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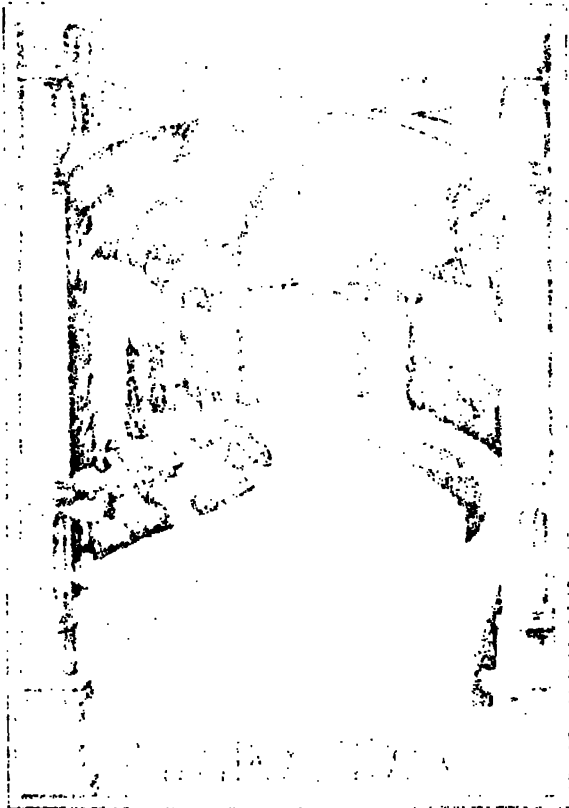
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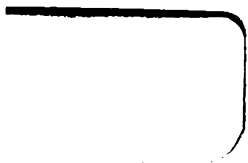
The Sporting Rifle



Walter Winans



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NEW YORK

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THE SPORTING RIFLE





Walter Winans





THE SPORTING RIFLE

THE SHOOTING OF BIG AND LITTLE GAME

TOGETHER WITH

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRINCIPAL CLASSES
OF SPORTING WEAPONS

BY

WALTER WINANS

VICE-PRESIDENT NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN ; AUTHOR OF "THE ART
OF REVOLVER SHOOTING," "HINTS ON REVOLVER SHOOTING," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press

1908

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The Knickerbocker Press, New York



PREFACE

WHEN practising with rifle, pistol, gun, or foil, there is an unfortunate tendency to overlook the fact that such practice is only a means to an end. Such practice, unless strictly confined to the object in view, is apt to degenerate into a mere game of skill.

One sees rifle clubs, both miniature, and for full charges, springing up all over England, but on looking at the cuts of these ranges in the illustrated papers, *all* the members are seen lying down to shoot, even when the target is only a few yards off.

How can a man learn to hit game encountered unexpectedly or in rapid motion, if he never shoots a rifle except with both elbows resting on the ground. One even sees pictures of young boys, who ought to be taught "timing" and "swing," lying down and "poking" at their targets like old men.

The various breeds of dogs, poultry, etc., are gradually being deteriorated by breeding to "points" instead of for use, till, as I have myself seen, a "show" deerhound puts his tail between his legs and bolts when slipped on a wounded stag, and a "show" bloodhound cannot track a blood trail from a wild boar, which I myself could follow by sight on a run. In this way rifle shooting is in danger of being reduced to a mere game.

When I first began rifle shooting as a small boy, I shot off a rest, and when I could hit a four-inch bull at one hundred yards, I thought I was a good enough shot to kill deer. The first stag I saw I came on suddenly; he was standing facing me at forty yards, but instantly whipped round. My rest shooting practice had not prepared me for this; I had to take a snap shot and missed him clean.

People lie down and shoot at stationary targets till they acquire very great skill at that particular sort of shooting, but I feel sure that this is all wrong for learning to shoot at game. If such a shooter is taken out deer-stalking, he does not know what to do; the deer will not keep still. Even if the deer is standing still, he is flicking his ears and tail, or stamping a foot at the midges, or doing something which a target never does.

For these reasons I hope that this book may be of a little use to those who intend to take up big-game shooting, or those who, being unable to indulge in big-game shooting, still want to learn how to handle a rifle. I have not mentioned any form of shooting in which I have not myself taken part, and I have not quoted, knowingly, anyone else's opinion. Whatever I have written is the result of my own experience and not a matter of theory.



Some people tell me that shooting at a stationary target improves their snap shooting. I am glad to hear it and only wish that I could say the same thing about myself. They cannot, however, blame me for stating that, from my own experience, I have come to a different conclusion.

Whilst not professing to give a complete description of every make of sporting rifle, or of all sorts of big-game shooting, this book still describes the principal classes of sporting weapons, and enough of the habits of the deer and boar tribes to enable a beginner in rifle shooting to start less handicapped than he would otherwise be.

Most beginners, unless they have an experienced shot to guide them, have to purchase their experience by much disappointment in their early efforts. I have known a man to spoil a trip after big game by not taking the proper class of rifles, and therefore wounding and losing instead of bagging his game.

In the following pages I have taken care never to recommend anything that I have not myself tried and found useful, also not to describe any sort of shooting in which I have not myself taken part; so that, though well aware of the shortcomings and limitations of my book, I can confidently say that I advise nothing which has not been proved by experience to be practicable.

In my first book on *Revolver Shooting* (published in 1901), I drew attention to the dangerous consequences to a nation through excessive devotion to games, such as cricket, golf, and football. Many partisans of these games were indignant at my remarks, but public opinion now indorses my doctrine of the absolute necessity that every able-bodied man should be able to handle a rifle. The



RUSSIAN BEAR
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shooter of game with a rifle can pride himself upon the fact that, unlike the player of games, he is perfecting himself in an art which is of use.

There are good books to be had on the subject of target shooting, but I do not know of any which teaches the handling of a rifle in game shooting. That was my reason in publishing a book, *Practical Rifle Shooting*, on this aspect of the subject. It was, however, intended merely to give a few hints, at a popular price, to counteract the general tendency to practise shooting on what I consider a wrong principle. I did not have space to go fully into details. The present work is intended to supplement this former volume, and, while embodying a good deal of it, is amplified in many places, and contains important additional chapters.

Unless a rifle shot begins right, he is apt to develop habits which are very difficult to eradicate, and which may hamper him greatly in perfecting himself in shooting. The following pages furnish the beginner with a series of hints, by the use of which he may be enabled not only to put himself through a proper course of training, but also to keep himself free from tricks which impede progress, and which, if persisted in, will destroy his ability for any but the most artificial forms of shooting.

It has been said, in certain quarters, that I condemn all target shooting as useless, but this is a serious misapprehension. The National Rifle Association, of which I have been a member for many years, has done more to encourage rifle shootings than any other organisation in the world. A beginner must commence his practice at a stationary target, and a pretty big target at that, for it is with the man



TWO- AND THREE-YEAR-OLD AMERICAN "BUFFALO" BULLS

Preface

as with the horse. No one attempts to train a horse in the High School by beginning at once with the "Spanish Trot"; he is first mouthed, collected, balanced, etc., and similarly a man must advance to skill with the rifle by carefully working up through successive stages.

I do not, again, condemn scientific long-range rifle shooting, which has been most useful in bringing about the development of rifles, ammunition, sights, etc. The majority of improvements in modern military and also sporting rifles are adaptations from experimental improvements in the match weapon based upon experience at the ranges.

I do, however, condemn the methods of the shot who never fires a rifle except in the prone position. He may, and often does, make wonderful scores and beginners naturally try to emulate him, with the worst results to their capacity for practical work.

A marksman of this kind is sometimes called a pot-hunter, but unjustly, for there is no money to be made, except in very exceptional cases, in rifle shooting. Men with skill of this kind do not shoot for the money, but for the sport of the thing. It is a good sport, a clean and sober sport, but it is not *practical rifle shooting*.

W. W.



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Photo by W. W. Rouch & Co.

THE SPORTING RIFLE



THE SPORTING RIFLE

CHAPTER I

ARTIFICIAL TARGETS

THE beginner who has never been used to handle firearms had better procure a .22 calibre rim-fire rifle. There are many makes on the market from which he can suit himself, but an expensive weapon is unnecessary. The accuracy of any such arm is sufficient for the novice at the very short ranges with which he is to commence practice. The reason I recommend this small-charge rifle is that the beginner should feel no recoil and therefore not flinch when shooting. The short .22 calibre rim-fire cartridge is the cheapest, and makes the least noise and recoil.

I have had practical experience lately of how a begin-

The Sporting Rifle

ner is apt to flinch from recoil. I know several men who are first-class shots with .22 or .25 calibre miniature rifles and yet flinch so much from a rifle with recoil that they cannot make even moderately good scores with it. Even the comparatively slight recoil of the .303 Lee-Remington-Union disconcerts them. I think it is a matter of being able to "stand punishment." Some men can stand any amount of it and it only makes them set their teeth and do all the better; others at once "curl up." One can, however, get used to a heavy recoil, by gradually working one's self up to it. Rubber heel-plates, and holding the rifle firmly into the shoulder, help to lessen the blow. Unless the beginner pay attention to it he is apt, with a .22 calibre rifle to hold the rifle too loosely as there is no recoil to hold against.

Anyhow the learner under my instruction may console himself that being made to shoot in the standing position saves his shoulder from the severe pounding it will get if he shoots in the usual prone position, or, which is worst of all for feeling recoil, off a gunmaker's rest. The pupil who is already used to handling a shotgun may begin with larger than .22 calibres, as he will not be "gunshy."

There are various forms of appliances to enable practice to be had with rifles built for powerful charges, on ranges where this heavy charge would be dangerous. They consist generally either in using a reduced charge or having a tube inside the rifle of reduced calibre for small ammunition, or having a very small bore rifle made, with the external parts the same size as the larger rifle. Neither of these last two methods is, in my opinion, very satisfactory.

Having a full-sized rifle made with a very small calibre makes the rifle heavier than the rifle it is to represent, owing to there being more metal in the barrel; this also makes it balance badly. Inserting a tube in the bore of the rifle also has the same objections. I prefer, therefore, those forms which shoot a reduced charge out of the unaltered barrel of the rifle. One of the best I know is Trask's Reloader. The principle of this device is the



TRASK'S RELOADER

employment of a steel cartridge case, externally like the cartridge used by the rifle when shooting its normal charge, but carrying in its base a blank cartridge of a reduced charge and at the muzzle end a special bullet. These cartridge cases can be reloaded for every shot, or a quantity can be loaded in advance and used either through the magazine (in a magazine rifle) or in the ordinary way with a single-loader. The reloading is very simple, and there is no danger of putting in too big a charge, or, what is most important, there is no danger of putting in a bullet with only a cap behind it. There is great danger in any ammunition which may have only a cap behind the bullet, especially when one is firing rapidly. The cap may drive the bullet only partly up the barrel, instead of out of it, and then the next shot may burst the rifle from the obstruction, or, at least, spoil it by bulging it.

For the moment, however, I write for the absolute tyro who has never been used to firearms of any description. I may here mention that calibre is expressed in decimal points; .22 means that the bore of the rifle is .22 of an inch in diameter. The trigger-pull of the rifle should be adjusted to about three pounds. Cheap rifles cannot be made with so light a pull as superior weapons, because the softer quality of the metal used in their locks cannot be trusted for pulls of more than a certain lightness, as it wears rapidly to a dangerously light trigger-pull. The actual strength of the trigger-pull with which a given weapon is to be fitted should therefore be left to the gunmaker, who best understands its capabilities, subject to a general direction as above. It is to be impressed upon him that what you want is *the lightest pull consistent with safety* and that the pull be "clean" without any drag; bolt action rifles are apt to "drag" unless specially adjusted. The question of trigger-pull is of the utmost importance. The heavy trigger-pull of military regulation patterns greatly enhances the difficulty of shooting at moving objects, and "timing" the shot. I believe that army shooting would be greatly improved if the regulation trigger-pull were lightened. I do not think that such a change would increase the danger of premature or accidental discharge. The present heavy pull makes men heavy-handed. A light trigger-pull would teach the men to keep their fingers off the trigger until the actual moment of discharge, whereas the heavy pull causes them to keep a finger in the trigger-guard, and to *hang* on the trigger. I know, however, of course, that recruits enlisted from men accustomed to manual labour have less sensitive trigger-fingers than those

who have not had to handle spades, etc. I also think attempting to remedy this by having a "double pull" is a great mistake as nobody can make good shooting at moving objects with a rifle that "drags" on the trigger-pull.

A page of this book will serve to indicate how far along the barrel the hind sight should be placed. For this purpose hold a page at varying distances from your eyes—the right eye in case the sight of both eyes is identical—until you have discovered exactly *how close* you can hold a page *without causing the letters to appear blurred*. The *hind sight* of your rifle, unless it is an aperture sight, should be fixed on the barrel at this distance from your best eye—when the weapon is at your shoulder and you are looking along the barrel. If your left eye is the best, you should shoot left-handed, *i. e.*, put the rifle to your left shoulder and use your left fore-finger for the trigger, although that finger is not usually so sensitive as the right fore-finger.

In deciding at what point to place the hind sight, and in fact in all rifle shooting, do not crane the head forward, but stand upright and bring the rifle slowly to your shoulder. The right arm being well extended, but not so far as to make your position stiff (just in front of the fore-end is about right for the average man), now look through the hind sight *without lowering your head*.

Personally, I do not lower my head at all, but bring the stock sufficiently high up my shoulder to *bring the sights up to my eye*. *The eye is not to be brought down to the sights, but the sights brought up to the eye*. The stock of the rifle must fit you to enable you to do this.

The importance of this direction for sighting, when firing at objects in quick motion, or in "snap-shooting," cannot be exaggerated, as any user of the shotgun will bear witness.

If, when you bring the rifle to your shoulder, you find that you see too much of your front sight in the notch of the "V" of the hind sight, it means either that the stock is not bent enough or else the stock is too long. And in the same way if you see the front sight on either side, it means that the stock has not the proper "cast-off" to suit you.

A few years ago, pigeon shooters, to avoid shooting under, got into the habit of having guns with exceptionally long and straight stocks. A pigeon shot generally has the bird rising and going more or less straight away from him. A gun which shoots a little high is therefore an advantage. On the other hand, the rifle shot, at game which is running, not flying, and often crossing at various angles, has a tendency to shoot too high rather than not high enough, so that for game a rifle-stock should be a little shorter and more bent than the gun-stock which the same shooter would use for birds; also, if he wears thicker clothes for winter shooting, the stock should be shortened.

A shotgun shooter will understand me better if I say: Whereas you have your shotguns fitted so that you see about a third of the rib, you should have your rifle made so that (with the sights taken off) you see *none* of the rib.

The usual head-poked-forward attitude, and the regulation high position of the right elbow, adopted by most target shots, when shooting in the standing position are

two of the chief reasons why they are unable to hit moving objects with the rifle. I have seen a man, who was trained to target shooting in the volunteers, try pheasant-shooting (with a shotgun of course) for the first time. He "presented" his gun in orthodox style, right elbow level with the ear, left arm at the correct bend, and head craned forward, but he did not hit any pheasants. What use he would have been against a charging enemy, if he had had a rifle in his hands, it would not be difficult to guess.

The .22 rifle has a short barrel, and you will generally find that the hind sight, as fitted by the makers, is far too close to the eye for any but the most short-sighted. When it has been moved forward sufficiently to enable you clearly to distinguish the "V" in it, you will probably find that there remains very little space between the hind and front sights. This makes very accurate aiming more difficult, for the closeness of the two sights magnifies any error in your aim; but this will not prove a hindrance to correct shooting at the short ranges with which you will commence practice with this rifle, and the ease and speed with which you can take aim will more than compensate any such variation.

The whole art of practical rifle shooting consists in the marksman's ability to take instantaneous aim, and to discharge his weapon before he loses that aim.

I have found, when teaching beginners, that one of the most difficult things to make them avoid is the habit of trying to see the sights, especially the hind sight. What they are apt to say is, "I can see the hind sight perfectly, but the object I want to hit is so indistinct." They *will* look at the hind sight, and by focussing their sight on it,

the front sight, and still more the object to be struck, look all a blur, being out of focus.

What I want them to do is to have the object to be struck in focus, and to let the sights align themselves, almost by sense of direction, being only vaguely seen, just as a shotgun shot does not look at the front sight of his gun consciously, although he would miss it if he had it removed from his gun. The hind sight ought to have a wide shallow "V," so that the front sight can be instantly centred in it, but all side projectors, as in the American Buck Horn sight, I consider a hindrance. The sight should be made very thick, at least one third of an inch in thickness. The "V" should have its edges bevelled to the face farthest from the eye. This arrangement gives the "V" a clear knife-edge, and yet does not weaken it. Also the hind sight must be upright or inclined slightly toward the eye; if it inclines away from the eye (as makers like to set it), it does not look the dead black which it does when in shadow, and consequently is not so great a contrast to the *white* front sight.

For revolvers I prefer a semicircular notch, instead of a "V" for the hind sight; this is more scientific than centring a bead front sight in a "V." With a semicircular notch in the hind sight the bead of the front sight fits more neatly in aiming. To some people, however, there would be more chance of failing to find the front sight when shooting rapidly. The sides of an open "V" admit of seeing the bead, or part of it, even if the rifle has not come to the shoulder properly, and therefore the aim can be corrected; whereas, if the rifle is brought to the shoulder not quite correctly (when using a semicircular notch in the hind sight) the front sight may be lost altogether.

I have lately been shooting a great deal with the Lyman aperture hind sight (see cut). I find that, contrary to expectation, I can do very rapid firing with it, and it is much less fatiguing to the eye than other sights. The main advantage is that there is no tendency to concentrate one's attention on it.



LYMAN APERTURE SIGHT.

The Lyman sight consists of an adjustable stalk with a small disc with a hole in it. Aim is taken by seeing the front sight through this hole. There is no necessity to try to centre the front sight in this hole: the eye naturally does this, and all you have to do is to use this hole as a window to view the front sight covering the object aimed at.

By the way, I was once shooting almost until dark in a rifle match at fixed targets, with military rifles and sights, and I found, after it was too dark to see to shoot properly with these military that by raising my hind peep-sight I could see to go on shooting quite well. This is a proof that peep-sights are useful to have on a rifle for shooting late at night or early in the morning in the open. The aperture

must of course be of large size. If small it is useless in a bad light. On the other hand among trees in the evening I find I can see to shoot better with a "V" sight. As when it is getting dark a deer just visible to the naked eye is invisible through the Lyman. I would not advise the Lyman for use on dangerous game.

The best front sight is a bead sight. If the whole of this is seen, the elevation (or vertical adjustment of aim) can be kept constant; with "barley corn," or pyramid shaped, front sights, one may see more or less of the front sight in successive shots, causing shots too high or low. This source of error is corrected by target shots by painting dots, etc., on the front sight, of course an inadmissible device for practical work. The "bead" for a beginner should be large, and it should be white. Military rifles have black front sights, which make them hard to define except against a white target. It was doubtless the target shooters who decided on black front sights for military rifles; sporting rifles are always sold with plated or white front sights. For the benefit of American readers, I may explain that by "sporting" I mean what is called a "hunting" rifle in the States,—the American "sporting" rifle being called a "match" or "ANY" rifle in England.

The best material for a white bead sight is the Lyman inlaid ivory. A good substitute is white enamel, but both are unfortunately brittle. I have had water get behind the ivory and force it out, on a very cold day by the water freezing. The easiest and cheapest, although a troublesome, method of obtaining a white sight is to carry a tube of water-colour Chinese white, from which a squeeze of white may be applied to the bead as a preliminary to

Artificial Targets

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shooting. I always carry such a tube of Chinese white when out deer-stalking or shooting wild boar and in the latter case, when quick, accurate firing in a bad light may be called for, the little consequent trouble may well save a man's life.

Many sporting rifles are fitted with a hind sight sloped away from the shooter, and the eye consequently sees the back sight as grey, thanks to the reflection of light from above. The edges of the "V" thus lose in definition, and the contrast between the black hind sight and the white of the front sight is not so great. In order to maintain the blackness of the hind sight, target shots may carry a supply of sight black. In case of need the smoke from a lighted match, or, still better, a burning piece of camphor, is a serviceable substitute.

As in the first lesson, to which we are now to proceed, it is essential that the back sight should be as dead a black as possible, it may be blackened. This painting of sights may appear a concession on my part to target shooters' methods, but I am using them for the beginner, so as to make his lessons as easy as possible. I do not much care for the platina line usual on the "V" of sporting rifles; it is apt to get confused with the front sight, and does not enable one to find the centre of the "V" any easier. At any rate it should be a very thin line.

A very bad thing, in my opinion, is to have a platina line on the hind sight which stops just short of the bottom of the "V"; with such a line, in a bad light, the front sight cannot be properly adjusted for elevation. One also may mistake the little bit of dark at the bottom of the "V" of the hind sight (where the platina line, especially if the latter is of

silver and has got tarnished, does not quite come up to it) for the front sight.

This led to several "unaccountable misses" on my part one stalking season, till I found out the cause. Also, the line not coming up to the "V" causes one all the time to think that he is taking too coarse a front sight.

I find that an artist, mechanical draughtsman, mechanic, or cabinet maker who has to use calipers, etc., learns to use the sights of a rifle more easily and accurately than a beginner who has never learnt to use his eye and hand in combination or to divide spaces. I believe this can be proved by the professions of winners at Bisley.

Now for your first lesson: Open the breech and make certain that the rifle is unloaded; in the case of a drop-barrel action, when closing the breech do not raise the barrel into line with the butt, but elevate the butt. This is to prevent the cartridge partly falling out and getting nipped when loading. Stand in front of a mirror, and look at the right eye of your face reflected in the glass. Keep your head erect. Bring up the rifle to your shoulder slowly, and, if the stock fits you properly, as it touches your shoulder, your eye, the bottom of the "V" of the hind sight, and the whole of the bead of the front sight will be in line with the reflection of your eye in the glass. If this does not come readily, consult your gun-maker as to the fit of the rifle's stock.

Most .22 rifles are fitted with stocks that are much too short. The makers seem to think that, because the calibre is small the rifle will be used by small people. The fit of the stock of a rifle is, as I said before, as important as the fit of the stock of a shotgun. It is customary with some

gunmakers to ignore the essential matter of thus fitting the stock of a rifle to its user, although they take great pains with the fit of a shotgun; but the ability to take quick and accurate aim, to swing and time one's shots, depends upon such "fit," whatever the class to which the weapon belong. Unfortunately a rifle is still looked on by the majority as a weapon only fit for deliberate shooting at stationary objects. With the heavy-forward regulation rifle, a stock which is not fitted, a heavy-dragging or double trigger-pull, and a black front sight (often with a projection each side of it), the soldier has an arm with which it would puzzle the best shot in the world to make good snap-shooting.

Besides adjusting the fit of the stock, a gunmaker can render the novice another service. After looking to see that the weapon is not loaded, take aim at the gunmaker's eye. He will then tell you whether the fit is right, whether you cant the rifle to one side in the act of aiming and how to *squeeze-off* the trigger instead of pulling it, and so jerking off your aim. A man accustomed to a shotgun will not need this instruction, except that a shotgun shooter is apt to *snatch* too much at the trigger for good rifle shooting. Experience with that weapon will soon tell him whether the stock of his rifle fits, or if it needs more bend, cast-off, to be lengthened or shortened.

The range for rifle shooting should be chosen with care as to a safe background, so that wherever a bullet goes no damage will be done. Also, there should be no hard substances about, such as stones, etc., off which a bullet will ricochet. Water, if one fires on it at a wide angle, gives dangerous ricochets.

The Sporting Rifle

The first mark may be a tin can, turnip, or other easily penetrable mark of about that size. The mark should be supported at the level of the pupil's eye upon a short wooden stake. An iron rod must not be used for this purpose. The bullet may glance off an iron support, and may do damage in consequence; and the same risk makes a glass bottle an unsuitable target for use with a .22 calibre weapon. Do not have this object so supported that it drops off if the stake is hit. The mark ought to stand at a distance of not less than ten yards in front of a butt, which should be composed of some soft material, such as earth or sand, in order that the bullets may imbed themselves in it and not rebound. Even hard wood is a dangerous butt with light bullets, which are apt to fly back if they strike a knot in it.

At first, take plenty of time, and bring the rifle to your shoulder with the greatest deliberation, but fire the instant it touches your shoulder. Be careful, at the moment of firing, that you do not jerk the weapon off its aim, and be especially on guard against *bobbing* or dropping the muzzle of the rifle as you squeeze the trigger—a hard trigger-pull adds to this tendency.

It is well to begin at five yards, gradually increasing the distance to twenty yards. At this range, practise a gradual increase of speed in firing as you gain in confidence and ability to hit the mark. *Do not increase the speed at which you bring the rifle to the shoulder, but let all the saving in time be made after the weapon is raised, and not in the act of raising the rifle.*

“*Festina lente*,” “make haste by going slowly,” is the motto for rapid shooting. Too great haste in bringing the rifle to the shoulder results in erroneous first alignment of

the sights upon the mark. In consequence, you either fire and miss or time is wasted in "finding your sights." A good object-lesson in the right method of taking aim for rapid firing may be learned by watching a first-class gun-shooter. His gun comes up to his shoulder rapidly and smoothly, but not hurriedly, and it is discharged on the instant of touching the shoulder. Do not let the butt of the stock *slide* up your shoulder; bring the rifle *well forward* and then *back into the shoulder*; do not have any lappet or pocket or other unevenness on that side of your coat to catch or otherwise impede the butt of the rifle. Also a soft-fronted shirt is best, and you can shoot in your shirt-sleeves.

There is a machine called the "sub-target," which is useful. The machine consists of a stand to which any make of rifle can be attached in such a way that there is no perceptible obstruction to the freedom with which the rifle can be handled over a limited space, which is sufficient, however, for shooting at a stationary target. When the sights of the rifle are aligned on the target, a pointer, affixed to the machine, follows these movements on a miniature target. And when the rifle is fired this pointer pierces the miniature target at a spot exactly corresponding to the spot, on the real target, at which the rifle's sights were aligned at the moment of firing.

In point of fact, the action of the machine is more delicate than this blunt statement indicates. The moment at which the trigger of a rifle is pulled and that at which the bullet leaves the muzzle do not coincide completely. The sub-target rifle recognises this, and its pointer does not pierce the miniature target at the moment when the

trigger of the rifle is pulled, but at that at which the bullet (if the rifle were loaded) would leave the muzzle. This is a most important feature, for, infinitesimal as is this difference in time, it is sufficient for the recoil, if the rifle were loaded, to throw the front sight slightly out of the alignment which the marksman chose.

The machine can also be used with blank cartridges, so crimped as to cause a recoil, and the best practice, if noise is not an objection, is occasionally to load with a blank cartridge. If the instructor handles this mixed loading, the pupil will not be forewarned when to expect a recoil or explosion and when none, when he presses the trigger. Thus there will be demonstrable evidence of the extent to which he, if imperfectly cured of gun-shyness, flinches and jerks off on pressing the trigger.

The machine has the advantage of greatly removing the difficulty which want of space causes to those who desire practice. It also, if no blank cartridges are used, need give no opportunity for complaint from neighbours who object to the noise of firing. It can be set up in a billiard or reading room and cause no annoyance to the other users of the room.

Another very good form of rifle for practice where noise is inadmissible is an air-gun of the improved form. Air-guns are made which are accurate up to twenty yards, and easy to load. They have a good deal of penetration, however, so care should be taken when shooting indoors to have a suitable background. Not having enough respect for its powers of penetration when I first tried it caused me to spoil a drawing I was at work on for this book. I used the back of the drawing board as a target, and the

pellet went clean through the board and the drawing on the other side.

When using one of the air-guns see that the pellet is seated deeply enough in the breech before closing it, as otherwise you may shave off a portion of the pellet or distort it, thereby causing a wild shot; a piece of wire can be used for this purpose. Be sure that the trigger-pull is not a dragging one.

