The Troodos Hunting Expedition, published from the ms of E. Croker

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The “Troodos Hunting Expedition”.  
A transcribed narrative from the records of Edward W. D. Croker (September 1885 or 1886)  
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The “Troodos Hunting Expedition” came to light recently, as a result of a message received by Mr John Elverson who was doing a research on a great grandfather Edward William Dunlo Croker (14 September 1849 – 10 May 1893). Edward, born at Merrion Square North, Dublin, was the fourth son of Captain Edward Croker of Ballynagarde, county Limerick and his wife Lady Georgiana Ellen Monck. The youthful Edward was admitted to the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, at the age of seventeen on the 1st of February 1867, Captain and Adjutant in the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders, he was seconded to the Cyprus Military Police as Adjutant and Quarter Master on April 1881. He was most probably recruited by Sir Robert Biddulph (1833-1918) while his regiment was in Gibraltar. During his service in Cyprus Military Police he seems to have been employed on the well-known “Locust Destruction Campaign”. In a letter to the High Commissioner, dated 1st March 1884, he refers to his successful employment in this campaign “during the latter part of last season” – a success partly ensued from his “colloquial knowledge of the languages” of the people living on the island. On February 1884 Captain Croker retired from the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, receiving a gratuity, with permission to retain his rank, and wear the prescribed uniform. He remained on the island, possibly for another couple of years. There are no biographical details available about this period, except from the fact, according to family records, that he participated in two race meetings, one in Nicosia (April 1885) and the other in Limassol (1886). Family records confirm that Croker was back in Ireland in January 1888. He died in May 1893 in Chicago from injuries sustained from a fall from his horse, whilst Adjutant of the English Military Tournament at the Chicago World’s Fair – The Columbian Exposition. He had a full military funeral and was buried at Graceland. The family still possesses, inter alia, two documents written by him, that shed some light on a period of his life with focus on Cyprus: First, an account of an expedition that he made to the Lebanon (September 1882) in order to procure horses and mules for the British Army on the eve of the battle of Tel el-Kebir, and of his return to Cyprus; and a narrative of a hunting trip that he and five regrettably unnamed companions made in the Troodos Mountains in September 1886 (possibly in 1885). While the first document which is in the form of a letter to Croker’s mother is in a very good condition (written in someone’s best handwriting – it is actually a copy of his original letter and dated 1893), the “Hunting Trip” has been written hurriedly on an inferior quality of paper and is in a very fragile state with one or two pages missing, plus parts of others. Unfortunately the two short parts missing comprise both the prologue as well as the epilogue of the text. Both documents have been meticulously transcribed by John Elverson. A careful reading of the longest second document confirms that the “Troodos Expedition” is much more than a typical sketch of a hunting trip, and hence deserves publication. Apart from being a primary source that belongs to a certain literary genre (see below), it has a sociological, historical and topographical interest, especially for the cypriologist and the student of nineteenth-century Victorian imperial culture. It is an amusingly clever – in expression and perception – account of an expedition (with an English twist!) that reveals ethnological and social habits and characteristics of the rural people of Cyprus at the time. Edward Croker’s account of the hunting group’s stay in Kykkos Monastery (founded by the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos [1081-1118]), and their dealings and conversations with the monks (whom he interestingly portrays as cunning and stingy), as well as his picture of the surrounding social and political environment, are the most entertaining and informative parts of his narrative. The text is published in its original, albeit transcribed, form. All linguistic customs and Victorian conventions have been preserved. Given that my research at the Cyprus State Archives procured no verifiable results as regards Croker’s companions I have made no effort at conjecturing in order to fill in the acronyms. Symbolisms and Metaphors Nineteenth-century British hunting literature, with large doses of hunting fiction, is immense. For the sociologist and the social historian these sources primarily constitute a literary reflection of intestine class divisions between the landowners and the rural community. Recently, Cultural Studies, especially in the context of Gender Studies, turn centre of the island. Troodos’ highest peak is Mount Olympos at 1,952 metres. Troodos mountain range stretches across most of the western side of Cyprus. 9 See my earlier account on Victorian periodical sources on Cyprus, from a political and sociological perspective, in K. Demetriou, “Victorian Cyprus: society and institutions in the aftermath of the Anglo-Turkish convention, 1878-1891”, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 21 (1997), pp. 1-29, and Victorian Texts on Cyprus (Nicosia: Research Centre of the Holy Monastery of Kykkos, Nicosia, 2000). 10 Panagia tou Kykkou, where one of the allegedly three surviving icons of the Virgin painted by the Apostle Luke is preserved. The monastery lies at an altitude of 1318 metres on the North West face of Troodos Mountains. See Agnes Smith Lewis, Through Cyprus (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1887), for a lively report on Kykkos and its inhabitants more or less at the time Croker visited the Holy monastery. See also David G. Hogarth, Devia Cyprus; Notes of an Archaeological Journey in Cyprus in 1888 (London: Sir R. Biddulph, 1889), and R. Lambert Playfair, Handbook to the Mediterranean: its Cities, Coasts, and Islands (London: John Murray, 1881). The monks, Playfair wrote, “are hospitable, and good accommodation for the night is to be had, for which a contribution to the “poor-box” is expected” (p. 178). Compare this statement with Croker’s below, part III. 11 See G. E. Mingay, Victorian Countryside (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 461ff.
ned attention to the concept of “Victorian masculinity”, in its manifold forms and expressions. One of them revolves around the emergence of sports and physical combat as an integral part of the idea of elite gentlemanship. Sports and game-playing were primarily acted through the public school system for boys. Prompted by the discoveries of natural science and biology, British boys were educated to become successful athletes, and thus distinguish themselves both intellectually and bodily. An additional reason for the cultivation of sporting culture was the British Empire itself, which, after the middle of the nineteenth century was deemed to be in danger. Athletic public school-boys would have made good recruits. The “ideal Victorian man” was defined as courageous, passionate and enduring, like hunters and adventurers, as well as knowledgeable and scientifically updated. That man would be expected to express his masculinity in a successful military career, thus materializing the cardinal virtue the nation required: patriotism. The role sport played (hunting included) in both Victorian Britain and its Empire is indisputably of vital significance and has therefore been the subject of an ongoing research. According to Mike Huggins, “press reporting of sport helped the dissemination of the imperial ideal, and helped create an imagined imperial community, one where an amateur athletic ethos was valued and Britons enjoyed a class, racial, and national superiority. Sport, like the theatre, juvenile literature, education and the iconography of popular art, became infused with the images of imperialism…”

John M. MacKenzie, emphasizes the role of hunting for the Empire and for the advancement of an imperial domestic ethos, marked by racial overtones. During the high noon of empire, MacKenzie states, “hunting became a ritualized and occasionally spectacular way of white dominance”, as well as a “necessary preparation and training for European expansion and conflict with other peoples”. Like other remote destinations of the British Empire, hunting, according to a contemporary commentator, “came to be regarded as an amusement for country gentlemen to Alexandria and Cyprus…” Mrs Brasseys, an early high-class traveller to Cyprus, reports that it was “very pleasant to go out hunting the next day of our arrival” on the island – such was the fascination in hunting in a foreign island, a recent possession of the empire. One of their amusements was hunting wild animals, like the moufflon (today a Cypriot national symbol, portrayed on coins, firms, emblems, and elsewhere). The moufflon, called Agrino, which comes from the Greek "wild", the target in Edward Croker and his company’s expedition, is a subspecies group of the wild sheep Ovis orientalis. Unregulated and excessive hunting led the Cypriot moufflon to near extinction in the 20th century. Today it is declared an endangered species, and it is protected by strict regulations and a conservation strategy.

The Text

The Moufflon Discovered

[Missing text] ... who inhabit the villages [on the wooded slopes] of the great Yallia forest, as it is called.

The summer encampment of the British troops and officials on Mount Troödos and the insatiable excursions made from thence by exploring spirits, led to it becoming pretty generally known that there was in reality an animal to be seen, which was neither a deer nor a sheep but resembled both in some ways. Naturally sceptical men, muttered “goat of course” on hearing the stories of the nature of the animal. After the natives had brought in an odd skin now and then, this soon proved the existence of the moufflon. Lack of knowledge of the wild country and the language prevented any expedition being made for a long time. [So the moufflon (or psokas, yabani koyun) as the Turks call him [remained an elusive and unknown game.]

At last a [chance arose when the Administration employed a man as Forestry Manager and he having taken up his quarters at Limini, a village on the skirt of the forest. Knowing the language well, he soon found men who knew every path and what is as important, every spring of water in the forest, for scores of miles in every direction. He then had but little difficulty in coming to close quarters with the moufflon and obtaining a fine specimen. The following season he continued his success and shot seven including a very fine nine year old ram.

The accounts of this sport caused several of the English residents to make attempts to share it, but no success resulted from their efforts. Though indeed one sportsman had at least a fair chance of making a bag, for a herd of some half dozen old rams were driven up past his ambush, but after he had pulled the trigger three times and failed to get his rifle to go off, an inspection of the weapon (a Martini Henry) showed it was without a striker. The state of mind of the unfortunate sportsman on discovering this may be better imagined than described!

At the commencement of the 1885 season, some of the officers of the Brigade of Guards then quartered in Cyprus made a short excursion after the moufflon into the very heart of the Yallia forest, but though they had good guides and saw some moufflon they failed to obtain a shot.

An expedition was then got up from Mount Troödos consisting of the writer and five friends who were to be reinforced at the rendezvous by a picked party of natives of the forest, all well known as experienced moufflon hunters under command of our friend W... who lived in these parts and who certainly knew more of the habits and customs of the moufflon than any other Englishman. While some years experience of the forest made him as safe a guide as any native. He kindly sent us many valuable hints before our party started, as to provisions and equipment and warned us that without good guides who knew every path and pass in the mountainous forest we might be lost for hours or even days! This we subsequently ascertained by experience, was no exaggeration.

The rendezvous was fixed at a place called Stavros tis Psokas or known shortly as Stavros. It is situated far down in the forest, about 35 miles from Mount Troödos and is conveniently placed for a hunting camp as it is near water and on one of the principal tracks which run through the forest, besides being fairly centrally situated as regards the best moufflon ground.

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The Expedition sets off

All being prepared we got under way from Tröodos early in September intending to halt at the celebrated monastery of Kykkos on our first night out.

