

HUNTING AND FISHING, HERE AND ELSEWHERE

THE CHINESE PHEASANT AND THE HUNGARIAN PHEASANT ON AMERICAN UPLANDS

(Portion of a striking article by Ernest McCaffey in Recreation.)



PARADOXICAL as the statement may seem, the future of imported game birds seems brighter than that of our native game birds. The importation and propagation of foreign birds for restocking or adding to native covers was long ago proven practicable. The success of the initial experiments and the widespread interest and increasing outlay for eggs and full-grown birds from Europe and Asia attests the firm hold which the movement has already gained in America.

The most notable instance of what has been done in this line is the introduction of the Chinese or China pheasant into Oregon. Over a score of years ago ring-neck pheasants were imported from China and turned loose in the Willamette valley. They were of the true Chinese variety, as distinguished from the English breed. The beautiful supply of cover in this beautiful valley, which is 8,000 square miles in extent, the mild climate tempered by the influence of the Kuroshio or Black Current of Japan, and the fertility of the valley itself, combined to make the location an ideal one.

Oregon has now a greater abundance of China pheasants than China herself has. Fifty thousand of these splendid birds were killed in one day within the last four years, and yet they are increasing so rapidly that there has been no apparent diminution of their number. Where they are just getting a foot-hold as to propagation they are being rigidly protected, as in the country east of the Cascade mountains. As no sale of the birds is allowed, nor shipment for sale, the market hunters are shut out. Sales for breeding purposes being allowed, neighboring states are beginning to buy birds and stock up. Prices range from \$6.50 to \$7.50 a pair, and they can be obtained from all dealers in the state. It is instructive, also, to note that Oregon has an open season from October 1 until December 1, on English partridges, capercaillie, moor-hen and silver, golden, copper, green Japanese and Reeves pheasants, so that her initial step in pheasant rearing has been followed up extensively with additional foreign importations.

Perhaps the most significant feature about the raising of these birds is the fact that they not only thrive in districts where the weather is mild, like the Coast states, and the South and Southwest, but they are hardy and can withstand the severe cold of northern winters in such states as Illinois, for example. The state game commissioner of Illinois, Hon. John A. Wheeler, says they can stand any kind of cold and are "great hustlers for feed." This means that they have the hardiness and persistent habits of food seeking of our native ruffed grouse. But, unlike the ruffed grouse, and to the decided advantage of the China pheasant, the imported birds seem to stay in the fields most of the time, excepting in winter, and apparently prefer the cultivated tracts rather than the forest fastnesses.

This means, then, that less cover is needed where they are raised than is necessary in the case of ruffed grouse, and that they can endure northern winters with safety where quail would often freeze in entire covets. This being the evidence of men who have observed their habits and had years of experience in raising and experimenting with them, it is safe to assert that they are the bird for the future where the diminution of cover has thinned out or driven away the ruffed grouse, and in those parts of the country where the winter months make the existence of quail a hazardous uncertainty. Couple this with the further fact that the beauty and size of the China pheasant are remarkable, and the flesh delicious, and the reasons for prophesying that the birds have come to America to stay are many and potent.

The China pheasant is one of the real game birds of the future here in America. The eggs can be hatched out under a barn-yard fowl, and with adequate protection and judicious game laws, there is no reason why in the years to come the birds should not be plentiful in every state in the Union, save perhaps those states so far north that the deep snows will, during long winters, prevent them from finding enough feed to keep them alive.

As to the claim that pheasants will drive out the ruffed grouse, this does not hold good in the case of the Chinese variety. The ruffed grouse stick to the deep woods; the China pheasants prefer the more cultivated spaces. In the winter, where both kinds of birds might be in the same locality, the ruffed grouse would be more apt to take to the trees in case of neighborhood differences, and the pheasants would be likely to skulk on the ground. In any event, considering the scarcity of cover, ruffed grouse shooting is a sport for the remote districts, while China pheasant shooting will be a sport which will thrive around the farms where there may be only sparse cover, and in extent so small that ruffed grouse would not thrive there.