Practice with the .22 calibre rifle may be varied after a while by taking up a position with the back to the target. Then turn and fire. Before attempting this be careful to satisfy yourself that no dangerous results will follow should you accidentally let the weapon off while in the act of turning towards the mark. Do not, however, attempt firing in this way until considerable practice has taught you not to feel flustered. Later you may take up a position at a distance from the point at which you mean to fire, advancing and firing instantly as you stop at different distances. In no case must you permit yourself to *blaze away, but always make certain of your aim*, even if you are conscious that you are slow in doing so. There is a tendency to keep increasing the speed at which you fire, till you find that you are losing accuracy at the price of speed. The cure is to begin again at a shorter range and with greater deliberation.

It is advantageous to have some one to replace the fallen or damaged cans, as walking to and fro between the mark and firing point both wearies a man and takes his attention from the real business in hand. Be very careful not to endanger this man by shooting near him, or ever pointing the rifle in his direction. Many even good shots are very

careless about where they point their guns or rifles. So long as it is not held to the shoulder they seem to think that the direction of the muzzle does not matter. *But whether a rifle be loaded or empty, open or shut, remember that it must never be pointed in any one's direction.* It is absolutely essential to learn from the first that a firearm must never be pointed at any living thing unless with the intention of killing it. Be especially careful that a rifle is not pointed towards any one *as you load it.* It may jar off ; some otherwise very careful shots are guilty of this fault.

A miniature running deer can be set up in a room for shooting at with an air-gun.

It should be made of soft wood, a profile of a stag, not modelled in relief, as in the latter case shots may glance. It should be shot at with darts, not slugs, if an ordinary air-gun is used. A dart sticks in the deer if the latter is of soft wood and flat, and shows the hits, whereas a slug would glance off, or at least not show hits so distinctly.

If you have darts coloured differently for each shooter, you can tell who makes the best score, rather on the principle of playing bowls ; after each man has shot six shots, for instance, you can look at the darts sticking in the "deer" and see whose average of hits has been closest to the heart.

The labour of loading is, however, an objection, as loading after each shot will tire your hand. In using this weapon it is, therefore, desirable that those not actually shooting should load for the shooters.

The air-gun I have already referred to does not shoot darts, but as its slugs have great penetration, a running

deer in miniature, made of cardboard, would be easily penetrated. The background ought to be of very soft deal, perhaps covered with baize or felt, so as to obviate any glancing back.

Two dozen shots are quite enough for the first day when using a rifle ; on subsequent days the number may be increased gradually, but stopping at the least symptom of fatigue or carelessness. You must not mind if all your shots are too high or too low ; this is merely a matter of having the sights adjusted, in the former case by filing the " V " of the hind sight lower, or in the latter by putting in a lower front sight; but if your shots vary, sometimes high, sometimes low, the cause is bad shooting, or a bad rifle.

If you find that you cannot hit the mark even when taking deliberate aim, get the gunmaker to try some shots from a rest, and regulate the weapon as may be necessary, to shoot higher or lower. But on no account attempt to use a rest for yourself, or you will find it so pleasant, and so comparatively easy to shoot from, that you will be tempted to practise from a rest or in the prone position.

My object is to teach you to become a first-class shot while standing, and when firing at moving objects, before you are acquainted with the temptations held out by other positions. The user of a rifle ought no more to take a " pot-shot," or to shoot from a rest, than does the user of a shotgun.

The deleterious fascination of shooting in the prone position, or with a rest for the rifle, needs no further demonstration than may be had by observing the general failure of English shots when compelled to shoot in the

erect position, in competitions in the United States or on the continent. Continental and American shots do not fail in this way, as so much of their practice is done in the standing position.

The regular excuse of men who have failed to shoot straight in the erect position is that "the position is not military." This *may* be so, but it is the game shooters' position. I have no knowledge of military matters, but my experience of deer and boar teaches me that at least half my shots at deer and all my shots at boar are made when standing erect; and I cannot but think that a skirmisher will often need to fire as he stands, or as he runs forward, as a deer-shooter does, under conditions in which the adoption of any other position would hide his mark from sight, or let slip the moment when alone he could fire with effect.

The pupil should not proceed to the second stage of practice until he has learned to fire accurately and rapidly in the above lessons with the .22 calibre rifle, *i. e.*, while standing erect, when standing with his back to the mark and firing as he turns, and when halting to fire, as he advances toward his mark. As a definition of good shooting in this style, I may call a "good shot" one who can hit the object (allowing two seconds for raising the rifle and firing) twenty-four out of twenty-five times at twenty yards. I do not say *every time*, as the mere fact of *being able* to hit it every time makes a man sometimes miss from being too confident and careless.

The second stage of practice consists in firing at objects crossing the line of fire, away from, and towards one, slowly at first, later at increasing speeds.

The .22 rifle used heretofore is an excellent weapon for the next stage did it not require reloading after every shot. I want you to get into the way of rapid aiming and rapid firing, and for this reason a repeater, or one of the new Winchester automatic rifles, is to be preferred. The automatic Winchester is a very pleasant weapon to "play with"; you can keep a tin can rolling by "pumping" a series of shots at it, or rather just under it. After missing a shot at a moving object it allows of one's putting in several further shots in as many half-seconds, while it does not disturb one's aim or attention like the usual repeating rifle which requires hand ejection. It can also be had in



THE WINCHESTER AUTOMATIC RIFLE

.32 and .38 calibres central fire, shooting smokeless powder and nickel-covered bullets.

It is not a good thing to have a target moving on an overhead wire, unless it is fitted with wheels; I have seen targets hung by wire loops from the overhead wire which ran in jerks, owing to there being too much friction. This causes the target to run by fits and starts, and only annoys the shooter, without giving him any practice. A form of moving target runs down an inclined plane, on wheels; the ends of the plane are alternately lifted, so that the target runs by simple force of gravity.

It is, however, better to have the target run horizontally

if possible, as it is easier for a beginner to learn the allowance which has to be made in front of the target, before he complicates it by also having to remember to aim lower on account of the target descending.

At Gastinne Renette's gallery in Paris galloping rabbits pass by hydraulic power.

A useful form of practice target is one in which small targets appear at uncertain points, and disappear again after a two-seconds exposure. There are also targets made which record where they are hit automatically at the firing point, but in this latter case I think it is best to have a special target made without visible bull's-eye, as I do not approve of visible bull's-eyes. In fact, there is scarcely any limit to the variety of moving and disappearing target practice which can be secured by exercising a little ingenuity.

But, whatever your target and its action, do not have a visible bull's-eye, and above all do not have a white target with a black bull's-eye.

The proper target for present purposes may be of any uniform neutral tint *with no mark in the centre*. Begin with a size which you can easily hit, and then gradually decrease the size. You must not be satisfied until you have learned to hit this target about its centre, although that centre is not indicated upon it. *Always shoot consciously to hit the centre*. Or, if the target is in the form of an animal, where its heart should be. You will, with practice, and only practice, learn how much to aim in front of the point you desire to hit according to its distance and speed, and to swing and time your shot.

At the short range, to which you still adhere, no allow-

ance need be made for the rate at which the target is travelling unless it is actually "thrown," *i. e.* no speed allowance need be made for a mark moving at less than ten miles an hour.

Unless a man is left-handed, and so shoots from his left shoulder, he will soon find that it is easier to hit an object moving from right to left, rather than one moving in the contrary direction. As an illustration of this truth I will mention the case of a keeper I used to know. He could shoot from either shoulder, and when out ferreting he stood ready to fire from whichever shoulder was likely to afford him the easier shot. Thus if a rabbit bolted to the right he shot from his left shoulder, with the right arm extended, and *vice versa*.

If the pupil finds that he can shoot better from the left shoulder, whether because he uses that side from preference, since the left eye has better vision, or because his left forefinger responds more truly to the will, or he is left-handed, by all means let him shoot from that side.

The trigger should always be squeezed by the first finger.
The grip of the old Martini rifle was so thick that men with small hands were compelled to use the second finger. The neater grip of modern rifles has removed this necessity, but one sees the trick perpetuated in England even in the handling of revolvers, although in this case it entails a scorched first finger, owing to the blowback of powder from the cylinder. Apart from the awkward appearance of the trick, it is illogical. The simplest experiment in fine work will demonstrate the higher sensitiveness of the first finger, and to wilfully use the second in pulling a trigger is to handicap one's ability to shoot well.

Many of the bad habits old shots have got into, and which the younger consciously follow, are similar survivals of what was very useful and necessary in former times, but are now not only unnecessary but even a hindrance. For instance, placing the thumb along the top of the grip, instead of in the natural position round the grip, which many shooters of military rifles adopt, is merely a survival of the big clumsy grip to the stock of the older forms of military rifles, and it is not necessary in the modern neat "grip." Also holding the left hand close to the trigger-guard, instead of extending the arm, is the survival of the fear that the barrel, made of bad metal, might burst.

The final stage in this practice-shooting is to fire at marks flung in the air, rolled or trundled past one, or away from one. For such practice automatic or repeating rifles should be used, unless the cost of them prove prohibitive. Such rifles allow a series of shots to be fired until the mark is hit. A sandy soil is, again, for rolling targets, the best upon which to practise, since the spurt of dust which is flung up by the impact of each bullet can be used as an index to the error in aiming, showing as it does whether the bullet struck the ground over or under, in front of or behind, the mark, and one can correct one's aim for the next shot.

For practice at objects trundled along the ground a serviceable mark is a couple of clay pigeons, with the concave sides joined together. Sandy soil is preferable for the reasons given above, and stony soil must be avoided owing to the danger of bullets ricocheting on impact with a stone. A repeater, or double rifle is altogether better than a single-shot rifle, as a miss with the latter allows of

no second shot at the *same* object. Consequently you cannot attempt to correct the error which led to the miss, or compare the margin of error between two misses.

The ordinary clay pigeon machine makes too difficult shooting for all but the most expert rifle shots. Such a trap as the old-fashioned Bogardus trap, throwing balls, is better, since these machines cast the mark more vertically into the air and slower, and the shooter can be closer to the target. But whatever the mark it should always be of a brittle substance, easily penetrated, or there is a risk that the bullet may glance off and inflict injury at a distance. For the same reason it is better not to have the marks thrown up by hand, unless it can be arranged that the person charged with throwing them is safely sheltered behind bullet-proof and glance-proof shelter. To shoot at a stone thrown in the air, or even a bottle (if this latter is shot at with a small charge), is a very dangerous thing to do, on account of the bullet's glancing.

There is an opening here for trap manufacturers. What is wanted is a machine that will throw balls of about cricket ball size, or perhaps a trifle larger, straight up to a height of about twelve feet; a series of balls, one after the other, one at each pull of the string from the firing point, without giving the trouble to go and put in a fresh ball after each throw. The balls should be made of some brittle substance, but not so brittle as to break on falling, if missed. The substance should not be glass or anything of which the broken pieces would be dangerous to horses or cattle, if left unswept.

One cannot be too careful in the selection of the background when bullets are to be fired into the air. The

idea that a bullet "fired into the air" can do no harm—as in the police-court plea, "I only fired into the air in order to frighten him,"—is quite erroneous. A bullet propelled by a heavy charge, and even a bullet from the .22 short cartridge, may do great harm, although fired into the air. My own feeling about the risk is such that I never feel entirely comfortable when using a rifle for rook-shooting, for fear that one of the falling bullets may strike and injure some one.

A .22 rifle may be safely used from the sea-shore as long as—granting that the day is clear—no boats or bathers are in range (say 700 yards for a .22 bore bullet). Objects thrown into the air between the marksman and the sea can then be safely fired at, while objects flung into the water, and fired at as the waves toss them, make good practice; but the glare from the water is trying for the eyes, unless you use blue or smoked goggles. I do not approve of the wanton shooting at sea-birds or any living thing merely for practice.

You may increase the calibre of your rifle as you become expert with the .22, if you can afford the necessary outlay, and then go through the same progressive course of practice as before. But I confess to having a preference for the .22 and use it more than any other, it is so neat and makes so little noise. What you want to learn is to be as handy with the rifle as small-game shots are with their shotguns.

As I have already remarked, it is quite possible that the beginner may find that shooting with a Lyman or aperture hind sight may come easier to him than shooting with a "V" in it. If so, I see no objection to his using it in preference. He must remember, though, to use the Lyman

appropriate to the rifle he is using. For instance, a sight which would be quite safe on a .22 calibre rifle might give him a knock in the eye if used on a rifle having a heavy recoil. For this latter class of rifle the sight should be placed farther from the eye, and have a larger aperture in consequence. I used to think that for rapid shooting a "V" enabled the aim to be taken quicker, but I can quite see that if a man practises with the Lyman he can learn to be at least as quick with it.

When firing at moving objects the rifle should always in early attempts be brought to the shoulder with deliberation, and body, arms and rifle should swing so that the rifle comes to the shoulder moving with the object. Follow your moving mark by swinging the extended arm and the upper part of your body from the hips in the direction of the object's motion, as you raise the rifle, and when the sights are aligned this motion must not be checked, but the trigger is to be pressed while the motion continues. I know a very good shot at the running deer at Bisley who gradually overtakes the deer with his sights and fires when he gets past it. I discovered this by his making a haunch one day when accidentally letting the rifle off a fraction of a second too soon. I shoot by the reverse process, putting up the rifle too far in front, and letting the deer gradually overtake the sights, but not stopping my swing. I think, though, the best and soundest plan is to bring up the rifle with a swing to the point in front which is necessary for the speed the object is travelling, and to fire the instant the sights are there, without checking the swing. This is called "good timing."

Theoretically a rifle should be fired as would be a

shotgun in the hands of an expert, as soon as the butt touches the shoulder. This is possible at short ranges, and comparatively large objects, but at longer ranges a certain interval must usually intervene while the weapon follows the motion of the mark. In practice, therefore, the rifle-shot must shoot like a rather "pokey" gun shot. You should, however, try as nearly as possible to snap-shoot. It is better shooting to fire thus, and the more rapidly a man fires after the butt has once touched his shoulder the less danger will there be for those who shoot with him or for the beaters, as he fires when he sees "all clear"; if he "follows" too much he may swing across a danger zone.

Practice alone can tell a man what "allowance" he is to make in shooting at a moving object. The allowance, whether before, above or below the mark, depends on the man as well as upon the speed and direction of the object aimed at, and of course on the make of rifle he is using. Some men cannot continue the swing of their weapon at the moment of firing, and they must, therefore, make a correspondingly increased allowance. Others find that their trigger-finger responds more or less quickly to the alignment of the sights.

A swinging ball naturally suggests itself as an easy device to work, but one naturally learns to wait for the end of the swing before firing. The swinging ball mark, therefore, teaches trick shooting, unless you are very careful and have a very long string and only shoot in the middle of the swing. The same temptation must be guarded against when the mark is a clay pigeon thrown from a trap. You are apt to take it at the top of its flight.

A good mark for a .22 rifle is a small toy balloon inflated with gas and let loose, but it is dangerous to shoot at except where there are no people about, or unless you are firing out to sea, and then you must be certain that no boats or swimmers are within range.

As soon as the pupil has obtained thorough mastery of the .22 rifle for rapid firing at stationary and moving marks, at ranges up to twenty yards, it is time to proceed to longer ranges. For these a weapon of larger calibre is better, though not absolutely necessary.

Such an advance necessitates increased outlay and increased command of space, and one or other of these considerations may preclude the possibility of doing more than perfecting practice at the short range and with the .22 calibre. Those whom necessity may disappoint in this way can, however, indulge in this consolation, if they have followed my suggestions faithfully—that they are good shots *within their limits*. And a man who is a first-rate shot within those limits only needs the means of practice and a little application in order to qualify himself in a very short time at longer ranges and with heavier rifles, and even without any further practice he will be able to beat any one who has done only “regulation target shooting”

A rifle club of which I am president tied last year in a match against yeomanry using military rifles at 200, 500, and 600 yards. Several of my men had never shot with anything but miniature rifles, nor beyond a range of 100 yards, and all the practice that they had had before the match was with .25 calibre rifles at 25, 50 and 100 yards. And yet, curiously enough, they made a higher score at 600 yards than their rivals. This shows that min-

ature rifle shooting is of some use in teaching men to shoot even with military rifles.

Men accustomed to handle shotguns, and therefore not afraid of noise and recoil, have no need to commence rifle practice with the .22, but may handle a rifle of heavier calibre from the first. Such pupils must, none the less, be content to make a beginning with a large target and at short ranges, and they should be *extremely* careful if using powerful rifles to have a safe background, passed as safe by an expert. Amateurs have strange ideas of what constitutes safety; I have had people to stand exactly in my line of aim beyond a fallow buck I was going to shoot at, thinking they were quite safe.

The Bisley "Running Deer" target which I describe later is the best means I know of for learning to shoot at real deer. A second target of this pattern was opened at the last Bisley meeting, and I hope in time still more will be needed.

Those who do not mind a little expense can have a special shotgun made to use for "rifle" practice at moving objects. For this purpose a single or double barrel 28 or 32 bore shotgun should be made with the most extreme choke possible. Such a weapon, at clay pigeons thrown from a trap, needs nearly as straight holding as a rifle. It must not, however, be mounted as a shotgun, but be fitted with rifle sights and a "bead drawn," exactly as though the weapon were a rifle. It enables one to practise a particular shot for an indefinite number of times by firing at a series of clay pigeons sent up from the machine adjusted to a given angle and strength, till one can make certain of that particular shot and know the exact allow-

ance for it. A series of trials, with the machine sending up its pigeons at different angles, will soon teach you how to make that shot and you instinctively, when shooting at a deer, do the same. The ideal stage is reached when, like a billiard-player, the marksman's eye intuitively calculates, "Such a speed and such an angle, therefore this allowance."

When a pupil has mastered all the above varieties of shooting at the moving target, but *not* before he has done so, he may allow himself to fire a little in the back or prone position at fixed targets and at ranges from 100 up to 1000 yards. I personally prefer the back position at game standing too far off to make certain of the shot otherwise. In this art I will not attempt to become an instructor—first, because there are plenty of excellent books upon the subject; and next, because I have no pretensions to be called a target shot with the rifle. I would, however, say this:

The better a man learns to shoot in slow shooting at a fixed target, in the prone or back position, or even when kneeling, the worse shot he will become for shooting at moving targets or for quick shooting, and for shooting in the standing position, and vice versa. I leave these words as I wrote them in my first book on the rifle, in spite of the controversy they have caused, because that is my experience.

To become an all-round shot one must, of course, learn to shoot in all styles, but any man who wishes to become a *practical shot*, and to *remain one*, must be very careful not to overdo deliberate shooting. There are a few exceptional men who can be pointed out as first-class at fixed targets and who are also good shots at moving objects. All

my experience leads me to repeat that nothing spoils snap-shooting, timing and swing with the rifle so much as indulgence in shooting at stationary targets.

The National Rifle Association naturally has to provide more fixed targets than moving targets, its supply of targets being strictly calculated to meet the demand for each of them, but I feel sure that the National Rifle Association only needs to find a demand for more moving targets in order to provide them. A mounted cavalryman at a 200- or 250-yards range would be a useful target. An extremely useful target, if only the Bisley ranges admitted of it, would be ranges from 60 to 150 yards, at a stationary figure of a deer which has to be shot at downhill. One hardly ever gets any target practice at an object down hill; when such a shot occurs in deer-stalking—and it is generally more or less down hill that deer are shot at—the shooter is in doubt as to where to aim (high or low). The popular idea is that when you shoot at a deer much below you you ought to aim low, so as not to shoot over him, the trajectory being flatter in shooting down hill, owing to gravity assisting, instead of retarding, the bullet. Any one practising for deer-stalking should try to get a range where this down-hill shooting can be practised. Shooting up hill can be practised in rook-shooting.

A feature of miniature rifle ranges at most places of popular amusement is the “jungle,” and although it is a fashion with target shots to decry the value of practice at the “jungle” I am of a different opinion, considering practice of this kind to afford valuable instruction in rifle shooting.

The “jungle” consists of a stage representing rough

ground across which run mechanical rabbits, tigers, etc. When struck, the animals fall over, and then right themselves for the next shot. A good form of practice is to use an automatic or repeating rifle or select two single shot rifles, which are sighted alike, and to use them alternately, having an attendant to load and to hand them to you. One should endeavour to get a certain number of rabbits without letting one pass unshot-at. This is quick practice, and two men may have a good match at, say, fifty rabbits each, to see who can knock over that number first. Another way to practise snap-shooting is to select one of the "animals" and by quick shooting to keep it down. The figures when struck fall over, and in about a second come up again, rather deliberately. If you are very quick with an automatic or repeating rifle, as soon as you have knocked down the rabbit you can get another shot and knock it down again just as it reappears, and keep this up all the way across.

It is usually possible to make an arrangement with the owner of a "jungle" by which one can bring one's own rifle and shoot at so much an hour. This plan is cheaper than paying the proprietor so much a shot, or fitting up a private "jungle."

Most repeating .22 calibre rifles are too powerful for use at such a range, as they take long or medium .22 calibre cartridges, which knock the rabbits about. The usual "jungle" ammunition is the short .22 calibre cartridge, or even .22 bulleted caps.

A private "jungle" can be made to stand heavier ammunition being shot at it, and I think one which would stand the long .22 rifle cartridge would be an improvement,

as then all the different sorts of repeaters and automatic rifles of that calibre could be used. I believe that an automatic rifle cannot be made to shoot the .22 short cartridge, as there is not enough recoil to operate the extracting and loading mechanism. But of course it can be used in repeaters or "pump" rifles.

The Bisley "Running Deer" can now be hired by the afternoon and is best of all.



CHAPTER II

THE "RUNNING DEER" TARGET

MOST moving targets are representations of deer, wild boar, or men. I will describe the "deer" in use at Wimbledon and latterly at Bisley. I believe it to be one of the first moving targets ever used at the National Rifle Association meeting, and it remains, with slight modifications, the best of its kind.

The cartoon by Sir Edwin Landseer for the "stag's" outline is hung, framed, in the National Rifle Association's offices, and the N. R. A. might use it as a fitting heading to certificates of efficiency at this target.

I have an idea that Landseer also used this drawing for his picture (or perhaps it was a cartoon, in coloured crayons, which was destroyed in a fire at a shooting lodge) of a stag chased by a deerhound. I certainly seem to recollect such a picture with a deer-hound galloping with lifted head preparing to spring at the deer's throat.

The original Bisley arrangement was as follows :

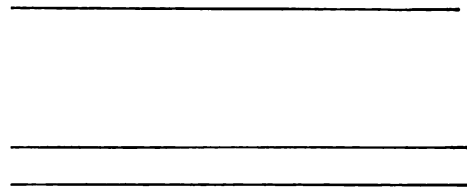
A line of small-gauge rails was laid with a dip in the middle of the track. There was a straight run at either end of the track, and a set of stop-buffers at each finish. A light trolley ran upon these rails, and the straight finish at either end was so calculated that the trolley naturally



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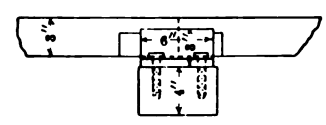
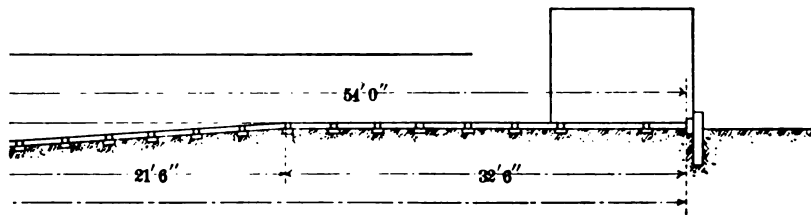
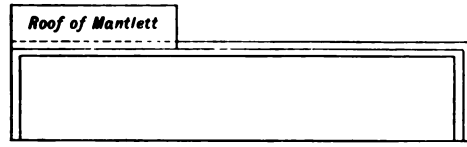
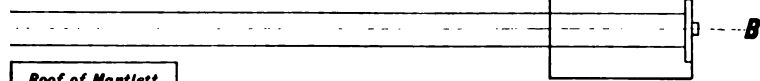
THE WIMBLEDON "RUNNING DEER" RANGE

After T. Blinks

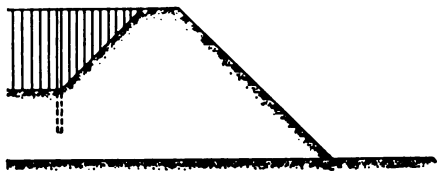


Dummy Target

Shed for Running Deer

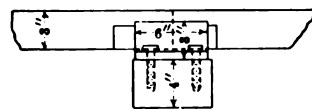
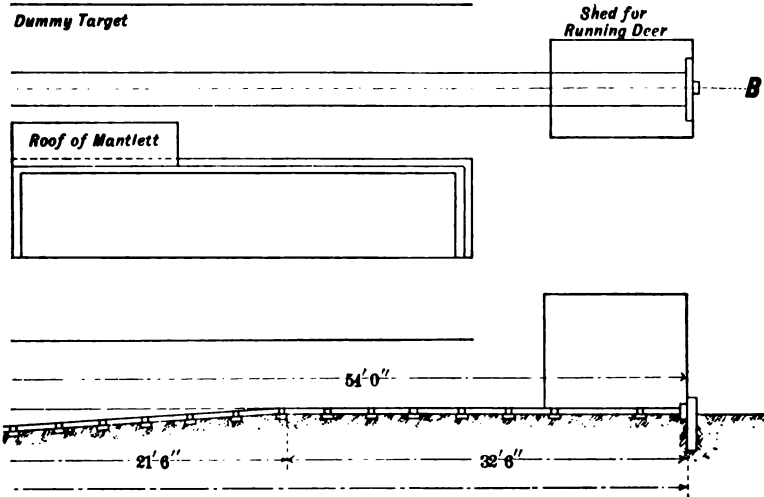
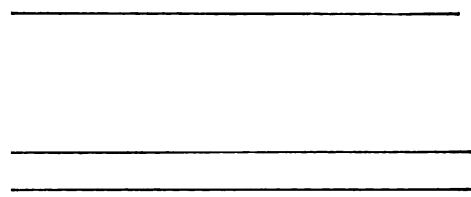


Double Chair

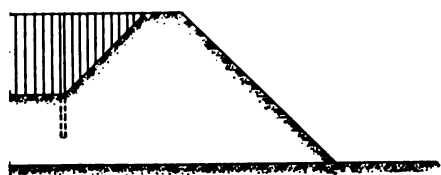


End Elevation

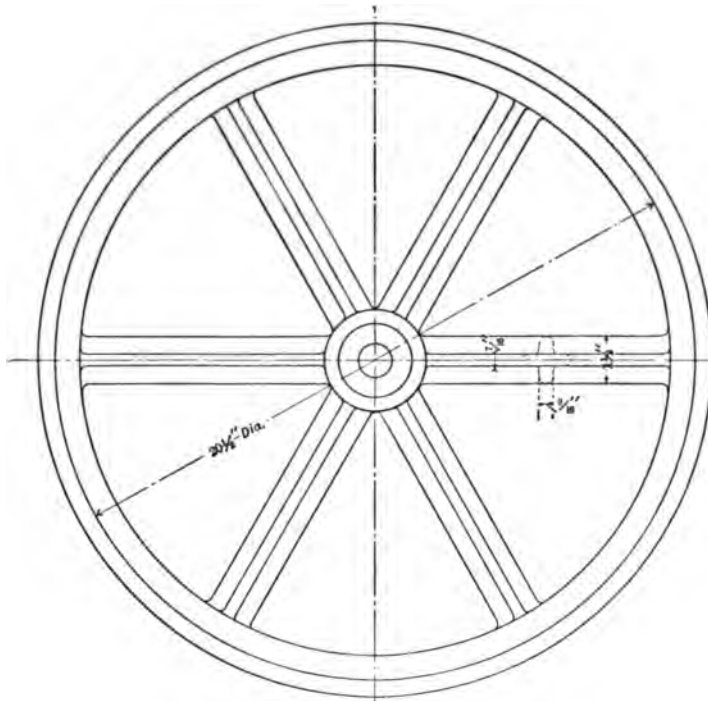




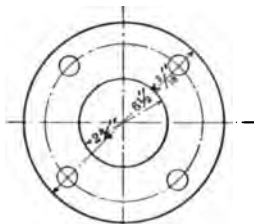
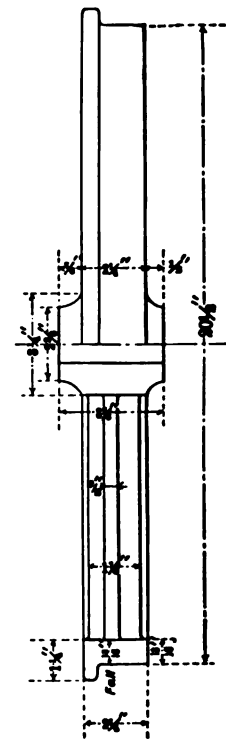
Double Chair



