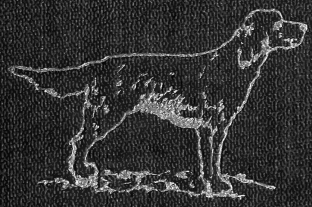
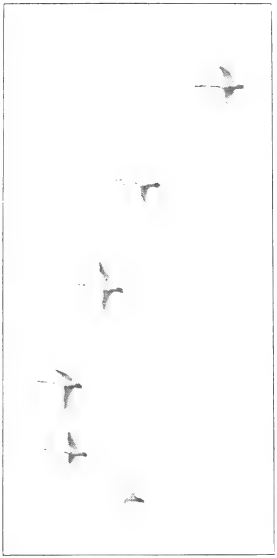
Scatter-Gun Sketches

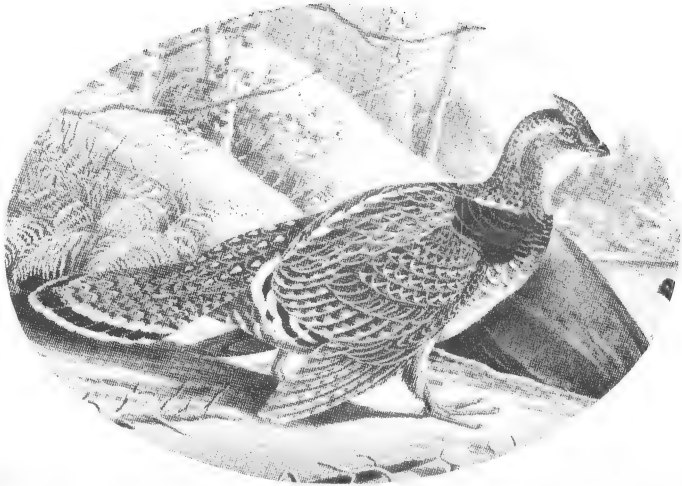


SCATTER-GUN SKETCHES


Rich



Swans at Currituck Sound,
North Carolina

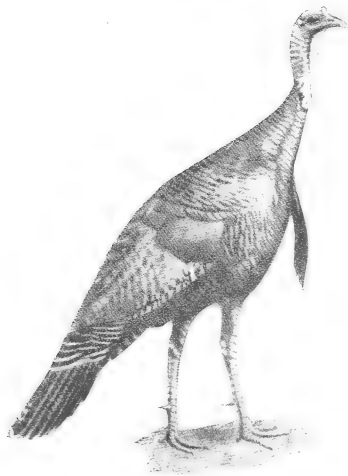


RUFFED GROUSE

Drawing by kind permission of Walter H. Rich.

SCATTER-GUN SKETCHES

By Horatio Bigelow



SPORT AMONG UPLAND GAME BIRDS AND WATERFOWL WITH THE GUN

PUBLISHED BY
WILLIAM C. HAZELTON
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS
1922

Sangamo on Point, Dr. O. F. Maxon, Owner,
Springfield, Ill.

SPORT

BY DUNCAN ANDERSON

The canvasback a double zest affords,
And yields a dish to "set before a king,"
And where the north-shore streams rush to the sea,
Here the rare harlequin shoots past on rapid wing.

To Grondine's flats the ibis yet returns,
The snowy goose loves well the sedgy shore;
Loud booms the bittern 'midst the clustering reeds,
And the famed heron nests on pine-top as of yore.

The shady copse the wary woodcock haunts;
From Chauteau Richer's swamps the snipe upsprings;
Tennessee's fields know well the scurrying quail,
O'er the glassy lake the loon's weird laughter rings.

Resplendent through the grove the turkey roams,
And lends a deeper grace to Christmas cheer;
Our silvery lakes still claim the graceful swan;
And o'er the uplands shrill the plover's pipe we hear.

DEDICATION

To

M. R. B.,

The "Home Camp" listener to these tales,

this volume is affectionately

dedicated.

PRESS OF PHILLIPS BROS., SPRINGFIELD, ILL.

CONTENTS

Books on hunting Wildfowl and Upland Game Birds published by W. C. Hazelton:

1916, Duck Shooting and Hunting Sketches.
1919, Ducking Days.
1921, Wildfowling Tales.
1922, Tales of Duck and Goose Shooting.
1922, Scatter-Gun Sketches.

Editions now exhausted of the first two volumes.

Chicago address, 407 Pontiac Bldg.

PREFACE

WHEN stern necessity and the cares of business bind and you can't get away on that long-anticipated shooting trip, how often can you find relief from the "Call of the Wild" in reading how some other hunter did get away and bagged his geese and ducks, tramped the fields and covers after partridge and woodcock, or called up and killed the fine fat gobbler?

When you are bound for the metropolis and the train roars over the trestle crossing the slough in the marsh, how often do you recall so vividly the red-letter day when the black ducks and mallards were literally falling over your gun barrels in that similar slough in the Southland, or when you rattle by the little brook trickling through the alder run, how often do you picture to yourself the successful shot you made on Mr. Longbill last October, as he was topping just such a "lucky hole"?

When gathered around the blazing camp-fire or hugging tight the red-hot stove, how often have you heard the "old timers" spin the yarns that linger with you, still so strenuously alive, though their authors have long since gone to the "Happy Hunting Grounds"?

It is because of these things and also for the reason that there is a great deal of satisfaction in setting down some record of your various shoots that your children may read that I have written these stories. They are sketches of some of my own experiences during the last few years and I have not delved too far into the past as time often serves to dull the lustre of a sterling yarn.

HORATIO BIGELOW.

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.

AUTUMN'S LURE

J. S. WHIPPLE

Fleecy clouds across the heavens,
Autumn haze hangs round the hills,
Squirrels chatter in the tree-tops,
Sweetly sings the mountain rills.
Partridge drums in hazel thicket,
Calling, calling, to his mate;
Air is full of brown leaves falling,
Leaving tree-tops desolate.

Comes the deer from yonder thicket,
Where in hiding he has been,
Softly steps into the water,
Fearful—looking down the glen,
Head erect, ears keen for noises—
What a picture there he makes,
Standing, listening like a sentry,
But to vanish in the brakes.

Visions these of many Autumns
When the smoky haze comes down,
Shutting out the far horizon,
Shutting in the sleepy town.
Days so full of gorgeous glory,
Touching every field and hill,
Painting there the wondrous story
Of the Master's hand and skill.

OPENING DAY

THOMPSON had often urged me to try a day's shoot with "Jim" Dennison and as October 1st approached, he redoubled his entreaties. Finally without any real thought of going I told him to make arrangements with "Jim" for opening day. When the day arrived my indifference had vanished and I was as anxious as Thompson himself to get the motor started and headed for Groton, Dennison's home. Arrived at our destination, we found that "Jim," through some misunderstanding, was not expecting us until the following week and had departed on a house-painting job. We were on his trail in short order and "ran him to earth" working on Deacon Perkins' barn. Said Dennison, "I promised the Deacon to finish his barn for him this week, but it's such a pretty day I guess I can come along with yer for a few hours. Let's go back to the house so I can get my gun and coat."

Jim was soon ready, lifted the two dogs, "Nell," an old setter, and a young pointer named "Pete," into the tonneau, jumped in with them, and I headed the car for Centre Groton. We worked out two covers "en route," the first a huckleberry pasture bordering on the old race track near Poquonoc, where a covey of quail usually hung out, and the second an impenetrable tangle

of briars, wild-grape vines and stunted cedars along the "Laurel Drive" where Br'er Partridge often made his home. The dogs didn't find a trace of game in the pasture, but in the briar patch we heard an old partridge roar up well ahead of us and "Pete," who had rushed headlong into the cover, came sneaking back with his tail between his legs and looking very properly ashamed. After an unsuccessful tramp hunting for more birds, "Jim" exclaimed, "Let's leave, boys, that bird's the only one here. We'll strike into that hazel patch of Haley's over on the Old Mystic road. A fellow from New London killed seventeen woodcock there one afternoon during the flight last year."

A short spin in the clear, frosty air and we were on the ground. Thompson let down the bars and I ran the car into the woods on the opposite side of the road from the hazel patch. We left it there, out of sight of passers-by as a matter of precaution, and invaded Mr. Longbill's domain. We had not gone far before I heard a shot from Thompson and a minute later what seemed to be a large brown bumblebee flopped through the leaves and dropped into the cover just ahead of me. I walked forward a few steps and flushed the woodcock again. She was in sight for an instant only and then dove through the red and brown hazel leaves. I thought I had held about right when I pressed the trigger and sure enough "Pete," who had galloped into the brush when I fired, came trotting proudly back with a fine fat bird in his mouth.

"Shank's mare" was pretty well exercised before we found another. This time Dennison flushed a woodcock in a thick growth of birches. The bird, as it came to the edge of the cover, soared up through the leaves of a big oak and Dennison tried a shot at her with his twenty gauge. She still kept on going and further remonstrance from my twelve only quickened her flight. We were unable to put her up again and went on. I was well to the end of our line when a longbill rose on my left. I swung around and had a nice straightaway chance at him as he flew down the open over some low brush. At the crack of the gun the woodcock dropped in a cloud of feathers and we whistled in "Pete" to retrieve. I thought I had marked the bird down but neither "Nell" nor "Pete" could seem to find him. We searched for about fifteen minutes till "Jim" said, "He probably wasn't so far away as you thought." I turned around and started back towards where I had been standing and had only taken a few steps when I nearly stepped on the woodcock, lying on his back, stone dead.

A few minutes afterwards I heard a shot from Dennison and a woodcock flew right over my head from behind. I waited till she dropped down and started after her. She flushed wild and went up through the tree-tops like a bat. When I finally had a second's clear view of her the bird certainly seemed small and I was indeed pleased when she came rustling down through the autumn foliage at my shot.

We were unable to find more woodcock in the hazel patch and trudged along the wooded ridge adjoining to start a partridge if possible. Dennison was telling me about some of his shooting experiences when he was a boy and game was plenty. Said he: "I was huntin' with 'Pop' and two of his city friends. They started a woodcock which flew in my direction and lit in some low bushes in front of me. 'Pop' came over and hollered, 'Bud, where's that cock?' I was some excited and when I pointed my gun into the brush where the bird had gone I pulled the trigger. Nothing got up, but the dog rushed in and came out presently with the woodcock, dead, in his mouth. Pretty hard to beat that shot, eh?"

We got back to the car without finding a partridge, and found old Haley and his son with another old fellow, looking over the machine. Haley knew Dennison well and seemed pleased to see him—also me when I pulled a small flask out of my hip pocket. The old fellow must have had an interior of cast-iron for the high-proof whiskey kept trickling down his gullet until I thought he would never stop. At last he reluctantly withdrew the bottle from his lips and gave a long sigh of satisfaction. "Come again," he cried. "I'm always glad to do anything for a friend of Jim's. My boy and I just come over to see who was doin' the shootin'. We found your car and were thinkin' perhaps we'd padlock it to a tree with an ox-chain, but it's all right now—shoot anywhere you mind to." Haley and his boy then waved us good-bye and started back to the little red farmhouse just beyond the hazel patch.

"Jim" in the meantime, had been talking with the other old fellow whose name was Haley also, and when I backed the car out he whispered to me, "If we go down the road a piece and take this farmer home, he says he'll let us shoot over his corn piece where he saw a covey of quail early this morning."

We hustled Haley No. 2 home to his great delight. Leaving him at the lane running up to his house, we let down the bars and turned the car into the cornfield, a foolish proceeding, as it proved, for the quail were there indeed. The whole covey flushed with a "whir" of many wings and shot like so many bullets into the briar patches that lined the field. "Pete" and "Nell" were out in an instant and we were right on their heels. Dennison and Thompson followed the dogs, who were galloping towards the cover into which the birds had flown. I circled to the left with the idea of working ahead with the others and perhaps getting a shot at birds that flushed before them. On the further side of the brush was a boggy meadow with tussocks of grass and high blueberry bushes. A fine spot for the birds to "lie close!" As I was balancing on one of the tussocks I heard two shots and three quail whizzed by me as if the Old Nick himself were after them. I knew when I pulled the trigger on the first that I was shooting behind him, but I felt sure of the last bird. I was doomed to disappointment, however, as all three kept on till I marked them down in an impenetrable thicket of of cat briars. Dennison came up, tucking a fat little

hen quail into his back pocket. He was certainly in his element with "Bob White" and his twenty gauge as he spent every winter "down South" breaking dogs and "shootin' birds." He had spotted two a short distance from where we stood and when we flushed them his was the only gun that spoke as the quail were right in line with him and quickly gained the cover. That is, one did; the other, well centred by the charge from the little gun, tumbled into the grass for "Pete" to bring in.

I was resolved to take toll from the three that had escaped me, and so attacked the cat briars. They gave me a most affectionate welcome as if to say, "Don't be in a hurry," and I didn't get away from them without bearing sundry tokens of their esteem in the shape of scratches. The quail didn't wait for me and rose noisily before I had thoroughly made good my onslaught on their retreat. One small cock had the temerity to give me a glimpse of him as he vanished into a pine tree and he dropped dead on its further side as the result of my "snap."

Breakfast had been an early one and the inner man was clamoring for lunch, but as I came out to "Jim" in the meadow I heard the sweet whistle of first one quail and then another out in the field. "Khloi-hee, khloie-hee." The temptation was too strong for both of us and we headed towards the whistle. The two birds rose at the same instant and we each had a nice straight-away chance and we each shot two barrels. "Did we get them?"

"Ask 'Jim'—he knows."

On our way back to the car and the grub pile we passed through the cornfield where we first found the quail. At the edge of the stubble our path took us by some rows of onions and some melon vines but what was more there were musk melons and watermelons on the vines and they looked ripe. We felt sure Haley would be pleased to have us sample them and started on the musk melons. They were musky for sure and didn't seem very popular as one mouthful usually spelled "enough!" With the watermelons it was a different story and it was lucky for us we didn't meet Haley when we headed the car for Groton for if he had any plans as to the future of those melons our faces bore indisputable evidence as to their destruction.

SHORE BIRD SHOOTING—"SUMMERS" AND "WINTERS"

CLARENCE LEONARD is a friend who has put me next to some good shooting more than once, so when I received the following letter from him I felt sure results would follow. "Dear B.—Please try to be at my house by 3 A. M., Tuesday next, the 15th. I have discovered a lot of birds haunted in a marsh some twenty minutes' drive with machine from here, and they will probably make good shooting if we can get there by daylight. If I don't hear from you, shall look for you at my house Tuesday next at that time."

At 2:15 A. M. on the 15th, we grabbed guns, shells and lunch, and Ray, Rip and the Scribe set sail for Leonard's.

Clarence was on deck with a market basket full of wooden "yaller-legs" and old Plum-centre, his trusty L. C. Smith twelve gauge. A short tack to wind'ard and we came to anchor in Uncle Lige Pratt's yard down Duxbury way. We meandered through a huckleberry pasture, fell over and demolished a couple of stone walls, located a dim and distant trail through the long, wet grass of a deserted apple orchard, and fought

our way through blood-thirsty, war-whooping clouds of mosquitoes defending a boggy wood lot, and we were on the marsh. A hundred yards from the river was our stand—a low circle of water bushes enclosing a log seat and in the shallow, muddy pond in front of us Leonard set out the stool head on to the fresh southwest breeze, in two groups, one on either side.

Yellow-legs were calling all around us—"summers" and "winters." "More'n seventy 'winters' opened their throats all at once," as Clarence described one particularly noisy demonstration from the east'ard. Little pods of black ducks shot by speeding toward the mud flats at the river mouth. They were probably counting on an immunity bath till October 1, but a fusillade from a stand across the river disillusioned them. Some gunner couldn't stand the strain.

"Whew! whew! whew!" And again, "Whew! whew! whew!!" "Mark east, a 'winter'!"

The alluring strains of Leonard's whistle turned the bird our way, but it was still too dark to see our decoys, or else the "yaller-leg" was of a nervous disposition, for he swooped along the further shore of the pond, and landed on a mud flat at the west end out of range.

Ray and Rip were anxious to stalk the bird, which had now disappeared behind a tuft of grass, but Leonard dissuaded them by saying they would probably lose some good shots if they left the stand.

Another "winter" and several "summer" yellow-legs joined the pioneer at the end of the pond, and we had

literally to "hog-tie" the two boys to keep them from starting an offensive.

Four "summers" of an exclusive turn of mind pitched camp in another puddle to the east'ard.

Bang! bang! bang! bang! The stand across the river had opened hostilities, and one of our neighbors from the east'ard decided to pay us a call. Ray and Rip gave him a cordial welcome with four shots, and the "summer" passed out, his long yellow legs giving one last futile kick as he drifted down the pond on his back.

As the sun rose, the birds began stirring, and for a short while the fun was fast and furious. A few of the "winters," but mostly "summers," were our visitors. The former passed by unscathed, but several of the latter stayed with us. Leonard was giving us a chance to demonstrate our scatter-gun efficiency, and it was a minus quality. Clarence himself had not yet unlimbered "Plum-centre," but his efforts on the little whistle, whenever there was a bird in the air, brought him swooping our way as if there was a piece of string tied to him. The whistle was a piece of tin the size of a silver dollar with a small hole in the middle over which the tin was folded. With this contrivance between his lips, the open side out, and the small hole against his tongue, Clarence could talk "shore bird" with all the migrating tribes. I have heard many callers in thirty years on the marshes, some with mechanical whistles and others with their lips, but none could com-

pare with Leonard, and whenever they tried conclusions with him the result was always the same, everybody else occupied chairs in the dress-circle, while Leonard held the stage with the birds.

During a lull in the flight, Ray and Rip stalked the "winters" at the west end of the pond, a futile attempt, as the birds rose a long shot distant from the gunners, and nothing resulted from the ensuing discharge.

I routed out the kodak and snapped a picture or two of Leonard picking up the dead birds floating in the pond—the results of our last shot, six down out of a flock of seven "summers" that had come right into our face and eyes in answer to the seductive call. Then he squatted down in the stand while I tried a picture of the layout.

I heard the mellow note of a "summer" and stood still while Clarence made a neat right and left. Reinforcements had arrived—"ole Plum-centre" had now opened up.

A little later, while we were all in the stand, a flock of eight "summers" happened on the scene, and great was the slaughter thereof. One survivor hustled off for Duxbury—the reserves had proved too much for them.

After 8 o'clock the shooting fell off. We had over thirty "summers" in the little pile under the grass in the shadow of the stand, but no "winters." The next flurry was due to occur when the tide came up over the marsh at 2. During the interval we killed several more single "summers," and missed two chances at single

"winters." One of these big fellows came in from behind us and was missed by both boys, while the other flopped right into my face to escape both barrels. The boys also burnt some powder when Leonard whistled this last one back, but only served to accelerate his departure for Duxbury.