Before starting a village priest offered his services as a guide, assuring us that he was the most experienced moufflon hunter in Cyprus: annually slaying numbers; that he knew where herds were to be found of not 5 or 6, but of 20 or 30 – and so on. All this we took to be vain babbling, but when the revered sportsman volunteered that if he showed us no sport then he should get no pay, we began to have more faith in his protestations. For never before did we hear of a Cypriot who of his own accord suggested so fair a bargain. We further reflected that as none of us knew the road or track to Stavros, a guide there at least might be useful and if by any chance W... was late in meeting us, our priest would then be invaluable. So we closed with his offer and we settled to pick him up at Kykkos.

Physically Pappa Yiann[i]s, as he was called, was a very fine specimen of humanity, about 6 feet high, broad shouldered and active. However, when it came to the subject of him being a Priest or indeed of his morality, the less said about him the better.

Pappa Yiann[i]s in his visiting robes was a wild looking customer, high features, strongly marked eyebrows and piercing eyes combined with a long black beard and flowing tangled hair, contrived to make him, in spite of his priest’s dress and queer chimney-pot shaped headdress, look far more like a leader of a band of robbers than minister of a peaceful village flock. If he looked wild when in his clerical dress, he indeed looked savage when divested of it and arrayed for the chase in a loose blue garment girt in at the waist, ragged breaches, huge knee boots and a blue handkerchief bound over his shaggy head!

To start a train of mules is always a matter of difficulty and the Cypriot muleteer is one of the most dilatory of his kind at the outset of a journey, but once he has set off he does, as a rule, his work well and rapidly. We had to undergo, on the afternoon we started, the usual amount of loading and unloading, again and again, so that each beast might carry only what its owner thought fair. The air rang with the vociferations of the muleteers as they wrangled about the disposition of the baggage. Then it was found that those of the party who were in charge of the transport, had underestimated the number of animals required. At the last moment, more mules had to be sent for in order to carry the remaining baggage. Meanwhile we started off with those mules that were ready, for we had to reach the monastery of Kykkos before nightfall if possible and the greater part of the track was unknown to us.

A very formidable train of baggage animals accompanied us, for although of course the personal baggage of each man was cut down as low as possible, yet owing to the remoteness of the place we were bound for, we had to take all sorts of provisions for man and beast. In addition to tents, camp beds, guns, rifles and ammunition, we had a large supply of tinned provisions, dozens of loaves of bread to feed ourselves and the muleteers and loads of fodder for the animals.

After leaving the camp at Tröodos we rode up towards the summit of Mount Olympus for a short distance and then branching off, we descended a rough narrow track down the north western slopes of the mountain. After about one and a half hours scramble, we passed the village of Prodromos and here we emerged from the forest and our way lay for 5 or 6 miles through lovely country. In front and on each side were bold hills and deep valleys all covered with vineyards, whose bright green foliage found a pleasant contrast to the dark bare sides of old Troödos which we had just left behind us. In the distance, as we descended a steep hill side, we caught a glimpse of the monastery of Kykkos perched on a high wooded peak. Beyond it and right away, as far as we could see, lay ridge after ridge of thickly wooded hills which stretched, as we knew, up to the great Yallia forest, where we were bound.

The evening was lovely and a fairer prospect no one could desire to look on than that vine district, glowing under the evening sun. The contrast of colour was exquisite, the bright green of the vine clothed hills near at hand softening into a deeper shade in the further distance. The whole panorama framed by the dark line of the distant mountain forest. Over this scene a transparent bluish mist seemed to shimmer, which produced a peculiar but exquisite effect.

We had however no time to spare, so hurrying on we soon reached the lowest valley and here the vine country ceased and our way lay along a dry, stony bed of a mountain stream or a torrent, as it would be when the rains came. Then there came a stiff climb up a woody hill and the track was an apparently endless series of winding around the hillsides, along paths which ran on the edge of precipitous slopes. To look down from these paths made one inwardly trust that one’s steed would make no false step. Rapid progress along such a track was impossible and with night falling and being still some miles from the monastery, the latter part of the journey was a very unpleasant task.

The road got rougher every minute until, at last it got so hard and the darkness was so great that most of us took to leading our mules or ponies and scrambling along as best we could with many a stumble and fall. Very welcome indeed was the sight of light at last, on a height not far above us and a final scramble up a steep hillside brought us to a broad level road leading up to the door of the monastery. The building looked imposing enough through the darkness, but we did not stay to gaze at it, and having paused our nags, we lost no time in paying our respects to the monks.

All monasteries in Cyprus, in return for certain concessions from Government, are bound to receive and entertain all travellers without charge, but as a matter of fact everyone is expected to pay and liberally too, for his entertainment. The chief monks will not accept any baksheesh, but the juniors will do so and gladly. Besides this, one is supposed to subscribe to the church or chapel attached to each convent and into which at some period of his visit, every traveller is bound to find himself ushered.

The Kykkos Monastery

We found the Kykkos Monastery was a very capacious rambling old building with room to hold a Regiment, but dirty to a degree. We clambered up some steep well worn stairs and in a long low passage, dimly lighted we found the head of the monastery and his attendant monks waiting to greet us. This we did with cordiality but as we knew no Greek and they no English, conversation rather languished. One of our party indeed professed to know some Greek and attempted to carry on a conversation but with little success. Subsequently we proved that his presumed knowledge of the Greek tongue was a fraud. We were also very hungry and thirsty so we were not sorry when a move was made to the great chamber. This was a large stuffy apartment entered by a low door, to get into which, a man of ordinary height had to stoop low. Such doors are common in many Cyprus houses and we never could find the reason why they are made so low. After a pause our nags, we lost no time in paying our respects to the monks.
le for people sitting at it to stow their legs under it and therefore one had to eat at arms length from one plate. The rest of the furniture consisted of the inevitable divan and an assortment of rickety wicker-bottomed chairs. An inner chamber presented a view of a dingy looking wooden bedstead whose very appearance stamped it as the home and hunting ground of that disgusting insect which creepeth in the darkness and which is indeed in most native houses in Cyprus a veritable pestilence.

Although we had now entered the refectory, yet no refreshment of any kind had been offered to us. This was so contrary to the usual custom of the natives that we were astonished. At last one of us asked for a glass of water and then the usual tray of glasses appeared, each glass filled with water along with a small dish of jam and a number of small spoons. Each guest takes a spoonful of jam and drinks a glass of water. This very simple refreshment is really a most excellent one and especially after long and hot travel as it acts as a welcome pick-me-up. On this occasion we did ample justice to it and trusted that it was the fore-runner of more substantial fare. As time went on though, no sign of any food appeared and as our baggage animals had not yet arrived, we began to despair. At length, one of our party, who could speak Turkish managed to convey to a boy waiter, who was resting for the night at the monastery, a knowledge of our wants. He shortly announced to us that a meal was in preparation and asked if we would like to try the celebrated red mastik of Kykkos. Knowing that the place was celebrated for a peculiarly good brand of this liqueur, we gladly consented and were soon discussing it over some of the ruby coloured liquid. To most strangers mastik, which is largely drank by the Greek population of Cyprus, seems a strong flavoured abomination. No doubt the first sips to a very nasty, tasting strongly of aniseed, but really good mastik is excellent taken as a liqueur and it is a capital tonic. The red mastik at Kykkos was distinguished by being mellow and without the strong flavour to which so many people object. Its ruby colour and fruity taste led to its being christened by us as the “firm old fruity” and the monks seemed pleased at the justice done to their famous liqueur.

Our repast was then announced, not a very plentiful one, as they only gave us two moderate sized fowls among six hungry men. However they gave us an unlimited supply of fried potatoes and these along with plenty of brown bread were sufficient to satisfy our hunger. We were also given plenty of the native wine or “Mauro” a wholesome bread were sufficient to satisfy our hunger. We were also given plenty of the native wine or “Mauro”a wholesome alcohol. When diluted of fried potatoes and these along with plenty of brown

ven no water. We hunted for the groom in charge and in the search for him, we unearthed an extraordinary collection of miscellaneous humanity which seemed to have established a set of burrows or lairs in a long low building, the back wall of which was cut out of the slope of the hill. These slumberers, of which there were about sixty, we afterwards found were the servants and labourers attached to the monastery. We failed to find our groom, so had to lead the horses down a steep path to a drinking trough. Having attended to our animal's wants, we returned to the monastery to see about our own sleeping accommodation. We were offered quarters in some of the numerous dark looking bunks with latticed doors which opened from the long main passage, but declined as they looked so horribly stuffy and dirty. At last, with the help of our own camp beds, we got settled down in the eating room and the room off it, some of us were also in the passage itself, which was at any rate airy. One of us bolder than the rest, actually braved the horrors of a “loose box” as we called the bunk beds! All of us alike were very worried by the inevitably lively fleas, but all being fairly tired, were soon asleep.

Only to be roused at about 3 a.m. by the heavy tramping of a lay brother, whose duty apparently was to rouse the monks in time for early matins. Rather than knock in an ordinary manner at the door of each cell, his method of doing this was by sounding a long rat-tat-tat a-ratat-tat AT-TAT, like a footman at the knocker of a street door. This noise having subsided, the lay brother proceeded to another mode of banishing slumber by seizing the rope of the huge Chapel bell. He pealed forth a most discordant clatter, winding up with a rattle and a bang, bang, enough to rouse the Seven Sleepers. His games were not yet over, for he then put in motion a new instrument of noise making, what it really was we could not see, but the effect was just what a hard pea might produce if rattled violently about in a tin kettle. The lay brother was evidently an expert at the working of his instrument, for he worked out some astounding roulades from it, winding up with a crescendo and a ---- (indecipherable word) movement which concluded, as the door knocking and bell ringing had done, with a loud bang, bang. At the conclusion of this performance we all burst out laughing, the effect was so ludicrous.

The monks, having arisen, proceeded to their chapel, where for hours arose the musical chanting, which is characteristic of the services of the Greek Church in Cyprus. Being, of course, now thoroughly awakened, we rose and finding the means of ablution in the monastery of a very limited kind, we sallied out and descended to the spring, at which we had watered the horses the night previous. Then, with a little management, we each secured a substitute for a morning “tub” in icy cold water, to the intense astonishment of any of the monkish fraternity who witnessed our proceedings. The horses were then looked to and enquiries made after our missing baggage, but it had not yet turned up. This was serious business as most of our provisions were amongst our missing baggage, as well as some of the guns and ammunition. It was impossible to move on until the remaining baggage arrived as the monastery was the last trace of civilisation we would meet with before entering the forest, where our expedition would have to be entirely self-supported.

