

Field Sports at Home and Abroad



Sportsman's Calendar

OCTOBER

Oct. 1.—Pheasant (cocks only) and quail shooting opens for Esquimalt, Cowichan, Saanich and Islands Electoral Districts.
Pheasant shooting (cocks only) opens on Hornby and Denman Islands.
Game Now in Season—Deer, pheasant, grouse (except in Saanich), quail, also ducks, geese and snipe.
N.B.—Municipal regulations of both North and South Saanich require written permits from both owners of land on which it is desired to shoot and Reeves of the municipalities.
Trout-fishing now excellent, also Salmon-trotting. Tyees at their best at Alberni this month.

The veteran has killed several thousand cougars in the Pacific and northwestern states since 1800, his largest bag in one year being 739, killed in eastern Washington and Oregon and northern Idaho and southeastern British Columbia. Hopper confines his work to predatory animals, upon which the various states have placed a head bounty.

They are great on fish yarns at Kingston, Ontario. Mr. D. P. Branigan, manager of the opera house in that city, spent a day fishing in the Rideau Lakes. He had two hooks on his line and on one occasion caught a black bass on each hook. He believes that each fish weighed a couple of pounds and naturally the tussle with the two of them was a hard one. According to Mr. Branigan's story—and the responsibility for the same must rest upon him—one fish appeared to signal the other, whereupon the fish on the lower part of the line made an upward dart at the fish higher up and with one snap of the jaws or swish of its tail severed the gut and thus freed the fish. A brief instant later and the released fish did its duty to its rescuer by biting or swishing in its turn the gut attached to the hook on which the first fish still remained caught and freeing it in its turn. Mr. Branigan declared it to have been the most astounding piece of fish wisdom he ever witnessed and the sight reconciled him to the loss of the fish. Further Mr. Branigan states that the two fish, with hooks in their mouths, hung about the boat the whole afternoon and when they failed to warn away other fish released three bass in a similar way. Anglers will wish to make the acquaintance of these wise fish.

A proposed readjustment of the boundaries of the Canadian National Park has caused considerable excitement at Banff. It is alleged that the portion taken from the park and simply made a forest reserve includes some of the best game portions of the park, and its withdrawal from game protection means a virtual extermination of the game. The Banff Board of Trade have petitioned the Government to make a new game preserve of that portion of the country between the old and the new boundaries and levy a hunting tax of \$25 on residents and \$50 on non-residents, such tax to be applicable to the Indians, and that a patrol of the park with game guards be continued. The Alberta Fish and Game Protective Association have also requested the Government not to withdraw protection from the area. It is principally over the northern part of the park that the difficulty arises.

A Fort William paper gives the following: An Indian in the C.P.R. employ had an unusual experience at Grasset, and luckily escaped with his life, admitting, despite his nationalistic stoicism, that he got a big scare. He was following a path about half a mile from the track when, with a bellow, a bull moose made for him at full tilt. The Indian had no gun and fell in trying to escape, the moose rushing over him. The bull turned, and the Indian took his chance by lying still while the animal trod him several times. The man got a severe cut in the cheek and a gash in the shoulder, but stood it without a move, and in a second or two the animal made off satisfied that he had despatched his enemy. The Indian received treatment at Grasset, and now travels regularly with a rifle.

"I got a great deal of water in my ears," he said, as he came puffing out of the surf. "I thought the ocean looked rather low," replied his friend.—United Presbyterian.

Counsel: "You reside?"
Witness: "With my brother."
Counsel: "And your brother lives?"
Witness: "With me."
Counsel: "Precisely, but you both live."
Witness: "Together."—Black and White.

BUSK SAMPSON'S POLE VAULT

By Ernest McGaffey

Buck Sampson was the champion "pole vaulter in his college. Of course I didn't know this when we started on a quail shoot together, and, in fact, I never would have thought of it if I had known it, for what was pole vaulting to do with quail shooting? Not much, generally speaking, although it happened to cut quite a figure in our hunt. Buck's real name was Leonard, but everybody called him Buck, because he was so big, and had such a rollicking laugh when anything tickled him. To hear Buck open his mouth and roll out that infectious, roaring laugh of his was something extremely enjoyable, if the joke did not happen to be on you.

