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I.—*Cruise of the 'Zara,' R. Y. S., in the Mediterranean.*

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It is so long since I have written any thing for this Journal, that I fear that many Members of the B.O.U., more especially those lately elected, may consider that the President is a myth, who never appears at the Annual Meetings, and merely exists as a sort of conventional fiction. I resume the pen, then, partly to assure such Ibises that I have a real existence, and, though latterly prevented by illness from attending the Annual Meetings of our Society, that my interest in the said Society is in no way diminished, and my ardour for ornithology very much augmented. I hope I may be forgiven for saying this much entirely about myself; but I really feel that, before recording the few following facts, some kind of introduction is becoming, although not strictly necessary, on my part. Since I last wrote in this Journal, I have visited Spain, the country of my predilection, three times; but although, on two of these occasions, I had fair ornithological success in Andalucia, that district has been so much more thoroughly explored by my friend Colonel Irby, to whose

accurate powers of observation and ardour in the cause European ornithologists must ever be greatly indebted, and so much has been written by another of our fraternity, Mr. Howard Saunders, that I hardly considered myself justified in asking for space in 'The Ibis' to record things of Spain. I may, however, mention that during one of the above-mentioned visits to Spain I had the satisfaction of discovering an undescribed species of bird, viz. *Calandrella bætica*, Dresser, 'Birds of Europe,' and of thoroughly investigating the breeding-habits of the Spanish Imperial Eagle (*Aquila adalberti*), recently specifically separated from the Eastern species (*Aquila mogilnik*). I may add that there is still plenty of ground in old Spain for enterprising naturalists; and let us hope that when a Spanish monarch is once more on the throne of that glorious but unhappy country, and things become more settled therein, some of our increasing flock of Ibises may migrate thither, and reap a rich harvest. This may be a thing of "mañana;" but, as the natives say, "Ojala Dios!" It is my purpose in this paper to relate my principal ornithological observations during a yacht-cruise in the Mediterranean, extending from the end of December 1873, till the end of June 1874, and to show how much may be done comparatively near home even by a naturalist so incapacitated by lameness as myself.

I despatched my yacht, the 'Zara,' R. Y. S., from England for Toulon about the end of October 1873; and we started from England, *viâ* France, about the middle of the following month to join her at the latter place. After being detained by gales of wind at the North Foreland, taking in stores at Plymouth, and being again driven back and detained at Falmouth for more than a week by a furious south-wester, she reached Gibraltar November 16th, after an eight days' run from Falmouth, and was detained at Gibraltar for three days by that curse of "the Rock," a furious "levanter." After encountering very bad weather and calms, and being obliged to take shelter in Port Mahon for nearly a fortnight, she eventually reached Toulon, where the authorities kindly put her in quarantine for three days because the Captain had not

obtained a *visa* of the French Consul at Port Mahon, for the good reason that after diligent researches he had been unable to find, or hear of, any such functionary at that port. The yacht had lost some copper; and I was obliged to put her into dry dock for repairs, having to go through innumerable useless ceremonies, and visit innumerable bureaux before I could get any thing done. It appears incredible, but I had no less than sixteen official documents to sign and deliver at some twelve different bureaux before the dockyard authorities would oblige me by accepting the money due for hire of dry dock and work upon the vessel.

I need hardly say that on our way through France, and at Toulon, I had seen hardly any thing worthy of remark, ornithologically speaking—an Eagle Owl hanging up in a poulterer's shop at Marseilles (which I was informed was not “une pièce de gibier, mais pour les amateurs”), some young Blue Rock-Thrushes alive, and various species of Ducks, some Woodcocks, Snipes, and Godwits in the market. A locality more entirely destitute of birds than the environs of Toulon I never saw. With the exception of a considerable number of Gulls (*Larus leucophæus*, *L. melanocephalus*, *L. ridibundus*, and *L. canus*), I literally hardly saw any bird but a few Sparrows, all here *P. domesticus*, a solitary Kingfisher, and a pair of Wall-creepers (*Tichodroma muraria*), in the gorge of Ollioule, some miles from the town. Notwithstanding this absence of feathered fowl, I, wishing to be entirely “en règle,” spent three days in procuring a “permis de chasse,” being sent from Consul to Mayor, from Mayor to Préfet, and from Préfet—I was going to say, about my business; but my business was a “permis,” and Monsieur le Préfet, or Sous-Préfet, sent me away, and said the official forms could not be officially ready before to-morrow. We talk of Spanish procrastination; but with good temper and courtesy, and an occasional cigar, a Spanish official will be ready (he is too much of an Arab to be anxious) to oblige a stranger. In Spain there is no system; and in unhappy France system is the curse of the country, and the result is, an amount of petty official swagger, and a swarm of bureaux, especially provoking to an English-

man, who is generally in a hurry, and cannot understand why he cannot have any article that he is ready to pay for there and then. Having, as I say, after three days of perfectly unnecessary driving from pillar to post, obtained the precious document, and thinking I might perhaps get a Gull or two in the harbour, I took a boat, and stood away for the extreme west corner of the fine bay to a spot where my boatman informed me we should find many ducks, and perhaps get a shot. The Gulls, though swarming in the small inner harbour, where shooting is not allowed, took such good care of themselves out in the bay, that I could not get a shot; the ducks were of course a myth; and the only birds I saw were the Kingfisher mentioned above, and a few Crossbills in a pine-wood, which also perfectly understood the meaning of a gun. I think my old boatman, an old man-of-war's man, who had been a prisoner in England during Napoleon's war with us, wished to revenge his wrongs; for not content with taking me, as a representative of "la perfide Albion," in pursuit of imaginary ducks, he further persuaded me to fish in a blazing sun and thirty fathoms of water, for a whole day, the sole result being the capture of a few very small "bogues" (a perfectly worthless fish) and a sharp attack of rheumatic gout, brought on by the sudden piercing chill at sunset after the great heat of the day. Experience is invaluable; but I certainly, on this occasion, paid a high price in learning that sport, in the south of France at all events, is a delusion and a snare, and that the inhabitants are, as a rule, wholly untrustworthy. I was laid up for three weeks, fortunately in a good hotel, and well attended by our Doctor, Mr. Sidney Morris, who accompanied us through the cruise, and to whose activity and eagerness for *la chasse* I am indebted for many of my specimens. Being just able to move, I went on board the yacht on 26th of December, and sailed the following day for Cannes. The coast is exceedingly beautiful; and the weather was fine. We lay one night in the roads of Hyères. On these islands there really is some shooting, as they are preserved; and I hear (from an Englishman) that there are a fair number of Partridges and rabbits, and occasionally con-

siderable flights of Woodcocks and wildfowl. There is a great breeding-place of Gulls on la Gabinera, a rocky islet south of the middle island : but I was not in a condition for exploration ; so we sailed again for Cannes on the 29th, and, with light head-winds and calms, arrived there at 9 P.M. the same day, seeing no birds on our way but a few Gulls and two or three Shearwaters. At Cannes we remained three zoologically profitless weeks, and I had a return of my malady, which prevented my ever getting ashore ; but we found many friends amongst the large and steadily increasing English colony there, whose attention and kindness made the time pass quickly. My yacht-steward, who had passed many years collecting and preserving objects of natural history in Australia, and is a good hand at the business, brought me off various birds from the market, amongst others, *Turdus torquatus*, *Coccothraustes vulgaris*, *Caccabis rufa*, *Caccabis petrosa* (from Sardinia), *Anas clypeata*, *A. crecca*, *A. acuta*, *Mareca penelope*, *Fuligula ferina*, *Mergus merganser*, and *Scolopax rusticola*. A friend whom we found there, a Highlander, and devoted to the gun, told me that amongst the pine-clad hills which surround Cannes, he had in about two months' constant rambles met with two Woodcocks, four Partridges, an Owl, and many foxes ; so I cannot recommend Cannes as a shooting-locality. The climate is certainly fine ; but in all this part of the Mediterranean coast the sudden piercing cold at sunset is especially to be guarded against, and must, I think, be prejudicial to the class of invalids who principally resort thither. The Russians and our Transatlantic cousins have monopolized Nice, the climate of which place, *pace* the faculty, is in my opinion simply abominable ; and our country people have gone to the eastward, and are establishing themselves along the lovely Riviera from Mentone to Savona, where the climate in winter really is fine, and the country interesting and comparatively little known. I speak from experience, having passed some nine months in this part of Europe, and sailed, walked, ridden, driven, and steamed along and almost all over it. I found that, while to the westward of the Maritime Alps the peasantry are boorish,

