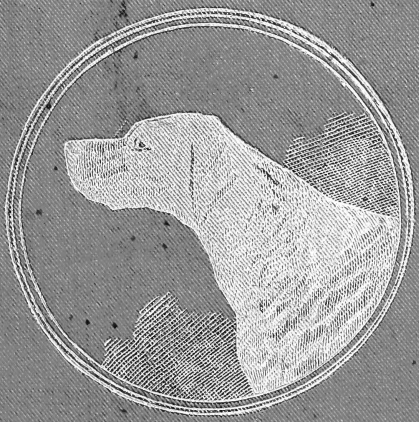
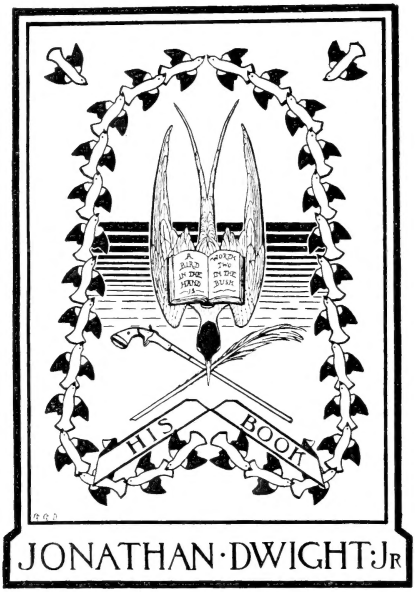
WING SHOOTING



By "CHIPMUNK."


A BLIND IN ONE HAND
THROUGH THE IN THE OTHER
HIS
BOOK
JONATHAN·DWIGHT·JR

J. C. Merrill

WING-SHOOTING,

BY

"CHIPMUNK."

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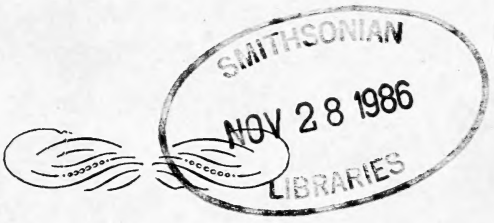
"CHIPMUNK."

Illustrated by Henry Beech.



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FULL AND ACCURATE METHODS

OF

LOADING THE MODERN BREECH-LOADER;

INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING

Powder, Shot and Wadding;

AND

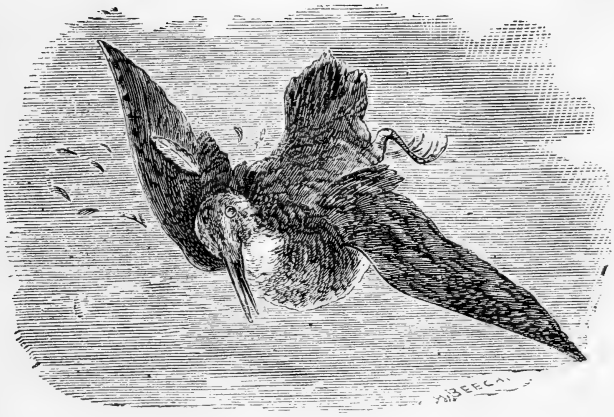
HINTS ON WING-SHOOTING.

TOGETHER WITH

Instructive and Positive Methods

FOR HUNTING

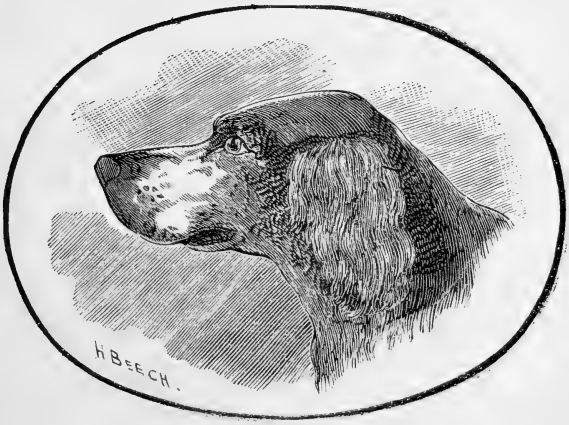
SNIPE, WOODCOCK, RUFFED GROUSE AND QUAIL.



DEDICATED

TO

WING-SHOTS.



PREFACE.

In presenting "Wing-Shooting" to Canadian sportsmen, I have endeavoured to give them full directions of the various methods of loading the modern breach-loader, and trustworthy explanations of how, when, and where to hunt for the four game birds of our country.

There are in existence several works on sport in Canada, useful so far as they go; but they are, as a rule, discursive in their tone, and lack that comprehensiveness which can render them of any real value to the sportsman.

The Author has, in the present work, endeavoured to supply the existing want, and whatever merit it may not possess, it has, in no small degree, that of originality, and of being compiled from actual personal experience.

The entire system of loading is fully treated on; the respective merits and advantages of cylinder and choke-bore guns are discussed, and when and where the use of either is most expedient.

Succinct and plain tables of charges are given, together with details of the various grades of powder and shot.

The experience of the Author as to the best mode of cleaning guns, and also the clothing found most suitable, is related.

The habits of our Canadian game birds have been but little written on; in this work the knowledge of their habits, acquired by a close observation of over thirty years, will be furnished the reader, which whilst it will be invaluable to the young sportsman, must contain some slight information for the older.

Nothing can be more necessary to the prosecution of successful and legitimate sport than a thorough knowledge of the habits of the game sought, and although it may appear a paradox, it is equally valuable in, at all events, retarding if not preventing that extermination which in some districts has become total.

If the lines which will be found in this little volume should serve to strengthen the love of field sports in those who take up the gun as a means of health and recreation, and should conduce to a legitimate pursuit of that sport, I shall feel that I have not written in vain.

THE AUTHOR.

JULY, 1881.

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WING-SHOOTING.

A JUMBLE OF ODDS AND ENDS.

To lay down a set of rules by the observance of which a beginner may become a fair shot is quite an easy affair; but the difficulty is, that the instructions are too frequently forgotten when a bird is on the wing. Many birds are missed by shooting too quickly, and the reason is that so many become over anxious when in expectation of game; but this, in a measure, can be overcome by determining after each hurried shot to take more time in the future. Too much importance cannot be attached to the stocking of guns. The length of a man's neck and arm, together with his build, should give a hint as to what is required. One with a long neck, long arm, and tall in figure, requires a long crooked stock; while another with a short neck, short arm, high shoulder, and short in figure, requires a short, straight stock; and a person that

is neither tall nor short, requires a bend between the extremes. A gun that comes slap up to the shoulder, and with ease to the eye, is the one with which the shooter will be best suited. The stock should neither be so long as to be inconvenient when brought to the shoulder, nor so short as to require much of a backward movement to bring it in place. It is found by experience that a thirty-inch barrel is the maximum which can be made to cover one's bird with the requisite speed and facility, but the barrels should not be too heavy at the muzzle, as at the end of a hard day's tramp the little extra weight tells heavily against the shooter, forcing him to make his aim slow, and causing him to undershoot. A first-class twelve-gauge gun of seven to seven and a quarter pounds in weight for field and covert shooting would suit most persons, while a ten-gauge of seven and three-quarters to eight and a-quarter pounds would be about the thing; but ten-gauge guns for wild-fowl shooting should contain more metal, as they are required to carry more ammunition, and for this sort of shooting a gun of ten to eleven pounds would be preferable. In preference choose a gun in which the weight is within the last foot of the breech, with rebounding locks, and low axle hammers, so that they lie well out of sight when at full-cock. With such

a gun from a first-class maker, one need never fear of having any miss-fires.

CYLINDER AND CHOKE-BORE GUNS.

By a cylinder gun is understood a gun that is bored in accordance with the ordinary or old plan—its diameter throughout the barrels being the same.

In Greener's "Choke-Bore Guns" we find that: "A gun constricted at the muzzle to the extent of 5,000th part of an inch may be called a modified choke; by increasing the choke to the 30,000th part of an inch, we get the full choke."

"A 12-gauge cylinder gun loaded with $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. (270 pellets to the ounce) by weight of No. 6 chilled shot, fired at a target 30 inches in diameter at 40 yards, will make a pattern of 100 to 120; a modified choke 140 to 180; and a full choke 180 to 220."

"It is claimed that the choke-bore will always make a pattern so evenly that it is impossible for a game bird to escape when within the killing-circle; but with the cylinder, at every five or six shots, the pellets of shot will so spread, that a bird may escape."

"The best pattern made by a cylinder is from twenty to thirty-five yards; up to forty yards, the pattern be-

comes so wide that game birds may escape between the pellets."

"A cylinder 12-gauge, with $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of shot, gives a killing-circle of 28 to 30 inches at twenty yards; and about 32 inches at twenty-five yards. The modified and full choke 20 to 25 inches at twenty yards; and 23 to 28 inches at twenty-five yards. A modified choke 36 to 40 inches at forty yards; and a full choke 30 to 34 inches. Beyond 40 yards, the modified choke is inferior to the full choke."

At the present time I believe that all guns are made more or less constricted at the muzzle. Of late, I think it has become too much the fashion to own a full choke-bore gun. In America the great majority of game birds, with the exception of snipes, pinnated grouse, and ducks, are killed in the woods and coverts. With the modified and full choke the birds are often smashed. With a close-shooting gun, made for display on a target, the game is often spoiled by the shot. The closest shooting target-gun is not the best general gun by any means. The best general gun is one that discharges its shot regularly, neither too closely nor too widely. Bear in mind, that a 12-gauge cylinder gives a pattern of about 100 to 120; but it will often give one as low as 85, with open spaces

where a bird may escape, and corresponding areas where the shot is bunched. These irregularities of pattern will account for unaccountable misses, and for instances where the game is cut to pieces. But when a gun is made by a first-class maker, to give a pattern of 130, one can depend upon receiving a gun that will give an even and regular pattern, and a gun approaching its standard.

For upland shooting I prefer a 12-gauge gun, with each barrel 130; with such a gun one can shoot birds at 15 yards' distance without smashing the game, because the gun gives a regular spread of shot; and he can do good work up to 50 yards—all depending upon the method of loading the cartridges.

Many persons prefer a gun with one barrel a cylinder, and the other constricted at the muzzle to the extent of producing a modified or full choke.

When the greater part of one's shooting may be for snipe, pinnated grouse and ducks, the gun should be a full choke.

My impression of an all-round-gun for upland shooting is, that it should give a pattern of 130 for the first barrel, and 150 for the second. But the successful duck-shooter usually arms himself with a 10-gauge full choke-bore gun, weighing from 10 to 11 pounds, because the larger the

bore, all other things being equal, the greater the execution.

When, hereafter, any reference may be made (in this little volume) to a cylinder, it is to be understood, that the reference is to a 12-gauge gun that is bored to make a pattern of 130.

METALLIC AND PAPER CARTRIDGES.

Cartridge cases should be of the same length as the chambers of the gun. Metallic cartridges perform better in pattern and penetration than paper cartridges; but in order to obtain the best results, wads one size larger than the gauge should be used. They are a bother to carry, yet they are the cartridges to be used when duck-shooting from a boat.

Of late years my experience has been quite extensive with Eley's paper cartridges; those by other makers may be as good, or even better, but I have had no experience with them. I have used several thousands in guns having rebounding locks, with low axle hammers, and have not had a single miss-fire. The brown, blue, and green are those used.

Powder.

"As to the quantity of powder to be used, a trial at the target, should be made. Guns vary so much; thin barrels, when true, are much more lively than heavy ones; hence the latter require more powder to get the same results. Bear in mind, that it is useless to increase the powder, unless you put an additional wadding over it, or increase the shot, as unless it has an additional resistance to overcome, the extra powder is burnt outside of the barrel, and no more force is obtained, but a greater tendency to scatter. The real knowledge of loading is nothing more or less than a proportion of weights, and it is better to err on the side of light than heavy loading."

