

# PRACTICAL DOG EDUCATION

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By "RECAPPER"  
(THOS. C. ABBOTT)

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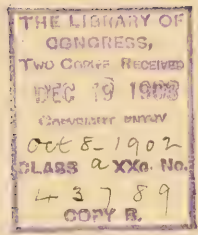
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# PRACTICAL DOG EDUCATION

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## I.

The above title I have chosen for this work—*not* the common one of dog training, and still less, the old and brutal one of dog breaking.

But perhaps some may think that with the numerous books already published on the subject, nothing further is left to be said; that is a matter of opinion. I am familiar with most of these works (some of them good), yet in all of them I find something lacking, as I may point out farther on. I think it was Frank Forster who wrote that, "for a novice to undertake the training of a dog would be an act of stark madness;" yet we are all novices when we begin. Another thing I think he wrote was that "no man who is not able to control himself need ever hope to be able to control his dog;" a dictum far more truthful than the first one quoted. Anyone undertaking the teaching of a dog requires patience; a perfect control of temper; a determination to persevere until success is attained; a real love for the dog, an ability to seize upon new ideas suggested by the actions of the pupil; and an aptitude for seeing the humorous side in all things. With these qualifications, and a well-bred pupil, he need have no fear of failure if my advice is followed out to the letter.

Almost every writer on this subject gives his opinion as to the age at which the education of a dog should be begun; and right here, I am at variance with all of them. Age has nothing to do with it, for dogs are like children, in that the mental powers of some are developed at an earlier or later age than those of others, even of the same litter. Another point I have never seen mentioned is that your dog is always anxious to please you, though he cannot say so in words, but begs you by actions that speak as eloquently to make plain to him just

what you wish him to do, by showing him for a few times how and when to do it.

Many men have started in to train a dog and failed, just because they tried to teach too much; or, in other words, tried to teach too fast. One of the golden rules is to remember that the dog in your care is just what a child is in the care of the school teacher. That child is not expected to be able to spell until the alphabet is learned, or to read until well grounded in spelling. Just so is it with the canine pupil, and no dog will ever be thoroughly well trained when, having only partly learned one lesson, he is hurried on to another.

Just here let me say that I am writing of training for field sports pure and simple, and not of field trials. Having never attended a field trial, I only know of them what I have read in reports of such trials; and, judging by these reports, I am forced to believe that beyond mere speed and stanchness at point, other things count for but little. Of course, a good dog for shooting over *may* be equal to winning several firsts in field trials; or a dog trained first exclusively for field trials may be developed into an excellent dog for the sportsman; and there are such dogs on record, but it is not of the sky-scraping field-trialer I write.

Harking back to the would-be trainer of his own dog, I may say that the first thing for him to do is to study the disposition of his young pupil. To do this, make of him a constant companion as much as possible, and treat him at all times with kindness and gentleness. But do not misunderstand me, and do, as many have done, be mistaken in this kindness. It is easily possible to be both gentle and kind, thereby winning your dog's love and confidence; but you want something more than that, a something which shall be a great help alike to him and to you in the task before you, and that something is his respect.

Therefore, though you be kind, be not too familiar, remembering the old saw about "familiarity breeding contempt." As corporal punishment is a thing of the past in our schools, so let me beg of you, once and for all, to put aside from you all thought of use of the whip, at least for the *young* dog. Children have been taught to read and to spell in the old days when the schoolmaster's reign was a "Reign of Terror"; but it was, after all, but a parrot-like, word-of-mouth sort of learn-

ing, often forgotten before the child reached home at night. It is true that, with an untrained, obstinate two-year-old dog the whip *must* sometimes appear; but even then you must be very sure that the dog understands what you wish him to do and refuses to do it until shown that punishment is certain to be inflicted upon him. Even then it is easy for you to be in error. One or two strokes with the whip are far better than a half-hour's cruel beating. The former makes the dog ashamed that his behavior has called for punishment, the latter makes him angry and excites within him a spirit of rebellion. The cheek-cord and force collar must be your mainstay, but even they must be used with great judgment.

Regarding the proper age at which a dog's education should begin, depends, as above said, upon the dog himself. I have begun the training of pups when four months old (and timid ones at that), and as the slow training continued found that they developed not only in knowledge, but gained confidence in their powers to please me, and this confidence in its turn brought courage and dash. It is just like one learning to ride a bicycle; for at the start he needs the whole highway, and then, as little by little he masters the intricacies of the handle-bars and pedals and finds out how to keep his balance, he gets self-confident and learns to ride up hill and down, take narrow paths and go where he never would have thought of going at the first. Just so it is with the dog. His first lesson, when well learned and commendation for it received, nerves him to try the next, and this building up of self-confidence goes on as his education goes on, until it becomes a positive delight to him to be instructed. I have spoken above as to the advisability of watching the dog's actions in order to get suggestions from him as to how best to advance him in this education.

Many years ago, while training an orange-and-white setter in retrieving for one of my patrons, an incident occurred which I can never forget, and it illustrates well the point above made. The dog was one of a particularly fine and biddable disposition, and showing unmistakably that he took pleasure in learning. For reasons I will give later on I always use a bunch of quill feathers from the tail of a turkey as the object to be retrieved. The dog had quickly learned to carry them around when placed in his mouth, or to take them when offered from my hand. But beyond this he could not seem to



get any idea. If I placed the bunch on a chair, a stool, on the ground, and *kept my hand close to the bunch*, he would when ordered pick them up, but if I removed my hand he evidently thought I had no farther use for them, and, do what I might, paid no attention to the bunch when ordered to "fetch." As he showed evident anxiety to get my meaning, I was determined not to apply punishment, and so kept on patiently as before, but apparently to no purpose. One day while at work with him thus, and when I had dropped the bunch of feathers on the ground directly in front of him, telling him to "fetch," there came a strong puff of wind and moved the feathers just as I had pointed to them. Instantly he stooped, seized the bunch, and sat down before me, holding them up for me to take. Of course, I let him know he had done the right thing, and did it well; but I was not disposed to trust to the wind for help, and I ended the lesson right there. One hour later I gave him another lesson, but I captured an idea from the wind, and equipped myself somewhat differently. The bunch of feathers were tied to one end of a strong piece of patent thread, the other end of the thread to the little finger of my left hand, the thread being about six feet long. Taking the dog to a quiet spot and bidding him stand by me, I cast the feathers a foot or so from me on the ground; then, while his eyes were on the bunch, I gave the order "fetch," and at the same moment, *unperceived by him*, I gave a slight jerk on the thread, causing the feathers to move. In a moment he sprang forward and picked them up, and the lesson was repeated several times, and each time I threw the bunch to a greater distance, till I had "reached the end of my rope." Then the thread was removed and I tried it again, and no matter where or how far I cast it, or where I might hide it, that bunch of feathers was always promptly found and brought to me immediately on my giving the order, and a more delighted dog it would be hard to find.

Under the old brutal system of the whip, and nothing but the whip, this dog would have been ruined, but, with my determination to be patient until the dog understood what I wished him to do, and how he should do it, he made an excellent retriever, while I found out that there was room for me to learn something, even though I had only a chance puff of wind for my teacher. Almost every writer on the subject whose works

I have read will lay down some particular system of training, and treat of it as though it was to be followed *without variation* for all dogs. Here, I believe, is another mistake; for, as I have pointed out, dogs vary in disposition and the faculty of acquiring knowledge, just as do children, and a set system which may do admirably for one dog, may have to be varied in some degree, to get satisfactory results, for his litter brother or sister.