Dry bread and hard looking cheese were the only victuals produced by the monks for our breakfast and all enquiries as to eggs, fruit or jam produced but a shrug of the shoulders and “En Eshie”, meaning “nothing” or “nothing is none”. This we knew to be very far removed from the truth as the monastery is one of the richest in Cyprus, but all our efforts backed up by the strenuous attempts of our

18 Mastic, as spice, continues to be used in Greece to flavour spirits and liqueurs. There are scanty references to mastic liquor made at Kykkos. See, e.g., W. Bevan, Notes on Agriculture in Cyprus and its Products (London: Hazell, Watson & Viney, id., printers, 1919), p. 39, and Hugh Montgomery Sinclair, Camp and Society (London: Chapman and Hall, 1926), p. 141. On the other hand, the monastery has been ever since famous for the production of the red zivania, a traditional Cypriot beverage, a distillate produced from pomace (or marcis), the residue of grapes that were pressed during the wine-making process. See Samuel W. Baker, Cyprus as I Saw it in 1879 (London: Macmillan, 1879), p. 120.
would-be Greek conversationalist failed to obtain what we required. However a Turkish lad, servant to one of our party was set to cook some beef steak from a bit of beef that we had brought with us, so we had a good breakfast after all. A messenger was despatched to Troodos to hurry up the missing baggage and then we had nothing to do but lounge about and look at the view.

The view from the monastery was indeed very fine. There is little or no forest close to Kykkos, but the steep hills and deep valleys in every direction, when not cleared for vineyards, were covered all over with shrubs and brushwood and the whole scene from the door of the monastery was worth travelling a long distance to see. Mount Troodos lay grim looking as ever, towering over the surrounding hills and in the clear bright air seemed not six miles off as the crow flies, though we knew in reality that over fifteen miles of rough road lay between us and it.

Sauntering around the monastery, we were astonished at the size and number of the out-buildings and also by the scores of hangers-on in the establishment. There seemed to be over a hundred of these people, not including the monks. We were told that these people begin by wishing to qualify as priests and so enter the service of the monastery. They receive no pay but, in return for their labour are given board, food and clothing. If, when we sat down at the uncomfortable table, that was brought that the long lost baggage had just turned up, the effect of "En Eshie" potatoes was kept up, it would be a case of instructing him to acquaint the major-domo that if the story was to be believed, so calling for Hassan, our Turkish retainer, we asked for more fowls, "En Eshie" was the reply, we asked for more fowls, Hassan the Turk, informed us as to which of the attendants expected the biggest "bakshee" and which a smaller amount. Matters having been adjusted, we proceeded to bid farewell to the heads of the monastery. Here more delays occurred, we could not be suffered to depart without paying a visit to the Chapel.

The Chapel contains a famous picture or rather an engraving on brass of the Virgin and our Saviour. It is supposed to be of a peculiarly holy nature and the features of the figures are always covered over, for what reason we did not learn. The frame of the picture is sufficient to draw, annually a great crowd of pilgrims to the Panayia [the Holy Virgin] or fair in connection with the monastery.

As the day wore on we found time hang heavy on our hands, so we set out to find the missing baggage had not turned up and an exploration of the neighbouring hills and valleys after the red legged partridges that we could hear calling to each other, proved unsuccessful. However, quite close to the monastery, we found a vineyard full of the most excellent grapes, on which we feasted. The monks did not appear in the least put-out by this direct confutation of their imputed assurances that no fruit was to be had, on the contrary they laughed heartily at our reproaches and joined gladly in devouring the grapes we had picked.

Evening came at last and as we had finished all the provisions we had brought with us and there was now a sign of our missing baggage, we had to make enquiries as to dinner, for it was by this time clear to us all that we had unwillingly out-stayed our welcome at Kykkos. If we did not ask for what we required, we would be given nothing. The reply to our enquiries as to what we were to have for dinner was that roast fowls would be provided at 9.30 p.m. So far so good, but we were somewhat dismayed at finding, when we sat down at the uncomfortable table, that one meagre chicken and a few pieces of fried potatoes was considered by the major-domo of the monastery, as sufficient repast for six hungry men. We remonstrated and asked for more fowls, "En Eshie" was the reply, we asked for more potatoes, "En Eshie" again. This was really too much to get bored, so calling for Hassan, our Turkish retainer, we instructed him to acquaint the major-domo that if the story of "En Eshie" potatoes was kept up, it would be a case of "En Eshie baksheesh" with us, on our leaving. The effect of this threat was wonderful! Out sallied the attendants and soon returned with the news that plenty of potatoes were in the course of frying for us.

On waiting for the arrival of our potatoes, the news was brought that the long lost baggage had just turned up. This announcement was received with cheers and sallying out, we soon had materials for a good meal unpacked. This over, we prepared to turn in. The whole party elected to bivouac in the passage this night, as being more airy and just as clean as the reception room. There was one exception, I should say, our conversationalist preferred to remain in his "loose-box" of the night before. Before withdrawing there, he thought fit to wander up and down between our beds giving his ideas of things in general. We were all very sleepy and not particularly anxious to hear his views, but as he seemed inclined to prattle on all night, one of his hearsers rose and hurling a muleteer’s goad at him, induced him to depart abruptly.

Keating’s insect powder was in great request and by its means we secured a fair nights rest from the bloodthirsty insect denizens of the monastery. The rousing of the monks and the bell ringing however, had us all awake betimes next morning. We began to get our baggage animals loaded before day had broken but it was long after that time before the whole of our baggage was loaded. Then, what with breakfast and one delay after another, it was 7 a.m. before we were fairly ready to start. Hassan the Turk, informed us as to which of the attendants expected the biggest "bakshee" and which a smaller amount. Matters having been adjusted, we proceeded to bid farewell to the heads of the monastery. Here more delays occurred, we could not be suffered to depart without paying a visit to the Chapel.

The Chapel contains a famous picture or rather an engraving on brass of the Virgin and our Saviour. It is supposed to be of a peculiarly holy nature and the features of the figures are always covered over, for what reason we did not learn. The frame of the picture is sufficient to draw, annually a great crowd of pilgrims to the Panayia [the Holy Virgin] or fair in connection with the monastery.

As the day wore on we found time hang heavy on our hands, so we set out to find the missing baggage had not turned up and an exploration of the neighbouring hills and valleys after the red legged partridges that we could hear calling to each other, proved unsuccessful. However, quite close to the monastery, we found a vineyard full of the most excellent grapes, on which we feasted. The monks did not appear in the least put-out by this direct confutation of their imputed assurances that no fruit was to be had, on the contrary they laughed heartily at our reproaches and joined gladly in devouring the grapes we had picked.

Evening came at last and as we had finished all the provisions we had brought with us and there was now a sign of our missing baggage, we had to make enquiries as to dinner, for it was by this time clear to us all that we had unwillingly out-stayed our welcome at Kykkos. If we did not ask for what we required, we would be given nothing. The reply to our enquiries as to what we were to have for dinner was that roast fowls would be provided at 9.30 p.m. So far so good, but we were somewhat dismayed at finding, when we sat down at the uncomfortable table, that one meagre chicken and a few pieces of fried potatoes was considered by the major-domo of the monastery, as sufficient repast for six hungry men. We remonstrated and asked for more fowls, "En Eshie" was the reply, we asked for more potatoes, "En Eshie" again. This was really too much to get bored, so calling for Hassan, our Turkish retainer, we instructed him to acquaint the major-domo that if the story of "En Eshie" potatoes was kept up, it would be a case of "En Eshie baksheesh" with us, on our leaving. The effect
soon we came on a sad sight, which however is only too lucky enough to spy one.

side for a glimpse of the wily moufflon, for we were now along though, keen eyes searched every deep glen and hill little time to spare, to halt and gaze about us. As we rode view all the more striking.

everlasting monotonous green of the pine forest, made the with every change of light and shade. The change from the beautiful and the peculiar hue surprised all of us. There is the dense foliage around the top of every tree was really solid canopy around the top of each tree. The colouring of look down on them, as if the branches formed a regular out at right angles to their trunks. It seemed to us as we did from an elevated peak, was charming in the extreme.

trees more or less sparsely scattered over an area of several to allow our scattered baggage train to close up. We were seemed all one to him.

at a pace which we could not but admire. Up hill or down become displaced. Our reverend guide strode on in front muleteers to slacken speed or rearrange loads which had boughs of shrubs and trees were continually forcing the precipitous slopes as best we could. The surrounding about two hours we scrambled up steep hills and down for very long, but soon branched off on a mere track. For about two hours we scrambled up steep hills and down precipitous slopes as best we could. The surrounding country getting wilder every instant as we went. The baggage animals made very poor progress as the narrowness and roughness of the road and the frequent overhanging boughs of shrubs and trees were continually forcing the muleteers to slacken speed or rearrange loads which had become displaced. Our reverend guide strode on in front at a pace which we could not but admire. Up hill or down seemed all one to him.

After going about ten miles the Priest suggested a halt to allow our scattered baggage train to close up. We were now in very wild country, a sort of thin mountain forest, in parts covered with underwood: ilex, arbutus and such like shrubs. In the main, however, except at the lower part of the steep valleys, we saw hill sides but scantily cover ed with medium sized pine trees and barren of anything beyond a low sized scrub. After our halt however we soon came to a different looking bit of scenery, for on rising to a stony outcrop, we suddenly found ourselves in the beginning of that part of the country which is known as the Cedar Forest. This is in reality a misnomer, for it is not a forest at all, but a collection of venerable cedar trees more or less sparsely scattered over an area of several miles. Nevertheless, the effect looking down on it, as we did from an elevated peak, was charming in the extreme. All along the steep hill sides and the tops of the ridges were the cedars, with their grand boughs stretching stiffly all out at right angles to their trunks. It seemed to us as we looked down on them, as if the branches formed a regular solid canopy around the top of each tree. The colouring of the dense foliage around the top of every tree was really beautiful and the peculiar hue surprised all of us. There is no tree, except the blue gum eucalyptus that we knew of that had that exquisite blueish-green tint which changes with every change of light and shade. The change from the everlasting monotonous green of the pine forest, made the view all the more striking.

