

British Rural Sports:

FALCONRY

by Stonehenge

CHAP. I.

SECT. I.—THE GAME FLOWN-AT.

537. THE HERON (*Ardea Cinerea*), though already alluded to as being met with occasionally in the fens, must now be more fully described, since it is the chief of the birds at which the hawk is, or rather was, flown, in the sport called Falconry, or Hawking. In the winter they are shy and solitary, and are then more frequently seen in the fens by themselves; but in the spring they congregate and resort to the place of breeding called "a heronry," which is usually in a high wood. The nests are built like those of the rook, which bird they resemble in their habits, at this time of the year, in many respects. Sometimes, however, they build upon rocks on the coast, and at others in reeds or rushes; but these are rare exceptions, and the ordinary situation is the top of a lofty oak, fir, or elm tree. The nest is very large and broad, made of sticks, and lined with wool. The eggs are four or five, of a sea-green colour, rather more than two inches in length, and one and three-quarters in breadth. The heron feeds on fish, reptiles, mice, &c. When fishing, which is usually early in the morning and late at night, he stands motionless in shallow water, with the head between the shoulders, which, on seeing his prey, he darts as quick as lightning into the water, with a sure stroke. It is remarked that the heron always seeks the protection of a rock, or other impenetrable body when a wind is blowing. In the adult bird, the beak is yellow; iris, yellow; head, greyish-white; plumage, dark slate-blue; back, French-grey; tail, slate-grey; neck, white, with dark blueish-grey spots in front; breast, belly, and vent, greyish-white, streaked with black; legs and toes, greenish-yellow; claws, brown. Length, three feet. Adult females differ only in their colours being less bright. The plumage does not appear till the third year.

The following list of HERONRIES is extracted from Mr. Yarrell's splendid contribution to British Ornithology, to which I am also indebted for much useful information relating to birds here introduced:—

BERKSHIRE.—Windsor great park, two.

CHESHIRE.—Durham Massey, the seat of

the Earl of Stamford; Combermere Abbey, belonging to Lord Combermere; Hooton on the Mersey, the seat of Sir T. M. Stanley, Bart.; Ardley Hall, the residence of R. E. Warburton, Esq.; and at Oulton Park, the seat of Sir Philip Grey Egerton, Bart.

CUMBERLAND.—Gowbarrow Park, near Ulswater Lake, and at Graystock, or Graystoke.

DEVONSHIRE.—Powderham Castle, another at Sharpham on the Dart, and a third at Warleigh on the Tamar, the seat of the Rev. W. Radcliff.

DORSETSHIRE.—Brownsea Island, near Poole.

DURHAM.—Ravensworth Castle, the seat of Lord Ravensworth.

ESSEX.—Wansstead Flats.

KENT.—Cobham Hall, the seat of Earl Darnley; and at Penshurst Park.

LINCOLNSHIRE.—Formerly at Cressy Hall, near Spalding, a very large one, now destroyed, but two others established in the neighbourhood—Downington; Manby, near Brigg, belonging to Lord Yarborough; another at Skillingthorpe Wood, near Lincoln.

MIDDLESEX.—Osterly Park.

NORFOLK.—Didlington, the seat of Colonel Wilson.

NORTHAMPTON.—The seat of Earl Spencer.

NORTHUMBERLAND.—Collingham Park, the seat of Lord Tankerville.

SHROPSHIRE.—At the mere, near Ellesmere.

SOMERSETSHIRE.—Pilton, belonging to the Earl of Carnarvon; and at Brockley Woods, near Bristol.

SURREY.—Cobham Park, the seat of H. Coombe, Esq.; and at Ashley Park, Walton-on-Thames, the seat of Sir H. Fletcher, Bart.

WARWICKSHIRE.—Warwick Castle, the seat of the Earl of Warwick.

WESTMORELAND.—Dalham Tower, the seat of Colonel Wilson.

YORKSHIRE.—One, at the seat of R. Thompson, Esq., near Boroughbridge; another at Walton Hall, the residence of Charles Waterton, Esq.; and at Hutton, near Beverly, the seat of Mr. Bethel.

538. KITES, PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS, LARKS, ROOKS, MAGPIES, PIGEONS, SPARROWS, and WILDFOWL have each in their turn been flown-at in modern times, within the

limits of Great Britain. A great attempt has been recently made to restore this almost forgotten sport to something like its pristine state, and in doing so pigeons were chiefly the subjects of the falconer's art; because they only could be ensured at the time when a large company was assembled together. But the attempt failed to attract attention, and it is scarcely likely to be generally popular in such days as these, when the patience and perseverance of the old-fashioned sportsman are no longer practised. A few casts of falcons are still maintained where heronries are kept up, as one of the proofs of antiquity of places or race to which most people cling who have any title to them; but they are so scarce as to be out of the reach of nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of her Majesty's sporting subjects.

SECT. 2.—VARIETIES OF HAWKS USED IN FALCONRY.

539. THE LENGTH OF WING and the notch in the bill form the basis of the two classes into which the hawks are divided. Those whose wing-feathers project as far as the ends of their tails being called long-winged hawks, whilst the epithet short-winged is given to those whose tails are much longer than their wings. But the utility for hawking purposes does not always exactly depend upon this formation, since the short-winged goshawk and sparrow-hawk are far superior to the long-winged kestrel. All the falcons relieve their stomachs of the undigested feathers, bones, &c., of their prey, by vomiting up what is called "castings," some time after they have devoured them. None of the falconidæ change their wing and tail-feathers in their first autumnal moult.

540. THE GYR-FALCON (*Falco Gyr-Falco*).—This splendid bird is long-winged, and is the largest species used in hawking; it is very rare in Great Britain, and can seldom be obtained even in Norway or Iceland, where it is comparatively common. In the olden days of falconry, the Iceland gyr-falcon was very highly esteemed, it being supposed to be more courageous and of more rapid flight than the British variety, or even that obtained from Norway. Indeed it was very commonly supposed to be a distinct species, but it is now generally considered as identical with the gyr-falcon of Great Britain. It was used for flying at herons and the larger kinds of wildfowl, for which its great size and strength made it peculiarly fitted. In length the gyr-falcon is about 23 inches. The beak is of a horn colour, with yellow cere, iris, dark; the back and all the upper parts of the body vary according to age, from a plumage

of dark brown shaded with light brown, to feathers each edged with white and having a light brown centre. The lower parts also vary from a pale brown to a pure white. The tarsi and toes are yellow; claws, black and much curved. The nest is built high among the rocks of the coast, and the eggs are of a dull white ground, mottled with pale reddish-brown; they are nearly two inches and a half long, and two inches in diameter.

