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JOHNNY, GET YOUR GUN.

GAME IS PLENTIFUL AND SPORTSMEN MAY HAVE LOTS OF FUN.

The Swift Winged Snipe, the Coy Quail, the Apple Duck and Many Other Birds Waiting to Be Shot—The Pleasures of Hunting.

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HERE do they come from? These swift winged circlers that fly across the great salt marshes in the spring, the late summer and the fall, whistling their "Wheew-wee, wheew-wee" so clearly that at a mile, or even two miles away, it sounds as distinct as the tone of a flute nearby. Well, they come from the north—probably Labrador—and whole colonies of them come down the coast in July and August, so young and foolish that if it were not for the few old birds that stay with them as guides, and probably as mentors, they would fall an easier prey than they do to the snipe shooter. Great yellow legs, larger than a pigeon, little hawk's eyes, small as a wren, dozens of varieties between, all toothsome, all fair game for the sportsman.

Of all bird shooting it seems to me that snipe shooting is the pleasantest. There is the least of fatigue, the least of exposure about it, and to a lazy man who has still the passion of sport it is very delicious to lie in wait for prey and shoot it without labor. Not for the love of destroying life, as sentimentalists declare by way of denouncing us, but for the development and exercise of skill, the enhancement of health, the exalted physical enjoyment of outdoors.

It is the early hunter that catches the snipe. Half an hour before dawn is the time to start. The athletic sportsman who sneered just now when I spoke of lying in wait for game will have plenty of exercise if he lives, as I do, two or three miles away from the best ponds and has to row to them. Down through the salt marshes toward the ocean, with the fresh breeze blowing away the slowly rising mists and causing the millions of [illegible], birds and insects that live among the reeds and grass, streaks of gray light first, then the pink flush of the eastern sky, songs and twitterings, chirps and whistles on every side—all make a morning that is enough to convince a pessimist that life is worth living, at least for the morning. At the ponds it is for a few minutes joy enough to watch nature's awakening. Then the birds

MAY KILL A DOZEN BIRDS.

come, by ones, by scores, by hundreds sometimes. When they flock they flock so closely that even an indifferent shot may often kill a dozen birds with one barrel.

The skill and the real pleasure of the sport, however, is in the shooting of single birds. Their flight is very swift, and though not as erratic as that of some others, it is different indeed from that of the most of the field and wood birds. The latter are apt to fly straight, no matter how swiftly, but the flight of the snipe is [illegible] a succession of rapid curves, upward, downward and to either side. Only two hours before I began writing this page a flock of fully twenty, started by the shot of a brother hunter, circled around toward where I stood. By the time my gun was at my shoulder they were within twenty feet of my face flying directly at me. I fired, but the instant I did so the flock divided, one half going past me on either side, and one shell was wasted. It was the rare experience of missing because the mark was too near.

It is not many years ago that snipe—at least the coast varieties—were only to be found on the coast. Now they say they shoot the very same birds as far west as Salt Lake. It seems a most remarkable instance of a change of habit.

The confusion of game laws makes it almost impossible for a gunner to know what he may or may not shoot in his own state, and utterly impossible for an average man to remember all the conflicting statutes in different states. It is therefore out of the question to talk of open seasons with any degree of accuracy. All that may be said is that the season is almost at hand for almost all game or is now open.

Shooting over a dog is the ideal of most American bird hunters, and there is nothing to urge against the idea provided the dog is all he should be—in other words, if he understands his business thoroughly and knows the man who is behind him. For the man who has such a dog and a good gun, a good aim and a good pair of legs, the autumn is full of glorious sport. The legs are necessary, for I know of no part of the country where quail can now be [illegible] shot as we used to hunt them in southern Alabama, on horseback. Through woods and stubble, across prairies and plowed fields, then hundreds of thousands of good Americans will go for the next three months after birds of all descriptions.

Few persons, indeed, excepting marketmen—and marketmen know a surprising number of things that other people are ignorant of—few others realize how great the slaughter of game is. They know well that it is too great. Inexhaustible as the supply seems to be, recuperative as mother Nature is, there is no possible doubt that many of the choicest birds of North America are doomed to extinction in the near future if they are not protected in some way. Already countries and states that were formerly populous with quail and woodcock, partridges and prairie chickens are given over by the sportsman as hopeless, while the pothunter has gone perforce into other business, or has "gone west."

Big as the country is, its resources will not last forever if the war of extermination goes on. There is no lack of laws. Indeed, in most states there are too many laws. They stumble over one another. Our legislators see the danger and try, according to their lights, to avert it; but the slaughter still continues.

There will be many readers who will, perhaps, ridicule this, and truly it is difficult for one who has traversed the forests of Maine or of Arkansas to realize that the supply of game birds can

ACROSS PRAIRIES AND PLOWED FIELDS.

ever be exhausted. But with [illegible] of people, increasing at a million a year, many things are possible. The Indians and white hunters of the plains a generation ago laughed at the idea of the buffalo disappearing, but he is gone.