uncivil, and rapacious, to the eastward of that chain they are simple-minded, lively, honest, and obliging; but no doubt increasing civilization and the influx of foreigners will soon change all this, and a travelling Englishman will be considered, as in other places, a sort of mint which issues good coin without getting any thing in return but fine air and such amusement as his own resources may provide for him. We left Cannes January 19th, with beautiful weather; but we had no wind, and for four days just crept along the coast, which is so exceedingly beautiful that we could hardly regret the delay, as we were not pressed for time, and the deck of a good yacht in fine weather furnishes perhaps as pleasant a lounge for a convalescent as can well be imagined. At length, on the morning of Jan. 22, we got a fair breeze, and arrived at Genoa about 9 A.M. I had not visited this beautiful city for many years, and was now prevented from going ashore much by my lameness. I had the pleasure, however, of making the acquaintance of the Marchese Giacomo Doria, a hardworking and accurate naturalist, and an excellent good fellow, who was kind enough to do me the honours of his new Museo Civico on the Acquasola, to present me with various scarce reptiles in spirits, and to furnish me with a great deal of valuable information on all my favourite branches of zoology. The chief treasures of the European ornithological collection in the above-mentioned Museum are the following—a fine specimen of *Falco eleanoræ*, killed near Genoa, many rare Buntings (e. g. *Emberiza pityornis*, *E. aureola*, *E. pusilla*, *E. lesbia*, *E. cæsia*), *Turdus fuscatus*, *Merops persicus*, *Erythrosterna parva*, *Actiturus bartramius*, *Francolinus vulgaris*, and, last (though not least), that great prize of the Mediterranean *Larus audouini*. With the exception of the Francolin, all these birds were obtained in Liguria, most of them in the immediate neighbourhood of Genoa; and more beautifully mounted specimens could hardly be. The *Larus audouini* was killed near Savona, and is in winter plumage; there is, I believe, another specimen in the University Museum of Genoa, also obtained in the neighbourhood. The Francolin was obtained by Doria from Sicily, some four or

five years ago, already stuffed ; and though he (Doria) showed it to me in a rather triumphant manner, as a proof that my theory of the extinction of the species was incorrect, I can hardly admit it as such proof, as he knew nothing of the date of its capture. I may here mention, on this favourite subject, that in leaving England I had proposed to visit the island of Cyprus, expressly to see the Francolins in their native haunts ; but I was prevented from so doing by a variety of causes ; and about the birds in Europe, properly so called, I have hardly any thing to add to what has already appeared in this Journal from the pen of my friend Mr. Howard Saunders. Salvadori, in his most interesting work on the ornithological fauna of Italy, which was presented to me by the Marchese Doria, says, it seems to him that Mr. Saunders and I were premature in proclaiming the extinction of the species in Sicily ; and I am perfectly willing and very glad to admit that this is the case, as will be seen from Mr. Saunders's papers above mentioned ; but from all that I could learn subsequently in Sicily, not a single specimen has fallen into the hands of any naturalist since 1869 ; and, for many years before that, the occasional rare occurrence of a solitary individual in the old haunts of the species only went to prove that, although strictly speaking not completely extinct, the species was rapidly becoming so ; and in spite of the diligent personal researches of more than one competent naturalist, one could never depend on shooting, or seeing, a Francolin, or even hearing its sonorous cry in its favourite localities, for at all events twenty years past. In the harbour of Genoa were great numbers of *Larus leucophæus*, *L. ridibundus*, *L. melanocephalus*, and some few of *Larus canus*. I did not see *Larus fuscus* in adult plumage ; but amongst the many brown-feathered gulls at Genoa I have little doubt that it existed. It is not an uncommon bird in the western portion of the Mediterranean ; but immature specimens are more frequently met with than the adults. In the gardens of the Museo Civico at Genoa, Doria showed me an Eagle alive, which I have no doubt was *Aquila rapax* ; but the locality whence it came was unfortunately not known. The Museo will soon

be, under the able care of the Marchese, one of the best-arranged museums of zoology in the world; and I am sure that all English naturalists will wish god-speed to an institution so thoroughly well managed, so competently governed, and so delightfully situated as this. I was rather surprised to find our English Grey Partridge (*Perdix cinerea*) pretty abundant in the market, as, although tolerably common in some parts of the plains and lower hills of northern Italy, I had always thought that it avoided Liguria, in which province I never met with it in my former shooting-rambles. I may perhaps be allowed to say a few words here on the distribution of the four European species of Partridge, which is certainly curious, and, I think, not much understood. The Common Redleg (*Caccabis rufa*) is the Partridge of Spain from Irun to Tarifa, and from Lisbon to Barcelona. The Barbary Partridge (*Caccabis petrosa*) is found in that country on the Rock of Gibraltar only, no doubt introduced by man from the opposite coast; this species seems never to quit the Rock, where it is well protected. Within a few miles *Caccabis rufa* is tolerably abundant, but (I speak under correction) is never seen on the Rock itself. Throughout the Barbary States of the Mediterranean *C. petrosa* is the common and, I think, the only true Partridge.

To return to Spain, the Grey Partridge is pretty common in some of the north-western provinces, notably in those of Leon and Asturias. I met with it sparingly in the Pyrenees of Aragon, and have been informed of its occurrence as far south as Murcia. There is a tradition of the former existence of *C. petrosa* in that province, in the neighbourhood of Cartagena; but it has now disappeared there, more *Francolinorum* in Sicily.

As I have before stated in this Journal, I have never been able to meet with *C. saxatilis* alive or dead in Spain; and, as far as I know, there is no tradition of its existence in that country, though it is not uncommon in some parts of Southern France. In the latter country *Caccabis rubra* and *Perdix cinerea* are the prevailing species, whilst *Caccabis saxatilis* (the Bartavelle) is tolerably common in many places suitable

to its habits, especially the Jura, the Hautes Pyrénées, and the Alpes Maritimes. I do not think it can be called common; in fact no game bird is common in France, except where strictly and artificially preserved; but I found a fair number of these Bartavelles for sale in the Paris poulterers' shops in November, which I was informed came principally from the South. In Switzerland the Bartavelle is found sparingly in the mountains; and I think that the frontiers of that Republic and the State of Baden are about the limit of its northern range. I believe (but here I speak under correction) that the present species is met with throughout the mountains of Southern Germany, the Tyrol, and Styria. I have specimens from the latter province. I am not aware that it is found in the Carpathians, though it is probable that it exists in the eastern portion of that chain. *Perdix cinerea* is the Partridge of Germany, generally speaking; I do not know that *Caccabis rufa* is indigenous in any part of that country, though it has spread into Belgium and some portions of the Netherlands. Returning to Italy, we find *C. saxatilis* more or less common throughout the Alps and Apennines, becoming more common as we go southwards. *C. rufa* is found also in many parts of Italy, notably in Tuscany, but decidedly becomes scarce in the southern provinces. I never met with a specimen in the markets of Naples. *Perdix cinerea* is found in the plains throughout Italy. In the islands of the W. Mediterranean *C. rufa* is found in the Balearics, where it is the only species of the family, as I believe is the case in Corsica and Elba. In Sardinia *C. petrosa* is the only species found, whilst in Sicily, in spite of the assertion of Monsieur Malherbe, no Partridge but *C. saxatilis* is indigenous; and I am not aware of the introduction of any other species into that island. In the Ionian Islands, Styria, Dalmatia and throughout European Turkey, *C. saxatilis* (sive *græca*), and *Perdix cinerea* are, I believe, the only species; and I think I am correct in stating that the latter is the Partridge of the Danubian principalities. In European Russia, as far as I can find out, no species of *Caccabis* is found, whilst, on the other hand, *Perdix cinerea* is in some places very abundant.