There are several well-known makers of powder, who manufacture a first-class article, which will give good results after you have thoroughly tested it. Choose a clean and rather coarse-grained powder, and after you have experimented with it sufficiently to know the proper charge, use no other.

Hazard's Electric,
Orange Lightning,
Curtiss and Harvey's,
Pigou, Wilks and Laurence's, and
Hamilton Caribou, I am quite familiar with, and

can pronounce them first-rate, I have used the Orange Lightning, No. 5., Hamilton Caribou, No. 5., and Pigou, Wilks and Laurance's Alliance, No. 4, quite extensively in 12-gauge guns, and usually prefer them to all others. These brands are strong, clean, and do not burn rapidly, giving out little recoil, so that any one may fire several hundred shots a day without a bruised shoulder or a head-ache. The granules are not of equal size; some are small; some medium; while the majority are of the required size; this irregularity is supposed to be an advantage as it causes a more complete combustion. A reason why a coarse-grained powder is preferable to a fine-grained one is, that it is burnt the whole length of the barrel, increasing its force as it proceeds, and giving out less recoil; while the fine-grained powder is more rapidly consumed, spending its force nearer the breech, so that the force of the shot is somewhat impaired by the friction along the barrel. For small guns and short barrels a fine-grained powder can be used to advantage, but it is a rule that the wider the bore and longer the barrel the coarser should be the powder. When a gun is found to recoil too much, a coarse-grained powder should be used.

CHARGES FOR GUNS.

For a 20 *gauge gun.*

$2\frac{1}{8}$–$2\frac{1}{2}$ drs. Curtiss and Harvey's -	No. 4.
$2\frac{1}{8}$–$2\frac{1}{2}$ drs. Pigou, Wilks and Laurence's	No. 4.
$2\frac{1}{4}$–$2\frac{3}{4}$ drs. Orange Lightning - -	No. 4.

For a 16 *gauge gun.*

$2\frac{1}{2}$–$2\frac{3}{4}$ drs. Curtiss and Harvey's -	No. 4.
$2\frac{1}{2}$–$2\frac{3}{4}$ drs. Pigou, Wilks and Laurence's	No. 4.
$2\frac{1}{2}$–3 drs. Orange Lightning - -	No. 4.

For a 12 *gauge gun.*

3 –$3\frac{1}{4}$ drs. Curtiss and Harvey's -	No. 4.
3 –$3\frac{1}{4}$ drs. Pigou, Wilks and Laurence's	No. 4.
3 –$3\frac{1}{4}$ drs. Hazard's Electric - -	No. 5.
$3\frac{1}{4}$–$3\frac{1}{2}$ drs. Orange Lightning - -	No. 5.
$3\frac{1}{4}$–$3\frac{1}{2}$ drs. Hamilton Caribou - -	No. 5.

For a 10 *gauge gun.*

$3\frac{3}{4}$–$4\frac{1}{4}$ drs. Curtiss and Harvey's -	No. 6.
$3\frac{3}{4}$–$4\frac{1}{4}$ drs. Pigou, Wilks and Laurence's	No. 6.
$3\frac{3}{4}$–$4\frac{1}{4}$ drs. Hazard's Electric - -	No. 6.
4 –$4\frac{1}{2}$ drs. Orange Lightning - -	No. 6.
4 –$4\frac{1}{2}$ drs. Hamilton Caribou - -	No. 6.

For long distance shooting, heavy loads of coarse pow-

der and reduced loads of shot have a greater effect than when the usual charges are used. Fine shot travels as fast as coarse up to a certain distance, but afterwards coarse shot maintains its velocity for a given time, whilst fine shot falls off. When duck-shooting with heavy Tens you should use more powder and less shot in order to obtain more killing power. More than $5\frac{1}{2}$ drams of powder causes great recoil without adding to the killing power of the gun. If a very high velocity is required, it is best obtained by using a reduced load of large shot in a full chokebore gun; if used in a cylinder the shot would so spread, that there would be no certainty of hitting the object fired at. "By reducing the load of large shot, there is a gain in every way—less weight of shot, less friction, and a greater force of the heavier pellets." But when you wish to load successfully for large game, such as turkeys and geese, very large shot should be used, and the same quantity of powder should be retained.

I have no experience with very large shot in 10 bore guns, but with a 12 bore I load as follows:—

For goose-shooting:—

$3\frac{1}{2}$ drs. of Hamilton Caribou, No. 6 powder, a pink-edged, thick felt greased and card wad, $1\frac{3}{8}$ oz. of No. 1 shot, a card wad.

For turkey-shooting:—

3½ drs. of Hamilton Caribou, No. 6 powder, a pink edged, thick felt greased and card wad, 1½ oz. of B, BB, or BBB shot, a card wad.

This load will kill large birds at almost incredible distances, and at the same time it will prove almost worthless when sent after a single duck.

When upland shooting I almost always hang on to the same quantity of powder, but the shot is increased or reduced, and the method of using the wads altered according to circumstances.

Shot.

Hard shot is preferable to soft shot, because a less number of pellets are lost, and a greater number are likely to strike the object fired at; besides the penetration is supposed to be greater.

The old rule was the finer the shot the more powder was required, and the coarser the shot the less the quantity of powder, as a large quantity scattered coarse shot too much. Bear in mind that one of the great advantages of the choke-bore gun is that it keeps coarse shot together. In upland shooting I believe in using the same quantity of powder, but increasing the quantity of coarse shot.

The shot that I have used and that with which the experiments have been made is Tatham's chilled shot.

CHARGES FOR GUNS.

For a 20-gauge gun.—$\frac{3}{4}$ oz. of fine shot; 1 oz of coarse.

For a 16-gauge gun.—1 oz. of fine shot; $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of coarse.

For a 12-gauge gun.—$1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of Nos. 10, 9, 8, 7 and 6; $1\frac{1}{4}$ oz. of 5, 4 and 3; or, $1\frac{3}{8}$ oz. of 2 and 1.

For a 10-gauge gun.—$1\frac{1}{4}$ oz. of Nos. 10, 9, 8, 7, and 6; $1\frac{3}{8}$ oz. of 5, 4 and 3; or, $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz of 2 and 1.

DIRECTIONS FOR LOADING CARTRIDGE CASES.

Unless the cartridges are properly loaded the shooting will be inferior. I prefer having the cartridges loaded sufficiently full, so as to obviate the necessity of trimming and cutting off the ends with scissors. If kept to their full length, they fit and fill up the chambers of the gun, and perform better; whereas if they are not long enough to fill up the chambers, the gas escapes into the shot; consequently pattern and penetration cannot be as good. In order to fill up the cartridges, a card wad is very useful, both under and over the thick felt wad, as it not only

keeps the grease from the powder, but it also prevents the shot adhering to the wad. For long distance-shooting there can be no question, that the use of thin card wads is imperative, both under and over the thick felt wad, to protect the powder from the grease, and afford a solid seat for the shot; and at the same time, it is absolutely necessary to use thick wadding over the powder to prevent the escape of gas into the shot.

Thick wadding should be placed over the powder for several reasons. First, it keeps the shot together, or rather prevents the escape of gas into the shot; Secondly, it confines the powder, and gives it more time to burn; and thirdly, the wadding in the cartridge of the second barrel is not so easily started by the discharge of the cartridge in the first barrel as when a thin wad is used.

A thin wad should not, as a rule, be placed over the powder, because it causes the shot to scatter, and by repeated firing of one barrel it is more easily started when placed in a cartridge that is inserted in the other; if so started a vacuum would be formed between the powder and the wad. However, a single pink-edged wad may be used in a choke-bore for covert shooting, where you wish to have the shot scatter very much. But I do not now-a-days load my cartridges with thin wadding over the pow-

der, as I prefer to load in the usual way, and use less shot when I wish to have the shot scatter. As a rule a thin wad should be placed over the shot.

When loading cartridge cases, the powder and shot should be placed in two bowls, and scooped with the regular Dixon or Dougall measure, and skimmed off level so as to insure exact weight. Pour in the powder, place over it the wadding, press it down squarely and firmly, and then send home with a light tap or two; pour in the shot, place over it the wad, and press down firmly; then the edge of the cartridge is to be coiled down with an even and steady turn or two, without any jerking movement which has a tendency to bulge the cartridge. The wads over the powder should not be unduly rammed or pounded, as the powder would become finer, causing a quicker explosion, and making the shot scatter; also giving out greater recoil; nor should the wadding be merely sent home without a decided tap or two with the rammer, because if not sufficiently rammed, the powder would be apt to burn too slowly, causing the gun to hang-fire.

I use 12-gauge guns altogether, and have found that with $3\frac{1}{2}$ drams of powder and $1\frac{1}{8}$ ounce of fine shot, that most twelves perform well. Some twelves shoot indifferently with $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz., while they perform splendidly with

only 1 oz. Again, I have found that all the twelves, that I have experimented with, gave better penetration with that quantity of shot, but the pattern was not so good as when using $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz.

My charge, early in the season, for a 12-gauge is $3\frac{1}{2}$ drams of Orange Lightning, No. 5., or Hamilton Caribou, No. 5., the two being about the same, and $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of fine shot; late in the season, where quick and hard shooting is required, I prefer to use $3\frac{1}{4}$ drams of Pigou, Wilks and Laurence's Alliance, No. 4. In order to obtain the best results at different periods of the year I depend upon the size of the shot, and the difference in the wads used, while the same quantity of powder is retained.

With these charges I have obtained good patterns, good penetration, and have retained a sound shoulder and unbruised fingers, with comfortable shooting.

TABLES OF LOADS

For a 20-gauge gun.

For general shooting :—

$2\frac{1}{8}$–$2\frac{1}{2}$ drs. Curtiss and Harvey's - -	No. 4.
$2\frac{1}{8}$–$2\frac{1}{2}$ drs. Pigou, Wilks and Lawrence's	No. 4.
$2\frac{1}{4}$–$2\frac{3}{4}$ drs. Orange Lightning - - -	No. 4.

A card, pink-edged, and card wad, or

A card and a thick felt wad.

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz. of fine, or 1 oz. of coarse shot.

Late in the season:—

The same quantity of powder.

A pink-edged, thick felt, and card wad.

The same quantity of shot.

A card wad.

For covert shooting:—

Increase the powder, or reduce the shot.

A pink-edged wad.

The same quantity of shot, or reduce the shot, or

A card and pink-edged wad.

For a 16-gauge gun.

For general shooting:

$2\frac{1}{2}$–$2\frac{3}{4}$ drs. Curtiss and Harvey's - - No. 4.

$2\frac{1}{2}$–$2\frac{3}{4}$ drs. Pigou, Wilks and Laurence's No. 4.

$2\frac{1}{2}$–3 drs. Orange Lightning - - - No. 4.

A card, pink-edged, and card wad, or

A card and thick felt wad.

1 oz. of fine, or $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of coarse shot.

A card wad.

Late in the season :—

The same quantity of powder.

A pink-edged, thick felt, and card wad.

The same quantity of shot.

A card wad.

For covert shooting :—

Increase the quantity of powder, or reduce the shot.

A card and pink-edged wad, or

A pink-edged wad,

The same quantity of shot, or reduce the shot.

A card and pink-edged wad, or

A pink-edged wad.

For a 12*-gauge gun.*

For general shooting :—

3 –3¼ drs. Curtiss and Harvey's - - No. 4.

3 –3¼ drs. Pigou, Wilks and Lawrence's No. 4.

3 –3¼ drs. Hazard's Electric - - - - No. 5.

3¼–3½ drs. Orange Lightning - - - No. 5.

3¼–3½ drs. Hamilton Caribou - - - No. 5.

A card and thick felt wad, or,

A card, pink-edged, and a card wad, or,

Two pink-edged wads.

The shot.

A card, or Baldwin wad.

Late in the season:—

The same quantity of powder.

A card, a thick felt and a card wad.

The same quantity of shot.

A card wad.

For covert shooting:—

Increase the quantity of powder, or reduce the shot,

A pink-edged wad over the powder, and

A pink-edged wad over the shot.

