

HUNTING AND FISHING, HERE AND ELSEWHERE

PASSING COMMENTS

(By Richard L. Pocock.)

July is usually rather a dull month for the angling fraternity, and there do not seem to have been many big baskets made among the trout fishermen lately. From Cowichan Lake some big fish have been taken by trolling in the headwaters of the big lake. A few days ago a Victoria gentleman brought one down from there which pulled the scale down to six pounds and ten ounces, a beautiful fish in first-class shape. He reported having a tussle with another which broke him and which he believed to be even larger. Other anglers, by the same methods, in the same waters, have made some very good catches.

In the upper reaches of the river not much has been done during the last week or so. The writer had quite a nice lot of smallish trout from there a few days ago on the fly, but nothing of any very great size. The Cowichan river is a good deal higher than it was at this time last year, and the rain which has fallen lately probably accounts for the fact that there are few trout at present to be caught in the salt-chuck at the mouth of the river, as they have apparently all run up into the lake; a little later there will in all probability be another run of sea-trout, though once the salmon appear there in any great numbers, trolling for trout in the sea at the mouth of the river seems practically useless. A few good spring salmon have been caught by anglers there and elsewhere, but, as yet, this sport is rather uncertain, though there are millions of small "grise" in the waters of the bay and a big basket of these may be made with ease on the rising tides for preference.

I used to have scruples about killing these small fellows until I noticed that every one I hooked was gorged with still smaller fry of its own species, since when I have no mercy, and they certainly do make most excellent eating, though the present run averages rather too small to give very much sport in the catching.

Sportsmen are beginning to make enquiries as to when the shooting season is to be declared open this year. Enquiry of the game warden on this point elicited the reply that as soon as he returned from the trip to East Kootenay on which he was just about to start, he was going to take this matter up and gather opinions from various districts as to what it would be advisable to do in this matter. Various rumors have been current as to the opening date which is to be fixed by the Government, but as a matter of fact nothing has yet been decided on. The usual reports have been coming in from enthusiasts as to the blue grouse thick in various districts; my own observation leads me to the belief that they are not generally as plentiful as last year and are rather more backward owing to the cold spring and the lateness of the season generally this year. I certainly think it would be a wise policy to keep the season closed again this year until October 1st for everything. It seems pretty certain that the mistake of last year of allowing deer-shooting a full month before the grouse were in will not be repeated. Given a full September and no guns in the woods to disturb the birds, and there is no reason why we should not have a short, but lively grouse-shooting season. As to pheasant shooting I confess I am not so well posted, though of course these birds would not be shot before October; if everything comes into season at the same date, the grouse may escape quite such a merciless hammering as they have been subjected to in former years.

The way of the transgressor against the game laws is getting harder. A conviction has been obtained and a fine of fifty dollars imposed for shooting deer out of season.

THE MAXIM REPORT SILENCER.

The English Field, the recognized authority in the Old Country on all matters relating to sporting gunnery, and which has special machinery and equipment for carrying out all kinds of tests and experiments relating to small arms, has lately been testing the Maxim Report Silencer on different types of rifles, and has published a very interesting report on the result of their investigations. They say—

Barring unforeseen difficulties, the Maxim arrangement for diminishing the report of firearms seems destined to work important changes in the conditions of rifle shooting. Newspaper accounts and the publication of patents made everyone familiar in the early part of the present year with the details of the device by which it was emphatically reported that the noise of firearms had been abolished. But it was essentially a case where seeing, or rather, hearing—better still, not hearing—is believing. Mr. Maxim's original patent was concerned with an arrangement which seemed to be hostile to the known behavior of powder gases, an objection which certainly ceased to exist when the radically different method of the present device came to be disclosed. Briefly, the idea consists in attaching to the muzzle of the rifle a tube containing a series of stampeddisks of peculiar form, whose intended purpose is to modify the outrush of gas, which ordinarily takes place immediately after the bullet leaves the muzzle. A clear longitudinal space permits the free passage of the bullet past the series of chambers or compartments of which the silencer is composed. To prevent undue obstruction of the line of sight, the bullet passage is situated eccentrically with reference to the axis of the silencer. Whether the arrangement would not better fulfil

its intended purpose if it were made entirely symmetrical is a matter open to decision hereafter. The slight raising of the line of sight would be an advantage, rather than a disadvantage, if reasons existed for excusing the more cumbersome arrangement involved.

