

YOUR NEW GUN DOG

You ask: "How do I raise him? How do I train him?"

Some of our best Old Hemlock setters have been developed by men who never owned a shooting dog. They learned as their dog learned and became half of an efficient man/dog sporting combination (man before dog because he has less inborn hunting instinct and more to learn than the puppy). I don't have all the answers. But, briefly, this is what we do:

FEEDING:

At 12 weeks, 3 meals daily. Each feeding: 2/3 cup dog meal (we use Friskies)
1/3 cup dry skim milk powder
1 teaspoon corn oil (Mazola)

Once daily add: 1/2 teaspoon vitamin-mineral supplement (Vitamycin). At 6 months increase to 1 teaspoon, continue until 1 year.
1 teaspoon steamed bone meal (for bone structure).

Gauge amount by puppy's weight, increasing as he gets older but avoid crowding digestive system. At 6 months feed twice daily until one year, then one meal daily with morning and bedtime "snack" of dried bread (they love it) or a few dog biscuits. Limit snacks to this and as reward when training. Constant nibbling means overweight. During hard training, meat added to meals keeps up stamina but fed too frequently will make your dog refuse regular food which, as above, is balanced ration. Keep him keen, preferably with exercise, maintaining good ratio of body weight and food intake. An obese dog is an old dog, no matter what his years. Fit and lean, he'll be with you much longer.

QUARTERS:

Until mild weather he cannot be kept outdoors. At present, being a little hellion, he must not have free run of your house (your nicer antiques make the best chewing). Have him with you as much as possible but provide a box to sleep in a warm place like your cellar where he can be confined and

kept out of mischief when he can't be with you. He'll object at first but will eventually become attached to it. In warmer weather he can sleep in a snug outdoor kennel. But you will have a much better shooting companion if you housebreak him and let him live inside with you. If dogs act like barnyard animals it's because they are kept that way. Your dog's life is too short to have him spend any avoidable part of it away from you. The notion that gun dogs belong in kennels produces specimens that pounce on you when released, are often unreliable in a house, and frequently difficult to handle in the field. We've had enough excellent shooting dogs who lived indoors with us to speak from experience -- and that is not overlooking the fallacy that living indoors spoils a dog's nose. That doesn't take care of stray dog hairs and a few paw-prints but I've got so I'm uncomfortable without them.

HOUSEBREAKING:

Next to patience and consistency, anticipation is the key to all training. Try to prevent faults before they happen. But if your puppy has an accident in the house, be consistent. Catch him in the act or as he is about to function (later does no good for he isn't supposed to have much memory -- though I question this). Scold him severely and put him outdoors or in the cellar in cold weather if that's where he is to attend to such things. Newspapers help him locate the place, but never use them to whack him as suggested for some breeds. Loud noises associated with punishment instead of pleasure can make him timid of a gun. Suggestion: don't leave newspapers lying on the floor after reading if you don't want trouble.

The constructive method to housebreak is to establish regular habits. Take him to wherever you want him to attend to his duties after each meal, at bedtime and at strategic intervals during the day. Make his habits good

habits.

INOCULATION:

While nursing, your puppy received distemper antibodies from his inoculated mother through her milk. After weaning and until his permanent inoculation he was vulnerable to infection. All visitors were screened to prevent contact with dogs who could be "carriers" or incubating disease before actual symptoms. Most authorities set 8 weeks as earliest age permanent immunity can be expected from inoculation. (Earlier shots involve "interference" with antibodies from the mother's milk.)

At just past two months (22 March '58) your puppy was vaccinated against distemper with modified live virus (avianized) Diamond-Serial #20, and simultaneously received canine distemper, hepatitis and lespira antiserum, administered here at the house by Leo Kotchek, DVM. The antiserum theoretically provides immediate protection, lasting 2 to 4 weeks. After 10 days the permanent distemper inoculation should have taken over. We've never seen adverse reactions to these shots other than mild transitory diarrhea during the first few days.

Please note that the above accounts for only a 2 to 4 week protection against hepatitis. Consult your vet as to further protection against this. We have no hepatitis problem locally. Available hepatitis vaccination is short-lived and requires booster shots, according to information given us.

On the subject of veterinarians, avoid taking your dog into a vet's office when possible. Hot infection is often present, especially in the waiting room where any type of case may be brought in. We lost a beautiful brood matron, 6½ and inoculated, to distemper contracted in a veterinarian hospital. If you ever see a lovely setter die from distemper (and they rarely survive a bad case) you will share my feeling that any precaution

is worth-while, regardless of your vet's feelings about danger of infection in his office. My vets co-operate by giving shots here at home or in our station wagon outside the office, perform minor surgery without holding the patient overnight. Examination and treatment in the office are occasionally necessary but avoid them if possible. And if ever forced to leave a dog in hospital, insist that he receive distemper, hepatitis antiserum as routine precaution. A dog sick enough to stay in hospital has a lowered resistance that can cause a normally effective inoculation to "break."