541. THE PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco Peregrinus*), being more common than any of the large long-winged falcons suitable for hawking purposes, has always been the chief subject of the falconer's art. She is nearly as large and powerful as the gyr-falcon. The female is larger than the male, and is consequently used in falconry in preference; being reserved for the heron and wildfowl, while the male is flown at partridges and quails. The yearling male is called a red tiercel, and the female a red falcon; the further names of eyas, gentil, passage, and haggard are also applied to them according to the age at which they are taken, the first name being given to the nestling birds. The peregrine is found almost in all countries, hence its name. It builds on the high rocks all round the coast of England, Wales, and Scotland, and in the interior of Ireland, as well as on its sea coast; and lays from two to four eggs, about two inches long, by one and two-thirds in breadth, mottled all over with pale reddish-brown. In length it is about 18 inches, if a female; or 15 inches, if a male. The beak is blue; cere and eyelids yellow; iris, dark brown; top of the head and neck, and also a spot under the eye, brown-black. The whole upper surface of the body is of a blueish-slate, or ash colour, hence its common name of "blue falcon;" these feathers are barred with a darker shade of the same colour, and both shades become lighter in old birds. The primaries, dark brown, barred and spotted with rusty white. Front of neck of a white ground, with longitudinal streaks of brown; breast, pale rusty-white with transverse bars of brown. Flanks and under surface of the tail-feathers barred with white. Legs and toes yellow; claws, black. The young peregrines have all the upper parts of a brownish-ash colour, each feather having a rusty edge. The longitudinal streaks on the breast are also more marked.

542. THE HOBBY (*Hypotriorchis Subbuteo*), is a peregrine in miniature, but of a more delicate, airy, and elegant shape. It is also more bold in proportion to its size, having sometimes been known to fly at birds larger than itself. It is a bird of passage in this country, appearing in the spring, and leaving

us again for warmer regions in October or November. Its chief haunts are the woodlands of the more cultivated districts, where it probably succeeds in obtaining half-crippled thrushes, sparrows, or other birds, more easily than would be the case if they were whole and sound. It makes its nest in some high tree, usually selecting the deserted one of some other bird. The female lays three or four eggs, in length one inch and two-thirds, breadth one inch and one-third, speckled all over with reddish-brown on a ground of dirty white. The hobby is obliged to have recourse to large insects for food in default of birds, which it cannot always procure. The female measures 14 and the male 12 inches in length. The colours of the male are as follows:—beak, horn-colour; cere, greenish-yellow; iris, brown; all the upper parts greyish-black, the feathers having each a whitish fringe; primaries and secondaries black, edged with white; the two middle tail-feathers plain black, the others barred with a lighter shade; chin, white; cheek, black; breast, belly, and thighs of a yellowish-white ground, with streaks of brown; legs and toes, yellow; claws, black. It is too small for hawking purposes, but may be used to fly at larks or sparrows let loose from the hands.

543. THE MERLIN (*Hypotriorchis Esalon*) is like the hobby, too small for the purpose of flying at any of the larger varieties of game; but, as he is a very bold bird, he is capable of being used with great efficiency in taking larks, &c., on the open downs, or small birds let loose from the hand. So bold and powerful is this little falcon, that he has been seen to strike and kill a partridge of more than double his weight. He is very tenacious of his prey, and it is very difficult to make him leave it when he has full possession. He does not often, like the hobby, feed on insects, but pursues small birds with unrelenting fury and courage. The greater number of the merlins found in this country are bred elsewhere, but many nests are found in the northern moors and in North Wales. The nest is made on the ground, with very scanty materials. The eggs are four or five in number, mottled with two shades of reddish-brown, and they measure one inch and seven lines, by one inch and three lines. The merlin is from 10 to 12 inches in length. Its description is as follows:—In the male, beak, horn-colour; cere, yellow; iris, brown; upper parts blue-grey, with a dark line along the shaft of each feather; primaries, black; tail-feathers, blueish-grey, verging to black towards the exterior third, and each feather having a white tip; chin and throat, white; breast and under parts rufous,

with patches or streaks of brown on each feather; legs and toes, yellow; claws, black. The females differ, in having all the upper parts of a dark liver-brown, each feather having a rusty tip; tail, brown, with five narrow transverse bars of a deeper shade; under parts, pale, whitish-brown, with darker streaks. The young males resemble the females.

544. THE KESTREL, though a long-winged hawk and of very great powers of flight, can never be trained even to fly at small birds. Its timidity is so great that it will not return to the wrist of the falconer, unless very strongly pressed by hunger. At one time I doubted this fact, but having persevered for many months in endeavouring to reclaim a pair of these birds, I can speak from experience as to its utter impracticability. It may, therefore, at once be dismissed from the list of hawks suitable to the falconer's purpose. The remaining hawks are of the short-winged subdivision.

545. THE GOSHAWK (*Astur Palumbarius*) not only has the shorter wing to distinguish it from the true falcons, but it has also a lobe instead of a tooth on the cutting edge of the upper mandible. In flying at its game, the goshawk does not soar above it and then stoop, but follows in the same line, in a style which is called "raking" in falconry. This is occasioned by its comparative want of speed, which forbids its soaring, and it is consequently compelled to adopt the only plan left to it. Nevertheless, it is a very bold bird, and was formerly highly esteemed for flying at ground-game. Its flight is very fast for a short time, but it cannot long maintain its speed; and if it does not succeed at once, it gives up the pursuit and retires to the nearest tree, from which it may be easily "lured." Colonel Thornton was very partial to this species of hawk, and used it in the pursuit of pheasants to a great extent. Those which he trained were obtained partly from Scotland, but chiefly from the Continent. It is very rarely met with in the south of England, though a few specimens have been taken on Dartmoor; there is no record of its appearance in Ireland. It builds in some high tree on the outskirts of an extensive forest, and lays three or four eggs of a pale blueish-white. The female is from 23 to 24 inches long; males, about 17 or 18. Plumage alike in both, when full-grown; beak, horn colour; cere and iris, yellow. All the upper parts dark-greyish brown, inclining to clove-brown in the females; tail feathers, barred with a much lighter shade of brown. All the under parts white, with spots and undulating transverse bars of brownish-black on the breast, belly, and thighs. Cheeks and ear-crests, greyish; eyes and

toes, yellow; claws, blueish. The young birds differ in having the top of the head and ear-coverts of a rusty white, with a dark band down the middle of each feather; back, wings, and upper tail-coverts, brown, with an edge of buff. Primaries, dark-brown, with two shades of brown barred on the inner webs; under parts, greyish-white, each feather having a central patch of dark-brown; legs and toes, brownish yellow.

