, some hours later, I was driving through another part of the same forest when I saw a Cinereous Vulture sitting on the dead top of a gnarled old oak. It allowed the carriage to come up without moving, and did not fly off until a second trap, which was closely following us, reached the tree. Next day, however, there was nothing more to be seen of this rare visitor.

The Cinereous Vulture only occurs in the woods of the Gödöllö estate at rare intervals. According to the perfectly trustworthy statements of the head forester Dittrich, it is always to be seen when an epidemic breaks out among the cattle. The Hungarian peasants have a bad habit of throwing the dead beasts outside the villages and of burying them either in a very slovenly fashion or not at all. This dainty food attracts the Vultures; and it once happened that during a great murrain, some years ago, a keeper saw twelve of these birds collected round a carcass at the edge of a wood.

In September of the year 1879 there occurred among the cattle an epidemic which was quite unimportant and confined to a single village. Again one of the keepers saw five Cinereous Vultures sitting on the old dead oaks of a thinly wooded hillside above that very village.

This last case seems to me worthy of attention, and I cannot help asking myself how the Cinereous Vultures which appeared in the Gödöllö district knew of this trifling outbreak of a disease which merely prevailed in one village; for in our country the true habitat of this bird only begins in Slavonia on the right bank of the Danube, while throughout Southern Hungary it is of very rare occurrence. Between this latter region, however, and the woods around Gödöllö there still intervenes a considerable distance.

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I consider this to be a very interesting question, and further researches may very materially increase our knowledge of the instinct of birds, their wanderings and the extent of ground they traverse in the pursuit of prey. In this latter respect, especially in the case of the raptorial birds, we seem to draw the line rather too tightly.

In the spring of 1878 I had frequent opportunities of observing the Cinereous Vulture at its nest. In the splendid woods of Syrmia it breeds everywhere, and starting from the village of Čerevič on the right bank of the Danube I made, as already related, a series of excursions among the wonderful forests of the Fruška-Gora.

Everywhere I met with Cinereous Vultures. I saw them cruising high aloft, looking out for plunder, sitting on the old oaks, gorged, and also busy at their nests, but never more than eight of them together.

In those districts the Cinereous Vulture is a true forest-bird as regards its nesting and roosting-places, for both are situated in the midst of woods many miles in extent. Its food it seeks beyond the wooded mountains, among the bare stony hills that slope partly northwards to the Danube and partly southwards to the valley of the Save, and I am also quite convinced that the Cinereous Vultures which breed in the Fruška-Gora range into the Bosnian and Servian mountains in search of food, the great wing-power of this bird allowing me to draw this conclusion with safety.

This vulture likes to rest on rocks during the afternoon, and where they are scarce appears to search for them, for we found in the midst of the Fruška-Gora woods only one very small group of rocky pinnacles, which were, however, crowded with vultures in the afternoon, while the incredible quantities of droppings, castings, and feathers lying about them showed that the spot must be a favourite resort of these huge raptorial birds.

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The Cinereous Vulture generally places its nest on the dead upper branches of old oaks. Leafy trees it avoids, as they would render the flying to and fro almost impossible, for these are movements which it always executes but slowly and with difficulty. The nest itself is bigger than that of the largest eagle, and seems to me to be more carefully and solidly built, while the mud which is always plastered upon its outer edge and the great branches of oak which form its foundation give the whole structure a grey appearance.

The Cinereous Vulture shows great anxiety about its brood, and is far more heedless of danger than any of the eagles; and both males and females take turns in the business of incubation, a habit I have never noticed amongst the eagles. That this vulture does so, however, I know from personal observation. Its behaviour at the nest is also characterized by a certain degree of recklessness, for one can hardly get it to rise, and when frightened off it flies back in a few minutes and again creeps into its dwelling. Every time, before leaving or returning, the huge bird slowly erects itself upon the edge of the nest, looks round with outstretched neck, and then, with the assistance of its wings, settles itself inside in the clumsiest fashion.

I have personally observed five Cinereous Vultures' nests, four of which were placed on enormous oaks and one on an old wild pear-tree. At all of them the birds only left the nests after they had been much disturbed, and one always had to shout, hammer the trunk of the tree, and throw up bits of stick. At one nest I had such remarkable evidences of this vulture's want of caution, that I think they are worth detailing.

On reaching the place a forester and I tried to drive away the devoted mother from her brood by shouting, stamping, breaking branches, and throwing up the pieces, but all to no purpose; and it was not until I had missed the protruding

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head of the bird with a bullet that it leisurely rose and flew off. The slow, heavy way in which it did so is shown by the fact that I had plenty of time to change the rifle for a gun that was lying on the ground; the two charges of shot, however, took no effect, being stopped by the thick foliage. I was still standing in the open near the tree and looking about for a good hiding-place, when the great bird came rushing up, and so quickly that it at once vanished into its dwelling. Again I drove it out with an unsuccessful rifle-shot, yet within five minutes at the most the vulture appeared again above the trees, took a few sweeps round, and once more alighted on the edge of the nest; but before it had settled itself on the eggs it noticed me, and flew off ere I could get a shot. A quarter of an hour now elapsed, both birds circling aloft with hoarse croakings. Suddenly the female, which was recognizable by its size, left its spouse and flew straight to the nest; but before it could get there I killed it with my shot-gun.

I will add one more observation which I had several opportunities of making, and which seems to me rather striking: it is that I found a singular enmity existing between the Cinereous Vulture and the "Stein" Eagle, which even gave rise to fierce fights, especially at the nest of the former. "Stein" Eagles came flying past four of the Cinereous Vultures' nests which I visited, circled above them, and swooped after the parent birds, when they hurried up with cries of alarm. Directly these bold eagles showed themselves, one of the vultures returned to the nest and tried to cover its brood with its own body, while in their aerial encounters it was always the great vulture which fled from its valiant but much smaller relative.

This behaviour of the vulture at the approach of an eagle induced me to think that the latter might be trying to take the eggs of the former. I cannot, however, say anything

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definite on this point, and therefore only permit myself to draw attention to it.

At one nest I witnessed a battle which reached a pitch that I should never have believed possible. I was sitting one afternoon under an old oak that bore on its upper branches the nest of a Cinereous Vulture. Both the vultures had made a few circles round my hiding-place, and had then disappeared down a wooded valley, probably in search of plunder. I must have been watching patiently for a good half-hour when I heard a loud rushing sound above me. The noise increased, and suddenly I saw a great mass, composed of the closely involved wings, heads, and feet of two birds, fall straight down to the nest and at once vanish within it. At first I did not know what to make of this phenomenon, but hardly had the birds reached the nest when dust and twigs fell from it, and a great disturbance made me aware that a fight was going on.

After a few moments there appeared, at short intervals, the great wing of the Cinereous Vulture, its bare head, a smaller wing, and presently the head and foot of a "Stein" Eagle. Unfortunately all this happened so quickly that it was impossible to get a safe shot at the portions of the birds' bodies of which I caught such momentary glimpses. Suddenly there was a creaking of the nest, the whole structure swayed, and a Cinereous Vulture fell out over its edge down the trunk of the tree on to one of the lower branches. There the heavy bird caught hold and tried to extend its wings; but availing myself of that moment, I sent a charge of heavy shot into the middle of its breast, and it continued its fall—dead.

No sooner had the shot rung through the wood than a powerful "Stein" Eagle left the nest with easy flight, but my second barrel, which I now let drive, unfortunately failed to bring down the bold robber.

A forester belonging to the district, who knew how to dis-

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tinguish the various birds of prey very well, had been awaiting my return at a clearing about half a mile away, and before I related my experiences he told me that, shortly before the two shots, a Cinereous Vulture and a "Stein" Eagle had followed each other high aloft and then, commencing to fight, had descended towards my hiding-place.

I am perfectly sure that the Cinereous Vulture was the owner of the nest, but what caused the fight I do not know. It seemed, however, to be that the "Stein" Eagle was certainly the stronger and more courageous bird, for it had forced its way right into the dwelling of its huge adversary.

I have rarely had an opportunity of seeing the Griffon Vulture (*Vultur fulvus*) in the open, and have never managed to kill it. On several occasions, however, I observed it in various parts of Slavonia, but always when it was soaring at a very great height. The districts which I visited were generally wooded and had but few rocks, and rocks are what this vulture must have before it feels at home.

Many naturalists even maintain that the Griffon Vulture only builds on rocks; but this is incorrect, for where they are altogether wanting it puts up with big trees. It is, however, quite true that in such wooded districts it is of very rare occurrence. In the above-mentioned forests round Čerevič we found only one nest of this bird; it was placed on a large oak, and the female was killed by Eugen v. Homeyer as she was flying up to it.

That the Griffon Vulture is now carrying out a definite migratory movement in far greater numbers than the Cinereous Vulture is an undoubted fact. Large flocks of this species have already been often observed in Bohemia, near Pardubitz for example in the year 1877; and when the natural-history collections in the schools of small provincial

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towns or the sporting trophies in country-houses are examined, one very frequently finds in the western provinces of the kingdom stuffed specimens of the Griffon, but very seldom of the Cinereous Vulture. What is the reason of this?

From what I have seen and heard, I believe that I have good grounds for maintaining that the Griffon Vulture is now, as already said, engaged in a vast migration, and is occupied in extending the area of its distribution.

Certain species of animals change their habitats in the course of time, but their reasons for so doing are as yet unknown to us, and the investigation of these causes offers splendid employment to students of the animal world.

According to my ideas, this vulture is drawing nearer and nearer to the Alps. It has already taken up its abode in the Karawanken to the south of Klangenfurt, and from there it will spread further towards the north and west. In the eastern and central Alps it is, as it were, replacing the Bearded Vulture, which has now, alas! almost entirely disappeared.

I may also mention, as an interesting fact, that the Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) regularly breeds in Switzerland, and that one or two of its nests are situated on a mountain close to Geneva. In the museum of that town I saw specimens that were killed in that locality, and one of the Curators informed me that this bird still breeds there every year and invariably on the same mountain.

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II.

I AM in a position to furnish some notes on our European eagles which may not, perhaps, be wholly devoid of interest; and I will begin with the "Stein" Eagle, as it is the species that I have chiefly studied.

The "Stein" Eagle (*Aquila fulva*) is now-a-days considered one of the rarest raptorial birds of our country, and even in the works of the greatest naturalists one may read that this powerful eagle has been driven from all other districts and is now to be found almost exclusively in the Alps. These statements I dispute. The "Stein" Eagle has not yet become so uncommon, although there are but few places sufficiently quiet for it to breed in. Among the inaccessible precipices of many of the Alpine valleys its nest is safe from all disturbance; and it may here and there be found breeding in certain of the ravines of Switzerland, Tyrol, Salzburg, and Styria. These nests are heard of, as the mighty bird of prey carries on its depredations over a large tract of country, and it is therefore imagined that the Alps are the only localities in which it occurs. This is, however, quite incorrect, for though, thanks to the inaccessible precipices, isolated nests do exist in the Alpine regions, still the number of the "Stein" Eagles which specially frequent those mountains is extremely small, much smaller than it is in those lowlands that are tolerably well fitted for shy birds to live in.

In the Alps every peasant is a practised shot, and every sportsman considers the eagle the noblest of game, so that wherever the mighty robber appears he is exposed to the

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most constant pursuit. I have ranged through our Alps in the most varied directions, and have spent entire days high up in the mountains, and I have, at the outside, not met with more than four "Stein" Eagles; but, on the other hand, I have both seen and carefully observed many birds of this species in divers flat districts of the kingdom, and have even shot some of them. Excepting, however, the high mountains, I know of no other locality within our realms where they would breed.

I imagine that most of their nests are situated in the loftier parts of the Carpathians, the Alps of Transylvania, and in the forests of Eastern Prussia, Russian Poland, and other Russian provinces. There must be places where this species can breed quite undisturbed, for the number of young ones seen in spring and summer, as well as the pairs and the solitary adults encountered in winter, is very considerable. One need, however, have sharp eyes, skill, and perseverance to find out whether these eagles are passing through a given district.

Like all other large birds of prey, the "Stein" Eagle only begins to breed in its third or fourth year, and is from the moment of its leaving the nest up to that time occupied in long journeys and in ranging through the most distant localities.

Its powers of flight are very great, and its wanderings are limited by no other laws than those of hunger and its fear of man, which increases with age. This being the case, whither does not this swift powerful bird travel! There is, for example, not a single tract in the whole kingdom unfrequented by the "Stein" Eagle. In one locality it is seen more commonly, in another more rarely, but everywhere a thorough search can and will disclose its presence, at all events occasionally during the year. There is a current idea, especially among sportsmen, that this eagle only visits the

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lowlands in the depth of winter, when hunger drives it down from the mountains. This is quite a mistake, for though the adult birds are still busy at their nest in the beginning of summer, and are therefore confined to certain localities, the young ones which have not yet paired range about as freely in summer as in winter.

I had opportunities of seeing a great many "Stein" Eagles in Syrmia, especially in the range of the Frnška-Gora. Their lesser relatives, the beautiful Imperial Eagles, breed in those splendid wooded valleys, but they themselves do not; for, despite our thorough searching, we did not find a single nest of this species. Young unpaired birds belonging to it were, however, flying about the woods in great numbers, and we saw some of them every day, although it was just the breeding-season of the birds of prey.

In order to strengthen what has been already said about these eagles being found in all parts of the kingdom, I may mention that in Bohemia, where, at any rate, agriculture has already made very great progress, the hall of almost every large country-house is adorned with one or two "Stein" Eagles killed on the estate; and that even on the extensive shootings of the open country round Prague sportsmen know this great raptorial bird, not from books alone but from personal observation, and can describe it accurately.

I will say nothing about the Riesen- and Erzgebirge and the great Böhmer-Wald, for what has been already stated applies to them; but I may mention that in the woods round Bürglitz and Lána, which belong to Prince Fürstenberg, the "Stein" Eagle is of very common occurrence, especially in winter, and I have seen stuffed specimens which were killed in those districts; it even returns there so regularly that attempts have already been made to kill it at a lure. In Moravia, too, it is very common, this being the natural result of the nearness of the Carpathians.

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Of Lower Austria I can speak from my own experience and from many personal observations, for in this part of the country I was even lucky enough to kill a very large "Stein" Eagle. In the whole neighbourhood of Vienna it is one of the regularly recurring sights, and in all the preserves among the auen of the Danube, as well as in the Wiener-Wald and the open country, most of the keepers have tales to relate of what has happened to them in their encounters with these eagles. Several have already been shot in the little pheasant-preserves near Laxenburg, and between 1840 and 1850 many of these noble birds were killed in the Imperial park, which they used to frequent as long as there was a large slaughter-house close beside the wall near Upper St. Veit. Even now, young eagles may be seen cruising above the meadows, attracted by the abundance of game. Thus, for instance, in July 1878 a "Stein" Eagle took up its abode within the park for three weeks, and in the middle of September I saw one circling high above that locality.

Certain spots are specially affected by these eagles, because they are well situated, abound in game, and are quiet. To such localities they come year after year, and often remain a considerable time. There is, for example, a fir-wood near Gänserndorf, in Lower Austria, which, being well stocked with hares and rabbits, is a regular hunting-ground of the "Stein" Eagle. In autumn, when work in the fields is over and large flights of wild geese pitch on them every evening, the eagles also appear, and stay for days and even weeks. Others then relieve them, but there are often a good many there at the same time, and so it goes on until the middle of March.

This locality is well peopled; several villages lie in its immediate neighbourhood; roads and railways run past it; the wood is not large, and the only positions which afford the

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birds an outlook are a few detached trees and boundary heaps; yet from one spot two or even three eagles are often seen flying over the snow or sitting on the trees, waiting for the hares to run past.

In Hungary the "Stein" Eagle is common enough in all the districts where there is a large head of game. I know one locality very well, which is yearly visited by this bird, and is, I might almost say, one of its winter-stations, and can therefore give some details about it.

Round Gödöllö, about an hour from Pest by rail, the woods and heaths are stocked with incredible numbers of red deer, some roe, and plenty of small game. In summer the eagles frequently pass over the forests without halting there. In autumn, on the other hand, they appear and often stay until almost the end of March. The reason for their so doing is quite clear to me, for from the beginning of September up to about the middle of January the red deer are being continually driven, and owing to their great abundance and the pronounced disinclination of the Hungarian keepers to make a proper search for the wounded animals, a great deal of game is left lying in the woods, and the eagles find a superfluity of enticing food.

Throughout three autumns and winters I have employed myself in making observations at this favourite resort of the eagles. One circumstance which I could not account for was the great variation in the time when the birds first showed themselves. In 1875 the first "Stein" Eagle appeared somewhat after the middle of October, and remained a long time. In 1876 heavy snow fell in Central Hungary in the beginning of November, and in spite of the cold having set in so early the first eagle only came to the woods about Gödöllö on the 11th of November. In the autumn of 1877, October was singularly mild, the trees were still in full leaf, and the country had by no means an autumnal

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look, yet I nevertheless found some of these birds in their customary haunts by the middle, and shot one on the 24th of that month.

When the "Stein" Eagle finds a suitable district, it stays there a long time, often for one or two months. It takes up a fixed position, selects a certain tree as its roosting-place, to which it returns every evening. It avoids remaining for any length of time in the hunting-grounds of another of its species, and merely flies over them rapidly. One finds, however, that a couple often keep faithfully together long after the breeding-season, and that they hunt and sleep in company throughout the winter. The same thing may be observed among young birds, probably children from the same nest; they remain together for years, until their pairing-time also comes.

Hunting in company is much more conducive to success, and so it even happens that the "Stein" and the Sea-Eagles become fast friends and remain together day and night. This I have personally observed. A large pale yellow Sea-Eagle and a male "Stein" Eagle appeared together one day in a wood near Gödöllö, and frequented the same district for three weeks. They were to be seen at all hours, and always together. I encountered them almost daily, until at last the "Stein" Eagle fell to my gun before the eyes of its companion.

Strictly speaking, there is only one wood at Gödöllö to which the eagles always resort, and this is St. Király, the most easterly of all. Their reason for selecting it is its great quietude and the numbers of deer which are there crowded into a small space. One comes across eagles in all the other adjoining woods, especially on fine days, when they extend their excursions; but for roosting, and as a special residence, they always make choice of that wood.

In the afternoon I often saw from one spot three and even

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four of these birds sitting on the dead tops of the old oaks after a successful hunt. The more the deer are pursued the greater is the number of eagles that appear, and if the trouble was taken to lay out a deer every week at a particular spot, and the birds not shot at, one could within a short time collect a very large number of eagles in this single preserve. In 1876 I exposed a deer in front of my hut on four occasions, and spent four mornings at the place, killing three "Stein" Eagles and wounding one Sea-Eagle, which, unfortunately, got away.

I have observed that the "Stein" Eagle also comes to carrion even when in quite a high condition, but this it does very reluctantly and only if much pressed for food. I have only once shot one of these birds at a dead horse, and on that day the ground was covered with several feet of snow, while the temperature had fallen below zero.

One may say that this eagle is, as a rule, very fastidious, for as long as hunting promises to be successful it disdains all inferior food. If a deer is killed in the afternoon and laid in front of the decoy-hut just as it is getting dark, without its being gralloched or any trace of human hands left upon it, one can make sure of seeing a "Stein" Eagle on the following day. In the early morning, often before daybreak, it appears at the place; and the way to make still more sure of a meeting with the bold robber is to place an Eagle-Owl near the dead game, and then jealousy and an innate hatred of its nocturnal foe is added to its greediness for the feast. In this way I have killed six of these eagles, two of them in one day, and even within one hour.

It is a mistake to think that the "Stein" Eagle is an excessively shy and cunning bird, for, conscious of its powers, it is bold, quick, and impatient, and can therefore be easily deceived and lured into danger.

When it is quietly sitting on a tree and becomes aware of

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the dangerous presence of man it flies off fast enough ; for it is not lazy, and is as active as ever even after a meal. On the other hand, its keen love of hunting and its bold disposition often lead it to follow up game until it gets quite close to people. The same sort of thing takes place at the owl and the decoy-hut. The instant that it catches sight of the foe or the bait it dashes at them, and before it thinks of the possible danger it is there, yet whenever anything seems the least suspicious it vanishes with equal rapidity. A quick shot will therefore find it easier to kill three "Stein" Eagles than one of the heavy, lazy, but sly Sea-Eagles.

The great number of eagles killed by Draxler, who was equally celebrated both as a singer and a shot, will serve as a proof that this bird has not become so very rare. Besides many Sea-Eagles and other birds of prey this indefatigable sportsman also bagged a large number of "Stein" Eagles, all shot, so far as I am aware, from his well-known hut at Marchfeld, close to Vienna.

As further evidence of the truth of my statements I may mention that, though I had but little time to devote to the tedious sport of eagle-shooting, I killed during three winters twelve "Stein" Eagles in a comparatively short time.

I may now be allowed to jot down a few remarks on the Golden and "Stein" Eagle question, which has of late been so often discussed in scientific circles.

What is *Aquila chrysaëtus*? This was the question that so often forced itself upon me when I turned over the works of so many naturalists and then saw, either in the open or in collections, the bird described as the Golden Eagle.

All the specimens which we call *chrysaëtus* are invariably only colour-varieties of the true "Stein" Eagle. In every large museum one finds specimens which are pointed out by the Curators as rarities and true Golden Eagles, yet after all they are not so.

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The "Stein" Eagle varies much in plumage, and in this variation age plays an important part; but one transition and three main forms of its plumage, and even of its build, can also be clearly distinguished, and they are dependent on the locality of the nest from which the bird has flown. No stress can be laid on the very variable size of individuals of all these forms, for that is caused by alimentary conditions during the youth of the bird.

The south-west, north-west, and central European "Stein" Eagles may be included in the first group, those of South-eastern Europe in the second, and those that belong to the north-eastern and northern parts of the continent in the third; while between the second and third groups one finds an intermediate, or what may be called a transition form.

The third form is the Golden Eagle of the old writers Naumann and Brehm, and so clearly and definitely do these great naturalists describe it, that it can easily be recognized. It exists, but what to call it, and whether to elevate it to specific rank or not to do so, is the point on which the whole question hinges. My own opinion is that as an individual species it can no longer stand unless two more new species are to be created, and then we should have three species of "Stein" Eagles. For this the differences are too slight, for they are not nearly so important as between *Aquila imperialis* and its Spanish relative *A. adalberti*. That is why one speaks of forms and not of species, for there is only one species of "Stein" Eagle, but it is split up into three forms according to the region in which it lives. As an example of this practice with regard to many birds, I may instance the case of *Haliaëtus albicilla*. There is a great difference in size between the Sea-Eagles of Northern and Southern Europe, but yet it would never occur to any one to make two species out of them.

I have had fewer opportunities of observing the Imperial

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Eagle (*Aquila imperialis*), the lesser relative of the "Stein" Eagle. In vain I searched for it in the great virgin forests of Southern Hungary north of the Draueck, as well as in the woods to the west of the Danube below Mohács. Not once did I even see it circling aloft; I was, however, told by the keepers that isolated couples often built their nests in the great oak woods to the south-west of Mohács, but, as I have already said, I could not personally verify the statement.

It was some distance above Futak that I first saw the Imperial Eagle. The bird was cruising over the Danube, and from the steamer I observed several others of the same species as they were setting out in the morning from the wooded mountains of Slavonia towards the plains of the Hungarian side of the river, in search of plunder. In the true Syrmian mountains of the Vrdnik or Fruška-Gora there are many nests of the Imperial Eagle; but there it selects the low outlying hills and the woods bordering the plains in preference to the beech-forests which cover the higher mountains, and though I certainly found a few nests among the mountains, I met with it more frequently at lower elevations.

The reason of this is pretty clear: the ziesel forms its chief food, an observation that was also made by Brehm on the steppes of Siberia. One can easily see what a vital necessity this little rodent is to the Imperial Eagle, and as it is, of course, only found among fields, meadows, and heaths, the eagles prefer to settle in the woods of the cultivated country and the outlying hills.

The seven nests of this eagle which I saw were all placed on oaks, some of them on thin saplings, for while the other eagles, even the small ones such as the Osprey, the Pygmy, and the Spotted, all show fastidious caution in picking out old and lofty trees on which to construct their dwellings, the Imperial appears to content itself with any tree that it happens to find. The nest itself, compared with those of other

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raptorial birds, is not large—strikingly small indeed, considering the size of its owner, and built in what I should call a very slovenly manner.

At all the nests of the Imperial Eagle I found whole colonies of Tree-Sparrows, which fluttered round the abode of their mighty landlord, chirping loudly. I have also observed them at the nests of the Sea-Eagle, but not in such numbers.

The Imperial Eagle is shy and knows how to get out of the way in good time; it is, however, by no means difficult to kill it at the nest, for it does not exhibit the great and often marvellous circumspection of the Sea-Eagle. It is true that at one's first approach it leaves its abode sooner and more quickly than that bird, but it soon appears again and flies straight back to it, quite oblivious of the sportsman.

This species is very common in the large woods of stunted trees which extend over the perfectly level country near Titel, above the junction of the Theiss with the Danube. There it is, so to speak, the characteristic bird of the district, and there also its principal food is the ziesel, which is so destructive to the fields that it inhabits in multitudes.

In that locality I saw an Imperial Eagle's nest at the edge of a large wood, and not more than three hundred paces distant from a road on which there was plenty of traffic. It was placed on a low slender oak, and the birds being accustomed to the sight of people were naturally very tame, so that we had only to wait a few minutes before we killed the old and finely plumaged female.

In the beginning of May I still found Imperial Eagles engaged in the building of their nests. Others were sitting on their eggs, and some even had young. These eaglets, however, were still in down, and so small that it would have been impossible to rear any of them. At one nest, which was situated in a remote valley of the Fruška-Gora

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mountains, I saw the male busily bringing food to the sitting female.

The immature birds that have not yet begun to pair fly about hunting, like the "Stein" Eagles already described, but their excursions are naturally much more limited in extent than those of their larger relatives, for the Imperial Eagle is not cosmopolitan; it has a well-defined range, and is a bird of the South. The precise boundaries of the area of its distribution I have not, however, been able to determine, as I have hitherto only investigated the most northerly of the regions which it inhabits.

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III.

To the Spotted Eagle (*Aquila nævia*) I can only devote a few words, as I have but seldom had an opportunity of studying it. It is unobtrusive and not very striking, and therefore often escapes observation, although the whole of our country lies within the area of its distribution.

In its wanderings, which extend far to the west, it passes through the more western provinces of the kingdom commonly enough, avoiding the high mountains, for large plains are its special hunting-grounds.

In Lower Austria, Moravia, and Bohemia it is a regular and tolerably frequent visitor, and if we were to observe more carefully, this interesting bird would be much oftener seen, and it would be possible to give more precise data about its journeyings and the localities in which it takes up its quarters.

With us the Spotted Eagle only breeds in Galizia, Central and Southern Hungary. In Germany it inhabits the northern and eastern provinces. My own observations of it have been confined to Hungary and Slavonia. I first saw it on the island of Adony, south of Pest : there the bold robber was circling over a heronry, followed by the frightened cries of the old birds. Nowhere did I find it in the great auen south of Mohács and north of Draueck, for its true dwelling-places are the dry woods among the fields and plains.

This bird was, as might have been expected, very common in the Keskend wood, which lies to the south-west of Mohács, and is a few miles distant from the Danube. That is a locality which exactly suits it, as it is an oak wood of good-

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sized trees, in the middle of a broad plain, and affords everything that the Spotted Eagle can desire. The keepers told us that it often breeds there; but we were not lucky enough to find a nest ourselves, though we often saw the birds flying through the trees or circling aloft, either singly or in little companies.

In Slavonia I saw Spotted Eagles hunting about the wooded valleys of the Fruška-Gora mountains on several occasions, and was much surprised to find this characteristic bird of the plains among those thickly wooded and somewhat high mountains. The fact may be explained by the proximity of the great Hungarian plains, as well as those of the Save further to the south, which must, according to our united observations, be regarded as the daily hunting-grounds of all the birds of prey nesting in the Fruška-Gora. In one of the valleys of these mountains we even found a nest of the Spotted Eagle, which the keepers pointed out as being the abode of a Kite.

I found this species most abundant near the village of Futak, on the left bank of the Danube. There it was really the characteristic bird of the little oak woods, which were surrounded by fields and heaths. We came across four inhabited nests of it within a small area, and I noticed several of these eagles flying about among the isolated clumps of wood. The nests which I myself saw were placed on the upper branches of medium-sized oaks, and were large and strongly built, their form reminding us of those of the Common Buzzard. The breeding females were all sitting hard, and it was only after repeated tapping at the trunks of the trees that they quitted their dwellings with a quick gliding flight.

I several times saw Spotted Eagles in the woods at Kovil, near the mouth of the Theiss; but favourable as the nature of the district appeared to be, I did not succeed in finding a

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single nest. I only observed one paired couple, and they were probably still employed in building.

I will, in conclusion, give the measurements of three Spotted Eagles killed in one district, as it may be interesting to compare them with those of *Aquila clanga*, *Aquila nipalensis*, and other specimens of *nævia* from various localities.

	Length.	Breadth.	Wing.	Tail.	Beak.	Tarsus.	Middle toe.
	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.
I.	59·5	155·5	47	23	5·2	9·3	5·5
II.	63	164·5	49·3	24	5	9·5	5·5
III.	65·8	162·6	47·2	24	4·7	10	5·2

The Pygmy Eagle (*Aquila pennata*), though apparently a feeble little fellow, is a noble eagle from top to toe. It has undeniably been less observed than any of our Central European birds of prey, and is therefore still very imperfectly known. All parts of our native land, excepting the Alpine regions, come within its range, and it may be found in most of the districts of Central Europe, but is nowhere common. It demands quiet and large woods, for immunity from all disturbance and the pursuit of man are more necessary to it than to many other raptorial birds. All the facts connected with its existence plainly show how easily it falls a prey to mankind, and this is the reason why we find it quite common in the extensive woods of Hungary, Poland, Russia, the Principalities of the Danube, Turkey and Spain, but already rare in the western provinces of Austria, and in Germany and France. It still, however, occurs in all tracts of country which gratify its demands, and if scarce has still nowhere entirely disappeared. Plenty of practice, perseverance, and good eyesight are the only requisites for the detection and observation of the Pygmy Eagle in our woods.

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It was long a matter of dispute whether *Aquila pennata* (the Booted Eagle) ought to be separated from *Aquila minuta* (the Pygmy Eagle) or not. Brehm persistently adhered to the view that they should be divided into two species, and many naturalists agreed with him. In the first edition of his 'Thierleben' one may still read of the two species. In the second edition there is only one Pygmy Eagle, the two species having been fused. Until recently I also was impressed with the idea that they should be separated, and held firmly to that conviction. The observations, however, which I have had opportunities of making have taught me to know better.

The Pygmy Eagle varies considerably in size, but what raptorial bird does not? If new species were to be made according to relative sizes, more ornithologists, especially the learned gentlemen who have to do with museums and collections, would have the opportunities they so greatly desire of splitting species, of giving new names, and of making out that they have discovered new birds. One must go out into the open, and study the ways and habits of a bird, in order to form a proper conception of it, and there it will soon be apparent how much its size and plumage may vary, but how permanent are its habits.

The first Pygmy Eagles which I had an opportunity of observing were particularly small specimens, and I felt sure that I had made the acquaintance of *Aquila minuta*. A little later I killed a specimen quite exceptionally large, and was convinced that I had before me the Booted Eagle (*Aquila pennata*). I afterwards often saw eagles of this species at home and abroad, stuffed and in skins, while a great many, killed near Vienna, passed through my hands. The large specimens I always took to be *pennata*, the small ones *minuta*.

It was not until 1880 that I had a chance of seeing and

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studying a comparatively large number of Pygmy Eagles in Hungary, and on several occasions I saw that the forms which I had before supposed to be Booted Eagles and Pygmy Eagles respectively were represented by a single pair. The habits of the larger birds were the same as those of the smaller, and the variations of colour were also equally common to both.

In speaking of the colour of this bird I must mention that I have always met with two leading forms, and a third which is only characterized by slight distinctions. The first has the pale plumage with the white breast and underparts, the light brown back, &c.: that is the best known, and, according to my experience, the most common. The second has the uniformly coffee-brown plumage, which varies much in depth of shade among different individuals. The third has the quite dark, almost black-brown dress, which is very rarely met with in our country, and is (according to Louis Bureau in France, and Brehm in Spain) the commoner among the Pygmy Eagles of Western Europe. Among the many Spanish Pygmy Eagles which I saw in the exceptionally rich collection of skins at the British Museum, I also found some specimens with this perfectly dark plumage.

The mistaken idea that the pale bird is the male, and the dark the female, is still pretty widely spread; and one of the many extremely interesting points connected with this bird of prey is the very fact that the variations of its colouring, which differ just as much as the plumage of the cock Capercaillie does from that of the hen, are subject to no law known to us.

Few European species offer so much material for study as the Pygmy Eagle, and as in Austria, especially in the eastern parts of the country, it is still tolerably common, Austrian ornithologists ought to devote themselves to the study of this bird.

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The finding of the Pygmy Eagle in extensive woods presents, as I have already said, certain difficulties. The dark birds especially require a very practised eye to prevent their being confounded with the Common Buzzard. In the immediate neighbourhood of Vienna it is not really so rare as one imagines, for in some parts of the Wiener Wald it even breeds every year, and during its migrations one sees it in parks and quite unimportant patches of wood, while it has been repeatedly killed in the pheasant preserves at Laxenburg and in the vicinity of Hietzing. In spring I often saw from one spot several of these eagles going through their aerial evolutions above the quiet wooded valleys of the Wiener Wald, the character of these woodlands appearing to possess peculiarities specially attractive to the Pygmy Eagle, for they always frequent them as a resting-place during the time of migration, and in the breeding-season one or two pairs habitually nest in the Imperial park at Hütteldorf.

The chain of the Fruška-Gora mountains, which has just the same character as the Wiener Wald, is also a favourite resort of the Pygmy Eagle, for there the beech and oak woods, which are only interrupted by isolated little meadows, seem to suit it quite as well as the large forests of the open country.

In the Wiener Wald this bird can be most easily observed during the early morning hours of fine June days, when it comes flying out of the woods low over the ground, and settles among the small glades in order to catch mice, and more especially grasshoppers. There I have seen and observed it for days together almost every year. I never saw it in the auen of the Danube at Vienna, and I was also told by the keepers that it rarely comes to those woods, and only on migration. The character of the auen does not suit it, for I saw it but twice in the great forests near Apatin and the neighbourhood of the Draueck. On the first occasion a single bird was flying about ; on the second I was patiently

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watching under a Sea-Eagle's nest when a pair appeared, one of which was in the light, the other in the dark plumage.

In the large Keskend wood, several times alluded to, we found a pair of these birds still employed in building their nest, and single individuals were also flying about in that locality. In the Fruška-Gora, as I have already said, I saw Pygmy Eagles several times every day, sometimes solitary, sometimes paired. The light-coloured birds were the more common, the dark rarer, but still of regular occurrence.

I have never seen so many of these graceful little eagles crowded into such a comparatively small area as in the Kovil and Šačer forests, in the district near the junction of the Theiss. There I had opportunities of seeing them at all times of the day, and also found some of their nests. In the beginning of May, several of the females were already sitting closely on their eggs, others were busy with the building of their nests, and here and there pairs were flying about, seeking suitable sites for their habitations. On the 3rd of May I found a dark-coloured female sitting so hard that I with difficulty forced her to leave her abode.

At the nest, as well as on all other occasions, the Pygmy Eagle exhibits great confidence towards man and is not difficult to kill. Its behaviour in the woods is awkward, I might say almost Owl-like. It sits quietly on the lower branches of an old beech or oak for a long time, and not until one comes close up to it does it flutter away low down between the stems of the trees with a noiseless irregular flight. Quite different, however, is its conduct when it is out hunting or amusing the sitting female with an exhibition of its powers of flight: then the Pygmy Eagle shows that it is a true member of the group of noble eagles, for without any apparent movement or beating of its wings it soars high over the woods and hills, and now and then folds its pinions and drops like an arrow to the earth.

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The Pygmy Eagle has a fine melodious voice: I might really speak of it as the singing eagle; for the varied notes which it utters constitute a song, short indeed, but still not a call, and more like the utterances of many of the song-birds than the shrill whistle of the other raptorial birds.

I had often heard this song of the Pygmy Eagle, but at first never imagined that the pretty notes proceeded from a bird of prey until I chanced to see the beautiful creature perched on a dead branch with open beak and inflated throat, warbling its ecstatic love-song to its sitting mate.

I believe that I am right in thinking that, like its larger relatives, it only pairs after several years, for during each breeding-season I saw solitary individuals ranging carelessly through the woods in pursuit of sport and plunder.

Its nest much reminds one of that of the Spotted Eagle or of the Common Buzzard, and, as with them, the structure is distinctly large compared with the size of the bird. I believe that only in the rarest instances does the Pygmy Eagle have recourse to nest-building; and that, wherever it can do so, it turns the Spotted Eagles and Buzzards out of their dwellings, as it naturally prefers their nests, and that where it can find nothing better it appropriates the slovenly constructed abodes of the Kites instead of making a nest of its own. I have twice found and killed Pygmy Eagles at nests which on both occasions were proved to belong to the Common Kite. It was in the Wiener Wald that this first happened. I had found a Kite's nest, had observed the splendid pair of birds for some days, and had even fired an ineffectual shot at them, when one afternoon, as I was again sitting under the nest, there appeared, instead of the Kite, a beautiful light-coloured Pygmy Eagle. It flew noiselessly to the tree where the nest was placed, settled on the edge of the Kite's dwelling, towards the interior of which it was stretching out its head, when a shot brought it down.

