



## GUNNING FOR SNIPE IN JAMAICA.

BY BRUX.

WITHERTO the West Indies have not been accredited by the roaming sportsman as a field for sport, yet the beautiful island of Jamaica may be excepted, as, although, unlike Trinidad, it cannot boast of deer shooting, yet wild ducks, teal, pigeons, doves and snipe, in the season, afford very good gunning. Duck, teal and snipe are protected from March 1st to August 31st; pigeons and doves may be shot from August 1st to February 28th.

My friend Jack and I were indulging in a post-prandial cigar, when he asked after my good old pointer Juno, a liver-and-white bitch, thoroughly broken, and over whom we had both clone a good deal of shooting.

In response to my call of "Hold up, Juno, good dog," she came bounding into the room, wagging her tail in ecstasy.

"The dog looks in good form," says Jack; "suppose we try a little snipe-shooting; there are any amount of them at Kirk Hall in that piece of old canes. I rode through there yesterday and put up about twenty wisps. They seem to have just arrived; suppose we try them to-morrow."

"Say 6 A. M. All right; I am willing. I will be there. I had a note from Will saying teal were down in goodly number on Harmony Pond, and he will preserve them for next week; in the mean-

time we will try your snipe. Juno may be a little more anxious than she used to be, but she is just as keen of scent as ever."

"All right, Brux, old fellow, Meet me at the logwood fence at Friendship line, 6 A. M. sharp. Good night."

With thermometer at seventy degrees, exactly at five o'clock I heard a rap at the door. "Is that you, Jim?"

"Yes, massa; alright."

"Jim, I will be up directly."

Thirty minutes after, I was sipping a cup of hot coffee, and ten minutes later was wheeling away behind Milton in the four-wheeler, my faithful Juno sitting up between my legs and looking fit for anything.

At a quarter to six, sure enough, I saw Jack sitting on the logwood fence, our trysting place, and looking quite fresh.

He welcomed me with a "Good morning, old fellow; beautiful morning. We had a shower last night, and the birds will lie well; they have divided up, and you will have better fun at single birds. Of course you are aware they do not fly in wisps for more than two or three days after arrival, but I prefer them single when I am fortunate enough to have such a good dog as Juno."

Out of the buggy Juno jumped. Jack and myself both loaded up, I placing two cartridges, No. 8 shot, in my twelve bore.

"The wind is from the north. Brux, you take that side, as the birds will fly from me to you—always against the wind, you know."

"No, no! Since I am not as good a snipe-shot as you are, let me take south," I insisted. After a little argument this was agreed to. "Now hold up Juno." And a few minutes after she was as rigid as marble, with one fore foot and one hind foot lifted.

"Steady! Now, Jack, that's your bird mark!" Bang! and Jack scored a miss.

"Better luck next time. Steady! Now, Jack, mark!" Bang! goes Jack, and another miss is scored.

"Why, Jack, they are as thick as peas. Look at the dog. She hasn't even dropped. to charge. Steady, good dog!"

She looks at me so intelligently, and with a slight wag of her tail, was again rigid, a perfect picture; again does Jack pull off another miss. "Down charge."

"I seem a little off, Brux," he said.

"You have not had a chance yet."

"Hold up, good dog," and another point was the result.

"Steady now," and up got a fine bird with the usual "quirk," and as soon as his zigzag was over, crack! from one of our smokeless cartridges, a twirl in the air, and my first bird was killed.

"Well done," says Jack; "beautifully killed. I thought you said you could not shoot snipe."

Jim who is not far behind, also exclaims: "You got him, sah!" and goes forward to pick up the bird. I stop him just in time, as Juno again points; again head-over-heels, down comes the bird with both wings broken. I am certainly getting confidence.

Jim is rather an awkward negro, with crossed eyes; or, as I tell him, he looks with his right eye into his left pocket, and *vice versa*. But in picking up the bird, he flushes another that gets up from almost under his feet. The "quirk" frightens him; I call out "Mark," and Jack grasses his first bird.

"Well done," says I, and Jack looks very pleased with the bird in his hand. "They seem fat," he adds, as he places it in the palm of his hand, and it seems to wabble about a little.

I turn round and find Jim up to his old tricks, pulling out a few feathers from the back. "Now, Jim, don't tear them to pieces."

"No, sah, but dem are fat, sah."

We mop our brows, take a nip of punch, with just enough spirit to prevent the acid and sugar from having an ill effect, and we start again. The fun becomes fast and furious, I make two misses, and then score with a right and left. Jack goes on steadily. The punch seems to have steadied his nerves, and bang from Jack's black powder follows in quick succession, and I begin to think I am getting left, when up gets a bird from under my feet, and another to my left, and again I score a right and left. Up two more get before I am loaded, and as I move off I bag two more. Then comes the hot corner, and after walking across ten acres of land we feel that we have ourselves gotten a little warm.

We sit down, have a "wee draw of the pipe," and another nip of punch, but before resuming we count the bags. Jack has got six brace and I have seven and a half brace, of longbills, the true English snipe.

"Now," says Jack, "we will walk back across the higher portion of the field, and you must take the north." "All right, if you will have it." "What are those?" says Jack.

Two golden plover pass overhead and crack! from my left barrel (full choke), and down they both came.

Jack lays a longbill low, and we keep it up alternately, when bang, bang from Jack's black powder, and two more are accounted for. Then we both begin in earnest, and as it is now about 9:30 A.M., we begin to feel "peckish." Jack says breakfast will be ready at ten, and we will get to the end of the field by that time; but we have no time to talk, while our guns keep up a brilliant rattle of tenor and bass from smokeless and black powder for the whole half hour, and at last we come to the end of the field.

After pulling ourselves together a bit we count the birds. Sixteen brace of snipe and a pair of golden plover had fallen to my gun, and Jack had twelve brace of snipe. He, however, said they were bigger than mine.

"Get into my trap, Jack, and we will go together. Jim will draw the other trap. Come, Juno."

What a breakfast we did eat! Jack would have some of the snipe on toast cooked with the trail in, and they were just lovely. Yes; Jamaica is a great island for snipe!