

FIN, FUR, AND FEATHER.

shooting again, for they invariably rise vertically when shot at. Mark! A pair of canvas-backs. How do I know at this distance? By their steady flight, their long necks, their short bodies. They will come in to our red-head decoys. Don't wait for them to light, give them a chance for their lives; that is, if shooting at them at thirty-five yards is a chance. You take the drake and I will his mate. Now is your time! Pshaw! Pure carelessness! I ought to have killed her with either barrel. When I shot first I didn't gauge her speed; then the second barrel was fired hastily, and without properly judging flight. Look! Look at her wobble and teeter,—hit hard after all! See how hard she tries to keep up! Will she make it? Yes? No! Down she goes, stone dead, the shot having penetrated a vital part. We will find her all right, as she fell in that big open water. Yes, yes! I see those six millards. They will come all right. The two that are about fifty yards in advance will call the others in. Keep low. Here's a drake swinging right in to us. Knock him! Well! You are a nice fellow. Why didn't you shoot? I supposed of course you would, and I followed him, and waited and waited for you. Lucky thing I was ready and killed him. What was the matter? Duck fever? Thought the others would come in? Perhaps they would and perhaps they wouldn't. I have waited a good many times myself, refraining to shoot, expecting a better shot, and getting none at all, and experience has taught me that in the long run the best way is to kill a duck

when it gets within thirty to thirty-five yards, no matter what you may see in expectation. Of course it would have been very nice to have waited and killed three out of the four; but suppose they hadn't come? Would have felt pretty cheap, wouldn't we? But here it is noon; we will go over on that ridge, make some coffee, and have lunch. We go, leaving our decoys in the water.

Soon coffee is made, and sitting on our rubber coats we are enjoying ourselves, as only hungry hunters can. As you face the north, I notice you gaze idly on those hills so near us, then turn your eyes indifferently away. Nothing particularly interesting about them, is there? Simply bluffs, grass and scraggy trees,—an elevated point overlooking the surrounding country. You see this, and your curiosity is satisfied, your interest dies out. Let me tell you a little about those hills, where the cattle are so peaceably grazing to-day. Some years ago, they were the rendezvous of the most desperate gang of horse-thieves and murderers that ever infested the West. It was from this vicinity they sallied forth, bent on repine and murder. It is only thirty miles below here where they murdered old man Davenport in his own house. On these hill-tops, as late as 1892, the Sac and Fox Indians held their councils of war; here, where from their elevated positions, they could command a view up and down the broad Mississippi River. It was on those bluffs that Black Hawk, one of the most celebrated Indian warriors that ever lived, with fiery eloqu