For heavy 12-*gauge guns.*

Use $\frac{1}{4}$ dr. more powder, and place the wads as recommended for late in the season.

For a 10-*gauge gun.*

For general shooting:—

$3\frac{3}{4}$ –$4\frac{1}{4}$ drs. Curtiss and Harvey's - No. 6.
$3\frac{3}{4}$ –$4\frac{1}{4}$ drs. Pigou, Wilks and Lawrence's No. 6.
$3\frac{3}{4}$ –$4\frac{1}{4}$ drs. Hazard's Electric - - - No. 6.
4 –$4\frac{1}{2}$ drs. Orange Lightning - - - No. 6.
4 –$4\frac{1}{2}$ drs. Hamilton Caribou - - - No. 6.

A card and thick felt wad, or

A card, pink-edged, and card wad, or

Two pink-edged wads.

The shot.

A card, or Baldwin wad.

Late in the season:—

The same quantity of powder.

A card, thick felt, and card wad.

Or later:—

A tight-fitting pink-edged, thick felt and card wad.

The shot.

For covert shooting:—

Increase the powder, or reduce the shot.

A pink-edged wad, or

A card and pink-edged wad.

The shot.

A card and pink-edged wad, or

A pink-edged wad.

The above methods of loading will give good satisfaction, but the system is complicated, and the cartridges must be marked, in many instances, in order that one may know the quantity and kind of ammunition that he is using. You can simplify the thing by the use of Eley's brown, blue and green cartridges, and know at a glance, the colour indicating the kind, which will be required for the occasion.

For a 12-gauge gun I load as follows:—In a brown are put $3\frac{1}{2}$ drs. of powder, two pink-edged wads; 1 oz, or $1\frac{1}{8}$

of No. 9 shot, and a Baldwin wad. This is used for woodcock and grouse in September, and quail in October.

In a blue, $3\frac{1}{2}$ drs., a card, thick felt greased, a card wad; $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of No. 8 shot, and a card wad. This for snipe, grouse in October and November, and quail in December.

In a green, $3\frac{1}{2}$ drs., a card or pink-edged, thick felt greased, a card wad; $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of No. 7 shot, and a card wad. This for grouse in December.

To get the best and most uniform shooting, make use of the Field Method. In the Field Method the object is to have the wadding over the powder long enough to reach from the mouth of the cartridge case to the entrance of the true barrel, so as to prevent the escape of gas into the shot—the escape causing wild shooting.

The Field Method.

The directions for loading 12-bore cartridge cases:

"Obtain three kinds and sizes of wadding, which are made by Eley.

1. A thick wad of fine felt, pink on one side and grease-proof on the other, $11\frac{1}{4}$ to $11\frac{1}{2}$; edge slightly greased.
2. A greased felt wad, carefully cut to $11\frac{1}{4}$ gauge, and $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch in length.

3. A thin card wad, 12 gauge, so as to just fit the case. First pour in the powder, then introduce wad No. 1, with the black side downwards; put on this the felt and No. 2, and gently seat them together or separately, using no more pressure than is needful for that purpose. A wad No. 3, is then dropped down, the shot poured in and another of the same wads placed on it."

An improvement is as follows:—Put No. 1, No. 2 and a loose pink-edged wad over the powder, and a card wad over the shot. The pattern in nearly every instance is very regular, and the penetration all that can be got out of a 12-gauge gun. By using 1 oz. of No. 6 shot in a full choke-bore gun, with a pink-edged, a thick felt greased, and a card wad over the powder, one can make as heavy bags upon ducks as the majority of his friends who are armed with heavy 10-bore guns.

Straight paper cartridges perform better than those rimmed down, but it has been found almost impossible to carry cartridges without being rimmed. For special shooting, when you wish to keep the cartridges straight, apply a small quantity of dissolved gum arabic over the edges of the shot wad, so that it may adhere to the rim of the cartridge.

THE WAY TO CLEAN A GUN.

The easiest and safest cleaner for a gun may be made out of a piece of hickory, of about the size of one's little finger and six inches longer than the length of the barrels, with an oblong hole of about an inch and a-half in length —the hole beginning about an inch from one end and running upwards. Then take a piece of cotton or flannel cloth, and saturate it with a fine oil, such as refined sperm, neatsfoot, or rangoon oil, or vaseline, alcohol, purified benzine, or spirits of turpentine: introduce it partly through the oblong hole, and pass it through the barrels till all the powder has been removed. Afterwards, repeat the operation with dry cotton cloths. Then the outside of the barrels, locks, guard, and woodwork should be oiled, and polished with cotton cloths. Raw linseed oil is an excellent article to apply to the stock and woodwork.

When powder has caked in the barrels, take a cloth and saturate it with spirits of turpentine, roll it in some wood-ashes, introduce it in the cleaner, and use in the same way as when cleaning the gun.

To prevent the inside of the barrels from getting streaks and spots deposited upon their surfaces, always clean your gun upon the evening of the day, or rather

not later than the evening of the day that it has been used, but do not immediately place it away in the gun case, as the inside of the barrels sweat after free rubbing. The barrels should be placed in a warm place for a few hours before being laid away.

To prevent the outside of the barrels from getting rusty, rough and spotted, carry in your vest-pocket an oiled flannel cloth which must be used over the barrels after any moisture has been deposited upon them.

Vaseline or petroleum jelly when rubbed over the barrels keeps them bright and free from rust.

Finally, a gun requires looking after every week!

Clothing.

I shall venture, I hope without giving offence to any brother sportsman, to dictate a few suggestions concerning dress, which may be of benefit to some who use the gun as a means of recreation. And first of all, the general fit and comfort should be of that character which makes one quite at his ease. Otherwise, a day's shooting is pain and annoyance. From hat to boots I have tried almost every variety that has been advertised, and I have settled down to encourage home-manufacture as much as possible. When the weather is mild use a felt hat, but when cold wear a cloth cap. Wear a thin under-shirt, over it a woollen shirt, large and loose, trimmed with large buttons, and have the bosom so constructed that it shall be double-breasted, so as to button on one side. By repeated sweatings and washings you may expect to have the shirt shrink a good deal, but that may be got over, in a measure, by having it made with a tuck in the sleeves and one in the body, so that it may be lengthened as required.

The vest may be made of woollen cloth, lined in the back with flannel; or of corduroy, lined with flannel;

with two sets of pockets,—the upper set rather deep and wide, but the lower not so deep.

The coat should be made of corduroy, the colour of fustian : dark cord and velveteen can be seen a mile away, and are hot in warm weather. The coat should be made sacque fashion, of medium length, with two sets of pockets, a card pocket, and two inside pockets for game. The card pocket should be large enough to hold four cartridges for special purposes. The sets of pockets should be sufficiently deep to hold fifty or sixty cartridges.

The pants should be made of woollen, and good shooting-pants may be got out of old winter pants, with the front of each leg patched with material cut out of another old pair. The patch should extend from a short distance below the groins, to a short distance below the knees, and should cover the front and a portion of the sides of the thighs and legs, and be sewn upon the *outside* of the pants. When finished such a pair may not appear very taking to the eye, but the odds are that no material, now offered for sale, can compare in durability, usefulness and comfort with this home-made article. With such a pair, one may confront cat-brier and blackberry bushes, day in and day out, and yet have a sound skin.

Early in the season nothing beats the old-fashioned laced boots. They should be made broad, with short heels, should fit easily and be laced just sufficiently tightly to make them feel part and parcel, so to speak, of the feet which means neither too tightly nor too loosely.

With laced boots, calfskin leggings should be worn, and they should be furnished with metallic buttons which will last as long as the leather.

Late in the season cowhide boots, made to reach to the knees, should be worn. It may be necessary to remark, that at first, boots may gall the ankles, but that can easily be prevented, and it would seem a wise precaution to always wear two pairs of socks; first, a thin pair, over them a thicker pair which must be of wool; between the two some batting should be stuffed above and below the ankles.

When ordering shooting shoes or boots order them to be made with rather thin soles, that is, a medium double sole—thick soles prevent the feet from bending, thereby worrying and tiring one out by their weight before the day is half over.

Lined india-rubber boots are a great comfort in wet or snow, but they should be removed as soon as convenient after the hunt is over on account of damp being gene-

rated. To absorb the moisture and dry the lining fill the boots with hot bran or oats; allow to remain for the night, empty and repeat the following morning, if necessary.

WATERPROOF GREASE.

Take One ounce of rosin,
Two ounces of beeswax,
Six ounces of tallow,
Two ounces of india-rubber,

First, cut the india rubber in small pieces, place it in a wide mouthed bottle, pour sufficient benzine upon it to cover over, cork and allow to stand for two or three days. Then mix it with the other ingredients in a tin cup, place over a slow fire, stir frequently till all are melted and well mixed. Apply to leather shoes or boots when they are somewhat damp, and this is waterproof grease, for a fact.

Hints on Wing-Shooting.

When in the act of shooting, close one eye, or use both eyes, as most convenient. The majority of our crack shots make use of both eyes, and pay no attention to the gun whilst aiming.

To raise the gun quickly, easily, and effectively, you must have full command over it ; and the most effective way is to extend the left arm to its full length so as to grasp the gun well forward.

When a bird is going straightaway, keep your head erect, and let your aim run along the rib of the barrels and upon the bird at the instant of firing.

When a bird is going to the left, step forward with the right foot, keep your head erect, bring the gun behind the bird, carry it forward to the bird at the instant of firing.

When a bird is going to the right, step backward with the right foot, throw the head well over the gun, bring the gun behind the bird, carry it forward at the instant of firing.

When firing at cross shots, make an effort to keep the gun upon or ahead of the bird, and endeavour to pull the

trigger without stopping the motion of the gun, even after its discharge.

"The question as to the degree of allowance to be made at cross shots involves so many considerations that it is difficult to deal with; because the speed and angle of flight vary so constantly, that it is improbable for two cases to be exactly alike. In fact, this knack is to be gained only by frequent practice and close observation; and it is in part merely guess-work."

A thorough knowledge of a gun, acquaintance with its power, its killing-circle, the gravitation of shot, and the flight of game, are absolutely necessary to become a crack shot. Possessed of these qualifications, the reader will find the difficulty of approximating the allowance to be made at cross shots much decreased.

"The secret in getting a gun to suit you is first, the balance; then, to get it to come up properly; and the third point of hitting the bird, is to be able to make sufficient swing to your gun. This swing is the most difficult thing of all to acquire in shooting, yet some seem to pick it up while others never acquire it; and this art, when perfect, makes the difference between the crack and the ordinary shot."

"A first-class 12-gauge cylinder gun gives a killing-circle of 28 to 30 inches at twenty yards; about 32

inches at twenty-five yards; while a choke bore gives 20 to 25 inches at twenty yards; 23 to 28 inches at twenty-five yards; and about 35 inches at forty yards."

A quail crossing at right angles to the shooter at 30 yards will gain about six inches in flight while the shot is travelling to the bird; at 40 yards, about twelve inches; at 50 yards, about eighteen inches; and at 60 yards, about twenty-four inches.

Woodcock, snipe, and quail early in the season possess about the same degree of speed, while the ruffed grouse, it seems to me, possesses almost double that degree.

"Shot falls about four inches while travelling a distance of forty yards, and about eight inches up to 60 yards."

Then the secret of cross shots at short distances lies in pointing the gun directly upon or a little ahead of the bird, moving the gun with the bird, and at the same time in keeping up the movement of the gun for an instant after its discharge. But at long distances it is really necessary to hold ahead of the bird, because the bird is gaining something upon the shot, and above the bird, because the shot is continually falling.

At straightaway shots at short distances, you are to fire directly at the bird, but at long distances it is neces-

sary to shoot over the bird, because the shot falls from four to eight inches while travelling up to 40 and 60 yards.

At cross shots at long distances, you are to hold ahead of the bird, because the bird is gaining in flight from six to twenty-four inches while the shot is travelling up to 30 and 60 yards.