The various questions concerning the effectiveness and practicability of the device under consideration present one of the most interesting problems which has ever arisen in connection with rifle shooting, equalling perhaps in importance the conundrums brought into being by the Spitzer system of pointed bullet. At the present stage the most essential question of all others is whether the silencer actually does, or does not, diminish the noise produced by the discharge of firearms. The first demonstration was given on Friday of last week at an underground shooting gallery in Jermyn street, situated in premises shortly to be opened as the King's Club. It then became apparent for the first time that a considerable rearrangement of ideas is necessary before a reliable judgment can be formed of the nature and origin of the sounds produced by the discharge of a rifle. Firing in restricted surroundings, the impact of the bullet makes a quite respectable noise of its own, which is easily mistaken for the sound of discharge. Mr. Maxim has accordingly set up a coffin-shaped trough, lined with felt in a peculiar manner, to deaden to the spectators' ears any sound that may be thrown back by the impact of the bullet into the sand beyond. In a narrow basement, surrounded by brick walls, the discharge of a full-power rifle is an experience which no one cares to repeat. With the silencer screwed on to the muzzle of the gun, the whole of the distressing aspects of rifle discharge absolutely disappeared. The experiment was carried out with various rifles, military, mid-range, and miniature, and the experience was every time the same, and apparently without the slightest opening for trickery or deception. Even so, the surroundings were unusual, for the impact silencer, might conceivably have had a share in the result produced. Consequently, Mr. Berg and Mr. Maxim were asked whether they would be willing to attend at the Field experimental shooting ground on the following Monday morning to repeat their demonstration independently of complications due to restrictions of space. The invitation having been accepted, the experiments were repeated last Monday, with most interesting variations of the previous results, everything still confirming the claims put forward.

Shooting was first of all conducted with an ordinary .22 Winchester rifle, firing Rheinisch cartridges. These, it will be remembered, were shown in a recent article to give a velocity of about 1035 f. s. over twenty yards. At first there was so much noise that the silencer seemed to be producing but little effect, and when Mr. Maxim assured us that the sound came from the impact of the bullet on the mound situated fifty yards away the notion seemed incredible. He then asked that the direction of fire should be changed to a small hillock about 200 yards away. The extraordinary absence of sound at once confirmed the previous explanation. Other shots fired in the air gave so slight a report that they were thought to be misfires until the empty smoking cartridge cases proved that this was not so. Other shots were fired at the heap of empty cartridge shells, which is a feature of the West London Shooting School. These were sudden by a night's rain, and the bullets struck with a dull "flop," which revealed a state of practical silence at the firing point. A very curious observation was then made. Mr. Maxim's own cartridges, U.M.C. smokeless, of the kind which recently gave 899 f. s. over twenty yards, produced a sound no louder than the act of ex-

pectoration. Mr. Maxim thinks that there is a critical velocity of bullets in the region of the velocity of sound, below which, when the silencer is used, there is a greater noise, the origin of which is not for the moment easy to define. The possible explanation is that the silencer is equally effective in respect to all degrees of muzzle blast, but that the bullet makes a variable amount of noise in cutting through the air, depending on the relation of its velocity to that of sound. The character of the noise produced would thus be influenced by whether the bullet keeps in front of any sound disturbances it may create, as distinguished from the opposite conditions where sound waves disturb the air in advance of the bullet. These points need investigation and explanation by expert mathematicians.

