

riders, tried to escape on one side. The Gauchos pursued at a reckless pace, twisting their horses about with the most admirable command, and each man whirling the balls round his head. At length the foremost threw them, revolving through the air: in an instant the ostrich rolled over and over, its legs fairly lashed together by the thong.

The plains abound with three kinds of partridge,<sup>1</sup> two of which are as large as hen pheasants. Their destroyer, a small and pretty fox, was also singularly numerous; in the course of the day we could not have seen less than forty or fifty. They were generally near their earths, but the dogs killed one. When we returned to the posta, we found two of the party returned who had been hunting by themselves. They had killed a puma, and had found an ostrich's nest with twenty-seven eggs in it. Each of these is said to equal in weight eleven hen's eggs; so that we obtained from this one nest as much food as 297 hen's-eggs would have given.

September 14th.—As the soldiers belonging to the next posta meant to return, and we should together make a party of five, and all armed, I determined not to wait for the expected troops. My host, the lieutenant, pressed me much to stop. As he had been very obliging—not only providing me with food, but lending me his private horses—I wanted to make him some remuneration. I asked my guide whether I might do so, but he told me certainly not; that the only answer I should receive probably would be, "We have meat for the dogs in our country, and therefore do not grudge it to a Christian." It must not be supposed that the rank of lieutenant in such an army would at all prevent the acceptance of payment: it was only the high sense of hospitality, which every traveller is bound to acknowledge as nearly universal throughout these provinces. After galloping some leagues, we came to a low swampy country, which extends for nearly eighty miles northward, as far as the

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<sup>1</sup> Two species of *Tinamus*, and *Eudromia elegans* of A. d'Orbigny, which can only be called a partridge with regard to its habits.