At ascending, descending, and oblique shots, when within fair distances, you are to fire directly at the bird, but you are to keep the gun moving with the bird, and for an instant after its discharge; but at long distances, you are to make some allowance for the flight of the bird, and fall of the shot.

Overhead shots, when within, say, 40 yards, are quite easy. When a bird is approaching you, it is a common belief that the feathers upon the breast cause the shot to glance off, but I believe that to be a mistake as that very shot with me is the most deadly of all shots, and the way to manage such a shot is as follows:—

When a bird is approaching, bring the gun behind, carry it forward and ahead of the bird until the bird is lost to view, that instant fire.

When a bird has crossed over your head, point the gun at the bird, lower the muzzle a foot, more or less, according to distance and pace, and fire.

Straightaway shots at short distances are the easiest of all shots, but at long distances they are the most uncertain, because the vital parts of the bird are not so much exposed, and because the shot has to travel with the bird, rendering the shot less effective.

Cross shots at short distances are more difficult to indifferent shots, because the shot passes behind the bird, on account of the gun not being carried with the bird; but at long distances they are more deadly when the bird is hit, because the vital parts of the bird are more exposed, and because the shot strikes with greater force. The above hints are intended, in a measure, for open and deliberate shooting.

SNAP-SHOOTING AND SHOOTING IN COVERTS.

Snap-shooting must necessarily be followed when hunting for woodcock, often ruffed grouse, and, in many instances, quail.

In covert shooting, the sportsman who follows his bird, or dwells on his aim, in all probability will make an indifferent bag. Almost all game birds killed in coverts are near shots, and must be killed by quick or snap-shooting. That system is conducted by keeping the head erect, planting the muzzle of the gun directly upon the

bird, and pulling the trigger the instant that the heel-plate of the stock reaches the shoulder. Very many of these shots are complete misses, because the pellets of shot pass over the bird, on account of the elevation of the muzzle.

The reader should endeavour to follow the directions as below:—

In case a bird be a low-flying one, by keeping the head erect, planting the muzzle upon the bird at the instant of firing, the shot goes high, and the bird, in all probability, will be killed, because it has flown within the killing-circle; whereas, if the head be lowered so as to let the eye run along the whole length of the rib, time is lost, and the shot, in many instances, would pass under the bird.

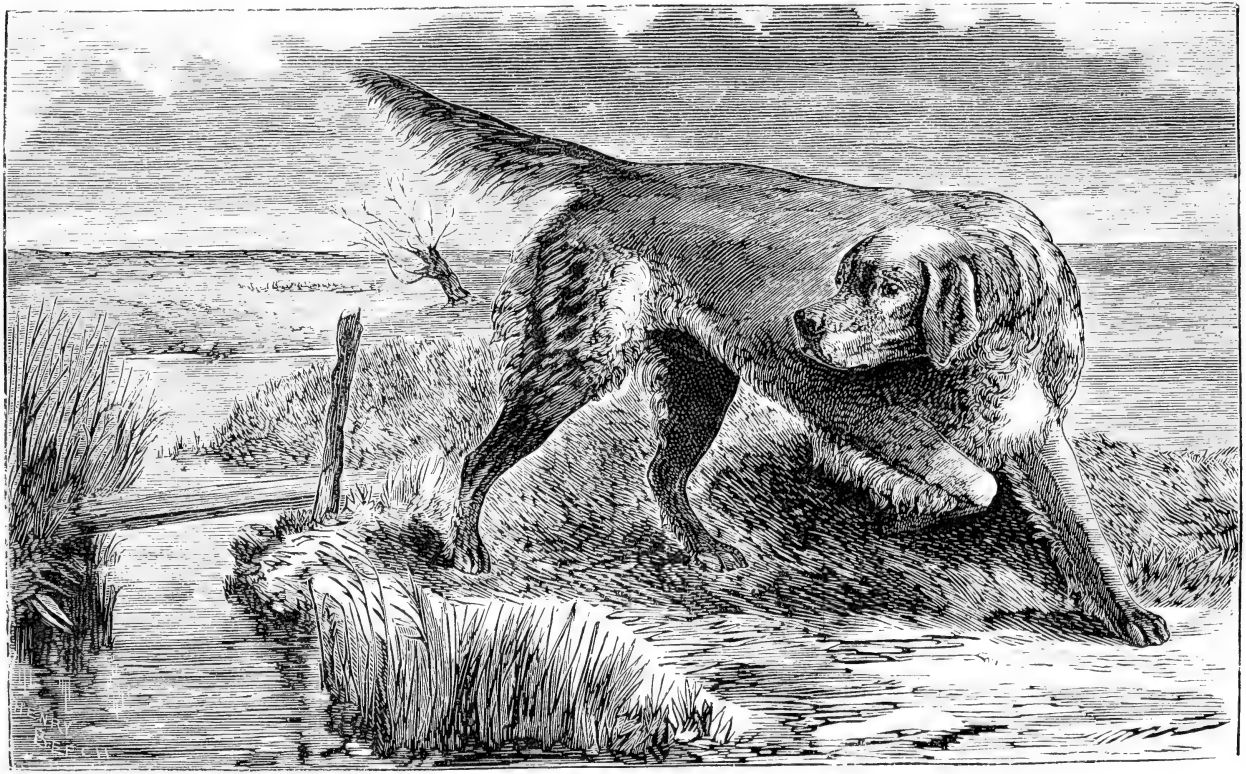
Should the bird rise high in the air, as woodcock usually do in coverts, the pellets of shot, in many instances, would pass over the bird, because he is on a curve, that is, on the descent. In similar instances, after placing the gun in position, depress the muzzle an inch or so, just at the instant of firing.

At straightaway shots, more time is allowed to run the eye along the rib, or at any rate the last foot of the muzzle-end.

At cross shots it is swing, and nothing else but swing, that will enable you to kill almost every bird.

SNIPE.

The snipe is perhaps the most widely distributed of all the feathered creation, and it breeds in almost every country under the sun. Snipe spend the winter months in the South, and as Spring advances they gradually work their way to the North, and arrive in this country about the middle of April, but their time of arrival depends upon the forwardness or backwardness of the season, and the state of the weather. After the frost is quite out of the ground, and two or three rains have visited us, it is quite early enough to hunt for snipe. Some years they remain with us for two or three weeks, while in others they drop in for a day or two, and then go to the North, to their breeding-grounds. In fact, it is quite a common occurrence to find snipe quite plentiful on one day, and only a bird or two on the next. They appear again during the latter part of September, after the equinoctial storms, and remain till driven away by severe frosts. In early Spring there is no bird more variable in its habits, which are affected, more or less, by the weather; and during cold winds they may be found in most unlikely places. High



Opp Snipe

IRISH SETTER.

winds, that are cold, drive them to cover, when they may be found in woodcock coverts and willow bottoms; here in a gale of wind I have found the most difficult shooting possible. But in the autumn they are less uncertain in their movements, lie better to the dog, do not fly so far when flushed, and stick more to one feeding-ground. At this season of the year they often take to the cornfields; here, on their first arrival, they are extremely difficult shooting; for, at one time, they dodge and twist among the stalks, hardly rising to the tops; at another, just before rising to the tops, they fall off to one side or the other, and, in many instances, dip a few feet and streak straight away between the rows, out of sight; but they fatten rapidly on these grounds, and, in the course of a few days, the very same birds that taxed your skill to the utmost to secure a few couple will now allow you to approach quite near, and, as they jump to the tops of the corn, will dwell for an instant before getting away, so that fair shots are offered. Snipe are often discovered, by accident, in the most unlikely places, when hunting for other game. In the autumn, I have on more than one occasion, stumbled upon them in large numbers in fields covered with a second crop of clover, ten to twelve inches in height.

Haunts.—When snipe arrive in the spring, they may be found upon marshy grounds, wet patches of grassy lands, on the borders of streams, and in willow thickets, when they are thin and wild, and their flights are long and rapid: but when the weather becomes warm they lie quite hard, and frequently alight, on being flushed, within a hundred yards. The flight of snipe being often irregular and confused, and at the same time rapid, they give all sorts of shots, so that the sportsman who makes a good bag after a hard day's tramp, will, in all probability, come to the conclusion that he has made upon this bird all the shots that may be afforded by all of our game birds.

On uplands, that is, on farming lands, independent of extensive marshes, we seldom find snipe very numerous; here they are found in early spring, or if the season be backward, in willow thickets, and woodcock coverts; later on, when the weather becomes warm, upon open meadows, and in shallow swales traversing meadows.

When abundant, many advocate the plan of walking them up without the assistance of a dog, assigning as a reason that so few dogs are successful snipe-hunters—being too fast when on game, the birds so easily flushed, and the flights so long, that there is no certainty of approaching within gun-shot a second time. As a companion, when

snipe-shooting, I like a dog; for the day's sport is heightened any number of degrees: and to shoot a snipe over an intelligent dog is much more satisfactory than to shoot many more without one. Then, without the assistance of a dog, it seems to me, that shooting is deprived of half its pleasure; but in this particular kind of shooting, he must, of necessity, be very well broken, staunch, and a dog that has a good deal of speed and bottom, as the ground to be worked over must necessarily be large. In willow thickets, or upon boggy grounds devoid of thickets, a well-broken dog is of great value, not only on account of his assistance in finding birds, but also in retrieving them after being shot. Again, many snipe, killed clean, are hard to find without the assistance of a dog.

SNIPE-SHOOTING.

As snipe afford a variety of shots, some easy, some difficult, and not a few very difficult, both on account of their rapidity of flight, and long shots required, I think them as difficult a bird to make a bag of as any shot in the open. And now, in order to make a good bag it is necessary for the shooter to possess a good deal of endurance and perseverance, as the walking is often of the hardest kind, the find very uncertain, and the

birds often wild. But snipe are not always easily brought down when hit, unless hard hit, and in order to ensure first-rate success it is necessary to use a close-shooting gun. When they first arrive they are thin and wild, when the shooting is often difficult, but a short time after their arrival, when the days become warm, they get fat, lie hard, rise slow, and afford easier shots than any other game bird of my acquaintance.

It is often asserted that snipe are missed by shooting too quickly, which is true enough in its way when accompanied by *too much of a hurry*.

When working over snipe grounds, the better way is to work down wind, as snipe usually fly up wind, but one cannot always do as he would like; and it often happens that the wind prevents one doing as he should. So with beating for snipe; but, as a rule, it is a good plan to beat down the wind, for the simple reason that snipe generally fly up wind, and so pass on the one side or the other of the gun. But with a fast and well-trained dog it is almost impossible to work *him* down wind, because when sent out, he will make a dash up to a hundred yards or so, and then work in a half circle, and make towards the gun, that being the most successful plan of tactics that could be pursued to beat the ground to advantage.

With a slow, pottering sort of dog, the plan of operations must be changed somewhat; and when handicapped with that sort of dog, it would be well to work down wind for a time; afterwards beat the same ground up wind, and permit the dog to range against the wind; but that cannot be the way for a sportsman, who is armed with a breech-loader, and accompanied by a speedy and wide-ranging dog, to circumvent the innocent *scolopax*. One is justified in conceding a point or two in favour of a slow and sure dog, and to that method of working a snipe-ground, as more birds may be brought to bag, "shot for shot," but nothing like as many can be got, nor nearly so many shots can be had as when habitually beating down wind with a dog that possesses a great degree of pace, and an ability "to go the distance."

The different methods that I think best to follow I shall now give, but it is to be understood that the gun must be moving with the wind. If the day should be warm, the birds fat and lazy, they will lie hard, and afford easy shots; in this case, give them plenty of time until they go twenty or twenty-five yards away, when you should secure nearly every bird shot at. Again, if the birds are not in good condition, it is not at all likely that they will be hard; in this instance, if there is any

wind, allow them to fly a distance when they will make against the wind towards you, on the one side or the other, and present a side shot, about the easiest shot possible under the circumstances. But when snipe are wild I think, as a rule, that you cannot shoot too quickly, not hurriedly, for when rising against the wind they dwell for an instant before getting away, and that instant is just the time to let go at them. Occasionally they go as they please, or rise just as it happens, when you must do your level best.