Don't take your dog to a vet for teeth cleaning, shampooing, and grooming -- all should be done at home. Even worming; though I know one vet who refuses to dispense worm medicine, insisting upon treatment in his hospital.

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I have a humble respect for the few competent veterinarian doctors I have met. And I want no part of those who stress packaged specialties and cosmetic services. Too often they take an offensively defensive attitude as to their position as a doctor, instead of dignifying it by giving us the intelligent services we have a right to expect from their profession.

Purchase a rectal thermometer. Your dog's normal temperature (101.0 to 102.0) often rules out serious trouble in face of other symptoms. Above all, consult your vet, but by phone -- describing symptoms -- and when possible pick up the medication without taking the dog around.

WORMS:

Roundworms (ascarids) are a part of puppies, like their speckles but not as pretty. Regardless of treatment of the mother, we never fail to find worms in the youngsters. Your puppy was wormed at $4\frac{1}{2}$ weeks and had a follow-up at 6 weeks. Unless symptoms appear (scooting his bottom along the floor, coughing, vomiting, mucus in movements, or merely failure to gain weight)

he should not require checking for worms until 4 months old, when you should have your vet make a fecal examination. If eggs are found, purchase worm medicine from the vet (probably methyl-benzine) and do the job at home, where you can see that the drug is not vomited, and observe results. Above all, your puppy has not been where he can pick up disease. If worms are passed, repeat the treatment in 10 days to 2 weeks to get the unhatched worms and those that were present in the blood stream that escaped the first treatment and will later reach the stomach and intestine.

Hookworms and heartworms are more serious but unlikely to be encountered unless you send your dog to a trainer or boarding kennel where infestation is common. Tapeworms are a problem if the dog has access to rabbit viscera, thrown out by rabbit hunters in the field or dragged in by cats. Or if he has fleas.

Have your puppy checked for worms again at 8 months and one year, then at $1\frac{1}{2}$ years and at two. Oddly, after that he will have an apparent "resistance" to roundworms. Hook- heart- and tapeworms must always be considered. A desirable aspect of living in with you is lack of risk of infestation from a kennel yard. Relieving himself in unrestricted areas avoids this contamination.

CLEANING TEETH:

Tartar accumulation on teeth causes offensive breath and danger of gum infection, threatening loss of teeth. Every 2 or 3 days vigorously rub your dog's teeth to the gum line, but not irritating it, with a dry paper napkin. This prevents tartar deposit almost entirely. If present, scrape it off with the edge of a nail file. Don't fear damaging tooth surface but avoid injury to gums. This is not painful and my dogs permit it gracefully. Not necessary until the second teeth which appear at about 6 months.

Chewing bones helps remove tartar but causes wear, offsetting any advantages, not to mention danger of bone splinters in the intestines. Ruff has had very few bones and, at eleven, has better teeth than many dogs of five. Instead of bones, give steamed bone meal.

GROOMING:

Once your dog gets his adult coat, daily combing makes the difference between a beautiful setter and a tousled spectacle. The more handsome type of setter requires extra attention, with hand-rubbing to produce a sheen. You needn't do extreme trimming, but keep his whiskers cut off and remove the excess mass of hair under his ears and throat. An ordinary safety razor is a good thinning comb. The best job requires electric clippers. Never remove the "feathers" on his legs and underparts.

CLEANING EARS:

Setters love to have their ears sniffed. It is what they do to you and reciprocity clarifies your relationship. But you may notice an odor about your dog's ears (caused by wax secretion). Every week or so clean the inner surfaces of the ear with a cloth moistened with rubbing alcohol (never soap and water which can irritate the inner passage). This cleans and imparts a pleasant smell, as well as preventing certain infections. Don't rub too vigorously for the area is tender.

FIRST STEPS IN TRAINING

GUNSHYNESS:

At 10 weeks your puppy is at the bravado stage and fears neither man nor devil. Keep him that way. A new experience may give him pause but, once associated with fun, is taken in stride and accepted.

Gunshy and timid dogs are man-made. Your puppy has heard hand-clapping and loud noises while being fed to make him bold. After he's used to his

new environment, continue this -- clapping your hands, slapping a newspaper on a box -- but do it when he is sailing into his food. Later, discharge a cap pistol or .22 blank at this time. Graduate to .32 and .38 blanks fired first at a distance, later close-by but always when he is gobbling his meal. If he should show alarm, ignore him (comforting him at gun-sound or thunder only convinces him there is reason for fear) but start over with the milder noises he is used to and build up gradually.

