

Music of the Week

THE production of the new version of Sir Arthur Sullivan's *Contrabandista*, which was at one time expected towards the end of this week, has now been postponed for a few days in order that the rehearsals may be completed. Meanwhile, the run of *Mirette* has ended, and the *Contrabandista*—which, except as to the germ of the plot and five or six of the musical numbers is practically new—will probably be given next Saturday. There is also a possibility that Sir Arthur Sullivan's *Yankee*, which, in its revised form, is now awaiting the attendance of its composer to be produced at the Holoper, Berlin, may soon be heard in London; and at any rate, the Carl Rosa Company have undertaken to perform it in the provinces next month. The London production of Humperdink's *Hansel und Gretel* is now fully fixed for Boxing Day at Italy's Theatre. We understand that the Carl Rosa troupe will not be employed in this work, but a special company will be engaged under the auspices of the Carl Rosa directors. The principal part of Gretel will then fall to Mädie. Jeanne Douste, who was formerly better known as a pianist, while Madame Elise, the Danish soprano, who some time since appeared at the Trafalgar in *Mlle. Nitsche*, has been engaged for the part of Hansel.

Although down at any rate to a few days since, the exact locale of Sir Augustus Harris's next season had not been fixed upon, yet there is little doubt but that Covent Garden will again be available to him. Consequently, he is now engaged in the task of completing his company. His newest acquisition is Signor Tamagno, who will probably appear in a new opera, besides in *Otello* and other famous parts. M. Jean de Reszke has likewise been retained. Some German performances will certainly be given, possibly with Herr Birkenhoven as chief tenor, although the matter is not yet by any means settled.

At the Popular Concerts on Monday, the First String Quartet in E minor (its companion work, which is totally unknown here, is in C major), by Friedrich Smetsiana, the Bohemian composer, was added to Mr. Chappell's repertory. This talented musician, who died ten years ago just as his popularity was commencing, was for some years conductor of the National Opera House at Prague, and was one of the teachers of Anton Dvorak. Two of his symphonic poems were given at the Crystal Palace about a dozen years ago. A year or two since, however, his opera, *The Sold Bride*, was revived in Vienna, and it has run rapidly through the opera houses in Germany. His String Quartet in E minor was written nearly fifteen years ago, and, like his symphonic poems, it is thoroughly imbued with the national Bohemian characteristics. This is particularly the case in regard to the very interesting Scherzo—*à la Polka*, with an important part for solo viola “quasi tomba ad C”—thus doubtless, unwittingly, recalling the “rumpet-toned viol” of the old poet. The Scherzo was much admired by the audience, who tried unsuccessfully to encore it, but the melodious though rather elaborate slow movement and the bright and vivacious finale were almost equally successful. In short, the quartet was at once taken into favour, and next week it is to be given twice.

Signor Piatti is, unfortunately, unable yet to fulfil his engagement at the Popular Concerts owing to his illness. His duties are therefore being divided between Mr. Ould and Herr Popper; the senior cellist not returning to England till January 12.

A Violoncello Concerto in C, attributed upon somewhat slender evidence to Haydn, was produced by Herr Popper, at the Crystal Palace, on Saturday. It is alleged that for many years this work was in the possession of some unnamed amateur of Vienna until 1870, when the solo part only was presented to Herr Popper, then chief violoncellist at the Vienna Opera. Despite search for them the orchestral parts cannot be discovered, and, therefore, the concerto has been scored by Herr Popper himself. The music would seem to be in the later Mozartian rather than in the Haydn style, and concerning the authenticity of the work, indeed, there must be very grave doubts. Music of this sort is extremely simple to a violoncellist of the rank of Herr Popper, who played it practically to perfection.

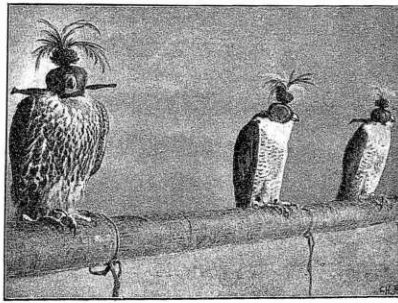
Mrs. Henschel has given the first of a series of vocal recitals, in the course of which she introduced some Scottish songs by her husband. Scotch songs were also the principal features of the numerous concerts given on St. Andrew's night in various parts of London, attracting, it is said, audiences exceeding in the aggregate 13,000 people. Herr Emil Sauer has given a couple more recitals, but has for the most part kept to familiar programmes. Madame Patti has made her only appearance in London this season, singing for the first time in public the *Page's* air “*Voi che sapete*” from Mozart's *Figaro*. Her voice showed traces of recent indisposition, but she gave three songs and four encores, winding up, of course, with the inevitable “Home, Sweet Home” and “The Last Rose of Summer.” Mr. Moberly's ladies' orchestra have again appeared, their programme on Tuesday being mainly devoted to Russian works; and the students of the Guildhall School of Music have given a performance at the Queen's Hall of Berlioz's *Fantasy*, under the conductorship of Sir Joseph Barnby. Upwards of forty concerts have indeed been given during the past week.



