ELEPHANT-BAITING IN INDIA R The Field; Jan 7, 1865; 25, 628; British Periodicals pg. 11

ADVENTURE WITH A MOOSE.

IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER LAST, I and my Indian lad Abraham were camping on a small island in a very pretty lake far back in the woods. I had already had good sport, and the last three or four days we had been busy cutting and smoking meat, it being too far back to carry out fresh. After breakfast one fine morning, leaving my lad at his work, I took my canoe with the intention of exploring a distant cove in the lake, taking my rifle and moose-call with me. I was soon skimming along the calm surface of the lake, the morning mist rising like steam. The borders of the lake looked very gay with the bright red and yellow maple leaves standing out from the background of dark green forest; and on the north side a steep range of rocky hills, with the outline cutting so clear against the blue sky that you would think them quite close, though it was a good mile from the shore of the lake to the top. The thin curl of smoke coming from one of the islands showed where our camp was, while the clarion cry of the loon, the splash of trout and kingfisher, helped to enliven the scene. But I soon made my rock-maple paddle bend to the stroke as my canoe raced along, for it was a fine morning for "calling," and I was now determined to have more sport if possible; so it was not long before I reached the cove, at the end of which I found a small brook running into the lake. The little wind there was coming right against my face. I stepped lightly on shore, and after waiting about half a minute I gave two or three calls. I stopped to listen about a quarter of an hour, but finding the murmuring of the brook at my feet prevented my hearing, I got into the canoe, intending to paddle round a small point of land and try my luck in the next cove. I was paddling very quietly, and was just in the shoal water off the point, when I heard the grunt of a bull moose. He was walking along the moose path on the opposite side of the cove, which was about fifty or sixty yards across, and right opposite to me. I could have shot him easily, but as he was only a two-year-old I had not the least intention of doing so. As he did not see me I held on to the bottom with my paddle to steady the canoe, and crouching down kept as still as possible. He was walking along quietly and grunting, evidently bent on coming to the brook where I had been calling. All at once he stopped, and listened for about a minute, and sometimes he seemed to look straight at me and the canoe; but I being downwind, of course he could not wind me, and wearing grey homespun, with a chequered guernsey, perhaps he did not distinguish me from the granite rocks alongside; however, apparently satisfied that all was right, he walked quietly into the water. It was laughable to see the cautious way in which he placed his feet, the rocky boulders at the bottom not affording good standing, and he had several yards to walk before it was deep enough to swim, which at last, with a deep grunt, he did, striking out for the opposite shore, being, when in the middle, about twenty yards from my canoe. As soon as he was out of sight I was glad to free myself from my cramped position, and quickly and silently as possible turned my canoe and paddled back to the brook. I had to be very cautious, as I knew he was now close enough to hear the slightest sound, but in about half a minute I succeeded in noiselessly fixing the canoe, and, creeping through the low bushes on the bank, got behind a hemlock tree at the edge of the brook. Drawing a long breath, and making myself as calm as possible, I carefully gave a low call, when almost immediately I heard him answer, and soon saw the tops of the young birches move as he sneaked cautiously through them. I covered the whole of my body with the tree trunk, just peeping round; he was soon standing in a little open space close to the other side of the brook, looking round from one side to the other. After a little while he walked quietly away into the bush. But I had not done with him yet, as I wanted to see if I was able to call him up again, and intending to give him a good scaring, and see him run off; so I called again, and this time he came from another direction, a little further up the brook, till, just as he had his forefeet in the brook, he being now little over twelve paces from me, I, thinking he was quite close enough, as I did not want to shoot him, jumped out from behind the tree, waving my call, and grunting like a bull moose, and scraping the calf against the boughs, which makes a noise like the bull's horns. But instead of bolting, as I expected, after wavering a little he stood stock-still, with his ears laid back; seeing which I stepped back towards the tree, which I should prefer you get up, had he made at me—in fact, were it not that the tree was easy to climb, I should have snatched up my rifle, which was close at hand; but now, seeing he stood still, although I was in full view, and not covered by the tree, I waited to see how long he was going to remain there. He was not at all frightened, but seemed quite at his ease, licking his mouth with his tongue, though sometimes he turned his head round; but when on the point of moving, I stopped him by giving a low cow-call, when he would prick both his ears forward, and look right at me. I did this two or three times. At other times I grunted like a bull, when back went his ears, as wicked as may be. After standing like this for I am certain over twenty minutes, at last the spell was broken, for, putting up his head, with widely-expanded nostril, he winded me for the first time, when he immediately turned and trotted off at a good pace; and as he vanished among the fir-boughs, I breathed a wish that he might live to grace the woods till his antlers should span six feet across. And so I stepped into my canoe, and paddled back to camp.