As we were consuming the last crumb of lunch, a single "summer" dropped in. Both boys fired, and the bird fell. Up till now, Rip had claimed most of the birds after each discharge, so Leonard thought he would get ahead of him. He ran out into the pond, picked up the bird, and exclaimed, "Anyway, I got that one!" Rip and Ray were so surprised that they could say nothing.

A young fellow, a cousin of Leonard's, who had been shooting just across the river, came over to visit. He told us that he and his brother had killed twenty-three "summers," and that the two men in the stand beyond them had sixty-one. He and Leonard decided that the birds had changed their line of flight from the Duxbury marsh so that instead of passing over us, they were cutting across further to the southwest. To prove their contention, we caught sight of first a pair, and then a flock of nine "summers" following the river course. The breeze had died away and Leonard's whistle enticed the pair and four of the nine yellow-legs our way. We accounted for both the former and three of the latter.

Later on, three more followed the same route, and as they whirled over the stool, Ray jumped to his feet and

fired. One bird fell, but the combination of an extra heavy load and the slippery mud on the floor of the stand proved the youngster's undoing and the salvation of the other two birds. At the crack of the gun, the boy came splashing back in a shower of mud, stumbled over Ray and the Scribe, who were just going to unlimber their fowling pieces, and all three of us came down with such a thud in the mess below us that we were some minutes getting free from the sticky mud. Leonard and his cousin were laughing so heartily at our mishap that they could not shoot, and so the other yellow-legs escaped.

Leonard's cousin left us and had barely reached his boat on the river bank, before the tide, which had been pouring into the eastern end of our pond, flooded the marsh. A minute later Leonard whispered, "Look there!"

A quarter of a mile to the sou'west two large flocks of "summers" were circling. At the call of the whistle they joined forces, set their wings and swooped down on our harmless decoys. We all emptied into their serried ranks, and when they reformed and swung by again, two barrels from each of us again took toll. The air was full of feathers, the pond of dead and dying yellow-legs, and the long marsh grass of cripples. Out of the invading force of thirty birds, only four survivors escaped.

We then ran out and started across the pond to gather up the cripples before the tide carried them

off, then picked up the dead. While thus engaged, first one, and then another single, remnants of the scattered host, tried to spy out the battlefield, but a shot apiece laid them low.

We now had fifty-eight "summer" yellow-legs in our pile, our shells were spent and the flivver was straining at her anchor. "All aboard!" now shouted Captain Leonard, and the rattle of the Peace Ship drowned all sounds of our final discussion of summer shore bird shooting.

WOODCOCK AND PARTRIDGE—CHURCH'S DOUBLE

"WELL, William, what's the program today?" cried I as I stopped the machine at Church's door.

Church lifted his setter, Count, into the tonneau, slid his Marlin repeater in afterwards, climbed into the front seat beside me and said, "I guess we'll start in at the woodcock ground at the lake, then try the swamp hole near Abell's, hunt Powell's lot and then the Packer place and finish up at Ford's swamp."

This seemed a good layout to me and in about ten minutes we stopped at a pair of bars that let us into the woodcock ground. Birches and maples with occasional patches of laurel and high huckleberry bushes formed the cover along the eastern shore of Gardner's Lake, and if the longbills were not there, we were quite sure of finding one in the alder run nearby. We hunted the south side of the "edge" without success, though Count kept trying to work to the north of us. We thought we'd see what interested him so much and let him have his way, while we followed. Count made game while Church and I got ready for business. Suddenly with twittering wings a woodcock flushed wild in

front of Church and he fired but missed as the bird was nearly out of range. We marked the direction of his flight and followed after but found nothing of him. As we reached a woods-road near the bar-way we flushed a partridge and saw where he went down a short ways into the woods on the other side of the road. There was a stone wall on the other side of the cover near where we had marked the bird down, and I climbed over into the open lot on the further side in hopes that I would get a shot when the bird flushed. Church and Count crossed the road and struck into the maples after the game. In a few minutes William sang out, "I've got a point!" and a second later I heard the partridge get up. I stood watching and soon saw the bird "going some" through the tree-tops and nearly out of gun-shot. I was afraid if I waited for him to cross an open space in front of me that I would lose my chance, so I fired through the maples. Mr. Partridge never changed his course but kept straight on and would have given me a fine shot in the opening, but he had crossed it before I could get on him with my second barrel.

We turned back and looked for more woodcock. Count pointed on the edge of the birches and Church walked in, flushing a longbill. The cover was so thick that a shot was impossible, and we followed up the bird. We were more successful this time than with the first bird and Count soon came to a stiff point that showed the woodcock was right under his nose. Church flushed him, and the bird twisted through the trees ahead of me.

I saw enough of him to get him over the end of my gun, and he dropped like a wet rag. Count retrieved and we circled to the right. Not a hundred yards away we had another point. The dog stood, or rather he squatted directly in front of me, his head turned slightly to one side. I walked in, and was lucky enough to drop woodcock No. 2, with much the same kind of a shot as I had on the last one. Having quartered this section pretty thoroughly, we swung around through the alder run near the lake and then through the last corner of the "birch edge" which we had not yet disturbed. Church had hardly hied Count into the cover, when another dog—a lemon and white pointer—burst out of the bushes in front, and stood there looking at us for a minute. Then a whistle sounded and the dog darted back. An instant later we heard someone say, "There used to be woodcock along this edge last year," and the pointer came into view again followed by Bob Congdon of New London and another hunter. To their greeting "What luck?" I answered, "Not much; we flushed a partridge over there," as I pointed to the cover we had been through and as they moved on I whispered to Church, "Let's leave, I think we have cleaned up this piece." In confirmation of the truth of this remark I know that we didn't hear a shot from the other party, though Powell's, our next objective, was only a short mile distant.

On our way we stopped in at Abell's to see if young Elmer would join us, but his hunting license had run

out the day before so he could not go. However, I had an extra gun in the car and turned it over to Thompson, the chauffeur, to see if he could kill a bird.

Church took Count into the swamp hole opposite Abell's to try and find a partridge, while Thompson and I stationed ourselves in the road between the swamp hole and Powell's. It was nearly a certainty that if Church flushed a bird it would go across the road, and I waited in anticipation until finally Count scrambled over the wall into the road and Church followed, saying, "Nothing doing."

We spread out going through Powell's, Church taking the thick cover with Count, Thompson the side hill on his right, and I the edge on his left. Thompson was the first one to shoot, once, twice, and then called "D——n it! Had a fine shot at two partridges but missed them. They've gone on up the hill. Are you going to chase them up?"

"We certainly are," cried I, and joined Church and the dog in circling over towards Thompson and up that side hill. After a short hunt we flushed one of the birds and Thompson again missed another shot. The partridge flew back again into the run we had quitted and we kept after it. When Thompson missed a third chance, I fired a barrel at the bird as it rose over the tree-tops and headed for the swamp hole where Church had drawn a blank. I could not seem to do any better than Thompson as the old cock kept straight on and Church called out, "I think it's my turn." He went

back with Count into the thickest of the cover and we soon heard a shot.

"Did you get him?" I shouted.

"Gol darn it! No," said he, "I had a good sight on him but put the charge into an old black maple. He's gone back into Powell's."

Again we followed up that long suffering partridge and at the edge of a clearing Count froze to a point near a tuft of grass. We all stood ready for a fine shot and Church walked in—to pick up the bird which was lying stone dead, right under the dog's nose. Some of the charge had got by that black maple.

On our left lay a long stretch of alders, once a famous woodcock ground, and nowadays often a resting place for a few of the longbills. After conscientious search, however, Count emerged from the lower end of the cover without discovering a bird. We continued on our way through "Powell's," skirting the edge of a thick growth of birch, maple, oak and chestnut timber. Church, strolling ahead of me, was spinning yarns about his hunting experiences with General Ely, a famous old Norwich sportsman, who used to spend much of the open season with William.

"Yes, old Grouse, the General's dog, had the finest nose I ever saw. I've never seen such a partridge dog before or since. He always seemed to get a point without flushing—but then, there were birds those days and you could get somewhere near them. Grouse started in mighty wild. I remember one time the dog was with

me for a couple of weeks. I was then shooting for the market pretty regular and gave old Grouse a few lessons in steadiness that he needed. When the General went out with him again he didn't say much, but I noticed he kept a careful eye on the dog. A few days afterwards he sent me a check for ——."

"Brrrr! brrrr!" and two partridges flushed at the edge of the birches in front of Church and started for cover. The old Marlin repeater came up like a flash and at its sharp "crack" a cloud of feathers and a thud in the dry leaves marked the end of the first bird, a straightaway. Hardly had number one struck the ground, when "crack" went the gun again, and this time partridge number two, a left quarterer, was literally bowled over, the light grey of its breast showing as it dropped.

"Gol darn it!" cried Church. "I'm awfully sorry I took your shot. I could just as well have slipped out of your way. I forgot myself, to tell you the truth, and was thinking I was shooting for the market in the old days. Of course in those times I had to make every shot count."

I was standing close to William, who really seemed quite conscience-stricken that he had not given me the shot, and taking a step towards him I gave him a resounding slap on the back. "Don't bother about that," said I, "you got them both, which is more than I could have done. It was worth the hunt to see you do it."

We now headed for the Packer place, where we had located a flock of about fifteen partridges in one of our

former hunts, but the birds did not seem to be in the treetops and brush-heaps where we had found them before and we turned our steps towards the clumps of birches in the next lot. Count scrambled over the wall, began nosing around, and soon struck a scent so hot that he had to crawl along on his belly to avoid overrunning his bird. In a minute he froze to a stiff point in some tiny birch sprouts along the path. There was no undergrowth and I wondered where the bird was for I could see none. Church said he could see him just in front of the dog's nose. I stepped in and a nice fat woodcock whistled out in the open and went corkscrewing down the path. Both barrels of my gun and one of Thompson's had no effect on "Mr. Timberdoodle" further than to increase the speed and weird twisting of his flight. We marked him down a few hundred yards away near a big maple, and followed after. As I was scrambling over a dilapidated stone wall trying to keep various portions thereof from landing on my toes, the woodcock flushed again. It rose up straight through the treetops, giving Thompson as good a shot as the one I had just missed. He failed to take advantage of his opportunity and we pursued the bird another "fly." This time Church had his turn on a wild flush but the cock still kept on, this time into a thick swamp where we were unable to find him.

We turned back to the birches, "Tom Gardner's woodcock patch," as Church called it, to look for more and it was not long before we had another point. A cock flushed ahead of me and headed straight through the

myriad birch twigs. I sighted the bird carefully over my old Scott, and at the crack of my first shot he shut up like a jack-knife. Count retrieved and we tried out the rest of the patch. Suddenly the dog stiffened and we walked in ahead of him. "Brrrr! brrrr!" and two partridges got up on the further edge of the cover and went streaking across the open pasture and into the woods beyond. Luckily their line of flight led towards Abell's and lunch and we chased them up. One we were unable to find. The other buzzed out of a treetop in front of Church, who fired and downed her just as I pulled myself. I say "downed," and so I thought, but just before she struck the ground the partridge recovered herself and scaled off into the cedars. Finally, Church, who suggested that she might be a little further to the left than we had searched, wandered over in that direction and nearly stepped on the bird lying dead on its back. When he had tucked it away in the back pocket of his shooting coat we hurried on to Abell's and strengthened ourselves with a sandwich or two before we started on the afternoon's hunt.

Our luncheon inside and our pipes lighted we started the old machine up the cross-road that ran near Ford's swamp, and hopped out at the bars leading into Ford's seven-acre lot. There were no signs of game in the alder run, however, and we kept on up a path over the side hill beyond. As we dipped down over the ridge, Count pointed in the maples at the pathside. The dog's nose was held high as if he scented a partridge in a

clump of cedars beyond, so when a woodcock fluttered up in front of me the minute I stepped into the cover I promptly missed with both barrels. The old setter made another nice point on "Mr. Timberdoodle" after his first "fly" and again I tried my luck. I thought I would be more careful this time and when the bird flushed, waited until I got him over the end of the gun. Just as I pressed the trigger the cock decided he would change his straightaway course, and swooped to the left. Needless to say, my charge of No. 8's came nowhere near him. We marked him down by a fence near the brook that wandered through the gulley at the foot of the hill, and started after. On our way Count had another point and it was Church's chance this time. William walked over to and by the dog when suddenly the woodcock twittered up behind him. Church swung around like lightning, but the bird dropped down before he could hold on him. We went back over the ridge and at the dog's point I called to Church, "Now you get him. I can't hit a thing." Church flushed the bird but did not fire and the longbill gave me a beautiful straightaway shot as it twisted up over the treetops. We turned back after woodcock No. 1. "How about this last one?" you ask. "Did you get him?"

I didn't think it necessary to say anything more about that "darned" bird. I certainly did—not, and he kept on out of sight.

As we trudged down the hillside towards the fence I told William that he would have to kill the bird as it

was beyond me. The sound of my voice flushed the woodcock—a flight bird which my shooting had made rather wild—and he got up over forty yards away. Church's old Marlin, however, was good for the distance and the cock dropped.

We crossed the brook and up over the hill beyond, then swung back towards the machine. A partridge "brrr-ed!" out of a clump of long grass at the edge of the cover and I snapped at her ineffectively as she went sailing down toward the brook. Church marked where the bird dropped down near a fallen chestnut tree and we kept on after her. My resolves were most deadly as we approached the treetop, and when the old hen started to make for the top of the other side hill, I took plenty of time and carefully missed her with the first barrel. By this time I thought her out of range, and fired the second barrel in her general direction just for luck. The bird was topping a big oak but at the "crack" of this last "luck shot" she came bumping on down through the dead leaves as dead as a herring.

We had one more point as we walked down the brook to the road, but the partridge flushed way ahead of us. When we got to the machine Thompson told us that the bird had just sailed over the road into the next lot. That field was posted. However, we thought we had our share and called it a day at that.

A MIXED BAG

IT was shortly after 8 on a clear, frosty morning in late October when I drove the machine containing friend Church with "Count," his old English setter, Thompson and the Scribe into Abell's yard. Abell was the gatekeeper at Gardner's Lake, and his son, Elmer, usually went "huntin'" with us. This morning, however, we were a trifle early for him, as he had not yet finished his chores, and he said he would join us after lunch.

Church and I left Thompson chatting with Elmer, and whistling Count to heel, started off across the fields. There was a swamp hole a short distance from the Abell place, where we usually flushed two or three partridges, and this was our starting point.

"I'll go through the swamp," said Church, "and you keep along this edge. If I start one and it comes your way, get him." A wave of his hand and old Count galloped off into the thick growth of alders. Church followed him and they were soon out of sight, though I could easily keep track of them by the crackling underbrush. I followed the edge of the swamp, my gun ready for business. "Brrrr! Brrrr!" Two partridges jumped up out of an old treetop to my right. "Crack!"

and the old cock bird making for the birches doubled up like a bunch of wet feathers. "Crack!" again, but the hen partridge, wiser than her mate, contrived to place the trunk of a large oak between us. You could see the bark fly when I fired. I "coo-ped" to Church as a signal that I had been successful and broke my gun to reload. "Brrrr!" and partridge number three flushed from the same treetop, giving me a fine shot had I been ready for him. I marked him down in the birches while waiting for Count to retrieve the fallen bird.

We tramped through the rest of the swamp hole without starting another feather, and then decided to swing back to the right through the birches where the other partridges had gone and on to Ford's swamp, where we usually found a woodcock or two. Church and Count worked through the cover while I strolled down an old woods road, hoping to get a shot if a bird flew across. We were nearing the spot where I had marked down partridge number three, when Church exclaimed, "Look out! I've got a point!" An instant later the partridge soared up out of the birches and across the road right in front of me. I fired, and pulled down the gun without trying the second barrel, so sure was I that I had held on him. But he still kept going, though a few small feathers fluttered down in the road. A short distance beyond another partridge flushed ahead of us, and then still another. We did not see them until they were out of gunshot, but noted that they were all headed for the cedars on the wooded ridge to our left.

As we approached the end of the cover, Church told me to stay where I was while he circled around to the right with Count and if he flushed a bird it would probably come my way. There were no more birds, however, in that neck of woods, and all Church started was a nice, fat rabbit that went bumping down a path in the briars away from me. The chance was too good to lose, and I gave him a barrel, causing him to turn a complete somersault and fell dead in the path, his hind legs twitching convulsively.

Ford's swamp, our next objective, consisted of a long alder run which overhung both banks of a small brook. Church and Count worked their way through the cover and left me to take care of the edge. "Count's making game," called Church, and sure enough I could glimpse the old black-and-white setter cautiously trailing. Suddenly he froze to a stiff point, and Church, with a warning "Watch out!" walked in ahead of him. With twittering wings a woodcock fluttered up through the alders and, swinging out of the cover just ahead of me, headed for a clump of birches on the side hill. I shot too quickly and missed with my first barrel, but closed up Mr. Longbill in good shape with my second. Count retrieved, and we went on up the run. "I've got another point," murmured Church, from the thicket, and I heard the whistle of another woodcock. I saw nothing for a second or two and then the bird showed up over the alders, but well on the other side of the run. At the sound of my gun he dropped like a stone, at least

forty yards away. "That was a nice shot," came from Church. "I was afraid you wouldn't get him."

We hunted over the rest of the run, but found no more birds there, though Count kept making game, and there was abundant signs of woodcock borings. It looked as if a number of flight birds had dropped in during the night and left in the morning before we arrived—that is, all but the two I had killed.

We next headed for the cedars on the ridge, where we had left the partridges. We knew the chances were against our getting good shots in the thick cover, but trusted to drive the birds out into good shooting country again. Count began to trail almost as soon as we got there, and Church followed him under the cedars. In a few minutes he "coo-ped" to me softly and whispered, "Get into an open place if you can, I've got a point here." I stole into a little clearing with cedars on all sides, a little to the right of Church and the dog. This clearing was not over ten feet across, and if I was to get a bird crossing it, it would be a case of snapping. I heard Church step in, and with a roar like an express train the partridge flashed across the clearing. I swung the gun across with her as I fired and had the satisfaction of hearing her come down with a thump in an old pine tree at my left. Count brought her in, and we kept on through the cedars, flushing two more partridges which got up wild ahead of us and flew across the road into Powell's lot. This was posted, but Church said it would be all right for us to shoot there as the signs

were only to keep the Abells out, as they and Powell had had some right-of-way dispute. We crossed the road, climbing the stone wall and started in. Church was slightly ahead of me, and as he came to the edge of a small lot covered with low brush and clumps of birches, a partridge jumped up from a bush right in front of him. He had to shoot quickly or the bird would have been out of sight in the cover, but it seemed to me as if the "brrr!" of the partridge getting up and the crack of Church's gun were almost simultaneous, and the bird dropped in a cloud of feathers.