All questions as to the effectiveness of the silencer were set aside by passing to weapons of the military type. Meantime in respect even to high power .22 rifle cartridges, it was certainly observed that, though the impact of the bullet might make a sharp sound when striking the butt, mistakable for the uninstrumented observer for the ordinary muzzle report, at the same time, there was a complete absence of the sensation of shock and injury to the ear drum, which even the .22 rifle is capable of producing. Practically speaking, all shooters are more or less deaf, and the origin of their deafness is the impact of the sound wave, as produced by, and propagated from, the blast of high pressure gas, which passes into the air with explosive violence as soon as the bullet has left the muzzle. The Maxim silencer undoubtedly catches this blast, and by the interposition of frictional resistance, prolongs the period of expansion, and thereby destroys the power of the gas to initiate a sound wave. What the bullet does is quite another question, but no one's ears would be injured by bullet noises short of lying inside a locomotive boiler whilst shooters were peering in from the outside.

The actual tests with the service rifle comprised firing it in an open field, into a hillock some 200 yards away. The rifle was used alternately with and without the silencer. The various persons present very soon vetoed any further experiments to prove that, without the silencer on the rifle, an extremely unpleasant noise was produced by the extra powerful match cartridges, which had been brought on to the ground by the Field expert with the idea of making the trials as severe as possible. The silencer certainly destroyed the whole of the unpleasant effects on the ear. On one occasion Mr. Maxim actually stood close to the muzzle of the gun, and held a visiting card for the bullet to pierce, a proceeding which would represent the height of folly in the case of an ordinary rifle. The bullet certainly produced a ringing noise as it tore its way through the air, and there was a decided impact when it struck the bank. Standing adjoining the mound whilst someone else fired produced the strange experience of a sharp crack, probably denoting the arrival of the air wave set up by the passage of the bullet. On the other hand, the ear could not separate this sound from the extremely similar one due to impact with the mound. When the silencer was removed, the boom of the discharge 200 yards away followed the first sharp impact, thus leaving no doubt in the mind that a person being fired at would hear a crack in the air due to the arrival of the bullet, but with no sound from the firing point to denote whence comes the hostile fire. The entire abolition of the muzzle report was finally and conclusively proved by discharging a shot vertically into the air. The perceptible noise was then no greater than that of an ordinary spring air gun. A very similar effect was produced by firing into

dense vegetation, the bullet being in such circumstances swallowed up by the ground without making any great noise.

It is early as yet to know just what place to give to the new arrangement in the region of practical accomplishments. Other tests must be conducted to prove that accuracy over all ranges remains undiminished, and that the device itself is capable of withstanding ordinary service conditions. One scientific experiment was conducted for the purpose of establishing recoil. The Americans have had first "go" at the invention, and have accordingly examined most of its properties. On the subject of recoil they are, however, vague and almost inconsistent. They variously attribute the diminution of recoil when the instrument is used to 50 and 60 per cent, whereas theory, as understood on this side, suggests that the entire abolition of muzzle blast could not produce so great a difference. The addition of weight to a weapon in itself diminishes recoil, apart from any influence it might exert on the powder gases. The obvious need is, therefore, a measurement of recoil in the fundamental unit of velocity, which permits the elimination of the weight element. Velocity of recoil multiplied by the weight of the weapon gives momentum, and momentum is a constant value independent of the weight of the firearm. The experimental results as detailed below show that, though the velocity of recoil, using the attachment, is decidedly less than that of the plain weapon, the bulk of the difference can be accounted for by the added weight. On the other hand, the Americans report that the velocity of the bullet is greater when the silencer is used than without, due to the additional distance over which the cases may act on the base of the bullet. Time did not permit of separately ascertaining the velocity of the bullet, but it is quite feasible that the extra velocity which the silencer imparts to the bullet adds to the recoil approximately the amount destroyed by modifying the out-rush of gases.

