THE GAME-PRESERVER'S MANUAL,

CONTAINING

FULL INSTRUCTIONS IN ALL THAT RELATES TO

GETTING UP AND MAINTAINING

A GOOD HEAD OF GAME;

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY

"HIGH ELMS."

TWO SHILLINGS.

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IN

ADMIRATION OF HIS QUALITIES

AS A GENUINE SPORTSMAN

AND

ENCOURAGER OF THE OUT-DOOR AMUSEMENTS

OF THE ENGLISH COUNTRY GENTLEMAN,

THIS LITTLE WORK IS DEDICATED TO

"THE EDITOR OF THE FIELD,"

BY HIS OBLIGED,

GRATEFUL,

AND VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,

"THE AUTHOR."

INTRODUCTION.

THE acknowledged fact that no plain and practical suggestions on the Preservation of Game are available in a compendious form, has induced the writer to offer this little work to the public.

The instructions here given are the result of some years' actual experience, and are derived from the personal observation of the Compiler. Borrowing from the works of others has been studiously avoided. Not that the Author would imply for a moment but that many very excellent instructions are given in several works he could name, but it has been his anxious endeavour to avoid the appearance of "Book-making."

The Compiler has been permitted by the courtesy of the Editor of "The Field," to introduce occasionally in that paper a few suggestions on the subjects forming the present work, and the editorial remarks on his contributions have been most flattering. Emboldened by the approval of such an authority, and at the suggestion of several game-preserving friends, he has ventured to lay his experience before the public in the form of the present work.

The apparent egotism that may seem to pervade the various subjects treated on, must be ascribed by the indulgent reader to the Author's position; for, being, as they are, his own suggestions deduced from actual practice, the use of the first person singular becomes, of course, a frequent necessity.

In writing a book of this kind, the Author is of course prepared to undergo a sharp ordeal of criticism from every game preserver and keeper into whose hands it may come. That it is principally written for the guidance of amateurs must be its apology. For those in fact who are situated like the writer, viz. with a wild country to shoot over and preserve, without the means of employing a regular keeper.

That some useful information may be gathered from the perusal of his labours by such of his readers as are similarly circumstanced, is the sincere wish of

THE AUTHOR.

Buxton, Derbyshire.

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PART I.

POACHING IN GENERAL AND ITS PREVENTION.

IT may be safely accepted as a truism, that it is perfectly hopeless to expect a good head of game on any estate, unless, in addition to waging a constant war against the Vermin, a vigilant look-out after Poachers is kept up, and a keeper must never allow his exertions in either branch to relax.

On commencing the preservation of a manor or estate which has been neglected, and the depredations of poachers and vermin permitted, a great deal will depend on whether the properties adjoining be preserved strictly or no. If they *are*, your task will be comparatively an easy one. If, however, there is any "outside," viz : unpreserved land adjoining one or more of your boundaries, it is a matter of proportionably greater difficulty to get up, or keep, a good head of game.

On the other hand it is a common case to see a small property which swarms with game through being completely surrounded by a strictly preserved estate, and it is as common to hear the owner or tenant of the small inlying property boasting that he can kill any amount of game on it all through the season, without its costing him one farthing, as relays of Hares and Partridges keep coming to him. I may be wrong in the opinion I express on this head, but I do not hesitate to say, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the person who thus acts is not a Gentleman, or has he the feelings of one. I maintain that in the case I am now supposing, the owner or tenant of the small estate

is bound to assist his neighbour in every way he reasonably can by trapping vermin and sending information to the large preserver of any suspicious person, &c., he may see about, and also by allowing the keeper or keepers to cross the land, if he knows them to be respectable men and such as will not take an unfair advantage of the permission. Here, however, he would be guided by circumstances, as an unscrupulous keeper might take these opportunities to drive game off. I am, of course, assuming in all this, that the large proprietor is liberal and neighbourly with one who may annoy him so greatly if things go wrong. On my own beat I have the shooting over a long field that runs right into a neighbour's preserve, and I give his keeper permission to cross it when he likes, and I know that the man would in consequence help me in any way that lay in his power.

I shall, previously to entering into the detail of Trapping, make a few remarks on Poaching and its prevention. There are few preserved estates that do not suffer from the depredations—you can call them nothing less—of one or more pot-hunters, who having obtained permission to shoot on land joining to a preserve, take out a Certificate with the object of prowling round close to the boundary and (usually at an early hour of the morning) killing every head of game that may have strayed out. I need not say how trying this is to the temper of the legitimate preserver. He sees game that he knows he has reared himself at considerable trouble and expense, killed before his face, and usually by some certificated poacher, who thinks that in so doing he has performed a clever feat rather than a dirty and unsportsmanlike trick. I do not however intend these observations to apply to every case where land joins up to a preserve and is not itself preserved. It would be hard indeed if every one were precluded from shooting over such lands, but what I mean is, that in most cases constant opportunity is taken of shooting your outlying game, and often within three yards of the fence forming

the boundary. In cases where this may occur, you may save a good many of your hares by driving such outsides before day-break with a clever dog. If this is not done the hares will probably sit out, especially when the leaves are falling in the woods. Having been once driven in at or before day-break, they will not usually come out again, but this is not the case with rabbits, as they will often when the alarm is over return to the field from whence they have been driven, and feed off and on at all times during the day. In a stone wall country this may be altogether prevented by taking care that all the meuses on the enemy's side are kept closed, and the wall well "bearded" with small boughs thrust under the coping on the side next the cover. Nothing can beat spruce fir for this purpose. The boughs need not project more than a foot. Should you find that on stopping the meuses by building them up with stones they are again opened, you must adopt a plan which was shewn to me by a very clever keeper, and which is an effectual remedy. It is simply to take out one of the side stones which supports the coverer, or, if the stone goes too far into the wall, to knock the end off. Then put your foot on the coverer, and press the whole down into the meuse. To make a fresh one in this place would involve pulling the wall all to pieces, and few dare venture this undertaking. The wall is none the worse, and the alteration is sometimes hardly perceptible. I was constantly annnoyed by some of my meuses being unstopped until I tried this plan. When a hedge is the boundary fence you may prevent the hares from going through by smearing the runs occasionally with a mixture of gas-tar and train-oil. The oil is to prevent the tar drying up and losing its strong offensive smell. No hare or rabbit will pass it. This is a very cheap remedy, as the tar, if not given away at the gas works, is sold for a mere trifle per gallon, and it only requires a pint of oil to a gallon of tar.

These precautions that I name do not unfortunately apply to

Pheasants which are very readily enticed away from cover, and will as likely as not remain all day in any bushy hedge or coppice where they are, I need not say, easily shot.

Should you have any covies of Partridges that have been bred on your own land, but on being sprung, fly direct on to your neighbour's territory, or are addicted to feeding and lying of their own accord on his lands, have them netted by all means through the assistance of some one you can trust, and having pulled two or three feathers out of a wing of each of the old birds, turn the covey down again well inside your own preserve. The reader will bear in mind that I am treating solely on the supposition that you join up to a person of pot-hunting and all-for-what-he-can-get propensities, and that such covies are in fact your own.