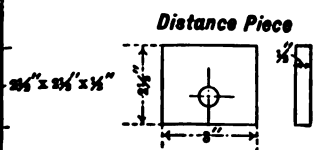
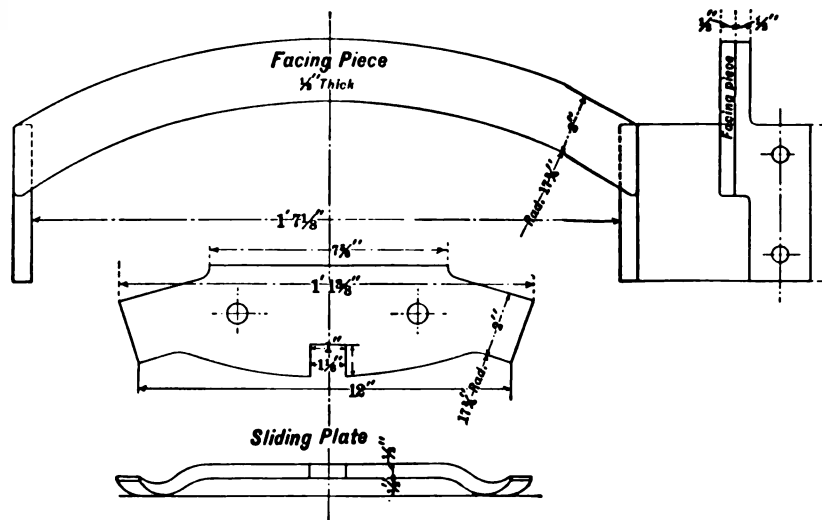
End Elevation



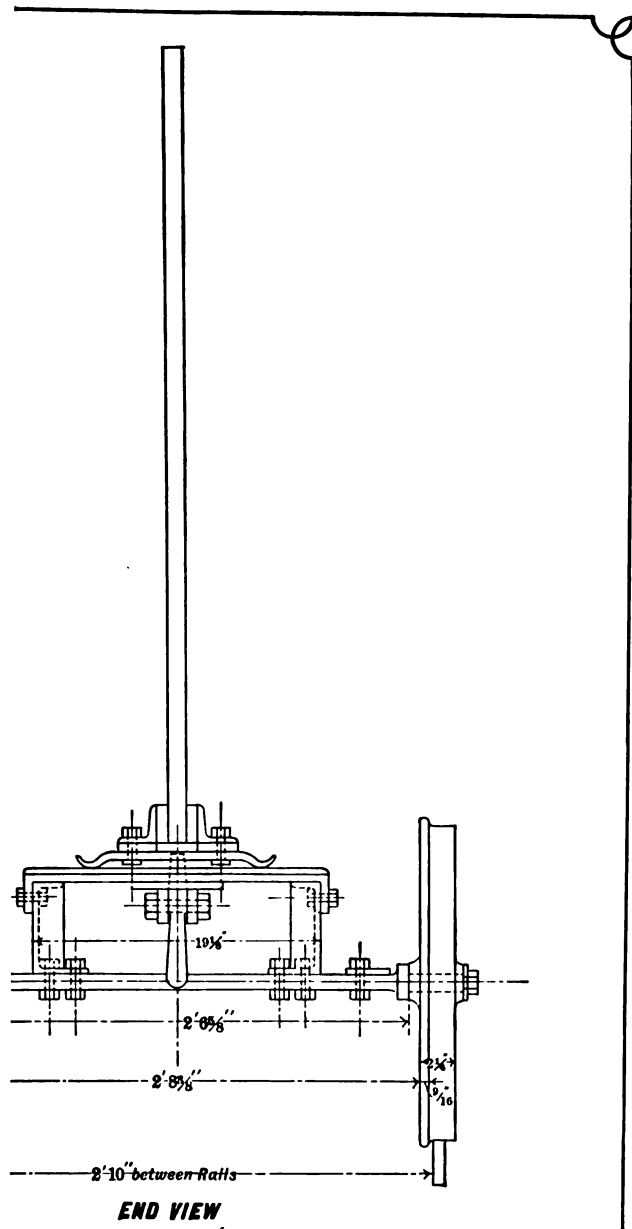
Cast Iron Wheels
4 of this



Washer Plates
2 of this



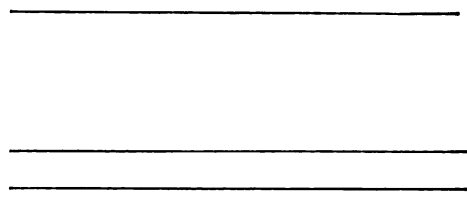
DETAILS OF RUNNING DEER



RUNNING DEER

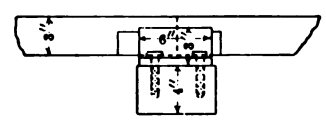
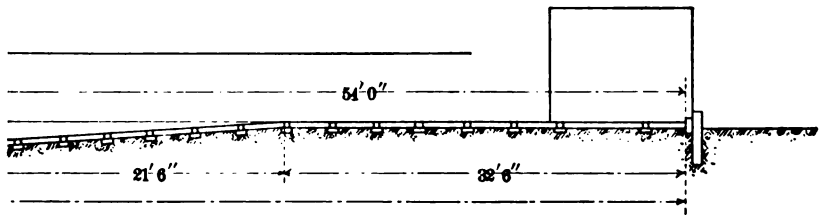
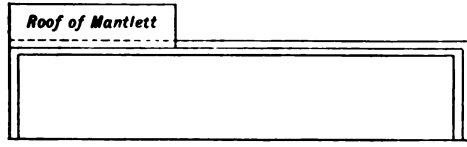
Scale 1" = 1 Foot



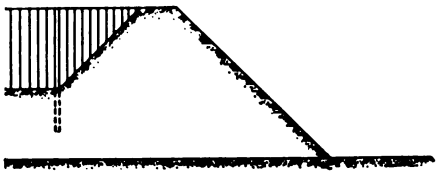


Dummy Target

Shed for Running Deer

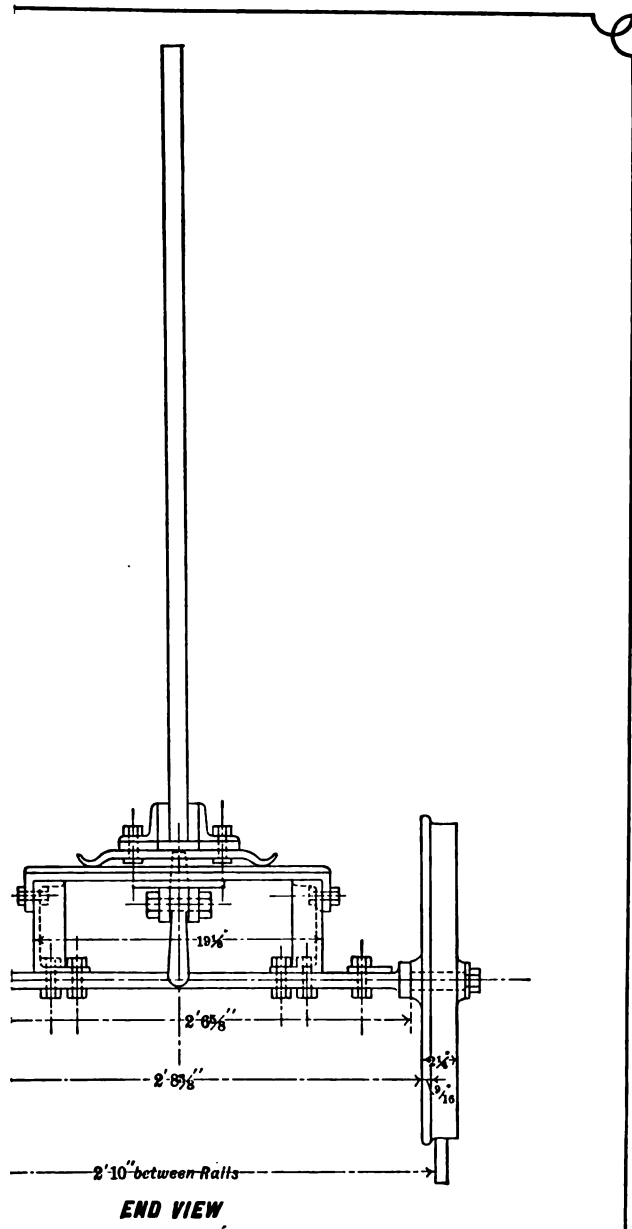


Double Chair



End Elevation

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RUNNING DEER

Scale 1"=1 Foot

The "Running Deer" Target 37

slowed up to a stop as it reached the buffers. A low mound, the whole length of the "run," protected the trolley and its wheels from being hit from the firing point.

The trolley was started by men at either end of the track, and their push, added to its own momentum, was sufficient to run it up the further rise.

The stag was mounted on a turn-table, on the trolley, and the "run" consisted of about twenty yards, at the rate of twelve miles an hour, a "five-minute gait" as we trotting men call it, too slow for a frightened deer, but about the speed at which the stags at the tail end of the herd, before the first shot has been fired, canter past in a deer drive.

The men at either end of the track marked the position of the hits on the "dummy deer" (described later), and obliterated on the "deer" any hits which had been made. They then turned the "deer" on its turn-table, and awaited the signal to send it off on the return run.

The "deer" runs in front of the face of a bank; a similar bank, but in this case on the near side of the rails, serves to protect the markers, who stand at the level ends of the track. A danger post is placed just below the screens on each descent, and a fine of ten shillings is imposed on every shot fired except when the "deer" is between these posts.

I reproduce here the full working drawings for constructing such a range, which were kindly given me by the late secretary of the National Rifle Association, Colonel MacKinnon. It will be noticed that the divisions are made as they originally were at Wimbledon, but I do not like to alter Colonel MacKinnon's drawings. Such a deer would

cost about £250, irrespective of erection and earthworks, but if the deer is of canvas and wood it would come much cheaper.

This was the old way of doing it, as shown in the diagrams. Now there are two canvas and wood deer, facing opposite directions joined at an angle of 90 degrees, hinged on the trolley, which are raised alternately, the deer not in use lying horizontally and therefore not seen from the firing point.

The marking is managed as follows: A dummy stag surmounts the bank at each end of the run. On the "stag's" arrival at either end of his run one marker obliterates the hit (or hits, in case of a right and left shot) on the "stag," either with distemper paint on the iron deer, or in the case of a canvas deer by covering them with a paper patch, while another signals the hits by means of a rod with a coloured disc on the end, with which he points out the hits on the dummy stag at his end of the mound.

The original "stag" was made of iron and carried an eight-inch circle incised round the place where the heart was *supposed* to be. A hypercritical mind might have objected that this was a generous measure, and that stags carry their hearts lower and more forward than the position indicated by this circle.

This circle represented the bull's-eye, and a hit within it was counted four points. The circle was not, of course, visible from the firing point.

Other incised lines divided the neck from the shoulder and the forelegs from the body. This "inner" space, counting three points, was completed by a vertical line set some two inches behind the bull in such a way that the



Photo by W. Rosch

INDIAN BLACK BUCK—SHOWING HOW THE BUCK RISES ABOVE THE LINE OF AIM

“inner” area was shaped rather like a round cheese of which a third had been cut vertically away.

Another vertical line dividing the body just forward of the stifle, one cutting off the hind legs at the stifle, and one cutting off the tail completed the divisions of the stag. An “outer,” counting two, was allowed for a hit on the legs, neck, or tail, or the middle of the deer—between the two vertical lines. There was no “magpie” division then. The remainder of the body—“the haunch”—not only counted nothing towards the score, but was penalised by a fine of half a crown for each hit recorded upon it.

The entire surface of the iron target was coloured a rusty brown with distemper paint, and a dab of the paint obliterated the mark of the bullet as soon as the scorer had noted it. This was not the best possible method of obliterating a hit, for distemper paint required some time in which to dry, and until the new spot had dried it was of a darker colour than the remainder of the carcass. Hence if several shots were placed on or near the “bull,” and painted over, the deer would be running with a visibly darker patch over the “bull,” a great help to whoever chanced to take his shots at such a time.

The dummy stags, for marking, were similarly divided, but were painted white with black divisions, and a black bull’s-eye. Hits were signalled by means of coloured discs mounted on the marking poles. A white disc to show against the black bull’s-eye signalled “*Bull—4*”; a red one signalled “*Inner—3*”; an “*Outer—2*” was shown by a black disc; while the “*Haunch—fine 2s. 6d.*” was marked by a black cross.

An iron “stag” did well enough against the soft lead

The "Running Deer" Target 41

bullets driven by black powder which were used at that time, although I have known it almost knocked off the rails by a shot from an elephant gun. After a while, however, it became badly battered by express rifles and a steel "deer" took its place. Shooting was increasing in accuracy and the steel "stag's" heart now only measured six inches in diameter; of course, as before, indicated by an incised line in such a way as to be invisible from the firing point.

But presently the steel "stag" had to follow his iron predecessors—nickel-coated, small-bore bullets driven by smokeless powder having made him a source of danger through the liability of bullets to fly off at an angle after impact. The third and last kind of deer, therefore, consists of canvas stretched on a frame. He has also, more's the pity, lost his horns.

The canvas stag is harder to hit and to make a high score on than the metal ones. A lead bullet, especially if it had a very hollow point, made a big splash on striking the iron target, even more so if it happened to impinge on one of the rivets in it. Every shot which touches the bull's-eye line counts a bull, and thus a number of shots which would miss the canvas bull splashed well within the circles on the iron or steel one. On those targets, again, one both saw the hit and heard the impact of one's bullet—an immense aid when firing double shots at the running deer. With the canvas "stag" you do not hear a hit (unless it hits the wooden frame) or see a hit, especially with a small-bore bullet, and when you see a cloud of dust on the butt behind it is not always possible to decide if this has been flung up by a miss in front of the deer or by a bullet which has pierced the canvas and imbedded itself in the bank behind. One's

first shot is, for this reason, no help in judging where to aim the second, when firing a right and left; for the only certainty obtainable comes from the marker's signal at the end of each run. At a stationary target one can hear the bullet go through the canvas at short ranges, but the rumble of the trolley drowns this sound in the case of the running deer.

The colour of the original Wimbledon deer was so uncertain against the background that several of us asked to have it altered so as more closely to resemble the hue of the natural animal, and be more of a contrast to its environment. We found it more distinct after a shower of rain, as then the "stag" looked a dark, almost burnt umber colour against the sand-bank behind it, whereas, on a dry day, when the sun got low, it was very difficult to see the colour, yellow ocre, harmonising so completely with the sand of the background. Consequently, there used to be a great rush among experts to get their scores shot just after a shower. Our request (as all reasonable suggestions of competitors always are) was adopted, and then the "running deer" was as perfect an artificial target as could be devised, and it was a distinct misfortune when improved modern weapons made the metal animal unsafe. Both stags, the steel and the iron, are now in honourable retirement as ornaments in front of the N. R. A. offices, and the large dents caused by the elephant gun, one in the haunch, may be seen upon the latter.

The "stag" has to be of one uniform colour at Bisley, owing to every moment being precious, but for a private "running deer" it would be an improvement if the "stag" were painted natural colours. The dark neck and especially

The "Running Deer" Target 43

the light rump and tail are a distraction to the eye, and it is important to shoot well forward without having one's attention distracted by them. For instance, a rabbit's white bobbing tail, in a crossing shot, is often the cause of its being missed, as the shooter has his attention distracted by it, and shoots as if the white tail were what he wanted to hit, instead of the rabbit's head; consequently, he shoots too far back and misses behind, like the beginner on a bicycle who rides into anything he looks at.



SCORE WITH WHICH THE AUTHOR WON THE "FRASER," IN 1907, AT BISLEY: SIX SHOTS
AT 110 YARDS AT THE "RUNNING DEER" TARGET

The canvas "stag" has been improved by the addition of an extra division, "the magpie." The value of a "bull" has not been raised to the usual five of a fixed target, but remains at four. An "inner" ring is drawn round the bull, with a 12-in. diameter, and counts three; the remainder of the old "inner" (but with the vertical line altered to a

convex one) is thus the "magpie," value two, and the old "outer" is reduced to score only one point. It is rather a pity that the divisions do not have the same values as the stationary targets have, as when a score is published it does not correspond with the fixed target scores; for instance, a highest possible score of seven shots at the latter counts thirty-five points, whereas if a seven-shot highest possible score were made at the "deer" it would only count twenty-eight points, equal to an average of only "inners" at a fixed target; and I have consequently known uncomplimentary remarks to be made on a good score at the "running deer" by people who did not know of this discrepancy.

The old target was once, for a few days, fitted with a crank arrangement on the front axle intended to give the galloping motion of a galloping deer, but this was abandoned, as it got out of order and tended to make the deer jump off the rails. This objection would not apply to the lighter canvas stag, as it was the top-heavy weight of the iron deer which caused it to run off the rails when swayed by the crank. Such a crank, on one or both wheels, would be an improvement on a private "running deer" when the additional cost was no object. It would be still better to secure the galloping by an eccentric instead of a crank, as it would tend less to jerk the deer off the rails.

I consider that the forelegs of the N. R. A. deer are not in the best possible position. Being stretched forward they afford a steady point at which to aim, whereas the motion of a live deer's legs gives no fixed point, and the contrast would disconcert any one whose practice had been confined to the "stag," whose forelegs give a point to aim at. I should have the forelegs in the position which

The "Running Deer" Target 45

they are in when a stag rises in a jump, tucked up out of the way, if they cannot be made to move like those of a live deer galloping. In the sketch I have made of my score I have drawn the "stag" not as he appears at Bisley but as a real stag appears when hit, I made this score with a .275 Bigby-Mausser.

A live stag, especially if he has big horns, carries his head as steadily as possible when running, galloping as a man walks from his hips when he is carrying a heavy pack on his head. If you watch a heavy stag, with a good "head," galloping, the top of his horns can be seen to move in as steady a line as the head of a man on a bicycle, but his entire body, from the head downward, is in constant undulating movement. The neck bends and undulates under the steady head much like the constant swaying of a flag from the staff of a moving river steamer. The end of the nose, or rather just in front of it, is, therefore, a legitimate point of aim when firing at an artificial running deer target, and if the head and neck are stretched forward in a natural position, this aim affords good practice for the real animal. When the head is stretching forward naturally in a hard gallop, a line drawn through the eye to the corner of the mouth should be almost horizontal; when very "done," a stag's nose points lower.

With the modern small-bore rifle and smokeless powder it is unnecessary to make the long allowance, in front, of earlier days. An aim *only just* in front of the chest allows enough for the speed at which the Bisley "running deer" moves, when using a Lee-Metford, Mannlicher, or Mauser. The actual allowances I make are, if running to the right, eight inches, and to the left six inches with a Mauser, and



The "Running Deer" Target 47

about two inches more each way with a Lee-Metford (this is with the blunt bullet). The new weapons and ammunition have thus minimised the risk of shooting too far back, and so making a haunch, which was a danger in the old days of comparatively slow, big-bore rifles. A "shot-and-ball gun," owing to the large bore and small charge, "goes up" very slowly to the "stag," and the use of such a weapon is, consequently, very liable to make you score "haunches," unless you aim well forward.

When I speak of aiming at the end of a forefoot, or at the deer's nose, in order to make a bull's-eye, it must be understood that the rifle needs to be sighted appropriately for an aim at the nose or at the toe to be the proper elevation to score a bull's-eye.

To make a bull's-eye while aiming at the toe of the leading forefoot of the running deer, the rifle must be sighted to shoot some six inches, at least, too high, and if the aim is taken at the end of the nose the sighting should be about as much too low for normal aiming, but an aim so forward is not necessary with high-power rifles.

When using the Bisley "running deer" for practice or for sighting for deer-stalking, it must be remembered that shooting at Bisley is done under better conditions of light, owing to its being earlier in the year, than would be the case in Scotland. Consequently, if you intend to use the same sights when deer-stalking, it is better to have the rifle shoot a little too low at Bisley. As a rule, the worse the light the higher one shoots (owing to unconsciously seeing more of the front sight in a bad light). This, as I have mentioned elsewhere, applies only to open sights; a peep or Lyman sight gives the same elevation in all lights.

There is a "Running Man" target at Bisley as well as a "Running Deer." In the early days, when the "man" was made of metal, he carried a rifle at the trail. Shooters soon found that if one put up the 200-yards sight, to allow for aiming so low, the end of the "man's" rifle (which projected well in front of him) was just the right measure for the allowance necessary to make a bull's-eye with the regulation Martini rifle. There was, consequently, much lamentation when some one shot off the end of the "running man's" rifle and spoiled it as an "allowance measure!"

The "running man" was harder to hit than the "deer," because he was not even so deep through his chest (horizontally) as the deer's "inner." A shot scoring a "magpie," or even a far-back "inner," on the deer would, therefore, be a miss on the man. There is now a nice fat canvas "man" at Bisley, who runs sideways; easier to hit in consequence. The proper allowance in front of him with a Lee-Netford is his own width to the right and two inches less to the left.

By the way, this greater difficulty in hitting a vertical than a horizontal target, when it is moving across the line of fire, shows that if one has to run across a line of fire it is safer to keep as upright as possible.

These targets may be shot at from two positions—when standing erect, and when sitting with an elbow on one or both knees, the feet being set rather wide apart. "Target shots" try shooting in the prone position at the deer! I saw at least a dozen try it this year; they *sometimes* hit the "man" off. The sitting position is a good one for firing at real deer, particularly when they are

The "Running Deer" Target 49

standing or moving at a fairly regular and not very rapid rate, and not *too close* to you. It is certainly an effective position for hitting the "running deer" or "running man" targets if the marksman happens to be suitably built for that position, but a stout man cannot breathe freely in this position.

To shoot at these targets, whether standing or sitting, face rather towards the direction to which they run, and not that from which they appear, so as to be in the easiest position at the moment the rifle is fired.

If you are shooting at these targets in a competition, one shot at a time, it is easier to fire when the man or deer is on the rise at the *end of the run*, for the target is then moving less rapidly. For practice for game shooting, you should learn to take your shot as soon as possible after the target appears beyond the danger post.

When the competition allows two shots to each run, fire the first on the descent and the second on the rise. As, unlike shooting at real deer, you know exactly the path which the stag will take, stand prepared to "snap" him the moment he passes the first danger post and starts his run; this gives you the longest possible time to get an accurate aim for your second shot.

In the old days of black powder we used often to have to shoot our second barrels through the smoke, at the spot where we knew the "stag" ought to be, and by practice we often scored "bulls" by so doing, but now there is no impediment to seeing the deer properly for the second barrel.

At the first shot the target is moving more rapidly and descending, at the second it is ascending and moving

more slowly. Therefore aim low and forward for the first shot, and higher and not so much forward with the second barrel. Do not check your swing after the first discharge, but continue to follow the "deer" with the rifle until you have fired the second shot. This applies equally to double-barrel, automatic or repeating rifles of the Winchester or Colt pattern. With most military-pattern repeaters you have to take down the rifle from your shoulder after each shot—a great fault, in my opinion.

If you are shooting from the right shoulder owing to swinging to the left being easier less allowance need be made than when shooting to the right; also in the latter case you are apt to shoot lower.

It is important to remember that your object, if prize shooting at the Bisley "running deer," is to hit the bull's-eye, but that in firing at a live stag it is better to strike him in the shoulder—say four inches in front of the heart. Unless, therefore, you are shooting at the running target for prizes, treat it as though it were the real beast, and shoot for the shoulder or lower part of the neck, instead of trying for the bull's-eye. At the "running deer" a hit a little too far back counts an "inner," three (and may win you a prize); at a real deer it "counts" the rest of the day wasted tracking the wounded stag, and perhaps finally losing him "over the march."

The above hints for shooting at the Bisley running targets embody the teaching of my own experience. Quicker shots will do well to aim a trifle farther back than the points indicated by me; slower shots will aim a fraction forward.

Entries are a shilling a shot in "pool shooting"; the

The "Running Deer" Target 51

entrance money is divided between the winners, less the N. R. A's percentage, deducted for range expenses. If a man can shoot fairly well—say make a bull's-eye on the deer once in four shots—he can about pay expenses. There are also prizes at 2s. 6d. entrance fee for from four to eight shots; the fine for hitting a haunch has been abolished.

It seems to me a pity that the donors of prizes at Bisley so seldom offer prizes for the "deer". I believe that a *really good* series of prizes, perhaps with the addition of a challenge cup for the best score, would do more towards encouraging practical shooting than the endless prizes offered for shooting at stationary targets.

I have already mentioned the sitting or standing positions as the best for these targets. They are, indeed, the only two which are of much use. Kneeling is a cramped position, and one can't swing in it.

In the sitting position, one may rest both elbows on the knees, or the left elbow only on the left knee, or *vice versa* for a left-handed man.

If right-eyed you can swing better when resting the left elbow on the left knee. A bank at the Bisley firing point gives a further choice of attitude, since you can take up a position which lets the feet rest on a lower level than that on which you are seated. I, personally, prefer to have my feet slightly lower than where I sit and to shoot off one knee. The position should always face toward the point at which the target is to disappear, and this also varies according as the "run" is to the right or left. When sitting more "allowance" must be made than when shooting in the standing position, owing to the swing of the arms and body being hampered. Do not get into the

trick of aiming at a spot on the stop butt and shooting when the "stag" arrives there. It is no use for winning prizes, and also ruins your shooting.

I saw a man try aiming at one of the danger posts, and fire just as the bull's-eye of the deer came opposite it. As, of course, a third of the "deer" was past the post as he fired, he was promptly fined ten shillings for "shooting when the deer was past the danger post" and also, incidentally, owing to having no "swing" or "allowance" on his rifle, half a crown for hitting the haunch!

CHAPTER III

ROOK-, RABBIT-, AND HARE-SHOOTING

ROOK-SHOOTING

SHOOTING rooks with a rifle is good practice, but even with the weakest charge and weapons of the smallest calibre, I am never free from fears as to where a bullet may fall.

Any of the small .22 and .25 calibre rifles, mentioned as suitable for a beginner, will do for rook-shooting, and the Lyman peep hind-sight is particularly good in this kind of shooting. Rooks afford good practice for flying shots, for the old birds usually sail round and round well up in the air.

RABBIT-SHOOTING

Rabbits are the only kind of living target at which most people are likely to have an opportunity of using a rifle, unless it be an odd day's shooting at the rooks. And as the poor rabbit is considered vermin, which must be "kept down," he is certainly better off when killed by a good rifle shot than slowly strangling to death in a snare, or suffering for hours with a torn and broken leg in a steel trap. By the way, I have seen it recommended to wrap a few strands of copper wire round the lower part of the jaws of a steel trap, so that it cannot *quite* close when sprung and will hold without breaking a rabbit's leg. I

wish there were some way to strangle him at once in a snare instead of letting him sit there with bloodshot eyes staring out of his head as he slowly suffocates to death.

