

when Dunraven challenged for the Cup. His knowledge of engineering has enabled him to solve some formidable problems in lightness of construction.

Nat Herreshoff preserves some memories of Burgess. He wears a pointed and bristling red beard, which protrudes from under the rim of a gray slouched hat. He wears a gray sack suit of clothes, and his general appearance is that of a successful rural horse dealer come to town to see the sights. But he turns no somersaults when his winners cross the line. Grim and silent,

he simply studies the hollow masts and spars, and seems to be calculating how much more sail-spread he can put on the next defender without causing her long, thin steel tubes to collapse. A designer, an engineer, a builder, a sailor, he is a good deal like Napoleon? "a sceptered hermit, wrapped in the solitude of his own originality." But he is not the famous blind designer of whom we so often hear. He can see as far to windward as any one else. His brother John is blind, but Nathaniel's eyes are very wide open.

THE GAME FIELD

By EDWYN SANDYS

BLINDS FOR SHORE-BIRDS.

THE list of feathered game of chief interest at present includes those plovers, sandpipers, etc., which are commonly termed shore-birds; the river-ducks; the prairie grouse; the woodcock, and the snipe. The popular method of shooting the first-mentioned is over decoys, the shooter concealing himself in some natural, or made "hide" or "blind" upon the beach or sandbar frequented by the birds. The favorite feeding-grounds of the great majority of shore-birds is the strip of wet sand bordering salt or fresh waters, and, naturally, the gunner must so place himself as to command this favored bit. The most common error made by the novice is in constructing too large and too conspicuous a hide. My experience has taught that, no matter what its material, the hide hardly can be too small. The novice seldom realizes the importance of proper dress, nor how apparently insignificant a shelter will serve for a man who is dressed as he should be. In his anxiety to thoroughly conceal himself, he builds not wisely but too well, forgetting that the birds probably have flown up and down that particular beach for many days, and become familiar with every prominent object within a stretch of, possibly, several miles. Low-flying birds almost invariably are on the lookout for a good spot to feed, which means that a lot of marvelously sharp eyes are closely examining every rod of promising ground. Hence, when they discover, as they are almost certain to do, a strange object which seems to have suddenly sprung up among a lot of familiar things, they sheer off and make for some other spot which appears as it did the previous visit.

Perhaps the greatest aid to successful shore-bird shooting is the proper match-

ing of the costume and surroundings. Anything approaching a sharp contrast should be avoided. Hat, or cap, coat, sweater, pants, and boots should be of the dead-grass shade, which is inconspicuous upon dry sand and among drift-wood and sedge. A man properly dressed requires the smallest of hides, while at a pinch he can get along without any shelter other than a trifling ridge of sand, which he can form with his hands in a few minutes. The simplest way to learn how to properly place the decoys is to observe the actions of a flock of the coveted birds. Five minutes of such observation will teach an intelligent man all that is necessary, for he has but to look and then place his lures; a little of such study is more valuable than pages of printed instructions. Some species wade in the shallows, others trip along the margin; some straggle widely apart while feeding, others almost invariably maintain some approach to close order in their ranks. Granted the proper costume and hide, a very useful accessory is skillful calling. This cannot be taught upon paper. If the shooter has "an ear" and can whistle, he should experience no difficulty in imitating the calls of all, or nearly all, of our shore-birds. And here again observation and judgment are valuable, for many birds have alarm-notes, which differ sharply from their calls of friendly greeting, or invitations to a feast. Needless to say, it is hardly good business for a well-hidden man to strain himself over notes which signify to every shore-bird within hearing, that a certain spot is a fine place to avoid. Yet this comical blunder has been many times made by novices who prided themselves upon their cleverness.

Apropos of calling, whoever will devote himself to a through mastery of the calls of shore-birds, quail, black and gray

ducks and the wild goose, never will regret the time so spent. Only the brazen honk or the goose is difficult, for very few young sportsmen are unable to whistle, while almost any one can imitate the cheery invitation-quack of the mallard and the slightly gruffer greeting of his dusky relative. The goose-call is a sounding "aw-wunk" with a brazen clang to it which seems to baffle the vocal powers of most people—even good singers. As an old marsh-man once said, I can fairly talk goose, yet I am unable to explain how or why this should be, as I cannot sing any better than the average cow. All I know about it is that I listened and practised until I could send a call that would turn even a foxy old gander at an astonishing distance. The quail call is straight whistling, and its mastery is an extremely valuable accomplishment, especially when a lot of young birds are widely scattered, as in such a case it is apt to save a good dog from much tedious work in hard cover. There is, of course, no call to be imitated where grouse, woodcock and snipe are concerned.