I shall now proceed to detail a few of the duties of a keeper or watcher. There are many things that he will have to learn before he is *au fait* at his business, which practice and attention, combined with a real liking for his calling (without which everything is comparatively useless) will alone suffice to teach him. He should be provided with a good pocket telescope, and never be without it. I have for years carried one, and although it has had constant hard wear, it is from being well, though not cheaply, made, as good as new. It closes into a leather case 3½ inches long. On a clear day I can tell the time by any church clock three miles off. The original cost was, if I am not mistaken, 36s., including the case, and I bought it of Mr. Davis, Optician, Derby, who is noted for these glasses, and there is no one for whom I have a greater respect as a thoroughly upright and honourable tradesman. To proceed however with my instructions on game watching. Do not move about without occasion. Select what you know to be a good commanding situation and remain there, bearing in mind that one hour's waiting in a good position is worth three hours' walking about. Keep under the

edge of all hill sides in walking, as you are not so liable to be seen as when shewing in contrast with the open sky. Dress in a colour as nearly as possible in accordance with the country you have to look after. For moors in dark brown, and for a stone wall or open country in moderately dark grey, with a small cap of a corresponding colour in each case. For trousers I have found nothing to beat seal skin, cut into the shape of the leather antegropelos and sewn on to the trousers leg. When kneeling down in the damp grass setting traps or walking through wet turnips or heath, they will be found a real comfort. They will also effectually resist gorse and thorns. One large skin, which costs 6s. 6d., will be sufficient for both legs, and they can be put on to a pair of trousers, which from being worn out about the feet and knees would otherwise be thrown or given away. By adopting the above rules in the colour of your dress you give yourself every advantage. I have frequently when sitting against a limestone wall or rock had birds that are notoriously shy (such as hawks, carrion crows, &c.) come close on to me. I lately shot a sparrow hawk when within five yards of the gun muzzle. He came straight to me and was evidently going to settle on the rock I was sitting against and which was not more than twelve feet high. If when looking out with your glass you see sheep suddenly start away from a fence, horses set off at a canter, cows stop feeding and either walk in a body towards some spot or stand gazing intently in one and the same direction, wood pigeons flying restlessly about over a cover, rooks turning suddenly to the right or left in their flight, &c., &c., you may be sure that there is some cause for it and should satisfy yourself as to what it means. Trample out all marks of hares at gaps, and do not take a pride in letting others besides yourself *see* your game. I have never any ambition to be met with the remark of "I saw such a banging great hare feeding in Jackson's field only an hour ago." Don't go needlessly into small covers. You can generally

look at your traps over the fence, and if you walk through the cover the odds are that any game you put up goes out and is perhaps chased by some self-hunting dog. Game can't be too quiet. If you see a man's footmarks in the dew or after rain in any part where they ought not to be, follow them up.

I shall now proceed to the subject of poaching the various kinds of game, and give hints for counteracting the practice. I shall observe the order of Grouse and Black game, Pheasants, Partridges, Hares, and Rabbits. First as to Grouse. The principal mode of killing them is by shooting. The poachers go either in a body and clear all before them, setting keepers at defiance, or one or two proceed together, and having hidden before day-break in some hole near a wall or bank, they imitate with a tobacco pipe the call of a hen grouse. If there is a cock within hearing he comes directly and is shot. Fortunately this sport can only last during the half hour before day-light, but its frequent repetition soon makes work with your stock of grouse. It is obvious that selecting a probable place for the poacher's performance and being there before him is the only mode of dealing with this case. Should there be any oat fields near the moor, the grouse and black game are sure to resort to them in great quantities during the afternoon. If they think they are on dangerous ground they feed as quickly as they can and are off again, but if they have not been shot at you may see them on the shocks of corn or feeding on the stubble almost any time of the day. Perhaps there are more grouse killed by poachers on the stubble fields than in any other manner. I believe that netting grouse at night with large sheet nets is practised in some parts of the kingdom, but I have never met with a keeper on whose moors it has been used, and am, I must say, rather sceptical of the frequency of the operation.

Numbers of grouse are shot after the season for the purpose of stuffing, consequently you must not rest content with the

assumption that because grouse are not seen in the game dealer's shop that the moors are of necessity safe for another eight months. You will of course take care also that grouse egg stealers, under the guise of besom makers are not allowed access to your moors.

Especial care must also be taken that needless and illegal burning of the heath is not carried on. A moor once burnt bare of heath is ruined for some few years to come. There is by Act of Parliament a penalty of £5 for burning the heath after the 10th of April, and it would be no bad plan to have a short extract from this Act painted on boards and put up here and there in places where the mischief is likely to be done. Having once caught a person illegally burning, let no false commiseration for the delinquent or those connected with, or related to him, induce you to swerve from a strict enforcement of the penalty.

Following the order I laid down I now come to Pheasants, Unfortunately there is no kind of game that requires some one to "think for them" more than *they* do. Although great numbers of these birds are taken in hangs set in the runs, yet undoubtedly the far larger proportion are shot at night. A deal of mischief may however be prevented in this respect, by having plenty of imitation pheasants put here and there on the trees.

They are very easily made, but their situations should be often varied. Some keepers make them of board cut into the shape of a pheasant. These are of little use. A poacher gets under them and sees at once what they are. The best mode of making them is as follows. Get a bunch of long hay and roll it round till it is the size of a pheasant's body, leaving enough for a tail. Wrap it with thin copper wire down to the end of the tail. Cut a peg about six inches long and as thick as a lead pencil. Wind a bit of hay round the end to make a head and run the peg into the body. Tie these imitations on the branches of larch trees here

and there. Pheasants prefer this kind of tree to others, in consequence of the boughs coming out straight, and thus allowing them a flat surface to sit on. In woods where there are no foxes, and where the ground vermin has been well killed down, it is a good plan (more especially if you think it a likely night for poachers) to unroost the pheasants in the evening. They will not fly up again that night. If however you do it too often it makes them rather shy of the cover where it is practised, and may drive them away. As long as they can be quiet they are all very well, but only begin shooting rabbits, &c., in the covers and they stray off. They cannot bear guns going off close to them. Where pheasants are very numerous, poachers will take them in hangs during the day time. Careful watching will alone prevent this. Alarm guns set here and there on the trees, with wires branching in different directions, will be found very useful as shewing the whereabouts of any day or night poachers. The simplest and cheapest I have seen are sold by Barratt, Gun-Maker, Burton-on-Trent. All they seem to require is that the caps should be of the largest size and be covered all over when on the nipple with wax and suet. Previously to seeing Barratt's Alarm Gun I had made some myself, and as mine answer very well and Barratt's are just like them, I can't be very far wrong in recommending them. After all nothing daunts poachers so much as pit-falls made in a wood. They should be about seven feet deep and made with the sides slanting, so that the chamber is larger at the bottom than at the top. Unless they are boarded the soil will fall in. The opening should be about four feet square, and the pit-fall be covered with sticks and sods. Poachers are very shy of coming where you make them.

We now come to Partridges. Here our work is easier. In most parts of the country where a pretty good range can be had, a fair stock of partridges may be got up. The chief mode of destruction adopted by poachers is by netting, and of such arti-

cles the most frequently used is the sheet net. This net is usually made of silk, and will go into an inconceivably small compass when folded up. To prevent its use you must bush the land well. Cut some old thorns or briars, or (better still) old stunted black thorns with bushy tops. Stick them into the ground all about the fields, but only firm enough to prevent the wind from blowing them away. The net catching the bush pulls it up out of the ground, and it rolls up, making a succession of Gordian knots very trying to the tempers of the Gentlemen amusing themselves with the net. Another very excellent mode of preventing sheet netting is to cut the branches of Scotch fir, leaving the stem eighteen inches long and the minor branches about six inches. Run them firmly into the ground in a slanting position, so that cattle lying down on them at night cannot hurt themselves, and they make it a "teaser" for the net if it catches hold of one. Tunnel netting is not so easily guarded against, but is very fortunately not so much practised as the other mode. If the field be laid out in ridge and furrow, you may, by keeping the furrows thickly bushed, prevent the mischief partly, but on all plain flat ground you must see that all the gates are close barred, or the poachers can with a horse drive a covey slowly through and take them there. If the gates are done as I shall hereafter recommend for hares and rabbits, they will be pretty safe. The only other precautions you have to take, are to see that a shot is not had at the covey about jugging time, and also that they are not shot near farm yards in very hard weather; and if you feed them yourself, take care that your stacks of corn are not within shot of any place that can be used as an ambush. Partridges are very much addicted to making their nests close to a road or foot-path, and the nests are often found in these situations by idle lads. Sometimes you hear of it through the boys coming and telling you in expectation of a reward. Under any circumstances take the eggs away, and put them under a sitting

hen if you can meet with one, and at once destroy the nest. If this is not done, the partridge will go on laying, and can come to no good after all, as the nest is sure to be investigated daily by the boys who found it, accompanied by a few select friends.