As it was now noon, and we had left our lunches in the machine, we made our way back to Abell's. Elmer and Thompson were waiting for us, anxious to see our game, and when he had spread them out, Elmer said, "I've got something to add to your string." He groped under the robe in the back of the machine and brought out first one black duck and then another. "Thompson and I killed these while you were away," he explained. "We saw a bunch of five drop down in that pool near the head of the lake. We crawled up to them through the long grass and brush, and when we got to the edge of the pond discovered that only these two were within range. We each shot one, waited until the wind blew them ashore and here they are. I think you can get a shot at a jacksnipe over in that marsh; we started one when we were creeping up on the ducks."

Accordingly, when we had devoured our sandwiches and had smoked a pipeful of tobacco each, Church and

I, accompanied by Elmer, and, of course, by old Count, made for the piece of marsh north of the lake. We spread out and covered the ground thoroughly to see what we could find, and soon saw Elmer shoot and pick up a jacksnipe. I had the next chance, as I saw a grassbird standing in the mud at the edge of a puddle. I walked him up, and as he rose dropped him in the water. Then I heard the harsh "scaipe! scaipe!" of a jacksnipe as it flushed far ahead. All of a sudden it made one of its corkscrew twists and went skimming by Church like a bullet. "Bang!" went his gun, and again "bang!" but the snipe kept on. I marked him down at the edge of some thick brush a short distance ahead of me, and started after him. He flushed in range and went straight up, high enough to clear the bushes, but before he could begin his twisting and dodging I fired and landed him. I waited for Count to retrieve, as I hated to get into the thick cover where the bird dropped, but the dog could not seem to locate him, and I finally had to take part in the hunt myself. I did find that snipe, though it took me some time to do so. He had fallen with his back up and his plumage blended exactly with the surroundings. This was the last snipe we found. Elmer said he knew where there was a covey of quail, so we now followed his guidance.

He took us across the road and through a big field of corn stubble. Count quartered the field in fine style, and did his best to find the birds, but they were not there. Next we tried a weed patch in the adjoining field, and lastly the brush along the edge of these two

fields, but found them not, and we turned our faces towards Abell's and the machine.

As we were cutting across the mowing lot just across the road from Abell's, Count, who was investigating a buckwheat patch along the wall, made a point. "That's nothing," said Church, "just some of those small birds," and we walked on. Thompson, however, who had joined us when we came back from our snipe hunt, turned and went over to the old dog. "Whirr! whirr! whirr!" and some fifteen fat quail shot away in front of him toward the swamp hole where I had killed my first partridge in the morning. Thompson fired twice and got one bird, a left quarterer that was making for the corn stubble we had just crossed. "Darn the luck!" I growled, "that's what comes of not believing in your dog. We would have killed three or four of these birds if we had attended to business. Let's hunt them up."

Soon Elmer stepped on a brush heap and the whole covey flushed again. The cover was too thick for a shot, but we marked down the scattered birds and prepared to hunt them up one by one. Elmer flushed the first bird at the edge of the bog but missed him. The quail whizzed by Church like a bullet, but stopped right there when he fired. Shortly afterward Count made a point and Church called us up for a shot. However, the bird chose to go through the brush where Church stood instead of the safer way by us, and he joined the other in the pocket of Church's coat. Count pointed again, and this time a nice little cock quail flew my way.

He went so fast that he outdistanced my first charge, but the second overtook him, and he came down dead.

By this time the sun had gone down, and it was getting too dark to shoot, so we made for home.

At Abell's, before starting the machine, we took stock of our game, and a pretty bunch of birds it was for this vicinity—three partridges, two woodcock, four quail, two jacksnipe, two black ducks, one grassbird and one cottontail. This was our "Mixed Bag."

RAIL SHOOTING ON CONNECTICUT RIVER

SPORTSMEN who have never tried rail shooting cannot realize the fascination the sport holds for one who has experienced it. In the first place in September there is for the New Englander little else in the line of feathered game on which he can test his skill unless it be on shore birds. The rail are still fairly numerous, their haunts are easily reached from the metropolis, and their pursuit is not accompanied by the hardships and privations incident to wildfowling, for instance. In short, about all one has to do is to keep his balance on a three-legged stool in a flat-bottomed boat and shoot the rail as they flutter away in front of him while the "pusher" behind does all the work.

Essex and Deep River on the west bank of the Connecticut River and Brockway's on the east are the chief fitting-out points for such famous grounds as Eustasia Island, Hudson's Hole, Salmon River and last but not least, Selden's Cove. In the huge wild-oat fields of the "Cove" I have counted at a tide over thirty boats, and the nearly continuous shooting sounded like some mimic

warfare. At one time there was no limit and the rail were literally massacred, but now with a limit set, the birds have a chance to hold out for our sons to slaughter though even that chance is a slim one.

My first experience was one never to be forgotten. It was pouring in torrents when I arose at 6 A. M. and did not let up until after 7 when I started off with the old red runabout to pick up Willis Austin, my shooting companion. The sun was shining as we headed for Herb Banning's house at Brockway's Landing and I didn't think it worth while to go out of my way to the garage to get a set of tire chains. Over near Hamburg we took a wrong turn and lost our way among some of the most precipitous hills it has ever been my fate to see. The old car had gravity feed and the grades were so steep she wouldn't feed into the carburetor. We nursed her over one mountain, but arriving in the hollow on the further side, we discovered that getting up the next hill was going to be worse than climbing the side of a house. I set the old car at it backwards and she climbed up it till she came to a right-angled muddy curve in the middle of the grade. Here the wheels spun uselessly around and around in a hail of red mud till I took pity on the machine and dropped back to the foot of the hill. On the second trial I succeeded no better than the first. The third time I had gained about two feet on my other marks when I was greeted by a crack under the car, something seemed to give way and I shot back to the foot of the hill so fast that I

narrowly missed landing in the gutter. The propellor shaft had dropped out. As it was nearing 11 when the tide would be high enough for shooting, Willis and I left Thompson, the chauffeur, with the car and "hoofed" the remaining mile and half over to Banning's. There we left word to send a yoke of oxen back for the "invalid" while we accompanied Herb to the dock, boarded his launch and, towing a couple of shoving skiffs astern, set off for Selden's Cove.

Arriving at the cove, Willis and Banning dropped into one skiff while I joined "Red-beard," Banning's pusher, in the other. Soon a small brown bird with long drooping legs fluttered off over the top of the tall oats ahead of me. "Mark!" cried Red-Beard and I missed the rail. This performance was repeated some five times until Red-beard, who had had a long pull at my flask, exclaimed, "You gotta kill 'em better'n that or Banning'll have us beat a mile. Take it a bit more slow an' careful." The next rail gave me an easy straightaway and I literally blew him to pieces, his head, wings and legs being all that was left of him. I had now mastered the knack of killing the feeble flying birds and missed only three more before we got back to the launch. Willis and Banning were waiting for us with the limit of thirty-five rail which Willis bagged with forty-one shells. Red-beard and I had eighteen and I had used twenty-eight shells.

My next rail shoot came late in the season a few years later. Willis and I had been unable to get away earlier

and anticipated a slim shoot when we found Herb and his partner on the dock at Deep River. Banning, as usual, piloted Willis and headed for Selden's Cove, while Red-beard and I started for the oat fields that surround Eustasia Island. I had brought with me for good luck a bottle of cherry whisky and divided its contents between the two pushers before we left the wharf. It did not seem to have much effect on their leathern throats and hard heads. I know Banning said to me as we were leaving after the shoot, "I don't think much of that stuff of yours—ain't got no kick to it. Why didn't yer bring some real whisky?"

At Eustasia Island I killed just four rail although Red-beard kept pounding down the oats with his pole in attempting to flush the skulkers. The trouble was with the tide which was poor and enabled the rail to run ashore before us without rising. I knew the birds were there as several times when Red-beard thrashed about in the cover with his pole they began to squeak, reminding me for all the world of a litter of puppies whose dam had deserted them.

Hudson's Hole was our second destination but there the same conditions prevailed. Three more rail were added to my score with two shots missed so you can see that the fun could hardly be called "fast and furious." We rallied several bunches of black ducks returning along the shore of Eustasia Island, but none within gunshot. Willis and Banning soon joined us at the Deep

River dock. They had apparently happened upon a small flight of rail at Selden's as Willis had killed thirty-four and lost thirteen cripples with fifty shells.

On my next two rail shoots Banning did my "pushing" and his new man, "Indian Joe," took care of Thompson.

As we were leaving "Ustasy" Island, as "Herb" called it, for Selden's Cove after our first shoot I had a rather novel experience. Three rail rose ahead of us, two straightaways and one left quarterer. I killed the two straightaways, one with each barrel, and the left quarterer alighted on the shore of the island. Banning jumped out of the skiff and flushed the bird, who was wise enough to direct his flight precisely in line with Herb's sturdy form. That Banning realized his position was proven to me by his throwing himself flat on his face, while calling to me to "Shoot him!" Needless to say, I landed Mr. Rail.

At Selden's Cove that day I had my first encounter with a Connecticut game warden. A short, stout old fellow with a very red face and a white moutache showing under his old straw hat was sitting at the mouth of the Cove as Banning and I approached. He sung out to me for my shooting license which luckily I was able to produce for his benefit from the depths of my shooting coat pocket. The old boy grunted and jotted down the license number in his note-book. It was very plain to be seen that he was disappointed at not catching me "with the goods on."

When we got back to Brockway's and were munching our lunch at the dock Banning spun a few of his most choice shooting yarns. I wish I could remeber them all and do justice to his skill as a "raconteur." Certain bits still linger in my memory; particularly about the old red fox that "Bugle" had trailed for five hours and two of the boys had peppered in vain with BB's. At last he came by Herb, who was squatting down behind an old stone wall, with a cut shell in the left barrel of his gun in case of a long shot. "Th' old vixen was right over on th' far side of that plain field but th' cut shell did the trick. She turned a somersault and fell over stone dead. I paced off to where she lay—just seventeen rod."

There was another story that Herb told about a fellow named Bishop who went rail shooting with him one day. Bishop, it seems, had a beautiful Purdey gun and all the other impedimenta necessary to quality as a Nimrod, including a high opinion of his own prowess. However, his reputation alone wouldn't kill rail, and after shooting eighty-one shots and downing sixteen birds, he made Banning a present of his gun and made tracks for the metropolis.

My last shoot with Banning is memorable because my bag contained one Virginia rail. Herb said they are not rare in this vicinity, but it was the first one I had ever seen. I didn't notice anything particularly distinctive about it when the bird rose except its size, which I remarked to Banning, but he recognized it at once and said it was a "Virginia" before he started to retrieve it.

Other interesting incidents were the distant view of a large clapper rail winging its way far out of our neighborhood, and my meeting with another game warden, this time old man Brockway of Brockway's Landing. He was certainly a genial soul and one who appreciated the superior boquet of "Old Hermitage Whisky." I really think that Herb Banning, big-hearted fellow that he is, was jealous that day of his old neighbor's capacity and studied proximity to that bottle.

DUCK AND PLOVER SHOOTING IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

WHEN Maxwell invited me to accompany him on a ducking trip to the LaConner Flats, I didn't hesitate long about accepting; just long enough to find out that the "Chief" was willing to let me go from Friday evening until Monday. Accordingly we foregathered aboard the old stern-wheeler, the "Greyhound," when she cast loose from her Seattle dock and turned her nose towards Anacortes at 10 o'clock that Friday evening. Maxwell had his Parker, I had my old Scott, and we took along a hundred shells each, loaded with three and one-quarter drams of Dupont and an ounce and one-eighth of No. 6 shot. Needless to say, we were well equipped with gum-boots, shooting coats, sweaters, etc.

We turned in early and slept soundly till we were aroused at 2 A. M. by the boat bumping into the cannery dock at Anacortes. We hustled into our clothes, then gathered up our belongings and went ashore. It was pitch dark, and we stumbled along over the fish nets stretched out on the wharf, until Maxwell produced a pocket flashlight and led the way to the outskirts of

the town. Under a smoky street-lamp a weather-beaten sign "Rasterant" caught my eye, and rousing the proprietor, a fat, greasy-looking "Dago" from his snooze, Maxwell and I stocked up with a few pounds of fried ham topped off with some two dozen eggs. We also sampled a tasteless but smoking-hot brown liquid that the proprietor called "coffee." My partner, Maxwell, had an appointment in town at 9 o'clock, and we passed the time away sitting in the deserted lobby of the local hotel, burning tobacco, swapping yarns and dozing—principally dozing. At 7 o'clock, when the hotel dining-room opened, we surrounded a second breakfast, and afterwards Maxwell hustled away to finish his business, while I strolled around to the livery stable and corralled a rig to transport us to the marsh.

Ten o'clock saw us well under way for the shooting grounds eight miles distant from Anacortes. The road was rough, the horses slow and the wagon springless, while the back seat was held down by a single small screw and continually threatened to hop out into the ditch with its occupants. I was much relieved when along towards noon we pulled up at the small farm house where we were to spend the night. Maxwell and I donned our shooting outfits, filled our pockets with shells and, putting our guns together, started off to find George Lemon, our guide. A short walk through the marsh brought us to the cabin alongside the creek where Maxwell said George and his brother lived. Nets in profusion and two or three fishing boats that

were moored to the rough landing were proof that the Lemon boys' principal occupation was salmon fishing. Prolonged knocking at the cabin door finally brought forth a hoarse "Shut up!" a window banged open and a tousled head of light hair surmounting a pair of sleepy blue eyes and a tawny moustache emerged. This was George.

"Naw, I won't go shooting. I gotta sleep. Me and Bill just got in from catching 'silvers' and we're clean done up," was his welcome.

Maxwell was prepared for the emergency. Reaching into his hip pocket he brought out a quart flask. The window immediately crashed down, and a second later George stood in his open doorway asking us to come in and "set down" while he pulled his boots on. That task accomplished and a fair share of the contents of Maxwell's flask stowed under his belt, Lemon was ready to accompany us. We bailed out the water in a small skiff lying at the dock, stowed some twenty-five mallard decoys in the stern and hopped in. George took his place at the oars and we went sliding down the creek with the ebb tide.

It was soft and calm, a regular "blue-bird day," and though it had been rather foggy in the early morning, the mist was rapidly rolling away before the warm rays of the sun. The tide was dead low, leaving bare miles of mud flats and crisscrossed by numerous sloughs and creeks. Beyond the flats the water was like glass and there rested acres upon acres of ducks. Occasionally a

small bunch would get up in front of us and skim away to join the crowd. To my mind all signs pointed to a pretty slim shoot. I turned to George and said, "What are the chances?"

"Nawthin' doin' till evenin' when the tide comes in," was his answer. "Then I'll put yer on the sou'west p'int at the mouth of ther main slough and give yer a chance to kill a few."

A flock of seven large ducks from the marsh flew right over our boat. They were not very high up and Maxwell gave them a barrel. He was sorry afterwards that he hadn't given them a second, as one of them closed up and splashed dead in the water ahead of us. We retrieved the bird, a fat mallard, and as we had now come to the mouth of the creek, turned to the right and set off along the edge of the flats. We headed up the first slough, hoping to jump a duck or two within range, but found none. Maxwell, however, spied a Wilson snipe feeding near a small pond on the flats, and had us set him ashore. He thought he might pick up a few birds and then meet us at the next waterway. I went on up the slough with George. It was not long before I heard the crack of Maxwell's gun, but gave it little attention as I saw something of interest myself. A flock of nine plover, "beetleheads," I determined, were feeding on the further bank of the stream. I told George to paddle quietly by along the further bank of the slough and then drift down close to them with the tide. As we came in gunshot I stood up and flushed

the birds, giving them both barrels as they rose. Four fell—three dead on the mud and one with a broken wing in the water. George rowed after the cripple while I jumped ashore and picked up the others. There I found that they were not "beetleheads" but golden plover.

I judged that we had run into a flight of these birds as the flats were teeming with them in flocks containing anywhere from six or eight to over a hundred. It was impossible to get within gunshot on foot as I found out soon and our plan of drifting with the tide by the numerous bunches seemed the only successful way and with the big flocks even this failed. I shot on and on with varying success—out of one bunch I remember I dropped nine with both barrels, while out of another I killed only one, and out of a third I am ashamed to say I got none. Meanwhile we had been gradually working our way along the edge of the flats to the next slough where we met Maxwell. He had five "jack" or Wilson snipe and nine plover and wanted to know what I had been banging away at. My forty-odd birds in the bottom of the skiff was a pretty good answer and made him regret that he had ever left us.

The tide had turned and was gradually covering the flats and as the water had come up to the edge of the marsh at the point where we intended to set out, George rowed us across the main slough and put us ashore to repair the old blind while he tied out the stool. Then he hid the skiff in a small creek back of us and we sat and waited for the evening flight to begin.

A huge raft of ducks, principally teal, were floating on the placid water in front of our point, and were gradually drifting toward us. They came so near we could see that many of them were asleep with their heads under their wings, while a few were feeding on the drift and the rest were noisily discussing the affairs of the nation. But before they were within gunshot a cross current sent them down into the little bay on our right and we didn't get the shot we had anticipated. We thought of creeping around through the marsh grass to the head of the bay but then decided it was not worth while for a "pot shot" and that we might lose more than we would gain. A half hour later the roar of two heavy loads sounded on our ears and the tumult as the raft got up showed that other hunters had been watching. We found out later that the gunner killed fourteen teal and a mallard with his two barrels.

It was not long before we had a chance ourselves. Two big ducks streaked in from outside. We saw they were mallards as they came nearer. They headed for our decoys, but kept on straight over us. I could see the light glisten on the glossy green head of the drake, which was on my side.

"Are you ready?" whispered Maxwell.

"Yes," said I.

"Then let them have it."

"Bang!" and the head of my drake snapped back as he came down with a resounding splash in the water in front of the blind. "Crack" and his mate wilted at

Maxwell's shot and thudded down on the grass behind us.

Then a bunch of greenwings hissed by over the decoys from the right and our four barrels dropped three. Another wisp of teal and five more joined our count.

The fun was fast and furious while it lasted but it was rapidly growing dark. Soon it became a matter of waiting for the whistle of hurrying wings from dark shadows overhead, for the tongues of red flame darting up in the air, for the loud "crash" of reports and the echoes from the dusky marsh and sometimes for the bump of a heavy body on the ground or a splash in the water showing we had scored. More often we would listen in vain and then wait for the next chance.

At last the sky grew dark and we could no longer discern the ducks against it. We signaled to George, picked up our dead and the decoys and made for the farm house where we were to spend the night.

Once outside a good hot supper, we lighted our pipes and sat back before a blazing open fire and talked over our past experiences, then hurried to bed and a few hours of dreamless sleep. The thunderous knocking on our door and the hoarse "Four o'clock, gents!" seemed all too soon. We fell out of bed, lighted the lamp and tumbled into our clothes. Downstairs we attacked a breakfast of coffee, bacon and eggs, and then tramped off in the starlight for George's place. We found that Bill, his brother, was ready for us and soon rowed us

back to the stand we had occupied the night before. The decoys were out in jiffy and we waited for daylight.