The old-time belief that animals do not reason, but do everything by instinct, is a fallacy. Neither do men or women, even of the brightest intellect, do everything by reasoning. In moments of great peril, when there has been no time for reasoning, many a life has been saved by instinctive action, and reason has cut no figure in the rescue. Some might claim that it "was a great display of nerve," and so it was; but not in the sense they mean. It was simply an involuntary act of the motor nerves, prompted by instinct, and reason has nothing left to brag of. The man who thinks that dogs, horses and other animals do not reason has no right to undertake their training, and the two first-named having for so long been the companions and servants of man, have by that companionship and service, as well as by heredity and imitativeness, acquired many of his ways of action and of reasoning. "Man," writes Lord Bulwer-Lytton, "who is the most conceited of all animals, says that he alone has the prerogative of thought, and condemns other animals to the mechanical operation of instinct. But as instinct is unerring, and thoughts frequently go wrong, man has not much to boast of, according to his own definition."



## II.

I am compelled to admit, at the outset, that I can lay no claim for originality in my way of educating dogs, or for any special system. The whole thing is a conglomeration of ideas, taken from various writers on this subject, and altered to suit individual pupils and circumstances. I am going to suppose that some one of my readers has a young dog—say four or six months old—which he is educating; and that I am coaching the teacher. I am also supposing that the dog has been the property of his teacher long enough to be well acquainted with him; has always been kindly treated, and allowed lots of exercise. Most writers on training claim that pointing at the word is the most important part of yard-training—of which I only write—but I differ with them. My claim is that the dropping to order, wing or shot, or, as it is sometimes called, the “down charge,” is most important of all, and, therefore, the first thing the dog should learn.

I must, once for all, mention the importance of always using the same word for a particular command; and, as when your dog goes down to your order, you wish him to remain down until *you* order him up; and not to go down to the order of anyone *but* yourself, it is well to adopt some word for this command that others would *not* think of using. As “lie down,” “down,” “charge” and “down charge” are so commonly used, and you wish your dog to render obedience to *no* orders except your own, you will (let us suppose) make use of the word “drop.” Provide yourself with a strong but not heavy cord (sash cord is good) about fifty feet long. Later you will want a revolver and good supply of blank cartridges. Have a strong, light leather collar on the dog’s neck. Attach the cord to a ring on the collar, lead the dog around for a few minutes, and then give the command “drop.” Of course, he does not know what this means, so you must, with your hand, gently but firmly place him in the proper position. If he attempts to move, repeat the order “drop,” jerking smartly on the cord and collar. Do not expect too much of him at first, but keep cool and repeat the lesson till he will remain in the proper

position. This first lesson can be given quite as well (perhaps with some pupils better) in the house as out-of-doors.

In all first lessons you want no other person present, or anything to draw the dog's attention away from yourself. When you have got him to understand by repeated lessons that the word "drop" is an order for him to crouch down, the next thing is to teach him that he is not, under any circumstances, either to get up or move from that spot until ordered to "hold up." Drill him thoroughly, however, in the first lesson, until he obeys promptly and always drops at command. After each lesson is over, if possible, give him a race; and if he wants to chase after sparrows and other small birds, let him do it; it gives him exercise and arouses the hunting instinct. He must next learn that he is to obey your orders and *yours only*. Get a smooth, short stake (a broom handle will do) and drive it into the ground firmly. To this fasten the end of a piece of cord about ten feet long, and attach the other end to collar on the dog's neck. I should have stated above that this short cord is the proper one to be used in all of the above lessons. All being ready, lead your dog to the stake and give the command to "drop" there. As he is supposed to be well drilled, he goes down to your order.

Now start and walk away from him, but watching him all the time (if possible, without his knowing it), and if he makes a move to follow seize hold of the cord, jerk it sharply and pull him back to the stake, and then, but *not till then*, order him again to drop. If you gave the order sooner he would think he could come part way towards you and then drop, but you want nothing of that kind. There must, in short, be no half-way measures, no compromise, but absolute obedience. He will soon learn that once down when ordered he is to *stay* down, no matter how far you may go from him, or how long you stay away. Practice him in this important lesson till he is perfect at it, and then, but not till then, you will need an assistant. Having got thus far, you may now at the next lesson teach him that he is to have but one master whose orders are law to him, and that he owes allegiance to him alone. Put on him the collar and short cord and drop him at the stake as before.

Now go a short distance away and have someone to call or whistle to him to induce him to get up, or move away from the stake. If he does arise or start away, step quietly up to the

stake, catch hold of the cord and jerk him back to you and repeat the order to drop, and then try the lesson over again. A half-hour drill at this lesson twice a day, for say a week or less, ought to make him so steady at the drop that no other person can get him to pay any attention to any inducement they can offer him to disobey you. These preliminary lessons he should be practiced in day after day till he is as perfect in them as the trick circus horses in the ring, and there is no occasion while training him in them to cow him or intimidate him in any way. We will suppose that he has been perfected in this drill, and now you will have use for the long cord. If you are lucky enough to live in the country, take him into the nearest field, fasten one end of the long cord to his collar, and let the other end trail on the ground. Of course he will think he is out for a race, and will want to be off and you must let him go.

Right at the start he finds the trailing cord rather in his way, but that is just what you want. After he has run off his "wire edge" a little get where you can reach the cord, and, having got hold of it, call out "Drop!" just as the cord begins to tighten. If he obeys, all right; but if he does not do so promptly the cord will stop him and perhaps throw him "heels over head." Well, no matter. He has learned two most important things at one lesson. First, that by not obeying instantly he has punished himself, and, second, that you do not have to be close up with him to correct him. From my own past experience, I cannot too strongly urge the necessity of continuous drilling in this lesson until he is so perfected in it that he will drop instantly when ordered, even though the distance he may be from you requires that you should call to him somewhat loudly, a thing you should do at no other time during his training. And now you have the next important lesson before you, the training him to drop "to the hand."

Here again the lesson may be taught at first in a room, or small yard, and the cord and collar may come in play if your pupil is at all inclined to be stubborn, though the lesson is a simple one. It is simply this: Give him the word to drop, and, when doing so raise your right arm and hand straight. Of course, he goes down to your verbal order, so let him lie there for a few minutes and then order him up. After a short time, say ten minutes, having hold of the cord, call him by name, or give a low whistle, and as he looks at you raise your arm and

hand as before. If he does not drop (and it is hardly likely that he will do so, the first few times), jerk the cord sharply and say "drop," when he will go down. It will not take him long to learn that the raised arm and hand mean the same thing as the spoken word 'drop.' Of course, if you are living in town, you may have to teach him all of the foregoing lesson in very restricted quarters; but it can be done there all the same. As the *use* of firearms is usually forbidden in town, you will now be compelled in teaching him to drop to shot to get him away from town.