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On the second occasion I went through a somewhat similar experience in the Fruška-Gora. An accomplished forester, well acquainted with birds, conducted me to a Kite's nest, where I tried to drive out the occupant by hammering at the trunk of the tree, but it was not until after repeated attempts that a handsome Pygmy Eagle flew out and fell to my shot. A few days before, the forester had frightened out the female Kite, and on the very day when I found the Pygmy Eagle as an interloper in the nest the pair of Kites were anxiously circling over the spot. Both the nests of these Kites were placed on oak trees in very similar situations.

Near Kovil I found a dark-coloured female Pygmy Eagle in a particularly large nest. The male, decked in the beautiful pale plumage, was perched close by, and when I approached fluttered anxiously from tree to tree without flying far away, even after its mate had been shot.

It is difficult to furnish detailed and connected information about the Pygmy Eagle, for one only sees it now and again, and it is only when favoured by good luck that one has an opportunity of studying this highly interesting bird.

In the beautiful uninhabited mountains close to the splendid lake of Butrinto, in Albania, I have seen the bold, powerful, and equally interesting Bonelli's Eagle (*Aquila bonellii*) cruising about, but it unfortunately never came well within shot. I hope, however, that on some future occasion I may be able to record some particulars concerning this bird.

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IV.

The many opportunities that I have had of studying the great Sea-Eagle (*Haliaëtus albicilla*), the largest of all our eagles, lead me to believe that I can furnish some notes concerning it which may not be wholly uninteresting to many of my readers.

The Sea-Eagle is the best known eagle of our country, although it breeds in so few of its districts; for it is very widely distributed, and one may safely say that, with the exception of the Alps, every part of Austria is yearly visited by this bird in the course of its wanderings. It is the commonest of our eagles, but in most places merely appears at certain seasons of the year, and there are only a few southern localities where it is more than a winter bird, a passing guest on its travels.

The western parts of Austria are for the Sea-Eagle merely winter-quarters. It visits them on its long journeys, which begin in autumn and continue until about the middle of March. It may be met with during the winter months throughout Central Europe, excepting the high mountains. These it shuns, or at most just touches them on its migrations. During my many rambles through all the Alpine districts of Austria I never saw a Sea-Eagle, and have only heard of one being killed within the last few years. It was shot in the range of the northern limestone Alps, and was a very powerful young bird, which frequented the shores of the lake of Gmunden and the most northerly spurs of those mountains for three weeks. From time to time it flew a little way up the Traun, towards the interior of the hills, and after doing much damage among the ducks and other waterfowl of the

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lake, it was caught in a trap near Ebensee, but was so slightly injured that it was quite fit to be an ornament of the Zoological Gardens at Schönbrunn.

The Sea-Eagle is not, on the whole, very critical in its choice of winter-quarters. It prefers large rivers and streams, and also selects districts where lakes and ponds will provide it with food, remaining close to them until they are quite frozen; but from that moment it may be seen away in the interior of the plains, far from all water. Fish certainly form its chief diet; but in winter, as soon as these fail, it pursues all sorts of game, from the doe of the Roe Deer down to the smallest vertebrate animal. It is indeed so fond of hares and rabbits that it even forsakes the waters and spends a long time in localities where these animals abound.

Most of the Sea-Eagles build their nests on the shores of the northern seas, in Norway, Sweden, on the coasts of the German Ocean and the Baltic, in the great forests of Russia and Northern Germany, and in Mecklenburg, especially on the island of Rügen, which is one of their well-known breeding-places. It has also several favourite resorts along the large rivers of Southern Russia near the Black Sea, but never nests in Central Europe proper. The only spots in our own country where it now breeds are situated in Southern Hungary, the Banat, and on the Danube down to the Servian frontier.

In spring the Sea-Eagles are of course busy at their nests, and until the young are fully fledged do not begin their travels, which at first only extend over a limited area in the neighbourhood of their breeding-places, the greater journeys commencing towards the middle of October, and in mild autumns even later.

Many of these eagles naturally remain on the sea-coasts, chiefly on those of the northern waters, but numbers of them come down into the interior of Europe, and there

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range about, following the upward course of the rivers; while others, especially those which nest in Southern Europe, extend their journeys to Asia Minor and Egypt, and there pass the winter. Their autumn migrations are quite irregular, for they are not true birds of passage, and seek no milder climate, but, like all the eagles, travel about in search of hunting-grounds. One day they spend in northerly, another in more southerly districts, just as their hunting necessitates; and this is the reason why we find the Sea-Eagle in all parts of Central Europe, even more frequently than the "Stein" Eagle. Although the latter nests in the heart of our continent, in the Swiss Alps, Spain, the Pyrenees, and so many of the extensive forests of Europe, still the Sea-Eagle, which sets up its abode further from us, is a much commoner bird, for its numbers are far greater. The number of eggs which it lays is also almost invariably larger, for a nest of the "Stein" Eagle is rarely tenanted by more than one young bird; but it is not uncommon to see three Sea-Eaglets in a single eyrie. Fish being the principal food of the Sea-Eagle, it is naturally in a position to bring up its young much more easily, and its cunning wary habits also enable it to avoid more dangers than the dashing "Stein" Eagle. Seldom are more than two, at most three, of the latter birds seen at the same moment, while on the northern coasts of Europe, as well as at their breeding-places in Southern Hungary, the former may be met with in companies of seven or eight, or even more. In all well-watered localities, where excessive cultivation does not make its free robber-life impossible, it is a winter resident; but there are certain districts which, by reason of their special qualifications, yearly harbour great numbers of these birds. There they pass a shorter or longer time, and are always replaced by others. The auen of the Danube, close to Vienna, are, for example, one of their favourite winter resorts, and in former times especially, when

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there was more game and they were able to find abundance of food on land in the event of the ice holding, eight to ten Sea-Eagles often appeared on the Lobau, where they were concentrated within a small area. In the evening they roosted on the tall elms and white poplars, and a great many were then shot by the keepers. Things have, however, changed since that time, but three or four still come to the auen in the immediate neighbourhood of Vienna every year, and there spend the winter. The March is also one of the chief lines of this eagle's migration. From Germany they come to Moravia, follow that river up to the Danube, and there hunt about up and down. From the March they also make excursions away over the Marchfeld, straight to the Danube.

In January and February they are seen in almost every part of Lower Austria north of the Danube. The little fir-woods near Gänserndorf form one of the headquarters and favourite roosting-places, to which they come every year, especially when the ice on the rivers makes fishing impossible. There they try to make up for their deprivations by hunting hares and rabbits, and many are then killed at the Eagle-Owl huts round Gänserndorf, Wagram, and even as low as Aspern. I need only refer to the numbers of Sea-Eagles that the celebrated eagle-hunter Draxler used to shoot from his hut at Gänserndorf, where I myself once saw near the railway two of these birds following each other close to the ground. The Sea-Eagle is also a common yearly visitor in the neighbourhood of the Neusiedler Lake, where it hunts the ducks in the reed-beds and does great havoc among the fish, for it is one of the most arrant robbers of these creatures, and does immense damage to the fishermen.

Similar localities also exist in Hungary, where it may be met with in winter almost daily. I have frequently observed it in the woods at Gödöllö, and in October, when its first great hunting-trips begin, have often seen one or two every

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day, and for many consecutive days. They fly high above the woods, and none of them settle, for they are still travelling from river to river in search of hunting-grounds, and the most that any of them do is to circle round and try to appease their hunger with a hare. After the commencement of their migratory season these eagles quite disappear from that neighbourhood for some time, for they have all reached the places where they can find their favourite food; they are then on the lakes and rivers.

Not until the great cold sets in do they return to the woods; then one often sees them in the forest which I mentioned when treating of the "Stein" Eagle, from two to four being frequently assembled at one spot. Sometimes, however, when the weather is mild Sea-Eagles may be sought for in vain in the woods of Gödöllö; one or two may halt there perhaps for a few hours about the middle of December, but that is all. In severe winters they are, on the contrary, visitors upon whose appearance one can safely count. In 1875 I there lured with horseflesh, and was fortunate enough to kill, a very pale-yellow coloured Sea-Eagle, which had been ranging for some time through a particular wood. Soon afterwards another very old bird appeared and went about for nearly a month with a "Stein" Eagle, which I finally killed before its eyes.

The same sort of thing takes place at the commencement of the mild weather, towards the middle or end of March, as in October. There then comes a succession of days when Sea-Eagles may be met with in almost every district of Central Europe. That is the time when they are flying to their breeding-places. In the neighbourhood of Vienna, which throughout the winter is well stocked with them, I only remember to have seen one during the breeding-season. It was a very pale-coloured old bird, and made its appearance in the Imperial Park at the beginning of June. It devoured

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several young wild pigs and little Mouflon lambs, and disappeared after staying about a week. During the day it generally sat on the banks of the two ponds that lie close together, or on a great elm that stands in the middle of a meadow, but always kept so cautiously out of the way of any one who tried to approach it with a gun, that nobody ever succeeded in getting a shot at it. The crows and jackdaws worried it incessantly, and it often took wide flights round the meadows only to shake off its pursuers.

What I have already said of the "Stein" Eagle, namely that it may be found everywhere, even in districts where one least expects it, naturally applies, in a far greater degree, to the Sea-Eagle; and it is, in my opinion, not only the commonest eagle, but even one of the most widely distributed and most abundant of all the European raptorial species. It is really quite a common ordinary bird, astonishing only from its size to those who have seen but few eagles. In winter, as I have already said, it visits all parts of the country, even the most civilized and densely populated, nor does it become alarmed at being constantly pursued, for its quiet cunning always enables it to escape at the right moment.

During the winter it is met with throughout Germany, and the same may be said of our thickly peopled provinces. In Bohemia, for example, where the "Stein" Eagle is accounted a great rarity, the Sea-Eagle yearly appears in considerable numbers. On the ponds of the southern parts of that country, notably in the district of Wittingau, several are killed every season; and in all the Bohemian country houses one finds among the sporting trophies various Sea-Eagles which are habitually pointed out with pride as "Stein" Eagles. In Bavaria, also, especially on the southern lakes, it is very common during the cold weather, and in the auen of the Isar it occurs almost throughout the winter. It is, as already said, easy to find everywhere, but very hard to

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kill, except when nesting, and it is not until the districts where it breeds are visited that one finds out how numerous Sea-Eagles are, even at the present day.

Keepers living on the Danube not far from Draueck have told me that in July, when the fledgling eagles are making their first excursion along the river, and are still very awkward at hunting and fishing, they congregate in the auen among the smaller arms of the Danube, so that when the water subsides, after the yearly spring inundations, they may catch the fish that are swimming about in the shallows. At that time incredible numbers of old and young Sea-Eagles are said to collect within a small area; and if the keepers knew what to do with them, and did not grudge their ammunition, they could, by hiding themselves on one of the arms of the river, kill, in a single morning, ten or twelve of these birds as they fly up and down the water.

The young Sea-Eagle is not particularly shy, for it does not yet know what danger is, and being clumsy and heavy dislikes changing its position often, and so allows itself to be closely approached; but the old bird, that has already travelled much and has, while ranging about the most varied districts of Central Europe, often heard the shot sing past him, is one of the wariest of creatures. Most of these old winter visitors can only be killed by employing the Eagle-Owl, and some of them even understand the owl and the decoy-hut, and scrupulously avoid both. I have seen Sea-Eagles sitting a few hundred paces from a carcass and constantly looking at it, but never allowing themselves to be deluded into coming down to it. The easiest but most unsportsmanlike way of getting hold of them is by poison, laying out poisoned rabbits, for instance, by the banks of rivers. By this means Sea-Eagles are destroyed every winter along the Danube between Vienna and Pressburg.

The change in the colour of its plumage which every Sea-

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Eagle makes during its life is interesting, and I believe that this bird attains an extraordinary age, very much greater than is usually imagined. For several years it flies about in a dark dress, almost as brown as that of the "Stein" Eagle, and with a bluish beak and somewhat darker feet. It is then that Sea-Eagles are mistaken for "Stein" Eagles, and are even sent to museums as such. The first change of plumage takes place very slowly, the back remaining dark longest. The earliest part to colour is the breast, and in most cases the bird only becomes adult when it has fully assumed the light dress, *i. e.* after several years.

I have seen some of these eagles, and I even killed one myself, in a most remarkable transition state of plumage. It was really quite spotted and was accompanied by a perfectly dark-coloured, and therefore much younger, bird. I shot it at a dead horse, in the middle of the breeding-season, but it had no nest and was in its prentice years. I saw another with somewhat similar plumage, which already had a nest; it was clad in the pale dress, with the exception of some isolated dark feathers, and its beak was still blue-grey. The older the bird, the lighter is the beak and the whole plumage.

Among the Sea-Eagles that range about in winter individuals are often seen which, at a distance, appear quite white. The tail, at first dark, always becomes paler in course of time, and begins by being banded like that of the so-called Golden Eagle, but one feather after another blanches, until at last in old age the whole becomes brilliantly white.

In our country the only breeding-grounds yearly visited by the Sea-Eagle are situated in the southern parts of Hungary (at least I know of no other frequented nesting-places), and every year the advance of civilization is driving them further back. Thirty or forty years ago, as we learn from the writings of several of the earlier ornithologists, Sea-Eagles still nested in considerable numbers on the island of

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Adony, which is only two hours and a half distant from Pest, and was also formerly noted for its large heronries; while not much earlier there were nests of this eagle in the "auen" near Vienna. It is constant persecution and especially the cutting down of its favourite nesting-trees that have driven it so far away; and I believe that, given a fair amount of quiet and a cessation of all pursuit, a few eagles might easily be induced to nest again, even in the immediate vicinity of our capital.

According to the information that I have hitherto received, the Sea-Eagles' nests nearest to Vienna at the present time are situated south of Mohács, on an island formed by the broad arm of the Danube known as the Bega Canal. There I found three inhabited nests of this bird; and even they are doomed to destruction, as the woods of that island have recently been put under scientific management. On seeing these nests I was astonished at finding the dwellings of three pairs of Sea-Eagles on an island traversed by roads, easily approachable on every side, and protected by its greater elevation from all inundations. I was also told by the keepers that several years ago there existed quite a large colony of these birds on this island of Bega and the surrounding auen, but that every year they had retreated before the increasing wood-cutting and the herds of cattle consequent thereupon.

In the woods of the auen, some hours' walk south of Apatin, there still exist breeding-places of the Sea-Eagle, which exceed the wildest expectations of the ornithologist. Within a few days some of my friends and I had opportunities of observing nineteen inhabited nests of this species. How many more there were which we did not find might be inferred from the numbers of these eagles which were ranging about in search of food for their young.

In Southern Hungary (by which I mean the district north

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of Draueck, and close to it) all the nests of the Sea-Eagle are situated in the thickest woods of the auen, where they are protected by a network of the arms of the Danube and by the yearly spring-floods. There I never found a nest in the dry inland woods, not even in those lying near the region of the auen. It was, however, otherwise in Slavonia, where the Danube is hemmed in by hills on the right bank, while on the left there is but a narrow strip of auen, which affords very insufficient breeding-grounds for the Sea-Eagle. In that part of the country it places its nest at a considerable distance from the river, and not only in the inland woods, but also in the mountain-valleys of the Fruška-Gora.

Of the nineteen nests which we visited, two stood exposed on the very tops of the trees, all the rest on horizontal branches, more or less close to the main stem, three being on secondary boughs, the rest quite close to it. Six were built on oaks, five on black and five on white poplars, two on beeches, and one on a wild pear-tree. The sizes of the nests varied very much according to their age, and we could easily tell the newly constructed ones by their smaller bulk and the freshness of their materials. The old nests, which must have decorated the trees for a great many years, were more than six feet and half in diameter, and of a grey weathered colour. Every year the nest becomes somewhat larger, for the eagle always makes a few repairs before it begins to breed. The biggest that I saw stood on the highest point of an old pear-tree visible from afar; it had been taken possession of by a very old pale-coloured individual, and was a veritable stronghold of its mighty occupant.

The Sea-Eagle selects thick high trees for its dwelling, and it is only when compelled by sheer necessity that it puts up with a thin stem.

In a perfectly dry deciduous wood, a few miles from the village of Kovil, near the junction of the Theiss, I found an

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inhabited nest on a weak oak sapling in the middle of a young cover. The whole forest was, in consequence of the miserable sandy soil, composed of very poor trees. This, the only Sea-Eagle's nest in that wood, was skilfully built to lean against the stem and the thickest branch of the tree, and from the nature of the above circumstances was so small in proportion to the size of its owner, that one could observe all the movements of the already well-grown eaglet in the swaying fabric.

Excepting two of them, all the other Sea-Eagles' nests that we saw were peopled with whole colonies of Tree-Sparrows—impudent birds that hopped about without caring either for the young or the old eagles, and a perfectly unruffled friendship seemed to exist between the mighty lords of the nests and the little parasites. Nor did these eagles appear to trouble themselves in the least about other smallish birds, for I often saw Turtle-Doves, little Hawks, Thrushes, &c. quietly sitting on the nesting-trees, and close under one of them was breeding a Wild Duck.

During my sojourn in those districts in the end of April and the beginning of May, all the Sea-Eagles' nests contained young birds in various states of development. In some they were very large and already feathered, in others very small and still in down ; but even birds of the same nest differed greatly in size. Three taken from one eyrie were so unlike each other that the largest was at least twice as big as the smallest. We had four nests taken, only one of which contained three young birds, the others two. One eaglet we found squatting on the ground, under the nest, but its good condition showed us that even there it had been faithfully fed by its parents.

I managed to collect a good many notes on the behaviour of the Sea-Eagles when breeding, but they were confined to the period when the nests already contained young birds, for

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I never had an opportunity of observing a sitting female. The hen bird passes the night in her nest and the male rests on an adjacent tree. Early in the morning both fly off in search of plunder, either alternately or together, and generally return to give the young their first meal about seven o'clock. They then stay near the nest for some time, and afterwards regularly set out on their hunting-expeditions, remaining away for several hours, provided the young have attained a certain age. About the beginning of the afternoon there comes a time of repose, when they are generally to be found near their nest. Towards evening they resume their hunting with renewed vigour, and carry it on until the setting of the sun warns them that it is time to roost. On cold rainy days the female remains several hours longer in the nest during the morning, in order to keep her young warm; and before the bursting of a storm the careful mother hurries back and sits closely in the nest. This I have myself observed near Apatin, before the commencement of a downpour that was like a waterspout. We only found females at six of the nests, and always under the above conditions. Most of them sat lightly, and were either frightened away by the noise of our approach or by a gentle tapping on the stem of the tree. In but one nest did I find the female sitting so hard that she could only be frightened off by a constant hammering at the tree and a throwing up of branches, and that was on a rainy disagreeable morning.

If the Sea-Eagle thinks itself perfectly safe, it relaxes, in a marked degree, the great and peculiar caution which it otherwise displays, and when it returns from hunting, laden with booty, flies straight to its dwelling, within which it at once disappears. After placing the food before its young, it again leaves the nest, and often either plays about low over the trees, near the spot where the observer is stationed, or settles on a dead branch to preen its feathers. There is, at

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a certain distance from every nest, a particular tree with dead upper branches, on which the eagles rest, and which is exclusively used for that purpose. If, however, the Sea-Eagle has detected any one near its abode, there is an instant end to its carelessness, and it circles high and low over the place, uttering the incessant cries of warning by which it seeks to summon up its mate, that they may examine the neighbourhood in company, and not be absent for an instant from the spot where danger threatens. Every movement of the discovered enemy is responded to by renewed screams, nor do they for a moment relax their precautions until the danger has entirely vanished. Should another Sea-Eagle come into their territory, they at once hunt it out, but in a playful manner, for among the eagles on the Danube such serious encounters do not take place as certainly occur elsewhere, as the pairs breed too close together, and the extent of ground which each couple regard as their own is very small. I twice found these birds nesting hardly six hundred paces from each other.

Four of the Sea-Eagles observed by us brought fish to their young, some of which were still alive. This is not remarkable in the auen, where the nests are often situated close to the water; but in the Fruška-Gora, where we also found two of their eyries, we thought it interesting to see live fish in the claws of the eagles. These birds must have traversed at least three or four miles in a straight line from the Danube, over the bare outlying hills, before reaching the woods of the Fruška-Gora. Yet there one of my companions saw an eagle carrying two fish at the same time, one of which it threw into the nest, and then settled upon a branch, holding the other in its claws. There it was killed, and about half an hour afterwards the second eagle came up, perched on a branch, escaped uninjured from a shot fired at it, and let fall a fish, which was picked up by the jägers. The observer then left the nest, but returning an hour later, found that the fish which had been lying on the

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branch had disappeared, and as it could not be discovered on the ground, the female must have returned, picked it up, and carried it to the young.

We found, as already mentioned, only two Sea-Eagles' nests in the Fruška-Gora; but, on the other hand, we saw large numbers of this species flying about in company with the Cinereous Vultures and the "Stein" and Imperial Eagles. We were also fortunate enough to see two interesting proofs of the courage displayed by this bird towards man. One of my friends wounded a female Sea-Eagle at a dead goat. It flew down the valley hard-hit, and a keeper was sent after it, who soon found the bird and gave it a finishing shot. While he was still busy with the slain creature, there came a great rush over his head, and he saw a large Sea-Eagle, which had probably noticed its dead comrade, and, furious at the sight, was levelling fierce assaults at the hated intruder. The eagle dashed down so close to him that the otherwise perfectly fearless man had to seek shelter under a thick tree. The second instance of a similar attack happened at a nest which I myself visited. I had been lucky enough to kill the female, had soon afterwards missed the male, and had then sent a climber to take out the young ones; but hardly had the man clambered up to the nest when the eagle appeared in a great state of excitement, and swooped down close above his head.

Within a few days nine young Sea-Eagles were taken out of the nests, and we reared them under very unfavourable circumstances, but nevertheless brought them all home alive; this gave me an opportunity of learning how tough the nestlings of the Sea-Eagles are, and what strong constitutions they have. A space in the open air enclosed by boards and boxes, some hay for a soft bed, a diet consisting of the remnants of the bodies of the skinned birds, and often of whole animals with their skin and hair, were all the comforts that I could offer my nine eaglets; but they all throve splendidly, grew apace, and some even passed from down to feathers

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without sickness. They would, without any particular care, have become strong young rascals, when I transferred them to other hands; but, as I afterwards heard, the close sunless cages and the food of the Zoological Gardens soon finished off most of them.

I have found this to be the case on several occasions, and young birds of prey in confinement can only be saved from certain death by a mixed diet of flesh and bones, with feathers or hair. In a great many zoological gardens they are, however, unhappily killed by being studiously fed with pure flesh, whereas they need other substances for the formation of bone. It was remarkable how quickly my young Sea-Eagles got used to people and dogs, and how confident they became.

I will, in conclusion, give the dimensions of twelve Sea-Eagles which I measured myself, and which my friends and I shot in Southern Hungary and Slavonia during the end of April and the beginning of May.

Sex.	Length.	Breadth.	Wing.	Tail.	Beak.	Tarsus.	Middle toe.
	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.
♂.	84	212	60	29	7·9	9	7
♂.	91	228	63	30	8·7	9·5	8·5
♂.	83	214	60	29·5	8·5	9·5	7·9
♀.	91	235	64	31	9	9·9	8·3
♂.	93	233	64	31	9	9·8	8·5
♂.	83	213	60	28·5	8·7	8·5	8·9
♂.	87	240	68	28·8	9	10	9
♀.	95·5	232	66	28·5	9	10	8·5
♀.	96	234	69	28	7·2	9·5	10·3
♂.	87	239	63	32	8·8	9	9·3
♀.	95	213	61·5	30	8	9	7·5
♂.	84	214	60·5	30	8	9	7·5

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In four very old and perfectly similar birds the iris was sulphur to lemon-yellow in colour, the beak waxy yellow, the cere somewhat the same, but more inclined to citron-yellow, the feet citron-yellow, and the nails black. A fifth showed brownish spots, especially on the under part of the eye, the iris being sulphur-yellow.

The Sea-Eagle of Southern Europe differs from the Northern Sea-Eagle both in size and colour, but is indisputably the same bird, and there seem to be no grounds whatever for making two species of them. They are, however, distinct races, such as are often produced among other members of the animal-world by different conditions of life and climate.

In the rich collection of the British Museum I found skins of *Haliaëtus albicilla* in all plumages and from the most widely separated countries. The northern specimens from Scotland, Iceland, Scandinavia, and the north of Russia were all markedly larger than those from the South of Europe, Asia Minor, and the north of Africa; and the colouring of the former was much more pronounced, being darker in the young plumage, lighter in the old, and in many cases almost white.

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ORNITHOLOGICAL SKETCHES

FROM

SPAIN.

I.

THE BEARDED VULTURE

(*Gypaëtus barbatus*).

After many difficulties we succeeded in finding a nest of the great Bearded Vulture (*Gypaëtus barbatus*) in the mountains of Spain.

I had rambled with some fellow-travellers through several tracts of that country where it was said to be tolerably common, but nowhere had we managed to see one of these interesting birds, not to speak of finding a nest. At last, after a great deal of trouble, we were enabled to explore an eyrie of this Vulture-Eagle in the mountains of the Sierra Nevada, by the help of a German resident in Granada. Setting out from that town, we went a long way up the valley of the Genil, then turned aside into a narrower valley, and after a ride of nearly five hours reached a little hacienda (or farm, as we should call it), situated at a considerable elevation on the side of a big hill.

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These mountains, which reminded us of our Central Alps, consist of detached chains of large rounded forms, each considerably higher than the one in front of it, and the one on which we were was the outermost of the snow-clad giants that make up the long Sierra Nevada range. On the other side of the valley, and just opposite the house where we had dismounted, was a precipitous wall of rock which formed the base of a hill. In this cliff were several holes and clefts, and there, according to the peasants, herdsmen, and hunters, was situated the nest of the 'Quebranta-huésos,' as the Bearded Vulture is called in Spain. Not placing much reliance, however, on the ornithological knowledge of these people, we made them give a precise account of the bird they had seen, and, rightly enough, the most delightful description of the plumage of an old Bearded Vulture rang like music in our ears.

On examining the cliff with the glass we soon discovered the hole which served as the dwelling of this mighty bird, for underneath it everything was white with the droppings of the young.

Now came the main question: How were we to get near the nest? One of my fellow-travellers, myself, and some Spaniards started off at once, and, passing through some olive-yards, reached the valley at the foot of the mountain; but before we could get to the foot of the cliff we had to ascend a somewhat high and steep slope of loose stones, such as one finds on our Alps. This being surmounted, I looked about for the best way of getting close enough to the nest, and found a cleft in the rock, or chimney as our mountaineers call it, that permitted us to climb within a few yards of it, but just at the last a pulpit-like projection separated it from the nearest approachable place.

As it would have been impossible to make a hiding-place for one's self there, we rounded the projection by passing along the bottom of the cliff, and then found a capital place

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where, by crouching close up against the rock, we should be immediately under the nest and about sixty yards from it.

I now got the Spaniards, whom we had brought for the purpose, to make a screen of rosemary bushes, which, when propped up against the rock, afforded good cover. While we were still at work, a proud "Stein" Eagle wheeled about above us, a Griffon Vulture flew slowly over the mountains, and Lesser Kestrels and numbers of Sand-Martins fluttered round, uttering cries of affright and exhibiting great anxiety about their nests, which were in the crannies of the rock near the hole occupied by the Bearded Vulture.

I had sat down under the screen, and the Spanish hunter was just throwing a few more bits of bush over me, when the bird appeared. I could not see it from my hiding-place, but the hunter whispered to me that it was flying up along the slope of the hill close below us. I only heard its cry, a deep grunting sound, very much reminding me of the call of *Aquila imperialis* or *Aquila adalberti*. The Spaniard now hurried down the hill, and only my companion and I remained quietly in our ambush, crouching close to the rock and looking steadily towards the nest. I soon observed the young bird raise itself on the edge of its dwelling and petulantly shake its wings. It was already a fine big fellow, with its body feathered, but its head still covered with down. Ten minutes had hardly passed when we saw a great shadow glide over the ground. The Bearded Vulture was there, but covered as we were by the twigs of our screen we could only get an instantaneous glimpse of the bird that we had been looking for so long. It swept twice past our ambush and then flew to the nest.

The way in which the Bearded Vulture returns to its nest is quite different from that of the vultures and much more like that of the eagles; for, with stiffly extended wings, outstretched feet, head carried vertically but its tail

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horizontally, it shoots in like an arrow. We could therefore only get a very hurried glance at this wonderful and highly interesting picture, and it would have been quite impossible to fire while the bird was going at such a rate. The hole, too, was very large and its mouth quite circular, so that it could at once vanish into its dwelling without having to settle on the rock even for an instant. Its long tail, however, protruded, and one could see by its movements that it was busily engaged in placing food before its young one.

I now stepped out of my hiding-place and looked about for good standing ground among the stones, so that I might make a steady shot. I then shouted out, but it was so occupied with the feeding of its offspring that it paid no attention to my summons; and it was only after repeated shouts that the long tail vanished into the hole, and in its place there appeared the goat-like head with its bristly beard and gleaming eyes and the yellow breast of the Bearded Vulture—the strangest, rarest, and noblest bird of prey that inhabits the mountains of Europe. Without waiting a second I fired my first barrel, and it fell, plunging past me towards the valley. I gave it the second barrel; and making another effort, it spread its wings, flew a few hundred yards further, and then, towering to a little height, flapped its wings together and fell dead, rolling down over the loose stones.

Hardly had we dragged up the slain bird and got our ambush into good order again, when the circling of the other Bearded Vulture high overhead warned us to keep perfectly quiet. After a lapse of ten minutes I suddenly heard the cry of a Raven, and cautiously looking out through the twigs of the screen, I saw one of those birds with its easy flight playing round the great *Gypaëtus*. They both flew close past us, and immediately disappeared behind a projecting rock; but in a few moments I again heard the rush of wings, and before I had time to get my gun to my shoulder, the Bearded

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Vulture had already plunged into its hole. Again I saw the long tail protruding, and again it was only after repeated shouts that it turned itself round. The first shot brought it down the cliff, but, extending its wings, it recovered its balance and flew towards the valley in an opposite direction to that taken by the first bird. The second shot broke one of its legs, which hung down, and over an olive-yard, a few hundred paces from us, its wings suddenly drooped and it fell to the ground like a stone.

Hurrying down the slope I found my splendid booty already surrounded by the herdsmen, and, laden with the two Bearded Vultures, we now returned to the hacienda. I was thus lucky enough to bag a paired couple of these rare, beautiful, and very interesting birds of prey in less than half an hour.

The same afternoon we again clambered to the same place, and sent some hunters and herdsmen up the cliff to take the nest. A peasant from the neighbourhood of the hacienda, who climbs for nests every year, undertook to descend the dangerous and very difficult cliff by a rope-ladder and to bring down the young bird in a basket. We waited under the rock to have the materials of the nest thrown out to us, and a bit of goatskin, some feathers, old bones, and mouldy remains of plants came down in this fashion. The nest of this bird is very carelessly constructed, or, to speak more accurately, there is no regular nest, and the young one sits on the bare rock simply surrounded by the feathers and remnants of food which happen to collect in the course of its existence.

The plucky Spaniard had a great deal of difficulty in taking out the young Bearded Vulture, for the hole went back a long way and the bird retreated into it; but he at last managed to get it into the basket, and it passed from its rocky castle into our possession. It was already quite large and strong, and its plumage was in the transition-stage between down

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and feathers. During the last fortnight that I had it in captivity it grew remarkably fast, was in capital health, devoured great quantities of flesh, and was already beginning to lay aside all fear of man. It even got quite used to the dogs, of which it at first had the greatest dread.

Both the old Bearded Vultures were magnificent birds, in the beautiful orange dress with grey-brown backs, grey-white foreheads, black stripes over the eyes, and black bristly beards. Irides pale copper-yellow; cornea reddish brown-yellow; beaks horn-blue with a reddish tinge; feet lead-colour.

Dimensions.

Sex.	Length.	Breadth.	Wing.	Tail.	Tarsus.	Middle toe.
	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.
♂.	111·1	256	81	51	8·5	8·6
♀.	112	264	82	51	8·5	8·8

In order that our great and sudden success may not delude the reader into thinking that the Bearded Vulture is a common bird in Spain, I may simply say that there, as well as in all high mountains, whether situated in Central or Southern Europe, Northern Africa, or Central Asia, it is very much the reverse. I have rambled through the ranges of the north-east of Spain, Central Spain, and those near the east coast, have clambered about the Sierra Nevada for a whole day, and have sat for a long time on the summit of a high hill opposite Mulhacen, the loftiest mountain of that chain (which bears the name of Quebranta-huésos, after the Bearded Vulture), without once catching sight of this rare species. The only three specimens that I have hitherto seen in a state of freedom are the two old ones that I shot and the

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young one that we took out of the nest. One of my acquaintances, too, who for more than twenty years has been hunting after birds of prey in Spain, has only killed one Bearded Vulture during the whole of that period, and for that success he was indebted to a chance encounter during the winter.

All the hunters of the Sierra Nevada told me that the Bearded Vulture still exists among the Sierras, but that it has become rarer, and that I fully believe. An equally persistent pursuit of it has quite put an end to the breeding of this noble bird in our Austrian Alps; and in Switzerland also its existence has almost become a matter of history. This will, sooner or later, be the case in Spain, for the herdsmen dislike it as a neighbour and try to destroy its nest, or at any rate to scare away the old birds, and only a few days before my arrival they demolished one of its abodes by throwing stones at it.

The common occurrence of the Bearded Vulture in Spain, to which even some books testify, is, therefore, quite out of the question; and when Howard Saunders, in his 'Catalogue des Oiseaux du midi de l'Espagne,' which he laid before the Société Zoologique de France, in speaking of the *Gypaëtus barbatus*, says: "Un ou deux couples se trouvent sédentaires dans toutes les montagnes, mais c'est dans la Sierra Nevada que ce beau rapace devient presque abondant," he is altogether wrong, and if his statement was founded on any observations at all they must have been very faulty.

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II.

THE GRIFFON VULTURE
(*Vultur fulvus*).

In my paper on the Cinereous Vulture I devoted a few words to the interesting Griffon Vulture, but I have since had many more and much better opportunities of seeing this grand bird in a state of freedom. I do not, however, even now pretend to furnish an exhaustive treatise on this widely distributed species, but simply feel impelled to communicate the results of my observations in order to furnish materials for other naturalists.

The Griffon Vulture is the most generally and most widely distributed of all the European members of its group. It is found breeding in the southern provinces of our native country, and during migration it visits all parts of the kingdom, perhaps even more frequently than one imagines.

In Slavonia, Transylvania, Dalmatia, Bosnia, and especially in the Herzegovina it is considered one of the commonest birds. Barren rocky mountains are among the chief requisites for its frequent occurrence, but woods it does not frequent, though it does not so scrupulously shun them as most naturalists have hitherto maintained. The brothers Sintenis found it breeding on trees, and I also know of an instance where a pair of these birds nested on a pine-tree in the midst of a large forest in Slavonia. These occurrences are, however, quite exceptional, and the Cinereous Vulture may be met with in the forests of Slavonia and the other regions of the Lower Danube much more frequently than the Griffon Vulture; the latter, indeed, is but rarely to be seen.

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The Griffon Vulture is now carrying out one of those great migratory movements observable in the case of so many representatives of the animal world. In the course of last year whole flocks were repeatedly seen in Northern Hungary, Bohemia, and Lower Austria, and single specimens were frequently obtained. Nor are they merely longer hunting-journeys that this bird is undertaking, but it is its regular habitat which it keeps pushing further north. In Carinthia and certain parts of Tyrol it already breeds, and it extends its excursions in search of plunder as far as the neighbourhood of Salzburg with great regularity, there replacing the Bearded Vulture, which is already almost extinct.

Throughout the Iberian peninsula it is the commonest of all the raptorial birds, and soars over the snow-fields of the highest mountains and the scorching stony wastes of the plains in equally large numbers. Excepting in the verdant "huertas" of the park-like scenery to be found at Valencia, Granada, and Murcia, this bird may be seen everywhere, for Spain is the land of the Vulture, and its many lofty Sierras offer the very nesting-places that these great raptorial birds love, while the desert-like plains lying between the mountains serve them as splendid hunting-grounds.

It is in the best cultivated parts of the country that the Griffon Vulture is most uncommon, and these are the districts of Barcelona, Valencia, and the whole east coast. In the south, on the contrary, from Malaga to the rocky mountains about Gibraltar, there stretches a territory well stocked with these birds.

In the immediate neighbourhood of Granada I saw very few, and in the Sierra Nevada, which is the special head-quarters of the Bearded Vulture in Spain, I found that it was very sporadic. On the other hand, the Sierra de Ronda, which rises between Granada and Malaga, abounds with them, the lofty precipices of this wild limestone range affording

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splendid positions for their dwellings, and the train, as it rattles through a long narrow rocky valley, is constantly surrounded by these vultures.

Opposite one of the small stations there rises a high and perfectly perpendicular cliff, where every hole, cleft, and cranny is occupied with nests, and among many pairs of Griffon Vultures I found several couples of Egyptian Vultures and one nest of the "Stein" Eagle.

With the glass I watched the lively stir at the nests, where the halfgrown young were sitting upright on the edges of their abodes, and the old birds were majestically flying to and fro, or perching on the protuberances of the rocks to digest their meals. This interesting place might truly be called a vulture colony.

