



A NEST IN THE OPEN



ber from four to twelve. The greater number of nests have eight eggs. I have often found the nests lined with dead beech leaves, when the colors so harmonize that the eggs are very hard indeed to see. There is, as a rule, very little lining except a few leaves and still fewer feathers from the bird herself. Incubation lasts about twenty-eight days; some authors say twenty-four, others twenty-six or even twenty-eight. I am told by one of the keepers in the heart of caper country that it is invariably twenty-eight days; as he is a most keen and close observer of Nature, I pin my faith on his estimate. Of all birds I think the caper is the best mother. She will not readily leave the nest when the eggs are becoming hard set, and when the chicks are hatched she is most devoted; shamming illness, she will actually fall head over heels, lie on her side and raise one wing as though dying. Some others are far bolder and will attack the intruder. Only last spring I found a brood about three days old, and was very keen to photograph some of the chicks, which immediately crouched down and remained perfectly still while I stood and looked at this most interesting of family groups. The mother bird suddenly roused herself and came straight at me, leaping as high as my face and striking at me with both feet and wings. She took great care to attack at a reasonable distance, I noticed; but I have heard of them actually striking a man in the face. A few years ago I found the traces of a most severe combat. I was attracted to a tree trunk by a number of large feathers, and on going up to them saw a caper on her nest; the ground around was literally strewn with feathers from wings, tail and body. Who had been the opponent I cannot say. It may have been a stray cat run wild, or a stoat; at any rate, it had suffered defeat after what was evidently a protracted engagement. I have seen several broods of chicks, and find that, when they are a week old or more, the mother generally runs or flies a short distance, uttering a clucking note, whereupon the whole family scatter at an incredible speed; so independent are they that not one will follow another, but every one strikes out a line for himself. I have never been able to take a satisfactory photograph of a chick; the young birds never seem to tire; it is utterly impossible to get one to sit at ease for a moment. On one occasion I caught one and carefully covered him up with a cloth, under which he remained perfectly content, and, meanwhile, I rigged up the camera in readiness to take a snap of him in suitable surroundings; but when I began to get him into these surroundings he stoutly declined by bolting in every direction. All the time I could hear the mother clucking, and not being able to keep her waiting any longer, I gave it up. If there is one thing I cannot resist, it is the call of distress of a mother bird. I have spoiled many a picture because the old bird would keep calling; there is something in the tone of entreaty which is too much for me. How some people can enjoy watching a parent bird

ber. In the ordinary way they are by no means noisy flyers, in fact, they are particularly silent for their large size and weight, and they have great power of swerving to avoid obstacles, which, considering their bulk, is rather exceptional. It is not unusual for old and barren hens to assume the plumage of the male bird, some having been shot in which the resemblance has been so remarkable as to make it a matter of difficulty to tell one from the other.

This article has already grown to too great a length, much as I should like to have dealt with the methods of trapping these birds in Sweden, etc. I must deny myself, and again refer the reader to Mr. J. A. Harvie-Brown's book, i.e., "The Capercaille in Scotland".

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"We note that, here as elsewhere, the Note is careful to speak of the Moorish government and not of Abdul Aziz; possibly there may be liabilities of a personal nature, with which Mulai Hafid could hardly fairly be saddled. There is to be responsibility for the debts of

"The great significance of the habit, which has been adopted or has imposed itself upon British statesmen of both parties, of rather considering the possible effect of their own

"We can only hope that Mulai Hafid will be speedily recognized, and then left to justify by his rule the throne he has admittedly won.

actions upon their followers than of determining their course according to definite principles, lies in the demands which it makes upon the mass of the people. When the statesman waits to see what his followers think, he throws upon them the responsibility of government. Probably this is exactly what commends itself to the theoretical advocates of democratic institutions. But the system implies in the people upon whom the responsibility is thus thrown qualities of character and intelligence of a very high order. The democratic theory asserts that in such cases the demand produces the supply."

Elkeberg, the Swedish discoverer of tantalum, gave the name Tantalum to the metal now used as a filament for electric lamps, because of the difficulties that he encountered while investigating it, says the Engineer. "It is only recently that tantalum has been obtained in a state of purity, and the rapidity with which it has been produced in response to the demands of commerce and industry is almost unprecedented. Only a little while ago the minerals from which tantalum is obtained was so rare that not enough could be found to supply specimens to all the mineralogical museums. Now Australia alone produces more than seventy tons of tantalite a year. This does not seem a very great quantity, but it is to be remembered that a single pound of tantalum suffices to furnish 23,000 lamps, each of twenty-five candle-power."

"British Ass" writes to the Pall Mall Gazette stating that "attractive and useful abstracts" of Dr. F. Darwin's presidential address at the British Association meeting might very well have been published, adding:—"You what are the facts? On Thursday morning the great heart of the people of London was appeased by its journalistic guides, philosophers, and friends as follows: I copied their contents bills on the bookstall at my own suburban station:—'Earl and Gaiety Girl Married. Special Interviews. 'Earl Marries Gaiety Girl. Illustrated.' 'Wife and Boy Friend. Lady's Dramatic Suicide. Two Juices for one Inquest.' 'Striking Photos, Earl Poolett and his Bride.' 'Gaiety Girl Weds Peer.' Only two bills that I saw mentioned in the B.A. meeting or the address. Very well have the newspapers we deserve."