Should you by any chance see a covey of birds "jugging" or preparing to "jug," in a place unprotected by "bushes," spring them at once. You may not be the only person who has seen them and that night might otherwise be their last.

Hares next claim our attention, and here is a subject that could be expanded to a greater length than the limits of my small publication would allow. I must honestly say, that the directions I shall give, will have the effect of *mitigating* only, the loss of hares by poaching. No great head of hares can be got up without plenty of "strength" and night watching. A good deal of the mischief may however be prevented by making the land where the hares chiefly lie "bad killing ground," and, with a view to so making it, I give the following directions. I am assuming of course that the land is watched early in the morning and late in the evening. Hares are particularly foolish creatures, and will frequently persist in feeding close to houses, foot-paths, &c., where they are always liable to be shot. From these localities you must drive them as much as possible. If your estate be much intersected by foot-paths, it makes it hard work for the watchers. Many hares also are shot during moonlight nights when snow is on the ground, or there is a white frost. In my hints on hare preserving, I shall describe in the first place what should be done in a stone wall country, and in the next what is necessary where there are hedges.

As to walls, the first thing to be attended to is the safety of the gates. This can only be done to depend upon, by putting extra bars between the two lowest bars, and if there should also be a space all along under the gate wide enough for a hare to go through, you must put an extra bar there as well. Should there

however only be the hollows or ruts made by cart wheels, all you need do is to put a good stone in each and *see that the stones are not moved.* To put the bars that I have described firmly on the gate, mortise the "back" a good inch deep, and the "head" half an inch Suppose the gate to be eight feet clear inside, you must cut the extra bars eight feet one inch. Drive one end into the deep mortise and then prize it back into the shallow one. The half inch hold it has at each end is amply sufficient. Nail it well to the upright of the gate and it is as strong as any other part. If not mortised in this way but merely nailed on a man can kick the ends off or break them off with a stone. Some people content themselves with painting the two lower bars of the gate white This is all very well for a week or so, but perfectly useless afterwards. Should you have any gaps or gateways where there are no gates hung, and you find that hares use them, the best way is to go on the most favourable night and net the hares and turn them out again. You may be sure they won't forget the lesson either at that spot or any similar one. Keep all meuses stopped, and make the hares jump the walls; circumstances may however occur where you must have meuses. If this be so, bear in mind that they cannot be too close together; every three yards if it were possible. I have several places on my beat where there are meuses, but I don't think it possible for hares to be taken at any of them. I adopt the following plan as a preventive, and I can with confidence advise the reader to follow my example. Get a good stout rail about 9 feet long. Let the thick end into the ground and thrust the other end into the wall close over the meuse. Nail some of the very strongest and coarsest thorns you can procure firmly on to the rail, and drive a stake into the ground at the foot of the rail, leaving it to project out of the ground about a yard and leaning away from the rail at an angle of about forty-five degrees. It is a "puzzler" to set a net here. Neither a purse or sheet net can be set. This

plan is of course only to be adopted in plantations. To prevent that curse to hare and rabbit preserving, called "Long netting," you must get plenty of young trees such as would make rails; trim the branches off to about a foot long, and having driven posts into the ground in the position described in the next sentence, nail them strongly down. They should be placed at right angles to the wood, and should reach a good many yards down into the field, and ought not to be more than a dozen yards off each other laterally. Rabbits will generally use the same runs in going back to the cover, and you can't be wrong in putting the trees close along these runs. Long nets are generally set about three yards off the cover, and the obvious thing is to prevent a clear set along the wood side. One of my own covers was long-netted last autumn. I had thought that from the fact of the field being a very narrow one it was impossible to set it, but I was mistaken. The poachers came and swept away most of the rabbits. I bushed it well as soon as I discovered the mischief, and a fortnight afterwards they honoured me with another visit, and, finding it impossible to set *across* the field, they tried it *up and down*. I need hardly say that their labour might as well have been saved; and, as they left (apparently in disgust) five of their pegs standing, I don't think they got rich out of that night's work. It is with rabbits more than hares that the long net makes such havoc. Hares are generally feeding at a greater distance from the cover than rabbits are, and the least alarm in that direction makes them more cautious of approaching the net, and to avoid the possible danger they call into full play the organ of scent, which enables them to perceive a net when some distance off it. Rabbits, on the contrary, rush headlong forward and are taken easily. More hares are taken at gap ways and meuses than with any other kind of netting. If you see a few copings thrown as if by accident off a wall, replace them, as it is probably done to induce hares to go over at that spot where a sheet net would take them at once.

In a hedge country the gates will require extra bars also, and you must look to the runs to see that they are not set with hangs. Should any be found they must of course be watched; previously to doing which the noose should be run up and the hang pulled out as far as it will reach. The poacher coming to look at it will doubtless set it again. Another mode of taking hares in the day time, is, though little suspected, frequently practised. The keeper being known to have left the cover, the poacher enters it, and selecting some narrow ride or a gateway, hangs a very light and almost imperceptible net on two sticks across one of these places, and hiding himself in a proper position for the wind, sends his dog into the cover, and the chances are he has a hare in a few minutes and is off without any one being the wiser. The hares seem in the day time to trust to their powers of speed, and go cantering forward with their heads in a proper position for listening to what is following them and never suspecting the net. This desultory mode of poaching is very difficult to guard against, and a man who would do his duty and keep his game must have all his wits about him. One man also is very liable to be watched himself when he thinks he is watching others. I shall conclude my remarks on hares by recommending my readers not to destroy the common green Plovers should they frequent the fields where hares feed at night. There is no bird more easily aroused than they are, and their incessant cry of alarm commenced on the least suspicion of trespassers, puts every hare within hearing on the *qui vive*.

On the subject of Rabbits little need be added to what I have said respecting hares. When rabbits begin to lie in their burrows, you must take care that they are not ferreted in quiet unsuspected places. Recollect that this work makes no noise, and a vast deal of damage may be done in a very short time by any person who gets quietly into a plantation, and quite undisturbed runs all the burrows through. Wood pigeons are very

useful in giving the alarm should trespassers have got into the covers where the pigeons resort, and especially in the breeding season, when they are always on the spot, and it is the time also when you must look sharp after people who would dig out rabbit nests. Should you find a rabbit "stop," do not open it out of mere curiosity. The chances are the old rabbit will discover something has been at it if ever so neatly covered up again, and she will probably forsake.

PART II.

THE DESTRUCTION OF VERMIN.

