

# Field Sports at Home and Abroad

## AN OLD-FASHIONED "TWELFTH"

The pavements still burn with the sultry fires of the August afternoon, though the lurid glow of evening has long faded from the sky. Dinner—that almost classical meal which once again has served as a kind of benediction upon the anticipatory delights of the journey North and the dawn of another Twelfth—is over. The hurry and bustle of conveyances to Euston and King's Cross has roared with a vigor that has not been heard at such an hour for twelve long months and lapsed into its accustomed monotony. The crowded station platforms have gradually thinned down to their normal appearance. The last of the gun-cases, rod-boxes, and cartridge magazines have disappeared into the van, and the great train, with its load of sportsmen—some immediately preparing for bed, others too full of thrilling anticipations for sleep—softly moves out into the night.

Far away into the West country a white mist, which betokens fine weather, is lying tree-deep in a silent valley, and a dew, cool and refreshing, has invigorated a thirsty, sun-beaten earth. From the little gardens, which make a broken line of indistinct color in the half-light on either side of the village street, there comes a "homely cottage smell" of phloxes, mignonette, and old clove pinks. Clusters of pale blue hydrangeas gleam with an almost electric brightness in the shadows, and the flowers of the window-boxes are delicately silhouetted against the light which glows through the drawn blinds. It is very still; so still that the indignant protests of a dot-beetle, which has struck the telegraph wires of the high road, and fizzled away its wrath in an entanglement of greenery below, break with an intruding voice upon the slumberous night. Here in the lap of the old, deep country the summer is sleeping, as she has slept over the whitening fields since the first glories of autumn invaded her unbroken green.

More than an hour ago the last of the evening habits of the village inn relieved the anxieties of the local policeman by going on their way in a seemly manner; but inside that wayside hostelry a genial landlord, entertaining some shooting friends with the good cheer that is always associated with old-fashioned sportsmen. There are dogs, too, of various descriptions; dogs that have indicated only too plainly for weeks past that they are "The Twelfth"—their "Twelfth," upon which beaters and butts are still unknown—is night. There are old dogs asleep in dark corners of the room, wisely reserving their energies for later on, and nervous young spaniels ever wand'ring about in a fever of excitement, their honest round eyes glistening with enthusiasm. The dull rattle of cartridges which are being counted out and discussed makes them literally beside themselves with a zeal which is so hard to suppress, while the old stagers wake up at the familiar sound and yawn aloud, just to show they were not asleep after all. And when the flasks are filled, and ammunition, game bags, and guns shouldered by their respective owners, the party set out at midnight on foot for the distant moor.

The dawn comes early on mountain slopes which are facing east, 2,000 feet above the sea, and as there are many leagues of heather to be walked over, a start must be made at day-break. Furthermore, it may be maintained that in some places where the preservation of grouse is not exercised to the same extent, nor with the same thoroughness, as in Scotland or Yorkshire, it is often the best of the sport. And as those moors are frequently a stiff two or three hours' climb from the village in the valley, a start somewhere about midnight is essential.

On the occasion in question, the road, which in the bright light of day winds like a lash of a whip across the hazy distance, takes the sportsmen by a series of curves up the steep hillside. There is an odor of moss and dew-drenched ferns between its high banks while from down in the wooded gorge near by, through which a mountain torrent roars, drifts the clean fragrance of wet bracken and leaf-strewn mould. And now, where the larger trees give way to stunted willow and wind-blown thorn, high nut hedges to grey, lichened walls, the track leads past small farmhouses—all sleeping, save for their respective dogs, which come out to interview the sporting members of their kind, who are much too busy thinking about game to enter into parley—along narrow sheep paths, by bogs which ominously gurgle a warning of the evil which may befall an incautious step until the last ridge sinks in the sky and the peat wind, "hard and cold and pure," announces the moorland near.

But darkness still covers the earth. No sound breaks through the silence save the voice of the stream, now far off, which is borne across the sleeping mountains like broken sighs. A cloudy sky has put back the clock of dawn, and it will be nearly an hour before the mists which fill the valley eastward have been dissipated by the risen sun. No time is lost, therefore, in snatching a brief hour of rest. Each man seeks out a comfortable nest, the dogs' tails are dejectedly lowered, and the party, deep in the cosy wrappings of heather and blaeberry, are soon at one with the silence and the mystery of the moorland night.

