

flight, and preys upon the greater quadrupeds. Indeed the continued existence of the bird has been alleged as late as 1861 and 1863!

On the great map of Fra Mauro (1459) near the extreme point of Africa which he calls *Cavo de Diab*, and which is suggestive of the Cape of Good Hope, but was really perhaps Cape Corrientes, there is a rubric inscribed with the following remarkable story: "About the year of Our Lord 1420 a ship or junk of India in crossing the Indian Sea was driven by way of the Islands of Men and Women beyond the Cape of Diab, and carried between the Green Islands and the Darkness in a westerly and south-westerly direction for 40 days, without seeing anything but sky and sea, during which time they made to the best of their judgment 2000 miles. The gale then ceasing they turned back, and were seventy days in getting to the aforesaid Cape Diab. The ship having touched on the coast to supply its wants, the mariners beheld there the egg of a certain bird called *Chrocho*, which egg was as big as a butt.* And the bigness of the bird is such that between the extremities of the wings is said to be 60 paces. They say too that it carries away an elephant or any other great animal with the greatest ease, and does great injury to the inhabitants of the country, and is most rapid in its flight."

G.-St. Hilaire considered the *Aepyornis* to be of the Ostrich family; Prince C. Buonaparte classed it with the *Inepti* or Dodos; Duvernay of Valenciennes with aquatic birds! There was clearly therefore room for difference of opinion, and Professor Bianconi of Bologna, who has written much on the subject, concludes that it was most probably a bird of the vulture family. This would go far, he urges, to justify Polo's account of the Ruc as a bird of prey, though the story of its *lifting* any large animal could have had no foundation, as the feet of the vulture kind are unfit for such efforts. Humboldt describes the habit of the condor of the Andes as that of worrying, wearying, and frightening its four-footed prey until it drops; sometimes the condor drives its victim over a precipice.

Bianconi concludes that on the same scale of proportion as the condor's, the great quills of the *Aepyornis* would be about 10 feet long, and the spread of the wings about 32 feet, whilst the height of the bird would be at least four times that of the condor. These are indeed little more than conjectures. And I must add that in Professor Owen's opinion there is no reasonable doubt that the *Aepyornis* was a bird allied to the Ostriches.

We gave, in the first edition of this work, a drawing of the great *Aepyornis* egg in the British Museum of its true size, as the nearest approach we could make to an illustration of the *Rukh* from nature. The actual contents of this egg will be about 2.35 gallons, which may be compared with Fra Mauro's *anfora*! Except in this matter of size, his story of the ship and the egg may be true.

A passage from Temple's Travels in Peru has been quoted as exhibiting exaggeration in the description of the condor surpassing anything that can be laid to Polo's charge here; but that is, in fact, only somewhat heavy banter directed against our traveller's own narrative. (See *Travels in Various Parts of Peru*, 1830, II. 414-417.)

Recently fossil bones have been found in New Zealand, which seem to bring us a step nearer to the realization of the Rukh. Dr. Haast discovered in a swamp at Glenmark in the province of Otago, along with remains of the *Dinornis* or Moa, some bones (femur, ungual phalanges, and rib) of a gigantic bird which he pronounces to be a bird of prey, apparently allied to the Harriers, and calls *Harpagornis*. He supposes it to have preyed upon the Moa, and as that fowl is calculated to have been 10 feet and upwards in height, we are not so very far from the elephant-devouring Rukh. (See *Comptes Rendus, Ac. des Sciences* 1872, p. 1782; and *Ibis*, October 1872, p. 433.) This discovery may possibly throw a new light on the traditions of the New Zealanders. For Professor Owen, in first describing the *Dinornis* in 1839, mentioned that the natives had a tradition that the bones belonged to a bird of the

* "*De la grandezza de una bota d' anfora.*" The lowest estimate that I find of the Venetian anfora makes it equal to about 108 imperial gallons, a little less than the English butt. This seems intended. The ancient amphora would be more reasonable, being only 5.66 gallons.