546. THE SPARROW-HAWK (*Accipiter Nisus*) is another short-winged hawk. It is much smaller, and bears in some measure the same relation to the goshawk which the merlin and hobby do to the gyr-falcon and peregrine. Thus, the young aspirant for honours in falconry may choose in every case any one of the three sets, and then confine himself to the under-sized bird, which must be flown at small game; or extend his operations to the more bold and expensive amusement for which the three larger varieties only are suited. In all the wooded districts of Great Britain this hawk is very common, and may be readily obtained when in the nest; but for the purpose of falconry it must either be allowed to reach its full powers in a wild state, and can then only be procured by trapping, or it must be reared in a half-wild state, called "rearing at hawk." It is an extremely dangerous enemy to the poultry-yard and the young broods of game, and, as I have already directed in the chapter on game-preserving, should be diligently rooted out in every preserve. It builds in some tree, generally in the deserted nest of the crow or magpie, and lays four or five eggs of a pale blueish-white, blotched with dark reddish-brown. The male measures 12 inches in length. Beak, blue; cere and iris, yellow; all the upper parts, rich dark-brown; tail, greyish-brown, transversely barred with darkish-brown; under parts, rufous, with numerous transverse bars of a much darker shade; legs and toes, yellow; claws, black. The female is 15 inches long, and differs as follows:—The upper parts are marked with delicate white spots, which are partially concealed by each successive feather; primaries and tail-feathers, of a lighter brown; under parts, greyish-white, instead of rufous. The young male resembles the female, but the feathers of the back are not spotted with white, but are edged with reddish-brown; tail, reddish-brown towards the base.

547. THE KITE, BUZZARD, AND HARRIER may be reclaimed, but are not bold enough for the purpose of hawking, and so long as the peregrine falcon or goshawk may be obtained, no one would dream of their use. They have none of the daring of that bird

in the presence of man, though in a wild state they sometimes exhibit great boldness and courage.

SECT. 3.—HAWKING APPARATUS, AND TECHNICAL TERMS.

548. THE HOOD-PROPER is of the greatest importance in breaking the hawk to the hand, and its manufacture requires some little nicety of workmanship. Its great use is to tame the hawk by producing temporary blindness; and as we know the effect of solitary confinement in the dark, we can easily understand the consequence of this mode of treatment. This hood is made of stiff leather, and must be blocked upon a wooden model of the intended shape so as to sit stiffly and firmly on the hawk's head. In order to obtain the necessary shape, a central portion of leather (*fig. 1, a*) is let in, and neatly stitched to the cheeks, which are seen at *b b*; *c* is an aperture for the beak to come through, and should be large enough to allow of the bird's ejecting his castings without difficulty, but not wide enough to allow him to see; *d* is a slit at the back, to allow of its being put over the head, and afterwards confined by means of the leathern braces *e e*, which draw together, and fix it easily, yet securely. In blocking the leather, a convex piece of leather or other material should be fixed upon the ground-block to represent the eye, by which precaution the hood is rendered more concave at that part, and is prevented from pressing upon that delicate organ. If this is properly attended to, the hood sits quite easily, even on the prominent eyes of the kestrel, which is the most difficult of all to fit without injury. The hood-proper is usually ornamented with a tuft of leathers, as shown in the woodcut.

549. THE RUTTER HOOD is intended to remedy the defects of the hood-proper when badly made, but instead of this it only aggravates the evil. Every one knows that a smooth and polished piece of leather would be less painful to the eye than a rough surface, even though soft and pliant; besides, the rutter-hood being of cloth or pliable leather, is more liable to be rubbed into the eye in the efforts of the hawk to get rid of it; and I have found by experience that it is a very bad substitute, even for a badly-made hood-proper. It is made in two pieces, having a neat seam down the centre, and, like the hood-proper, has a hole for the beak, and also a slit at the back with a brace (see *fig. 2, a and b*).

550. THE BRAIL (*fig. 3*) is merely a slip of soft leather slit down by the knife, so as to include the wings (as shown at *fig. 3, a b*) while the end is continued backwards, and being carried along the side, is tied to

Fig 1

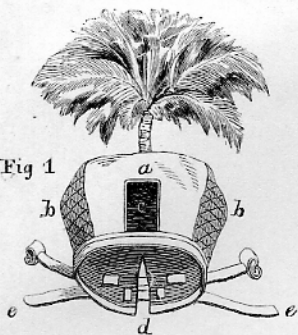


Fig 2

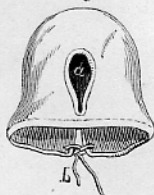


Fig 3

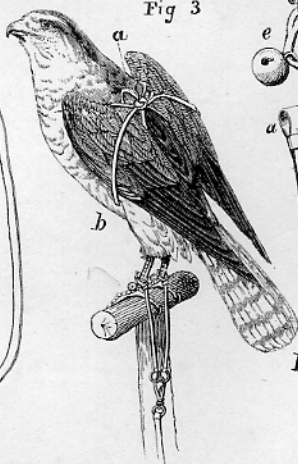


Fig 4



Fig 5

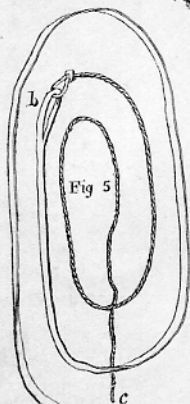
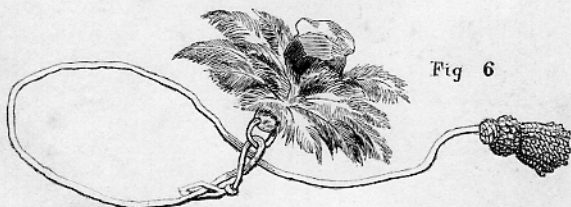


Fig 6



the other end above the back. Its object is to prevent the newly-caught hawk from fluttering, or "baiting," as it is called, which would permanently injure her feathers, so as to interfere with her appearance and powers.