Once when I found a rabbit in a snare I took off the loop which was strangling him, put him down and waited to see him run off. He was afraid to move, and even if gently pushed from behind he resisted and shrank back expecting the dreadful increased sense of suffocation he would feel each time he tightened the noose. People are horrified when reading of the tortures of the Inquisition, and yet they sit placidly in Church thinking they will be "saved" after having set snares which will torture sensitive animals.

When shooting rabbits with a rifle, always use a weapon which will kill outright. This requires thought on two points. Too small a calibre means that the rabbit is not killed outright unless he happens to be hit in the brain. On the other hand, rabbits are usually shot in places where the use of a large calibre or heavy charge may be dangerous, should a bullet go beyond or glance. A rabbit struck by a bullet of insufficient size will go off and die slowly; even if hit through the heart, he can usually wriggle into a hole.

The object of all shooting should be to kill game as instantaneously and painlessly as possible. It should be a rule never to go on till you have accounted for what you have shot at, as dead, or as gone away missed clean. A wounded animal ought always to be followed up and killed if it be at all possible. Unfortunately it is only too common to hear men say, "Let's get on—there's no use in looking any longer!" when the finding of a wounded animal or bird proves at all troublesome.

A .22 calibre even when shooting the long rifle cart-

Rook-, Rabbit-, and Hare-Shooting 55

ridge is not quite big enough to make one sure of killing a rabbit outright. I prefer a larger calibre with a small charge and a hollow-nosed bullet. The small charge, of course, makes the judging of distance more difficult; but this is good practice, and it is far better to miss a few shots than to wound without killing, and the hollow-nosed bullet is less apt to glance.

The .22 automatic Winchester is perhaps an admissible weapon against rabbits, as, if quick, one can give a wounded animal a second shot before he can wriggle away into his hole. I wonder if a "spitzen" pointed .22 bullet would make a "stopping" bullet. Given such ground as a deer forest, where flying bullets would not be dangerous, it would be pretty practice to ferret rabbits and shoot them with this weapon as they bolted from their holes. I know a man who has shot bolting rabbits with his deer-stalking .4 bore express rifle!

BLUE-HARE-DRIVING

Blue hare drives, in Scotland, afford good practice for rifles. The hares always prefer to run up hill. The beaters, therefore, walk the lower grounds, and the guns are lined on the ridges. They usually carry shot guns on these drives, but the lolloping progress of an old blue hare, and the way he sits up on his hind legs to take an occasional look round, always make me feel that the shotgun is too easy a weapon to use. He is a good mark for a rook rifle, however, and if the shooter observes ordinary caution not to fire toward the line of beaters, or when the bullet may glance off a stone, there is no danger in its use. The great point is to have small charges, and not too powerful a rifle.



CHAPTER IV DEER-STALKING

I HAVE a preference for a double-barrel rifle. Having killed nearly all my deer with double-barrelled expresses may prejudice me, but I think a double-barrel balances better than a single barrel, and it also comes up to the shoulder more level, without the tendency to cant to one side, which is the fault of some modern sporting adaptations of military rifles. I give herewith an illustration of my favourite .4 double-barrel.

My second reason for the preference is that most small-bore high-velocity rifles are furnished with sights which are placed high above the barrel, an awkward arrangement; but on the other hand I have seen some wonderfully neat, well-balanced, handy, and short single-barrels, especially the new short Mauser rifle made for chamois-shooting.¹ If expense is an object, of course a single is much better than a double rifle, the difficulty of making the barrels shoot alike being the

¹ See frontispiece.



RIGBY-MAUSER .275 CALIBRE WITH WHICH AUTHOR WON THE "FRASER" IN 1906 AND 1907

chief reason of the high price of a good double-barrel rifle. The Rigby-Mausser rifle illustrated here is the one I won the "Fraser Running-Deer" prize with in 1906 and 1907 at Bisley.

My continental experience has led me to like a sling on a rifle. It is a great convenience, leaving the hands free for climbing or for pushing through thick cover, while it is a rest for the arms to be able to sling the rifle during a long tramp, or on the way to, or from, the ground. There are many ways of slinging it, over the shoulder, round the neck, etc.

The bottom of the "V" of the hind sight on a deer-stalking rifle should not lie too close to the barrel. A "V" which is close down on the barrel is difficult to align, and the mirage which forms on a barrel in hot weather, or after several shots have been fired in quick succession, also obscures a low sight. For the same reason, and also to prevent a glare when in sunlight, the rib of the rifle should be chequered or otherwise roughened.

I imagine that it might be an advantage to paint the whole metal work, except the sights, a dull grey, if one does not mind spoiling the appearance of the weapon; this would prevent the glint from the weapon frightening deer.

The front sight should be large and dead-white in colour. Most rifles are sent out from the makers with too small front sights, and these are consequently hard to find in a poor light. They are also too shiny; if of white metal, they should be "mat." The great thing for deer-stalking is to have a front sight which enables one to obtain an *approximately* true alignment *instantaneously*,



rather than one for extremely accurate aim when time is no object and the light is perfect. Most deer are shot in a bad light, early in the morning or late in the afternoon, so that too fine sights are a mistake.

The ideal rifle for deer-stalking would be one which shoots from 10 up to 300 yards without needing any alteration of elevation, gives a killing blow if the deer is struck anywhere near a vital place, makes no noise, and is light to carry; incidentally also having very small, light cartridges, and loading automatically and noiselessly.

I will take these various points separately, and show how nearly the ideal has been reached up to the present time.

1st. Trajectory. The original deer-stalking rifles, being made of large calibre, half an inch or more (*i. e.*, .5, .57, etc.), and shooting a very small charge of black powder and leaden bullets, required a change of elevation every few yards, a miscalculation often being enough to make a clean miss at a stag. In order to give an *apparently* flat trajectory, they were sometimes sighted for 200 yards, which made them shoot far over a deer at 50 yards. Their advantage was that if a deer was hit he was almost sure to be dropped by the big bullet, and the noise of the shot for black powder was comparatively slight. The accuracy, also, if the distance was judged right, was very good.

In order to overcome the high trajectory, the "express" rifle was introduced by Mr. Purdey. The "express" system consisted of putting in as large a charge of black powder as could be used without causing the soft leaden bullet to "strip" and lose accuracy.

The leaden bullet, if it has too much power behind it, is forced straight through the bands of the rifling, instead of following them; it therefore "keyholes," or turns sideways in its flight, which destroys all accuracy.

Rifles of .5 calibre, made to shoot $4\frac{1}{2}$ drachms of black powder, shot accurately enough for deer-stalking, up to 200 yards, though of course they were easily beaten for accuracy at a target by rifles shooting less than half that charge. These rifles shot about an inch high at 50 yards (if sighted for 100 yards) and dropped some three inches at 200 yards. Their weak points were the difficulty of judging distance from 100 to 200 yards, and the great noise of the explosion, which made one shot frighten away most of the deer on a beat. The recoil also was very severe. These rifles shot hollow-pointed bullets, which were made in this way both to lighten the bullet, whilst keeping it in shape long enough to insure its accurate flight, and also that it should open out and give more shock to the animal struck. The idea was that if a bullet opens out, and stops in the body of the deer, it expends its full energy on the deer, whereas a solid bullet passes through, wasting its power, and also makes a smaller hole.

I have always preferred the solid bullet, in spite of these disadvantages, as I do not like making a mess of the deer. The "express" was about the limit possible with a black powder and leaden bullets.

When smokeless powders were invented, much more power could be used, but nickel-coated bullets became necessary to prevent the bullet's "stripping." The calibre in consequence could be much reduced, and rifles are now made for deer-stalking of as small a calibre as .275



DEER-STALKING: GETTING THE WIND

(smaller than rook or rabbit rifles of the old style), and shooting a charge of smokeless powder which makes the rifle shoot practically up to 200 yards, or even further, without necessitating any change of elevation. The recoil and noise are also very much reduced, and the smokelessness of the powder enables one to see the result of the shot and also to get in another shot at once.

Double-barrels on this principle have to be heavy to stand the strain. Another disadvantage is that the bullet is so small that it has either to be soft-pointed, have its point weakened, have diagonal slits made in the envelope, or be otherwise treated so that it shall expand on impact. This, in my opinion, is its great fault. I do not like the idea of making a big, ragged hole in a deer, and spoiling the looks of it when skinned. It does not appear workmanlike to me to bring in a deer all knocked about.

What is now wanted from inventors is a double-barrelled rifle weighing $5\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, shooting with even less noise and recoil than any present rifle, and killing with a clean hole in the deer instead of making a wound as if a dynamite shell had exploded in it. The double-barrel rifle made by Messrs. J. Purdey & Sons for me (see page 183), more nearly affords this ideal than any double rifle I know. The very light cordite double rifle made in Belgium has the disadvantage of the possibility of overloading, whilst the Purdey, having a special straight cartridge, cannot be loaded too heavily.

Some deer-stalkers like to say that they have killed so many stags with so many shots, and to endeavour to miss as few shots as possible is legitimate. It is not, however either sportsmanlike, nor good for one's reputation as a



DEER-STALKING. "THEY'RE AWAY"

“shot,” to buy such a boast at the price of never firing except when the shot is a very easy one, and a “standing one.” It would probably surprise a good many people to learn how few men who go deer-stalking have ever killed a deer moving, even at a walk, while fewer still are those who can kill a right and left when the stags are running past at the speed of a racehorse and bounding into the air, or who have even attempted to do so. A stag racing past you, down hill, and at a distance of, say, 200 yards, needs an allowance in front of over a length and a half or two lengths to bring him down with an express rifle. The newest high-power small-bore rifles have reduced this allowance. But remember that the spot the bullet should go is where the stag’s shoulder *will be* (both vertically and horizontally) at the moment when he is struck, *not* the position of that shoulder *at the moment of pressing the trigger*. For instance, if the stag is springing off his hind legs, as you fire at the level of his shoulders, you will miss under. If he is landing on his forelegs, with the same elevation you will shoot over him. If he is on the upward part of his bound, shoot high; if landing from his spring, aim low. I like, if possible, to shoot at running deer at the moment they are landing over a burn. By watching where the leading hinds land in jumping a burn or other obstacle in their course, you can often get a stag as he follows at the same place. If a stag drops, the rest often hesitate and give you a good chance.

The best spot to hit is the shoulder, well forward, and not the heart. The stag’s heart is perhaps three inches in diameter—an uncertain mark to hit in a galloping beast at long range. Very little above or below the heart may



DEER-STALKING. THE SHOT

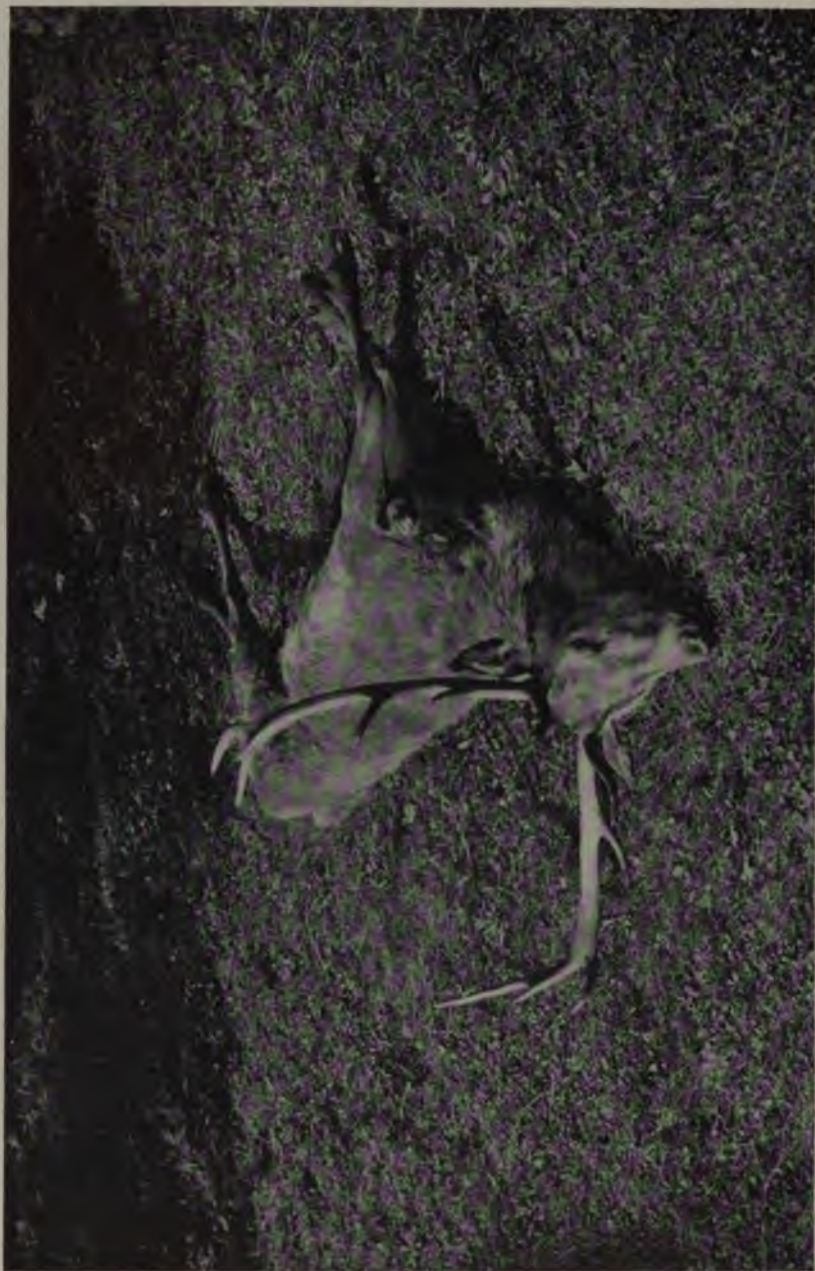
result in your losing him, or at best he will need a second shot, wasting precious moments, when you might be shooting at a fresh beast.

The shoulder offers a far larger mark in the first place. And secondly, a stag hit in the shoulder by a solid bullet, or one which does not expand too readily, drops at once and is done with. Such a wound pierces his lungs and usually disables one or both shoulders. A stag with "a body hit" (I omit the rather coarse term used by stalkers) can go far at a much faster speed than a man can follow him, and *keeps on going*; but one with broken shoulders can only kick himself along for a few yards.

Be sure your hollow-pointed, (or in the case of nickel-coated bullets soft-nosed or split) bullet has enough penetration. I have known a stag to have three successive shots in the shoulder with express bullets as he ran past me before he dropped, and I found all three shots were well in the shoulder, but the first two had merely flattened on his shoulder-blade, owing to having too hollow points, and consequently not sufficient penetration.

I may add a hint as to the choice of stags to shoot. When stalking deer, or watching the approach of a driven herd, with your glass try to form a mental picture of the different stags worth shooting. Commit to memory the number of stags in the herd, the shape of each one's horns, number of points, colour, and other distinguishing particulars. You will thus avoid the risk of emptying your rifle at smaller beasts, when the large stags are still to come into view—a common fault with inexperienced men, who get flurried, and blaze at the first thing with horns.

From the shooter's point of view, the conclusion of a



successful stalk or drive ought to see the best "heads" on the ground. If, however, your object is to raise a stock of good "heads" and heavy bodies in the forest, the stags to shoot are of course the bad "heads," and old or injured beasts. A man who wishes to improve his stud does not sell off his best horses.

If a stag, when hit, claps in his tail, or puts on a spurt in a crouching attitude with outstretched neck, he is finished and will not go far. You can safely leave him and take another. But if he drops instantly, be careful he does not get up again. If he throws up his head and rears, and then staggers off, he has only had a concussion. A graze at the top of the withers or head sometimes makes a stag drop, seemingly dead, but he gets up and gradually gets better and finally goes off. If, after lying a little time as if dead, a stag begins to raise his head, and make movements of rising, shoot him again immediately, whilst he is still within range.

My personal idea about sights for a stalking rifle is that these weapons should only have *one hind sight, a fixed one for one hundred yards*, and that the aim should be taken a little high or a little low, as you estimate the distance to be beyond or below that distance. To "judge the range and aim high or low" is better and quicker than raising leaves, and more accurate than changing the amount of fore sight taken.

My great objection to having a rifle fitted with leaves or a sliding bar or wind gage on the hind sight is the liability to get them inadvertently moved when one has to run or crawl. If it then happens that you have to take a quick shot, you may easily miss a stag, thanks to having



DEER-STALKING. GRALLOCHING

the 200 yards sight up when he is 20 yards off and noticing this too late. Or, if you do notice it, there may not be time to shut it down and take your shot as well. An adjustable telescope sight may be useful for chamois or antelope, but at the short range at which Scotch deer are shot there should be no need of one. Be sure your sights cannot move laterally, or you may give one a knock and consequently have the rifle shooting all to one side. Have them screwed on, not wedged in.

There is a very neat form of peep-sight made which folds down flush in the grip of the stock, but can be instantly raised by pushing a small slide (like a safety bolt), when the sight springs up of itself into position. There is, however, a weak point in this arrangement. In order to get the full benefit of a peep or Lyman sight there ought to be only this sight and the front sight. If you have a rifle fitted with a "V" hind sight, and then raise a peep-sight, you have a look through the "V" of the hind sight when using the peep-sight. In fact you are using two hind sights at the same time.

Many people try aiming in this way and think the peep-sight is useless, or even a hindrance. They are quite right about it *when using it in this way*. But that is not the way to use a peep-sight. There should be no ordinary hind sight in front of it. If you, therefore, have a peep-sight to put up when wanted, you should have the ordinary back sight made to fold down flush with the barrel, so as to be out of the way when the peep-sight is raised. If, however, the hind sight can fold down, it may get partly or entirely folded down unintentionally, and be very annoying. The only satisfactory thing would be to



have some way of making it permanently erect, held by a catch, unless this catch is released.

Stalking rifles should always be provided with a safety bolt, and one which will not get shifted in crawling. The action of crawling should put the bolt *on*, not have a tendency to take it off, as it is sometimes put on a rifle.

A very large white bead, to slip over or in front of the ordinary front sight, is useful, in case you need to shoot at a wounded deer after the light has failed. I have one hinged which folds down in a recess of the barrel just in front of the ordinary front sight when not in use and is at an angle of 45 degrees when in use so as to catch all the light possible. When it has grown very dark, also, it is frequently of service to remember that you can sometimes get an aim by drawing a bead against the sky, and then lowering your rifle upon the stag. In this case take a very careful fitting of the front sight into the "V" of the hind sight while you aim at the sky, then lower to the stag quickly and pull the moment you, by sense of direction, feel you are "on" him. If you try to *see* the front sight against him you only lose the alignment you have gained by aligning against the sky.

That this is not merely a theory on my part, but practical advice, I may mention that I won a rifle match this year by putting it into practice, when the light (it was getting towards night on an autumn evening) was so bad that the other shooters complained they could not see their fore sights on the target.

Before leaving a dropped deer which appears dead, always make sure that he is so by sticking him or putting a bullet through his neck. (A shot in the brain may

spoil his head for stuffing, and bulge his eyes out.) A stag is often only stunned by a shot, and it is both a source of vexation and needless cruelty to pass on only to find the beast gone when you return. A friend of mine tied a label with his name on it on the horns of an exceptionally fine roebuck he thought dead and the buck got up and went off!

Cartridges should be carried in some way which prevents their rattling against each other but does not hinder their easy extraction from the case. Most cartridge cases or belts require a lot of tugging or unbuttoning before it is possible to draw out the cartridges. A useful habit is to cause your tailor to furnish the lining of your right-hand pocket with a few compartments of a size to take one cartridge each, and tight enough, but not too deep, to hold them during a crawl without making it difficult to draw one out, whatever the position in which you chance to be at the moment of needing so to do. Some repeating rifles have clips holding five or more cartridges for quick insertion; one of these handy in a special pocket is useful. Take *enough* cartridges; you *may* need them all. It may be swagger before the other "guns" to pick up only two cartridges when starting from the gun room, but you may lose the best stag of the season in consequence.

I prefer the type of magazine on a rifle which revolves on the revolver cylinder pattern. It only holds five cartridges, but with one in the barrel this makes six, plenty for most immediate use, and there is no big magazine underneath to hamper one.

Be particular to choose a knife of which the blade is both long and wide enough to do its work properly, and



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not too hard steel, or the point is apt to snap off. It is sickening to see a deer tortured because a man will not trouble to provide himself with a suitable knife. Always be sure that a beast is quite dead before proceeding to gralloch him, *i. e.* remove his inside. One way of determining this is to see if he flinches when you touch his eyeball with a finger. Gralloching should be done as soon as a deer is dead, as delay causes the meat to



deteriorate. It is curious how gralloching customs differ in different countries. In Scotland the forester takes off his coat and rolls up his sleeves, in Germany he does not even turn up his sleeves and would consider himself a duffer if he even soiled his cuffs; he does it all "au bout des doigts."

It is sometimes useful to fire in a sitting posture, with one or both elbows resting on the knees, as described at

length in the chapter on the Bisley "Running Deer." It is a good position for a long running shot, over 200 yards, say, when it is often difficult to trust the steadiness of one's arms without some support. It is particularly useful for a shot across a ravine when a high wind is blowing. But, while the position is serviceable when the



mark is not moving at a very high speed, you will find it impossible for snap-shooting at deer running hard or jumping into the air.

In crawling up to a deer, if it is at all down hill (and most stalks are so), it is easier to go feet foremost, and the

blood does not rush to one's head. I always leave my stalker behind, when the crawling begins, and go on by myself ; a deer does not see one man so easily as two, and you can get closer by yourself ; also there is no use having the stalker near you, and he will only flurry you by whis-



pering all sorts of distracting things just as you need all your attention. For instance, when I was a boy, and had only shot a few stags, a stalker whispered to me, "Be sure not to miss, he is the biggest stag in the forest." The result as to my shot may be imagined. Also, if you miss, the stalker is almost sure to spoil your elevation for your

second barrel by whispering "Over," even if you have missed by six inches too low.

If you find a place awkward to crawl along without the deer seeing you, it is worth while to examine this spot carefully after the stalk is over, to see if it cannot be made easier by placing sods of turf, stones, etc., in a natural way as a screen, so that in a future stalk that piece of ground may be passed unobserved by deer. A short piece



so arranged diagonally over a sky-line is very useful, as deer are much more apt to see any one stalking them just as he crosses the sky-line. This is the reason why stalkers prefer to cross the sky-line through a slanting depression. Also, several men crawling one behind the other, in such circumstances, are much more apt to be seen than if they keep along an imaginary line drawn from the deer through the nearest man; a deer may look up as a man comes over

the sky-line and yet not be certain what it is ; if a second man follows it will be *sure* to see him.

When approaching deer feet foremost, the back position is the easiest to shoot from. There are many forms of this, but the one I adopt, and which is suitable for any one not too stout or short-necked, is as follows : I turn on my right side, and rest the rifle on the outside of my left knee my left leg crossing my right, the left hand either steadying the butt of the rifle, if it is a very down-hill shot, or holding the fore-end against the left knee if less so, This position also enables you to spring to your feet quickly, or to a sitting position, for your second barrel as the deer gallop off. If you shoot in the prone position, be sure to let your legs slope well to the left, and mind not to shoot off one of your toes !

Some years ago, before the introduction of military magazine rifles, I saw a match at Bisley between English Volunteers and United States Militia, shot in squads which advanced by rushes on the targets. The English shot in the prone, and the Americans in the back position. The Americans won, getting off many more shots ; they got down quicker, and lying on their backs, with a handful of cartridges laid on their chests, they were able to operate the breeches of their rifles and pull the trigger with their right hands whilst the left hands at the fore-end of the rifles kept them "on" the target the whole time, whereas the English team in the prone position had to raise their barrels and lower them at each shot—their cartridges, laid on the grass beside them, being also less easy to pick up.

There is a tradition amongst Scotch foresters that you

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must on no account shoot at a stag unless he is standing, broadside on to you. When a man crawls up within range of the stag the stalker says "Wait till he rises," or "Wait till he is broadside on." The result is that often the best opportunity is lost. It is easier to hit a stag when he is



lying down, if you have plenty of time to aim and are prepared, than to wait, and wait, cold and shivering, until he moves. He may jump up suddenly and you will have to take a snap-shot for fear he will be off, or else he may get up and feed away from you, giving you no opportunity to shoot except at his stern. In connection with this

“Wait till he rises” I have heard the following anecdote :

A “gun” was sent out with a stalker, who, after taking him a long crawl, pulled the double-barrel rifle out of its cover, took off the stops, and whispered the usual formula, “He is lying down, wait till he rises.” “Lying down, is he?” said the “gun.” “I’ll soon get him out of that!” And, standing up in full sight of the deer, he, to the stalker’s intense horror, fired his right barrel into the air. The stag was up and off in a twinkling, and the “gun” gave him the second barrel, rolling him over like a rabbit.

A gun cover is generally used to protect the rifle; my objection to one is that it gets damp inside and rusts the rifle; also if you come unexpectedly on a stag you may miss a chance of a shot. I really think, as long as you have a big leather sight protector to guard the front sight, it is better for the rifle not to be in a gun cover. If you have one, do not have it waterproof, but of a neutral-coloured cloth, thick enough, and with a leather guard at the muzzle and over the locks. Do not let the forester button the rifle in, or you will be fighting with a button, instead of shooting, if you get an unexpected chance at a deer. (I cut the buttons off my covers.) This carrying a rifle in a case, when stalking, is one of the conventions better abandoned. In the days of muzzle-loaders the cap was apt to be lost, or the priming powder to get wet, unless a rifle was in a case, and the tradition continues.

It is important to have your front sight-guard made, however, so that you cannot blow the end of your rifle off, or burst it, in case you shoot, by mistake, with the sight protector on. Some sight protectors are made so as to

cover the whole muzzle ; this, whilst preventing objects from getting into the rifle, makes a dangerous obstruction if the rifle is shot with it on. The possibility of getting the muzzle choked with mud, etc., when crawling is the only objection to not having a cover on. Perhaps a sight-protector so bulky that one cannot by any chance fail to see that it is on, when about to shoot without removing it, would be the solution of the difficulty ; in this case, the whole of the muzzle and front sight ought to be completely covered.



I have been in a tight place from a charging boar by having the muzzle of my rifle choked with snow from a fall.

It is curious how close deer will lie. As I finished the above paragraph I went out to sight a rifle. Close to the spot where I was standing was a small patch of nettles (young ones), none of them a foot high, the patch about ten by twenty yards. After I had fired twenty or thirty shots from a .25 calibre rifle, a fallow deer fawn jumped up in the nettles and made off. I stepped to where he had been lying, and it was eight yards ! He must have been lying in full view from where I stood, but as I had not

looked in his direction he thought it best to do what his mother had told him when she went away to feed: "Lie low," like "Brer Rabbit."

It is well to remember that a deer gets up by first raising his hind quarters and then his fore-hand (the reverse of the way a horse gets up). That is the reason a circus horse shows much reluctance when his trainer forces him to lie down shoulder first instead of his natural way. If you



want to "wait till he rises," aim just above his withers, give a low whistle, begin squeezing the trigger as his croup rises, and fire just as his withers come up.

It is much more satisfactory and interesting to learn to stalk deer oneself, without the stalker, as soon as one gets to know the ground and there is no danger of getting inadvertently on a neighbour's ground.

You can first begin leaving the stalker the last few yards of the stalk, gradually getting to do all the work yourself.

It is not very safe to be absolutely alone in a forest in case of breaking a leg, or getting into a bog or burn, or otherwise needing help. A broken leg from a slip might,

for instance, necessitate stopping out all night until a search party could find you.

