

# Field Sports at Home and Abroad

## THE IRISH WATER SPANIEL

A few years ago the Irish water spaniel was little known in this country as an all-round sporting dog. Today he is coming to the front so fast that the supply is not equal to the demand; for the man that shoots is beginning to realize the fact that this spaniel is favored by nature for all-round work, and if not abused is one of the most companionable of the entire dog family. This dog has an undercoat which thoroughly protects him from the wet and cold, and in addition he is favored with an unusually strong constitution. Consequently he is able to withstand cold and exposure without flinching, and as, if properly handled, he is no loafer, the ambition and energy of a good specimen of the breed is amazing. His nose is the equal of that of any other sporting dog. He is not the prettiest dog in the world, but there is something about him which draws the experienced sportsman to him, and once having become used to him no other variety of hunting dog can take his place. His style, intelligent look, activity and general make-up are such that he commands attention everywhere.

Shooters in general used to have the erroneous impression that the Irish water spaniel did not possess a good nose. No doubt some of them have been deficient in this particular, and I will with regard to this say that, as any other species, they must be bred for this valuable quality. Will Watson, who was once the owner of that grand old dog, Ch. Dennis C., told me that when hunting quail once he had for companions two gentlemen with setters, and that when the day was over he had quite a bit of pleasure teasing his friends, for old Dennis had found more birds than either one of the setters. My Ch. Dowdy Girl (now dead) was broken for quail. I have never seen her equal at finding birds, and when holding a point she certainly was a picture. At a recent dog show a prize was offered for the best field dog, and she was entered. However, as there were several protests from setter men, they claiming she was a water dog, I withdrew her. In the judging ring was a covered cage containing three quail. In passing, not a single setter or pointer stopped at the cage. I obtained permission to try my spaniel, and immediately she came within ten feet of the cage she stopped and came to as pretty a point as anyone could wish to see. One setter man, who had two dogs entered, afterwards told me that the best thing of the entire show was the pointing of this spaniel.

Some six years ago I was shooting ducks over my favorite dog, Ch. Mike B., when a discussion arose as to the ability of any of the dogs present to find a wing-tipped mallard after it had been down twenty minutes, the ground being particularly favorable for a quick getaway for the duck. The argument finally resulted in a match, the competing dogs being a Gordon, an English setter, and my spaniel, the stake being \$60, the owner of each dog putting up \$20. The bird was turned loose, and when the twenty minutes' time was up the dogs were brought from the shack, taken to the spot where the bird was turned loose, and sent on their way. After waiting anxiously for some little time, we saw Mike coming in with the bird, he being about a half-mile away and neither of the other dogs within 200 yards of him.

As to big game hunting, I have used my Ch. Pat M. successfully, as the following will show. Two years ago I was invited by the owner of a large mountain ranch to come up and bring a couple of my friends for a deer shoot. I took Pat along just for the exercise, never suspecting that he would be of any use to me.

While we did not get a shot the first day, Pat learned something, and was working in earnest. The next afternoon I took him with me again. And, after we had ridden about three miles, Pat put up a fine young buck, which was brought down with two shots.

I do not believe in hunting deer with hounds that will run the animal for a day at a time. But in a country where hounding is permitted and the deer lurk in almost impenetrable brush, I am for a stand on a hillside with my spaniel sent into the nearby ravine to start something. If he jumps a deer and I do not get a shot, he will run only a short distance, will not bark on the trail, and will return to me in a few minutes. If I wound a deer, the coyotes and the buzzards are not very apt to get him if Pat is with me.

Following is the standard of the Irish water spaniel as given by Theodore Marples:

**Head**—Skull and muzzle must be of good size; skull high in dome, good length, and fairly wide, showing large brain capacity; muzzle long, strong, and somewhat square in appearance; face perfectly smooth. Topknot should consist of long, loose curls, growing down to a well-defined peak between the eyes and should not be in the form of a wig, i.e., growing straight across.

**Eyes**—Comparatively small, dark amber, and very intelligent looking.

**Ears**—Very long and lobe shaped in the leather, set low, hanging quite close to the cheeks, covered with long twisted curls of hair.

**Nose**—Fairly long, strong, and arching, carrying the head well above the level of the back and strongly set into the shoulders.

**Body** (including size and symmetry)—Fair sized, round, and barrel-shaped, so stout and

compact as to convey a cobbiness in appearance. Height, about 23 inches at shoulder.