A whistle of wings, the roar of Maxwell's gun and the splash of a falling body showed that the work was on. Teal began streaming over our decoys from both sides with occasionally a small bunch of mallards. They came in flurries so that at times we seemed to shoot nearly continuously, then perhaps for half an hour we would not fire again. As the sun rose the tide began to drop and the shots to come at longer intervals. A lone mallard flew by, well up in the air, and in my judgment out of range. Maxwell thought differently, tried him with his choked barrel and to my amazement picked the duck out of the air as dead as a herring.

"I tell you, Bigelow," cried he, "there's nothing like a Parker gun for killing them!"

At this instant three teal loomed up, skimming over the water towards the decoys from his side of the stand. Maxwell had not had time to reload, and could only try one shot. Something must have happened to the Parker, as all three birds still kept on. They were flying in single file but it seemed to me that the second duck was gaining on the first one. At any rate, I was lucky enough to cut them both down with my first barrel and kill number three with my second. The temptation was too great to resist and I could not help asking, "Don't you think the old Scott is in the same class with the Parker, Maxwell?" He could not do otherwise but agree.

We shot two or three ducks after this before the tide left our decoys resting on the flats, and then we took up. We had a few shells left out of our original two hundred and cruised along the banks of the main slough to use them up on the plover. These birds were much wilder than the day before, but we added over a score to our count. At 11 o'clock, as our shells had run out, we turned our faces toward the landing, Anacortes and Seattle. Our bag, I was told, was not extraordinary for that locality, but at home it would seem almost too big. I know that the fifty-four ducks—forty teal and fourteen mallards—and the eighty golden plover were all that Maxwell and I cared to lug through the streets of Seattle the following morning.

ON THE HEADWATERS OF THE TUOLUMNE

AFTER leaving college I started in to learn the mining business at the "Mary Harrison" mine, Coulterville, Mariposa County, California. Our chief clerk, Kidder, was an enthusiastic sportsman and when at Thanksgiving time he had to go back in the hills to look over some ditches in connection with a water-power scheme, he took along his rifle and asked me to come with him as there was a chance to kill a deer.

It was forty miles from Coulterville to "Crocker's," where we intended to "put up," and we made an early start. The mine manager had loaned us a pair of green but sturdy horses to pull the buggy over the narrow, muddy trail, the day was fair, the air crisp and snappy and we were well supplied with pipes, cigars and tobacco. The only person we met on the road was Bill Fiske, the horse-trader, a typical "old timer." We stopped for lunch at Hamilton's, and the old man told us that his "bye Garge" had killed a nice buck two days before. I know that the venison steak went to the right spot.

In the afternoon our outfit scared up one flock of the California valley quail and a little later three flocks of the mountain variety. Perhaps I didn't hanker for my old Scott. About 3 o'clock we arrived at the site of the proposed hydro-electric plant, a deep canon eroded by the Tuolumne River, which flowed through its depths. It was the end of a series of ditches which brought the water from the head of the river, a distance of eight or ten miles, to fall over twelve hundred feet at the bottom of the gorge. We had many distant glimpses of the river as we continued our journey. In '49, which was considerably before our time, the Tuolumne was one of the famous deposits of placer gold, and there is mighty little of its auriferous sand that has not been panned again and again.

Mrs. Crocker welcomed our arrival and her cooking tasted like "back home" as she was a "down Easter" from Maine. She got hold of me after supper and did not quit until she had pumped me dry as a bone about everything that had happened in New England during the past ten years. Her's was a lonely life, only two neighbors—one of those a "Greaser" family—within ten miles, but she was as bright as a button and looked as if she had not experienced a day's sickness in her forty-odd years. She said the summer time was a little more lively as a good many parties going into the Yosemite put up at her place.

The following morning we hired a rig so as to give our steeds a rest before the long home grind. It was

a raw, cold day and the gathering clouds threatened rain. Our route led over a rough woods-road to the head of the ditch and our progress was necessarily slow on account of the numerous stumps and logs that beset our path. Kidder called my attention to some tall brush that looked like our New England hazel brush. He said the deer were very fond of the leaves and buds and that it was commonly known as "deer brush." As we passed a large thicket of the brush we heard a great sound of breaking twigs and rustling branches and a minute later a fat doe bounded across the trail. She was followed by a little spotted fawn that became confused and galloped along a short way beside us. When in connection with this the men working on the ditch said that the deer were very numerous, we decided after lunch to walk back and sent one of the repair crew with the rig some distance in advance. The rain that had been threatening all day started to come down in torrents and we were soon throughly drenched. Kidder had given me his 30-30 Winchester and said, "If you see a deer, make sure it's a buck and then give it to him."

We were more than half way to Crocker's and were walking along the north branch of the Tuolumne not far from the ford when, as we were passing a clump of the "deer brush," Kidder nudged my elbow. "Look!" said he, and pointed to my left. After a short scrutiny I saw what I took to be the hind quarters of a deer that seemed to be standing broadside to me, and a short distance ahead, his horns projecting over the brush. I

took careful aim at the hip and pressed the trigger. My! what a rumpus ensued. The deer crashed into the bushes a short way and was still, while from all sides came the sounds of others escaping. We hurried after my victim to cut his throat and had just reached him, when another buck with a much finer head got up within thirty steps and started off. I drew a bead on his lordship and pulled. "Click!" a missfire, and when finally I did shoot it was at a flying grey streak which, needless to state, I missed. Kidder dressed the deer and we then started to drag him out. How we did it I don't know for though Kidder said it was only three miles I am sure it was all of six. We were certainly a tired pair when we reached Mrs. Crocker's hospitable door but pretty well satisfied at that. The deer was hung up back of the barn and we sat down with zest to do justice to the "vittles."

Thursday was Thanksgiving day and we tramped around through the woods primarily to whet our appetites in working order for the old-fashioned dinner. We saw no deer although we saw the fresh tracks of a buck and a doe not over a half-mile from the house. Near the river we ran across the huge track of a grizzly bear and followed it a mile or more. The prints did not look very fresh and when we discovered that they led over Bald Mountain we left the track and headed for the house.

Thanksgiving dinner was served at 2 o'clock and what a gorge! I didn't expect to be able to ever leave the table. It was a regular New England feast, lacking only the turkey, but this void was so well taken up by roast chicken and the superabundance of pies "such as mother used to make" that we never missed the noble bird at all.

Friday morning we took the back trail for Coulterville though it was with sincere regret that we bid goodby to "Crocker's. Old man Hamilton was waiting for us when we got to his place for lunch and wanted to know what luck we had had with the deer. He seemed genuinely pleased when we showed him our head. But it was time to be stirring if we hoped to reach Coulterville before dark and we set out for our destination, which we reached without further incident.

WITH THE CONNECTICUT TROUT

TWO of my friends, the "Dude" and Tobin, one April day persuaded me to try bait fishing for trout in the brooks of New London and adjacent counties. I soon became as ardent a fisherman as either of my instructors, and we made together many excursions, successful and otherwise. Certain of these trips deserve special mention, which explains this narrative.

At "Jim Dixon's."

It was after 6 A. M. when I shut off the motor at Jim Dixon's or Campbell's Mills, which consisted of Dixon's house, two other cottages and the sawmill that Jim ran. Tobin took us in and introduced us to Dixon, as fine a sportsman as you ever met, who induced us to try an egg-nog (cider, eggs and sugar beaten up together) for luck, and said we could fish his brook on condition only that we lunched with him that noon.

A stretch of this brook flowed out of the mill-pond near Dixon's house and there we started in, Tobin standing on the flashboard of the mill-dam and dropping his line in the pool beneath, the Scribe fishing under the bridge where the road crossed the brook, and the "Dude" wading into the stream near the sawmill and

floating his bait down into a dark pool where a big boulder checked the current. Dixon, himself, tried to pilot me, and we did our best to find a trout under that old bridge, but if he was there he didn't feel hungry for he left us severely alone.

Tobin, however, had hardly dropped his line over the dam before he had a strike which bent the tip of his rod and caused the taut line to cut through the water like a knife. After a short struggle he landed a nice, fat trout just long enough to keep, and dropped his line in again. A second strike, and he quickly landed the mate of his first fish.

In the meantime I had fished several pools below the bridge and the "Dude" had fished to the end of the swift water but nary a trout, so we joined Tobin and walked over to where an upper stretch of the brook ran into the pond. Here the "Dude" caught his first fish, a small one, and Tobin lost a beauty that tied his line up in a pile of brush and broke away. I, as usual, got nothing but experience and spent most of my time renewing the hooks lost in the numerous snags.

Dixon now harnessed up his old grey mare and drove us over to the upper part of Mount Misery Brook. We decided that the man who gave the brook its name did so after driving out there over the rocks, stumps and ruts that formed the road. It was a deep, narrow and swift-running brook which flowed out of a large pond and under a heap of rotten lumber, all that remained of an old sawmill. There were only a few hundred feet

of this brook that we could fish from the bank as it soon widened out into a small river too deep to wade, but Dixon showed us a tiny stream nearby, tributary to the Mount Misery Brook, and said it was full of small trout. So there was work enough ahead of us to last till lunch time.

The "Dude" was high man at the Mount Misery Brook—Tobin and I drew blanks. The former sat down on an old log and worked his line into the few yards of black water that showed among the debris of the old mill. It was not long before he had a strike and I felt sure he would be tied up on one of the many snags that infested this part of the brook, but he was too old a hand to be caught that way and soon landed a small trout, carefully taking in the slack with his left hand and paying no attention to the reel. He caught two more without changing his position, one of which weighed over half a pound, and did not get snagged once. I know that if I had been trying to fish the same place I would have lost a hook before I could wet my line.

The next place on the program was the small tributary brook. This we divided into three sections and agreed to meet Dixon at a certain bridge in about two hours—lunch time. It was a case of wading the brook and I made a good beginning by slipping on a moss-covered stone and falling prone on my back in the middle of the stream. I was good and wet and afterwards chose the sunniest places I could find to fish in.

Perhaps this was the reason that I arrived at the bridge without a fish in my creel, while the "Dude" was there with five little fellows and Tobin soon hove in view with six more. We then headed the old mare for Dixon's and lunch.

Mrs. Dixon was ready for us with a huge meal of which the "Dude" and Tobin partook so bountifully that they were incapacitated for fishing purposes for at least two hours. I took care of my share of the good food but when the others reached for a second piece of apple pie, I slipped out of the door, grabbed my rod and made for the dam where Tobin had caught his first two fish that morning. I waded cautiously out on the flashboard and dropped my line in the pool below the fall. A baby trout, some three inches long, took the bait, but dropped off half-way up the dam. Loud cheers from Dixon's door where stood Dixon himself, Tobin and the "Dude" greeted this performance. I baited my hook with a nice, fat night-crawler and dropped in again. A small trout, which looked like a minnow but later proved to be six inches, flashed out of the water on the end of my line and landed safely on the bank of the mill-pond above the dam. The cheering throng from Dixon's swept down on me as I took the trout off the hook and escorted me with my prize in triumph to our car which stood in Jim's yard. There we shook hands with our good hosts, cranked the motor, and got under way for Pratt's meadow.

Here we found a deep, slow-running brook where the "Dude" and Tobin each caught a quarter-pound trout. The stream was fringed with alders and I caught more of them than I did trout—but what did that matter, I had caught one trout on my first day—"Sufficiency."

It started to rain on our way home and as we passed a tiny pond faintly visible through the heavy brush alongside the road, Tobin exclaimed, "Whoa! There's the spring-hole where Oscar Palmer caught his nice string just such a day as this." I sat in the car while Tobin and the "Dude" started for the pond. There was an outlet concealed by blackberry bushes and the overhanging boughs of a clump of white birches. Here a little rivulet tumbled out of the pond into a small, black pool which looked so tempting to Tobin that he worked the tip of his rod through the brush and dropped his line in to see what was doing. A swirl in the dark water and the first big fish of the day seized his bait. To and fro, back and forth across the pool swished the trout, and when he ceased his struggles, Tobin, keeping a steady strain on the line with his left hand, parted the brush with his right, and tried thus to land his fish. Unhappily his line caught on a root, the trout made a final lunge and broke away. Tobin was sure he weighed over a pound. After waiting a few minutes he dropped his line in the pool a second time and again lost the big fish on a snag. A third time brought better results for after a sharp struggle Tobin landed a nice trout that weighed a little over three-quarters of a pound when we

got home. The big fellow, however, had had struggle enough for one day and would not take hold again.

In the meantime the "Dude" had been trying his luck in the pond. He had waded out through the muddy bottom up to his waist and after waiting a few minutes for the water to clear, had started casting out in the pond as far as he could. After making a cast, he would reel the bait slowly towards him, giving it plenty of time to settle well in the water, and by this practice he succeeded in making fast to a nice three-quarter pounder. It was the prettiest sight of the day—that animated line cutting back and forth through the still surface of the pond, till it brought up on the stony bank with the flopping beauty. The back of this last trout was nearly black and the red spots on his side were very bright. I thought I might do likewise and joined the "Dude" in the pond but I must have been a hoodoo, for neither of us had another strike and the "Dude's" fish was the last trout caught that day.

At "Bob Rood's."

It was before daybreak that early spring morning when we knocked at the door of Bob Rood's little white cottage to ask permission to fish the stream. A gruff voice answered Tobin's knock with "Who in h——l's there?"

At Tobin's answer the voice said, "Come right in," and turning the handle we walked into the kitchen where

an oil lamp burned dimly. The half-open door into the next room gave us a glimpse of the old four-poster bed where Bob and his wife were still reposing. When we appeared, however, Bob placed his foot against his wife's back and pushed her out of bed, growling out, "Hustle, Mary, and mix these gentlemen an egg-nog." Mary, without adding to her raiment, mixed the concoction—eggs beated up with cider—and we made it our duty to consume a goodly quantity, though I must confess that it hardly hit the right spot at 4 A. M. In the meantime, Bob, himself, slid out of bed and stood before us. He was a charcoal burner and that part of his person exposed by his short and very dirty night-shirt gave ocular proof that he turned out the genuine article.

"Of course you can fish the brook," he said, "but wait till I get you some decent bait." Then, clad only in his night-shirt, he opened the door, hobbled—for he was crippled by rheumatism—to the cow-barn, and grasping a pitchfork walked about in the cow-yard, until he had unearthed a quantity of nice fat worms. "Now there," said he, "is some bait that is all right—go try your luck."

Bob Rood's Brook is a narrow but deep and swift-flowing stream which finds its source in a small mill-pond a quarter of a mile from Bob's house. From there it gurgles merrily down its winding channel some four miles, alternately through woods and meadows, until it empties into Pachaug Pond. We fished first in the long rolling meadow in front of Bob's door but our utmost

efforts resulted in only two small trout, one each for the "Dude" and Tobin. Next we waded the stream through the woods nearby, as the brush was too thick to allow fishing from the banks. Nothing was added to our score until we struck into a second meadow where the brook rippled cheerily on between two rows of alders. I landed one small fish but threw him back as he was under size.

A small tributary joined the main stream a short distance from the edge of the woods, and Tobin and I worked our way through the brush along this smaller brook until we reached a tiny waterfall thirty feet from the back door of a large white farm house. I crept up to the edge of the pool below the fall, and standing back of a huge oak tree, dropped my line in the water. Tobin tried his luck under the dilapidated stone wall where the brook hurried out of the lot. I soon felt a tug on the line but struck too hard and jerked the hook out of the fish's mouth. However, he must have been pretty hungry as he took hold again when I had baited up and this time I landed him, a fat little quarter-pound trout. I had heard nothing from Tobin, though I could see him dimly through the brush, but when I called out, "Got one," he answered, "Me, too."

I went to work again below him and fished back to the main brook, landing two nice half-pounders on the way. The first I caught in a brush-hidden pool where I let my bait drift with the current down under the drooping branches and had hard work to keep from getting

"snagged." The other took hold under an overhanging bank where I crept up on my hands and knees and then poked my rod over the edge with a few feet of line dangling from it into the brook. Tobin caught one more small trout in the little stream and the "Dude," who had fished the main brook nearly to its junction with the tributary, had four, one of which weighed nearly three-quarters of a pound.

I next fished under the alders where the little brook joined the big one, landing two little fellows in quick succession, then hustled down the brook after Tobin and the "Dude," who had gone on ahead. I soon caught up with Tobin whom I found standing quietly behind some brush at the edge of the brook. He motioned me to approach very carefully and pointed to a dark shadow in the water near an old log. "That trout," he whispered, "will weigh over a pound and I am going to get him." He stole back from the brook and crossed it a few hundred yards above; he then worked his way down on his hands and knees to the edge of the bank a short distance from the old log. I stood still behind the brush on the further bank and watched. Presently Tobin pushed forward his rod and his bait slid into the water without a ripple. "Just a minute," thought I, "and he'll have him." "Splash!" The old log which was resting very gingerly against the bank fell back into the pool, disturbed by his slight motion, and the trout darted out of sight. "Damn it!" grunted Tobin, "that's the best one I've seen this year."

In the next stretch of woods the "Dude" caught two small trout, Tobin three and I none. I worked hard to equal the others and finally snapped the tip of my rod while trying to work loose a hook that had caught on a branch on the further side of the brook. This put me out of the competition and I sat down on an old stump with my back against a birch sapling and lighted my pipe while Tobin fished on towards Pachaug Pond and the "Dude" tried a little stream nearby that seemed alive with small trout. I soon dozed off in the warm noonday sun and slept soundly for an hour or more. When I awoke I noticed two small animals in front of me, perhaps fifty yards distant. Being still drowsy, I at first took them for a yearling heifer and a small calf, then as I became wider awake and noticed their long, round ears and the constant whisking of their short tails like white flags behind them, I realized that they were deer. The wind was blowing towards me and I sat quietly watching them for some time.

I soon reached the bridge at the lower end of the brook and it was not long before Tobin and the "Dude" joined me. The latter reached me first with four nice trout that he had caught in the little brook. He said he had landed a number of others but had put them back in the water as they were less than six inches long. Tobin arrived shortly with as many more as proof of his diligence since leaving me. Somebody said, "Let's beat it," and as the contents of our creels were sufficient for the various tomorrow's breakfasts, we started the motor and headed the old car towards home.

THE BIG TROUT OF DEEP RIVER BROOK

TAKING its rise in the laurel-clad Colchester hills, and ending its turbulent course in the deep, still pools of the boggy meadows where it meets Exeter Brook, Deep River has always been one of my favorite Connecticut trout streams. There are many others where a day's fishing will produce more fish, but if I want the big fellows, Deep River is my choice. This is particularly so on a sunny day in early May when ths swamp azalea blooms along its banks.