551. **JESSES AND BELLS** are fixtures to the legs of the falcon, being constantly suffered to remain on, even when flying at her quarry. The jesses are two slips of leather, or knitted silk, one for each leg, a few inches long, varying with the size of the hawk. One end of each (*fig. 4, b*) has a ring to which the swivel of the leash is attached; the other has a running noose (*a a*), in which the leg of the hawk, together with the "bewit" of the bell is inserted. The jesses are held by the fingers of the falconer when the bird is on his wrist, or they serve to attach her to him by the leash when in training. The bells are for the purpose of finding the hawk when she is at large, and they are attached by a double slip of leather called the *bewit* (*fig. 4, e*), through which the leg is passed, and then the button is still further confined by the running noose of the jesse.

552. **THE LEASH** (*fig. 5, a b*) and **CREANCE** (*fig. 5, b c*) are for the purpose of confining the hawk. The former is of leather, with a swivel at *a*, by which it can immediately be unhooked from the jesses when the game is on the wing. At the other end it has a simple loop at *b*, by which it may be lengthened with a light cord called the "creance." This last is only used for training purposes.

553. **THE LURE**, in some form or other, is used to entice the hawk back to the wrist of the falconer, either after an unsuccessful flight, or when the game is struck, and is to be saved from the talons of its devourer. The **ORDINARY LURE** is a bunch of gaudy feathers, with a cord and tassel (as shown at *fig. 6*). In the middle of the feathers is a forked piece of wood, to which is tied a piece of raw meat. By accustoming the hawk to feed upon flesh tied to this lure, she soon learns to come to it immediately; and thus its chief use is obtained. **THE TABUR-STYCKE** and **DRAWER** are modifications of the same, merely using a stick instead of a cord.

554. **HAWKING GLOVES** are made of stout tanned leather, with gauntlets coming up over the wrist. In the palmy days of falconry these were very gaily ornamented; but this being quite a matter of taste, it is needless to go into the many colours and ornaments which were appended to them.

555. **THE MEWS** is the apartment in which the hawk is kept. This should be open to the air on the south and west, but

protected from the cold winds coming from the north and east. In intense frost, windows are required, but usually the apertures may be left open day and night. When several hawks are kept, two or three of these apartments must be provided, in order to suit the particular constitutions or conditions of each variety or species. Wooden blocks or perches must also be fixed in the ground; the former being mere cones of wood for the long-winged hawks, whilst the latter are for the short-winged hawks, and are cross-bars fixed at the top of posts, and having a piece of cloth or matting hanging down to the ground, by which the hawk is assisted in recovering his perch; and the leash is also prevented from being entangled, by the hawk constantly descending on one side and ascending on the other. The floor should be of dry gravel, constantly renewed.

556. **THE CAGE** is used for removing the hawks from place to place. It is merely an oblong square, or circle, of light wood, in the centre of which the falconer walks, supporting the weight by shoulder-straps, and steadying it with his hands. The cross-bars should be of a size suited to the feet of the hawks used, and should be of soft wood, or even padded with leather. A few light cross pieces are added, to prevent the hawks falling inwards. The oblong cage is 4 feet 6 inches by 2 feet, and has four moveable legs, by which it is supported from the ground when the falconer wishes to leave it.

557. **THE TECHNICAL TERMS** used in falconry are the following:—

1.—THE PARTS OF THE HAWK.

The upper mandible is called	<i>The beak</i>
The lower mandible	<i>The chap</i>
The cere of the bill	<i>The cere.</i>
The nostrils	<i>Nares.</i>
The legs	<i>Arms.</i>
The toes	<i>Petty singles</i>
The claws	<i>Pounces.</i>
The wings	<i>Sails.</i>
The long feathers of the wings	<i>Beams.</i>
The first two feathers	<i>Principals</i>
The next two feathers	<i>Flags.</i>
The tail	<i>The train.</i>
The crop of the hawk	<i>The gorge.</i>
The stomach	<i>The pannel.</i>
The lower intestines	<i>The gut.</i>
The ejected feathers, skins, &c.	<i>The castings.</i>

2.—NAMES GIVEN ACCORDING TO AGE.

A young hawk from the nest is	<i>An eyas.</i>
A young hawk which can hop but not fly	<i>A brancher.</i>
A nestling hawk reared at liberty	<i>A hack-hawk.</i>
A young hawk able to take game	<i>A soar-hawk.</i>

Young hawks taken wild before Lent *Lantiners.*
 Young hawks taken after Lent *Haggards.*
 Young hawks taken in their migrations *Passage hawks*

3.—NAMES FOR VARIOUS ACTIONS OR PROCESSES.
 The taming of the hawk is *Reclaiming.*
 Fluttering *Baiting.*
 Fighting with each other *Crabbing.*
 When the hawk sleeps, she *Jouks.*
 Her prey which she is flown at *Her quarry.*
 When she strikes it she is said *To bind.*
 When she flies away with it *She carries.*
 When she plucks it *She deplumes.*
 The dead game is *The pelt.*
 When she pursues her game *She flies at it.*
 When, after soaring, she descends with her game *She trusses.*
 When she soars and then descends *She swoops.*
 Her direct pursuit without soaring is *Raking.*
 When she leaves her proper game to fly at crows, &c. *She checks.*
 When the game flies into a hedge *It puts in.*

4.—THE TERMS USED IN MOULTING.
 Moulting the feathers is *Mewing.*
 When she has gone through her first moult she is *Intermewed.*
 A hawk with complete plumage is *Summed.*
 A hawk with incomplete plumage is *Unsummed.*
 A hawk in good condition is *Inseamed.*
 The reverse *Seamed.*
 Mending the feathers artificially is *Imping them.*
 Paring the bill or talons is *Coping.*

5.—TERMS USED IN TRAINING AND FLYING.
 When the hawk is obediently flying round in the air *She waits on her master.*
 The hawk is sent off by *A whistle.*
 She is brought back by *A lure.*
 Flying long-winged hawks at partridges from the wrist is *Flying out of the hood.*
 A couple of hawks *A cast.*

SECT. 4.—MODES OF OBTAINING HAWKS.