**Shoulders and chest**—Shoulders very powerful, but not too straight. Chest deep, but not too wide or round between the fore legs, though large in girth, with ribs well sprung behind the shoulders.

**Back and loins**—Back short, broad, level, and very powerfully coupled to hindquarters. Ribs carried well back, loins deep and wide.

**Hindquarters**—Very powerful, with long, well-bent stifles and hocks set low.

**Stern**—Short and smooth, strong and thick at root (where it is covered for three or four inches with short curls) and gradually tapering, ends in a fine point. It should not be long enough to reach the hock joint.

**Feet and legs**—Feet large, somewhat round and spreading, well clothed with hair, both over and between the toes, but free any superfluous feather. Fore legs well boned and straight, with arms well let down, carrying the forearm at elbow and knee in a straight line with point of shoulders.

**Coat**—Composed of dense, tight, crisp ringlets entirely free from wooliness; the fore legs covered with feather, which should be abundant all round, though rather short in front so as to give a rough appearance; below the hocks the hind legs must be smooth in front, but feathered behind down to the feet.

**Color**—A very rich liver, no white.

**General appearance**—That of a smart, up-standing, strongly built, but not leggy dog, combining great intelligence and endurance with a bold and dashing eagerness of temperament.

Scale of points:	
Head, jaws, eyes, topknot	20
Ears	20
Neck	5
Body	10
Fore legs	7½
Hind legs	7½
Feet	5
Stern	10
Coat	15
General appearance	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

—Wm. Bay in Recreation

## COYOTE HUNTING ON THE PRAIRIES

"Have you ever been coyote hunting?" is a question very often asked any man with Western experience. Whenever I hear the query I am always reminded of many exciting moments spent after the wily coyote.

In the first place readers should not confuse the coyote wolf with the prairie dog. They are very different animals. People have asked me the question: "Does a prairie dog put up a very hard fight at the finish?" Their knowledge on the subject is very small or they would scarcely have asked the question. The prairie dog, which is very little larger than a grey squirrel, nests on the ground. It is very amusing to see the members of one of their many colonies sitting up on the little mounds of earth they throw up in digging their holes. Paws are drooped and they present the appearance of a lot of little soldiers. At the slightest motion of the hand they disappear as if by magic.

There are also strong differences between coyotes and timber wolves. Any coyote hunter whose dogs return badly used up may know that they have been trying conclusions with a lone timber wolf and came off second best.

Coyote hunting is generally followed in winter. In summer it is impossible to locate these animals on the level plains, and even in winter it requires a sharp pair of eyes to see the grey animal standing like a statue alongside a straw stack.

The dogs used in coyote hunting are a cross between a Russian wolfhound and a staghound. Well bred dogs are very expensive and sell as high as seventy-five dollars each. They are divided into two kinds, known as rough and smooth. The only training necessary is to run the young dogs on a few occasions with the old timers.

I have a particular recollection of one morning when the thermometer stood at twenty below and my friend Charlie proposed a coyote hunt. I acquiesced at once and we lost no time in making our arrangements. With five dogs in leash we started, the crisp air making our blood tingle with new energy.

After driving five miles Charlie pulled up the team and remarked: "Now use your eyes for one of the fellows I know saw a coyote here yesterday."

Carefully I glanced round and by the time the horses stopped I caught a glimpse of the game. The animal was just on the edge of a coulee. Stepping out of the cutter I loosed the dogs and hid them away. With a few eager yelps they were off, Old Killer in the lead and Jock a close second. Away over the level stretch and down the coulee they ran, the coyote well ahead. With a quick turn the coyote circled back to us, striving to gain the shelter of the coulee and soft snow. The endeavor was unsuccessful. Old Killer rushed him, and in a few seconds it was all over. Only rarely does a coyote show much fight and this was no exception to the general rule.

Most of the people are under the impression that the first dog up does the killing. This is a mistaken idea. The leading dog simply runs into the coyote, knocking it down

and then the dogs rush in on the fallen animal, speedily administering the quietus.

After securing the pelt, which, with the bounty offered, is valued at eight dollars, we started on our return journey keeping a bright look out for a second coyote. However, we had no further luck in that way and arrived home hungry and happy.