Having now, to the best of my ability, introduced to the reader's attention some of the practises adopted by poachers, and shewn how they may be in a great measure frustrated, I come to the second, but hardly less important part of my subject, viz: Vermin Trapping. Opinions are very much divided as to whether a trapper should carry a gun. I know I am setting up my own dictum against several very good authorities, when I declare most decidedly that he ought never to go his rounds without one. The amateur may of course please himself. If a keeper cannot be trusted with a gun, don't employ him at all. I cannot join either in the clap-trap cry of "there's no such thing as an honest keeper." I have had some experience of keepers, and have never, except in a few isolated cases, known a keeper who did not do his duty to his employer conscientiously, and take a pride in shewing him a good head of game. To return to the question of carrying a gun. I should myself as soon think of going my rounds without my hat as without a gun. There is no need for it to be a double. With a load of traps on your shoulder or in your pockets, a double gun is only in the way from its extra weight. All you want is a single, to knock over any vermin, &c., that may come across you in your rounds. Apropos to this subject, there are no greater nuisances than self-hunting dogs. These brutes are usually sheep curs which the farmer's boys or men invariably take with them whether required to drive

the cattle or no, and if the dog puts up a hare he is immediately urged to chase it by the encouraging shouts of the man or boy. Forbearance has its limits, and I leave it to the discretion of the keeper, should he meet one of these plagues hunting by himself in a nice out-of-the-way part of the covers, as to what course he shall adopt should he have a gun with him. When there are leverets and young partridges, &c, the mischief a self-hunting sheep cur does is quite inconceivable. Bear in mind also that the Act of Parliament relating to dogs used for the purpose of driving cattle is very precise in its description of what sort of dogs are free from tax, and that "curs" are rigidly excluded from the exemption. A farmer or farming man also who encourages his dogs to run the game, is precluded from claiming an exemption from the Dog-tax, and is also liable to be prosecuted, it being clearly a "pursuit" within the meaning of the Act. The late Mr. St. John was not, I am aware, an advocate for a keeper carrying a gun, and he remarks in one part of his most delightful work "Wild Sports in the Highlands," that a trapper should be able to depend on catching or poisoning any vermin he may happen to see on going his rounds. With every respect for such an authority, I must except to what is here laid down, as would most people who had noticed for instance as I often have, the tracks of a weasel or stoat in the snow. You may trace him in and out of a wall for perhaps a mile, and although the snow may lie for weeks, yet you do not trace him back again. My vermin list would not be what it is, were it not for the vermin of all sorts that I have *shot*.

As to the traps most frequently in use, I need hardly say that the steel trap stands, as it always must, pre-eminent. It is only within comparatively a few years that the present bow-spring traps have been generally used. In the days of flat springs you had to be very particular where you got them, and even the best of that make soon lost their goodness. *Now* you may obtain the

bow-springs at most respectable Gunmakers and Ironmongers, and they will last good for years. If the flat springs were equally desirable, I should prefer them infinitely, as they set so much closer to the ground. As it is, I have not used one for years. The size I mostly use and recommend are about five inches long in the jaws. There is nothing that a trap of this size will miss. For Hawks the trap should be quite round, and should be five inches wide across the jaws when set. They are usually made smaller than this, and it is a fault, as the hawks may settle on the plate and spring up in time to get clear of the trap when it goes off. This is the effect of the circular spring, which is slower in its action than the straight one. Steel traps should have good chains. Those that are sold with the traps are seldom good for much, and are too short. The better plan is to buy strong dog chains, which may be got for about eight pence each, and cut them up into trap chains. These should be about twenty inches long. With short chains you are sometimes non-plussed by finding some first rate place to set a trap, and from there being a large stone in the way, you are perhaps obliged to shift the trap a foot one way or the other, and there are many situations where that one foot makes all the difference. A longer chain might very probably render you independent of the obstacle. Trap spikes ought to be never less than nine inches long, or, unless it is good holding ground, a dog will draw them. In some situations I find it necessary to lock my traps, and this is easily done by having a clasp with a joint in the middle and turned into the form of a ring about three inches diameter. At each end is a loop to admit of a good strong padlock. I burrow with the trap spike under one of the main roots of a tree close where I mean to set, and put the clasp round the root, and lock the end of the trap chain to it. Nine-tenths of all trapping is done in plantations, and there are few places in which the plan I suggest cannot be adopted. I should have lost many a trap if

I did not occasionally so fasten them, and it is not merely losing a trap that is the mischief, but the probability of their being set *against you*. The clasp should be made of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch round iron. By being put round the *root* of a tree it is out of sight, and is also in a safe place to prevent being broken with a stone, owing to its being down in a hole.

The dead-fall traps of which I give engravings, are my own invention, with the exception of the "Figure 4," but which is so far an improvement of mine on the old fashioned one of the same form, as to be rendered almost a different affair, and is beyond comparison superior.

The trap No. 2 was through the kindness of the Editor of "the Field," introduced to notice in the columns of that paper. I have since then rather simplified and amended it.

I have proved No. 1 to be a most admirable trap and it needs no bait. It should be set under a wall, at a place where a board or stone is put to turn the weasels and stoats out, as fully described in my after hints for their destruction. This trap however must not be set while young rabbits are about, as they are sure to go through and would get killed. In the early Spring, when the weasels run so much, it will be found wonderfully effective.

For the instruction of the beginner, I may as well describe in this place the proper mode of setting the common steel trap. In some works on trapping it is recommended that the shape of the trap be cut out of the ground with a small mole spade. The same process may however be more readily performed with an old strong broad bladed knife, which, in addition to one for general purposes, you can carry with you. Cut out a space exactly the size of the trap, and set the latter by means of your strength of wrist, or this failing, by compressing the spring with your foot. Then place the trap in the hole, having previously lowered the plate till the catch only just keeps the trap from

springing. Drive the peg firmly into the ground, and put a good stone on the top of it to make it doubly secure. This stone need not attract the attention of either man or beast, and is by no means a bad help to holding the peg should a strong dog get into the trap. Cover the latter with materials of the same kind as the surrounding ground, taking care that no bits of stick or stones can get caught between the jaws when the trap is sprung. Traps should always be set parallel to the fence or ditch, and not across it, and the catch on the side farthest from you.

I shall now proceed to describe the method of taking the various kinds of Vermin, and shall commence with—

"THE FOX."

I have not in my dissertations on this particular head the slightest wish to encourage "Vulpicedes," but it must be remembered that there are many parts of the kingdom, and more especially of Scotland, in which for entire counties fox hounds are not only unknown, but where they could not, from the nature of the country, by any possibility be introduced with effect. In these localities the preservation of foxes could not be advantageous to any one, and could only act to the detriment of the game. In a hunting country, the general feeling against trapping foxes will, in nine cases out of ten, prevent the mischief; as all however are not fox hunters, and I wish in this work to be impartial, I shall without dwelling needlessly on the subject in hand, give a few instructions in the art of trapping foxes for the benefit alone of those who are situated in the kind of locality indicated in the first few sentences of this article.

The steel traps I have described are quite large enough for foxes. They should be set round the game or rabbit you use for a bait, and which bait should not show signs of having met with a violent death. The traps, of which five or six should be used at one place, must be fastened together by their chains,

and not pegged to the ground. If the trap be fast, a fox will gnaw his own leg off to regain his liberty, but as long as he can drag it after him he will not attempt the amputation. Let the traps be set for three or four days at least before you bait them, and then, having rubbed your shoes with a red herring or the inside of a rabbit, carry the bait on a stick and throw it carelessly on the ground in the centre of the circle of traps. The bait must never have been touched with your hand. Foxes are shot with comparative ease, by having a trail (the inside of a fresh killed sheep) drawn for a long distance and past an ambush. Having placed yourself in this latter on a fine moonlight night, and taken the precaution to whiten the barrel of the gun from the sight to the muzzle, you are pretty sure of a shot.

"THE CAT."

