

Field Sports at Home and Abroad

SPORT IN THE ARGENTINE

After a twelve hours' dusty railway journey from Buenos Aires we were deposited rather late in the evening at a wayside station. Here, being met by a camp cart without lights, we started upon a three-mile drive, mostly over virgin pampa, to our destination. We arrived safely, but bruised, before the door of a long, low estancia house, to be welcomed by our host (the estanciero) with kindly hospitality and cocktails. As a stranger in a strange land there were naturally many questions to be asked, chiefly, be it confessed, about the shoot which was to take place on the morrow. I had already heard several accounts of camp shoots, and was uncertain how much fiction had been absorbed with fact. It was, however, growing late, and an early start was essential, so my host advised me to turn in and see for myself on the next day how things were done. My room was large and airy, in that part of the building allotted to the estancia staff. Needless to say, I slept like a log until 5 a.m., at which hour some of the under-managers came and pulled me out. These light-hearted young Englishmen had risen, according to their usual custom, at day-break, and had already played a couple of chukkers of polo to work off their superfluous energy. On this estancia the working day all the year round lasted from sunrise to sunset.

After a hearty breakfast our party of ten guns set forth for the scene of operations, which was distant some five miles. Some of us rode, and others were driving in camp carts—vehicles constructed with good springs and large wheels, both necessary to lessen the bumps when travelling over the pampa. At intervals on our way we were joined by "gaucho" or natives of the cow-punching type, looking wild and picturesque, with their quaint saddles, lassoes, and absurd spurs. An organized shoot is generally a gala day here, and these men are always glad to turn out and give a hand. Our drive across the flat pampa, past enormous wire-fenced paddocks, all looking much the same, became somewhat wearisome. We were glad, therefore, to reach the shooting grounds, a series of paddocks, some rich with alfalfa, knee deep, others covered with coarse grass or low scrub. In the distance were two or three "lagunas," or small lakes, the haunt of innumerable wildfowl.

The method of hunting, or rather of sweeping, game was now made clear to me. First a length of fencing wire about 300 yards long was stretched in the line we were to follow. This wire was then made fast to the "cinchas," or girths, of three horses ridden by cowboys, one horse at each end and one in the centre. After drawing for places, the guns took up their respective positions immediately behind the wire and about thirty yards apart. Behind each gun rode one or two cowboys to pick up the game and supply cartridges. Bringing up the rear were three light wagons for receiving the bag as gathered. The whole line was controlled by our host from one end by means of whistle and signal, starting, wheeling, or halting as directed.

The wire fencing along the side of the paddock which fronted us was now cut and removed, and on the signal being given the whole line moved forward, the horses dragging the line of wire over the pampa. Strict orders were passed down to shoot only in front, and on no account to fire on either side or behind, and the guns pulled themselves together and prepared for the fun, which soon became fast and furious. First one hare started up, then another, then two or three together, appearing and disappearing amongst the alfalfa, in a manner which made shooting as difficult as could be desired. By the time we were halfway across the paddock there were hares dashing about in front in all directions, and a halt had to be called to enable the horsemen to retrieve the dead and wounded and the guns replenish their ammunition. Besides hares, some of the small tinamous, here known as "partridges," with which the country abounds, had been killed. Hares in this district have become as great a pest as the rabbit in Australia, and after the third paddock, having been then accounted for a very large number, it was decided to go for other game, else before midday our ammunition would be completely expended.

The wire fencing of each paddock was cut in order to admit our horses within the line of wire, the paddock being re-fenced after all were through by men provided with pliers, etc., sold off for this purpose. At midday, having killed a goodly number of "partridge" and a few of the rarer martineta, a large bird of the same family, a welcome halt was called for lunch. Our meal consisted chiefly of unleavened native bread (which is very filling) and "carne concuero," or young goat roasted in the open air with its skin on, which causes it to retain its natural juices and renders the flesh delicious to eat. Cooling draughts of light beer were by this time very soothing after the heat of the sun.

