

catching a "teaser" of a cold which generally drives him from his sport to his more comfortable home; and he may think himself well off, if he escapes being laid up in his bed for two or three weeks. Many persons resort to these Flats to shoot for the Canadian and American markets, of Toronto, Boston, New York, and Detroit, amongst the most successful of whom are the Messrs. Ward & Rennardsons, boatbuilders, of Toronto. In ten weeks, with three guns, in the fall of 1868, they bagged two thousand five hundred birds, mostly ducks, with some geese and an occasional swan. Eagles, hawks, and owls, at this season are in beautiful plumage, and are killed to grace the table of some lady's drawing room, or to be put away on the dusty shelves of some natural history society. Seventy-five birds with one gun, is considered an excellent day's shooting. These sportsmen generally arrive at Hurson's Island about the 15th of October, and proceed to put their boats and other implements in order, which occupies about a week. They make their head-quarters in a scow, which is towed about the main channels as required, so that it may be nearest the best shooting grounds, which vary very considerably according to the state of the wind and weather. On fine days, the ducks move out into the lake; but in rough, stormy weather they retire inland to feed in the quieter pools of water. The scow has a raised cabin containing a small stove, used both for cooking and heating purposes; into this ark they take their decoys, provisions and a large quantity of ammunition. Their punts are about thirteen feet long, built of boards hollowed so that they may not split by bending them to the ribs. These boats are sometimes of cedar, sometimes of pine—cedar being the lightest but pine the less likely to split. They are made of quarter-inch planks, and are covered with copper on the bottom to prevent the ice from cutting them through, as the best shooting is just as the streams are freezing up. It is necessary to have these punts as light as possible, as they have to be hauled sometimes half a mile or more from the main channels, through the marsh, into lagoons of open water.

Almost all kinds of ducks and brent geese are shot over decoys. A great deal, therefore,

depends upon having these artificial birds well shaped, naturally painted, and properly ballasted and anchored, so that they will swing with the wind or current, like a flock of wildfowl feeding. Having secured about eighteen of these "dummies" of the right kind, such as red-heads, black-ducks, mallards, widgeons, bluebills and canvas-backs, it requires some skill and a good knowledge of the inlets to set them in the most advantageous places; they are usually put at the down-stream end of an island, or point of rushes, in which the sportsman secretes himself—the nearest decoys are placed at twenty yards from him—the ducks will sail down towards the outside of his flock, and no good shot will allow them to alight, which they will frequently do at the beginning of the season, before they are much fired at. Where there is not foliage of a sufficient thickness to hide a man and his boat, blinds have to be erected, with splines and rushes, to conceal the hunter from his wary prey. Often, when the punt has to be hauled a distance, only three or four decoys are taken. These are made purposely light and hollow—sometimes of gutta-percha—and, in such cases, the first birds that are killed are set up either with wires or by means of sticks—a few of which are carried on purpose. This stick is run down the duck's neck and through the skin at his crop, and inserted into the mud; and this, with a little practice, can be so successfully done that no one could distinguish whether they are alive or dead without a pretty close inspection.

Ducks are curious birds. If they take a notion to go into a pool, go in they will,—and all the firing in the world will not keep them out, provided the sportsman's cover is good; for so soon as the report dies away, and the smoke clears off, another flock sails in—to the destruction of some of its number. Seventy ducks have been known to be shot in a pool, when in another lying close by only three were killed by an equally skilful sportsman, equally well provided with the necessary appliances.

Sometimes the eggs of the wild ducks are obtained, or the ducklings caught and reared in the barn-yard with the domestic birds. These never attempt to fly or stray away from the home where they are brought