On such a day Church and I got into action at the upper bridge, "Will" going ahead to try a few pools in the woods, while I prospected the swift water below the bridge. The black, foam-flected eddy resulted in a goose egg as did the sunlit shallows below. In one shallow pool I scored a strike but failed to hook the trout. I rested the fish a minute, then rebaited and tried him again. He started to make a dash at my worm when a dark shadow scared Mr. Trout so badly that he darted out of reach like a bullet. The owner of the shadow, a small boy who was plainly much interested in the fishing, stood on the bank. He was clad in two

dirty garments, a once-white shirt-waist, and a tattered pair of trousers remarkable for the fact that it took so little to hold them together. This urchin chattered a lot of gibberish at me which sounded like Anglicized Russian Yiddish, but I could catch only one word, "Wums." Finally I made out that the youngster himself wanted to fish, and would I give him one of my night-crawlers? To get rid of him I passed over two fine, fat wrigglers and he scampered off up the bank only to reappear in a few minutes, this time holding a short willow switch terminating in a bent pin. By his gestures and something that sounded like "Put 'im on," he led me to understand that he wanted my assistance in baiting his hook. I impaled one of his worms on the pin, he slipped the other inside his waist for safe keeping, and then made off to try his luck upstream. I hurried in the opposite direction, resolved to land my next strike without interruption.

Just above the old dam where I had planned to meet Church was a long stretch of still water. I waded out into the middle of the brook and fished the ripples at the head of this pool, losing one small trout and losing another before I went on.

At the dam I stopped again. Below me the stream swept suddenly to the right and the current, divided by a ledge jutting out from the bank, formed two eddies which swirled back towards me, one on either side of the brook. I tried the right-hand eddy first and my bait had hardly disappeared in the troubled waters at the rocky point when it was captured by a trout. I

worked the fish into the shallow water near me where the sunlight streaming down through an opening in the trees overhead showed me the dark form darting over the bright sandy bottom. As his struggles grew weaker and weaker, I drew him up on the beach and dropped him on the wet moss at the bottom of my creel. Not a big trout, but one that weighed a little over a quarter of a pound. The mate to this fish was waiting in the other eddy, and soon came to basket though the water there was as black as ink, and I could not see the fish until I lifted him out of the water and up over the little dam.

Three to start with, though I had taken some time to catch them and would have to slight the next piece of woods fishing if I wished to take proper care of the meadow below. I wondered how Church had fared, and sat down on an old log with my pipe between my teeth and waited his coming. The muffled drumming of a partridge sounded from the woods in front of me, a blue-jay scolded from the pine stump at my side, my eyes were blinking drowsily in the warm sunshine when a twig snapped and Church came into view.

"Did you get any?" was his first remark.

"Three," said I, and showed him the contents of my basket with some little pride. "How did you make out?"

"I got one pretty good one up in that meadow" was his answer as he reached into the back pocket of his old canvas shooting jacket.

I could tell by the difficulty he experienced in getting the fish out that it was a big fellow, but was unprepared for the beauty that he finally worked loose—just a shade under a full pound was the scale's verdict when we got home. "Jingo!" thought I, "I would surely like to catch one of those big ones."

We hurried through the woods and did not fish all the pools, though some were likely looking haunts for big trout. Our experience in the past had shown us that on Deep River Brook the cream of the fishing was in the big meadow ahead of us and we lost no time in getting there before "old Dan Sisson" or some other wily angler forestalled us. I added one fish, a quarter-pounder, to my score, pulling him out of a deep hole under a fallen tree-top, but it was "slim pickings" to fish behind Church and I ran on after him.

At the head of the meadow Church crossed over to the west side of the brook while I stayed on the west. On account of the thick brush along the banks of the stream it was only possible to fish the best pools from one side or the other, and our arrangement precluded our both fishing the same hole.

I fished some distance without success. There had been recent heavy rains which had swollen the volume of water in the brook and I feared had increased the food supply to such an extent that the older members of the trout family would not be very greedy about my night-crawlers. I edged up to the bank and pushed the tip of my rod through an opening in the brush, holding

it close to the water so that the bait would get a chance to work to the bottom. As the line ran out with the current and under a limb projecting into the stream I felt a sharp tug. I took up the slack and worked the lively fish away from the threatening branch. He had quite a little play in him for a half-pounder and when I finally landed him my spirits had risen a peg.

I fished two more likely looking spots through the brush, but accomplishing nothing. Then I cautiously approached the pool where I had caught two three-quarter-pound beauties the year before. This was formed by a bend of the brook where the current had eaten out the bank around the roots of an old willow. There was no brush on my side of the stream and it was easy fishing. I waded out through the mud and lily pads at the head of the pool and cast into the eddy, working the bait well under the bank. Nothing rewarded my first attempt and I rebaited with a fresh worm and tried again. I let the line drift out rapidly and when I started to draw it in I could tell there was a fish of some kind tasting. I reeled off a little more line and gave him a good chance to get a fair sample of the bait, then struck. The rod bent double as the fish made a rush for the lower end of the pool and I knew he was a good one. I checked him as soon as possible as there was a tree top in the brook below the turn and if he reached it I would lose him. I began to wade backwards toward the bank and the fish followed, fighting fiercely. Once, as he was drawn into the shallow water, he made a vicious swirl on the surface and for a minute I thought

I had lost him. But it was his final try for liberty and a second later I was gloating over him on the bank. He was not quite so large as Church's fish, but weighed easily three-quarters of a pound. His sides had rather a greenish hue and the red spots were as bright as if they had just been retouched. I slipped him in my creel and walked on.

Below the treetop around the bend there was some swift water along my bank, and crawling up to the edge through the short meadow grass, I dropped in. A fat quarter-pound trout must have been waiting there with his mouth open, for the bait had hardly touched the water when I twitched it out again with Mr. Trout hanging on.

Not far beyond here the brook widened out into a shallow pool with a sandy bottom, and here I caught another small trout, who must have missed his last meal, as I lost him the first time he took hold, and he was ready at once to try again.

It had gradually been getting darker and soon began to rain in torrents. I hurried to leeward of a row of big elms for shelter and stood there smoking my pipe until the storm passed. These elms stood on a little ridge a short distance back from the brook, and I could see over the brush and trees into the meadow on the other side. A small red dog with a very bushy tail held high in the air came loping across this field and disappeared in the brush before I realized that I was watching a fox. Even had I a gun I doubt if I would

have had time to shoot when I recognized Reynard.

The rain stopped and I went on fishing. At a sharp turn in the stream I stepped behind a shad-bush just blossoming and cast into the current. A minute later a mighty twitch at the line warned me that leviathan was there. But he had missed, and when I pulled in the line I found the bait severed clean at the hook. I re-baited with the fattest night-crawler I could find in my bait-box and waited a few minutes. I knew from that first strike that it was a big fish and I was determined to land him. I let the bait slip off the bank and into the water so as to avoid making a splash; the swift-running stream carried it a dozen feet below the bush behind which I crouched, and "Oh, joy!" the monster struck again. I was ready and reeled off a little line to enable him to gobble the worm. I did not need to strike back as the fish had hooked himself in his greedy rush, and tore off downstream at a great rate. Some alders grew out into the brook at the lower end of the pool and though I tried to check him the trout dashed in among the branches. I dropped the tip of my rod so that the line would run clear of the limbs, which seemed thickest at the surface, and began to reel in slowly but steadily. At last I was lucky enough to get him clear of the brush and had a fighting chance to land him. What worried me most was how to get the trout out of the brook. The stream was too deep to wade at this point, and the banks were very abrupt; furthermore, I had no landing net. Meantime the fish was making a

gallant fight for his life, rushing back and forth across the pool. At last the strain of the line began to tell on him and his dashes grew weaker; finally he turned over on his side for an instant and I saw it was a case of now or never. I reeled in all the line but a few feet, grasped it firmly with my left hand and twitched the big fellow out on the bank. The old steel rod doubled right up and I was sure I had lost him, but no, the glistening monster swung out over the grass, dropping off the hook at my feet. I lost no time but fell on him with both hands and then sat back to view my prize—the biggest trout I had ever seen in this vicinity. He weighed just one ounce over a pound and a quarter, and with a little feeding he would have weighed nearer two pounds as he was not as thick through as many smaller fish I have caught. I poured the other fish out of my creel, and placed him in the bottom of the basket, covering him carefully with damp moss, then replaced the other fish.

I caught one more trout before I reached the bridge where Church and Thompson were waiting for me. This was a half-pounder I landed in a big pool under the alders, where I had waded out into the brook in order to get my line into the current. He seemed an unimportant addition to the basket after the big fellow, but he added to my score just the same.

Arriving at the bridge, I found Church with his catch strung out on the running-board of the machine. He had five in all, including the fish he had already shown me, three half-pounders and one quarter-pounder.

Thompson, who had been fishing from the bridge while waiting for us, had two—one pretty trout weighing three-quarters of a pound, and one little fellow that reached perhaps a quarter. They both called for my catch, and I took them out of the basket one by one, leaving the prize fish in the bottom. They counted eight, including the three-quarter-pounder from the willow pool, and I was high line in point of numbers, though I could tell from Church's expression that he was pleased that he still had the biggest fish. I was unable to keep my good fortune quiet for long, and I finally drew the big fellow out of the basket.

"My! but ain't he a whopper?" cried Thompson.

"The best one I have seen this year," said Church, while as for me, my delight was too great for words, and I made Thompson drive the car home while I sat in the front seat with the fish in my hand and feasted my eyes on the prize, "The Big Trout of Deep River Brook."

"D——N THAT HAWG"

I HAD always been anxious to kill a wild turkey and when my January vacation was increased I decided to spend the last few days of it turkey hunting. A recent article and photographs in one of the sporting magazines had called my attention to the fact that turkeys still existed along the banks of the Neuse River in close proximity to my North Carolina ducking club, and thither I wended my way after a week of the poorest wildfowl shooting I ever experienced in that section.

I arrived at my destination Sunday night accompanied by two other sportsmen from the "Nutmeg" state who I had met on the train. Their host was to be the same as mine but luckily they wanted duck shooting, which did not conflict with my desires. "Uncle Simon" or "the Colonel" as he is generally known, met us at the railroad station and steered us to his "home camp." Our pharaphernalia tucked away and our sleeping quarters located we headed for a seat around the stove in the tiny "settin' room." There we found a crowd of other nimrods toasting their shins and swapping yarns. The roll-call follows:

"Uncle Jimmy"—New York manufacturer—an old

friend of "Uncle Simon's" and the idol of his children.

"The White Man's Hope"—"Uncle Jimmy's" shooting partner, six feet four inches of English brawn and muscle.

"The Scotchman"—repository of Gaelic yarns and discoverer of "The White Man's Hope."

"The Ball Fan"—Scotty's partner—most thoroughly versed in "batting averages" and the doings of the "fancy."

Tom ———indefatigable "bird" hunter and authority on shooting dogs.

Sam ———manager of the local lumber mill and the Colonel's rival in turkey lore.

The three "Nutmeggers" including the "Scribe"—"nuff sed."

"The Colonel"—turkey expert, duck expert, bird expert and unequalled at "fightin' chickens," telling yarns, following his professions or tending to his guests. If you ever meet in North Carolina a small man with regular features, bushy chesnut beard and sleepy seeming blue eyes, who can yelp a turkey up out of the atmosphere, and walk the legs off any living creature—two-legged or four—"that's him."

Monday was cold and cloudy with rain and an easterly wind. The Scotchman and his partner with my two Connecticut friends were going duck hunting; Uncle Jimmy and his partner and Tom, "bird" hunting if the rain let up, and the Scribe "turkeying." As the ducks and turkeys "used" on the further side of the Neuse,

a boat was imperative, though the Colonel's launch was out of commission. Luckily for us, one of Uncle Simon's friends, a Yankee sportsman who spent his winters on a small motor boat cruiser, volunteered the use of his boat to get us over to Adams Creek, and we got under way shortly after 9 A. M. It was a six-mile run across the river which, with the subsequent course up Adams Creek and into its tributary, Back Creek, consumed over an hour and a half. Setting out three stands of decoys, one each for the two Nutmeggers, the Scotchman and his partner, and William, took nearly as long again and it was after 1 o'clock when the Colonel and I headed into the pines to "rastle" up the turkeys.

A flock of these wily birds usually frequent a stretch of territory several miles in extent and unless disturbed they make a regular weekly round of this district. For this reason if one is not thoroughly versed in the schedule of the flock he is after, it is a good deal of a question of luck whether he finds them or not. Of course if the hunter who discovers their route baits them with peas (hogs are likely to eat any corn) and has plenty of patience he usually gets a shot within a week or two. The turkeys probably stay in that location a day longer when they first discover the bait and on their next round come there a day in advance. If they always find plenty of bait they finally give up their "route" and stay where the food is. This is the hunter's opportunity. He builds a brush blind, leaving but one small opening through which he can train his

gun on the feeding birds as they follow up the baited trail and shoots their heads off as they come in range. If you have not a flock baited, the custom is to try and find the turkeys, flush them with dogs which are trained to run in on them with loud barks so as to confuse the birds and cause them to fly in different directions, build a blind and "call" the birds back.

The Colonel's "call" or "yelper" was manufactured out of the following—the smallest bone of a turkey's second joint, a piece of reed or cane such as is used for pipe stems in many parts of the South, an old spool and a piece of wood shaped like a horn. These are combined and with this instrument the old fellow certainly produced the most peculiar sounds; first a shrill "cheep" or squeak rising gradually from a low note to a higher and following this up with a "yelp, yelp, yelp."

We had two dogs with us, "Teddy" and "Trixie." The former with her sombre brown coat was what the Colonel called a "native setter" though she looked like a combination of Irish setter and Chesapeake Bay dog. She was young and though her experience was limited was still a fair turkey dog. The other, a small white setter, was simply taken along as "Teddy" worked better when she had a "side partner."

The ground we were to hunt consisted of "ridges" covered with Carolina pine, intersected by numerous swamps grown up with black gums and cedars tied together with wild grape vines and briars of all makes and kinds. The footing in these swamps was most un-

certain and it was usually a case of tight-rope walking on some old tree trunk to get across. I had a sneaking suspicion that the Colonel was trying me out to see if I could keep up the pace.

Unluckily the ridges where we expected to find a large flock of turkeys—twenty-three, according to reports of eye witnesses—had just been cut over, including a section that the Colonel had recently "baited." This meant a long tramp to country where the birds could still feed—"mast" or acorns, pine cones, gall berries, etc. Finally, as we were crossing a mud hole on the cordwood ties of an abandoned logging road, Uncle Simon, who had been studying the ground most carefully, said, "Look yeah!" There in the soft, black ooze were the fresh tracks of a huge old gobbler. A little further on the Colonel called my attention to a spot where the pine needles had been tossed about. "Scratchin's," was his comment. Then "Teddy" started galloping off at top speed and I felt sure we were going to run across the flock, but we had arrived on the scene about a day late and we didn't see them.

On our way back to the boat I asked the Colonel to try a call or two for luck as he had told me that occasionally you would get a shot by so doing. We sat down on an old log and the "pipe of Pan" appeared. The old fellow softly cleared his throat and put the instrument to his lips. I could see his cheeks drawn in once or twice as he sucked on the pipe and then it came, "Peep, Pee—eeep, yawp, yawp, yawp," while the tall

pines echoed back the strange notes. We sat there like wooden images and listened. Then again, "Pee—eep—yawp, yawp, yawp, yawp" and another long wait. No answer only the "soughing" of the wind and a distant shot from the creek.

We reached our skiff with no further incident, shoved out to the little cruiser where we found William already aboard as he had not fired a shot, and we chug-chugged down the creek picking up the rest of the duck hunters. Scotty and his partner had not fired a gun but the two Nutmeggers had missed several chances through not being prepared.

That evening the Colonel and Sam, the mill man, regaled us with yarns of turkey hunting. The Colonel told of a rich sportsman from Philadelphia who had come down to his place several years before. It seems that this arrival had hunted turkeys in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Florida and the middle West but had never seen one. He had decided they were a myth or else he was a "Jonah" and he had come to North Carolina to decide the question. The Colonel told his guest that if he would stay with him long enough he would get him a shot, and the guest brightened up a little but said he had heard that before. They hunted three days, finding plenty of sign, "scratchings," "dustings" and "tracks" but no turkeys, and the Quaker began to get discouraged. He said he had grown tired of "dustings," "scratchings" and "tracks"—what he wanted was turkeys. The fourth day they stayed at home as the Colonel had

nearly walked the legs off his victim, and said victim said he thought he had a day's rest coming to him. The next morning they started off again. Hardly had they left the boat when the dog flushed a flock of turkeys. The sportsman didn't see the birds and told the Colonel he would believe his story when he saw a turkey and not before. The Colonel built a comfortable stand and told his guest to take a nap; that he would call him when the time came. After about an hour and a half the Colonel said he began to call and soon got an answer. He wakened the sportsman and told him to get ready. Soon in answer to the call a turkey hen came running, "yelpin' foh eve'y breff." The sportsman slid his gun out through a crack in the blind, fired and there lay his first turkey, dead. The hunter gave a yell of delight and started to go after his prize but the Colonel stopped him and told him to get down and keep quiet. The Philadelphian obeyed and the Colonel kept on yelping. Soon a big gobbler appeared and the sportsman downed him. Uncle Simon killed the third—another hen—at the hunter's request and the fun continued. Nine chances did that Quaker sportsman have and killed five turkeys including the Colonel's. At the end, according to the story, the fellow acted like a crazy man, whooping and yelping, embracing the Colonel and shooting his gun off every few minutes while between times he drank often and copiously from his flask to the health of the "dear departed."

Another yarn was about an Eastern sportsman who missed three good shots at turkeys with a shotgun. On the next occasion when the dogs flushed a flock, the Yankee was armed with a twenty-two calibre carbine. As they crept after the birds the Colonel discovered an old gobbler roosting in a big pine about seventy-five yards away. Cautiously he pointed out the turkey to the sportsman, who whispered, "I'm going to get him right where the wing joins the body," took quick aim and fired. At the shot the gobbler tumbled to the ground with a thud and there was the bullet hole just at the base of the wing. As the Colonel said, "I reckon that Yank could shoot some!"

Sam told of a hunt he once had with his father. The old gentleman, a famous turkey hunter, was over 70 years of age but as keen over the sport as ever. Sam said they did not dare let the old fellow go out alone for fear something might happen to him, and on this occasion, after the dogs had put up a large flock of turkeys, he fixed his father comfortably in a small stand. Then he went off a short distance and built a blind for himself. After waiting a while he began calling and presently heard his father shoot twice. A little later his father shot again. Then a hen turkey began to answer Sam's call and he thought it was going to be his turn, but just as the bird was getting in range, his father gave a little squeal and the bird turned and ran off to the old gentleman. Again the sound of a gun and in a few minutes Mrs. Turkey came galloping by

Sam's stand like a racehorse. Sam jumped out of the blind and started after her with the dog, finally came up to the hen with her head hidden under a pile of brush. She was wing-broken, so Sam wrung her neck and lugged her back. When it came time to start for home, Sam went over to get his father. "Well, Dad," said he, "killed three, didn't you?"