There is no species of vermin more thoroughly destructive to game than the domestic Cat. People not conversant with their predatory habits would never for a moment suppose that the household favourite that appears to be dozing so innocently before the fire, is probably doing so in consequence of a severe night's hunting in the plantations. How different also in her manner is a cat when at home and when detected prowling after the game. In the first of the two cases she is tame and accessible to any little attentions. In the latter she seems to know she is doing wrong and scampers off home as hard as she can go. Luckily there is no animal more easily caught in a trap, if common care be used in setting. Steel traps are almost always used for taking them. Drop traps would necessarily have to be made too cumbersome for the purpose. The usual places to set, are under fences or walls in the covers, or at the side of any dry ride. The trap should be about six inches from the wall, and fenced with two or three twigs at each end, and the bait be suspended about a foot above, but almost touching the wall. The trap being thus set rather forward, the cat gets into it

before she can reach to smell the bait. Traps should be sprung about every three days. Should they get stiff, a drop of fine oil must be put on the part that sticks. Do not use common oil, and only a drop (or two at most) of the best. In the summer there is never any great difficulty in getting baits, but during the early Spring months a trapper is often put to great shifts for them, and this is the most important time of the year for killing the vermin. Make-shift baits are partially cured herrings, fish bones, or Valerian root. Small birds or mice are all very well for weasels and stoats, but no great things can be done with them as respects cats. The Valerian root must be merely put on the ground between the trap and the wall, or tincture of Valerian dropped on to a bit of cloth, rolled tightly up, and put under the plate of the trap, will do. Recollect at all hanging baits to fill up the interstices between the stones of a wall with grass, or you will be constantly plagued by the mice biting the string and letting the baits fall into your traps. A very good mode of taking cats is to hollow out a good flat coping, and put a round trap in it. In damp weather, or when the dew is rising, a cat almost invariably walks along a wall to get to her hunting grounds. I have caught many a one by this means. I need hardly say that no bait is here required. When the rabbits are ready to kill, you have at once the very best baits that can be used, viz: their insides. In hot weather however, there is nothing that so soon taints, and it is the best plan therefore not to bait in the morning, but towards evening. Traps however should always be looked at in a morning. It is quite within the bounds of probability that you may during the breeding season find a doe hare that has been worried by a dog. Don't use the inside for a bait in this case, as the chances are very much in favour of a hare being taken in the trap. Such of my readers as are doubtful of this fact, may have its corroboration from many a keeper. I discovered it from experience, and

naming the circumstance to a clever keeper, he told me that it was not the exception, but would be found to be the rule should such a bait be used. If there should happen to be a watercourse running through the plantation, a trap set in a coping where the stream goes under the wall, will be very effective, as a cat will be at the trouble of climbing on to the wall, crossing over the stream, and jumping down again, sooner than leap over the stream itself. Before I dismiss this branch of my subject, I may just mention, that if on entering a plantation during the nesting season, you hear a pair of blackbirds or thrushes making a constant note of distress, (and once heard you cannot mistake it) be sure there is some sort of vermin about, (most probably a cat,) and take your measures accordingly. We now come to

"THE POLE CAT, WEASEL, AND STOAT."

The same traps and mode of setting may be adopted for these animals as for a cat. The dead-falls however will also now come into operation, and with plenty of them judiciously set, you may soon thin their numbers. Mice and small birds make good baits, but to get all the scent possible out of them, you should cut them down the middle before hanging them over a steel trap, No. 2, or tying to the stretcher of the Figure of 4. House mice are better than field mice for ground vermin, and *vice versâ* for hawks. It is well known that weasels and stoats are perpetually hunting along stone walls, sometimes keeping inside for several yards, and then coming out for a yard or two, and so on. To make sure of turning them out, it is a good plan to pull a yard of wall down, and rebuild it with a broad board or flat stone set up on end. As this cuts off the communication, every weasel is necessitated to turn out at this place, and here you should set a trap. No. 1 will be found excellent for such spots. Set it parallel to and touching the wall, and pile a few stones at each end to make a "lead" into the trap, and every weasel that runs that way will to a certainty go through it. For these

traps to be thoroughly efficient, the run in the wall should be stopped as before described at *both* ends. I have caught great numbers of small vermin in them, and they need no bait. Should you however have a good fresh bait with you, you can't be wrong in rubbing the floor of the dead-fall with it.

No. 2 may be set anywhere, and at any time, without danger to young game. Tie the bait to the loose iron plate, taking care that it does not hang down to the fall-plate, and then merely put it on to the hole cut in the lid for it. This is an improvement on my first trap of the sort shewn in the "Field." Weight the lid with a couple of stones about the size of bricks.

No. 3 is in appearance the old "Figure of 4," but the great improvement consists in the certainty with which the stretcher falls directly the bait is touched, and in the construction of the upright, not allowing it to be pulled round sideways. This trap has the advantage of requiring only a small bait, which must be tied on to the end of the stretcher. Both these last named traps are very "tickle," and all vermin caught in them will invariably be found crushed under the very centre of the lid or slate. Be careful that the top of "C," in the Figure of 4, is only just under the edge of the slate, or the trap may remain propped up after the stretcher has fallen. These traps, like No. 2, may be set anywhere, without danger to young game, subject to the qualifying remarks I make on this head. I would not affirm decidedly that young game *never* is taken in them, but, that with care, this need hardly ever happen. Young pheasants will sometimes find them if there are maggots on the baits. A keeper who traps on every available day through the year, runs his chance of this, and of course acts with corresponding caution. It will be seen that my instructions are principally applicable to a stone wall country. It is in such a country I have lived most of my life. I had a few hedges, but walls were the prevailing fence. Where you have hedges, and dry ditches, the traps

should be set at such places. If in a ditch, you will of course take care to set on one side of it, and not in the run. Gateways are also good places, but your traps are liable to be seen by the farmer's boys when set here. Remember that the corners of woods are always the best places for trapping, and more likely to catch vermin than any other parts of a cover.

It frequently happens that a weasel or stoat may be seen suddenly crossing your path, or rapidly beating down the side of a fence. In this case, stand perfectly still, and with your mouth make the squeaking noise used to entice reluctant ferrets from rabbit burrows. The result will be immediate attention on the part of the weasel or stoat to your blandishments, and his speedy reception of an oz. of No. 6.

"THE HEDGE HOG"

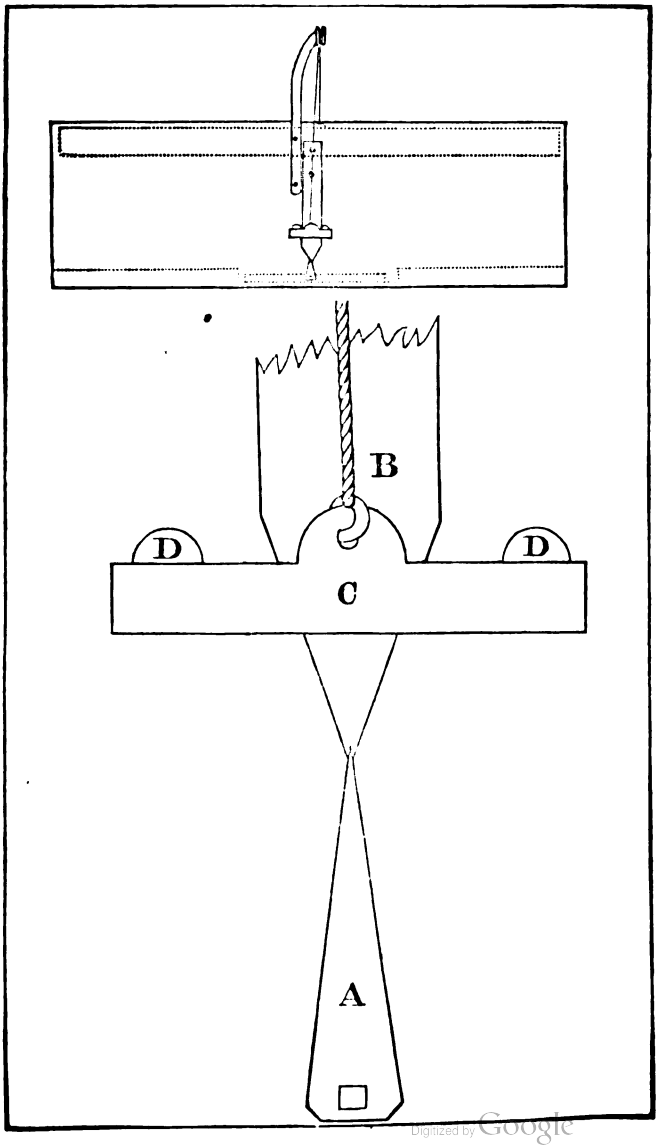
Will be taken in all the traps I have named, but the more decomposed the bait the sooner they will come to it.