And it is to be said in all fairness that the true sportsman is not to be blamed for it all. If sportsmen were twice as numerous, it may fairly be doubted if they would exterminate a single desirable species. Unfortunately for the sportsman the pothunters kill scores where they kill single birds, and the pothunters, shooting or trapping for the markets and eager for the high prices of the early season, break the game laws fifty times willfully where the sportsman may violate them once in ignorance.

There is another kind of shooting, almost as distinct from what we have been considering as is the shooting of "big game." When the ducks come from the north the sportsman has use for entirely different tactics. He also has use for a vigorous constitution and for a hearty contempt of hardship. For the young man, however, who has not yet come to love his comfort and ease too much, duck shooting is perhaps the most exhilarating of all bird hunting. And with decent luck the temptation to excessive slaughter is very great. It may be, however, as is claimed, that there is far less danger of exterminating the migratory coast birds than the field birds. Coming as they do from their breeding places, down along the shore in countless flocks, they escape the hunter by flying on, while the field birds only go from the range of one gun into that of another.

Aside from the question of game preservation, which seems to be one that has only been solved by a people who have class legislation, there is open for consideration the greater question of field sports and their availability for the general public. Sport people will have in one shape or another, and sport in some shapes has proven disastrous to a goodly percentage of American youth. It seems to be a sensible suggestion right now that the young man who desires

DUCK SHOOTING.

fun—and all young men do—should, instead of buying bottles and playing pool, buy a shotgun and train a dog. Let him learn to use the gun and to be careful, above all things, in the use of it. Let him teach the dog (and so get a friend who will never fail him), and then let him go forth for out of door sport. So he will grow healthier, stronger, more self reliant. So he will not fall into evil ways.

DAVID A. CURTIS.

Two Views of Chicago.

If you were to judge some of the streets in Chicago by the horses feeding [illegible] the pavements and stamping flies off themselves in the [illegible] thoroughfares, you would think yourself in some country town, but when you look up at the fifteen story buildings and listen to the roar of the commerce whistling and trundling and humming all about you, you know you are in one of the greatest cities of the world.

Timely Items.

"That was an appropriate bit of music they had at the cattlemen's annual dinner."

"What was it?"

"The band played Beethoven's 'Concerto in Cow.'"—Harper's Bazar.

A FINE EVERGREEN.

A Beautiful Fir Worthy of the Attention of Landscape Gardeners.

On the grounds of The Rural New Yorker a specimen of Nordmann's fir has stood unharmed by heat or cold for some fourteen years.

NORDMANN'S FIR.

The journal mentioned says: "We know, however, of a tree of about fifteen years of age being killed, root and branch, less than two miles from The Rural grounds, during a severe winter. An unusually dry fall preceding may have caused its death rather than the severe winter, as other conifers regarded as perfectly hardy were also killed. This beautiful fir is said to be hardy in Rochester, and may stand still colder climates.

"Abies (Picea) Nordmanniana was first discovered by Professor Nordmann growing upon the Adsbar mountains at an elevation of some 5,000 feet. Some of the trees were 100 feet in height. It is found also on the Chinese mountains. The leaves are a full inch in length, of a dark, very glossy green on the upper surface, and of a glaucous color underneath, making a pleasing contrast not unlike that seen in Alcock's spruce. It is certainly a fine evergreen and worthy of a place in every collection." The cut here reproduced is from a photograph of the specimen alluded to.

Propagating Cuttings.

Many of our common trees and shrubs may be propagated by cuttings, some much more easily and with greater certainty than others. Among those of the [illegible] varieties easily propagated in this way are poplars, sycamores, willows and cottonwoods, from which cuttings grow with but little care, others, [illegible] them to ground containing the requisite amount of moisture. Among the fruit bearers the quince, grape, currant and gooseberry may be rooted with [illegible] with which this method is usually successful. As a general rule, however, the use of plants with roots is the most trustworthy and the one to be recommended. The best time for taking off cuttings is in the fall as soon as the wood has ripened, and they will require careful treatment in a pit or otherwise to preserve them in a cool and moist condition for setting out early in the spring. As a rule the cuttings should be of the new growth and should be cut off just beyond a bud, and it is best to keep them through the winter with the butts upward. When set, from one to two buds are enough to be left above ground. Cuttings should be from five to ten inches long, according to varieties, and the long ones may be set in a slanting direction.

A Cheap Flower Pit.

I kept my tender roses last winter by having a frame made of planks, writes a correspondent in Popular Gardening. This frame was set on the ground and the earth inside taken out to a depth of 1 to 1½ feet, and this earth banked up the frame. Then I filled in, first, horse manure, then muck and sand, and planted my roses, covering them with glass and in cold [illegible] with a piece of carpet. The last of [illegible] winter I put more manure on the outside, and my roses kept green all winter and in the early spring sent out fine strong shoots, which bore blooms some of the finest roses I ever saw. I shall try other plants the same way this winter. This would hardly be called a pit, but has been a very inexpensive yet successful way to keep roses at least.

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