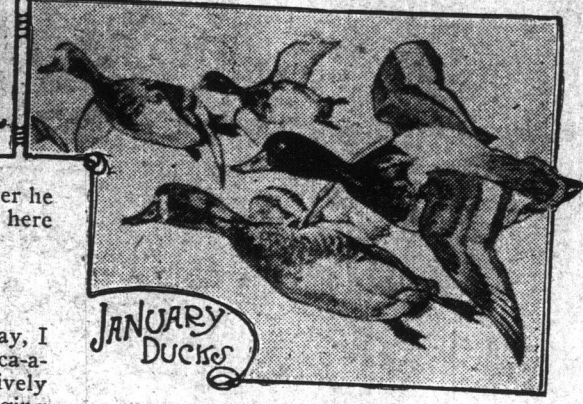


Field Sports at Home and Abroad



The Sportsman's Calendar

JANUARY

Sport of the Month—Wildfowl shooting.
In Season—Ducks, geese, brant, snipe.
January 1st the last day for shooting pheasants, grouse and quail.
Grilse now running in Saanich Arm.

WANTED—A GUN LICENSE

Sooner or later a gun license is inevitable; as things are now the sooner the better. British Columbia has advanced and is advancing so rapidly that we are apt to fail to realize our selves quite how much conditions are changing. A few years back and the supply of game appeared inexhaustible, and those comparatively few who fished and hunted regularly did not know what it was to contemplate the possibility of poor bags or empty baskets. Things are different now. In places where half a dozen years ago I could hunt all day without hearing a report from any gun but my own, I should be scared to be abroad on the opening day of the season now without armoured coat and pants.

The numbers of genuine sportsmen, responsible men, who know what they are about in the woods and pursue their favorite recreation in a legitimate manner, with a due regard to the rights and personal safety of others, have increased enormously; the army of "ir-responsible" has also increased to an extent which may well be called alarming in view of the serious accidents of the season which is now drawing to a close. For their own protection, and also for the protection of their sport, the former class, at least every man of them whom I have met and spoken to, is asking for a system of government gun licenses. Sportsmen realize that the game of the country is a highly important asset and that the maintenance of a fair head of both large and small game is of the greatest value in attracting both visiting sportsmen and permanent settlers; the government has been paying more serious attention to this subject of late and has shown a desire to meet the wishes of responsible sportsmen and act on their suggestions for the improvement of the game laws. It is all very well to say that the laws as they stand now have given satisfaction, and that it is a mistake to do too much tinkering with them. All legislation to be any good must be progressive, and the policy of laissez faire may mean in many cases, as undoubtedly it does in this one, an inactivity which is the reverse of mastery.

As regards the close seasons, for small game on Vancouver Island, there seems to be little need for change from the regulations issued this season, if those regulations are properly and energetically enforced. One very good measure to help to enforce them would be the adoption of a gun license carrying with it obligations similar to those attaching to the holding of a Manitoba deer-shooting permit, as described in these columns under the date November 28 of last year. Any person who is legally in possession of a permit under a section of this act legally issued to him becomes ipso facto a game guardian for the purpose of the enforcement of the act during the open season, and under the same act it is the duty of every game guardian to institute, or cause to be instituted, prosecutions against all persons infringing the provisions of the act or any of them.

In present conditions, and considering the impossibility of adequate patrol and watching of the enormous game country, the property of the people of the province, this seems to be an excellent way of assisting the good work of better game protection, putting, as it does, a considerable part of the onus of protecting the game on those who are most directly interested, the sportsmen who take out the permits to shoot it. All who took out licenses might not act up to the full power and duty conferred on them by the holding of them, but it would undoubtedly serve as a great deterrent to evildoers in the shape of game-hogs and game poachers, and it would help to keep out of the woods the "irresponsible" with the death dealing weapon which he is not capable of using safely and legitimately. The small fees levied for the licenses would hurt none of us, and the money raised would be a considerable help, devoted as it should be to the payment of more salaried wardens.

