Is That So?

By EUGENE BURNS
Ranger-Naturalist

Amman—For obvious reason there are only certain sections of the Jordan river a stranger can visit, and since the chances to visit even those are rather restricted I grabbed the first one that offered.

The Jordan Valley, roughly 65 miles from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, is a fairly shallow trench along whose bottom twists a narrow groove of green with a brownish center.

The green is the Jordan jungle, a dense mass of cane and thickets in the river bottom. The brown is due to the silt the rolling current carries in its 800-foot drop to the Dead Sea. Between the jungle, which the Arabs call the Zoc, and the Ghor, or flats of the valley, is a 100-200-foot band of nearly barren hills of a grayish marl.

As we arrived in the river

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bottom, I was immediately impressed by two things: the heat—it was a good 15 degress hotter—and the sight of an Arab boy cutting some meat off a dead vulture to use for bait.

The vulture, shot a few hours earlier by another boy who was practicing marksmanship, was a black-winged bird with a dirty white body and a peculiar fringe of feathers that framed its face, dominated by a yellow, cruel-looking beak. Its scrawny, taloned legs were a pinkish color.

Later that night, I learned the bird was an Egyptian vulture that had flown a few hundred miles off beat as it is easy for a vulture to do.

Carrion Feasts

What probably lured him away was a succession of carrions feasts, each one 60 to 40 miles farther out than the one preceding. At that rate, it would be no trick at all for him to wander the 200 miles distance we were from the Nile.

As the vultures hang in the sky, slowly circling thousands of feet up, they aren't watching just the ground with their telescopic eyes. Each one keeps looking at his neighbors miles away around him. When one starts down, those nearest follow, and so on in a chain in a chain reaction that can easily include each one of the great birds for scores of miles.

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Alaska Supporters See Statehood Near

Washington — (UPI) — Jubilant Alaska supporters predicted that the Senate will approve statehood for the territory by an overwhelming margin this week.

Sen. Henry M. Jackson (Wash.) said the stage was set for making Alaska the 49th state of the union. The Democratic floor manager of the Alaska bill said he was confident the Senate would pass the House - approved measure, "probably by Wednesday."

He said opposition "crumbled" Friday when the Senate rejected, in two major tests of strength, proposals which would have scuttled statehood for this session of Congress.

It turned down 50-29 Sen. A. S. Mike Monroney's (D-Okla.) move to give Alaska commonwealth status instead of statehood, and defeated 53-28 a point of order objection by Sen. James O. Eastland (D-Miss.), who said the Alaska bill's military land withdrawal provisions were unconstitutional.

Los Angeles — (UPI) — Some 200 persons, including actress Ilona Massey, staged a peaceful demonstration Saturday at city hall, protesting the execution of former Hungarian Premier Imre Nagy.

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