Bowdler Sharpe Collection

rows here —
I have seen a Kite here, and one day I had a rare Ornithological treat. For nearly 20 minutes I watched an Osprey eating something presumably a fish, on the other side of the Loire, which is very broad here.
I have not done much in the nesting way yet, for the good reason, that, although it seems to me rather late, most birds are only just beginning to think of breeding. I have found 2 Magpies' nests, one with 7 eggs, which are now hatched. When they are fledged, I am going to take a young one, and have him hopping about my room tame — better company than the Mossoos, at any rate! — I only hope no small boy will find the nest first. I have also found a Carrion Crow's nest with 5 eggs — almost broke my neck over that business, as it was at the very

27th April 1890

chez M. le Pasteur Rotti,
Chatillon-sur-Loire,
Loiret,
France.

Dear Mr Sharpe,

I am going to write you another yarn, and hope it won't bother you. Mother told me she had a letter from you very kindly asking her for the Boat-race. Didn't she tell you my address?
Thank you awfully for saying you would propose me for the B. O. U.! It was awfully good of you! The election is very soon now, isn't it? I do hope I will be elected.
Porter sent me the last no. of Ibis. I always read with great interest your writing on M. Bornes. At Winchester, especi-

stop news for fear of being over weight, so with much love,
Yours affectionately
H. Symes Leycester Boodle

ally, it was interesting, because one of my best friends was a namesake of mine, the future Rajah of Sarawak, — the eldest son of Sir Charles Brooke — who could tell me something about all the places, Kina Balu, etc. — I send you a list of my coll. as far as it has got as yet. I know it will seem beastly childish and rotten to you, but it is a good deal to me, as it is the most I have ever done as yet, and also you must remember that it is all done under some difficulty, as it has to be done with the greatest secrecy, as it is against the law, & now, especially, the "chasse" is closed. Also, it is only done in the spare time when I am not at my lessons. If I had not my lessons, I'd do far more. But, as it is, one bird is about all I can manage comfortably in a day. Also, all my collecting, as I told you, is done with a rotten little saloon-gun, as I daren't use my big gun, for fear of the gendarmes, as I wd be nailed & carried off to the comity gaol in no time!

Those in red were not killed by me, although skinned by me, but everyone of the others — 36 species — were killed with that little toy — A keeper of a big castle near here — an awfully good sort — killed me most of the others — He trapped both the Buzzards — one is the ordinary dark brown fellow, but the other is a beautiful whitish variety — last year he trapped one pure white. I am afraid he destroys a good many of these harmless birds in the year, but as I thought it was better that I shd have them than that they shd rot on a barn door, he gives them to me now. Although A. rosea is very common here — I have only once seen a pure white-headed chap — of course on a Sunday!

The grey-backed European Coal Tit is very rare. I have or else, as is more probable, very local. I have only twice seen them, and only killed one ♀. Tree Sparrows are far commoner than House Spar-

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tip-top of a tremendously high very thin birch with hardly a branch the whole way, which only just bore my weight. By Jove! I was dripping when I did get to the top — it was a grind! I have also by watching them, discovered where a pair of Long tailed Tits are building their nest — high up in a spruce tree (rather an unusual place, isn't it?) — but that is all the nests I have found.

However, I have learnt a tremendous lot about birds since I have been here, compared to what I knew before, as I now may say I live among them as much as possible, as I don't care much for the Frenchmen's society. I should be utterly sick of the place if it were not for its feathered inhabitants. As it is, I am very happy here. Also, my skinning has improved im-

mensely — Mr. Kirs gives one some practice — although I can't hope to rival your daughter, some of whose specimens I saw in the Brit. Mus. — But still, when I come back, & you see some day what I have got, as I hope you will, if that won't bother you too much, you won't see such miserable bundles of feathers as I once showed you at Egerton Gardens! Do you remember a certain bird either a Cliffchaff or a Willow Warbler, which you could hardly make head & tail of? My present coll. is rather better than that! I hope you have been keeping quite well lately — quite got over the Influenza? — and also Mrs Sharpe and all your family — Would it bother you too much to send me a p. card after the meeting of B. O. U. to tell me if I have been elected or not. But never mind about it if it bothers you, as I know you have always lots to do! With I must