During field training after he has had numerous contacts with bird scent, discharge a blank at a distance at a time when he is excited over game and pay no attention when he looks up -- not even if he comes in to you. Simply keep on walking, concealing the gun. Later, if all goes well, let him see what makes the noise. Finally, on his first shooting trip be sure you take him alone, avoiding shooting directly over his head or too close to him. Your companions might not use judgement in this respect. A lot of fine dogs have been ruined by improper introduction to the gun, especially in groups of hunters. I have never had a gunshy dog but have seen puppies spoiled with thoughtless treatment (children discharging cap pistols or firecrackers or striking at puppies with toy guns).

SIGHT POINTING:

Young dogs will often sight point butterflies or sparrows or any strange object that moves intermittently. This delights the owner. It is not necessarily the sign of future brilliance, for we are concerned with game scent. However, it does no harm to encourage it at this stage. Preferably, introduce an element of scent by using a grouse or pheasant wing or tail fan on the end of a long string. Toss it in front of the puppy and jerk it beyond reach each time he tries to catch it. This is mere play and should not be overdone to the extent of encouraging pointing all moving objects.

RETRIEVING:

Your Old Hemlock puppy knew his name at the early age of 4 weeks, simply by consistent association. Up to 12 weeks there is little to do but foster close understanding. Have him with you as much as possible, use his name, talking gently. Avoid romping too much (a calm manner, like an hysterical one, is a direct reflection of the owner's attitude).

You can now begin retrieving lessons, starting as play. Old Hemlock setters are natural retrievers and should require no force methods (which I will not use). Tie a rag into a compact bundle -- floppy objects encourage shaking and a small ball may be swallowed -- and toss it out with the command "Go fetch." When he picks it up, clap your hands and call his name. His impulse may be to run the other way so do this in a hallway where he has no choice but to carry the "bird" back toward you, fixing a pattern in his mind. Do this only a few times but repeat daily. Don't lose patience if he doesn't respond for he is still only a baby and this is mere kindergarten work.

When he is 4 months old do more serious retrieving lessons. Take him to a spot with no distractions, no other people or dogs, and toss out the "bird", restraining him until it has landed. (Letting him run after it while still in the air encourages breaking at flush later on.) Command, "Go fetch," and release your hold on him. When he picks it up command, "Fetch it here," and slap the side of your leg. Always use exactly the same commands for each step. If he picks it up but gets coy and won't bring it to you, work him on a long cord, pulling him in gently but firmly and always with a pleasant tone of voice. Never punish for failure in a retrieving lesson. He has you at a disadvantage for you can end with a non-retriever. Using the hallway again may get him to bring the "Bird" to you.

I like to use a grouse wing for the "bird" but if this encourages chewing, make a dummy. Wrap a cob-size piece of wood with fleece or cloth, studding it overall with finishing nails left extended $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Over this, wire on a pair of grouse or pheasant wings and a tail, leaving plenty of wire exposed. When the pupil bites down on this he finds it uncomfortable but still exciting and learns to handle it with a gentle mouth. I like using game bird feathers and the association with searching. Later afield when he hits scent you have a dog already familiar with what he is hunting for.

Toss this "bird" into deep grass where the puppy must use his nose to locate it. Finally, hide the "bird" instead of tossing it and send your retriever to find it. At this stage extend the command to "Dead bird, go fetch." Our dogs love this game indoors in bad weather, waiting in one room while I hide the bird in another. Make it easy at first, later more difficult -- behind a door, on a chair seat. I send them singly and together, but feelings have been known to run high as competition soars. It is best to work your pupil alone. If he goes stale, change locale for he will associate the place with the experience. Short 5 to 10 minute lessons done regularly do the job.

The ultimate is to insist that your star sit to deliver the bird to hand. You will have taught him to sit by this later stage and you simply give the command before accepting the retrieve. (Insist on this in actual retrieving afield). Follow the lessons with a dog biscuit reward, after school is over. One of our greedy rascals could think of nothing but the biscuit and refused the retrieves. We omitted biscuits from then on.

The best of retrievers may refuse a woodcock (something about the scent) while others retrieve them regularly. (This does not affect their interest in pointing them.) In any case, a dependable retriever is invaluable in actual gunning and worth all the time you spend developing him.

OBEDIENCE LESSONS (YARD TRAINING):

These lessons not only make your dog a more civilized person to live with and help him enjoy himself, but they supplement his lessons under the gun. May I suggest that you train your puppy yourself for several reasons: He thinks you are God. He'll find a professional trainer considerably less than that but, if sent to one, will be forced to hunt for that man (often under brutal treatment) and comes back, at best, having attached his loyalty to another man and finding you a stranger; at worst, in bad physical condition and with possible faults (birdshyness, fear of gun or man). Like any boarding kennel, the trainer always faces chance of distemper infection brought in by the new dogs, and heart- and hookworm infestation is the rule in many training kennels.