I now append drawings of the dead-falls I have alluded to, and I hope my readers will not find any difficulty in making them, should they be disposed, on my recommendation, to try them.

No. 1.

The body of this trap must be three feet long, eleven inches high, and four inches wide (inside,) and the wood of which the treadle is made must be oak; the body of the trap being deal. The treadle is one foot long and 5-8ths thick. It works in the floor of the trap in an open space left for it. It must not be flush with the floor, but rather below it, or the weight of the "drop" will most probably break the pins on which the treadle works. These must be of brass, and about as thick as a quill, and are driven into the sides of the treadle exactly at the centre of each edge. The holes in the trap on which the pins work, must be burnt with a round iron after boring, or the wet weather will swell the wood and make the pins bind. On one of these

No. 1.



pins must be riveted the iron point "A." This pin must be made with a square end to rivet, so as to prevent "A" from turning round on it. When put into the treadle, "A" ought to stand away from the body of the trap about one inch, and be perfectly upright. "B" is a piece of bell-spring about six inches long, and pointed at one end to meet the point of "A." This spring must be fastened with a couple of screws to the side of the trap, directly over "A," and should be so far projecting downwards, that the end of "A" has about 1-8th of an inch of hold of it. "C" is a piece of brass or iron plate, about 1-16th thick, with a hole in it to tie the string to that suspends the weight. "D D" are two strong screws, standing out two inches. When screwed in, and with the cracks in their heads horizontal, file away the under half of the head as deep as the crack. A piece of half-inch bar iron, flat at one end to allow of two screws, must be fixed in the position shewn in the full drawing of the trap. It must be made in an arched form at the top end, to stand over the centre, and a pulley must be fixed in that end, working on a bit of iron riveted to it. The weight consists of a piece of wood about three inches square, and 2 feet 10 inches long. A staple is driven exactly into the centre. A string goes from "C" to this staple. To set the trap, press down the spring "B," and put it just under the point "A." Then pass the string over the pulley, and let "C" catch across the half cracks in the two screws "D, D." The weight ought to hang with its top edge about even with, or a trifle lower than, the top of the trap. A weasel running over the treadle at either end, disengages the two points, and the spring flying out, strikes "C" out of the two catches, and the weight drops. I have drawn "A, B, C, and D" the proper size for use. The reason why the weight is made two inches shorter than the top is, to allow of a peg or two being run into the ground at each end, to keep rabbits out, and if the weight were the full length it might

catch on the pegs. Rub the spring occasionally with mercurial ointment, and it will last any length of time. The string being liable to decay, will, of course, occasionally want renewing. The point of the spring, when the trap has gone off, need not fly up more than an inch beyond the two screw heads.

No. 2, which I here introduce, rather simplified on the original plan, will be found a most excellent trap. It should be made of the very commonest deal or other wood, and in fact, as it should resemble as far as possible an old stone or slate, it ought to be coloured. The following mixture will stain it, and it is dry (in the sun) in an hour or two. Dissolve half an ounce of powdered alum, 1 ounce of burnt umber, and 4½ ounces of lamp black, in ¾ of a pint of dark ale or porter, and brush the wood over with it.

Fig. 1 is the floor of the trap, made of unplaned deal, twenty-two inches long, fourteen wide, and ¾ thick. It must be made in two pieces, so as to be able to screw on the trigger to the edge of one of the boards, which must then be nailed together with two battens 2 inches wide and ½ an inch thick. A strip is cut out six inches long and ½ an inch wide at "a."

Fig. 2 is the lid, which may be made either solid or in two pieces like Fig. 1, but two inches shorter. "b" is a staple to receive the end of the lever; "c" is a hole to allow the stanchion to pass through without grazing; "d" is a hole three inches diameter, with its centre 4½ inches from the hinge end of the lid. An oblong piece is cut out from this hole to hinge end, ½ an inch wide, so as to allow neck of trigger to work. The hinges may be made of pieces of old stirrup leather.

Fig. 3 is an iron stanchion, made of ½-inch round iron flattened at the foot, with two holes punched for screws. It must be bent to a radius of 15 inches. Half an inch from the other end it must be flattened, and a pin, the thickness of a quill, and standing out at right angles, and ¾ of an inch long, is to be rivetted on. This stanchion is screwed on to Fig. 1 at "c."

No. 2.

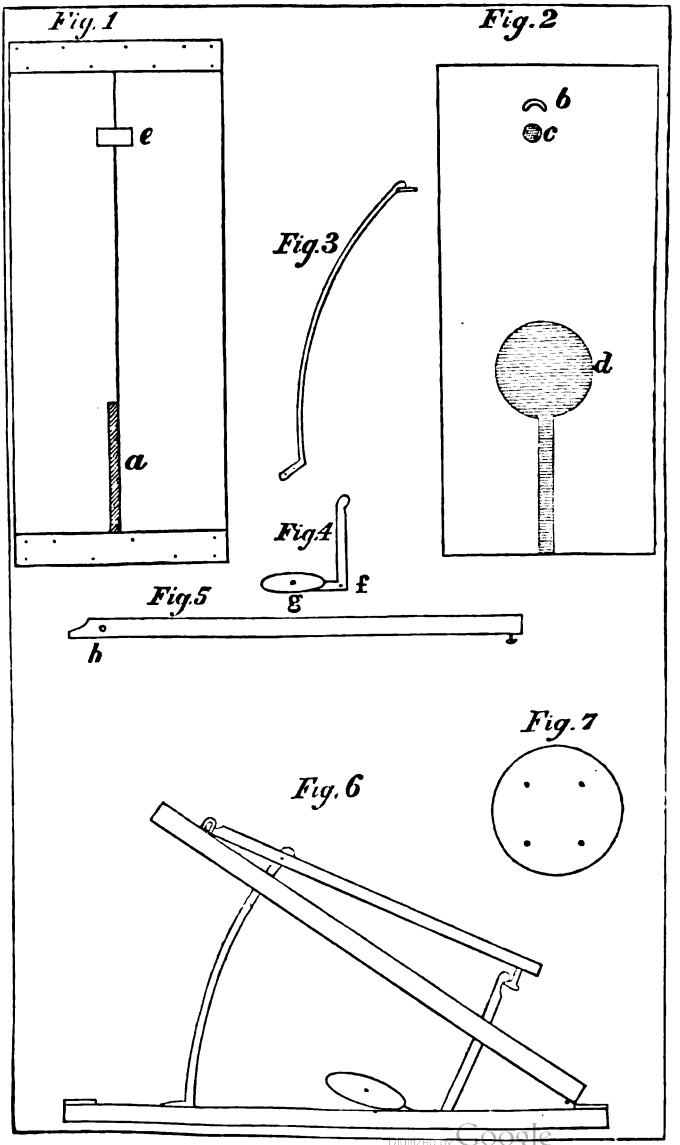


Fig. 4 is the trigger and plate. From notch to "f" 4½ inches, from "f" to "g" 3 inches. The plate is a piece of round sheet iron 3½ inches diameter, with a hole punched in, and by which it is rivetted to the trigger.

Fig. 5 is a wooden lever, ¾ inch wide, and ½ inch thick, to reach from the top of trigger when set, to the staple "b" in Fig. 2. Two inches from the end as at "h," is a hole for it to slip on to the pin in the top of the stanchion, and at the other end a lath nail to catch the notch in Fig. 4.

Fig. 6 is the trap when set.

Fig. 7 is a round piece of sheet iron 4 inches diameter, with four holes punched in it to tie the bait on.

