the shooter may see whether the bird falls, or feathers fly from it ; for if he does not, he may rely that there is some- thing defective in his system of managing the fowling-piece. A shooter only requires coolness, a very little mechanical knowledge, and a gun properly mounted. Possessing these requisites, he will not be deficient in any other which he will not be easily able to supply. The novice should learn to shoot high enough at winged, and low enough at footed game, and well forward at both. He should seldom shoot directly at the object ; but at the wing, if the bird is moving obliquely from him, the head, if the bird is rising, the legs, if descending ; but if crossing, or flying obliquely at a considerable angle, he should make an allowance of a few inches according to the distance of the object from him. It is not usual to shoot at any object approaching the shooter. It should be allowed to pass, when he turns round and fires at it as it moves from him.

*The Rook.* We commence our notice of the different kinds of shooting with the fowling-piece now chiefly prac­tised, with a few observations on those birds, not coming under the denomination of game, which occasionally afford the first lessons to the younger brethren of the trigger, and which therefore may properly take precedence, in description, of the more difficult branches of the art.

Young rooks, in the month of May, are generally shot whilst sitting on the branches, near their nests, on the tops of the loftiest trees, so that it requires a steady aim, and hard-stricken shot to bring them down with certainty ; for if only wounded, they will frequently cling to the bough with their claws, and die suspended in that manner. The rook should be fired at with a small charge of rather large shot, and a heavy charge of powder. Rooks are gregarious, and feed on grain, worms, and insects. It is only during the season of incubation, and until the young ones can fly, that they frequent the rookery, which is mostly a small plantation, or clump of old trees, and near to some habita­tion. When rooks choose any particular cluster of trees, or plantation to build in, the same trees will, if standing, be tenanted again the next year by the same rooks and their offspring, notwithstanding they may have been much fired at, or in some other way disturbed. This opinion is not universal. In some counties there exists a prejudice against the practice of firing at rooks with gunpowder, especially when the rooks are few, and the number of trees limited, lest the rooks should desert the rookery ; and, therefore, that as little alarm as possible may be created, they are fired at with balls from the air-gun, and sometimes the young shooter will try his skill with the cross-bow. The old rook is distinguished from the young one by the thick end of either mandible being white ; and the beak of the young rook is black to the insertion. They are distinguished from other birds of a somewhat similar appearance, by a slight variation of colour ; the rook has a blue, the carrion-crow a brown tinge, the jackdaw is partially grey, the raven is jet black.

After young rooks have been fired at several times, some of the strongest and best-fledged will quit the rookery, and alight on hedges or trees at some distance, where the shooter flushes them, and they afford good sport to the tyro learning to shoot birds on the wing. A warm sunny day is best for rook-shooting. In cold weather, particularly on windy days, young rooks will not quit their nests.

*The Wood-pigeon.* The wood-pigeon is little regarded by the sportsman. A shot may he obtained by lying in ambush early in the morning, near to some wheat stubble, or field of newly-sown grain, where the birds feed ; but the best sport the wood-pigeon affords is at the roosting places, where the shooter ought to take his station an hour before sunset. It is difficult to obtain a shot in any other manner, except when the birds are young, when they are some- times killed in trees, in the same manner as young rooks.

The shooter in pursuit of game often sees them, but rarely obtains a shot at them. Sometimes, but it is usually when he is not aware of them, they will suffer him to approach close to the tree in which they are perched. The tree is generally a large one, and perhaps in full foliage, and the shooter hears the rustling of the wings of the decamping birds, but seldom secures a shot. Whenever u wood-pigeon leaves a tree, the shooter should prepare for others, since, when there are several in the same tree, they will not leave it simultaneously, but move off in succession. They are large strong birds, and require heavy shot to bring them down.

Shooting tame pigeons is becoming a very common amusement ; but it is offener practised to decide a wager, than prove the skill of the parties. The Red House at Battersea, near London, is the scene of the principal matches. The birds are sprung from a trap, which is usually placed twenty- one yards from the gun ; the birds of each person are pro- vided by his opponent ; blue rocks are the favourites ; very heavy guns are used, but the weight of shot is usually li- mited. The birds must fall within a limited distance from the trap, or they are not counted amongst the successful shots.

*The lark, field-fare, lapwing, golden plover, and dottrel.* Larks and field-fares are often the object of the young shooter’s pursuit. Field-fares, the blue-backs and red-wings, arrive in October, and remain during winter. They are easily approached during a frost, or when the ground is co- vered with snow. They will then be found in search of the berries of the mountain-ash, the holly, and the hawthorn, and are killed in great numbers. Like wood-pigeons, field-fares do not leave a tree, or rise from the ground simultaneously, so that when one bird flies off, if the shooter will hasten to the spot, he will, in all probability, meet with a lagger.

The lapwing or pewit is a bird much sought for by the juvenile shooter. Lapwings are commonly found on marshes, or wet land abounding in rushes. Except during the season of incubation, they collect in flocks, and are so very wary as to be difficult of approach. They are often killed for the sake of their toppings, which are useful to the angler. As they wing round the shooter, it is extremely dif­ficult to decide whether they are within range or not; they should be within a moderate distance when fired at, or they will escape in the interstices of the charge, as the size of the body bears a small proportion to the apparent size of the bird when on the wing. It is not uncommon to see several feathers cut out of the wings, and the bird fly away as if unhurt.

All these birds afford amusement chiefly to schoolboys. The sportsman in pursuit of game does not think them worthy attention ; but the golden or whistling plover, and the dottrel, which are birds often met with in hilly districts, are generally considered as worth firing at, if they accidentally come in the way, but are not worth the trouble of following.

*The Land-rail.* The land-rail or corn-crake is a bird of passage. It may be found with pointers or spaniels early in spring, in hedges or long grass. The dogs for this sport should not be staunch ; such as will foot the birds are best as it is with great difficulty they can be made to rise. It is only during the first fortnight after their arrival that they may be fairly killed in spring; after that time they begin to pair. In August and September, the sportsman sometimes casually meets with a land-rail, whilst beating for other birds.

Wild-fowl. Wild-fowl shooting is practised in vari- ous ways. The method of proceeding depends entirely on the situation in which the shooter expects to find the birds. In some of the inland counties, except during hard frosts, they are not met with anywhere but on large pools and ri­