

Field Sports at Home and Abroad

"ALL TO THE POINT."

Kathleen Mavourneen, the horn of the hunter. The amateur hunter, is heard on the hill. You'd better be doing a get-away stunt or Your person with buck-shot he's likely to fill;

For amateur hunters have somehow a habit Of shooting too soon, and, dear Kathleen, there may Mistake you, alas! for a quail or a rabbit, And leave you a mass of inanimate clay.

Kathleen Mavourneen, you'd think we were joking, If we should relate half the tales that are told Of Nimrods half-baked that go aimlessly poking About through the forests and over the wild, A farmer bobs up and they think he's a pheasant, Bang, bang, he is shot through the lung or the jaw, Now if you'd avoid such a prospect unpleasant, Dear Kathleen, you'd better stay home with your Ma.

Kathleen Mavourneen, O pray take this warning And don't take a chance when the hunter is loose, He keeps up his reckless performance from morning till night, so to venture abroad is no use, Don't try it, fair maid, or you're bound to be swatted, He'll think you're a turkey, a snipe or a swan; And, unless you desire to be foully pot-shotted, O Kathleen, stay home till the hunters are gone.

—From Life, Nov. 30, 1911.

HUNTING JAPANESE DEER IN ENGLAND.

The Ribblesdale Buckhounds.

On Saturday the Ribblesdale Buckhounds held the opening meet of the season—their sixth—at Gisburn. Some eight degrees of frost in the preceding night made the scent indifferent, and although the sun shone brilliantly the ground remained a trifle hard on the sheltered slopes and in the bottoms, where all day the grass and the lower branches of the trees stayed powdered white with frost. On such a morning there is a wonderful fascination about this country with its wide horizons, its sweeping reaches of grassland, through which the Ribbles wanders, rising to wild stretches of broken moor and heather and the dark slopes of the fells; a grand hunting country in which stags have made straight points of 10 and 11 miles, going the whole way almost continuously over good grass, with fences (usually the characteristic bank flanked on one side or the other by a ditch and topped with posts and rails on a stone wall) which call for a strong jumping horse. On Saturday a stag was found immediately, having been harbored in the woods along the river within a mile of Gisburn village. He broke away at once on a line which would have taken him by Paythorne through some of the best country in the district, but was turned apparently by some of the followers, in motor cars, on bicycles, or on foot, who straggled along the road, and took to the woods again. Here he was rattled up and down for a couple of hours, but would not make for the open, till finally the scent becoming mixed with that of other deer, he was left for attention on another day. Though not productive of any long run, the day was enjoyable and interesting, the more so as being the first, since their establishment, on which the buckhounds have been hunted by any one except the joint master, Mr. Peter Ormrod, of Wyresdale Park, who, with the co-operation of Lord Ribblesdale, founded the hunt in 1906, and has since then devoted to it both his time and his private means ungrudgingly. The committee have not yet accepted Mr. Ormrod's resignation. Meanwhile the new huntsman, Charles Greenway, has for some years been Mr. Ormrod's first whip and kennel huntsman, and knows the pack and the country well. For other reasons also the opening meet of the Ribblesdale Buckhounds is one of the most interesting events in the hunting world.

Mr. Ormrod's Hounds.

The hound themselves are a cross, of Mr. Ormrod's making, between the best foxhound strains and the so-called Kerry beagles, which are not beagles at all, but hounds with the pace and drive of foxhounds, which stand 23 inches and upwards at the shoulder. Of the crossed strain, some of the 16½ couples which were on Saturday stood over 24 inches. The Kerry hounds are black and tan in color, and their peculiar characteristics, which it was hoped to breed into the cross, are chiefly two—namely, first, their music, which is deeper and more sonorous, as well as much greater in volume, than is to be found in any foxhound pack; and, second, their keen scenting power. There are many who think that the modern foxhound is losing his nose. The Kerry hounds, on the other hand, having for generations lived hard, not seldom half-starved, with their sporting, but

generally very poor, peasant owners, have preserved the keenness of scent which once undoubtedly belonged to all hounds. When two or three couples of them were first introduced into the (otherwise foxhound) pack of the Ribblesdale, they seemed on more than one occasion to demonstrate beyond question their superiority in scenting power, being able to pick up a half-cold trail when the rest of the pack was at fault. Other details in which the Kerry hounds differ from the accepted type of foxhound are that they are less broad-chested, they have flat, instead of domed, foreheads, and the longer and more "hare's" foot instead of the short "cat's" foot of the modern foxhound. Mr. Ormrod's experiments in crossing seem to have been eminently successful and are not a little interesting from a Mendelian point of view.