The best reason is the indescribable sense of pride you will know shooting over a dog you have trained yourself. Finally, you will learn along with your pupil and the pair of you will be attuned to each other. If you don't have the time, take time. The exercise will do you worlds of good.

Trainers often suggest field work before obedience lessons. Runs afield are desirable any time but your puppy is yearning to use that intelligence of his. I like to get the pre-hunting course finished during the summer and settle down to serious field work with no interruptions when the training season begins, going out after we have a language to communicate with each other. With judgement, obedience lessons in no way curb the puppy's spirit.

NO:

"No" is your way of explaining that you don't want your puppy to do certain things, not necessarily a reprimand. Tone of voice and attitude carry weight. When the offense is serious, a convincing slap on his little bottom is in order though it needn't be any rougher than he is used to feeling

in play. Often the word accompanied by an accusing finger shaken at him will suffice.

When the dog is older you must not tolerate disobedience. Don't lose your temper if you can possibly control yourself (I say possibly because I have been through a lot). Whipping a dog is degrading and never to be resorted to unless you are certain it would ruin the dog to go unpunished. Distinguish between a mistake and a sin. (The latter is when the dog knows it is wrong and does it anyway.) Let any doubt be in the dog's favor. Ideally, he obeys you because he wants to and it is a matter of making your wishes clear.

LIE DOWN, COME HERE:

These commands are learned together. With your pupil on a leash and a small switch in your hand, give the command "Lie down" in a firm but pleasant tone and accompany it with a light but decisive stroke of the switch across his back. Remind me about "whipping" and trainer brutality, and while this is not "beating" I still dislike it. But if you can find a way to teach a dog to drop promptly to a word he does not yet understand, please advise me. Some books suggest pushing down on his back. I always have a wrestling match on my hands and a pupil who resists rather than responds (dogs naturally resist all direct force and we use this to our advantage in later work on point). If you can wait it out over the years you can catch him when he is in the act of lying down, give the command and establish the association. I have used other trained dogs to set the example. But if you want to get on with the lesson you will use the switch. Actually the discomfort is not greater than the prick of a hypodermic needle used in giving shots.

As your pupil drops, stroke him gently and repeat the word "Down", also stroking him with the switch to show there is no ill will. The moment you

straighten up he will bounce onto his feet but you must anticipate this, keeping him down by threat of the switch. When you get him holding in the down position, move a few feet away with the switch held upright. Hold your index finger vertically along the switch (later this position of the finger alone carries the meaning). Go back to him and stroke him, showing you are pleased, and again back away, keeping him down as you repeat the word.

Only when you have him staying to your will do you relax and, slapping your leg give the command "Come here." This is exactly what he wants to do and he will come promptly. Congratulate him.

Repeat the "Lie down" and "Come here" drill until he understands both, then stop for the day. If all went well, do the drill in the same place every day for 5 to 10 minute sessions. Use a firm convincing tone, don't yell. Actually, a whisper will carry more impact than shouting, once he understands what you want.

Use these commands in your daily life together, but always the same words. You can combine them with his name if you get better response. Later you may use the commands in a conversational manner but never change. (Some people confuse the issue by saying "Come here" and "Come on" for the same command.)

STAY:

After a dozen lessons and he is remaining in position well for "Lie down," give the command "Stay" after you have put him down. In addition to the switch in the upright position raise your left hand, palm toward the dog as though pushing him back. As you back further away his impulse will be to break and follow but you must anticipate this. Keeping him in position you back away and hold him under control for an extended period, moving closer to him again before bringing him to you with "Come here."

Increase the distance he will permit you to back away and finally, in-

stead of going to him, bring him to you from where you stand with "Come here." After several days of the "Stay" drill, you must hold him in position while you go out of his sight behind a building or through a doorway. Peek around cautiously and if he begins to break, surprise him with your "Stay" from out of mere space, convincing him you know his every nasty little thought even before he has them. Eventually, you hold him in position while you make a complete circle around the building, appearing in a new place to his great surprise, before you say "Come here."

Doing this first with the "Lie down" drill is best. Later you can have him stay while sitting or standing wherever you want him to wait, even in your car. Put plenty of dramatic emphasis in the act, for he obeys if he thinks you are serious. Convince him, in the finish stage, that you have complete control; turning your back on him while he stays, walk away and don't look back until you are some distance away. Then turn and bring him to you.

GO ON:

The "Stay" command is most valuable and used, not only with "Come here" but with "Go on." At a doorway where you can block his passage (the old service axiom "Never give a command you are not in a position to enforce" holds with dogs), give the command "Stay", raising your hand as usual. After he has held properly, command "Go on" and step aside. For some reason I find "All right, go on" more effective -- perhaps more relaxing.