We had started in that year on snipe, along about April, and were taking our last hunt of the season at quail, in a rough, rolling country in the southern part of the Prairie state. The birds were fairly plentiful, but there had been so much rain that all the little branches, sloughs, and "cricks" were filled to overflowing with tawny currents that plunged through the timber and ran down the hillsides, making crossing at many points a matter of walking a long way to find suitable spots.

We had one dog, a liver and white pointer, named Don, and he was one of those pottering, careful dogs that make up in "bird sense" and game finding qualities what they lack in speed. Old Don was not such a star on beaves, but when once a bevy was found and scattered he was first class on picking up the "singles," and on locating cripples or dead birds.

So we were enjoying our hunt. Early that morning we had struck a little "crick," as the natives called it, which emptied farther away into the Okaw river, and as there seemed to be birds along it we decided to hunt down it until we reached the big timber, and then cross and come back to where we had started. The beaves had been unusually small, running from nine to a dozen birds, and invariably when they were put up the most of them whirled across the "crick" and lit on the other side.

Now, this particular stream was deep, and the rains had swollen it out of all shape. It was too wide to jump across and too deep to wade, and it was tantalizing in the extreme to have these beaves of quail dart across the "crick" and maybe give us one shot on our side. If we had been hunting with a brace of dogs, we could have hunted a man apiece on each side, but with only one dog we were handicapped. It was cold, too, biting and nippy, and we didn't feel like taking shots as the birds were flying across and depending on old Don to go across and retrieve them. Buck said: "Well, get 'em when we cross at the end and come back."

"When we come back," was my remark, "they'll all fly back on this side. They're educated birds, Buck."

Our conversation was taking place at the noon hour when we had stopped to eat a bite. Eating a bite, meant about five pounds of fried chicken apiece and literally tons and tons of bread, doughnuts, and other truck. As for the dog, he ate bones enough to have built a Goktha.

After we had picked our teeth—Buck and I, not the dog—Buck said, stretching himself to his full height of 6 feet 2-1/2: "Do you know I was the best pole vaulter at Ann Arbor while I was there?"

"No, Buck," was my reply, "were you thinking of giving an exhibition of your powers here?"

"Well," says Buck, "I may if these quail keep on crowding me."

"How so?" says I.

"Why," says Buck, "I'll take one of these dead saplings around here, and the next time a bunch fly across the creek I'll vault across and stir 'em up something eminent."

"I'll go with you," was my answer.

"It's a go," was his reply.

We hadn't gone farther down the creek than a hundred yards when old Don stiffened into a point, head forward, tail stiff as a ramrod, eyes glued to a brush heap right on the edge of the creek. We stepped forward, and one lone bird whirled over towards Buck's side and the rest of the bevy, about thirty, a splendid bevy, darted across the creek and disappeared in a cornfield that flanked the creek on that side, and in among some scattered undergrowth along the edge of the corn.

Buck killed his bird that had swung in to the right, and then we came to the banks of the creek.

"All over," says Buck.

"Andy Over," says I.

"I'll find a pole," he remarked, as he went up into the woods.

He soon returned with a pole that looked to be about thirty feet long. It was pretty heavy and was dead timber, but looked strong enough to hold a church in. We took our guns apart, tied them up in our corduroy coats, and then fell on our hands and knees, where they fell, and bank on the other side.

"Then we flipped" to see who should go first, and I was the "lucky" man. I took hold of the pole and with his assistance stood on the changing high bank on our side of the creek and stuck the pole into the sand on the bottom of the creek. Then, with a silent invocation to the fates, I gave a jump and a swing forward, aiming to heave myself fairly across by the aid of the pole. But I was not an adept at "pole vaulting," and I came down in about two feet of water at the edge, buried my nose in the sand, skinned my wrists a little and was half submerged in sand and water scrambling to

my feet as mad as a hornet and thoroughly disgusted with my effort.

But it pleased Buck that was easily to be seen. He was rolling around on the bank above me almost exploding with laughter and every time he tried to stop he would begin again and laugh some more. This did not improve my feelings although I had to grin a little when I thought of myself coming down, "spread eagle fashion," "kersouse" in the mud and water. Finally I tilted the pole back to Buck and remarked, "I'd give a farm to have you light right in the middle of the creek."