Often enough there are some laughable experiences in coyote hunting. The bane of this kind of hunting is the jack rabbit. It is very aggravating just after sighting game and loosing the dogs to have a big jack dash out in front. Away go the dogs, making a mighty diversion, and with them all chances of a coyote. A wolf-hound will run a jack rabbit down either on stubble or soft snow, but on hard going the jack will easily get away.

On several occasions we had sighted a coyote very close to the town, but in various ways he was always able to give us the slip. So often did this occur that we got up a standing bet on who would be the one fortunate enough to capture the old boy. One day when I was out on my pony, accompanied by two of the dogs for the purpose of exercise, I was more than surprised to see Mr. Coyote get up about fifty yards ahead of me. The dogs saw him and were off like the wind. In the short space of two or three hundred yards they pulled him down. The explanation of the short run was speedily apparent when I examined the carcass. The left front paw had either been shot off or taken off in a trap. On other occasions when we lost him he must simply have lain down in the snow and thus escaped our observation.

One thing that always puzzles me is the fact that the dogs will run a live coyote to the death, but will turn and run away from the pelt of the animal. Perhaps some of your readers, with wider experience than I have can give an explanation of this apparent mystery.—A. H. Visser in Rod and Gun.

## THE GRUDGE IN SHOOTING

That the grudge often plays an esoteric part in every form of sport is well known, but the sense of injury, of personal affront, which sometimes goads the sportsman to bit himself again and again against a particular animal or bird that obstinately refuses to allow itself to be killed is a matter of less general cognition. Most shooting men, however, are familiar with this type of grudge, the intensity of which is, curiously enough, usually in inverse ratio to the size of the animal that causes it. Why this should be so I am not prepared to say, unless it is that trifles are rather more apt to inspire ill-will than things of greater dignity; but there is no questioning the fact that there are times when nothing exceeds the power of an utterly insignificant creature to obsess a man with the grim resolve to scatter its anatomy in infinitesimal fragments over the landscape, or himself perish in the attempt.

It is, of course, sadly humbling to human self esteem to have to acknowledge, even to oneself, that some wretched animal, whose only interest in your sight is, likely enough, its ability to flout you with impunity, should have the power to rouse within you an all-consuming thirst for its life-blood; but, as a set-off to this rather negative humiliation, there is the positive exultation, the fierce glow of savage joy, which is the unholy reward of victory. Whether, given the power to choose, it would be worth while to go through so much to gain so brief a gratification may be arguable; but there can be no doubt that, having suffered the vexation of spirit, the moment when our grudge is satisfied pays us for all that has gone before.

Such, at least, has been my experience; and I have nourished some remarkably robust grudges since the day when, as a youngster of 9, I tore down about 20ft. of stone wall to get at an impudent chipmunk, to which I had taken an unreasonable dislike. I failed to get the chipmunk on that occasion, but I got a sound thrashing instead, and it was as much because the memory of the licking rankled in my mind, as from any ill will I bore the chipmunk, that during the rest of my holidays I made its life such an endless round of terror that it must have been almost as happy as I was when at last a well-aimed bullet from my catapult put a violent end to its harassed existence.

It was, no doubt, because of the boundless capacity of youth to suffer and enjoy that the gratification of my thirst for vengeance on that innocent chipmunk was perhaps the keenest satisfaction I have ever felt at the successful paying-off of old scores. But there was a woodchuck! I blush now when I think of it, and faint would erase the incident from my memory. But facts are stubborn burrs, and this one sticks fast, reminding me that I, a man grown, once spent a whole fortnight in the hottest part of a hot summer trying to outwit a wily old chuk that had made its burrow in the middle of an old pasture, where the nearest cover was just out of gun-range.

Half the countryside had shot at that woodchuck unavailingly, and the other half had looked on and laughed. I was staying at the time with my uncle, on whose land the burrow was, and at whose fiendish suggestion I was introduced to the animal by a diabolical cousin. I was told, as a sort of excuse for its presence, that the woodchuck positively re-

fused to go into a trap, but nothing was said of the impossibility of shooting it.

In ignorance, therefore, of this important fact, I spent several days stalking it with a 12-bore Parker as it sat erect on the mound at the mouth of its burrow; and always it dodged underground just when I came within long shooting distance. So I changed the Parker for a big 4-bore goosegun, fondly believing that the woodchuck would not suspect the difference. But suspect it he did. Finally the conviction fastened on me that I was "up against" a difficult proposition, and then, of course, the killing of that woodchuck became an obsession—a point of honor (or was it dishonor?), and I felt that kill it I must, even if the rest of my mortal days went in the effort.