We were still far from our camping ground, so had but little time to spare, to halt and gaze about us. As we rode along though, keen eyes searched every deep glen and hill side for a glimpse of the wily moufflon, for we were now getting well into Moufflon Country, some of us were indeed lucky enough to spy one.

Half an hour’s ride took us clear of the cedars and soon we came on a sad sight, which however is only too frequent in the Cyprus forests. A vast tract of woodland entirely ruined and laid waste by wilful and wanton dest ruction. Acres upon acres of grand pines had been felled, apparently for no purpose, for all lay rotting where they fell. The loss to the vegetation by this destruction was ev ident by the marked barrenness and desolate appearance of the whole surrounding region. What the purpose was in felling these hundreds of trees, no one can tell. It is known that even to the present day, in spite of proclamations, fi nes and imprisonment, the Cypriot peasant will go to the labour of cutting down several trees to get the particular bit of timber he may require, if only for a pig trough, quite re gardless of any trees that may already be felled and which would equally well suit his purpose. No reasonable excuse or motive, as far as we know, has ever been given for this wholesale destruction of whole tracts of forest, especially in a district remote from all human habitation. Of course it occurred in the old days of Turkish misrule, but the Turks you find are a canny race enough, when you get to know them, so for what good they wasted time and labour in ruining the forests and thereby a climate of a province of their own, the Lord only knows.

Clear of this particular area of desolation, we came to a more fertile tract of country but we noticed the slopes to the valleys on each side of the road grew steeper and stee per and our friend, the priest intimated to us that we were approaching, so to speak, to within measurable distance of our goal of Stavros tis Psokas.

At length we arrived at the top of a really formidable looking descent and were informed that our camping ground lay at its base. The forest was pretty thick too at this place and we could see but a short way below us. Down we went, the hill getting more precipitous every minute. First one, then another dismounted, for really as one rode down, the ponies seemed as if they were taking deliberate “head ers” and it was a work of no small difficulty to remain in the saddle at all. As soon as we began walking down the hill, the strain on our knees told pretty well what the ponies had had to bear. None of us were sorry when after nearly an hour’s steep descent, we reached the bottom of the hill and found the path now lay along a little rapid stream who se banks were covered with bracken and brambles nearly chest high in places. We then came upon some peasants driving donkeys and were pleased to find that they had come from one of the nearest villages, ordered by W... to bring forage for our beasts.

Five minutes further on, we came upon a pretty large party of muleteers camped on a level bit of ground at the confluence of two mountain rivulets. In the background we saw the tents of a party from Troödos, who had been picnicking in the forest for the last week or so. As our bag gage animals were still struggling along the road and no immediate prospect of our provisions arriving, we gladly accepted their hospitable invitation to lunch, which was at once given us by the explorers and the ladies of their par ty. Having kindly excused our sitting down in our rough dirty clothes, we were soon enjoying a merry meal and exchanging accounts of our adventures. We heard that in a weeks stay, some four or five moufflon had been seen at a distance, but very little other game. We were warned that the walking and climbing were simply awful and indeed from what we saw of the surrounding hills from the camping ground, we could well believe that we had stiff work before us.

The camp was placed in a circular valley not over a quart er of a mile in circumference and was bounded on three fourths of its extent by the two streams before men tioned. Behind, the hills rose almost perpendicularly to a height of from 1,500 to 4,000 feet. At the back of the camp, the hill was thickly clothed with dense thickets of ilex and
golden leaved oak shrubs to nearly its summit, where the inevitable pine forest again appeared. The other hills were more or less open forests of pine. In the valley near the stream were some magnificent old plane trees and altogether it was as pretty a spot as one could desire for a camping ground.

Four beaters or guides had arrived from W... with a letter to say that he could not join us for two days but that the head guide, old Anastasi knew all the country and was a renowned moufflon hunter. We lost no time in interviewing him and found him a keen eyed weather-beaten old chap, who looked as hard as the proverbial nails and eager for the fray. We soon found out all we wanted to know, though as Anastasi was said only to speak Greek and none of us could speak that language, our conversation was carried on by C... telling the lad Hassan in Turkish what we wished to say. Hassan would then inform the old sportsman in Greek and the reply would come back through Hassan and C... for the good of the rest. Although we had not yet pitched our camp, T..., whose leave was short and K... determined to sally out to see what was to be seen before nightfall, by a quiet stalk. They started out at once with Anastasi and another sportsman named Argiro[s], of whom more anon.

We noticed that our boasting friend, the priest had begun to take quite a back-seat, now that we had arrived on the hunting grounds and was confronted by the real professional stalkers. We soon found out that beyond his walking powers, which were indeed first-rate, and a moderate knowledge of the forest, he was a rank impostor as regards his qualifications as a guide or stalker.

As soon as they saw T... and K... depart, the remainder set to work to pitch camp and get things generally in order. We fixed the site for our tents on two narrow ledges, higher up the hill side from the other camp. At night fall the stalkers returned, but had not seen any moufflon. They were loud in their praises of the splendid stalking ground and had seen several fresh tracks of the sought after animals. They agreed, however that the walking and climbing were a caution!

I must here remark that in relating our various adventures, though it was impossible for me to be like Sir Boyle Roche’s bird; in more places than one at the same time, yet I will put down what happened in each case, as if I was really present. I fancy that a fairly exact account can be gathered by this means, for as a matter of course, we discussed every incident among ourselves, over and over again, around our camp fire of an evening or when we met for our frugal luncheon on the hill side.

We joined forces that first evening with the exploring party, who were good enough not to be afraid of our attacks upon their commissariat and after a pleasant dinner, we retired to our camp and turned in early. Our couches were varied, from the regulation camp bed to a lair under a bush on a bundle of blankets. We were not without music to compose us to sleep. One amongst us was a most proficient performer on the piccolo or rather its substitute, the veritable tin penny whistle. We sought our respective lairs to the accompaniment of Irish airs, in first rate style.

The Moufflon Hunt Day 1

The next morning we were on the move before dawn. The icy cold stream below the camp furnished an excellent substitute for the morning tub. Then a hurried breakfast and we were ready for a start.

Our battery was varied, but formidable enough. Some of us trusted to a smooth bore, others to rifles and some settled to take both. The rifles were: a double barreled Express, a charming little weapon; a Winchester Repeater and two small bore weapons, not much heavier than rab-bit rifles. Of the native sportsmen, only old Anastasi was permitted to carry a weapon of his own. He had a breech-loading gun, presented to him by the Commissioner of his district, of this, he was inordinately proud. So much so that there was a chat against him to the effect that his wife complained that since he became possessed of this weapon, he had transferred all his affections to it!

All the natives carried queer looking sheepskin bags on their shoulders, hung by thongs. In these bags were gourds for water, and the days supply of food for themselves and for us too.

All being ready, we started off in Indian file led by Anastasi. Crossing the stream to the west of the camp, we at once began to climb an almost perpendicular hill, about 1,500 feet high. In addition to its steepness, the ground was covered in pine needles which made it tremendously slippery, we betide those whose boots were not provided with proper nails, for the want of them about doubled the labour of climbing.

Although the sun was barely up and the morning air was sharp and cool, yet by the time we reached the top of the first hill, we were all as warm as was pleasant, if not much more so. Anastasi alone seemed neither blown nor hot. He trudged along at an even pace with his gun lying across his shoulders and held with both hands. This fashion of carrying arms is in great vogue among Cypriots, but it is certainly dangerous practise in company. We never found much advantage in it, though the natives always declare that it is a help when going up a hill.

When we arrived at the top of the hill, or rather at the top of one of the highest shoulders of the hill, we all sat down and got our glasses out. All that is, except for Anastasi, whose sight was marvellous. We scanned every ridge and valley but with no result. We set off, winding down a goat path about six inches wide along the side of a steep hill until we reached a ferny gorge where there was a spring of water. Here gourds were filled and we all had a welcome drink of the ice cold water. We were joined here by a queer looking black lurcher belonging to Anastasi, by name Arabis. This dog was said to be useful if a moufflon was wounded.

We were off again, and up now for another stiff climb until we reached a saddle back ridge from which a very extensive view was obtained. Here again, we sat down and the whole ground before us was thoroughly searched over. No one could have desired a finer expanse of stalking ground, for miles the open forest stretched in every direction, intersected with deep valleys and broken by the steep ridges which rose one beyond the other as far as the eye could reach. The valleys were more or less covered with thickets of ilex and arbutus shrubs but the hills were almost bare except for the pine trees, allowing an uninterrupted view to be obtained of the greater part of the ground.

We learnt that the moufflon keep to the high ridges at night and that they begin to move about in the early morning. They then descend gradually to some favourite drinking spot and lie in the shade during the heat of the day, again moving upwards towards evening.

It is most difficult to the unpractised eye, to spot a moufflon, especially if it is lying down, for the colour of its coat so nearly resembles the red-brown of the pine needles. Until he moves or exposes some of the white of his belly or of his queer scut of a tail, most people might look directly at one for a quarter of an hour or more and never detect him. Then again, during the day they invariably lie in the shade after the sun gets up at all high and this adds to the difficulties in seeing him.

As we sat and searched every inch of ground with our eyes and binoculars, we were all struck by the intense silence of the forest, not a bird’s call was to be heard.
and there was not even a breath of wind to stir the leaves of the trees. A careful reconnaissance of the ground in our neighbourhood revealed no sign of game and the only excitement was the discovery of the form of some animal lying in the shade of a pine at the bottom of the hill opposite to us. Opinions expressed in the most careful whispers differed as to the nature of the animal and even old Anastasi was not quite sure, but was inclined to believe that it was only a goat. At length the silence of the forest was broken by the faint tinkle of a goat’s bell and soon one and then another of a herd of goats appeared and the animal we were watching rose and joined its comrades. This was not the last time by any means that goats raised false alarms. Thousands of the brutes roam in a semi-wild condition over this entire region, doing incalculable damage to the young trees but the island’s government takes no real measures to lessen their ravages.