As for the quail, cunning and swift of either wing or leg, I do not believe they can be driven out by any birds short of the game-destroyers, such as hawks, crows and owls. Quail and ruffed grouse occupy the same covers and there have been no data to show that the China pheasant and Bob-white will not "in their little nests agree."

Coming next to the question of the European partridges which are being brought into the United States, apparently the consensus of opinion favors overwhelmingly the

Hungarian variety. He seems to be a coming bird. Extremes of climate do not seem to affect him, and this is of course one of the most valuable attributes of upland game birds. Teasdale-Buckell, the celebrated English sporting writer, in considering the introduction of the English gray partridge into America contends that the Hungarian partridge would be even more suitable, because the variations of heat and cold are greater in Hungary and Bohemia (and in America) than in England. He also briefly mentions the advisability of crossing these breeds.

English gray partridges are so wild nowadays that they will fly as far or farther than our prairie chickens when flushed, and they are usually driven over the shooters the same as pheasants. But on the continent, the Hungarian partridges are walked up in a similar manner to that by which we hunt quail in America. In a number of the states experiments are being conducted with these partridges, and in very nearly every state where the importation and propagation of foreign game birds has received any attention the Hungarian partridge has come in for a share of notice.

In Kansas 610 pairs of Hungarian partridges were liberated in 1907, and the results have been eminently satisfactory. It is not a bird which prefers to frequent the timber, but one which will be found more often in the fields and stubbles, although flying to the hedges and cover for protection. It will also seek cover for its nest, and thereby follows the natural instinct of an upland bird for seclusion and safety from natural enemies. It is very hardy, and the only thing to be feared in bringing it into the most northern states would be the problem of whether it could scratch up enough food during the extremely bitter and snowy weather to sustain it until spring.

Comparatively little cover will suffice for their nesting and protection, and in this respect they are similar to the China pheasants. On almost any farm there may be found a small patch of timber or brush, some hedge or thickety gully, which would afford ample cover for a covey of these partridges, yet which would not make enough for a solitary ruffed grouse to hide in. They will nest in grass patches, in fence corners and berry thickets, and in hedges and wood-pastures.

W. B. Mershon, of Saginaw, Mich., the author of "The Passenger Pigeon," and a well-known angler and hunter, is a reliable authority as to the Hungarian partridge. He advises liberating them in early spring and fattening them well after their ocean journey by keeping them in confinement before setting them out. He gives to this partridge the credit of being "the best mother of all the game birds, unless excepting the ruffed grouse. The mother keeps count of her brood, and will hunt up a stray chick, where a mother pheasant will start off in search of food and leave her progeny to follow as best they can. Mr. Mershon's experience with these partridges has been most satisfactory, and those which he has brought into Michigan and liberated have lived through one winter and brought out their broods in various portions of the state.

In Illinois Game Commissioner Wheeler has been interested in these birds since 1906. In that year Illinois purchased 530 pairs of Hungarian partridges, distributing most of them throughout the state. Good reports were received concerning them, and it was understood they were increasing rapidly and doing well. In 1908 about 1,000 pairs were distributed. All these were brought from American importers. Partridge and pheasant eggs are both placed under common barn-yard hens for hatching purposes at the Illinois game farm. The custom of distributing these partridges in pairs, as quail are often "set out," and as is practised by the Illinois commission, is not followed by Mr. Mershon, as he claims not only that it is difficult to distinguish the male from the female bird, but that if put out in pairs one bird may meet with an accident. His experience has been that about six birds in a place was the most successful way in which to distribute them.

Hungarian partridges will eat the small grains, seeming to prefer them to corn, cabbage leaves, celery tops, apples, insects, bugs, etc., and they require plenty of water. According to Mr. Mershon, in releasing them they should be set down where they are to be liberated some evening in a box with some brush placed around it, and a little enclosure made in which food is placed. After dark the cover of the box should be removed. When received from the importer a pen with the sides and top screened should be provided for them. A common chicken coop will answer, provided it is thoroughly cleaned and protected at the sides and top by some evergreen or other branches or corn stalks, so that the partridges, if frightened at the approach of any one, cannot injure themselves by flying against the side of the pen or the top of it.