Presently something wakes the slumbers, for they almost simultaneously look round for each other. There is a pale, bluish light ly-

ing over mountain and upland valley, a light which casts into bold relief every crag and boulder, every tottering wall and crumbling scarp, with a wonderful and unreal effect. But this is only for a few moments, for with a burst of dazzling splendor the great gun-god has risen, flushing the moors with purple, fusing every dewdrop with jeweled fires, and setting the furze ablaze with his glory. Surely there is nothing quite so enchanting, nothing that brings involuntarily to our minds some instinctive desire of worship, as the dawn on an August moor. I never witness it, nor think of it, without experiencing a sneaking sympathy with the Parsee in his faith. In the un-written splendor of those plains of sunset purple, in the wild, free song of the first awakened where the berried rowan clings to the blue-grey rocks, and in the profligate loveliness of the dwarf furze there is, to some of us, a sublimer grandeur than any other scene can afford, and yet, withal, a gracious beauty which few but the sportsman, who sees these things in their diaphanous hours of dawn, can understand.

After a brief breakfast—a mere prelude to the operations of the day—taken by a tiny rivulet which mutters through the peat where sundews and butterworts are also enjoying the process of seducing the "fretful midge" to taste the glistening smiles of their gastric juices, the guns and dogs line out for a first beat across the nearest patch of heather, where lately the grouse were calling. But the birds are wild—they always are—and the coives rise out of shot, and glides away at enormous speed over the shoulder of the hill. After an hour's walking through deep, hummocky heather, beds of rushes, and soft oozy places, flecked with the silver tassels of cotton grass, another coeve is promised; but the setter, who suddenly checks her pace and stands, with quivering lips, rigid as a statue, nosing the air in the direction in which the birds are lying. The spaniels fall behind at a sign from their respective masters, the guns converge, with noiseless tread towards the fifth, blue-grey form, which has the tensest anxiety written in every line of her, when, suddenly, with a whirr and rattle of wings, the birds rise and break coeve, some going to the right, others to the left. The outside men get the best of it, being able to put in a second shot, with the result that from six barrels four birds are retrieved by the busy little spaniels from the glowing heather. As coives are few and often very far between, every eye is fixed on the remaining birds, which have, in nearly as many minutes, covered the best part of three miles across the moor. But only the trained sight can follow their splendid flight as they sail across the chequered country, and note that tiny, instantaneous flutter in the far-off shimmering haze which marks them down.

But there is more—very much more—in an old-fashioned "Twelfth" than grouse, more than can ever be written. From the wonderful dawn to noon-day, when a light pony cart comes rumbling and tossing over the rocky moorland track with juncos—and what a fragrance of flowers and beauty that has no other equal in these islands—and again on till evening the day affords an ever-changing variety of incident. There are no big bags to record, no keepers to expect heavy tips. But there is the fine, thin air, sparkling and keen as champagne, and perhaps more wholesome, the flush of snipe in the rushes, unexpected mallards springing from the weedy pools, and mountain hares (which he who shoots must carry!) amid the yellowing bracken which embroders the banks of the burn. And not the least, there is the delightful sense of physical ease which cushions of springy heather provide when pipes are smoked and the fortunes of the day discussed. Even greater than all these things, perhaps, is the sense of freedom—boundless as the moor itself—which is the distinctive charm of such a day! And many a man who is persuaded by custom and circumstance to confine himself to the butts, and their unavoidable conventionalities, may wish to think of the days when he carried his own gun, when he halted at the peat hill to mix his whisky with its crystal and icy water, and learned to love the finer ethics of the chase with the good companionship of kindred spirits—dogs and men.

Such recollections are very dear to many of us, and I have tried to show that the old-fashioned "Twelfth" not only still exists in the remote counties, but that it still preserves its erstwhile flavor of romance. Modern methods of shooting have much to recommend them. But there are not a few men who, having forsaken the old for the new, cannot hear in the gathering mists the far-off evening coives calling, "Back, come back?"—A. T. Johnson in Ballys.

## IN THE INNER HEBRIDES

The day was a fine, frosty one in early February when I assisted the minister of the parish to harness an ancient steed into a still more ancient gig for a drive to the far side of the island in search of sport. In due course we reached our destination across sandy beaches linked up by very bad stretches of road, and, having hobbled our steed behind the shelter of a mighty boulder, we proceeded first to try the beach. We had not gone far down the grassy slope when a hare racing away down the hill, was bowled over and deposited