"No," answered his father, "only got two. I knocked down the third but she got up and ran off. Where did you get yours? I didn't hear you shoot?"

"I must have fired at the same time you did," said Sam.

The old gentleman couldn't get over that and all the way home kept saying, "Funny I didn't hear you shoot," while Sam kept up the deception. At the supper table that night his father told about the day's hunt and ended up with, "But I'll be dogged if I can see how Luke theah got his bird without shooting."

Then Sam "'fessed up" while his father twitted him about his poor success and told him, "You want to learn how to call them." This egged Sam on to try again the next day and he succeeded in killing three gobblers. When he got home that night he threw the birds on the porch in front of the dining-room door and went in to see his father. The old fellow greeted him with roars of laughter when he saw him return apparently empty-handed and suggested, "Luke, you'all had better give up turkey huntin'." A few minutes later when they stepped out on the porch to go in to supper,

Luke said, "Dad, what's that dark lump in front of the dining room doh?" His father stepped forward and picked up the three gobblers, then turned to his son, "Pretty lucky you've growed so big," said he, "or you wouldn't dared to fool yoh ole Dad."

Tuesday the Colonel and I got an earlier start as most of the crowd were going "bird hunting." The two Connecticut men had another man to set them out. We landed opposite the Winthrop lumber mill at the head of Adams Creek and tramped through the weed-grown fields of a deserted plantation, the "Lee Place." We climbed an old board fence and walked along in the path on the further side toward a big stand of Carolina pine. The sun was shining brightly and from the myrtle thicket sounded a sweet bird song. "Woity, woity, woity," followed at a short interval by the warble of a bluebird and then a liquid "Toweet, toweet, toweet." "That's a Carolina wren," said the Colonel, "ut suah is a sweet singer."

"Teddy," a short distance ahead of us, was "making game." "Pahtridges," said the Colonel and at the corner of the fence we turned to the right to enter the thick pine growth. Both dogs had run straight ahead to a thicket of scrub pine and gall berry bushes.

"Teddy" gave a sharp bark. I heard the flapping of heavy wings and the dark bodies of four and then five turkeys went sailing over the treetops about eighty yards away. "Shall I try them?" I cried to the Colonel. "Shoot," said he, and I gave them the second barrel

loaded with BB's but they still kept on. I could see the red wattles on one old gobbler, or at least I thought I could, and when turkey number six rose far ahead and started after the others, I couldn't help exclaiming, "D——n it! If we had only kept on we would surely have killed a pair." We sprinted up to where the birds had started in the vain hope that we might get a chance at some skulker the dogs had not flushed, then we headed into the pines in the direction the flock had just flown. As we crept through the woods the Colonel whispered "Watch the trees; you might see a turkey settin' up on a limb," but a careful search determined that the birds had taken a long flight and were not in our immediate vicinity. There was plenty of "sign" in the pine thickets, and one tall tree had evidently served as a "roost."

The Colonel was not very sanguine about our chances of calling up a turkey as the flock had not scattered, but after a final circle through the brush he brought up at a windfall and started to build a blind. It was but a short job as the branches of the fallen trees made an effective screen for anyone hidden behind them, and the addition of a few pine branches and tops of laurel brush "chinked" up the crevices in such shape as to hide our motions thoroughly. I made myself comfortable in one corner of the structure while the Colonel dozed in the other. The sunlight playing through the branches, the aromatic smell of the pines and the song of the birds lulled me to sleep. I was awakened by the

Colonel's prelude on his turkey call, "Yawp, yawp, yawp." A wait of a few minutes and a little squeal followed again with "Yawp, yawp, yawp," the "Chow, chow, chow," Sam termed it, ended the sonata. Uncle Simon's attitude was one of rapt attention, though his closed eyes rather discredited his position. Suddenly he opened his eyes wide as he whispered, "Did you hear one?" and he called again. No answer. There was a small peep-hole in front of me and I kept a sharp lookout on the thicket. As I gazed I seemed to see the bald head and scraggy neck of a turkey hen watching me intently. I moved slightly and she disappeared. I called the Colonel but he couldn't see anything of her. It was all imagination, helped out by the combination of a pink leaf and a dead branch viewed from a certain direction. Along towards afternoon the Colonel stood up, shook himself, and said, "We might just as well move on. They won't come back here tonight."

Leaving the blind we started off in the direction taken by the turkeys and on the further side of an impenetrable cover of underbrush and briars discovered another pine ridge where the dogs acted "gamey" and several fresh "dustings" seemed to show the recent gathering of the flock. "This is where we should have come right away," said the Colonel. "Then we would have flushed them again and probably had a shot. That call I heard was the old hen getting them together and they're miles away by now. We might as well start back for the boat."

That night after supper asked the Colonel if there weren't a lot of mosquitoes along the Neuse in the summer time, and the Colonel said there were, but nothing like up in Hyde County. "Why up thah," he went on, "a case come foh da coht. Uncle Lou Midget's wife 'lowed she shoh wanted a separshun from Unc'l Lou cohse he wouldn't leave Hyde County and de skeeters was so monst'us bad she sholy couldn't live thah no moh. 'Why, yoh Honah,' says she, 'w'en I go down teh fetch a bucket of watah, I sho neff has teh draw three buckets er skeeters befoh I git any watah.' "

"There certainly must be some 'skeeters' there," said one of the Connecticut boys. "I met an old fellow on the train coming here named Fleetwood, who said he knew a man in Hyde County who went to the store and bought nine pounds of beef, and when he got home all he had left was the skin—the 'skeeters' had eaten all the beef."

Wednesday was Uncle Jimmy's last day and the old Colonel promised to go quail hunting with him and the "White Man's Hope." Sam, the lumber man, said he thought he would take a day off and go turkey hunting with me. He was ready by about 10 o'clock and took me across the river in the lumber company's tug. We struck in again at the Lee place as Sam said he knew there was a flock "usin' " back of Jim Nelson's in case we didn't find the birds we saw on Tuesday. Sam said he had not done much walking lately but his years of timber cruising had certainly hardened him up as he

fairly flew through the cover. We couldn't find yesterday's flock and kept on towards Nelson's. As we were going through a thicket of young pine I heard the flopping of many wings and started to snap at the glimpse of a dark body sailing off. Sam whispered, "No use, only buzzards," and in a minute more we came upon the carcass of a cow, upon which they had been gorging, lying in a deep ditch. Among some tall pines not far back of the Nelson house we found plenty of turkey sign around an old hog-pen where somebody had scattered a bushel or two of corn, but the birds themselves were not there. Along about noon we flushed a covey of quail and Sam made a nice right and left through the briars. I pulled on one little hen as she whizzed past my head but the "safety" was on and nothing happened.

We tramped all afternoon with no success though Sam knocked a grey squirrel out of the top of a tall oak. Everywhere we found turkey sign but we couldn't find the birds.

The next day the Colonel made an early start. We had decided to spend the morning looking for the flock on the north side of Back Creek and the afternoon hunting the bunches on the Lee and Nelson places. That morning hunt was the hardest hunt of the trip. It was a close day and the swamps we encountered certainly opened the pores. In one awful hole we got hung up in the briars for nearly an hour, and when we did get out our faces, heads and clothing were nearly torn to pieces. Every sign was lacking on this tramp until we

were nearly back to the boat when we came to a place where it looked as if the turkeys had only just been there. We left for the other flocks, however, without seeing the birds, though soon after I went north I received a letter from the Colonel saying that he had killed an eighteen-pound gobbler in this place.

Lunch finished, we started in at the Lee place and after a long walk heard the welcome "flop, flop" of big wings and a turkey got up out of gunshot not far from the Nelson place and flew off towards the Neuse. I had always heard that the turkey flew in a straight line, making it a simple matter to flush him a second time if you noticed the direction of his flight. The bird we had put up rather disproved this theory as after a short, straight flight he swung off well towards the right. We did not follow as the Colonel thought we would flush the rest of the flock if we kept on to the old hog-pen where Sam and I had found the bait the day before. A quarter of a mile further "Teddy" began to bark vigorously and we heard sounds of turkeys getting up on all sides. We had glimpses of three or four dark bodies flitting through the trees and I tried an unsuccessful snap at one that was practically out of range, but the tall pines grew so thick that we saw only a small portion of the flock. The hog-pen provided us with a convenient blind as it had not been used and the floor was clean though rather damp. The Colonel was not very optimistic as to our chances of getting a shot because it was late in the afternoon, a quarter of four, and

he feared that most of the birds had alighted in trees where they would probably roost for the night. One hen, however, had flown towards the river to the north of us and he had hopes she might answer his call and come in as the rest of the birds had scattered in other directions. The old fellow gave me careful instructions about keeping my head below the log sides of the blind and not making a move, particularly if he got an answer, and we squatted there like wooden dummies for about half an hour. We had filled up the cracks between the logs with bunches of pine needles and a few pine branches but there were still many peep-holes and you can be sure I kept a sharp lookout.

Then the Colonel began to call and immediately the turkey hen answered, "Yup, yup, yup." I stretched out flat on the ground, never daring to move a muscle until Uncle Simon warned me to get ready. The bird answered the call for nearly ten minutes and then went, "Putt, putt. Putt, putt." "Look out, she's coming," whispered the Colonel and then, "Thaar she goes. She flew into that big pine." Another call from the little pipe, instant answer from the hen and then she quit. An instant later a loud crackling in the underbrush called our attention to an old hog that went grunting by, but the racket had done it's work—it had frightened the hen and she wouldn't come in.

"You might as well set up," said the Colonel, "we'll have to wait till dark and see if we can get a shot at her in the tree after she's tucked her head under her

wing." I was so stiff from the long, exciting wait in a strained position that I could hardly move, but finally made myself comfortable and waited for the darkness. At 6 o'clock we crept out of the blind and tiptoed over to the big pine where the Colonel said the hen was "roosting." It was so dark that we were unable to distinguish the bird and after a long and fruitless scrutiny we fired two shots up into the thick branches in the hopes of starting the turkey out. Nothing stirred and we had to give up our quest. That three-mile tramp to the boat through the thick woods in the pitch darkness was a weird experience but proved the Colonel's mettle as a woodsman. I had to hold one arm in front of me to keep the boughs from striking me in the face or eyes, but the old fellow slid along the trail with unerring instinct, while I stumbled along at his back practically holding on to his coat tails.

The following morning I left for the North and the Colonel on seeing me off expressed his disappointment that I had been so unlucky. As he put it, "I'm dogged that you'all didn't get ah turkey. I was certainly suah of a shot yesterday but 'D——n That Hawg!' "

My story really ends here but after I had been home for about two weeks I received from the Colonel by express a hen turkey. He said he and Mr. M—— of New York had killed four a few days before.

THE DUDE AND I BATTERY SHOOTING AT PAMLICO SOUND

SUNDAY, the day after Christmas, saw me under way for a trip to Pea Island, Pamlico Sound. It was an inauspicious beginning, as we had a heavy snowfall the night before, but I did not realize till later that Sunday certainly was "ma Jonah day." After what I know now it would take a heap of urging to get me started off on another shoot on Sunday.

According to my reckoning, I was due at the Island on Tuesday, while the "Dude" and my cousin, who had planned to leave New York on Friday of the same week, should get there the following Sunday. I had already pictured in my mind's eye a host of ducks and geese hanging on the club house porch to greet their view on their arrival, but the "best laid plans," as the old saying goes, "gang aft agley."

Due to heavy snow storms causing delay, it was Tuesday evening when I reached Norfolk.

Wednesday morning I left Norfolk on the Norfolk & Southern train bound for Elizabeth City. I felt like a new man after a comfortable night and a hearty breakfast at the "Monticello," but even so, decided to risk

no further delay by waiting for the train three hours later which was scheduled to connect at Elizabeth City with the boat for Manteo. Happily this stage of my journey was destined to elapse without accident, and I arrived at my destination on time and without injury.

The sun was shining on the muddy waters of the Pasquotank, the air was soft and balmy; it was easy to forget the snow and cold of old New England in the warmth of the "Sunny South." The "Hattie Creef" was lying alongside the wharf opposite the railroad station and I headed that way intent on passing the time of day with "Captain Johnson." The dock was littered with freight and express and I had my eyes open for game shipments; nor was I disappointed. Directly in front of me loomed a large crate from which resounded the honking and cackling of a score of "Canadas." "For the park in Philadelphia," said the agent, "but what do you think of these?" He pointed first to the bodies of two small Virginia deer, a five-point buck and a doe, and then pushing aside a packing case or two, to the carcass of a huge "she bear." "Came from down Washington way," said he.

As I was gaping at the long claws and mouthful of fangs displayed by old "Mother Bruin," a familiar voice drawled, "Waal, stranger, glad to see yer," and I looked up to see the sinewy figure of my friend "Cap'n Johnson." A few remarks about the weather, a few queries about old friends and the chances for a successful shoot, and we gravitated to the cabin of the

"Creef" where my small flask was made considerably lighter.

My guns and baggage were stowed aboard by one of the darky roustabouts; then, as the Captain seemed busy getting a quantity of building material for Manteo aboard the boat, I left him, and filling my pipe, sat down on a packing case to enjoy a quiet smoke in the sunshine. But not for long, for soon a cold northwest wind sprang up, the sky clouded over, blotting out the sun, and it began to snow. I changed my seat to the neighborhood of the stove in the agent's office on the dock and waited for starting time. At last it came. The "Creef" cast off and chugged down the river through the thickening snow for Roanoke Island and Manteo.

Three hunters, two men and a boy, had joined us upon the arrival of the noon train from Norfolk, and they, with a couple of other passengers, made up our little company. I soon got into conversation with one of my fellow nimrods, and discovered that he was a New York lawyer, who with his son and partner were bound for their houseboat, "The Ark," which they expected to find in Mill Creek, near Wanchese. Carpenter, my new acquaintance, had been coming to Pamlico Sound for a good many years and had belonged, during its short existence, to some shooting club at the south end of Roanoke. This club, according to his story, had been buncoed by its local representative to such an extent that it soon found itself without any shooting grounds save a few "goosin' lumps" on the Bodie Island shore.

Those were not a sufficient drawing card to keep up the annual dues; the little schooner, "The Brant," which brought the members from Elizabeth City was sold, and the club died a natural death. Shortly afterwards, a sickly New Yorker, who was cruising about the Sound in his houseboat in search of health, failed to accomplish his purpose and Carpenter purchased his outfit—hence "The Ark."

I had been so interested in the history of "The Ark" that I had paid little attention to the weather or to our progress, but these matters were now brought vividly to my attention. The door slammed open with a crash and in whirled a cloud of snowflakes and "Cap'n Johnson." "Boys," said he, "I reck'n I'm gwine to dis'p'int yer, but it's snowin' thicker'n Hades, that deck load of iron for the jail has set mah compass at least five p'ints out, and I 'low Elizabeth City's the place for us."

Johnson then headed the old "Creef" back for her dock which we reached in about an hour. The two passengers boarded the next train for Norfolk, while the nimrods, after an interview with the "Creef's" captain, in which he promised to notify us before he made another start for Manteo, scoured Elizabeth City for a square meal. We brought up at a small Greek restaurant and were pleasantly disappointed at all the good things set before us. Oyster stew and broiled quail on toast fairly melted away before our ravenous appetites, and then the Captain appeared with the welcome news that the snow squall had blown over and he was going to start for Roanoke.

This time we reached our destination without further delay, and tied up at the Manteo dock at 9:30. I said good-bye to Carpenter, whose launch was waiting to take him and his party to "The Ark" at Mill Creek and made my way to the "Tranquil House." "Cap'n Jesse" had given up waiting for me and gone home but good Mrs. Evans saw that I was well fed and had a warm feather bed for the night. The only thing that disturbed my sleep was Cap'n Johnson's parting remark as I left the "Creef": "I reckon you boys won't get to Pea Island tomorrow; it is going to come off cold and the Sound will likely freeze over."

It surely was cold the next morning, and on looking out of my window at 7:30, I could still see the "Creef" at her dock, although she was due to leave for Elizabeth City at 5. Furthermore, I could see a line of foam that marked the edge of the ice far out from the shore.

After breakfast "Cap'n Jesse" arrived and I immediately sounded him as to the possibility of getting down to Pea Island. He said he would make an attempt to reach the club, but thought we would find it impossible to break our way through the ice to the shore when we got off the island. If we were successful and had to return to Manteo against a head wind, the motor boat might "log up" with ice to such an extent that we would be caught in the freeze out in the Sound. This was not a cheerful prospect and when a telephone query to the Pea Island Life Saving Station brought back the answer that the ice extended over a mile from shore off the club

house, I decided to wait for the "break-up." I strolled over to Meekin's store with "Cap'n Jesse" and drawing up a chair near the stove, toasted my toes and listened to the old timers spin yarns about a cold spell ten years previous which lasted two weeks, when the Sound froze solid and it was possible to cross over on the ice from Roanoke to Bodie Island. These yarns were not very encouraging, neither did I relish the fact that my "wet goods" and tobacco, which would have helped to while away the time, were reposing at the club house, as I had expressed them ahead to lighten my load.

The following morning dawned "clear and colder." The ice now extended as far as you could see and there was not a sign of life out on the Sound save where a small flock of swan flying by, shimmered in the sun off the mouth of Manteo Harbor. At the wharf in front of the "Tranquil House" lay a government boat named the "Gretchen," and her "chief," a crony of "Cap'n Jesse's," asked us aboard. She was a tidy little motor cruiser, about fifty feet waterline, equipped with a thirty-horse-power engine and comfortable quarters for a crew of five or six men. Her captain, a graduate of Cornell, employed in survey work for a new chart of Pamlico Sound, made the morning slip by so pleasantly that it was lunch time before we realized it.

After luncheon I was smoking a quiet pipe in Meekin's store, when I spied the New Yorker, Carpenter, and his partner, striding down the village street. They greeted me with open arms and asked me to spend the rest of

my enforced sojourn on Roanoke with them on "The Ark." Did I accept? Manteo and the old "Tranquil House" saw only a flitting shadow as I hustled after my "friends in need" on their tramp to Wanchese and Mill Creek. It was a long eight-mile walk and when finally we were assembled in the tiny cabin of the good ship "Ark" I had lots of dust in my throat and plenty of room under my belt. Carpenter settled the first with the contents of a long glass crowded with tinkling ice, and filled the latter void with fried chicken, yams, baked beans and other good things from the commissary. Soon after, Ben Cohoon, the captain of the craft, superintended the setting up of two cots in the saloon and we turned in.

Saturday, "darn the luck," the ice seemed thicker than ever. Carpenter suggested tramping through the marsh near the creek with the object of bagging a snipe or two, and off we went. We had hardly left the landing before a bird flushed on Carpenter's left, to drop dead at the crack of his gun. This seemed to presage good luck, but nevertheless we got back to the boat without another shot.