A PEREGRINE FALCON

Modern Falconry

To most people the word “falconry” sounds but an echo of the past; but even in these days there are not wanting a goodly muster of keen votaries of this noble and artistic sport. When the “fowling-piece” first came into use hawking was doomed, and at the present time a vast number of people are not even aware of the existence of falconry. Many difficulties have to be overcome before success can be secured, not only in regard to obtaining and training the hawk, but also on account of a country fit to fly hawks in, and weather. For game and rook hawking an open country is the great desideratum, as it is wonderful how soon the quarry can “put in” to any available cover—either fence, tree, bush, or cove, and so a successful kill be lost. But a goshawk, for hares or rabbits—or a sparrowhawk for thrushes and blackbirds, can be flown in



IDLE HOURS AT HOME

an ordinary enclosed country. But the finest branch of the art is to be obtained with peregrines flown at game in the autumn, or at rooks in the spring. For grouse the female peregrine, technically called the “falcon,” is used, and for partridges the male peregrine, or “tiercel,” as he is always called in the language of falconers. These two flights are carried out in precisely the same manner, the peregrine being trained to “wait on”—the higher the better, over the falconer's head—until the quarry is flushed, when, if the hawk



IN THE FIELD: READY FOR ACTION

be well placed, down she comes like a “bolt from the blue;” and if she is a real good one, she aims well ahead, after the fashion of a good driven-partridge shot, and hits her quarry with all the force of her weight and impetus, striking it with the two hind claws, her feet being thrust right forward as she deals the fatal blow. An indifferent hawk will “stoop” too far behind the fast-flying quarry, and so has to resort to a tail-on-end chase in which she may be often beaten, or, if tail-on-end chase is not possible, she may be obliged to knock it over dead or stunned, and so the quarry often escapes.

Rook-hawking is carried on in a different manner, and at a different time of year, viz. in the spring, when the old rooks are raiding the sown barley far out from their rookeries. The rook being a strong, active bird, and a powerful flyer, the “falcon” is used, and is slipped “from the bolt” (from the hand) dead up wind—at a flock of rooks feeding, or at one on passage at a fair distance—by a man, generally on foot, who keeps on the far side of another man who is mounted. Then, if the country be a large open one, as it should be, both hawk and quarry take the air, each trying to get higher than the other, as the rook knows full well that he is safe as long as he is above the hawk; so they go up higher and higher into the clouds, ringing up into the sky, until a good hawk, snatching sticking to her quarry—and it takes a good one to do so—makes a mighty ring into the wind, and in so doing often is flying in the opposite direction to the quarry, and then, wheeling,

is thrown far above the quarry, which sees at once that the game is up, and so comes down with closed wings, making towards any available cover, fence, tree, or sheep-fold; but so also comes down the falcon behind him, lashing her wings now and then to give impetus to her stoop; and unless he is a very old cunning cock rook, who can throw himself away from under the very feet of the falcon, he will be knocked silly and half senseless to the ground. And then the falconer gallops up to the kill, perhaps two or three miles from where the hawk was slipped, and so—“who-whoop!”