A. V.

ELEPHANT-BAITING IN INDIA

AT THE BEGINNING OF NOVEMBER 1863, I chanced to be at Baroda during the race week, not so much, perhaps, to see the races (which may certainly be denominated as second-rate) as to see the province of Guzerat, the "garden of India," and the independent native state of Baroda, which is governed by a rajah, or "guicowar" as he is called. This guicowar is at all times most obliging, and willing to do what he can to promote the enjoyment of any Europeans who may chance to be there, and especially, I believe, during the races, to which he presents a handsome 120*l.* cup, and generally attends the meeting himself. Well, before we had been there many days, my friend and I received an invitation, through the resident, to be present at a grand "tumasha," which was to be given by his highness in the course of a day or two, and at which most of the few Europeans in the station would be present. This, of course, we accepted; and, after ascertaining that the sports would embrace an elephant "bait," with the possibility of an encounter between two rhinoceroses, settled down to wait as patiently as possible for the time.

About three o'clock in the afternoon of the day appointed, an open carriage, drawn by two white horses, whose sides were painted with the native idea of gorgeous birds, with paradisical tails, &c., and sent for our accommodation by the guicowar, arrived at our bungalows, and as the scene of contention was about three or four miles off, and punctuality was generally observed, we made a start of it at once. On the road through the town the natives seemed mostly to be dressed in their best, and on one or two occasions we came upon "swells" mounted upon their very gorgeously caparisoned elephants, and scrupulously protected from the sun by immense umbrellas borne by attendants, a most carefully-observed mark of nobility. Just before arriving at our destination we saw a large crowd, as it seemed, of men coming towards us on foot at a jog trot, and making a most infernal row. On nearer approach, however, it turned out to be the guicowar himself, surrounded by his rather extraordinary body guard, armed chiefly with swords, but preserving no sort of order among themselves, although they managed to keep the road clear for the royal palanquin and its occupant, who was a rather young-looking man of about five-and-thirty, very plainly dressed in white, and, as far as I could see, without any of the usual profuse native ornamental jewellery. His progress along the crowded streets was attended by reverential salaams, and reminded me very forcibly of a field of ripe hay violently disturbed by a sudden gust of wind. As soon as he had passed we dropped in his rear, and in a few minutes more had accomplished our journey.

Descending from the carriage, we mounted some steps, at the top of which stood the Prime Minister, who, as we reached him, extended his hand English-fashion, which we, English-fashion, gave a hearty shake; and then, being unfortunately not particularly well up in the language of the country, exchanged a few dumb but doubtlessly expressive signs of mutual satisfaction, and, preceded by a guide through a few dark rooms and down two or three invisible steps—of course just as one least expected them—emerged into the private balcony of the guicowar. A very fine sight here awaited us; all along the other three sides of the theatre, which was a large enclosed rectangular space of about 200 by 100 yards, were crowded some thousands of natives, sitting on the walls or the banks above; their head-dresses were composed of all the colours of the rainbow, looking, indeed, very much like a large and gaudy mosaic, but withal exceedingly picturesque. Within this enclosure were grouped somewhere about 80 or 100 men, partially stripped and almost entirely armed with long bamboo-shafted spears. These athletes kept walking about underneath our balcony, brandishing their spears and showing their muscle, until the time for the commencement of the fun arrived, evidently under the impression that hiding their lights under bushels formed no part of their duty.