On account of quickness in handling the gun, long shots, and hardness of shooting required, I prefer a light 12-gauge full choke-bore gun, a gun that is capable of doing its work well, up to forty or fifty yards. Ordinarily a cylinder will be quite as effective, but when snipe are wild as they usually are, the gun mentioned above will be the weapon to depend upon.

CHARGES FOR SNIPE-SHOOTING.

For a 12-gauge gun, I load as follows:—

$3\frac{1}{2}$ drs. of Hamilton Caribou, No. 5 powder,

or,

$3\frac{1}{4}$ drs. of Pigou, Wilks and Laurence's Alliance No. 4, a card, a thick felt greased and a card wad; $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of No. 8 or No. 9 shot, and a card wad.

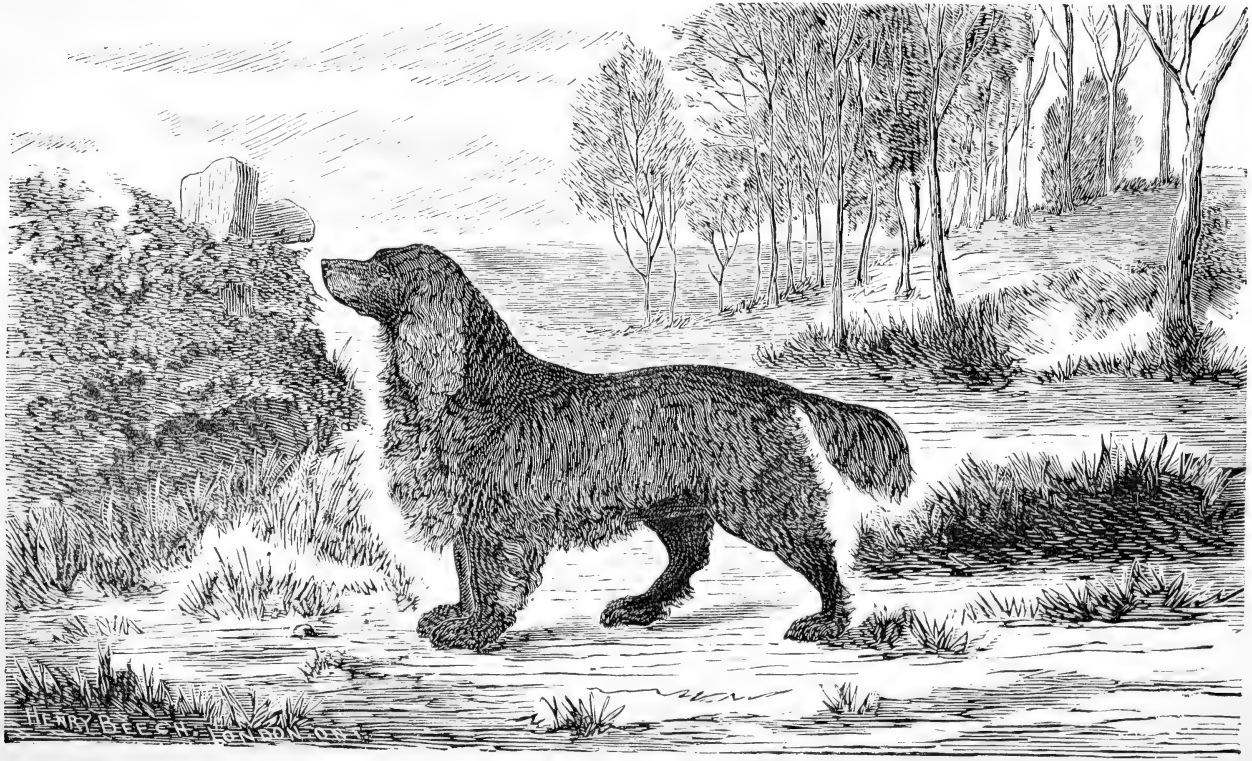
SYNOPSIS.

Then, in early spring when snipe first arrive, look through woodcock coverts, and even after the season has well advanced if cold and raw winds prevail; but when the weather has become warmer, look to low grassy plots and shallow swales. In the autumn the birds lie better to the dog, are less uncertain in their movements, and are larger and better than in the spring, you should work over corn fields where there is water, potato-patches, stubble and fall wheat fields, and go over wet meadows and through shallow swales where snipe are likely to feed.

WOODCOCK.

The woodcock is a nocturnal bird, feeding chiefly at night or early dawn; and may exist in large numbers in a locality, and still its presence not be suspected, unless by the sportsman who is familiar with its habits and haunts.

Woodcock winter in the South, and if the season be forward in this country they make their appearance sometime during the first half of April, and usually begin to take their departure during the last week of October, but if the season be mild, some of them may remain for a week or ten days later. They begin laying their eggs late in April, or early in May, and the usual number of young at a hatching is four birds, and if the first brood gets off early, or if the nest be destroyed, the old couple proceed to a second hatching. By statute we are permitted to kill this bird in July, when the flight of the young is slow and of short duration, so that most of the young birds are killed off when only half-fledged, and when the old ones, in many instances, are still engaged in hatching or rearing a second brood. For that reason, the time for cock-shooting should not commence till the first of September, when we might expect to have grand sport all through the lat-



Opp. Woodcock

BLACK COCKER.

ter part of that month, and throughout the month of October.

During those months the birds are strong and vigorous, and fly with such rapidity, that he who makes a good bag may well be proud of the achievement. From an experience of more than thirty years, I am firmly convinced, that if they were not killed in such large numbers in July, that we should almost always have an abundance in the autumn. I shall not undertake to give any directions or hints for the pursuit of woodcock in July and August, as I have mostly given up its capture during the summer months, and I hope that all sportsmen may shortly see the error of their ways, and defer the shooting of woodcock till the month of September, and then what fall shooting we should have when the birds are full-grown, and bold of flight! I will relate a little experience that I once had as it will go to show that whenever, by chance, woodcock are spared for a single summer, that they will greatly multiply, and consequently good sport must follow. For a number of reasons I remember the summer of 1854, the Cholera year, as it was a long, dry, and sickly summer, and sportsmen, through fear, had to remain at home; and it was the first time, in life, that I had been obliged to realize the sober side of it, as I was one of many, who had

to battle with the greatest scourge of this century. I remember that July and August were hot and dry, but about the twentieth of August, the epidemic nature of the disease suddenly ceased, and about the twenty-fourth, I made up my mind to look for cock. Within a mile of my home was a nice little covert where at the beginning of the season two or three broods could be easily flushed, but after the tenth of August, as a rule, not a bird could be found. Well, when danger from the epidemic had passed, after having spent seven anxious weeks attending to and looking after the welfare of several hundred labourers, I was ready for sport, and on that afternoon I had it. From the excessive drought I fully expected to find a fair number of birds in this springy covert, but on fairly getting into it, I found that the covert seemed to swarm with them. It contained three depressions, of about twenty by thirty yards, and in each of these nearly a dozen were flushed. In three afternoons twenty-one couple were secured, and that was a greater number of birds than I ever remember of being taken out of that covert in any one season, and I attribute it to the drought, which caused the coverts in its vicinity to become too dry for suitable feeding grounds. After a few days a heavy rain set in, and all the cock disappeared, but what glorious shooting

we had that fall on the great brown beauties! The following year, the last one that I was in that locality, afforded the finest cock shooting that I ever have had, and this fine shooting I attribute, to a certain extent, to the fact that the birds were spared in July and August the previous year. I shall qualify this statement somewhat, and in this way. For two or three years in succession woodcock may be quite numerous, and the year following, they may be scarce. This may be accounted for by the state of the weather during their migration north. If the spring be an early one, without any severe and cold weather setting in, they appear early and in large numbers, but if the weather be cold for a length of time, the birds do not reach us in large numbers. This I have noticed for many years, and can, to almost a certainty, predict a good or indifferent cock-year.

Haunts.—Woodcock are usually found on low grounds in willows, alders, and thickets standing on wet grounds. After the autumn rains set in they change their feeding-grounds, and are often found on elevated situations that contain a certain degree of moisture; their brooding-places, when apparently quite dry, being famous haunts for them; in corn-fields, nettles, elders, patches of white birch, and along fences lined with brush and trees; and,

as the weather becomes cooler in the month of October, they may be found on more open grounds containing patches of brush, hazel, poplars, and white birch.

When the nights are quite frosty, open grounds with patches of saplings and scrub oaks, that admit sunshine attract cock, and in these localities they may often be found in large numbers. At this season of the year woodcock give good opportunities for splendid practice as they present themselves in all sorts of flights. Now and then one may go skewing and twisting up through the trees in a way that will make you almost despair of getting on to him, whilst another may flop up under your nose and flip-flop in the air, and then dart away with surprising swiftness; then, one may make directly at you; again, one may go straight away on a dead level with your gun when in position, and on its report, a shooter may arise at your feet, and whisk away so close to the ground, that you can hardly see it. Though the walking may be difficult, the bushes thick, the briers sharp, the birds hard to hit, yet it is splendid sport.

WOODCOCK-SHOOTING.

When shooting in the autumn, go over the same grounds frequently, as the birds are moving nearly every night.

At this season of the year you are not very likely to find borings and markings, as the grounds, which they frequent, are of such a nature, that they are not readily seen. Then when working the ground, go over it very carefully, and work out almost every yard for a time. If you raise a bird and secure it, look over its breast and belly; if the colour be light and of a fawn colour, you may suspect that the bird has just dropped in from a long flight, and you may, in all probability, come to the conclusion that your bag in that locality will not be large; for that reason you will be justified by working over the ground more rapidly, and for the reason that the birds will be readily flushed. But if the colour on the breast and belly be of a deep orange colour, you may conclude that the bird has been in that locality for some time. If the season be favourable, and the ground a good one, you may infer, in all probability, that it contains many. In this instance, work out every yard faithfully, as the birds lie very closely. Unless a cock has already been flushed on that day, he lies hard, but after being flushed two or three times, he is very easily flushed again, and often difficult of approach, even in covert, so that beginning as a very tame bird, he often ends by becoming a very wild one.

On moonlight nights cocks visit meadows, corn-fields and hill-sides in search of food, returning by daylight to the coverts, where they rest the fore-part of the day, and then are difficult to find; that is, they lie very close, frequently allowing both shooter and dog to pass within a few feet without being flushed; and now it is just here where a painstaking sportsman, with a careful dog, will often make a good bag.

On dark nights they remain in the coverts, but, I believe, do not feed; on the following mornings they begin to move early and to feed, leaving out a scent by which they are readily found.

What is most desired in a pointer or setter, for this kind of shooting, are caution, steadiness, and close quartering; but, to rank as a first-rate cock-dog, he must hunt for the foot-scent: and the chief qualifications in the shooter are endurance and perseverance, combined with a knowledge of their haunts and habits. When flushed, the birds usually fly to comparatively open places on the edges of thickets. When hunting in cornfields, on being flushed, they go straight away and alight within one hundred yards, or when flushed near the edge of the patch, go to the outside, and turn to the right or left, and drop near the edge, or in grass, or weeds a short distance from the corn.

COCK IN THE CORN.

The boys used to inform me of great numbers of woodcock that were flushed by them when hunting for 'coons at night, in the corn, and on beating the same fields a day or two afterwards, I very seldom found a bird. In order to satisfy myself as to the veracity of these youthful 'coon-hunters, I accompanied them on several occasions, and was not a little surprised to so frequently hear the *chit, chit, chit* of the woodcock in the same fields that I had hunted over, only a day or two before. From these nightly excursions I was led to the conclusion that woodcock were in the habit of leaving the coverts on moonlight nights for other feeding-grounds, as they were so frequently flushed by us, not only in cornfields, but also in meadows and on hill sides.

