

FALCONRY.

From "Bell's Life in London."

Mr. Editor.—Having been in the habit of amusing myself during the last few years with the training and flying of different species of hawks, I am induced to offer a few observations on the subject for the assistance of those who, like myself, wish to see an old national sport once more in vogue.

To commence with the management of the peregrine falcon. This bird may be taken and trained at any age. The easiest mode, however, and in some respects the best, and that to which I have been most accustomed, is to secure nestlings. It is of the utmost consequence that these should not be taken from the parent birds at too early an age, say before the young feathers have, in a great measure, taken the place of the down.

The hawk must also be furnished with jesses, slips of white-leather, well greased, about six inches in length, fastened to each leg, and attached at the loose end to a swivel, so as to be easily removed when the bird is required to fly.

The hawk must now be carried on the fist as much as possible, and broken to the hood, or, in other words, taught to allow it to be taken off and put on without resistance. As soon as this is accomplished, and it has, in addition, learned to come to and feed upon the fist and lure without any signs of fear, let it fly (being sharp set at the time), and wait patiently until it comes down to the lure, reward it well, and repeat the same lesson daily, keeping it by degrees longer upon the wing.

It is now that the pleasure as well as the frequent disappointment of the falconer commences. All hawks differ more or less in disposition, and until their trainer has found out by practice the particular mode of treatment each bird requires he will certainly have the mortification of seeing them either obstinately immovable on a tree, or perhaps raking out far and wide, indifferent to his call or whistle at the very time that the dogs have come to a dead point, and there is every prospect of a fine open flight.

In game-hawking the principal pleasure consists in seeing the birds and dogs work in concert. The flight is soon over, except with grouse, which bird, both from its own strength of wing, and also from the nature of the ground on which it is found, affords by far the best sport of all descriptions of game.

Mr. Editor.—My former communication having met with so ready a place in your columns, I have now much satisfaction in adding to the hints on training hawks therein offered. The merlin should, I think, stand second on the list of serviceable hawks, and this bird, though rare throughout the southern counties of England during the summer months, might be procured in considerable numbers from the north, provided there was a demand for them.

expected from the merlin and the other small hawks, that having been fortunate enough to meet with peregrines since I commenced following the amusement in earnest, I have not attempted to make the most of the other species, and although I have had a considerable number of them in hand, it has been as much from the love of seeing hawks about me, and watching their habits, as from any wish to make much use of their killing powers; therefore, other amateurs may expect greater results from the trial than I can speak of.

Merlins should be treated, while young, exactly in the same manner as the peregrine, keeping them at liberty, and accustoming them to come to and feed on the fist from the first. They appear, however, to have a more rapid digestion, and should, in consequence, be more frequently fed. There is no necessity to make use of a regular lure with these birds, a small piece of scarlet cloth at the end of a couple of feet of string, to which also the food should be tied, is, when swung round the head, a sufficient attraction to bring them a long distance; with this simple lure the fist is garnished when the bird is required to alight on it.

As soon as they can fly well, and will return readily to the hand, take them, two at a time, to some open space, unhood them, and throw them off together in pursuit of a blackbird, thrush, or young partridge, which either the falconer or an assistant lets fly for the purpose; a smaller bird will tempt them to carry, although there is less danger of this when two of them are used together, as both of them seizing upon the victim, each prevents the other from taking it away.

The hobby comes next on my list of falcons, and is, I think, when adult, both in form and plumage, the most elegant of all our species. The wings being considerably longer in proportion to the body than in either of the others, gives it a particularly light and swallow-like appearance in the air, and at the same time enables it to mount with great facility; it is pre-eminently the hawk for the lark, and in my own case I should never attempt to accustom it to any other quarry.

The sparrowhawk—the last I shall speak of—is also a very common species, but of a totally different nature from those already mentioned. It is one of the short-winged hawks, and although it can fly for a short distance with considerable rapidity, is greatly deficient in powers of endurance. Its natural habit of taking its prey by flying low, and taking advantage of the shelter of a hedge or favoring ground to dash unexpectedly upon its quarry, instead of trying its chance in a prolonged chase, points to this deficiency.

This hawk has a very delicate constitution, and is peculiarly susceptible of orp, both at an early age and also after it has acquired its full size and plumage. Another objection is a very timid, and, at the same time, obstinate disposition, which, however, may prove useful in testing fully the temper and patience of the trainer, for, to one accustomed to use these birds, the management of other hawks will prove an easy task.

The sparrowhawk should not be taken from the nest until fully three parts feathered, kept then in a sheltered situation, quite at liberty, and should never be handled (a rule which applies to all young hawks); fed, at the call of a whistle, from the hand, and accustomed as much as possible from the first to the presence of different persons and animals.