Pallas, in his 'Zoographia Rosso-Asiatica,' tome ii. p. 79, appears to have considered the three species of *Caccabis* as only local races, of which three, I suspect, *Caccabis græca* was his typical form, as in his short diagnosis he does not mention either the black spots below the collar of *C. rufa*, or the chestnut colour and white spots of *C. petrosa*. But I must return to the yacht, and can only hope that this long digression about my favourite game birds may be pardoned, and perhaps be of service to some brother ornithologists or sportsmen desiring of making acquaintance with the foreign members of this interesting and, generally speaking, estimable family.

We left Genoa January 30, and with light airs of wind got into the splendid Bay of Spezia early in the afternoon of the next day. We remained there, enjoying the matchless beauty of the scenery, with fine weather, till February 3, when we sailed for Leghorn. Great numbers of Gulls, principally *L. ridibundus* and *L. melanocephalus*, frequent the Bay of Spezia, with some *L. leucophæus*, a few *L. canus*; and I also distinctly made out one *Rissa tridactyla*, which, as far as my observation goes, is by no means a common bird on the Mediterranean coasts. We got into Leghorn about daylight, February 4, and immediately drove off to Pisa, some ten or twelve miles. On the way I noticed the following species of birds—*Falco tinnunculus*, *Corvus frugilegus*, *Passer italiæ*, *Fringilla chloris*, *F. carduelis*, *F. cælebs*, *Motacilla alba*, *Anthus*?, *Galerita cristata*, *Columba ænas*, and an *Ardea*, at a great distance, which looked very white in the bright sunlight, but may have been *A. cinerea*.

At Pisa I had, unfortunately, no time to visit the Museum, but, amidst the many attractions of that beautiful city, did not forget to pay my humble tribute of respect at the tomb of Paoli Savi, in the Campo Santo. We left Leghorn the next morning at daylight for Naples, with a very light northerly wind, which carried us about six miles on our course, and left us becalmed till about 1 p.m., when a delightful breeze crept up to us from N.N.W., and we span along at from seven to eleven knots till about 10 a.m., February 6, when it fell calm

again till 1 P.M., when we got the same breeze till midnight; it then left us rolling in a calm, with a very heavy swell off the westernmost point of the island of Ischia. With occasional light puffs of wind we crept into the port of Naples about 4 P.M., February 7. Except the Gulls above mentioned, the only birds seen during this run were two flocks of some small species of *Tringa* coming from the westward, some fifteen miles from the Italian coast, many Shearwaters (*Puffinus kuhli* and *P. yelkouan*), and one Razor-bill (*Alca torda*). Just south of Ischia we saw a very large Seal, and a large Cetacean, probably a Thrasher, which for a long time kept lashing the water with its tail, making the spray fly to a great height with a report like the discharge of a small field-gun.

We remained at Naples till March 4, being detained by the loss of our rudder in a sudden furious squall of wind, which caused the yacht to drag her anchor and go stern on to the Mole, fortunately sustaining no greater damage than the loss above mentioned; but the weather generally speaking was so bad, wet and cold, that, as the shipwright worked in the open air, the new rudder took a long time making. The officials of the dockyard sent me in a longish bill, but showed me every attention and civility; and as we were most cordially and hospitably received in the house of a relative, our time passed quickly away in spite of constant bad weather and the contretemps just mentioned.

In the market of Naples I saw the following species of birds—Common Jay, Chaffinch, Serin Finch, Goldfinch, Italian Sparrow, Stonechat, Skylark, Woodpigeon, Greek Partridge, Barbary Partridge, Grey Partridge, Spotted Crake, Lapwing, Golden Plover, Little Bustard, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Woodcock, Common Snipe, Jack Snipe, Wild Duck, Pintail, Gadwall, Shoveller, Teal, Wigeon, Red-headed Pochard, and one Smew. In our drives about the country we noticed very few birds; I think, besides those mentioned above, we only saw a few common Kestrels, a Sparrow-Hawk or two, some Robins, and now and then a Blue Rock-Thrush. In the garden of the house in which we were living I observed White Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, Blackbird, Song-Thrush, Chiffchaff,

Blackcap, Black-headed Warbler, and common Wren. The usual Mediterranean Gulls frequented the harbour in large numbers; and I obtained specimens of *Larus canus*, *L. leucophæus*, *L. melanocephalus*, and *L. ridibundus*; the first mentioned was decidedly the least common, and the third the most abundant species of Gull during our stay at Naples. The weather, as I have mentioned, was so cold and wet that we were prevented from seeing much of the neighbourhood; but we went of course to Pozzuoli, Baiæ, Astroni, Capo di Monte, and from Torre del Annunziata, whither I sent the yacht, to Pompeii.

The lake of Avernus has lost its ancient deadly character; and we saw many Coots and Dabchicks taking their pleasure thereon, whilst Blackbirds and Robins were whistling gaily in the surrounding copses without the slightest perceptible symptom of approaching asphyxia. I noticed a great many bats flying in the broad sunshine, and succeeded in knocking one down with the carriage-whip, which proved to be a specimen of *Vespertilio schreibersi*. I distinguished many other species, notably *V. murinus*, but could not persuade the natives to preserve me specimens of any of this interesting order of animals. I made acquaintance with Prof. G. Palma, of the University, who courteously did me the honours of the Zoological collections belonging to that institution, and also showed me a small private collection at his own house.

The University Museum contains a fair local collection of birds; but the setting-up and mounting is lamentable, and the ornithological department altogether unworthy of such a city as Naples. Prof. Palma's collection contains several specimens of *Larus* in various plumages, which completely puzzled me, exhibiting, as they did, many characteristics of both *Larus melanocephalus* and *L. ridibundus*. I came very reluctantly to the conclusion that they must be hybrids; but I hope I am wrong, and that our friend Mr. Saunders, who has devoted so much attention to this family, may some day see them and enlighten us. I obtained my principal information about sport in the southern provinces from Cavaliere Mario Mattino, who is Grand Veneur to the King. He in-

formed me that bears still exist in some parts of the Abruzzi, wolves are common in the mountains, foxes swarm. I could obtain no positive information about the lynx. Wild cats and both species of marten are tolerably (or I should, as a game-preserved, perhaps say intolerably) common, otters and badgers less so, wild boars very abundant. The porcupine is gradually becoming scarce; hares and rabbits exist in the preserved districts. Of the genus *Cervus*, Cavaliere Mattino seemed to consider that *C. capreolus* and *C. elaphus* are indigenous, though the latter is very rare except in the royal preserves, whilst *C. dama* is, he thinks, decidedly an imported species. Of winged game, strictly speaking, Pheasants having been introduced, *Caccabis saxatilis*, *Perdix cinerea*, and *Coturnix communis* are the only representatives; but the numbers of winter fowl, Woodcocks, Snipes, and especially Ducks, of many species, are occasionally almost incredible, particularly during this last season, which was exceptionally severe throughout Southern Europe. The King, a few days before our arrival, had killed 180 Ducks to his own gun at Licola; but His Majesty is a sportsman in the true sense of the word, and fears danger, difficulty, and fatigue as little with the fowling-piece or rifle as with the sword or the more troublesome weapons of State policy. He is devoted to shooting of all kinds, but prefers the wilder forms of sport; and whilst the mountains and valleys of Northern Italy ring with his praises as a good fellow and first-class hunter of Ibex and Chamois, even in the languid south, where his fearless and manly qualities are less appreciated, he is universally allowed to be "*famoso cacciatore*."

We at last left the beautiful Bay of Naples for Messina on the morning of March 7th, and, with light airs of wind, got some miles south of Stromboli by midday of the 9th, when a furious wind met us, blowing directly out of the Straits; and as the current was also running some eight or ten knots in the same direction, we ran under the lee of the Sicilian land, and brought up in a little sandy bay some five or six miles west of the Faro for the night, and worked into the harbour of Messina by 9 A.M. on the following morning,

where we remained till the 16th of March, almost entirely confined to our vessel by continual storms of rain, thunder, wind, and snow. I observed some Sandwich Terns (*Sterna cantiaca*) and the first House-Martins of the season on the 12th about the Faro.