That the latter are needed, and urgently needed, is a statement which would hardly be questioned by any sportsman knowing the country and with the best interests of sport at heart. This implies no criticism on the present game wardens; they are alright; but we want more of them, if they are to do the amount of good which we expect they should. It is notorious that the game laws as they affect the small game of Vancouver Island are not respected to the extent which they must be if we are to retain a decent stock of game to afford us fair sport; we read with gratification articles in foreign sporting papers testifying to the good work which has been done by the British Columbia game warden in our big game grounds, and it is pleasant to know that visiting foreign sportsmen are pleased with the way they are treated and assisted in their quest for new trophies here by our public representatives. Our big game is a valuable possession, which is being far more appreciated and far better looked after now than ever formerly. Granted, and for this much thanks, but let the good work continue, and let our head warden be given more power and facilities to safeguard and increase our stock of small game, which after all is far the most important to the average man who comes here to make his home and his fortune, and likes his days' fishing or shooting occasionally as a relaxation from the cares of daily business, although he is not in a position to indulge in the richer man's pastime of big-game hunting.

These few lines are not written in any spirit of carping criticism, but realizing that the government does not recognize the importance and value of our game, both small and big, and

is ready to listen to and take into serious consideration any reasonable suggestions for the betterment of existing legislation affecting it, and are written not to express the opinion of the writer only, but that of many other sportsmen, who have asked him to do his best to voice their views on the subject.

RICHARD L. POOCK.

(Correspondence on the subject of a gun license for publication in this page would be welcome, whether for or against. Letters should reach the Colonist office not later than Thursday morning for publication the following Sunday, addressed to Richard L. Poock. No letters will be published except over the writer's own signature.)

THE MAINTENANCE OF NATURAL SPORT IN BRITAIN

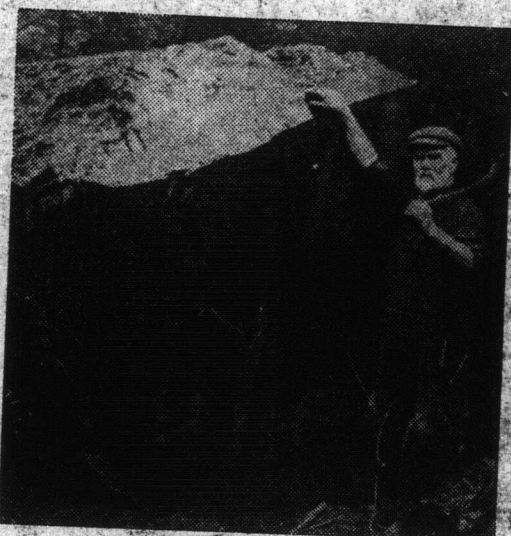
When Lord Tullibardine conceived the admirable idea of conducting a number of Scottish working men over the Atholl deer forest, with a view of letting them judge for themselves whether such forest ground could be used for farming, he probably did not expect to convince the armchair politicians of the value of his experiment. There are writers and speakers who, perhaps having never in their lives set eyes on a Highland mountain, still persist in referring to a deer forest as if it were a vast stretch of mixed woodland and arable ground which a selfish landlord prefers to retain uncultivated for his own pleasure rather than allow it to be broken up into holdings for tenant farmers. With that type of mind it is useless to argue. But Lord Tullibardine no doubt did hope to convince, and did succeed in convincing, a body of sensible Scotsmen that the maintaining of a deer forest is not the artificial, selfish thing that it is often described as being. The delegates whom he invited were shown the ground and asked to form their own opinion, and they had not much difficulty in forming it; they were convinced that the land could not be reclaimed for farming. The armchair politician would probably retort that such men were not qualified to form a proper judgment, and if that is to be the answer argument can only be dropped. It is something at least to have convinced those who have seen.

