

sulted, sometimes even ill-treated. So when Polly with her fine colours made her appearance in the leafy playground of our sober-coloured English birds, she got well stared at. The sparrows chatted, the chaffinches twitted, and at last an old rook passing by in his black coat and waistcoat spied her. He gave one or two indignant caws, and sailed up to the top of the big elm-tree to tell his relations. Out they all came, flying down to the field to see this gaudy-coloured stranger.

Meanwhile, her owner had missed her, and having traced her to the meadow, he came upon her just in the nick of time. She was fairly being mobbed, and with spread tail and angrily-open beak was calling out at the top of her voice, "One at a time, gentlemen, one at a time, please!"

The Owl's Defeat.

The Rev. Alex. Stewart of Ballachulish had a pet barn-owl, of which he says:—In the kitchen neither cat nor dog dare venture near the hearth when Strix, as we called him, had gravely set himself, standing on one leg, with his back to the fire, for a comfortable nap in the genial warmth, which he seemed always to enjoy vastly.

If, while in this state, he chanced to be pushed against, or disturbed in any way, he just opened the corner of one eye, blinking in the most comical manner, and if it turned out to be the cat or dog that had, however unwittingly, roused him from his reverie, he was at him like a flash of lightning.

With a pounce, always unerring, he first dug his bill into the cheek or ear of the unlucky intruder, then using the hold he thus got as a purchase, he threw himself on his back, and with his claws laid fierce grip on his victim's flank or nose, or about the eyes or forehead—a mode of warfare so fierce and sudden, and so utterly new to the unfortunate assailed, that Strix could in a few seconds always claim a complete victory.

He met with a violent death; he was musing in deep reverie in a clump of luxuriant ivy that clothes our garden wall, when a brood of downy ducklings that had only been hatched the day before passed merrily by, under the guardianship of their proud step-mother, a turkey-hen.

The owl saw the ducklings, and quickly making up his mind that one of them would be a very good thing by way of lunch, he made a dash at the nearest. But the turkey, alert and active, and in bold defence of her precious charge, instantly struck at Strix with all her might, and hitting him with her sharp beak right on the head, laid him dead at her feet.

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About Pointers.

Pointers are very useful to a sportsman, as they save him the trouble of finding the game. He can walk slowly along, while his dogs are beating over the field to his right and left. The sagacious animals are so well trained to act with each other that at a wave of the hand they will separate, one going to the right and the other to the left, and so traverse the whole field in a series of "tracks," crossing each other regularly in front of the sportsman as he walks forward.

When either of them scents a bird, he stops suddenly, arresting even his foot as it hangs in the air, his head thrust forward, his body and limbs fix-

ed, and his tail stretched out straight behind him. This attitude is termed a "point," and on account of this peculiar method of indicating the game, the animal is called a "pointer."

It is rather difficult to teach them their lesson rightly, for the dogs are quite as likely to make a mistake through being too anxious to please their master as through laziness and carelessness. Such dogs are very provoking in the field, for they will come to a point at every strange odour that crosses their nostrils, and so will stand at pigs, sparrows, cats, or any other creature that may stand in their way, and will hold so firmly to their "point," that they will not move until compelled.

A gentleman of Bradford had a pointer who showed great faithfulness in carrying out what he supposed was his duty. His master, after a day's sport with a friend, returned home after dark. On the way he lost two or three birds out of his bag. He was sure, however, that he had them with him when passing a certain spot.

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