558.—All hawks are either taken from the nest (*eyases* and *branchers*), or they are trapped at a later period, when able to take game themselves (*lantiners* and *haggards*). By the adoption of the former mode they are much more tractable, but they do not fly at their game so boldly or so strongly; and, as taming the hawk is easy enough, whilst teaching them to fly at game is the chief difficulty in falconry, it is no wonder that haggards are preferred for hawking, when they can be obtained;

since their full perfection in plumage is an essential to their employment as falcons; but they are of course more difficult to procure, since the hawk is a very cunning bird, and not very easily trapped. When the nest is found the eyas is taken at once, and reared more or less at liberty, or it is allowed to remain under the fostering care of its parents until it is nearly able to fly (*a brancher*), in which stage of development it may be taken by several active men in the trees surrounding that in which it is perched, or by springes of horse-hair, or by bird-lime. The two latter plans, however, injure the plumage a good deal, and should not be adopted unless it is impossible to procure the assistance of active men or boys. The nests being usually in the same place in each succeeding year, may generally be found by those who have made the matter their business.

559. HAGGARDS may be trapped in this country with the square-net, or the bow-net, but in either case great difficulty is experienced. The square is thus described by Sir John Sebright:—A net, eight feet in depth, and of sufficient length to enclose a square of nine feet, is suspended by means of upright stakes, into which transverse notches are made, and on which notches the meshes of the net are loosely placed, so that as soon as a hawk strikes against it the net readily disengages itself and falls. The square enclosure is open above, and within it a living bird, usually a pigeon, is fastened as a bait. The colour of the net should assimilate as much as may be with surrounding objects, and the material should be a fine silk. The merlin, the hobby, and the sparrow-hawk may be taken in this way, but the larger varieties, viz., the gyr-falcon, peregrine, and gos-hawk, are seldom to be thus trapped, and they must be captured either by the bow-net or the hand-net, as follows:—The bow-net consists of a net of dark-green silk, six feet square, which is attached to an arch of wood or metal fixed to the ground, like the handle of a common pall is to the pall itself. The bow works freely backwards and forwards in eyes which are attached to pegs firmly driven into the ground; it is about four or five feet in diameter, and is fixed to the one side of the net by fine but strong cord, the other three sides being firmly pegged down to the ground, but so fastened as to allow the bow to be drawn completely over to the side opposite to that on which the pegs are driven into the ground. By this arrangement the bow-net is scarcely visible when set, the bow then lying on the ground upon the folds of the net, and the whole being concealed by grass, &c., but capable of being drawn over to the other

side at the pull of the falconer, when his prey is within its reach. To effect this purpose a long line is attached to the bow, and a live pigeon, or other bird, is fastened down by a string close to the bow-net, so that when the falcon strikes the pigeon it is enclosed by the net, which is rapidly pulled over it by the falconer in concealment. The great difficulty lies in the habits of the hawk tribe, which will seldom strike a bird on the ground; but with patience, I have little doubt that the bow-net would succeed. In this way *PASSAGE-HAWKS*, both of the long and short-winged kinds, are caught on the continent of Europe, and particularly in the heaths near *Falcons-waerd*, in the autumn, as they pass southwards and to the east. A pigeon forms the usual bait; but, in addition to this apparatus, which is the same as that used in England, a *BUTCHER-BIRD* (*Lanius Excubitor*), is tied on the ground near the hut of the falconer, and two pieces of turf are so set up as to serve him as well for a place of shelter from the weather, as for a retreat from the falcon. The falconer employs himself in some sedentary occupation, relying upon the vigilance of the butcher-bird to warn him of the approach of the hawk. This he never fails to do, by screaming loudly when he perceives his enemy in the distance, and by running under the turf as the hawk draws near. The falconer is thus prepared to pull the net the moment the falcon has pounced upon the pigeon. The short-winged hawks are all taken in the square-net, as already described for capturing hawks in this country. Sometimes the passage-hawk is taken by large hand-nets similar in principle to the landing-nets used in fishing, but very much larger. With these the hawk is caught by the falconer, who is concealed near a pigeon tied by a string to his hand, and suffered occasionally to fly a short distance. The bird attracts the hawk, who makes a swoop, and is dexterously caught by the falconer while his attention is thus fully engaged.

SECT. 5.—GENERAL MANAGEMENT OF THE HAWK.

560. *THE HOUSING* is the domestic economy of the hawk, and upon its being properly carried out depend her health and spirits. I have already described the apartment or *meus* in which they are to be kept. It is strongly recommended by Sir J. Sebright that hawks should be *bathed* every five or six days in a running stream with a shallow edge. Before bathing, they should be lightly fed; and if a running stream cannot be obtained, an artificial pond or a sunken pan of earthenware must be

employed. In very hot weather a bath every other day is not too often. The hawks may be unhooded, and fastened by their *creances* to pegs stuck in the ground, and may be left by the falconer to bathe themselves, he retiring to some little distance. But they must not be suffered to indulge themselves as fully and as long as they like, nor must they be allowed to struggle or "bait" when confined by the *creance*, which they will do as soon as they begin to attempt to fly after bathing. The hood must therefore be again put on, and the hawks returned to their perches. Hawks must also be *weathered*; that is to say, they should be put out on perches which are erected in the open air, and then left either hooded or unhooded, according to their degree of wildness, for many hours a-day, but not in the rain. If wild and unruly, they should be well fed before weathering, which renders them sluggish and disinclined to *bait*.

561. *THE REARING of the eyas or brancher* must be carefully attended to. They must be kept warm, but should be handled as little as possible. Sir John Sebright recommends a hamper to be placed in a sheltered situation, about breast-high, in a tree or hedge. The bed of the hamper forms a good stage for the young birds to come out upon, in order to be fed. Beef or mutton forms the food, with the fat carefully removed, and the lean cut into oblong slender pieces. With these the young birds are fed night and morning, the falconer always using the same kind of cry as an accompaniment, which the young hawks speedily get accustomed to, and are impatient for their food as soon as they hear it. The long-winged hawks are usually fed on a high table, the short-winged on the ground. Birds, such as pigeons and rooks, are given occasionally as a variety, and also to stimulate the appetite for that kind of food. If young hawks are not properly fed, the feathers are not well developed, and what are called *hunger-traces* are left upon them. It is said that one day's starvation will leave a mark on the feathers. Sir John Sebright says, "The hunger-trace may be seen as a line of imperfection across the web of every feather, neatly marked, as if a razor had been passed across the wing." When this appears, a raw egg must be added daily to the flesh. When the eyas is fully feathered and capable of flying, she is either confined to certain limits by her jesses and leash, or with her jesses and bells on, she is suffered to be at large, and is then said to be *at hack*. The hack-hawk must be carefully fed and watched, and if she does not come to her usual feeding-time, she must be sought for and retaken by means of a

bow-net, or some other device, such as horse-hair springes, &c. Of course the neighbours should be requested to respect the hawk-haw, and not to take advantage of her comparative tameness. As soon as she begins to hawk for herself, she must be confined to the length of her leash, or she will assuredly be lost. But if care be taken to feed them very early in the morning, they may be left at liberty for a long time, as they do not fly at game unless hungry.