I found no Griffon Vultures in the immediate neighbourhood of Seville or on the "marismas" of the Guadalquiver, for there the character of the whole district does not in the least meet the requirements of these great birds. I saw them, however, throughout Central Spain, especially in the stony barren surroundings of Madrid. Along the Manzanares, just outside the town, and over the royal preserves of the Casa de Campo, I noticed many of them returning to the Sierra Guadarrama from their hunting-excursions, in company with Cinereous and Egyptian Vultures.

Between Madrid and the high mountains there lies an elevated plateau covered with miserable oakwoods, and there I laid out a carcass as a bait for the vultures. Some of the Cinereous Vultures which nest in these woods, and afterwards a few Egyptian Vultures, Eagles, Black Kites, and Ravens, came to the place, but only one Griffon Vulture dropped down to the bait, although I saw numbers of them flying to the mountains at a great height.

I think I may safely assume that this species is far more generally distributed over the entire country at other periods

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of the year, for during spring, when it is breeding, it is chiefly confined to the rocky mountains, and does not wander so far from its nest. At another time one could certainly have collected a large number of Griffon Vultures at a carcass anywhere else, even in the wooded Pardo ; but at the season that I rambled through these regions I was compelled to visit the breeding-places near the high mountains, in order to see them at a great banquet.

Behind the famous palace of the Escorial there rises a high ridge strewn with great masses of stone. It is a spur of the true Sierra Guadarrama, and the vultures cross it every morning as they come from the mountains to look for plunder in the plain between the Escorial and Madrid. I therefore thought it would be a good plan to expose a carcass on this widely visible height, and, concealing myself in a hut made of stones, I awaited the interesting spectacle. After a little while a few Egyptian Vultures appeared, then came some Black Kites and Ravens, and shortly afterwards a Cinereous Vulture. Hardly had these birds arrived when a troop of Griffon Vultures descended with heavy beats of their wings. The shots fired frightened them away; but they were quickly succeeded by fresh arrivals, for vultures follow each other, and as soon as one settles at a carcass others keep plunging down, generally coming from the same direction as the first.

It was interesting to see how clumsily these great birds hopped round the carrion, tugged at the entrails, and trailing great pieces after them, flapped off to the nearest rocks, where they quarrelled and fought. There were one or two Cinereous among the ten to twenty Griffon Vultures; but the former went about with greater vigour and assurance, and violently thrusting themselves between their yellow-plumaged relatives, always hopped straight up to the carcass, tore out huge pieces of flesh and flapped away with them. When scared by too much shooting, the vultures settled on the stones and rocky

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projections about a hundred yards off, and there quietly awaited the moment of our departure, when they doubtless continued their meal.

In the wooded spurs of the Sierra Guadarrama I had also an opportunity of observing the Griffon Vulture in an interesting locality. Crossing the aforesaid barren ridge above the Escorial, one reaches a wooded mountain district, the character of which quite recalls certain portions of the Bohemian or Saxon Switzerland, and in no other part of Spain have I found a mountain formation like that of these ranges, which rise gradually from the plain of Avila towards the desolate loftier regions of the Sierra Guadarrama, and are covered with fir-woods and decked with isolated little patches of cultivation. Wooded hills of this sort cannot be a permanent resort of the Griffon Vultures, but in order to reach from their true dwelling-places the plains which furnish them with their booty they must cross them; and so even there one may in the afternoon see many vultures flying one after another at a great height, and all pursuing the same direction towards the high mountains.

Among the wooded summits of these charmingly beautiful outlying hills rises a sharp rocky pinnacle with bare precipitous sides, and at its base there is a steep slope of loose stones, some large masses of rock, and a few old firs. It is known as the Peña Blanca, and is a most remarkable point, which serves as a rendezvous and resting-place for many of the large birds of prey. In two adjacent clefts of the rock a pair of Egyptian Vultures and a couple of Peregrines were also dwelling, while in an old fir-tree close under it I found the nest of a Pygmy Eagle, while the cliffs were quite whitewashed with the droppings of the vultures.

On one face of this rock the herdsmen showed me a niche which is said to have served as the roosting-place of two Bearded Vultures for years; and on another were the clefts,

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crannies, and ledges which the Griffon Vultures always use as halfway halting-places on their way to the true Sierra Guadarrama. A Spaniard who accompanied me pointed out a spot marked with droppings as the nesting-place of one of these birds; but this, as I had an opportunity of assuring myself, was a mistake, and the projecting ledge was merely one of their most favourite resorts.

During the afternoon I crouched under the cliff, well concealed by a large stone; and presently a Griffon Vulture came flapping along, pitched on the rock, and settling itself comfortably was beginning to preen its feathers, when I frightened it off by firing an unsuccessful shot at it with ball. In a few minutes a second appeared at the same spot, and I tried shot; but the distance was too great, and the hard-hit bird, leaving the place with its feet hanging, quickly disappeared behind the nearest hill. It was joined by a comrade, who came back and circled cautiously round the place. No long interval elapsed before another vulture flew straight to the rock, and had hardly settled itself to its satisfaction in a broad niche, when I sent a bullet through the middle of its breast, and it fell rattling down over the stones. It proved to be a very pale-coloured and extremely old specimen.

I now left the place to turn my attention to some nests; but as soon as I got a few hundred paces from the rock, I saw two more vultures alight upon it, and in the far distance I observed many others, all coming up in the same direction.

In the striking primary rock formations of the Sierra de Gredos I had also repeated opportunities of observing Griffon Vultures among other surroundings, namely, high up among the snow-fields. During a long and difficult ride from the village of Bohoyo, when we followed the course of a stream through a splendid valley and finally reached the ridge of the mountain, I constantly saw vultures soaring aloft or sitting

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on the rocks; and on the highest elevations near the Almanzor peak, Griffon Vultures were flying only a few yards above the snow-fields, and crossing the ridge from one side of the Sierra to the other, both in the morning and the afternoon. One morning I was standing on a high point of an extensive tract of snow, where I could overlook both the slopes of this lofty but narrow range. From the valleys and the ravines the vultures came twisting up to the crest of the mountain, and glided with noiseless flight over the snow of the opposite slope down to the other valleys. They followed each other, and there were so many of them that I soon got tired of counting. In the same locality one of my attendants found a nest of this bird in a high precipice, not far from the snow-line. During the middle of the day I saw the vultures quietly sitting in the shady places of the cliffs and rocks halfway up the mountain.

In Northern Spain I found incredible numbers of Griffon Vultures near the celebrated Picos de Europa, in the mountains by Riva de Sella and Santander. In those splendid limestone ranges, with their picturesque forms, white summits, pleasant valleys, and luxuriant beech-woods, Bears, Wild Cats, Wolves, Chamois, Capercaille, Bearded Vultures, and many other stately representatives of the animal world still dwell undisturbed; and those truly magnificent districts are the only places in all Spain which remind us northerners of the Alps of our own country.

While driving from Riva de Sella through the grand mountain valleys to the place of pilgrimage at Cobadonga, I observed vultures flying about everywhere; but as these valleys are wooded from the bottom up to a great height, and have absolutely the character of our limestone Alps, the Griffon Vulture only finds suitable dwelling-places in the highest regions above the zone of the woods.

When I first arrived in that part of the country its appear-

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ance would never have led me to imagine that it could hold so many vultures; but on the following morning I passed through some high valleys and saw green Alps with Alpine huts just like those of our own highlands. That very night a Bear had eaten a cow close to a hut, and I observed at a distance numbers of Griffon Vultures, with a few Egyptian Vultures and Ravens, flying round the remnants left by the animal after his feast. Concealing myself behind a fence, I watched vulture after vulture leave the place and fly across a deep valley to the opposite mountain-ridge, where numbers of them were cruising about a high cliff, in which they probably had their nests; many, however, sailed away down the valley. As I wanted to see how soon I could again collect them at a carcass, I purchased a sheep at the nearest hut, and led it to a rocky elevation visible from afar, and situated on a little meadow surrounded by great stones. There I killed it, and concealed myself in a shelter rapidly constructed with boughs and stones. In a few minutes an Egyptian Vulture appeared and at once began its meal; a little later I heard the rush of heavy wings, and saw a huge shadow gliding up over the ground, immediately followed by an old finely coloured Griffon Vulture, which settled on a large stone near my ambush. I gave it a ball through the breast, and as I was proceeding to drag my booty into the hiding-place, a second flew past a few yards above me and looked at its slain comrade. This bird I also brought down with the shot barrel of my combination gun. A torrent of rain then fell like a waterspout, and obliged me to return with my spoils to the nearest hut, which was within five minutes' walk. Hardly had the sky cleared again and the sun burst through the clouds, when I observed a vulture circling over the carcass; so I hurried back to the place under cover of the stones, and on reaching it looked out from behind them, and saw that the sheep and its surroundings were covered

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with vultures. Every second fresh arrivals came plunging down from above, and I quickly began to number them. In a few minutes there were seventy-five Griffon Vultures and one Egyptian Vulture on that one spot; but almost before I had finished counting, the birds left the place one after another and flapped heavily about. Of the sheep there remained nothing but some spots of blood, a little wool, and its bones, which lay scattered in all directions.

This feast of the vultures was a singular and interesting scene, and the cracking of bones, the hoarse croaks of the birds, the rushing sound of their wings, the snapping of their great beaks, and the way in which they pulled and hauled at the entrails and extremities of the sheep, and quarrelled and fought, created a peculiar and deafening noise. I fired several times at them as they were flying round about, but they were too far off, and only a few feathers fell; yet even these shots did not disturb them, and most of them merely flapped from one stone to another.

For several minutes a young Bearded Vulture, still in the dark plumage, was soaring high above the Griffon Vultures, and a "Stein" Eagle, allured by the noise of the vultures' feast, also came to the place and settled on the dead branch of a stunted tree which grew out of the rocks. I finished it off with my rifle, and afterwards the vultures gradually flew away in various directions. On my way back I saw some of these great birds low down, and even observed many of them among the high cliffs of the main valley near the little town of Riva de Sella on the sea-coast.

Throughout Spain the Griffon Vulture is more or less a perfectly common bird, I might even say a characteristic creature of this wild, stony, thinly populated country. The observer will find no difficulty in seeing it at any hour of the day, though generally at a great distance. At the nest, however, it is not easy to study it closely, for its dwelling is

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almost always situated in the most inaccessible precipices. The only certain way to watch these birds near at hand and to obtain them is by decoying them with a carcass; and in Spain one can in suitable places get near them in this way at any hour of the day, and without great precautions such as are necessary with eagles. The hiding-place of the observer does not even require to be particularly well concealed, for gormandizing is the one idea and the sole occupation of these vulgar birds.

To attract vultures quickly to a carcass, one must expose it on some high position which is visible from afar, for they follow each other, and in a few minutes the enticing bait is detected and all of them plump down to the ground. The one thing to avoid is the laying out of the lure in a deep valley or any particularly low-lying spot, for the vultures like to have an open look-out during their feast, and fear being surprised in a moment of laziness and torpor after their gorge. We once laid out six horses in a deep valley of the Sierra de Ronda; but though there were nests all about, and the vultures made great sweeps round the place high in the air, they nevertheless resisted their gluttonous instincts and forbore to descend into the narrow ravine.

When in Spain, I daily saw numbers of living Griffon Vultures, and many either freshly killed, in skins, or set up in collections, and it always struck me that the Spanish bird was paler and altogether more beautiful in colour than that of the East. The white of the head, neck, and ruff is purer and more brilliant; the breast, belly, back, and shoulders are yellower and of a clearer and finer tint. I simply make this modest remark in the hope that some other traveller wandering through Spain with an eye for the bird-world may confirm it by further observations.

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I will, in conclusion, give the measurements of one Slavonian and four Spanish Griffon Vultures.

Length.	Width.	Wing.	Tail.	Tarsus.	Middle toe.
cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.
Vultur fulvus from Slavonia.					
108	266	74	32	11	10·5
Vultur fulvus from Cobadonga in Northern Spain.					
115	257	70	34	9·8	11
115	256·8	70	33·9	9·7	11·1
Vultur fulvus from the Sierra de Guadarrama.					
113·2	267·2	75	34·5	11	11·8
Vultur fulvus from the Escorial.					
102	267	72·5	32	11·5	11·5

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III.

THE CINEREOUS VULTURE

(*Vultur cinereus*).

THE Great Cinereous Vulture is in Spain one of the rarer birds, and inhabits only a few districts of that country, for it is the vulture of the great woods, and of these there are not many in barren sunburnt Spain. I have myself only met with it in two localities. In the extensive royal park of the Pardo, which stretches from the Sierra Guadarrama almost up to the gates of Madrid, it nests among the evergreen oaks; and when I laid out a carcass there many of these gigantic birds appeared, five or six of which settled on the nearest oaks and carefully examined the surroundings.

Of all the places that I visited in Spain, the Pardo is the only one where the Cinereous is commoner than the Griffon Vulture, for in all the other parts of the country the former is rare, the latter very abundant. In the fir-woods on the spurs of the Sierra Guadarrama it is said to nest every year. This information I received from a perfectly trustworthy source, but I never saw it there myself, much less its nest.

In the Sierra de Gredos I saw one sitting on a rock at no great distance, but it was the only bird of the kind that I observed in those mountains.

During my many excursions in Southern Spain, which lasted all day long, I never came across a Cinereous Vulture. According to Lord Lilford, however, there are many nests of it in the large woods between Seville and Cordova. This I can say nothing about, never having visited that district.

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In no part of Northern Spain did I see it; even in the wooded mountain valleys of the range of the Picos de Europa it does not appear to occur; and this is very surprising, for the extensive beech-woods of that region would afford it excellent nesting-places.

In Portugal I saw in museums stuffed specimens which had been killed in that country, but there, too, it seems to be uncommon. In Spain it is undoubtedly most abundant in the neighbourhood of Madrid.

The behaviour of this vulture at a carcass is very remarkable. Dealing heavy blows with its beak and wings it hops in among the Griffon Vultures when they are already greedily eating, drives them quickly apart, tears off a great piece of flesh, and goes off with it to a considerable distance, flapping along close to the ground. If there is but a single Cinereous among many Griffon Vultures, then the former, which is undeniably the nobler and less greedy bird, retains all its cautiousness and shyness, and seems to put no trust in its yellow-plumaged relatives; for long after they have been comfortably feasting, it keeps examining the surroundings from some elevated position. If, however, several Cinereous Vultures come to a carcass at the same time, they are bolder, for each relies on the wariness of the others, and the Griffons get the worst share of the meal even when there are more of them.

According to my idea the Spanish Cinereous Vulture is darker than our bird, the latter having a great deal of brownish black in its plumage, while the former seems to me to be as black as a Raven. In size they are pretty much alike, and I give for comparison the measurements of one Spanish and five Slavonian specimens.

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Sex.	Length.	Breadth.	Wing.	Tail.	Tarsus.	Middle toe.
	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.
			Vultur cinereus from the Escorial.			
♂.	106	250	76	36·5	12·5	11
			Vultur cinereus from Slavonia.			
♂.	105	265	75	38·5	12·5	9·5
♀.	111	284	82	40	13	10·5
♂.	103·6	280	76	40·5	12·2	11
♂.	104	270	78	37·5	13	9
♀.	109	287	76·5	33	13	11

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IV.

THE EGYPTIAN VULTURE
(*Neophron percnopterus*).

In order that the entire group of the European Vultures may be included in my remarks, I have still to append my notes on *Neophron percnopterus*, the Egyptian Vulture.

Never having had an opportunity of observing this vulture in a state of freedom in Eastern Europe, I was all the more eager to study it in Spain. There it is the commonest and most generally distributed bird of prey, and, excepting in the highly cultivated district of Barcelona, is everywhere to be found, though never in great numbers. Still detached pairs inhabit all parts of the country, in just the proportion that each district admits of.

The Egyptian Vulture is the bird of Islam, for its way of living adapts itself to that of the Mohammedans. Where the Crescent still holds sway, there it also is at home; and where, as in Spain, the Orientals once dwelt, and only their vices and none of their many virtues now remain as a remembrance of better days, there also the Egyptian Vulture is in its true element. There is no bird whose habits are, on close inspection, found to be more repulsive than those of the *Neophron*. In its whole being, too, there is but little that reminds one of the raptorial birds, and even its appearance is in keeping with its way of living, while its flight is a curious blending of that

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of the Vulture and the Stork, but much more suggestive of the latter. An old finely coloured male is a smart-looking bird, and at first attracts attention; but the observer is soon disgusted and wearied, for at every step he sees this lazy dirty fellow.

I found the Egyptian Vulture in the highest of the Spanish mountains, in the plains, by the sea-coast, among woods, and on the outer houses of the towns. The nests which I saw were situated in cliffs, and when circling round its dwelling or sailing along the rocks, apparently without effort or the slightest movement of its wings, there are moments when, thanks to its pointed tail, the shape of its wings, and the carriage of its head, it reminds one of the Bearded Vulture. The Spaniards are, therefore, not altogether so wrong in giving to both birds the same name of "Quebranta-huésos."

I never saw the Egyptian Vulture in the immediate neighbourhood of Barcelona, and the people of that place were quite unacquainted with it. We met with the first at Valencia, but from that point found it everywhere throughout the country.

As we ran into the station of the Spanish capital I noticed an Egyptian Vulture placidly sitting on a stone and allowing our train to pass it. In the Casa de Campo, on the other side of the city, I also saw some of these birds close to the houses, and in the woods of the Pardo several came to a carcass in a few minutes.

At Murcia I shot a very finely coloured specimen which was sitting on a dead horse close to the town. A whole pack of half-wild dogs had surrounded this carcass, but a couple of Egyptian Vultures and a Raven pushed in among them and drove them apart with blows from their beaks. In Cartagena I observed these Vultures in a part of the town which has lain in ruins since the time of the last civil war.

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In the Sierra de Ronda and the Sierra Nevada it is quite a common bird. In the latter mountains I found it at a considerable elevation and near the nest of a Bearded Vulture. I also saw it everywhere in the plain of Granada.

At the town of Tangiers, on the north coast of Africa, it is of course very common.

On the Guadalquivir, where the dunes and the well-wooded banks of the river afford it fewer suitable resorts, I hardly ever observed it; and in the plain between Zeres della Frontera and Seville, and the immediate neighbourhood of these towns, it was everywhere exceedingly rare.

I have travelled so little in Portugal that I can say nothing definite about it in that country, but I saw it in museums and do not doubt that it is there abundant.

In the range of the Picos de Europa, in Northern Spain, I found it from the sea-coast up to the loftiest regions above the limit of the woods, and it was equally plentiful in the mountains of the interior near Avila, the Sierra Guadarrama, and the Sierra de Gredos, as well as in the intervening plains. In the latter I saw it close to the snow-line, and on the utterly barren spurs of the former I found it in great numbers near the Escorial, a fact which may be accounted for by the peculiarly favourable lie of these mountains.

The habits of this Vulture are, so far as I have been able to observe them, unusually variable and entirely dependent upon the locality occupied by each individual. Immediately outside the gates of the towns it descends to the level of a very low domestic creature, and lives upon carrion and filth, while on the mountain-tops, near the perpetual snow, it strikes the observer as being a noble bird of prey. One characteristic it retains under all conditions of life, and that is a gluttonous love of an enticing repast, which makes it

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heedless of all danger. None of the other European Vultures can be so easily lured to a carcass; and in Spain, whenever I wanted to shoot vultures at a bait, the Egyptian was always the first to appear, often sailing round us low down and examining the carrion, while we were still employed either in laying it out or in giving the finishing touches to our ambush. On no occasion, however, did I notice more than five or six of them at a vultures' banquet, for they never occur in such numbers as the Griffons; but, on the other hand, a few never failed to come.

I believe that this bird does not daily undertake such long excursions in search of plunder as its larger relatives, and that it has but a limited beat; so that when a carcass is exposed the Egyptian Vultures belonging to the place immediately appear; while in many promising localities, which are generally tenanted by the large vultures, there are days when one does not find a single bird at home, and only after hours of waiting are they seen returning from a distant feast. In most parts of Spain the small, and therefore more easily satisfied, vulture finds sufficient nourishment everywhere; for, quite independently of the fact that abundant food is almost daily afforded them by the dead domestic animals in the neighbourhood of human settlements, and especially by the bodies of the murdered horses that are thrown outside the gates of the towns after bull-fights, the people of Spain take absolute pains to poison the air with smaller offal and dirt of all kinds; so that, owing to this total absence of cleanliness, it is easy for the vultures to carry on a sort of scavengering of the village streets every morning. I found such evident traces of this unpleasant industry on the beak and feet of an Egyptian Vulture, that from that time I never interfered with them again, though I could have shot plenty of them; but after killing and measuring three specimens, I

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allowed all the rest to live, for it is a pity to take away life wantonly, and the skinning of them would have been a repulsive business.

When in the north of Spain I had an opportunity of observing an Egyptian Vulture quietly feeding at a carcass. It came a few moments after I had withdrawn into my hiding-place, and instantly began by thrusting its head into the belly and among the entrails of the beast. At first it tore out great pieces, bolted them at once, and from time to time drew itself up and stared about, dripping with blood; but after an incredible amount of flesh had vanished down the throat of this gluttonous bird, it commenced pulling at a long entrail of the sheep, and hopping backward with short jumps, tugged and swallowed at the same time, stuffing till it could stuff no more. It then exerted its full strength, broke the entrail, flapped away a few paces, and, after ruffling its feathers and shaking itself, began to digest its meal with evident satisfaction. It had, doubtless, hurried so much in order that it might have an undisturbed enjoyment of the banquet before the arrival of its larger relatives.

The Egyptian Vulture builds in cliffs, generally in a perfectly unapproachable place, its nest being situated in a hole, cranny, or rift, but almost always in a position where it is protected by an overhanging part of the rock. The hollow of the nest is large and its exterior very loosely put together, a few twigs placed one upon another, feathers, sheep's wool, the hair of goats and pigs, and all sorts of animal refuse, such as bones, bits of skin, and even the dry dung of cattle, being the materials that form the dirty stinking abode of this carrion bird. I saw from a distance several of its nests in high cliffs, but only found one that was fairly approachable, and that was placed in a precipice of the Peña Blanca rock, among the spurs of the Sierra Guadarrama.

Just as I got under the nest the old bird was bringing food

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to the young, and I fired as it was clambering over the edge of its dwelling, but unsuccessfully, the height being too great. To get a look into the nest I had to clamber up by a crack in the rock, and on reaching it had a good deal of difficulty in taking out the young bird, for there was but one, about the size of a Wood-Pigeon, and still in down. The interior of the nest had a disgusting appearance, filled as it was with all sorts of decaying substances that were crawling with maggots, while a most pungent stench proceeded from the dwelling of this filthy bird.

The young Egyptian Vulture was more delicate than a Bearded Vulture and a "Stein" Eagle of the same age, for it could not stand long journeys, and died in a few days.

In conclusion, I annex the measurements of three Spanish specimens:—

Sex.	Length.	Breadth.	Wing.	Tail.	Tarsus.	Middle toe.
	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.
Neophron percnopterus from the Pardo at Madrid.						
♂.	65	162·5	50	27·5	9·5	5·2
♀.	68·5	163	49	26	9	6
Neophron percnopterus from Fuensanta at Murcia.						
♀.	68·5	163	50	28	9	6·5

I may perhaps be permitted to say a few more words (a few are unfortunately all that I can say) about the king of the bird-world, the great Bearded Vulture.

After killing the two specimens in the Sierra Nevada I rambled through the south of Spain, where I neither saw it

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in the Sierra de Ronda, nor of course among the flat surroundings of Seville, or on the banks of the Guadalquivir.

As I visited no part of Portugal except the immediate neighbourhood of the capital, I can say nothing about its occurrence in that country from my own observation; while in the large Royal Museum at Lisbon—where the collections, in pleasing contrast to all those of Spain, are quite up to the mark of modern science—every stuffed Bearded Vulture that I saw came from the latter country. Prof. Barboza du Bocage, the keeper of the museum, who is so well known to all ornithologists, also told me that it is one of the greatest rarities in Portugal, having only been occasionally seen in the mountainous parts of the country near the Spanish frontier, while its nest has never been found.

In the range of the Picos de Europa, in the north of Spain, I discovered an abandoned nest situated on a lofty precipice that rose from a high desolate mountain valley clothed with luxuriant beech woods, and inhabited by bears and izards (Spanish chamois). According to the information that I received from the herdsmen, this nest had been occupied the year before by a pair of Bearded Vultures; and from what these men said I could easily see that they knew how to distinguish this species from the other raptorial birds. I inspected the nest, which was placed in a hole just like the one that I had found in the Sierra Nevada.

In the same mountains above Cobadonga, and not far from the abandoned nest, I one morning saw a very dark-coloured young bird not more than a year and a half old. It was with a large flock of vultures that were circling round the last remnants of a dead cow; but it always kept rather higher up than the Griffon Vultures, and when I approached it was the first to go. On my proceeding to lay out a sheep as a bait it appeared again with many of the other birds, circled constantly round the carcass at a considerable height, and looked

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down at the feasting vultures. As soon as I saw that it would come no lower, but that it was sweeping round in widening circuits, I fired. Some feathers fell, and it plunged down the valley severely wounded; but not being able to see the exact place where it had fallen, all our searching was unfortunately unsuccessful. That was the only Bearded Vulture I met with in the north of Spain.

I also saw a splendid old bird, with bright yellow plumage, on the Sierra de Gredos, in the interior of the country. It glided away over a snow-field, took a wide sweep along the ridge of the mountain, and after passing close to the spot where I was lying in wait for ibex, it finally vanished down a rugged valley. The natives of these mountains knew the Bearded Vultures well, but could give me no information about their nests.

In the spurs of the Sierra Guadarrama I was shown a resting-place of this bird on the rock of Peña Blanca, situated in the midst of those low wooded hills. The niche in the rock was certainly plastered with droppings, but I thought it looked more like a favourite resort of the Griffon Vultures, and that the mountains were too unimportant for the Bearded Vulture. When climbing about the rocks, however, late in the afternoon I observed two of these birds playfully circling aloft—one being very large, old, and with bright yellow underparts; the other smaller and rather darker. I gazed for a long time at the splendid creatures as they tumbled about and swept round the wooded hill-tops, behind one of which they at last disappeared.

Those were the last Bearded Vultures that I observed in Spain; but one of my attendants saw two others, which came within shot of him several times while he was waiting for me not far from an ambush on the ridge above the Escorial, where I was watching for vultures.

In Malaga I was fortunate enough to procure a live Bearded

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Vulture. It was an adult that had already been long in confinement, and was so tame that it quietly allowed itself to be touched. Its plumage—as it generally does in captivity—had lost the beautiful bright yellow, and both breast and belly had turned silver-grey, while the dark black feathers had also become greyer. I saw a similar specimen in the Jardin des Plantes at Paris.

Both my captive Bearded Vultures, the old bird as well as the young one, bore the sea-voyage quite well, but in rough weather they took no food. The diet that suited them best was dead creatures of all sort, with the skin, hair, or feathers left on, which go to form their castings. Bones, however, are their favourite delicacy, and my old bird crushed the strongest beef-bones with incredible strength. One day I put a live rabbit into his cage. Like lightning he seized the poor beast with one foot, but did not squeeze it in the least, for he was quite sated, and only wanted to play with it. The game, however, turned out a somewhat grim one: for with his sharp beak he worked up and down the unlucky rabbit, and literally shore the whole fur from its body right up to its forehead. This he swallowed, and then let the animal slip out between the bars of the cage, clean-shaved, but otherwise uninjured.

My Bearded Vulture was perfectly tame and quite composed under all circumstances. I never saw him either excited or frightened. He did not pay the slightest attention to dogs, even when they came close up to him, nor was he alarmed at the bustle on deck, and when anybody approached him he seemed particularly pleased and at once stretched out his head. In the repose and deliberation of his movements he struck me as differing greatly from the many eagles which I have either kept myself or seen in confinement; for he had none of the vivacity or irritability which is daily exhibited even by

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quite tame young eagles, and appeared to look with disdain on all that went on around him.

The Bearded Vulture stands alone, no other raptorial bird really resembles it. The Egyptian Vulture comes nearest to it in its flight and the form of its tail, but differs from it so greatly in all other respects that the two birds cannot be said to have any true common characteristics such as exist among individual species of the other groups of raptorial birds. Its place appears to be between the eagles and the vultures, and it is, in my opinion, equally unlike and equally distant from both. Its flight is not at all like that of the vultures, and is also quite different to that of the eagles. In that respect, as well as in its habits and behaviour, it more resembles the large falcons; while its attitude, either when sitting on rocky pinnacles or shooting swiftly along, low over the ground, and the way in which it tumbles about when playing high in the air, remind one only of the latter birds. The observer who has never before met with a Bearded Vulture will at once recognize it, for, in spite of its size, it can never be mistaken for an eagle or a vulture. At a distance, indeed, it always looks to me like a large Peregrine; but when it is near and its full size is apparent, it presents quite a new picture to the ornithologist, being totally unlike any other bird; for its goat-like head, with the black stripes above the eyes, bristly beard that can be seen far away, long body carried horizontally when flying, cuneate tail, long narrow wings, and the mixture of hoary grey, black, and bright yellow in its plumage, unite in giving it an extraordinary, I might almost say a dragon-like, appearance.

The sight of a Bearded Vulture involuntarily suggests the thought that here must be a creature that does not belong to the fauna of the present day, but is a gradually expiring relic of an earlier epoch. And so it really is. Species indis-

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putably change in the course of time, and new forms replace those that are dying out. The Ibex and the Bearded Vulture—two representatives of the ancient Alpine fauna of Europe—are perishing together. Both are children of the highest mountains, dependent on conditions of utter freedom and repose, and both have retreated before the all-destroying race of man into a few isolated mountain-ranges, where even the last survivors are approaching the period of their final extinction.

The Lämmergeier of the Austrian and Swiss Alps has for some years past become a matter of story; it once dwelt there: and the same will ere long be the case in Spain. In the Balkan peninsula it is always one of the greatest rarities, and soon only the mountains of the Atlas and a few of the Asiatic ranges will harbour the bird, which in former years was the emblem of our own Alpine world. In the Austrian dominions the last of the Bearded Vultures now live in Transylvania and the mountains at the Iron Gates; but rare as they are even there, it would still be possible to find a nest by careful observation, and I have already received skins from those districts.

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V.

THE "STEIN" EAGLE (*Aquila fulva*) AND THE SPANISH IMPERIAL EAGLE (*Aquila adalberti*).

HAVING already treated of the "Stein" Eagle, I can only add the few short notes that I have collected concerning its occurrence in Spain.

There it is much rarer than I imagined, for although that country is so well provided with high mountains and rocks, and seems to offer it splendid places of residence, one is nevertheless much mistaken in expecting to find it everywhere.

I never met with it in the plains, and in many of the mountains it occurred either very sparingly or not at all. On the well-known range of Monserrat, for instance, where the towering precipices would afford it excellent nesting-places, I saw no "Stein" Eagles, and even the herdsmen could tell me nothing about them.

In the royal park of the Pardo at Madrid one appeared near a carcass, but only circled once round the place and then immediately flew far away. In the neighbourhood of Murcia rise some barren bright yellow mountains perfectly devoid of vegetation, and there a friend of mine found a nest on a low, easily accessible cliff; but though he waited a whole day for the return of the old bird, he only saw it cruising in the distance.

Isolated nests of this eagle exist in the Sierra de Ronda; a certain proof of this being that I received from a peasant a young bird in the down, just taken from a nest in that

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locality. In the Sierra Nevada I caught sight of it, but only in the distance; and one of my attendants found a nest, but could not possibly get to it owing to the steepness of the cliff.

In Portugal I saw stuffed specimens in collections, and learned from trustworthy sources that it bred there in suitable localities; a nest was even said to have been situated at no great distance from Lisbon.

In the range of the Picos de Europa, in the north of Spain, I observed several of these birds wheeling about over the valleys. I also found a nest in an inaccessible precipice, and while still making ineffectual attempts to get to it, the old bird flew over me several times within a few yards: but I could never manage to use my gun, as I had to hold on to the rock with my hands. When I was going back, and by an easier way, it again flew towards me, and settled close by on a dead tree that projected from the cliff, from which I brought it down with a ball.

I never saw this eagle in the Sierra de Gredos, which is so full of precipices, snow-fields, and alpine forms of the grandest description, nor did I receive any trustworthy information about it from the natives of that district.

In the wooded spurs of the Sierra Guadarrama I only saw it a long way off; but one of my attendants was lucky enough to find a nest, and shot the female, a splendid and very large specimen. I was delighted at the finding of this nest, as it afforded an opportunity of distinctly refuting an erroneous opinion entertained even by many naturalists. People in general believe that the "Stein" Eagle nests exclusively in rocks; others allow that in places where there are no rocks it builds on trees, but that it only does so from necessity. This is quite a mistake; the "Stein" Eagle nests just as readily on trees as on rocks, but the former must be high and situated in a secure retreat seldom visited by man. In

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more inhabited districts this shy bird naturally chooses inaccessible precipices in preference to trees as being safer.

In the forests of the Sierra Guadarrama it is by no means obliged to build on trees, for it is only a short flight to the rocks of that high snowy range, while the high projections of the Peña Blanca in the midst of the woods would also afford it excellent nesting-places. Nevertheless, my attendant found a nest on an old fir-tree, not far from the above rock, killed the female, and unfortunately missed the male. This was the last "Stein" Eagle that we met with in Spain, for on the heights near the Escorial no eagles came to the lure.

I think I am right in asserting that there are more birds of this species in the eastern parts of our native land than in the whole Spanish peninsula. Their shyness, however, increases the difficulty of finding them out and of studying them in a strange country, for their habits being so erratic, one only meets with them accidentally; their eyries, too, when not on trees, are, as a rule, situated in such inaccessible precipices, that the taking of them is the most difficult and dangerous of tasks for the collector of eggs or young birds; even the nests of vultures are easier to get at. It is also hard to acquire any definite information about this eagle from the natives, as it goes by a different name in most parts of Spain; in the north the herdsmen call it "Aquila pinta." In whatever part of the country it occurs, it is always the most dreaded of the raptorial birds, and the peasants have far more tales to tell of its depredations than of the Bearded Vulture's.

The Spanish "Stein" Eagle has the plumage of the true *Aquila fulva* form, being very dark, with a white tail tipped with black, precisely the reverse of the northern "Stein" Eagle, the so-called *chrysaëtos*, and I always found that the Spanish eagles of this species which I saw in museums were very uniform in colour.

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I subjoin measurements of two Spanish specimens:—

Sex.	Length.	Breadth.	Wing.	Tail.	Tarsus.	Middle toe.
	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.
Aquila fulva from Cobadonga, North Spain.						
♂.	83	200	50	34	11	7·5
Aquila fulva from the Sierra Guadarrama.						
♀.	91·4	214·6	66	36·2	11	8·2

I managed while in Spain to collect some notes about the *Aquila imperialis* and the *Aquila adalberti* of that country; and before making a few remarks with regard to the eventual union or separation of these so-called species, I will mention in what districts and under what circumstances I saw them.

When I laid out a carcass for the vultures in the Royal preserves of the Pardo at Madrid, a very light-brown, almost yellowish bird, about the size of an Imperial Eagle, appeared almost simultaneously with the Cinereous Vultures. It made a few sweeps round the place, and then pitched on the ground near a vulture. It was just the colour of a Sea-Eagle, but its flight, bearing, and feathered feet at once showed me that it was a "noble" eagle. Before I could fire it rose, to follow a vulture that was flying off with a large lump of flesh. Two more of these eagles, coloured precisely like the first, very soon arrived. They sailed round our ambush, settled on the nearest trees, and hung about the place for fully half an hour without coming down to the bait, so that I had an opportunity of observing them perfectly. Their cry was a sort of grunting sound, and quite reminded me of the call of the Sea-Eagle—not the sharp nervous scream of that bird, so familiar to every sportsman who has often lain in wait under its nest,

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but the deep guttural note that it utters, when, believing itself to be in perfect security, it either circles round its dwelling or hunts about on misty November days.

These two eagles screamed incessantly, both flying and sitting, and it was the first time that I had ever heard an eagle do so when at a carcass. After a while a third bird joined them, but soon left its comrades and came rushing down a few yards from our hiding-place. I killed it with my shot-gun, whereupon the Vultures, Black Kites, Ravens, and Magpies rose in affright from the ground and the neighbouring trees, and the two other eagles also sailed off to the depths of the woods in ever-widening circles.

For two whole days I rambled through the preserves of the Pardo, but never again did I manage to see an eagle of this species, and it was in the pine-woods near the coast that I first got a distant glimpse of another similarly light-coloured bird. I also found in a low pine-tree a nest about the size of an Imperial Eagle's, which, according to the Spaniard who was with me, belonged to the "Aquila carmelita," as this pale-plumaged bird is called.

In no other part of Spain did I come across it, but when riding in Morocco through a valley, girt with rocky hills covered with dense bushes, I saw a light-yellow eagle fly slowly away close to the ground, about a hundred paces off, and one of my attendants observed another at a different place.

I have now mentioned all the occasions on which I saw this doubtful species in the open, but I also noticed stuffed specimens of it in the collections at Madrid, Valencia, and Lisbon. These were generally in the same immature plumage, but some were darker. I could never quite make up my mind on the question, and therefore direct the attention of the next ornithologist who travels in Spain to the subject.

Aquila adalberti or *leucomela* was discovered by Doctor R.