"JUMPING" WOOD-DUCK.

Just about this season there frequently is fair shooting at wood-duck and teal, along the winding, almost currentless rivers and creeks, so characteristic of the level portions of the country. In the early autumn, wood-duck are addicted to resting upon old rat-houses and half-submerged stumps and logs, while the teal almost invariably takes his siesta upon some muddy bank. Both ducks are extremely quick at starting, in this respect being almost as clever as quail, while the teal is notoriously speedy at any stage of his flight. A very interesting form of shooting, which also is no mean test of one's all-round ability, is to paddle a skiff, or canoe, for miles along the stream and cut down the fowl as they jump. For this work, I prefer a good canoe, which is handier and more silent than any skiff, although the latter is not to be despised. When thus jumping duck, I always kneel, paddling upon the port side, the gun resting against the thwart, triggers down, the butt nipped between my knees. Thus placed, it is ready for instant action, and seconds are valuable, for a teal is a bit impulsive when scared. The paddle should be made fast by a couple of yards of stout cord, and instantly dropped overboard as the game takes wing. This at once leaves the hands free to seize the gun. A good paddler will travel for miles without lifting the paddle from the water, the blade being turned edgewise for the forward movement.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR WOODCOCK.

The woodcock, the bird of mystery, at this season is apt to be a puzzle. The

earlier feeding-grounds, the damp beds of creeks and the low-lying swales, are now mostly bone-dry, which means that the birds have sought other grounds, where worms are easier to procure, or which offer shady sanctuaries by day from which the cock can fly at dusk to the muddy margins of waters which do not fail. The fact that cock will spend the day in perfectly dry, dense cover does not seem to be understood by many sportsmen. As a general rule, the birds are now in the brush or the tall corn and seldom very far from the ground favored a few weeks ago. The wise man will first thoroughly beat the corn, then adjacent thickets and woodlands. Where the corn is very tall and dense it forms ideal cover, while beneath it is apt to be the best of feeding-ground, especially immediately after heavy rain. The reason is similar enough. There are many worms which the rain is sure to bring to the surface, and these form the rock's favorite fare. The birds both bore for the worms and pick them up as they crawl over the surface, and any one who will take the trouble to walk through a big cornfield shortly after a heavy rain will get a good idea of what an astonishing number of worms come to the surface. At such times the birds are likely to remain in the field during the day, but there are many exceptions to this. Hence, when much sign (the borings and white droppings) is found, but only one or two birds are flushed, it is safe to surmise that other birds feed in the field, but spend the day elsewhere. A careful beating of the most promising cover near the field may prove profitable. Shooting in tall corn is not so difficult as a novice might imagine. A man working with the rows usually has plenty of room for the handling of his gun, and a bird is more apt to follow the rows than to cross them. The wisest course is to shoot at the merest glimpse of a bird, or just ahead of where he disappears. Even small shot will penetrate a lot of corn and a good shot can kill many a bird which is invisible at the instant the trigger is pressed. Where there are wooded or brushy hills surrounding the feeding-ground, they should be carefully searched, for birds frequently show a marked fondness for such day-shelters, even though the ground there be perfectly dry. Another type of ground occasionally met with, is where dry, brushy, or forested knolls rise like islands above marshy levels. These often prove to be well worth the trouble of reaching them, and their value is increased by the likelihood of the inexperienced gunner's overlooking their possibilities. When once the abundant sign of woodcock has been found in a cornfield, yet birds fail to materialize, the safest rule is to beat all cover within a mile of the spot. While the birds occasionally travel much farther during a night, their usual course is to lie up in the nearest dense cover. When this happens to be large

tracts of timber, the most promising ground is about the borders, as the birds seldom penetrate very far into dry woods.

BEATING UP SNIPE.