562. THE MEWING, or moulting, must be carefully attended to, as this process is often accompanied by considerable fever and loss of appetite. The moulting commences early in the autumn, and at that time the hawks should be examined for vermin, and, if any are present, treated according to the plan hereafter recommended. The apartment must be warm, but not close; airy, yet free from draughts; the hood should be avoided, if possible, and the beak and talons should be closely *coped*, to prevent her from injuring her young feathers. Bathing occasionally is necessary, but in cold weather the water must have the chill taken off. Mewing-hawks should be well fed, and should be encouraged to come to the fist as often as possible, for the sake of exercise. Hawks are not to be suffered to fly for six weeks after the completion of the moult.

563. IMPING is the repairing of broken feathers, and for this purpose the falconer should have a good store of all the wing and tail-feathers of the various species which he has under his care. When a feather is broken, it must be repaired as follows:—The broken feather is to be obliquely cut off, and the artificial one exactly shaped to fit it; then, by inserting two needles, and using a little solution of isinglass in spirit of wine, the two may be strongly spliced together. The old falconers used merely a needle dipped in vinegar or salt and water, and trusted to the rust arising upon it, for the retaining the two parts in apposition. Diamond cement and white of egg have been recommended; but I have found the solution of isinglass make so secure a joint that it is difficult to detect the point of union; and by a little care, all sowing of the adjacent feathers may be avoided.

564. THE CONDITIONING of the hawk is the process of dieting and physicking her so as to replace by art what she loses of her natural state. When at liberty she takes no food without feathers or fur, and naturally requires their stimulus to her stomach; usually also she feeds on her prey while lying on the ground, and in doing so she gets some small portion of earth with the feathers and flesh. Hence the falconer, to

imitate his great prototype, gives his charge feathers and small bones mixed with the meat, and occasionally a little fine gravel; or, if he has not these readily at command, a little tow or wool. The feet of fowls, rabbits, and hares with the fur on answer this purpose well, and should be given at night, as the hawk is usually dull till the *castings* have returned. All hawks should have a full meal, called a *gorge*, every four or five days; which is their natural mode of feeding, with light feeding on the intermediate days. The condition is known by the weight or handling, and the amount of food is regulated accordingly.

565. MEDICINES are sometimes required, and especially purges consisting of from three to four grains of rhubarb, jalap, or aloes mixed with the meat. If the dose is not active enough, it must be increased; and sometimes 10 or 12 grains will be taken by the larger hawks without over purgation. If the hawk is relaxed, a little chalk and a grain or two of cinnamon must be given with the meat. When the castings are returned in a moist state, with small pieces of flesh adhering to them, or covered with mucus, it shows that the stomach is disordered and weak. For this condition five grains of extract of camomile with some cinnamon should be given after a dose of rhubarb daily. If the *meutings* or *feces* are black, a grain or two of mercury with chalk should be given with two or three of rhubarb, every other day till they become of the natural colour. Sometimes the hawk has an attack of wheezing, for which from a quarter to half a grain of ipecacuanha may be given, or a little syrup of coltsfoot. If they are afflicted with worms, as much finely-pounded glass as will lie on the point of a large penknife is to be mixed with an equal amount of salt, and put on a piece of flesh and given to the hawk daily.

566. FOR VERMIN, fumigations of tobacco must be used, taking care to exclude her head; or powdered sulphur may be well sprinkled among the roots of the feathers by means of a powder-puff. The fumigation is effected by tying a large bag round the back of the hood, and then introducing into the bag the fumes of burning tobacco. Care should be taken that there is no escape between the head of the bird and the hood, and to prevent this some soft cotton should be gently introduced at the back.

SECT. 6.—TRAINING THE EYAS AND BRANCHER FALCON.

567. HOODING commences this part of the education of the hawk, and should be commenced as soon as the young eyas is fully feathered. When first hooding her, the brail, paragraph 550, should be used, and

continued till the hood is borne with patience, in order to prevent the bird from *baiting* and spoiling her feathers. If very refractory, the constant dropping of water upon her will soon bring her to, conjoined with deprivation of sleep and low diet; but this is seldom required in the *eyas*. The next thing is to accustom her to the bells, jesses, and leash, which she bears well enough with her hood on, but without it she will soon pull them to pieces, until prevented by careful watching. The water-dropping acts well here, by taking her attention off her feet; but it is not safe to use it freely, except in warm weather. The perch to which the hawk is attached by the leash is usually a cross-piece of soft wood, or a solid cone of the same material, to the lower part of which the end of the leash is attached, the latter being used for long-winged hawks only. The next thing to be done is to accustom the hawk to the fist, on which she should be first placed while in her hood; after removing this she is in course of time reconciled to her master, and if rewarded with a piece of meat, soon learns to bear his presence without *baiting*. Every time she is wanted to bear any restraint, or to obey her master in any way, she should be rewarded for compliance by a choice morsel. In this way, however much she may resist at first, she finally submits to hood, jesses, and bells, and readily comes to the fist, either to be fed, or simply to the whistle, which invariably accompanies that act. When the hawk will come the length of her leash to the fist, the *creance* may be added to the former to any length, and the hawk may be suffered to fly short distances, that is, to the length of her *creance*, from which she may be enticed back to the fist by the whistle. All this is very easy with the *eyas* or *brancher*, but with the *haggard* it can seldom be fully accomplished, and the falconer must content himself with breaking his hawk to the *lure*; and even that is sometimes difficult to accomplish.