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Brehm of Madrid, in 1860, who laid down the following characters :—

I. The white extended further in the region of the shoulder than in the Imperial Eagle, so that the broad white band reaches along the humeral and cubital parts of the wing including the digital.

II. The general colour of the plumage is darker.

III. In the young bird, on the contrary, the feathers of the underparts are less distinctly striped.

Besides the eagle which is distinguished by these characteristics, and which we will for the sake of brevity call Adalbert's Eagle, the true *Aquila imperialis* also appears to exist in Spain, for there I have seen eagles in collections which I should without any hesitation have called Imperial Eagles, and which, in point of fact, did not differ from the Imperial Eagles of our own country in the slightest degree. It must, however, be very rare in Spain, for during my numerous expeditions into the interior of the country I did not see one of these birds.

As regards this so-called Adalbert's Eagle, I am by no means sure that the species can be retained. Every one who has been much engaged in the study of the raptorial birds, and especially of the eagles, knows that the members of that group vary in plumage according to climate and habits of life, and to show that one speaks of many forms of each species, it is only necessary to cite the cases of the "Stein" Eagle and the Common Buzzard ; nor is this all, for even individual examples of these forms exhibit marked differences in size and plumage. Greater caution must therefore be exercised in making new species of the raptorial than of any other group of birds.

The dark *Aquila adalberti* is, in my opinion, *Aquila imperialis* a little deeper in colour and with a somewhat larger

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shoulder-patch, but still one and the same bird as the Imperial Eagle of Slavonia or Southern Russia. It is a finely-marked colour variety, and not even a Spanish or South-west European form of the bird; for these regions contain Imperial Eagles which are absolutely identical in colour with those of our own country, and, according to my own observations, the difference between the two is not so great as between the true "Stein" Eagle and the form known as the Golden Eagle.

I must now proceed to speak of the light-yellow eagle, which is considered to be an immature bird. In Spain I saw only these light-coloured specimens, and none in the transition stage; all were equally pale, and in Africa it was the same. If, therefore, it is an immature state, it is strange that I never met with an adult individual, but invariably with young birds, which were all exactly alike in both countries. Again, allowing it to be the immature plumage, these individuals must, as they all had the same shade of feathering, have been born in the same year, and this would undoubtedly have been a most remarkable coincidence.

If, in addition to the eagles already known in Spain, another species has just been discovered, or still remains to be discovered, it is, or will be, not a dark but a very pale bird. It is possible that an *Aquila adalberti*, or whatever it may be called—for names are of no consequence—does exist in Spain; but it will eventually prove to be the light-brown eagle, which up to the present time has been considered immature, instead of the dark bird which has hitherto borne the above name. There may, however, still be a new undescribed African species whose range extends into the middle of Spain, for that country already agrees in many points with the neighbouring continent as regards all the divisions of the animal-world; but, so long as this is still undetermined, I shall hold the

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dark *Aquila adalberti* to be a colour-variety of *Aquila imperialis*, and the light-coloured bird to be the immature state of the same species.

I give for comparison the measurements of the eagle that I killed at Madrid, and of seven Slavonian Imperial Eagles.

Sex.	Length.	Breadth.	Wing.	Tail.	Tarsus.	Middle toe.
	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.
Aquila imperialis (*adalberti*) from the Pardo at Madrid.						
♂.	79	194	57·5	33	10	6·5
Aquila imperialis from Slavonia.						
♂.	80·5	196	62	31·2	9·2	7
♀.	86	213	58	32	8·5	8
♂.	81	203·1	60	29·8	9·5	6·5
♀.	82	210·5	62	32·5	9·5	6
♀.	82	223·5	61·5	31·5	10	6·5
♂.	81·5	204·5	61·5	31·5	10	7
♂.	75	184	57	29	9·2	5·5

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VI.

BONELLI'S EAGLE (*Aquila bonelli*) AND THE OSPREY (*Pandion haliaëtus*).

Bonelli's Eagle is indisputably one of the rarest European birds of prey, for, although the area of its distribution extends over the entire southern part of our continent and some portions of Asia, as well as along the north coast of Africa, it is everywhere extremely uncommon.

According to earlier records it seems to have occurred in all the provinces of Spain; but though I have hunted after it frequently, and taken a great deal of trouble to catch sight of it, I have only had two opportunities of doing so.

When riding along the fortifications on the slope of the rock of Gibraltar I saw a Bonelli's Eagle. It flew low over us, and was a beautifully coloured old bird, with dark back and wings and pure white underparts. I was told by the English officers that its nest was situated on a cliff that fell abruptly down to the sea, and that it had for years been protected from all pursuit. On reaching the highest point of the rock I was shown this well-known eyrie, which is described by that excellent ornithologist Colonel Irby, in his work on the birds of Gibraltar.

It was placed on a projecting part of a very high cliff, and we could, from where we stood, get a very good slanting view of its interior. It was well constructed of branches, broom, and grass, and the two almost full-fledged young that it contained were hopping about lustily, and clambering to its edge with outstretched wings.

This nest is occupied every year, and there is no other on

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the whole rock, nor did we find one in any other part of the peninsula; while the many ineffectual attempts to procure a specimen which I made in all parts of Spain proved that the bird was extremely rare.

From morning until night I used to ramble about the mountains, plains, marshes, and sea-coasts—I may safely say through every zone of that country, but I only once managed to catch a distant glimpse of a Bonelli's Eagle. This was in the range of the Picos de Europa, where the rare bird circled for a few minutes over a bare mountain summit, near the nest of a " Stein " Eagle.

I believe that I am right in saying that, excepting the Sea-Eagle, Bonelli's is the rarest of all the resident eagles of Spain. It is perhaps more abundant in Southern Italy and Greece, but in Spain the frequency of its occurrence is much over-estimated by many naturalists.

I have in various countries had many opportunities of observing the Osprey, which may safely be said to be the most widely and evenly distributed eagle in the whole world.

Water and plenty of fish are all that it demands from a district before settling in it. It fishes just as readily in the sea as in fresh water, and adapts its nest to the nature of the locality where it is fishing. In treeless steppes it builds on the bare ground; and by the sea in the steepest precipices, as well as on the lowest coral-reefs. In well-wooded countries it selects tall thick trees, but in the high mountains the most inaccessible places in the rocks. Everywhere its nest retains the same character, being built of very coarse materials, and being, in comparison with the not very great size of the bird, always disproportionately large. In our woods one may instantly recognize it by its very peculiar shape and its dirty grey colour. Large trees, such as old oaks or half-withered pines, are always chosen, and the bird invariably places its

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nest on the dead topmost twigs, or at any rate on the uppermost branches.

In Austria the Osprey occurs everywhere, even in the most cultivated districts, provided they contain large rivers, ponds, or lakes, to supply it with food—everywhere, that is, during migration and when the young birds begin their wanderings. When breeding, however, it is only to be found in certain districts, which not only furnish it with the necessaries of life, but where it is also sufficiently out of the way of man and animals.

In Bohemia I have either found it on all the larger rivers and ponds during the time of its migration, or have seen specimens of it in country houses and collections. The many extensive lakes of the southern part of the country afford it suitable resorts, which it visits when migrating or when it leaves its nest to go fishing. Every year a few pairs nest in the forests, far away from any large river, and even a good many miles from the ponds of the plains. These nests are situated in the extensive woods of pine and spruce among the higher hills, which are little frequented by man. This bird and the Pygmy Eagle are now the only eagles that breed in Bohemia.

In the plains of Lower Austria the Osprey occurs almost everywhere, and is found on the Danube from spring to autumn with great regularity. In the lonely auen between Vienna and Pressburg it is even very common; and during both the time of its migration and throughout the summer some young birds that are not yet ready to breed frequent the river, and may be seen taking regular flights along the main stream and its arms, or lazily sitting on the sandbanks, among the various marsh and waterfowl. The Osprey is such an inoffensive fellow, and lives so exclusively on fish, that none of these birds are the least shy of him, but, on the contrary, live peaceably in his company.

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Curiously enough this eagle now never breeds in the auen of the Danube, which offer it such splendid fishing-grounds, for I only know of one nest there, and that has been deserted for many years.

Sea-Eagles and Kites are the most malicious tormentors of the poor Osprey, for they worry it incessantly during the whole time that it is breeding, and also rob it of its cleverly gained booty; indeed, I believe that the great numbers of Kites which nest in the auen of Lower Austria have driven the Ospreys to settle elsewhere.

This applies, in a still greater degree, to the Hungarian auen, for in the great maze of woods between Mohács and the Draueck, where all the requirements of the Osprey exist in great abundance, I only found two of its nests and saw very few of these birds flying up and down the numerous branching arms of the Danube. There, again, the quantities of Sea-Eagles, added to the goodly numbers of the Black Kites, are the drawbacks that prevent the Ospreys from taking up their quarters in those districts. I went one day from the auen of the Danube to the Keskend wood, a large but perfectly dry oak forest, some hours' drive from the river, and had on the way already caught sight of some Ospreys fishing along the small streams that flowed to the Danube; but in this forest, far away from all marshes and rivers, I found several of their nests, close to each other, near the eyrie of a Short-toed Eagle, and surrounded by the dwellings of the Black Storks, which were very common in that locality. It was beautiful to see the Osprey among the Storks as they flew to and fro over the oaks.

In many of the Alpine districts I found this eagle quite common; in others, however, it either did not occur at all or was very rare. In the Alps it shows a preference for the neighbourhood of mountain-lakes, and this is the reason why

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it is so abundant in the Salzkammergut. There the Traun, Wolfgang, Mond, and Atter lakes are its favourite haunts, and it usually builds on the cliffs which rise straight above the water. Every year there are several nests at the Traunsee, one or two quite close to the lake, the others in a narrow valley which runs between the well-known Traunstein and the rocky Gassenkegel, and which keeps decreasing in width until it finally becomes a mere ravine among the rugged chamois mountains. There the nests are situated in the abrupt precipices high above the region of the trees; and some years ago, when out after chamois in August, I saw several young Ospreys circling together round the lofty pinnacles of the rocks.

The birds that live on the Traunsee make regular excursions along the shores of the lake, where one frequently sees them close to the steamer. They also fly daily and with absolute punctuality up and down the Traun, often ascending the river almost as far as Ischl. Every year one could easily shoot several of them from the Ebensee road, for they come from the lake to hunt in the river at the same time every day.

It is beautiful to see the active Osprey hovering like a hawk high above the water, and keeping in a fixed position, as if held by a charm, until it suddenly plunges into the foaming mountain-stream with such arrowy speed that the water closes over it, and the next moment it flies off with a slim trout in its claws.

Nor is it only on the large rivers that the Osprey hunts, but it also seeks its prey in the very narrow valleys of the high mountains, especially during migration. In April, for example, I once found it busily catching fish on the Murz in the Murzthal, not far from Neuberg. In Spain I never

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saw this eagle in the interior; but I once observed it flying up and down over the sea at the rock of Gibraltar, where, as I was informed by the English officers, it breeds every year, not far from the well-known nest of Bonelli's Eagle.

According to my experiences few birds of prey are less shy when breeding than the Osprey, for it sits hard and readily allows one to come close under the nest. It also feeds its young with regularity and pretty often, so that it can easily be killed from an ambush. One of my friends twice drove an Osprey from its nest within half an hour, missing it both times, but breaking one of its primaries on the second occasion. Not more than ten minutes afterwards I stole up to the nest and found the bird again setting on its eggs, nor would it leave its dwelling until the tree had been repeatedly struck; but this time its fate was sealed. There was another Osprey's eyrie situated among the nests of the Black Storks; to it I drove in a noisy Hungarian cart, pulled up under the nest, and while still sitting in the vehicle shot the eagle, which was circling round low down.

The shooting of this bird, however, except in the breeding-season, is a very uncertain affair, for it never stoops to the Eagle-Owl, but only occasionally settles on a neighbouring tree or flies over the place at a considerable height; while it often passes by without deigning to glance at the owl. It is also useless to attempt to shoot it from a decoy, as it never touches carrion; so the method generally employed by sportsmen is simply to lie in wait for it, for, as already mentioned, these eagles fly up and down the rivers fishing, and keep to certain hours with great punctuality. One may, therefore, get a close easy shot from a good hiding-place. In conclusion, I subjoin the measurements of two Ospreys shot by myself.

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Sex.	Length.	Breadth.	Wing.	Tail.	Tarsus.	Middle toe.
	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.
			Pandion haliaëtus from Hungary.			
♀.	61	168	51	24·5	5	6·3
♂.	57	160	49	22	4·8	5·8

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ORNITHOLOGICAL SKETCHES

FROM

THE EAST.

Egypt, up to the Nubian frontier, and Palestine were the countries that I travelled through and investigated to the best of my ability. It is, however, no exhaustive account of their faunas that is now presented to the reader, but a simple statement of my observations.

The task I have undertaken may be divided into two sections—the first being a list of all the species killed either by my fellow travellers or myself, with my remarks concerning them ; the second a collection of notes relating to the birds which we undoubtedly saw but failed to secure. I ought, however, to begin by saying that the journey took place at a time when many of our migrants had already left their winter-quarters, a fact that will account to naturalists for the absence of a string of species which one would certainly expect to find in Egypt during the winter months.

In the enumeration of the birds observed I have followed Brehm's system, and have only had to insert five species that are not included in his 'Thierleben.'

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Precise measurements were taken of all the specimens obtained, but these I will, with a view to economy of space, omit.

1. Coccystes glandarius. Great Spotted Cuckoo.

Only twice observed: first at the village of Ermaut in Upper Egypt, flitting to and fro among the high leafy trees; the second time also in Upper Egypt, at Sohag, where it was sitting on the mud wall of a garden close to the town.

2. Ceryle rudis. Pied Kingfisher.

First seen between Alexandria and Cairo. In many places these Kingfishers were flying over the canals and water-courses close to the line, or were perched on the telegraph-wires. Near Cairo it was less common, but further south we found it in all favourable situations, such as the reedy and rocky shores of Lake Birket-el-Karûn, in the province of Fayûm, and everywhere on the Nile, the canals, and the sluggish streams, even within the towns of Upper Egypt; most common where both shallow water and suitable perches were to be found. In such places as many as ten were often congregated within a small area. Also sometimes noticed on the freshwater streams in the neighbourhood of the Suez Canal and Lake Menzaleh, but not so common there as elsewhere. Only once seen in Palestine, in the valley of the Jordan, where it was fishing and hovering in its usual way over a marsh covered with thick bushes.

3. Merops ægyptius. Blue-cheeked Bee-eater.

This strikingly beautiful bird was never seen in Lower Egypt or anywhere near Cairo. The first and most northerly specimens were observed in the garden of the railway-station of Abouksor-Fayûm, where they were, as usual, collected together in a small flock. Everywhere found along the Nile,

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in Upper Egypt, in suitable situations, in the choice of which, however, it appears to be very particular. Gardens with solitary palms, thick bushes with places for perching on, after the fashion of the Bee-eaters, and especially telegraph-wires are among its requirements. So little does this tame bird shun mankind and his dwellings, that even repeated shots do not frighten it away from its favourite resorts. I saw one paired couple at Kom-el-Emir, on a hedge near the bank of the Nile: otherwise they were always in flocks of as many as thirty individuals. They fluttered round the trees like butterflies, and flitted from one suitable spot to another.

4. Cypselus pallidus. Egyptian Swift.

This bird is very critical in the selection of its haunts and is less frequently found than one anticipates; but where it does settle it congregates in great numbers. Its dwelling-places are in the steep mountains bordering the valley of the Nile, principally in the northern parts of the country. I found it, for instance, in great swarms on the rocks of the quarry in the Mokattam hills near Cairo.

5. Cypselus parvus. Little Grey Swift.

This is the characteristic Swift of Upper Egypt, and may be found in all suitable situations. It is very common, for example, at the ruins of Karnak. In the mornings I saw great numbers of them hunting gnats over the waving corn-fields in true Swift fashion.

6. Falco barbarus. Barbary Falcon.

I observed a pair of these beautiful falcons on the island of Bezire-Karûn at Lake Birket-el-Karûn, where they circled all day long round the rocks of the highest point of the island; otherwise they were very rare, and never seen except

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near mountains. The only specimen that occurred in Palestine was killed at Baisân, in the valley of the Jordan.

7. Falco cenchris. Lesser Kestrel.

From Alexandria up to Assuan the Lesser Kestrel is not only common, but one of the commonest birds, and may be seen everywhere in the towns, among the ruins, in the rocky mountains, and in the palm-groves. In Palestine it is on the whole not so numerous as in North Africa, and is confined to isolated localities that are adapted to it, such as the rocky gorge of the monastery of Mar-Saba, near the Dead Sea, where I found quite an enormous colony of them breeding.

8. Astur nisus. Sparrow-Hawk.

Only once seen. It came flying up over the steppe of the Jordan valley, and circled a few times above a deep gorge covered with thick bushes, in which we were then hunting wild boars.

9. Aquila nipalensis. Steppe-Eagle.

Never observed in Africa. In Palestine, on the contrary, it is the commonest of the large noble eagles. In a narrow mountain valley between Jaffa and Jerusalem I saw many of them cruising about, and at a distance took them at first for Imperial Eagles. Many were also observed between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and especially between Bethlehem and Mar-Saba. All these eagles were flying in small and often in large companies of as many as twenty together; they seemed to be on migration, or, to speak more correctly, on the search after good localities for feeding on the great black lizards and gigantic grasshoppers. According to my observations the large insects and the reptiles which are everywhere so abundant in Palestine form the sole food of all the eagles. In the valley of the Jordan I saw the first paired couple of Steppe-

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Eagles flying along the mountain-ridges. The breeding-season seemed to be just beginning, for next day one of these eagles, while chasing another, flew so low over our caravan that I brought it down with small shot.

10. Aquila pennata. Pygmy Eagle.

In Africa I saw and shot a Pygmy Eagle of the quite dark, almost black variety. It was in the palm-groves near the town of Sohag, where, crowded on a few trees, large numbers of Crows, Ravens, Kites, Night-Herons, Falcons, and Pigeons assemble every evening for their night's rest. It was dark, but still I could see that it was not a Kite. The bird was already fast asleep on the bottom branches of a low tamarisk.

In Palestine I saw such numbers of Pygmy Eagles that I could not believe my eyes. They were on migration, and every day, in all parts of the country, one could see them flying in large flocks, often as many as sixty in loose order, but still following each other. I also several times noted the curious fact that this Eagle travels in company with the Stork, not merely following the huge flocks of those birds, but even mixing with them. Both hunt after reptiles and insects, and seek the best places for feeding during migration. In the Jordan valley we once saw a great many Pygmy Eagles perched on the low trees and bushes in company with the Short-toed Eagles.

11. Pandion haliaëtus. Osprey.

One sees this Eagle on the Nile every day, on the large lake of Birket-el-Karûn it is even very common. Ospreys flew round the shores of the island Bezire-Karûn the whole day long, and in the afternoon often as many as ten together sat resting for digestive purposes on the rocky coast, in company with the flocks of Herons, Gulls, and Pelicans. It was also often observed on the lake of Menzaleh and along the

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Suez Canal, but only once in Palestine, in the Jordan valley, close to the Dead Sea.

12. Elanus melanopterus. Black-winged Kite.

This beautiful bird of prey was first observed at Beliane on the Nile, and from thence to the Nubian frontier was everywhere seen in suitable localities. By the 1st of March it had already paired, and was hunting its prey in couples. Single trees near villages, little gardens and palm-groves, telegraph-poles, mud heaps and walls among the waving corn-fields, embankments by canals, and solitary trees by the sides of pools are the favourite haunts of these birds. They have no fear of man, and one can walk right up to them and shoot them within a few paces; even when missed, they circle round the sportsman, inquisitively, but without taking alarm, and presently settle down quite close to him. In its flight and in its restless butterfly way of fluttering about, the Black-winged Kite is undeniably a most peculiar bird of prey.

13. Milvus ater. Black Kite.

In company with the Parasitic Kite, the Black Kite is distributed over the whole of Egypt, but is not so common as the former, nor so bold in its behaviour in the towns. It certainly flies about the houses, and especially the towns on the banks of the Nile, still it does not come so close to men and dogs as its relative. The Parasitic Kite is always the first at a carcass, and the Black Kite does not follow it until a few minutes later. In Palestine one comes across the Black Kite only, and here and there a Common Kite.

About Jerusalem and on the Jordan I saw many Black Kites, but not such numbers of them as in Africa.

14. Milvus migrans. Parasitic Kite.

This bold bird, which is to be seen in wearisome abundance

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in all towns, especially in Cairo, on the roofs, minarets, gardens, and walls, is in Egypt really a domestic creature. One hears its tittering cry everywhere, and it is so worrying that it can only be compared to the buzzing of a fly. This bird is always the first to come to carrion, and does not allow itself to be driven away even by the large Vultures. When I left Africa, towards the end of March, the Parasitic Kites were already sitting on their nests among the towns and gardens.

15. Circus pallidus. Pallid Harrier.

This beautiful bird is rare throughout Upper Egypt, where only solitary specimens are seen; but it is somewhat commoner in Lower Egypt, near Cairo, and the Suez Canal towards the end of March. We there found it on the bush-covered pastures, and it was also occasionally observed in Palestine.

16. Circus æruginosus. Marsh-Harrier.

In incredible numbers throughout Egypt and Palestine, in all corn-fields, pastures, rush and reed beds, and the bushes by the shores of lakes.

17. Circaëtus gallicus. Short-toed Eagle.

Never observed in Africa, and confined in Palestine to the Jordan valley, but there seen in astonishing numbers on the low bushes and trees.

18. Buteo ferox. Long-legged Buzzard.

Throughout Egypt this large Buzzard is everywhere to be found, but always solitary. One sees it sitting among the fields, on walls, and on heaps of mud and dung. On the cliffs of the mountains bordering the Nile I found two paired couples. In Palestine I only saw two, one in the valley of

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the Jordan, the other between Nazareth and Jaffa. This bird is unusually confiding in its behaviour towards man.

19. Neophron percnopterus. Egyptian Vulture.

More or less common throughout Egypt, and everywhere distributed in Cairo and its neighbourhood. Near the towns of Upper and Lower Egypt one sees it sitting on the sand-banks along the Nile watching for stranded carrion. Both within and without the towns this Vulture is very audacious, but can perfectly distinguish the Europeans, who murder everything, from the Arabs, who protect it because it cleans the neighbourhood from carrion and dirt. In Palestine it is common, and even in the uninhabited districts of the Jordan valley is the unfailing attendant of every encampment. There it is much tamer than in Egypt, and we saw Carrion Vultures going about among the tents looking for kitchen scraps.

20. Neophron pileatus. Pileated Vulture.

The Pileated Vulture was observed in Upper Egypt. We had laid out a carcass on a sandbank of the Nile for the purpose of shooting large Vultures. At first several Egyptian Vultures appeared, and soon afterwards three of these birds; but they were the only ones seen during the whole journey.

21. Vultur fulvus. Griffon Vulture.

The first Griffon Vultures which I saw in Africa were at Cairo. There these great birds of prey may be observed circling over the town almost daily. They came with great regularity from the Mokattam hills to the city, and I once saw them at a carcass in quite incredible numbers. Frightened by the constant pursuit of the Europeans, they neither pass the night nor nest in the precipices of those hills, but, according to reliable observations, fly off every evening as far as the Akaba mountains on the Red Sea, near the town of Suez, and

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daily appear at midday over Cairo. The latter part of this statement I can endorse.

They are also frequently to be seen on the sandbanks of the Nile, especially in the neighbourhood of high mountains. At certain places, such as Medinet Abu, opposite Luxor, one meets with great numbers of them. In Palestine I saw solitary specimens between Jaffa and Jerusalem, but round the latter town hundreds daily collected to look for carrion. They always flew from the same direction in a sort of travelling procession, and I observed this flight to Jerusalem from Bethlehem, Mar-Saba, and the Dead Sea; for all these birds came from the high barren mountains on the left side of the Dead Sea.

22. Athene noctua. Little Owl.

Very common among gardens and groves in and about the towns of Upper Egypt.

23. Monticola cyana. Blue Rock-Thrush.

Very common throughout Egypt among mountains, ruins, and even near towns. In Africa this species is distinguished by its great tameness, whereas in Southern Europe it is considered one of the most shy of birds.

24. Saxicola leucura. Black Chat.

This beautiful bird was only observed near Assouan, in the cemetery among the desert mountains. Two specimens were killed—the first in the ordinary plumage, the second with a white forehead.

25. Saxicola œnanthe. Wheatear.

Seen throughout Egypt, but nowhere common. It seeks the same food and frequents the same localities as in Europe.

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26. Saxicola rufescens. Black-eared Chat.

Nowhere common in Egypt; most frequently seen in the neighbourhood of the Suez Canal.

27. Saxicola stapazina. Russet Chat.

Not common in Egypt, but isolated individuals were to be found everywhere. In Palestine it frequented the same localities as the Wheatear.

28. Saxicola leucomela. Pied Chat.

Somewhat rare in Egypt. In Palestine everywhere in suitable spots. In the desert mountains between Bethlehem and the Red Sea even very common.

29. Ixos xanthopygius. Yellow-vented Bulbul.

This remarkable bird was daily observed in the Jordan valley while we were boar-hunting among the dense bushes of the broad watercourses. As I was not acquainted with the species, I sent a specimen to Herr v. Homeyer, who determined it as *Ixos xanthopygius*, and as it had no German name called it "Gelbbauchige Buschdrossel" (Yellow-bellied Bush-Thrush). It occurs in some of the Greek islands, especially in the Cyclades. These birds were very local, and were always found among the same sort of bushes or in the thick rushes and high grass. They had already paired and were extremely shy.

30. Crateropus squamiceps. Palestine Bush-Babbler.

Found in the same districts of the Jordan valley and under the same conditions of life as the Bush-Thrush, but in much greater numbers. In its way of living and its general behaviour it somewhat resembles the Cuckoo, and is, moreover, very shy. The young birds were already fledged, and were flying from bush to bush in small companies of eight to ten. This species was also new to me, and was determined by

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Homeyer, and as a German name was again wanting he christened it the "Geschuppter Drossling" (Little Crested Thrush). A similar form appears to be found in the Sierra Nevada in Spain, but I have never personally observed it.

31. Aëdon familiaris. Grey-backed Warbler.

In Egypt common, but local, among thickets on level ground. In Palestine only among dense bushy tracts in the valley of the Jordan, but there very abundant.

32. Cisticola cursitans. Fantail Warbler.

Very common in the green fields of the cultivated country both of Lower Egypt and the valley of the Nile in Upper Egypt.

33. Acrocephalus turdoides. Great Sedge-Warbler.

Everywhere common in the wet reedy tracts of Egypt and Palestine.

34. Acrocephalus melanopogon. Moustached Warbler.

Common on the islands of Lake Menzaleh, which are thickly covered with low bushes, and also among the brushwood of the Jordan valley.

35. Acrocephalus aquaticus. Aquatic Warbler.

Very common among the thick bushes and reeds on the islands of the Nile between Cairo and the sea. Everywhere else very isolated and rare.

36. Accentor modularis. Hedge-Accentor.

The only specimen seen was observed among the large cacti which, together with many other Southern plants, fringed the bank of a rapid stream at the foot of the high mountain of Skopos on the island of Zante.

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37. Motacilla alba. White Wagtail.

Very common and often congregated in flocks of considerable size on Lake Menzaleh, Lake Birket-el-Karûn, the whole valley of the Nile, and all the moist ground in Egypt that was suitable for Wagtails.

38. Motacilla flava. Grey-headed Yellow Wagtail.

The only specimen was seen in the island of Zante near a hut by a pool at the foot of Mount Skopos, and not far from the sea-shore.

39. Motacilla rayii. Yellow Wagtail.

Seen in great abundance along the whole Nile and on Lake Menzaleh. It frequented ground covered with thick bushes in the neighbourhood of water as well as the fields of the cultivated country.

40. Anthus pratensis. Meadow-Pipit.

On green meadows and fields near the banks of the Nile. Several large flocks were observed on migration.

41. Anthus campestris. Tawny Pipit.

Only seen at Zante, where large flocks were observed on the steep hillsides of the island, especially on Mount Skopos, and also on the open ground among the rosemary bushes.

42. Galerita theclæ. Egyptian Crested Lark.

Throughout Egypt the commonest lark of the cultivated country. Very abundant in the well-tilled plain between Jaffa and Latrun. Less numerous in the Jordan valley, but still not rare.

43. Certhilauda duponti. Dupont's Lark.

Seen in considerable numbers, but only among the bushes

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and scattered pastures of the islands near the Barrage of the Nile.

44. Calandrites brachydactyla. Short-toed Lark.

In large flocks on the islands near the Barrage, but never met with elsewhere.

45. Ammomanes deserti. Desert-Lark.

This lark is rather common in the barren rocky mountains at Assuan, and of regular occurrence throughout Egypt in stony barren tracts.

46. Ammomanes cinctura. Gould's Desert-Lark.

Occasionally seen in several of the desert mountains of Upper Egypt, but nowhere common.

47. Emberiza hortulana. Ortolan Bunting.

Often observed in flocks on the grassy mountains. They assembled in great numbers on the detached clumps of bushes, and were probably on migration.

48. Emberiza cæsia. Cretzschmar's Bunting.

Of regular occurrence throughout Palestine, and even common in districts where there are thick bushes and large masses of rock.

49. Passer italiæ. Italian Sparrow.

The commonest Sparrow both in Egypt and Palestine in many of the localities that abound in ruins, débris, and thick bushes.

50. Passer hispaniolensis.

Everywhere very abundant in Upper Egypt, especially among the ruins on the island of Philæ.

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51. Erythrospiza githaginea. Desert-Bullfinch.

Rather common in all the desert districts of Upper Egypt and in places which are either stony or but sparsely covered with bushes. Often in flocks of four or five individuals. Observed even in the cultivated country, but only among ruins and old walls.

52. Amydrus tristrami. Tristram's Grakle.

This remarkable dusky black-blue bird, with rusty-brown wings, was only once seen and observed in a ravine near the monastery of Mar-Saba. It nests in the cliffs in the neighbourhood of the monastery, and all day long one sees it in great numbers either sitting on the roofs, towers, and walls of the old buildings or flying round them. The Greek monks have so tamed these Grakles that every day, at the same hour, they come to the call of a brother of the order who feeds them with bread. We had great difficulty in obtaining a specimen, for the monks permit no one to shoot them. I sent the bird to Herr v. Homeyer for identification.

53. Sturnus vulgaris. Common Starling.

Only in the first days of our journey and again at the end of February did we meet with the common Starling in Lower Egypt. At the lake of Birket-el-Karûn great flocks of them pass the night in the bushes along the shore.

54. Corvus corax. Raven.

Throughout Egypt in all suitable places in the towns. Among the desert-mountains, in the desert itself among the old ruins, at the large lakes, and on the sandbanks of the Nile our Raven was frequently observed. In the interior of the temple of Edfu a pair were nesting in the covered and almost perfectly dark hall of the building. On the Red Sea and in the Arabian desert Ravens were also observed. They

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are fond of the sea-shore on account of the mussels. In Egypt this bird is much less shy than with us, but still not nearly so tame as in Asia. I saw it everywhere in Palestine, on the mountains, the steppes, and in the valley of the Jordan. A pair were nesting on the ancient city-wall of Jerusalem near our camp, and the impudent birds stole the kitchen-scraps from among the tents. On the Greek islands and in Dalmatia it is everywhere common. The African bird is somewhat smaller than the European, and its plumage, which is decidedly bluer, has a beautiful sheen. The Asiatic is like our own in all respects.

55. Corvus cornix. Hooded Crow.

In Egypt everywhere common in the cultivated country from Alexandria to Assuan. Fledged birds of the year were seen in Upper Egypt on the 1st of March. In appearance and habits the Hooded Crow of Africa resembles our own bird, but lacks its extreme shyness and cautiousness; near the towns it is almost domesticated. In Palestine I observed it in the cultivated country between Jaffa and the mountains, and also near Jerusalem.

56. Garrulus melanocephalus. Syrian Jay.

This species, which is almost identical with our Jay, was only observed twice; on both occasions in the olive-gardens of Latrun and Jerusalem. It is still more shy and active than our bird, and only differs from it in its note and the blackness of its head, the rest of its plumage being very nearly the same.

57. Lanius meridionalis. Southern Grey Shrike.

Only seen in Palestine in the Jordan valley, but there in astonishing numbers on tracts covered with low trees and dense thickets. In the beginning of April the young of the

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year were already fledged. This bird is less shy than any of the other Shrikes. The first that we bagged for our collection was a full-grown specimen, which I simply knocked down from a bush with my hunting-knife, for, being in pursuit of large game, we did not wish to fire any unnecessary shots.

58. Lanius rufus. Woodchat Shrike.

Only in the thickets of the Jordan valley, but there often observed.

59. Lanius nubicus. Masked Shrike.

Very sporadic in the whole of Lower Egypt. Common in Upper Egypt, and there not critical in the choice of its resting-places, but generally found on hedges, in gardens, palm-groves, and among bushes. Exceptionally tame. In Palestine only in the Jordan valley, and there very rare.

60. Hirundo rufula. Cave-Swallow *.

Very abundant throughout Egypt, where it takes the place of our Chimney-Swallow.

61. Hirundo rufula. Rufous Swallow.

Near the rock-monastery of Mar-Saba and on Mount Tabor I found a Swallow of the same size as our House-Swallow, with white breast and underparts, and rusty-brown spots on the neck and back, and, not recognizing it, sent it to Herr v. Homeyer, who determined it as *Hirundo rufula*. It differs entirely from the Egyptian Cave-Swallow, which bears the same name, and for which it cannot be mistaken. The error probably originates from an inaccurate knowledge of the two species.

* [Probably *Hirundo riocourii*, Audouin. Oriental Chimney-Swallow.]

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62. Cotyle rupestris. Crag-Swallow.

Very common throughout Egypt and Palestine in suitable localities, such as cliffs and even large masses of rock in the mountains of the desert. Where there are no rocks it contents itself with ruins and buildings, the pyramids of Gizeh for example.

63. Upupa epops. Hoopoe.

Throughout Egypt one of the commonest and tamest birds, both in the towns and the cultivated country. Less abundant in Palestine, where localities suited to it are much rarer.

64. Columba livia. Rock-Dove.

Common throughout Egypt and Palestine, wherever high cliffs with holes in them offer it suitable dwelling-places. In Egypt, however, incredible numbers of semi-wild Rock-Doves are generally found crowded together in little towns of dove-cots, which are specially built for them for the sake of their eggs, but chiefly for their guano. These birds, nevertheless, never change either in size or colour.

65. Turtur auritus. Common Turtle-Dove.

Isolated specimens were seen, but only in the valley of the Jordan.

66. Turtur orientalis. Asiatic Turtle-Dove.

Only found in the low trees and bushy tracts of the valley of the Jordan, but there in great numbers. These birds had already paired, and the males were executing their aerial evolutions more skilfully than any pigeons I have ever seen. Their peculiar call resounded all day long, and they were, on the whole, very shy and wary.

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67. Turtur senegalensis. Egyptian Turtle-Dove.

Very common throughout Egypt in cultivated ground, on all roads and clumps of trees, but especially in gardens, even within the towns.

68. Chalcopelia afra. Emerald-spotted Dove.

Only once seen at Kom-el-Emir, in Upper Egypt, where a pair of these strikingly small and beautiful pigeons were sitting on a mud-heap among the fields near the Nile. At my approach one flew away; the other remained, and fell to my gun. This pigeon is really a native of Nubia and the interior.

69. Caccabis saxatilis. Rock-Partridge *.

The first specimens, a paired couple, were observed between Jaffa and Jerusalem. Between Latrun and Jerusalem we saw more of them among the hills that were covered with bushes and large masses of rock. About Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the road to the Dead Sea this beautiful partridge occurred everywhere; but as the natives are always after it, it was nowhere common. In the valley of the Jordan it chiefly frequents the broad watercourses that run from the mountains and across the plains down to the river. These watercourses are filled with large stones and impenetrable thickets; and in these favourable localities many partridges are to be found, and a good bag of these by no means shy birds can easily be made. The Asiatic bird is, indeed, precisely the same species as the Rock-Partridge of the Balkan peninsula and the Greek islands, but it is larger and finer in colour.

70. Caccabis petrosa. Cliff-Partridge †.

The first specimens were seen on the barren mountains

* [" Steinhuhn." The Red-legged Partridge of Palestine is now generally considered to be the eastern species *Caccabis chukar*.]

† [" Klippenhuhn." This undoubtedly refers to Hey's Partridge (*Ammoperdix heyi*).]

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between Bethlehem and the Dead Sea, where, however, it was very scarce. In the valley of the Jordan this graceful bird and the Rock-Partridge live together in the same localities, but the former is the more abundant.

71. Francolinus vulgaris. Francolin.

First found among thick bushes near the halting-place of Abd-el-Kader in the middle of the Jordan valley. On the Upper Jordan, within a day's journey of the Lake of Tiberias, this bird was extremely abundant in the marshy well-watered neighbourhood of the village of Beisân. Pairs of them were met with on damp ground that was well covered with grass, very dense underwood, and a few reeds. The Francolin allows one to come quite close to it, and only takes wing at the last moment. The hens appeared to be sitting, as but one was flushed. All morning, afternoon, and evening the monotonous love-song of the cocks was heard in every direction, and only ceased in the scorching heat of the midday hours. This cry, which is continued until the sportsman is quite near, much facilitates the pursuit of this beautiful game-bird.