The best part of the day was still before us, so after a smoke and a rest a move was made to new ground, where there was certainty of finding the coveted martineta in numbers. This ground was so thickly covered with partly withered alfalfa which had previously run to seed that walking was most difficult. The sport, however, compensated us for everything. Martineta are easy birds to bring down; No. 8 shot is quite heavy enough, although they are rather larger in size than a pheasant. They rise with a deafening whirr of wings, and can travel from rest with the

rapidity of the wind, giving the most sporting of shots. A great many were put out of this excellent cover; sometimes, indeed, the firing was continuous all along the line of guns, and the weight of our bag had increased considerably by the time we had swept three paddocks.

As a wind-up we approached the lagunas, with the intention of giving the wildfowl there a turn. There were large numbers of birds on the small lakes, chiefly duck of various kinds. As they are by no means tame, it is an almost impossible task to approach them on the pampa, where no cover exists for stalking, and where one can see as far as the horizon. After consultation it was agreed that our only chance was for some of us to ride and some to drive past the first laguna at a slow canter, or "galope," which is the usual pace in this country. By this means we hoped to get a couple of barrels each into them, because the birds were accustomed to constantly seeing horsemen and wagons passing over the pampa without being molested. At this pace, then, we advanced. My place was in a springy camp cart with two other men and the driver. Our guns were ready across our knees, and two half-broken horses were pulling us. The signal to fire was to be given by the leader in the front cart raising his gun. We rapidly drew near, and although some duck grew suspicious and flew off on our approach, we were rejoiced to see that the greater part paid but little attention to us, probably because we studiously avoided any unusual signs of interest in their direction. Soon we were jolting along the edge of the lake until the nearest flock appeared to be about forty yards distant. Then, as we saw the leader give the signal, all three of us sprang up and emptied our guns into the thick of them. We heard with satisfaction afterwards that twenty ducks had been accounted for. After that last strategic movement on our part all the wildfowl in the district had become alarmed and flown off, so as things stood it was proposed to conclude the day and return to our headquarters at the estancia house. We made a most imposing cortege on arriving, everyone being in the best of spirits after such a day of ideal weather and good sport. Our bag came to 408 hares, 262 partridges (tinamous), 125 martineta, and 21 ducks, or 816 head—a very respectable total for any part of the world.

While waiting for dinner, some of the men showed me how to use the "boleadoras," or three heavy stone balls attached to the ends of three raw-hide thongs, the thongs being joined together at their other extremities. Whilst riding they hold one ball and, swinging the others round their head, can nearly always bring down ostrich or cattle by casting at their legs; whichever part strikes, the remainder rapidly coils around and so throws the victim. I essayed a cast with one of them, but, not having sufficient education in the art, I let go at the wrong moment, and was nearly cut off in the flower of my youth by the thong twisting round my throat and throttling me.

We returned to Buenos Aires next day, having learnt much that was new to us in the art of shooting.—Robert A. S. Waters, in Field.

SHALL WE GIVE POSTERITY A GAME-LESS COUNTRY?

By William T. Hornaday, in New York Times

Recent occurrences have led me to make a new analysis of the conditions today affecting the wild creatures of this continent and its effect on the future. It is not in the hope of materially affecting the final result that I am led to write down certain premises and conclusions. The deadly apathy of the great majority of Americans is so all-pervading and impenetrable that no power on earth seems likely ever to arouse our people to the activity that is necessary for the adequate preservation of their own birds, quadrupeds, and fishes. I am laboring, mechanically, like a man pumping on a sinking ship, to do my own duty toward our wild neighbors, to induce my friends to do theirs, and at the same time to school myself not to care too much about the ultimate annihilation when it comes.

Gentlemen may sit in their comfortable offices and cry "Exaggeration," just as gentlemen may cry "Peace! Peace!" when there is no peace, but that does not change the hard facts in the case. The great-grandchildren of the boys and girls who marry in the year 1911 will find the United States as barren of wild life as Italy is today—everywhere save in the iron-bound game preserves and in a very few forest areas of wide extent.

Although the end seems inexorably fixed, there is a certain academic interest attaching to the men and measures by which annihilation will be attained. First let us catalogue the chief agencies of destruction.