The black and tan color has been clearly shown to be "dominant" over the tricolor of a foxhound, though whether it is dominant over the lemon and white is not so certain. The domed (foxhound) forehead is dominant but not with great positiveness over the flat; and the hare's foot, as might be expected, is dominant over the cat's foot. The result is far, then, is a pack of fine, upstanding hounds with black and tan coats, tending to the foxhound's breadth of chest and domed forehead, and with longish feet of the hare type. They have keen scent, the pace, dash, and drive of good foxhounds, and a music which must be almost unique—deep, bell-like, and of extraordinary volume, every hound, apparently, throwing his tongue with equal readiness.

An Ancient Hunting Country.

The country, a splendid green oasis beyond the smoke of the manufacturing district which runs up to Blackburn, Preston, and Chorley, has been a huntmaster's country from time immemorial. Roughly, it may be said to reach, unbroken save by the higher hills which run up to 1400 feet, from a few miles from the sea at Scorton and Garstang, some 40 miles eastward by Bleasdale Moor and the Trough of Boland (or Bowland) over the Yorkshire border and the valley of the Ribble, by Waddington and Clitheroe, Pendle Hill, Easington Fell, Ribblesdale, and Gistow towards Skipton. This is the country which Nicholas Assheton, of Downham, hunted, something immorally, perhaps, and in a roystering fashion, without much regard to seasons in the early 17th century. Here in 1617, too, King James I. came, and in Myerscough Forest, near Garstang, on August 12, "killed a buck" and on the following day "five bucks," taking occasion, (to the horror of the Puritans) to make a speech in favor of "piping and honest recreation." Not that his Majesty seems to have been a first class shot, for (we quote from Assheton's "Journal"):

August 16—Houghton—The King hunting: a great company: killed afore dinner a brace of stags. Verie hott: soe hee went in to dinner. Wee attend he lord's table; and about 4 o'clock the King went downe to the allome (alum) mines which were near Houghton, and was ther an hower, and then went and shot at a stag, and missed. Then my Lord Compton had lodged two brace. The King shott gaine and brake the thigh bone. A dogg long in coing, and my Lo. Compton shott again and killed him. Late in to supper.

The King, however, let it be noted in excuse, was shooting after dinner.

Seventeenth Century Spor.

Assheton's own sport seems to have been of an extraordinarily varied character. In the month of June, 1617, we find him (usually cum alibi) "trying for a fox" on nine different days, with, apparently, only one kill, and that of a bitch fox on June 25! But foxes then were vermin with one shilling bounty on their heads: which heads were subsequently nailed to the church door. Besides foxes, however, there were "bowson" (badger) to be "wrought out of" their earths and killed, and otter, and hares, and—

November 4 (1618)—Downe to the water. Dick killed a mallard and a duck at one shoote; Sherborne killed a water ouse, two pigeons and a thrush.

A fine mixed bag! And this same Bro. Sherborne ten days later "went to th' Arrope and Skelfshaw Fells with gunnes: shott at a morecock, struck feathers off, and missed." On the following day:

November 15—On hill above Wallaper Well shott two young hinds; presently comes the keeper and broke the other deere, had the skin and a shoulder and V. shillings, and said he would take no notice.

The penalties for illicit deer-killing were, we know, serious. In the regulations of this same Forest of Bolland we read elsewhere:

The several tenants, as well leaseholders as fee-farmers, are bound to suffer the deere to go unmolested into their several grounds; they are also fyned if anie, without lysesn, keep anie dogg bigger than will go through a stirrups to hunt the deere out of he corne.