Raising both pheasants and partridges by hand is not nearly so difficult as raising the common turkey. Strict cleanliness should be observed, and it is always best to feed them on boards or in boxes so that they will not tread the food into the ground or get it mixed with their droppings. Boiling the water when the chicks are very young, and, in fact, as long as the birds are in the pen, is a wise precaution, and the pens should be kept scrupulously clean and free from insects. It is not even necessary to have the adult birds when eggs can be procured, since an ordinary barn yard hen can hatch the eggs as well as a mother bird. In the case of the partridges, the partridge mothers may be depended on

to take care of the brood, but the pheasant's maternal instinct is not nearly so reliable.

In nearly every state in the Union there is a little timber left. Even in the prairie states the hedges and orchards are not all gone. In such localities the Hungarian partridge will certainly thrive, even where the prairie chickens seem to disappear. They will raise from fifteen to twenty birds in a covey, and with a rigid adherence to protection until they are plentiful, and with a limit of from eight to ten birds to a gun in a day, they can easily become numerous in every state of the Union, barring, possibly, the extreme northern and northeastern states, and even in these states, as Mr. Mershon's tests will show regarding Michigan, the Hungarian partridge has made the strongest kind of bid for high honors as one of the hardest of upland game birds.

The famous Reeves pheasant, with its five-foot tail, the other various breeds of pheasants and grouse may or may not become, in the future, birds to be reckoned with in the practical problem of restocking American covers and keeping up the sport of upland game bird shooting for Americans. The capercaillie, that enormous and at one time reported extinct cock of the woods, has been brought to America, and in her still occasional primeval woods finds a congenial habitat. The black and sand grouse are yet to be reported in numbers sufficient to inspire the confidence that we have found a substitute for our own unrivalled ruffed grouse. The English partridge is undoubtedly a bird which will acclimatize itself and prove easy of adoption in the southern and coast states. The experimental spirit of American breeders and sportsmen will not stop at the last possible trial.



An interesting hybrid, a cross between a Chinese pheasant and an American blue grouse. This would be an excellent cross, but unfortunately the male is not fertile. It may be noted the photograph was made from a mounted specimen.—Reproduced From Recreation.

What ardent sportsman but would willingly pay so much a bird for good shooting? Is it coming to that? It has come to that already in many localities. And again, it will be a simple matter for a pair of sportsmen, a group of them, or a gun club, to lease several adjoining farms, stock up with pheasants and partridges and have good shooting right along, year in and year out. Quail shooting is managed in that way in more than one locality of the densely settled states. Pheasant shooting, however, will not be so much of a sport where the work of the dogs will show to advantage as the partridge shooting will be. The long-tailed flyers are incorrigible runners and skulkers, and yet they present large marks on the wing. A brace of them should make almost any sportsman proud. The partridges, from the accounts of Hungarian and Bohemian shooters, lie well to the dogs and afford prime sport.

Such, then, is the outlook for at least two, and doubtless the most important two, of the upland game bird importations from foreign countries. It is decidedly a favorable condition to say the least. We have game commissioners and private individuals, both sports-

A WESTERN PICTURE

In the heart of Puget Sound,
Pure of air and clean of ground,
Lies an emerald-wooded island
Lapped by waters wild all round.

Where the grey roads meet and stray,
A white house looks o'er the bay,
Taking toll from all the sunsets
In the red fires that they pay.

Black canoes go drifting by,
Red brows pointing to the sky—
Swarthy Indians slowly paddling
Down to where the hop fields lie.

'Neath the pier, when the sun smiles,
Lighting up the watery aisles,
You can see the starfish clinging
To the ancient moss-grown piles;

See the gleam from scale and fin,
As the lordly salmon win
To the place of their desire
Where the fresh brooks tumble in.

Great snails in the dark woods deep
Climb the high fern's graceful sweep,
While their silvery paths are cancelled
By the dew, and fir boughs weep.

Where the rain drew its white lines
Gains the background of the pines,
Now the clouds disperse in heaven
And the star of evening shines.

Through the dripping forest damp,
With the pale moon for a lamp,
Now the hunters come, returning
To their welcome fire-lit camp.

Soon the darkness all around
In its depths their fire has drowned,
And the little isle lies sleeping
In the heart of Puget Sound.