Many other experiments will have to be made before an unqualified verdict of approval can be passed. In the meantime it really looks as though success has been achieved in abolishing what has hitherto been regarded as one of the necessary evils of shooting. Whether the idea can be applied to shotguns is far more problematical than in the case of rifles. There are many reasons for supposing that the muzzle blast is the prime factor in producing the dispersion of a charge of shot, and that the shot charge becomes subject to lateral expansion practically from the very moment when it leaves the muzzle. To be effective with shotguns it would be necessary that the silencer should not accidentally catch some of the charge, and since no one is quite certain exactly what happens during the first few inches of travel after the shot leaves the muzzle, the subject remains open until working models have been produced. Instantaneous photographs taken quite close to the muzzle, as a rule, show only a blurred mass of smoke.

SUNDAY FISHING AND THE BASS

The American Field publishes the following amusing little story which should be of especial interest to those of us who are necessarily compelled to do our fishing on Sunday: "Although most of us were men whose calling in life had compelled us to work on Sunday, none of us would under any circumstances fish on the Sabbath day except to demonstrate a great truth, and right here is where we played one of the smoothest tricks on the black bass in South Harpeth river that has been pulled off in many a year. Sunday morning dawned bright and clear, the stream was never in more perfect condition. We all gathered in front

of our tent and Edward Sparks gave utterance to the following theories and belief:

"Boys," said he, "I have fished faithfully and hard Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and I have killed one hundred or more nice steel-back minnows throwing them into deep holes and around old stumps and trees and where the sportive black bass are supposed to congregate, and never a strike have I got. The only conclusion I can reach after silent, patient and painful meditation is, that these people in this beautiful little valley have been good Christian people for generations back, that they have worked six days in the week and refused to fish on the Sabbath day, and, by some mysterious means unknown to us, this information has been transmitted to the black bass in this stream and they have in self-defence learned to feed on Sunday and lie up and fatten the other six days in the week. Now, in view of this condition of affairs, which is not of our making and entirely beyond our control, I believe," continued Sparks, "that we would be justified in taking that bucket of steel-back minnows, one pole each, and proceeding up the river until we come to that patch of pawpaw bushes that skirts the river bank, and spend this lovely Sabbath day in teaching these wise old black bass a lesson that they will not soon forget."

"Well," as the reasoning of Sparks appeared to us to be so sound and sensible, we at once set out for the deep hole and the pawpaw thicket. Well, sir, would you believe it, those hundred minnows did not last an hour. Our reels got hot from constant use, and our poles were in the shape of a rainbow nearly every minute of the time, and we went away from there with the finest string of black bass that ever came out of South Harpeth river.

"Don't tell me that black bass don't know when Sunday comes, or that a train despatcher can't sometimes be a prophet."

MEMORIES

Did you ever have that feeling just beneath your collar-bone
When you're overhauling tackle by the lamp-light—all alone—
That seems to cry the loudest as some favorite spoon or fly
Casts its shadows on the table 'neath your criticizing eye?
Did that feeling ever stir you as your memory wandered back
And revealed a treasured moment
When you bivouacked in some shack,
Where the murmurs of the waters etched their music on your brain,
Where you got as near to heaven as you'll ever get again?

—C. B. Davis in Outdoor Life.

GROWTH OF THE BRITISH FLEET

The mimic war of the British fleet this year is noteworthy for more reasons than one. The scene and plan of the operations are highly significant of the source from which actual attack upon the United Kingdom is deemed most probable, or least improbable. The revival of the red, white and blue divisions is of interest from historical and sentimental points of view. The discipline and the secrecy which are being maintained are strongly suggestive of the conditions of actual warfare. Moreover, the expedition with which the ships were put into condition for action and were equipped with full war complements of men must have been exceedingly gratifying to the administrative officers of the Admiralty, and must have gone far toward correcting the suspicion of unreadiness.

