FALCO LANARIUS.

Lanner Falcon.

Accipiter lanarius, Briss. Orn., tom. i. p. 363.

Falco lanarius, Klein, Ova Av., p. 48.—Schleg. Rev. Crit. des Ois. d'Eur., pp. 2, 11.—Bonap. Rev. Zool., 1850, p. 485.—Adams in Ibis, 1864, p. 10.

— Feldeggii, Schleg. Abh. aus dem Geb. der Zool. &c., tabb. 10, 11; Rev. Crit. des Ois. d'Eur., p. 12.

Le vrai Lanier, Buff. Hist. Nat. des Ois., tom. i. p. 243.

Brown Lanner, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. i. p. 86.—Id. Gen. Hist., vol. i. p. 84.

The remarks made at the commencement of my account of Falco sacer, as to the amount of confusion which exists with regard to its synonymy, apply with equal force to the present bird, so well known to all living European ornithologists as Falco lanarius; hence, for the like reasons, the list of names said to pertain to it are sparsely given. The native country of the bird is Northern Africa, over which portion of the globe it ranges from Morocco to Egypt, and proceeds still further eastward to Palestine, Asia Minor, Persia, and, according to the late Mr. G. T. Vigne's note to me, as far as the Punjab. That a bird enjoying such vast powers of flight should not occasionally visit other countries would be contrary to probability; and we find that it not only occasionally visits Spain, but there are recorded instances of its occurrence in Greece and other European countries, and one at least of its being killed in England; indeed the Reviewer, in the 'Ibis' for 1859, of Dr. Bree's 'Birds of Europe not observed in the British Isles' remarks that "The Lanner has a good claim to be included in the British list; for Lewin's figure in his 'British Birds,' vol. i. pl. 17, seems referable only to this species, and the subject of it was taken in Lincolnshire; but we know of no other instance of its occurrence here unaccompanied by considerable doubt."

Of all the Falcons I have had opportunities of becoming acquainted with in a living state, this is at once the most beautiful and the most docile. My figure was taken with great care from a living example perched on my arm, and which appeared to be as inquisitive and as interested in the delineation of his figure as the draftsman himself. This fine bird is now (March 1868) living in the aviary of the Zoological Society of London in the Regent's Park.

A glance at my plates of Falco sacer and Falco lanarius will furnish a better idea of the differences of the two birds than any verbal description, however accurate. Like the former, the latter bird is considered by the falconers a less powerful flier than the birds of the Peregrine form; and I believe it is less courageous and sanguinary. The fact is, these two desert Falcons are of a different type, befitting them for a different mode of life from that of the Peregrines, but equally suited for some special purpose, such as preying upon the smaller quadrupeds as well as birds, which the Peregrine and its allies never do.

I shall now give some extracts from the writings of the ornithologists and travellers who have remarked on this elegant bird,—a course I do not hesitate to adopt, as the furtherance of science and the promotion of truthful knowledge is my constant aim.

"By far the most common of the large Falcons of Palestine," says the Rev. H. B. Tristram, "is the Falco lanarius. It is universally distributed throughout the rocky wadys on both sides of the Jordan and the Dead Sea and as far north as the foot of Hermon, is a permanent resident, and, as we were told, reoccupies the same eyric year after year. A nest of four eggs was taken in the gorge of the Wady Kelt, near Jericho, on the 29th of February; and the Lanner was breeding in four or five places in the Wady Hamam and the Wady Leimun, near Gennesaret, in April. No region is too desolate or dreary for this noble bird. On the stupendous rock of Masada, facing the Dead Sea, a Lanner dropped a Pochard Duck on being fired at; and we also saw a pair at Jebel Usdum, the salt mountain at the south end of the lake. It seems to avoid the forests; for though very common near the mouths of the ravines east of Jordan, we never observed it in the vast forests of Gilead and Ajlun. It is in high repute among the Bedouins for the chace; and trained birds are as valuable as in North Africa. But though we frequently saw it in the possession of Arab sheikhs of high degree, we never had an opportunity of witnessing the sport, as we only met them on the march."

Mr. E. Cavendish Taylor says the "Lanner is decidedly the most abundant of the large Falcons in Egypt, where it breeds and is resident, I believe, all the year round. In the month of January 1864, I shot three specimens within a short walk of Cairo."

Mr. J. Clarke Hawkshaw informs me that when at Girgeh on the 19th of March, 1865, he "saw a Lanner eating a tame Pigeon on the sandbank by the water's edge; on my approach it flew with its prey a quarter of a mile further up the Nile, and, after being twice disturbed, retired to a mud-bank in the middle of the