To set this trap, put the lever on to the iron stanchion, raise the lid till the end of the lever catches under the staple, press the other end of the lever down, and let the nail catch the notch of the trigger. Weight the lid with stones. Having tied the bait on to Fig. 7, merely place it on the hole "d" with the bait downwards. The vermin reaching up to smell at it, lets the trap off by touching the trigger plate. The bait must not hang down too low.

The Figure of 4 is as follows :—

Fig. 1 is 13 inches long. From notch at end to notch in middle 4½ inches. The reason why one notch is cut slanting is to prevent the binding of two broad surfaces. It must be ½-inch wide and ⅜-inch thick.

Fig. 2 is 6½ inches long, 1 inch wide at notch end, and ⅜-inch, at the other: the notch must be from an inch to half an inch from the end, according to the weight of the stone. If a heavy stone, you must have a short notch, and *vice versâ*. This piece must be ⅜-inch thick. To cut the slant off properly, hold Fig. 2 resting on its point with the notch end uppermost, and the notch itself under, and slant off the *right side*.

No. 3.

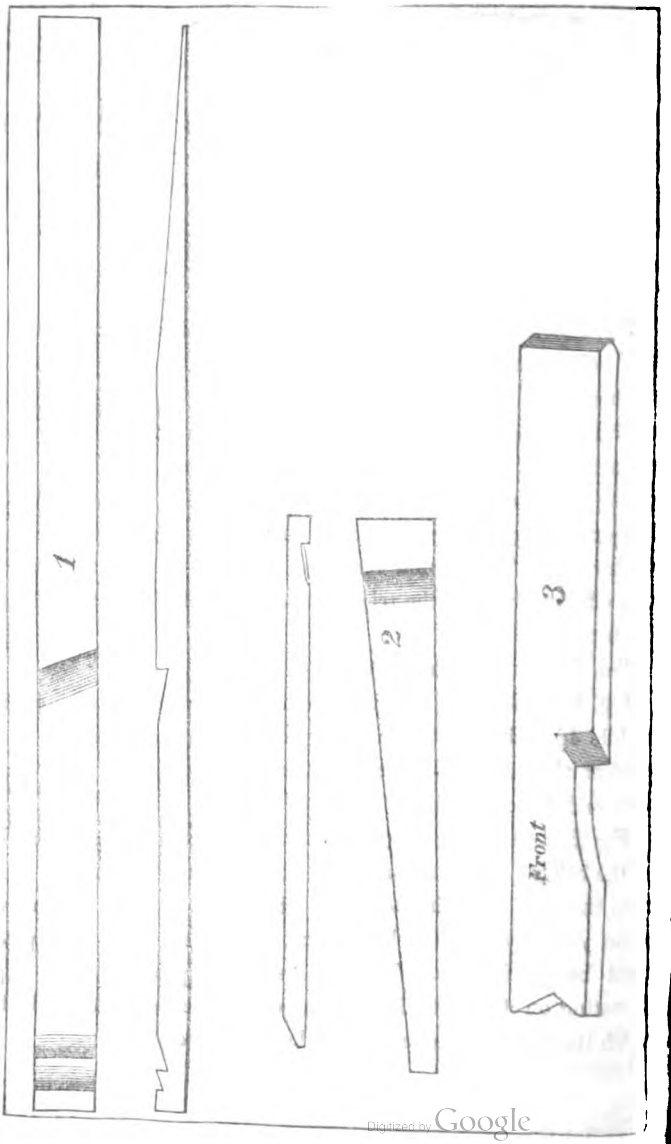


Fig. 3 is 7 inches long, (3 inches from fork to notch, and 4 inches from notch to other end) 1 inch wide, and $\frac{3}{16}$-inch thick. The notch is half an inch deep. When held on its edge, with the fork from you and the notch upwards, the slant, to bring the notch to a sharp edge, must be cut from the right. The long slant may begin at half an inch from the fork.

To set this trap, put the fork end of "3" on a bit of flat stone, to prevent the weight of the slate forcing it into the ground, and "3" itself perpendicularly under the front edge of the slate, keeping the front correct as marked in the drawing. Then put notch in Fig. 2 on the top of Fig. 3, with the end of 2 just under the extreme edge of the slate, which you will now bring down and allow to rest on it. Now put the point of 2 into one of the two notches at the end of Fig. 1, and let the slanting notch of Fig. 1 catch against the sharp notch in Fig. 3, and the trap is set.

FLYING VERMIN.

Under this head are included all kinds of Hawks, Ravens, Carrion Crows, Magpies, and Jays. Foremost among the Hawk tribe I place the Peregrine Falcon. The constant war waged by keepers against these birds has rendered them very scarce, and on English moors they are comparatively but seldom seen. They are most destructive to grouse and all sorts of game. No great things can be done with them in the trapping way, and there is nothing like shooting them in the breeding season. This applies to the Hen Harrier as well. You must not however expect to go out for "a day's Peregrine Falcon or Hen Harrier shooting." The chances of a shot are very uncertain, and a knowledge of the grounds they frequent, and noticing their morning and evening flight, will best assist you.

The large brown Buzzard is common in the mountainous districts of Wales, and is not, I conceive, a difficult bird to trap. They will feed on dead sheep, cattle, &c., and a trap set on any

mound of heath or turf, close to a dead rabbit or other animal will be pretty sure to take them. They will sit for hours together on some projecting rock or commanding situation, and with pains, a shot may be got at them in such places. Their sense of hearing does not appear to be particularly acute, if I may judge from one I shot some time ago. He was sitting on a ledge of projecting rock with a large extent of perfectly flat ground above it. By taking a very long round, I managed to get within three or four yards of him. The ground was full of small inequalities such as cattle would make with walking over it, and being hard frozen, and these places full of white ice, every footstep I took might have been heard some distance off. Had it been a crow or magpie, I am sure it would have been an utter impossibility to have got near it.

"THE SPARROW-HAWK."

These are very destructive birds, and a keeper must adopt every means he can to kill them. I never succeeded in taking them in traps, unless I chanced to find one at work on any head of game he had killed, and then, with a trap set close to, and the bait pegged down, taking care not to let the top of the peg be visible, I have always caught him. These birds build in the old nests of carrion crows and magpies, and should you not succeed in killing the female at the nest, you are certain to have both the old ones if you tie the young hawks to the ground in an artificial circle of twigs with entrances, and setting a trap or two. By destroying one only of the old ones, you must not suppose that your work is finished, as the one that is left is sure to find another mate and return with it.

"THE KESTREL."

That these little hawks are mischievous, is denied by those only who acquire their opinions from books, and not from actual experience. Although kestrels prey chiefly on mice, they have not the slightest objection to young game, and consequently I

kill them whenever I can. A fresh killed mouse, with half a grain of strychnine put in the liver, and placed on any large stone in the usual beat of a kestrel, will be sure to attract him. I fully expect a whole legion of opponents when I name "strychnine," but I am very well content to bear the onslaught. If properly used, no dog need ever be injured by it, and I have always found it a wonderful help in vermin destroying. Those who exclaim so much against its use are, in nine cases out of ten, people who have never once in their lives either seen a grain of strychnine, or any of the vermin it is meant to destroy. It is never of very much use trying to get near a kestrel when you see him hovering about; the great proportion of shots that are got at them are entirely unexpected ones.

"THE CARRION CROW."