Old foresters have a lot of traditions for stalking and are apt to want to go through the whole routine, whereas there are circumstances where a lot of it may be cut out. For instance, with the setting sun low and full in the stag's eye, a crawl can be made towards a stag (if straight towards him and on level ground) on perfectly exposed ground, instead of going farther round. I remember a case in point. I was with a forester, who had been a poacher in his young days, and consequently knew a lot



of wrinkles of which men who have done only legitimate stalking are ignorant.

We were stalking a stag lying by himself, late in the season, when stags were beginning to roar. The setting sun was behind us, and we got within about two hundred yards and could not get any closer without the stag seeing us. The old forester was very unwilling to let me take the shot at this distance; the light was very bad, and the stag indistinct, and, as the old man said, "It is best to

get as close as you can"—in fact he used to consider seventy yards a long shot. In his poaching experience he had found that the first shot fired, coming unexpectedly, did not enable poachers to be located, but if a second shot had to be fired, that meant detection. Consequently, his stalking principle was to get so close that the shot was a certainty, instead of doing as most stalkers are apt to do, if they are at all lazy, make "their gun" fire long shots, to save trouble in getting up to the deer, and then lay all the blame on "the gun" if the stag is not got. The old man said that, as there was no cover, I had better crawl by myself very slowly and steadily straight towards the deer, of course being in full view of him. Leaving the forester behind, I started. Almost immediately the stag saw me, and got up, looking intently in my direction. I lay quite still for some minutes, and as soon as he glanced away I got a few yards nearer. This continued for a long time, I getting nearer only by inches. At last the stag would not take his eye off me.

Suddenly he gave a grunt and came trotting towards me, and I shot him, still advancing, when he was some sixty yards off; I really believe he would have come quite close up to me if I had waited.

The old forester said that probably the stag mistook me for a fox.

Be suspicious of too long a "spy" for deer on the part of the stalker; it may only be his lazy way of passing the time. A stalker who knows his business only looks for deer in sheltered places, not all over the ground. Once I caught two stalkers (who did not think I understood any Gaelic) "spying" the oats in each other's crofts, and

comparing their ripeness, when they were supposed to be spying for deer.

The manner of weighing deer is unsatisfactory for purposes of comparison. They are weighed some with more, some with less, of the inside taken out. Some forests use eight pounds to the stone, others fourteen pounds. A uniform custom should be adopted. I believe a stag, weighed as he falls (at fourteen pounds to the stone) would weigh the same number of stones gralloched at eight pounds to the stone. For this reason I give all weights of deer, in this book, in pounds and weighed "as they fell," without anything removed. Weighing in this way would, however, be very troublesome in some deer forests, owing to the difficulty of getting deer home on ponies unless their inside, or some of it, were taken out. Also the venison would suffer if the deer were not immediately gralloched.

There ought, however, to be some universal rule, as to how much should be removed (all back of the diaphragm for instance) and the number of pounds to the stone decided on a uniform scale.





CHAPTER V

DEER-DRIVING

THIS is an unfortunate combination of words to describe moving deer towards the shooters. It has led to the "driving deer into a narrow place where they have no escape" style of abusing those who indulge in this form of sport. If the writers of such nonsense tried themselves to *drive* deer, they would find how impossible it is. Deer will not be *driven*; if they think they are being forced they will break back, however thick the beaters are.

The only way to force deer up *to* the guns is to make them think you want them to go *in the opposite direction*.

Instead of being called deer-driving it ought to be called (coining a word in the German manner) *deceiving-deer-into-going-where-you-want-them-to*.

Deer prefer to go up wind; they prefer to climb; when climbing they prefer to climb on the best and hardest going. In crossing a ridge they prefer crossing the lowest

part. In crossing a river they go for the fords; they do not like crossing human tracks.

Now it is impossible to humour them in all things. For instance, deer prefer to go up wind, so that they can smell if there is any danger in front, but if you post the "guns" *up wind* the deer will smell them and break back,



you must, therefore, post your guns as "near the wind" as possible without their being actually "in the wind." I have even known putting the guns behind the beaters, and letting the deer break back on them, succeed. In fact being posted behind the beaters is the best position for a "Solitaire" or "Keiler" in a wild boar drive. The beaters should not try to hurry the deer, or force them too much. If deer look like coming back, the beaters towards whom they seem likely to break had much better duck and creep about than shout and wave their arms; as soon as beaters begin

shouting and running, it's—all up, the deer are sure to go back through them.

It is important to vary the methods of driving a beat; if it has been successful in one way, that is just the reason for *not* doing it that way next time. There is sure to



be an old hind who led the former drive and remembers where the danger lay. It seems a brutal thing to do, but this hind ought to be shot if possible; an old hind who has been in several drives gets too clever and has to be killed.

It is wise to have some three ways of driving a beat planned out to the minutest details, these being made to suit different winds. You can then, at a moment's notice, if the wind changes, alter a drive and have the guns and beaters and stops all in their proper places without any discussion or delay. A series of signals with flags I have found useful, so that you can, if necessary, alter a drive,

or make the beaters come back without continuing the drive, if a mist suddenly descends. Bugle calls may be useful after a drive for giving directions and getting



things quickly, as for instance, "Bring a tracker," "Two ponies wanted, etc.," but I do not like noise in a forest if it can possibly be avoided. It is a very useful accomplishment to know the Morse code for flag signalling.

The big stags generally come last, and at the least suspicion of danger break back. Most of my big stags have been shot when breaking back through the beaters, I preferring to walk with the beaters to being posted in

front. But the gun with the beaters must be a "safe" one, as there is danger of shooting the beaters.

There is a very effective combination of stalking and



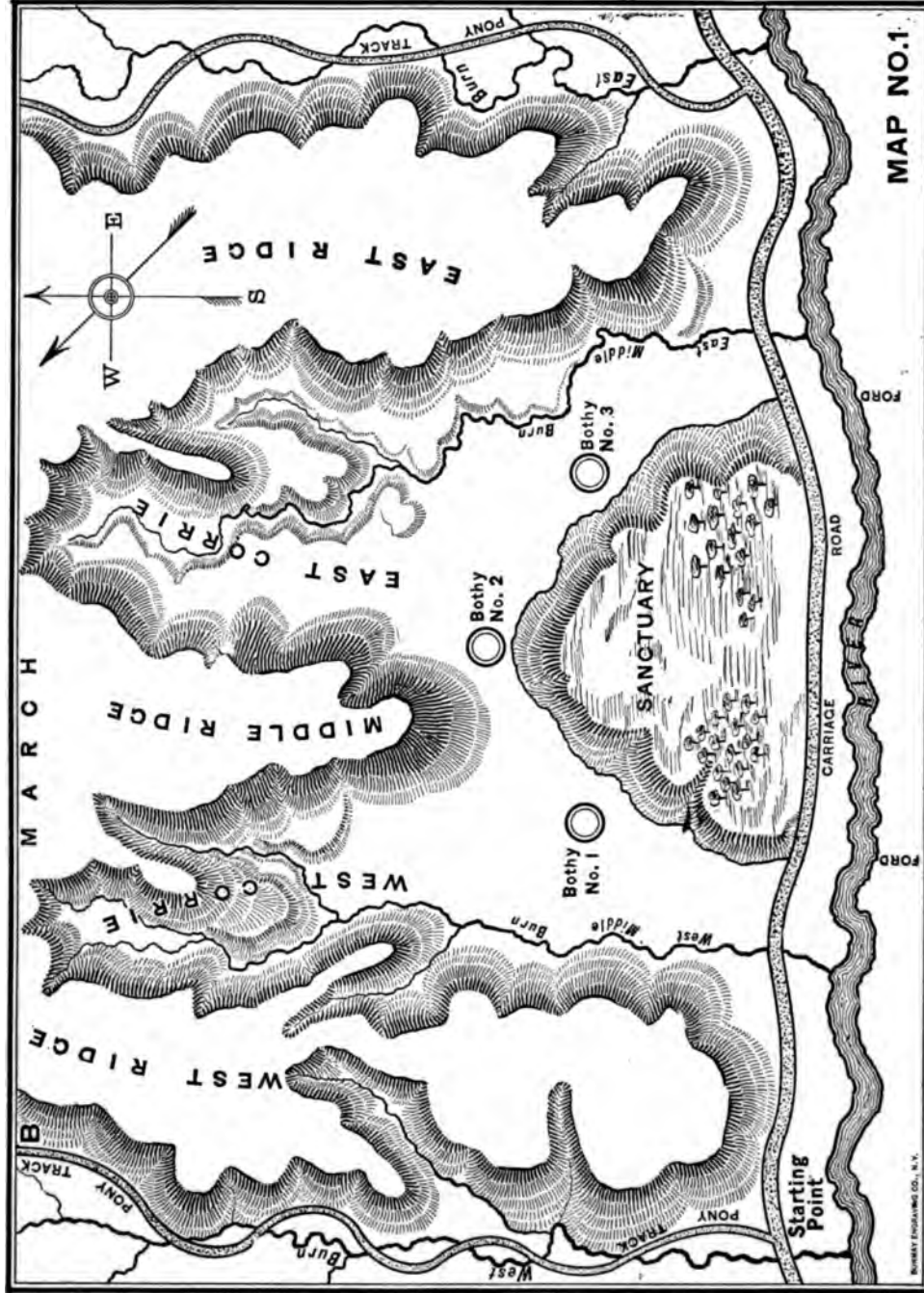
driving when two or more "guns" stalk in combination with each other; that is to say, going down a beat in line a long way apart, and waiting for each other as each stalks deer in front of him, and turns them to the other "gun."

Whilst I do not consider *Lappen*, as the Germans call the small flags on cords or nets a legitimate form of "stop" to prevent deer going where they are not wanted, a low stone wall of a few yards may be built across gullies down where deer must otherwise slip away unseen by the

guns on either side. If they are moving without being pressed, deer will turn out of the gully rather than jump the wall, even if it is only three feet high, and so offer a shot to one of the guns. Of course such walls should be put up at least some weeks before they are needed, so that the deer may get used to them. In order to explain more fully how to arrange and work deer-drives, I give several maps of typical beats, and explanations as to how to "work" them in different winds.



Map 1 (p. 94) represents a beat on the north side of a river, the march or boundary with the neighbouring deer forest being the top of a high ridge on the north. It must be remembered that forest in this sense means ground frequented by deer, not a wood. The beat consists, roughly, of three ridges running south from the high ridge running east and west which constitutes the "march." In the middle of the south limit of this beat, where it is bounded by the river and road, there is a lower hill with clumps of



MAP NO. 1

SWINNEY ENGINEERING CO., N.Y.

trees in its southern part. Four burns or small streams run north and south down to the river. I have marked the wind as blowing from the south-east. This wind is rather apt to bring a mist on the high tops, but a wind with some south in it is indispensable for working this beat, as any north in the wind would make the deer go over the march into the next forest, if disturbed.

We will suppose that the party—guns, foresters, beaters, and ponies—have assembled on the road at the south-west point. It is best, if possible, for them to have arrived from the west. If they have come down the road from the east, they will have “given their wind” (*i. e.* the deer will have smelt them), if there happen to be any deer in the south of the sanctuary, but if the road is much used deer will not pay any attention to this.

The party is now divided into two parts, those who are “going on the hill” and those left below to guard the fords on the river, and prevent the deer crossing when disturbed from above. This beat can be worked with one, two, three, or more guns. If there are four or more guns in the party, all over three will be left with the men who guard the fords. In this particular case there are three fords to guard, so three guns can guard a ford each, and are left at the starting-point; the rest go up the west pony track, the guns riding, if there are enough ponies. It is best in this case to keep to the pony track, not letting men go a little up the ridge to the east to spy where the deer are. This does no good and is apt to get deer moving. It is better to go steadily up the path, halting at intervals to let the men on foot have a rest after an exceptionally steep climb, and leaving men at intervals

as stops. The stops left below should keep a constant lookout with their telescopes, over every part of the beat that they can see, and if they discover any deer descending towards the fords, they will have to hurry thither to prevent the deer from crossing and to turn them back into the sanctuary. It is false economy not letting the stops have telescopes. The stops for the ford should only



under such circumstances leave the starting-point, as their movements down the road might drive deer over the march before the upper guns had got round above them.

There is no danger, with a south-east wind, of deer being moved by the men going up the west pony track,

unless some happened to be in the way on this path, or in sight of it. If this should unfortunately be the case, the proper course is to stop the climbing party, of whom one or two foresters should always be some two hundred yards in front, and every one hidden from the deer as much as possible. If the men in front know their duty, the deer will not have seen anything, although they are themselves seen by the foresters, as the foresters will spy each fresh turn of the road and only advance if they see all clear. If deer are in the way, the only thing is to wait till they feed out of sight, or if this does not seem likely, they must be moved very gently, without alarming them and getting them galloping, as in this latter case they may start a lot more deer running and spoil everything.

We will suppose that the climbing party arrive safely at the end of the pony track, at the north-west corner of the beat, having got there without sending any deer off the beat. They now line the whole of the north march, keeping out of sight of the deer as much as possible.

There is an unwritten forest law that one can go the height of oneself over the march on to a neighbour's ground, if this is necessary to keep out of sight of deer.

The guns are posted, if there are three, one on the west end of the north ridge, one on the middle, and one on the east. If only two guns are available, there need not be one on the west of the ridge; the chance is worst there, that ridge having most likely been cleared of deer by the ascending party. The guns now being in line, with gillies between, the whole length of the north march, commence to advance slowly in crescent formation, the guns on the east and west ridges being well in advance of

the middle gun, and the men at the extreme east and west well in advance of all.

If there are enough tracking dogs, one should accompany each gun; if there are too few for this, they should be so distributed that they may be available for the gun on either side of them, according to necessity.



If the men at the fords have not got to their places before, as soon as the guns are posted along the march, with gillies in position between them, the stops should go to the fords before the line advances. A signal can be given from above, at a preconcerted point, when all is ready. If the mist is so thick above that this cannot be done, a double shot (fired so quickly that it cannot be mistaken for a shot at deer,) may be given as a starting signal, or a bugle call. By the way, shots should on no account be taken, however tempting the chance, on the way up the pony track, as it will spoil the drive.



DEER-DRIVING—"GUN" WITH BEATERS, STAGS BREAKING BACK

The Sporting Rifle

The crescent-shaped line now very slowly descends the beat southwards, the foresters with the "guns" carefully spying the ground as they descend; as soon as any of them see deer, the whole line stops, and the gun nearest the deer stalks and tries to get a shot at them. The whole line manoeuvres so as to make these deer, when shot at, run to the sanctuary. Occasionally deer will break back, and in that case the gun nearest the point that they are making for runs along the line to get a shot at them, but it gives the other guns a better chance to try to stalk and move deer down into the middle of the beat.

The gun or guns left down with the men who guard the fords can move about from one to another, as deer threaten to cross, always trying to get shots, before the deer cross the road, and to put those not killed back into the sanctuary, rather than let them cross the river. This latter move, however, is better than letting deer get up north over the march, if the other side of the river happens to be in one's own forest, as they will be safe for another day. Ponies follow each gun down the ridge; it is not necessary to leave a pony for the guns at the fords, as their deer can easily be picked up when the drive is over. The ponies following the guns are loaded with any deer shot, and are sent off to follow the drive down one or other of the pony tracks to the road.

There are two ways of finishing this drive. One is to treat the sanctuary as a real sanctuary, *i. e.*, leave the deer alone which get into it, the guns going off to the pony track, with the men and horses, as soon as they come to the boundary of the sanctuary. This is the best plan if



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DEER DRIVING—A RIGHT AND LEFT

the forest is a small one. Deer soon learn where they are not molested, and run to such a spot when they are disturbed. If this sanctuary is, therefore, always respected, deer will keep on the beat (except of course when stags begin roaring and going in search of hinds). By the way, if this beat is stalked in a south-east wind, by a single gun he should go up the west pony track, and then stalk down from the march, moving east or west according to where the deer are, but still not going into the sanctuary, and not having men at the fords. If, however, the forest is very large, and it does not matter about driving deer off the beat, then what I have described above is only the preliminary of the drive.

The gun going down the west ridge, when he gets near the west butt or bothy (No. 1), crawls into it, so as not to be seen approaching it. The middle and the last gun go likewise into their respective bothies (No. 2 and No. 3), the men with the tracking dogs being left higher up so as to intercept wounded deer.

The men divide and descend to the right and left sides of the sanctuary to the road. There they line up with the men who have been watching fords and walk in crescent form up north through the sanctuary, the deer breaking out to the guns to the north of them. It is better for the gun or guns at the ford to remain rather than to walk up with the beaters, as deer often break back through the beaters and go for the fords.

The men who came down from above, past the east side of the sanctuary, should keep as far east as necessary to prevent their moving the deer prematurely by giving them their wind, but if the guns are already in the three



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AFTER A DEER-DRIVE

bothies such moving will not prevent the deer from coming to them.

With a south-west wind the party meet at the east end of the road and climb the east pony trail. The above description of how to drive a beat is merely an example; there are, of course, modifications, but this will show the general way of doing it. I find it always more satisfactory to do this combination of stalking at the beginning, and finishing with a drive, but the next description is driving pure and simple.

The best form of bothy or butt for the guns is circular with a low seat, wide enough for the gun and his loader. The seat must be very low, so that you can rest your elbows on your knees when aiming at a stag coming in from where the butt is set for, and the front edge low enough to shoot over. A bothy of this construction enables the men inside it to lie very low; if the seat is high you cannot shoot off it, and you have to slide down, generally into mud trampled by your feet, when the deer appear.

Sticks should be stuck into the ground between bothies showing conspicuously, if possible, against the sky-line, so that the guns shall know in what direction it is dangerous to shoot. I like several such sticks put about, showing danger zones; this enables you to concentrate all your attention on the shooting instead of worrying as to where the other guns or stops are.

Map 2 (see p. 107) is a plan of a very big deer drive; I have shot in such a one which yielded thirty-one stags in one drive, every gun getting one or more.

The ponies are ridden by the guns up the east pony



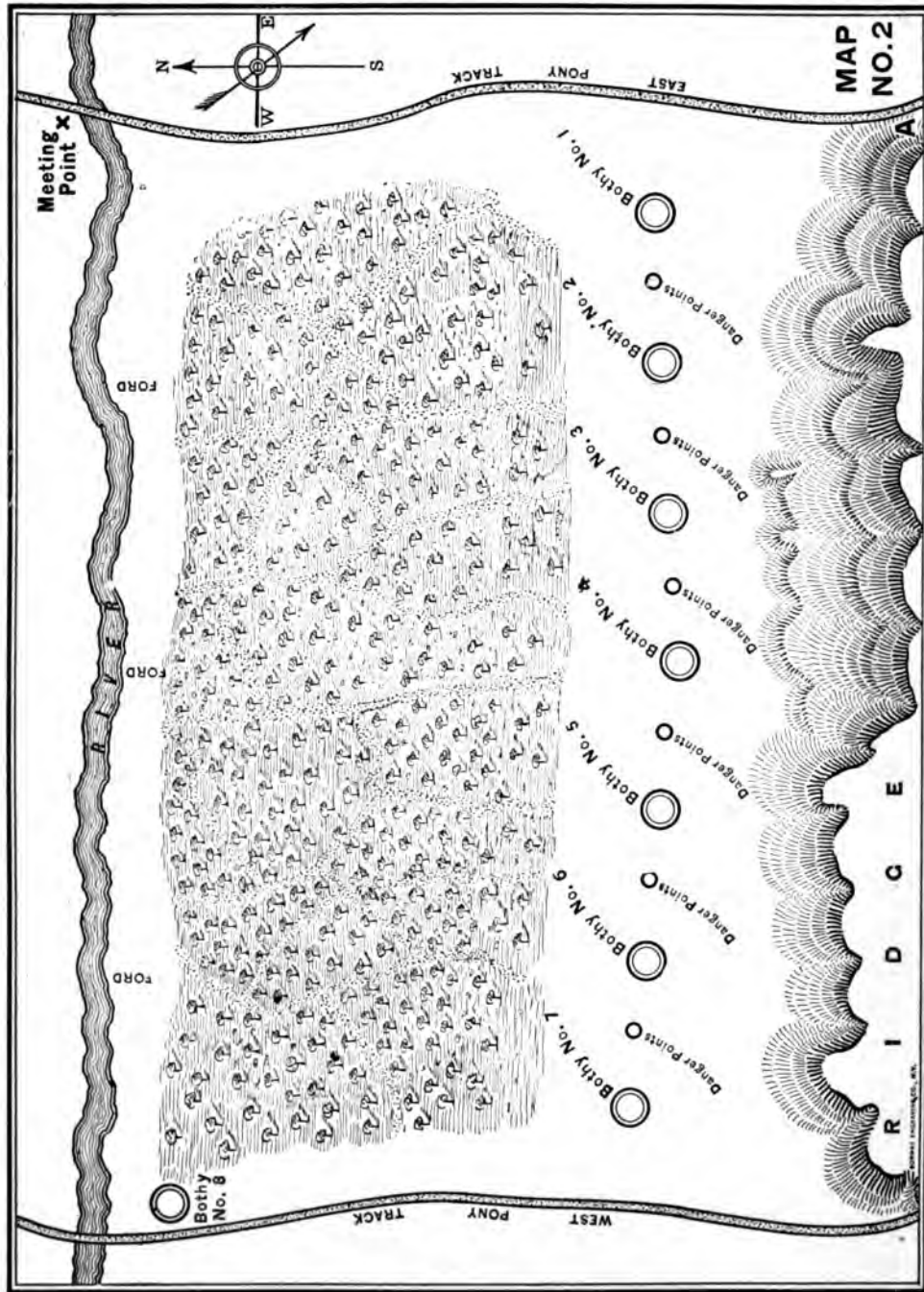
track if the wind is north-west. When the guns arrive on top of the ridge at letter "A," they stop with their loaders. The ponies are sent back down the pony track to the starting-point, to wait till they are needed to take home the deer. The guns now walk along the ridge, out of sight of the wood below them, each gun stopping south of the bothy allotted him. The men to guard the fords, who of course are left below at the same time go to the fords; the rest of the men, with perhaps a "gun" or two, if there are enough, line up along the pony track, from the top to the bottom. The tracking dogs are posted along the ridge, with their attendants, at the likely spots for wounded deer to pass them.

In big drives like this it is as well to let the attendant have a rifle for finishing wounded deer, as the "guns" have not time to attend to this.

When everything is ready, the guns crawl simultaneously down to their bothies, and then the line of beaters starts walking west, in a diagonal formation, the northern end of the line being in advance, so as to cause the deer gradually to break up to the guns instead of trying for the fords.

If bothy No. 8. is to be used the gun runs down to it last of all from the ridge.

Of the two guns who walk with the beaters, one may walk along the edge of the river, using his judgment when to be at each ford, as the deer are apt to make for the fords as soon as shooting begins above them. The gun walking through the wood with the beaters also has very good snap-shooting chances, as the deer break back through the beaters or hesitate in front of them, but such a gun must be very experienced and a safe shot, or else there is great risk to the beaters.



If deer are moving west, it is permissible for the gun in a bothy to shoot at them as he catches glimpses in the wood, before the beaters get opposite him, as this helps to move the deer on to the other guns.

The first blood drawn determines whose stag it is when one has been shot. The slightest graze gives a man the stag, if he shot first, even if the next gun killed it, and the first man had only knocked a few hairs and a drop of blood off by a grazing shot. On the Continent it is the one who kills who claims the beast. I think the Scotch is the fairest way on the whole, as according to the Continental rule, a deer may be dying and another man shoot it just before it expires and claim it.

Be careful that the guns know the importance of keeping quiet, anyway till the drive commences ; after that, if they choose to move about and put deer to the other guns, that matters only to themselves.

I know of three cases in point : One of a man who took his shotgun and shot a snipe on the edge of the beat the morning of the drive, whilst the other guns were at breakfast, thus putting every deer off it before anyone was in his place. On another occasion I was posted for a wolf drive on the Continent, and before the beaters and stops could get in place the gun next me fired both barrels in the air "to see if his muzzle-loader was in proper order." In the third case, a gun, whose station was at one of the fords, got into the "machine" we were going to drive to the beat in, carrying a fishing rod, with which he was going to beguile the tedium of waiting for the deer, by fishing.



CHAPTER VI

DEER-TRACKERS.

TO get a good dog for tracking wounded deer is a very difficult matter. In the olden days in Scotland, as shown by Landseer's and Ansdell's pictures, it was the custom to use deerhounds and slip them on wounded deer. This was, primarily, necessary, owing to the inaccuracy of the old-fashioned rifle, whereby deer were often wounded instead of being killed. With modern rifles, not only is this much more rarely the case, but also it would be very inadvisable (even if the lease of many forests did not forbid it) to let dogs loose in a deer forest. They disturb a large district when chasing a wounded deer, and deer hate the smell of dogs' tracks.

The usual plan, nowadays, is to have a dog to track the wounded deer silently; if it is not absolutely under control, it is kept on a lead.



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VERY SICK—HIT TOO FAR BACK.

The best plan, if a deer is hit and cannot for any reason be shot at again before he gets out of range, is to watch him through your glass, see where he is hit, and lie perfectly quiet till he has gone out of sight or lain down. He will generally take a last look back before disappearing over the sky-line. If he is "very sick," hit in the middle of the body (see my sketch) it is best to leave him alone for half an hour, and then by carefully stalking him, avoiding, if possible, approaching from the direction in which he left you, you can generally get another shot at him before he gets up. A wounded deer always keeps a very keen lookout in the direction he was shot at from. If he has a broken leg, especially a fore one, or, as I have mentioned elsewhere, the very unfortunate wound of a broken jaw, he may go for many miles. If, therefore, when stalking, he is not found just beyond where he was last seen when he went over a rise, or lying down in the nearest water, the only thing is to put the dog on his track. By passing the hand through the heather or grass one can sometimes find blood, or his slot can be seen, or his tracks in dew.

I had a good dog who would not only track slowly in front of me without needing a lead, but would, if he saw the deer, crouch down like a setter and wait for me. He was bought from a poacher, who, when the dog was caught, begged for his life, as he said he was the best tracker in the country. This dog was an ugly little red mongrel with a broken tail.

One never knows what dog will make a good tracker; He ought not to be too big or of a conspicuous colour; a mute running hound might make a good tracker if it were

not for his white markings, but generally a hound will not hunt if hampered by a lead; he likes to make casts at speed. I have had one or two good mongrels, a cross between a retriever and a hound, but they are usually too black; this cross is however occasionally a brindle.

The best sort of a lead is a harness lead. If led by the collar a dog gets wrong in the wind, besides making a choking noise when dragging at his lead.

Of course when you get sight of the wounded deer the tracker should be taken up and the deer stalked in the usual way; never slip the dog at the deer. A well-trained tracker will lie down wherever he is told to, and wait, till he is whistled for.

PONIES

I, personally, do not care to ride the Scotch forest ponies; they are very good for carrying deer, but, if you can train them to do the work, better bred ponies are much pleasanter to ride than the upright-shouldered, stumbling pony usual in Scotland. It is also very much more pleasant to have something on which one can canter home, instead of riding a "hill pony" stumping along at a cow-like walk, with a lurching stumble every few yards.

There are deer saddles made which, whilst carrying a deer well, are not *too* uncomfortable for riding. *Don't* get one with a join down the middle, unless you are a cyclist who enjoys riding on a rail.

A deer should always be packed on the pony with his legs and horns slanting back, so that they do not catch against rocks, branches, etc., the head being put well on the

middle of the saddle. The correct position is shown on pages 75 and 105.

It is a great convenience to have the paths made so that a pony can be used on them, instead of having only man tracks. With a proper system of pony paths there is no necessity, except in unusual cases, to get off the pony till the highest point in the day's work is reached, and one can start later than the men and overtake them.