The most striking feature of all, however, is probably the number of ships engaged in the manoeuvres and the enormous increase over other recent assemblages of the Imperial navy. The increase is to be noted in nearly all classes of ships, and in the fleet as a whole it amounts to considerably more than 100 per cent over the showing of the two great reviews of 1897 and 1902. Thus, of big battle-ships there were in Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee review, in 1897, only 21, and in King Edward's Coronation review, in 1902, the same number, while in the present operations there are no fewer than 40. Of those powerful armored cruisers which are practically battle-ships there were in 1897 only 4 and in 1902 only 6, while now there are 27. Of those destroyers which Mr. Kipling has celebrated as the deadliest of all craft, "the choosers of the slain," there were 30 in 1897 and 32 in 1902, and now there are 117. Torpedo boats have increased from 20 in 1897 and 26 in 1902, to 79, while submarines, which were non-existent in the two reviews, now number 26. The totals are 165 in 1897, 125 in 1902, and 350 in 1909.

To this tremendous showing we may add that while in 1897 and 1902 about half of the battleships were more than ten years old, and some were more than twenty years old, of the 40 this year all but 8 are less than ten years old, and practically all the armored cruisers, destroyers, torpedo boats and submarines are within that limit of age. That is to say, within ten years Great Britain has put into commission at least 32 battleships, 20 armored cruisers, scores of destroyers and torpedo boats and more than two dozen submarines. The present fleet is therefore not only the greatest in numbers that has ever been assembled, but also the newest and therefore presumably the most up-to-date and most efficient. In the face of such a showing Britannia may certainly have some degree of confidence that at least for a considerable time she will continue to rule the waves.

Scott and Irish Wits and Humorists

The relative merits of Scottish and Irish wit and humor have often been debated. Most people, perhaps, when discussing the question, would carelessly give the opinion that the former is distinctly superior to the latter. Scott is a Scotchman, and he believes that upon investigation it will be found that the true state of affairs is exactly the opposite of this, and in support of his attitude he quotes a few typical specimens. His differentiation of the two modes of pleasantry is striking. "Wit," he says, "is keen, sudden, brief, and sometimes severe; humor is deep, thoughtful, and sustained."

A good story is told of a succeeding minister in Scotland who possessed some eccentric qualities, and who was well known for the quaint parenthetical comments he introduced in his reading of Scripture. He took for his text one day the eleventh verse of the one hundred and sixteenth Psalm.

"I said in my haste, All men are liars," he read, and then quietly observed, "Indeed, David, an ye had been in this parish, ye might have said 'it at your leisure.'"

That certainly meets all the stated requirements for classification as wit. It is keen, sudden, brief, and it is moderately severe. It also displays quick perception of unperceived analogies. To compare with this, there is an anecdote of undisputed Irish origin. A particularly diminutive Colonel was putting a strapping Irish private over six feet in height, through his pages. "Come man!" he shouted, "Hold up your head!"

"Higher, man, higher, I tell you—higher!"

"This way, sir?" asked the recruit, raising his head much above the horizontal parallel.

"Yes, man."

"And am I always to hold it so?"

"Yes, you are."

"Then I'll say 'Goodbye to you, Colonel for I shall never see you again.'"

Applying the accepted definition, Mr. Jones places this readily under the classification of humor. While it is not particularly deep, it is thoughtful and sustained. It certainly is not keen, and it is not sudden; for the private was forced to pave the way for his point, and the Colonel's series of pure Irish humor will be found to follow the same general line, requiring a word or two in advance of the point and sometimes a rather elaborate setting to produce the humor.

This characteristic of Irish humor is further illustrated in a rebuke once administered by an Irishman to the famous Mitchner, proprietor of an equally famous hotel in Margate. The smallness of Mitchner's wine bottles bore no proportion whatever to the high price of the wine, a fact that disgusted an Irishman who frequented the place.

"Look here, Mitchner!" said the Irishman, who had just paid a high price for a bottle of wine. "If my friend here just had a bet as to what profession you were bred to originally, and we were to place a stake on it, I would bet that you were bred to a trade to decide the matter for us."