—Haven Charles Hurst in Western Field.

men and others, who are deeply interested in the work and who are busying themselves with experiments in all parts of the Union. There is no lack of money to carry on the scheme among the owners of private preserves, and it is to be hoped that an aroused enthusiasm among shooters all over America may communicate itself to the various state legislatures with a view to a game farm for every state, and a wide-awake commissioner at the head of it who will be furnished with sufficient means to proceed in the plain path already marked out so successfully by Oregon.

The ruffed grouse of America can make a living where the crows fly south for the winter. The men empowered to know, say that either the China pheasant or the Hungarian partridge is quite or nearly quite as able to withstand climatic severities and food conditions in the wintry season. It would follow, then, as the day the night, without touching on the merits of any other foreign upland game bird as adaptable to our country, without advertising or seeking to advertise any man's business, that the China pheasant and the Hungarian partridge are two upland game birds whose merits have been tried and found peculiarly acceptable; and that they offer a wide field for distribution, with well grounded assurances of giving general satisfaction to the sportsmen of America.

A GRATEFUL CRAB

All the fish stories since prehistoric times have been eclipsed by the tale of the grateful crab told in this week's "Era."

The heroes of the story are Mr. Alfred Sommerlad, musical director of the Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne, and Mr. Edgar Bateman the song-writer.

Mr. Bateman, marching along with his rods, met Mr. Sommerlad, and told him he was on his way to the Hippodrome to borrow a "professional's" dress-basket, as no creel would hold his average catch.

"I've heard of your prowess with the rod," said the musician, "and now I'm coming to the pier with you to see whether it is true."

Nothing abashed, Mr. Bateman led the way to the staging under the pierhead, which was deserted, and, dropping down a line, soon hooked a fine specimen of the edible crab.

He was about to destroy the creature, when Mr. Sommerlad begged that its life might be spared. It was then tossed back to the water, and at that moment an accidental kick sent the tin box containing the lug and ragworms after the crab, and all the bait was gone!

There were no other persons fishing from whom worms could be begged or borrowed, so the disconsolate song-writer lowered the line again into the sea, as one solitary fragment of bait was adhering to the hook, and sadly led the way to the refreshment department.

Then the time approached for Mr. Sommerlad to get to the theatre, and Mr. Bateman went to fetch the rod, having decided to walk with him on the way.

Judge the twain's amazement to find the basket they had left empty on the still deserted stage full to overflowing with fine flounders, sole, rock-whiting, and plaice!

They rubbed their eyes with astonishment at what seemed a miracle, when suddenly the explanation was forthcoming.

Painfully making its way up the fishing line, came the creature whose life had been spared, bearing in its nippers a fine young conger, which it carefully placed with the other fish on the basket. Then it dropped back into the water, to return no more.

Apparently the grateful crab, knowing by instinct that he had caused the bait to be lost, had deposited 15 1-2 lbs. of live fish in the song-writer's creel as a thankoffering for its life being spared.—Glasgow News.

BIG GAME HUNTING IN INDIA

It was in connection with elephant hunting two years ago that I was fortunate enough to shoot the third largest elephant ever killed in India. It measured ten feet four inches in height from the shoulder, and the circumference of foot was sixty-two inches; it was a "goonda"—a solitary male. It had been giving considerable trouble fighting our keonkies, and I applied to the Government for permission to shoot the brute. One night the elephant amused itself by breaking down the servants' tents and nearly killed two men.

I had a small camp, and several friends were staying with me to see the wild elephants taken out of the stockade. We were all admiring them, when one of my elephant hunters rushed up and said that the goonda was going for the keonkies. This was most serious, as some of the wild elephants were at that very moment roped to tame ones and being tied up to trees. If the goonda got among them some elephants would probably be killed and certainly some of the drivers. There was only one thing to do. The goonda must be stopped at all costs. Seizing my rifle, a .450 bore high velocity, I ran into the forest to cut him off. I had not gone more than twenty yards in the forest before I saw the huge brute, but what was more to the point, he also saw me. There was just one moment of hesitation, when he seemed undecided whether to go for the keonkies or to come for me. He decided on the latter course, and with a shrill trumpet charged straight down on me, the very incarnation of rage. It was a glorious sight, one of those moments which make life worth living. I let him get within

ten yards, then shot him clear through the brain. He dropped stone dead to the one shot, shaking the earth as he fell, and one more trophy was added to my collection.—Forest and Stream.