"Impossible, me boy," said Buck, condescendingly "best pole vaulter in Ann Arbor in my time. Little distance like that mere bagatelle, assure you—do it with one hand, but won't take any chances." And then he had another fit of laughing at me.

It looked as though the laugh was on me, sure enough, for I knew him well enough to know that he could make good in any branch of athletics that he said he knew anything about. He swung off in easy, graceful style, and had apparently made his mind up to light away out in the cornfield, high and dry, but then, why, well, dear me, sad, wasn't it, but as a matter of fact the blooming pole broke square off in the middle when Buck's extra sixty pounds of weight was hoisted on to it, and the "champion pole vaulter of Ann Arbor" disappeared for a damp moment under the waters of Little Sister "crick."

When he came up, soaked to the marrow in icy water, he lost no time in splashing and wading ashore, a matter of only a few yards, but his merriment was entirely restrained. As for me, knowing that he never had been in the slightest danger, I whooped and yelled until I was exhausted. Buck "stood the gaft" elegantly, only suggesting that I keep on hunting, as he was going to cut for home to get dry. "I'll go with you, Buck," said I, and I went.

Since then, if Buck and I meet in a crowd and the talk turns on athletics, I have only to commence about as follows: "When Buck and I were hunting quail down in Illinois one fall, when Buck will hold up a warning hand and say, "Ssh, hold on, what'll everybody have."

RIFLE SIGHTS AND SIGHTING RIFLES

Once upon a time a man went deer hunting with a borrowed—rented, to be accurate—rifle. He found a spike buck, minus much knowledge of this cruel world, or else anxious to be killed, if his actions could be taken as indication. The man fired five shots at the innocent buck at a range of about 50 yards. The landscape between was devoid of anything to interfere with the view, which made the five misses even more inexcusable.

The hunter crammed in more ammunition and followed the deer, which had strayed off in search of new adventures. Four one-quarter mile bullets mushroomed on rocks one-quarter mile beyond the venison. After this the man went back to camp, his mind full of unholy thoughts, and the buck, still sound in wind and limb, leisurely sought a good place for the night.

Investigation showed the rifle to be accurate. The sights also were good, a cheap rear and a gold bead front. The trouble lay in that the good things had no relation to each other, the sights lining up in one direction and the very accurate rifle in another. The moral to this yarn is that the full and unlimited membership taken out by the man in the Nevermore Club didn't bring back the innocent buck. Therefore see to it that your own accurate rifle and your own chosen sights have the proper relation to one another before you encounter the guileless buck.

The hopeful hunter, essaying to kill game with the common or barnyard variety of open rear and brass front sight found on most of our rifles as they come from the factory, should be "jolly well certain" that he can make hits with this combination. Satisfied that he can, then he should proceed to assure himself that he can make more hits with this combination than with any other set of sights on the market. Economy is fine, in its place, but saving seventy-five cents on a front sight you didn't get and losing a two hundred dollar shot hardly come within the charmed circle of economy.

The rear sight is by far the most important. Human eyes are subject to the same restrictions, regardless of the age, sex, politics, or nationality of the owner. Some eyes are better than others—perhaps it would be better to say that some are worse than others.

However, the best of them will not focus at the same time two or more objects lying in different planes and closer than the "universal focus" distance. Therefore, when you aim a rifle equipped with open sight, your sighting eye is continually doing a jig between the rear sight fifteen inches from the eye, and the to-be-hit object probably in the universal focus plane.

When the eyes are young and strong—sometimes they are both old and strong—this hopping process is carried on so easily and quickly that the shooter is convinced that he is focussing all three objects at the same time. When the eye loses its power of accommodation, then the true inwardness of the sighting process begins to appear.

If you have strong eyes and the power of accommodation is yet with you in full vigor, you can afford to use the open rear sight, although it is still inferior to the various forms of aperture sights. Nobody whose eyes are not of the best can afford to penalize his

chances for getting game by the use of a form of sight that he cannot sharply define.