The first feat to be performed was the baiting of an elephant, which, being in a state of "must," is naturally excessively savage and bloodthirsty. He was fastened securely within an arch at one side of the enclosure with chains attached to all four legs; and now to loose them, which his keeper did very scientifically, first his fore legs, and then the hind ones, which operation seemed to relieve him immensely, for he gave himself a good stretch, very much as a dog does after sleep, and then walked calmly and unconcernedly into the middle of the arena. The poor beast seemed to me to be in wretched condition, and had, undoubtedly, been starved for the occasion; let us hope he had a good dinner after he had played his part. And then he was surrounded by his tormentors, yelling at him, running up close to him, and shaking cloths in his face, and then getting away again as quickly as possible, as the beast turned upon them to pursue them, which it was prevented doing to any extent by one man taking the other's place, and, in turn, diverting his attention. This little game went on for about a quarter of an hour without much excitement, and I was beginning to get rather tired of it all, and to think it a "do," when suddenly a large native squib, which burns with a great noise for about one minute, was lighted close to his nose, and went off with a capital roar. This seemed to puzzle him rather, and at last he undoubtedly began to get very angry; for now three or four squibs were going at once, and the great and apparently unwieldy brute began to rush about and try in earnest to make powder of some of his tormentors. After two or three minutes of this, whilst he was apparently doing his best to catch one man, who was running away from him as fast as he could, he suddenly stopped like a shot, and turning right round with a swiftness almost incredible, came right on another who was hopping gaily after him and evidently not expecting this sudden attack. By a great exercise of activity, however, before the elephant was actually upon him, he was just able to turn himself and start off at an angle; short, however, was the distance between pursuer and pursued, the elephant managing to cut off the angle, and I, and most of the spectators, I fancy, thought it was undeniably all UP with him. In ten yards or so the elephant raised his trunk for a very palpable purpose, the man at that time being about two or three yards in front of him, and then down it came with a swoop, and just brushed the man's back, who again doubled like a hare, and this time the elephant, disappointed in his stroke, left him, and very soon had his attention distracted by others. They now all drew off from him and left the animal to compose himself for a few minutes, previous to catching him again. For this purpose some men appeared, carrying four immense pincer-like contrivances, one of which the keeper took and approached from behind the elephant, who was now standing still, whilst some of the athletes distracted his attention in front by waving cloths and brandishing spears. Noiselessly as a cat went the keeper to within about three yards of his victim, then with a sudden rush and a bound you saw him stretch out his hands, heard a click, and the next moment master keeper was ten yards off, and the elephant was standing on three legs, evidently undergoing the most acute pain. The meaning of all this is, that the keeper had fastened one of these pairs of pincers on the bottom of the leg of the elephant, where they are extremely sensitive; the instruments, having very sharp points, penetrate the flesh, as they close with a very strong spring which keeps them in that position, and the pain caused by this renders the elephant, in a short time, so tame again that he is easily secured, and marched out limping on three legs and loaded with chains, like the verest felon that ever underwent penal servitude.

The nearer escape a man has from being caught and trodden on by the elephant, the greater the sport is supposed to be, and the hero of the day always receives plenty of baksheesh, I believe, from the guicowar. The last time, I hear, that there was an elephant-bait, the elephant was so nearly securing his victim that he had actually got his trunk round him, when by some miraculous process, which only a nigger could have succeeded in, the man managed to wriggle himself out through the trunk and escaped, which part so pleased the royal potentate that he presented him on the spot with a small village, as a compensation for so nearly losing his life.

R.

SHOOTING.

NOTES AND QUESTIONS ON SHOOTING.

RAIN-SPOTS ON GUN-BARRELS.—I shall feel much obliged to any correspondent who will inform me of the best and safest method of removing stains and spots from the outside of gun-barrels. After rain, most keepers use oil and fine sand or woodashes; but both of these remove the browning as well as the stains.—CHRISTOPHER.

ELLIOTT'S BREECH-LOADERS.—Will any of your readers kindly give me the result of his experiences in shooting with Elliott's (Birmingham) patent breech-loader? Is the principle a safe one, and likely to stand wear and tear? What would be the effect if the spring which holds the bolt in its place were to break? might not the consequence be a partial opening at the breech, and a discharge backwards into the shooter's face? I have lately seen one of these guns, and, as far as style goes, it is quite equal to London work, and the price (20*l.*) is moderate. I should feel very obliged if any competent sportsman would give an answer to these questions, and an opinion as to the general principle on which these guns are made.—A SPORTSMAN.

