

Field Sports at Home and Abroad

SPORTSMANSHIP

(From an Editorial in "Baseball")

Between the "sport" and the "sportsman" is a great gulf fixed, yet many people confound the two. There is all the distance between extreme east and west; the difference between black and white, dress and gold, separating the one from the other, and it lies not in exteriors, but in the heart of the individual.

For numerous reasons "the sport" has fallen into disrepute, and because of his discreditable ways is non persona grata in any community as soon as his real character is known, regardless of his smooth appearance, his diamonds as big as pigeons' eggs and his automobile, unless to those of his own stripe. Even they demand that he walk before them with hands up. Play with him becomes shady business.

The pursuit of pastime for pastime's sake, when the thousand tongues of exhausted physical stamina call for a let-up from the treadmill of business, grind or social treadmill, is not only a token of a man's good taste, but an evidence of good sense. If one is so foolish as to say, "I cannot spare time to play," we may confidently watch for the day when the shades are drawn low at his windows and the honk of the physician's automobile sounds in his street.

Play is as honest as toil, but it lives in a realm of its own and bears unmistakable marks that never associate themselves with trade. Whenever the element of pecuniary gain sets aside the consideration of beneficent physical reward for time devoted to honest sport, one of the Almighty's richest gifts is prostituted.

Nature sounds her warnings in "that tired feeling" so prevalent at spring time, in that absent-mindedness of which one is painfully aware; in fits of irritability amounting to peevishness and proneness to discontent. She is calling men out of bondage into the open, where forces that make for the rebuilding of nerve and brain tissue may restore the perfect poise that marks the well-equipped individual—one fitted to be a strong contender for real prizes in life's arena.

Happy is that man or woman who has formed the habit of keeping tabs on the passing days and inviting anticipation of joys to come by making pets of the fools that call not for evening clothes as the uniform that attends their use! Halcyon days are devoted to painting the canoe or yacht; rewinding, varnishing and straightening rods and sorting fishing tackle; overhauling and setting the eye to the sights of shotgun or rifle; filling the clothesline with outworn paraphernalia that it may be well aired and ready for the call to action.

When the first wire is made public, the streams and lakes are open and the law is off. Sound your friend as to his reasons for shaking off the cares of the market and seeking the smell of the pines. Does he tell only of the number and size of the fish he has caught; of the deadliest and surest combinations of gangs of hooks and most enticing bait; of the use of worms in waters where the excellent results from casting flies are so satisfactory that the law prohibits other lures; of the resort to nets or high explosives to bring to creel trophies, when other means fail, as they sometimes will on the best fishing grounds—take it from me, he is no sportsman.

If, on the contrary, he waxes enthusiastic over fine country, picturesque water-falls, purring brooks, sun-kissed, mirror-faced lakes, good comrades, homely fare and a very few prizes that come to his landing net after a royal battle at the insistence of lightest rigging manipulated with a consummate skill—that friend of yours is my friend too, for he rings true at the test. He is a sportsman.

If he is a hunter, he will probably find the most game, kill the least, bring back the most and best of the game pictures and leave no animals writhing in agony, to die unclaimed in the wilds, or slowly return to the sunshine after their wounds have healed.

BRITISH AND AMERICAN SPORT

In this country we hunt; in England we shoot. There does not appear to the American to be much difference between the two phrases, and I have used them as synonymous for years, but I know now there is a great difference. In a recent experience in shooting in Scotland and England I came to understand that it was not merely a British peculiarity never to use the word "hunt" with respect to birds. Before I passed the gatekeeper's lodge it was borne in upon me that the "beaters" did the hunting and the first morning that I stationed myself in a "butt" among the heather waiting for the birds to be driven within shooting distance I realized why the sportsmen were designated "guns."

The British, who do all things in a steady round from year to year, long ago decided upon "the twelfth" of August for the opening of the grouse season in Scotland. This is shown on the calendar of a man who is both a good churchman and a good sportsman as "St. Grouse's Day."

A number of likeable men can have a very good time together in the heather and feel rejuvenated at the end of a visit, although they may not have taken more severe exercise than riding to the "butts" and raising a gun.