We sailed again, March 16th, for Taormina, and anchored in the bay at 1 P.M., seeing on our way several little Gulls (*Larus minutus*), some large flocks of Cranes passing northwards high over head, and a few Purple Herons going in the same direction, and on the rocks about Taormina a few Rock-Doves, Kestrels, a Kingfisher, some Blue Thrushes, and two Black Redstarts. We went on to Catania the next day, seeing nothing remarkable but a flight of ten Vultures crossing to the Italian coast at an immense height up in the clouds. The scenery of the Straits of Messina and the Sicilian coast is magnificent. Etna, which I had only seen before at a distance of some seventy miles, was covered with snow from the summit quite halfway down to the sea; and the contrast of the dazzling white with the black lava-fields and the rich green of the lower slopes and maritime strip produced a most superb effect, and put the undeniably beautiful Bay of Naples and Vesuvius quite into the shade. At Catania, a very pleasant, cheerful, well-built town, with a good market, we remained till March the 30th, making many excursions to the Pantani, some very extensive marshes at the mouth of the river Simeto, and another stream which runs into the sea some miles further to the south. These marshes are a complete Paradise for the ornithologist, and in the winter afford unrivalled Duck- and Snipe-shooting. They may be easily reached by road from Catania; in fact, within two miles of that town there are fine Snipy-looking meadows and swamps on both sides of the road; but our usual plan was to get away in the yacht's cutter pretty early in the morning and sail or row off to the mouth of the small river above mentioned, where there is a bar with very little water, pull a short distance up the stream to a sort of pothouse kept by the lessee of the fisheries, and there take punts to explore the reed-jungles of the lagoons. Before arriving at the mouth of

the river, we generally had an interview with large flocks of Ducks of various species, principally common Wild Duck and Mallard, Gargany, Pintail, Tufted Duck, Teal, Red-crested Pochard, Common Pochard, and Wigeon. But as the wind was generally light and did not favour us, we did not succeed in bring many of these to bag. We obtained, however, some fine specimens of Black-headed Gull (*L. melanocephalus*) with complete black head, and one or two Sandwich Terns, which last was the only species of *Sterna* we observed here. On our first visit to the marshes we found a great many Snipes; but they were very wild, I was very lame, and the doctor, though he plunged gallantly into the mud and water, was not accustomed to sniping, and our bag was not so full at the end of the day as it might have been. The doctor's Snipe-shooting rapidly improved; but unfortunately the birds became scarcer every day, till, at the end of time in these "*cari luoghi*" we had to search diligently to find a Snipe at all. The same may be said of most of the wading birds, of which at first we found great numbers, such as common Curlew, Whimbrel, possibly Slender-billed Curlew, Pewit, Golden Plover, Avocet (never abundant), Oystercatcher, Black-winged Stilt, Greenshank, Marsh-Sandpiper, Dusky Redshank, Common Redshank, Green Sandpiper, Wood-Sandpiper, Ruff and Reeve, Pygmy Curlew, and Dunlin, all of which we made out positively, and several of which we obtained. Of the Ardeidæ, we only met with *Ardea cinerea* and the common Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), which last is common and breeds in the country. The migratory Herons, with the exception of the Purple (*Ardea purpurea*), which was constantly passing but did not appear to rest in the marshes, had not yet arrived in force; and, besides those above mentioned, we only saw two Little Egrets (*Egretta garzetta*). The lagoons swarmed with Coots (*Fulica atra*); and we constantly heard, but on one occasion only obtained a fleeting glimpse of, the Purple Waterhen (*Porphyrio veterum*). This bird is by no means rare in these marshes, but seldom appears in the open water, and haunts the highest and strongest reed-brakes, where it is always difficult, and often

impossible, to shove a boat along. I found one nest of this bird exactly resembling, and not conspicuously larger than, that of our common Waterhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), which is extremely abundant here. This nest was placed on the water in a thick mass of growing flags, and contained one egg; this was on March 31st. The Spotted, Baillon's, and Little Crakes are all common, the former very abundant; and we also found several Water-Rails (*Rallus aquaticus*). Besides the Ducks above mentioned, I observed the White-eyed Pochard (*Fuligula nyroca*) in great numbers, and shot several specimens; and Gadwalls and Shovellers were also pretty common. I have no doubt that *Anas boschas*, *A. clypeata*, *A. strepera*, *Branta rufina*, and *Fuligula nyroca* breed in these marshes, possibly also *Anas querquedula*, and a species which I had forgotten, but may mention as tolerably common, viz. the White-headed Duck (*Erismatura mersa*). I was surprised at the paucity of Raptores; with the exception of one common Kite and a few Kestrels, we saw nothing but Harriers. And another surprising fact was that we did not see a single *Podiceps* of any species, though the whole of the district is apparently admirably suited to their habits and swarming with fish—grey mullet, tench, and eels. To return to *terra firma*, the most conspicuous bird was the common Magpie, which is very abundant, and breeds all over the country, high and low. We now and then saw and heard a Raven. Some Hooded Crows (*Corvus cornix*) frequented the sandhills which extend from Catania between the marshes and the sea for many miles; and the Jackdaw is very abundant. The common Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*) is found in the wooded portions of Etna (I observed it near Nicolosi). We saw a few common Kingfishers (*Alcedo ispida*) on the banks of the rivers; the Swallow tribe were increasing in numbers every day; we saw all the common European species of this family, the great arrival of the common Swallow and Alpine Swift occurring on the same day, viz. March 24th. I feel no doubt in my own mind that on that day I also saw more than one of the eastern Chimney-Swallow (*Hirundo rufula*); but as we were in a carriage and our guns

in their covers, we did not obtain a specimen; and I do not like to record the occurrence of a species so similar to the common Swallow as a positive fact, though the bird is by no means uncommon on passage in several parts of Sicily. *Cotyle rupestris* I saw in the craters of the Monte Rossi, above Nicolosi; *C. riparia* was the least common of the family. I noticed many Blackbirds and Song-Thrushes on the skirts of the marshes; and Black Redstarts are common and resident in all suitable localities. The reed-brakes and swamps teem with Warblers, amongst which Cetti's Warbler is conspicuous by his thrilling note; I recognized also the song of Savi's Warbler (*Calamodyta luscinioides*), our common Reed- and Sedge-Warblers (*C. arundinacea* and *C. phragmitis*). *Cisticola schænicola* is very abundant; and in the dense jungle of the Pantani there were at least three other species, probably *Calamodyta aquatica*, *C. melanopogon*, and another which I had never heard and, I think, never seen before; but I must here make a sad ornithological confession, and state that whilst exploring these marshes I was always on the special look-out for *Porphyrio veterum*, and my gun was loaded with large shot, so that I fired at nothing smaller than the Duck tribe. The above-mentioned Warblers, with the exception of *C. schænicola*, frequent the dense beds of reeds and flags in some five or six feet of water and mud, whilst *Sylvia atricapilla* was common amongst the brambles of the dryer portions of the marsh. *S. melanocephala* I noticed in the Zoological Gardens of Catania, where it was evidently nesting in the shrubberies; and this, I think, brings me to an end of the family. I may state that all the above-mentioned Sylviidæ and many other species are recorded from Sicily by various authors; and a more suitable home for them than the Pantani could hardly be imagined. In the market of Catania I met with no birds that I did not see alive out in the country. Calandra Larks, Goldfinches, Greenfinches, and Serins are the favourite song-birds, and *Passer salicicola* the only Sparrow we met with.

We drove out to the famous lake of Lentini, about fifteen miles from Catania, on 23rd March. This is a fine sheet of

water, I should say, perhaps, twelve or fifteen miles in length, by some five in breadth in the widest part, is surrounded by good Snipe-marshes and thick reed-brakes. Its whole surface, as far as the eye could reach, was thickly dotted with birds, principally Coots (*Fulica atra*); but there were also many Ducks of the various species above mentioned; and here I met with the common Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) for the first and only time in Sicily. We found a sprinkling of Snipes, but they were exceedingly wild. I saw a large Solitary Snipe here, and the doctor afterwards killed one of this species at the Pantani; but it was not yet as common as it becomes in these regions on passage later in the spring.