I am supposing that, during his younger days, you have accustomed him to the sound of the snapping of percussion caps, and of very light charges of powder. You must take the long cord, your revolver and the blank cartridges. Once away from town, fasten the cord to his collar, letting it trail on the ground. Take him into an open field and let him run for a short time. After this, watch an opportunity when he is not more than the length of the cord from you, and is not looking at you. Have your revolver ready in your right hand, point it upward, with your hand and arm aloft, and fire one blank. Naturally, at the sound he will look towards you, and, seeing your raised arm, will go down. If he does not, keep your arm up, and seizing the cord with your left hand, jerking it, and giving the command to "drop." But if your teaching of the preliminary lessons has been as thorough as they should have been, this will not be needed; for the now well-known sight of your signal of the raised hand and arm will have been promptly obeyed.

Should this be the case, go slowly up to the dog, and after letting him lie quiet for about five minutes order him up—and after a few kind words and pats let him know that he has done well and that you are pleased with him—send him off again for another short run. At the end of about fifteen minutes watch your chance as before; get within reach of the cord, and again, with your right hand and arm aloft, fire another blank with the revolver when he is not looking, keeping your hand and arm up. As said before, dogs are like children, some catching a new idea quicker than others; but in my experience most dogs, if well taught in the previous lessons, learn this dropping to shot in a very short time, and drop promptly when at the extreme distance at which the sound can be heard. If you find

that your pupil is learning very rapidly make the periods of time between shots longer, but let them always be at moments when the dog's attention seems to not be upon your movements.

The final step is to practice him until perfect, to drop to shot without your making any signal with the hand and arm, but do not try to go too fast. I cannot insist too strongly that he must be perfect in each lesson before attempting to learn the next one. No one part of this task must be done in a slovenly, half-hearted way; and be not lacking in praise and commendation of him when he has done well. Another point is that when he has done well that is the proper time to stop with that particular lesson, for he will then have something pleasant to look back to and remember. It is quite possible that some may be thinking me inclined to give dogs credit for more mental powers than they possess. Well, in answer to that I may say that if they had raised, owned and handled as many dogs as I have, they would agree with instead of differing from me. To complete these important lessons you have now to only practice him daily until he drops at the sound of the shot without any other signal from you.



## III.

Having your dog now well trained in the dropping to word, hand and shot, the next step, if you are living where game is plenty, is to get him to drop to wing, or, in other words, when a game bird is flushed to him. As it is not necessary that game should be killed over him in teaching him this very important part of his education, you need not come in conflict with the game laws. Even though it be in the open season for game, it is better that birds should not be killed to him yet, for seeing game fall to the gun at this early stage of his learning will be a temptation to disobey the sound of the gun, and so lead him into one of the worst faults a dog can have, namely, breaking into shot. It is my belief that more dogs have learned to be practically worthless in this way (unless thoroughly retrained) than from almost any other cause, and here, as in so many other things, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." If you are not living where game is easily reached, this part of his training must perforce be delayed until game is to be killed over the dog; but, even then, if you desire to have your dog be one you can take pride in, and his working be for you and himself an increasing pleasure, you will, at least during his first season, make the bagging of game a very secondary matter.

Being in a game-frequented part of the country, take him where it is to be found, and having fast to his collar the long cord. It will be found a good plan to have the outward or trailing end of this cord whipped tightly with fine copper wire, as this will prevent it from untwisting and allow it to slip over grass and through brush, while if it was knotted at the end, it would certainly annoy you in this way, and, generally, just at the most inopportune times. I will suppose that your dog struck the scent of game, and shows it by his action. Get quickly but quietly up within reach of the cord, having the revolver ready. As it may be the first time your dog has scented game, it will hardly be fair to expect that he will point. If the pointing instinct is strongly developed in him and he



comes to a stand all right, let him stay at point for a few minutes, you having got a firm hold of the cord meanwhile. Then while he stands you flush the bird and the moment it flushes fire a blank shot.

His nature will prompt him to dash away in chase, but the sound of the cartridge tells him to drop. If he rushes after the game he will quickly and severely be brought to a stop by the cord of which you have hold, and then you are to give further punishment by getting him back to where he was at point, and there telling him to drop. Use no other punishment, do no scolding, but remember that though your pupil has done wrong it is a first offense, and that he had no way of knowing that he was doing wrong. If, on the other hand, he made a good point and dropped well to shot, all is well. In either case let him stay down for quite a little while, say fifteen minutes, as you *must not* be in a hurry. Then, with a pleasant word, or a kindly pat or two, let him try for another find, and go on repeating the lesson day after day for several days. Gradually increase the time between the rising of the bird and firing of the shot, and you will soon notice that he does not wait for the sound of the pistol, and anticipates it by dropping as the bird flushes.

You have now reached a point in the education of your pupil where, if he is of a gentle, timid disposition, you may halt for a time before you go to the next lesson. It is not meant by this, however, that you are to stop practicing him in the lessons already learned. You want to drill him in these things for several days, and it is well to always reward him in some way for every well-performed task, for dogs are like children, they like to be praised and rewarded for doing anything well. I do not know if I have previously mentioned it, but always when giving a verbal order, use some certain word for that order (and not a whole sentence), and *never* change that word. It is the same with signals, if you wish him to work by them only. Adopt a code to suit your own ideas, each one meaning that you wish him to do some certain thing, and, as with the words, make no changes, because you do not wish to confuse him, but have everything as plain and comprehensible to his understanding as you can make it. You can now once more return to the yard-training, pure and simple, for his next lesson, by which he is taught to come to you promptly by a word or a

single short blast of the whistle, or to go from you at the order "hie on."

There are many who claim that this should be a dog's first lesson, but I do not agree with them. Training a dog to this at the first is, with some dogs, very apt to get them into the bad habit of being afraid to range out boldly in fear that they may not hear an order to "come in," and then get punishment of some kind when they do come; so to be on the safe side they acquire this bad habit of running in every few minutes, only to be sent out again. A well-trained dog, when ranging in search of game, will always have wide open his eyes and ears for orders, or signals from his master; but he will not let this watchfulness of sight and hearing interfere with an equal watchfulness by his nose for the locating of game. To teach this next lesson you must again resort to the long cord and the stake driven into the ground. It is well that the top of this stake should be about two feet above the top of the ground. Fasten the two ends of the cord to the dog's collar, and pass the cord over or around the stake, having it to play freely. Now walk back with the dog as far as the cord will allow, the farther the better. Have the dog standing by you, make a forward motion towards the stake with one hand, and at the same time give the order to "hie on" or "go on."

Of course he does not understand you, so begin pulling on one strand of the cord, hand over hand, thus drawing him away from you and towards the stake, while you keep repeating the order. When you have drawn him nearly up to the stake, stop pulling on that part of the cord, and, after letting him stand (or, if he chooses), lie down for a moment, give a low whistle, or the order "come in," and draw him back to you by pulling on the other half of the cord. If he seems at all timid, pet him for a moment, or give him a bit of meat or a biscuit, and then after a minute go over the lesson again. Now, as in actual work under the gun, you will frequently wish to send your dog out to range in other directions, as well as straight ahead, after you have got him to promptly obey your order to "come in" and "hie on" ahead, you have to teach him to go out to right or left, as you may wish at the time. To do this, if you wish him to go to the right, place him as before, and then having half the length of the cord extending between him and the stake, and you the other half, walk away from

him until he, you and the stake each form one of the angles of a right-angled triangle. Now with the cord in your left hand, wave your right arm towards the stake, and give the order "hie on." If he does not know which way to go (and it is barely a chance that he will), pull on the cord in your left hand, and this draws him across your front to the right, and towards the stake, and wave him with your right arm in that direction. As he is supposed to have learned in the previous lessons just what the pull on the cord means, viz., that he is to go in the direction he feels the cord drawing, he will soon learn that a wave of your arm to the right means just the same. Drill him in these two lessons until perfect at them in the yard, and then you have only to reverse the last one, using your right hand to pull the cord, and your left arm and hand to wave to the left, and he will soon catch the meaning of that signal, as he did the others. Your next move is to get him to obey these signals in the open field.

