

FIN, FUR, AND FEATHER

ten shells loaded with other sizes where we have one with No. 8's. Since we arrived here and began placing out our decoys, and arranging our blind, numerous flocks and pairs have started to come in, then sheered away, because they saw us. This is almost invariably the case. Don't feel discouraged at this, because the hunter should take his time and make all preparations to suit. Discretion and judgment must be used in the selection of a stand, the setting out of the decoys and the building of the blind. Perhaps you think I am doing a good deal of talking and we are not bagging many birds. Remember what I am telling you, for some day you will be out and not having me, or some other experienced person along, these hints and instructions will then be of far more benefit to you than if you bagged one hundred birds to-day. Mark, south! Red-heads! The wind is helping them along. They see the decoys. Let them pass, I will chuck and they will return and alight against the wind. Here they come! Give it to them! Six down! Snoot that cripple quick. That's it. And you were none to soon either. He only straightened up to see where the danger lay, and if you had let him dive once we would have lost him, as he would have gone clean over to the rushes, and then would have been safe. Here comes a single one. Hold well ahead and under; his wings are set, and he is coming down quite fast. See how dead you can kill him. Didn't kill him very dead, did you, with the first barrel? You overshot it, but then your second

barrel redeemed you. It is a Gadwall or gray duck. It took two shells, but if you can bag a duck using two shells on an average, you are a good duck shot. It can be done over decoys, but in no other way. Bless me! I came near missing it, shot a trifle behind; it wasn't over twenty yards from us. I saw Don's eyes sparkling, and, following the direction he was looking, I saw a pair of red feet right over the water, a young mallard drake. Many and many a duck have I shot in this manner, my attention being called to it by the glistening eyes of my dog, or his chattering teeth, as he tries to restrain his nervous excitement. An old duck dog as anxiously notes the approach of game as does his master. Here comes a flock of pin-tails. Now for fun! Don't move and I will see if they can be called down. See! They notice the decoys, hear my whistle, and look at them come down, like fluttering leaves. They must have been fully eighty yards up when I first called them. Don't they come with a rush? Shoot just as they are over the water; fire where two or more are together. Hurrah! We made sad havoc with them, didn't we? Eight down, with four barrels. I am not surprised at your missing with your second barrel, for you weren't watching for them to jump quite so high after they received the contents of our first barrels. Did you notice how they jumped perpendicular? They went straight up fully thirty feet, and you undershot the second time. Bear it in mind hereafter, and as soon as you fire the first barrel, look high before