Sunday morning I was awakened in the "wee small hours" by a thumping and creaking which seemed to demand an investigation. I stuck my head out of the hatchway and saw that a heavy swell was pounding in from the eastward and the ice had disappeared. No sleep for the weary after that and I fear that I made myself decidedly unpopular by dragging the rest of the

party out of their berths to view the welcome sight. Breakfast dispatched, Carpenter's two motor launches made fast to "The Ark" and started to tow her and her family of battery boats, batteries and decoys to Pea Island. On our voyage we saw a few flocks of bluebills and some geese, though nothing like the raft of fowl that had greeted me on previous trips. Shortly after noon we came to anchor in Baum's Slough, where I was picked up by "Cap'n Jesse" and chug-chugged ashore. At the club house a telegram from my cousin and the "Dude" stated that they would be off the mouth of the slough at 5 o'clock and Jesse started back for them. I toasted my toes at the stove and listened to the guides' stories of the shooting I had missed by not "getting there" before the freeze. According to their accounts, Wednesday afternoon, the day of the snow-storm, the fowl had been driven ashore in such numbers that one could have killed geese, black ducks and "sprig" until he was tired. Another tale that made me think hardly of my lost time was the wonderful battery shooting on Saturday, when "Randy" Farrell, the market gunner, "tied out" as the ice started to break up about noon, and picked up one hundred and forty ducks, over forty of them redheads, with one hundred and eighty shells. Still, I had a week ahead of me to make up for what I had lost, so why worry.

The rest of the party arrived in due time and after a hasty supper made plans for the morrow, and soon "hit the pillow." They had suffered practically no de-

lay, for though they had been forced to spend one night in Elizabeth City, as the "Creel" was not running, they had succeeded Sunday morning in chartering a "sea-going" motor boat which had brought them directly to Pea Island.

There was a light southwest breeze stirring when we rose at 5 Monday morning and we decided to put out two outfits. The "flip up" of a nickel decided that Cousin Henry should take care of one battery while the "Dude" and I took turns in looking after the other. We rallied several rafts of bluebill and redhead as we glided over Rock Shoal and soon cut loose Cousin and his battery with John Etheridge and Eddie Wise to "tend" in the sailing skiff. It seemed as if a few of the fowl we had started might return to call on the combination. The "Dude" and I with the other battery and the motor boat and with "Cap'n Jesse" and Payne to look out for us ran off some distance to the southward and were shortly set out and ready for business.

I went in the battery first and after keeping careful watch for over half of my two-hour period without seeing a duck coming my way, I closed my eyes for a minute. I opened them with a start on hearing a soft "Queek, queek," and sure enough, there, with her white spotted head dipping up and down, was a small female bluebill swimming around among the decoys. I sat up in the box and threw the little Scott to my shoulder, but she still kept swimming and diving among her stupid neighbors. At last, when I rose to my feet, Madame Bluebill

decided to depart in haste, but the chance was an easy one—she fell at my first barrel and bobbed away to leeward. I had to shoot twice to kill the next bluebill, another single, and wing-broke a third, just as the "Dude" came up to take his spell. He didn't have much better luck and when I went in again at 2 P. M. our total score was six bluebill and one redhead. In the afternoon the shooting grew a little better, though all my chances were at single birds and bluebills at that. However, mighty few got away and I could not have said as much if the birds had come in bunches. When we took up we counted nineteen bluebill and five redheads, the last to the credit of the "Dude." We picked up Cousin and his party on the way in and took a look at the bag. His luck was no better than ours and though he had sixteen birds, ten of them were "coots" and other "trash" ducks. Altogether, our first day's luck might have been a little better.

That night "Cap'n Jesse," who had been fidgetting about the barometer for some time without saying anything, suddenly exclaimed, "D——n it, boys, I hate to say it, but we'll have easterly wind tomorrow and you all know what that means—no ducks." We poohpoohed the suggestion and slept the sleep of the just, but morning proved the truth of the prophecy, as the wind was blowing hard from the northeast and the tide in the Sound was so far out that you could barely see the edge of the flats. Cousin and I decided to accompany Jesse on a tramp over the club's land north of the

house, while the "Dude" was stationed in a "bury-box" with a stand of goose decoys, near "Goosin' Island."

At the north end of Pea Island, near the Oregon Inlet Life Saving Station, Cousin called my attention to a solitary black duck settling down in a piece of marshy ground and I headed in that direction. The bird flushed at some distance from me on my right, though I was lucky enough to double him up with my first shot. I kept on toward a small pond ahead of me and soon I jumped another "black." I felt very sure of this duck, as it got up so close I could nearly strike it with my gun, but it seemed to bear a charmed life and hurried away unscathed, while both barrels hurled number 6's in its direction.

On our way back to the club house we picked up the "Dude," who was rather wearied of his unsuccessful wait in that "blasted coffin," as he termed the "bury box." Cousin relieved him for the few hours remaining before dark, but with no better luck, and my one black duck was the only score.

Wednesday the wind was still fresh from the eastward. Cousin joined Jesse in trip to the south end of the island, while the "Dude" and I, with John Etheridge and Payne, started out with the battery. The fowl seemed to be trading between the Turtle Bed Flats and Rock Shoal and we tied out in the "flyway." I think we would have prospered better if we had set out where the birds were "using," but we didn't realize this until

it was too late to change our location. There was a strong tide setting in across our layout and as the wind was light the stool were heading every which way. The "Dude" killed two bluebill during his trick, while I sat in the motor boat and gathered oysters with an old rake. They certainly tasted good, fresh from the salty waters of the Sound, and better still were the oyster crabs, which seemed to live in every oyster. At about 2 o'clock I relieved the "Dude," who went off with the motor boat to rally some of the fowl. He was successful and the air was soon full of numerous bunches of ducks, both redhead and bluebill, all heading in my direction. I lay low and got ready for action, but the unnatural position of the decoys did its work and flock after flock flared off just when I was sure they were coming in. Finally, after waiting in vain for some of the birds to swing in over the decoys, I began shooting at anything that came anywhere within range. The result was discouraging. Time and time again I would drop one and two ducks out of the hurrying bunches, but nearly all crippled and out of range where they had dropped, so I had no opportunity to shoot them again. The most disappointing part of it was that nearly all the fowl were redhead, and the multitude of crippies escaping to leeward was most disheartening. As I remember the result, Payne and John Etheridge picked up six redheads and four bluebills out of the twenty-six birds I had down.

The next morning Cap'n Jesse picked up seven redheads and five dead bluebills where they had drifted ashore. My shooting had been at birds too far away.

It was the rule at Pea Island to determine the choice of points, guides and dogs for the following morning by cutting the cards the evening before. Once I cut with Leroy Davis, the president of the club, and "Old Bob" Smith, the clerk of the County Court. Davis tried first and got a queen, "Old Bob" caught a king and I topped them both with an ace. I also won choice of guides and took Howard, reserving choice of points till morning.

In the morning the wind was to the southwest and on Howard's advice I chose South Point as great strings of redheads had been trading through the pass between this point and Cedar Island. I made this decision somewhat against my will as the day before I had killed the first "canvas" of the season at Gordon's Bend, pulling him down from high up in the air with the big eight gauge. Also the grass was all "tore up" in the deep water off the Bend, sure sign of canvas "using" there. However, we went to South Point, Davis to Gordon's Bend and Bob Smith to Lane's. We had hardly set out when the fog shut in so thick we could hardly see the stool and hung on till noon. This spoiled our morning redhead flight and all we killed that day was one redhead and one goose.

"I wonder what Mr. Davis got at Gordon's," was Howard's first remark when we started for home.

At the club-house door both Davis and Smith met us, anxious to see our bag, and I glimpsed a poorly con-

cealed grin when they saw its slimness. The followed me into the gun-room with smiling faces. Ye gods! What a sight! Twenty-six "canvas" lay in state before my eyes. Didn't I wish I had chosen Gordon's Bend when I heard their story! Davis had had canvas falling all over his stool and had come home to lunch when the flight was thickest. Also he had done wretched shooting, though he had bagged sixteen. "Os" Moore, who had been with him, said that if Mr. Davis had not come home to lunch and done any decent shooting, he should have killed anywhere from fifty to seventy-five canvas. There was no limit. Think of it! Bob Smith at Lane's had picked up ten that had come to him from Davis' flocks. I decided after that experience that choice of location did not always mean birds.

I well recollect my first experience at Ragged Islands at battery shooting. An outfit was always kept ready aboard the "big boat," a large open sloop or sharpie. It was seldom used, however, except by a few of the club members on very calm days.

One such day I determined to try it and had "Os" and Howard tie me out in the "flyway" between Cedar Island and South Point. There was not much moving except numerous bunches of "boobies" or ruddy ducks, "greasers" I believe they call them on the Chesapeake Bay. None of them seemed to come my way, though I kept well down, according to instructions from the guides. I constantly heard the whistle of wings but when I looked up the birds were always out of range. Finally Moore shoved up to me and said, "What's the matter? Why don't you shoot?"

"At what?" said I, "I haven't had a chance."

"Yes, you have," was his answer. "Those 'boobies' have been cutting over the stool back of your head all the time you have been in there. Would you like me to try it for a little while?"

I assented and "Os" changed with me while I went and swallowed some lunch aboard the "big boat." He shot a number of times and on my way back Howard picked up thirteen "boobies" that had fallen to Oscar's gun.

The flight seemed to have ceased when I got in again but after a long wait a solitary canvasback drake circled around the outfit and lit in the stool back of my right shoulder. I was not posted on the batteryman's trick of throwing his feet out of the box and spinning around on a pivot for shots of this kind so I took a chance from my left shoulder which resulted in a cut lip and the also the escape of the "canvas." We took up soon afterward and I went ashore without killing a bird on my first day in a battery.

I had an amusing experience with a battery on another trip. Or rather my friend "Mike" did. We were tied off Lane's in shallow water and the shooting was fair, "Mike" downing eight "boobies" and one canvas in his first trick, though it was his first time in a "sink-box." Howard poled me up to relieve him but before we got alongside "Mike," thinking that there was a wing at the foot of the battery as on the other three sides, started towards us and walked right off into the bay.

The water was only up to his waist though slightly chilly and he was soon warmed up again as the result of some vigorous sprinting up and down the marsh nearby and internal applications from my flask. I didn't think I would ever be able to stop laughing at the startled look of amazement on his face when he first came up after his sudden dip.

One day at Ragged Islands I was tied out in the battery and as it was a flat calm there was very little moving. I lay back basking in the warm sunshine, and was getting a little drowsy when I happened to glance down at the stool over the tops of my rubber boots. There was a large redhead drake, with his wings set, just alighting in the water. I sat up and, as he rose, downed him with my second barrel. A bunch of bluebill showed up on my left side, but the wind had shifted a little since we tied out and the stool had trailed off to the right of the battery, so that the birds swung up at my back and came down over me at a mile-a-minute clip. Two barrels accomplished nothing and I had to lie back without waving to the tender.

A pair of redheads now flew by outside the decoys to leeward. "Too far," I said to myself, "but I'll try 'em once for luck." I held the gun carefully on the last bird, gave him a good lead, and at the report he crumpled up dead, at least fifty yards from the battery. When Payne pushed up to relieve me, he said, "That was a nice shot, sir," and I felt quite proud, but there is an old saying, the truth of which I was to know later.

ROAST GOOSE AND FIXIN'S AT PEA ISLAND

AFTER considerable duck shooting at Pamlico, I and the "Dude" decided to devote one entire day to hunting the wary goose. On the day we had set, "Cap'n" Jesse" got the "goosin' " outfit together and started with the "Dude" and me for the south end of the island.

It seemed that Cousin and he on their journey the day before had put up several hundred geese near some small pools of fresh water back among the sand hills, where we headed. Furthermore, the ground was covered with droppings and goose tracks and Jesse was sure it was a regular drinking hole for the fowl. There was a portable stand nearby which we soon shifted into position in a hole dug in the sand, scattered seaweed over the freshly spaded ground, and started to peg out our twenty-odd goose decoys. We had just tied down the last decoy and were stacking our guns and shell boxes in the stand, when Jesse exclaimed, "Get down, boys, quick, here comes an old goose!" We lay down in the sand and watched the big bird flopping up against the strong wind. I did not see how he could help noticing us, but that gander's eyes must have been fixed on our decoys, which were calling to him so vigorously. As another enticement, the "Dude," who had slipped into

the stand, was peeking out through the sedge with his genial grin. Anyhow, the old goose set his wings to alight among the decoys, whatever the reason, whether he mistook that smile for a welcoming look from one of his next of kin, or whether he was hypnotized by the "Dude's" eagle eye. The "Dude" was the only man who had any shells handy and as I whispered, "Let him have it," he fired first one barrel and then the other I expected to witness Mr. Goose's sudden demise and the "Dude's" consequent elation, but I was to be disappointed. The goose hustled away in record time, while the "Dude" excused himself by saying that he had used number 5 shot (his duck loads) instead of BB's.

Finally the "Dude" and I were packed into the little box as tightly as cigars in a case. Jesse and John Etheridge were out of sight with the team and we were looking for more geese. The "Dude" guarded the leeward side of the fort with his twelve-gauge Parker and I held down the other side with a Remington automatic twelve-gauge and an old English eight-gauge. The Remington was brand new, had been restocked and refitted to come up as nearly as possible like my old Scott twelve, and I had resolved for once to leave the old gun at home and try the new one instead. I had brought the eight bore along in case the automatic failed to work, but my eight-gauge shells were a year old and bulk nitro of that age is not much good on the seacoast.

There were eight geese in the first flock that arrived. They came from the "Dude's" side, as in fact did all

the birds that day, and dropping down among the decoys, waddled about, while the "Dude" and I shivered with excitement. We decided to stand up and shoot when the birds jumped. We forgot, however, that both of us were pretty large and the stand pretty small, and when we got up were so entangled with each other that out of four shots we got just one goose. Disgusted with our clumsy work, we sat back to wait for another chance. Soon it came. Eight fine, fat geese joined the decoys and we jumped up to shoot. As the birds rose, we dropped three with our first shots, and one each, mine wing-broken, with our seconds. The automatic jammed with the first shell and I sprang out of the stand and tore up the beach after the cripple, working the ejector with my right hand. I don't know how many times I shot at the poor creature before I finally killed him, but when I returned to the stand with the dead bird, the "Dude" was rolling over and over, convulsed with merriment. "Why didn't you club him with your gun instead of wasting all those shells? You would have got him quicker," he cried. After that the automatic reposed in one corner of the stand and I shot the eight-gauge.

Three more bunches visited our decoys and we took toll from them all. I counted fourteen as our total score when the flight ceased towards afternoon. Two of the geese had trailed off towards the sand hills apparently badly hit and I started to look them up. I soon found one stone dead and discovered the other not far from

the first but with his head up. He did not wait for me to get within range, and the one shot I fired when he flew off was simply a sporting chance. I saw him alight again far out on the flats and started after him. On the way I encountered Jesse, who said he thought the bird was dead. I told him I did not think so and handed him the Remington to try when the bird got up. Sure enough when Jesse approached and up went the Remington, "Crack! crack!" and still the goose flew on. Then a third "Crack!" and the old Canada came down in a heap. I made my way back to the stand with the two geese, and enjoyed a pipe in the sunshine.

Presently the "Dude" whispered, "There's Jesse rallying the big raft of geese out on the flats." We lay low and the great flock headed our way while we watched them and listened to the increasing clamor as they answered our decoys. We saw that they would not decoy, so stood up and gave them four "guns" as they went by. I accomplished nothing but the "Dude" landed an old gander that acted as if he had a stroke of paralysis and came tumbling down from among his companions to fall dead with a "thump" among our decoys. As we trudged home that night beside the old pony with our seventeen geese lying in state in the "sand buggy" we decided that the day's shoot was well worth the trip.

Saturday night's dinner was the real climax of the trip—oysters, soup, canned asparagus, yams, canned plum pudding and to top it all, the "piece de resistance" "in memoriam" of Thursday's most glorious shoot, "Roast Goose and Fixin's."

DEER HUNTING IN SOUTH CAROLINA

SOON after I bought my plantation and moved to Charleston, South Carolina, some of my friends suggested that I buy a share of the Liberty Hall Club. "No duck shooting, but good deer and wild turkey hunting, and some birds," was the way it was put up to me.

As to location, this is the way it was described to me how to reach this sportsman's paradise: "You drive out the Meetin' Street road straight on till you come to the Blue House road to Sumerville; that's a little over fifteen miles from the Charleston County court house at Broad and Meeting streets. There you take the right-hand road over the Goose Creek causeway, on past the Parson's place, the 'Oaks,' and 'round the corner, take the first right-hand turn into the woods. A rough drive of about three miles over a muddy, corduroyed cow path, is a fair description of what you will have to accomplish to reach the modern bungalow club house of the Liberty Hall Club." Audubon himself hunted at this historic place.

Being primarily a dyed-in-the-wool duck shooter, and coming from Missouri, I had to be shown, so at 6 o'clock one cool October morning I routed out a friendly member

when knew the road, and hazed the old Cadillac, with many a jolt and lurch, over the way to the club.

The crowd there gave us a hearty welcome, and we were ushered in to one of Minnie's real South Carolina breakfasts of "grits," and lots of it, bacon, eggs and coffee, and last but not least, beaten biscuits.

Having satisfied the inner man, the hunters mounted their prancing(?) steeds, some horses, but mostly mules brought in for a dollar a day by the neighboring negroes and followed Sammie Seal, the whipper-in and club-keeper, a fine-looking negro of pronounced Indian features, together with five couple of hounds, to "Nigger House and Cut Down," the first drive for the day.

Sammie left us to "put in" the dogs, while "Pat" Lowndes and Frank Ford, two of the old timers, stationed the standers, and gave us our instructions: "Several short blasts on Sammie's horn means the start of the drive, and three long blasts means, 'Come here, all's over.' "

I was placed a short distance from the main trail, and after tying my old mule to a sapling in a bunch of small pines behind my stand, I "got set" and waited for something to happen.

Soon I heard Sam's horn, and not long afterwards the pack opened up in a wonderful burst of music. The sounds came directly towards me and shortly, through the open pine woods in front of me, I saw the flash of a white tail rocketing over the scrub growth, and a deer burst into view, apparently bound straight for me. Oh, no! I wasn't excited!

Then I saw it was a "peg-horn" buck, and as there is a club law at Liberty Hall against shooting does, my excitement grew.

To my disgust the deer kept bearing to my right, and finally stopped for a minute to get his bearings. I was tempted to shoot, though he was a long ways off, but I was afraid he was going to get through the line. I hadn't made up my mind when a shot sounded from my right, and the deer slid down out of sight behind a myrtle bush.