To do this you must, if a town resident, again take your pupil into the country. Have fast to his collar the long cord and let it trail after him. It may not be really needed, but the knowledge that he wears it, and the recollection that on previous occasions it has placed him within your reach when he thought he was going to have everything his own way, will have a good effect. Walk about with him for a little while, keeping him at heel by means of the cord. Then order him on, letting him take his own course. In a few minutes whistle to him, and when he looks around to you wave him to the right, turning and walking in that direction yourself. If he obeys, all right; but if not, order or signal him to drop and when he is down go quietly up to him, order him up and begin over again. Do not be put out of temper if you have several failures in getting him to understand. Everything depends on your keeping cool, for he only wants to get an understanding of what you wish him to do. I will suppose that at last he has learned what you wish and obeys the motion of the hand. Now let him run in that direction till he nears the side of the field, you following. Then whistle again, and the moment he looks to you wave your other arm to the left, and turn that way yourself. Seeing you turn will turn him, and in this way he will soon obey the wave of the arm without your altering your course.

It must be borne in mind that these are *not* lessons in ranging, but lessons in obeying signals. Having a dog trained to range with mathematical precision may sound well in theory, and look very pretty on an open prairie, but my experience is that a dog should range over ground where his scenting powers and past experience tell him game is likely to be found, and not wear himself out in covering ground where game never goes, only because it looks pretty to see him do it. You might train a greyhound or a coach dog to that, but of what good would they be as birdfinders? You want your present pupil to rely on your judgment as to where the game may be found now, and to look to you to direct him where to hunt for it. Later he will learn to know likely spots at sight, and work them out when signaled to do so,

## IV.

As I am one of the old style of sportsmen who hold to the theory that no dog can be held to be fully trained that does not retrieve dead and wounded game, it follows that, as your pupil is now supposed to be trained in all of the other essential requirements for field work, that retrieving should be the final lesson. But I am not in favor of his being required or encouraged to retrieve, during his first season, every head of game killed to his points, lest he look upon it as an encouragement to become unsteady to wing and shot. And now as to how he should be trained. In the first article of this series I spoke of always using a bunch of turkey quill feathers as being the best thing with which to train a dog to retrieve, and stated that, later on, I would say why I thought so. The reason is plain and it is simply that he should get used to the feel of the feathers in his mouth. I have in past years seen more than one dog perfectly yard trained to retrieve balls, gloves, sticks and other articles he could lift, and refuse to retrieve his bird the first time he was called on to lift one. Suppose that bird to be a snipe that has fallen just across a ditch too wide for you to jump and too deep for you to wade.

Well, what are you going to do about it? The dog has gone to the bird, and now looks first at it and then at you, and wags his tail. It won't do to call him away and leave that bird and wait till you kill another that you and he can both go to; for that will give him the idea that he can retrieve or not, just as it suits him. Talk about moral suasion is all very well, but it won't work in animal training, not one little bit. You *must have* absolute, unconditional, instant obedience; and it will be wholly your own fault and *not the dog's*, if you place yourself in a position where you are unable to enforce it. I have said many times and I repeat it now, that I am all for kindness and gentleness in educating animals; but *not* for coaxing. As in his previous training, you must rely on the check cord and force-collar as "your right-hand man." Sit down on a stool or low chair, call the dog up to you, and put the cord and collar



on him. The short cord, of say six feet long, will do best in the first two or three lessons.

Of course, the first thing for the dog to learn is to hold the feathers when placed in his mouth. There must be no lip pinching or nose twisting about this. You want your pupil to associate all ideas of pain or punishment only with disobedience, as heretofore; and *not* with the lack of knowledge on his part of what you wish him to do. Being seated yourself, with the dog also seated in front of you, open his mouth gently with your left hand, and roll in the feather bunch with your right hand, giving the order, "hold it." He will try to put them out of his mouth immediately, of course; so replace them again and repeat your order sharply, but not loudly. After a few trials your pupil will understand that he is not to drop the feathers, and will hold them while you sit by him. Now while he holds them, make a move to get up from your seat, and the odds are that, his attention being thus attracted, he will drop the feathers. If he does not, all is well; but if he drops them, jerk the cord sharply with your left hand to punish him, replace the feathers in his mouth with your other hand, and try again.

After a time he will get the idea that, no matter what move you may make, he must not drop the feathers. You may now safely "adjourn the court" till next day, not forgetting to praise your pupil for having done well; and you may even reward him for so doing with a bit of meat, a biscuit, or something for which you know he has a special liking. On the morrow it will be well to go over the previous lesson to make sure that he is perfect in it, and then proceed as follows: Placing the feathers in his mouth, rise up and walk away from him a few steps, and give the order "fetch." It being a new order, he may not comprehend it; so draw him gently towards you by means of the cord. As he comes towards you, keep walking around with him following you, but watch sharp that he keeps the feathers in his mouth. If he drops them at any time go to them immediately, jerking him sharply up to where the feathers lie, replace them in his mouth, and go over again with the whole performance. This is lesson No. 2 and you must practice him at it until he will carry them so long as you desire and not drop the feathers.

Lesson No. 3 now comes, and here again you may resume



your seat, with the dog sitting in front of you. Hold the cord in your right hand and the feathers in your left, moving them towards his mouth and giving the order "take hold," and at the same moment drawing his head towards the feathers till they touch his nose. Just here some dogs seem to know what is wanted of them, open their mouths and receive the feathers, because of what they have learned in the preceding lessons. Your pupil may not do this at first, so jerk the cord just enough to make him feel the force-collar pinch him, and he will open his mouth enough to cry out, when, as he does so, you must drop the feathers into his mouth, loosen the pull on the cord and give him a word of encouragement. Having already learned that he is to hold the feathers when placed in his mouth he will do so now. Gradually he will learn to reach out for the feathers as they are held towards him and take hold of them at your order "take hold." When you have got him to do this every time you may feel well pleased, as this is usually one of the hardest parts of retrieving to make a dog understand.

Little by little, you must now increase the distance at which you hold the feathers from him, until he will have learned to move toward them when held at least a yard away from him. Practice him at this for several days, and then, when he is perfect at it, make a change of tactics by holding the feathers no longer on a level with his mouth, but a few inches below that level, and still in front of him. To give him a help in learning to lower his head, pass the cord down under the hollow of your foot (which should be near him), and when you order him to "take hold," draw on the cord and this will pull down his head. Give the order "take hold" when his head is down opposite the feathers, but not until then. *After* he has learned that he is to reach down, as well as away from him, you may give the order a little sooner. Practice him often at this until he will reach to the floor to take hold of the feathers in your hand, and do not try to go farther in his lessons until he is perfect at this.