BREECH-LOADING CARTRIDGE-CASES.—The subject of the cost of breech-loading cartridge-cases is of such great importance to the shooting community, that I trust you will not close your columns to it until something definite has been arrived at touching the true economy of ammunition. By true economy, I do not mean screwing down the cost to the lowest possible point, but paying for first-rate workmanship in essentials only. The fault I have to find with Eley's first-class cartridges is that they are too good. The paper tubes are so strongly made that they bear reloading twice. I think this can hardly be denied. Consequently a sportsman must either pick up and pocket his discharged cases as he marches through a covert, or else for every thousand new cases which he throws down or does not retrieve he wantonly sacrifices 6*l.* sterling—as deliberate a throwing away of money as I can conceive. It would be infinitely more satisfactory to change them into penny-pieces, and have the pleasure of skimming the latter across a pond. The great desideratum, therefore, for all gunners, whether poor or rich, is a cartridge-case that will not bear reloading, and therefore can be supplied at a much cheaper rate than 60s. a-thousand, while at the same time the pin and cap must be of first-rate materials. For sportsmen in India, the cartridges should be just as good as those there, when shooting, one can always have a man in close attendance who will pick up the empty cases as fast as they are thrown down, and a great deal of expense in carriage and trouble in procuring the cartridges will be saved by having such as will reload twice. I wish "Ramrod" would kindly state where he gets the French cases at 30s. per thousand, which he has used with only a single misfire, and thereby oblige—EOTHEN.

ANSWERS.

SHOOTING BOOTS—HOW TO TIE LEATHER LACES.—Seeing in THE FIELD of Dec. 31 an application from "Eothen" how to secure the laces of shooting boots, I beg to forward the following:—Tie the laces in a single bow (that is, a bow with one loop only); you will then have a loop and two ends; take one (the one which is not the string forming the loop) and put it through the loop as though threading a needle, then pull the other end, and you will pull the loop tight down on it. I have found this a good knot.—CAVALIER.

ACCIDENTS WITH PIN-CARTRIDGES.—A short time since a pin-cartridge fell from a shelf in my gun cupboard, and alighting on a brick floor went off with a tremendous bang. A little girl was within three feet of it; the shot flew about her legs, but did not hurt her in the least. Out of the gun-barrel I look upon breech-loader cartridges as comparatively harmless, for if a man's jacket should be set on fire by one, he can take it off. But in the barrel, when the breech was not closed, an explosion I can easily understand might be a very unpleasant (if not positively dangerous) effect; but after all, I look upon a breech-loader as a very far safer gun than a muzzle-loader.—BOGTROTTER.

—— In answer to E., about accidents with breech-loaders, I had, on the 1st of September, one of exactly the same nature as mentioned by him. In shutting up my gun (a sliding breech-loader) the cartridge exploded; where it went to I know it, but the copper end went through the brim of my hard hat, and this so concussed altogether made my ear sing for several days. I had shot with it for three years before, and hundreds of times since. The cartridge was not French, but an English-made one, by Snow (Norfolk), the maker of the gun, viz.—cylinder, 1 oz. No. 7 shot, 8drs. powder; B. cases. I never in three years had but one misfire.—T. P. D.

—— Mr Hans Busk gives a list of the supposed dangers of pin-cartridges, most of which I certainly think very exceptional, at all events Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, may be considered as such. Many men of great experience have assured me that they have only heard of one or two cases of explosion by dropping on the ground (No. 1), while many have never known it happen at all. The explosion of a supply of spare ammunition (No. 2) on the back of a keeper who happened to fall, is so extremely exceptional that I must, in my own mind, put it entirely on one side. The omission to insert the pin in its proper nick (No. 3) can hardly be put down to anything but carelessness, and when such is the case, the fault cannot fairly be laid to the pin. The moment of time required to place the cartridge properly, could not possibly delay even the quickest shooting. Nos. 4 and 5 are so entirely accidental that they cannot really be considered as injuring the reputation of the pin-cartridge. The Daw cartridges, I understand, stick quite as much as the pin ditto, and have not even the advantage of the pin by which to extract them. I should as much dislike carrying the Daw cartridges loose in my pocket as I should the others. There is nothing like ventilating a subject, however, and I hope some more experienced sportsman than myself will give their ideas on the subject.—JAGER.