When he has mastered this, make a ritual of holding him at "Stay" when his food is placed before him and don't let him break until you say "Go on." In all his eleven years Ruff has never had a meal at home without this rite and he would miss it. I poise four setters over their separate pans, drooling and quivering with eagerness (also watching each other to see that the other fellow doesn't cheat) and prolong the agony with a long conversation,

ending with "All right, go on," and not a dog breaks until then. The greater the temptation to break, the greater the value of the drill. I invariably make my dogs "Stay" when I put them down in the field before sending them out with "Go on." The real purpose comes when we make them staunch and steady on point but it is most useful in daily life and should be used often.

Converse intelligently with your dog, sprinkling your sentences with words he knows. Dogs thus talked to develop more intelligent attitude and appearance, and feel closer to you. They learn far more words than you imagine (if I have the bad taste to use profanity, Ruff looks apprehensive). They need not be one-syllable words and you can use French, German or Swahili and your dog will learn -- as long as you are consistent. I think there is almost no limit to what we can teach our dogs if we have the imagination, and you should continue to teach him new words all through his life. While he is concerned with the serious business of learning to hunt don't complicate his education. Here are a few essentials.

SIT:

Part of the retrieving drill and easily taught. Offer a dog biscuit and hold it back over his head to make him back up to get it. Refuse it until he settles on his haunches at the word "Sit." Crowding him back with the biscuit and pushing down on his rear quarters helps. Associate the response with your upraised finger (this alone later does the trick).

BACK:

No dog should be permitted to jump up on you or your guests. It is no kindness to let him become a nuisance and it can be dangerous (his nails can rake your face or eyes with no intention of roughness on his part). Use the command "Back" and slap his front paws or, if he persists, his nose. Don't confuse him by saying "Down" which means "Lie down" to him. There are fancy theories about stepping on his hind feet as he jumps but unless your foot work is good you end with a cute dance. You can combine "Back" with

"No" to show displeasure and when he goes back to earth repeat it sternly, shaking your finger at him. Be unyielding about this.

HEEL:

Don't try to teach "Heel" by tugging back on the leash. (Again, it impels the dog to resist). You can have him heeling by the end of a half-hour walk. Take a long-stemmed weed or switch with leaves, walk the dog on leash (to prevent his lagging behind or moving to one side) and as you command "Heel" rustle the foliage in his face. Repeat the command every time he surges ahead and shake the leaves in his face. He dislikes this and soon obeys. Later, repeat without the leash. Insist upon obedience and do not permit him to move ahead of you until you command "All right, go on."

GET IN, GET UP:

Taught by showing him what you wish him to do -- as opening your car door or house door as you say "Get in" or "Go in", or patting a bench or sofa as you say "Get up." Often snapping your finger and pointing helps him understand. Teach only one new thing at a time, but continue all commands already learned.

FIELD TRAINING:

Every gunner should have a dog that works exactly as he wants it to, unlike a show or field trial man whose dogs must conform to the standards of other men. If you want your dog to work close, or drop at wing, or even move in on order and flush the birds -- that is up to you and you can so train him. My ideal is a dog that moves at a swift lope, ranging well out to either side hitting all birdy places, and finds and pins birds with style -- holding staunchly until I arrive (or the bird flushes, which is beyond the dog's control). Your Old Hemlock puppy has been bred for hunting (as well as beauty) with countless generations of hot gun-dog blood in him. If you kill enough birds over him he will train himself. But you will have a more finished dog if you guide him in certain things.

Falconers have an axiom: a trained falcon, yes -- a tamed falcon, never. An unbidable dog mars shooting, but the brilliant dog has spirit and must not be "cowed." He is our companion, not our servant.

Where the average dog owner thinks entirely of points, the connoisseur thinks of the positiveness and the efficiency with which those points are brought off. Quail and woodcock may lie, but today's grouse and pheasants won't tolerate a pussy-footing approach. I want my dog to sail along, head high, and slam into his points -- full speed one moment, locked up tight the next. It minimizes false pointing and pins birds from sheer impact. Keep in mind that this is almost invariably done by body scent, not foot trails.

FIRST TRIPS AFIELD:

Forget points and first teach your puppy to move out and travel -- that there is something out ahead to hunt. At about 5 months take him to open fields (dense foliage makes summer woods unfeasible) and run him. Get him into field sparrows and encourage him to chase -- even rabbits at this stage. He'll learn to range sooner with an older dog but you can do it alone. Shout, make it exciting -- run short distances with him if you are in condition. Always do this in the cool of the day and for no more than 15 minutes to keep him eager. Long workouts make him set a slower pace, and he is still soft. If you get into game birds, take him to the spot and give him a noseful of the hot scent, patting him excitedly.