under the rugs in the gig. On the rocky shore at the base of the cliffs we saw several parties of turnstone and a few purple sandpipers and oyster-catchers, but on turning a corner viewed a small party of ducks riding in a sheltered cove about half a mile away. They looked like mergansers, but as they were not on the feed, the minister thought they might be mallard, and we decided to stalk them from two covered half the distance. However, before we had reached the cove, the ducks commenced diving for food, and by their actions betrayed their identity, for no one can mistake the dive of a merganser for that of any other duck. Having left them to their fishing operations and retraced our steps, we proceeded on our way, badly missing a snipe en route, which rose out of a mass of kelp, but bagging a single mallard which got up at the discharge. A lot of curlews arose also from the rocks, and, circling round, pitched apparently on the top of the cliff. The climb was not an easy one, the cliff surface was very soft near the top, when, having gained it in breathless condition, we found no trace of the birds. Whilst regained our breath and talking over our disappointment a large wispy of fully a hundred snipe rose not forty yards away, at which we fired all four barrels without touching a feather, when at the discharge another large wispy rose almost at our feet, to go off, of course, without being shot at. To make matters worse, the curlews got up from behind some boulders and flew down to the beach again, where we did not follow them. The ground at the top of the cliff was very soft, and soon single snipe began to rise wild, only one of which was bagged; but a small flock of golden plover charged a fourth being shot as it fell over the cliff into the sea. We now decided to descend the cliff to a large cave in the hopes of getting some rock pigeons, and possibly an otter. Several pigeons flew out at our approach out of range, and on firing a gun off near the entrance fully a dozen flew out, but at such tremendous speed that only one was dropped.

The method of approaching an otter is for one gun to remain outside the cave ready to fire when the bolts, and for the other to enter the cave and to follow the windings in pitch darkness until the otter is heard rushing towards him inside the cave to gain the open. This method is not every day a pleasant one for the man in the cave, and certainly a very dangerous one, for fear of the discharge in so confined a space bringing down the roof; but the gun outside usually kills the animal as he bolts. This cave, however, was drawn blank as far as otters were concerned, and so we determined to try another one not far away, which was eventually reached after a somewhat exciting climb in the nature of a short cut round a projecting edge of cliff. Two green couravants were disturbed from a ledge just inside the cave at our approach, and on firing a gun off another came out of its recesses with a great noise, followed by three pigeons, one of which was shot, and at which we made no attempt to fire, as they dodged behind a large overhanging piece of cliff before we could get to them. This cave evidently held an otter, for on the soft sand at its entrance, left wet by the last tide, were the animal's paddings entering the cave, with no returning marks, so, having posted my friend near the entrance, I entered. It very soon took a turn to the right, and then was in pitch darkness. This was necessitated feeling one's way along the walls and very soon bending as well, when suddenly I heard a rushing sound, and immediately pulled both triggers, feeling something brush against my leg as I did so. There was a tremendous crash, as if the whole cave had blown up, and I saw thousands of stars and felt other unpleasant sensations. Whatever else had happened, the otter had certainly taken no harm, and so I retraced my steps to see how the parson had fared. He did not look particularly happy, and no wonder, for not only had he failed to hit the otter as he bolted from the cave, but at his second discharge had tumbled backwards off the slippery rock upon which he had been standing and found himself in a sitting posture in a pool of water. After this experience we decided to leave otters and coves alone, for that day at any rate, and so climbed back to the top of the cliff by the direct route and had lunch. Leaving the cliffs, we descended to lower ground, and had not long been there before we heard the welcome cries of white-fronted geese, and saw a skein flying along the ridge of a hill, to pitch on the grassy slope near a conical hill, called by the islanders Ben More. There was no cover on our side, except a wall quite 250 yards from them, and they were also too far from the ridge to approach them from the other side, so we determined to have a drive, the minister losing the tress and having to act as driver. Making a long detour, I gained the hedge and took up my position in a sheepfold near the top, and there awaited the report of my friend's gun, which was to proclaim the fact that he had put them up. I had not long to wait before I heard the welcome sound, followed by the laughing cackle so characteristic of this kind of goose. They were very scattered, and the first lot passed below me, and, although within shot, I let them go in the hope that some would come right over the sheepfold. I thus was not disappointed, for the next minute I had eight or nine right overhead and low down, and scored an easy right and left. Hastily reloading, I was just in time for another