Mayrant, the next stander, had scored.

Loud blew the horns, and after the buck had been hung up in a tree, which we would recover on our way back, the cavalcade once more got under way.

In "Rodford," the next drive, the dogs "jumped" again, but nothing but does were seen, one flashing past me not over fifteen yards away.

"Leseman's Lead" was our next destination, where we were stationed in a half moon, while Lowndes, Ford and Huguenin, old-timers all, went into the drive with Sammie.

Hardly were we on our stands when the hounds were put in, and immediately their wild music burst forth. "Look out! Look out! Buck! Buck!" cried Sammie, and "Bang! bang! bang!" sounded the guns.

"Ah!" There he comes, bounding through the pine-land with tremendous leaps, his head, with a regular basket of horns atop, thrown well back.

As he swept by the stander to my left, the friend with

whom I had driven up that morning, he stepped out from behind a tree and with deliberate aim gave him two barrels. The buck staggered, but I thought he was going to give me a shot as he kept on. Suddenly, just as I was going to pull trigger, he let go all fours and crashed to the ground.

A four-point buck! He surely was a king of the pineland, and well worth the "bloodying" that welcomed my successful friend for killing his first deer.

Do you wonder, after this experience, that I bought a share in the Liberty Hall Club?

I Lose a Shirt Tail.

The Friday following Thanksgiving, accompanied by Horne, my plantation manager, his brother Johnnie, and his brother-in-law Moore, I drove in to Liberty Hall with the hopes of giving one of these North Carolina visitors a shot at a buck. It was afternoon when we arrived, but as we had consumed our lunch on the drive up, we did not lose any time and were soon ready for action.

I placed my three visitors, Johnnie, Moore and Horne, in the order named along the bank in the "Pasture" drive, directly behind the club house, took the "Bachman," stand myself, and tied my horse at the "Pine Tree" stand, so if the deer came that way, he would be turned in my direction.

With the clear notes of Sammie's horn the drive was on, and soon "old Buck" opened up a little, to be

followed by occasional squeals from some of the pups as they tried to work out a cold trail. This was enough to keep me right on edge, so I was certainly on the job and ready, waiting, when a tremendous uproar showed that the pack had "jumped." The deer had been "lying-up" in front of Horne's stand, and I expected him to get the shot. The wild music of the hounds showed that it was a "sight cry." Directly I saw the deer, a fine "two-snag" buck, literally flying towards "Pine Tree" stand with "Hard Times," "Buck" and "Logan" close at his heels. Seeing my horse, the buck swung to the left and flashed by the "Bachman" stand like a bullet.

"Bang! bang" I turned two loads of No. 1 buckshot in his direction. The buck gave a tremendous leap, cleared the myrtle and gall berry bushes back of my stand, and disappeared "over the wire" into a neighboring preserve, "Stoney's." I ran to stop the dogs, but in vain. "Hard Times" simply swerved to one side and carried the rest of the pack, in full cry, off with him.

I had lost the dogs, there was no more hunting for the day, and I was due to lose a shirt tail, the club's penalty for missing a buck.

The Three-Snag Buck.

Again I was at the "Bachman" stand. This time a year later, and on the last deer hunt of the season, the day before New Year's.

Fire had raged through the pinelands and swamps the previous week and had thoroughly swept all the drives with the exception of "Big Mill Swamp" and the "Pasture."

We had driven "Big Mill Swamp" that morning, had jumped two peg-horns and "Old Sure Shot" (W. F.) had downed one of them. Since then we had tucked one of Minnie's real dinners under our belts, and were fit to be in at the finish of one of the grandfather bucks that Sammie had told us about.

I heard Sammie's horn as he put the dogs in, and immediately, directly in front of me, appeared four deer. They were loping gracefully along towards the "Bachman" stand and apparently had not heard the dogs. The leader, a big doe, sailed by about thirty yards away, followed closely by a three-snag buck. I confess that I was shaking a little, but I took my time, saw the old fellow's shoulder well over the end of my gun, swung it with him, and, as I pulled, his hind legs let go, his front legs doubled under him, and with his head thrown back, he fell never to rise again.

Behind the big fellow stood a two-snag buck, greatly bewildered, trying to figure out what had happened to his fellow. The fourth deer, a small doe, doubled back into the drive.

I threw my gun on buck No. 2, and then pulled it down. With "Old Sure Shot's" buck, we had all the meat the party of seven could use and I didn't want to be a hog. I am sorry now I didn't shoot, as the deer

was within twenty yards of me, and I could hardly have missed him. As it was, the buck dashed off towards the "Pine Tree" stand to be shot at by several standers, and was found dead by Sammie a week later from the resulting wounds.

The Christening of "Old Sure Shot."

About a year after I joined the Liberty Hall Club, we were unfortunate enough to lose Frank Ford, one of our most enthusiastic members, and one of the best known deer and turkey hunters in coastal South Carolina.

Naturally when his brother Willie appeared on the scene in time for the deer hunting the following fall, we were anxious to see how he would "stack up." He showed us.

We had started the hunt, as we often did, with the "Nigger House" and "Cut Down" drive. The dogs jumped and carried the deer off towards "Dug Ground" and the right flank of the standers. Then one shot, the call of the horns summoned us, and we rode over to the old log tramway to find Willie Ford sitting nonchalantly on his horse, with a peg-horn buck lying in the pine thicket in front of him. "Only need one shot," says he, and was straightway christened "Old Sure Shot."

In "Rodford," the next drive, the dogs jumped again, but the buck, a peg-horn which Sammie saw, doubled back and escaped into a swampy, overgrown bottom.

There were no tracks leading out, so we ringed the cover and put the dogs in. Directly they jumped, and shortly we heard a shot.

When the crowd came up, there was Willie Ford, sitting with his back against a pine tree calmly smoking a cigarette. "What did you shoot at, Willie?" cried "Pat" Lowndes. "There's a buck lying over there," said Ford, pointing to some bushes about eighty yards from where he sat. Sure enough there lay the peg-horn. A long shot—and again—only one barrel. It seemed if Ford's nickname had been well chosen.

Now there is an old saying, "The truth will out," and later in the day, after a noticeable amount of whispering and laughing between Willie Ford and "Pat" Lowndes, they owned up that "Pat" had killed the first deer, and then placed Ford, who was on the next stand, so that the rest of the crowd would think he had shot it. Also it transpired that the second deer was not over thirty yards away when killed, and Ford had walked back to where we found him to make it look like a long shot.

The strange part of it is that despite these incongruities, the name still sticks, and Willie Ford is known by all of us as "Old Sure Shot."

AMONG THE CAROLINA "HENS" AND "GOBBLERS"

BESIDES deer, wild turkeys were plentiful my first year at Liberty Hall. Several were shot as they were flying over in the deer drives, and I had loosed a couple of loads of buckshot at an old gobbler as he topped the pines coming out of "Turkey" drive, but without effect.

I had been keeping my two horses at the club until my stables were completed at the plantation, and when Horne and I drove up before daylight one morning in late January, our early start was with the purpose of getting a shot at a gobbler before breakfast.

Sammie placed us along the ridge at the edge of "Big Mill" swamp, the writer in a stand behind the huge root of a fallen pine, and Horne in a thicket over a quarter of a mile from me. The turkeys had been taking the bait in front of my stand, and we could hear the clucking of the old hens behind us in the swamp.

With the coming of daylight the turkey talk ceased, and I kept peeking out over the old root looking for arrivals. Nothing appeared except a red bird or two, a mocking bird, a brown thrush, and a Carolina wren. It looked as though the turkeys had decided on another course that day.

All at once I heard two shots over in Horne's direction, and when I looked over that way the air was black with turkeys flying in all directions. Presently one flew by me well up in the tree-tops and my chance shot produced no result. Then a small hen came by lower down and at the report of my second barrel she doubled up in mid-flight and came crashing down through the branches. An eight-pound hen turkey.

Horne soon showed up, carrying another hen, the mate of mine. He said that after waiting a while he saw what he first thought was a drove of hogs heading his way. Then he realized that it was a flock of over twenty-five wild turkeys. He kept perfectly still, and they passed by about sixty yards from where he sat. He picked out the nearest bird and shot both barrels as he wanted to be sure of it at the long range. When the turkeys flew, one of them alighted in a pine within gunshot. He had reloaded his gun but was so excited that he forgot to throw off the safety, and kept pointing the gun at the turkey, and pulling the trigger, wondering why it didn't go off, until the bird got tired of waiting and flew off.

A Gobbler Gits.

Another morning Sammie and I had heard an old gobbler who was gobbling in the swamp, and Sammie had induced me to perch myself on a fallen tree about

ten feet up in the air. The branches made a fair screen in front of me, but I was in plain sight from behind. It seemed as if the turkey would cross the ridge where my stand was located, and sure enough, he answered my first imitation of the call of a hen turkey. I called again after a short interval, and then once more, but no response. The old fellow had probably found his harem.

All at once I heard a peculiar call just behind me to the right, and very gradually turned my head so that I could look over my shoulder. There stood a young gobbler. He had just stepped out of the thicket into the open, and was giving the vicinity a careful and very thorough inspection. Finally he decided the coast was clear and walked on, occasionally scratching and picking up berries and mast. He got directly behind me so that I lost sight of him, but I could hear him rustling the leaves and scratching. I was in a predicament. By the time I was able to get turned around and in a position to shoot, the turkey would certainly be galloping out of range like a race-horse. I determined to wait and see if the confounded bird would work around in front of me. Minutes seemed like hours, but I must have sat there motionless for at least ten minutes listening to the picking and scratching. I lost patience at last and swung around on my elevated perch, nearly capsizing as I tried to bring my gun to bear on the now fleeting gobbler. He was practically out of range and going like the wind. I fired once for luck, and as he

flew off, one solitary feather came floating to the ground. The gobbler was gone.

A Nineteen-Pound Patriarch.

Turkeys had been taking the bait at the gum thicket regularly and Sammie said there was a very large gobbler in the drove. So one balmy morning in March I put my boy, Ray, in the stand, leaving Sammie with him with instructions not to shoot any hens but wait for the old gobbler.

I sat down with my back to a pine tree and began to call. Soon a gobbler answered and then another. I kept calling and they answering. Finally one grew silent. Then I heard a tremendous "gobble! gobble! gobble!" from some myrtles one hundred yards away on my left. My heart seemed to thump so loud that I was sure it would scare the turkey away. Bang! bang! sounded Ray's gun. I was sure that my own chances were over and that my gobbler would be scared off by the loud reports, so I stood up and started off in their direction. Directly I spied my turkey, out of range, running off like the wind. (Some of the old turkey hunters told me later that I should have waited and the gobbler would have come out to me despite the other shots. Encouraging, eh?)

The first thing I saw at the gum thicket was a huge gobbler out in front of the stand. He was kicking and struggling to rise, but a closer inspection showed that

a stout cord round his red legs hobbled him securely. Presently his struggles ceased, his alert old head fell forward and the gobbler was dead. Nineteen pounds full, the scales showed, and you don't often get them larger, the record weight at Liberty Hall being twenty pounds and fourteen ounces.

Ray had had some experience. Hardly was he settled in the stand before a turkey hen stalked out of the bushes, and after the usual careful inspection, started in on her breakfast. Ray watched her for over half an hour before she got fed up and departed. Then three more hens appeared and Ray watched them picking and scratching for some time. At last he and Sammie had about lost patience. Ray wanted to shoot a hen, and Sammie was ready to tell him to go ahead, when they heard "Pumph! pumph!" in the thicket, and there came strutting out an old gobbler followed by three more hens. A regular Sultan with his seraglio.

At Ray's first shot the old fellow crumpled up in a heap, but immediately was on his feet again and streaking for cover. Ray's second barrel scored the turkey, promiscuously with big shot, and down he went again. This time, when he started to get up, Sammie, with a tremendous leap, cleared the top of the stand, grabbed him, and tied him up where I found him on my arrival.

A mighty proud moment for Ray when he rode in to breakfast with the old "Patriarch" with his flowing beard, tied to his saddle bow!

DUCK SHOOTING IN SOUTH CAROLINA RICE FIELDS

DUCK shooting has ever had an attraction for me. In February a few seasons ago I had the great good fortune to be a "pay guest" for two days at Cherokee, the hospitable plantation home of the gifted author of "A Woman Rice Planter." This beautiful old place with its avenue of live oaks, its old-fashioned garden with the japonicas, azaleas, crepe myrtles and Lady Campbell violets and its old Colonial house looking out over the tawny Pedee River, is situated on the banks of the Pedee some fourteen miles out of Georgetown, S. C.

A flivver, piloted by some local Barney Oldfield, showed me a swift flight over the rutted apology for a road, and also flushed two wild turkeys a mile or so out of town. It grew dark before we reached our destination, but as we turned in the avenue the full moon was just rising, and its pale lights sifting down through the moss-hung live oaks on the old white house with its pillared porch gave me an impression of the "old time South" that I shall never forget.

"Chloe," Mrs. Pennington's old cook, certainly knew how to make waffles, and there were plenty of them

ready for me when I arrived. Later, Joe, the house boy, showed me up to my room, where I mounted some steps to leap into the huge feather bed. The quacking of the mallards in the rice fields across the river lulled me to sleep.

Shortly before daybreak Joe roused me, and started a "light wood" blaze on the hearth in the warmth of which I hustled on my shooting clothes. In the dining room Joe had breakfast ready of boiled eggs, hominy, sausage, toast and coffee, all cooked over the open fire, and then Joe Keit took me in hand.

The canoe was paddled up river, crossed over and sped on through a maze of rice field ditches and canals into the "Thoroughfare." Occasionally we surprised a mallard into splashing up out of the reeds with a startled quack, but it was still too dark to shoot. At last an old greenhead with swiftly beating wings rose against the faint pink of the horizon that announced the coming dawn. His black silhouette was too good a chance to miss, and he splashed into the canal at my first barrel. At the report of my gun legions of ducks roared up from the old rice fields, and the air was full of the "whee-whee-wheeing" of the countless wings. I am sure that all the ducks on the Carolina coast were holding a convention in "Marshfield." Every now and then pairs and singles and small flocks would dart out over the bank of the "Thoroughfare" ahead of the canoe and a number of them stayed behind to join the bag. Then, too, we "jumped" a few ducks around the

bends of the twisting stream. As the sun rose higher the ducks stopped moving, and we paddled back to the landing on the Pedee.

In the evening Joe paddled me out into the wild rice in "Marshfield" to a little muddy pond-hole where we set out a half a dozen blocks. Then we shoved back into the rice at the pond's edge. There was little air stirring and the ducks did not begin moving in till near dark. I had the decoys so placed that when the birds hovered over them before alighting they would be plainly outlined against the moonlight. With such chances it was nearly impossible to miss, and I had hardly downed one before one or two more would be flickering in the pale light. I suppose if I had cared to keep on I could have killed a hundred ducks, but twenty-five seemed plenty, and at that, I added five or six more to my string while Joe was picking up the ducks and decoys.

On the Santee River.

The following winter the "Missus" and my two boys joined me on my trip to Georgetown. Unhappily Mrs. Pennington was ill and could not have us at Cherokee, but we were lucky enough to discover another haunt of the "pay guests" at Annandale Plantation, six miles down Winyah Bay. There we spent a long-to-be-remembered ten days hunting deer, turkeys and ducks, and of this latter I shall make special mention.

The plantation consisted of some 4,400 acres, 2,300 of which were old rice fields along both banks of the North Santee. Two hundred acres had been planted the past season, but the greater part of this "duck habitat" was grown up in wild rice. There were plenty of ducks, but the equipment of boats and decoys were rather slim, and the feeding grounds being so vast, that unless blustery weather occurred to keep the birds moving, one fired a few shots where first located, and the duck battalions hied themselves to pastures new where there were no gunners.

One evening of a cold, stormy day, the spitting rain and sleet fast turning into snow, the boys and I crossed the river to a small reedy island where the luxuriant growth of wild rice made it a famous "hang-out" for English ducks (mallards). I took my stand on an old rice field bank near the landing, while the boys went on with the negro who had paddled us across, as he was the only one of us who had on hip boots, and even then many of the rice field ditches were too deep for him to cross to retrieve the birds.

It was certainly cold and uncomfortable on that muddy rice field bank, and the wet snow made it hard to see, but a continuous flight of mallards streamed past, and the weather was such that they would hardly seem to notice the reports of my gun in the roar of the gale. The first duck I killed dropped on the farther side of the deep ditch in front of me. The next one crashed into the reeds across the canal behind

me, as did the third and fourth. I knew that they were all "lost birds," so afterwards chose only those shots where I was reasonably sure of downing the ducks on the bank beside me. At that I had seventeen, sixteen mallards and one pintail, when the boys came back on their way to the boat.

Ducking at "Rice Hope."

In January a friend of mine had invited me to a duck shoot at "Rice Hope," one of the old rice plantations some thirty miles up the Cooper River from my home at Charleston. The ninety-horse-power motor cruiser "Nokomis" transported us up the river and back, and formed our "home camp" while at the plantation of my friend.

We arrived in time for the eveniug shoot and the hunters divided, most of them to take stands on the rice field banks or dykes, or in the reeds out in the fields to shoot over decoys. I was allotted a Mullins "tin boat" to paddle through the rice field ditches "jumping" ducks and keeping the birds moving for the standers. It was easy shooting as the fat rice-fed mallards would stay hidden in the thick patches of reeds and wild rice till I nearly paddled on top of them, when with loud quacks of alarm, preparing me for their appearance, they would flop up out of the cover which they were so reluctant to leave. With my paddle tied to a thwart, and my gun (with the "safe" off) across my knees, it was a simple matter to get lined up on the old fellows before they

were fully straightened out in full flight. I had an even dozen, all mallards, when I got back, and the standers all had their share.

In the morning all of us shot out of stands in the rice over decoys. The day was warm with practically no wind, so after the first flurry at daylight, the shooting was rather slow. Still when we "shoved off" at noon the total for the evening and morning shoots with four gunners was 114 ducks. I had a stand in part of the old plantation known as "Fish Pond." There was a little open water directly in front of me and also on my right, but on all other sides I was surrounded by wild rice and reeds towering over my head. The ducks that came my way, mostly blackheads, with a few mallards, would flash into sight without warning, and while a few hovered over the decoys, most of them gave me a snap shot as they started to disappear again over the reeds. I picked up fifteen, but was unable to find a number of birds that dropped dead in the jungle of rice and reeds.

Duck shooting on the South Carolina coast is unique, apart from its quantities of ducks and their distinctive abode in the old rice fields, in its environment—the old plantations, rich in historic interest. One can easily imagine himself following the "Swamp Fox" (Francis Marion) along the twisting "Thoroughfare," or through the maze of rice field ditches in the Santee swamp, his shotgun a flintlock musket, his game no swift-flying mallard or lightning-darting teal, but the skulking Tory, or the red-jacketed Tarleton trooper.