When first taken up and placed upon the fist, it will appear to have lost the use of its legs, and those unaccustomed to them would begin to fear that it had received some injury by struggling in the leash; this, however, is all temper, and bad temper too, which must be overcome by an exercise of the exact opposite quality on the part of the trainer. In the course of half an hour or so it will jump up on the fist, and get rid of a little more bile by digging its talons into the glove with considerable vigor.

When used in the field, the hawk should be thrown from the fist the moment the game springs; and if the flight is unsuccessful should be called back to it immediately, and rewarded with a mouthful or two. Where landrails are plentiful, it will prove a very useful hawk for these birds; it will also fly partridges, but it is by no means equal to the male peregrine for this purpose.

When used in the field, the hawk should be thrown from the fist the moment the game springs; and if the flight is unsuccessful should be called back to it immediately, and rewarded with a mouthful or two. Where landrails are plentiful, it will prove a very useful hawk for these birds; it will also fly partridges, but it is by no means equal to the male peregrine for this purpose.

A HUNTING MATCH.

In one of the interior counties of the State of New York, and situated in a beautiful valley enclosing a chain of small lakes or ponds, is the village of S—, noted among the neighboring towns and villages as a great place of resort for pleasure parties, attracted by the prospect of a sail on its contiguous waters, or

But everybody knows that in all places, there are seasons when amusements are stale; and this season in S— occurred in the interval between the last run (not of *shad*), but of sleighing, and the Fourth of July, (between whom and Saint Patrick, a son of the Green Isle once averred, the choice for the better man was in favor of the latter!) About the first of June, no matter in what year, a lot of jolly fellows who constituted a kind of *involuntary* club for getting up parties of various descriptions, took the notion very strongly, that it was a decided bore to be tied up from all amusements for so long a time, and accordingly concocted a hunt, according to the customs pertaining thereto.

In that section of country where traces of backwoods habits are yet to be found, and where game is not entirely extinct, it is quite common to get up a squirrel hunt, by way of enjoyment, when other pleasures are not seasonable, and very usually those parties terminate their amusement with a splendid supper and dance.

Well, the two prominent characters who headed the movement that is here narrated, found that they could muster about sixty others who would enter the field, and they proceeded to select their men, to form each a band, who were, in a specified time and manner, to produce their game, and the party having secured the most counts according to the decision of the umpires, should be provided with a supper and a dance at the expense of the other party.

In the articles of agreement and restrictions drawn up and signed by the parties, it was arranged that nothing should be considered game that had not four legs, a head and tail, and found wild, except it was suitable for the table, and should go towards the supply of the supper, &c., &c.

The two "captains" were on tiptoe, each sure of winning; Captain Smith was the best shot, but Captain Jones had more *tact*, and each had selected his men according to his own qualities.

Early the next morning Captain Smith and his band were away in the woods, banging away merrily—but Captain Jones wa'n't *thar*. He, be it understood, was an amateur fisherman, and had the only manageable boats on the lake, besides other fixins, including a very nice fish box, in which to secure his captives alive.

He mustered his men on the shore of the lake, put them into his boats, and shoved off. "No doubt," thought the lookers on, "he intends to supply the table with fish!" That was mere guess work, however. When sufficiently distant from shore, not to be overheard by the idlers, who had followed to witness his mysterious embarkation, the boats centred to one point and their occupants held a conference, in which it was communicated to them by the leader that his plan was about to be made known.

"But," said he, "this is not the best place to catch 'em, and the loafers yonder on the shore, will smell the rat, and leak to the other party, then we are dashed!"

The idea took amazingly—and pulling away for the latter location, it was not long ere their boats were *alive* and *crawling* with the innocent little animals; and as the game was abundant, and easily secured by the hands, there evidently appeared to be no immediate prospect of an end to the sport. Having taken several thousands of this novel species of game, and conducted them with perfect secrecy to a place of security, and feeling perfectly sure that other four legged game to the same "count" would be unobtainable, they returned to land, took their "shooting irons," more by way of appearance than anything else, and made pretext to hunt in the woods, which by this time had been pretty well scoured by the other party.

The day for the count came. The few squirrels and other field game taken by the Jones party made a very small appearance by the side of the pile of rabbits, squirrels, *poultry*, &c., brought in by Smith's party; the count was about to proceed, but was interrupted by Jones. "Please read over the articles first," said Jones; and they were read. "All right," said Jones, "four legs, head and tail; all O. K. boys," and Smith's game was soon counted. Jones interposed again to have the articles re-read before his game was counted; "because," said he, "I want to have you all satisfied!"

After the second reading, and the counting of the few squirrels Jones had produced, he remarked, "you are not quite counted up yet, but just remember, four legs, head and tail count one, and you may proceed to count," pointing to some bags in a corner, which, until then, had been covered with a buffalo skin. The other party looked in amazement, and their surprise was materially increased by the appearance of a couple of bushels of Jones's game, as one of the bags was emptied on the floor before the umpire.