We sailed from Catania on March 30th, ran down to the mouth of the river, and went ashore to shoot in the Pantani. On this occasion some of my crew killed about thirty snakes, principally *Tropidonotus natrix*, and a few of the fine dark variety of *Zamenis atrovirens*, known as *Z. carbonaria*. We laid off the mouth of the river in a dead calm all night, and, landing early to shoot, sent the yacht round to Agosta. After a long and rather profitless day on the Pantani, we hired mules and rode over an undulating fertile country to Lentini, about seven miles; and after an immense amount of bargaining and expostulations with our muleteers and a crowd of filthy and rapacious ruffians in a dirty *locanda*, and a meal of cold tench, we at length procured a carriage, and drove through a beautiful country with a brilliant moon eighteen miles to Agosta, where we arrived about midnight, and got on board the yacht just as our cutter (which we had left at the Pantani, to find its way round to Agosta) hove in sight. Agosta is a ruinous, wretched town; but the bay is very fine, and might be made into one of the best harbours in the Mediterranean by erecting a breakwater on the Hybla shoal.

We sailed at about 11 the next morning for Syracuse, and with a light breeze ahead beat into that port at about 4 P.M. An interpreter came off to us as soon as we had obtained pratique, and was not a little astonished at my telling him to send out the youth of Syracuse to collect bats, snakes, and lizards for me. He, however, complied with my

directions, with considerable result, as will be seen further on. We spent the next day in visiting some of the many lions of Syracuse, viz. :—the Fountain of Arethusa, now frequented by vulgar Domestic Ducks and some common Water-hens ; the Museo, where a large collection of very interesting antiquities are piled together in such confusion that it is impossible to examine them. Here we saw the beautiful Venus of Syracuse, which rivals, in my opinion, the best representations of the irresistible goddess that I have seen, and is yet but little known or spoken of in Western Europe. From the Museo we went to see a poor collection of stuffed birds at the Gabinetto, the most remarkable thing there being a specimen of the Nutcracker (*Nucifraga caryocatactes*), which the Curator assured me was killed in the neighbourhood. We afterwards drove out to see the quarries from which the stone was taken for the building of the four cities which composed the ancient Syracuse, and were much interested. The whole neighbourhood of Syracuse is pierced with galleries, tunnels, and tombs, and quarries of enormous extent. A great deal has been done in the way of exploration ; but a very great deal more remains to be done, as the ground occupied by the ancient cities extends over an area of some fifteen or twenty miles. We made many excursions to various points in the vicinity, all full of interest to the most unlearned, and to an antiquarian, I should say, almost unrivalled. The natives of this corner of Sicily, though heavily taxed and wretched enough, are not such shameless and rapacious beggars and liars as about Messina and Catania ; nor have they taken to highway robbery and murder, as is the case in the western and central parts of the island.

We of course took a boat up the Anapo, and by dint of towing, punting, pushing, and a good deal of objurgation on the part of our boatmen, succeeded in arriving at the famous fountain of Cyane, the source of the Anapo, where Proserpine is said to have made her final exit from the air above. The far-famed river is a small stream, densely choked with aquatic vegetation ; the most interesting vegetable production is the papyrus, which grows in great luxuriance and is extremely

graceful. I believe I am correct in saying that this is the only spot in Europe in which this famous plant is now found. There are fine Snipe-marshes on both sides of the river; but these birds had all but left the country, and we only saw some three or four. The usual marsh-birds were apparently common; but we saw nothing here which we had not previously met with in the Pantani. We found several nests of common Magpie in the papyrus, which in some places grows to a height of twelve feet or more. I had always heard great accounts of the Snipe and wild-fowl shooting in these marshes, and can well imagine it must be excellent at the right times of year; but there is nothing like the extent of the Pantani, and four good walkers who did not mind wet and dirt could, I should say, easily work the practicable portions of the marsh in a winter's day.

Our Syracusan zoological parties began to drop in after two or three days, and brought off many bats and lizards and snakes; of the former I should say that we had, one morning, at least five hundred brought on board alive, in a tall basket. I put on a glove, pulled them out by handfuls, and found that the prevalent species was *Vespertilio schreibersi*; the three or four European *Rhinolophi* were also common, but (according to the collectors) frequent a cave or caves apart from *V. schreibersi*; only one *V. murinus* appeared, and a stray *V. kuhli* or two; and I think one *V. megapodius* completes the list of species. I selected a fair series of each species, and threw the remainder up into the air from the yacht's deck. Some flew on board the vessels in harbour, particularly into the paddle-boxes of the war-steamer 'Tripoli,' whose Captain told me he was afraid that when he went to sea his paddles would destroy the nests of these bats!

During our stay at Syracuse the spring migrants were arriving in great numbers, the most conspicuous being Little Kestrels (*Falco cenchris*), Hoopoes (*Upupa epops*), Alpine Swifts (*Cypselus melba*), common Swifts (*Cypselus apus*), and immense flocks of Yellow Wagtails (*Budytes flavus*, Linn.); with these last were a few of the Black-headed Wagtail (*B. melanocephalus*), which I am more than ever inclined to consider a good species.

A good spot for bird-collecting is the marshy ground about the saltworks on the western side of the bay, to the south of the Anapo; here we obtained many specimens of the Little Ringed Plover (*Ægialitis minor*), Wood-Sandpiper (*Totanus glareola*), Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*), and other birds. We were induced by the report of the arrival of Quails to make one or two expeditions in search of them; but we only found a few scattered birds, which had wintered in the country, and are known as "Paesane." Here I may observe that I have often been surprised to see the occurrence of Quails in England and other parts of Europe during the winter months recorded in the Natural-History columns of the 'Field' and other publications as a remarkable fact, whilst from my own experience I have noticed that wherever there is a considerable arrival of Quails on their spring migration, some, and in certain cases a good number, will remain through the winter. This is certainly the case on my own property near Preston, in Lancashire, in parts of the Cambridgeshire and Norfolk fen-country, in Spain, Italy, Tunis, and Epirus, as also in many parts of Ireland.

To return to Sicily, there is a good Snipe-marsh some seven or eight miles off beyond the Scala Grecca, between the road to Catania and the sea; but, as I have before said, these birds were becoming very scarce, and we shot but few of them. I could not discover that any of the natives were acquainted with the Hemipode (*Turnix sylvatica*), though specimens are in the Gabinetto of Syracuse, with a local name, and in some of the southern portions of Sicily it is more common than in any other part of Europe. I was much amused one evening by watching the arrival of countless thousands of Spanish Sparrows (*Passer salicicola*) to roost in a thick grove of young orange-trees, not far from the Roman amphitheatre; they came dropping in, in flights of from a dozen to perhaps two or three hundred, from all points of the compass, and made a most deafening uproar, which was at once quelled for perhaps half a minute by the crack of our driver's whip, and by the sudden dash of a Sparrow-Hawk into the midst of them; I could not see with what result. This species and the Rock-

Sparrow (*Pyrgita petronia*) were the only Sparrows we met with in Sicily.

We remained weather-bound at Syracuse till April 16th, when we sailed for Malta, where we arrived about 3 P.M. on the 17th, seeing a good many migrating birds on our way, viz. one Roller, many House-Swallows, Yellow Wagtails, Turtle Doves (one of which rested on board for some hours), common Cranes, common Herons, and a few Little Egrets. At Malta, where we remained till May 7th, I had the great pleasure of making the acquaintance of a frequent contributor to 'The Ibis,' Mr. C. A. Wright, with whom I had several most interesting zoological conversations, and in whose company I visited the very curious ruins in Gozo.