This most destructive and wary bird is always an especial object of a keeper's attention. Few birds are so shy, and in the laying time, none so mischievous, especially among grouse eggs. They are up early and retire late, being perseveringly at work the whole of the day. They may occasionally be shot, but for a dozen times that you try to approach them, you may only succeed once perhaps in getting a shot. Should you see a pair of crows at feed in any field where you have a chance of getting near them, creep very cautiously along the wall side till you arrive at about forty yards opposite the spot where you last saw them. Then reconnoitre through the cracks in the wall, and if you have not been perceived, and the crows are feeding from, and not towards, you, proceed another twenty yards, but keeping as near the ground as possible. The reason for doing this is, that the lower you are the less chance there is of breaking the light as you pass along. Now take another look, but do not place your eye suddenly to, or suddenly withdraw it from, the hole you have selected, or the crows will catch the break of light. Should you now be within shot, remember that you have a chance

of killing both crows, which chance may not recur. I am assuming of course that you have a double gun; although from what I have before said, it would, if I were the performer, be most probably a single. Few people know how to put a gun over a wall, but I think if you follow my directions, you may in a few minutes practice be able to shoot over a wall, so quick as to kill the shyest and sharpest flying birds, on the ground. Having marked exactly where the bird is, put the gun to your shoulder while you are in a stooping position, and with your left side to the wall. Spring up suddenly, giving the gun a sweep sufficient to be well clear of the coping, and in the same instant your sight is on the bird. The difference of time gained by adopting this plan for the usual one of putting up your head and then getting the gun up, makes several yards in the flight of a quick-sighted bird. By killing one of the carrion crows on the ground, you have a good chance of the other with a second barrel, as these birds usually feed near each other. Crows however frequently adopt the precaution of feeding by turns, leaving the other to mount guard.

The system of trapping them varies with the season of the year. In Winter, poison may be used with great effect. To use it safely, throw a dead rabbit any where under a high wall or rock, and put two or three bits of meat, with a grain of strych: nine in each, on the top of these elevations. A carrion crow is sure to alight there, with a view to narrowly inspecting your bait before he settles on it. He will however take the small bit of meat without any false modesty. With a rat instead of a rabbit, you may put the strychnine into the eye, and into a little slit cut here and there in the body. A dog *may* touch the rat, but this will not happen in one instance out of a thousand, though I am free to admit that it is not an invariable rule as to dogs refusing to eat a dead rat. I have placed many a poisoned rat, but have not found in my experience that a dog has touched

it. Besides, I always select the place to put it in as being least likely to be frequented by dogs. Carrion crows are not, by any means, difficult to trap, but as they generally go in pairs, you cannot depend on catching both, and one being caught, renders the other very shy of a bait. In the Spring of the year, no bait can surpass an egg, but here again they are suspicious, and will not sometimes venture on one by itself. If after a day or two you find it is not touched, you should add another, and another to that, and so on. I always boil the eggs in coffee, which makes them look more like the eggs of game, and it is a very good plan to sprinkle some very thin bent grass over the eggs, when you are pretty well convinced that the crows know of, but are shy of touching, them. They should be put in an artificial nest, made in a tuft of grass, and the trap set on a small mound about a yard off, which you can make with a couple of large sods. An under keeper of my brother's, by adopting this plan of adding to the eggs, lately succeeded in catching a carrion crow that had long set him at defiance. With a single egg or shell, you may however often trap them at a shallow place in an open ditch. Make a false promontory with a sod reaching into the water, and with another sod construct a small island at the end, on which plant the egg, with the trap on the promontory. You are generally pretty sure of the crow, but to catch the second one of a pair, you must try another place of the kind, about fifty to a hundred yards off. The smallest hen or bantam eggs are best.

In the breeding season, should you find a crow's nest, which is, in most instances, built on the very top of a Scotch fir, you should wait till she sits hard, and having climbed up to the nest, pull the undermost sticks away, leaving only one or two to prevent the lining giving way. Between the lining and sticks put a bit of white paper. Go when you are sure she is on, and fire a cartridge at the paper. It is perfectly useless shooting at the

nest without this precaution, as it is composed of the very hardest shanks of heath, &c., and will turn any amount of shot fired from a common gun. To follow out this plan, you should select if possible, a cold rainy day, as she will not like to leave the eggs for long together, and if you go towards night you have all the better chance of finding her on. It will happen however sometimes, that in no sort of weather, or in any stage of sitting, will a carrion crow let you come near the nest. In such a case, you may adopt a plan which is pretty sure to succeed, as I tried it myself some years ago with great effect. I had found a crow's nest, and knew the old hen was sitting deep, and yet I never could get nearer than some eighty yards off the nest. She always went off, though she had never been shot at or needlessly alarmed. I concocted, with a very knowing keeper, the following plan. We went very quietly towards the nest one morning, and of course she started off as usual, and went and settled on the top of a very high tree at the end of the wood. I left the keeper to make himself a hiding place, and I myself walked out of the wood across an adjoining moor. The carrion crow quite losing sight of the possibility of having *two* visitors, thought it was all safe, and went straight back, and was easily shot by the keeper within ten yards of the nest. Should it so happen that a crow has hatched before you find the nest, you should get the skin of a cat, and stuff it in any rough manner, and put it on the ground or in a tree close to the nest, and hide yourself. The first of the old birds that comes to feed the young ones will catch sight of it, and will begin striking at it with her wings, and not heed you in the least should you have taken the precaution not to move. She may be very easily shot while thus engaged. Should the noise she makes not bring up the other, you must wait, and you are sure of it also.

"THE MAGPIE."

This is also a very destructive bird. It confines its depredations chiefly to inclosed fields and covers, not beating the moors

for grouse eggs to the extent the carrion crow does. Great numbers of Black game, pheasant, and partridge eggs are taken by magpies. You will catch them in the same way as I have directed for crows, but instead of planting an egg in the water, you should proceed as follows. Cut an oblong place out of any bank side, about a foot long and nine inches deep at the farthest end. At that end put a handful of grass with an egg on it. Plant a trap, neatly covered, in the entrance, and peg a bit of white paper about the size of a half-crown on one side of the hole. I have caught many scores of magpies in this way. For this mode, and setting for crows in a stream, the alabaster eggs will do very well.

Magpies may be easily called in any part of the country where there are plantations with thick covers to hide yourself in. The calling is done with a tobacco pipe usually, but it is equally easy without, if the knack can be once acquired. I must honestly confess, that although perfect at both methods, I find it quite impossible to describe *how* to do it. The noise made is intended to imitate the cry of a hare or rabbit in distress. There are few keepers who cannot however manage to call either with or without a pipe, and none, I am sure, who would not think a glass or two of beer easily earned by instructing the amateur in the accomplishment. In calling magpies, you should be very careful not to shew yourself, or you at once ruin your sport, and while they are new to the system you may kill great numbers of them, but they will after a time get shy, and then they sit chattering on the tops of the trees a hundred yards off or more, and no persuasion will again bring them. Should you however have another person with you, he will get several shots under these circumstances, by following them about while you keep on calling. For this however the wood should be very thick, and the ground free from sticks, and if towards roosting time, so much the better. Larch plantations, besides being the most common resort of magpies, are the best to approach them in. If you

have, by frequent calling, made them shy, and you happen to hear one chatter, go as quickly, and at the same time as quietly as you can towards where you heard him, but only moving forward while he chatters, and stopping the instant he does. His own noise quite prevents his hearing you, and the odds are greatly in favour of your getting a sitting shot at him. In the breeding time, take a person with you and look the woods carefully over for nests. Your assistant strikes or kicks the tree where a nest is, and you knock the magpie over as she comes off. You must however *shoot your best*, as, if missed, she will, unless deep sitting, forsake. It is no use attempting to pull part of a magpie's nest out, so as to shoot through, after the plan suggested for crows. The nest is usually about the size of a twelve gallon barrel, and made of clay underneath. After the nest is done with, however, it should be pulled out altogether, so as not to deceive you another year.

"THE JAY."

Jays will take the eggs of game, and should always be destroyed. The localities they frequent are altogether different from those occupied by magpies, the latter preferring larch, and the former oak, woods, as they feed a good deal on the acorns. They will come to a call, or may be taken in egg traps.

THE END.

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