Peregrines are obtained in various ways. When taken from the nest they are called “eyasses.” But, as a rule, wild caught hawks, full grown, turn out more satisfactory, as then they have had plenty of experience in killing quarry for themselves. They are caught on migration by a clever system of nets, decoy pigeons, and decoy hawks. Those caught in their first plumage are called “passage hawks,” and those in adult plumage are “haggards.” The first plumage of a peregrine is dark brown above, each feather tipped with rust colour; and creamy buff below, each feather having a dark streak down the centre longitudinally. This plumage is retained until the autumn following the year in which the bird was hatched. The new plumage is either dark or light slate blue, each feather being broadly barred with rather darker colour; while below it is cream colour, varying from almost white to pale salmon colour, getting bluer on the flanks, the feathers on the crop being narrowly streaked longitudinally with black, while all the rest of the breast, flanks, thighs, and under tail-coverts are barred transversely with black. This colouration of plumage is always retained, and for the rest of its life the bird moults every year. Passage-hawks are more in request than haggards, as the latter may be of any age for all one can tell, and are more liable to be lost. Training is more or less a matter of food, the chief of which for the hawk to be taught that she can never feed without the assistance of the falconer. They are never fed when in training except on the falconer's hand, are flown fasting, and are rewarded with some hot blood as a reward for their work. Hawks must be kept in proper condition for flying, and hence great care and judgment must be exercised; individual hawks varying so much in this respect. Some hawks will fly fat, while others, if fat, will be lazy and disinclined to trouble about hunting. Although all falcons are hawks in general parlance, all hawks are not falcons. Falcons have black eyes and long pointed wings, the second primary being longest, or equal to the third; while hawks have brilliant yellow eyes and much shorter wings, which, when open, are more rounded than those of falcons, the fifth primary being longest. Their habits are also very dissimilar; falcons, as a rule, hunting their prey in the air, chasing it until they either kill it or are fairly tired out and beaten; while the hawk's fashion is to pounce on anything unawares, no matter whether it is on the ground, or a tree, or in the air—a short, sharp burst and all is over. If they fail they give it up at once and wait for another chance. Goshawks are used in enclosed country; and a very good sport can be had when rabbits are lying out sufficiently far from their earths. As with all hawks, the female is much larger and stronger than the male. A big courageous female goshawk will give excellent sport with hares, but to ensure this she must be entered to hares alone, and never allowed to fly a rabbit; as they are very quick to appreciate the fact that rabbits are much less trouble to kill than hares. Goshawks are never hooded, and are flown from the bolt. They require a deal of conditioning before they are in “yarak”—technically, in trim for hunting, and are not too much carrying to get them used to all sorts of sights and sounds.

Booklets

SMALL books being much in vogue just now, Mr. Conan Doyle has now given us one, a pretty little volume resembling in size the ubiquitous Pseudonyms, but printed in clear and charming type—“The Parasite” (A. Constable and Co., Westminster). The tale is of a professor who becomes a convert to the Spiritualism which he has despised in a very unpleasant manner, and becomes possessed of a parasitic soul. It is a queer little psychological study. Two new volumes of the Autonym Library (T. Fisher Unwin) are “The Play Actress,” by S. R. Crockett, a pretty little tale of an old and revered Scotch minister who has thrust upon him a little grandchild brought up in the traditions of the stage; and “By Reef and Palm,” by Louis Beale, a selection of very striking little tales of adventures in the South Sea Islands. “Winter's Woman” is a complete tale by John Sturges Winter. “The Stranger Woman” (F. V. White and Co.). Two new Pseudonyms (T. Fisher Unwin) are “Helen,” by Oswald Valentine, and “Lesser's Daughter,” by Mrs. Andrew Dean. Mrs. Dean's studies of Jewish life are in their way as brilliant as they are sordid in what they reveal. Lesser himself is an admirably drawn character, and his little tragedy is most ably worked out. The last of the three mentioned is lighter, and deals with the marriage of a young man of position and a dancer. The treatment is guarded, sympathetic, and pleasing. From the offices of the Strand Magazine, in chequer form then the last, “A Woman all Over,” by Winifred Graham, quite fulfils the promise of its title. It has the great merit of being cleverly conceived, and if the treatment ever halts a little it is never sufficiently so to spoil a very fresh and original little study of a girl of the period. “Where Love is there God is Also” (Walter Scott) is a little volume, tastefully bound, containing two stories by Count Tolstoy, with illustrations by H. R. Millar. It is the first of a very charming little series. Resembling the Pseudonyms, and from the same publishers, comes “A Fancy Sketch” by George Rivers, and from Messrs. Macmillan and Co., tastefully printed, with blue and gold covers, two little volumes in a cheap series which they are now issuing, namely, “The Story of Sonny Sahib,” by Sara Jeannette Duncan, who has still the same happy touch which first gave her prominence, and “The Rubies of St. Lo,” by Charlotte M. Yonge.



RELEASING THE QUARRY

"Modern Falconry." Graphic, 8 Dec. 1894. British Library Newspapers, link.gale.com/apps/doc/BA3201459522/BNCN?u=tou&sid=bookmark-BNCN. Accessed 28 May 2026.