Malta, though it affords apparently few attractions to an ornithologist, is by no means in reality a barren field for him, as Mr. Wright has abundantly proved. Almost every unhappy tired straggler from the vast flocks of migratory birds that seeks a temporary resting-place under British protection, is immediately shot or bullied to death, and comes eventually into the market. The only birds I saw at liberty in one or two excursions in Malta, and on the occasion of our visit to Gozo, were one Osprey, a Marsh-Harrier, a few Collared Flycatchers, Black-headed Warblers, Short-toed Larks, common Buntings, House-Swallows, Swifts, Herring-Gulls (one adult), Lesser Black-backed Gull, and many Shearwaters. I may, however, mention that my excursions were very few, as I was kept to my vessel by a fresh attack of gout, during which I received every courtesy and attention possible from all my acquaintances and official friends in Malta. I was fortunate enough to be able to visit Mr. Wright's collection, one of the most interesting local museums I ever saw : almost every rare specimen has a history ; and the owner has such a pleasant way of imparting his varied stores of information on his favourite subjects, that a visit to his collection is a real zoological recreation. He, Mr. Wright, has given us such full details of the ornithology of Malta in this Journal, that I will only say that I saw his specimens of *Falco eleanoræ*, *Actiturus bartramius*, the new European Chat *Saxicola leucopyga*, and

many other species. From the market I obtained common Hobby, Orange-legged Falcon, Little Kestrel, Scops Owl, Common Cuckoo (some of this species in the red plumage), Bee-eater, Common Nightjar, Rock-Thrush, Russet Wheatear, and a few other common birds. The Quails were dropping in, but I did not hear of any very remarkable arrival during our stay, though I believe the vernal migration of this species was this year very exceptionally abundant throughout the south of Europe. A considerable number of Solitary Snipes (*Gallinago major*) were shot in Malta during our stay; and I heard from a Neapolitan friend that he had killed many more than usual of this species in May in the marshes near Pæstum.

We left Malta Harbour about mid-day, May 7th, for Palermo, and carried a fine ten-knot breeze from the eastward till after dark, when we were off the Sicilian coast, between Alicata and Girgenti. The wind then suddenly flew round to W.N.W., and freshened into a gale, against which we beat for some hours, without making much way; so, about 3 A.M. on the morning of May 8th, we made up our minds to try the other way round, and ran along in smooth water under the Sicilian land, till sunset left us becalmed off Taormina. We made but little way through the night, but got a light air soon after daybreak, which took us up abreast of Messina, whither we sent a boat for provisions, and lay off and on, waiting for the flying squadron under Admiral Randolph, who left Malta a few hours after us, and had kindly promised to give us a tow in case of need. The ships came up under easy steam about 3 P.M.; and the 'Topaze' towed us out through the Straits, and cast us off at 6 P.M. We found a heavy swell and hardly any wind outside, and passed a very uncomfortable night. At daylight we were off Volcano, one of the Lipari Islands, with the squadron hull down ahead of us. We at last got a fair breeze, about noon; and the squadron having stopped steaming and made sail, we overhauled them about 4 P.M., ran between their lines, and got into Palermo about 9 P.M.; very dark and torrents of rain. We remained at Palermo till May 15th. The weather during

our stay being generally squally, wet, and cold, we could not do much; but I visited the University Museum, and made the acquaintance of Professor Doderlein, who gave me a great deal of interesting ornithological information. The local collections are very interesting; and here I had the pleasure of seeing three fine adult specimens of *Larus audouini*, all killed near Palermo, and four genuine Sicilian specimens of my retiring friend the Francolin, killed at various times, but all before 1870.

Professor Doderlein had lately returned from a visit to the Island of Pantellaria, where he found *Sylvia sarda* in great abundance. I believe, from information obtained from the Professor, that Sicily is certainly the headquarters of the Hemipode (*Turnix sylvatica*) in Europe, as he told me, and states in his recently published work on the ornithology of Sicily, that he had often shot from ten to fifteen specimens in one day in the neighbourhood of Alicata, Girgenti, and Sciacca. I certainly never heard of a similar abundance in any part of Spain.

We left Palermo May 15th, and had a rough and baffling passage to Cagliari, where we arrived on the morning of May 18th. A great many birds visited us on the 17th. At one time on that day we had a Woodchat (*Lanius rufus*), a Swift (*Cypselus apus*), a Wheatear (*Saxicola ænanthe*), a Wood-Warbler (*Phyllopneuste sibilatrix*), several Garden-Warblers (*Sylvia hortensis*), a Redstart (*Ruticilla phænicura*), a few Turtle Doves, one Martin (*Hirundo urbica*) and some dozen Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*), all on board together. The Doves were decidedly the most weary of the party. I examined the Swallows very closely in hopes of finding *Hirundo rufula*, but without success, which I do not regret, as my feelings would have been very mixed between the wish to preserve a rare bird and the cruel want of hospitality to a tired and defenceless traveller, who claimed British protection on the high seas.

Cagliari, a place dear to my memory from the excellent sport I have enjoyed in its immediate neighbourhood, looked

much as it did in 1862, on the occasion of my last visit to Sardinia, in spite of the talk one hears in Italy about the progress and increasing civilization of the island, the accomplished fact of a railroad, &c. Our good friends the Sards seemed to us very much in the same state as twelve years ago; and I was glad to find their extreme civility and hospitality unchanged. It was refreshing to be able to walk about the town and drive into the country unmolested, after our experience of the ruffianly swarms of rapacious beggars of Naples, and more especially of Messina and Catania, and without any fear of the brigands who infest the western parts of Sicily. I have found the Sards of all classes most courteous to strangers, and experienced hospitality from them not surpassed even in the wilder portions of beloved Spain. Of course our first visit was to the Great Stagno or Lagoon, just to the westward of the town. The water was very low, and we could not get far in the yacht's cutter; so with some difficulty we landed on the large island nearest to the town, shot a few birds, and saw a good many others—Marsh-Harriers in great abundance, Kestrels, Rose-breasted Shrike, Hoopoe, many of the commoner Hirundines, abundance of Warblers (*Sylvia melanocephala*, *S. cinerea*, *S. cisticola*, *Philomela luscinia*, *S. subalpina*), Calandra and Short-toed Larks, Stonechat, Common Bunting, Turtle Dove, Thick-knee, some small Waders which we could not distinguish, Common Quails, Coots (*Larus leucophæus*), Sandwich Terns, and a few young Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*). I met at the passage into the Stagno from the sea an old friend, one Antonio Fanni, who had been my guide in my shooting-expeditions on many former occasions; and we arranged with him to take us into the heart of the lagoons the next day. We were delayed by visitors in the morning; and it blew so hard that we could do but little. We went right away to the far north-west corner of the lagoon, and for some distance up a very birdy river. We got quite close to a Black Vulture, who was busily engaged on a dead horse. I gave him both barrels at some fifteen yards; but he seemed rather to take my salute as a compliment, and I only got a

cloud of feathers in my face for my pains; and unsavoury feathers they were. We saw a solitary Flamingo, Purple Heron, Squacco Heron, a good many common Wild Ducks (*Anas boschas*), and some Red-crested Pochards (*Branta rufina*), besides the species enumerated above, also many Hooded Crows (*Corvus cornix*), of which bird we found several nests in the low tamarisks by the river-side; one of these nests contained two callow young, which we carried off, and one of which is, at the time of writing this, in the Regent's Park Zoological Gardens. On the 22nd May Antonio took me to some flat islets in a different part of the stagno, on which we found common Terns (*Sterna fluviatilis*) breeding in great numbers, and collected many of their eggs. The Sandwich Tern (*Sterna cantiaca*) and Little Tern (*Sterna minuta*) were quite as abundant as the first-named species; but we only found one nest of *S. minuta*, and none of *Sterna cantiaca*. A great number of Ducks (*Anas boschas*) breed in these islets; and we found many of their nests with eggs, and in two instances young birds which had just left the shell. We found also one nest of *Ægialitis cantiana*, several recently hatched Coots, and common Waterhens (*Gallinula chloropus*), saw Osprey, a large Falcon, and a great number of Red-crested Pochards, which were in large flocks, and apparently had not commenced nesting. I secured beautiful specimens of the three species of *Sterna* above mentioned, a pair of Kentish Plovers, and two very fine adult Herring-Gulls (*Larus leucophæus*), but did not succeed in bagging the only individual of *Hydrochelidon fissipes* which we met with; nor could I get a shot at the Red-crested Pochards, which appeared wary to an extent uncommon even in their wide-awake family. The nests of Kentish Plover and Little Tern were out on the green scum weed which covers the semiliquid mud round these islets, whilst those of the common Tern were on *terra firma* on bare spots amongst the scrubby vegetation with which they are thickly overgrown. We saw one Flamingo only, probably the same individual before observed.