It was no use our attempting a stalk if all our large party kept together. It was decided that four of us should go forward and keep watch over the paths which led out of a certain deep wide valley and over one of the main ridges into another favourite resort of the moufflon. While T... guided by Argiro[s] on one side of this valley and J.K... with Anastasi on the other, were to do a bit of stalking up the valley. If they were not successful they would at least, we hoped, drive any animals that were about up to one of the paths commanded by the guns that had gone forward. It took a long walk to get all the foremost guns into position and at last we found ourselves posted on a wide semi-circular ridge overlooking a deep valley in which was very thick cover. Between the various spurs which stretched from the main ridge into the valley, were gullies more or less deep and it was evident that any moufflon moving forward would certainly pass up one or other of them. K... and C... commanded the passes on the near side with the Priest in attendance, while Th... and H... with a couple of half grown lamb came galloping past within a couple of hundred yards of him. Argiro[s], who was carrying T...'s gun, pointed in an excited manner down the valley and there, sure enough, appeared two splendid ram moufflon from one to the other. It was no use our attempting a stalk if all our large party kept together. It was decided that four of us should go forward and keep watch over the paths which led out of a certain deep wide valley and over one of the main ridges into another favourite resort of the moufflon. While T... guided by Argiro[s] on one side of this valley and J.K... with Anastasi on the other, were to do a bit of stalking up the valley. If they were not successful they would at least, we hoped, drive any animals that were about up to one of the paths commanded by the guns that had gone forward. It took a long walk to get all the foremost guns into position and at last we found ourselves posted on a wide semi-circular ridge overlooking a deep valley in which was very thick cover. Between the various spurs which stretched from the main ridge into the valley, were gullies more or less deep and it was evident that any moufflon moving forward would certainly pass up one or other of them. K... and C... commanded the passes on the near side with the Priest in attendance, while Th... and H... with a couple of the natives took post at the further side. This part of the valley was over a mile across and when in position, the guns were invisible to each other. This was unfortunate for it was of course impossible to signal the approach of a moufflon from one to the other.

Once posted, all around us was as still as death and the only living things apparently in our vicinity were a stray wood pigeon or two. Later on a huge shadow floated over the ground and looking up we could see a magnificent golden eagle soaring majestically through the clear blue sky above us.

Half an hour’s waiting passed and then the “old Buck” as we now irreverently styled our Priest, who was crouching near C... pointed in an excited manner down the valley and there, sure enough, appeared two splendid ram moufflon moving noiselessly up over the pine needles at a walk. When first seen they were a couple of hundred yards off, but came on unsuspicous of any danger as they had not the wind of their enemies. They came to within a hundred yards of C... Unfortunately C... had resolved on trusting to the wind of their enemies. They came to within a hundred yards and the Priest, before he could be stopped, hurled some more ill savoured odour. At any rate, the beasts were gone and the priest, before he could be stopped, hurled some huge rocks down the steep slope in the direction the rams had gone. The noise of these crushing down several hundred feet effectually spoiled the chance of any other animals coming that way and not only that, but must have had a fatal affect on the stalking of the parties below. As a matter of fact, the noise started off a herd of three that had been marked into a valley by Anastasi and J.K.....

The various divisions of our party saw no less than twelve moufflon in the course of their stalk. Nine being in one herd, some grand rams among them, but here also luck was against them and none came within shooting distance. But for the vagaries of our priest, they would have had a fair chance of stalking that herd. T... also saw game, but he had not long left the rest and was going quietly along a ridge with his guide, through a most likely looking bit of ground when he heard a clattering along the hillside and presently a fine ewe and its half grown lamb came galloping past within a couple of hundred yards of him. Argiro[s], who was carrying T...’s rifle, implored him by signs to fire, but T... had no wish to injure the matron and allowed her to proceed on her way with her little one. The ewe is much smaller than the ram, has no horns and is much lighter in colour. Both the ewe and lamb possess the same unmistakable sheepish face as the ram moufflon.

After a long, hot scramble down the hills from our respective posts we all joined forces on the banks of a shady little stream for lunch. We had worked hard for over six hours, so copious draughts of cold water just qualified with a “drop of the crathur” was very acceptable and sharp appetites soon made short work of our provisions. From the difficulty in carriage across this terrain, we had only a tin of potted meat and some bread with us, but Anastasi supplemented this by producing some dried figs and almonds, a most excellent dessert. Later experience showed us that much hard work could be done after a midday meal of Cyprus dried figs and native brown bread. While we were resting and smoking after our food, we could hear old Anastasi and the other officers quietly murmuring, “two more of us that much hard work could be done after a midday meal of Cyprus dried figs and native brown bread. While we were resting and smoking after our food, we could hear old Anastasi and the other officers quietly murmuring, “two more of
After a short rest, we started again, T..., K..., and C... with the priest and Argiro[s] had to climb up a terrifically steep hill in the full sun. It was a very severe task as the sun was by now very powerful. Anastasi and J.K... had also to ascend another steep slope while Th... and H... had the luck to have nothing worse to encounter than a rough track scattered with the boulders of a water course which eventually led back to the camp. The afternoon's sport was nil, much severe walking and scrambling, but no more moufflon were seen. K... indeed thought that he saw one and with the priest descended a deep valley to try and stalk it, but in the end saw nothing. In the meantime C... contrived to take a wrong turn on the hillside and got lost for a while.

Everyone suffered badly from thirst during the homeward march and one of us on reaching a spring, some miles from camp seriously thought of remaining there for the night. The final descent of the hills close to our camp was a pretty severe task for men who were pretty well tired and those unfortunate who had no proper nails in their boots now suffered severely. On the steep slippery slopes they slipped, shooting down several feet at each step. C... who is not exactly a featherweight had a bad time, all the nails were out of his boots and he came flying down, providentially the priest was just in front of him lending what assistance he could in the darkness, for the sun had been set for some time. Every stumbling slide C... made, he tried to bang into the priest in order to stop any further rapid descent. If he had missed the priest, the slide would have surely ended in a bad fall. Each time he charged into the priest, the “old buck” gave forth loud cries of “Amān, Amān”, Turkish for “Mercy, Mercy”. However after about a dozen falls they reached the bottom of the hill.

Everyone made their way to the welcome blaze of the camp fire. We found that the hosts of the night before had departed but we soon had some hot soup and other food ready. There was a great run on the claret and water. We had been on the move for thirteen and a half hours, so after dinner and a pipe and having discussed the days work, we made an early adjournment to our beds.

The Moufflon Hunt Day 2

The next morning we were again up at dawn and used our new bathing place at the stream. It was a very pretty bathroom, a stream of clear icy cold water burst out of our new bathing place at the stream. It was a very pretty position, a crevice in a rocky bank scooping out a hollow in the bed of the stream, this we converted into a bath by clearing out stones and gravel until we had got it to the right shape and depth. Overhead a couple of old plane trees with their elegant drooping boughs and foliage formed a complete ring out stones and gravel until we had got it to the right shape and depth. Overhead a couple of old plane trees with their elegant drooping boughs and foliage formed a complete dome which reached down to the tops of the tall brilliantly coloured bracken which grew thickly on the banks of the stream while the ground all around was covered with wild violets, though not however in bloom at this season.

After breakfast we found that our priest had boasted so much to the other natives as to his prowess at finding large herds of moufflon that old Anastasi agreed to try those parts of the forest recommended by him. We set off up the terrible hill which we had descended on the day of our first arrival at Stavros, C... did not accompany us as he declined to move out until he had fixed some proper nails in his boots. There was also some cooking to be looked to as we passed over a ridge and T... instantly put up his rifle, but before he could draw a bead on him the brute had darted over a second ewe, then a third, then a fourth all appeared from a hilly side, in fact the tops of the steepest hills are often only a few inches wide. The paths run along so near the summit that one can look down both valleys without moving from the spot. We could therefore look out vast ranges of country when we were stalking and when we were moving along we could enjoy the magnificent scenery on both sides at once.

The days sport of the majority of the party can be briefly described as much weary climbing and walking, several false alarms from goats, but no moufflon seen. The priest did indeed rouse two semi-wild pigs which trotted off in front of K..., who however did not consider that the porkers were fit game to fire at, much to the disgust of the “old buck” who vainly implored him to shoot. We found out afterwards that there are a number of these feral pigs in the forest. They are the descendants of some old sow that escaped from a tame herd and had a litter in the forest. It is an annual custom now for the shepherds and other dwellers in the forest to hunt down and shoot these pigs, whose flesh is said to be excellent. Indeed fed on roots, nuts and berries with no chance of devouring disgusting refuse, there is no reason why the wild pig should not be first rate eating, which cannot be said of the rest of the unclean beasts which hang around Greek villages in Cyprus. These forest pigs still retain the parti-coloured coats of their civilised ancestors and none that we saw seemed in any way to have the grizzled coat of the true grim-grey wild boar.

After another long hard day we got back to camp at sunset. All that is, except T..., whose last day it was and who had done an extra round in the hope of getting a shot before he left Cyprus for the dreary post of Suakin. T... was guided by the hard bitten Argiro[s], they did not reach camp until long after the rest of us. He had walked for some hours without seeing any moufflon. Then at last in a valley some 500 yards below where he was standing, he thought he saw a moufflon lying down. He drew Argiro[s]’s attention to it, who after staring at it for a prolonged time, this worthy whispered “Su eshi Agrino”, meaning “quiet there is a moufflon”, Agrino being the Greek name for moufflon. T... whose eyesight was very keen, after a long scrutiny with his binoculars, was rewarded by seeing a fine ewe moufflon move out from the shadows of a tree where she had been lying and starting to feed. Argiro[s] was now all agog, gesticulating wildly and fairly shaking with excitement. T... however induced him to remain seated and presently a second ewe, then a third, then a fourth all appeared from their shelter among some rocks and scrub. Moments later a huge ram appeared leisurely, sauntering after his harem. T... was tempted to risk a shot, even at that distance, but the light was not good and there was a chance of heading them off and getting to much closer quarters. Argiro[s], by rapid signs pointed out the line to take and they crept forward as rapidly and as quietly as they could to the desired point. The moufflon however had either become alarmed or were moving off rapidly to another feeding ground, for when T... next saw them they were far beyond where he had hoped to head them. The big ram first halted for a second as he passed over a ridge and T... instantly put up his rifle, but before he could draw a bead on him the brute had darted over the ridge and the whole herd went off at a gallop into a deep wooded valley. So ended poor T...'s chances of securing the coveted moufflon head and skin!