This system of shooting is particularly suitable for older men. I have in mind a fellow sportsman, who, as he came into the clubhouse, remarked that he was disgusted with his dog. It was too old, and he proposed to get a

young dog. At that time the sportsman was 82 years of age.

Many of our old American sportsmen find walking up game too fatiguing and have rented Scotch grouse preserves, thus gratifying their taste for sport, although no longer equal to long tramps over rough country. To many it seems strange that Americans with so many available wild places in their own country should go to old Scotland for bird shooting, where the hills have been shot over for centuries, but the conditions there are most favorable for game. The heather grows luxuriantly and furnishes excellent food on which birds thrive so well that, although many thousands are shot annually, the number shot each season is not reduced. They have a system of game protection and intelligent care of preserves, which should be an "object lesson" for our legislators and sportsmen.

Balmoret Castle, Mulk county, where we went for grouse, is on high ground overlooking hills of heather rolling away to the sky line.

When at the leisurely hour of 9 our shooting party, some on Scotch ponies and some afoot, moved off across the heather we were a cavalcade, seven "guns," with gamekeepers and boy and girl "beaters" to the number of 20. There were five or six dogs, brought along to retrieve, but they were kept under the control of the keepers, and the "guns" took little, if any, notice of them. It was all new to me, as I have been in the habit of starting out at daylight alone and handling my own dogs. There I did not even carry by two 12-bore guns. These my loader bore behind me. Instead, I was given what appeared to be a clumsy, walking stick, but which, whenever I cared to sit down, developed into a one-legged stool.

Within a quarter of an hour we came to a side hill broken at intervals with a line of blinds, called in Scotland "butts." Our host, at the breakfast table had produced ivory pieces with numbers on them, and we drew lots for places. The most desirable "butts" were at or near the top of the hill, but, as we passed from hill to hill, we advanced one place, so all had an equal chance at the favorite positions.

After taking up our stations in the "butts," each with a loader, we waited for the grouse to be driven to us. With little flags held high over their heads the laddies and lassies went on a detour of one or two miles. The flags served a double purpose—they frightened the birds and gave warning to the sportsmen not to shoot the advancing "beaters" as their heads appeared above the heather. Before the flags were in general use, it is told that a gamekeeper in reply to a question why there were so few boys, answered: "Me laird, you shot 'em down rather close last season."

Generally the birds flew low, as the air near the ground offered greater resistance to their wings, and they flew faster just above the heather. The American sportsman, accustomed to shoot behind dogs, has had little practice on "incomers," and the driven grouse came as if shot from a cannon. In this country when birds fly toward us the sportsman generally fires when they get about at right angles, but in Scotland he must not fire within an angle of safety of about 50 deg. Instead of following the bird with his gun within the angle, he must raise it, to avoid danger from accidental discharge. The "gun" in England and Scotland become accustomed to these conditions, and a fair shot will kill one "incomer" and then turn and kill the second as the bird passes beyond the 50 deg. limit, but some of the "guns" who kill thousands of birds annually become so expert that they will first kill two "incomers," and then, with the second gun, which their loader hands them, they will kill one or two birds as they are flying away.

Sometimes, particularly late in the season when the birds "pack"—that is, when a large number of them get together—they come in considerable numbers, and some of them fly high. The high birds are followed with the gun continually as the angle of safety is in the elevation.

Every reasonable precaution was taken to avoid accident, and the rules for safety were imperative. Sportsmen here are too careless in pointing loaded guns at their companions. Having made it a rule not to go the second time with a man who covers me with a loaded gun, I generally shoot alone. In Scotland when a man shoots within the angle of safety, even though no one is hurt, his host is likely to request him to retire from the field. It is told that, in one case, a laird being shot, he quickly asked the man who fired to hold up his hand, which he did, and the laird filled it full of shot.

The "butts" are about 60 yards apart, so that it is not always possible to know to whose gun the bird falls, but it makes no difference in the final adjustment, as the birds are assembled in one place.

There is, however, a healthy rivalry as to the number which each man kills, but it is often found that there are less birds—never more—than the aggregate of the numbers reported by each "gun." There was one rough retriever that was so alive to his master's interests that, in the most exciting moment of the shooting, he went to the adjoining "butt" and brought to his master one of his neighbor's birds.