So I wrote home for my 40-90 Winchester single-shot, an arm that had never been used for so ignoble a purpose, but which could be depended on to be as faithful in mean things as in greater achievements. Three days passed before its arrival—three days, during which I lay flat on my stomach in an angle of the fence and loosed goose shot at the woodchuck as often as it stuck its head above ground. Towards the end of this vigil I aged rapidly. Wicked thoughts are said to shorten life, and I must have lost in those three days enough years to carry me on to a hale decrepitude somewhere in the middle of the twenty-second century.

Then, one evening, the rifle came, and with it a box of long, wicked-looking cartridges, the sight of which acted on my drooping spirits like a powerful tonic. I hardly slept a wink that night, and long before anyone else in the house was up I was out in the dewy dawn, making strides for that bald place in the grass in the angle of the fence where I had spent so many fruitless hours.

It was a beautiful morning. The world was at peace with itself, and I with the world—barring one woodchuck! Flat on my stomach in the wet grass I lay, with my rifle barrel thrust between the rails, its business-like muzzle trained on the enemy's earthworks, and when, in due course, the woodchuck perched itself thereon and took a cynical survey of the field, a single well-directed bullet scattered a considerable portion of its anatomy over the scene of frequent human discomfort and final triumph.

On mature reflection, I am disposed to believe that this woodchuck was the most demoralizing influence that ever disturbed the serenity of a naturally angelic disposition. But a coyote can incite almost to madness. I was in the West in the early "nineties," partly on business, partly for pleasure, and on the way home, at the peremptory invitation of an old school chum, I spent a fortnight at the H.E. Ranch, where cattle and coyotes were the chief scenic features.

These latter animals at first afforded me considerable amusement. We shot several from the ranch verandah as they played around a haystack near the corral, but it was uncertain work, owing to the distance. I was using a 45-70 Government Winchester, with the 500 gr. bullet, an arm that does not endeavor itself to the shoulder; while Mr. Ogilvie, the owner of the ranch, used a worn-out 45-90 single-shot rifle that was fairly accurate up to 300 yards, but was liable to hit almost any part of the landscape at greater ranges.

At the range at which we were shooting, however, and with a coyote for a target, one rifle was about as good as the other, and at the end of the first week our scores were nearly equal—Mr. Ogilvie's two and mine three. Then on Sunday, while I was making a call at our nearest neighbor, ten miles away, Mr. Ogilvie killed two coyotes with two consecutive shots—a really remarkable incidence of luck, which evidently exhausted our credit with Providence, for thereafter, although we fired away much ammunition, it was a long time before either of us secured another victim.

There was one coyote, bigger than any of the others, that tried our tempers sorely. His impudence was prodigious. A coyote is said to be a cross between a wolf and the devil, but this particular coyote was apparently a pure strain of the latter. He knew human tricks from A to Z, and had resources in reserve against many that man had never thought of.

At last we began to lose patience. And when men on a lonely ranch begin to lose patience with what they cannot get at they are very apt to read what is within their reach. So the ranch-house began an abode of discord. We wrangled over the veriest trifles; and ever that coyote, like an animated King Charles' head, kept getting into our arguments. Finally we could do little else than glare at each other, what time we were not absorbed in the mutual interest of wasting good ammunition at the coyote, which daily added original items to its programme of impudence.

At that time the new high-power, small-bore rifle was just being introduced to sportsmen, and Mr. Ogilvie's brother was inspired to send him one. A cow-puncher from a neighboring ranch brought it from the railway one grey afternoon when the Chinook was veiling the nearby foothills with thaw-maze, and we tried it at increasing distances in the gathering twilight. Skeptical at first of the shooting qualities of so small a calibre, our preliminary range was 100 yards. Result: A bull's-eye. Other targets at 200 and 300 yards served to augment our confidence, and after a steady look at each other, we picked up the board

and carried it off to the haystack, where we stuck it upright in the snow just where the coyote was fond of playing. Then, as the light was failing fast, we hurried back to the ranch-house, rested the new rifle on the window-sill, and each took a shot, the first bullet clipping a piece from the edge of the board, the second passing through the centre.

Next day a very much surprised coyote spun round in the snow at the first crack of a rifle, looked first at one side, then at the other, and, reckoning life not worth living with a hole through the liver, promptly laid itself down and died.

