

Field Sports at Home and Abroad



WOODS AND WATER EXPLOITS.

(By Ernest McGaffey)
Author of "Poems of Gun and Rod," Etc.

The Trolley Rabbit.

There's more than a dozen ways of shooting rabbits, but the boys generally wait until there's snow on the ground. Of course, a man runs across rabbits when he's quail shooting, hunting for ruffed grouse and prairie chickens, but the real time to shoot them is along about from November until, say, the middle of December. Then they are foraging around among the corn shocks and fattening up on different stuff and the fat just lays in wads all up and down their backs and their kidneys are simply smothered in tallo. Fact! You take a corn-fed rabbit in the middle of November and he's as fat as a seal, and tender as a chicken.

But that isn't what I started to tell about. The Nimrod Gun and Rod Club was composed of about as crafty a bunch of jokers as ever sat up nights trying to "put it over" some unsuspecting devotee of the rod and gun. It was about an even bet that they would rather fool some fellow into doing something ridiculous than to make the record "bag" for ducks along the lakes. "Big Jack" Mullanphy was willing at any time to spend \$50 for something that could take in a veteran "sport." And every winter, after the shooting had closed and the boys had lots of idle time on their hands, "Big Jack" always was working on some racket that was calculated to cover some hunter with confusion and cause him to set up quantities of cigars, or buy a supper for the members of the club.

And so this particular winter Jack had fixed up the slickest scheme you ever heard of. The club's headquarters were at a farmhouse about a quarter of a mile from the lake, and we used to go out there as soon as there was a good snow on the ground and take some beagles along and shake the country up for rabbits. Back of the sitting room of the farmhouse was the kitchen, and it was built high up from the ground and boarded underneath. Back of the kitchen was the orchard, and it was on a side hill, with the trees pretty low to the ground; an old orchard pretty well gone to seed.

"Big Jack," who was a clever mechanic, and an electrician besides, went out there and built a little trolley track in the orchard that ran up and down hill and around among the trees and that worked as slick as one of these little tracks that they use to send cash back and forth on in the big stores. Well, sir, he next shot a rabbit and got it mounted, all stretched out, and then he fixes the rabbit on the track and gets the wires and pulleys arranged so that he could keep the rabbit on a steady swing around this track, up and down, in and out, by sitting under the kitchen and working the dingus from down there.

Well, say, now! Didn't that tame some of the real "wise" boys? I guess yes! Every Saturday night when we'd go out to the lake we'd take some hunter along, and after the boys would get to playing "cinch" in the sitting room, some fellow would come in sort of excited and say, "Where's my gun?" and commence to fumble around the gun rack. The fellows who were in the deal would say: "What do you want with your gun?"

Then the Nimrod would say: "There's a rabbit out in the orchard." By a little smooth work we could generally get the new arrival to dig out into the night with the fell intent of destroying the rabbit; and if he was a real hunter, even he would usually take a couple of shots at the trolley rabbit before he would "catch on" to the joke. But if he was a green hand he would stand there and bang away for a dozen shots. The boys always went along and fed shells to him and encouraged him to shoot, and after he had finally "tumbled" to the hoax, it was worth a supper next week in town.

"Big Jack" always disappeared at the psychological moment, and manipulated the trolleys and when he came back the boys would kindly tell him all about it and imitate the actions of the shooter and "Big Jack" would nearly perish with laughter.

One time we got word from "Jack" that he had a fresh victim in tow who would be on hand the next Saturday night at the depot, and for us all to be sure to come down and meet Wilbur. This Wilbur was simply sagging in his side-pockets with money and it was figured that he would do the handsome thing by the boys when we gave him an interview with our rabbit. So a full attendance was there at the depot and we had our four beagles along to give the meet the appearance of the genuine thing. Wilbur was there all right, and he seemed to be the most promising thing in the way of a "tenderfoot" that had been sprung in a long time.

He was just breaking into the shooting game, and "Big Jack" was helping him out and lending him books and going out shooting clay pigeons with him, and had put up his name for membership, and we all gave him the "glad hand" and prepared to hand it to him plenty when we got out to the lake.

All the way out we sat in the "smoker," and this Wilbur won about a dollar and eighty cents playing "cinch" with three of us. He was green enough hunting, but he seemed to know how to play "cinch" all right. We talked a lot about the rabbit shooting around the lake but we didn't tip off our game by any remarks about rabbits in the orchard. Then "Big Jack" says: "We'll make a purse of five

dollars for the fellow that gets the first rabbit," and everyone agreed to it and chipped in 50 cents apiece.