72. Coturnix communis. Common Quail.

When we arrived in Lower Egypt at the end of February we found that the Quail had not yet come. In the beginning and up to the middle of March the whole valley of the Nile was full of them, but we had neither the time nor the inclination to go specially after these birds. In the latter half, and particularly the last few days, of March, Quail were very numerous in Lower Egypt. At the beginning ef April we found them throughout Palestine, even among the rocky hills where there was no cover, and they were incredibly abundant in the grassy and wooded districts of the valley of the Jordan. There, we were obliged to shoot them for

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our ill-stocked larder, and there I even found fledged birds of the year.

73. Œdicnemus crepitans. Stone-Curlew.

The Stone-Curlew occurs throughout Egypt in suitable localities, old walls near water being its favourite resorts. I found a great many of them in the ruins of an ancient mosque at Cairo. There, as well as in most of the Egyptian towns, its monotonous cry is nightly heard. It even inhabits the upper part of the well-preserved Shûbra palace in considerable numbers. It also dwells among large stones and bare rocks near water, on the island in the lake of Birket-el-Karûn for example. On the Nile it frequents the sandy islands that are sparingly covered with bushes. In Palestine we saw a pair on the barren mountains above the Dead Sea, and a flock of more than ten on the steppe near the Jordan. Unless we made a special search for this bird we seldom met with it, but as soon as it began to get dark we heard its call almost nightly, both in Egypt and Palestine.

74. Chettusia leucura. White-tailed Plover.

Some of these beautiful birds were observed on the shores of Lake Birket-el-Karûn.

75. Hoplopterus spinosus. Spur-winged Plover.

From Alexandria to Assuan in all suitable localities near water. On the banks of the Nile especially one sees great numbers of these handsome birds every day; also on fields, meadows, and sandbanks, in gardens, by pools and canals, it may be observed either singly or in flocks of as many as twenty or even more. It is not shy, and one could slaughter a hundred in a few days.

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76. Charadrius fluviatilis. Little Ringed Plover.

Very common at Lake Birket-el-Karûn and the well-watered districts near the Suez Canal; generally in large flocks, but also solitary.

77. Charadrius hiaticula. Ringed Plover.

Found in considerable numbers at pools, in suitable situations on the Nile, both in Upper and Lower Egypt, and on the great lagoons.

78. Charadrius cantianus. Kentish Plover.

Only seen at the Red Sea, where it was pretty common.

79. Cursorius gallicus. Cream-coloured Courser.

Only once found in the desert on the shore of the Red Sea.

80. Hyas ægyptiaca. Black-headed Plover.

Of regular but not quite common occurrence on the banks of the Nile in Upper Egypt. We saw only paired couples, which chiefly frequented the sandbanks and the crumbling sides of the river.

81. Strepsilas interpres. Turnstone.

Only seen at Lake Menzaleh, but there in large flocks, often composed of various species of Sandpipers. In the evening these birds kept uttering their incessant cries while hovering round the numerous islands, which are surrounded by sandy shores and covered with low bushes.

82. Gallinago gallinaria. Common Snipe.

In all suitable swamps on the marshy shores, and often even the sandy banks of the river, both in Upper and Lower Egypt. On an ancient freestone reservoir in the ruins of

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Karnak I found two kinds of Sandpipers and two Common Snipe resting on the bare stone, being probably tired with a long journey, and in a little marsh near Ismailia I met with this bird in great abundance. In Palestine I saw several solitary individuals among the bushes and mountain-streams of the Jordan valley.

83. Gallinago gallinula. Jack Snipe.

Only in the true marshes of Lower Egypt, and even there not common.

84. Calidris arenaria. Sanderling.

Regularly seen on the Lakes and the Nile, but nowhere common.

85. Tringa maritima.

Only observed on the shores of the Red Sea, but there in great flocks.

86. Tringa subarquata. Pygmy Curlew.

Frequently seen on the Red Sea, but nowhere else.

87. Tringa alpina. Dunlin.

Very often observed in all suitable places, such as lakes, pools, canals, and the banks of the Nile, both in Upper and Lower Egypt.

88. Tringa schinzii. Schinz's Sandpiper.

Often seen in large flocks on the banks of the little islands of Lake Menzaleh.

89. Tringa temminckii. Temminck's Stint.

Several large flocks, and also some single birds, of this species were observed on the islands of Lake Menzaleh and the salt-water marshes near Ismailia.

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90. Machetes pugnax. Ruff.

A few were seen on the islands of Lake Menzaleh, which was very rich in Sandpipers, but nowhere else.

91. Xenus cinereus. Terek Sandpiper.

Very common at Lake Birket-el-Karûn, and at pools and suitable places along the Nile in Upper Egypt up to the middle of March; later it was nowhere to be seen.

92. Totanus stagnatilis. Marsh-Sandpiper.

Observed singly at Lake Menzaleh, and by watercourses in the valley of the Jordan in Palestine.

93. Totanus glareola. Wood-Sandpiper.

Met with in large numbers on the marshy ground at Ismailia. It was probably on migration.

94. Totanus ochropus. Green Sandpiper.

Several times observed on the shores of Lake Birket-el-Karûn.

95. Limosa rufa. Bar-tailed Godwit.

Seen on various occasions at Lake Birket-el-Karûn, on the Nile, in Upper Egypt, and on the islands of Lake Menzaleh.

96. Limosa ægocephala. Black-tailed Godwit.

A few were observed on the pools and sandy banks of one of the islands of Lake Menzaleh.

97. Recurvirostra avocetta. Avocet.

A flock of ten was observed at Lake Menzaleh. They were flying restlessly from one side of the island to the other. This was the only place where this bird was seen.

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98. Ciconia alba. Common Stork.

Observed daily in Upper Egypt at the beginning of March in great flights of at least several hundred individuals. They were flying up-stream along the mountains bordering the Nile. We also saw large flocks standing on the sandbanks of the river. I never observed single birds in Egypt. In Palestine I saw, during the last days of March, the fields and meadows between Jaffa and the mountains, full of Storks looking for food. At Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and in the mountains of Mar-Saba I daily observed flights of hundreds upon hundreds, all flying in a northerly direction. During the entire time that we were travelling through the valley of the Jordan, the grassy steppe-covered mountains that border it, as well as the bottom of the valley, were crowded with Storks. We often found them even in very arid localities. In the evening they always collected at certain spots, where there were trees and high bushes, in such numbers that these roosting-places really seemed to be quite covered with them. The first arrived at sunset, the last left at sunrise. Both these trees and the ground round about them were coloured with their droppings. We also met with Storks on the fields near Nazareth, and between that place and the sea, but never in such numbers.

99. Ardea cinerea. Grey Heron.

In astonishing numbers at Lake Birket-el-Karûn, and on the Nile these herons were standing close to one another on every patch of sand and all along the banks the whole way up to Assuan.

100. Ardea purpurea. Purple Heron.

Rather common on Lake Birket-el-Karûn, but observed nowhere else in Egypt. Seen in the Jordan valley, not only on the river itself, but also among the great stones and dense bushes of the watercourses, yet nowhere common.

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101. Ardea garzetta. Little Egret.

This heron was tolerably common at the lakes of Birket-el-Karûn and Menzaleh, but was never seen elsewhere.

102. Ardea bubulcus. Buff-backed Heron.

From Alexandria far into Upper Egypt one of the commonest birds in all fields and gardens, even near the outer houses of Cairo, and by the banks of the Nile and canals. Large flocks follow the fellaheen as they plough, and keep within a few paces of them, while all grazing herds are surrounded by these birds, which have almost become domesticated.

103. Ardea comata. Squacco Heron.

Only once seen among large flocks of Buff-backed Herons on a wet plot of the Shûbra gardens near Cairo.

104. Ardea nycticorax. Night-Heron.

First observed in a grove of palms at Kench, in Upper Egypt, where these herons pass the night. At Cairo I found a very large colony of them nesting on a clump of pines which ornament an artificial mound in the Shûbra gardens. Along the Jordan valley we saw several of these birds among the thickets of the watercourses, and in the middle of April we found them among the pine woods and bushes of the island of Lacroma in Dalmatia.

105. Rhynchæa capensis. Painted Snipe.

Great numbers of these beautiful and incredibly tame birds were seen on a narrow little bit of the great marsh at Ismailia. They rise within a few paces, and fly only a short distance, their flight being truly rail-like, but rather lighter than that of our Water-Rail, and instead of running off and cleverly concealing themselves, they wait for the sportsman to come up again.

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106. Fulica atra. Coot.

In prodigious numbers, both on Lake Birket-el-Karûn and Lake Menzaleh.

107. Anas boschas. Common Mallard.

Single birds were observed on both the above lakes, but nowhere else.

108. Anas querquedula. Garganey Teal.

Several specimens were on various occasions met with at Lake Birket-el-Karûn, and a paired couple on an island near the Barrage; otherwise these ducks were nowhere observed.

109. Spatula clypeata. Shoveller.

Very scarce on Lake Birket-el-Karûn and on the Nile; on Lake Menzaleh pretty common.

110. Fuligula nyroca. White-eyed Duck.

We found these ducks in astonishing numbers at many places on Lake Birket-el-Karûn, where the shore was covered with high reeds. On the Nile and on Lake Menzaleh they were no longer to be met with by the middle of March.

111. Fuligula cristata. Tufted Duck.

Isolated individuals were observed on Lake Birket-el-Karûn, nowhere else.

112. Larus michahellesii. Yellow-legged Herring-Gull.

The commonest Gull of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. In February seen everywhere and all day long throughout the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, and the great lagoons, but never met with on the Nile.

113. Larus fuscus. Herring-Gull.*

Local in the Adriatic and among the Greek islands; rather

* ["Heringsmöve." *L. argentatus*?]

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common in the harbour of Corfu, and very abundant in that of Zante; rare at Alexandria, Lake Menzaleh, and the Suez Canal.

114. Larus ichthyaëtus. Great Black-headed Gull.

Rather common on Lake Birket-el-Karûn, sometimes seen on the Suez Canal, but never on the Nile or Lake Menzaleh.

115. Larus ridibundus. Black-headed Gull.

Very plentiful at all times of the year on the Adriatic and Ionian waters; also abundant throughout the Mediterranean, in the harbours of Alexandria and Port Said, on the Suez Canal, and on the lakes of Birket-el-Karûn and Menzaleh.

116. Larus melanocephalus. Mediterranean Black-headed Gull.

Several solitary specimens were observed on Lake Menzaleh.

117. Graculus carbo. Common Cormorant.

In large numbers on Lake Birket-el-Karûn; on Lake Menzaleh pretty numerous; very common on the Suez Canal, the Bitter Lakes, the Red Sea at Suez, and on all suitable coasts of the Mediterranean, Ionian, and Adriatic seas.

118. Carbo pygmæa. Pygmy Cormorant.

Very common in a brackish lagoon of the island of Corfu near the town. There it lives in company with the large Cormorants, Herons, Gulls, Ducks, and Divers. It is not very shy; never met with elsewhere.

119. Pelecanus onocrotalus. Roseate Pelican.

Rather common at Lake Birket-el-Karûn and all along the Nile. In incredible numbers on Lake Menzaleh. In Pales-

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tine I saw a very large flock of Pelicans that came flying across the Dead Sea, and circled for a long time over a great fire that we had made to assist us in boar-hunting. These were the only Pelicans seen in Asia.

120. Pelecanus crispus. Dalmatian Pelican.

Seen singly or in large flocks on Lake Birket-el-Karûn, but never observed elsewhere.

The list of the birds obtained, measured, and therefore thoroughly studied is now complete, and it only remains to devote a few words to the species which were not killed. In enumerating these I will not follow any system, but will give the precedence to those about which I have most to record.

To commence with the Waterfowl, most of the European geese and ducks had, as I have already said, returned to their homes when my journey in Africa began; and the sporting districts of Egypt are, moreover, completely ruined by a yearly invasion of European, and, more particularly, of English sportsmen. I saw many ducks, even more than I had expected, both on the Nile and the Lakes, but they sought safety in flight while we were still a long way off and before I could distinguish the species to which they belonged. A large Diver, also, that I met with several times at Lake Menzaleh would never let me come near enough.

I found it utterly impossible to bag a specimen of the beautiful Egyptian Geese, formerly so common, but now so very perceptibly reduced in number. I only saw these handsome birds on the Nile, never on the lakes. The Purple Gallinule, too, seems to have already become very scarce.

I met with enormous numbers of Flamingoes on Lake Menzaleh, but they very seldom fly into the interior of the country, and we only saw one of them on the Upper Nile.

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Having already been unlucky with these shy birds in other countries, I was not surprised at failing to obtain any. The great flocks of Flamingoes, however, though containing many hundreds of individuals, were not nearly so large as the swarms of Pelicans.

I must mention, as an interesting fact, that we saw the Pomatorhine Skua (*Lestris pomatorhinus*) in the harbour of Zante during rough weather. This was the second time that I had observed this northern Gull in the Mediterranean, having first noticed it in the western part of this sea, on which occasion I was fortunate enough to secure the rare specimen. I also repeatedly saw the Mediterranean Shearwater (*Puffinus kuhli*) along the coasts of Greece and Dalmatia.

The Waders were the birds which we had the best and most frequent opportunities of observing during our journey: for in the first place Africa and also Western Asia, though in a lesser degree, possess a long list of residents belonging to this group; and, secondly, the northern species take their departure later than the generality of the swimming birds, and we therefore met with many of them still in their winter-quarters. The lagoons of Egypt and the flat sandbanks of the Nile also afford splendid resorts for the members of this Order.

At the end of February I still saw the Woodcock in Africa, for our dogs put one up in a large sugar-cane plantation in the province of Fayûm.

A considerable number of the raptorial species of birds were killed, but unfortunately many more were only seen. The "Stein" Eagle (*Aquila fulva*) I twice observed in the mountainous districts of Palestine. The Imperial Eagle (*Aquila imperialis*) very seldom, but am sure that I once saw it flying over the oak woods of Mount Tabor. The Larger Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*) I repeatedly met with, but

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only in Africa, where I noticed it sitting on the islands of Lake Menzaleh, while it was common on the banks of the Nile and among the fields of the cultivated districts of Upper Egypt.

The Pygmy Eagle has already been treated of among the specimens obtained, and I will only add that two of the specimens had the very dark, almost black dress, while the third exhibited the true transition stage of plumage—coffee-brown varied with striations and whitish spots. Among the many Pygmy Eagles that we saw I also noticed some in the perfectly white dress of the true *pennata*, by which that form used to be distinguished from *minuta*.

As I was one day sitting waiting for jackals in the ravine below the monastery of Mar-Saba, in Palestine, an eagle flew along the upper edge of the rocks, which, from its size and plumage, I could only take to be Bonelli's Eagle (*Aquila bonellii*), a bird well known to me.

On the banks of the Nile I observed the Sea-Eagle (*Haliaëtus albicilla*) on several occasions, but, singularly enough, always young birds in the dark plumage. There could have been no mistake, for I examined some with the field-glass when they were not more than two hundred paces off.

I never saw the Cinereous Vulture (*Vultur cinereus*) in Africa; but in Palestine I observed two in the oak woods of Mount Tabor, and also fancied that I detected some amongst a flock of Griffon Vultures in the mountains bordering the Red Sea. Of this, however, I cannot be sure.

The great Sociable Vulture (*Vultur auricularis*), which only a few years ago was a regular inhabitant of Upper Egypt, has now almost entirely disappeared. I saw two among some Griffon Vultures; they were all sitting on a sandbank near the carcass of a buffalo that had been washed up by the Nile.

My attention was drawn to them by the way in which they

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differed from the other vultures, both in size and colour, and I examined these rarities with the glass when but a short distance from them. We stopped the steamer and tried to stalk the wary birds, but our attempt was unhappily quite unsuccessful.

I never saw the Bearded Vulture (*Gypaëtus barbatus*) either in the Arabian mountains or in those of Palestine, though it appears to be not so very rare in both; but I observed this splendid Vulture-Eagle in the rocky range that marks the boundary of the desert in the province of Fayûm. I had already heard that it does occasionally, but very rarely, visit the frontier mountains of Egypt in its wanderings, and was therefore delighted at seeing an immature bird in the dark plumage circling several times above the rocks of the island of Bezire-el-Karûn.

I had also two opportunities of observing the Egyptian Eagle-Owl (*Bubo ascalaphus*), which in Northern Africa takes the place of our Eagle-Owl (*Bubo maximus*), but is somewhat smaller and very variable in colour. I first saw this beautiful bird at the pyramids of Gizeh, while we were making the Arabs beat them for jackals. Just as the drive was almost over one of these owls left the third small pyramid and flew warily off into the desert, but it was unfortunately so far from me that I could not get a good shot. I again met with it at Medinet Abu, and could easily have killed it. I was sitting one evening at the foot of the high desert mountains, when shortly after sundown an owl came from the hills and flew towards the plain, passing me quite close and low. My keen love of sport, however, overcame my ornithological instincts, and not wishing to spoil one of my usually successful night expeditions after the larger beasts of prey, I did not fire.

I never met with the European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) in Egypt, though I went up to the Nubian frontier, which

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shows how far into the interior this bird goes for its winter-quarters. When I left Egypt, at the end of March, the Bee-eaters had not yet appeared; but I heard from a friend that three days after my departure they had arrived in swarms, and that the greatest number had been seen in the Shûbra gardens not far from the town. A few days later, in the first week of April, I had repeated opportunities of observing these birds in the valley of the Jordan, where paired couples were hovering about the high crumbling earthy banks of the streams, while the many nest-holes indicated that colonies of them bred there every year.

The Roller (*Coracias garrula*) was not observed in Africa; but in the valley of the Jordan I saw a good many, almost all, paired couples. They generally frequented the same breeding-places as the Bee-eaters, and lived in company with them.

I was lying in wait for jackals in the rocky valley of Mar-Saba, below the monastery, when, soon after sunset, I noticed some birds flitting like butterflies along the cliffs, and at times climbing up the bare rocks and disappearing one after another into the clefts and crannies to sleep. Having often observed the Wall-creeper (*Tichodroma muraria*) in the Alps, and knowing its appearance perfectly, as well as its characteristic habit of coming every evening to a particular cliff, where, after a few flying and running manœuvres, it seeks its rest, I was sure that these birds were Wall-Creepers; but, though the cliff was not far from my post, the increasing darkness prevented by seeing the colours of their plumage.

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ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES

FROM

JANUARY 1st TO APRIL 30th, 1882.

Although the Notes that I now publish are but loose leaves, not well-arranged matter, and have been collected at various times and in various localities, they may perchance contain some observations not wholly devoid of interest.

From the 12th to the 31st of January I saw Sky-Larks (*Alauda arvensis*) almost daily in the neighbourhood of Prague. In fine weather they sang as they mounted aloft, but when it was cold and stormy they congregated in large flocks on the newly-ploughed fields.

At the end of January I killed in the same district a Jack Snipe (*Gallinago gallinula*) on the bank of a frozen reed-covered pond. It was not a sick bird, but lively and in good condition.

During the past autumn the Rough-legged Buzzard (*Buteo lagopus*) was far less abundant than in former years, but remained in the neighbourhood of Prague throughout the winter. It commenced its return journey in the beginning of March, but in the latter days of that month I still saw several in their usual haunts.

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The Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*) wintered this year on the towers of Prague in far larger numbers than usual, and by the beginning of March the first pairs were already to be seen tidying up their nests with fresh twigs. The Rook (*C. frugilegus*) also passed almost the entire winter with us, and went about the fields in large flocks.

I saw single specimens of the Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*) round Prague throughout the winter. In the districts of Northern Bohemia, where this thrush nests, I observed it in large flocks of fifty to sixty. On March 3rd and on April 13th, during very warm weather, I found considerable numbers congregated in the plains near Laxenburg, south of Vienna, and being struck by this late appearance of the Fieldfare in a district where it never breeds I killed a specimen in order to make sure of the species.

During December the Common Mallard (*Anas boschas*) did not leave a little lake near Prague until it was completely frozen over, and several individuals reappeared at the first thaw in the end of February. In the middle of March I already found paired couples on the brooks and ponds of Northern Bohemia.

I observed the Shoveller (*Spatula clypeata*) on migration at the same time, and found on little ponds a few stray birds, which, curiously enough, were all females.

The Long-tailed Duck (*Harelda glacialis*) came to the Danube this winter in extraordinary numbers, and the last stragglers did not leave until the beginning of March. I still saw some on the large lakes of Southern Bohemia on March 10th.

During the first weeks of March the Coot (*Fulica atra*) appeared on the small pools near Prague, and at the end of that month I already found several full clutches of eggs.

The first Black-headed Gulls (*Larus ridibundus*) were observed on the Moldau at Prague in the middle of March,

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and on March 21st and the following days I saw many of them in Northern Bohemia, where they were looking for insects on the fields and flying about the large ponds in flocks. No paired couples were noticed at that time.

In Northern Bohemia, after a long spell of unnaturally warm weather, there came on March 22nd a pretty severe snowfall, with a sudden fall in the temperature, and the strong north-east wind seemed to have a great influence on the migration of the birds, for on a little stream that flows through woods and meadows, and that usually harbours as resident birds only a few pairs of Mallards, I found on March 22nd a Double Snipe (*Gallinago major*), and soon afterwards a Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*). Both seemed to be much tired with a long journey, and rose very slowly before the dogs. The Bittern is extremely rare in this locality, and few of the keepers knew it.

The Wood-Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) was first observed near Prague at the end of February. On the 14th of March I saw large flocks both of this bird and of the Stock-Dove (*C. œnas*) in the meadows of the Danube below Vienna, and also found paired couples of the two species in their customary haunts.

The Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*) came to the neighbourhood of Vienna in the beginning of March, and was unusually scarce both in the auen of the Danube and in the Wiener Wald, for the dryness of the ground and the hot weather drove them quickly to their breeding-places. Even when we were out shooting, these birds, which are generally so sluggish during the day, were singularly active. I saw some that were flushed rise high in the air, wing their way over woods and valleys, and disappear for good.

On March 20th I found many Woodcocks in the woods west of Prague, where they breed every year in the damp valleys among the dense pine-forests and birches. According

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to the keepers the flight had been going on regularly, both morning and evening, for eight days, and they were more plentiful than in most years. I often heard Woodcocks later on, and on the 20th of April still found six of them on passage at one place, while some were calling on the 25th, even as early as half-past four.

I fancy that this season these birds travelled quickly over the dry deciduous woods, and instead of stopping in them for some time, as they generally do in March, flew straight to their breeding-places among the damp coniferous forests.

From what the keepers told me, the Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) appeared on the Danube below Vienna earlier than usual. On March 14th I found all the paired birds at their nests, to which they were busily giving the final touches, and by the 10th of April the females were sitting hard.

For several years past I had now and then noticed a white-bellied bird among the crowd of Cormorants. This year I again saw this singular individual, which seemed to have no nest, and I managed to shoot it on one of the arms of the river close by. The whole of the underparts, beginning from the bill, were pure white, with the exception of a few black spots, and the back, top of the head, and uppersides of the wings were shot with silver-grey, the undersides of the wings being reddish brown. Careful comparison showed that in all the measurements—length, breadth, wings, bill, tail, tarsus, middle toe—this singular bird was distinctly smaller than the ordinary Cormorant.

It is for experts to determine whether in the case of this specimen we have to do with an abnormal bird or possibly with one of the two closely allied species.

The Grey Herons (*Ardea cinerea*) came this year to their breeding-grounds in the auen of the Danube, near Vienna, earlier than usual. On March 14th I found them already busy with the building of their nests, and by April 10th

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most of the females were sitting, but not so hard as the Cormorants.

On March 28th, when looking for Blackcock in a clearing of one of those high-lying wooded districts near Prague which are quite destitute of any large streams or marshy flats, three Herons, tired with some long journey, came slowly flying along at sunrise, one after another, and close to the ground. I knocked down the leader, but in spite of the shot the two others settled in an adjacent field of young corn. It was a cold morning, and a succession of snow-showers were being brought up by a strong west wind. The Herons were flying from a south-easterly direction and were battling against the wind.

In the neighbourhood of Prague I saw the first Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) at the end of February. On March 21st I arrived at a shooting-lodge situated at the edge of a great forest in Northern Bohemia. During the first part of the afternoon the temperature was very high, the weather quite like spring, and pairs of Starlings were sitting in front of my window on the numerous nest-boxes. Towards evening there was a heavy storm, succeeded by a very decided change of temperature. The next morning brought with it cold showers of rain, and the Starlings had all left their breeding-places, and were flying about the fields in large flocks. On the following day the country was covered with snow, and it kept getting colder and colder. I was out of doors the whole day, but did not see a single Starling, for they had begun to beat a retreat. Two days afterwards the weather improved, the temperature rose, the sun shone pleasantly, and on looking out of my window in the morning I again saw the Starlings busily employed at their breeding-boxes.

The Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) also seems to have been much influenced in its breeding by the mild weather of the present year, for close to Prague on the evening of March

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3rd I saw a cock settle on its usual trysting-place, which it frequented every evening for a long time, and where it drummed later on.

In consequence of this overwarm March weather the drumming-time of the Capercaillie began unusually early, was several times interrupted by the change of weather, and passed off in a very irregular fashion. On the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th of April I had personal opportunities of observing that almost all the cocks had ceased calling in the well-stocked grounds, and that was generally just the height of the season.

On February 23rd, during pretty cold weather, I met with the Blackcock (*Tetrao tetrix*) in packs of from twenty to thirty, not far from Prague. In the morning these birds were on the fields near the woods, as they usually are in winter, and on several occasions some cocks began to call for a few moments.

By February 27th the large packs had already broken up, and at daybreak the cocks were drumming at the usual places, as if it were really spring, and from that day up to the present time they have continued to drum uninterruptedly in the best possible way.

In the immediate neighbourhood of Prague, where there is quite an extraordinary head of Blackgame, I had previously killed some old cocks that had several of the brown feathers of the hen, generally on the back, but sometimes even on the breast; and this year I had various opportunities of doing so again. It must be remembered that these were not the grey-brown feathers that one finds on cocks of the year, but that they were of a bright brownish yellow, just like those of the hen. The birds, too, were old cocks with well-curved tail-feathers, and were drumming, surrounded by their wives. Almost all these abnormal specimens had some white feathers on the chin; and this I have hitherto only noticed in the

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woods in the western vicinity of Prague, where there is a remarkably large stock of Blackgame. Perhaps it may be regarded as one of the degenerations arising from over-population.

The first Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) were seen flying about the banks of one of the arms of the Danube on April 16th, and the following day I saw some of them in Vienna. Arriving in Prague on the 19th I could not, in spite of diligent observation, discover any Swallows, nor was it until the 21st that I met with some on the Moldau south of the city, and a few days later found them in the villages of Northern Bohemia, though in very small numbers.

Up to the present date I have only once seen the Martin (*Chelidon urbica*) this year, and that was on April 16th, when I observed a large flock flying at a great rate up-stream along the bank of the Danube, near Vienna.

This winter seems also to have affected the movements of the birds of prey. Several Sea-Eagles (*Haliaëtus albicilla*) made their ordinary annual appearance in November, among the auen of the Danube below Vienna, and left before the middle of March, this being the period that the Sea-Eagles generally visit Lower Austria. From March to November there are usually none of them to be seen in that region; but this year it was different, for on April 10th, as I was stealing along an arm of the Danube to watch the Cormorants fishing, a Sea-Eagle suddenly dropped from a tree a few hundred yards away, hunted up and down the water several times, and soon afterwards perched upon a silver poplar well furnished with dead branches.

I stalked up as carefully as possible under cover of the wood and managed to reach the edge of a little open, within sixty to seventy paces of the tree. An old but very small male was sitting on a branch looking towards the water, and a perfectly enormous female was lazily resting beside

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him, both having the pale yellow plumage and the white tail indicative of great age.

On my attempting to cross the open they rose, and at my shot the female sank towards the water, but flew over it to a high tree near by, about halfway up which it settled: the male, however, kept rising into higher regions, circling round the place where its mate had disappeared, and in a few minutes disappeared in a southerly direction. I then went after the wounded bird, and three times found it sitting on the ground, but never succeeded in getting near enough to kill it with shot.

It is very exceptional to meet with an old pair of Sea-Eagles in April at any other place than the immediate neighbourhood of their nest, and they most certainly no longer breed in the auen of the Danube between Vienna and Pressburg; my astonishment was therefore all the greater when on the 16th of April I several times saw three different Sea-Eagles at the same spot, either sitting on the bank of the arms of the river or flying about hunting and fishing. With the help of a field-glass I could perfectly well make out that these were distinct individuals, for, in the first place, they were of different sizes, and, in the second, they varied in their plumage, one having the full adult feathering, but not so pale as that of the pair that I saw on the 10th, while the others were younger—one being in the tawny transition dress, the other in the dark brown garb of the very young bird.

This year the auen of the Danube were also unusually rich in Ospreys (*Pandion haliaëtus*); but they were all immature birds that were not yet breeding, for I never found a nest of this species in that district. The first two I observed on March 14th, and on the 6th, and especially on the 16th, of April I saw many of them flying about fishing.

On March 14th I noticed a Montagu's Harrier (*Circus*

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cineraceus); on April 10th several, as well as some Marsh-Harriers (*C. æruginosus*).

Up to the 14th of March the Black Kite (*Milvus ater*) had not been met with at Vienna, but by April 10th they were already flying about in pairs. On the 16th of the same month both the Black and the Common Kite (*M. regalis*) were busy finishing their nests, while the Common Buzzard (*Buteo vulgaris*) was already sitting hard.

On the evening of April 22nd I heard the first Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) calling in a large forest in the north of Bohemia, and after that day their notes resounded everywhere with extraordinary frequency.

On April 24th I saw, in the same district, the first Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*), also a great flock of Common Storks (*Ciconia alba*) upon a meadow at the edge of a wood; and on the 25th I heard before sunrise the call of the Quail (*Coturnix dactylisonans*) in a wood near Prague.

Both at Vienna, as well as in the various districts of Bohemia, I was much struck with the great abundance of the Corn-Bunting (*Emberiza miliaria*). The White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*) I this year saw for the first time at Vienna on the 12th of March, and at Prague on the 18th.

Before concluding these fugitive notes I will add a few more observations made during the winter and the beginning of spring in a couple of gardens situated in the middle of the town of Prague. One of these spots lies on a steep slope, and is open towards the Moldau on the south-east, shut in on the north by high houses, and in all other directions by the buildings lower down at the bottom of the hill. The other is surrounded by houses on the south and south-west, and open towards the north and the west. There are fields near it, but no real wood for far and wide, nothing but a few patches of garden-ground with low bushes.

I here found no confirmation of the idea that in severe

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winters birds overcome all their fear of man and come into the gardens of the town; for in the winter of 1878–79, which was so very hard, both these gardens were uncommonly poor in birds, while during the very mild one just past I compiled a list of species which, considering the position of the locality where they were seen, is remarkably full.

Before enumerating them I will divide the period of observation into two sections, namely, from January 1st to March 1st, and from March 1st to April 30th. I should also mention that I killed with a small collecting-gun some specimens which struck me as being particularly dark. These birds were all so blackened by the smoke of the town that they looked quite peculiar. This blackness, which yielded, however, to an application of soap, occurred chiefly among the Sparrows and Woodpeckers.

From January 1st to March 1st I observed the Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Picus major*), much blackened, the Middle Spotted Woodpecker (*P. medius*), the Grey-headed Green Woodpecker (*P. canus*), the Goshawk (*Aster palumbarius*), the Sparrow-Hawk (*A. nisus*), the Robin (*Erythacus rubecula*), the Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), the Common Wren (*Troglodytes parvulus*), the Golden-crested Wren (*Regulus cristatus*), the Fire-crested Wren (*R. ignicapillus*), the Crested Lark (*Alauda cristata*), the Chaffinch (*Fringilla cœlebs*), up to the beginning of February only females, afterwards males. Also the Siskin (*Chrysomitris spinus*), the Common Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), much blackened; the Tree-Sparrow (*P. montanus*), the Greenfinch (*Coccothraustes vulgaris*), the Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula europæa*), the Hooded Crow (*Corvus cornix*), the Rook (*C. frugilegus*), the Jackdaw (*C. monedula*), the Great Tit (*Parus major*), the Blue Tit (*P. cœruleus*), one specimen of the Coal Tit (*P. ater*), the Marsh-Tit (*P. palustris*), the Crested Tit (*P. cristatus*), the Long-tailed Tit

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(*Acredula caudata*), the Nuthatch (*Sitta cæsia*), the Creeper (*Certhia familiaris*).

The above birds remained from March 1st to April 30th, with the exception of the following:—the Green and Grey-headed Green Woodpeckers, the Common Wren, the Fire-crested Wren, the Siskin, the Bullfinch, the Coal, Marsh, and Long-tailed Tits. There came, in addition, on April 3rd the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Picus minor*), a bird that I had never before observed in Bohemia, and which was perfectly black from the smoke; on April 19th the Wryneck (*Iynx torquilla*); after the end of March, the Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*); after the middle of April, the Redstart (*Ruticilla phœnicurus*), the Black Redstart (*R. tithys*); after the beginning of March, the Song-Thrush (*Turdus musicus*) and the Redwing (*T. iliacus*), both of which arrived together, but stayed a very short time, the Hedge-Sparrow (*Accentor modularis*), the Yellow-Hammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), the Greenfinch (*Ligurinus chloris*), large flocks of the Goldfinch (*Carduelis elegans*), which only remained for one day, the Serin Finch (*Serinus hortulanus*), and the Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*).

The Shrikes, the Flycatchers, and our best songsters, the Warblers, were still absent, at any rate from the gardens in Prague; but some miles south of the town, by the banks of the river Sazawa, which are thickly covered with willow bushes, I saw on April 28th a few Great Reed-Warblers (*Acrocephalus turdoides*) and Reed-Warblers (*A. arundinaceus*), and on the meadows several Whinchats (*Pratincola rubetra*) and one Stonechat (*P. rubicola*), while the Wheatear (*Saxicola œnanthe*) was everywhere flitting about the stony slopes of the hills.

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ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES

FROM

MAY 1st to 31st, 1882.

In continuation of my first series of notes I will now cite some further dates in the order in which they were set down.

On May 1st I saw, close to Prague, a good many Sand-Martins (*Cotyle riparia*) flying about a large deep sand-pit, far from all water.

On May 2nd, as I was waiting for the coming of the Capercaillie cocks at the edge of a young plantation of pines that adjoined a high beech-wood, a Woodcock flew past, uttering its note loudly. This was at half-past six in the evening, and it was therefore still quite light. I soon afterwards saw the first White-collared Flycatchers (*Muscicapa albicollis*). The weather was rainy and mild, and the vegetation was very forward even in that raw district, the beeches and larches being clad in the richest green.

After being silent for eight days the cock Capercaillies again began calling lustily; previously they had only been heard here and there, so that it was generally believed that the drumming-time was already over; on May 2nd and 3rd, however, it was going on in the woods just as merrily as during the height of the season. For several years past I

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have had opportunities of observing that the cocks continue to drum just as long as the hens are at the regular spots. Then comes the time when the latter wander away to their breeding-places and begin to lay: almost all the cocks are then silent, generally for nearly a week, but when the hens are sitting hard there follows another short but very lively period of drumming ("Nachbalz").

This observation was completely borne out in many parts of Bohemia during the present year. For instance, on May 3rd I saw at one spot several cocks calling very well; but they began unusually early, while it was still quite dark, and soon left off.

I was just 'springing' a Capercaillie when a cock suddenly flew up almost noiselessly, and, settling on a young pine-tree close by me, immediately began to call softly. First came an indistinct confused clucking ("Glocken" *), then instead of the "Hauptschlag" * and the "Schleifen" * there followed a peculiar snoring sound.

This call was familiar to me, and I soon recognized it as that of the Hybrid Grouse, and attempted to get near the bird; but though for half an hour I examined the dense foliage of the young pine from all sides, I could not discover the cock, which kept on uttering his comical song until he at last vanished as quickly as he had come. However, as he flew away across the valley, I caught a momentary glimpse of him between two trees, and saw that he was not large enough for a Capercaillie. None of the keepers knew of this cock, and I have heard nothing more of him, so it would seem that he was only a visitor.

The Blackcocks are this year enjoying a particularly long drumming-season, for, induced by the mildness of the winter to begin calling early, they have now been carrying on their

* [There are no English equivalents for these divisions of the sounds made by the Capercaillie when drumming.]

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battles and love-affairs at the regular places for eleven weeks. They commence to call soon after three o'clock, but leave off altogether between five and six, especially on warm mornings. The old pugnacious cocks already show the effects of this prolonged "Balz," for their necks are bare and the gloss of their plumage is worn off, while the hens all appear to be breeding, as they no longer come to the trysting-places.

On May 4th a somewhat strong but very mild south wind was blowing, which continued throughout the night of the 5th, and after two fine days brought up clouds and stormy weather with passing showers of heavy rain.

Before three o'clock on the morning of the 5th I was walking along the edge of the wood that lies nearest to Prague, and from which an almost unbroken stretch of fertile fields runs right up to the town, when I suddenly heard the cry of the Eagle-Owl (*Bubo maximus*). I stole up to the place whence the sound came; but unfortunately the shy bird would not let me get within range, but flew away over the fields when I was about eighty yards from it.

Soon after this, as I was sitting in a Blackcock hut hard by I heard the call of the Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europæus*). It kept sounding its disagreeable note until a few minutes before sunrise, when it was relieved by the Nightingale (*Luscinia philomela*), while as soon as the sun was up the song of the Oriole (*Oriolus galbula*) resounded from all the higher woods. These three birds I now heard for the first time this year, and I also greeted as a fresh arrival the Turtle-Dove (*Turtur auritus*), which, singularly enough, was silent all that morning.