The best colour for a pony is a dun colour, the next best is a mealy bay; red or blue roan is not bad, but such coloured horses are generally underbred, or have a bit of hackney in them, and riding a hackney is something too awful; a black or white horse is too conspicuous; a dark grey is very good, as long as he remains that colour, but unfortunately they turn white with age.

I had an exceptionally good white pony. We used to put a black net on her to make her less conspicuous, but, while it kept off flies, it made her too hot. I then tried dyeing her. I got two colourless fluids from a West End hairdresser. First, she had to be washed with soda, to get the grease out, then sponged all over with the first fluid, which smelt of ammonia. The next I put on with a set of hog's-hair oil painting brushes. In order to make an artistic job of it I used a four-year-old iron-grey pony as a model, and copied him, putting on the dapples, painting the joints black, the tail black with the bottom left white, the muzzle and round the eyes left lighter, etc. At first no colour appeared, but when I had finished a shoulder, and began on the quarter, the shoulder began turning a violet colour, which gradually became black, and a couple of hours after

I had finished painting the old mare she looked like a four-year-old, but the smell of the chemicals was awful. When she was turned into the paddock the other ponies did not seem to know her and kicked her.

This painting was a great success, as it lasted the ten weeks of the stalking season; at the end she began turning all sorts of queer colours, but still she was not so conspicuous as she was when her natural white colour, and whilst the chemical smell lasted it kept the midges off.

Speaking of midges, it is as well to carry a grey veil consisting of a gauze bag which can be slipped over your head and hang well down. There are some made for fishing purposes which are kept open by wooden hoops so that the veil keeps clear of the face.

The veil is not so important in stalking, but in deer-driving, where one often has to sit at the edge of a wood, or worse place for midges, near water, it is a great comfort.

I have tried various fluids for keeping off midges, but know of none effective, except those so sticky or bad-smelling that they are worse than the midges.

It is sometimes dangerous to sit too long near water. I know on one occasion all three guns who were at fords in a deer drive became ill the same night.

It is also dangerous to drink chance water; if you are very thirsty you can alleviate your thirst by turning up your sleeves and burying your hands and arms in wet moss for a few minutes.



CHAPTER VII

TELESCOPES AND BINOCULARS

IT is important to have a good "glass" of some sort. An ordinary binocular or field-glass is of very little use; a man with normally good long-sight can see almost as well with his naked eyes. What is wanted is a good telescope, or a Zeiss or other binocular made on that principle. Personally, I suppose because I have used one during so many years, I prefer a telescope. Some men carry both, but that I should think must be very cumbersome. I suppose men who use a rifle with a detachable telescopic sight might use this sight for spying, on a pinch, but its magnifying power is not enough, and the field of view very limited.

The things to consider in choosing a telescope, or a binocular, are, good definition, large aperture, lightness, and compactness. Many telescopes are made of too high power, which means loss of light. Some are made

with two or three "draws" at the eyepiece end, so that various powers may be used, as found most suitable.

What you want is as high a power as can be had, compatible with a large aperture. In using a glass with a small aperture it is impossible to see well in a bad light.

By holding the eyepiece some distance from the eye one can find the size of the "stop" or aperture, without unscrewing the lenses. The telescope should have several "draws," so as to shut up in a small compass. I prefer an aluminium telescope, with brass in the places where the lenses and slides screw on. This latter point is very important, and I believe it is my own idea, as I had one made for me and I have never seen a similar telescope belonging to any one else. Having the "screw rings" of brass adds very little to the weight, and enables one to screw and unscrew the various parts for cleaning and wiping (as when the glass gets fogged in wet or misty weather), without the danger of stripping off the thread of the screws. I find aluminium screw rings are a constant source of worry; the metal is so soft that, if you screw it up in a hurry and do not engage the screw correctly, the screw strips, and then either jams or cuts itself so that the point will not hold. This also applies to binoculars, which, in my opinion, should also have all parts which screw made of some tougher metal than pure aluminium. Another advantage in having the rings of brass in a telescope is that it prevents the telescope "sagging" at the joints of the various slides.

With an aluminium telescope you must be careful, however, not to step on it. I remember at a deer drive I had been looking with my telescope at the approaching herd, in order to see which were the best

stags. When the deer got within shot I put the telescope down beside me. After firing a few shots in the sitting position, what were left of the herd rushed past close, compelling me to stand up and keep turning to get several shots, my gun-loader moving about also. When the shooting was over I found that he and I had trampled all over my telescope and stamped it flat, so that it was of no more use till it had been to the makers. An ordinary telescope would have stood the buffeting and been little the worse for it. The lightness compensates, however, for the little extra care required in using, and now that aluminium is so cheap it does not matter much if a telescope does occasionally get flattened.

Draw the telescope out to its full length, then sit down and focus it on some object at average "spying" distance. When you have found your right focus, make a scratch with a pin round the eyepiece draw-tube where it enters the first ring. This will leave a silvery aluminium line, and saves time in future "spying," as when you draw your telescope you can at once put the eyepiece draw-tube to your focus, and so avoid adjusting after the telescope is to your eye.

The leather case is preferably made with a "bayonet" catch, as that is quicker to close than if you have a buckle and tongue; it is apt to make a noise, though, when closed rapidly. Some foresters will buckle and unbuckle the telescope case endlessly, and it is very fidgeting as well as a waste of time. With my telescope case I have cut off the buckle and tongue, and string the case reversed way on the shoulder strap—that is to say, the strap goes under the case instead of above it; this prevents it open-

ing unless pulled, and obviates the necessity of fastening. If you want to be extra particular in point of material, grey leather is best, but either brown or black leather, when well stained or faded respectively by the weather, is invisible enough for all practical purposes. The telescope itself is apt to flash in the sun—in fact, I have signalled to the men by flashing the telescope. I do not quite see how this can be avoided. If it is painted grey with a dead grey, it will not slide properly—in fact, polish, which in other words is glitter, seems unavoidable. In sunny weather it is best, therefore, to be very careful only to move a telescope, when out of its case, straight towards deer; if it is put at any angle it will flash and be seen at great distances. I have known men take off their coats and put the telescope through the sleeve for “spying,” and others who use a bag made of grey material over the telescope, this is where a Zeiss binocular has the advantage.

In wet weather a telescope, if often drawn, gets almost like a squirt, and the glasses get so fogged as to become practically useless. There is a substance sold by some opticians which, rubbed on the glasses and then wiped off leaving a very thin film, prevents wet forming on the glass; it is called “*Lasin*.” Rubbing with vaseline is also rather effective. In Russia salt is placed in paper cones between hermetically closed double windows in winter to prevent moisture fogging the glass, as salt absorbs the moisture; perhaps something of the sort could be done for telescopes. After a wet day it is as well to unscrew the telescope and leave the various parts all night near a fire so as to get thoroughly dry, but not anywhere where a housemaid may

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sweep up the "litter." Do not rub the lenses with anything likely to scratch them. Use a thin silk handkerchief, or thin cambric one; I prefer the latter. I know a man who carries a piece of chamois leather in a little tin box for wiping the lenses, but there is danger of scratching them, as the leather sometimes gets grit in it.

In looking through a telescope it is bad to use either eye too long at a time, and especially so if keeping the other one shut. With a little practice you can learn to keep both eyes open, ignoring the image seen by the eye not being used, and use the telescope with alternate eyes. I do not like (if it can possibly be avoided) to use a telescope immediately before shooting, as it tires the eyes. There are several ways of holding a telescope steadily. By the way, it is curious that not one artist in a hundred draws a man holding a telescope to his eye properly. They represent it held with both hands away from the face with the eyepiece to the eye in a way that would make the user of the glass poke his own eye out. The proper way is to put the first and second fingers of one hand round the eyepiece, and put the thumb along the cheek, the little finger against the mouth, and the tips of the other fingers touching the nose. In this way you shut out external light and avoid poking your eyes, the other hand extended and holding the larger end of the telescope.

The lying-down position is the steadiest and least conspicuous, and if the glass is drawn, and slowly pushed forward, taking care to hold it always as nearly horizontal as possible and pointing in the direction of the deer, it can be used even in full sunlight without betraying your presence to the deer by flashing in the sun. Resting against



the side of a partly raised knee, when lying on the back, is also good, especially for watching moving deer. See illustration on page 115.

A way of "spying" which can only be adopted when there is no fear of sun, and when there is no danger of deer seeing you, or when they are already alarmed and further concealment is useless, is to stand up, rest your stick, crook downwards, in the sling of your telescope, (the empty case being drawn forward), and grasp the end of the telescope and top of the stick at the same time with the outstretched hand. See accompanying illustration which is a photograph from nature.

A little thistle down, or other extremely light substance, is useful to carry in the ticket pocket; this thrown in the air shows which way the wind is drifting when there is not enough wind to be otherwise discernible. Wetting a forefinger in the mouth and holding it up is also a good way of finding the direction of the wind. The side from which the wind comes feels cold.



CHAPTER VIII

CLOTHING AND BOOTS

THIS is a most important matter, and means all the difference between benefiting your health by shooting, or getting ill.

The main point is to wear nothing but flannel and (if not much walking is to be done) leather for the outer clothes, but no linen except perhaps collar and cuffs.

Besides, linen, even a white collar or cuffs, is very conspicuous. Always have your shirt of a neutral colour, so that if you have to take off your coat for any reason, such as galloching or climbing when it is hot, you will not be noticeable. A linen collar and cuffs of the same neutral colour as the shirt are more comfortable than having a limp flannel collar and no cuffs.

I do not at all approve of a hunting stock, such as hunting men have taken to; even if it is of a neutral colour it is so apt to give one cold. The throat—I am only speaking from personal experience, not with medical knowledge—is best able to resist catching cold if it is exposed; the more you coddle it the more delicate it becomes.

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The woollen mufflers are a case in point. A doctor told me that whenever he saw mufflers in a hall he knew there would be business for him in that house. The hunting stock keeps the neck very warm, gets it in a perspiration, and then if you turn your head you get a current of icy cold air down it, or a lot of rain.

It is curious that some people do not understand the importance of invisibility. I remember a man some years ago, an artist too, who ought to have understood colour "values" who came deer-stalking where I was. He had shot small game all his life, but never deer. He wore a dark-green velvet jacket with shiny brass buttons, a big piece of leather over each shoulder *pipeclayed white*, and white fox-hunting breeches.

When the forester who had charge of him had got him out of our hearing he said :

"We may as well stop at home as try to get you within shot of deer with all that white about you. I will either have to rub you with peat till you get a nice colour, or take you home."

The "gun" preferred the former alternative !

The tint used by the British troops in India and Africa, called khaki, I do not consider a good colour for stalking. It is much too light and yellow in colour for a deer forest ; it may perhaps do in deserts, but I know that on the tan of the arena at the Military Tournament in London it is very conspicuous.

Most beginners get their clothes of too light a colour, generally a very light "clean" French grey, which shows a mile off, but the wearer is never tired of explaining to you how invisible it makes him.

There is a grey-green called the Lovat mixture which is very good. I like my clothes to be the prevailing tint of the season, getting more yellow and red in it as the autumn advances. Of course white is best in snow.

I also find it is better *not* to be dressed *entirely in one colour*. It is more invisible, for instance, to have the jacket grey-green, the knickerbockers or breeches grey, the waistcoat heather colour (if in Scotland), than to have all of one uniform colour.

In the latter case you look a mass of one colour, and your *outline* shows, but in the former case your colour is more "broken up," as we artists say; one part of you represents a rock, another a tuft of heather growing on it with a patch of grass beside it, etc., and it is more difficult to separate you from the surrounding objects when you are stationary. Nature always does this in animal colouring. A very curious detail in this nature colouring, which I have not seen mentioned, is that nature breaks up colour *to the scale* of the animal. For instance, the markings on a partridge are of just the size to represent the small sticks, pebbles, bits of grass, etc., in which it crouches. Such small subdivisions would make a tiger, whose surface is so much bigger, of too uniform a colour, so his divisions of colour are on a much bolder scale, and represent tropical vegetation dried by the sun, trunks of trees, etc. For this reason a man must have the subdivisions of the colour of his clothing on nearly as bold a scale as a tiger's markings.

Most heather-mixture tweeds are much too minute in pattern, too much on the partridge instead of the tiger scale. Of course I know a big, loud check is not "good



form" in a town, but in the deer forest a good distinct big check is good so long as the component parts are of colour representing objects seen in the forest. For instance, grass green, purple heather, a stripe of peat, and a patch of grey rock would make a good mixture. A bright thin yellow line like that in the Gordon tartan adds to the invisibility, as it represents the high lights on grass.

For the same reason I have found brown or even black leather gaiters (representing peat or black stumps) quite inconspicuous as long as the wearer did not move. This, in fact, is the real secret of being invisible, *keeping still*. Deer will stand, if the wind is right, within a few yards and never notice you, but if you make the least movement they are off at once.

I prefer all-wool underwear, varying in thickness according to the weather and time of year. A jacket hanging straight down, not fitting to the figure and not too long, merely covering the lower parts of one's body sufficiently, which buttons close up to the neck. The sleeves should turn over with a cuff, which cuff can be turned over the hands if cold and cover them to the end of the fingers. A Norfolk jacket makes one too hot when stalking by not letting air circulate from below. I never turn up a collar, however much it rains; it is only a fashion, like turning up the bottom of trousers and letting the ankles get wet in consequence.

I prefer knickerbocker-breeches, as giving more freedom to the legs when climbing, but they need not buckle below the knee or, if you do not catch cold easily and there are not many thorns about, breeches

cut off just above the knee, as worn by Swiss peasants, leaving the knee bare, are still better for climbing, and I think less apt to give rheumatism, as the knee dries as soon as it gets wet, instead of having a clammy bit of cloth against it all day.

The waistcoat should also button close up to the throat, and the jacket should allow buttoning all the way down over it.

The pockets should all have button flaps to prevent things falling out of them. I have on the right shoulder a sort of epaulette strap, which buttons on, under which my telescope strap goes, so that the strap does not slip down when I am crawling, or when the weight of the telescope is not resting on the strap. Also having a button big and deep on each shoulder the sling of the rifle does not slip when carrying it *en bandalier*.

An amusing incident occurred of a man who had a new suit of shooting clothes. He was following his stalker getting up to deer. Up to then they had only been obliged to keep in a crouching attitude, but they had now come to the part where they had to get down and crawl. There was a lot of black peat and wet moss to get over. The forester got down flat and wriggled himself along, but they had not gone two yards when the deer jumped up and galloped off. Looking back to see what could have startled them, he found the "gun," for fear of dirtying the knees of his new knickerbockers, walking on his hands and feet, in the attitude that the man dressed as a monkey does at the pantomime. Although his head was low enough, a more prominent part of his anatomy was in full view of the deer.

Cloth can now be had which is semi-waterproof, like fox-hunting cloths, and will throw off a good shower. The subject of waterproofs is a difficult one. Personally I cannot walk in one, or in waterproof cloth, even if it is ventilated. It seems to stifle one, and I believe it is more injurious to health than if one got wet through in woollen clothes. For sitting or standing about, however, a waterproof is useful, and, at a deer drive, while at the pass. A piece of waterproof sewn inside the seat and knees of knickerbockers is also useful, but it does not keep the wet out if one has to do any flat crawling. If you have a water-proof do not have one with a cape. One sees pretty advertisements of a man shooting with his cape thrown back from his right shoulder. This would be all very well if you had time to throw it back. After a very hard wet day's stalking, I got the only chance late in the evening, a snap-shot, unexpectedly, as I was walking along a ridge in a caped waterproof. The butt of the rifle caught in the cape and went off, far over the stag. I threw the water-proof away!

A friend was showing me a patent caped water-proof and describing its beauties. I said, "Put up your gun." He tried to put it up and got tangled up in it. The German jayrock has very big armholes and can be slipped out of instantly.

I do not understand why people want waterproof caps! I suppose it must be the bald-headed, who find a wet cap cold, who started the idea. I think one can walk and run best with the head kept as cool as possible; in fact, I like the feeling of a cap soaked through under such circumstances. It is important to have whatever cap or hat one

wears with ventilators; want of this is likely to make the hair fall out. Also a wide peak or brim is an advantage; a very small peak, such as gillies affect, prevents your seeing well in the sun. I do not approve of the modern cap, stuffed full of cotton wool—it is so unbearably hot, and is too big. In stalking you want to look as small and inconspicuous as possible, and not wear a head-covering like a lady's matinée hat.

For the legs I prefer woollen stockings fastened with a bit of tape some two feet long, which I wind round the leg below the knee and turn down the top of the stocking over it. If you wear a garter to keep up the stocking it cuts the leg and is apt to give varicose veins. By having the tape some two or three feet long you can wind it spirally round the leg, so that it gets a wider bearing surface and holds the stocking up without having to be as tight as a narrow garter. Some stockings have the turn-down top very elastic; this, if properly fitted, will almost keep up the stocking by itself. A pattern of neutral colours will be less conspicuous than one plain tint; if you do not mind the oddity, the stockings of different colours will be still more invisible.

For boots I prefer wide-soled shooting boots studded with aluminium or copper nails, as they are less liable to slip than steel ones; and I have a loop at the back, through which I pass the laces before fastening them, so as to prevent their slipping up around the ankles. If you have to stalk over "noisy" ground, such as rocks, it is as well to have a pair of goloshes, or moccasins, to put on when doing so.

Some men do not like gaiters but wear stockings only.



This is very well in dry weather, but one's legs get very wet unless gaiters are worn. A short spat prevents heather or sand getting into the top of the boot, but in rain I think a gaiter is the only comfortable wear. Buttons on gaiters, especially if they are the large round leather ones, are a nuisance, as they pull off when one is crawling and pick up tussocks of grass or heather.

CHAPTER IX

FALLOW DEER SHOOTING

ALTHOUGH there are a few herds of wild fallow deer, the fallow deer is seldom found outside parks in the British Islands. Where wild, they are shot much as red deer are shot, but they are less easy to stalk under such conditions, as they prefer wooded country and move about more than red deer.

The fallow deer has horns palmated at the top, a brow and tray point but seldom a bay, though I have shot some with rudimentary bay points. The point which projects behind may be a bay point wrong way round. I have a fallow German buck in the park with forked back tines.

The heaviest fallow deer on record is one I shot, shown on page 136; he was of the black variety and was weighed as he fell, without bleeding—222 pounds.

The rifle for *wild* fallow deer may be a little less powerful than for red deer.

But for park shooting the utmost caution must be used on account of the risk to people who may be about. No shot ought to be fired in a park unless the firer is certain that his back-ground is safe. The high wall which often

surrounds old parks makes a safe background against which to fire.

Only rifles shooting small charges should therefore be used. My usual weapon was a .36 rifle, shooting a very weak charge of black powder, and loaded with a very hollow-pointed lead bullet. I have now a rifle made to shoot "mark 1" revolver .45 ammunition with the "man-stopper" bullet; this is very effective for head-shots. The chief thing in choosing a rifle for park use is to select one powerful enough to kill a fallow buck, but which will not carry long distances. The modern high-power small-bore, smokeless-powder, nickel-coated-bullet rifles must never be used in a park.

By "a rifle powerful enough to kill a fallow buck" I mean a weapon the bullet from which will kill the animal outright when it strikes him in the brain or neck. It need not be powerful enough to drop him to a bad body-shot.

A park fallow deer should never be shot except in the head or neck, because—

1. A body wound spoils his meat.
2. A body wound spoils his skin.
3. The poor beast is in a confined space, and cannot ultimately refuse to be shot at, however long he may elude your attempt. It is only sportsmanlike to give him a "sporting chance," and a body-shot under such conditions is poor "law" for him, besides being a bungling piece of work. One ought never to try a shot unless one is satisfied that the chance of killing the beast amounts to a practical certainty.

Shooting for the brain, however, requires care. A low shot will break the jaw, and hours of work are likely to



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FALLOW DEER

Photo by W. A. Rouch

follow, before you can finish the beast. The buck will run into the middle of the herd, and the whole thing will be a botched affair, not to mention the needless cruelty, for you may never get another chance at the wounded animal until the herd has turned him out.

I make it a rule not to fire again at the same fallow deer, if I have once missed it, unless that particular deer has to be killed. I consider that it is fairer to the deer.

The best shot, for clean killing, is to fire when the buck's head is up and he is looking straight away from you. A shot between the ears from behind will drop him stone dead where he stands. If it goes lower, but gets his neck bones, it will drop him also. If too high, it will miss him, and so no harm be done. If to one side and too low, it may cut the jugular vein, or a wide shot will inflict no more than a flesh wound, or break a horn.

The second best shot, from the "killing" point of view, is to hit him in the forehead as he faces the rifle. A shot a trifle too high, if in the direct vertical line, may still drop him. The danger lies in being low enough to break his nose and not stop him. Moreover, a nose wound frequently does not bleed more than a few drops round the nostrils, which the animal will lick off, so that you may find it hard to recognize him in the herd. A shot at his "Adam's apple" is a deadly shot. Never shoot deer without carrying a Zeiss-glass or a telescope, so as to be able to identify wounded deer, and also to know whether a deer is wounded enough for it to be necessary to follow it up, or whether it has only been grazed. A flesh wound, especially in hot weather, is apt to go wrong; so it is as well if a deer is touched anywhere to finish him. A "glass"



Photo by Penfold

FALLOW DEER

is also indispensable to enable you to examine ear marks or other identification marks so as not to shoot deer imported for improving the breed. None but a good shot, and he only at close range, ought to fire at the head of a fallow buck *in profile*. The spot to hit then is just above the centre of a line between the root of the ear and the corner of the eye, and the least deviation will miss the brain. The almost inevitable consequence is to send him off with a broken jaw, and you with a devout wish that the shot had never been fired. A wild deer, hit thus, is not likely to give you a second sight of him. Or, as once happened to me, you may spy him days afterwards with the glass, endeavouring to drink from the stream in which he stands, but unable to do so. He is difficult to stalk and will die miserably of inability either to drink or feed. The sight cured me of taking "profile" head-shots at wild deer. If you drive in a cart which the deer are accustomed to see, you may get a close shot out of it, but be sure that the horse stands fire.

The custom of some parks is to cut a buck's throat instead of sticking him, but this seems needlessly cruel, to my ideas, though I suppose it is not more painful or slower than sticking him, but I hate the look of it. The place to stick a deer is at the junction of throat and breast, where the ring of a hunting breast-plate comes on a horse. A thrust here goes straight to the heart. The knife should be long and broad, and held like a foil, not a stage-dagger. A beginner is apt to break the point of the knife on a shoulder bone. Most knives are made of too hard steel; it is better to bend the point of the knife than to snap it off.

Caution is needed in sticking a deer, especially of the larger species. The best plan is to approach from behind, on the side *away from* which his legs are, and seize the horn on the side farthest from yourself. Get his nose in the air and dig the nearer horn into the earth, or kneel on it and hold the other horn, and never let go until the buck is stuck, *and you have got your body clear of him*. Otherwise he may plunge straight into you. The safest of all methods of "sticking" is to get some one to seize a hind leg and turn the animal on his back, and hold him so while you stick him. A deer can also give a nasty cut with his forefeet. By attracting his attention from in front you may give your man a chance to get hold of one of his hind legs. It is very difficult to stun a male deer with a stick. He can parry blows from a stick with his horns like an expert fencer.

I saw a fallow buck save himself, from what looked like certain death by a neat parry. I was watching two big bucks, of about equal weight, fighting; at a pause, one of them turned away; the other took advantage of this and made a lunge in a slanting direction, from behind, at his heart. There was not time for the one attacked to turn to parry the thrust, but he threw up his head, letting the broad palmation of his horn on that side cover his heart. No expert fencer could have made a neater guard. I have modelled a bronze group of this incident.

The reason for shooting park deer is usually to thin the herd and improve the stock, and not to kill good heads. Therefore the animals to be chosen are the worst bucks—the bucks which are of a bad colour, have "bad

heads," are deformed, lame, aged, or otherwise undesirable for breeding purposes.

I find it best to feed park deer all the year round. Most people begin feeding them after the snow comes, or when there has been a hard frost for some time and the deer are starving. This is too late: the deer then are so weak that they often die; the proper way is to feed them every day, increasing or decreasing the amount of the food, and varying it, according to the weather. After the rutting season, when the bucks are at their weakest and worst, the snow and frost come, and many of them cannot stand the cold, and die unless kept up with good food previously.

One is often told, "You will have to kill the old bucks; there is no use saving the big ones for breeding, they are sure to die in the winter." By feeding all the year round I find that this is not so. Since I took to feeding daily, I have not had a buck die in the winter, from natural causes, for six years. In the summer the deer have a few beans and maize; each day, as the rutting season approaches, I give them more of each, and also oil cake, Molacine, etc.

By the time the buck-shooting season commences they are as fat as possible. I have seen a buck "track" the line the feeder had gone, like a hound, to pick up beans he had dropped. I give them a little medicine occasionally, amongst their food, as they are apt to become bilious with so much rich food.

By such feeding, even during the rutting season, the bucks do not become thin, and they soon recover; as winter approaches I sometimes add acorns and chestnuts



Photo by H. Penford

THE RECORD FALLOW BUCK, 222 LBS. AS HE FELL

to their food. When the snow comes they have, in addition, hay put in proper receptacles. If hay is thrown on the ground the deer trample on it and lie on it and most of it is wasted; also it litters a park. In the winter I put the other food in long troughs, placed rather wide apart, else the big bucks get the lion's share of the food. Acorns, when they first fall, kill deer, especially Sika deer, if they eat many of them. During the rest of the year the maize and beans are scattered over the ground, after whistling the deer up, and they clear it up very clean, hardly leaving a bean.

I have a couple of small Pomeranians who go out when the deer are fed, and keep the sheep from stealing the deer's food. The deer do not mind them a bit, and they chase the sheep right through the deer and never chase deer.

There are at least four varieties of fallow deer: The spotted, of which the Hungarian is the most spotted, in fact even more spotted than the Axis deer; the German is also well spotted. The next variety is a dark bay with very few, and often entirely without, spots; the herd at Drummond Castle, Perthshire, is a good example of this kind. Next is the black; there are several herds in Kent of this colour, the peculiarity being that the deer is black all over, jet black in summer, with the legs and belly not quite so black, and a rusty black in winter. By black all over I mean that the rump and tail are also black, a very unusual thing in the deer tribe but also seen in black roe deer; lately I have had a light bay colour variety forming in the Park, which I think is unique; it may be a Sika cross. There is also a pure white variety.

The black fallow deer have dark grey velvet on their horns; the white have very light grey with a pinkish shade, from the veins showing through; the dark unspotted have a medium grey, and the very spotted a quite light French grey velvet. By seeing the horns alone, when they are in velvet, one can very accurately judge to which variety of fallow deer they belong.

I have not quite been able to decide whether the black variety has the fawns spotted. In the herd with which I am most acquainted, some of the fawns, as well as some of the full-grown deer, show faint spots in certain lights, but this may be the result of crossing with the spotted variety, both herds being together.

One newly-born black fawn was thickly covered with white spots, but unfortunately it was killed by a dog, so I do not know how it would have been marked when grown. A herd like it, coal black with white spots as if they had been snowed on, would look very pretty.

The popular idea is that the Axis deer cross is what gave the spots to fallow deer. I have tried both stag and hind Axis deer with the fallow, and although one of the stags (the other unfortunately broke his leg) "ran" most of the does in the park for several seasons, till he got so savage that I had to shoot him, during those years we were very short of fawns, and I cannot be certain that any of the herd are crosses with the Axis, although certainly they are much more spotted than they were before the Axis deer were introduced amongst them. One big buck has a brown instead of a black line down his back and tail, and the white line along his sides is more like that on an Axis than even the most spotted variety of fallow deer, so



FALLOW DEER (CERVUS DAMA)
Black variety shot by the author. Weight, 222 lbs.