The first and greatest agency for the destruction of wild life is the devilish spirit of lawless "freedom" and "personal liberty" that animates about 75 per cent of the men and boys of the United States. The curse of this country is the "do-as-I-please" feeling that is in-born in the average native American, and acquired by every male immigrant the moment his foot touches the dock at Ellis Island. A large and picturesque volume might be written on that subject, if there were time.

When aimed at wild game, it prompts the market hunter to kill contrary to law, the game dealer to sell contrary to law, the restaurateur to serve under false names, and the stall-fed epicure to order and to eat contrary to law. In most rural communities the killing and marketing of game in spite of the game

warden is, by many persons, winked at as a smart thing to do. So long as the sale of wild game is permitted, just so long (or until annihilation) will quantities of game be killed, sold, and eaten contrary to law every year. For this reason—New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore are plague spots for game.

The sale of game constantly offers a reward for game extermination, and steadily promotes that end, but a number of pivotal states resolutely permit to continue.

It is to be noted that at this date the game laws covering the United States are in very many respects excellent. What used to be the outlying plague spots of slaughter are disappearing, and aside from the awful duck killing for the markets at Carrizuck Sound and adjacent waters conditions on the lawbooks are not nearly so bad as they might be. Not only are the state game laws in general very good, but they are also, as a rule, reasonably well enforced, considering all the difficulties and drawbacks in such work. And it is right here that the situation galls us.

If it were a case of a few plague spots only we could go on attacking them until all are cleaned up. But the alarming thing is that our wild life generally is steadily fading away from us, in spite of laws and wardens! Of course, there are a few local exceptions, but I cannot pause to enumerate them here.

The troubles are these: There are fifty times too many gunners who shoot according to law.

The legal bag limits are far too high, especially on birds.

The open seasons are at least twice too long.

The open markets for the sale of game are very deadly.

Many shotguns and rifles are three times too deadly to use in hunting.

The "open seasons" on all game that is verging on extinction need replacement by five-year close seasons.

The killing of song and other insectivorous birds and squirrels for food is wicked and indefensible, but in many localities it is persistent.

A chapter might be written on each of these texts, but what is the use? It seems that the wild creatures of this gun-cursed land are doomed to go on fading away, until nothing of value remains. There is no civilized nation on earth in which there are so many shotguns and rifles per capita or such universal shooting as in the United States. Every man and boy, rich or poor, bond or free, demands the glorious constitutional right to shoot—shoot when he pleases, where he pleases, and with what he pleases. Try to limit the deadliness of his weapon—i.e., stop him from using a "pump" gun or an automatic—and his lawyers lift their hands, roll their eyes to heaven, rush to court, and cry "Unconstitutional! Un-constitutional!" But Judge Dady of Pennsylvania has rudely established the fact that laws against the too-murderous guns are constitutional. All that any state need do is to pass the law and enforce it.

The United States contains millions of shotguns of modern make, and hundreds of thousands of sporting rifles. A reliable gunmaker has informed me that, in round figures, 500,000 shotguns are annually sold in the United States, and of that number 350,000 sell to the consumers at \$5 each or less.

The deadliest guns that are aimed at wild life are the "pumpguns" and the "automatics." Of these a gunmaker estimates, from the best facts obtainable by a man in the business, that 97,000 were made in this country last year.

The cartridges made and used annually in this country run up into the millions; but the exact figures are not obtainable. One gun-making authority says 10,000,000, and another scoffs at that figure as being ridiculously low.

It is quite true that in many states a hunting license is required in order to use a gun, but the standard price for a resident license for a shotgun is only \$1, and where is the man or boy with a gun who is unable to produce a dollar to pay for the privilege of using it? True, in New York, an unnaturalized alien must pay \$20 for a hunting license, which to many summer visitants from sunny Italy is quite an annoyance, and in Pennsylvania the human bird of passage may not own a gun of any kind, which is a good law.