When we got to the station Old Man Carmody met us, and when we asked him about rabbits the old man says: "Slathers of 'em. I see 'em playin' 'round the yards on moonlight nights, and they're gnawin' at the old cabbages left in the garden, an' chasin' each other in the orchard. You'll have fine sport tomorrow; there hasn't been a gun fired at 'em yet."

Well of course, this was a grand "steer" for Wilbur, and gave him an idea that there were rabbits by the million in the country, and he wanted to get his gun out of the case and stick in a couple of shells in case we saw any rabbits on the way over. But Old Man Carmody put a stopper on that by declaring that the team wouldn't stand for shooting from the wagon, and so we coaxed Wilbur to keep his artillery under cover until later.

We arrived at the house and Wilbur was introduced all around and we had an elegant supper waiting for us. We showed our prospective member the gun-racks, the mounted ducks, jack-snipe, woodcock, ruffed grouse, prairie chickens, and other specimens in the front room which was our "show room," and then we got together in the sitting-room for another session of "cinch." Well, sir, this here Wilbur was a lucky devil at "cinch." Seems as if he got the cards, and he knew how to play 'em. He kept winning steadily, and by and by after he was about three dollars ahead "Buck" Swearingen went out doors and after paddling around in the light snow that lay on the ground, he comes in kind of sly and says: "Where'd I put my gun?"

"This Wilbur fellow he'd just won a game, and 'Big Jack' was shuffling the cards, and 'Jack' speaks up and says: 'What's up; is that old owl out there, 'Buck?'"

"No," says "Buck," but I saw a rabbit running around the orchard, and I thought I'd run in and nail him. I win the five if I get him, don't I?"

"Oh, no!" says "Big Jack," "that's for a fair start in the morning, every fellow in the timber and the dogs loose. Go ahead and get him, though. Hold on, though," says Jack, "as a thought seemed to strike him, 'what's the matter with our new member taking first crack at him?'"

"All right," says "Buck," "we'll both go." So "Buck" and this Wilbur boy they shakes their breech-loaders out of the cases and out they put for the rabbit. "Big Jack" ducks out of the side door and in under the kitchen and away goes the rabbit.

"There he goes," whispers "Buck," as the rabbit sails away as slick as a cash basket, and goes down the hill. "Give it to him, soak him!"

So this Wilbur fellow ups with his gun and aims for the rabbit, and then he drops his gun and takes a peek, and then he raises his gun, and still he doesn't shoot.

"Shoot, shoot," says "Buck," "he'll get clear away if you don't hurry. What ye waitin' for?" says "Buck."

"I'm waitin' for some one to turn the power off," says this here Wilbur fellow. "I ain't shooting any mechanical rabbits unless I get a crack at 'em settin'."

And "Big Jack" paid for that supper.—Ernest McGaffey.

REMINISCENCES OF SPORT IN IRELAND.

Certainly the attractions of the Emerald Isle—especially to those who own no land there—are many, yet, in spite of what certain self-seeking politicians, often ill-acquainted with "the distressful country," tell us, most calm students of Irish character and history will probably agree in thinking that, with some brilliant exceptions, the Irish are ill-fitted to govern themselves.

How strangely does one see in Ireland, courage, kindness and hospitality, mingled with cold-blooded and even cowardly cruelty; and shrewd common-sense with desperate superstition.

The very thought of old Ireland makes one see again the quiet peace of evening on the bogland, and smell the fragrant odor of peat smoke, wafted from low white cottages of Kerry or Tipperary with its queerly rounded roof thatched with mats neatly braided at regular intervals with plaited straw, whilst sounds of girlish laughter float across the yellow gorse from where Molly and her sister sit between the peat stack and potato patch busy at their spinning wheels till America claims them, as she does all the pick of Erin's sons and daughters.

On nearing such a cottage, a few years ago, with a friend who owned a mansion hard by, we noticed that a red-haired lad, whose sad, Irish-grey eyes lit up tenderly and almost cheerfully when they met Molly's blue ones, was beguiling her labors with words too low for us to hear.

