

**FALCONRY.**

**Reviving the Ancient Sport for Americans.**

**FINE FUN WITH HAWK AND DOG.**

A Picturesque Description of the Sport—How to Train a Hawk for Field Purposes—Our American Birds of Prey.

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 NEW YORK, Feb. 9, 1891.—[Special Correspondence of THE TIMES.] A rainbow had been shattered by the hammer of Thor, and the fragments were scattered over the western sky; a blood-red highway ran in a straight line over the sea to the sun, which rested like a ball of molten metal upon the horizon. There was a sudden rushing sound, and a bolt from heaven struck in the midst of the sun path, scattering a shower of jewels that reflected back the sunset hues of the sky. An instant later an American osprey rose from the waves with his glistening prey in his talons. It was a noble sight—a grand plunge, an unerring aim, a skilful and quick

cradle on rock or treetop are called oysas, and are the most easily tamed and trained; but they are apt to lack the strength and audacity of the brancher or the haggard.

The brancher may be caught by the lure of a pigeon or a quail, and the haggard by means of a decoy and a net. There is a deadly enmity between the hawks and their nocturnal rivals, the owls, and hence an owl is frequently used as a decoy to induce the haggards to swoop down for the opportunity of a blow at their hated enemy. A tame hawk or falcon also makes an excellent decoy for his wild brothers.

In the early spring hawks' nests can be found within twenty minutes' journey, by rail or ferry, from New York City, and young ones procured, which will prove interesting pets to those who care to bestow time upon them. Should a demand for young or trained birds arise, there are plenty of dealers in birds and animals who would hasten to supply the market with both the domestic and imported article; but if any of the readers of this paper seriously think of trying their hands at hawking, they will enjoy the sport the more and understand their birds the better if they rear and train them by their own hand.

Hawks and falcons, being of wild and violent natures, are at first insensible to both punishment and caresses; hence with an intractable bird want of light and food is the only punishment that will affect it, and it is of the utmost importance that the same person should always administer its food and care for the bird's welfare. Having secured a brancher, shackle its legs with the supple thongs of straps called bewits; the bewits usually terminate with bells. With an old army buckskin gauntlet protect your hand and wrist, and place the bird upon your gauntleted wrist, and carry it about with you night and day, giving it no opportunity for rest. If your falcon or hawk tries to bite and fight you, douse his head into a pail of cold water, and it will quiet him, and then put on the leather hood, which will keep him in complete darkness. Three days and nights of this will make the wildest bird inclined to be docile to a certain extent. Next teach the bird to take its food quietly, allowing no fluttering, fighting, or undue excitement during its meal. Feed it with your hand, and never do so without whistling or giving the peculiar call, whatever it may be, by which you intend to summon the bird in the future, when you wish it to resume its perch upon your wrist. It will by this means learn to recognize the call, and associating the noise with food, and food with its perch upon your gauntlet, will always fly for your wrist when you call. Familiarize your charge with horses, dogs and strangers.

When the ruling classes wish to strengthen their power over their poorer brethren, they seek to make the poor dependent upon the bounty of the rich for their support, and by thus destroying the independence of the so-called lower classes, the ones in power retain their position. Now exactly the same policy must be pursued with a wayward or foolish bird that prefers freedom and self-support to wearing a plumed hood on its head and bewits on its legs. With such a bird, excite its appetite by

forcing it to swallow pellets of tow mixed with a little wormwood and garlic. This will increase its hunger, and thereby make it more dependent upon its master, and consequently more docile, and the pleasure it derives from the gratification of this artificial appetite will attach it more closely to its master who feeds it.

In a week or less the bird is tamed, and then you can commence with the training. Take the falcon out in your yard, or if you live in the city and have no back yard, seek a retired spot in the park. Put a piece of meat on your hand and, calling the bird, teach it to hop on your hand. By no means allow it to partake of the meat until it has answered your call. Next fasten the meat to a lure made of a flat piece of wood and covered on both sides with the wings of the bird you intend to hunt or the skin of the animal you expect your hawk to pounce upon. Unhood your bird and show it the lure. If the bird strikes the lure, allow it to take the meat when it has answered your call and returned to your wrist. The string attached to the lure may be from ten to more than thirty yards in length, and when the bird swoops down upon the lure at the full length of the string and will then obey the call, you are on the road to success and know that the bird recognizes the lure, and knows that by answering your call it will be entitled to the meat for its reward. This point

gained, you need no longer fear allowing your bird freedom, because at a moment's notice you can reclaim him with the call or signal; even if he be soaring high overhead, at the sound of the call he will descend to his accustomed perch upon the buckskin gauntlet.

