

slowly and are steady in their flight, such as prairie chickens, geese, brant, pigeons when sailing, crows and hawks, and very likely you can get such ducks as mallards, which fly slowly and steadily."

After giving a passing glance at the didn't-know-it-was-loaded idiot, Mr. Bliss devotes a little space to the care of a rifle, but though the space occupied is not great, it is used to the best advantage. He says:

"In taking care of a gun you can't keep it too clean. If it once gets spotted inside it will be likely to remain so. In shooting a 22-calibre rifle I use a magazine gun—I clean it out after emptying every magazine, if I am shooting right along. If I am going to lay the gun aside for a few hours, I clean it even if I have only fired it once. A good many will tell you that powder is a good thing to leave in a gun. If you fall into that habit you will find it the best excuse in the world for not cleaning your gun sometime when you are too lazy to do it, and the gun will stay with powder in it for a month.

If you want a gun to hang up in your room on a pair of antlers for an ornament, get some old Queen Anne arm that was used in the revolution. It will answer every purpose, and be a great deal better than ruining a fine gun."

Mr. Bliss discusses several makes of rifles, all, of course, of small calibre, but does not commit himself to recommend any particular make, in fact he acknowledges that any gun by a good maker will do good work, but he thinks the sights usually adopted could be improved on:

"I think that there is nothing worse in the line of rifle sights than a combination of a glittering sight in front that comes up to a knife edge at the top and the old-fashioned buckhorn sight for the back sight. Take such a set of sights as this and shoot five shots towards the sun, and as many at each of the other points of the compass on a bright day, and compare the targets and note the result. One way you will shoot over, another under, another to one side, and so on, all owing to the reflection of light from your sights. When a boy I used such a set, and I could 'bead' as fine as the point of a cambric needle with them. At least it would appear so, but I always had to make so much allowance for which side the light struck that my shooting was very uncertain.

You will probably get used to some set of sights and do good work with them, but keep your eyes open and be ready to adopt what is clearly proved to be in advance of what you have. A front sight should be broad, and especially in all quick shooting should you accustom yourself to a broad, large front sight. You can do just as fine shooting, and in quick shooting you can catch it much quicker. A good front sight is made from a piece from a silver quarter or half dollar filed down smooth on the sides and edges. The height will have to be determined entirely with regard to the shooting of your gun. Try the sights that come with the gun, and make your sights either the same height as these or higher or lower as may be necessary. The sides of this sight want to be perfectly black, so that the light will not reflect from them. This you can probably get a jeweller to do for you cheaper and better than you can do it yourself. Then the top wants to be bright. Do not burnish it, but have it white, I mean. If you were going to shoot on the snow all the time, a sight of the same shape made of pure copper would be much better.

For your back sight put on in place of the 'crotch' or 'buckhorn' sight a plain oblong bar of dead black iron, nearly as long as your gun barrel is wide, and about three-sixteenths or an inch deep and wide. Into the back side of this should be set a piece of platinum wire. It can be dovetailed in and flattened, coming to within a thirty-second part of an inch of the top, and running down to the bottom of the sight. The width of this sight will have to be governed entirely by the width of your front sight and the length of your gun barrel. It must, of course, be narrower than the front sight, as the intention is to have them *appear* just the same width when you look over the barrel of the gun at them. The line of dead iron at the top of the bar will always enable you to keep the two sights distinct, and they will never appear to be one and the same piece. The advantages of having a rear sight that is flat on top are manifold. One of the most important things in shooting at any distance is to have your gun level and with a flat sight to look over; it is much easier to accomplish this than with a sight that is notched. It is also much easier to tell just how much front sight you are using than with the old 'buckhorn.'

After a good long, practical talk about sights and aiming, Mr. Bliss concludes his little brochure with an expose of some of the humbugs practised by professional rifle wing shots, and an account of some fancy shooting done at moving targets, neither of which subjects is of as general interest as the body of the book. There is no doubt that the book will be a great aid to anyone having to use a sporting rifle, while to the long range, big caliber rifleman it is full of food for reflection, and well worthy of perusal. Its only fault is, it is too short, and we hope that in a future edition the directions to beginners will be amplified.

British Officers and their Weapons.