We found that W... had arrived in Camp during the afternoon after about a twelve hour march from his place. C... had dinner ready for us and we all did ample justice to the repast. A villager had come in about two hours after we had left in the morning with the good news that is was reported that he had seen a ram moufflon and three ewes not far from camp. C... and the Turk Hassan had rallied out after them but failed to come across them.
as an authority on moufflon stalking was well pleased with questions and gave us some interesting particulars about his chosen sport of three seasons in the forest. He said the tenacity of life in the moufflon is very great and gave us several instances. In one case he and Arigro[s] were posted on opposite sides of a little gully while some other men beat an area of the forest driving towards them. Four fine rams were seen leisurely approaching and the concealed sportsmen were anticipating a grand bag. Suddenly a wretched little cur that was lying at Arigro[s]'s feet rushed out at the moufflon with wild barks. This of course caused a stampede and in the confusion both W... and his man fired at the same ram. This ram, though shot at close quarters and fairly riddled by a charge of slugs and two bullets in his vitals, ran for a considerable distance before rolling over dead. On another occasion a ram was hit by W.... in a vital part, but a little too far back, and he went off so strongly that a dog was slipped after him. Dog and moufflon disappeared into the forest and although the hunters hurried along the track, nothing could be seen or heard of the animals. At last, from a thicket of ilex bushes came a faint sound of an animal kicking the dead leaves. Hurrying to the spot W... found a fine ram stone dead and lying under him with his neck caught in a forked bough and the full weight of the moufflon, was the dog at its last gasp apparently from suffocation. The dog was soon rescued from its perilous position, but took a long time to recover. He had brought the ram to bay and in the ensuing struggle, the moufflon had evidently suddenly succumbed to its wounds and falling on the dog, had crushed him in the manner related. The dog could not breath, much less bark or howl and it was lucky that his dying struggles were heard when they were, another minute longer would have finished him. The dog in question was a great character, he was a cross between a greyhound and one of the famous Kamanian sheep dogs. He was in colour a kind of grizzled fawn. The length of his coat and his general appearance was that of a collie with a black muzzle and half nicked ears. He stood about 3 feet high and had a bobbed tail. He rejoiced in the title of Condonouri, which I believe were heard of his sagacity and speed when after a wounded moufflon and we had an opportunity of seeing him at work before long. The old bob-tail was a most reserved animal, seeming to take no notice of anyone but Anastasi, his master and W... to whom he frequently attached himself and in whose company he arrived in camp.

With many stories of the moufflon in the Troödos forest and the relating of many shooting adventures in South Africa and the Sudan, we whiled away the time to a pretty late hour. When we turned in, W... took up his quarters for the night in a hammock slung between two trees and old Condonouri mounted guard over him.

We heard a fox barking before we went to bed and throughout the night the dogs, at intervals, chased a most handsome gentleman, who seemed absolutely fearless and only left the precincts of the camp on compulsion when charged by both dogs at once. The fox, on these occasions snarled and yelped at his pursuers but as soon as he had gained a bit of shelter and the dogs had given up the pursuit, would invariably follow in their retreating steps with exultant yaps. There never was so bold a fox as this, I believe. All the chasing he got must have seemed like child's play to him for C... waking up about an hour before dawn, actually saw him not five yards off foraging on the spot where we had had our last night's al fresco meal! Up to this time our vulpine visitor had confined his pranks to annoying our dogs and inspecting the camp in general. Just before day break however, he thought fit to seize one of our newly bought fowls and endeavour to drag her away. It was lucky for us and for the hen that she had been tethered by the leg to a bush with a long piece of string, for that impeded the fox in his attempt to remove her. Her screams roused the whole camp. T... and C..., who were nearest to the scrimmage, dashed to the rescue and in their hurry rolled down a gully a gully that was about 10 feet deep, which bounded one side of the camp, T... had his gun with him, and vowing that, if he got the chance, his trip to the forest should have been a witness to many a wretched little cur lying at Argiro[s]'s feet, more so then to please him more than anything. We heard episodes of his history which was rather an eventful one. He was originally of Greek descent but not of the Cypriot brand. His ancestors having been employed under the Venetians in guarding the north-west coast of the island. They came from Asia Minor and their descendants are to this day a very independent wild lot of men. In some time of religious persecution under the Turkish rule, Anastasi was forced when a lad to embrace the Mussulman faith. He soon recanted and on marrying a Greek widow, once more became a Christian. He had spent all his life in or near the forest and had been a witness to many a wild scene of bloodshed. The forest shepherd's principle wealth is their flocks of goats and to defend them they will stop at nothing. Unfortunately for them the wild, little known country attracts all outlaws and men fleeing from justice. As these men must eat to live, they catch and kill the goats. The shepherds shoot at them without hesitation if they catch them and will dispose of them in the most barbarous manner. There was one case of a well known outlaw, whose raids on the flocks led to his death not more than eighteen months ago. He was caught and bound hand and foot and left to die, helpless without food or water in a lonely hut in one of the wildest parts of this wild region. No one was arrested for this crime, as anyone who knew the perpetrators kept their silence, no doubt quite satisfied as to the justice of the deed.

After breakfast, to the regret of the whole party and his own great disgust, T... had to depart. Our worthy friend the Priest, unable to stand the jeers of the other natives, resigned his post as Moufflon Hunter and departed, very indignant at not receiving a larger baksheesh. However, as he himself on his engagement had offered the terms "no sport, no pay", we only paid him the wages of an ordinary guide.

We then set off into the forest, our way lay up the very steep hill we had ascended on our first morning's stalk. This hill rejoices in the name of "Lagona tou Bambaki" or Bambaki for short. We were agreeably surprised to find how a couple of days had put us into good training and
steep as the hill was, we made nothing of it and marched away as fresh as four year olds. Also we derived great assistance from sticks that we each carried. About an hours tramp along the narrow paths, winding along precipitous hill slopes, brought us to where we were to split into separate parties. While W... and the natives were to beat a large tract of country, one by one we were posted in commanding positions. The indefatigable W... started off with his men over a fearful country. We all agreed we never saw hills so steep with trees and shrubs growing freely over them. We had no clinometer to take the angles but certainly a number of the slopes were as steep as it was possible for man to be, without being perpendicular. In fact when winding along the narrower goat tracks on these hillsides, it looked as if a slip would send you rolling down thousands of feet, the slope covered with the slipperiest pine needles. A curious effect was seen if a stick was set loose downhill with its end foremost, it would glide away like a snake and almost as noiselessly wriggling and twisting through the dead pine needles like a living creature until it disappeared with great velocity from sight.

Our first beat was unsuccessful and when we met for lunch at a spring we found W... had impressed into our service a goat herder, as beater. A wild looking fellow armed with a long single barrelled gun. All the natives were the proudest of these and were ready as usual to lend a hand. We all stumped along the treacherous surface of the rock with our sticks on our heads. After an hour's march we came to a slope of naked rock. A false step on this would have sent us over into a steep slanting hillside crossed a bare, smooth, slippery stretch of country, one by one we were posted in commanding positions. The indefatigable W... started off with his men along the narrower goat tracks on these hillsides, it looked as if a slip would send you rolling down thousands of feet, the slope covered with the slipperiest pine needles. A curious effect was seen if a stick was set loose downhill with its end foremost, it would glide away like a snake and almost as noiselessly wriggling and twisting through the dead pine needles like a living creature until it disappeared with great velocity from sight.

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... the chases were hot and frequent but the fox returned to the charge after every chase as gay as ever. This skirmishing went on long after we retired to rest.

**The Moufflon Hunt Day 4**

The fourth morning of our camp life broke dark and lowering. We met as usual around the fire for a cup of hot tea or cocoa and milk, which was very acceptable in the chilly air. Each morning we met thus and vowed that be for ever so hard, we would convey the animal alive to Troödos, as the Vali or High Commissioner would be sure to give a good price for such a rarity as a live moufflon. Well, after some cogitation the sapient woodcutters decided on tying a rope to the horns of the animal and the other end was fixed to the clumsy old native saddle of their stead...

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wealthy town bred Cyprus gent, Barnabas by name, was once fixed with the desire to slay a moufflon. He knew nothing of the toils he would have to go through and as he laboured along he suddenly found himself at this nasty place. He dare not go back and feared to go on and as he stood shivering in a blue funk in the middle of the outcrop, to the amusement of his guide, he began to accuse himself loudly of faithless treatment to a too confiding damsel and confessed Providence must have brought him to this awful place to punish him for his crime! Whether, when returned from his predicament, he made the “amends honourable” to the damsel, is not related, but the bit of path around the cliff is known to the natives of the forest to this day as “Barnabas’ Crime”!

After this place we climbed up to a spring known as the “Dry Spring”. Why so called, no one seemed to know, for it is said never to run dry. There we refreshed ourselves with a drink of cold water and the men filled their gourds. It was really astounding the quantity of cold water we all consumed while on the march, though as we got more into training we felt less need for the water.

Our beat this morning was a deep valley lying between two lofty ridges which form the backbones, as it were, of all the ridges between the Stavro and Oxo Millia [sic] rivers. W..., some of the men, have been known to take pot shots at moufflon as far as the densest undergrowth, an area known as Afforiti, while C... and H... guarded the opposite ridge. The beaters made for the furthest end of the valley to beat up the game to us. This was a well known haunt of the moufflon and as we all took our posts we were in the greatest hopes of scoring at last. It was on the ridge on which C... and H... were posted that two officers of the Brigade of Guards, then quartered in Cyprus, very nearly made a good bag of moufflon not too long before we arrived at Stavro. The beaters had been driving the slope from the Stavro river upwards and the Officers had been sent with a guide to command a certain pass. Either they were wrongly posted or did not remain long enough at their posts, but when Anastasi and the others neared the summit of the ridge, they heard a sound as of rams fighting and then, sure enough, saw four rams, all hard at it within easy range of where the sportsmen should have been. None of the natives were armed and so the rams escaped unscathed.

On the occasion when we surrounded the valley, huge masses of cloud and mist began to sweep up over the hills and soon a heavy thunder storm broke over our heads accompanied by such torrents of rain as few of us had ever seen before. It really came down in sheets of water, sweeping along the hillside and carrying sticks, stones and rubbish before it and of course drenching us to the skin. The howling of the wind, the roaring of the thunder echoing in the damsel is not related, but the bit of path around the cliff is known to the natives of the forest to this day as “Barnabas’ Crime”!

By this time we were on the look out for a glimpse of the moufflon when the lull came our hopes were raised by hearing the clatter of some heavy animals close below him as they dashed across the hillside, invisible to all. Nothing could be heard but the wind and thunder. The men were not long in detecting the sound of the ram and thus the signal was given. The rams had got up within forty yards of the beater Petri who was carrying a spare rifle. The rams had stopped twice to gaze at him and he had fired two shots without effect at the largest ram, which he described as an enormous animal. The rams had then turned straight for the pass that H... was guarding and had escaped in the fog as related. Woe upon woe! We seemed to have had the very elements against us as well as everything else. Petri was loud with lamentation that he did not have his own long gun with him. With this weapon, crammed with slugs, he vowed that he would have easily bowled over the “Mauré Agrino” or cursed moufflon.