The snipe is a different proposition. As a rule, he sticks to the open marsh, bogs, and the muddy borders of waterways, although during stormy weather he may seek shelter in thickets and low-lying, lightly timbered woodlands. At this season, he is swift and silent, except for the characteristic hoarse "scape-sca-ipl" as he rises. Opinions differ regarding the best way to beat for this artful dodger. Many experts work up-wind whenever possible, which, of course, gives the dog the better chance. Yet the plan has its undesirable features, that is if giving the bird all the best of it be considered undesirable. A snipe going straightaway up-wind, as he will do if allowed, presents the smallest possible mark to the gun, while his erratic flight greatly adds to that advantage. If, on the contrary, the shooter beats down, or across the wind, the great majority of birds as they bore into the breeze will offer squarely crossing, or at the worst, slightly angling shots, which are easier than the straightaway chances. The dodging them avails but little, while there is a much larger mark for the shot. Roughly speaking, the difference between the marks presented by a straightaway and a crossing snipe would be about the same as between a silver dollar and the palm of one's hand. Even the crossing shots are not so easy as to warrant any dread of monotony in the killing. The snipe well deserves his reputation as a difficult mark, and those who follow him up-wind will find that an average of one-half of all chances is a record to be proud of. This, to an inexperienced reader, may at first glance appear very poor shooting, yet few of the cracks can beat it the season through. The chances are that a man who can average half his birds working up-wind, would score fully two-thirds with, or across the wind. Perhaps three-fourths of the chances will be nearer the gun, the dodging is practically eliminated, and holding well ahead will do the rest.

EARLY AUTUMN GROUSE LIE CLOSE.

The prairie grouse are now at their best, big and strong, yet willing to lie well to the dogs. Both the pinnated and sharp-tail grouse are easy marks, so long as they flush within reasonable range. A little later, after the birds have become wild, things are apt to be a trifle different, but until that time, marks as big as barn-yard hens should not greatly bother a man with any pretensions to skill. During the typical sunny September day, the grouse

are apt to lie almost as close as quail, and perhaps a dozen of them may straggle up singly within twenty-five yards of the gun. Then is the time for the quick hand and the silent tongue; for a remark to a comrade, or an order to the dog, may cause a lot of birds to rise together, and so spoil a royal chance. The man who keeps busy and mute gets the grouse, which seem to fear the voice much more than the gun.

SPORTSMEN NO LONGER KILL FOR COUNT.

A just-completed and rather extensive tour through some of the best shooting-grounds of Canada has revealed the cheering fact that our friends to the north are fully awake to the value of wise protection. Canadian game never was better looked after, and the benefit of the wiser policy is plainly apparent. Many grounds which only a few years ago were hardly worth visiting, will now richly repay a trial, and there is no danger of the grave errors of the past being repeated. The day of wanton slaughter, killing for count and kindred evils has forever passed. Most of us have learned to temper our sport with moderation, and this is good. The fact is, the *killer* of old is rapidly being supplanted by the *observer* of to-day. The mighty Nimrod has been educated and refined into the sportsman-naturalist, who, with all due respect to the great ones of the passing generation, is a more entertaining and altogether a more useful and interesting fellow. I have been delighted to find the rising young sportsman a much better-informed and more observant chap than was his respected Daddy, in fact a deal more of a student than a butcher. By the council-fire—and I have warmed my shins by a lot of bully fires the past few weeks!—the talk is different. It used to be all about *how many*,—kill—kill, all the time, but now the close observer, the chap who has closest conned the fine print of Nature's perfect page, is the one who can hold the audience. And to one who had enjoyed the glorious privilege of being one of the pioneers of this movement toward reasonable sport, the change is indeed grateful. It is true that yet may be found dear old ruffians, who sniff and snarl in red-necked rage at the doings of the disciples of the new school, but such things must be yet awhile. The graduate of the new school is closer to his game than ever was his father. In his heart it is the science of the thing rather than the slaughter, and of that school are bound to come the highest types of sportsmen this continent has ever produced. The silent folk of stream and mere, the little brown people of stubble and copse never had more lenient masters than the sportsmen-naturalists of the new school. Nor does this mean any actual loss of skill with arms.