

## THE AMERICAN GOSHAWK NEAR OTTAWA.

BY G. EIFRIG.

The goshawk or blue henhawk (*Accipiter atricapillus*) breeds in some numbers in the vast wooded area to the north of Ottawa. It is a large hawk measuring two feet from bill to end of tail, the wing expanse being three to four feet. It is a beautifully marked hawk. The adults of both sexes are bluish-slate color above, the under parts white, each feather being pencilled with black, producing a fine effect. The young ones are entirely different, brownish-black with some rufous above, and the feathers below being heavily streaked with black, not barred as the adults. Last fall they were quite common for a while around the city. Their flight is not the slow gliding of the buzzard genus. They fly low and swift and fall on their prey like thunderbolts, and when people come out of the house to look for the miscreant who carried away their chicken, they may happen to see a red-shouldered hawk gliding around above, and, taking him to be the author of the mischief, will vow vengeance, whereas the real author, the goshawk, or perhaps Cooper's hawk, who looks and acts much like him, is far away by this time, enjoying his meal. They are quite fearless, often carrying away chickens or game from the very feet of the husbandman or hunter. They would be real harmful to farmers and poultrymen were they not so rare in settled districts. But for what damage the quick-flying *Accipiters* do, the slow-gliding useful buzzards, *Buteo*, are blamed and punished, as the red-shouldered, red-tailed and broad-winged hawks. Of the accipitrine hawks, which closely approach the falcons in build, rapacity and swiftness, we have only the goshawk, Cooper's and the sharp-shinned hawk, of which only the last is at all common, and he is too small to do much harm to man. He confines his depredations to small wild birds, where he does much harm. In winter he sometimes enters cities, as three winters ago Ottawa, and makes himself useful to the community by doing away with an enormous number of English sparrows.

The following two incidents, which came under the writer's notice, show the fierceness of the goshawk. About May 15th, 1905, Mr. F. Sack, a farmer of Germanicus, Renfrew Co., went into one of his fields, which he had not visited for a while. Suddenly a large hawk swooped down upon him, sailed around him in uncomfortably close proximity to his head, struck at him with his claws, and all this with such fierceness that progress was impossible. He had to turn back. The next day he wanted to finish his tour of inspection, when the same thing