

# HOW TO IMPROVE DOG STANDARDS

By JOSEPH A. GRAHAM

## HABITS OF POINTERS

FOR the man who happens to be a little bit known in the dog world, there is a burden of perplexity never ending and never evolving into a simple system. People are perpetually asking him to pronounce opinions about bird dogs, or to give advice about where to find a good bird dog. No two of these clients seem to have the same opinions. In the matter of field qualities the variety of tastes is almost incredible. You can steer a man to a first-rate bargain and he will discover some insurmountable fault which you have regarded of no consequence.

The other day an acquaintance, who has done a great deal of shooting, asked me to show him what I called a good dog. I took him out to see a pointer which I regarded as about as nearly perfect as I could find. The dog is not for sale, and the visit was simply for purposes of illustration. The pointer is handsome, fast, high-headed, docile and accurate of nose. He performed well on this occasion, but my acquaintance looked at him with utter disapproval. "He doesn't look as if he were hunting for birds," was the verdict. "He seems to be just running around."

What this observer meant was that the dog did not have that strained and intent appearance which nearly all bird dogs have when they are directly on game, and some in all their work. In fact, like most men, the gentleman had in mind a dog of his own; and his is one which searches always as if he were about to point.

After all, this sort of taste is not unaccountable. There is a positive charm about the intent and expectant style of work. It keeps a man in an agreeable state of suppressed excitement. But it is not the quality of a high-class dog. Five times out of six a dog of that style is a false pointer, and he is almost never either an effective ranger or decisive on game.

It is coming to be the case that most extremely high-class dogs have not a great deal of tail action, or what is called style, when ranging at speed. They show this characteristic only when nearing game. The fact, I suppose, is due to the natural tendency of conserving energy. Excessive tail action and excitement undoubtedly consume a great deal of unnecessary energy. It may be that, like highstepping in a trotting horse, it tends to disappear as the speed limit is approached. Anyhow, the more experienced public trainers doubt the capacity of a young dog which seems to be making game all the time.

What constitutes a broken dog gives rise

to more differences of opinion than anything else. Obscurity proceeds from a misunderstanding of the certainties of education. A dog well broken by one man often needs considerable handling by another before he shows his "lamin'." A dog broken this season is likely to forget a lot of his discipline when the next season opens. Some people have, apparently, the notion that when the term "broken" is once applied to a dog it means perfect performance and for all time. It should not be necessary to say that this is a gross mistake, but the reminder has to be repeated a hundred times over to buyers of dogs. An animal is not a machine which once set up goes ahead until it is worn out.

## STAGE-FRIGHT AMONG DOGS

Some kinds of owners are utterly disappointed and discouraged by the quality of timidity or sensitiveness. You frequently hear the complaint that this trouble is due to high and overfine breeding. I happen to know that it is as old as the breeding of sporting dogs. I have lately come to the conclusion that, rightly considered, so far from being objectionable, it is an evidence of high capacity. Year after year I have seen the very finest performers in public and private work exhibit this psychical attribute of apprehension and sensitiveness. Often, with strangers or in new surroundings, it is ludicrously like stage-fright in human beings.

The best strain of greyhounds ever produced in America were nearly all intensely shy. Yet they were fierce and ruthless after the hare. Here is a peculiarity of this mental property.

In bird dogs, too, those which are sensitive to human reproof or to strange surroundings are usually fiercest in the pursuit of game and most fearless in their relations with other dogs.

Sensitiveness and so-called timidity are just as probable in the most valuable types of foxhounds and beagles; in fact, more so perhaps than in any other breeds of sporting dogs. Many are the hounds which will scarcely work at all if strangers are about. I daresay that a great many foxhound and beagle men will remember how certain hounds would quit a trail and start for home if they ran up against a stranger in the woods.

## PROLONGED TRAINING TO IMPROVE OFFSPRING

Mr. Redfield's theory of dynamic development has captivated many dog men and several college professors of biology. Except for the known habit of being fasci-

nated by novelty, it is hard to understand how anybody could seriously consider this proposition without an immense amount of proof. It is a fundamental rule that a fantastic and involved theory cannot be accepted if a simple and natural rule will explain the phenomena. Mr. Redfield holds that prolonged training in the ancestors produces capacity in the offspring; also that when a pedigree shows a predominance of sires it will continue to do so and prolong the sire prepotency.