In the foregoing cases, gratification at the death of the object of my spite was more than sufficient to relieve me of any humiliation I might otherwise have felt at finding myself capable of harboring so low a passion as a grudge against an inconsequential animal, but in the following incident there was no such saving satisfaction, and because of this lack, I review the occasion with the liveliest self-distrust. Vanity, speaking with no uncertain voice, says "Keep it dark!" Confession, however, is said to be good for the soul (though 'tis often extremely bad for the reputation) and since I derived no other benefit from the episode, I may as well secure what psychological good I can by a belated humbling of myself at the confessional.

This is how it happened. In company with two friends from New York, I was spending the winter of 1891-2 in the North woods, our object being less to hunt and trap than to study the wilderness in its harder moods. But, of course, a little shooting did not come amiss, and we tended our three lines of traps, aggregating ninety miles in length, with business-like regularity. We had a comfortable log camp on a deadwater, sixty miles from the nearest settlement, and here for months on end, we lived the life of primitive backwoods-men. For next-door neighbors we had two trappers, whose range embraced the headwaters of our stream, from whom we received occasional visits; and at irregular intervals one or another of us did the twenty odd miles on snowshoes to a lumber camp to fetch our mail, which was brought in to that point once a week by tote-sled. In this wise we passed the time very pleasantly till after the main log drive on the river, and it was just when the ice was beginning to break up in the lake, two miles below our camp, that I spent an entire afternoon nursing one of the most unprofitable grudges that ever made the world seem well lost in the pursuit of it.

The incident began thus: My companions having left camp early to bring in some distant traps, I spent part of the morning pitching our canoes, which had weathered ill under their brush shelter, and then took my rifle out for an airing, not so much in the hope of seeing anything worth shooting at that season of the year as for the companionship of the iron. To men living practically alone in the forest a gun becomes almost a living presence, and I can imagine that the feel of its weight in the arm-crook is as comforting to the hunter as the cling of his lady's hand is to the arm of the lover.

Wandering somewhat aimlessly through the woods in rather a good-by mood, for we were "going out" very shortly, and this walk was, therefore, in the nature of a solemn leave-taking, I came out presently on the shore of the lake, still ice-covered, save for a narrow strip of open water some 200 yards off shore, where the lake began to feel the "pull" of the outlet. A stiff wind was blowing snappy little waves across this lane towards me, and bobbing gaily up and down close to the ice on the hither side was a pert-looking duck, at sight of which my softened mood vanished, and I thought only of how good that fowl would taste served up smoking hot on the morrow.

Of course, duck shooting at 200 yards with a 45-70 bullet is apt to be unsatisfactory work, even if you hit the duck, which is unlikely; but I had subsisted on pork and beans until even a fragmentary duck strongly appealed to my appetite. So I laid my barrel across a convenient "blow down" at the edge of the timber, took a careful aim, and loosed the trigger, making a beautiful line shot that kicked up the water just over the back of the fowl.

Somewhat surprised that the duck did not fly (as indeed I was to see it there, anyway), but presuming it to be one of those freaks which the sportsman encounters now and again, I took a second shot, rather wilder than the first, and a third, which, owing perhaps to rising temper, was worse than either. Then I pumped out the exploded shell, closed the mechanism viciously, and, taking extraordinary care with my sighting, had the inexpressible disgust of hearing the hammer go down on emptiness.

At this interesting juncture I took counsel with myself. In ordinary circumstances, and to a sensible man, a single duck would not be worth a four-mile tramp; but I was not at that moment a sensible man. I was a man with a grudge. So I set off hot-foot for camp to fetch more ammunition. On the way there and back I deliberated with myself what manner of fool I was, but these reflections did not prevent my getting to the lake in record time. The duck was there still, bobbing about in the most irritating fashion, and taking up my former position, I began target practice.

I fired twice, and because of the gathering mist of the ice thaw I shot atrociously. My third shot, however, was better aimed. Through the cloud of smoke of the big, black powder cartridge I saw a sudden commotion where the duck sat, and the next instant a dozen fragments of wood were flung into the air, to fall splashing back into the water.

Then for the first time that afternoon I saw myself "as others see us," and, as the poet puts it, was "shamed through all my being" to have entertained a grudge against a wooden decoy.—Lincoln Wilbar in Baily's.