

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## 1. "SHAH DAULAH'S RATS."

Rugby,  
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DEAR SIR,—“Shah Daulah’s Rats” are alluded to in *North Indian Notes and Queries*, v, §311. “Shah Daulah cures barrenness. . . . When he gives children, the first is always a sort of dwarf, or mannikin, with a small head, like a rat. Such children are called Shah Daulah’s Rats, and are devoted to the shrine. These rats of Shah Daulah now form a special class of beggars. Each of them is said to have on his head the marks of the five fingers of the saint who brought him into the world.” (Note by Pandit Ram Gharib Chaube.)—The editor refers to *Punjab Notes and Queries*, ii, 27; iii, 27.

This note, if correct, explains the objection of Mr. Muhammed Latif. The parents expect to get more than one child; and the first is the saint’s due, as Samuel was Jehovah’s.

It is not stated that they are idiots.—Yours faithfully,

W. H. D. ROUSE.

## 2. "ANTIQUITY OF EASTERN FALCONRY."

SIR,—I should be much obliged to any member or correspondent who can inform me of any Oriental authority for the use of trained falcons in the East before the first century A.D. The modern falconers are apparently inclined

to claim a great antiquity for that diversion; and certainly the stage of civilization favourable to falconry is very ancient; and there is no "antecedent improbability" in the matter. But the positive evidence seems to be poor.

That most commonly quoted is a very doubtful note of the late Sir Austen Layard's, in "Nineveh and Babylon" (p. 483, note, ed. 1853). It is not repeated in the abridgment of 1882, and he does not seem to have attached much importance to it, though an amateur of falconry himself, and holding it as "probably of the highest antiquity" (*loc. cit.*). He says, "A falconer bearing a hawk on his wrist *appeared to be* represented in a bas-relief which I saw at Khorsabad." Bonomi ("Nineveh and its Palaces," 3rd edition, p. 202) has an equally doubtful identification of a falcon on the wing, in a hunting scene from the same place. But there seems to be no reference to falconry in that region in any ancient writer, though one would expect it, if practised, to have been mentioned by the Hebrews of the Captivity, by Herodotus, Xenophon (himself a sportsman), Aristotle, or some of the subsequent Greek and Roman writers—people whose nations knew more of Mesopotamia than our grandfathers did of the Panjāb and Sind.

Aristotle, indeed, mentions wild hawks (or what he supposed to be such) as assisting fowlers in Thrace ("History of Animals," book ix, chap. xxiv). And this story is borrowed from him in the first century A.D. by Pliny ("Nat. Hist.," x, 8), and from one or both of them by Aelian in the second ("De Nat. Animal," ii, 42), who also mentions tame sacred hawks in a temple "of Apollo in Egypt." Neither speaks on his own authority. But, after Pliny and before Aelian, Martial undoubtedly mentions the use of a hawk, which had been caught wild, in the 216th Epigram of the fourteenth book, which was written—or, at least, published—in Spain, very early in the second century A.D. He must have observed the practice in Spain, for he travelled only to Italy, where it could not have escaped Pliny and Aelian.

The next notice is said to be in the writings of Julius Firmicus (fourth century A.D.), which are not available to me.

In the sixth verse of the fifth Sura of the Kurān, "The Table," there is a passage authorizing, as it is read by Musalmans to-day, the use of prey taken by "wild creatures ('jawarih')<sup>1</sup> which ye have trained like dogs, teaching them as God hath taught you." A Musalman scholar whom I have consulted assures me that the inclusion of falconry in this permission is universally admitted to be based on a tradition of the Prophet himself, which brings it back, in Arabia, to the early years of the Hijra (the fifth Sura was revealed at Medina), and by implication to the end of the sixth century, as the practice must have been general and well known to require notice.<sup>2</sup>

"E. D. R.," writing in the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" (1879), speaks of falconry as recorded by "very ancient Egyptian carvings and paintings," as "known in China some 2,000 years B.C."; and in high favour in the days of "Wen Wang, who reigned over a province of that country in 689 B.C." This writer is known as a past master in modern falconry, but hardly as an authority on Egyptian or Chinese archaeology, and I beg for a reference from any of our members skilled in those branches of history. Search in the Assyrian rooms at the British Museum has brought nothing to light, though I was favoured by the courteous assistance of Mr. Wallis Budge. I need only add that positive evidence would be as welcome to me as negative.

<sup>1</sup> Rodwell translates "wild beasts"; Sale, and my friend, "animals of prey." My friend adds that *chitas* are also classed, on the same authority, under the passage quoted, and that the Shah Nama contains many references to falconry. Firdusi, however, is not an admissible witness for days much older than his own, any more than Shakspeare for firearms in Hamlet's Denmark and Macbeth's Scotland.

<sup>2</sup> Since the above was written, one of our own members has favoured me with some references to mention of Falconry (*ṣyainimpāta*) by Pānini (vi, s. 71), and later Sanskrit authority; and a distinguished Hindu scholar with a quotation from Manu. The true date of the Dharma-shastra has been so much disputed that I do not feel entitled to rely on it in this case. But I suppose one is pretty safe in taking Pānini for older authority than Aristotle; if not than "Wen Wang's" historian.

I have not a thesis to prove, and there is no reason why any race of men who had learnt to train the horse and hound, and to use metals, should not have learnt falconry next (the condition of modern savages seems to show that these are earlier stages in civilization). Meanwhile, "*Amicus Falco, magis amica veritas.*"

W. F. SINCLAIR.