The sport of deerstalking remains as still the most natural and most nearly allied to the hunting of primitive man that is to be found in these islands. The difference between the actual hunting of the hungry Pic and the stalking of the owner of a modern deer forest is little more than the weapon. The stag has not changed, the mountains have not changed, nor the valleys, nor the rivers, nor the wind. The stag still fears and hates and flees from the scent of man, and doubtless hundreds of years ago the hunting Pic knew that the stag looks down hill and feeds up wind; and so strove to get above his quarry and to keep the wind blowing from the deer to himself. Or he got to learn the habits of the deer when alarmed in this or that mountain pass or valley, and he knew how, when a particular wind was blowing, he could arrange with a fellow hunter to give the herd his scent down wind, so that they would come galloping past a particular rock where he would hide himself to shoot. The difference between then and now is only the difference between the bow and the rifle. It is, perhaps, that sense of partaking in the oldest pursuits which adds a peculiar freshness and wildness of its own to the sport of deerstalking. Yet not every deerstalker comes to that sense or gets for himself that knowledge. It may be true of many owners of deer forests, but it is certainly not true of many tenants, that they could go out on the hill and spy, stalk and kill their own beast. That is, of course, easily understood. The intimate knowledge of a deer forest is a matter of the learning of a lifetime. It is not merely that the deerstalker—to be successful must be possessed of strength, coolness and marksmanship beyond the average, but he must have a knowledge which can only come from experience of the habits of deer; more, for he must know not merely how deer behave as a rule, but how they behave on varying occasions on different parts of a particular forest. He must know every rock, every rise and dip in the ground, every little watercourse that could help him unseen down a hillside; and he must know, too, not only how the wind works blowing straight down a valley or the flank of a hill, but a hundred and out of this or that little corrie, round the shoulder of the hill, down between the sides of some narrowing valley. That is a knowledge to be gained not merely in a few seasons, and it is little wonder if the actual spying and deciding on the ring to be taken to get down wind of the herd, besides the actual stalk ending in the scrawl down the burn or the slide down the bare hillside, is left to the stalker who has made the learning of his craft of the forest his life's work. How many others could spare the time to learn it?

Deerstalking remains, of course, the sport of the few, and it would be an obvious consequence, with the centres of population and of manufacture spreading so widely, that the chance of wholly natural sport for the average man should be growing less and less. The simplest and easiest of all, the sport of fishing, becomes more and more difficult to obtain, except at a price, within moderate reach of any city or town. Everywhere where there is common access to a river or lake, so great is the demand on its capacities for providing sport that local control has to begin with rigid rules, and probably finds it necessary to go on with re-stocking. Where a club or private

owner has the rights of river fishing the rules and regulations must be strictly enforced, or sport would fail, and, of course, measures for re-stocking from a hatchery in the case of trout waters, or systematic control of netting in the case of salmon rivers, become necessary at once. But it is one of the essential charms of fishing that however strictly, and so in a sense however artificially, the chances of sport are preserved, the sport itself cannot become artificial. Indeed, the paradox is that the more artificial the means of preservation, the more natural, the more nearly allied to primitive conditions the sport becomes. The harder a stream is fished and the more cunning the fish in it, the greater need of pitting human skill and science against the craft and wariness of the wild creature. It is not the novice who fills a heavy basket with Thames roach. There are Antipodean trout streams where a clumsily tossed grasshopper will rise a trout that would be stared at on any English river; but the Test trout that sinks down because he has seen the flicker of fine gut needs different qualities in the fisherman. The better sport begins with the increased difficulty.

It is true of most sport that it loses a certain naturalness when it is no longer intimate-



A Forest Monarch

The accompanying picture is not a scene in a quarry, but only a representation of a Douglas fir that grew at Chamberland, Vancouver, and was cut down last summer. It was 275 feet high, and 8 feet in diameter, and was estimated to cut 20,000 feet of merchantable lumber. A section of the tree was sent to the exposition at Seattle, and is now in the State Museum. The "man with the axe" is Mr. Joseph Shaw, who is so well and favorably known to most of the older residents of Victoria and vicinity.