DISTANCE JUDGING IN THE FIELD

The average man usually thinks himself a pretty fair judge of distance, and the average hunter will tell you the range within a few yards at which he shot the big buck, or missed it, as the case may be, with the utmost confidence. The fact of the matter is, however, that very few men indeed are gifted with the faculty of accurately judging distance in unknown country, and the extent of error that most will make is extraordinary.

Even among expert rifle shots this faculty is developed to a very slight extent, as was shown in the very interesting new feature introduced into one of the competitions at Bisley this year. In the Barlow competition the final stage was made a distance judging competition pure and simple. Now the Bisley competitors are the pick of the rifle-shooting world, and the competitors left in the final stage of this competition are part of the creme de la creme, so the attempts they made at accurately judging the distances in the competition are of even more interest than they would be if made by just ordinary individuals.

The method employed was to range the competitors in line, facing one direction, when a man rose into view, calling attention to his presence by the firing of blank charges. Each competitor in turn was then called upon to write his estimate of the distance of the imaginary enemy on his score card. The line of competitors was then faced in another direction, and another enemy made his appearance in the new direction in which they were facing. Altogether there were six varying distances to be judged.

Some of the variations in estimating distance were quite extraordinary, and, when it is borne in mind that they were made by some of the world's best rifle shots, the ordinary man may be excused for speculating on the exact amount of value to be placed on these men's skill at the targets at known ranges when brought into the field under conditions of actual warfare.

SALMON THAT DO FEED IN FRESH WATER

In one of the tanks in the diving birds house are two small salmon, the survivors of four young fish presented to the Zoological Society by the Thames Salmon Association in February, 1906. They have consequently been in the fresh-water tank for two years and a half. One has done well throughout, and is now a little over a foot long, and probably about a pound in weight. The other is much smaller, having grown very little since June, 1906. This, Waterman, the keeper, attributes to the fact that for a long time it was disinclined to take the small gudgeon put into the tank for food, so that its companion got the larger share. Of late, however, it has shown signs of improvement. The usual daily allowance for each is a gudgeon about three inches long in the morning and another in the evening, with a little chopped meat or worms in the daytime. Sometimes the gudgeon are neglected, and occasionally two or three may be seen swimming about the tank. The respite, however, is a short one, for there is no rock-work or other hiding place in which they can take shelter. One notable circumstance about these young salmon is their restlessness in early summer, at the time so many of their fellows are off to the sea. Then they assume the silvery coat—the "sea jacket" as fishermen call it—which is, however, before long replaced by soberer garb of olive-green and brown.—Hy. S. in the Field.

A PROTEST OF THE WILD

On the night of August 9 last, the night watchman in the yards of the Northern Pacific Railroad at Billings heard strange sounds which must be investigated. As he proceeded in the direction of the sound, hurrying along rapidly swinging his lantern, he saw what he supposed was a drunken tramp throwing railroad ties into the turntable. The watchman was indignant. He felt that a tramp who would amuse himself in this fashion must be unusually drunk, or else drunk on an unusual brand of alcohol, and he promptly rushed up to him to throw him out of the yard. Before he put his hands on the supposed tramp, however, he discovered that it was a large and apparently able-bodied grizzly bear, and the speed with which that watchman got out of the yard would probably have won him a record had he displayed it at the Olympic games in England.

The bear stopped work in the yards for three hours. A great crowd gathered and watched the fun, but finally the animal was roped, tied, put in a cage, and deposited in the Billings Park.

The reporters hailed the bear as a God-send; got out their dictionaries of synonyms and wrote him up at space rates. The newspapers gave him display headlines with their biggest block type, while the dispatches regarding his extraordinary conduct kept the wires hot.

No one, however, seems to have understood just what was the motive which prompted his entrance into the railroad yards, and the efforts to block the turn-table.—Forest and Stream.