In very wet seasons, woodcock visit cornfields in August and September, but as a rule, not many were found, on my shooting excursions, early in the autumn in cornfields, but the great number of billings and markings were too frequently seen to doubt that these fields were a portion of their feeding grounds. I used to have excellent sport in the corn up to the time that the corn was harvested, which was about the middle of October. On one

occasion, when following a bevy of quail in the corn, I unexpectedly fell in luck amongst the cock. It was a cloudy, boisterous day, and the quail ran after alighting, as the dog moved along rapidly upon the trail for seventy or eighty yards, when he stood; up flipped a cock—the quail were lost, but sixteen large, full-grown woodcock were gathered in that field, besides half as many more arose up in the wind, and flew across a large field, and topped some swamp elms in their flight, disappearing some six or seven hundred yards away—the longest flight made by woodcock, of any that has ever come under my observation. Hunting for cock in the corn is very uncertain sport, and unless the sportsman is well up to his work, the bag is likely to be small. It reminds one of snipe shooting in the spring; that is, it is uncertain, as an immense extent of country must be gone over, as a rule, to make a bag. I have often worked over twenty or more fields in a day's tramp, and in order to accomplish this feat I would be off before daylight, and would not return until after dark. At times I would be straight away five or six miles from home without a bird in the bag, and then, probably the next two or three fields would furnish sufficient to give me a bag of eight or ten couple. As stated above, that hunting for cock in the corn is much

like hunting for snipe in the spring, being hard work and plenty of it—an all-day job to make it a success, but a success to almost a certainty, provided that you are in a good corn and fair cock-country; that the equinoctial storms are over; that there has been sufficient wet; and that you are willing to work and walk all day long. The flight here is usually a short one and is in a straight line, except when the bird is flushed near the edge of the patch, when he will fly to the outside of the corn and twist back again, dropping in the edge or any covert convenient. The most successful way to secure him is by snap shooting as he just tops the corn in his flight. When missed, I usually follow a cock in the corn at once, as his flight will usually be short and in a direct line from where seen last. If he is not readily flushed again, you may suspect that, after alighting, he ran off in a side line; then by returning and beating the ground a little wide of his line of flight, he, in all probability, will be flushed, for the oftener a cock is flushed the easier he is to flush again.

Woodcock occasionally late in the autumn appear in large numbers in certain localities, with the intention probably of remaining a short time to recruit themselves for their flight southward. A friend, with whom I used

to shoot a good deal, informed me of the following incident; but by the way this friend was a very careless and lazy fellow, and through carelessness and laziness lost the finest opportunity for making a large bag of cock that he ever had. About three o'clock one drizzly afternoon a neighbour made him aware of a large number of *snipe* lying in a field near by. This field was within a quarter of-a-mile of his house, and it was one in which both he and I used to pick up a cock or two, two or three times a week, on going and returning from our shooting excursions in the month of October. It contained a small thicket, and the remainder was devoted to the raising of corn and potatoes. He seized his gun, foul as usual, and proceeded to the field, and on jumping the fence flushed a woodcock. From that time till dark he had a succession of snaps, misses, and successful shots as a bird was flushed at every few steps, but at last darkness put a stop to the agony, when he had secured only seven couple of very fine woodcock. On leaving the ground he had occasion to pass through some tall weeds, and here, he thought that between twenty-five and thirty cock arose while he was walking a distance of not more than a hundred yards. That night he was very industrious in order to have a clean gun in the morning, but at midnight the rain

ceased, the weather cleared, a severe frost set in, and the birds took their departure, as nothing was found in the morning but billings and markings, and a dead bird lost the night before.

Woodcock take their departure at the full of the moon, generally during the last week of October. This point I have now carefully watched for many years, and I am quite in the belief that at least the greater bulk of them leave this section of country upon the night that the moon is in the full. I have known of localities, say on the twenty-fourth of October, that contained at least half-a-dozen cock; on that night a number of cock have arisen, each one by himself, high in the air, and flown in a southern direction; on the twenty-fifth no cock could be found in those localities, and the night of the twenty-fourth the moon was in the full. To better impress this point I shall give a case or two, which will go to show that there is, at least, something more than circumstantial evidence that the great bulk of woodcock leave us when the moon is in the full. A friend, who is an indifferent shot, had bagged, out of upwards of fifty chances, a few couple of cock on the eighteenth day of October. I was asked to accompany him on the following day as the birds were very numerous. On arriving at

the ground we found the covert billed and splashed all over, but killed only two birds. The night before was very cold, and the moon was in the full. Had the weather been mild, and had it remained so for a time, a portion of the birds probably would have remained in that locality for a few days, as I have killed a round dozen on the first, and two-and-half couple so late as the fifth of November, when the moon was in the full, as early as the twenty-fourth of October; but the weather was a sort of hazy, sleepy, smoky weather that is called Indian Summer. Perhaps these remarks may seem at variance with some that I have made before; but what I wish to impress on the reader is not only the habits of the cock generally, but also their occasional variance from them. Once an old shooter routed me out of bed at midnight, and asked me to accompany him in the morning as he had found a large number at dusk in a cornfield, and he had been unable to bag a single bird after firing upwards of a dozen shots. We got there about twelve o'clock the following day, but found only seven birds. The ground was bored and whitewashed all over, showing evidence of a large number. His idea was that the birds had not left the country, as the moon lacked two days of being in the full, and he proposed that we should proceed

southward, and continue, if necessary, in that direction till dark. About two miles southward we came upon them and bagged nearly all, having secured fourteen couple during the afternoon.

I once missed a rare opportunity at full cock by being too solicitous for my own comfort; a relation of the incident will explain how, and also prove that woodcock closely observe the time of their departure. A friend and I had made arrangements to try for cock on the twenty-fourth of October, which was frustrated, so far as I was concerned, by a severe snow storm setting in on the twenty-first, and continuing all day on the twenty-second. It was chilly and quite cold on the night of the twenty-second, and began to thaw on the morning of the twenty-third. I threw up the sponge, concluding that the walking would be as bad as could be, and that all the cock would take their departure on that night, after the late freeze, although the moon would not be in the full until the night of the twenty-fifth. However, my friend was full of pluck, and concluded to make a start on the evening of the twenty-third, having a trip of forty odd miles by rail. On the afternoon of the twenty-fourth, the snow had almost disappeared, and when he was about tired out, the walking being extremely heavy, he fell upon the cock in

great numbers. At dark he had secured about twenty, and the following day, literally the last bird came to bag. I saw the birds on the twenty-sixth, and counted eighty-two.

CHARGES FOR WOODCOCK SHOOTING.

For a 12-gauge gun, I load as follows:—

$3\frac{1}{2}$ drs. of Hamilton Caribou, No. 5 powder.

Two pink-edged wads.

1 oz. of No. 10 shot.

And a Baldwin wad.

The grounds over which I am accustomed to hunt usually afford some grouse-shooting, and in order to successfully cope with that grand bird, and at the same time to gather in the long bills, I load my shells with $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of No. 9 shot.

SYNOPSIS.

Then, early in the month of September you may expect to find cock in thickets containing water, while late in the same month, after the equinoctial storms, in thickets devoid of water, upon hill-sides, in corn-fields, and upon sandy soils covered with elders and nettles. Early in October, they are found in localities similar to where found in the latter part of September, while late in the same month more open grounds, studded with

hazels, saplings, scrub oak, and patches of white birch, in addition, should receive your attention. When the nights are moonlight, you may expect to be more successful by working cock-grounds in the afternoon; but when they are dark your chances of success will be as good in the morning as in the afternoon.

RUFFED GROUSE; PHEASANT; PARTRIDGE.

HABITS AND HAUNTS.

In almost every newly settled wooded section of the northern portion of North America, ruffed grouse are to be met with. They are found along the sides of hills covered with hemlock, pine, cedar or beech; in level portions of country lined by swampy thickets; in dry swampy grounds, and the adjoining portions covered with beech or oak trees, the nuts of which they feed upon during the late autumn and throughout the winter. They nest in April, May and June, and bring forth their young in the same months. They produce only one brood a year, and the brood is usually hatched in May; those hatched in June or later are late broods, and are late because the eggs laid early in the season have been destroyed. The brood usually consists of eight to twelve, and sometimes fourteen or fifteen birds, and mature very early. In very rainy seasons, many of the young birds are killed by the wet. They moult in August, and when the plumage is perfect, which is in October, the covey usually separates; afterwards they are generally found singly or in pairs, but, in severe winter months, may often

Opp. Grouse

POINTER.

be found in companies of five or six. They are hardy birds, and can defy the snows of winter. In fine weather, or when the weather is cold, or when there is snow, they roost in the woods usually, upon the ground, each one by himself, and usually roost upon the same spot for several, nights in succession ; but when the weather is wet, they often roost upon the limbs of trees, sometimes three or four in company. The males predominate in numbers probably in consequence of the females so often falling a prey to vermin when sitting. It is a common belief among sportsmen, that the males greatly exceed the females in numbers, but on this point there is room for doubt, as it has been determined that the plumage of the present season's birds, male and female, is the same ; the ruff is smaller in size, but of the same colour and as dark as in the old male. Early in the season they may often be found in the mornings and evenings upon the outskirts of wooded lands, or upon the edges of dry alder swamps, where they run about and feed much like quail ; but as severe winter weather approaches, the woods and their outskirts will be their constant resort. Towards the middle of the day they are almost constantly in the woods, or upon the outskirts of wooded patches surrounded by fallen trees and brush-heaps. They live on a

variety of food—grain, seeds, beech-nuts, acorns, wild fruits, nuts, and, during the winter months, winter berries, the buds of laurel, spruce, iron-wood, soft maple, black birch and alder.

When flushed they skim over the ground, or rise to about seven or eight feet, but when flushed in clumps of bushes, they rise twenty or thirty feet. After rising for the flight, they go straight away to the thickest portion of cover, but after the first flight, often lie well to the dog.

GROUSE-SHOOTING.

For many years I hunted grouse in a haphazard sort of way, and thought myself lucky enough to bag one or two. I liked the shooting well enough, but considered them too wild to give one much sport, yet in time I became convinced, through the success of a country lout, that the ruffed grouse is the game bird *par excellence* of all our birds. This fellow showed me that he could flush a grouse some half-a-dozen times, and then shoot him while sitting upon the ground with a two-dollar gun. Some years ago I began hunting them in a rational manner, and having, in a measure, mastered their habits, haunts, and cunning, I have devoted the greater part of my shooting days, of late years, to their pursuit, and have come to the con-

clusion that, in parts of the country where grouse may be found in fair numbers, they afford rare sport, and, at the present time, grouse-shooting seems to me "head and shoulders" above all other sport with dog and gun, because he is the hardest to hit, the hardest to bring to bag, and the most wily of the feathered tribe of this country.

When hunting grouse, you require a dog well up to his work; he should work very carefully, and be satisfied with his points, as a rule, at long distances. I prefer a dog that is not a slow one by any means, as the country to be worked over must necessarily be large. I prefer a high-headed, wide-ranging dog; one that is broken to hand, as it is essential to hunt without speaking to your dog or companion.

On the first of September the shooting season begins, when the young birds are nearly and often quite full-grown, and then may generally be found by those who are familiar with their haunts. Then they will be found in coveys of a dozen or more, yet a stray bird, usually an old male, may often be flushed. The first flight of the covey is a short one, and is usually in a straight line from where flushed. By following them up they may generally be flushed again in an irregular way; that is, one

or two, then five or six, and at last the remainder. Here a breech-loader shows off its advantages, as a number of shots may be had, provided the sportsman handles his gun rapidly, and works without speaking, as they often lie within a few feet of the gun even after it has been fired, when they rise at the sound of the voice. When they rise in this irregular way, they go in different directions, and by marking the different lines of flight you may have an idea of their localities, which will be within two hundred yards. By following them up immediately, or leaving them for half an hour or so, you may, to almost a certainty, flush them again, singly, or in small companies of three or four.