But for the sportsmen of the United States it is fairly certain that all our game birds and quadrupeds would have been exterminated long ago, root and branch. They placed on our statute books the laws that have continued a remnant of quail, ruffed grouse, woodcock, and water fowl down to this time. With the protection of the large hoofed-and-horned game species, such as the antelope, elk, deer, moose, and caribou, the sportsmen-naturalists of the country have had much to do. The song and insectivorous birds owe a large part of their salvation to the Audubon Societies. And this has been all very well until now.

Today a new condition has arisen. It has been observed that the average sportsman protects game in order that he may shoot it! I think that the majority of him does not care a rap for posterity, or for the sentimental preservation of wild life. If you proposed to cut off his shooting privilege, even for five years, you are liable to make an enemy of him—or at least of the majority of him.

If any cause ever needed money, it is the cause of the wild creatures that need protection; but this seems to be the only good cause

that is being starved to death.

With sufficient money available from year to year for field work wherever and whenever needed, I believe that a very creditable showing of North American wild life could be saved and perpetuated. The work needs to be educational, constructive, and repressive. There must be more drastic laws limiting the use of firearms, restricting the size of the bag, and providing long-term close seasons for certain species. There must be a complete stoppage of the sale of game, and the employment of more game wardens.

As a rule I regard lawmakers in general as being both sympathetic and reasonable about the making of necessary laws. They readily respond to the demands of the hour—provided they are not intimidated by selfish or ignorant constituents. I believe that a fair amount of money for legitimate educational work will secure the passage of any good measure that is needed for wild life preservation—not necessarily at the first trial, but eventually.

The need of the hour is the annual income from a grand wild-life endowment fund of \$2,000,000, or let us say \$80,000 per year. With that sum central headquarters could be established in New York, Chicago, Denver, and San Francisco, and during the annual three months of legislative sessions a hundred good workers could be employed. During the remainder of each year a dozen different lines of educational and protective work could be pursued. With a foundation like that and the activities that it would foster, our wild life could be saved, not only at its present degree of abundance, but millions of additional individuals could be brought back! There is no mistake about this. The methods and their results are as simple and certain as the process in planting and harvesting a crop of corn.

But it seems that at present the money cannot be secured; and we may as well settle down to that fact. To collect small sums from the interested poor is too slow and laborious, and it leads to no large results. The rich simply will not be liberal to this particular cause. I have sought to interest a number of them who have not already contributed to the promotion of zoology. Every other good cause on earth receives its millions, but this is put off with next to nothing. I asked one great philanthropist for a fund of a million dollars to endow a great range of activities in this line, and I was told that "he really is not interested." I asked another, and received no reply whatever.

Recently I have asked for a total of \$9,000, to provide \$3,000 a year for three years' work; but I now see that I am not likely to secure it—not even the half of it. The men that I have engaged for some very necessary campaign work will have to be disengaged.

The American people are the greatest people on earth—in the locking of their barn doors, fast and tight, after their horses have been stolen. In the matter of wild life protection, they often good-naturedly shrink from drastic measures that may hurt some one's feelings, and optimistically ignore the naked, ugly facts. The bison was wiped out five years before our people could be convinced that such a fate was impending.

Let us for a moment see what species are today in the position the bison occupied in 1883. We need not waste time over the great auk, the passenger pigeon or the Labrador duck, because they are as extinct as the mastodon.

The Carolina parakeet, which once ranged as far north as Ohio and Pennsylvania, and bred in Florida, is now so totally gone that I doubt if a reward of \$1,000 would lead to the production of one pair. A year ago in Florida I was told that a celebrated Northern collector had recently visited what once was the breeding ground of this species, near Sebastian, and vainly offered \$250 to any one who would find him a nesting pair. I know of no reason for the belief that a single specimen now remains alive in the United States.

The trumpeter swan is so nearly extinct that already dry skins are worth \$200 each, and I think there are not to be had, even at that figure. By some ornithologists the two birds living in the New York Zoological Park have long been looked upon as the last that ever will be seen alive by bird-lovers; but recently two other specimens were secured.