We sailed for Port Mahon on the 23rd of May, but met a

very strong head wind and heavy sea, so ran back and anchored again in the north-west corner of the Bay of Cagliari, where we rolled heavily all night, and sailed at daybreak on the 24th, with light puffs of wind from all quarters, and a beautiful bright sunny morning. On rounding Cape Spartivento we met a fresh contrary breeze, so ran in and anchored in smooth water close to the Isola Rossa, in the Bay of Teulada, where we found a Neapolitan brigantine weather-bound, full of passengers for Bona and Algiers. About the island, which is perhaps barely a mile in circumference, and overgrown with thick scrub, except on the north-eastern side, where it is precipitous, we noticed a great number of Shags (*Carbo desmaresti*), a Falcon, some Kestrels, myriads of Alpine and common Swifts, and a good many Rock-Doves; but it was Sunday, and we waited anxiously for morning. During the night I heard strange moaning sounds from the rocky end of the island, which I was inclined to think proceeded from seals; but I afterwards found that they were caused by the conversation of Shearwaters (*Puffinus cinereus*), of which birds we had seen many as we came round from Cagliari, but none in the immediate vicinity of the island. The next morning we were astir at daybreak, got our anchor; and whilst the yacht stood off and on, the doctor and I went off in the cutter to explore the island. We landed the doctor and one of the crew; and I cruised round under the rocks in the boat. The sea was positively alive with Shags, old and young; but I did not observe a single specimen of the Cormorant, which is common and breeds near Cagliari. Every now and then a small party of Rock-Doves would dash past us, or out of some crevice in the rocks, and give me a real sporting shot. The Shags, many of which were unable to fly, gave us some long chases; but though I might have shot a great number, and did bag as many specimens as I required, we could not succeed in hunting down a young one alive. We saw a few still in their nests; but although two of our crew managed to get within a few feet of them, they could not get quite at them, and the youngsters refused to move. In the crevices of the rocks on the north side of the island a

vast quantity of Alpine Swifts were breeding, in company with many of the common species. I discovered a nest of the Rock-Martin attached to a flat face of rock, some thirty feet above the water. I secured the male bird, but, as I could not get the nest without destroying it and its contents, I left the hen bird sitting upon it in peace. A few pairs of Herring-Gulls sailed high above us in circles, barking and screaming; a pair of Blue Rock-Thrushes had their nest in a quiet creek on the eastern side; and we saw a few common Kestrels, one of which I brought down, as he gave me a snap shot, fondly hoping that he was *Falco eleanoræ*, as he looked so dark in the early sunlight. The doctor shot a very young specimen of *Falco barbarus*, and a few Rock-Doves, and found one rotten egg of Shag, and another of Herring-Gull in the same condition. The man who accompanied him about the island told me that he saw a very few small dark-coloured birds about the scrubby bushes, probably *Pyrophthalma melanocephala*, possibly *Sylvia sarda*, but they did not bag one.

We went off to the yacht about 8 A.M., and stood away for Port Mahon; but as on rounding Cape Teulada we met light head breezes, we bore away for the Island of Vacca, which lies a few miles to the south-east of Cape Sperone, and upon which my friend Mr. Basil Brooke had met with *Falco eleanoræ* in large numbers in May 1873. This island is perhaps something less than a mile in circumference, more or less precipitous all round—though accessible in a few spots on the eastern side in calm weather, rising to a high point at its southern extremity—and composed, according to La Marmora (*Voyage en Sardaigne, troisième partie, Descr. géologique, tome i. p. 537*), of a volcanic conglomerate, very much fretted and weather-worn, particularly at the southern end, where the cliff overhangs a shallow cave of considerable height, with an irregular perpendicular fissure. Having but little wind, we did not get within a mile of the island till about 4 P.M., when we brought the yacht up, head to windward, and went off in the cutter to explore the eastern side. Long before we went off I had distinctly made out *Falco eleanoræ* in large numbers, many Gulls, Rock-Doves, Swifts, and

Shags, the latter birds forming a sort of fringe to the little rock called Vitello (the calf), some hundred yards to the north-east of Vacca, and connected with it by a reef of rocks just awash, with two or three channels through them practicable for a boat. We landed the doctor and one of our boat's crew in a cleft of the eastern side, which extends at a very acute angle from the sea to the summit. We soon bagged four specimens of *Falco eleanoræ*, which, though they flew high, were not particularly wary. I very much regret that, owing to our feeble climbing-power, we lost three or four more of this beautiful and singular species. Several of the Greater Shearwater were caught on their single egg, under the masses of débris in the aforesaid cleft; and I had some fun with the Rock-Doves, of which we saw great numbers. The common Swifts also were breeding in force amongst the low rocks at the north-eastern end; and Herring-Gulls and Shags innumerable enlivened the scene, which, in spite of the black and weird appearance of the island, was, as will be readily imagined, one of intense interest to an ornithologist. Dusk came on; and we went off to the yacht delighted with our success, and hoping for more. A large seal (*Phoca monacha*) showed his smooth shining head once or twice, at a safe distance; it is not impossible he may have recognized the white ensign from a previous acquaintance with Lord Nelson and his squadron, as the Bay of Palmas (or San Antioco), hard by, was one of our admiral's favourite anchorages.

The wind being still ahead for Port Mahon, we ran into a sandy bay on the western side of the gulf, and anchored for the night in about ten fathoms.

We paid another morning visit to Vacca the next day, leaving the yacht about 6 A.M., and taking with us some volunteers of the crew to explore the island. We only shot one of the Falcons; but the men brought off several dozens of the eggs of the Herring-Gull (*Larus leucophæus*), and seven Cinereous Shearwaters with twelve eggs. We had seen vast numbers of this species on the water on our way to Vacca in the morning, with a good many of the smaller species, but

could not succeed in bagging any of them. I shot a fine Raven (one of a pair seen); and the men brought off two young Herring-Gulls, and reported many lizards and snakes amongst the coarse grass which covers the summit of the island. An ice-plant, which I believe to be *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*, grows in profusion amongst the rocks of Vacca, and, though highly ornamental, by no means assists the bird's-nester. The yacht ran down with a light northerly breeze, and picked us up about 9 A.M.; and away we went to the Island of Toro, some seven miles in a southerly direction. This rock is the spot upon which La Marmora found, and (I believe) first made known *Falco eleanoræ* by that name, though I have no doubt it was well known to falconers long before his time—though from its habits I consider it very doubtful that it is the species specially protected by a decree of the Pisan Duchess Eleanora, and named after her by the Sardinian general. Toro is of an entirely different geological character from Vacca. La Marmora calls it “une roche éminemment trachytique; il est totalement nu, à peine trouve-t-on de la chicorée sauvage dans ses nombreuses fissures. La roche est homogène partout, et elle ne repose pas sur le tufa; elle se décompose à l'air, et elle forme de petites grottes, dont le sol se couvre d'un sable fin feldspathique.” The author just quoted gives the rock an extreme altitude of 200 metres, and a nautical mile in circumference. The landing is much more difficult than on Vacca, and the ascent from the sea much more steep, though, owing to numerous ledges and the absence of ice-plant, perhaps not so risky. Here we found the *Falco eleonræ* in very large numbers, and easier to shoot than on the island first explored.

It is of course impossible to form any thing approaching to an accurate computation of the numbers of any species on the wing; but we agreed that whilst on Vacca there were about sixty or eighty pairs of these Falcons, on Toro there must have been at least three hundred pairs.

A good many Herring-Gulls were nesting about the summit; and my men, some of whom landed, brought off two young birds in the down. As we lay close off the rocks in

the boats, watching for shots at the Falcons, I suddenly heard behind me the cry of a Gull quite new to me, turned sharp round at the sound; the bird was rather high up, but I knocked him down; he fell on the rocks close to us, but I could not see him as he lay. One of the men jumped out and picked him up; and judge of my joy, ye Ibises, when I found that he was a beautiful adult *Larus audouini* (male), in full breeding-plumage!