Our next move was to light a fire to warm ourselves. Bit by bit we got our garments more or less dry, devoured our luncheon with appetites sharpened by the cold. We were sitting close to a shepherd’s hut that W... occasionally made use of as a shelter on some of his excursions to the forest. Taking care before occupying it, to have it thoroughly swept and cleaned. On his last visit there, he told us, he had come in for the night. He had a ram and a ewe moufflon hanging to the nearest trees, as a result of his days work. He recounted the story of his hunting success. W... had been lying in a lair commanding a well known rut far from the road on a very steep hillside driven along a hillside towards him. He soon saw a ewe pass by him, within shot. Letting her go by, another ewe followed soon after, then another, until at last believing the ram, for whom he was hunting, was never coming, he decided to fire at the next animal that appeared, whatever it was. Another ewe soon trotted up and was promptly dropped in her tracks. At that point, a fine ram appeared, sniffed at the prostrate form of the ewe and was immediately knocked over by W... A very satisfactory right and left!

Near where we were sitting for lunch was one of the illegal pitch kilns. There are thousands of them in the forest. Owing to the wildness of the country, the supineness of the Chief Forest Officers and the timidity or worse of their subordinates, very little was done to catch the law breakers. They use these kilns and make a good annual profit out of them. The kilns consist of a sort of dome shaped oven into which the pine lapis and branches are placed and heated from beneath by a fire. A pipe leads from the floor of the oven to a deepish pit outside. The pitch runs from the kiln into this pit and when enough has been made, the pitch itself is set alight to clear it from the dross. When the pitch has burnt long enough, the fire is extinguished in a peculiar way. On each side of the burning pit are two shallow pan shaped hollows, into which water is placed. Two long green pine branches with all the needles still on them are soaked, one in each pan. A man then takes them and standing at the end of the blazing pit, a branch in each hand, with a rapid movement he sweeps the wet branches inwards close to the surface of the burning pitch, like closing a huge pair of scissors. When properly performed this operation cuts off the flames as neatly as scissors would sever a thread. While the pitch remains without any flames upon it, a tongue of fire shoots up many feet into the air and then becomes extinguished. When cool the pitch sets hard and is then fit for removal.

After our lunch, as the clouds were gathering again, we started off to try our luck in a part of the forest which we heard rarely failed to hold moufflon. We had a very stiff climb indeed for we were going to the top of one of the highest hills around Stavro. Its highest point lay right at the back of our camp. As we toiled upwards it was curious to see the great furrows, not far from us. His men had cut their ascent for at one time the mountains had to be rid of the deer, but the deer have come back and have made their home here. It is a wonderful mountainous country, the slopes high and steep. The greater part of the forest is on the north side of the river and is then fit for removal.
in the hillside. It was extraordinary that these deep channels had been created in so short a time, more especially as every drop of water had now sunk into the ground and only these straight deep drains remained to show with what force the flood had rushed down the slopes. When we got about halfway up we divided into two parties. W..., K..., Argiro[s] and the old man going down the rough bit of hillside towards the Oxo Millia river. H... and C... with Petri and Antoni moved along the top of the ridge to intercept any moufflon that the others might rouse and turn up the hill. The former party were not long in coming in sight of game, as a fine ram, three ewes and a very small lamb were soon spotted but they were on the move and kept carefully out of range. The party however had a good view of the herd as it kept moving steadily off as they advanced. It was surprising to see the activity and gaiety of the little lamb, a creature no bigger than a good sized hare. It skipped and raced around its dam, altogether treating the little lamb, an animal far bigger than a good sized hare.

It was surprising to see the activity and gaiety of the little lamb, a creature no bigger than a good sized hare. The morning passed quickly enough, all being busy and in good spirits. The heavy rain had thoroughly drenched the ground and though the night was now fine there was no more sleeping in the open. All got accommodated in tents, the departure of so many of our party having left ample room for the natives to have a tent to themselves. Hitherto they had slept among the bushes like wild animals.

**The Moufflon Hunt Day 5**

The next day we decided to have an easy day and a general clean up of guns &c. The moufflon skin too had to be dressed and his head prepared for mounting. The skin and head of the moufflon were removed. We had all had a close inspection of the moufflon and all remarked at the peculiar setting of the horns which gave such an air of boldness to the male moufflon. We had moufflon steak for dinner and found that it had a very gamey flavour and of course, it was a bit tough being so fresh. The flesh is very dark coloured and close grained, the ram was a six year-old as could plainly be seen by the rings on his horns. Moufflon do not shed their horns, so each summers’ growth is clearly marked by a wider ring than the rest of the yearly growth showing where the horn was attached to the skull until forced upwards by the next summer’s growth. The horns of this ram were about seven inches in diameter at the base and tapered to mere points at the top, there widest distance apart was about 15 inches and then they bent downwards and inwards to the nap of the neck.

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The morning passed quickly enough, all being busy and we heard many queer stories from our native retainers. We had noticed the peculiarly hard-bitten care-worn looking countenance of Argiro[s]. Here was a man who had played his own part, if report spoke true, in the wild times when under Turkish rule, where the taking of human life was thought little or nothing of. After close on eight years under British rule, anyone acquainted with the island knows that even now murder and manslaughter form, along with sheep and goat stealing, the commonest crimes in Cyprus. One can well believe what a state of affairs existed formerly, more especially in the remoter districts where for a Greek to accuse a Turk often led to the imprisonment and torture of the accuser. Well, in tho-
se bad old times a certain evil doer among the Turks established a form of blackmail which he levied, at his own pleasure, on the poorer peasants and others of Greek origin in his district. Those who were targeted, for peace sake, paid what was asked. Success made the man greedier than ever and he ground down his unwilling taxpayers so hard that a body of them resolved to rid themselves of their tyrant. The lot of executioner fell, if the tale be true, to poor Argiro[s]. Going alone he waylaid his persecutor, fired at him at close quarters and then completed his job with a knife. The victim, being a Turk, caused the authorities to take note. They took the matter up and as certain evidence leaked out, Argiro[s] was arrested and conveyed to the centre of government at Nicosia and cast into jail. He was tried and found guilty but his execution was delayed because a difficulty arose due to the fact that no witness had seen him actually commit the murder. In Turkish law, no man can be put to death for slaying another if no witness can testify to seeing the deed done by the accused or unless the accused confesses to the crime. The luckless Argiro[s] was therefore tortured, not once, but many times to induce him to confess. His instinct for self-preservation gave him fortitude to endure the most hideous tortures without inculpating himself in any way. At length he was released, but he bears, on his arms and body scars and other marks which, to this day, testify to the severity of the ordeal that he went through. It is queer to think that under different circumstances the malefactor Argiro[s], by a similar display of unflinching fortitude displayed in a better cause might have been regarded by future generations as a Martyr!

It was arranged that we should try, in the afternoon, to circumvent a small herd of moufflon which we knew were in the habit of haunting a deep semi-circular valley at the back of the Bambaki hill. With whom we were to have several encounters as it afterwards turned out. We of course did not march straight on our objective point but made a long detour and performed the usual prodigious hill climbing and descending. Indeed, as K... remarked and we all cordially endorsed, "If you want to hunt moufflon properly you must select the most objectionably high and steep hill in your vicinity, climb up that and having reached the top, then choose the most beastly piece of almost perpendicular hillside to descend by, and by repeating this often enough, you will infallibly come upon moufflon, if you can hold out!". On this occasion we got to the required place without any adventure and quickly got into our allotted posts. H... on the one flank, next to him Anastasi, then C...., K... and W... on the outer flank, while Petri and Argiro[s] proceeded to beat up the valley towards them.

The drive had not long commenced when a shout from the beaters told us that moufflon were in view. They, at first, seemed inclined to break over the sides of the line, on which our outer guns were posted and it was an exciting few moments for these sportsmen as they listened to the loose stones rolling down the slope and the general clatter which a scared lot of moufflon are capable of making when they dash off along a stony hillside. However the sounds died out and the advanced party now listened for a shot from H... or Anastasi, but none came. When we all met again, we heard that the wily moufflon had most carefully avoided all the dangerous places and passing well down on the lower ridges had made good their retreat in safety. Only showing themselves briefly to H... to let him see that there were three ewes and a gigantic ram whichloomed high above the members of his harem.

This finished the hunt for the day, for although Anastasi came upon the tracks of what he said were two heavy rams and disappeared on a hunt of his own, nothing resulted and after a knee straining descent of Bambaki we arrived back in camp. Here we found Antoni, who had been promoted to the post of cook, had some delicious moufflon soup just flavoured with fresh tomatoes ready for us. There is no doubt, no more excellently flavoured soup can be made than that from moufflon. We also had some steaks broiled or roasted in a primitive fashion. To cook their own allowance of mutton, the natives had cut the meat into chunks. They prepared a long straight branch of ilex sharpened at each end and on this the chunks of mutton and moufflon were impaled. Two forked sticks were then driven into the ground a little less than the length of the spit apart and about six inches from the ground. On these forks the laden spit rested, the cook squatted at one end and by a continuous rubbing of his hands imparted a turning motion to the projecting end of the spit which kept the meat turning gradually round and round. The cook at intervals raking up the red embers or pushing them a little away as he judged whether the meat required more or less heat. The process was not a very rapid one but it was clean and certainly the meat was very nicely cooked in the end. The amount of mutton consumed by our retainers was prodigious and if permitted, they would have gorged themselves all night, though on an ordinary night a hunk of bread and some dried fruit or olives seemed to satisfy them perfectly. With the repast ended, pipes were the order of the day or rather night, and so to bed early.