ly connected with hunger and the cooking-pot. In a sense, for that reason, it might be argued that hunting in England ceased to be a sport when the quarry hunted changed from the stag to the fox. But that is a superficial contention which ignores the relation between the rider and his horse and hounds. That remains the same whatever the quarry. Besides, man has always hunted either for food or to destroy; there is nothing very unnatural in hunting a tiger, but the hunter does not eat his quarry. It would be more difficult to find an answer to the contention that sport becomes less natural when the quarry is reared artificially, as in the case of pheasants, and it is perhaps true that there is a slight change of taste already setting away from the stiffer, more rigid forms of pheasant shooting. The day has long gone by, except for the merest beginners in shooting, when it was thought sufficient to beat out a large number of low-flying pheasants close over the heads of a line of guns; the demand has become greater every year for higher birds and more and more difficult shooting. As to huge bags, and attempts to break a neighbor's record in the numbers killed in a day's or three days' shoot, that is a passing vulgarity which has nothing of sportsmanship in it, and of which we shall hear less, we hope, so, and however incidentally difficult the shooting of pheasants on a big day may be made, there is a greater tendency, perhaps, than there was to appreciate the essentially wild and uncertain shooting afforded by birds which cannot be hand-reared, and whose breeding cannot be controlled. The hunt-gunner has long been able to claim that his is a form of shooting which requires skill, endurance, nerve, and a love of lonely places which are required in an equal degree by hardly any other form of English sport; but few of us are hunt-gunners, if only because there would be no room for all of us to shoot. The wildest shooting still left to the average Englishman, perhaps, is winter snipe shooting, and he can still get that, if he can manage his holidays and knows where to go, without paying a chance of money, and with almost as good a moor or bogland. Snipe shooting is still a natural form of sport which needs no artificial maintenance. Indeed, the only form of maintenance is most cases belongs to the snipe food wherever food is to be found in wild and quiet places; and there, by those who do not mind rough quarters, they can be walked after and shot with as good a conscience as ever belonged to a gunner shooting for his own table, striding for miles over waste and through wa-

ter, and taking the sporting chance whether he will find his quarry gone yesterday or here today.—Field.

SNIFE AND SNIFE SHOOTING

Crossing a wet pasture one autumn day, I was suddenly startled by the familiar "Sca-a-ape! scaipe!" of a snipe, and, instinctively throwing up the gun, pulled on a zigzagging streak which rose to my left. At the sharp crack of the pitro, a small body came tumbling to the ground, and I walked forward to pick up my first specimen of a Wilson's snipe. This event happened some years ago—before I had dreamt of snipe shooting in Canada, though familiar enough with the long-billed birds of Great Britain.

In size, habits and general appearance the Wilson's snipe differs but slightly from its cousin of the Old World, and snipe shooting on this side of the Atlantic is a duplicate of the sport in Great Britain.

The snipe will lie well to a dog, and the latter can scent a "long bill" at a considerable distance. Living after the manner of the woodcock, the Wilson's snipe gets his living by boring in the mud of the swamps and other marshy places, feeding on the worms and larvae found there. There is no other bird coming under the sportsman's notice that so easily yet mysteriously perplexes the novice with a gun. Rising smartly from the ground, the snipe darts away in a series of quick, zigzag curves—gradually straightening out into a steadier flight as he increases the distance between himself and the shooter. You may patiently bide your time until Mr. Snipe chooses to fly straight—by which time he is more than likely to be 100 yards away—or you may cut loose at him the instant that he rises, the latter method being as a rule the most successful from the shooter's standpoint. He is hard enough to hit—no matter which method you employ—and practice alone will perfect you as a really good snipe shot. Luckily, this bird is not hard to kill from a "hard lived" point of view; for a single pellet will often bring him down, and owing to this, many snipe fall into the sportsman's hands—often causing the embryo his birds, whereas, in reality, such is far from being the case.