And now we come to what is practically the last step in retrieving, and generally for an amateur trainer the hardest one to teach, unless he knows what he is about. I refer to the teaching the dog to go for the feathers when thrown to a short distance. If you have access to an unoccupied building where

there will be nothing to attract the dog's attention away from you, the matter will be much simplified; though the lesson can be taught in a quiet and retired backyard. You want a small pulley fastened firmly to the floor or ground, and if this pulley fastening turns on a swivel so much the better. Use your long check-cord now instead of the short one, passing the end not fastened to the collar on the dog's neck through the pulley. Call the dog to you and place yourself and him as far from the pulley as the cord will allow. Now cast the feathers about half way to the pulley, having the dog standing at your side. Order him to "go on," and as he has already been trained to do this, the moment he gets to the feathers bid him first to "drop," and then "take hold"; see that you get him to drop a little before he reaches the feathers, so that he will not drop on them, but where he can reach them while he is down. Next give the order "take hold," and if he does not immediately do so, jerk the cord you hold in your hand, you having before this taken up the slack as the dog left your side.

This will draw him away from you and toward the feathers. If he seizes the feathers, drop the cord, give the order "hold up," for him to get on his feet, and then the orders "fetch," "come here." Occasionally a young dog at this point in his training grasps the notion of what you require of him right at this point, and you are exceedingly fortunate if you have such a pupil. Usually, when the dog has reached the feathers and dropped to your order he will, when told to "take hold," expect you to come to him and put your hand down near to the feathers, but this is just what you must not do, unless all other methods fail; and even then you may do it only with a timid dog, to help him to comprehend what you require. Ordinarily, if he does not reach for the feathers at your order, you are to repeat it, pulling on the cord as you give the order, and so drawing him up to the feathers, when a few light jerks on the cord will, sooner or later, cause him to obey. When once he has done so, you have, figuratively speaking, "climbed the hill," so do not be sparing of your praise, and let him see by your manner that he has done something very pleasing to you.

But, before this, while he holds the feathers, give the order "hold up," and, as he gets on his feet, the new order "fetch," drawing him gently toward you. When he reaches you, have him sit down in front of you; then, after a minute's pause,

take the feathers from his mouth, and then reward him in any way you think will be most pleasing to him. Now practice him daily in this lesson for say a week, always giving praise for well-doing. Should he at any time drop the feathers when coming to you, make him drop right by them (pulling him back to them by the cord, if necessary), and proceed as in the first instance. When he has become well drilled in this lesson, vary the programme by standing off to one side, and, when giving the orders "hie on," "take hold," "fetch," wave your right or left hand and arm, as may suit the case, in the direction of the feathers, and when he has picked them up, insist (by the help of the cord) that he come directly to you and hold the feathers *until you take them from his mouth*.

Nothing is more exasperating than to have a dog bring a bird part way to you, and then drop it, perhaps on the far side of a wide and deep ditch. You want him to understand that, once a bird is in his mouth, he is not to drop it except into your hand, and not even there *until ordered* to do so. I have now in the foregoing and present articles given the system on which I have trained many dogs, with never yet a failure. I have given simply the outlines. The details everyone must fill in to suit the idiosyncrasies of the various pupils he may undertake to instruct; and, as dogs vary in disposition and aptitude in learning, the trainer must judge for himself how to vary these details to suit individual cases. The mere matter of teaching the dog to find the feathers when hidden, later on, to the orders of "dead bird, find," is so simple that I feel I have no right to take up space by repeating it here. Continual practice in all of the lessons given will go so far toward perfecting your pupil for field work, and, when once he has come to actual work under the gun, he will quickly come to understand the reason for his yard training, and work as though he had been born trained, working with all of the exactitude of the trick horse in the circus ring, and with as much mechanical precision.

## REFINEMENTS IN RETRIEVING.

## I.

In a previous chapter I stated that I should only give the outlines of my system of training, leaving any of my readers who might undertake to educate his own dog to fill in the details to suit the circumstances and the individual temperament of his pupil; for it is my contention that each dog has an individuality of his own, and that a system of training which might be perfect for one dog must be varied in some one or more particulars to prove a success with some other dog, even though it be a litter-brother or sister of the first one. In no work on the subject I have yet seen has this fact been mentioned, and only what seem "hard and fast" rules are given to be followed by the would-be trainer, and this I claim to be a mistake.

When I wrote of training to retrieve, I left off where the supposed pupil had learned to go out for the bunch of feathers and pick them up to order. I also said that in this part of the instruction the cord of thirty feet should be used, but forgot to say that a cord of double that length would be better still, as it allows both yourself and your pupil to be at greater distances from the pulley fastened to the post, and therefore more room in which to work. When your dog has learned to pick up the feather roll promptly, at the order "fetch," insist that he come directly to you from where he seized hold of them, and not go circling round to your rear. To enforce this practice, should he show any inclination to pass around you, draw him to you in a direct line by means of the cord, and when he comes to you, make him sit down in front of you. Then call him by name to get him to look up to you, and not until he does so must you take the feathers from him. It is, to me, simply disgusting to see an otherwise well-trained dog, when retrieving a bird, sneak around behind his owner, then sit down, and when the bird is reached for, drop his head and make the shooter reach for the bird to the ground.

After he has retrieved the feathers a few times and done otherwise as here directed, let him bring them to you again,

sit up in front of you, and then hold them while you pass your hand over his head and around his mouth, and in contact therewith. But he is not to drop the feathers while you do this. If he does, scold him, place the feathers again in his mouth, and again stroke his head and nose, not allowing him to loosen his hold of the feathers. By this teaching he learns that when he has brought in to you a dead or wounded bird he is to hold it till he receives the order "give." The object of so training him is this: Suppose you have had a double shot at snipe, wing-tipping your first bird and missing the second one. Your dog drops to wing, you throw out the empty shells, insert fresh cartridges, and give the order "dead bird," "fetch," all the while keeping your eye on the missed bird to mark it down. Your dog retrieves the other snipe and sits down in front of you, and then, finding that you do not take it from him immediately, but keep your gaze fixed on the other snipe, drops the one he holds, unnoticed by you, when it may quickly slip away, and hide in the rushes, perhaps to be found no more.

Now, if you trained that dog, you and not he are to blame for this. If you have the ill luck to wing-tip or otherwise badly wound any one of the first few birds you shoot at over your pupil, there is one cast-iron rule to be followed if you wish your dog to become what I call a fine retriever, and that rule is to stay by the bird till your dog, with or (better) without your assistance, finds it and brings it to you, even though you may have to give up any further shooting, and *devote the whole day to retrieving that one bird*. I italicize this line as a written rule from which there *must not* be any deviation, as it teaches the dog that, no matter how much he may wish to be off in search of other birds; no matter how much time it may take; no matter what obstacles are to be met and overcome, that bird *must be found* and brought to bag; and this is a lesson for both of you, if you wish to own a retrieving setter, pointer or spaniel to be proud of. If you are not a crack shot, the first time you go out to practice your dog at retrieving game, be prepared by having in your game pocket a dead bird (a pigeon will do), and then, should you be so unfortunate as to wound a bird, and your dog, after continued searching, fails to find it, even with your help, you can, unseen by him, drop the bird you have with you and work him around till near it, and then let him find and retrieve it.



