

of the Emmico spring. I was in pursuit of black duck. En route through the close woods that lay between, my practised eye espied a flock and marked where they alighted on the further side. While stealing cautiously in their direction, I accidentally started a covey of partridge—a common aggravation when one does not dare to fire. But I learn my lesson in moral philosophy that “success lies in the pursuit of a single aim and purpose.” My gun was a heavy old goose gun—none of your modern, compact, ever-ready breech-loaders. I pushed on, gun in hand, till I came to an advantageous spot which I made my base of operations. From this point the birds were hidden by a mound of sedge-grass, but I had not long to wait till first one, then another, and another appeared, until I counted ten in all, within range and grouped admirably for my purpose. Silently, and with steady hand, the old muzzle is brought out in their direction and sighted. It was the space of a second before all was ready, and then without pause or nervous twitch, my finger found the trigger and pulled. Bang! Nine ducks lay prone upon the water; the tenth all unconscious of the extent of the catastrophe, sped away, quacking to his mates to follow. Fancy brings all the sounds and all the excitement back to me as vividly as at that moment so long ago.

Doubtless if the reader has followed me with the interest I feel in writing, he will be prepared, as I am, to defy the wrath of the ancient sage and say, “Surely the former times WERE better than these!”

N. B.—Where reference is made in this article to “mackerel,” it might be safer to have said “herring.”—H. G. C.