When the season is well advanced, say from about the tenth to the twentieth of October, they change their feeding grounds, especially if the weather be wet, when they resort to beech and oak ridges. Then they are usually found singly or in pairs, and will be harder to approach, often flushing before the sportsman is within shooting distance. At this season of the year they frequently allow the dog to approach within twenty or twenty-five yards, when they run twice that distance before rising, and, in all probability are out of gun-shot. When followed up they will, as a rule, be found in comparatively open places:

that is, they do not always, when the foliage is in the green and the weather warm, lie close in hidden covert, but end their flight by pitching down in any little clumps of saplings that may present themselves in their line of flight, or take to the trees. During the latter part of October severe frosts set in, and then grouse lie much better to the dog, after allowing a good long steady point to be made, so that fair shots may be had, provided the ground be worked in a quiet way, and above all, that the sportsman hunts silently. Then, when flushed, his flight, in all probability, will extend over several hundred yards, and he will generally end it in one of two ways: first by going directly to some cover, such as a thicket, by the side of a log, in a brush-heap, or in the top of a fallen tree: or secondly, by doubling back for a few yards, and pitching down a little to one side of his line of flight. Then when flushed, follow the bird with your eyes on his line of flight, and follow on, endeavouring to find his hiding-place; keep on his line of flight until he is flushed or passed; but if you suspect that you have overrun him, work back a few yards, off and on one side of his line of flight, and then on the other if necessary. By following these instructions it is quite possible to flush a single bird three, four, or five times, and it is quite likely for you to secure a few

brace. Now, in order to approach within fair distances, when the season is well advanced, it is requisite that no noise should be made, and that your dog should obey you rather by signs than otherwise, as a headstrong, noisy brute is entirely out of place. In the afternoon, late in the autumn, grouse feed upon beech-nuts, and are usually wild, because the ground upon which they feed is rather bare, that is, devoid of much underbrush, and the sportsman is readily seen. I have often seen birds upon the ground upwards of sixty or seventy yards away. Under like circumstances, I generally allow the dog full sway, and as he is a high-headed worker, the birds are scented at long distances. The instant that the dog winds the game, he works carefully, slowly, and steps lightly, often standing for a few minutes in order to catch the direction from which the scent is coming. The dog is seen by the bird, which often runs to cover. In the meantime I remain stationary until the dog makes his point, and then I approach slowly. In this way the dog and I generally approach within ten yards of the bird. But if the bird flushes wild, I endeavour to take his line of flight, which will extend over three or four hundred yards; when he ends it, he generally goes to cover, such as by the side of a log, in a brush-heap, in the top of a fallen tree, or in a

thicket; and when following him up, I endeavour to keep on his line of flight, yet I give any likely hiding-place a call, on my way, that lies near by. In order to attain good results, the work, at times, must necessarily be slow, and with as little noise as possible, yet it is often most tiresome to the wrists as the gun must be held "on the ready" for nearly the whole time, as almost every bird is secured by quick shooting; but the sport is the most exciting, the shooting the most difficult, and the work the most satisfactory of any that I have had any experience with, because it is claimed that one of the great charms of sport is when success has been attained under special difficulties

On the other hand, late in the season, I have often travelled over miles of beech-ridges without finding a single bird, when I would resort to swampy grounds, and there meet with fair success. On these grounds you often require a companion, if not two. Such grounds are usually made up in this way: a piece of open ground, then a patch of alders or willows, or both; in the coverts, the birds may be found. The dog may be upon a point, a shooter is upon the opposite sides of a covert; the third person goes in and flushes the bird. In December I have, many-the-times, made capital bags over such grounds, when I could not get a single shot upon others.

In a fresh fall of snow, of a foot or more in depth, grouse have a trick of secreting themselves under the roots of trees, and under the borders of grassy plots in low swampy grounds. In these localities, the only possible way to flush them is by the assistance of your dog through his scent. It is a mystery how the scent can be taken upon a bird entirely covered with snow, but such is the case. When the dog makes his point, walk up to him, pass him, and kick the snow in the direction that the dog is pointing; and after a good deal of time cut to waste, the bird from under your very feet will make a rush, throwing the fine snow four or five feet in height, so that in all probability, it cannot be seen until it has covered twenty-five or thirty yards in its flight. Occasionally I have made good bags under like conditions.

The one great ingredient in successful grouse shooting, as in most all other shooting, is patience and perseverance. The shooter, who follows his dog even to the most unlikely places, and sticks out to the last, usually, has the best chance. I am a sticker myself, and never like to give it up as there is often a chance of a bird or two, no matter how hopeless it looks. I have many a time had a run of luck at the last moment, which turned an indifferent day into a good one.

One of the last days that I shot last season was one of the best instances of this, that has happened to me for many a year. There had been rain, the birds very wild and mostly on the trees. A bird arose here and there, out of all range, not allowing the dog to approach within fifty yards. Evening came on; I went to the outskirts of the woods, trying the underbrush and brush-heaps, here and there; at dark or nearly so, the dog came to a point near a fallen tree-top, surrounded by beech saplings. I went on the far side of the heap, leaving a companion behind the dog. We scored seven grouse, certainly within two minutes, having secured only two during the entire day. It was a big hand, and we played it straight, but it was a marvellous streak of luck.

Ruffed grouse and quail in December are much alike, as in that month quail are wild, often rising at first out of shot; but, by sticking to them, good sport in the end may often be obtained. These two birds, late in the season, begin wild; but, by following them up as long as there is a chance of obtaining sport, end by becoming tame, and often afford easy shots; yet in the case of ruffed grouse it requires a good deal of perseverance on the part of the sportsman, and caution on the part of the dog, to make a good bag.

HOW TO SHOOT GROUSE.

The fault with many sportsmen is either shooting too hurriedly, or dwelling too long, but there is a happy medium in the time for firing.

As the bird flushes, the gun should be "on the ready," and as it jumps twenty or thirty feet in the air, the gun should be carried with the bird until the bird reaches its height before moving forward, that instant the gun should be fired.

When the bird rises seven or eight feet, the gun should be placed upon the bird, a quick and decided aim taken high on the bird at the instant of firing.

When the bird presents a cross shot, due allowance should be made for the velocity of flight, rise of the bird, and fall of the shot. At cross shots, the muzzle of the gun should be placed ahead of the bird, from one to five or six feet, according to distance; and the motion of the gun should be kept up, even after its discharge.

When a bird hugs the ground in its flight, the gun should be carried high on the bird and raised somewhat over the bird, so that when the bird is lost to view, the gun should be fired.

A bird, pitching from a tree presents one of the most

difficult shots possible, and the only chance of hitting him at all is to place the muzzle of the gun upon the bird, depress it from two or three to five or six feet, according to distance, at the instant of firing.

CHARGES FOR GROUSE-SHOOTING.

Early in the season, I use a 12-gauge cylinder gun, and load the cartridges as follows:—

$3\frac{1}{2}$ drs. of Hamilton Caribou, No. 5 powder.

Two pink-edged wads.

$1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of No. 9 shot.

And a Baldwin wad.

Late in the season: the same gun is used, the same quantity of powder retained, but the wadding is changed as well as the number of the shot. Over the powder are placed a card, a thick felt greased and a card wad; $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of No. 8 shot, and a card wad.

During the latter part of November and throughout the month of December a full choke-bore gun is preferred, and the loading is as follows:—

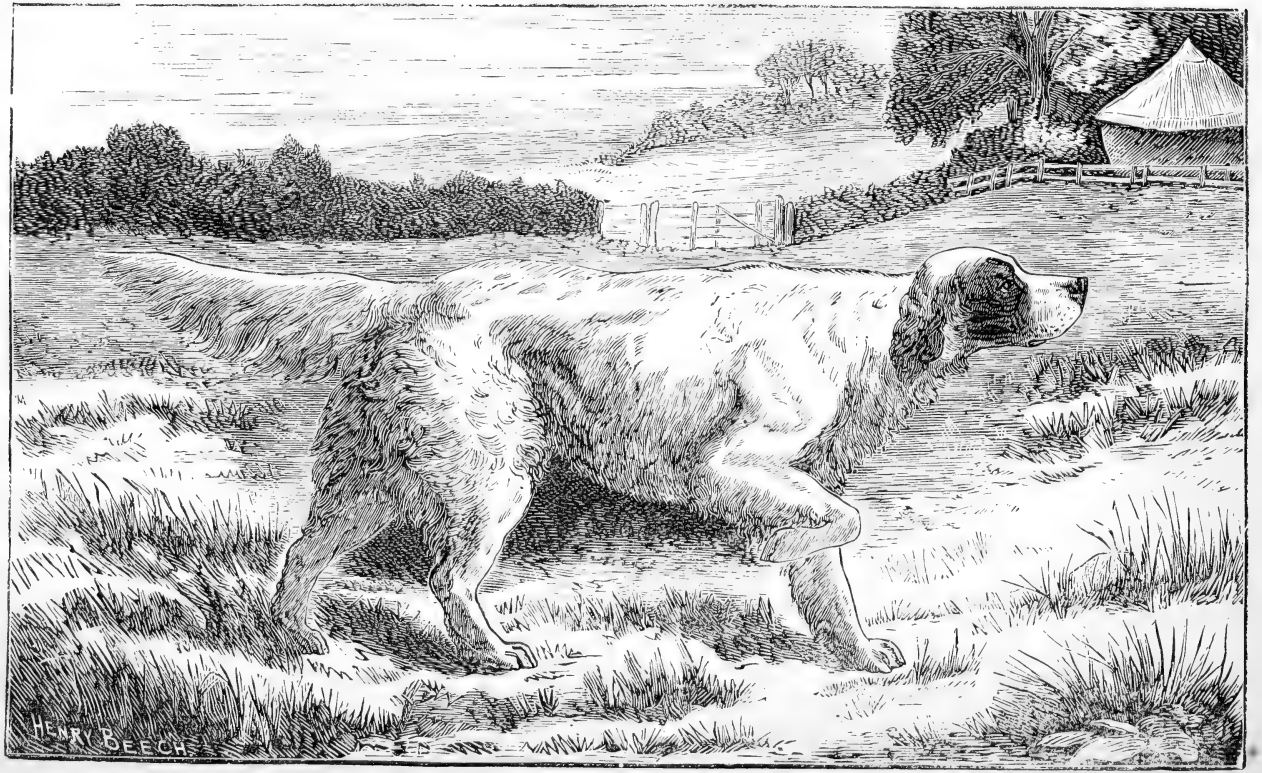
$3\frac{1}{4}$ drs. of Pigou, Wilks & Lawrence's Alliance, No. 4 powder.

The Field Method of loading, with $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of No. 7 shot.

SYNOPSIS.

Then, in the month of September you are very likely to find ruffed grouse in the mornings and evenings upon the edges of thickets, alder bottoms, and swampy grounds where woodcock make their haunts; and upon other parts of the day in ravines through which small water-courses run. In the early part of October, you may expect to find them upon the same grounds, but later on in the month, upon more open grounds, upon hill-sides, in beech woods, and upon late woodcock-grounds. In November and December, they usually travel over a large extent of country, changing their grounds frequently, but stick more to high and dry grounds, except swamps that are comparatively dry, where there is often an abundance of food; and on such grounds, I have often got my best shooting at this season of the year. The same applies to swamps that are filled with water, but are frozen over.

In order that you may keep up the stock over the same grounds year after year, make it a rule to always leave a sufficient number for that purpose. I know of a few localities where this practice has been adopted, and the same success has attended my shooting exploits, year after year, in those localities where the timber has not been materially reduced.



Opp Quail

ENGLISH SETTER.

QUAIL.