This will stimulate him wonderfully for future efforts in that line, and you will, with practice, soon have a dog from which it will be almost an impossibility for game to make its escape. I once owned an English setter bitch, a lineal descendant of H. W. Herbert's dog Chance, of which he writes in his "Field Sports of the United States," etc., and trained her myself. I kept her till she died of age at thirteen years and six months, and began shooting over her when she was ten months old. With her brace-mate (a setter dog), I used her for twelve years, and neither she nor the dog ever lost me but one bird in all that time. Either of these dogs would bring me dead or wounded game surely yet tenderly; but, let either one of them come upon a snake, an opossum, a rat or any other vermin, and no bulldog would be more fierce or deadly in his attack upon it. They were not satisfied with the mere killing, but every bone in the animal would be crunched; yet neither of these dogs ever bit a game bird.

My readers, those were dogs. Many another good one was brought to beat them afield on game, but Monk and Nellie ever were the only-acknowledged victors, whether it was on snipe, woodcock or quail; and both of these dogs (and all others I have owned) were trained by myself, and on the system I have laid down in this little volume. Happy indeed would I be did I now own one dog like unto either of them. But I must not write of them longer, for the knowledge that never again will they follow me afield; that never again will the kind brown eyes look lovingly into mine, brings moisture to my eyes and a choking in my throat. May God keep my memory of them ever green! And now to other matters of interest to others than myself. It sometimes occurs that a young dog, from over-eagerness, gets to handling game too roughly, and, if not checked at once, to biting it, and finally to eating it. No dog should ever be taken to work on game after eating just previously a hearty meal; and neither should he be required to work on an empty stomach; and, parenthetically, I may remark that the sportsman will do well to follow this rule himself.

If your pupil shows any disposition to mouth his birds when carrying them, it must be stopped at once.

Have two stiff wires a little sharpened at each end, and long enough to just reach through a bird. I will suppose you are



quail shooting. Have with you a check cord of say twenty feet in length, and *never be without it and your force-collar*. Your dog points a single bird, or a bevy, and you flush and kill *one* bird. Remember, you are not out to make a bag of game, but to train your dog. He has dropped to shot all right, and you are to let him lie there while you go quietly to the bird and thrust one wire downward through the back and breast, the other at right angles through it, from side to side. Drop the bird where it first fell and walk to where you were when you fired the shot. Open your gun and throw out the shell, put in a cartridge, and then give the word "dead," "hold up," "find." The dog gallops off and finds the bird, and seeing he has found it, you say "fetch." He seizes it, bites on it, but his tongue or upper jaw, and perhaps both, are punished by the wire points in exact proportion to the greediness with which he has bitten it. He drops it, of course, and now comes the "tug of war."

Order him to fetch, and if he does so, all is well; but you may rest assured he will do it without biting that bird. If he refuses to retrieve, keep cool, lay down your gun (first removing the cartridges), go quietly to the dog, and put on the force-collar and cord and then and there, by its means, make him pick up that bird and bring it to you. You may have to place the bird in his mouth a time or two, and if so, do it very gently and let him hold it for a few minutes. He will not be long in finding out that a bird picked up lightly "has no sting." Now remove the cord and force-collar, take up your gun, and bid him "hie on." When he gets another point, work as before, with this difference: Do not shoot at the newly flushed bird, but in some other direction, and at the same time pitch the bird you have wired in the direction you shoot, and then work him as before. After he has brought you the wired bird you may go and kill a bird or two for him, and watch closely to see if he shows any disposition to bite them.

If not, all right, but keep the wired bird handy in a pocket by itself, so that you may be prepared. Now, there are some dogs that never bite a dead bird, yet when sent to retrieve cripples will bite them. Generally this is caused by nervous excitement, due to high breeding. The whip would be worse than useless in nine out of ten such cases, and might cause your pupil to abandon retrieving altogether and give you your work to do all over again. But this bad habit must be

stopped at the outset. Return home at once and procure a live tame pigeon. Get a piece of thinnish leather half an inch wide and long enough to reach round the body of the pigeon, just behind its wings. Next get eight or ten eight-ounce carpet tacks and push them through the strap about half an inch apart. Sew a button on one end of the strap, and cut a buttonhole at the other end. Now get your wife or best girl to sew a strip of muslin to the strap, covering up the tack heads, with the points and the button on the other side. With a pair of scissors cut the flight feathers from one wing of your pigeon, button on him the spiked belt just back of his wings, put him in a pocket so that he cannot be injured or escape, and you are ready for business.

Get your gun and a few cartridges (blanks will do), and start out with your dog. Be sure you take the force-collar and check cord. Bid your dog "hie on," and let him run for a short time, and then, when you are unobserved by him, toss the pigeon out into the grass and fire a shot in the air. The dog drops, thinking you have put up a bird he has failed to scent. Reload the gun, and then comes the order "dead bird," "find." When you see he has the scent of the pigeon, order him to "fetch." He goes up, finds a live bird and proceeds to bite it, but the eight-ounce tacks enter a protest. Of course he drops it, and now you must proceed as directed with a wired dead bird, and by using judgment, patience and repeated lessons you will soon have that pupil learn that he is not to bite game, whether it be living or dead. No whip is used, no fear of you bred in the dog, and he punishes himself if doing wrongly, and gets no punishment when handling game as he should. The lesson once learned is never forgotten, and he may be trusted thereafter.

## II.

When I wrote out the foregoing chapter I thought I had said all that I wished on the subject, but I find that I have not. In fact, it may as well be at once stated that on the subject of dog education, as on guns, fine guns, the writer is an out-and-out crank, and feels no shame in admitting the fact. It is obvious that game when shot at and killed, may in falling not always reach the ground; being caught in the falling by twigs and creepers, and so kept beyond the reach of your setter or pointer. It is, therefore, very desirable that after you have him perfect in retrieving from the ground or water, that he be put through a course of training to prepare him for just such emergencies. To do this you must first practice him in finding (and, of course, retrieving) the feather-roll or a dead bird after you have hidden it on or close to the ground. As this is a lesson you can teach in your own dooryard and one in which he will take great delight, practice him at it twice a day. Gradually you may hide the bird (in shrubbery) higher from the ground until he has learned that when he cannot find it on the ground he must elevate his head and search at a higher level.

Never forget to be gentle with him, and be generous of praise and you will probably be surprised to find that your pupil delights in the performance, so much so, in fact, that when he has located the bird or feathers which you have purposely hidden beyond his reach, he will let you know it by his futile efforts to get at it, and bark because he is vexed that Nature did not endow him with longer legs. Then when you go forward, reach up and take the bird, and hand it to him to carry to the point from where you sent him to search for it, he will have learned the very important lesson that circumstances may occur when he must appeal to you for aid; and that lesson once learned will never be forgotten. I remember once that when shooting woodcock over my white-red setter Monk, he got a point close under a hedge of old water willows. These trees (still standing) had in past years been topped off about four feet above ground, and then had, in after

seasons, put out new limbs from the top of the decapitated trunks.

As usual I flushed the woodcock myself, and it flew directly away from me, rising until just above the willows. It was an easy shot and I killed the bird. Monk dropped to shot, and I reloaded (it was in the days of muzzle loaders), and then sent him for the bird. He went for it, and after waiting for him sometime without his coming, I first noticed the willow limbs were being shaken and then heard Monk whine. Running to the place with the fear in me that Monk had got fastened in some way, I found him making most strenuous efforts to reach up to the top of one of the willow trunks. He received me with yelps of joy, tinged with vexation. Setting down my gun and forcing my way into the hedge I climbed up the old willow trunk to see what was there, and found that the cock had fallen directly on the top of the trunk and lay there dead. What did I do? Well, I got down, lifted Monk up there and let him have, as a reward, the satisfaction of picking up the bird, jumping down and then bringing it to me where I stood by my gun.