The Moufflon Hunt Day 6

We made an early start the next morning, for we had a long tramp before us as it was intended that we should try an outlying bit of ground far away towards the cedar forest. The pull up the long hill on the Kykkos path was a severe one and the occasional halts very welcome. During these halts, the conversation turned a good deal on the lawless doings of the inhabitants of the forest districts. We heard that among the worst of a bad lot, were the villagers of Campo, a place not many hours march from Stavros. They were said to be the illegitimate descendants of former monks from Kykkos, but this, let us hope, is not accurate! An account of the feuds and bloodshed between the shepherds themselves as well as between them and the outsiders, who came to the forest to steal the sheep and goats, would fill a large volume. The following tale, in which one of our retainers is said to have taken part, is a fair sample of the rest. It appears that some years ago, two shepherds missed certain of their goats and came across tracks which they suspected, armed with an axe. Finding the shepherd in the forest, he accused him of the deed, but as the shepherd was suspected, armed with an axe, the Turk dared not attack but instead followed him about abusing him. At last, on a narrow path, the shepherd being close in front of him with his back turned, the Turk seized his chance and dealt a terrific blow with his axe aimed at his enemy’s head. The blow just failed to catch the shepherd’s skull, but inflicted a ghastly wound on his neck and shoulder. This wound, terrible though it was, was not sufficient to prevent the shepherd from turning on his assailant and shooting him dead. Of course no one was
The Moufflon Hunt Day 7

The next morning we resolved to try and locate the three rams as it was thought that they would have taken up their quarters in the ravine between the Stavros river and the ridge overhanging its left bank, known as “Musa lagona tou Stavros”. We were posted along this ridge while the natives beat the valley towards us, beginning at the end nearest the camp. The day was rainy and the hills often covered with a driving mist. A long and rather cold wait resulted in nothing being seen and we descended a series of steep ridges to the river for lunch. W... on the way came on a number of fresh moufflon lairs, indicating that this area was well used as a sleeping place by them. While resting before lunch some of us employed our time in catching a number of freshwater crabs, of which there were quantities among the stones of the shallow stream. We also noticed an eel or two, moving about in a stupid way, allowing themselves to be easily captured. The natives noticed this and a few enquiries from W... elicited the fact that that morning some villagers had been along the stream in search of eels, but not finding enough had moved further down. The mode of fishing that they employ is to throw a few handfuls of a certain crushed berry into the water. This has a curious effect on any eels exposed to the contaminated water and causes them to dash out of their holes and hiding places, wriggling at first wildly and then stupidly on top of the water where they can easily be captured. The berry is said to have no evil effect on human beings and in many streams the natives catch dozens of eels of various sizes in a few hours. We saw some of the berries being used afterwards. The berries were something between a snowberry and a white mulberry, but had a hard stone in the centre with a kernel like a cherry stone and it is no doubt that from this kernel comes the poison which so exercises the eels. The eels that we caught were reserved for the camp, but the men having lit a fire as the day was cold roasted the whole catch of crabs, we found that they were excellent.

Our afternoon’s work began with a series of awfully stiff climbs over some of the steepest ridges we had yet come across. W... and Anastasi had the dogs attached to them in the way they always led them about. This consisted of a rope of twisted hair and wool that was placed in a noose around the dogs neck, the other end being fastened to the man’s waist belt. In this way the noose could be lifted off the dogs neck in a second if necessary, however being tied to a strong dog has its disadvantages at times. As we steadily ascended towards the summit of the highest ridge, old Condonouri became much excited and endeavoured to break away and head into a valley which we intended to surround and then have driven. The old dog evidently winded moufflon and a halt was called. After much peering into the valley, nothing could be seen but at intervals we plainly heard the noise caused by two rams butting their heads together in play or earnest combat. The natives notified the other party.

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ever arrested for this double murder, the murderer died quietly of old age not many months ago.

We pushed on for about an hour before separating, W... and K... with Argiro going along one side of a deep wide valley while C..., H..., Anastasi and Petri marched nearly an hour further up the Kykkos track and then branched off on the outskirts of the Cedar Forest in a direction parallel to the other party.

The first party pushed over a large tract of recently burnt forest. The forest had only been burnt about a week previous to our arrival. The scene of the conflagration was of extreme devastation, the trees and larger shrubs that were not actually consumed were standing all charred and gaunt, while the air was filled with the pungent smell arising from the still warm ashes. Three ewe moufflon were sighted getting clear of these barren lands, but were too far off for any chance of a shot. Nothing more was seen by either divisions of the party that morning and after a very long, hard march we assembled for lunch at a point on the Oxo Millia river. We passed the largest pine trees we had yet seen, on our way down the valley to the rendezvous. One in particular standing alone was a magnificent tree, three of us with arms outstretched could barely span its trunk. The trunk shot up without a single branch for fully sixty feet and its top branches formed a handsome canopy above this forest column.

A very short halt was allowed us as we were a long distance from home and had a good beat before us. We were soon toiling upwards until we reached one of the higher ridges and along this we went at a great pace, skirting a portion of the burnt forest. So fast did W... lead us that when we reached the high cliff of Affariti, often a favourite haunt of the moufflon, we found that the natives with our spare rifles were not even in sight. When W... and H... peered over the cliffs, sure enough, to our disgust, right below them were two splendid rams feeding and while they looked, another appeared from behind a rock, quite unconscious of danger and kicking up his heels like a sportive mule. As it so happened all the rifles were with our dawdling natives and as the rams were out of reasonable range of a bullet from a smooth bore, we had nothing to do but grin and bare it and wait for the lagging rifle carriers. Something however alarmed the rams and they began to move off. Then indeed C..., and W... who were a little further off had a fine chance of witnessing in pathetic pantomime a tableau much resembling the “Forester’s Anguish” as depicted by Mr Punch, when old Briggs did not hit the finest hare that ever was seen. For H... had a brand new double-barrelled Express with his beater and here would have been the chance of all chances.

Anastasi showed that game was on foot and we hurried on nearest flank and then came K..., H..., C... and W.... While furthest guns were in position. Anastasi remained on the cliffs, sure enough, to our disgust, right below them were two splendid rams feeding and while they looked, another appeared from behind a rock, quite unconscious of danger and kicking up his heels like a sportive mule. As it so happened all the rifles were with our dawdling natives and as the rams were out of reasonable range of a bullet from a smooth bore, we had nothing to do but grin and bare it and wait for the lagging rifle carriers. Something however alarmed the rams and they began to move off. Then indeed C..., and W... who were a little further off had a fine chance of witnessing in pathetic pantomime a tableau much resembling the “Forester’s Anguish” as depicted by Mr Punch, when old Briggs did not hit the finest hare that ever was seen. For H... had a brand new double-barrelled Express with his beater and here would have been the chance of all chances.
very hard to head them, but never got near enough even to see the brutes. More of our bad luck.

As we moved towards home, the advance party saw K... and a beater coming across the valley directly instead of keeping to the top. He called out that he would strike the narrow path in front of him and follow us immediately, so we straggled down the steep hill to camp believing that he was close behind. When we got in, a beater far up the hill called to ask if all the Englishmen were in. It was then that we found that K... was missing. The word was passed back to the beaters and they were ordered back to find K... and get him back to camp quickly, as night had fallen. After a while, the men returned saying that no trace could be found of him. A council of war was then held and W... and old Anastasi agreed that he had mistaken his way and had kept straight down the valley, instead of turning up when the path crossed, but as all the valleys headed in the general direction of the river, he would no doubt be found along the course of the stream. So men were at once sent out with orders to fire shots and push down stream until they found the lost sheep. The men departed and the rest of us set about getting some soup and other refreshments ready, for the night was showery and cold though a young moon shone out between the showers. Much sooner than we expected the searchers returned and said that they had been far down the valley and had neither seen nor heard anything of K.... Matters were now becoming rather serious and it was decided that three search parties should at once set out in different directions. Two of the men were ordered to proceed down the stream and fire single shots at intervals and on no account to desist from the search until they had either found K... or heard the signal that he had been found by the others. The signal for success was to be a double shot. W... and old Anastasi went up the hill to where K... had last been seen, meaning to follow the course of the valley that they believed he must have gone down. Another party went up the Kykkos road with a view of coming around the back of Bambaki hill, in case K... had turned back in that direction. A vast amount of hallooning and shouting went on between the search parties at first and then all was quiet except an occasional single shot, which even in the stillness of the night was only indistinctly heard as the echoes rumbled away among the numerous deep ravines. In the meantime K... had been having a poor time of it. He had crossed the pathway when we last saw him and so missed his way in the dim twilight. He then made a very natural mistake when he struck the stream in the first valley he came to. Believing that he was actually on the Stavros river and that if he only kept on long enough downwards he must strike our camp. In reality, he was already below the camp and separated from the right valley by one huge ridge of mountains and many small ones. He tried shots at intervals, but owing to his being hemmed in by hills, the sounds were never heard by any of the search parties. At length having attempted to scale some precipitous hillsides in the hope of ascertaining his whereabouts and having had several severe falls, he made up his mind to lie out for the night and took consolation in his pipe. As he sat quietly smoking he was not without visitors, for a hare came and gazed at him curiously and then a fox paid him rather a long visit inspecting him from several points to see if he was likely soon to become prey to some denizen of the forest, probably. The cold driving rain which fell at intervals made his position anything but pleasant, with no food and lightly clad as he was. At length however the call of the sick of shots was heard and replying, he advanced to meet the relief party which happened to be the one that had gone down stream from camp. K... was found at a spot called Ayios Theodoros about two miles from Stavros on the direct line of the stream. The shots signify-

The Moufflon Hunt Day 8

We settled next day to have another look for the three rams under the Afforiti cliff and to wind up with a drive in the “home covert” as we called the ridge at the back of camp, where W... had killed the ram. We moved out of camp rather later than usual, but the day was not to be a very long one and a short time longer in bed was not unacceptable after the previous days labour. We got posted on or near the Afforiti cliff guarding all the passes on that side while the beaters descended from the opposite ridge and beat the valley towards us. The result was however nil and after lunch we climbed the steep hill above camp and took post along the ridge, while W... and Anastasi moved down into the valley of the Oxo Millia river and then turned up the hill towards us. They saw nothing and we were preparing to get into line for the drive through the home covert, when old Anastasi, who had moved to our outer flank fired a shot and then another. W... and K... dashed off towards him while H... and C... with two beaters took position to head off any animals that might come over from Anastasi’s side of the hill. Another shot came from his direction and soon after another from the ridge where W... had run up to. Shortly after the last shot two ewes came stealthily cantoring up towards C... and halted under cover of some thick ilex bushes. As they did not appear again a stalking advance was made on their retreat by C... and Antoni who was armed with K...’s Winchester Repeater and was in a great flutter to show off what he could do. The moufflon, however had the wind of them and had sneaked off.

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