You may now show your bird living game by letting the real animals or birds, represented by the lure, fly or run handicapped by strings fastened to their legs. If your falcon takes these properly, binds the game well, and is obedient to the call, you are safe to take him to the field and try him on wild game, and if you are fond of field sports you will be more than repaid



The olden time.

sions. In 1871 two well-known authorities published a list, one making six species of goshawks (Astur) and the other thirty-one; the latter made only twenty-three sparrow-hawks and the former forty-five. According to the latest authority at hand, the hawks differ from true falcons in not having a toothed or notched bill.

The goshawk of the United States is one of our handsomest birds of prey; the crown of his head is deep black, and the upper parts bluish-slate, darker at the tail. There are no cross-bars on the throat, but each individual feather has an artistically arranged dot or dash of color. It has dark tinged wings, a tail of the same hue, with obscure bands across it. A broad white stripe with fine black penciling running from above and behind the eye adds expression and fierceness to the face. Audobon loved to watch this bird and describe its bold daring adventures as on strong wing it sailed over American wilds that have since become populous towns and farming districts. It would take a volume to describe each species and be unnecessary, as the only object of this article is to attract the attention of the sportsman to the grand possibilities for sport that would be opened by a revival of hawking.

The fair sex would also have an opportunity, for "in days of old when knights were bold," the knight always paid his court to his fair one by his marked attention to the falcons. Using the greatest judgment in flying the bird at the proper moment, never losing sight of it, encouraging it by calls, following it, and securing the prey from the death-dealing talons, and with a caress as a reward for the lucky or skillful work, the knight would slip the hood over the bird's head, and with all the grace he could assume place the falcon on the slender wrist of his and the bird's mistress.

DAN BEARD.



recovery; and as I watched the bird rise higher and higher over my boat, I thought what grand and artistic and intensely interesting sport it would be to discard our hooks and lines, our creeping and crawling and disgusting bait, and to substitute a ring or perch of ospreys, hooded and belled like the falcons of old. It was an enchanting fancy, and nothing but the grim necessity of being compelled to make a living has deterred me from carrying out the idea.

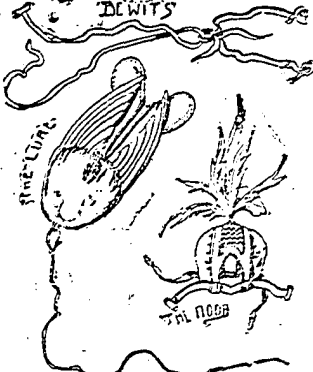
The ancient sport of falconry is about to be revived by a number of wealthy men in New Jersey, where, in the open country, there are excellent opportunities for fun with hawk and dogs.

Falconry was introduced into England about the fourth century and flourished during the middle ages and the Renaissance. From the peasant with his sparrowhawk to the crowned king with his gerfalcon, all were passionately fond of hawking. What were then considered vast fortunes were expended upon the cultivation of this sport. The grand master of the order of St. John of Jerusalem sent twelve falcons annually to the kings of France. A French knight of the order conveyed the birds to his monarch, for which service he received as a present his travelling expenses and money equivalent to \$15,000 a year. Louis XIII was daff on falconry, and always went hawking before going to church. Albert de Luynes made a fortune by his scientific training and



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Misunderstanding with a "Haggard." treatment of the birds. Baron de la Chastaignerie, chief falconer for Louis XIII, cared for 140 birds, and employed 100 men to assist him in their care.

England and Germany were enthusiastic on the subject of hawking. No lady or gentlemen, noble or ecclesiastic with any self-respect, would appear in public without a pet bird mounted upon the gauntleted wrist. The officiating clergymen even took their birds to church with them, only leaving them perched upon the altar steps while engaged in the actual church service.

Formerly falcons were divided into two classes, noble and inferior. The gerfalcons were the nobility in the bird aristocracy; and the others, the falcon, the bobby, the merlin, etc., had to content themselves with riding on the gloved hands of esquires and people of small importance.

The United States is well supplied with birds of prey, none of which probably are not susceptible of being trained for the chase. That they can be trained I know, having as a lad reared many, and taught them to come at my call and to be gentle in their behavior, not pinching my wrist when perching upon it. This is half the battle, and anyone with time and patience can do the rest.

In selecting a bird try to secure a brancher, that is, a bird that has been long enough out of the nest to hop from limb to limb, but is as yet incapable of flight and consequently unable to provide for its own wants. Paupers are always servile, and as this young bird must live upon your charity he will be more easily tamed than a haggard, that is, a full grown bird that is perfectly competent to hunt for himself and supply his own wants, and is consequently independent, and, under restraint, fierce and savage. Young birds that have just left their wild