Working without an older dog, you'll have trouble getting him to range out far enough. Start him in one direction and before he looks back, quarter suddenly away from him as fast as you can travel. Let him go as far as he will and when he turns and sees you, shout and wave him across in front of you. He will cut toward you and when he isn't looking, make a sudden tack back toward the side he has come from. By the time he spots you, you are once more far away and again waving him across in front of you. This conditions

him to be further from you and forms a habit of quartering from side to side (instead of running straight ahead and straight back which is wasted effort).

Work on this, not for mechanical quartering, but to encourage longer casts. When he gets moving well, spur him on by 2 rapid hand-claps as he dashes past or across in front. Keep him keen with frequent rests within the 15 minute trip afield.

WHISTLE SIGNALS:

Teach him to come to the whistle by association, blowing one blast as he is coming toward you (not when he is in the mood to run away). Avoid trick flute cadenzas. One prolonged blast means come here.

Two blasts mean go on. After he has been afield several times and is keen to go, restrain him before casting him off. Make him "Stay," standing solidly as you walk several yards ahead of him, then wave him on with "All right, go on," and as he dashes away blow 2 short blasts on your whistle. From now on, never start him out, either in training or actual hunting, without making him "Stay" and sending him out with "All right, go on," and the 2 blasts. It conditions him to obey you even when quivering to be off and sets the stage for teaching him to hold on point.

Further teach the 2 blast "go on" whistle signal by blowing it when he is running full-tilt away from you in the field. Eventually you will use it to send him on no matter how far away he may be. You will use it to drive him on if he drops his head to ground trail. (A puppy is allowed to do this at first. Later do not tolerate it. High weeds will keep a puppy's head up but the best tool is the 2 blast "go on" whistle, for he can't keep his head down and move fast.

Limit your whistle signals to three. The third, a variation on the one blast, is used to get his attention to swing him whatever direction you wave your arm. Ideally, he should not stop running each time he checks to locate

you. Anticipate the moment he is going to look for you and while he is still running blow a long blast, whipping it off at the end (easily done by changing blowing pressure). As he looks toward you, wave him into the direction you want him to go and take several steps in that direction. If he fails to understand, start walking that direction and blow him on with the 2 blast "go on" signal.

Teach each signal well before going to the next. Handle by whistle when possible (voice flushes birds and tends to confuse a dog). Don't overdo either. I have shot all afternoon over Ruff and his sons, using only occasional whistle signals and hand gestures. If your dog has difficulty locating you, make a low clucking sound to give him your position. Overhandling never achieves the inspired dog work you get when your dog is encouraged to use his own judgement.

FIRST WORK ON BIRDS:

It is essential to get your pupil into game birds. Once he has gained confidence in the field, the sooner the better. If you have quail or woodcock, fine -- for they lie well. I trained Ruff entirely on grouse but they are difficult for a youngster. Pheasants are blamed for encouraging ground trailing due to their running habit, but we find that half-grown pheasants lie beautifully and we do our early season training on them.

A trained dog sets an example for a puppy if you have one available, for excitement is contagious, but I don't consider one necessary. Take your pupil into good bird country and don't reprimand him for chasing at this stage. In fact, encourage him to for he must learn that he cannot catch them. The dog continually cautioned to "whoa, steady" from the first is the false pointer later on.

He can, and must, distinguish between body scent and foot scent but this takes time. Try sniffing a warm game bird. I get nothing but a dry feathery smell. Your dog can get it, under optimum conditions, for amazing

distances. Under other conditions he can walk on a bird and not detect it. One theory says all well bred gun dogs have innate nose potential, that one excels another because he knows how to use his equipment. I don't pretend to know but I think experience has much to do with it and I propose to give the youngster all possible experience.

HANDLING ON POINT:

Get the pupil out several times a week, in late afternoon when it is cooler and the birds are moving around to feed. Keep in mind that dense green weeds and foliage mask scent (is it the chlorophyll?) and don't fault the puppy if he seems to miss scent. Also, he has much to learn before he gets the full thrill from it.

After he's had lots of chasing, lead him up to an experienced dog on point, working into the wind. When you think he gets the scent, not just backpoints the other dog, tell him to "Stay" keeping hold of the leash. Repeating "Stay" in a soothing tone start stroking him slowly from head to tail tip, running one hand over him as the other leaves his tail -- one after the other but always ready to restrain him with the leash. If he lunges in don't be rough but jerk him decisively and reprimand "No."

If you have no trained dog available to work with you will have more difficulty getting him into birds while on leash. I often stop the car when birds run across a country road. Take the dog out of the car on leash and lead him to the bird. Handle him as above. Some men purchase a bird or two and work the dog on them in a small cage planted in advance where he cannot see it. The dog soon learns to detect your hand scent and fails to respond as on wild game but it may help at first.