There are two kinds of grouse to be found on the moors, the most common a bird about the size of our spruce partridge. The other is a larger and darker grouse, which generally flies high. The male is known as the black cock and the female as the grey hen.

In the course of the day the party with

whom I shot went to about half a dozen lines of "butts," continuing at the sport until nearly dark.

Some of the hills were steep, and the pony was a welcome "lift."

In the middle of the day we sat down on the heather to lunch, which, after our exercise, had the sauce of keen appetites. There were good-fellowship stories laughed at, and one of the "guns" quoted:

"Oh, there is sweetness in the mountain air That bloated ease can never hope to share."

A little way off the gamekeepers and the "beaters" fell to, and the youngsters, who had been having a lively scramble all the morning, ate ravenously.

A party of seven, such as ours was, shoots, say, from 50 to 200 brace of grouse per day, and, although the preserves will be shot over almost daily until November, there are a sufficient number of birds left at the end of the season. In fact, if too many are left they do not thrive.

The advantage of "driving" is that the old birds are shot, while in shooting over dogs a larger percentage of young birds are killed.

These Scotch estates are all catalogued, and whole publications are devoted to them, giving the name of the owner, the lessees of various years, and the number of birds killed, which most largely determines the rental of the estate, so that the owner is pleased to have the lessee shoot a large number.

The pleasure of shooting is partially in making and talking of good shots, but is also largely in companionship.

Partridge shooting commences in England the 1st of September and pheasant shooting on October 1. My host went south late in September, but few men, even in England, with all its charming country places, have such an impressive and comfortable establishment waiting him as Battle Abbey.

The habitable portion was built some time in the thirteenth century, but is furnished with the luxuries of a modern city house.

The surrounding country is undulating, marked off by old hedges. There are many turnip fields and some woods, but most of the land is in grass, principally for grazing. The partridges and pheasants are quite numerous in these fields, so that one is sure of good shooting. The game laws are such fixed institutions that there are practically no poachers.

The drives are much shorter than in Scotland, and, instead of "butts," the "guns" in position selected by lot, stand in line from 20 to 20 yards behind the hedge over which the birds are to be driven.

The same one-legged stools are in use and come in very handy to the fields. Although the sportsman generally has notice, the beaters whistle when birds are in flight, and he must be constantly on the alert, as a bird may at any moment appear over the hedge in full flight.

There is no great amount of tramping involved, and the women of the party often come out to see the sport, each standing behind one of the "guns." The American sportsman is less embarrassed by the angle of safety in partridge shooting than in grouse shooting, as the birds are turned upward by the hedge and fly sufficiently high, so there is no danger in following the bird with the gun in shooting at any point.

"Low birds" are not shot at, except occasionally, when the "gun" can see the range of the shot in an open field, but, owing to the lack of cover, the use of dogs is falling off in England. In Scotland, where the heather is good cover, they shoot over dogs early in the season on many of the estates. You hear old sportsmen tell of how much more uncultivated land there was in their youth, regretting the change, and how much they enjoyed shooting over their well-bred pointers and setters.

I found the sport enhanced on account of the pretty country, with its old oaks, its hedges, its stretches of green sward and places of historical interest. The shooting was in itself very good. A day's sport average 40 brace of partridge and 20 of pheasant for a party of seven, and we were frequently moving from field to field, which changes were more frequent than in Scotland, as the drives were much shorter.

Later in the season, my host informed me, they had great drives, where pheasants were shot flying fast and high over trees, and when the bags made were very large.

Although I had a good deal of shooting in Europe and had as much sport as the next one, I did not feel fully satisfied. There was something lacking, but I did not stop to analyze it, as I was having too good a time. As the steamer approached home I found myself thinking of my dogs up in Connecticut, and the day after my arrival, I was on the train bound for Liberty Hill.