It is such lessons as this that help to make a perfect dog, and yet how few amateur trainers there be who ever give such things a thought, or imagine that dogs can and do appreciate a kindness. With regard to teaching your dog to retrieve from water there is something to be said. The first thing to do is to know that your pupil is not water shy, refusing to enter the water and swim. Retrieving from the water should be taught in Summer, when both air and water are warm enough for you to enter, as you may have to do a few times to a depth where you may wade, but your dog has to swim; and you should, therefore, prepare for such emergencies. Where a young dog is water shy, I have always found that the quickest way to break up such nonsense was to take him out in a boat on some pond, and then leave him on some sandbar or islet and row away from him, coaxing him to come after me, and not on any account going back for him. The fear in him of being left alone will overcome the fear of entering the water, and especially if you go where he cannot see you.

Once he has learned that he can swim he will soon take delight in doing so, and that trouble will be at an end.

When it is you may begin teaching him to retrieve from the

water. Here once more the roll of feathers is the best thing to use and if (as I should have previously directed) a couple of good-sized bottle corks are rolled up in the center, it will float all the better. Now take your dog to the stream or pond, selecting a spot where the bottom has a gradual slope and a reasonably hard bottom and with no current to carry away the feathers. Should there be a current attach to the center of the feather roll by means of a cord a light weight to act as an anchor, but if you can find a piece of still water and dispense with the cord and weight it will be very much the best plan. Now stand a yard or two from the shore, order your dog to "drop," and then cast the roll just in the edge of the water. Let him lie still for a moment, then give the orders "hold up," "fetch." If he obeys promptly at first, all is well; but it is just possible that in picking up the feather roll he may also pick up a mouthful of water and in attempting to eject the latter, drop the former.

You are not to show ill-humor at this. Just remember that you could not read until you had learned to spell, and if he drops the roll call him to you, make him "drop" and then you are to pick up the roll, go back to the dog and repeat the whole lesson. A few trials will teach him how to seize the roll and leave the water where it belongs and then the worst is over. After that you may day after day slowly increase the distance until no matter how far you cast the roll he will go for it and bring it to you. Once or twice in past years I have had pupils that were inclined to be refractory when they had to go beyond their wading depth. There was but one thing for me to do, and it was done; and that was to wade out myself, drawing gently by the collar the dog with me to the feathers and there making him take it in his mouth, follow me to the shore and out on land, and then sit up and hold the roll for a moment before I take it from him. But it is right to say that only in quite rare instances will the amateur trainer meet with such experiences, if he has properly taught and practiced the pupil while retrieving from on the land.

With the weighted roll by gradually increasing the direction of casting into the water, a dog may be taught to dive for a wing-broken duck to the depth of say a foot or two; but I do not recommend it, though my dog Monk, above named, was so trained by myself; and on one occasion I saw him swim across



the Delaware River (there about two hundred yards wide) after a wing-broken teal duck; and then as it dived to escape him he also went under after it, and when he came to the surface that duck was fluttering in his mouth and stayed there till he reached me. On another occasion I saw his brace-mate, Nellie, swim across a partly flooded meadow, come to a point the moment her feet touched bottom, and with only her head showing above water hold that point for twenty minutes while I got around to where I could flush the eleven snipe she had winded. There was no such thing as getting her to flush game once pointed, nor could she be called off of a point. You might as well attempt to build a trolley road to the moon. This was in the month of March, with the water bitterly cold. Fortunately my cousin, now well known to the literary and scientific world as Dr. Charles C. Abbott, was witness to this point of Nellie's and talks often of it now.

While here noting intelligent acts of dogs I will cite some others. At one time it was my good fortune to have presented to me a lemon-and-white pointer pup, the only pointer I have ever owned. I raised and taught him on the system here given, and he developed into the finest pointer it has ever been my fortune to shoot over. He was what would even now be called a fast dog, with excellent scenting power, very stanch on point and backing, and very knowing. Did he get a point in thick cover he would, when you approached, look aloft and then, if he thought he could show a better chance for me to make a clean kill he would back away from his point, make a quick circle around till he faced me, and wait for me to flush the bird. But he only did this when he thought it would be an aid to me, and he always was right in his judgment.

The last dog I owned was also presented to me when a pup by my very good friend Wash A. Coster, former secretary of the Eastern Fields Trial Club. He was a white dog with orange ears, a Llewelyn of the purest, sired by Mr. Coster's Buckalew, out of same owner's Brimstone, and she by champion Gladstone, out of Swaze. This dog Blarneystone, or Blarney, was a lightweight. He was one of the handsomest and most lovable dogs I ever saw. He was a retriever by nature, and never refused the work. At that time my wife kept a few chickens and ducks, and Blarney, though never offering to do them any harm, seemed very much interested in their doings.



He had free access to the poultry house, but never took an egg. One day one of the hens laid an egg out on the ground in our backyard, and he found it lying there. He had seen my wife gather the eggs each evening and so learned that they were of some value; so he picked up the egg carefully and brought it into the kitchen and gave it to an aunt of mine who happened to be there. Some time after this one of our hens made a nest under our back piazza and laid there regularly. One day when we were all absent for an hour or two Blarney found an egg dropped by one of our ducks, carried it to the nest under the piazza, placed it in there, and then with his paws covered the nest up with straw and other litter. It so happened that my wife had not looked after the eggs in this nest for two days before this, and when feeling there that evening she remarked that instead of three eggs there were four and some other hen must have laid there, but she had never known a hen before then to cover up a nest. When, with three hen's eggs, she drew out the duck egg and happened to look around into the dog's face beside her, the look she saw in his brown eyes explained it all. That night Blarney got the best part of a sirloin steak for his supper.

I have stated facts, not fiction. I suppose an apology is here due my readers for inflicting these reminiscences upon them, but I will not so offend again. It is not sentimentality, but a loving memory of the kindest, truest, most faithful and loving companions I have ever known, and yet no tribute to such devoted companions could ever, if in mere words written or spoken, do them justice. I fear it will not be my lot ever again to know such friends.

FIELD TRAINING.

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It was asked of me by some who saw advance pages of "Practical Dog Education" why I did not write of field training. The answer was easily given, and was simply that I did not think it necessary. My claim is (and it is based on many years of experience) that when a young dog has been properly and thoroughly yard-trained on the system I have given, thereafter all his field training should be all the practice on game his owner can give him. He cannot have it too often or have too much of it, and he will then rapidly come to know why his primary education or yard training was given him and recognize its usefulness to him.

Being one of the "old-timers," I fully agree with some of the rules laid down by the late "Frank Forester" as to what a dog working on game should or should not do. No dog, and especially a young dog, ought ever to be asked to flush a bird after pointing it. It may be done with a steady, old dog, but it is the requirement of the pot-hunter and market-shooter (who want all of the game they find), but not of the true sportsman. The latter does not care about making big bags, but he does care that every bird he takes was got by the scientific work of both himself and his dogs. Hence, he takes no chance of making his young dog unsteady at point, simply because by doing so he may get a surer shot, but flushes the bird himself, and if he makes a miss, congratulates himself that he was not fool enough to teach his dog a bad habit.

