

## CARE OF FIREARMS

Thruout this great Western country where wild game, both feathered and furred, is still to be had for the killing, it is the exception, not the rule, to find a house without firearms of some kind, either shotgun or rifle, and usually these guns are thought of only when the owner wants to use them. Very often, to the great disappointment of said owners, they refuse to work when wanted, then maledictions are heaped upon the arms, their makers and the sporting goods dealers who sold them. The truth is, the gun is not to blame as the cause of it all, nine times out of ten is carelessness. For some reason guns seem to be thought of as capable of taking all kinds of rough usage and in spite of it, to be efficient at all times. Guns and rifles on the contrary should be well looked after, as dirt and rust will soon spoil the best gun or rifle made.

The barrels of a gun should be wiped dry and oiled immediately on coming in. The rest can be done at a more convenient time, tho it is just as well to do it as soon as possible.

## Cleaning the Shotgun

The best way to clean a shotgun is to take it apart, use a scratch brush and oil, and give the inside of the barrels a good scouring out, then wipe out with a piece of clean soft cloth, and as a finish run an oiled rag thru them.

The outside of the barrels should be carefully wiped off and oiled. Clean the action also, wiping off all dirt which has accumulated around the breach and bolts, then oil. Use a good animal oil or one of the prepared oils sold for the purpose. Avoid vegetable oils, as they gum up the locks and are altogether unsuitable. For guns that have become rusty, either thru carelessness or inability to take care of them at the proper time, use scalding water on the barrels inside and out, swab out thoroughly and dry them, then oil. Scour the rust off the action—kerosene does good work here.

If the barrels are badly pitted, send to some reliable gunsmith and have them lapped out.

Be careful of your gun, give it half a show, and if the arm is any good at all it should do good work for years. Bear this in mind—a gun that is not cleaned or looked after carefully will soon become unfit for use, if not absolutely dangerous, no matter what its quality may be.

## Care of the Rifle

Rifles need, if anything, more care than shotguns, if they are to retain their accuracy, and accuracy is the most important quality in a rifle. Owing to the very cold weather which is usual during the open season for big game in this country, it is hard to keep rifles from rusting, as immediately on entering a warm place, either house or tent, the frost in the barrels and action causes the moisture in the air to condense upon the steel and if this is not immediately cleaned off and dried it causes rust. Rust is sudden death to the rifling of the barrels. It eats away the lands, causing friction to the bullet and results in poor shooting. The best plan is to leave the arm outside in the cold during the expedition, then, on reaching home, take care of it at once, wiping every part dry. Scour with a brass or wire brush, using a little nickel solvent, if a high power rifle, swab out with a clean rag, oil up well, then put away in a flannel case. If the lock mechanism is simple it is just as well to take it down and clean thoroughly, otherwise run some kerosene oil into it and when this drips out squirt gun oil in with an oil can.

Of course it is the easiest thing in the world to put off cleaning until next day, which always seems to be the appointed time, and it keeps on being the next day and the next until an entirely good rifle is spoiled. If users of rifles would only go right at them and clean them up, as should be done before putting them away, satisfaction and content would be the reward.

## A Narrow Escape

Another cardinal sin against arms is the careless way in which they are transported in vehicles. I have seen a good gun bumping around in the bottom of a wagon like a hay fork and, by the way, this one was getting fixed to play even on its owner, for its ears were laid back (hammers full cock) when I discovered it



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and warned him in time—fact. No gun will stand this kind of usage. Standing out in the barn for a week or more does not tend to heighten the value of a gun or rifle, nor does snapping the hammers help. If, when putting a gun together, a little difficulty occurs and it does not go together smoothly, jamming it against your knee or other strong arm work does not help matters much, generally you will find that either the extractor or leg has become gummed up with dirt or rust and needs cleaning and pushing back so that the cam on the action will go to its proper place, or that the firing pins are set down from the same cause and the barrels hitting them are prevented from closing properly. Adjust these and your gun will generally go together.

## During Close Season

Guns and rifles are generally all right and will work for you willingly if you give them half a show—and when the season is over and all good and true sportsmen hang up their arms until the open season comes again, take another good look over your old friends. Clean them up, give them a coating of vaseline or Winchester gun grease, and don't be stingy; slap it on inside and out, shove them into their overcoats and hang them up in a dry place. Then, when the good old hunting time comes around again, wipe the surplus grease off, run a rag thru the barrels and go to it.

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