History.—This brave little bird is dead game, and may be found all over the southern and western portions of Ontario, from Niagara to Windsor. In its nature and manner of living, it somewhat resembles the ruffed grouse. Quail pair in May, hatch in June, July, August, and even in September, and frequently breed twice a year. The number of eggs usually laid by the female is from fourteen to eighteen. Much wet weather during the hatching season is unfavourable to the young; the bevies are always small after a wet season, and on the contrary large and strong, if the season be dry. Quail seem to multiply as they are found in new districts in considerable numbers, where a few years ago there were none. Every five or six years they suffer very considerably by hard winters, and once in about ten years the greater part of them perish by the quantity of snow and severity of the winter; but if the following spring and early summer should prove to be dry, the few, that are left, multiply rapidly as the bevies in the autumn will be found to contain from eighteen to twenty birds, exclusive of the old ones, but the usual number is fourteen. Whenever we have a very mild

winter, followed by a dry hatching season, quail appear to come through the winter with a small percentage of deaths, and the greater part of the young arrive at maturity as the following autumn affords more birds, and better sport than has been known for years.

Habits and Haunts.—Quail roost in bevies upon the ground, in a circle with their heads outwards; the roosting-place is generally in a cleared, or stubble-field, or bush-pasture; or in open woods, or by the edge of a swamp; but they are not very apt to roost in the same field where they habitually feed. It is a bird of rapid flight, and perhaps no game bird, except the ruffed grouse, flies more rapidly when full grown, and fleeing under fright. If the day be fine and clear, the birds will be found feeding at an early hour; if wet and cold, they come out late; if rainy, they go to the woods, not coming out till towards evening. If the weather be dry and warm for several days, they will be found in the vicinity of water; but if wet, in the stubble-fields and bush-pastures. If the weather be windy and boisterous without rain, they will generally be found in the edges of close coverts, or on the sides of high rising grounds. When beechnuts are plentiful they may often be found in the woods. They usually feed until about eleven o'clock, and

then remain quiet for two or three hours, resorting to some favourite hiding-place, such as a thicket, turnip-field, corn-field, fallow-field, grass, or clover-field; they may often be found by the side of the trunk of a fallen tree, or in the branches of a tree top, or on the edge of a wood, or in a bush-pasture.

When feeding they may generally be found in wheat, sometimes buckwheat fields, in turnip or corn-fields, along the hedges, by fences streaked with brush and grass as they return from their feeding grounds.

During the month of December they go to bushy swamps that have become frozen over, and along streams lined by thickets.

About three o'clock they run about and begin to feed, and then may be found upon the same grounds where they were found in the morning.

Enemies.—Quail have many enemies, such as the mink, the fox, the hawks, but the skunk is the greatest enemy to quail, except the very cold winters with much snow. The skunk is a great egg-destroyer, and is doubtless the cause of so many nests being broken up early in the season. The males predominate in numbers, probably in consequence of the females so often falling a prey to vermin when sitting. If sportsmen would make a dead-set

against vermin, and the skunk in particular, there would be an increase of game. When shooting, every sportsman should have with him three or four cartridges for a special purpose—that purpose, the destruction of hawks.

QUAIL-SHOOTING.

At the beginning of the season, quail-shooting is an easy affair as compared with it later on; the birds are young, fly slowly and steadily, dropping down after a short flight, in long grass, briers, or any covert that presents itself in the line of flight. Then, early in the season it does not require much skill to bring down a young quail which flies in a straight line, and which is not strong enough to fly very swiftly. But what a difference at the end of the season. Then quail fly very fast, often twisting and curving just in the nick of time to save their feathers.

If a bevy is lost early in the season, after having been marked down, you may come to the conclusion that you have overrun it, and it lies just where it was seen to alight.

You will find it add very much to your success by sticking to a bevy so long as there is any chance of finding game, and never leave the birds for the idea that more may be found elsewhere; but make it a rule to always spare a fair number for stock.

When you fail to find birds on a ground that you know to harbour a bevy, you may be successful by working the same ground again ; in this instance, work out carefully every portion that contains high grass, weeds, or briers, and especially look over every fallen tree, and every fence corner, as they lie close together, so that both you and your dog may pass by without disturbing them.

When your dog is on a point, walk up slowly until you get your position, and, as the birds rise, do not fire too soon as the shot requires distance to spread, and the birds are continually rising. In order to make sure of hitting at all, you must fix the eyes steadily upon one bird at a time, and the instant that it begins to fall to the first barrel, fix the eyes upon another ; or if the bird is missed, fire the second barrel at the same bird, lest it should go away wounded. After firing, cast your eyes in the direction of the bevy ; just before alighting you will perceive that the birds will give a sudden flap to their wings, which at the moment of pitching is often seen after the birds have been lost sight of. Before moving, cast your eyes upon the suspected spot or spots where the bird or birds fell, as a bird on falling dead requires a careful marking, because of their being but little scent to assist the dog in finding it, except within a short distance of where it fell.

Whenever a bird halts the instant that it is shot at, or the legs of the bird hang down, or if the feathers fly, it should be accurately marked down, and immediately followed up, and searched for. A wounded quail should always be followed up at once, and worked for, for a reasonable length of time, till found.

Not unfrequently, on being flushed, a bevy drops into long grass where the ground is flooded in the spring and autumn, and here the grass grows in tufts about a foot in diameter; the cover is so peculiarly grown, that the birds drop into a hiding-place at once, and do not move after alighting, so that the dog is unable to wind them, except by passing directly over them. Here is an instance where quail are believed to withhold their scent. Where met with under similar conditions, you may go over the ground carefully without flushing a bird; but by kicking each tussock, every bird will arise singly, and it will be your fault if a good account is not rendered, as they present the easiest shots possible; you must take time by allowing the birds to go sufficiently far to have the shot spread, or you may overshoot, and be rewarded by a succession of clean misses, or have your birds badly mangled; then by keeping cool, you do not mutilate your birds, and instead of being a ragged mass of flesh and feathers, you have

game to be proud of. Again, a bevy may drop upon uneven ground well covered with long grass or small bushes, or along the side of a fence lined with cat-brier or blackberry bushes; and here you may be unable to raise a single bird, after going over the ground again and again, because the dog is unable to wind them, except by passing directly over them. Under like circumstances, sit down, or beat another field, and return in fifteen or twenty minutes, when the dog will readily find them, as they have moved and given out their scent. You can often persuade them to move by imitating the call of the old bird, but before doing so it is necessary to leave the spot for a time.

Early in the season, after nine and before eleven o'clock in the morning, it is a good plan after having flushed a bevy, and marked it down in good cover, to go over the feeding-grounds near by before following up the birds, because a good deal of time would be cut to waste, and any other bevies in that vicinity would have gone from their feeding-grounds, and hidden away in some covert where it might be no easy matter for your dog to find them. When the birds are full-grown, they are strong on the wing, take long flights, and usually go to the woods, under-brush, or brush-heaps. When followed to the

woods, they may generally be found in and about the tops of a fallen tree, along the sides of a log, or in and about a brush-heap. Here they will often give the sportsman a number of shots, by one or two rising first, then the greater portion of the bevy, and at last, one or two more, affording sufficient time, if caution be used, for a breach-loader to be charged two or three times.

Finally, when the bevy is lost, you can get a few more shots by going about seventy or eighty yards from where you suspect the birds are. Then sit down, remain silent for ten or fifteen minutes, and begin to give the call of the old bird. Give it once, twice, then three times at intervals of a minute or two, and in all probability, you will be answered by several of the scattered bevy. Shortly after they begin to call they begin to move and approach each other, and in a short time will be together ; do not wait too long, but when sure of the locality of the several answers, then go quietly to each, and you will be rewarded by a shot; but under like circumstances you must be " on the ready " as the birds are not now hidden, but are in comparatively open places, and ready for a spring.

Late in the autumn and early in the winter, their flights are long and swift, and then they are often hard birds to kill, especially in December when the ground is covered

with snow, as at this season of the year they become very wild, and are difficult of approach. The first flight is a long one, and it is invariably to the woods, but by marking the line of flight, although the bevy may disappear from view, a persevering sportsman, accompanied by a cautious dog, may generally find the birds by hunting for two or three hundred yards, more or less, beyond where seen last.

The second flight will be long, although not as long as the first, when they will scatter, and lie much better, affording a number of shots. Here you have the birds driven into the woods for protection and shelter, and as you approach the frightened bevy, they by ones, twos, and threes fairly jump into the air, and dart off with great velocity; and in order to bag the birds, the shooting must be deliberate and steady, and the gun must be well held on, as they require hard hitting; and in order to make double shots, it requires extremely good shooting.

With snipe, woodcock, and sometimes ruffed grouse, the oftener they are flushed the less will be the chances of bagging them, but with quail, late in the season, the contrary is the rule as they seem to tire after a couple of long flights, and often rise close to your feet; in fact, beginning as very wild birds at first, they often end by be-

coming tame ones at last. When hunting quail, work the dog against or across wind, and late in the season hunt as silently as possible.

The chief qualifications of a first-rate quail-dog are, that he should possess a high degree of speed, should work altogether for the body scent, and should have a good nose; yet many a dog, that does not possess these qualifications in a high degree, seems to do well enough, as he finds lots of birds, and is the means of giving his master good sport, which is owing, in part, to the fact that the quail goes anywhere and everywhere, and at the same time gives out a strong scent.

In damp or wet weather, or even on cloudy days, quail do not lie well to the dog, but run and stop, and repeat that manœuvre several times before rising; during such weather, after being flushed, instead of remaining where they alight, they are apt to run also.

Many years ago I saw the following directions given in one of the sporting journals, for hunting quail:—

"On a hot, calm day, scent lies very badly, only hunt in the morning and late in the evening. At other hours your dog cannot smell the game.

"On a hot, windy day stay at home.

"On a warm, sunny day hunt near the ditch banks and water-courses.

"On a cold day hunt southern exposures.

"On a windy cold day hunt the leeward side of the woods.

"When the wind is north-west, and it is freezing, hunt a fire side, for your dog cannot smell a foot from him.

"On a rainy day, hunt in the ditches and briers.

"On a cloudy or grey day, hunt anywhere, and you will find them everywhere."

CHARGES FOR QUAIL-SHOOTING.

Early in the season I prefer a cylinder 12-gauge gun, and load as follows :—

$3\frac{1}{2}$ drs. of Hamilton Caribou, No. 5 powder, two pink-edged wads; 1 oz. of No. 9 shot, and a Baldwin wad.

Late in the season as follows :—

$3\frac{1}{4}$ drs. of Pigou, Wilks & Lawrence's Alliance, No. 4, a card, a thick felt greased and a card wad; $1\frac{1}{8}$. oz. of No. 8 shot, and a card wad.

Throughout the month of December I prefer a choke-bore 12-gauge gun, and like to have the cartridges loaded according to the Field Method with No. 8 shot.

At the last of the season many quail are lost by falling dead out of sight; but when the cartridges are loaded according to the Field Method, the birds usually drop stone-dead.

A reason why a light choke-bore is preferable to a heavy one, is that the birds are wild, flush at long distances, and a light close-shooting gun is more effective, because it can be held "on the ready" more easily, and tossed in position more readily. In fact what is required for this game in winter is quick, hard, and straight shooting.

SYNOPSIS.

Then, when the weather is fine and clear, begin your work at an early hour in grain-fields, and work them over until ten or eleven o'clock; from that time till three or four o'clock, work out corn-fields, turnip-fields, thickets, fence-sides, streaked with cover, fallow-fields, and grass lands containing creeks, and look over bush-pastures dotted with patches of standing trees, fallen trees and brush heaps. After three or four o'clock, return to the same grounds, or similar ones to those worked over in the morning. During cold and windy weather, work out the edges of thickets and hill-sides with a southern exposure. If the weather be dry and hot look over the edges of swamps, the sides of streams lined by weeds and bushes; but if wet, go to the dry woods and high grounds. When beechnuts are in abundance, work out beech ridges, and broken grounds adjoining. In the month of December,

when thick ice has formed, and the ground is covered with snow, turn your attention to weedy fields containing stooks of corn, patches of thickets, and bushy swamps.