We had noticed that a small colony of Gulls seemed to have established itself upon the slope of the rock on the eastern side, apart from the main establishment about the summit and western portion; but as their general appearance was very like that of the Herring-Gull (at a distance), I had not paid any particular attention to them. Now, however, when they took wing at my shot, I noticed that their wings seemed much longer, and now and then the brilliant red bills and dark-coloured legs were conspicuous. I landed one of my men, with particular instructions to search the spot where we had seen these Gulls; and he very soon came down to the boat with six eggs, varying a good deal in markings, and like those of *Larus leucophæus*, but just the size I wished. I had particularly told the finder to bring any of the Herring-Gull's eggs; but he assured me that he found none, though he searched for a considerable time.

The six eggs above mentioned were in five nests, one of which contained two and the others one respectively. There were several empty nests, but no young birds visible.

In the meantime the parent birds had gone right off to sea in a body of perhaps twenty or thirty, and were coming back to see what we were about, but so cautiously and at such a height that though I fired several shots I could not manage to bring down another specimen. The rest of the men, who had landed and clambered up to the top, reported great numbers of nests, eggs, and young of Herring-Gull; but I had told them not to rob them, as we had such a series from Vacca. It was very evident, and a curious fact, that the Audouin's Gulls had their establishment entirely apart from their congeners; and certainly they are naturally much more wary.

We saw no species of Gull but the two above mentioned, no Rock-Doves, no Swifts, and very few Shags. We were so eager about the Gulls that we neglected the Falcons; and I only bagged one, a very fine old bird in the sooty plumage. A pair of quite unmistakable *Falco barbarus* had their nest in a cleft of rock near the summit of the island, and flew round, screaming loudly. The contrast between the flight, cry, and habits of the Barbary and Eleanora Falcons was very interesting. The former is a true Peregrine, a very typical representative of the genus *Falco*, darting high round the rocks like an arrow with an angry chide, and occasionally making a fierce stoop at one of the other species, as if annoyed by their abundance and apparently purposeless wavering flight. We remained about this part of Sardinia till the morning of May 30th, and paid other visits to Vacca and Toro, obtaining two more specimens of Audouin's Gull, with five more eggs, all hard sat and very difficult to blow.

We secured altogether fifteen specimens of *Falco eleanoræ* (the greater number of which were males) in all their various stages of plumage. I consider these Falcons eminently crepuscular. They have all the wing-power of their near relation the Common Hobby, though in spite of the wonderful ease and rapidity of their evolutions there is, to the eye of a falconer, something soft and unfalconlike in their habits and general appearance, their very full, dark, liquid eye (so different from the piercing optics of *F. peregrinus*), their weak legs and claws, and their extravagantly long wings and tails. With one exception, the crops of all of them contained nothing but insects; and it is worthy of note that whilst the crops of the dark-plumaged birds were crammed with very small black beetles, which swarm upon Vacca, the lighter-plumaged birds appeared to feed more upon dipterous insects, grasshoppers, dragonflies, and, in several instances, small crustaceans. I am no entomologist, and may be mistaken in my definition of these little animals; but, speaking ignorantly, I should say the Falcons feed, or at all events were feeding when we shot them, almost exclusively upon beetles, dragonflies, grasshoppers, and shrimps. In one

specimen only did we find a leg of some small bird, apparently a Wheatear. When I first saw these Hawks flying in and out of the rocks on Vacca, and continually uttering their feeble cry, I imagined we were going to reap a rich harvest of their eggs; but I can state positively that at the time of our visit they had not begun to lay; and from information given me by some Neapolitan and Genoese coral-fishers of Carlo Forte, who are in the habit of landing on Toro and Vacca to dry their nets and harry the Gulls' nests, I am of opinion that August and September are their breeding-months. I believe that Lindermayer and Dr. Krüper found this to be the case in the Cyclades; and I am strengthened in my opinion by having some years ago received two young of the species in question alive from Mogador, about the middle of October, which still retained a considerable quantity of the nestling-down. The coral-fishers aforesaid, whom we found weather-bound in the Gulf of San Antioco, assured me that September was the month when they found the young birds, and that they were excellent eating.

I may here mention that I bought a living specimen of this Falcon in July last, of Castang in Leadenhall Market, which I deposited in the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, where I trust it did not suffer from the late terrible explosion on the canal hard by. This bird came from Mogador; and besides that locality and Dragonera, off the coast of Majorca (mentioned by Mr. Saunders), the Cyclades, Toro, and Vacca, I am informed of another breeding-locality of this Falcon in the Mediterranean, somewhat remote from us, but by no means difficult of access.

The coral-fishers, on my landing among their boats drawn up on the sand close to our anchorage, and inquiring for birds and beasts, brought me two young Gulls alive in the down, which at once struck me as too small even for newly-hatched Herring-Gulls, of which species we had several alive on board the yacht. I asked the owner where he had found them, and he immediately replied "On Toro." "Whereabouts?" and he proceeded to describe the exact spot, not knowing that we had been there, and said that these were the

Gulls "con becco color di corallo," as I firmly believe from their cry, their way of holding themselves, and the bright pink of their bills. For the first three weeks of their life on board I had of course every opportunity of comparing them with the young *Larus leucophæus*, and on arriving in England had the pleasure of presenting them to the Zoological Society, in whose gardens I also deposited two of our Herring-Gulls from Vacca.

The general appearance of *Larus audouini* on the wing is certainly more like that of *L. leucophæus* than that of any other Gull with which I am acquainted; but the wings seem conspicuously longer, and of course at a short distance the brilliant red bill is a clear distinction. The cry is not so harsh, and more prolonged than that of the latter species.

I subjoin the measurements of a skin of one of my specimens, a male, as taken by Mr. Salvin:—♂. Total length about 20 inches; length of tarsus 2·45; bill, from gape, 3; wing, from carpus to tip, 15·75; tail 6 inches.

These islands are very interesting in many ways. My men told me that on Vacca they saw several snakes of various colours (one large black one in pursuit of the only Quail they saw there) and a great variety of lizards; but I could not inspire them with my love for the Reptilia, and the only animals of that order that they brought off to me were some dozens of *Gongylus ocellatus*. On Toro they said they met with no snakes, but vast numbers of small brilliant green lizards (probably *Lacerta viridis*), which defied their attempts to capture them. My yacht-master, who landed on Toro with a gun and scrambled up to the top, described a curious-looking bird, which he pursued for some time, and which at last beat him by flying into a cave. From his description, I imagine it must have been a Nightjar, of which species we found the wings at the water's edge on Vacca, the owner probably having been devoured by the Ravens, which had a nest close by. These black robbers also spoiled a good specimen of *Falco eleanoræ*, which fell on a ledge to which we could not get till the day after the bird was shot. We took three young Ravens from the nest, and shot both the parent birds. I saw

Aquila bonellii one day sailing high over Vacca, and in a short ramble up a little valley near our anchorage in the Gulf of San Antioco observed *Circaetus gallicus*, *Caccabis petrosa*, *Corvus corax*, and a few other common birds. On Toro my men found a few large fragments of spherical shell, rusty and weather-eaten.

After this delay we at length reached Port Mahon on the last day of May; and after a short stay there (during which I had the good fortune to capture some specimens of a new lizard on the Isla del Ayre), we made the the best of our way home *viâ* Iviza, Valencia, Barcelona, and Marseilles, at which port we arrived June 21st. At Valencia we spent a long summer day in the fragrant "dehesa," but saw no birds worthy of mention. I succeeded in bringing home alive my Gulls, as before mentioned, one of the young Ravens taken on Vacca, one young Hooded Crow from near Cagliari, a Greek Partridge (*Caccabis saxatilis*) which I bought at Syracuse, and two Blue Rock-Thrushes.

It seems to me, on reading over this paper, that I ought to apologize for the frequent use of the first person singular and plural; and any one who can and will give me a practical suggestion as to how to avoid it shall have my lasting gratitude, *quantum valeat*.

II.—*Contributions to a History of the Accipitres. The Genus Glaucidium.* By R. BOWDLER SHARPE, F.L.S., F.Z.S., &c., of the Zoological Department, British Museum.

(Plates I., II.)

IN the 'Proceedings' of the Boston Society of Natural History for 1873, Mr. Robert Ridgway gave a review of the genus *Glaucidium*, which has done more than any previous attempt to clear up this difficult genus. Having myself had occasion recently to study these birds, I found great assistance from Mr. Ridgway's paper; but differing in many points from that gentleman, I have been led to place my views before



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