We had been tramping from bog to bog ever since wakened out of a sound sleep not very long after daybreak, and a nice mixed bag of some eighteen duck and teal had rewarded our efforts, to which we might have added snipe, had we not decided to spare them on account of their being thin so early in the season, and not yet worth shooting. Certainly Nature looked her softest that evening of late summer, for the rays of the setting sun painted the patches of bracken golden, and glorified the distant heather-clad hills beyond the green and yellow bogland; but as they lit up Molly's red-brown hair and we fell to envying Pat the loving glances which his colleen coyly cast at him, he rose and greeted us. "Bedad, it's great

sport yer honners have been getting, for it was myself heard the guns popping," he remarked as we approached, "and shure it's your pockets, gentlemen, I see just bulging wid the birds; but it's not shooting yer honner will be after soon, but hunting, and I have just the young horse that will carry you. He's clean bred, and for leppin is just the grandest little baste that ever you threw the leg across." Having promised to look at the wonderful animal some day, we wended our way homewards, my host beguiling the time with stories of boy-cott and ruthless doings carried out by these soft-tongued peasants on the smallest and finest provocation. One man—whose son I met—was boycotted for having dared to take a small field which marched with his land, in spite of the edict which, in a free country, had gone out against it from the miscreants who fed their stock there without paying rent, but pluck and a good cause, aided by a fairly long purse, eventually triumphed. Greatly to their credit, the servants of the brave man stuck to him throughout, for he was a good master and paid them well, but he and his family would have been better off in Darkest Africa than in Ireland whilst the boycott lasted.

One night the poor man was held up in a bohrren by a masked scoundrel, when driving back from market, where, needless to say, not a single bid had been made for his cattle. His blood was up and he was armed, and the result of the encounter was that the biter was bit, for he was actually convicted, and got several weeks' imprisonment; my friend informed me.

By the time the story was finished we had reached home, and after an early supper, my host took the "constate" from me at the rocky pools of the beautiful trout stream which nearly encircled the mansion for when we assembled at dark he had some good fish to show against my one or two small ones. Not long afterwards, when otter-hunting with a friend in County Clare, we were told by a pretty, kindly-looking girl in a little village shop that they had nothing to do with the people at the mansion, but her reason was assigned, and I gathered that at heart our informant felt kindly disposed towards the family; but apparently the mysterious edict had gone forth, and must be obeyed.

To show this poor Irish peasant girl's high standard of honor, I must mention that when we asked to buy some apples, she said, "We don't sell them, but have some for our own use, so I hope, gentlemen, you will accept these," and she handed us a couple, for which she absolutely refused payment insisting that as they were not for sale, she could not take it.

On breakfasting a day or two later with a resident magistrate, we heard particulars of a ghastly murder, committed not far away. The victim was under police protection, but the murderers bided their time patiently, and the murder was carried out so craftily that only a few neighbors of the victim knew anything about it, and their fellow-feeling for the criminals was so wondrous kind that the murderers got off scot free.

We had a poor week's sport here, but two things amused us a good deal at the time. One was when, following a blank day, we had spent the morning in trying to keep off the ground of a "cross" farmer, and were at last really hunting an otter, a keen but unlightened sportsman suddenly informed the master, in a hoarse whisper which all the field could hear, that he was sure our quarry was no otter, but a badger. This was too much for the master's over-wrought feelings, for he really did know his job, and his anger blazed forth.

A few hours after the badger affair, when we were about to lunch on an old, hunch-backed, grey stone bridge, spanning a brackish, forbidding-looking river, which one had to look at several times before deciding if it flowed any way at all, the other episode occurred. We were sitting sadly contrasting the part of the country where we then found ourselves with that which borders the bright little chattering stream of Cork, often arched right over with wild roses, where sport was of the best, when the master's stern-faced chauffeur arrived with the car and lunch. On being asked if he had seen the Lord Lieutenant—who was expected thereabouts that day—he replied, "No, sir, but I was saluted for him all along the road." This was quite true, for the chauffeur was an ex-groom, and still stuck to his bowler hat, which apparently was looked upon in those parts as a badge of rank.