small lot of five, also directly overhead, but somewhat higher, and again scored with my right and left a second bird very hard with my friend, who watched it alight on the far side of a stone wall, behind which he eventually stalked and killed it. Having picked up my three geese, I started to rejoin my companion, and had hardly gone fifty yards before up got a jack snipe, to be missed beautifully with both barrels, but, marking him down about a couple of hundred yards away, managed to rectify this mistake by adding him to the bag. Hardly had I done so before another jumped up, to be also missed with the only shot which I was able to send after him. Although I marked him down, he must have used his legs to some purpose, for I failed to put him up a second time. I found the minister looking very happy, for besides the geese which he had despatched he had also added a curlew and a brace of golden plover to the bag, which had now become quite a respectable one. On the way back to our horse and trap we added to it another hare and a teal, besides putting up several full snipe and jacks, which, however, with the exception of one which was bagged, rose somewhat too wild to warrant our wasting powder over them. We drove back so as to pass a large shallow loch noted for its wildfowl, and on topping a slight ridge which brought it into our view a magnificent sight presented itself to our gaze. The water and shores of the loch were literally black with duck, chiefly mallard, wigeon, and teal, and in lesser numbers tufted duck, pochard, gadwall, shoveller, and female goldeneye; but the most magnificent sight of all was a large herd of Bewick's swans, of which I counted 183, and among them three larger whoopers could be easily distinguished. It was a grand sight to see so many of these beautiful wild swans together, with every now and then the appearance of a new-comer, which sailed gracefully over the glassy surface of the loch, and, circling, joined the assembled flock, breaking with a splash the mirror-like surface of the water. They made no attempt to rise as we drove along the shore of the loch, but merely swam on farther into the centre.

On approaching the bridge crossing the mouth of the only river in the island we saw that it held a goodly lot of ducks, so, leaving our conveyances by the roadside, we proceeded to stalk them behind the shelter of two friendly crabs, which with such success that we added a couple of teal, a mallard, to our now satisfactory bag. Nor was this all, for on entering the glee we saw a flock of golden plover close to the manse. When about a hundred yards from them I dropped off behind the trap and told the minister to drive slowly on, while the plover were so busy watching the cart and horse that they failed to notice my approach in the gathering dusk, so that when they did rise it was an easy task to take four out of their closely packed ranks, and we gathered a fifth next morning. This latter piece of good luck brought our bag up to twenty-six head, made up of no less than ten varieties—viz., ten golden plover, four teal, a single teal, pigeon, curlew, and jack snipe. This total added to four green and two golden plover shot whilst crossing the glee in the morning on the way to the stable made quite a good show when hung up in the larder.—H. W. Robinson.

## DOAK AND FINLAY GO HUNTING

Some straggler through the Cumberlands had reported the sight of a bear far up in their fastnesses. The report was hardly regarded as worth listening to, and only oak and Finlay—Uriah Doak and Amziyah Finlay—would go hunting for his bearship. They were capital hunters—so they doubtless thought—and no bear, be he big or little, old or young, could prow through these mountains, as though he had through the bluff on all creation. No, Doak and Finlay would see to it that his cake should be dough. Doak and Finlay breakfasted early, after which they wended their way up into the Cumberlands. Doak was armed with his trusty flintlock, which had long been an heirloom in the family, while Finlay bore an old fuscus, which he had obtained from an ex-moonshiner, who no longer needed a gun. On their way they soared up a "whole family" of wild turkeys, but as they were loaded for bear they could not waste their ammunition on the like of turkeys. So those gallant fowls just spread wing and emigrated to the next hill, while Doak and Finlay went forth, doubtless wondering whether a bear would contend for his rights should these rights be trampled upon by a moonshiner who had operated a blackade distillery there many years before. They rounded a tall rock that stood in their way, old man Branham's black sheep appeared, having a very bear-like aspect. When he saw Doak and Finlay, true to his instinct, he backed and made at them, as if he would beat them into the next township. They knew he was the bear, but it appears that they never thought of using their guns in "self-defence," but they made for the top of the rock by way of the trunk of a small tree which had fallen against it. It must have been an arduous climb, but men will sometimes do wonders in the way of making their escapes from dangers. The "bear" stamped around the rock chewing his



"The First of the Season"

## Sportsman's Calendar

NOVEMBER

- Trout-fishing ends November 15.
- Cock Pheasant may be shot in Cowichan Electoral District only.
- Grouse (except willow grouse in Cowichan), Quail, Ducks, Deer, Geese and Snipe-shooting open.

quid for awhile. Then he went away. After which Doak and Finlay betwought themselves of their guns—but the butt-piece of Doak's gun was gone, and Finlay—had no gun! They were afraid to go down from their place of refuge—the bear might be waiting for them. In the afternoon, a photographer came along with his camera, and told them to be still a minute, which they did—till he snapped them. They told him that a bear had chased them, and they had climbed upon the rock to escape him. But as no bear was to be seen, he persuaded them down. Since then the rock has been known as Doak's Rock, Finlay not sharing the name—an injustice to him!—Field and Stream.