The Wild Japanese Deer.

There is not much corn in this grass country, however, now, and the "deer damage" is comparatively light. We have spoken of the pack of the Ribblesdale Buckhounds and of their country, but not yet of their quarry, which is perhaps the most interesting of them all. The mainstay of the hunt is not carred red deer nor fallow, but wild Japanese or sika deer (*Cervus sika*), which Mr. Ormrod has been systematically turning down

We call them "wild" because they are truly wild in nature, and (for the pack is hunted to kill) it is probable that of the original stags all, or nearly all, have by now been hunted out or have otherwise died. But the deer have multiplied naturally, till it is conjectured, there may be at present upwards of 300 in the district. But this conjecture only for being, as has been said, truly wild, the sika deer are extraordinarily shy. In the summer they go up into the hills and disappear, returning just as they are wanted in the autumn. But when returned they remain curiously invisible, never hanging round human habitations (as is the way of fallow deer) or invading gardens, but keeping well away and hiding so cleverly that they are seldom seen, and many a farmer does not know that he has a deer on his land. Even when hunted, a stag commonly manages to get away unseen, and the field probably never views him until, after an hour or two hours, or four, in which 20 miles and upwards may be covered, he is found at bay. Woe, then, to the hound which comes within reach of the wicked little four-tined horns, which, it is said small though he is, make the Japanese deer the master of even the tall red stag himself. If from a hunting point of view he has a fault it is his readiness to take to water; but when he does, as in the Ribble, it is always to cross direct and rarely, if ever, to go either up stream or down. For the rest he gives great sport, the best run so far recorded having covered 29 miles, with one straight-away point of 11 miles, or 15 miles between three points.

No Fox-Hunting Country.

This is not a fox country. It could not well be, where every farmer allows his poultry to run at large about the grass. Before the buckhounds were established there were two packs of harriers (which still flourish) with which there has been some needless friction, for there is, and should be, no legitimate clashing between harriers and such a hunt as this. As elsewhere, also, the preserving of pheasants on some estates has limited both the range of the hunt and the hunting season. But the hunt which has everything ideal as yet, perhaps, to be created, in this or some better world, and meanwhile under the spur of Mr. Ormrod's keenness and liberality, the Ribblesdale Buckhounds are firmly established in the affections of the neighborhood. The pack, already very fine, should go on improving as the type evolved by the cross-breeding becomes more stable; and the limitations of the country, of which we have spoken will tend to disappear. Finally, whether from the sportsman's or the naturalist's point of view, the apparently already successful naturalization on so large a scale of the sika deer as a true wild breeding species in England is an immensely interesting thing. And no man who has once heard the full, ringing music of these hounds over the wide sweep of the fell region could well fail to fall in love either with them or with the country.

AMONGST THE SANDGROUSE NEAR KARACHI.

The country round about Karachi is not swarming with game, but one can get a certain amount of shooting there, such as curlew and whimbrel, in the mangrove swamps and along the banks in a dug-out, or walking a little if the mud does not happen to be too deep. There are also certain good places for small sandgrouse, the district near Muggar Pir being one of them, and a stretch of desert seven or eight miles northwest of the British infantry lines being another. Muggar Pir derives its name from a small tank there containing a lot of alligators, or mugger, as they are called in Hindustani. Those kept there are held to be sacred, and are regularly fed and looked after by a native. They are so numerous in this tank that it is said one could cross the tank by walking over them. I would not care to try the experiment myself, but I believe the native in charge of them will do so.

Sandgrouse shooting commences in Sind on Sept. 1. For shikar purposes in Sind most people use a camel, as they are extremely useful and not a bit gun shy—at least, that has been my experience of them. Some people, I know, dislike the motion when riding on a camel, and there have been cases of mal de mer, I believe, especially during the walking motion, which, without undue exaggeration, might be likened to the motion of a boat at certain times. Personally, I have always found them pretty comfortable if one arranges the stirrups properly and takes an extra pillow to sit on.