Both the last-mentioned species are very abundant in the neighbourhood of Prague, but generally only in the clumps of trees about the fields and in the large gardens. I never saw so many of them in the thick woods as on May 5th, and

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they were probably brought in by the southerly gale of the 4th and the following night. This observation was confirmed a few days later.

During the middle of the day I also saw the first Swifts (*Cypselus apus*) at the cliffs on the river Beraun, and on the 6th observed them in Prague. Next day I heard Turtle-Doves cooing in a little wood among the fields, and saw the males performing the most beautiful aerial evolutions before their mates. In the thickets I noticed the Whitethroat (*Sylvia cinerea*) and the Lesser Whitethroat (*S. garrula*); among the flowering elder-bushes of the little gardens near the above wood I remarked the Icterine Warbler (*Hypolais icterina*), and in the reed-bed of a pond the Marsh-Warbler (*Acrocephalus palustris*). There I also saw a Wagtail—not the Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla sulphurea*), which I met with daily on the woodland streams of this district, but another species with a shorter tail and somewhat different plumage. A good many of them were going about the reeds and flitting from one tall stem to another. I also flushed a wonderfully handsome Little Bittern (*Ardea minuta*), as well as several paired couples of Garganey Teal (*Anas querquedula*), the females rising from their nests.

A trustworthy keeper, in detailing his observations to me, stated that some days ago he had seen an Osprey (*Pandion haliaëtus*) fishing, and afterwards swooping at the ducks on the above-mentioned pond; nor would the bird leave the place until it had been twice hit. This is the first time since I came to this part of the country that I have heard of the appearance of the Osprey in that district, where three little ponds are the only waters within a wide radius.

On May 8th I passed a couple of days at a farm-house situated on the borders of the woods already alluded to. There I found that the manager had a small collection of birds

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killed in the neighbourhood, and stuffed by a keeper. Among many very common inhabitants of the district I noticed a Pygmy Eagle (*Aquila minuta*) in the dark plumage, also a Red-legged Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*) and a Pomatorhine Skua (*Lestris pomatorhinus*). The appearance of this Gull in our part of the country is one of the rarest occurrences; it was shot in March 1872 on a very small pool that lies among the meadows, but is close to the woods, and not far from the village of Dolan on the Peklover ground. With the exception of some very small brooks there is no other water in the neighbourhood, the nearest large river being the Moldau, which is a good many miles away.

In the wood which was on May 5th so full of Golden Orioles and Turtle-Doves, I had on the 8th an opportunity of verifying my conjecture that it was the south wind that had brought such numbers of these birds, for although both species were still to be found, there was only the usual sprinkling of them.

As soon as it began to get dark I heard the cry of the Nightjar, and creeping close up to the bird I was able to observe its very curious behaviour as it sat on the branch of a dead oak, with its wings drooping, its tail spread out like a capercaillie's, and its body distorted. In this peculiar position it uttered its note, while it changed its perch several times, flitting from tree to tree and immediately recommencing its love song.

The Tawny Owl (*Syrnium aluco*) was also calling hard by in a high fir-wood bordering on the fields, and by imitating the squeak of a mouse I decoyed the bird into my neighbourhood, where it flew from one tree to another, took long turns out over the fields, and finally came back quite close to me, inquisitively trying to find out the spot from which the noise proceeded.

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On the morning of May 9th, which was cold and rainy, with a strong westerly gale, I heard a Woodcock loudly sounding its note while flying, as early as four o'clock. The Blackcock, too, were drumming pretty lustily and later than usual, but still only before sunrise and for a very short time. I also saw a pair of Kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*) constantly circling round some thick firs. With rushing flight they mounted high aloft, screaming loudly and playfully pursuing each other, and as they vanished several times into a dense fir tree I imagine they must have had a nest there; the branches, however, were so matted that I could not satisfy myself on this point, though I certainly thought I heard the hungry cries of the young hawks. This would have been unusually soon, and only to be accounted for by the very early spring.

I must also record the interesting fact that, up to May 11th, I had not seen a single Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*), though, while rambling about the neighbourhood of Prague, I searched the localities which I knew to have been the favourite haunts and breeding-grounds of this bird in former years, and I had already noted that it arrived near Vienna during the end of April and at Prague in the beginning of May.

On May 12th I saw a little falcon sitting on a telegraph-wire by the highroad south of Prague, and being struck by its very small size, I shot it. It turned out to be a Red-legged Falcon in the plumage of the second year, a somewhat rare bird in this district.

On May 13th I saw the first Flycatcher (*Muscicapa grisola*) in a garden at Prague, and on the 14th several in the same place; also some young Blackbirds fully fledged, and a pair of Garden-Warblers (*Sylvia hortensis*) at their already finished nest.

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On May 15, as I was returning from the pursuit of Black-cock on a shooting lying some eight miles to the west of Prague, I saw a Shrike sitting on a young ash, and never having here observed the Lesser Grey Shrike (*Lanius minor*), which, according to Brehm, only frequents districts where deciduous woods prevail (and one certainly could not say they did so here, for there was only a sprinkling of little clumps of oaks and beeches among the extensive forests of pine and fir), I shot the doubtful bird, and found myself in the possession of a beautifully-coloured specimen of the above species.

Early in the morning of the same day, even before three o'clock, I heard for the first time this year the Corn-Crake (*Crex pratensis*) calling in a field of young corn surrounded by woods; and a keeper, in whose observations I place the fullest confidence, told me that a few days ago a whole flock of small Snipe or Sandpipers appeared on a pond near Prague and remained there for two days. He did not, however, know what they were. The birds kept to the marshy edges of the pond, and when any one approached they rose together and settled again on the opposite side. To whatever species of the large family of Sandpipers they may have belonged, the fact of their appearance for two days in the form of a migrating flock in the height of the breeding-season is very remarkable.

On the 16th I saw the first Red-backed Shrike among some detached bushes near the old fortifications of Prague. It was a handsome male, and the next day there was a female at the same place.

On the 17th the first Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) appeared in a garden near the town, where I also observed a single Icterine Warbler, and everywhere the young of the common Sparrow full-fledged.

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On the 19th I noticed in the same place the first Pied Flycatcher (*Muscicapa atricapilla*).

I must also mention as a remarkable fact that the Martin, which used to be so common in the neighbourhood of Prague, is this year very rare; the first came very late, and they are, up to the present time, quite sparingly distributed. The Red-backed Shrike is also much less abundant than in former years. I certainly see a few every day, but in places where several pairs used to live close together there are now only one or two individuals at the most.

In one of the gardens inside Prague that I have so often mentioned in my previous paper a pair of Turtle-Doves have now established themselves; and there I also observed the Great Tit (*Parus major*) and the Long-tailed Tit (*Acredula caudata*) at their nests.

On the 22nd I found a nest of the Reed-Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*), with five eggs, in a low willow-bush on the bank of the river Beraun, and near the town of the same name.

On the 24th I came across several pairs of the Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*) at their nests on the little islands in the same locality that are covered with willows; and I also saw a couple of Stonechats (*Pratincola rubicola*) on a meadow surrounded by bushes, near the bank of the river. This is by no means a common bird here.

The late appearance of the Red-backed Shrike this year is worthy of note. Some days ago I thought that it had chosen another line of migration and had strayed away from its usual haunts, for from the 16th to the 22nd of May I noticed remarkably few; but now fresh arrivals are showing themselves from day to day, and in all the localities upon which I am able to keep a watchful eye the suitable spots will soon be stocked with the usual number of these birds.

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The abundance of Turtle-Doves, Quail, and particularly of Corn-Crakes strikes me as singular, the last-mentioned bird occurring even in localities not quite suited to its habits. The Nightingale is also exceptionally common in the few places near Prague that afford it good accommodation, for with us it altogether avoids the coniferous woods and only frequents the thick leafy bushes on the sides of streams and damp hillsides, where it lives in close companionship with other members of its group.

On the 23rd I saw three fully-fledged Tawny Owls and some Hooded Crows of the year.

On the 27th I found a very handsome old male of the Little Bittern on a steep slope thickly covered with hazels, beyond the Beraun.

On the evening of the 28th, as I was walking through a pine-wood near the fields, a Woodcock suddenly flew close up to me, and fluttered round several times. I had probably gone too near its nest.

On the 30th I observed a pair of Barred Warblers (*Sylvia nisoria*) by the bushy margin of a little irrigation-ditch in a garden near Prague. Several pairs of Red-backed Shrikes inhabited the same locality, and I saw an old male strike down from a tree a young but full-fledged Sparrow, which he was beginning to devour on the ground, when my sudden appearance drove off the robber, and allowed the Sparrow, which was only slightly wounded, to fly off into the nearest bushes.

I will conclude by devoting a few more words to the Blackcock.

The drumming-season of this bird, which in the districts that fell under my observation had lasted a long time, came to an end in the middle of May. But in one part of the ground, where almost all the nests both of the Partridge and the

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Blackgame appear to have been destroyed by tremendous torrents of rain, the hens have suddenly returned to the trysting-places, and the love-songs of the cocks are ringing out again just as lustily as in the ordinary season.

From half-past three in the morning until five or six o'clock one sees the brave champions fighting and challenging, so that in this locality the Blackcock have been drumming on the regular spots close to the shooting-screens from a week before the commencement of the legal shooting-season in the end of February up to its close on the 31st of May, and will very likely continue to do so well into June.

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BONELLI'S EAGLE

IN

BOHEMIA.

Among the sporting trophies in Prince Fürstenberg's castle of Lana, about sixteen miles west of Prague, I saw a stuffed Eagle which I at once took to be *Aquila bonellii*; but although I had often observed this southern bird in its native haunts, seen it in collections, and received many skins of it, I did not wish to announce the interesting fact simply on my own authority.

The valuable specimen was, however, most kindly placed at my disposal for a few days, and I hastened to send it to Eugen von Homeyer at Stolp, since his decision would hardly be questioned by any naturalist, and he replied that it certainly was a Bonelli's Eagle in the first plumage.

I must now give the data concerning it just as they were communicated to me :—

The Eagle was killed by a keeper named Franz Kratina, between the 20th and 31st of July, 1866. He shot it in the hayfields on the Finkova, about three o'clock in the afternoon. It came flying from the Maxthal in the direction of the black

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spruce on the Finkova, and settled on the ground close to the solitary oak below the nursery garden. On seeing the large bird some of the mowers began calling out to the keeper. This disturbed the Eagle, and it flew away over the Maxthal towards the Tummer wood. About half-past three it came back again from the Maxthal to the Finkova, and settled on one of the high pines at the edge of the meadow, below the road now known as the Maxweg. There Kratina stalked and shot it.

These are the full details of the occurrence just as they were sent to me.

I must conclude by saying that, soon after the bird was killed, it passed through the hands of the well-known ornithologist, Dr. Frič, of Prague, who also determined it as Bonelli's Eagle.

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ORNITHOLOGICAL SKETCHES

IN

TRANSYLVANIA.

During the end of July and the beginning of August 1882 I found time to carry out a long-projected trip, and made the Transylvanian Alps the scene of my shooting excursions and ornithological studies.

The journey from the frontier of Hungary and Transylvania to the railway-station near the town of Hátszeg lasted from sunrise until about two o'clock in the afternoon; but though I kept a careful watch out of the windows of the carriage, I saw but little of the bird-world. On the bare hilly tracts of country sparsely covered with steppe-grass, which give many parts of the interior of Transylvania such a melancholy character, great numbers of Magpies and Tree-Sparrows were flying about the stunted acacia-hedges near the solitary huts; but these, together with some Ravens (*Corvus corax*), Imperial Eagles (*Aquila imperialis*), Spotted Eagles (*A. nævia*), occasional Black Kites (*Milvus ater*), somewhat more numerous Buzzards (*Buteo vulgaris*), Common Kites (*Milvus regalis*), Kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*), and a few Crested Larks

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(*Alauda cristata*), were all the birds I observed, for the speed at which we were travelling of course prevented my detecting the smaller species. On getting further south, where marshes run through broad valleys bounded by prettily wooded hills, I noticed a few White Storks (*Ciconia alba*), one Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*), several Larger Spotted Eagles (*Aquila clanga*), and the above-mentioned Eagles, but more rarely than before.

The plain of Hátszeg, which was the immediate goal of our journey, is perfectly flat, damp, thickly clothed with vegetation, and intersected by numerous watercourses. On three sides it is surrounded by low but very steep hills, poorly wooded with stunted oaks, and quite bare in parts; but on the fourth the great mountains of the Transylvanian Alps, and in particular the splendid Retyézat, rise abruptly from the plain and form an imposing background.

I was obliged to hurry through this plain, which doubtless contains much that is worthy of attention, for time was pressing, and I had to go up into the mountains. My rapidly collected notes can therefore be by no means considered as exhaustive.

Such very common birds as Sparrows, Larks, Swallows, Common Buntings, White Wagtails, &c. were extremely abundant; but I unfortunately could not devote myself to the numerous and probably interesting small species with which the luxuriant meadows and field-woods of this little-known district are doubtless stocked.

At the castle where we lived I found a pair of Lesser Kestrels (*Falco cenchris*), and every evening there was an assemblage of Magpies in the garden such as I had never before seen. For a whole half-hour they came flying up to the thick bushes from all sides, arriving singly but in uninterrupted succession, and soon hundreds were congregated within a small space of not more than a hundred yards long

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by fifty broad, where they were screaming and quarrelling for the best roosting-places. Not far from this spot an equally large number of Hooded Crows assembled to sleep together on three tall poplars in the middle of the village of Szt. Mária Boldogfalva.

On the banks of the stream I saw the Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla sulphurea*); and among the fields Quail were calling everywhere, some of which I flushed, and on August 7th I killed a bird of the year full-grown and in perfect plumage.

On the stubble-fields I saw an extraordinary number of Lesser Spotted Eagles (*Aquila nævia*) and also some of the Larger Spotted (*A. clanga*). These birds allowed us not only to drive but even to walk close past them, and in this way I shot an old specimen of the former.

A few Common Kites and Kestrels, one Common Buzzard, one Short-toed Eagle (*Circaëtus gallicus*), Great Grey Shrikes (*Lanius excubitor*), Red-backed Shrikes (*L. collurio*), Turtle-Doves (*Turtur auritus*), and Hoopoes (*Upupa epops*) complete the list of the birds that I noticed while driving over the plain.

Near Malomviz, at the foot of the high mountains, I laid out a carcass as a future bait for eagles or vultures; but as I came down to the plain from the highest regions of the Retyezát for just a single day, I had little time to visit the decoy-hut, and only spent two hours there, vainly waiting for the appearance of birds of prey. Just as we were leaving the place, however, and were only a few hundred yards from the carrion, a very large Griffon Vulture (*Vultur fulvus*) flew over our heads, and we saw in the distance an eagle, which we could not manage to identify.

I must now preface my remarks on the Transylvanian Alps, the special region that we explored, by a short description of their leading features.

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All high mountains have certain common characteristics, and so the Retyezát may perhaps remind travellers of the Alps; yet in many respects one might call it a blending of the Central-European Alps, the Balkans, the mountains of the Karst, and in its lower parts also of the Hungarian Carpathians, while in some of its deep glens, whose lofty sides are clothed with deciduous woods up to a great height, I found a resemblance and often even an exact likeness to the mountains of the north-west provinces of Spain, and to those of no other range that I have ever visited.

The hills of this chain also exhibit many evidences of their southerly position and their connection with the great group of the South-European highlands. This struck me most forcibly in the distribution of the vegetation. The zone of the oaks reaches a long way up, even on to the steep heights. Then come regular woods of birches mixed with Scotch firs, and succeeded by enormous beech-forests, which give place to white and common spruces. Not until these have attained their limit does the Siberian cedar appear in conjunction with a few creeping pines, and where trees of a high habit of growth are no longer found there extend the great regions of the cliffs, the bare stony slopes, and the impenetrable thickets of creeping pine with, singularly enough, a sprinkling of juniper bushes. All these zones, too, are not narrow belts, but broad virgin forests; and these mountains are not subject to the rules which apply to the northern Alps, such as those of North Styria and Upper Austria, for at the elevation where the poor scattered spruces of the latter tail off among the creeping pines there are in the Transylvanian Alps the most luxuriant oak-woods, and instead of the bare rocks and nothing else which confront the traveller at about 4000 feet, we here have forests of beech and a growth of spruces reaching as high as 6000 to 7000 feet. This is indicative of a southerly position, for where the woods are not destroyed

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trees are everywhere to be found growing at a much greater elevation in the mountains of Southern Europe than in the Northern Alps.

It can hardly be considered strange that these circumstances should exercise an influence on the bird-world, and that the various species should here occupy regions quite different to those which they frequent in the Alps of Central Europe.

After this cursory sketch of the general character of the district I will now proceed with my ornithological notes. In order to reach the lake of Zenoga, which lies near the summit of the Retyezát, we had to travel eight hours from the last village, which is situated on the edge of the plain, just at the feet of the steep mountains, and half of this time was spent in riding along a wonderfully beautiful mountain-stream, where a good many Dippers (*Cinclus aquaticus*), Grey Wagtails, and a few Common Wrens (*Troglodytes parvulus*) were flitting about the banks and stones.

The Dippers were all of the brown variety, considered by some naturalists to be a distinct species, their heads being brown, their underparts rusty brown, and the white of their breasts less extended than in the ordinary form.

These three were the only species that I saw for a long time, for the virgin forests of the Transylvanian Alps are just as destitute of bird-life as those of Hungary and the northern part of the country. The beautiful Ural Owl (*Syrnium uralense*) is also said to occur in them; but it is certainly rarer than in the Northern Carpathians, where I have repeatedly seen it, and in both ranges the Hazel-Grouse exists in considerable numbers.

After riding for about two hours I saw the first birds of prey, namely several Short-toed Eagles, and later on a good many Cinereous and Griffon Vultures, with one or two "Stein" Eagles (*Aquila fulva*). In the zone of the beeches

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I also observed a few stray Rock-Doves (*Columba livia*), and heard the cries of the Great Black Woodpecker (*Picus martius*) and the Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*), while the deep silence of the coniferous woods was somewhat enlivened by the Ring-Ouzels (*Turdus torquatus*), which were pretty common, as well as by the Chaffinches (*Fringilla cælebs*) and the Bramblings (*F. montifringilla*), the latter, singularly enough, being in somewhat large flocks.

At the upper verge of the spruces, and especially among the Siberian cedars, the Nutcracker (*Nucifraga caryocatactes*) is always to be found, but never abundantly; and on the alpine meadows, among the creeping pines, there were plenty of Water-Pipits (*Anthus aquaticus*) and also a few Wheatears (*Saxicola œnanthe*); while in both the very high-lying coniferous woods and the region of the creeping pines I saw a good many Missel-Thrushes (*Turdus viscivorus*) and some Capercaillies (*Tetrao urogallus*), but only cocks, which in the breeding-season are reported to take up their quarters at a lower elevation.

I must here say a few words about the Transylvanian Capercaillie, in the hope of attracting the attention of other observers and naturalists to this interesting bird.

It is much smaller and also somewhat darker than the Capercaillie of Central Europe, the difference being so great that one notices it even when it is flying; and a Bohemian keeper who accompanied me mistook a cock of this species for a Blackcock, a bird that never occurs in the Transylvanian Alps. My belief that it is really a very striking variety is not, however, founded on casual glimpses of it in the woods, but on an examination of stuffed specimens, both cocks and hens, which have been killed on the Retyezát.

From the information that I obtained from the most enthusiastic of the Transylvanian sportsmen concerning the amours of this little *Tetrao urogalloides*, for such I consider

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it to be (in the Carpathians the Bobak of the Ural also replaces the Marmot of the Alps), it appears that the cocks very rarely sit on trees during the breeding-season, but that several generally meet together on the ground or, by preference, on small patches of snow, and there pour forth their love-songs. This is why the shooting of Capercaillies in Transylvania is not managed in the Bohemian or Styrian fashion by what is known as "springing," but usually by means of a screen of branches such as are placed near the drumming-places of the Blackcock.

On the very highest parts of the mountains there also seems to be a small grey game-bird well known to all the Transylvanian sportsmen, and said to be a Common Partridge. I once saw one, but it vanished so quickly among the creeping pines that I cannot with certainty say what it was; from the glimpse that I caught of it, however, I took the doubtful bird to be the Rock-Partridge (*Caccabis saxatilis*) *. On the margin of the Zenoga lake, which is far above the limit of the tree-growth, I also saw one morning a Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinaria*) among the bare stones: this poor creature must have been storm-driven into these inhospitable regions.

I everywhere found the Raven (*Corvus corax*) at the loftiest elevations, and also saw a Saker Falcon (*Falco lanarius*), for, knowing the species as I do, I could give no other name to the bird which flew close past me, although this would be the first time that it has ever been found in the high mountains and at an elevation that was even above the tree-growth. Possibly, however, it was only a Lanner (*Falco feldeggii*); at any rate, it was one of the true Falcons.

There were astonishing numbers of "Stein" Eagles, the birds of the year, which at this season hardly ever fly about

* [The Common Partridge (*Perdix cinerea*) is certainly not uncommon in those localities; but no red-legged species has been hitherto obtained.]

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alone, but generally in couples or with their parents, being quite remarkably abundant. The Cinereous Vulture was also very common; the Griffon Vulture the commonest bird of these mountains; and one saw both species everywhere and all day long.

I am glad to say that the Bearded Vulture (*Gypaëtus barbatus*), the king of the bird-world, still inhabits the Retyezát in considerable numbers, and though in its other haunts its days are almost numbered, the extent of our Transylvanian Alps, the scantiness of their population, and the difficulty of getting about them will make them a safe asylum both for this and the other great raptorial birds for a long time to come.

I observed the first Bearded Vulture among the barren heights near Lake Zenoga, where I was riding with some other gentlemen, when the imposing bird sailed slowly towards us, so that I could perfectly well see its black bristly beard and the orange-yellow of its plumage—a sign of great age. On the same day I also saw two birds of the year in the first grey-brown dress, both of which flew close past me; while a fourth, which I noticed just at the edge of the tree-growth, was singularly large and in adult but not very deep orange feathering. One of my jägers also found two of them, together with several Cinereous and Griffon Vultures, at the carcass of a horse which had been killed by a bear during the night.

The Wall-creeper (*Tichodroma muraria*), as I have learned from pretty trustworthy sources, also occurs in these mountains.

As may be seen from these notes, the district of Retyezát is, with the exception of the raptorial birds, poor in species; and in this respect the Transylvanian Alps perfectly agree with the other Carpathians. Its primeval forests are, as I had many opportunities of observing, strikingly devoid of animal life, and even in the loftier regions I did not find

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the birds that I certainly expected, while the rich field for study which the Alpine fauna of Central Europe opens up to the wandering ornithologist is non-existent in these eastern regions.

To this unfortunately rather meagre account of my summer excursion to the Alps of Transylvania I will add a few notes on what I saw during the autumn in the central part of the country.

From the railway-station at Maros-Vásárhely I drove along a good road up the great valley of the Maros to Szász-Regen. Both right and left were the well-tilled fields of the broad vale, which was enclosed by the gentle slopes of a slightly wooded chain of hills. Of ornithological interest there was nothing. Hooded Crows, Rooks, and Jackdaws were very abundant, and there were a few Magpies and some very occasional Turtle-Doves. I also saw several Red-backed Shrikes (*Lanius collurio*), although it was already the 21st of September; two days later, however, they had quite disappeared. Of the other small birds there were only the commonest kinds. At Szász-Regen our road turned eastwards into a neighbouring valley, and we soon reached Görgény Szt. Imre, the end of our journey.

The districts through which I now rambled for fourteen days may be divided into two strongly marked types of country. First, the low but steep chain of hills reaching down to the valley of the Maros, all of which are clothed with almost impenetrable deciduous woods, formed partly of stunted trees and partly of young covers, here and there broken by little meadows on which wild fruit-trees grow luxuriantly. Secondly, the sharply defined regions of the higher wooded mountains, with their long lofty ridges and their many square miles of uninterrupted virgin forests, consisting of beeches with a very slight admixture of conifers. Through the broad valley flows the Görgény, a clear mountain-stream well

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stocked with trout and much frequented by Dippers; while woods of huge lofty oaks, rich green marshy meadows, and extensive flats covered with alders and birches give it a pleasant appearance.

In detailing my unfortunately very scanty bird-notes, I will begin with the virgin forests. These I merely skirted, and never went to their upper parts, the only raptorial bird that I observed being a very large Eagle-Owl (*Bubo maximus*), for to my great astonishment I did not see a single Ural Owl. The Nutcracker, however, was tolerably abundant, even as low down as the edge of the meadows. There were not many Jays and only a few Hazel-Grouse; but I naturally saw but few of the latter, as this year I did not visit the localities of these primeval woods where both this bird and the Capercaillie are so numerous. Of the small fry I only noticed a pair of Three-toed Woodpeckers (*Picoides tridactylus*) and a good many Common Wrens, Goldcrests, Firecrests, and plenty of the ordinary species of Tits.

This about finishes my forest-notes, and although I saw but little the woods seemed this year to be full of life in comparison with the utter stillness which prevailed when I rambled through them in the middle of last November, for then there was quite a striking dearth of birds both in the valleys and the outlying hills, and this could not be said on the present occasion.

In November I did not see one of the larger birds of prey, but I now observed, both in the Görgény valley and the deciduous woods of the lower hills, a good many Cinereous Vultures, two Sea-Eagles (*Haliaëtus albicilla*), some "Stein," Larger and Lesser Spotted Eagles, and a great many Short-toed Eagles, Common Buzzards, Goshawks (*Astur palumbarius*), Sparrow-Hawks (*A. nisus*), Kestrels, Merlins (*Falco æsalon*), and Peregrines (*F. peregrinus*), as well as several

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Ravens, while in the lower covers I found plenty of small birds, all, however, belonging to common species.

During my stay in Transylvania the great variations of the weather produced rapid changes over the whole face of nature. When I arrived I found perfect summer, the heat being almost unendurable, the trees quite green and in full leaf. The fauna, too, belonged to that season, for Red-backed Shrikes, Turtle-Doves, and Hoopoes were, as already stated, still there, together with numbers of Swallows and Martins. Three days later violent storms, followed by cold heavy rains, changed the situation, for in an incredibly short time the foliage assumed its autumnal colours, and the summer birds vanished, being replaced by quantities of Woodcocks, Missel-Thrushes, Fieldfares, Song-Thrushes, Redwings, and Bullfinches, that were driven down from the mountains by the frost. In the lower woods I also observed whole flocks of Tits, all belonging to the common species, a great many Blackbirds, a few Nightjars, and such hordes of Jays, especially in the oak-copses, as I had never before seen. I also found great flocks of Wood-Pigeons and Stock-Doves in the magnificent forests of ancient oaks, which were further frequented by a considerable number of Jackdaws.

In the valley there were a good many small birds about the gardens and roadsides, but they were all of the commonest kinds, and I will only mention the abundance of Great Grey Shrikes, the large flocks of Goldfinches, and the scarcity of Magpies. In the south of Transylvania during the summer and in the Görgény valley during the autumn of last year Magpies were numerous enough, as they usually are at all seasons both in Transylvania and Hungary, but this year there were hardly any of them here. The occurrence of the Eagle-Owl down in the valley itself was also interesting, for in the garden of the castle at Görgény, which is situated within

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the village, one of these birds sounded its call quite unconcernedly early in the morning during the last days of September.

I will conclude by devoting a few words to the Woodcock. When I arrived at Görgény on the 21st of September the keepers reported that they had only seen one or two Cock, and during the first days of our stay we found but one while beating the lower woods, which seemed to be quite shunned by the "longbills," although better-looking places for them could not be imagined. In the main valley, however, there was a not very extensive stretch of damp pastures studded with birch and alder bushes, which did not form regular thickets, but were separated from each other by bits of open meadow. On ground with such scanty cover no sportsman would ever look for Woodcock, yet on the 23rd of September the keepers reported that they had seen some there, and when we went out next day we found a good many within a small area—at least forty of them and a few Common Snipe. They had been driven down from the mountains by the inclement weather; and as it grew still colder and more autumnal we again went out on the 1st of October and found our expectations realized, for we certainly met with far more than a hundred Cock on a small piece of ground; but there were only two or three Snipe. On the following day the Cock were still more plentiful; but we could only shoot in the morning, as I had to leave that neighbourhood at noon.

It was interesting to see how, before we began shooting, these Woodcock districts were always surrounded by low-circling birds of prey, which there found an easy booty. Besides Goshawks, Falcons, and Larger and Smaller Spotted Eagles, I saw a "Stein" Eagle diligently quartering the ground, and one Larger Spotted Eagle was even foolish

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enough to pursue his own sport during our beat, and consequently came dangerously near one of the guns. The small shot, however, unfortunately did not quite manage to knock down the powerful bird, and it went off with its feathers much cut up and its legs hanging.

I must now bring my ornithological sketches from Transylvania to a conclusion, and can only hope that they may contain something which will be of interest to the naturalist.

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A FEW

AUTUMN NOTES.

JANUARY 1883.

Although I am well aware how little I have to offer, I will now give some notes on the autumn migration of 1882.

This year a singularly large number of Owls passed through the neighbourhood of Prague, a fact that may be ascribed to the extraordinary abundance of the field-mice on the cultivated ground by the western bank of the Moldau, close to the town.

On October 14th, as I was walking through a not very large but extremely fine field of turnips, Owls rose at every step, and after a feeble flight settled in them again; so, in order to see what species they belonged to, I shot one, and found that I had killed an old light-coloured male of the Short-eared Owl (*Otus brachyotus*).

In previous years I had merely seen isolated specimens of this bird in our part of the country, and often none at all, but on that occasion there were at least forty of them in that one place.

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I may here devote a little more of my attention to the Owls, and mention that on October 16th I found only a few Long-eared Owls (*Otus sylvestris*) in a large oak wood in the same neighbourhood; but that on the 17th I saw in a small cover on the borders of a pond more than a hundred Long-eared, with just a few Short-eared Owls. I was shooting pheasants at the time, and from the reeds and scattered bushes, as well as from the dense clumps of spruces and Scotch firs, the Owls, frightened by the shots, rose in flocks and flew round in wide circles. The whole ground was covered with their droppings and castings, in which one could easily see traces of the mice that they had devoured.

On the 20th the Owls were just as numerous in the same place, and remained so; for the keeper of that preserve told me that they were there every day, sometimes more of them, sometimes fewer.

On November 4th I met with a large flock of Long-eared Owls in a larger wood, but only among the thick spruces. During October and the beginning of November I also found the Short-eared Owl very common on the bare fields, ploughed land, the borders of meadows, and in ditches. On the 12th of the latter month I flushed many birds of both species in a thin but rather extensive wood of deciduous trees. On the 14th I found more than forty Short-eared Owls and a few Long-eared in the above-mentioned little cover near the pond, and also in a patch of acacia bushes further off among the fields. The following days snow fell heavily, and covered everything with a thick mantle; and when I again visited the same place on the 20th the keeper informed me that the Owls had vanished at the first heavy snowfall, and I found only one of the Short-eared species, which flew from a thick spruce in a languid sort of way. It is strange that in the woods and little copses on

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the right bank of the Moldau and near Prague I saw no Short-eared and only a very few Long-eared Owls, though I often rambled through them at that time.

On the 23rd and 24th of November the weather was quite spring-like, with a strong south wind. The snow melted very quickly, and winter, which had shown itself so unmistakably, again completely disappeared.

On the 25th I once more went to the spot so often mentioned, where to my no small surprise I found considerable numbers of both species of Owl; and next day I saw several in a wood near Pardubitz in the east of Bohemia, but they were all Long-eared. On the 27th both species were very abundant in a small patch of oaks a few miles north of Prague. These birds must have been on migration, for I found many of them in the surrounding fields, where the hollows, ditches, mounds, and stone-pits afforded them but scanty cover, and they were even on the ploughed land.

At the end of November I could no longer ramble about the neighbourhood, for I had to travel for some days; and on my return in the beginning of December I found that the whole country was covered with deep snow, and that the severe cold had brought on winter again.

On December 6th I met with a great many Owls of both kinds in two little woods north of Prague. This surprised me, for though the first snowfall had quite driven them away, they had remained during the second, which was much heavier and lasted longer.

It struck me as remarkable that at a time when there were so many mice the Rough-legged Buzzard (*Buteo lagopus*) should be so very uncommon. In other years, even when comparatively few were ravaging the fields, the first of these birds came at the end of October, while the main body followed from the beginning to the middle of November, and every year there were days when numbers of them might be

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seen in this part of the country, which is so very well suited to them.

In 1882 all the conditions were fulfilled which would have led one to expect an unusually large immigration of Rough-legged Buzzards, and yet I never saw more than three on one day. The first, however, appeared on October 18th, which was exceptionally early.

This autumn Montagu's Harrier (*Circus cineraceus*) stayed with us longer than usual, for between November 15th and 20th, when plenty of snow had already fallen, I observed some birds of this species on the great tracts of cultivated ground.

On November 22nd I still remarked several Kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*); while the Sparrow-Hawk (*Astur nisus*), the Goshawk (*A. palumbarius*), and the Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) visited us in particularly large numbers, and were everywhere to be met with among the covers and the clumps of wood in the fields.

I was this year able to make interesting observations in connection with the migration of various species of birds, and, if I may make so bold a statement, I should say that there is no fixed order in their times of departure. Many species left us exactly at the times given by naturalists in their works—the Swallows and most of the small song-birds for instance. Not so the Quail, some of which I saw in a turnip-field as late as October 14th. The Corn-Crake also stayed much longer than usual, for I still met with several at the end of October, and on November 6th I killed an old bird among some thick bushes in the middle of a wood. The Woodcock, too, were exceptionally abundant this year in the neighbourhood of Prague, and at the end of October and the beginning of November were everywhere to be found in the large woods. On November 12th I killed one in a low little copse among the fields, the weather being very cold and the ground frozen but free from snow.

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In Eastern Bohemia I shot, on November 26th, a Jack Snipe (*Scolopax gallinula*) in the middle of a wood of Scotch firs, where the soil was sandy and the nearest water was a long way off. The poor bird must have been driven there by the storm of that day and the previous night, for it lay quite exhausted on a sandy path, and allowed me to approach within a few yards of it.

The Lapwing (*Vanellus cristatus*) also remained remarkably long with us; on November 10th, a few days before the snow, I saw many on the great ploughed fields near Prague, a locality frequented by large flocks of these birds every autumn. During the time that the fields were covered with deep snow I saw none; but on the 23rd, when a strong south wind freed the district from its white mantle in a few hours, I observed in the afternoon a large flock of Lapwings flying towards the south-east.

The Coot (*Fulica atra*) as well as the Moorhen (*Stagnicola chloropus*) stayed on a pond near Prague up to November 12th, and only left their summer-quarters a day or two before the water was entirely frozen over. At the same time a large flock of Mallards (*Anas boschas*) appeared there, and were afterwards joined by some Garganey Teal (*A. querquedula*).

I have now for several years observed this advent of fairly large flocks of ducks on these small sheets of water before the winter has quite begun; and this time the cunning birds did not allow themselves to be frightened away by the first snow and frost, for on November 22nd, as I was walking past a much smaller pool near the one above mentioned, I saw a large flock of Mallards on its perfectly frozen surface, and three days afterwards they were again contentedly swimming about among the rushes.

The Sky-Lark and the Starling both left us in the middle of November.

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This winter, which made its appearance with such suddenness and severity, was trying to the birds, and Crows, Crested Larks, Buntings, and Finches were to be seen seeking a scanty subsistence among the villages.

During the thaw which swept away all the snow with such rapidity I observed large flocks of Jackdaws on the neighbouring fields and the towers of the town; but now, in the middle of December, there are but few of them.

The recommencement of the snow, accompanied by sharp cold, drove the birds that were dispersed among the fields and bushes into the roads of the villages and the gardens of the town, so that even in the middle of Prague I saw Goldcrests, Tits, Goldfinches, Yellow Hammers, Chaffinches, Greater Spotted and Green Woodpeckers, the last-mentioned bird looking for insects on the wall of a house. This second and very unexpected heavy fall, which lay a foot deep over everything, seemed fraught with much danger to the animal world, for the Partridges behaved as they usually only do in the depth of a severe winter, and sat huddled together on the road, allowing people to go close to them, while those shot just now are excessively thin, being mere skin and bone.

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NOTES

ON THE

HYBRID GROUSE.

I HAVE had such repeated opportunities of studying the Hybrid or Middle Grouse (*Tetrao medius*) that I feel compelled to jot down a few notes concerning this interesting bird.

It is well known that naturalists have not yet conclusively decided whether it is a cross between the Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) and the Black Grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*), or a third and quite distinct species. Most ornithologists, however, consider it to be a hybrid, but there are undoubtedly some grounds for its acceptance as a distinct species. Let us first examine the reasons which lead to the latter conclusion.

In Russia and Scandinavia the Middle Grouse is much more abundant than with us, and even in our own country it is commoner in those parts of the northern provinces where the character of the forests is adapted to the requirements of the wood-frequenting species of grouse than it is in similar districts in the southern divisions of the country. In our Alps, where Capercaillie have now been pretty carefully preserved for many years, on account of the sport they afford, Hybrid Cocks are met with much more rarely than in Bohemia and Galizia, or, according to good authority, than in Northern

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Hungary, and during the last few years I have not seen more than four or five of these birds that have been shot in Switzerland or our Alpine districts. In Bohemia Hybrid Grouse have recently been increasing in number—a fact that cannot be attributed to closer preservation of the ground, as the shooting of Capercaillies has for many years been pursued with the same keenness, and cocks which are so very aberrant both in appearance and call would have been instantly detected by so many excellent sportsmen.