## THE TOP DROPPER

The ordinary use of the dropper is well known to wet-fly fishermen. But under certain conditions of water the top dropper, or fly nearest the rod, can be of great assistance quite apart from actually hooking fish. In high, colored water, when the stickles are turned into rough waves, the swifter parts of a river can hardly be fished up stream with any chance of fish seeing the fly. In fact, even fishing across and down stream, a very large number of trout fail to catch sight of our flies. At the same time, the fish are not feeding on very large flies. It is no use putting on whole cast of very big flies; the trout will only rise short at them. This is the time for a big top dropper dressed on a hook two or three sizes larger than your tail fly, and preferably a good showy cochy-bonduh, with more black than red in the hackle. Work this fly with a good dot-and-carry-one motion over all the rough water. As soon as a fish rises to it—it will probably be a short rise—mark the exact spot. The big dropper has now done its work and marked down a fish like a pointer, and a fish, too, that has had its attention aroused and will now be on the look out for surface food. The next thing to do is to hang your tail fly over this fish long enough for him to see it. If this cannot be done in any other way you must get right above him up stream, and hold the tail fly, or second dropper, dancing on the waves over his nose. Many a good fish, of whose presence you would have otherwise been unaware, may thus be secured in a day's fishing.

This may not seem very scientific fishing, casting, as you will be in some cases, right down stream; but those who have a short Easter holiday must make the most of their time, and attack it in any way you like, even with a dry fly if that is your fancy. Anyhow, it is a more wholesome way of fishing than using worms and minnows. Occasionally fish will not only rise to to but take the big dropper. So much for the big dropper as a fish finder. And now for another use.

On some days the light is very puzzling, and it is very hard to see where one's cast is. The difficulty of detecting a rise in wet-fly fishing is great enough when one knows exactly where to look for that slight tightening of the cast or faint glimpse of a fish which means a rise when a trout has taken under water. But when one does not know to a yard or two where the flies are it is chuck and chance it with a vengeance. Here a big showy top dropper comes in useful again; it acts as a pilot, and shows you where the rest of the cast is. For this purpose a good blackish cochy-bonduh is best, as nothing shows up better than black.—W. E. B. in Field.

One day a Scotch and English boy, who were fishing, were separated by their respective mothers with difficulty, the Scotch boy, though the smaller, being far the more pugnacious. "What garrud we fight a big laddie like that for?" said the mother as she wiped the blood from his nose. "And I'll fight him again," said the boy, "if he says Scotsmen wear kilts because their feet are too big to get into trousers!"—Argonaut.

## ON PIKE

fruit-growers that they can plentiful; their preference for such country grows more in as new settlers come in, increasing in the Kootenay those time has been observed with good results. On Vancouver only other part of the Province animal exists, it has been stop all killing in the south, and for the next few years, w-brush along many of the inland the white-tailed deer, but nowhere is really in account of its being such panthers and wolves, which of the heavy Government

of the group of heads Columbia entries for the Vienna during the month of phloxes, are, of course, the every head in the group

## BREAD BASKET

the Canadian Farm computation as to the Canada's wheat crop. The

and Saskatchewan produce 19,000,000 bushels of wheat, and 23,800,000 barrels of flour. It makes 180 loaves of and one-half pounds each, would make 4,284,000.

It is estimated that each average, about 130 of such finally, then, that amount almost 33,000,000 people in and as Canada's population 8,000,000, Canada could

st year for 25,000,000 people the United Kingdom's en 45,000,000 wheat crop of bread to so many mill of that great wheat crop

for a year. The foregoing no account the wheat produced in the Canada. Were that added, Canada could keep con-

of the Old Land in stated. Canada's wheat-

times the size of the United States as a wheat export- Canada is rapidly com-

porting. Western Can- on is five times what it And Canada has sold

5,420 worth of grain in ly making progress in

if immigration contin- Professor Mavor's fa-

port to the British Bro- a last year's editorial

ENGLAND

sunlight slowly wanes, summer closes, leaves turn red—

of roses. In time must pass, he back to golden; from new-found homes that are olden.

ndered far, and seemed cient tether, ing the Motherland hild together.

the maple leaves, and closes, and'er become and's roses.

—Arthur Stringer.

LUCK

he kind lady, as she a generous wedge of full of hardships?"

ord for it, ma'am," re- pinter, w'en de farmers eatin' apples, an' drink- old fer me 'I be tramp- mer people's allers of New's.

ELY CLEAR

her left ear and sleeps er husband, who had ound slumber; conse- the party at work in erald.

to gardener)—Have bought a new velas-

Wot's he going to do it?—The Bystander.