

pigeon mound he has a clap-net; the reason for this I will state further on. In one little mound he has a bird, which I think is a kind of shrike, and is trained for the purpose. He also has a string attached to his leg. The shrike sits on the top of his little hut, and as he is very keen sighted he can see a hawk coming at a tremendous distance, and just as soon as he can see one coming along far away in the horizon, he gives a scream of alarm and pops into his little hut for safety. This gives the hawk catcher warning and he peeps out. Presently he sees the hawk coming and marking his line of flight correctly, he pulls out a pigeon from the house the hawk is going to pass nearest to. The hawk sees the pigeon and swoops down on him. As soon as he grapples with it the trapper hauls the string, which pulls the pigeon back into his little hut, and at the same time pulls another string which springs the clap-net on the hawk, and he is caught without injury, the wildest and boldest of all birds, the falcon. If he is a poor specimen he is let go, but if a good one his training commences at once, and is done as follows: The hawk catcher carries him home and at once places him upon his "block" in a little out-house, built generally of clay, with thatch or sod roof, and so constructed that when the small door is closed it is quite dark. The hawk "block" is made of sod; two pieces are cut, say twelve inches every way, then each one is cut down so as to be 8 inches square at one end, and bevelled to the full size at the other; one sod is placed on the floor with the widest part at the bottom, and the other is placed immediately on the top of it with the widest part upward. This forms a little sod pyramid twelve inches square at base and top and eight inches through at centre. A small stake is then driven through the centre of the block horizontally, each end projecting several inches. A little leather strap or thong, called "jesses," is attached to each leg of the hawk, and the end fastened to the stake at either side of the sod. The bird sitting on the top of the block is then perfectly secured. His trainer now places a hood on his head with only one small hole in it for his beak, so that the bird is in actual darkness. The rest of his training may now be said to be done with patience, starvation and kindness. The hawk is allowed to sit on the block till quite hungry, when a piece of raw meat is offered him; if he takes it at all it is only to throw it from his beak, but more starvation brings him to better terms, and he soon commence eating any piece of meat that is offered him. When he does this readily the hood is taken off and he is fed openly from the hand. By-and-bye pieces of meat, small birds, &c., are thrown to him, and when he has become quite reconciled to this way of feeding he is taken off the block and

allowed to fly at his quarry, but still in his house. All this is done in the quietest manner possible; the trainer does nothing to scare the bird, nothing to excite his suspicions, all must be done by kindness to command his confidence, and the trainer does all this alone. When the bird has become quite reconciled to all this, he is taken outside the shed into a yard and allowed to fly, with a line attached to his jesses, at what is called a lure. It is a bunch of feathers with a piece of meat attached to it. After being perfected in this, and got under complete control so as to come at call of voice or whistle, the cord is taken off his jesses, and he is flown in the yard at small pieces of meat, dead birds &c., thrown for him. Perfected in this his hood is placed on him, and he is taken out and flown at game; first, perhaps, trying him on a lark, or some bird which he is almost sure to catch. This gives him confidence in this, to him, new mode of taking his victims, and his training may now be said to be complete.

The hawks are always carried with the hood on, and are only taken off to show them the game they are wanted to fly at. The jesses are always kept on them, so also is one very small bell on each leg, fastened immediately above the jesses.

Hawks raised from the nest are trained somewhat in the same manner, but being reared by hand are always tame and not so difficult to train, but it is allowed that the passage hawk when properly trained is much the better bird.

I have often seen old paintings of a hawking party, ladies and gentlemen on horseback, carrying their hawks, and to my mind no sporting picture equals it. It has a fascination about it that throws one back centuries in imagination, and unfolds a history of field sports in the the bygone ages; and when one thinks of the capture of a hawk, the wildest and fiercest of all wild birds, and of his being brought to such a state of training and obedience that he can be flown from the hand at game and fetched back from away up in the sky to his owner's call, is a triumph of the human mind over God's creatures that has no equal in the reclaiming of any other animal.

Hawking, so far as I know, has never been practised on this continent, and I presume as it has all but given way to the more destructive fowling-piece in Europe, there is little chance of it being taken up here, although we have a grand lot of falcons, some of which, no doubt, if trained would be admirable birds for hawking. The time and patience necessary to subdue and train them is something, I fear, not to be found among American people.

× ROADS.

Strathroy, July 4th, 1883.