These remarks on the distribution of the Hybrid Grouse suggest the theory that it is a distinct species belonging to Asia and the north-east of Europe, which is now extending its range westwards, the study of animal-geography teaching us that this is characteristic of many other Asiatic species, and especially of those belonging to the Grouse tribe.

The idea that Hybrid Cocks only occur where Capercaillie are common and Blackgame are but rare visitors, or the reverse, is a mere illusion, and too much stress is also laid on the variations in plumage among the individual cocks.

One speaks of the Hybrid Grouse as being of the Capercaillie or Blackgame type ; but a good many specimens have already passed through my hands, some in the flesh, more in skins, and I am bound to say that I never found any essential differences between them, either in size or plumage, greater than those due to age, and which occur among all the other species of Wood-Grouse. The notes, too, of this bird when drumming are always the same, and quite peculiar to it, having no resemblance to those either of the Capercaillie or the Blackcock.

In reply to all this naturalists adduce other and, I must confess, more weighty arguments for considering it to be a cross. The manner, for instance, in which its drumming is conducted differs among various individuals. Some Hybrid Cocks frequent the dense forests, where they utter their

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love-songs every day from the same tree, and these birds regularly return to their roosting-places in the evening, and in the morning conduct themselves just like the Capercaillies. Others, on the contrary, repair every morning to a certain drumming-place of the Blackcock, whether it be situated on a heath, a clearing, a glade, or a moor; there they drum in company with their smaller relatives, fight with them—generally very valiantly,—and haunt the neighbourhood of the spot throughout the day, especially in the evening, conducting themselves in every respect just like the Blackcock.

Their plumage, too, however much it may, as a whole, look like that of a special type, must, when viewed in detail, be recognized as a blending of that of both parents, for the feathers of the Capercaillie and the Blackcock are reproduced unchanged in the plumage of the Hybrid. Only in the ruddy sheen of the breast does it differ materially from the green of the former and the blue of the latter; and it is just this remarkable reddish play of colour which is a constant characteristic of all Hybrid Cocks. The beak and the feet, too, as well as the whole appearance of the bird, undoubtedly form, both in size and shape, a true intermediate stage between the Capercaillie and the Blackgame.

It is, however, the study of the skeleton that, above all, stamps the *Tetrao medius* as a cross; and I here give the varying numbers of the vertebræ in three of these birds which I got in Bohemia :—

	Vertebræ of neck and back.	Caudal vertebræ.	
I. . .	16	6	22
II. . .	14	6	20
III. . .	14	7	21

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The external and less important dimensions are not so variable in proportion ; but I am only able to give those of two of the cocks that I measured :—

	Length.	Breadth.	Wing.	Tail.	Beak.	Tarsus.	Middle toe.
	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.
I. . .	75·2	117·1	35	29	4·3	4·6	6
II. . .	70·5	109·2	33·2	21·5	4·1	6·2	6

I was fortunate enough to observe and kill two Hybrid Cocks. The first I bagged in Southern Bohemia in a perfectly flat boggy district, only varied by a few small woods among the fields. There the heaths and moorlands were well stocked with Blackgame, but no Capercaillie were to be found nearer than the thick woods a good many miles away. This Hybrid Cock which had there taken up its position, went about with the Blackcocks all day long, drummed at a considerable distance from a little fir-wood upon the place frequented by those birds, and visited the fields in the evening. I had, however, but little opportunity of studying it, as I killed it by a chance shot a few hours after my arrival in that district.

I therefore unfortunately missed the sight of a Hybrid Cock drumming on the ground like a Blackcock; but on a second occasion, when in Northern Bohemia, I was more successful. This bird, which the keepers had long known of, drummed on a tree just like a Capercaillie, and in a wood not frequented by that species. After I had waited a long time, and the sun had already risen, the cock at last began to sing, at first low, then loud, the pitch of its song resembling neither that of the Capercaillie nor the Blackcock, but in its rhythm and its divisions reminding me of the former, while the "Glocken" or "Zählen" was represented by a "kra, kra,"

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rather clearly uttered at short intervals, which kept decreasing, and wound up with a muffled croaking corresponding to the principal note ("Hauptschlag").

This moment I utilized for "springing in," and approached it without any concealment, just as one does in the shooting of Capercaillie; and when it was silent for a few moments I imitated the call of the hen Capercaillie, and it instantly recommenced its ugly song. Whether the Hybrid Cock, like the Capercaillie, neither sees nor hears at the moment when it utters the "Hauptschlag" is hard to say; but I certainly succeeded in getting so close to this bird, in spite of the bright sunshine and the very slight cover afforded by the thin wood, that I easily brought it down from the top of a spruce-tree.

The special preference for certain localities that is shown by these birds is an interesting fact. On the ground where I killed my first specimen three of them have been shot during the last few years; and where I bagged the second, one has been missed and another seen, while the very morning that I obtained mine an acquaintance also killed one not far away. For many years there have been no Capercaillies on that ground, and the preserves have held nothing but Blackgame, yet, curiously enough, that cock did not drum on the ground, but on a tree in a thick wood, and the lucky sportsman, after "springing" and killing it, saw a small hen that was perched on a tree above him. This interesting bird he considered to be a hybrid, and the forester stated that he had during the present year seen two of these medium-sized hens on the ground under his charge. Later on a Hybrid Cock again began calling there, also from a tree, which was, however, according to the forester, situated near the fringe of the wood, for the bird often left its high perch, fought among the Blackcock, and after a few minutes returned to its tree. The same forester also said that he saw in that wood a large hen Capercaillie with five young ones just beginning to change

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their plumage, so that the cocks could be distinguished from the hens, and that he at once recognized them as being Hybrid Grouse.

It is a remarkable fact that both the cocks of the Capercaillie and the Blackgame fight shy of the Hybrid Cocks, and that the latter can disturb the drumming-places of the others and even spoil them for a whole season. The keepers of both the shootings where I killed hybrids informed me that these birds fight with the Capercaillie as well as with the Blackcocks, and that, big as the former are, they are put to flight by their smaller relatives.

Before concluding these unfortunately very incomplete notes, I cannot refrain from urging all ornithologists and lovers of nature to pay great attention to this very interesting and still undecided question of the Hybrid Cock. Observations made in the open, external measurements of the various parts of the body, notes on the skeleton and plumage, are all still greatly lacking, while the main points which we must try to establish are :—

1. Whether Hybrid cocks and Hybrid hens are the parents of the broods of Hybrid Grouse that are now met with; or whether it is not a hen Capercaillie or a Greyhen which leads about these so-called young of the Hybrid Grouse.

2. Whether Hybrid cocks and Greyhens are not still exclusively the parents of the Hybrid Grouse, and whether the true Hybrid hen does not remain barren.

3. Whether the cock Capercaillie and the Hybrid hen, the Hybrid cock and the hen Capercaillie, or the Blackcock and the Hybrid hen do not interbreed.

These are the questions which seem to me the most important to decide in order that the vague theories which have hitherto existed may be cleared up; but I am well aware of all the difficulties attendant on the study of so rare a bird in the wild state.

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FURTHER NOTES

ON THE

HYBRID GROUSE

(*Tetrao medius*).

In consequence of an invitation from Prince Rohan I had, on the 23rd of April, 1883, the pleasure of being able to collect some very interesting notes on the Hybrid Cock which has been so much talked about of late years.

On both sides of the road that leads from Svijan-Podol to Sobotka lies a region wooded with wretched firs that drag out a miserable existence among sandstone, rocks, and fine sand. These preserves are well stocked with Blackgame, but no Capercaillies are to be found until one has gone several hours' journey to the further side of a wide, well-cultivated, treeless plain.

Here I was told by the keepers that some years ago a hen Capercaillie crossed over into this part of the ground, and that since that time Hybrid Cocks had been seen every year. Whether this statement was or was not based upon accurate observation would be hard to discover, but it is quite certain that both in 1880 and 1881 a Hybrid Cock was killed, and one was missed in 1882, while in 1883 four of them were drumming on this one piece of ground, and there was a

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fifth, quite a young one, which was, for the time being, silent. This fact of there being five of these birds within such a very small area is certainly a very rare occurrence.

On the whole the Hybrid game is increasing, for I know of two cocks that have drummed in the district of Jung-Bunzlau, of two others in the south of Bohemia, and of one in the neighbourhood of Gmunden at the foot of the Alps, on ground where two old Blackcocks, unattended by Greyhens, have now been going about among a very large stock of Capercaillies for a considerable time—a fact that may lead to interesting results. In order to account for the increase of the Hybrid Grouse, and by so doing for the cause and manner of its origin, more materials ought soon to be collected, and at least a certain amount of light be brought to bear on this highly interesting zoological question.

To return, however, to our own special experiences. From Svijan-Podol we drove to the ground, which was not far off, and pulling up on the road I posted myself near the place where two cocks had settled the previous evening, while my brother-in-law went a little further on to two others.

All the four birds began calling about the same time, commencing with a peculiar prolonged Woodpecker-like whistle which I had never heard before, for in 1880 I had found the cock in the height of its drumming when I approached its perch. This whistle was followed by the singular song of the Hybrid Grouse, which never varies, and is quite characteristic of the bird, and the bars of which ("Verse") follow each other much quicker than they do in the case of the Capercaillie, there being no intervals, while the pitch is always the same, and much higher than in the songs of our two other Wood-Grouse.

The clear "Schläge" take the place of the so-called "Zählen," and a most remarkable croaking noise is substituted for the principal note ("Hauptschlag") of the Capercaillie.

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I have satisfied myself that at the moment of its uttering this sound the bird is just as deaf, if not deafer, than its larger relative.

My brother-in-law brought down a cock from a very low fir. I missed one after "springing" it a long time, just as it flew off from the tree where it was drumming, in pursuit of a hen; but luckily it soon began again on the top of a little rock, and there I laid it low. Beside it were standing two hens, of which I shall speak later on. Both the other cocks were silent after the shots.

The two birds that were bagged suggest very interesting questions, for in many respects they do not agree with the hitherto well-known and often-described *Tetrao medius*, and it therefore seems advisable to preface the description of these new specimens with a few words about the established type of the Hybrid Cock.

As lately as 1880 I myself wrote: "One speaks of the Hybrid Grouse as being of the Capercaillie or Blackgame type; but a good many specimens have already passed through my hands, some in the flesh, more in skins, and I am bound to say that I never found any essential differences between them, either in size or plumage, greater than those due to age, and which occur among all the other species of Wood-Grouse."

Among other remarks about the Hybrid Cock, in his 'Thierleben,' A. E. Brehm has the following:—"What makes it especially remarkable is that the colour of the various individuals is extremely uniform, that is in all essentials." Then follows the description of the early well-known type of the bird.

Of the old authorities I will quote Christian Ludwig Brehm, a highly esteemed ornithologist, and the father of our Brehm, and also Johann Andreas Naumann. The former gives an excellent description of *Tetrao medius*, from the rich material

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of which I will only extract a few of the more important passages :—

"*Specific characters.*—Chin-feathers somewhat elongated; tail slightly forked; height of the tarsus at least two inches.

"*Distinctive description.*—The Middle Wood-Grouse ('Mittlere Waldhuhn') occupies an intermediate position between the Capercaillie and the Black Grouse, both in form and size, inclining, however, to the latter rather than to the former. Hitherto only the male of this bird, which is so extremely rare in Germany, has been known; so that I have the greatest pleasure in being able to give an accurate description of the female. This bird has long been considered to be a hybrid between the Blackcock and the hen Capercaillie, and at the present day there is no lack of able naturalists who hold this opinion, and support it, as we shall presently see, with apparently weighty arguments. It has therefore a twofold interest, both for the naturalist and the sportsman, and I will take pains to treat of it accordingly.

"*Old male.*—Much resembles the Blackcock in form, but is larger, and has the tail only slightly forked. The beak and nails are black; the iris brown; the head, neck, breast, back, and tail brilliant black, with a beautiful purple sheen; the belly dull black, with large white spots on the flanks and vent; the wings are blackish, sprinkled with brown and dark grey, and have two white bands; the back, too, and the tail are powdered with ash-grey. The tail is deep black, and above the eye is a red patch, almost similar to that of the Blackcock. Length 2 feet 5–6 inches."

Next come descriptions of the male after the first moult, and of the female, then "detailed descriptions," from the latter of which I will merely quote the following paragraphs:—

"In the old male all the colours are finer, the red over the eye more extended, the gloss on the head, neck, and breast more sheeny, the white spots on the underparts fewer, the

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tail without white terminal bars, and all the parts of the body larger and stronger.

"From this description it is evident that the male of the Middle Wood-Grouse closely resembles the Blackcock, so closely, indeed, that Gmelin (Syst. i. p. 748) calls it '*Tetrao tetrix*, var. γ.' The most striking differences lie in its tail, which, compared with that of the Blackcock, looks as if it had been clipped, and in its size.

"The young plumage of this Wood-Grouse is not yet known."

The detailed description of the female would be too long to quote in its entirety, but it contains certain passages which are interesting to us at the present moment, and which I must cite as briefly as possible.

Brehm writes:—"The discovery of the female of our Middle Wood-Grouse is not only of great importance for natural history in general, but also for the specific status of the bird itself; for although it has been known since the time of Brisson and Linnæus, there has always been a great division of opinion as to its being a distinct species. In the 'Mus. Carls.' of Sparrm. (fasc. i. T. 15) there is a very good figure of the old male under the name of '*Tetrao hybridus*; Hybrid Wood-Grouse.' Brisson, in his 'Orn.' v. i. p. 191, sp. 2 A, calls it *Tetrao minor punctatus*; that is to say, the Small Spotted Capercaillie?! Gmelin, in Syst. i. p. 748, considers it to be a variety of the Blackcock, for he designates it as *Tetrao tetrix*, var. γ. Bechstein alludes to it as the Hybrid Wood-Grouse (see his 'Naturgeschichte Deutschl.' 2 ed. 3 pt. p. 1335). Leisler, at the end of the second volume of his additions to Bechstein's 'Naturgesch. Deutschl.,' was, as far as I know, the first to write of this Wood-Grouse as a distinct species, and to publish a very accurate figure of the male after its first moult. He is followed by Temminck, in his 'Naturgeschichte der Tauben und Hühner,' and in his

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'Manuel d'Ornith.' ed. 1, pt. ii. pp. 459–460, and by Meyer, in his 'Vögel Liv- und Esthlands.' Nevertheless many naturalists still hold the Middle Wood-Grouse to be a hybrid between the hen Capercaillie and the Blackcock. Dr. Nilsson, for instance, who emphatically declares that, after carefully interrogating the Swedish and Finnish sportsmen, he elicited the fact that the Hybrid Cock is only found where the cock Capercaillies have been so thinned by over-shooting that the hens have been obliged to betake themselves to the drumming-places of the Blackcock, &c. &c."

From this one sees how strongly the old authority, Brehm, held the belief that *Tetrao medius* was a true species, and not a cross, and the grounds which he gives for so doing are good, if not, as it seems, quite unimpeachable. Seven pages of his book are devoted to this discussion; but from all the excellent and very learned arguments that he adduces I will, for want of space, only quote for my readers one passage which bears very strongly upon the special case which we are now considering. It runs thus:—"And all the Hybrid Cocks hitherto seen are so exactly similar in colour. Does this agree with other observations on the colour of hybrids? It is evident that the Middle Wood-Grouse, if it be a cross, has nothing of the mother about it, with the slight exception of the head, the chin-feathers ('Bart'), and the size of the body; but even in all these parts it bears a certain resemblance to the Blackcock.

"It really is a large Black-Grouse with a clipped tail, not unlike that of the Greyhen. No special home can, however, be assigned to the Middle Wood-Grouse, yet what does this matter? There are plenty of birds which are universally uncommon. The Lapp Owl (*Strix lapponica*), for example, and many others. Why should not the Middle Wood-Grouse be everywhere rare and yet a distinct species? Besides, Temminck, in speaking of the Middle Wood-Grouse, explicitly

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says, 'Nowhere so common as in Russia.' And a northern bird it absolutely seems to be."

Brehm concludes by saying that the female under discussion cannot possibly be a Greyhen on account of its beard, and the much greater length both of its tarsus and its alimentary canal. The sections in which he treats of its habitat, behaviour, food, propagation, foes, the method of shooting it, and usefulness and destructiveness, contain nothing especially remarkable, and have been superseded by the results of later investigations.

Naumann, in his work 'Naturgeschichte der Vögel Deutschlands,' gives an excellent plate showing the Hybrid cock and the Hybrid hen, the former presenting quite the characters of the *Tetrao medius*, hitherto described in all works.

Under the head of "specific distinctions" Naumann says: "The end of the tail somewhat notched, the feathers of the chin somewhat elongated.

"*Male.*—Black, with a purple sheen on the breast; tail almost uniformly black.

"*Female.*—Rust-coloured, banded with brown and black; two white bars across the wings."

Naumann goes on to say that *Tetrao medius* looks like an abnormally large and somewhat darker Blackcock with a shortened tail. The eleven cocks of which he treats were all precisely alike. Beak black, horn-blue at the edges; feet strong and thickly feathered to the toes, this covering extending so far down that the short hind toe is hidden up to the nail. This seems to me an important character, for we find it given in all works as one of the chief distinctive marks of *Tetrao medius*, and my experiences up to the present time lead me to say the same.

In his accurate description of the old bird Naumann mentions the deep black and the steely-blue sheen of the head, and the play of purple passing into violet on the breast.

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In the course of his remarks he also tells of a specimen that was far more like a Capercaillie than any of the others, and gives an exact description of its plumage.

Under the heading "Of its habitat" Naumann has, among many other highly interesting remarks, the following:—"As I did not start with any practical experience of the rights or wrongs of this question, never having had an opportunity of studying these Hybrid Wood-Grouse in the open, but having only had my doubts raised by the important differences existing among various stuffed specimens, I gave them a double share of my attention, and finally convinced myself that *Tetrao medius* cannot be a distinct species, but merely a hybrid, with the Blackcock for its father and the hen Capercaillie for its mother. It has, moreover, always been maintained in Sweden that the Blackcock and the hen of the Willow-Grouse not uncommonly cross, and that, most strange to say, hybrids spring from this union."

The Swede Nilsson, under the title of "Hybrid Blackgame," brings forward most accurate and important notes, and, among the many characteristic peculiarities of *Tetrao medius* that he describes, also lays stress on the black breast with its violet and purple sheen.

The contributions of this naturalist are supported by practical experience, and aim at the determination of the Hybrid cock as a cross between the Blackcock and the hen Capercaillie. On this point he expresses himself as follows:—

"I. Because, although the Hybrid Cock is yearly shot in our country during the breeding-season, and is therefore watched by the sportsmen, no one has ever yet known it to have a drumming-place of its own, or seen it in broods or with its own hens, but always either alone or on the drumming-places of other birds.

"II. Because it is clearly proved that the hen Capercaillie resorts to the drumming-places of the Blackcock and there crosses with them.

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"III. Because hybrids between the Blackcock and the Willow-Grouse are also found.

"IV. Because the Hybrid Cock has never been found in any districts except those in which both Capercaillie and Blackgame occur, and there only where the cock Capercaillies have been so shot down as to be almost exterminated."

Nilsson further declaims against those naturalists, especially Brehm, who seek to elevate *Tetrao medius* to specific rank, and mentions the following interesting fact in the course of his remarks:—"There is also another important difficulty which I must take into account: in Germany Capercaillie are much more plentiful than Blackgame; in Scandinavia, on the contrary, the proportion is exactly reversed, for here one can, on the whole, reckon that there are ten to twenty, or even thirty, head of Blackgame to every Capercaillie." This, I may add, is the case in most parts of Bohemia, especially in those where Hybrid Cocks have hitherto been observed to be most numerous, but in the Alps it is just the other way, and how rare are the hybrids there!

On the ground which afforded the two Hybrid Cocks, another was killed two years ago from a screen at the drumming-place of the Blackcock, all the rest while drumming by themselves in the wood; and now and then one of this year's birds appears among the Blackgame, disturbing them very much in their love-affairs.

The two that were killed in the same neighbourhood in 1879 and 1880 are typical specimens of the true Hybrid Cock, with the black beak, much feathered feet, violet sheen on the breast, outer tail-feathers somewhat curved, &c. &c. Those of the present year constitute two new forms, and immediately after they were shot I jotted down the following notes.

Specimen A.

Beak large, yellowish grey. Neck dark blue, passing into a violet sheen on the breast. Underparts dark, with a

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few pale feathers. Lower tail-coverts velvet-black, slightly tipped with white. A white speculum on the wings. Tail spotted with white. Upper tail-coverts long and marbled with white. Tail like that of the cock Capercaillie, the outer feathers not curved. Back brown, resembling the Capercaillie. Eyes brown; eyelids red, but not very strongly marked.

Specimen B.

Beak yellow, and neck grey like the Capercaillie cock. Breast green. Underparts paler, greyish with many light feathers. Lower tail-coverts shorter, grey like the Capercaillie. No white speculum on the wing. Tail quite black; upper tail-coverts short and shaded with grey. Tail strikingly short, resembling that of the hen, the outer feathers not curved. Back brown, like that of the Capercaillie. Eyes brown; eyelids red, not very strongly marked.

Chief characteristic: A somewhat and B very different from the Hybrid Cocks that I have hitherto seen.

Measurements.

	Length.	Breadth.	Wing.	Beak.	Tail.	Tarsus.	Middle toe.
	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.	cm.
Killed in 1883.							
A.	79	115	36·5	41	275	80	61
B.	81	123	37·2	55	240	80	64
Killed in former years.							
A.	75·2	117·1	35	43	290	46	60
B.	70·5	109·2	33·3	41	215	62	60

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Both those shot in 1883 had the feet only slightly feathered.

I think that we have now before us the following scale of the varieties of the wood-frequenting Grouse :—I. *Urogallus* ; II. Almost pure *Urogallus* ; III. Reversion to *Urogallus* ; IV. Thorough Hybrid Cock, i. e. *medius*, of the usual type ; V. *tetrix*.

The following Table will make this evident at a glance :—

	Urogallus.	Almost pure *Urogallus.*	Reversion to *Urogallus.*	*Medius.*	*Tetrix.*
	Centimetres.				
Length from the atlas to the point of the sacrum	50·2	49·5	47·2	43·8	32·4
	Kilogrammes.				
Weight of the whole bird	4·270	3·230	3·220	2·520	1·260
No. of vertebræ :—					
Neck.....	13	13	13	12	12
Atlas	1	1	1	1	1
Back.....	2	2	2	3	3
Pelvis	1	1	1	1	1
Tail	6	6	6	6	6
	23	23	23	23	23

The interesting fact that the two Hybrid Cocks first killed

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in this district are of the true *Tetrao medius* type, while those shot during the present year exhibit the transition-forms, affords matter for much consideration.

According to the keepers, a hen Capercaillie appeared on this ground some years ago, went about with the Blackcock, and this was the origin of the first true Hybrid Cocks.

But how is it that the specimens last killed come nearer to the Capercaillie? This species certainly never pairs with the Greyhen, and it is also hardly credible that a cock Capercaillie would, during the drumming-season, leave its woods, which were well stocked with hens, to fly for many miles over the open country and settle in thin fir-woods absolutely unsuited to it.

Is *Tetrao medius*, after all, a fertile or barren hybrid? I believe it to be fertile. Now, if its reproductive capabilities be granted it is possible that a Capercaillie hen might be fertilized by a hybrid bird, or even a hybrid by a hybrid; and there is no saying whether such a union might not produce a very singular form of reversion to the grandparents, in this case to the *Urogallus* type.

One thing is proved—*Tetrao medius* is not a true species, but a cross, for such enormous differences can only occur among hybrids. Hybrid hens also exist, and if the males have reproductive powers the same must hold good of the females.

At a distance of twenty paces at the most I saw two hens on the ground near a Hybrid Cock, and their reddish colour and peculiar size at once showed me that they were neither Capercaillie nor Blackgame; for I have had so much experience in the pursuit of these birds in the most varied localities, and have seen so very many of them, that I can quite rely on the accuracy of my observation. The call of these hens was also so different from that of both their ancestral species that I was at once struck by its strangeness.

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I will, in conclusion, quote word for word one more passage from the works of old Christian Ludwig Brehm :—

"COMPARISON OF THE FEMALES OF THE MIDDLE WOOD-GROUSE AND THE BLACKGAME.

"*Tetrao medius.* (Female, about 9 months old.)

"Length 21 inches ; breadth 32 inches.

"Tail $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and notched to a depth of 1 inch.

"The feet are so thickly feathered that only the point of the nail of the hind toe projects from the feathers.

"Height of the tarsus 24 lines.

"The head is large, and in form somewhat resembles that of the hen Capercaillie.

"The chin-feathers are elongated, so as to form a beard 15 lines long. The first six primaries are grey-black, with paler specklings, but only on the outer web.

"The white base of the primaries begins at the seventh and goes back to the eighth from the last.

"When the wings are folded they show two distinct white bars, of which the first or outer one is eight and the second five lines broad. The ground-colour of the lower back is a splendid blue-black with a bluish sheen traversed by narrow wavy bars of a dark rust-colour.

"*Tetrao tetrix.* (Female, about nine months old.)

"Length 18 inches ; breadth 28 inches.

"Tail $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and notched to a depth of $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

"The feet are not so closely feathered that the hind toe is hidden in the feathers.

"The head is not large, and does not at all resemble in form that of the hen Capercaillie.

"The feathers of the chin are not elongated.

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"The first six primaries are black-grey, with lighter specklings on both webs.

"The white base of the primaries begins at the sixth and goes back to the sixth from the last.

"When the wings are folded nothing of the first white bar is seen, and of the second little, only about two lines.

"The ground-colour of the lower back is pure black with hardly any sheen, traversed by broad pale rust-coloured bars."

This precise comparison is very instructive, and ought to be of material assistance in the elucidation of this question. Full attention must now be devoted to the Hybrid Hen, and the habits of both sexes of this cross ought to be studied as closely as possible. It is unfortunately but little that I have been able to contribute to the subject, but I believe that the discovery of these two new forms of *Tetrao medius* may tend to slightly advance the solution of this highly interesting problem.

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NOTES

ON

BIRDS OF PREY.

SEPTEMBER 1883.

I HAVE lately had an opportunity of devoting a little more attention to some of our Lower Austrian birds of prey.

The wide plain south of the Danube, between the Wiener Wald and the Leitha mountains, is inhabited by large numbers of many species of raptorial birds, and since May of the present year I have been able to pay frequent visits to the fields and heaths that lie between Laxenburg, Velm, Himberg, and Lanzendorf.

In May and June I saw but few hawks, only some Marsh-Harriers (*Circus æruginosus*) and Montagu's Harriers (*C. cineraceus*), and even these were but sparsely distributed. It is not difficult to see the reason of this: there is a great deal of work going on in the fields, while the covers and little woods, such as those of Velm, Guttendorf, Weitau, or whatever they are called, are too small and too well watched by the keepers to be used as nesting-places by these destructive marauders. At this season, therefore, the predatory species are concen-

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trated in quieter districts—the Harriers in the auen of the Danube, the Buzzards chiefly in the extensive woods.

In July I met with more of these birds, and since the beginning of August they have appeared in great abundance.

In order to try and bag some valuable specimens and to study their habits a little, I spent three days in visiting two huts where the Eagle-Owl was used as a decoy. The first time I came in the morning, and hid myself among the fields which lie between Laxenburg, Himberg, and Velm, the hut being placed on an embankment at the edge of the Neugraben, which is sparsely covered with reeds and bushes, and is not far from the little wood known as the Weitau.

Within two hours I saw at least eight to ten Common Buzzards (*Buteo vulgaris*), mostly birds of the year, the two or three young ones from the same nest generally flying about in company. These birds have only recently appeared here, and I fancy that they chiefly come from the Wiener Wald, where I observed great numbers of them in July. In the evening some of them may be seen going off towards the hills in a westerly direction; but I have satisfied myself that they generally pass the night in the little clumps of wood in the most outlying parts of the Laxenburg Park and the pheasant-preserves belonging to it, while during the day they fly over the fields looking for plunder.

The Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) roams about everywhere, and has paid me some visits at the Owl-hut; the Peregrine (*F. peregrinus*) also appeared, but was unfortunately missed; and the Goshawk (*Astur palumbarius*) showed itself one evening close to the hut, but did not stoop, and soon retired to its roosting-place in a little patch of trees.

Harriers here constitute the bulk of the birds of prey, and among them the commonest is the Marsh-Harrier. In the morning one sees them ranging about, hunting up the partridges and following them. They cast passing glances at the

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Owl, stoop now and again, but soon fly off. The day they spend in looking after booty, and it is not rare to see six or seven cruising about at the same moment. From six in the evening until twilight has quite fallen is the time at which they hold their final hunt, and then they stoop merrily at the Owl. Neither shots nor even the sight of the death-throes of their comrades frighten them, and birds that have been missed renew their savage onslaughts. At this time one can pass them in review, and see what large numbers frequent these heaths. One evening I counted thirteen sitting close together on a newly-mown meadow, and a great many more were cruising round about. As soon as it begins to get dark they come from all directions to the Neugraben, and flying close to the ground skim over the embankments and vanish among the reeds and bushes.

The habits of the Montagu's Harriers are precisely similar, but though there are plenty of them they are not present in such great numbers as the Marsh-Harriers. Singularly enough, I only saw one male in the beautiful pale plumage, all the others being clad in the brown dress of the female or the dirty grey-brown of the immature bird.

The beautiful Steppe-Harrier (*Circus pallidus*) also shows itself in considerable numbers, and is the keenest and most foolhardy of all in attacking the Eagle-Owl. One sees many of them, especially in the evening just at sunset, when they come from the fields to the Neugraben with a swift gliding flight only a yard or two above the ground, and as soon as they catch sight of the enemy in the neighbourhood of their sleeping-quarters they let go at him with a vengeance.

Among the many Steppe-Harriers that I have seen here during the last few days there was not one in the pale plumage, but all were brown with pale yellow underparts and beautiful dark borders round the eyes and beak.

I have yet to relate a remarkable incident that greatly

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surprised me, and this was that the Short-eared Owl (*Otus brachyotus*), a true marsh-owl, lately came flying at the Eagle-Owl on the open field in bright sunshine, and, surrounded by Harriers, stooped vigorously at its larger relative. A successful shot put me in a position to verify the species.

In the two trials that I made at the owl-hut in the open fields I shot three Common Buzzards (an old one and two birds of the year), ten Marsh-Harriers (mostly adults, but also some young birds, all in much the same plumage), five Steppe-Harriers (all old dark-coloured specimens), four Montagu's Harriers (one an old male, two old females, and one a young male in the dark grey-brown dress), three Kestrels (this year's birds), and one Short-eared Owl, while on one afternoon which I spent in watching near the Eagle-Owl in a little clump of trees I killed two Kestrels, both old specimens, and saw one Steppe-Harrier, which had, however, no desire to engage in hostilities.

The Buzzards were most numerous in the morning; in the evening only two appeared, but both of them were very foolhardy.

The utter absence of the Hen-Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) in this district was a very remarkable but well-ascertained fact.

During the beginning of August a Sea-Eagle, which was still in the dark immature plumage, showed itself one afternoon, and after flying through some of the little woods among the fields vanished, and was seen no more

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NOTES

FROM THE

NEIGHBOURHOOD OF VIENNA.

I.

NOVEMBER 1883.

THESE notes are confined to the autumn of the present year, when the migration of the birds of passage began on the whole early, some species leaving us considerably sooner than usual. For example, the Swift (*Cypselus apus*), the Oriole (*Oriolus galbula*), and the Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*) departed at the end of August, and at the beginning of September not one of them was to be found in our neighbourhood. The Quail, on the contrary, remained very late, and I still saw solitary individuals in October and even up to the 16th of this month. The Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), the Lesser Grey Shrike (*Lanius minor*), and the Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europæus*) quitted the district that fell under my observation in the middle of September, while the Lapwing (*Vanellus cristatus*), the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), and the Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*) are still passing through it in large flocks.

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Both the Swallows and the Martins had almost entirely departed by the middle and end of September, but I still saw some of the former on October 11th, and observed one of the latter flying up the Danube on the 15th of that month. The Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*) came this year in very small numbers, the first having been seen on the auen of the Danube at Vienna in the middle of September, and solitary individuals are even still to be met with here and there. This year there was a great flight of Redwings and Song-Thrushes, but it only lasted a few days, the greatest number being seen between October 7th and 15th.

The Mallards collected early in large flocks, for at the end of September I already noticed numbers of them on the Laxenburg pond, and on the Danube they were exceptionally abundant.

The Geese, but only one species, came to the Danube in the beginning of October, and during the day thousands of them pitched on the sandbanks by the so-called Schönauer Wasser, opposite the village of Schönau. On the 15th of October, which was a grey, misty, rainy, and particularly favourable day, I there observed countless myriads, gigantic swarms of them, between eleven and three o'clock. They all came from the north-west, and settled on the sluices and the sandbanks with a loud cackling. Their migration lasted until the end of October, but their numbers had then much decreased.

The Shoveller (*Anas clypeata*) has also often been met with since the beginning of the present month, and on the 15th the first Red-throated Diver (*Colymbus septentrionalis*) was seen, while a young Crested Grebe was killed on an arm of the river. The various kinds of Sandpipers, of which there were large numbers on the Danube at the end of September, have already departed.

The Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) appeared in great abundance at the end of last month, and they are still

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very common. The Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) I observed for the last time on October 15th, and then I only saw solitary individuals.

A Black Stork, which is a rare bird in Lower Austria, frequented the auen of the Danube during the latter half of September, and I myself once saw it in a wood of lofty trees by the side of a pool.

I paid particular attention to the migration of the birds of prey, and observed that the Sea-Eagle (*Haliaëtus albicilla*) took up its position on the Danube earlier than usual, for a pair of old pale yellow individuals frequented the Fischamend auen almost the whole of September, and are still often to be seen. The Ospreys (*Pandion haliaëtus*) also came in considerable numbers at the end of the preceding and the beginning of the present month, but they have now quite vanished.

The "Stein" Eagle (*Aquila fulva*) was several times observed in the neighbourhood of Laxenburg, but I believe that there was but one bird, which hunted over a large extent of country, and in the course of its wanderings often appeared at the same point. One afternoon at the end of September I saw it perched on a high spruce-fir in the so-called Franzensremise near Laxenburg, and a few days before it was noticed in the auen at Guntransdorf, where it was always surrounded by Hooded Crows, Magpies, and Hawks. Soon afterwards a keeper saw it sitting on a stack of straw near what is known as the Weitau, not far from the village of Himberg, and on the morning of the 20th I caught sight of a "Stein" Eagle standing on the ground in a field near Rauhenwart.

On September 29th I saw the Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila nævia*) at the edge of the Laxenburg Park.

The Kites have now almost disappeared from the auen of the Danube, and the migration of the Harriers is pretty nearly

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over. In the plain of Laxenburg the Steppe-Harrier (*Circus pallidus*) is the only one that remains, and it occurs but very rarely; on the 25th of October I shot one at the Eagle-Owl hut. Both the Marsh-Harrier (*C. æruginosus*) and Montagu's Harrier (*C. cineraceus*), however, left the district altogether at the end of September, and in October there was not one of them to be seen.

The Common Buzzard (*Buteo vulgaris*) took up its abode here during the autumn in fairly large numbers. One of them hunts every day in the meadows in front of my windows and is remarkably tame.

The Rough-legged Buzzard (*Buteo lagopus*) came earlier than usual, for the first were seen before the 15th of October, and by the 20th their migration had reached its height. On that date I rode in the morning straight across country from Laxenburg to Fischamend on the Danube, returning in the afternoon, and it must have been an especially favourable day for the passage of the raptorial birds, for on the way I saw the "Stein" Eagle already mentioned, more than thirty Rough-legged Buzzards, several Common Buzzards, a Peregrine Falcon, a Saker (*Falco laniarius*), several Merlins (*F æsalon*), and one or two Pallid Harriers.

The Kestrels are still here, but not in such abundance as before; but to make up for them there are more Sparrow-Hawks (*Astur nisus*) and Goshawks (*A. palumbarius*).

On the 21st some Rough-legged Buzzards came to the Eagle-Owl hut, but not so many as the numbers seen on the previous day would have led one to expect. On the 24th there was another very large flight of these birds; on the 25th I only observed one; but it was a very good day for Falcons, for I saw three Sakers at the Owl, one of which stooped well and was shot, and an old specimen of the Peregrine, which I also bagged.

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Bustards (*Otis tarda*) are often seen, but not at the same places that they frequent during the summer, for in Lower Austria they are true birds of passage, and do not remain for the autumn and winter where they spent the breeding-season and the summer, but remove to other ground, generally in the immediate neighbourhood of their former quarters. There old and young congregate together in great flocks, and go through the rigours of the winter in company. A few days ago I saw a flock of more than thirty on a field of young corn.

The Great Black Woodpecker (*Picus martius*) was often seen in the Laxenburg Park at the end of September and the beginning of October, and the appearance of such a thorough forest-bird in these woods so surrounded by plains certainly seems strange. I was, however, told by the keepers that it is noticed every year, but only for a few days, both in the park and the small clumps of trees and covers which lie round it, and that it may often be observed flying from tree to tree along the willow-fringed brooks, and so passing from one wood to another. This betokens a migration, or, at any rate, a change of residence, at the commencement of the cold weather.