If you decide on the open sight, don't stick to the affair that came on the rifle. Experience has shown that the flat bar, or one but slightly concaved across its top, is superior to the form with horns on it. Apparently they are useful only in blotting out as much of the target as possible. The bar with "U" or "V" cut in it is quick to catch when the rifle is thrown to the shoulder while the front sight drops into the notch without apparent effort on the part of the shooter.

Surprisingly good shooting can be done with the plain bar and no notch at all. The top edge should be bevelled away from the eye to avoid the reflections that come from a flat surface or one turned toward the eye.

Tang vs. Receiver

Occasionally some hunter objects to the aperture form of hunting on the ground that the open is more quickly caught. Theoretically the objection is based on fact; practically, when occasion demands such haste, the sights are never seen and the rifle is fired a la shotgun.

When the aperture is the choice of the sportsman, it may be of the tang variety or of the receiver breed. The tang has a slight advantage in that the aperture is closed to the eye and therefore less to be thought of in aiming the rifle. The receiver sight, fastened to the frame of the rifle, is out of the way of the right hand and does not threaten to poke out the eye of the fellow doing the shooting. On rifles of heavy comeback the tang sight is not the proper caper, for obvious reasons.

Regardless of the persuasion of the aperture sight, the secret of its successful use lies in forgetting it, except to be sure that it is set for the distance to be shot over. It doesn't matter a tittle that you can see the whole blame landscape through it. You can do the same thing with a needle hole in a piece of paper if it is close to the eye. He is a cranky fellow who objects to seeing too much through a sight, provided the affair is accurate. The last provision has been demonstrated too many times to make argument possible.

Of course the theory of the aperture sight is that the light is stronger in the centre of the ring than at its sides, and the light-loving eye hunts that centre like a fish going for a good pool. Likewise the aperture sight is more accurate than the open, apart from design, because the open has to be set some distance up the barrel to enable you to see it at all. The distance between sights is thus cut down and wiggles of the bead, apparently of no great width, cost more when seen through the open sight than through the aperture. Actually the movement of the front sight is greater, although it appears to be moving no farther than when seen through the aperture.

Front sights are more often chosen by rule of thumb than by the exercise of our uncommon sense. Primarily a front sight is merely a bead or other shaped small object on the muzzle that can be seen plainly through the rear sight and seen distinctly against the object that needs hitting. In other words, it must contrast with the thing at which you are going to shoot. A minor detail is that the sight must now throw reflections of light into your eyes and must not be of such a shape that it accumulates a glimmer on its top or side. Such glimmers deceive you as to the real centre of the sight and your shot strikes lower or to one side of the place you meant to hit.

After a long course of elimination, discriminating choice has settled upon the ivory, the gold, or the combination beads as the proper front sights for hunting rifles. Neither ivory nor properly shaped gold beads blend with the colors of most game animals and neither one, properly made, will break off under the ordinary wear and tear of the hunting rifle.

Ivory is open to several objections. Oil colors it a dead yellow that is hard to see, while a combination of rain and freezing has been known to drive the bit of ivory out of its steel seat. A gold bead can be seen anywhere that game can be spotted over the sights of the rifle, does not glimmer, does not turn any other than its natural color through outside influences, and is nearly as strong as its steel seat.

Combination bead sights, those rainbow affairs that offer you your choice of the colors of Joseph's coat, have the diabolical habit of always presenting the wrong color for the game that appears. Usually the time is too short to allow a change to be made.

Worse than this, the eye never knows what to look for when the rifle is thrown to the shoulder for a quick shot. With one fixed sight out there on the muzzle, the eye becomes accustomed to picking up that bit of white or black or yellow and guiding it to the mark. But when any one of the three may be sticking up, the eye may be confused and you stop for a perceptible instant to think whether that is the front sight or not. This is not a fine-spun, psychological theory; it's a plain, pug-nosed, flat-footed, cold-blooded fact.

A common error is to make the front sight a trifle smaller than the crown of your hat. The big one-eighth-inch jack bead comes under this classification. If you are positive enough to swear that you won't shoot over fifty yards, and that the game won't linger long enough for you to think twice in the same place, then use the jack sight. Otherwise don't.