The great whooping crane is now so nearly extinct that in ten years' time only five or six specimens have been captured. The standing order for a pair, given five years ago, is still unfilled, although the price offered was \$1,000 for a pair. The value of this strikingly handsome bird is very widely known, and the chances are that within ten years more, at the very utmost, the species will be totally extinct.

From what I saw between 1886 and 1901 of the terrible decrease of the great sage grouse between the Yellowstone and the Missouri rivers, over an area of 120 miles wide, I think that species is doomed to early extinction—unless the remnants are everywhere protected by long close seasons. In the open country it inhabits is fearfully exposed, and is easily discovered and killed. If the hunting of it during two months of the year is continued, its early extinction is absolutely fixed and certain.

The prairie sharp-tailed grouse is an exactly similar case; and the pinnated grouse must either be protected by long close seasons, or its doom also is sealed. Roughly speaking, it has already been exterminated over about four-fifths of the area that it inhabited even as late as 1870.

The wood duck has become so terribly re-



Sportsman's Calendar

FEBRUARY

Sports for the Month—For the angler, grilse and spring salmon. For the shooter, ducks and geese.

In Season—Ducks, geese, brant, snipe; grilse, salmon, steelheads in tidal water.

February 28 the last day of the season for ducks and snipe.

duced in number that the general alarm sounded in its behalf three years ago has led even New York to accord it a long-term close season, during which it may not be killed.

Out of the crumbling ruins of American wild life rises one monument to sportsmen's endeavor—the saving of the prong-horned antelope. The general alarm that was first sounded by G. O. Shields, eight years ago, has led to the closing of all hunting of that species in every state that it inhabits. Already the species is recovering, and if the perpetual close seasons are rigidly maintained, its future is reasonably secure. If my memory is correct, Dr. Palmer figures out 17,000 as the number of individuals now living—which I think is one-twentieth of the number alive in 1885.

After all, why should I worry any longer over these matters? I have done my utmost to stave off the impending annihilation; and I am tired of making bricks without straw. My grandchildren can endure a lifeless country as well as can those of other men. If 999 per cent of my country are willing that the wild creatures of our land should go to destruction, I can "stand it" if they can.

During the past twelve months I have observed wild life in three widely separated regions of this country—New York, Montana, and Florida—and everywhere conditions are the same. The remnant is steadily growing smaller and smaller. In Southern New York its fading away is plainly visible, save in wild fowl, since the stoppage of spring shooting. Here we have a decided gain. Now the baymen of Long Island demand that the law shall be repealed and the lid taken off.

"After us—the deluge!"

A HORRIBLE EXAMPLE

A timely warning to others is contained in this letter from an Arkansas man. He writes us:

"Lately I have missed something out of my life. Things seemed wrong. It occurred to me that I was not keeping up with the trend of things. When I would go home at night, I was restless, and couldn't settle myself down comfortably. A vacuum occurred in my brain and has been constantly increasing in size. I became alarmed, and began to look about for a reason; when lo and behold, I discovered that you had stopt my Literary Digest for the simple and insignificant reason that I had failed to pay my subscription. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves to treat a fellow that way. If my groceryman had treated my stomach like you people have treated my brain, I would have starved some time since. However, my groceryman took pity on me during the Christmas holidays and my physical condition is such that I have decided to let my stomach suffer a while and feed my brain; so I am enclosing you a check and I don't want you to ever, ever again be guilty of stopping my Digest just because I owe you a subscription. Yours with a groinch."

BEYOND THE LIMIT

Indignant Customer—I came in here yesterday and asked for a can of potted ham.

Grocer (soothingly)—I gave you the best brand on the market. But now, you know, the manufacturers themselves do not pretend there is any ham in it.

Indignant Customer—I didn't expect any ham, but the label says: "Potted Meat, Ham Flavor"—and they've even left out the flavor.—Woman's Home Companion.

AT THE ZOO

Johnny—Grandpa, do lions go to Heaven? Grandpa—No, Johnny.

Johnny—Well, do ministers? Grandpa—Why, of course. Why do you ask?

Johnny—Well, suppose a lion eats a minister.—Life.