I will, in conclusion, mention a peculiar duck which I shot a little while ago. As already said, great flocks of Mallards often visited the Laxenburg pond, and one day I noticed, among many others, a particularly large and very dark-plumaged bird. I killed it and found myself in the possession of a most remarkable specimen. The dark green head, blue wing-coverts, little feathers in the tail, and the distribution of light and dark in the plumage were just the same as in the Mallard, but over the whole of it there was a brownish tone, which in some parts, such as the belly, was very dark, while the light feathers had a reddish metallic sort of sheen.

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The bill and the feet, too, were also rather darker, and the bird was altogether larger and more strongly built than the ordinary Mallard.

I can only suppose that it must have been a cross between the half-wild Turkish ducks that live on the pond and the perfectly wild Mallards that breed every year in the more distant parts of the park.

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II.

FEBRUARY 1884.

A FEW notes collected in the neighbourhood of Vienna during the winter may not perhaps be wholly uninteresting to some of my readers.

I must begin by saying that the unusually mild weather which lasted throughout the winter of 1883–84 had a great influence on the movements of the birds. The Rough-legged Buzzard, for example, which generally only visits this part of the country on its migrations in November, the end of February, and the beginning of March, remained here this year in large numbers. I also saw Harriers, especially old males, all through the winter. The more northern visitors, however, appeared in but small strength, for I found very few Long-tailed Ducks (*Harelda glacialis*) on the Danube, where they usually swarm, and they have now quite disappeared. The Goosanders, too, were not numerous, while the other ducks, which generally come to the river in myriads when the smaller streams are quite frozen, only showed themselves in any numbers during the few colder days. The Grey Herons, on the other hand, most of which generally wander southwards, all remained; and the Jackdaws did the same, for one never failed to see them at their habitual summer resorts. I also frequently observed a pair of Grey Wagtails (*Motacilla sulphurea*) in a garden in the middle of Vienna, and at sunset these mountain birds might

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be seen flying rapidly over the house-tops, seeking a sheltered place for their night's rest.

Many of the migratory birds have also been caught sight of very early. The Wood-Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) was frequently seen in the auen of the Danube below Vienna during the last days of January, the Black Kite (*Milvus ater*) often in the beginning of February, the Starling everywhere since the 17th of this month, and the White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*) has already been here four days.

The Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) was first noted on February 15th, and on the 16th I remarked a flock circling round their usual nesting-places on the Danube, while during the last few days many of them have been met with. Geese, too, appear to have been observed on the Neusiedler Lake at the beginning of February, and since the middle of the month they have also appeared on the Danube, but hitherto not in large flocks.

Paired Partridges were already seen at the end of January, and couples of Mallards at the beginning of February.

This year I took pretty accurate notes of the appearance of the Sea-Eagles in our neighbourhood, the district that came under my observation extending from the Lobau to above the Fischamend auen. A pair of these birds came as early as the end of September, but did not stay long at a time, often going away for a week and then returning for a few days.

One of them, a tolerably large bird, easily recognizable from its having lost some of its wing-feathers, was observed throughout the autumn, and then, after a long absence, reappeared at the end of February, when it was encountered several times. On the 16th I myself saw it sitting on the lowest branch of a tree, and it seemed to be very ill, for it kept its wings open to assist it in maintaining its position on its weak legs, and when frightened off it only took a short flight close to the ground, never, however, allowing me to

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come well within shot. This individual, which was the first to appear in September, has now entirely vanished, and has in all probability died of some wound received on one of its many wanderings.

Since the end of September more Sea-Eagles have been seen on the Danube, frequently three or four of them in a single day, but often only one, while they now and then absent themselves altogether for several days. Their appearance is dependent on several causes, but it is the wild ducks that have most to do with their movements, for from morning to night the eagles hunt the large flocks up and down, and when one district has been cleared out and the persecuted birds have shifted down-stream their pursuers also disappear; and when, after a few days, the ducks collect again at their usual haunts, their adversaries follow them up, and so it goes on backwards and forwards. If, however, a frost comes, the eagles are sure to be there, and generally some of those that are engaged in the easier pursuit of the waterfowl on the smaller streams also come to the Danube.

The Sea-Eagle passes the night close to the place where it has either fished or hunted during the day; and as this shy bird almost always cautiously shuns both the Eagle-Owl and an exposed bait, and can only be approached at night, I devoted my attention to the finding out of its sleeping-quarters.

On the Danube it never roosts among the large auen that border the river, but always on the islands or "haufen" as they are called. It is also very critical in the choice of its quarters, and, avoiding the interior of woods, almost invariably selects the edge of a clump of high trees that faces either a meadow, a low copse, or a stagnant arm of the river, where there is nothing to impede its flying off even during the night. The spot must be sheltered from the wind, and the tree high and provided with large branches. In the auen

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between Vienna and Fischamend there are only two places to which all these eagles regularly repair every evening. One is situated on a small arm of the river; the other on the edge of a young cover, and even within these narrow limits there are certain favourite trees.

When a bird of this kind is seen flying about in the evening, look-outs must be stationed at spots which command a good view, for after its final hunt the Sea-Eagle circles for some time high aloft, and then suddenly contracting its wings, shoots down to its night-quarters like an arrow. There it flaps from tree to tree until darkness comes on, when it at last goes to roost on a suitable branch.

In January and February the eagles come to their roosting-places by four o'clock, and, having come, they stay. For about a week past, however, they have been very restless; and this I attribute to the approach of the breeding-season, as during the daytime I have of late seen them going through the same beautiful aerial evolutions that I have so often observed when in the neighbourhood of their nests.

Some days ago, for example, one of the keepers saw three of them settle on one tree, and there they all sat until it began to get quite dark; but when I got to the place at night they were no longer there, two having gone off altogether, while the third was roosting on another silver poplar about fifty paces away.

In the course of last week I bagged three Sea-Eagles; all at night. On the first occasion I found two very old ones, evidently a pair, sitting on the same tree; on the second a rather dark and much younger bird alone; the third time a somewhat older individual, which was one of the most interesting of the many specimens that have passed through my hands, for it was just in the transition stage from the dark plumage of the immature, to that of the fully adult bird. Its beak was still dark with a few yellow spots, and its plumage

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can only be described as mottled, for from the head downwards there was quite an irregular mixture of light and dark over the whole body, while the tail was in that ugly grey state when it is passing from brown to pure white. The two young ones were not very large, but the old bird first killed was a remarkably fine specimen.

The eagles, too, are merely winter visitors and will soon leave us; but when the migratory birds all return to their usual haunts there will be fresh life and movement to observe, concerning which I shall have something to say in due course.

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III.

DECEMBER 1885.

During the autumn of 1885 I was able to make some rather interesting notes.

Most of the migratory birds either left or passed through the field of my observation quite at the customary times. Almost all the swallows had gone by the latter part of September. Solitary specimens of geese appeared on the Danube at the end of that month, and therefore earlier than usual; but the great flights, which were this year of extraordinary size, came about the end of October and remained until the middle of November, while some of the smaller flocks stayed up to its close. The Teal, with a few Shovellers, Pochards, Garganey Teal, but especially Mallards in thousands, have frequented the river throughout the autumn, and have been joined since the end of November by the Goosanders and Mergansers, as well as by the Long-tailed Ducks, the latter in smaller numbers than usual.

In Lower Austria the Cormorants left the Danube earlier than last year, but the Sea-Eagles came much sooner to their winter-quarters. The first of them—a young bird still in the dark plumage—I observed in the auen below Vienna on September 24th, and during October some others arrived, both old and young, and they are still flying up and down the river every day hunting the ducks.

The migration of the smaller birds of prey was also very

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irregular, and very poor both in numbers and species—the Harriers, multitudes of which generally visit the plains of Lower Austria in September, being almost entirely absent, and I noted the first Rough-legged Buzzard on October 20th, that is fourteen days earlier than in previous years; but from that day did not see another of these birds, which are usually so common, until the end of November, when I remarked three of them flying one evening to their roosting-places in the auen.

It was interesting to see what multitudes of Fieldfares there were this autumn. On October 30th I saw hundreds on the meadows and clearings of the Wiener Wald some distance above Baden; and I met with much larger flocks, which must have contained thousands of them, in the auen of the Danube at Orth on October 6th and 7th, while I have since observed them until quite recently both in the Wiener Wald and the plains, but never in such large numbers.

The appearance of the Nutcrackers and their spread into districts which they usually seldom or never visit was very remarkable. Between September 15th and 18th I observed a great many of these birds in the wooded hills of Pohorella and Murány, in the county of Gömör, and at the end of September and the beginning of October I also saw them at various localities in the north of Styria, both high up in the mountains and quite low down in the valleys, while in the middle of October I found them very abundant in the woods among the fields and the low-lying copses of the hilly ground in the county of Maros-Torda in Transylvania. At the end of October several were observed above Baden; on the 21st a keeper killed one in the Laxenburg park; the following day I shot a couple of handsome old birds in the outlying woods of the Wiener Wald near Huttendorf; and on the morning of November 18th, which was cold and misty, I saw one sitting on an acacia near the railway station in Bruck on the Leitha. This was the first time in the course of the past few years that I

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had met with a Nuteracker in the immediate neighbourhood of Vienna.

The Dipper (*Cinclus aquaticus*), too, appeared last year on the brooks at Laxenburg, but again only when the cold weather had set in.

The passage of the Woodcock was also very irregular this autumn, for these birds, which only frequent the low hilly parts of Transylvania on migration, showed themselves there in large numbers from the 10th to the end of October, and by November the flight was over in those districts. In Hungary, however, especially in the wooded plains east of Pest, I met with some as early as September 12th, and the flight seems to have lasted well into November, though there were never many of them.

Still more peculiar was their behaviour in Lower Austria, for the first came to the Laxenburg park at the end of October, after that there were but very few in this part of the country, and by the middle of November none at all, the flight being apparently over. I was therefore greatly astonished at finding five of them in a little cover in the Wiener Wald near Laab on November 28th, and at meeting with a great many in the auen for some days after, the last on December 3rd. The cold, however, which has now set in has probably put an end to this abnormal appearance of the Woodcock.

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NOTES

FROM

THE SOUTH.

A FEW weeks spent on the coasts of Dalmatia and Istria, and in excursions into the Herzegovina, afforded me opportunities of making occasional ornithological notes; and as some of these jottings may not be wholly devoid of interest, I have undertaken to arrange them in the form of a list. I fear, however, that the many gaps therein, and the superficial nature of my remarks, will very likely be irritating to the naturalist, but my excuse must be found in the manner in which I travelled and the character of the districts that I visited.

It is no easy matter to collect notes of this sort from a fast steamer or while driving along the highroad; and where I had a chance of rambling about on foot, the impenetrability of the thorny evergreen thickets and the seas of jagged slippery stones greatly impeded my progress. The shyness of the birds, too, formed another difficulty, for the little songsters, which in our gardens and woods allow one to approach them quite confidingly, there fly with timorous haste into the thickest hiding-places, a fact that greatly increases the difficulty of making accurate observations, especially of the Warblers.

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Fringilla cælebs. Chaffinch.

When I arrived at Lacroma I found great flocks of these finches in the olive-yards and orchards of the island, and they remained until the end of March in larger or smaller numbers, just as they had happened to come in on migration. After that time I only saw solitary individuals; in April none at all.

Cannabina linota. Linnet.

The first flock was observed on Lacroma at the end of March; they kept to the bushy parts of the island. I subsequently met with more and more of them. I also found the Linnet everywhere on the mainland of Dalmatia and the Herzegovina, in the little fields, the gardens, and among the bushes and large stones up to a considerable height in the mountains.

Chrysomitris spinus. Siskin.

Seen on Lacroma from the beginning to the end of March in large flocks, but on the mainland rarely.

Carduelis elegans. Goldfinch.

Appeared towards the end of March in all suitable places both on the island and mainland, first in flocks and then singly.

Passer domesticus. Common Sparrow.

Very rare both on Lacroma and the mainland.

Passer montanus. Tree-Sparrow.

Somewhat commoner on the island and mainland. In the Herzegovina I saw a good many Sparrows among the most barren stony slopes of the high mountains, but they were unfortunately so shy that I could not quite make out what they

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were. I took them, however, for Italian Sparrows (*Passer italicus*).

LIGURINUS CHLORIS. Greenfinch.

In the middle of March small flocks appeared on Lacroma and joined the Chaffinches. In April I only saw scattered pairs.

EMBERIZA MILIARIA. Corn-Bunting.

On April 22nd I saw a great many about the meadows and fields along the shore of the great lake of Vrana, south of Zara.

EUSPIZA MELANOCEPHALA. Black-headed Bunting.

First observed at Lacroma in large flocks on March 14th. A few days later they were everywhere to be met with singly or in pairs among the gardens and olive-trees both of the mainland and the island. I saw at least two other species of Buntings among the bushes in the Herzegovina, but could not quite identify them.

SERINUS HORTULANUS. Serin Finch.

Appeared on the island in the middle of March. I saw rather large flocks for a few days, after which they entirely disappeared.

MELANOCORYPHA CALANDRA. Calandra Lark.

I observed this lark on April 23rd among the fields near Nona, a village on the sea-coast north of Zara. There it was very plentiful and had already paired.

CALANDRELLA BRACHYDACTYLA. Short-toed Lark.

Found on April 22nd and 23rd both north and south of Zara.

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Galerita cristata. Crested Lark.

One of the commonest roadside birds in Dalmatia, even high up in the mountains, and still more abundant in the Herzegovina. Apparently somewhat paler in plumage than the Crested Lark of Austria.

Corys arborea. Wood-Lark.

On March 13th, after a very stormy night, two very tired birds of this species remained on a little meadow in front of the castle at Lacroma. Next day they had vanished.

Alauda arvensis. Sky-Lark.

On March 13th a Sky-Lark appeared at the same place with the Wood-Larks. It was the only one that I saw during my stay in the south.

Oriolus galbula. Golden Oriole.

The first appeared in the pine-woods of Lacroma on March 16th; on the 17th there were a good many, and they were already beginning to whistle a little.

Pyrrhocorax alpinus. Alpine Chough.

On cool days during the end of March and the beginning of April I saw this bird in large flocks not far from the road between Ragusa and Trebinje, and on April 25th I found hundreds of them nesting together in the high cliffs along the river Cermanja, between Obrovazzo and the Mar di Novigrad.

Corvus corax. Raven.

Very common in Istria and Dalmatia, on the mainland as well as on the islands, and throughout the Herzegovina one of the most abundant birds. On March 31st two old Ravens with their three young ones came to a carcass that I had laid out for vultures not far from Trebinje. The young ones flew

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very clumsily and were instructed in the tearing of the carrion by blows from the beaks of their parents. On one occasion, when I had placed an Eagle-Owl upon a ruinous old Turkish "kula" near which I had also exposed a carcass, several Ravens came and for some minutes swooped down close to the Owl with loud croaks, but afterwards pitched on the ground and did not disturb themselves any further during their meal. For more than fourteen days I did not see a single Raven on Lacroma, but at last, after great quantities of kitchen scraps had been thrown into the sea near the castle, and some bones were lying about on the rocks, two of these birds appeared on the same day, and afterwards made repeated daily visits to the place.

Corvus corone. Hooded Crow.

Corvus frugilegus. Rook.

On stormy days during the middle of March large flocks of both these birds were seen passing over the island of Lacroma from south to north.

Corvus cornix. Carrion-Crow.

Observed in April round Mostar and in Northern Dalmatia, but nowhere in large numbers.

Monedula turrium. Jackdaw.

Only seen in the neighbourhood of Mostar, where it was nesting in the cliffs and circling round the minarets of the mosques.

Pica caudata. Magpie.

Only observed on the plains between Metkovič and Mostar.

Garrulus glandarius. Jay.

Often seen in the low oak-woods of the Herzegovina in March and April.

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FALCO SUBBUTEO. Hobby.

FALCO TANYPTERUS (*feldeggi*). Lanner.

During the month of March I observed several solitary specimens of both these birds in the pine-woods of Lacroma and along the coast.

FALCO TINNUNCULUS. Kestrel.

Single birds were seen in March and April on the cliffs of the Dalmatian coast, and one stooped to the Eagle-Owl when I was shooting in the Herzegovina.

FALCO CENCHRIS. Lesser Kestrel.

Common near towns and cliffs both in Southern Dalmatia and the Herzegovina, and very numerous among the rocks of the Istrian islands, and in the villages of Northern Dalmatia, particularly among ruins. Up to the middle of March there were but few Lesser Kestrels to be seen at Lacroma and its neighbourhood, and not until the end of that month and in April did they arrive in great numbers.

ASTUR PALUMBARIUS. Goshawk.

During the middle of March I observed one of these birds which for several consecutive days came and hunted through the island of Lacroma in all directions. In the latter part of this month it was no longer to be seen.

AQUILA FULVA. "Stein" Eagle.

On March 18th I saw a "Stein" Eagle fly across the Bocche di Cattaro, and in the Herzegovina I observed several. On April 15th one of these eagles, together with a raven, repeatedly swooped down close to our Eagle-Owl; and about the middle of March the head forester on the island of Meleda told me that a pair of them had been staying there for the

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past few weeks and had done a great deal of damage among the goats.

AQUILA NÆVIA. Lesser Spotted Eagle.

During March one of these birds often crossed from the mainland to Lacroma, and in April I also saw several in the Herzegovina.

PSEUDAËTUS BONELLII. Bonelli's Eagle.

I believe that I saw this eagle in the Herzegovina, but cannot be certain. I hear, however, from good authority that it is not very uncommon there.

HALIAËTUS ALBICILLA. Sea-Eagle.

On March 18th I saw a very old pale yellow bird with a white tail flying along the rocky coast not far from Antivari.

STRIGICEPS PALLIDUS. Pallid Harrier.

Often seen skimming over the low scrub and stony plains of the Herzegovina and Dalmatia in the middle of April. After the beginning of April five or six frequently came to Lacroma in stormy rainy weather, and cruised round the little hill at the north of the island.

CIRCUS RUFUS. Marsh-Harrier.

Often visited Lacroma in company with the Pallid Harrier. In April I observed some in the marshes of the Narenta, and at the Lago di Vrana and Nona in Northern Dalmatia.

CIRCAËTUS GALLICUS. Short-toed Eagle.

Observed during April near Trebinje in the Herzegovina.

BUTEO VULGARIS. Common Buzzard.

In March I sometimes saw this Buzzard on Lacroma and in April in the Herzegovina.

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GYPAËTUS BARBATUS. Bearded Vulture.

According to a trustworthy man, three Bearded Vultures were observed about the end of March at a carcass that I had laid out for large vultures in the neighbourhood of Trebinje. They circled round the spot repeatedly and then disappeared again. A few days before my arrival a specimen was killed at Mostar, not far from the town.

NEOPHRON PERCNOPTERUS. Egyptian Vulture.

On March 31st I observed one of these birds between Ragusa and Trebinje, not far from the frontier of Dalmatia and the Herzegovina. A few days later my brother-in-law killed one at a carcass where a pair had settled at the same time. In April I saw some near Trebinje. When I placed the Eagle-Owl near the carrion these vultures stooped at it furiously, but after a few attacks flapped down to the ground and began their repast. On April 24th I saw one in Northern Dalmatia on the rocky banks of the Cermanja, and on the same day two more among the high cliffs in the narrow passage from the Mar di Novigrad into the Mar di Karin.

GYPS FULVUS. Griffon Vulture.

Along the road between the Dalmatian frontier and Trebinje we everywhere saw Griffon Vultures sailing about. They did not always come to the carrion that I laid out, but generally only flew round the place. On March 31st, however, great numbers of these vultures assembled for a feast from seven in the morning until two in the afternoon, and a whole horse disappeared into their hungry stomachs in a single day. On April 15th we exposed a sheep at another spot near a Turkish "kula," upon which we set the Eagle-Owl. A "Stein" Eagle and a Raven stooped at the Owl, while at the same moment a Griffon Vulture, an Egyptian Vulture, and another Raven settled upon the carcass. On the 18th several vultures

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came to the same place, and, disdaining the sheep, stooped furiously at the Owl.

In the neighbourhood of Mostar I also saw plenty of them, and also one at Sebenico in Dalmatia. On a small rocky island in the Gulf of Fiume a whole colony of birds were nesting on a low cliff that descended to the sea—Rock-Doves, Kestrels, and Griffon Vultures living together in friendly companionship. They were within easy range, and the latter were so tame that even repeated shots did not frighten them from the place, and those that were missed sat quietly on, awaiting a second deadly discharge. These birds could only be got from a boat, and after I had on the evening of April 25th killed three fine old specimens in a few minutes, and taken a couple of almost fully-fledged young ones from the nests, I left this interesting island. The people told me that in winter great numbers of vultures habitually roost both there and in the adjacent islands, even on days when the Bora is blowing.

VULTUR CINEREUS. Cinereous Vulture.

I saw a few round Trebinje, and on one occasion a good many appear to have settled on a carcass. At Mostar I noticed many more of them.

ATHENE NOCTUA. Little Owl.

At Carina, between Ragusa and Trebinje, I often saw one of these birds sitting among some large stones, and always at the same place.

OTUS BRACHYOTUS. Short-eared Owl.

Two appeared in the pine-woods of Lacroma on the morning of March 28th.

STRIX FLAMMEA. Barn-Owl.

Once seen on Lacroma in March.

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HIRUNDO RUSTICA. Swallow.

First seen on March 29th at Ragusa. A few days later some pairs took up their residence at Lacroma. In Southern Dalmatia I found remarkably few Swallows, but in the Herzegovina and Northern Dalmatia they were much more abundant.

CHELIDON URBICA. Martin.

I saw the first in the Herzegovina during the beginning of April. In Dalmatia I found them almost quite solitary in the south, somewhat commoner in the north, but even there they were not numerous.

COTYLE RIPARIA. Sand-Martin.

During the first days of April flocks of Sand-Martins visited a cave on the shore of the island of Lacroma. On April 20th and 21st I saw a few on the rivers Cettina and Kerka in Northern Dalmatia. I was also informed by a trustworthy observer that some of these birds had passed the winter in a cave near Ragusa.

CYPSELUS APUS. Swift.

On March 29th I saw a few on the walls of the old fortifications at Ragusa ; on the following days large flocks ; but later only some stray pairs that flew about the cliffs of Lacroma in the morning and evening. In the Herzegovina and Dalmatia I everywhere met with Swifts, but nowhere in large numbers.

CYPSELUS MELBA. Alpine Swift.

First observed on the walls of Ragusa on March 29th. On the following days they came in great numbers and there remained. In the middle of April a colony of at least twenty pairs took up their quarters in a cave on the shore of Lacroma.

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In the beginning of April I saw a great many flying about Trebinje, but never met with them either in the neighbourhood of Mostar or in Northern Dalmatia.

LANIUS COLLURIO. Red-backed Shrike.

On April 13th I observed a Red-backed Shrike sitting on a thorn-bush between Ragusa and Carina, but neither before nor afterwards did I see another bird of this species.

LANIUS RUFUS. Woodchat Shrike.

On April 17th I saw a pair among the olive-trees on Lacroma, and they remained for the next few days.

MUSCICAPA ATRICAPILLA. Pied Flycatcher.

On April 19th I saw some on Lacroma.

MUSCICAPA ALBICOLLIS. White-collared Flycatcher.

On April 17th I met with the first pairs on Lacroma.

LUSCINIA PHILOMELA. Nightingale.

On April 1st we heard the earliest of these birds warbling in the bushes and low oak-woods between the frontier and Trebinje, and afterwards in all suitable localities both in the Herzegovina and Dalmatia.

ERITHACUS RUBECULA. Robin.

Very common in suitable localities on Lacroma and the mainland both in March and April.

PRATINCOLA RUBETRA. Whinchat.

On March 10th I saw one in a little vineyard on Lacroma, but after that no more until the middle of April, when whole flocks appeared in the island, but generally stayed but a short time. In Northern Dalmatia I only noticed solitary individuals.

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PRATINCOLA RUBICOLA. Stonechat.

Seen travelling in company with the preceding species after the middle of April, and found scattered through Northern Dalmatia at the end of that month.

SAXICOLA ŒNANTHE. Wheatear.

In Lacroma I observed the Wheatear almost daily from March 10th up to the time of my departure on April 19th. After storms there were whole flocks of them; in fine weather they were less abundant, and on the mainland much rarer.

SAXICOLA ISABELLINA. Isabelline Chat.

I saw solitary birds of this species at Lacroma in the beginning of April, and later on observed it almost daily in larger or smaller numbers. On the mainland between Ragusa and Trebinje I saw a great many, all paired.

MONTICOLA SAXATILIS. Rock-Thrush.

Two were seen on April 13th in the mountains between Ragusa and Trebinje; after that often on the mainland, but always at the same spots and in small numbers.

MONTICOLA CYANEA. Blue Rock-Thrush.

I saw the first bird of this species on the walls of Ragusa in the latter part of March, and soon afterwards observed a pair on the cliffs of Lacroma. During April fresh couples kept taking up their residence both on the island and the mainland, and were already in full song. North of Ragusa I only found them at an old monastery on the island of Meleda.

TURDUS MUSICUS. Song-Thrush.

On March 10th, and for several days afterwards, I saw flocks of these birds at Lacroma, but later on only scattered individuals.

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TURDUS ILIACUS. Redwing.

Seen at Lacroma on and after March 10th in flocks, together with the preceding species. Not observed afterwards.

TURDUS MERULA. Blackbird.

On March 10th I saw a good many at Lacroma; later on very few, and in April none, except in the brushwood of the Herzegovinian mountains, where I still met with them here and there.

CURRUCA NISORIA. Barred Warbler.

On the morning of April 17th I found several on Lacroma.

CURRUCA CINEREA. Whitethroat.

On April 17th I saw a few pairs on the island of Lacroma, and both there and in the Herzegovina I observed at least five other species of Warblers; but the impenetrable nature of the thickets and the dense character of the high pines, as well as the restless movements of these little songsters, made their identification almost impossible.

ACROCEPHALUS TURDOIDES. Great Reed-Warbler.

CALAMODUS PHRAGMITIS. Sedge-Warbler.

I both saw and heard these two species by the rivers of Northern Dalmatia and in the marshes of the Lago di Vrana.

ANTHUS PRATENSIS. Meadow-Pipit.

ANTHUS CAMPESTRIS. Tawny Pipit.

At the end of March I saw occasional birds of both species in Lacroma and on the few grassy spots that are to be found near the water-tanks in the Herzegovina.

ANTHUS ARBOREUS. Tree-Pipit.

On April 17th I met with several in Lacroma.

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MOTACILLA ALBA. White Wagtail.

On April 20th a few were seen on the banks of the river Cettina in the north of Dalmatia.

BUDYTES MELANOCEPHALUS. Black-headed Wagtail.

Seen in great numbers on April 22nd and 23rd on the fringes of the marshes of the Lago di Vrana and the lagoons at Nona in the north of Dalmatia.

PARUS MAJOR. Great Tit.

PARUS CÆRULEUS. Blue Tit.

I frequently observed solitary individuals of both species at Lacroma in the end of March.

UPUPA EPOPS. Hoopoe.

The first Hoopoe which I saw at Lacroma, on March 14th, seemed to be very tired with a long journey and could hardly fly. Up to March 28th I observed no more, but after that date they were daily to be seen in larger or smaller numbers, and were most abundant on April 16th and 17th. On the mainland I did not come across a single individual.

SITTA NEUMAYERI. Syrian Nuthatch.

After the beginning of April I often observed a few pairs of this remarkable Nuthatch high up in the almost barren mountains on the road between Ragusa and Trebinje. They clambered about the rocks, and sometimes sat resting on the tops of the stones, uttering a low song-like twittering.

TICHODROMA MURARIA. Wall-Creeper.

On March 17th I observed one creeping about the ramparts of Ragusa. It was the only bird of this species that I saw.

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MEROPS APIASTER. Bee-eater.

On April 10th a large flock flew round the island of Lacroma without settling. On the same day one of these birds dropped on to a steamer off the Albanian coast in a perfectly exhausted condition, and was given to me by the captain on his arrival at Ragusa. I also received another specimen killed in the park of Gravosa. On April 13th a Bee-eater settled on a pine-tree in Lacroma, and on the 18th there were several of them about the island.

CORACIAS GARRULA. Common Roller.

On April 16th I saw one at Lacroma in the middle of the day; an hour later there were more of them; but on the 17th I only observed a single bird.

CUCULUS CANORUS. Cuckoo.

On April 17th I saw a Cuckoo at Lacroma, and another at Nona in the north of Dalmatia on April 23rd.

PALUMBUS TORQUATUS. Wood-Pigeon.

On April 6th I saw one in a pine-wood at Lacroma, and another on April 24th among the perfectly bare cliffs between the Mar di Novigrad and the Mar di Karin.

COLUMBA LIVIA. Rock-Dove.

Everywhere seen in the rocky barren mountains near Trebinje, both in pairs and flocks, but still commoner on the Istrian islands and among the cliffs of Northern Dalmatia, which abound in caves.

TURTUR AURITUS. Turtle-Dove.

On April 23rd I saw three in a field in the north of Dalmatia.

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Streptopelia nisoria. Collared Turtle-Dove.

Seen on the roofs and in the gardens of Mostar.

Caccabis saxatilis. Greek Partridge.

Distributed in tolerable abundance throughout Dalmatia in all suitable localities. In the Herzegovina it is even very plentiful, the strongly enforced game-laws and the disarmament of the population having caused a sudden increase in the numbers of this bird. During April in the neighbourhood of Trébinje I often heard, for hours together, the loud cry that the cocks make when drumming.

Coturnix communis. Quail.

Quails were often observed in Lacroma from the 10th to the end of March. I afterwards found no more until April 17th, when I again met with a single bird in a little field of oats in that island. In the neighbourhood of Trebinje the flight of Quail is often so large that very good shooting may be had.

Œdicnemus crepitans. Stone-Curlew.

On April 24th I saw a pair at a stony place on the shore of the Mar di Karin in Northern Dalmatia.

Vanellus cristatus. Lapwing.

From the 6th to the 10th of March, during cold stormy weather, I saw several flocks flying along the coast of Dalmatia in a northerly direction, and towards the end of the month I occasionally noticed solitary birds winging their way high above Lacroma.

Hæmatopus ostralegus. Oyster-catcher.

On April 4th I saw and killed one of these rare visitors to this district on the rocky coast of the little peninsula of Lapat between Ragusa and Gravosa.

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SCOLOPAX RUSTICOLA. Woodcock.

From the 11th to the end of March I often saw Woodcock in Lacroma; but whether there were few or many of them I cannot say, for the impassable thorny scrub makes it difficult to put them up even with dogs; and the Woodcock, when on its travels and tired, flies very little of its own accord.

I also saw flocks of both Plovers and Sandpipers passing over Lacroma towards the north on the 10th of March. At the end of the month I observed them singly and in pairs at the rocks of Lacroma, and in April on the marshes and lagoons of the Narenta, the Mar di Novigrad, the Lago di Vrana, and the banks of the rivers in the north of Dalmatia.

I could make out at least five or six kinds of larger or smaller species, but they were always at such a distance either from the steamer or the boat that it was impossible to identify them accurately.

RECURVIROSTRA AVOCETTA. Avocet.

On March 30th a few were seen flying past Lacroma, from south to north, during rainy windy weather.

NUMENIUS ARQUATUS. Curlew.

On April 9th I saw some on a marshy bit of fallow ground on the bank of the Narenta.

CICONIA ALBA. White Stork.

In the beginning of April I saw single Storks flying at a great height between Ragusa and Trebinje.

ARDEA CINEREA. Grey Heron.

From March 11th to the beginning of April I often saw Grey Herons passing over Lacroma without stopping, singly and even in flocks of six or seven. On March 18th I also

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observed some at Fort Opus, and on April 9th there were many of them on the dunes in front of the lagoons at the mouth of the Narenta and on the marshes along the banks of the river. These birds were also frequently to be seen on the Dalmatian islands, and I noticed one standing on a cliff bordering the river Cermanja in the north of Dalmatia.

HERODIAS GARZETTA. Little Egret.

Early on the morning of April 10th six Little Egrets pitched upon a rock on the shore of Lacroma during a strong gale of wind ; and in April single individuals frequently came and stayed on the island for a short time. I also saw them in the marshes of the Narenta and of the Lago di Vrana.

NYCTICORAX EUROPÆUS. Night-Heron.

In March one hears almost every morning and evening the cries of the Night-Herons as they fly over Lacroma.

ARDEA RALLOIDES. Squacco Heron.

On April 4th two were seen sitting on a rock by the shore of Lacroma, and on the 22nd I observed some flying from the marshes of the Lago di Vrana to feed on the grazing-grounds of the horses and cattle.

ARDEA PURPUREA. Purple Heron.

On the morning of April 6th a couple pitched in the pine-woods of Lacroma and there spent the day. Next day several came, all of which selected the same resting-place—a clump of tall thick pines at the southern extremity of the island. On April 12th more than twenty alighted together, while other large flocks passed high over it without settling. I also met with the Purple Heron on the river Cermanja and at the Lago di Vrana.

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FULICA ATRA. Coot.

On April 22nd I saw a good many at the Lago di Vrana.

CYGNUS OLOR. Mute Swan.

Some of these Swans nest every year in a large swamp above Melkovič. On the Lago di Vrana, Swans only appear in winter; but whether they are the present species or the Whooper (*C. musicus*) I was not able to discover.

ANAS BOSCHAS. Mallard.

I saw a few pairs on the Lago di Vrana on April 22nd.

ANAS QUERQUEDULA. Garganey Teal.

ANAS CRECCA. Common Teal.

Both species were seen in large flocks on the Lago di Vrana, and also on the sea near Lacroma, at the end of March and the beginning of April.

On April 23rd I saw in a lagoon at Nona, in the north of Dalmatia, some larger ducks. They were a long way off, but I fancy they must have been Pochards (*Aythya ferina*). At the end of March I often saw from Lacroma tolerably large flocks of ducks alternately flying and swimming, and these I took to be Ruddy Sheld-Ducks (*Casarca rutila*).

SYLOCHELIDON CASPIA. Caspian Tern.

On March 18th I saw a good many in the Bocche di Cattaro.

STERNA HIRUNDO. Common Tern.

STERNULA MINUTA. Little Tern.

Both birds were often seen on the Dalmatian waters, and

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early on April 22nd I observed a great assemblage of the latter species resting on a rock at the entrance into the harbour of Sebenico.

LARUS MARINUS. Great Black-backed Gull.

From the 14th to the 18th of April I often observed one or two between Ragusa and Lacroma.

LARUS MICHAHELLESI. Yellow-legged Herring-Gull.

From the 6th of March to the 26th of April I everywhere saw great numbers of this Mediterranean form of the Herring-Gull in the Istrian and Dalmatian waters. On the rivers in the north of the latter country it wanders many miles up into the mountains.

LARUS FUSCUS. Lesser Black-backed Gull.

Everywhere to be met with in the same district as the preceding species, but not so abundantly, nor did I ever know it to leave the open sea and the harbours to fly into the interior of the country.

LARUS RIDIBUNDUS. Black-headed Gull.

In the Dalmatian waters I everywhere saw great numbers in March and April.

PUFFINUS ANGLORUM. Manx Shearwater.

First observed at the entrance to the Mar di Novigrad on April 24th.

PHALACROCORAX CARBO. Common Cormorant.

On March 12th a single bird was seen on the coast at Lacroma. On April 23rd I observed several near the little islands between Zara and Nona.

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GRACULUS CRISTATUS. Shag.

At the beginning of March I observed a good many between Istria and the north of Dalmatia. In the south of Dalmatia I saw none at all, and in the north of that country only a few. It was, however, commoner on the shores of the islands of Pago, Veglia, and Cherso, and abundant in the Gulf of Fiume.

GRACULUS PYGMÆUS. Pygmy Cormorant.

Only observed in the lagoons at Nona and near the Mar di Novigrad in the north of Dalmatia.

PELECANUS ONOCROTALUS. Roseate Pelican.

On April 9th I was informed that the first of the Pelicans had returned from their winter travels, and were to be seen on the lagoons at the mouth of the Narenta. Their breeding-place is in a marsh not far from Melkovič. They are also not uncommon visitors on the Lago di Vrana near Zara, but do not appear to nest there.

Both in the north of Dalmatia and at the mouth of the Narenta a medium-sized Diver was tolerably common near the coast. Unfortunately I never managed to get close to it, but I took it to be the Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisei-gena*).

This concludes the list of identified birds that fell within the range of my observation, and I may now perhaps be permitted to add a few remarks on the migration of the birds of passage.

The position of Lacroma makes it a really excellent post of observation, for a great many of the migrants rest on the island for a short time; and one fact that I can record is, that strong southerly gales always brought with them many individuals and a great variety of species, both of the birds

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which pass northwards early in the middle of March and of those which travel later. In fine warm weather, when the gentle north-west wind of this district was blowing, the island was generally quite poor in birds, for the number of those that reside on it is remarkably small.

Many species travel by day, for I saw birds come flying up from the sea, and a few hours later they had disappeared, while others remained for a day or two. Those that passed all kept the line along the coast—that is, almost due north. There were certain days upon which only one kind seemed to travel, others when several species appeared together, and all in large numbers. The 16th and 17th of April were among the very best of these days, and then the island was perfectly alive with the multitudes of birds that had arrived.

In Dalmatia the line of migration runs from island to island, for while Lacroma was all astir with the coming and going visitors the mainland was almost devoid of them.

These short notes, although they cannot claim to be regarded as exhaustive, may possibly serve to awaken an interest in this the most southern country of the monarchy, which even in ornithological respects offers so much that is worthy of attention.

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