FALLOW DEER (CERVUS DAMA)
Spotted variety shot by the author. Weight, 218 lbs.

he may be of this cross ; several does are also very spotted, and this year many of the spotted variety have no dark line down the back. Some of the black coloured bucks also have light grey velvet on their horns.

One reason why I fear that the two species of deer have not crossed is that the Axis is of the round-horned family, and the fallow deer of the flat-horned, so they are rather too distantly related to cross, or for the cross to be fertile. The herd I am experimenting with had horns, (both of the black and spotted variety) without the point at the back of the beam which is usually a characteristic of fallow deer. Since I have been introducing new blood, this point has begun to appear, but is still far from usual. It may be that too much in-breeding has obliterated this point, although one would think that a feature so characteristic of fallow deer would be the one further accentuated by in-breeding. Also the palmation was disappearing ; but this is usual, as wild fallow deer in Scotland, which never have fresh blood introduced, have hardly any palmation and park red deer have a tendency to palmation.

This loss of palmation may, however, be caused by bad feeding, as the horns are the first thing that suffer under such circumstances. I have two black fallow bucks which were given me, which have very short tails, no longer than those of a red deer; unfortunately I did not notice this when they arrived, as my man turned them out before I saw them, so I do not know whether this is natural or whether they have been docked, so as to identify them.¹

Where several herds of different colour run together,

¹ Since the above was written I have shot one of them, and find the short tail was natural.

it is important to shoot off any which look like a cross between any two sorts ; in this way one can keep various herds almost as pure as if there was only one kind kept.

The cross between the black and the spotted makes an ugly chestnut colour ; the cross between the white and the spotted is a white with bay pattern, rather than spotted, as the white predominates. The cross between the white and the black often has "white stockings," as horse-men call such marking. In the above cases the white was the male parent ; I do not know what the reverse cross would be. I have never seen a blaze down the face from any cross, although one hears of "the bald-faced stag" as an inn sign, so there must have been red deer with blazes down the face. I saw a roe doe in a menagerie with a long white blaze and snip down the face ; she was labelled "Common roe deer" !

I find it a good plan to earmark any deer I import, and keep a description in a book giving particulars of each. By varying the marking (one notch in right ear, two in left ear, top of right ear, etc.) one can identify each deer. Care must be taken as to this marking, however. When deer fight they get their ears torn, and it is difficult to distinguish markings made by fighting from those made by clipping the ear. I find it best to have an instrument which cuts a straight-edged piece with semicircular base out of the ear ; this is not likely to be confused with a tear made in fighting. Deer often lose an eye or they get an ear lopped and hanging down from an injury in fighting.

Deer imported to improve the breed should, if males, not be introduced during the rutting season or too soon

before it, as there is danger of their being killed by the other bucks. Even if turned out so that they have several months to get acquainted with the other deer, they usually keep apart, and when the fighting season begins, get hurt, unless they are as big and as heavy as the biggest buck in the original herd. If this is not the case, it is best to kill off any very heavy bucks in the original herd, so as to give the new-comers a better chance, as all the bucks of the herd will be against them and several attack them at once.

Imported deer often have their horns sawn off for convenience of transport in crates, which destroys their chance of defending themselves when turned out in a park, till their new horns grow.



CHAPTER X

ROE DEER SHOOTING

THIS is a subject about which I do not much like to write. A roe deer is so pretty, and cries so like a child when hurt, that I greatly dislike shooting one. Last year, at a big wild-boar-drive in the Ardennes, I was next to a man who has shot many boar and deer. A fine roe buck passed slowly close to him and he did not even take up his gun, although he had a pair, lying cocked on his "rest" in the usual way. When the beat was over I asked him why he did not shoot. He said that the little buck came skipping along, and, as the wind blew the dead leaves about on the snow, he played about and hit at them with his forefeet like a kitten. My friend could not find it in his heart to kill the little animal.

I have a very tame little Siberian roe buck, and he comes up to be nursed, and when his horns are in velvet he likes them rubbed. I suppose they irritate, as they feel very hot and feverish when the velvet is about to be cast. I would not, however, advise any one to make a pet of a roe buck, as they are as quick as lightning with their

horns, and there are tales of their having killed men, stabbing repeatedly when the man is down.

My little buck likes to be carried about ; but as he is growing up he is rather heavy to carry. I was turning out some wapiti one evening in the park from the crates in which they had travelled. The crates were on waggons and the deer plunged and rushed about. The little roe buck was very frightened, and ran to me and kept close against my leg which was farthest from the wapiti. I could feel him trembling, and he was afraid to leave me.

I have a pair of black roe deer from Germany, all black, rump inciuded, like the black fallow deer ; the buck is extremely savage and has twice wounded my deer-feeder.

If a roe *has* to be shot, he should be shot with a rifle as befits a deer, not with a shotgun. In cover shooting, where roe and small game come together, and there are a lot of beaters about, this is not practicable. In such cases, however, I should prefer to say that no roe should be shot at, but left for another time, and then stalked properly with a rifle. A long shot at a roe with a shotgun, especially if loaded for small game, is very cruel.

A roe is very hard to stalk. They are so restless that if you see one in a clearing, and it takes half an hour to get to him, it is ten chances to one he will be gone when you get there, even if he has not seen you or got your wind. You have to make the stalk as short and simple as possible. In the early morning, or just before sunset, you may get a chance at a roe near water or in corn. Roe generally go in a family party, and that is another reason why I do not like to kill them. The little doe calls and frets after the buck if he is shot.



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ROE DRIVING

This is quite otherwise in the case of red and fallow deer, where one male goes with as large a herd of hinds, or does, as he can keep together; the ladies of his family are great flirts, and are glad of an excuse to get away with a fresh husband, as the well-known French saying testifies. They cannot be much blamed for this, as a stag is a most selfish husband, bullying the ladies of his family during the few weeks when he cares for their company, and deserting them and thinking only of his own safety the moment there is any danger. In a deer-drive, for instance, he lets the hinds go first, even pushes them with his horns if they hesitate, so that, if anything is going to happen, they will be in danger and he can sneak off behind.

A roe is very inquisitive; if you have missed one, and he disappears into cover, and you follow him up wind silently, you may often get another shot at him, looking back in the direction where he last saw you.

The rifle which I use is the .36 recommended before for fallow deer shooting, only in this case I shoot for the shoulder. A roe's head is much too small to risk hitting him in the jaw. If he is down wounded in long ferns, where you have to hunt for him like a winged partridge, be careful of his horns—he may hurt you. A roe deer has usually six points, sometimes eight, to his horns, the Siberian species having much the best horns, almost as big as a Sika deer's.

I have shot some good ones in Poland; these have thicker horns and more "pearls" on them than the Scotch. Occasionally a roe buck has a "peruque"—that is to say the velvet on his horns grows abnormally, making a thick furry mass. In Poland one drives out in the early



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ROE DEER DRIVE



Roe Deer Shooting

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morning or evening in July to the woods, and, getting out on coming to openings, stalks any roe one sees, of course only bucks being shot. I have noticed on these occasions that many does have twin fawns.

In the part of Poland, near Posen, where I shot, the does were never disturbed, so they were very tame and let one get close to them.



CHAPTER XI

THE JAPANESE AND MANCHURIAN SIKA DEER

THE Japanese Sika is a deer which is gradually being introduced into parks. It resembles a very small red deer; and is half way in size between a fallow and a roe deer. There seem to be at least two varieties. I have one sort coloured just like a dark red deer; the other is a lighter bay and has a few white spots. The Manchurian variety is almost as large as fallow deer and spotted in summer. The tail is very short and both the tail and the rump are very white and covered with long hair. When the deer is frightened this white hair stands on end, and as the deer hops away from one this balloon-like object nearly hides the rest of the deer.

They are very hardy and seldom come up to be fed with the fallow deer (from whom they always keep apart), even in the hardest weather. They seem to find food by grubbing under beech and chestnut trees, probably for nuts; they sometimes die, however, especially the stags, from acorn poisoning.

I have only known one Japanese Sika stag to associate with fallow deer, and he never left them even during the breeding season, though he never crossed with them. They are more apt to keep in families, like the roe deer, than



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JAPANESE SIKA STAGS

most of the deer tribe, except during the rutting season. I have seen a fawn nestling close up to a stag, which a red deer fawn would not dare to do with a red deer stag. In fact, I have seen a red deer stag disembowel a calf which happened to feed too near him, when I was spying deer in a Scottish forest, and I had to kill it.

I imagine that, in their native state, the Sikas must make beds in dead leaves in the winter, as in the park where I live I have several times found them curled up amongst leaves asleep on winter evenings, when I have come home late. These leaves had been swept up by the park men, preparatory to being carted away. I remember one very cold dark night, as I drove past a heap of leaves, there seemed to be a pair of ears at the top of the heap. I got out and walked up to it, and a Sika hind uncurled herself out of the heap, and stood up.

When it is very cold several Sikas will also cuddle up in a ball together for warmth. In these cases stags, hinds, and calves will be together, a thing I have never seen amongst red and fallow deer.

The little stags are very bold fighters. A hunted "havier" or gelded red deer once came into the park and mixed with the deer, the hounds being, of course, stopped. Two of us had tried for more than half an hour to ride him out of the herd of fallow deer, without success, till he got mixed with the Sika deer. A little Sika stag immediately tackled him and, getting his horns under his body, very soon drove him off. I have also known a wounded Sika stag turn very nasty when approached.

I have never known the Japanese Sika to cross with other deer. In getting deer of this variety for a park,



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HERD OF SIKA
The centre stag is a Manchurian

Photo by W. A. Rouch

care should be taken that they come from healthy stock which has had plenty of space to run about in. In buying some, I got a hind which was lame in the hip, as I thought, from struggling in the crate she was sent in. The next spring her calf's feet began growing too long, and it had to be caught and the feet trimmed shorter. They grew long again, and then the calf died. I did not pay much attention to this till in a few years I found that some of the herd had crooked legs, and deformed feet, and I came to the conclusion that this hind (who had by that time died) was the cause of her descendants having deformed legs. I at once shot all the deer which showed the least symptoms of this deformity, and there have been few recurrences of it since. Finally, I learned that the hind had come from a place where the deer had no room to move about in.

Whenever seeking fresh blood for a herd of deer, it is very important to know the history and origin of the herd from which the deer are imported, or a hereditary or contagious disease may be introduced which will be very difficult to stamp out.

The Manchurian Sika is much larger, heavier, and taller than the fallow deer. I got two stags last year, but do not yet know the result of the cross with the Japanese Sika.

The heaviest Japanese Sika stag which I have shot weighed 160 pounds as he fell, but there have been heavier ones shot.

Although their horns are like those of red deer, they do not get so many points. In this they resemble the

Sambur. I have never seen one with more than eight points, four on each horn, and never with a cup on top. Eight points seems the normal size for full-grown Sika stags, and in a herd all the old stags have eight points, unlike red deer, whose big stags vary so much in the growth of their horns. A Sika is built like a hackney, heavy in the body and short in the legs. They are much prettier for a park, in my opinion, than fallow deer, and have all the good qualities a deer should have in a park, and none of the bad ones.

Red deer, besides needing very high fencing to keep them in, are dangerous during the rutting season. A Sika never attempts to jump, according to my observation, although the fence, if very open, requires rabbit-netting for a yard high at the bottom to prevent the calves from getting out, a Sika calf when newly born being about the size of a hare. I have some very low four-bar hurdles round my trotting track, which has a polo ground in its centre and therefore is a very tempting feeding ground for deer. The fallow deer are constantly jumping in. (It is only to keep the sheep out that the hurdles are employed.) The Sika deer, on the contrary, have scarcely ever been known to jump these hurdles. So it seems want of inclination not want of power.

I saw a very small child who was pushing a perambulator with a baby in it "held up" by a very diminutive Sika stag; he was pawing up the ground and throwing up tufts of grass with his horns, because he thought the perambulator would disturb his harem, but



Photo by H. Penfold

GROWTH OF A RED DEER "ROYAL" STAG'S HORNS. MAY 6, 1904

this is the only time I have ever known them to interfere with people.

The Axis or Cheetal deer are very dangerous in a park. One I had, after killing three fallow bucks in a few days, became menacing to people; he would go up to them for bread and if he did not get it at once would knock them down. I had to go out and put an end to him. I shot him from a "road wagon," and when the bullet hit him in the head he put up his mane and came toward the horse as if he would charge him, so I had to give him the other barrel quickly. He weighed 160 pounds as he fell.

A rather amusing mistake was made in a sporting paper about my Axis hind. A photo of her forms the tail piece of this chapter. She jumped the deer fence. (Axis deer are very bad about getting out of a park; they are constantly trying to find weak places in the fence to get out, and can jump at least as well as a red deer.) As she had got out, the only way was to hunt her with my hounds and try to take her alive; this I was fortunately able to do, running her into a pond and taking her unhurt after she had given us a run of over three hours. She screamed like a hare when in the pond. A newspaper reported this as "Hunting a Cheetah"—the word Cheetal having presumably been misspelt by the reporter.

I have only had the Manchurian Sika stags a few months, but during the breeding season both of them have been as much with the fallow does as with the Sika hinds, if not more. In fighting, the fallow bucks seem to beat them. It will be interesting to know if the fallow does will have Sika-fallow cross fawns, but I should think

that, one species being round-horned and the other flat, they would not cross. The Manchurian cross should, however, improve the size of my Sika deer, but the Manchurian is rather savage for a park.



AXIS HIND



ABNORMAL GROWTH OF HORN OF RED DEER

CHAPTER XII

DEER'S HORNS

THIS is a subject on which my experience differs from that of authorities on natural history. They may be right and I wrong; still it will be as well to give my observations, and perhaps the truth may be found to lie half way between our respective ideas.

The age to which deer live is very uncertain, but it has been supposed that they live to a fabulous age. There is a story that a stag which was hunted by a king of France, and which gave him a good run, was not killed when brought to bay, but had a silver collar put round his neck recording the incident and the date. The stag when killed nearly a century afterwards was still in his prime!

I am merely quoting from memory, and do not vouch for the details being correct; but what I want to convey

is that stags were formerly, if not now, believed to live to close on a hundred years.

As stag-hunting was more indulged in in the Middle Ages than now, people of those days should have known more about deer and their habits; but when one reads old natural history books and learns that "the elephant cannot lie down to sleep, but has to lean against a tree, because he has no joints in his legs" (as Josephus—or was it Pliny?—says), one sees that they are not quite reliable as to their facts. I myself shot a stag in Turlum Forest, in Scotland, in 1870, a fine royal, in his prime, weighing twenty-two stone "clean," in whose neck, when skinning him, was found a round bullet. The head forester said this bullet belonged to a class of muzzle-loading rifle which had not been used in the forest since 1840.

Assuming that the stag was of a shootable size, say five or six years old, when this bullet was shot into his neck, it makes his age when I shot him at thirty-five years; and, as he was in his prime, another thirty years could, on this reckoning, be added, making sixty years for the length of time he might have lived. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the bullet was not fired later than the year 1840. It may have been fired by a poacher who had one of these old-fashioned muzzle-loaders. Its being only slightly buried in the muscles of the neck makes it appear that perhaps the bullet was fired out of a smooth-bore (there were no marks of the bullet having passed through a rifled barrel) shooting a very small charge of powder. Perhaps the old bullet was fired out of a modern shotgun (it was about the size to fit a 12-bore shot gun), and only the year before I killed the stag.



Photo by H. Penfold

GROWTH OF A RED DEER "ROYAL" STAG'S HORNS. APRIL 25 1904

Another popular belief is that a stag gets one more point on each horn each year, till he is at his best, and that then he begins to "go back" in his horns. This latter belief tallies with my experience, but not the former. In order to make clear what follows it will be best for me to go over the process of horn-growing, even at the risk of repeating what the reader is already very familiar with. When a male deer is dropped, he has for the first few months a slight protuberance under the skin, at the spot where each horn will grow. When he is over a year old these have grown into upright horns of a few inches which are covered with a hairy skin, varying according to the species of deer.

The burr at the base of the horn begins to form in the summer, and as the autumn advances it becomes larger, finally cutting off the blood supply of the veins which run in this hairy skin, and killing the skin in consequence. This dead skin hangs in shreds, and is rubbed off by the deer. The horns are now hard and insensitive, and are used for fighting. They drop off the next spring, and a fresh set of horns, of larger growth, replaces them, to grow and drop off in turn. The popular idea is that each fresh growth has one more point on each horn; for instance, a stag rising three would have two points on each horn; one rising four would have three points on each horn, getting up to a royal (or twelve-pointer) at seven years old.

The red deer (*cervus elaphus*) belongs to the round-horned subdivision of the deer tribe, like the roe deer, Sika, Wapiti, and many others. I emphasise this question of the points for the following reason :

I have a herd of Wapiti, and a stag which I bought two years ago with four points, two on each horn, had last year nine points (four on one and five on the other horn) instead of having only three on each horn, six in all, as he should have according to the popular idea.

Another Wapiti, which I bought in 1904, was said to have twelve points (his horns had been sawed off, so I do not know from personal observation if this were true); last year he had thirteen points, instead of fourteen as he should have; this year, seventeen. (The weight of his 1906 year pair of horns is nearly double his 1905 year's.)

The younger stag (or bull, as he is called in the States) must, I think, have grown his abnormal increase of points owing to the very good feeding he had, but on the other hand he had consumptive lungs when I shot him last winter. I give bonemeal, limewater, and molasine to stimulate the growth of horn. A two year old stag, a cross between the Wapiti stag and a red deer hind had as a yearling only spikes, now at two years old he has eleven points; and a two-year-old stag a cross between a Wapiti and an Altai stag, has increased from spike horns to a twelve pointed in one year!

On the other hand, the red deer stag whose head appears several times in the illustrations accompanying this description has been a royal for four consecutive years to my knowledge, and he may have been so for several years before I got him. Each year's horns are almost the counterpart of the former year's; he is now in the Zoölogical Gardens, Regent's Park, so his future horn growth can be studied, but he seems to be "going back" in his horns now. According to the popular idea he



Photo by W. A. Rouch

COW WAPITI

should by now be a twenty-pointer, and I fed him to the utmost with oil cake and bone-forming foods to stimulate the horn growth. I have a theory that if a horn gets an abrasion, drawing blood at any spot, when the horn is in velvet, that a point will grow at that place. I have noticed something of the kind in fallow deer which have accidentally injured their horns. It would be interesting to make slight incisions on a stag's horns when they are in velvet, to see if points, or attempts at points, would make their appearance.

It may be that accidental injuries to a stag's horns were the origin of points, and that the flat tops to the horns of moose, fallow deer, etc., were originated in the same way, from deer rubbing their horns against trees. The stag at the Zoölogical Gardens has his brow points depressed this year. When I first got him he had normal brow points, but ever since he has had depressed ones. It may be owing to having had his horns sawed off.

I have noticed that deer kept in confinement, and which had to pass through narrow doorways, have upright horns, owing to the horns, when in velvet and comparatively flexible, being forced together each time the deer passed through a doorway. This is another line along which interesting experiments might be made; a light framework might be fixed on a stag's head whilst his horns were growing, to try and train them into abnormal forms, or the horns tied together with thin wire to prevent their spreading, or conversely forced apart by a spring, as horses' contracted feet are cured. The accompanying drawings by myself give examples of several abnormally shaped horns of deer which I have shot. I have not, how-



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WAPITI

Photo by W. A. Rouch

ever, been able to substantiate the general notion that an abnormal horn is caused on the opposite side by an injury (sexual) to the deer. This is also a subject worth experiment.

In England and in Scotland, the number of points on a stag's horns are added together; one with six points on each horn is called a twelve pointer, or royal. On the



THREE-HORNED STAG. THE PENDANT HORN WAS SOFT

Continent, or in Germany at least, it is customary to multiply by two the number of points on the horn which bears the most. For instance, a stag with five points on one horn and seven on the other would be called a twelve pointer in England, but a fourteen pointer in Germany. The difference between a stag having an equal number of points on each horn and one with more on one is distin-

guished in Germany by calling a stag in the latter case *ein ungerade* (uneven) fourteen (or whatever it is) pointer. This way of describing a stag must be borne in mind when comparing the number of points on English and German stags, from written or verbal descriptions, as the German stag if *ein ungerade* is only nominally endowed with his number of points, and may be quite a number short of them.



"OLD UGLY" SHOT IN GLEN STRATH FARRER

I am experimenting in breeding the best "heads." The Wapiti-red-deer cross has, as I mention elsewhere, gained nine points in one year, and I am now trying the Altai Mountain variety of Wapiti with the red deer, which has gained ten points in a year. This latter sort of Wapiti has usually more points, than the American and I think I can increase the number of points and size and weight of

horn without destroying the red deer character of the "heads." I am now crossing this Altai with the Wapiti-red-deer hybrid, but I have not gone far enough in my experiments yet to be able to say anything definite.

The stag's horn is described as follows: The main part is the beam, the boss at the bottom the burr, the lowest point is the brow point (I have shot a stag with two



ABNORMAL STAG'S HORNS

brow points on each side, the points being side by side, slightly diverging, and horizontal). The point vertically above the brow point is the bay point (if horizontal to it it is a second brow point as described above.) A bay point on the left horn is very fairly well developed in my record fallow buck, shown in the chapter on fallow deer; it might be possible, by careful selection, to breed a variety of fallow deer bearing these points on both horns.

The third vertical point is the tray point.

It is very unusual to have a fourth point above the tray, the points, if any, above it forming a cluster at the end of the beam. I have a Wapiti who has this fourth point on each horn for the last two years, and it is not forking at the end.¹



ONE-HORNED STAG

The cluster of points on top of a horn, if consisting of two, are called forks; if three, a crown, making, with brow, bay, and tray, a royal stag. Sometimes, if there are four points on top of each horn, it is called an imperial. Others only call a stag an imperial, if a double crown is on each horn, or a crown and a fork on the end of one of the points.

¹ Since writing the above, I have purchased a pair of Wapiti horns with a fifth point on each horn projecting horizontally from the beam.

It is possible for a stag to have a crown on each horn and yet not be a royal, his bay point being lacking. Also a ten pointer may have one horn brow, bay, and tray, and a fork on top of one side, and brow, tray, and three on top of the other side.

A peculiar form of horn (or "head," as it is technically called) is the "switch horn," which consists of merely the beam and brow point on each horn.



ABNORMAL STAG'S HORNS

The switch horn differs from the ordinary four-pointer by being a full-grown stag, and having a full-sized beam to his horn, and is a legitimate stag to shoot.

There are also stags occasionally met with which have no horns, although otherwise perfect. They are called hummel stags. A gelded stag also has no horns, or horns

always in velvet, according to his condition when gelded. Gelded stags are called "havers." One of the very largest and heaviest stags I ever shot was a hummel, without a vestige of horn.

One of my Wapiti two-year-olds has only two long beams and no points. It will be interesting to see if he gets any points next year.



Photo by H. Penfold

TAME FOX AND HOUND WHELPS BELONGING TO AUTHOR



CHAPTER XIII

WILD BOAR SHOOTING IN BELGIUM

THE rifle suitable for shooting deer is not suitable against Belgian wild boar, or, I suppose, any sort of game which is found and shot in thick covert.

I have shot all my Belgian boar in the Ardennes. The cover there is so thick, and the rides so narrow, that one seldom fires a shot at longer ranges than sixty yards, while the distance is often twenty yards or even less. The animal is usually going as fast as he can, and one fires on a glimpse, rather than a full sight of the entire beast.

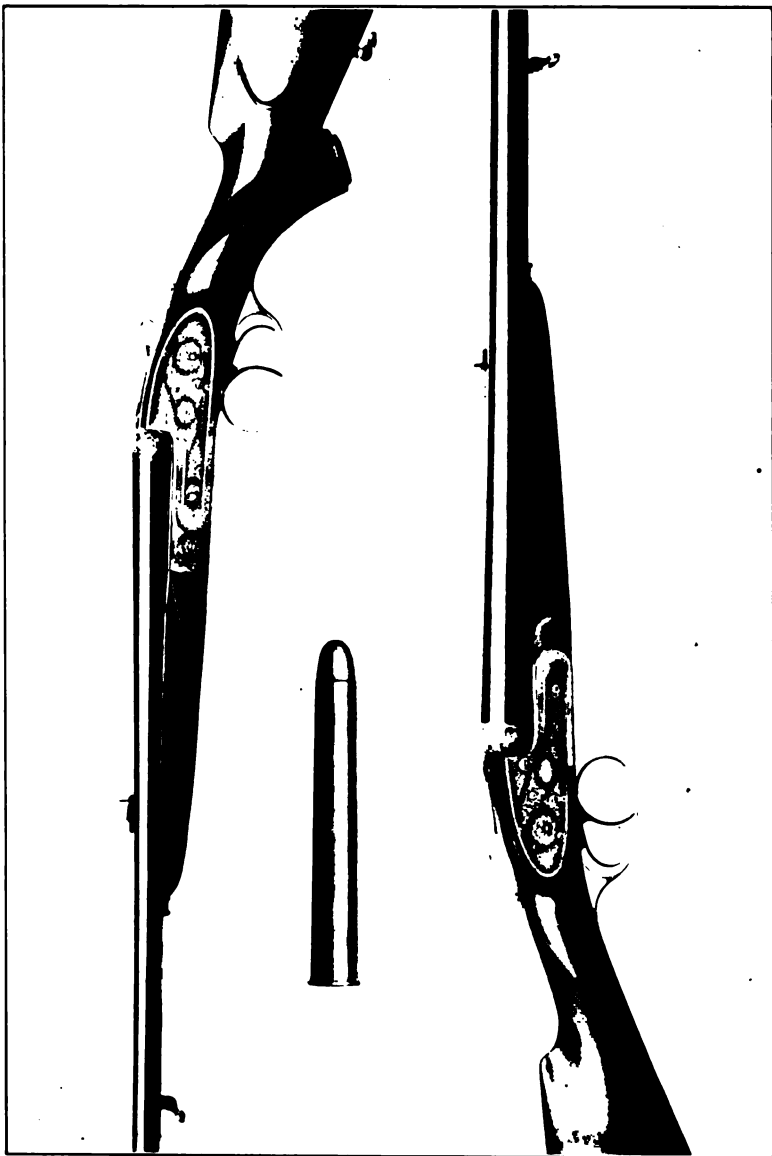
Under such circumstances an express rifle requires the utmost skill in handling, and however carefully and accurately such a weapon may be used there is always great danger that the bullet will be deflected from a branch or twig, and so not only miss the boar, but find its way to a

beater or one of the other guns. Most men, consequently, use a cylinder-bored 12-bore shotgun, and fire a charge of *ballottes*, nine to twelve round bullets, arranged in layers of three. The idea of such a "duffer" weapon is, however, unattractive, and the best compromise to my mind is a "shot-and-ball gun," a weapon which shoots shot, or a conical bullet with hollow point, and to use the bullet whenever possible. With a small powder charge and a big hollow bullet of this kind there need be no danger if one is careful and pays proper attention to the direction and distance from which the beaters are advancing, and the relative position of the other guns. And when the boar is dead one has the satisfaction of feeling that he fell to a bullet.

There is a very neat form of double-barrelled rifle used by the Belgians, made in their country, which shoots an express bullet with a reduced charge of cordite. This rifle has very short barrels (which makes it handy in cover), and the reduced charge enables it to be made much lighter in weight than an express with full charge. The only drawback is that one might by accident get a cartridge with a full charge, and then there would be danger of bursting the barrel.

The Purdey double-barrel rifle I use has a *special cartridge* for this reduced charge, so that there is no possibility of getting a full-charge cartridge into the chamber of my rifle. This rifle and cartridge are illustrated on the opposite page.