After some hesitation, Mitchner replied in a somewhat affected manner, "I was bred to the law."

"In that case," said the Irishman, "I have lost my bet, for I had a hunch that you were bred a packer."

"A packer, sir?" exclaimed Mitchner, in well-feigned horror. "What could induce you to think, sir, I was bred to a pack?"

"Why, sir," was the reply, "I judged so from your wine measures, for I thought no one but a very skillful packer, who had acquired the knack in his youth, could ever get a quart of wine into a pint bottle."

The thoughtful preparator, for the wit is clearly shown in this bit of Irish humor. The trap was set deliberately. It was well baited, and the victim was almost dragged to it. It has the thoughtfulness of humor, but lacks the spontaneity of wit.

With this may be compared another anecdote, also selected from the abundant supply contributed by the old Scotch history. The principal characters of this anecdote are Dr. Henry Macdonald, a celebrated scholar and commentator.

"Dr. Macdonald was caught in a heavy downpour of rain while on his way to his church one Sunday morning, and when he arrived at the vestry he was very wet. Every means was used to dry him out in time for the service; but as the hour drew near Dr. Macdonald became nervous, fearing that he would not be in at attention to appear before his flock.

"Oh, I wish I was dry!" he wailed. "Do you think I am dry enough now?"

"Patting him on the shoulder, Dr. Henry replied in his most soothing manner, 'Side a wee doctor and ye're be dry enough when ye get into the pulpit.'"

Here are all the classifications of wit, except that it is only mildly severe. Here is keenness, spontaneity, and brevity. There is no thoughtful preparation, no leading up to the point; the victim himself made the point, and he had his own trap, and he walked into it.

One more comparison should establish the Scotchman's claim to wit, and fix upon Irish pleasantries the label of humor.

A Scottish minister of the Gospel, while making his usual rounds among the members of his flock, came to the door of a house where his gentle tapping could not be heard for the noise of a contention within.

"After waiting a little, he opened the door and walked in, saying in an authoritative voice, 'I should like to know who is the head of this house!'"

"The husband," said the landlady, "if ye'll sit down a wee, we'll maybe be able to tell ye, for we are just trying to settle that point."

A Conversation With Haddock.

With this may be contrasted an anecdote of Mr. Gwynne, an Irishman

celebrated for his good humor. One Friday he was dining with a friend, and the conversation turned to the subject of the most served Gwynne was particularly fond of haddock, and seated himself near a fine specimen of the fish. He was, however, soon made him aware that the fish was not too fresh. He first looked at the head of the fish, and then he saw, as if conversing with it. The woman of the house, perceiving his peculiar motions, asked him whether he wished anything.

"Nothing," replied Gwynne, "nothing at all, madam. I was merely asking this haddock whether he could give me any news of my friend, Captain Murphy, who was drowned last Monday; but he tells me that he knows nothing of the matter, for he himself hasn't been to sea these three weeks."

The Irish bull, for which the son of Erin has ever been renowned, belongs to an entirely different class. While it possesses the spontaneity and the brevity of wit, it is lacking in wisdom, an important characteristic; and it certainly lacks the thoughtfulness of humor. Irish bulls, like Irish wit, are the result of a hasty, unprepared, and poor Paddy has been made to shoulder backs that even an Irishman would not dare to make. A number of legitimate Irish bulls are still to be found, however, and one or two will be sufficient to show the quality of the pure Irish article.

An Irish doctor, who had just returned from the West Indies, said in describing the climate, "It is most infernal. Had I lived there until today, I should have been dead of yellow fever two years ago."

"Another doctor, without observing the bull, agreed with the speaker, and declared that the climate must be very unwholesome, because a vast number of people died there."

"Very true," remarked another physician, "but if you will tell me of any country where people do not die, I shall go and end my days there tomorrow."

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