How different I found hunting in America from shooting in England. When my dogs saw me they came with a rush and barked and jumped, and even howled for joy. As I was putting my gun together, Drake, as usual, found my shooting cap and came to me with it in his mouth. We were soon off across the hills and valleys. It was a bright October day, the woods were brilliant with foliage of every color from the bright crimson of the maple to the rich yellow of the chestnut. It was the open season for woodcock, ruffed grouse and quail. What route should I take to have the best chances for game? Were the partridges feeding on wild grape or were they under the acorn and chestnut trees? Where were the best chances for woodcock? Were the "home birds" in the alder swamps or "flight birds" on the

hills? The quail, I knew, were certain on, or near, the buckwheat stubbles.

Drake, ranging wide, having "bird sense" looked in the most likely places and stopped at the scent, fearing to flush the bird until I came within shot. Woodcock and quail lie to the dog, but partridges seldom do. Drake knows it and remained standing until I could make a circle to get the partridge between us.

In America the sportsman must have the game sense; in England he must be at most a good shot. In Europe he is a part of a system, of which the gamekeeper is the practical head, and as your only office is to shoot, he very appropriately classes you as one of the "guns." The American sportsman plays every feature of the game, and herein lies the lack of complete satisfaction in shooting in Europe. Here we must have a knowledge of woodcraft, of the habits of the birds. We must know how to handle our dogs to be able to shoot under all conditions, whether in "the open" or in "the bush." We take intense delight in the superior work of our dogs.

With a bird in his mouth our favorite setter points another. Make a double shot and he leaves the dead bird to secure the wounded one. There is not only a feeling akin to affection, but there is perfect understanding between you. Although your bag may be but three or four woodcock, several partridges and a few quail—insignificant in number compared to the bags made of "driven birds"—the game you have shot under varied conditions is entirely the result of your own knowledge and skill.

At night, thoroughly tired out, you have a sense of complete contentment as you rest, after a hearty dinner, with your dogs lying around, reminders of the sport and inspiring a feeling of companionship. In contemplation, in front of the blazing logs in the great rough fireplace, you say with Mickey Fee, "Tis not for glory I care; ambition is only a fable" and, taking an all-round view of life, conclude that "health reserves" are better than "bank reserves."—Charles R. Flint, in Amateur Sportsman.

SPORTING SLANG AND ITS DERIVATION

Sporting slang and its derivation is an absorbing topic; it should be made interesting both to the educated man and to his less fortunate brother, whose education has been imperfectly improved by the best school of all—a hard world and its experiences. Sporting slang boasts a strong and vigorous father, springing from the Turf, and a loud-mouthed, bellicose mother hailing from the boxing booth, the wrestling arena, or the other homes of plebeian pastimes. With such a parentage, this language is certain to be coarse, yet, despite that, it is interesting—may, more, it is educative. If anything, it proves what a great force the Gipsy tongue, as we call it in our simplicity, has been in helping to make a language so expressive that it can be understood from Edinburgh to Lewes or from Cardiff to Paisley. The Gipsy tongue, the language of the Zigeuners in Germany, that of the Gitanos in Spain, that of the Zingari in Russia, and the Zinzari in Persia, has long been a source of mystery. Erroneously considered to be Egyptians, it is difficult to convince some people that they derive their origin from the Pariahs, the lowest cast of Hindus. Their arrival in Europe corresponds with the period in which Tamerlane invaded Hindustan, and these fugitives from the Conqueror wandered in search of a home where they hoped they would not be held in a state of detestation as they had been in their native lands. Such a people would appear to have little claim for our thought, yet the interest taken in them is widespread, and one proposes to examine their language to trace its roots and to show the important influence which it has exercised over our familiar discourse.

These gipsy tribes—originally migrated from North-West India, and their language, so far as its principal words are concerned, is a dialect of Hindustani. The most extraordinary thing about it is that it should be so pure as it is after four centuries of hard wear and tear. The language of the Romanys is still almost identical with that now spoken in Hindustan. There is no Hebrew or Chaldaic element in the language of the Romanys to support the idea that the lost tribes of Israel have contributed to its vocabulary.

To speak of a man following a sport as a "dab-hand" is to mean that he excels. Now the word dhab in Hindustani and in Gipsy means dexterity. The word "knack," or trick, of doing a certain thing comes from the Gipsies, it being nakhra in Hindustani. In Gipsy, chab is a fellow, and rumte a dodge; in slang, a rum chap is a man full of dodges. Raik, in Hindustani and Gipsy, has its equivalent in rake. Larka, in the two languages, signifies sport; to lark in English is to show excessive high spirits.