568. THE *LUKE* is useful for two purposes; first, to teach the hawk to fly at game; and secondly, to recover her in case of failure in her flight; or to distract her attention from the game which she is not wanted to devour, by giving her her accustomed food instead. The first step is to feed the hawk regularly on the *lure*, and when this is freely taken at a short distance from the hawk, gradually increase the interval, but very cautiously, for fear of alarming her fears. Next take the hawk out when very hungry, and let an assistant swing the *lure* round his head steadily, and at the full length of the cord; upon this the falconer casts off his hawk with the usual whistle or halloo, still holding the *creance*, and the assistant

suffers the *lure* to fall to the ground, for fear of injury to the hawk by striking it in the air, with the two strings attached. When this lesson is perfect, the assistant, instead of suffering the *lure* to fall withdraws it, and disappoints the hawk, which flies by him and then returns, when he may be suffered to strike the *lure* and feed upon it. In process of time the *creance* and jesses may be removed, and the hawk enticed to the *lure* from a considerable distance, and may then strike it in the air, while swinging round the head of the assistant. After a still greater time the hawk becomes so perfect, that she will circle round the head of the falconer, waiting for the *lure* to be thrown, and is then said to *wait on* him perfectly. While the hawk is feeding on the *lure*, the falconer should encourage her, and suffer her to finish without alarm, by which she will be shown that she may do this without fear, and will readily suffer herself to be taken after flying. She should also be accustomed to horses, men, and dogs. When this part of her education is accomplished, the hawk is ready for entering to her game.

569. ENTERING TO HER GAME is effected by letting loose a partridge or thrush, confined by a *creance*, at the time when the hawk is expecting the *lure*; she soon spies her prey, and strikes it to the ground, and may be suffered to indulge her appetite without restraint, while the falconer walks round and caresses her. After this she is ready to fly at wild game; but in case of her failure to strike, a live bird should always be carried into the field, which may be thrown up, confined by a *creance*.

SECT. 7.—TRAINING THE HAGGARD FALCON.

570. This is not quite so easy a process as that which I have already described for the *eyas*. The first thing to be done is to put on the hood, jesses, and bells, and to brail the wings; then carefully *cope* the beak and talons with nippers and file. During the early days their meat, which should only be given once a-day, must be washed with water, in order to reduce their courage; and they must be deprived of sleep, either by continual watchings of the attendant falconer, or by water dropping from above on their backs. If the hawk is very wild, the wearing of the hood must be postponed for some little time, till the courage is somewhat subdued by starvation and want of sleep; but the sooner it is put on the better. The falconer must be incessantly occupied with his charge, and by soothing treatment at last teaches her to bear her feathers to be touched without *baiting*. The falconer must live almost constantly with *haggards* before they get accustomed to him, but

when they own his presence they "rejoice" in him even more than the eyas. When the hood is borne pretty well, and the hawk is quiet on her perch, she may be fed a little more fully, but not yet upon unwashed meat. Sometimes there is great difficulty in getting the hood on the haggard at all, as the resistance is so great as to threaten destruction to the feathers, or even the life of the bird. In this case great tact is required, but it may always be accomplished by patience and perseverance when joined with starvation and want of sleep. When the hood is well borne, and the hawk becomes tamer, and feeds readily in the presence of the falconer, he may be tempted to approach by throwing him his food at some little distance from the falconer, when he will come nearer and nearer to him day by day, and at last feed freely close to him. Then the lure should be used as the place of feeding, and at last the hawk should be fed solely on that useful apparatus. Finally, she should be taken out and accustomed to strike the lure in the field; but the haggard can seldom be made to *wait on* the falconer, nor can she be recovered after an unsuccessful flight by its means, but a live pigeon must be let fly, with a *creance* attached.

571. ENTERING THE HAGGARD is a much more tedious process than the corresponding part of the treatment of the eyas, because so much more care is required lest she should escape. Whatever game she is intended for should be let fly with a string attached; and if this is the heron, the beak of that bird must be guarded with a piece of the elder-tree passed over its point. When a pigeon is used for entering hawks, they must afterwards be disgusted with its pursuit, by letting a succession of them fly at such distances from her as to be quite secure, and in this way tire her out. In the same way hawks may be broken from any kind of birds which they are wished not to pursue.

SECT. 8.—TRAINING THE SHORT-WINGED HAWK.

572. This is the same as regards feeding, and the use of the bells, jesses, and leash; but the short-winged hawks are flown from the fist, and are never hooded, except for a short time when first taken, or when on the cage. They, therefore, require to be made as tame as possible, by constant carrying on the wrist, and by tiring them out in allowing them to pull at a hare's foot or bare pinion-bone.

SECT. 9.—PREPARATION FOR FLYING.

573. All hawks should have a slight meal on the day before flying them, more or less

according to the condition and behaviour of the particular bird. Subsequently to flying they should be *gorged*; after which two clear days must intervene before the hawk is fit to be flown again. The feeding should be in the field immediately after flying. Half-reclaimed hawks must be flown very hungry; but excess in this respect does not answer the intended purpose, because it induces the hawk to hover round the falconer in the hope of being fed, rather than to pursue the game at which she is intended to fly.

SECT. 10.—FLYING THE FALCON OR LONG-WINGED HAWK.

574. HERON-HAWKING.—The falcon, which must be either the gyr-falcon or the female peregrine, having been previously entered to the heron, as described at paragraph 570, and fed according to the directions given in the last section, may now be taken into the field to wait for the appearance of the heron. Sir John Sebright thus describes the mode of flying peregrine falcons at herons, as practised in Norfolk:—"A well-stocked heronry in an open country is necessary for this sport, and this may be seen in the greatest perfection at Diddington, in Norfolk, the seat of Colonel Wilson. This heronry is situated on a river, with an open country on every side of it. The herons go out in the morning to rivers and ponds, at a very considerable distance, in search of food, and return to the heronry towards the evening. It is at this time that the falconers place themselves in the open country down-wind of the heronry; so that when the herons are intercepted on their return home, they are obliged to fly against the wind to gain their place of retreat. When a heron passes, a *cast* (a couple) of hawks is let go. The heron disgorges his food when he finds that he is pursued, and endeavours to keep above the hawks by rising in the air; the hawks fly in a spiral direction to get above the heron; and thus the three birds frequently appear to be flying in different directions. The first hawk makes his stoop as soon as he gets above the heron, who evades it by a shift, and thus gives the second hawk time to get up, and to stoop in his turn. In what is deemed a good flight this is frequently repeated, and the three birds often mount to a great height in the air. When one of the hawks seizes his prey, the other soon *binds to him*, as it is termed, and, buoyant from the motion of their wings, the three descend together to the ground with but little velocity. The falconer must lose no time in getting hold of the heron's neck when he is on the ground, to prevent him from injuring the hawks

it is then, and not when he is in the air, that he will use his beak in his defence. Hawks have indeed sometimes, but very rarely, been hurt by striking against the heron's beak when stooping, but this has been purely by accident, and not, as has been said, by the heron's presenting his beak to his pursuer as a means of defence. When the heron flies down-wind he is seldom taken; the hawks are in great danger of being lost, and as the flight is in a straight line, it affords but little sport."