I must confess that to my mind the paddy fields of India, or the moors of South Wales, are more enjoyable places to shoot snipe in than some of the Irish bogs which I have had to negotiate, whose bottomless nature has been such as to spoil not only the tobacco in one's pocket, but one's aim as well. When shooting one day with a friend on the worst and most watery bog I have ever risked a muddy grave in, the keeper—whose master was away from home—was our guide, and told us of how his late employer took a pride in enticing elaborately hosed and equipped "English gentlemen" into the worst patches of slime; and it struck me that the fellow was all for selecting good ground for himself, whilst perfectly indifferent about our fate, and I was soon to learn that I was right. Snipe were wild that day, and though we had seen a good many, we had only killed a few, and a teal, for such birds as rose within reasonable range always uttered their shrill, disconcerting cry when we were in difficulties, or even in danger of disappearing altogether; I missed mine, in my anxiety to save myself from a slimy bath, but my companion killed his like a man, though only to escape drowning by a narrow margin. "The gentleman is in," cried the keeper exult-

ingly; and as I turned as hastily as my situation would allow, I saw my unhappy friend with an angry gleam in his eye, throw himself forward on his gun across a patch of rushes, which proved his salvation. When he at last emerged from the green slime, he presented a rueful spectacle, and when his glance fell upon the keeper, even that thick-skinned fellow was asphyxiated by it, and the smile died away upon his lips.—"Homeless," in Baily's Magazine.

HUNTING IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

While in Kansas City in August, 1909, I happened to hear from a mutual friend of Jack Graves and the Three Bar Ranch, situated at Wapiti, in Wyoming. After spending three months in Texas and Oklahoma on cattle ranches, the prospect of a cooler climate induced me to leave the south, which is intensely hot at that time of the year. The Three Bar Ranch is located about thirty miles from Cody, on the wagon road to the Yellowstone Park, at an altitude of 6,000ft. The scenery all along the valley on the banks of the Shoshone river is very fine, the mountains on either side rising to a height of 10,000ft. and being crested with snow. On arriving, I was glad to hear from my host that there was a good prospect of elk and deer hunting in the autumn, and in the meantime some excellent trout fishing might be obtained in the river.

The season for big game shooting opens on September 25, and arrangements as to guides and outfit having been completed, we started with ten pack-horses for a distant spot in the mountains, where we intended to fix a camp to hunt from. Our party consisted of Graves, a friend from a neighboring ranch, myself, and a guide. The latter, Bill Borron by name, was a typical hunter, with extraordinary keen eyes and nose for game, and a wonderful bump of locality, a most necessary thing in this country. He had also, like most Westerners, an expressive vocabulary, to which he gave vent on our journey up the trail and considered absolutely necessary when driving a team of pack-horses. It certainly was a rough trail, through timber, over creeks, mounting gradually higher and higher. We reached our destination at sunset about thirty miles from the ranch, the journey occupying nine hours.

Jack Graves was early afoot the next morning, and returned before breakfast, having "tasted blood." He had run on to a bull elk and two or three cows about a mile up the creek, and had secured the bull with a single shot before he had got wind of him. This was a good start, having meat in camp on the first day, and a somewhat unusual occurrence. The first few days were spent by Bill Borron and myself in what he called "scouting around," so as to get some sort of idea of the game there was in the locality, and, having made that part of the country good, we decided to go farther afield, and made an early start one morning for a bit of country on the other side of the "divide." Leaving our saddle ponies tethered on a bank about halfway up, we advanced slowly through the timber until, as we neared the summit, tracks of a bunch of elk, quite recently made, were to be seen. As we came out of the timber on the ridge, Bill, who had an eye like a hawk, beckoned to me and pointed down into a deep gulch or basin, where I could see a bull elk feeding in the brush. He was not alone, for, after a careful scrutiny through the glasses, several cows were to be seen similarly engaged.

The problem now was, how to get within range, the sides sloping down into the basin being covered with loose rocks, which were easily dislodged unless great care was taken to avoid them. Slowly we worked our way down, creeping from boulder to boulder until we were within 200 yards of the game. The elk by this time were evidently getting uneasy; probably they had winded us, as we could hear the bulls "whistling" or "bugling," as it is called, up and down the "draw." There were two, if not more, bulls in the herd, though they were concealed by the brush. Suddenly one of them conceived the idea that it was about time to quit, and, coming out of the brush, he moved slowly down the slope. I fired twice, both shots going too high, but with the third got well home, and he turned sharply to the right, disappearing behind some rocks. He was hard hit, and scrambling and falling down the hill-side, we went in pursuit. Through some timber we tracked him, up the opposite slope, and there in a pocket in the rocks we found him laid out, a fine young bull with a good spread of antlers—48in. I afterwards measured them.