When a strong wind is blowing, snipe invariably rise against it, and, by walking your ground up-wind, you will find that the birds prove the easier marks than when flushed on a quiet day; for they will not twist so much and often appear almost motionless for an instant as they beat into the breeze. In any weather and at any time, however, the Wilson's snipe is an almighty hard bird to kill with anything like regularity, and the average sportsman may find an excuse for continually missing in the words of a certain shooter who explained that he had "shot zig just as the snipe turned zig."

In the fall months the snipe may be found in any place where moist ground will furnish him with satisfactory diet. In October, after a sharp frost, you can take down your scatter gun (and you will need all the scatter you can get) for a day at the long bills. If you are the possessor of a good dog, so much the better, but if you are well acquainted with all the likely snipe grounds in your territory, you may dispense with a dog's services, for snipe will stick close to a good feeding ground, allowing the shooter to get reasonably close before they flush.

In winter the snipe ranges as far south as South America, and in spring he reaches far northern points. The spring flights commence about March and are over by about the first of May—snipe usually remaining with us longer than the rest of the shore birds.

The peculiar habit of the snipe, called drumming, is doubtless familiar to most of my readers, and is caused by the air rushing through the stiff wing feathers, as the bird drops like a plummet from a great height. This sound can easily be reproduced by arranging stiff feathers in a cork attached to a string and then whirling it round in the air. The birds make this peculiar sound during the breeding season, and I have frequently heard four or five of them and watched their sudden dives to earth from high in air while crossing snipe ground in England.

Many of our game birds are not nearly so plentiful as they used to be—due to over-shooting and other causes; but as regards the snipe, over-shooting has not affected him, for he will afford amusement and much walking for both embryo and seasoned shooter alike, without losing too many members of his tribe from the ranks that annually haunt our marshes and boggy fields. From a sporting view-point, the snipe is one of our best game birds, and as a school in which to learn snap-shooting and quickness of eye, the snipe grounds will afford us all the lessons we require.—Richard Clapham in Sports Field.

BIG FISH

I remember reading the adverse criticism of some fisher here, that he lacked the ability to "finish his man," and never, therefore, could attain to those giddy heights on which champions rested on their laurels. I begin to think I can never be a champion amongst salmon fishers; I so often fail to finish my fish, especially when he is a big one. Something happens, in the first wild rush, something gives way, or, after an hour's struggle, when first the big, broad back shows above the water and then the round, white underworld is uppermost, when the gaffer grips his weapon—

something happens, and I have failed, like the poor Something Pet, to "finish my man." Once after defeat by a fish so big, I asked my Irish brother-boatman if they ever lost fish when fishing on their own. The question was received as, temperamentally, they might be expected to receive it. Dan's laughter and the slapping of his knees might be heard in Killaloe. "Did we ever lose a fish?" Then he met his brother's reproachful eyes. "An' fwat may ye be shoutin' at?" he was icily asked. "Can't y answer a question widout play-actin'?" Then, with his natural and national grave politeness, he turned to me. "Manny an' manny's the one, sorr, an' they always the biggest." "An'," chimed in the irrepressible Dan, "we be ivor for losin' thim whin we haven't a shot in the locker." I wonder if even those past masters are unconsciously affected by the size of the fish that is tugging and tumbling to be free. Are they as cool as they would be if it were a 10-pounder? Are their hands as steady? Is the strain as remorselessly even? If not, then—I cannot be expected to be unruined.

In looking back at the big fish I have lost, I can remember that three have smashed the tackle, one the line as it was dragged over perilously shallow and stony places, out of which the fish should have been kept, while the other two have broken the cast. Was the strain too great, or—even more disquieting thought—was there a weak spot somewhere in the gut which a reasonably careful examination would have disclosed? In the other instances the fly has come away. Again, was there contributory negligence? Was an even strain maintained, or was the fish for one fatal moment given his head? I suppose the fact is that a big fish should always find us at our best and he does not. But as the most successful general is he who makes the fewest mistakes, so he who, by keeping his tackle without flaw, and by using it "in arduis" as we would turn in whatever may be the proper word for the contrary, will run fewest risks, will give least away, and killing a higher average of the big fish hooked, will prove himself the most successful general. By big fish is meant, of course, real fighters and triers, for fighting power and resistance that has no bottom by no means vary with the fighters shown on the steelyard.