The important thing is to get to him when he has hot body scent in his face. He loves being handled while on point and it is the best way I know to make him staunch. After stroking him soothingly, continue to say "Stay" in a low tone and as you draw your hand back over him, lift him by the tail,

raising his rear feet off the ground and set him back down. Repeat this, setting his rear feet first to one side, then the other. He will retain this position no matter how awkward. Finally, set him straight and, keeping the leash in hand to prevent breaking but with no pressure apparent to him, lean over and push against his haunches as though to force him into the birds. If you were to pull him away from the birds his instinct would be to lean into them. When you feel him resist your pressure, push harder and he will resist more firmly. You have gone a long way toward making him staunch on point. The oftener you can handle him on point, the better the results.

If the birds have been obliging enough to lie all this while, you now must flush them. Have a companion do it while you restrain your pupil by the leash if he lunges in at the flush, reprimanding "No." If you are alone, give the now solid youngster a final stroke and "Stay" and then with both hands raised, palm toward him, walk backwards into the birds, always facing the dog, repeating "Stay" and actually willing him to. Be ready to jump toward your dog when the birds go up, making him stay with your gesture and command. Once the birds are gone, hold him a few seconds longer, then drop your hands and order "Go on." Let him run in and sniff the hot spot and encourage him for his work.

STEADY TO WING AND SHOT:

Don't expect him not to break at wing for the first season or even second, but don't tolerate it when you are on hand. Avoid discipline other than by voice and manner and use of a check cord. Severe punishment associated with birds can make him a blinker (one who takes the simple way out by ignoring all birds from then on). He will first become "staunch" (holding points as long as the bird lies). You can make him "steady to wing" (hold as the bird flushes) and "steady to shot" (continue to hold as the bird is shot at). I want mine steady to wing but do not insist on their being

steady to shot. Most men find it best for the dog to be on the spot as soon as possible after the bird falls, especially with grouse and pheasants for a crippled bird will run. Having the dog wait for orders to retrieve before moving in often means the difference between a bird brought to hand or left to a lingering death in some inaccessible crevice of rocks.

Both commands are taught the same way. Snap a check cord on him when on point. You must have a companion flush the birds (they never flush at your voice when you want them to, or even at a tossed stone). If the dog lunges in give a solid jerk and order "No." Even if he does not, give a light jerk and "No" to show your wishes. Don't use choke or spike collars -- you're not interested in hurting him. Use a leather collar loose enough to slip over his head with cord attached, or work him with it on and snap the cord to it. Working him with a long check cord dragging isn't effective -- it spoils his gait.

Approach a pointing dog from the side (from the rear makes him nervous) or better, from the front cornering the bird between you. Assume a confident manner convincing him you know he will hold. Hand raised, say "Stay" only once and walk in with slow decisive steps. The time to ham it up and feign excitement is when you want to make him more intense in his attitude on point. He will mimic you.

Now that he's had the thrill of bird scent, rabbits and deer are small potatoes to him, (though some excellent grouse dogs occasionally point a rabbit when in doubt). However, the desire to chase those white tails may remain and you must now take every opportunity to reprimand this. Call him off the moment a rabbit jumps and blow your one blast whistle and call "No", shaking him well. If he desists in mid-chase, congratulate him for obeying. If he points a rabbit, merely shame him with a scornful "No". My dogs are broken of this because I've been consistent.

Your dog must also be steady to flush (stopping instead of chasing if he runs into birds). This is difficult to teach. Don't lose your temper for he can smell your anger and it frightens and confuses him, losing the benefit of the lesson. Blow your one blast whistle and call "No" as on a rabbit chase. Hot on the chase he may ignore you. Don't call him to you and then scold him for what he thinks is obeying. Wait till he comes back and go to him, scolding "No." Lead him back to the spot where he should have stopped. We're concerned not with bumping the bird (conditions may have been against his scenting it) but with the sin of his not stopping when he did flush it. Set him up none too gently on the spot and shake him by the loose hide of the back of his neck, scolding "No." Shaking him is a primeval experience his early ancestors had when the pack leader shook them for offenses committed, and he has dim memories passed down through the ages. It causes no pain, mere chagrin, and I believe it is as effective as slapping on the rump -- though the latter is permissible here. Never whip severely for it can turn him against birds. After the shaking, stand him in position and let your manner change to a pleasant one as you stroke him as on point and repeat "Stay." Make him remain in position as you walk away from him, keeping him there till you are well ahead. Then send him on with a normal "All right, go on" and 2 blasts of the whistle. Always be sure you are good friends after a scolding -- you are correcting a mistake or sin, not holding a grudge. He'll respect you the more for it.