Well, three of us, having made all arrangements, started on the morning in question about five o'clock. There was nothing very exciting about the ride, though it was pleasant enough in the cool of the early morning. We got to the shooting ground about seven or half-past, and dismounted to stretch our legs. Then, coming to a good-sized patch of small scrub we decided to walk through it on the chance of getting a grey partridge or two and perhaps a black one; the former is not considered up to much for the table, but the black partridge is very good, and a much handsomer bird. We found, as we expected, a brace of grey partridges, but did not get a shot. Shortly afterwards we came across a flock of sandgrouse,

which however got up a long way off without giving us a chance. Then we made for a small tank, which could be seen a little way off, and took up our positions in readiness for the birds which would probably come there as usual to drink. After waiting about a quarter of an hour the familiar call of sandgrouse on the wing was heard—"Kur-r, kur-r"—and a small flock came flying over, of which a couple were dropped. Another rather long wait and no more birds arriving, we thought there would probably be other tanks near, so decided to separate and walk the birds up, covering as much ground as possible. Each having agreed on his line of country, we moved on, and in a very short time right and left shots were heard, and the birds were beginning to get on the move more, till about ten or eleven o'clock we were in the thick of them and getting pretty good shooting, each helping the sport for the others by keeping the birds on the wing. By about noon everyone was pretty hot and thirsty, and we adjourned to a small group of trees giving a certain amount of shade for cool drinks and something to eat.

When everyone was ready for the fray again we resumed operations, and continued to have fairly good sport all the afternoon. Sometimes the proceedings would be varied by mounting one's camel and getting a little shooting in that way. Birds coming on the left and fairly straight ahead were all right, but those coming on the right were difficult, as it necessitated slewing round in the saddle before being able to get a shot, thus losing time. Sometimes the sandgrouse would lie quite still till we came within five yards of them, and they were most difficult to see, so well did their color harmonize with their surroundings. About half-past four, when we were all pretty well tired, we called a halt, and after counting the bag, which totalled thirty-eight and a brace of sandgrouse and a brace of grey partridge, we mounted our camels and made for home.

PATIENCE WITH THE PUPPY

Every fall there are thousands of puppies taken afield for the first time and it may safely be said that over half of them are either spoiled outright or damaged because they are punished for what they do not know, not having the time and age to have learned. The temper of puppies vary. One will have too bold a manner of crowding his birds, another will not have the pointing instinct naturally, while another will know too much about the scent of game. A slight scolding will do for a bad break in one, a twist of the ear may have to be administered to another, and nothing short of shooting seems to do for a third. Hundreds of little faults are found in as many puppies and it is to train them out of these that the owner takes them afield and works with them. I am assuming that all the puppies are broken to the gun, and have found that when they see their masters coming to the kennel to take them out, gun over the arm, that they leap and bound to show their appreciation.

The time to break a gun-shy dog is when he is a puppy two or three months old. If he knows you are going to take him for a walk when he sees the gun or rifle over the arm he will soon learn who handles the noise making instrument, and that it is for his special benefit. If he has not had this training, better begin shooting about him with a .22 caliber rifle, when he is on the chain. After years of handling dogs in the field, I have found that two commands only are essential to handling a dog on game, if he will obey them. These two are "Down," at a word, and "Come." If he starts game that he should not, a rabbit for instance, and gives chase, if he is broken to "Down" he will down when he hears it from you, no matter how tempting the cottontail appears.

Do not call him up to you and punish him if he does not obey. Put on the spike collar and upset him a couple of times, and teach him to go down on the belly when you give the order. A bit of sugar, if you have taught him to like it, will help him to come at a word. I caught this from a Hagenbeck doctor dog trainer and from Adgie of lion fame. It is a good plan.