—— We are generally content to be observers of the discussions that take place from time to time in your columns. Most of the remarks made and grievances detailed are the result of the practical experience of the writers, and, being put forth in good faith, furnish many useful hints to a looker on. The question lately raised upon the merits of the pin-cartridge gun, in opposition to those of the central-fire gun, has elicited from the partisans of the latter such a storm in condemnation of the pin cartridge, that a few remarks upon the subject may not be out of time. We do not appear as the champions of either system—they have both considerable merits; we will simply confine ourselves to the letter of your correspondent, Mr Hans Busk, in your impression of last week, which draws an alarming picture of the danger of pin-cartridges. Many sportsmen whose experience is considerable, will form their own opinion, whilst many who are timid, or to whom breech-loaders are still somewhat of a novelty, may be seriously misled. Without calling into question the correctness of any of the statements, and the list of accidents, we would simply observe that he and his friends have been very fortunate. Many of the evils complained of would occur equally with the central-fire gun under similar circumstances; as, for instance, the man who got his cartridges in such a condition that he kept a party of shooters and twenty keepers waiting till the keeper brought the loading-rod to push out the discharged cases. The same thing would have occurred equally with the central-fire gun if the chamber was tight and the cartridge wet; probably with this variation—that he would soon have disarranged the mechanism of the extractor, and been obliged to retire altogether. Again, the shooter who exploded the pin-cartridge whilst hammering out the case that had stuck in his gun, would be just as likely to explode a central-fire cartridge whilst hammering in. We have frequently seen careless men hammer in pin-cartridges that were wet and would not go into the chamber. With regard to the first and greatest objection which he urges against the pin-cartridge, viz., their liability to accidental explosion, we may say that the danger is greatly overrated, and exists only in a very limited degree. Probably where your correspondent has seen hundreds of these cartridges loaded and used, we have seen hundreds of thousands, and though they are very frequently dropped by accident, we have, during eight or ten years of daily manufacture, only twice known cartridges to explode accidently: one of them, dropped upon flagstone, was a cartridge that had been twice recapped, and in which the pin was very loose. In neither case did they do any harm, although they were surrounded by a considerable number of loaded cartridges; the portion of the case that contained the powder burst off, leaving the shot and wadding in the upper part of the case undisturbed. Again he asks what would be the effect of dropping a box of loaded pin-cartridges upon the flagstones of a railway-station? We should say that, if properly packed, he would pick up the box in the same state that it was when he dropped it, if he did so a hundred times. But supposing what he infers should take place, viz., that the box should be broken, or a cartridge exploded, the danger and mischief would end there, as it would not ignite the rest.* We have by way of experiment frequently packed a hundred loaded pin-cartridges tightly in a strong wooden box, and screwed them down again in an outer case, and ignited one or two of the cartridges inside the boxes, but we have never known any cartridges to ignite in the box, except the one or two that were purposely exploded. We know that it is possible to ignite a cartridge in a keeper's case, but we can say that out of considerable experience we have never known or heard of it being done; and if it occurred it would be impossible to get an accident of greater magnitude than the ignition of one cartridge, and report like a squib. So much for the danger of carriage, &c., and there only remains the gentleman who, in his excitement put in the cartridge with the pin downwards, and exploded it whilst shutting up the gun. We do not know exactly how he did it, as we have taken some pains to do it ourselves by way of illustration, without succeeding. He must be rather a dangerous companion, and the parties may congratulate themselves that he did not shoot any of them. Taking everything into consideration, the gun and cartridge combined are about the safest and best system extant. The gun is unquestionably the lightest and strongest of all the breech-loading systems, and, taking everything into account, probably the safest. We can assure those who are possessed of good guns of this description, that they may rest satisfied with them for a time at least. There are two sides to most things, and we have all a right to our opinions, but it is always questionable policy to uphold one thing by unjust depreciation of the other. We have for our own use many breech-loaders using the pin-cartridge, equally good, that have seen a great deal of service—we will give an outline of one of them. It has been shot with three seasons, and has fired some thousands of shots, say 4000 or 5000, charge, 3drs. powder, 1¼oz. shot; the misfires during the time from every cause have not amounted to more than two or three; it has been used in all weathers, and never required a loading-rod or extractor to remove a discharged case, and has never been to the gunsmith once for any repairs, whilst the joints are as close as when new; it is a 12-gauge gun, weighing 6lb. 12oz. We doubt whether any central-fire gun can give an equally good account of itself. We shall be happy to send it, if desired, to THE FIELD office, to be inspected by any one who has been using such guns as those described by your correspondent. With regard to the central-fire gun, we do not consider it necessary to point out its weak places: let it stand upon its merits. It has many excellent points, and may eventually come into considerable use; but although well known, and open to the world in a variety of forms for the last ten or twelve years, it has not made much way. Doubtless many gunmakers will make guns upon this system in the course of next season, and amongst them we may have improvements that will leave nothing to be desired.—ELEY BROTHERS.