575. KITE-HAWKING — Some years ago these birds (*Milvus Regalis*) were much used in falconry by the Earl of Oxford, near Alconbury Hill. They are abundant in open countries, but require the gyr-falcon or the female peregrine. The great owl, with a fox's brush tied to it, was used as the lure to draw down the falcon after an unsuccessful flight; the object of the brush being to impede the flight of the owl.

576. HAWKING ROOKS requires, as in heron-hawking, a cast of falcons. The tiercels are too small, and haggard or passage-hawks must be employed, not eyases, unless the latter are very bold and strong, and when this is the case they are superior in all respects to the haggard. The rooks mount like herons, but not so high. They must be found in an open country, on the leeward side of their rookery, so as to compel them to fly up-wind.

577. WILDFOWL may be flown-at by the various kinds of falcons, according to the size and strength of the fowl. Thus, geese require the gyr-falcon; but both the game and the hawk are so rare as scarcely to require alluding to. Ducks, wigeon, and teal may be taken with the peregrine tiercel, and either the eyas or the haggard may be employed. The hack-hawk is the variety usually employed, being bold enough, yet sufficiently reclaimed for the sport. Sometimes in the old days of falconry, half-tame ducks were let loose from the neighbourhood of a brook, and were then taken with the goshawk; but it must have been a very poor imitation of the more noble varieties.

578. PARTRIDGE-HAWKING. — For this sport eyases are used, and an open country is required. The falconers must be on horseback, with a steady pointer, and one or two spaniels, under good command. When a partridge is marked-down or pointed by the dog, the hawk is unhooded and cast off. He then waits on the falconer, if a good bird, at a considerable height. If he ranges too far he may be brought nearer by the halloo and lure; but these must be used with great discretion. This, and the not giving the hawk sufficient time to mount, are the most common faults in the

falconer. It is not necessary that the hawk should be within two or three hundred yards of the birds when they rise, if his head is turned towards them, and he is high enough. High-ranging dogs are the best, as the birds lie better to them. The hawks are to be cast off as soon as the dog points with any certainty, as the rise of the hawk prevents the bird from springing. When the partridge rises, the hawk will dart down with great velocity, and either take it at once or force it into a hedge. If the latter, the hawk rises again into the air, and waits for the falconer to push up the bird. The falconer now attends to his hawks, and the assistant proceeds to push out the bird. As soon as the partridge is taken, the falconer alone is to approach his charge; at first walking round him, and gradually drawing near with great caution. At length, by kneeling down, whistling as at feeding-time, the arm may be extended gently, and by taking hold of the partridge both may be placed on the fist, after which the hawk may be suffered to devour the head, and is then hooded. If a young hawk does not take the partridge in his first swoop, and if the bird cannot be put up again speedily, after he has put it in, a live partridge must be thrown up from a bag; and if it is his first flight, he should be suffered to eat it. This will prevent him carrying, which is caused more by his fear of being deprived of his prey than by wildness, as is generally supposed. When the partridges are very wild, the company should be drawn up in a line at a distance of 60 yards from each other. They should then gallop across the country, with the falconer in the centre of the line to regulate the pace, which he does according to the position of the hawk which is waiting on him. When the birds will not lie to the dog, the hawk is sometimes unhooded and cast off, the moment they rise; this is called, *flying out of the hood*.

579. LARKS may be taken by the merlin and hobby, which should be used on the same principle as the larger varieties of the falcon tribe. These little hawks mount and swoop in the prettiest style imaginable. Nothing can be more elegant than this sport; but it has not received that attention which it deserves. I have succeeded in carrying it out to a very considerable extent, and can speak from experience as to its perfectibility; but it is so very similar to rook-hawking that it need not be more fully described.

SECT. 11.—FLYING THE SHORT-WINGED HAWKS.

580. PARTRIDGES are taken by the goshawk, and even by the sparrow-hawk, with

one of which Sir John Sebright says that he took a partridge only ten days after his capture by the bow-net. But the sport is very different to the partridge-hawking already described.

581. **PARTRIDGE-HAWKING.**—Before shooting flying was introduced, the goshawk was very commonly used for the purpose of taking the partridge; and he may be made to take a great deal of game, and even to fly in a wood. Sir John Sebright expresses his surprise at any one seeing any sport in hawking partridges with the short-winged hawks, in which opinion I beg leave to join; and as it was done only for the purpose of procuring game, which may now be much more readily shot, it is no wonder that its use has been entirely superseded by that of the gun. When a covey rises, if the birds are very small the goshawk may possibly take one at the first flight, but if the partridges are tolerably strong, they will fly twice as fast as this hawk. The goshawk follows the covey at a distance, and in the manner of an owl. When they take refuge in a hedge (for these hawks are too slow for the open country), the goshawk marks the spot with the greatest precision, and after having *made his point*, by rising perpendicularly in the air, he takes his stand upon a neighbouring tree. If his situation be favourable he is allowed to retain it, or otherwise he is called down to the fist. In

either case the birds are to be driven out, and he either takes one at this their second flight, or again drives them into a hedge, and takes his stand as before. A great many partridges are taken in this way by the dogs in the hedges, to which they are driven by the hawks, over and above those killed by the hawk himself.

582. **LANDRAILS** may be taken in the same way, but as they are of slower flight, goshawks used to them will not fly at partridges.

583. **PHEASANTS**, also, may in like manner be taken by the goshawk.

584. **RABBITS** are very easily taken by the goshawk, or even the sparrow-hawk; but the latter is hardly strong enough, and is sometimes carried off into the earths of the rabbit, and permanently injured or killed.

SECT. 12.—EXPENSES OF HAWKING.

585. The market is now so limited, that it is quite impossible to set any bounds to the expense which must be incurred in procuring the most rare and valuable hawks. The sparrow-hawk may be easily procured, and the merlin also is tolerably common; but if either of the larger long-winged hawks is desired, considerable difficulty and expense must be encountered. I have no guide to offer as to these, as I never have procured, or attempted to procure, any of them.