We carried out the head and as much meat as we could pack to where we left our ponies, and arrived back in camp about sunset.

Elk are not difficult animals to hunt if you have a good guide and do not mind plenty of hard climbing. They generally get away into pockets on the sides of the mountains during the day or under the rim rock, coming down to the creeks to water at night. I think that in many ways the smaller deer are more difficult to hunt than elk. The blacktail deer of the Rocky Mountains, for instance, is a most wary animal. He will lie in the timber all day, and unless you have snow under foot it is most difficult to get on to him.

Towards the end of November we began to get very short of meat at the ranch, having for some days been reduced to bacon; so, accompanied by Bill Borron, I went out into the mountains to look for deer. Taking five pack-horses, we went up one of the creeks that run

Sportsman's Calendar

SEPTEMBER

- Trout-fishing at its best this month. Bass in certain lakes.
- Spring Salmon and Cohoes all over the Coast.
- September 1st, shooting season opens on the Mainland for grouse, duck, snipe and deer.
- September 15th, shooting season opens on Vancouver Island for grouse, duck, snipe and deer, except for grouse in North and South Saanich Municipalities.
- Wild Pigeons plentiful and in season in many localities.

down into the valley, and found a good camping ground about a three hours' ride from the ranch, in a likely country for deer. The weather at this time was atrocious; sheets of fog kept continually rolling down from the mountains, with intermittent storms of snow. For the first two days it was practically impossible to hunt; indeed, on the first day we very nearly got lost, and at one time it looked as if we should have to lie out all night; but the fog luckily lifted, and we found the trail back to camp. After this the weather improved, and, taking our saddle-ponies, we went back into another country. There were several creeks and draws running down into the valley, so, leaving our ponies on a bank, we descended into the timber. There was about a foot of snow, and plenty of signs of deer, more or less fresh, so we advanced with great caution. Suddenly we heard a movement in the brush ahead of us, and there, with his antlers just showing, was a good buck. Taking a fine sight, I fired. He bounded in the air, and came down with his neck broken—a lucky shot, as the timber was so thick that it would have been almost impossible to have got in a second barrel. The question then was, how to get him out. However, we set to work, cut off his head and scalp, and cleaned and cut up the carcass. This finished, we made a bee line for where our ponies were tethered, blazing the trail as we went. To cut a long story short, we went back with the ponies, packed them with the head and carcass, and started afoot for camp, which we reached about an hour after sunset, dog tired, wet to the skin, and famished. But we did not mind this, as we had got what we wanted.

I left Three Bar Ranch early in December, after a stay of four months, and drove thirty miles to Cody, with the temperature to deg. below zero. This is by far the best country that I visited, from every point of view—a fine summer climate, splendid scenery, good fishing, and the best big game shooting in the States; and anyone who could care for the same experience as myself could not do better than pay a visit to Three Bar Ranch.—Ellis Chinnery.

THE KING'S SHOOT

The King had a most enjoyable day's sport recently on the extensive moors of Castle Grant, by invitation of Caroline Countess of Seafield. His Majesty was accompanied by Mr. Sassoon, Lord Herbert Vane-Tempest, Captain Godfrey-Faussett, and Lord Derby. The party, leaving Tulchan Lodge at half-past nine o'clock, motored to the moors about fourteen miles distant, where they were joined by a party from Castle Grant.

Shooting was commenced shortly after ten o'clock, and continued vigorously the whole day, the only interval being when the sportsmen had luncheon on the moor. The beat shot over was on either side of the Highland railway near Dava station, and round Lochindorb, a beautiful lake with the ruins of the castle in the centre. The castle was used as a residence by Edward I. and Edward III, when they raided the Highlands five hundred years ago. The bag was 204 brace of grouse and a number of hares.

A STRIKE OF WORM GATHERERS

A curious item in the deluge of strike news is the intelligence that there has recently been a strike among worm gatherers at Nottingham, which is the chief source of supply of lob-worms. The long spell of hot weather, which has possibly exacerbated other labor troubles, seems to have been directly responsible for this one. The difficulty of getting worms during the drought caused the men to raise their prices to the buyers who retail to the public. It is reported that the dispute has been settled, but it is very difficult to buy any lobworms in London at present.

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