The second of these propositions is a mere adaptation from the Bruce-Lowe figure system for horses.

Taking Mr. Redfield's main proposition of dynamic development, its abundant fallacies are easily seen. No kind of animal, for instance, has shown a greater improvement of average than has the thoroughbred horse. There are a hundred horses in the United States to-day which, with half the seasoning he had, could do everything done by Lexington. Yet it is a rare thing for a racehorse to be trained up to his maturity. A horse can hardly be called mature before he is six years old. It would be interesting for Mr. Redfield to pick out successful sires which have been severely trained beyond the five-year-old form. It would be as interesting to have him explain the line of Hindoo-Hanover-Hamburg. Even when horses are trained up to five and six years old, it will generally be found that they have had long intervals of rest, and that, taken as a whole, the average saddle or buggy horse goes through a great deal more work, not only at the slow gaits, but at the highest speed of which it is capable. Yet the line of high speed and high speed-sustaining power is in the spasmodically worked racehorse of short career.

Fifty years ago trotting horses had three times the severity of training and three times the length of campaign career that they have had in the last ten years. Yet the finest development of not only bursts of speed but of speed endurance came with the short career and milder training. Hambletonian, Electioneer and Dictator had nothing more than exercise. In the case of Electioneer's sons, the training of Chimes was small, while that of Palo Alto was unusually long and severe. Any horseman knows which has been the more successful producer.

Among George Wilkes's sons, Onward and Red Wilkes had next to no training, and were not even fast horses. Their standing in the sire list needs only a glance.

A well-informed man could go on for volumes, showing that Mr. Redfield's theory rests upon a small extent of evidence. His vital error is going along an easy path of picking special instances. In fact, behind that is the error of rather assuming that a horse or dog inherits a record. What he does inherit is a long combination of qualities which must be taken as a whole

to produce an effect. Like a war fleet, the result is a combination of units and not a sweeping phrase.

If my own small observations count, there is for the biologists an infinitely more important field of investigation in the question of nutrition. I do not much believe in the transmission of acquired qualities in any case, but I have seen a great deal to suggest that perfected nutrition not only has more than anything else post-natal to do with high performers, but operates to produce improved offspring. At least I would not be surprised to learn some time that beyond any doubt the procreative germ itself is carried to a higher potentiality by increased completeness of nutrition.

Just for what might be called a flyer, I should like to have Mr. Redfield and his biology professors explain in dogs the case of Lady's Count Gladstone. This animal happens to be the greatest living progenitor of high-class bird dogs. It also happens that he received a peculiarly short active training. Of course, it is hard to tell how much running he did when a young dog in amateur hands, but all that we know about his work is that he went into the hands of Rose, who does not work his dogs hard, late one spring and was retired with a championship the next winter. If I am not mistaken he was on the bench late in April of this year. It is therefore plain that his training period was very short and sweet.

#### IRISH AND AIREDALE TERRIERS COMPARED

A half-dozen inquiries lead me to think that a strong fancy is developing for Airedale and Irish terriers. The half-dozen to which I refer ask me which is the better of these two breeds for house or country home purposes. This is another of the times when one would have to be a mind-reader to say which is better. Some men would like one and some the other.

For persons who do not enter into the finer discriminations it is enough to say roughly that the Irish terrier is a smaller edition of the Airedale, or *vice versa*. Both are rough terriers, strong and active, good after vermin and courageous fighters. As far as I have noted, they are equally hardy.

The Irishman is somewhat more active, and he is also more restless and noisy after a barking fashion. Either of them is a taking dog to a man who has sense enough to appreciate sterling character.

The Airedale has the disadvantage of being common in looks. There is a rather frequent variety of cur, which bears an unhappy resemblance to this largest and latest of terrier fashions.

Outside of that fault, the Airedale to my mind has more of the good qualities of companionship and house usefulness than any other breed, but a man who likes the terrier tribe ought to be highly pleased with a brace of good Irish.