The size of the bead should be proportioned to the length of the barrel. The big

one-eighth-inch jack bead out on the end of a thirty-four-inch section of gas main looks quite reasonable in its dimensions. The little one-sixteenth bead on a carbine looks just as large. Taking the average length of barrel as twenty-four inches, the one-sixteenth-inch bead will strike the happy medium for most folks. It is at times embarrassing to lay a big chunk of ivory bead on a standing deer at three hundred yards, where the aforesaid bead obscures about ten feet of the landscape, to press the trigger carefully, and then to find that the deer had strayed out of the danger zone during the pressing operation.

For some illogical reason the average hunting rifle is sighted for the shortest distance at which it is likely to be used. Probably this is about fifty yards. Then the purchaser usually depends upon the alleged flat trajectory of the bullet to take care of shots beyond.

The flat trajectory rule works well one way but poorly the other. If the rifle is sighted for the longest distance you are likely to shoot, then is fired at game half as far away, the flat trajectory will probably score a hit for you because the bullet does not rise much on its path to the mark for which its sights are set. On the other hand—mark this—if your sights are set for a short distance and you attempt to shoot at double that range without raising your sights or changing your point of aim, the rule refuses to work backward and you'll score a miss.

Points About the Flat Trajectory

Put the well-known 30-40 cartridge on the dissecting table for a moment. If the sights of a rifle using this ammunition are set so that the bullet strikes centre at fifty yards, and then the rifle is fired without further change at two hundred yards, the bullet strikes fifteen inches below the point aimed at.

But sight the rifle for two hundred yards and then let your deer stand anywhere in between, fifty yards, one hundred yards, or one hundred and fifty yards from the rifle. He's yours if your hold is good, for the reason that the bullet to reach the two-hundred-yard mark has to rise but five and one-half inches at its highest point in the flight, in this case about one hundred and ten yards out.

In practice it's a blame sight easier to hold under four or five inches than to hold over fifteen of them. In one case you can see your mark all the time and you are not holding very far off anyhow. In the other you blot out your game and are besides having to judge inches pretty sharply. This is the difference between holding over for a long shot with a rifle sighted for absurdly close range and holding slightly under for game standing close than the distance for which your rifle is sighted.

For rifles of the 30-40, 303, and 1906 army class, two-hundred-yard sighting is not at all unreasonable for country that is open and where long shots may present themselves. In the woods or the brush, where one could not see two hundred yards if he wanted to, then the rifle can be sighted to strike where the bead touches at short range.

Even then, if you get the bead on the deer, shut your eyes, and jerk the crook out of the trigger, it will be hard to persuade you that figures don't lie.—Edward C. Crossman, in *Outing*.

CONTEST BETWEEN STRONG SWIMMER AND EXPERT ANGLER

A novel contest took place some time ago at the Edinburgh corporation baths between one of the strongest swimmers in Scotland and a well known angler. The contest occurred in a pool eighty feet long and forty feet wide.

The angler was furnished with an eleven foot trolling rod and an undressed silk line. The line was fixed to a girth belt, made expressly for the purpose, by a swivel immediately between the shoulders of the swimmer at the point where he had the greatest pulling power.

In the first trial the line snapped. In the second the angler gave and played without altogether slackening line, and several porpoise dives were swum from corner to corner, but ultimately was beaten, the match ending with a victory for the rod and line.

Another contest took place in which the angler employed a very light trolling rod ten feet long and weighing only six and one-half ounces, the line being the same as that used with the trolling rod. The swimmer, whose aim evidently was to smash the rod, pulled and leaped into the water. He was held steadily, however, and in about five minutes was forced to give in. The rod was again successful. At the finish both competitors were almost exhausted.

Tom Hopper, who has killed more than 2,000 bears in California, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and the province of British Columbia in the last thirty-five years, has returned to his home in Spokane from Kingston, Idaho, with the pelts of four bears, including the largest cinnamon bear ever killed in Idaho, and two cougars, the result of three days' work with a pack of hounds. The big bear was killed on Pine Creek, south of Kingston, after a lively battle, in which several of the dogs were severely pawed. Hounds were game, however, and stood their ground till Hopper reached the scene and dispatched the big fellow with a head shot. The other three bears and the cougars were bagged without much difficulty though Hopper admits that one of the black bears showed a lot of fight.