Training to be steady to shot involves shooting .32 or .38 blanks as the birds flush and making him stay. Never fire these too close to his head and never in front of his face.

BACKPOINTING:

Work him with another dog who is staunch. Your dog must honor all the dog's points by sight and regardless of any scent. Let him run up within

25 yards of the pointing dog and stop him abruptly with "Stay", going to him then and handling as on point. Preliminary work is to stop him while running in the field alone with the command stay. He should obey this regardless of any scent or point but don't overdo it or it loses emphasis. Don't permit him to steal in on another dog's points after once backing. Do avoid working with a dog who false points for your boy will soon lose confidence and he must believe there are birds ahead.

POSITIVE POINTS:

As your pupil becomes more experienced, insist upon more and more positive points (birds under his nose, not foot trails where the birds have been). The brilliant dog checks only long enough to determine if it is foot scent and then moves in, head up, quartering the wind till he hits the bird. He must do it boldly and then lock up tight at the right moment, not too soon, not too late and flush the bird. Beginners see their dog check on scent and, anxious to avoid a flush, caution him to stop. Usually it is only foot scent but he comes to think you want him to point that and you have a pottering dog. Having the dog hold on foot scent and then creep up as you walk with him may give you goosepimples but the birds will likely have run out well ahead, being warned in time to plan an escape.

When you see him check, instead of cautioning him to "Stay", drive him on with 2 blasts of the whistle (your voice will flush the bird). Drive him right up to the body scent, keeping his head up by repeated 2 blast whistle signals, till he locks up and will move no further in spite of your whistle.

If you drive him too far and cause a flush scold him as though he had flushed them himself and make him stay. (It is hypocritical but he must learn to judge for himself when to stop). This is when you get spine-chilling points -- the "moment of truth" -- with your dog quivering, points that raise the hackles along his back, and yours.

Once he has been brought to this stage it is a matter of experience. If he shows no anxiety about gunfire, a couple of day's shooting over him at a game preserve will be money well spent. Go alone on a day there are few or no gunners out. Only the two of you as in training. He'll come away feeling he knows what life is about. Just avoid excessive shooting, and not directly over his head or toward him in the air.

If there's any doubt about how he likes a shotgun, take it slower and wait for the regular season. Grouse season is ideal for there is not much shooting. Don't take your pupil out with another gunner until he has had a lot of experience with you alone. It keeps the relation better, you are able to keep your mind on helping him do well, not worrying about how he shows up to your friend, and no one but you will use the judgement about restraining from shooting too close to the young inexperienced dog. You will be thinking about the dog work, your companion about the shooting he may miss.

On this subject, don't buy a dog jointly with another man. No dog can belong to two men any more than a woman can. There must be unconditional devotion between you.

Don't be surprised if your young hopeful, no matter how letter-perfect in his retrieving lessons, hesitates to retrieve the first birds he sees fall. It's entirely different, the excitement, the scent, the hot feathers -- and you can ruin him if you force the issue. He usually goes to the bird, picks it up, then drops it and refuses the retrieve. If he does, encourage him, hold the bird to his nose (don't force it into his mouth) and then toss it out and order "Go fetch." He may still balk. After a few tries, let it ride but don't give him the praise he would get if he had done well. Simply pocket the bird and go on. That evening at home he'll probably retrieve it beautifully after it is cold. Experienced retrievers dislike retrieving in hot, dry weather. Next time try as usual. If he refuses it, put it somewhere between rocks where he thinks you cannot reach it and send him for it "Dead

bird, go fetch." It will work out in time.

Strive always for a busy hunter, moving to all birdy places. No sense in a dog who only finds the birds you yourself would have walked up. But don't confuse him with too much handling. As an experiment, some afternoon let him select the cover, following where he hunts without direction from you other than to go on.

If you can't overcome a difficult fault, try not stressing that fault but the things he does well. Let it simmer and go back to it much later on.

Remember, he has off-days, just like you. Unless you are the kind who never miss (!!!!) don't expect him to always be in top form. There are many things about this dog training that you will find discouraging -- refusal to retrieve, lack of staunchness, apparent clumsiness in handling scent. You will be certain I don't know what I am talking about (I often wonder) or if I am only talking. Then some wonderful day everything will seem to fall into place. It may be a foul bit of rainy weather or a cold, forbidding November day. But for you the sun will shine. Suddenly something is different, somewhere in that wonderful little brain and memory which together make a mind something clicks and all at once he does what you have been dreaming all along he would do. He not only does it, but to you he seems to do it as no other dog ever did. Whether or not you see clearly at a time like this, permit yourself and him this moment. You have what most men never know, and the two of you have it together -- may it last for long seasons. He has a shooting man, and you -- you have a bird dog.