"Count that lot," said Jones, "and average the rest; no use being particular into half a bushel or so!—and if there ain't enough, there are a few more of the 'same sort' left in the next room!"

Smith and his party looked aghast, and as soon as Smith could recover breath to speak, he "gin in" that it was "no sort of use to count 'em; I knock under; I knew we could squirrel you, but I did not expect to be 'mud turtled' in this outrageous way!" to which the cheers of the crowd responded.

BLOOD HORSE vs. IRON HORSE.

A highly interesting and exciting race took place on the Cincinnati end of the Little Miami Railroad, just at the rising of the sun on Monday morning last. A very beautiful and accomplished young lady, of our acquaintance, was to leave that morning on the cars for Cleveland, en route for the World's Fair, in company with our worthy fellow citizen, Mr. T—, and his family, and had promised to join them at the depot in time; but, rising a little late, and parting words to her good mother, and sisters and brothers, and for aught we know, other near and dear friends, delayed her so long that when she reached the station house, accompanied by her father, (one of the best men in the city,) in his carriage—to their consternation and almost utter despair, they discovered the cars had gone. The father was for giving up and returning quietly home—not so the young damsel—she possessed more spirit and resolution. She had no idea of abandoning the long anticipated voyage to Europe, and instantly cried out to their faithful driver:—"Robert, drive on—drive for your life—overtake the cars—we must overtake them!"

And, turning to her kind, good father, she said:—"John (the name of the horse, and a very favorite one), has blood, and can beat the iron horse, I know."

Robert lost no time in obeying his fair young mistress, and off they sped "like lightning." And the good horse "John" appeared to realize what was desired, and the very difficult task before him, and seemed to say, as did the gallant Col. Miller, on another occasion, "I will try,"—and he did try, so says the Fultonians, for never was seen horse and carriage pass through that quiet village before in such quick time. "John" not only ran, but flew—so the boys say, and we reckon the mud flew also. John Gilpin's race was nowhere, when compared to the race between the blood horse "John," and Anthony Harkness' iron horse "Franklin,"—and although the latter had the start of full a half mile, the former did overhaul, and perhaps might have passed her, had the conductor not thought it prudent to stop. It was not an hour from the commencement of the race, before the resolute and never daunted young lady was in the car with her friends, who of course had given up all hope of seeing her, and bidding an affectionate and tender farewell to her father, she bade him never despair, and never to sell that favorite horse, "John," for he had gloriously won the race, and Anthony Harkness' Iron horse must admit being beat for once.

Long live our fair friend. May she have a pleasant voyage across the Atlantic—have health and pleasure in the old world, and return in due time to the bosom of her affectionate family in the Queen City. Cincinnati Commercial, May 8th.

LIVE WEIGHT AND DEAD WEIGHT.

A knowledge of the difference between the live weight and dead weight of any animal, is oftentimes desirable. From the nature of the case, an approximation to it may be made. There are various ways of doing this—sometimes by the girth and measure of the length. Many butchers, by the experience they have gained in slaughtering and weighing different kinds of animals, can often judge with surprising accuracy. Different breeds vary very much in the comparative difference between live and dead weight. It must appear evident to any one that the more amount of tallow a bullock has to fill up the interstices of the frame, the less is the difference between live weight and dead weight, and, by consequence, the less the tallow the more the difference.

A German agriculturist has made some observations on this subject, and publishes the following as the result:

"An ox, where he is entirely lean, and therefore has no tallow, weighs 260 pounds live weight to 100 of pure flesh in the fore quarters. With 5 per cent. of tallow he weighs only 255 pounds live weight to 100 weight of flesh. At 10 per cent. the proportion of tallow, 246 pounds; at 15 per cent., 235 pounds; at 20 per cent., only 225 pounds, gross weight, for 100 weight of flesh.

"An ox of 1000 pounds, live weight, weighed in a state in which he has not been fed for fattening, has, when entirely lean, therefore without tallow, 885 pounds of flesh and about nine pounds of skin and hair, in which, in the after increase, the tallow, consequently to be weighed by itself, is included. This ox, raised to 5 per cent. proportion of tallow, will weigh 1050 pounds gross, 421 pounds of flesh, and 24 pounds of tallow. He gained, therefore, in this period of increase, 60 pounds gross, 27 pounds flesh, and 11 pounds tallow, and therefore gained an increase of 94 pounds live weight, 60 pounds flesh, and 34 pounds tallow. At 20 per cent. proportion of tallow, the same ox weighed 1850 pounds live weight, 600 pounds of flesh, 120 pounds of tallow; the increase of this period of fattening, therefore, amounted to 134 pounds of gross weight, 91 pounds of flesh, 52 of tallow."

In the improved breeds, the amount of valuable parts which are preserved and weighed, after being killed are, or ought to be, greater in proportion to the offal that is not weighed, and unsaleable, than is the unimproved breeds. Indeed, this constitutes a great part of the improvement.