The best shot of my acquaintance, at boar, kills pigs right and left with a double-barrelled rifle, just as if they were rabbits. He always fires snap-shots, and takes no more deliberate aim with his rifle than he would do with



183 Built to his specification by Messrs. T. Purdey & Son. 4-bore double cordite straight shell lead bullet

AUTHOR'S FAVOURITE RIFLE FOR BOAR

his shotgun. He tells me that he has never fired at a stationary target in his life.

His skill would soon be lost if he took to shooting lying down at stationary targets, and I have had him in my mind during the preceding chapters as the kind of shot which I should like to see my pupils become. A rifleman should be no less ashamed of taking a pot-shot with a rifle than to shoot a sitting partridge with his shotgun.

Whether a rifle or gun is the weapon selected for shooting boar, it should be as short as possible, so as to avoid the risk of catching in twig or boughs. It should be furnished with a sling for carrying, and have large, easily visible sights. My preference is a big shotgun fore sight, and a large, especially open "V" hind sight. But do not have the front sight put on a flat-topped pyramid, as some gunmakers like to do. They make it that way in order to have it fit in a groove, so that it can be shifted and another front sight substituted if wanted. It is this making things removable which causes so much trouble. If you have your front sight right why should you want to remove it? A front sight "moves itself" too often, when you least desire it, for one to wish purposely to add to its mobility.

Having a front sight of the shotgun pattern, that is without a stalk (so that it shall not break off easily), placed on a blunt pyramid makes it very awkward to shoot with in a hurry. The reason is this: If you have a front sight on a stalk, you can see it at once in the "V" of your hind sight. If it has no stalk, you are apt to get in part of the blunt pyramid. Now the horizontal top of this pattern going across the bottom of the "V" of the hind

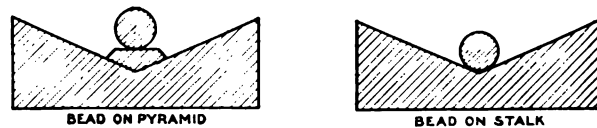


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Photo by A. H. De Ath

sight (both these objects being black) makes you think you have a "V" with a very shallow instead of acute-angled base, and you shoot too high. It is difficult to explain this in words, but the accompanying diagrams show it clearly. In a winter's evening light this fault is a very grave one.

In shooting boar, the best spot at which to aim is behind the ear; but if the boar is charging this is impossible, and you must generally fire between his eyes unless you are a little above him, when you can shoot into the top of his neck. In this case be careful about the angle of fire, or the bullet will glance off his sloping skull, and the only result will be to infuriate the animal.



A particular, though vital, reason against the use of buckshot or *ballettes* for boar is, to my mind, the awkwardness, not to say impossibility, of using them on a boar when he is fighting with the dogs or charging amongst men.¹ The light rifle described earlier is then necessary unless you have a shot-and-ball gun, or rifle, when the ball cartridge comes in handy. A friend of mine shot between the eyes a boar charging with a pair of bull terriers hanging onto his ears like earrings.

The boars are driven from one clump to another by beaters and dogs. The dogs used are mongrels and of small size. Large dogs are more apt to get injured, as they cannot dodge a boar so quickly, and also tend to get

¹ See illustration on page 185.



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SHOT BY H. PENFOLD

Photo by A. H. De Ath.

hung up by brambles more readily than small dogs which can squeeze through a hole. The Dogs' Home at Battersea is a good place at which to look for dogs for this purpose. There one may often pick up a "good" dog—in the sense that he is a good fighter—which has been condemned because savage, or given to fighting other dogs, or sheep-killing. A dog condemned on these grounds is "good" for boar. It was from the Home that I got a couple of fighting Irish terriers which are the pick of our pack. One of them refused to be taken out of the railway van when he first arrived at Brussels, going for every one who attempted to dislodge him. He is wonderful at boar. The first boar that ever crossed his view he tackled and caught by the ear with such purpose that he refused to leave hold when the animal had been killed, and had, consequently, to be driven home in the game cart with the carcase.

The "guns" are posted round the cover. Each "gun" usually has a gun-rest in front of him,¹ and on this he supports his 12-bore shotgun and his rifle, ready to hand, whichever he may choose to use first. Some men also add a third, lighter gun, loaded with No. 5 shot, in case a pheasant or hare should come their way. I do not approve of this shooting at small game when after boar, and personally I let even roe deer pass then. A shot is liable to turn back any boar which may be nearly breaking cover. But if your neighbours choose to be less careful, there is no need to complain of their acting in a way which will probably send you boar that would otherwise have broken near them.

Another little matter, which smokers seem incapable

¹ See headpiece to this chapter, and pages 193 and 201.



Photo by Chevalier Pauw van Wieldrecht

of appreciating, is that smoking at a stand is prejudicial to getting a shot at deer or boar. Smokers, indeed, seem to suffer from a pretty general delusion in regard to their habit. Scotch foresters, for instance, will often omit no precaution to see that the "*wind is right,*" *i. e.* not blowing on to the deer from them, and they will be equally careful to run no risk of being seen by the deer. But, while they fear that a deer may scent themselves, they quite ignore the thick cloud which is ascending from their pipes, and the tobacco which foresters and gillies smoke is pretty strong in perfume.

I remember a gillie who was once given an exceptionally expensive cigar by a "gun," as a reward for finding a wounded stag. When asked next day what he thought of it he said it was "no that bad, but no sickening enough!"

At some boar-drives, while you can neither see nor hear your neighbours, who are standing as still as mice, their positions, like chimneys, are apparent by puffs of smoke. Smokers who are perfectly reasonable on all other matters will not understand that this is so, but non-smokers who are shooting with them really need not cry out. As in the case of a neighbouring gun who cannot resist taking a shot at small game, their loss is your gain, and you will undoubtedly have cause to thank a pipe for many shots at boar which have skirted away from the smoker's stand to yours.

I do not believe that a heavy smoker can ever be a good rifle shot: he is too shaky.

It is a good plan to have your stick made with a thin saw blade fitting into it, which can be drawn out of a slit in the side of the stick and fastened to the crook. This



makes a good saw, on the fret saw principle, and it can be used when required to cut small branches. When at your pass, if you can do so without being heard by the boar, it is advisable to cut a few well-leaved branches, and stick them in a natural position in front of you to prevent the advancing game from seeing your legs, which, as the boar come through the brushwood, are the part of you most likely to attract attention ; also it is as well to cut down any branches which obstruct your view, or would be in the way of your gun or rifle should you need to take a quick shot. Do not leave your post under any circumstances without letting your neighbour know, as you may shoot each other if your positions are altered ; also do not leave your post till the three blasts from the horn tell you that each drive is over. When leaving your pass make sure that your neighbours are also leaving theirs, as otherwise a "gun" may be left behind and may lose himself. If you have to follow a wounded boar, first let the other guns know you are doing so; otherwise you will delay the next drive, but if you let them know, they can go on without you, if others are following you can indicate where you have turned up a side path by breaking a branch at the turn.

A boar often comes to the edge of the cover the moment the beaters start and stands there hidden by the thickest growth he can find. If he gets wind of the guns he goes along the whole line in this way, creeping within close range and yet invisible, till he gets to the end where he breaks.

Stuffers have a trick of drawing out a boar's tusks from the gums so that they may appear much longer than



they really are—an illegitimate trick, against which I warn those who may not be aware of it. A boar has so much of his tusk buried in the gum that it only needs a careful extraction and subsequent reinsertion—the tusk being held in place by attachment to a plug which has been driven into the empty socket—in order to make a quite moderate boar appear, in the Belgian phrase, *rudement armé*. Further, if you have occasion to send a dead boar by rail, be careful to have him sewn up in a sealed sack, or he will arrive at his destination half bald, as people have a trick of helping themselves to his bristles.

A stag may also appear with a wider spread of his horns, when stuffed, than he had during life, by his skull having been split between the horns by the stuffer, and a wedge inserted. I have seen stags, this time *not* in Belgium, with a greater number of points than nature gave them, several having been added by the stuffer! Of course, I do not refer to reputable taxidermists in the above remarks.

The greatest care is necessary when using the knife on a wounded boar. The safest plan is to approach from behind whilst he is occupied with the dogs, seize his further ear, brace your knee against him, and strike downwards behind the ear. But make certain that the dogs and you have a firm hold, or he is more than likely to rip you.

If you should have the misfortune to fall when charged by a boar, do your best to lie on your face, and prevent his turning you over. The great danger lies in getting the vitals ripped; a gash in the back is usually of less consequence. A charging boar cannot turn rapidly. If you fail to drop a charging boar at close quarters, wait until he is all but on you and then jump aside.



The Sporting Rifle

Never let a wounded boar go back among the beaters if you can help it.

The best moment to take a boar is as he leaves the covert which is being driven and crosses the drive on which you are stationed; but this is often impossible if the next gun is posted in line. If this is not possible, do not fire at a *solitaire*—(the name for a big boar) who shows himself in the beat without coming out—unless you are sure of killing him. Let him go rather than risk sending him back on to the beaters wounded. But if a wounded boar should break back let the beaters know *at once*.

Wounded boar are dangerous to the last. In a case within my knowledge, a wounded boar turned back and lay under a tree. A beater, seeing him and believing him dead, poked him with a stick. The unfortunate beater got a big hole in the inside of his thigh, from which he nearly bled to death and which kept him in hospital for over a month; two other beaters were knocked down, and the boar was found dead a week later over the German frontier. This boar had been hit in the face by *ballettes* at close range. His jaw was broken and his eyesight nearly destroyed, or he would have done even worse damage. The moral is, be sure that a pig is dead before you take the least liberty with him.

As wild boar shooting takes place principally in winter, and the Ardennes are high and cold then, it is important to be dressed warmly enough. One stands still and walks hard alternately, when going from beat to beat. It is therefore best to have a short fur-lined jacket, with fur collar to protect the ears taking care that this fur is not of a kind which will tickle the neck if your skin is sensitive.



The jacket can then be left unbuttoned or taken off whilst climbing, and buttoned when you reach your pass. Long India rubber boots are generally worn, as the snow, which is often just on the melting point, penetrates most leather boots. Rubber, however, is very unpleasant to walk in, especially if your feet break through half-frozen snow at every step. I wear a modification of wading-boots with steel spikes.

There are short socks, called American socks, which are a good thing to wear *over* the ordinary woollen stockings, as they absorb the moisture and keep the feet comparatively dry when wearing waterproof boots. If you turn down the top of your stockings *over* the top of the rubber boot, it keeps the wet from coming in over the tops of the boots. Nailed boots, unless with special steel ice nails, are rather dangerous on ice; ridges across the sole of the boots, made of leather or rubber, put on diagonally, are sometimes used.

The hands must be kept warm somehow. If you wear woollen gloves they cannot be taken off instantly when you want to take a shot. Some shooters carry a muff, either on a strap passed round the neck, which is apt to catch in things, or strapped round the waist. This latter way, if a man is at all stout, does not add charm to his appearance. What I find best and most practical is to have two vertical slits made at the level of your hands in your fur-lined jacket; into them you can put your hands whilst resting your rifle on your right forearm, with the muzzle pointing to the ground, in a convenient position for instant use. Always keep a loaded barrel in reserve in case of a charge. I have known a boar to charge when hit after he had



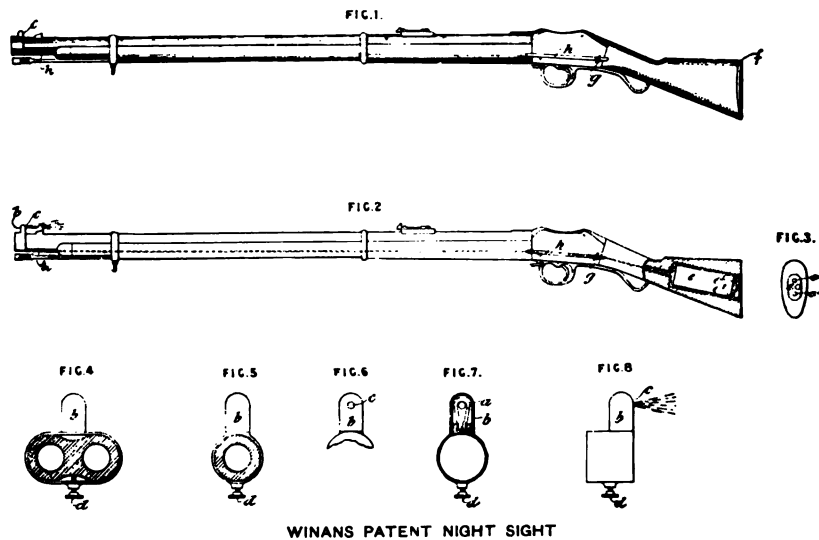
Photo by Chevalier Pauro van Wieldrecht

LUNCH AT A BOAR DRIVE

passed the "gun"—I mean turn round and charge back.

If a boar is wounded, and there is snow on the ground, when he is tracked into a clump of underwood, it is best to take a turn round the wood and see if his tracks lead out; if not it means he is still in the wood, most probably lying down, as a wounded boar usually keeps on going as long as he can, and if he stops it means he is "very sick."

To go up to a boar, wounded, in thick cover, more especially to look for him without seeing him, is very dangerous, as he may charge from close quarters and when you are in a position—perhaps stooping under a branch of a tree—where you cannot shoot instantly. Also, if a boar is fighting the dogs, he will charge if he catches sight of a man.



A moderate boar weighs fifty to seventy kilos, and a big "*solitaire*" 105 to 110 or even up to 130 or more.

A very exciting but often disappointing form of boar





Photo by W. W. Rouch & Co., London

THE AUTHOR SHOOTING A BOAR (A UNIQUE PHOTOGRAPH FROM NATURE)



Photo by W. W. Rouch & Co.

CHAPTER ON WILD BOAR SHOOTING IN BELGIUM

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shooting is lying out at night for them. You need a moonlight night, but even then it is extremely difficult to see your sights, unless the moon is straight behind you. I find the best night sight, if you do not use the electric sight I have invented, and of which the cut on page 186 gives an idea, is to have a big ivory "V" on the muzzle of your rifle.

One lies on the ground, on a waterproof sheet for preference, and waits near a field of oats or other crops where the boar is in the habit of coming. If he is an old one he generally has a creep round before coming and so gets your wind, and does not turn up. I once waited at one end of a field and an inveterate cigarette-smoker at the other end. The result may be imagined: every few moments there was the flash of a match from his direction, and cigarette ends thrown into the oats and then being stamped out.

It is very difficult not to go to sleep lying out like this all night, but it is better to be quite alone. I have never yet found any companion who does not fidget or move about, unless he happens to go to sleep, and *then* he snores.





Photo by W. W. Rouch & Co.

CHAPTER XIV

WILD BOAR SHOOTING IN GERMANY

THIS is managed rather differently from Belgian shooting. To begin with, the Germans are very particular as to the weapon used; in the shoot rented by myself, only rifles may be used, also no sows may be shot.

The cover is so thick that beaters cannot go through it, and only dogs are used, hunted by a man, with a horn, rather like rabbit-shooting with beagles. The similarity to beagling is increased by the smallness of the dogs. Whereas in Belgium the terrier is the best and most usual dog used, and anything smaller is unable to get along in deep snows, and over rough ground, in the part of Germany where I shoot, quite small dachshunds are the rule.

The sort of dogs one uses in Belgium would be too impetuous to be hunted by one man by himself.

The best dog on my shoot for boar is Hexie, a little one weighing (I should think by lifting her) not over five pounds. She is so small she is carried from beat to beat,¹ and put into a clump of thick fir trees, as one would put a ferret into a hole. To hear a squeaky voice, and see her come out chasing a big boar, big enough to swallow her whole, is very funny. Her little short crooked legs do

¹ She is in my arms in the illustration on page 207.

not allow her to go at any pace, or for any distance, but this is the advantage of having dachshunds for boar-driving, as they do not go far if the boar is not killed. If a boar is shot before little Hexie, she gets hold of him and tries to shake him and thinks she has killed him herself. I am afraid some day she will get hold of one not quite dead and he will hurt her.

There are also a couple of very good pointers that I use to hunt the boar occasionally.¹ It seems a curious idea, but they run and give a very deep hound note. They are, however, too big to get along well in thick cover. I am going to try some small cocker spaniels, they ought to bustle a boar along.

As no sows are allowed to be shot, it is important to know at a glance the sex when a boar breaks. It is only in sight some seconds crossing the openings (in my shoot fortunately there are no other guns and so there is no danger of shooting a gun or a beater), if the lower outline of the boar is a segment of a circle it is a safe rule not to shoot; if the outline is an obtuse angle, you can blaze away.

It is a good plan to carry a Zeiss glass hung round your neck, and when you hear a boar grunting and crashing in the cover you can get a good look at him, as he breaks, with the glasses, drop them, and raise your rifle.

One stands at the most likely place for a boar to break and runs to where the boar is heading before the dogs. A boar often works several times round the cover before the little dogs yapping and snapping at his heels make him finally break cover. It is usual to wear a hunting-knife, some two feet long or even longer, in case

¹ See illustration, page .

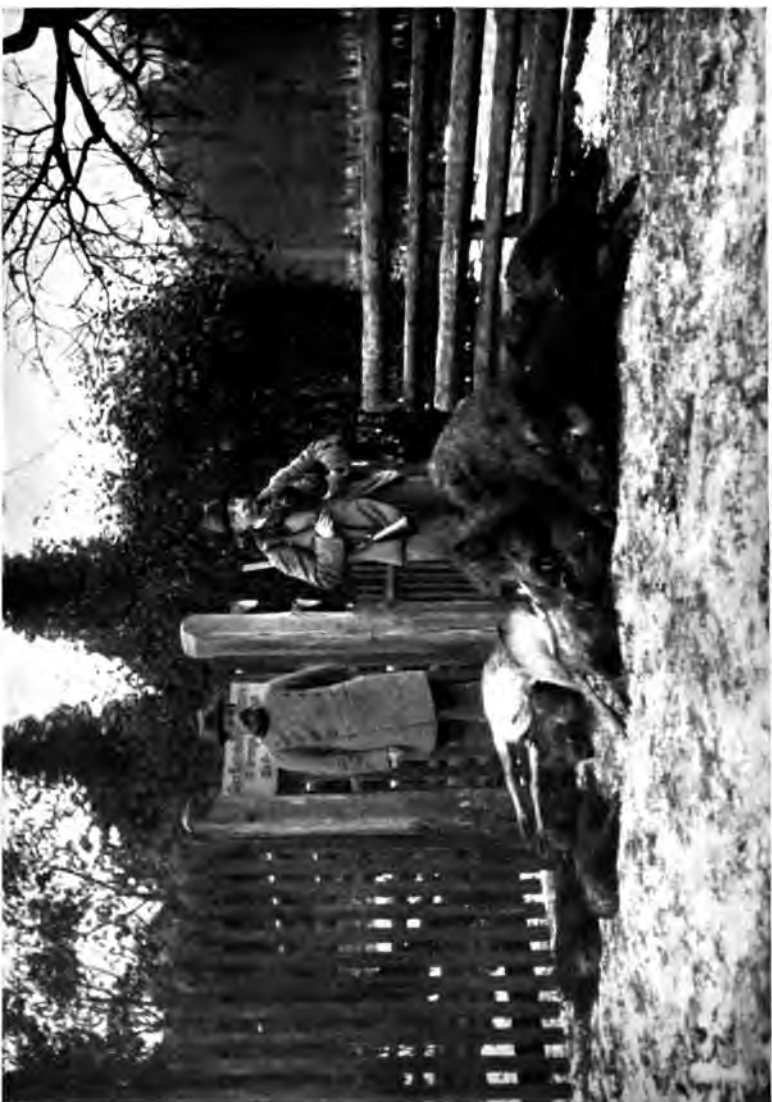


Photo by W. W. Rouch & Co.

The Sporting Rifle

a boar charges and gets you down, but I, personally, prefer to carry a .44 double-action, short-barrelled Smith and Wesson revolver in a cowboy holster, well down and forward on my right side so as to be to my hand. My idea, though I have not yet had to put it into practice, is that one could defend one's self better (when down) with a revolver, than by trying to draw a knife and get it into the thick hide of a boar's neck, especially if he was on you, or so close you could not give proper play to muscles of your arm.

A friend of mine, however, who is an exceptionally good, quick shot with a revolver, told me he fired all six bullets of a heavy army revolver into the head and shoulders of a charging, wounded boar, and that he finally had to turn and run. The boar was "very sick" before he began to charge, but the revolver bullets did not seem to have any effect on him.

The German foresters are very clever in tracking and following a wounded boar. I hit a boar in the throat this winter as he galloped past me. Two men were with me and they at once started on a run, one to the right and one to the left, round the cover the boar had gone into, leaving the man with the dogs to wait. As they ran one saw the boar's track leading out. He sounded his horn. The other man ran to him and they made a similar double cast round the next clump. The boar had again gone on, and they kept in this way following him for an hour, till they finally located him in a clump, by going round it and not finding any track leading out of it. We then got the dogs up, and routed the boar out. It was as good casting as fox-hounds would do.

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I am trying to improve the size of the boars by importing Russian boar.

There is a very good sportsman's exhibition held each year in Berlin, which could with advantage be imitated in England. It is an exhibition of big-game trophies, which must have been shot in Germany during the current year, or by a German subject in any other part of the world. Medals and prizes are given for the best heads of each sort of big game.



Photo by W. W. Rouch & Co.

If such an exhibition were held in London each year, during the London season, dear-stalkers could compare their trophies, of the year before, and it would encourage the shooting of good heads rather than mere quantity.

A year old wild boar, either male or female, is called a *Frischling*, from one upward to two years old an *Überläufer*; after that the males are *Keiler* and the females *Bake*, a big one having the prefix of *starke*.

Any tusks over four inches long outside the jaws are good ones. I understand the correct way to measure

The Sporting Rifle

tusks is along the outside curve when the tusk is extracted, which nearly doubles the length. A four-year-old boar weighs about 70 to 90 kilos, over 100 is a good one ; my best weighed 124 kilos.

If a *Frischling* is shot, care must be taken in going up to it especially if it cries out (a *Keiler* never cries out) as the old sow will turn back and attack anyone who goes near the wounded *Frischling*, and she may have to be shot in self-defence, which is a pity. Good females should never be shot ; they have six young ones a year and upwards, so killing a sow does more damage to the "*Sauenpark*" than killing half a dozen *Frischlinge*.

Also if you shoot at *Frischlinge* on purpose, which is sometimes done if there are too many, it is necessary to be very careful not to hit the sow.

The old sow generally goes in front and her family follow in single file ; it would seem therefore perfectly safe to shoot at one of the hindmost *Frischlinge*, but another sow with her string of young may be following on the heels of the front lot, and she may get the bullet intended for the last *Frischling* of the forward lot if they are travelling fast and the aim is not forward enough. When the family is going away from you there is great danger of hitting the sow, as, even if a *Frischling* is hit, the bullet goes through it and may hit the sow.

I give herewith an illustration of my best boar dog, Hector ; he is a pointer, and is also very good at pointing partridges and hares, and retrieving, but when after boar he ignores hares, which is very unusual in a dog originally taught to point hares.

He has been four times wounded this year (1907) in



Photo by W. W. Rouch & Co.

BOAR SHOT BY THE AUTHOR. WEIGHT, 270 POUNDS.

The Sporting Rifle

the throat, chest, flank and the last time by the 124-kilo bear mentioned above when he was struck at the side of the head on the left side. It was not with a tusk or he would most likely have been killed, but the blow was so severe that it has injured his hearing (I hope only temporarily) and he does not now know where a sound comes from. If whistled to he starts off in an entirely wrong direction.

Little Hixie the lathshund shown in my arms in the photograph of the group of dead boar also was hurt by the same bear the day this photograph was taken. She was struck but being so small and light was only thrown to one side with a bad bruise in the shoulder. A third dog a bigger rough lathshund had his ear and head cut at the same time.

I am mentioning this to show what risks one's dogs run when they get stuck in a wounded bear in cover so thick that they cannot get quickly to their assistance. You should not fire shots at long range at distances and under circumstances that prevent your being very confident that you will kill the bear on the spot.

In bear stalking and bear hunting if you wound a beast you know that it is only that beast which has to be followed up and killed. If you wound a bear although you mean to get out quick out for yourselves, your poor dogs run the risk of being killed and when the bear is at bay and they hear you coming to their assistance they are very bold and run in and very likely get hurt.

Little Hixie can generally take good care of herself, but she was so tired the day the bear caught her, having chased him several miles, that her little short crooked legs



Photo by W. W. Rouch & Co.

could not get her out of the way in time when he lunged at her.

There is a form of boar shooting which I have found quite successful, and that is walking very quietly about in the early morning and evening and getting shots at boar out in the open. Also waiting just about dusk for them. In this latter case it is best to stand behind a young fir tree, the wind of course being right, and cut off a few branches each side of the stem at the height to see through. If you stand close against the stem you are very invisible and get a wider view than if you sat or lay down.

The photographs herewith show shelters built where the shooter would be too conspicuous if he stood in the open, but one cannot shift about well from them if boar are coming wrong. I prefer moving about according to where I hear the dogs driving the boar, so as to be within shot when he finally breaks cover.

Where I have been lately shooting there are rides cut on a very scientific principle. The "shooting" ride or alley is about twelve yards wide; at one end of it is the shelter for the shooter. To enable him to be prepared for a shot, and to know if he has hit what he has shot at, two other very narrow rides, about three yards wide, run also from his shelter like spokes from the hub of a wheel. He therefore has on his left front a narrow three-yard ride, in front of him the twelve-yard ride, and to his right front another three-yard ride. The beaters drive the wood from the left with the dogs. Boar therefore cross the left-hand narrow ride first, giving the shooter a glimpse of them, he at once gets ready to shoot as they cross the



215 HECTOR, WHO WAS WOUNDED FOUR TIMES BY BOAR IN 1907, IN THE HEAD, THROAT, CHEST AND FLANK.
Photo by W. W. Rouch & Co.

big ride in front of him, and when he has shot, he glances at the right-hand narrow drive and if the boar does not cross, he knows it is down.

Anyone who has shot rabbits darting over a ride will appreciate this arrangement of giving you warning when to be ready to shoot.

The size of a boar in a cover can be judged by the height he sharpens his tusks against the trees in the neighbourhood.

I do not know if it is usual in boar, but I have found that when wounded they are apt to work in a large circle back to where they were found, instead of going right away. They certainly keep on travelling and do not lie down in the first shelter or go to water as deer do.

In following up a wounded boar (I mean a big male) always bear in mind that the moment he sees you he will charge and as the dogs will most likely be clustered round him it will be very difficult not to hurt them if you shoot. My experience, so far, is that the dogs I have used are too slow; dachshunds can worry along behind the boar and hamper him a little, but they keep him moving. Something small but very fast (a greyhound cross with a bull terrier perhaps) could race past the boar and stop him till one came up and prevent the chase being so long; also a long-legged dog could jump out of the way when lunged at better.

A beginner is apt to shoot over and behind a running boar, for a boar gets along much faster than his lumbering gallop leads one to suppose, as can be judged by the fact that the pointer Hector has to go his best to keep up with a boar. But when a man is over the "buck fever" and

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is an experienced running shot with the rifle, I believe almost all misses are under.

Always bear in mind when shooting game with a rifle to bring the rifle up with a swing in the direction the game is moving and to *keep up* the swing as you discharge the rifle.

With the shot-gun men are apt to check their swing and shoot behind; with the rifle there is even *more* tendency, owing to its being necessary, or rather advisable, to see the front sight well into the notch of the hind sight. I say "advisable" because it is *not* absolutely necessary to do this; I have killed many deer and boar by snap-shooting with the rifle as I would with a shot-gun at a rabbit crossing a clearing a few feet wide. By keeping up the swing, and even jerking forward as the rifle goes off, you can roll a boar over at any distance up to two hundred yards if he gives you an instant's glimpse of himself.

Keep on practising till you can shoot in this way, and till you can you are not a rifle shot.



Photo by W. W. Rouch & Co.

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