

THE LATE H. M. UPCHER.

HENRY MORRIS UPCHER, who died on April 6th, 1921, at Sheringham in Norfolk, at the age of eighty-two, was a well-known all-round sportsman, who as a shooter of game had few equals; so quick could he be with the gun that when in Palestine with Canon Tristram, whose expedition he joined in 1864, he earned among the Arabs the nickname of "a father of two eyes." On one occasion he brought down an Eagle-Owl and a Woodcock by a double shot, out of a cave high up in a bare ravine near Gennesaret, whence they were startled together by Tristram's shooting a Wall-Creeper. This journey, during which the party penetrated beyond the Jordan, was fruitful of great results, new species being secured, and the distribution of others extended (see *Ibis*, 1865, pp. 67, 241 *et seq.*).

Before this Upcher had already been to Iceland with C. W. Shepherd and Mr. George Fowler in 1862, when they visited a part of the island previously unattempted, but brought back no news of the Great Auk, nor were they able to decide what species of wild goose, or whether more than one species, bred there. At Vigr, on the north coast, they had an opportunity of seeing a large Eider farm, which has been graphically described by C. W. Shepherd in his *North-west Peninsula of Iceland* (p. 104).

Having joined the British Ornithologists' Union so far back as 1864, Upcher had been for many years its senior living *elected* member.

Always a supporter of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society, which he joined as far back as 1871, Upcher became a Vice-President, besides filling the Presidential chair in 1883-4. Especially was he concerned with the welfare of the birds of his own county, and detesting indiscriminate shooting, his Presidential address resolved itself into an appeal for their more adequate protection. In Volume IV. of the Transactions will be found a most interesting paper, entitled "A Day's Bird-Nesting in Norfolk" (*N.N.Tr.*, IV., p. 679), chiefly about the ducks on Wretham meres, always a great resort for the *Anatidæ* which there receive protection. We can, however, hardly accept the story of a Merlin taking a Curlew on Wells saltings (*N.N.Tr.*, III., p. 576). Upcher did not himself see the bird, which was more probably a tiercel Peregrine, a not uncommon migrant on the coast.

Although the late Mr. Upcher showed little taste for

handling the pen at any time, he frequently contributed short notes to the *Field*, and in a few instances to other journals. Very remarkable was his experience with a Great Bustard (*vide* the *Field*, April 3rd, 1876), a magnificent old male, which for several weeks frequented a field of coleseed on his west Norfolk estate, where the writer will not easily forget crawling behind a hedge to see it, and eventually getting within about two hundred yards; even then the Bustard did not resent the intrusion for some time, but at last flew away. On hearing of its arrival Lord Lilford promptly sent down a female from his aviaries at Oundle, and when that died another to replace it; but it was of no avail, for the cock Bustard showed no inclination to mate, and at the end of February migrated and was not seen again.

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