A well-bred dog will take the field with head either high or low and seem searching for game though he does not know what it is. If he gets started on rabbits and is allowed to go ahead with it he will soon be a fend for them and nothing but rabbits will appease him. If you know where there are quail or chickens, go to them and their feeding grounds at once on the opening of the season and let him road the scent and trails as long as he likes. This will get him onto the game scent. Bird scent is better to him than fur scent if he is started on it. If the breeding is behind him he will know bird scent as soon as he comes in contact with it; that is he will let you know he has found something interesting. I know a breeder who has a few crippled quail in his back yard, who takes his puppies, setters, out after them on a cord when they are less than three months old. He instils it into them as soon as possible, that quail are the desideratum, and when he goes afield he has a mighty easy time of it.

The idea in dog education is to break them to feather and bird scent early, and those of us who cannot do this must either



Sportsman's Calendar

DECEMBER

December 15—Last day for deer-shooting.
December 31—Last day for pheasants, grouse, and quail.
After November it is illegal to sell ducks, geese, snipe.

train to it later or send our dogs to the trainer. In either case have patience with the lad who so enjoys the run before the gun and give him time and help to learn what you want.—Amos Burhans, in Recreation.

GAME COCKS AND TROUT FLIES

A writer on poultry matters asked the other day, "Who could make a commercial success of Bantams?" In England, however, at the present time good prices can be obtained for skins of game fowl for the purpose of supplying the fly-tiers with material. The greater proportion of the flies used all over the world are made in England, and, apart from the big firms of tackle-makers, several ladies who have taken up this industry have their hands full with export orders alone. In fact, ladies who are compelled to stay at home and yet desire to add to their income, would do well to investigate the possibilities of this work. It requires little outfit; a vise, a collection of wools, silks and feathers, costing perhaps twenty dollars, will do to start with; the work is exactly of that delicate nature which suits a woman's fingers, while at the matching of coloring in silk and feather she is already an adept.

But the object of this article is to suggest to fishermen how much they will gain by obtaining even a rudimentary knowledge of the art of fly-tying. It should be especially valuable here since it will render the fisherman when "away back" independent of supplies from the shops. A fly is really an easy thing to dress, though the elaborate descriptions in books read rather forbiddingly. Once the idea is mastered, the rest is merely a matter of practice, and at a pinch materials for the flies used on these not too fastidious trout can generally be found, feathers picked up off the ground, a tuft of hair from some animal or the wool from a tweed coat or cap. The roughness of the work matters not at all, and the catching of a fish on the first fly of one's own tying brings a satisfaction and confidence in himself to the fisherman which he has never experienced before. The comparatively large flies used out here are all the easier to dress.

The Game cock comes in this way. For hooks from No. 0 downwards the hackles off the fowl of commerce are far too big, besides being often ill-shaped. A good hackle is known by its glossiness and ability to shoot water and remain stiff. The hen hackle fulfills none of these requirements. Also it should be of the shape of an isosceles triangle, the outside lines being straight and not convex. It will only be procured in perfection from a bird in the pink of condition, and if cock-fighting were still legal, the bird in training would be the one to go to.

So great is the interest taken in fly-dressing in England that several fishermen are breeding strains of Blue and Honey-duns, as they find it difficult to get the exact delicate smoky coloring in the markets. More and more men are becoming interested in fly-dressing, though they continue to buy the majority of their flies. This reacts on the work of the professionals, who find that slovenly work is at once condemned. To do them justice, the best of them are very good, though the finest and smallest flies ever seen by the writer were the work of an amateur, and tied without a vise. As trout get more and more educated, so is it found more and more necessary to imitate the natural insect as closely as it is possible to do. This entails a study of the natural insect and larval life of the river and river bank, and within the limits of their field work, fishermen have become recognized authorities on several species and their life history. Through the medium of papers devoted to sport, of fishing clubs, ideas as to new patterns are constantly being exchanged, and the professionals benefit by the increased devotion to this kind of sport.

Once a man has seen a fly tied he will never be afraid of the difficulty of the operation, the artistic eye will be delighted by the daintiness of coloring and workmanship, and the value of the Gamecock will again appreciate for a purpose not contemplated in the days of "Sebright."

We measure success by accumulation. The measure is false. The true measure is appreciation. He who loves most has most.—Henry van Dyke.