

on the top of a dead tree, with his head turned over his shoulder; he seemed so mournfully conscious of the catastrophe which had befallen his family that I felt utterly ashamed at having added murder to robbery in my desire to possess myself of, as I supposed, an unknown bird. If the gun had still been in my hand, I could have shot him easily, as he then seemed indifferent to his fate; but he flew away before the weapon arrived, and thus escaped being involved in the ruin of his household.

“This was the only pair of *Falco sacer* ever seen by me or by any of my friends in this part of the country; I am inclined, therefore, to believe that the species is rare even here, though the bare and treeless chalk downs of the Dobrudska are frequented by innumerable Bustards, both great and small, if that be the food they covet.”

In the appendix at the end of the third volume of the ‘Birds of India,’ Dr. Jerdon says:—“This rare European bird, the Saker Falcon of old writers, is brought in tolerable abundance from the Hazara country and the Alpine Punjab generally, and is much used for hawking the Indian Houbara Bustard, Hares, &c.”

Professor Schlegel remarks that “The name of Saker, used in Europe since the time of the Emperor Frederick II. and Marco Polo, is evidently of Arab origin; for it is by this name the Arabs designate Falcons in general; it is consequently an error to render this word into the Latin “*sacer*,” which signifies, sacred. This error has led to many others, even to the extent of the bird being regarded by some as identical with the Sacred Falcon of the Egyptians.

“This species,” continues the Professor, “having been often confounded with some others nearly allied to it, its geographical distribution has not been clearly defined. The late Mr. Natterer killed several in Hungary; and the Dutch falconer, Mollen, tells us that when in Austria, in the service of Prince Trautmannsdorff, he received young Sakers, taken from the nest in the middle of May, from the frontiers of the same country. Pallas indicates two varieties of this species—a larger kind from the Uralian mountains, and a smaller from the deserts of Great Tartary. Both, he says, emigrate in winter. The smaller one appears to be the true Saker; he states that it constructs its nest upon the trees (or even the shrubs) which are found in the desert. The young, two or three in number, often leave the nest before they are full-grown, and follow their mother everywhere, uttering loud cries. Being easily caught, the natives take them at this period, as they are much esteemed for hunting, particularly by the Kalmucs. The bird inhabits the eastern parts of Europe and the western portions of Asia.”

The Plate represents a female, from the Collection of Lord Lilford, somewhat less than the natural size, and a young bird in the distance.