SPEAKING of the guerilla warfare now going on in Burmah, *The Times of India* says that proficiency in the use of the revolver has saved many an officer's life during the past few months. An officer who finds that a Dacoit is covering him with his musket, has only a second or two to decide whether he will shoot or be shot. When a stockade is taken at the point of the bayonet, there is very frequently a sharp set-to for three or four minutes, during which swords, bayonets and the butt ends of rifles all come into vigorous play. Under these circumstances it is interesting to inquire whether our officers receive that thorough training in the use of their weapons which alone would stand them in good stead at a pinch. And in dealing with this subject, we cannot do better than once again quote the opinion of Major King-Harman, of the Bengal Staff Corps, in his lecture on *British Officers and their Weapons*. The Major does not take a sanguine view of the advantages to be derived from the present system of teaching officers to fence. "We all know," he says, "that fencing is simply the art of using the small sword or rapier, which are weapons that can be used for thrusting only, but as none of our officers are armed with such weapons, unless, perhaps, a few have retained the small-swords of their fathers, of what use to them is fencing as now taught? Therefore, I would recommend, with due deference, that either the system and weapon of instruction should be completely changed, or else that the regulation sword for all officers and for cavalry soldiers should be altered so as to make it a thrusting weapon only. I should infinitely prefer the latter, for the simple reason that the point is so far more deadly than the edge." This view of Major King-Harman is curiously and very practically confirmed by the following personal experience of an officer whose fame and memory are dear to all Englishmen. It is Sir John Moore, who was the actor, and it is General Sir George Napier who tells the story. "Upon our arrival at Lisbon," says Napier, "I joined Sir John Moore, and commenced my duty as aide-de-camp. One day I was going to purchase a sabre, when Sir John Moore told me not to do so, but to buy a straight sword, sharp on both edges. The reason he gave was this. When a colonel he commanded a storming party at the Fort of Calvi, in Corsica, and just as he mounted the top of the breach, and was forcing his way in, a French grenadier, one of those defending the entrance, was on the point of plunging his bayonet in him, when Moore, seeing his only chance of life was to run his sword through the man, did so, and killed him on the spot. Now, if he had not had a straight sword, but a sabre, he would not have been able to run the grenadier through the body, but would have been killed himself. So I did as he desired me, and purchased a straight one;" but, continues General Napier, who was as modest as he was brave, "thank God I was lucky enough never to use my sword in the same way as Sir John Moore was forced to use his, for he told me he never should forget the horrid sensation it gave him when drawing his sword out of the man's body, and that it was always a painful recollection to him." This little story, so simply told, and bringing into such strong relief the brave and kindly character, both of him who was the chief actor in it, and of him who tells it, fully bears out Major King-Harman's opinion. He continues—"I think and hope that if he was armed with a really good reliable weapon and was well skilled in its use, he would wear it oftener and with greater pride and pleasure than he does now, and would pay more attention to the condition of the blade than he does now to the polish of the scabbard. Others may say, but what about the sword exercise which we are all constantly practised in? Well, all I can say about it is that the mounted exercises, especially the pursuing practice, are extremely pretty to look at and perfectly useless as a means of instruction in the real use of the sword; and as regards the dismounted practice, known as the infantry sword exercise, I do not think I know of a more affecting sight than a body of English officers going through that performance before the reviewing general at his annual inspection." Major King-Harman has decidedly hit upon a blot when he censures the custom of officers handing over their swords to their syces to carry. It is a curious and not very edifying sight to see an officer, sometimes a subaltern, sometimes a field officer, the moment parade is over, take off his sword and hand it to his syce, while he canters home. The syce, already encumbered with the horse's *jhol*, is puzzled to know what to do with the sword. However, he contrives to hang it round his neck, or to sling it over his shoulder, and then he trots patiently after his master, his unaccustomed sword jumping and jangling as he goes. It is not a very dignified or martial spectacle. And anybody who has seen a body of British officers drawn up in line to go through the infantry sword exercise before a reviewing general will quite agree that it is truly "an affecting sight." In a native regiment all the mounted officers do the infantry sword exercise, being dismounted for the purpose, so that it becomes absolutely pathetic to see a stout field officer get off his horse and put himself as gracefully as possible into the attitude of "guard," while the general and his staff look on without betraying any outward