Again, I agree with "Forester" when he insists that a dog should point all game, whether it be dead, wounded or entirely unhurt; the first two until ordered to retrieve, the last until flushed by the shooter. It is argued by some that the pointing of wounded or dead game is a needless loss of time, and especially so in these days of hammerless, automatic ejectors and repeaters, of which I deny it. It all turns upon the following ques-

tions: Are you out only after meat, or are you out to see that your dog works in a manner you can take pride in? Your talk about a "needless loss of time" is (pardon me the slang) "all rot." We of the older generation of sportsmen did not look upon it as "loss of time" when we took so much care to see that the faithful, old-time muzzle-loader was properly reloaded; and some of us managed to get our share of the game and have dogs we could rely on at all times. But if you are tainted with that curse of so many of the American people, the fear of "losing time," then let me beg of you, never try to train a dog yourself; and if you buy a dog really well trained by someone else, do not expect him to remain well trained when worked for any length of time by you under your "hurry system."

Then, there is yet another thing to be well considered in field training, and that is the kind of game on which your dog will be most often worked and the nature of the grounds it frequents. Never having done any shooting outside of my native State of New Jersey, I am of course entirely incompetent to attempt giving advice as to localities differing much from those where I have shot; but I am entitled to an opinion, and, if I am mistaken, ask that I may be set right. Thus, in the Western States and on the plantations of the Southern and Southwestern States, I can understand the very wide-ranging dogs which stop for nothing but to point, back or drop to shot and wing, are all correct. There a field may have anywhere from one to five hundred acres of land, while here in the older States forty acres would be thought large for a meadow or a field. My rule has always been never to allow a dog to pass through a hedge or fence or jump over a ditch ahead of me.

Here, in our comparatively small fields and meadows, these are the very spots where (with the exception of Wilson's snipe) game is most often to be found; and if the dog is allowed to rush through or over them, he will often, through not having got the scent, flush the game when you are unable to get a shot. I will say here once for all that it is a good plan, and one which is to some dogs a real punishment, never to shoot at any game (no matter how tempting the shot) when through any disobedience of an order or by his own heedlessness a dog flushes it. It is a rule I have always followed. I

have heard some who, like myself, have been confined in their shooting to the older States, claim that the very fast and wide-ranging dog of the South and West would be worthless here, but I do not agree with them. If the dog has first-class scenting powers, is under absolute control, and is stanch at point, his extra speed is no detriment to his value. If game is scarce and scattered far apart, his speed enables him to reach it more quickly; then, if his nose is what it should be, he locates it at once; and if stanch at point, quietly awaits the arrival of the gun. When worked in heavy cover he will of course the first few times frequently point game when out of your sight and have to wait longer for you to find him; but he will soon tire of this waiting and see the cause of it. He learns that in the matter of speed four legs are superior to two, and to avoid these (to him) tiresome waits at point he will either cut down his speed, or, if keeping it up, make his casts less extended.

As to a fast dog overrunning his game where a slow dog would find it, there is no truth in it. It is altogether a matter of good scenting powers. If a fast dog has good scenting power, and game is plenty in the cover, the game itself will stop him to point it, and while the slow dog of equally good nose is finding one bird, the more active dog finds and points ten. Then, to test the matter in the most thorough and convincing manner, try the two dogs side by side and *down wind* on snipe. In the Eastern States, on the rocky hillsides or thick swamps, a fast dog is compelled by the nature of the ground to work slow. He cannot do otherwise, and it is the same in our Jersey pines. Yet in the last-named place I have had my setters, which were fast and wide rangers on snipe and on quail in open fields, come down to a slow canter for fear of making a flush out of shot, and do so without an order from me. Do not, then, try to restrict your dog in his speed, with the proviso that he is always to keep a sharp watch on you for any signals you may have taught him to obey during his yard training.

I have heard some people claim that the dropping to the signal of the raised hand was entirely superfluous. To that I may reply that having my dogs so trained has got me many a shot I otherwise would not have had. It frequently occurs that when on the meadows after snipe I have seen, flying low or

about to alight, a flock of ducks while my dogs were ranging some distance away. A low whistle would make the dogs look to me, the raised hand drop them in their tracks, and the ducks would pass near them unheeding and so give me a successful shot, when, had my dogs not dropped, a shot, even at long range, would not have been had. Now, in the matter of retrieving, I have said that I do not recommend that a dog during his first season should be required to retrieve every bird killed over his points, lest he become unsteady to shot and to wing. I will go even farther than that here and say that about one bird out of every ten killed may only be retrieved by him, and be sure that the birds you order him to retrieve are, first, killed cleanly, and, second, that they have fallen where you as well as the dog can reach them without trouble.

Then, if through the excitement of over-eagerness he makes the very common mistake of rushing around too wildly, you can get to him to check him. Throughout his first season let him while at work wear the force collar, and have attached to it a cord about two feet long, with a small but strong ring fastened to the trailing end. In one of your pockets carry your long check cord with a snap hook at one end, and so be prepared for emergencies. The short cord will not incommode the dog much, and will be a constant reminder to him of what it has done in the past. When I say that the young dog in his field experience cannot have too much of it, I do not mean that he is to be worked all day long and day after day. On the contrary, good judgment should be used by his owner, and care taken to prevent his becoming tired. If such care is not taken, he will get weary, work in a half-hearted, sluggish way, and, unless a dog of very high courage, become a potterer.

In the matter of dropping to shot and to the rise of the bird, I would insist that it be enforced throughout his first season on game; but if by the end of his first season he shows perfect steadiness, he may then be allowed to stand instead of dropping. If, however, he is of a highly nervous temperament and shows even the slightest disposition to "break shot," return at once to the first plan and have him go down at the rise of the bird and the report of the gun. It will also be wise to discontinue for a time allowing him to retrieve and keep him down at the drop longer than you have previously done; then



when you send him on by the command "find dead," and he finds and points it, go slowly up to him, and, after letting him point a few moments, pick up the bird yourself. If he attempts to move up unordered, caution him at once; and if he disobeys, catch hold of the short cord he has fast to the collar and jerk him sharply back to where he was standing and make him stay there while you go and gather the dead bird. In this way he is taught that when a bird has been killed he is not to move on until bidden, and to point the dead or wounded bird steadily until told to fetch.

If I knew of any other better way of making a dog always steady to shot and wing, I should at once recommend it, but I am satisfied that no better plan has ever been devised. Another thing that it is well to practice your dog at is as follows: When the birds are lying to point reasonably well, and the dog comes to a point, have someone with you go off some distance from you (say a hundred yards, while you stay by the dog, and then have your companion fire a shot. The dog should hold his point, not drop, and by occasionally following this plan, steadying your dog with a low-spoken word of caution, he learns that when at point he must hold it until the bird he has located is flushed. In what is above written I think all is said that is needed. True, I might go on almost indefinitely writing of supposititious faults and happenings and of how to avoid them, but it would be taking up space here unnecessarily and would be really insinuating that the average amateur trainer was lacking of good common sense. There is as much in "the man behind the dog" as there is in the dog itself. If the man adopts good methods and enforces them, he will have good dogs. If he does not do this, he must expect to have failures.