A footballer who makes a mistake in the field, a cricketer who misses a catch, or a sportsman who makes a blunder at a critical moment, is said to "muff" things. In Hindustani "muffins" are miserable creatures, and there is no doubt that we have contracted them into "muffs" by the aid of our Gipsy friends. The slang term for mouth is mug. The Hindustani word is muj, and the Gipsy mooc. To come "down with the dust" is the slang term to produce the money. Duster is Gipsy and Hindustani, and signifies money. Dean Swift, once preaching a charity sermon, took as his text that verse in Proverbs, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord."



Sportsman's Calendar

MAY

Trout-fishing good this month EVERYWHERE.

Steelheads still running in certain rivers.

A run of small silver salmon or cohoes comes in May.

Geese and brant may still be shot.

He commenced his sermon with the words, "My brethren, if you like the security, down with the dust." In sporting slang we talk of the cut of a man's "jib," and a politician's gifted eloquence is sometimes called jabber. Now the Hindustani jibh means the tongue, and jabha the jaw. When we speak of a man "turning rusty" we do not mean that the iron in his soul has moulded, but that he is losing his temper. Kusto-mush, in Gipsy, means an angry man. To "nab," to seize or catch, is from the Romanys tongue; and in Hindustani nab is the canine tooth.

What is the derivation of "hullabaloo"? A gipsy will tell you that hullar is an uproar; ballu, of pigs, and both are genuine Hindustani words. The slang terms to blab, to tell secrets, is from the Hindustani ba-lab, which signifies on the lip; labium, the Latin word for lip, is no doubt from the same root as the Hindustani lab, a lip. "To go a mucker" is from muka, a blow from the fist, and signifies to be knocked on the head. The expression is borrowed from the slang of the old-time pugilists.—Borrow II.

A TROUT AND A COW

An incident of a somewhat amusing nature was witnessed near the Gower Bridge, Llanrwst. It appears that a visitor, armed with rod and line, was playing the gentle art and enticing the wily trout by insinuating his flies on the placid surface of the deep pool which forms that portion of the Conway river. Above him on a high bank stood a cow lost in contemplation of the vagaries of the human race and that biped in particular standing on the river edge beneath. Suddenly a big trout rose like a flash and secured one of the flies, with the result that the reel immediately began to whirl. The angler, with galvanic suddenness, jumped back and struck. His unexpected manoeuvre, however, startled the cow, with the result that she slipped, and with a somersault and a heartrending "moo!" fell with a mighty splash into the pool beneath. The rod was struck from the angler's hand and, after a few spasmodic movements, floated gently down stream, while the trout, adapting himself to such favorable opportunity, disgorged the indigestible mockery on the hook and dashed out of the zone of danger and turmoil. The angler, who had undergone the pleasures of a generous shower-bath, having collected his scattered thoughts and convinced himself that he was not implicated in the throes of a violent earthquake, hurled a torrent of theological terms on the innocent cow, who was making futile efforts to regain terra firma. It soon became evident, however, that the animal was drowning, so the angler, with the generosity of his kind, called for assistance, and ultimately the half-drowned cow was rescued by means of ropes. It is anticipated that the angler, when he next visits his club in England will regale the company with reminiscences of his fishing exploit in the Conway when he hooked a trout and landed a cow.—C., in the Field.

Dew has very seldom been used as drinking water except in poetry, but it has been robbed of its poetic character by the English soldiers stationed at Gibraltar. Water is very scarce at this great fortification, and the dew is collected in the following manner. A large pit is dug in the earth and covered with dry wood or straw, which in turn is covered either with earth or sheet iron.

The straw or wood serves as a heat insulator and effectually prevents the conduction of heat from the ground to the layer of earth or the sheet iron above. Consequently, the earth or the iron cools after sunset much more rapidly than the ground, so that its temperature soon falls below the dew point of the surrounding air. Hence dew is formed on the layer of earth in very large quantities. The water thus obtained is drained off into reservoirs and, after clarification, is used for drinking.