When the two are combined—great weight and power with fighting, not sulking, instinct—where, too, the water is heavy and the going bad, then the angler, to be a champion, must be able to "finish his man." These desultory thoughts may have been guessed to have their origin in a recent catastrophe. They have. Not long ago I lost a very big fish. Fishing with somewhat slender gut (which, if candid confession must be made, had been a good deal used) and a smallish fly in very clear water, where even the capture of a grilse was considered unlikely, standing on smooth rocks sloping steeply into some 10-ft. of water, I got into a very big fish. First he flashed up stream, jumping clear out of the water, and then pelted down the middle of the pool, as hard as he could split, until all my line and, very nearly all the backing were out. I had, too, gone as far along the rocks as I could, and the boat which had ferried me across to the rocks, and which was being brought swiftly to my assistance, was still some yards away.

I dared not hold against the fish, but, putting my thumb on the brake of the reel, checked its perhaps too easy run, and, pressing the flying line on to the rod with the palm of my left hand, I did all I dared do, but hoped not too much. As the boat reached my feet, however, the end of the world came, and once more I had failed to finish my man. The cast had broken. I must throw myself on the mercy of the court. If I had not put some strain on he would certainly have broken me, and I cannot think I put on sufficient to break a reasonably sound cast. But there, I fear, my defence breaks down. I cannot lay my hand upon my heart and say that I had bestowed upon that cast a thousandth part of the careful examination that it would have received if I had had the least expectation that a fish of some gobb was lying at the foot of those much-fished rocks, and, moreover, that it could be lured therefrom by my little fly.—A. H. B.

A CRASH

"What was that awful crash?"
"One of father's New Year's resolutions gone to smash. He has just discovered that the furnace fire is out."

Writing

Philistine prince assured in Philistia, his epitaph reads as if the Philistine or cuneiform characters. As for the poor only means "Red" applied to "the red" who certainly were not the Babylonian cuneiform about 1100 B. C. The have been written in various other theists that the Phoenician on the Moabite Stone be derived from the linear writing of which closely resemble characters being utilizations of objects. By late Sir John Evans the original pictorial, and his designs, with actual Minoan characters by his son, Mr. Arthur the characters of Crete, the Semites used these, and even adopt to translate others.

ing fact that this theory of Crete, of Knossos, of Diodorus Siculus, says Diodorus, "to invention of letters to the Phoenicians by the Phoenicians, and passed through Cadmus and him to Europe, so that the Phoenician." To that the Phoenicians coverers of letters, but and their shapes." Let the Phoenicians did a out of a large number of Crete signs of alphabet of not many tradition is probable, classical accounts of the form of writing in a tablet of bronze in a at by Agesilaus to merely made an im-

its meaning. Then of the prose history eye-witness, Dictys D. this thing was Latin was the main tale of Troy. The year's time, was taken, with no Greek original has been found by nt on a papyrus of about 206 A. D., but tury earlier or more reign of Nero, when laid bare a deposit. ox was said to be which must have per-

ets were taken for a stone cist, lined found at Knossos; perts to decipher the dy who had written e of Troy tacked his e story of the discov- tissue of post-Hom- perversions of Ho- being omitted, and ht that this was a ord of the Trojan af- tan writing cannot could be made out known tongue, such an inscriptions in later volumes, Mr. discoveries.

Department has un- in its campaign for eed" at The Hague. stated to be nothing all disputes arising e. There at present e court—the result e Peace Conference ates; and now that the powers with a diction of this court tional disputes, it will have the power been stated; but it is e. Such a proposi- zation of an inter- might have to en- many, for example, nery at The Hague constituted to hear d to it voluntarily. It is likely that the or the extension of hich shall be always provided for such to it of many ques- through the ori- This would edu- of arbitration and blishment of a real arm of an inter- and Dreadnoughts ill be obsolete be- real Star, January

be getting old."

car all the way man offered me