—— I am in the habit of selling from two to three hundred thousand pin-cartridges every year, and have constantly the opportunity of seeing those noblemen and gentlemen who use them, and I have not heard from them of any of those numerous and terrible casualties which Mr Hans Busk attributes to the pin-cartridge, and which I have seen stated in some other quarters. In my own individual experience, in addition to others he has heard of. I cannot, therefore, but express my very great surprise at this sudden discovery of his; a surprise which is participated in by numerous customers of mine, who have called on me expressly since the publication of his letter in THE FIELD. Like most sanguine persons writing on behalf of a favourite system, Mr Hans Busk has been led far away beyond the bounds of discretion. He ventures to assert that "a pin-cartridge is like a loaded gun at full cock with a finger on the trigger." The few accidents which have happened to the Lefaucheux, during the thirty years in France and twelve years in England, afford such a sufficient and satisfactory reply to this extravagant statement, that it is superfluous for me to give my direct and formal contradiction to it. All the other statements are of similar calibre. We are told of a cartridge adhering so tightly to the inside of the barrel, that it cannot be extracted without so much loss of time that a whole shooting party is stopped for several minutes. None but the most inexperienced could accept this statement. In the first place, good pin-cartridges very seldom stick, and if it does occur the difficulty is instantly obviated by the use of the "extractor." If the entire cartridge adheres, one side of the extractor, which is made to fit the pin, will, if properly used, instantly remove the cartridge; and in the event of the cartridge being broken (a circumstance which rarely occurs, and only can arise from bad management), then the other side of the extractor, which has two teeth, will, if properly applied, instantly remove any part of the cartridge which may remain. I have had no complaints of broken cartridges from my customers, a number of hundreds of thousands: I therefore cannot refrain from again expressing my surprise that so many misfortunes of this class should have exclusively occurred to Mr Hans Busk and his friends. My object in addressing these few remarks to the sporting public through your columns is to exonerate the Lefaucheux principle from the numerous charges which have been brought against it, and which in the opinion of myself, and of numerous customers who have called on me since the publication of Mr Hans Busk's letter, are rather of an imaginary character, than such as can be relied on for the guidance of practical sportsmen. When a system which has been thoroughly tried and is high in favour, is violently assailed, and when extravagant charges are brought against it, and at the same time a new plan is highly commended with all the favour of parental friendship, a suspicion of interested partiality always justly attaches itself to the individual who engages in this endeavour. I have the conviction that the pin-cartridge gun will still maintain its enviable position in spite of all assailants.—J. LANG (Cockspur-street, London.)

BREECH-LOADERS.—I must thank J. H. for his information respecting a cheap lockfast, and must at the same time admit that there is no doubt whatsoever but that Thomson, or other makers, can turn out quite as good a gun as the patentee himself. I heard a gentleman tell him that he had been offered a first-class lockfast for 25*l.*; but to that Mr Dougall replied that he would not answer for its safety or good workmanship, that it might disappoint, and, in fact, that it was not to be trusted. However, if such men as Greener, Thomson, Pape, and others can give us a good, sound gun for from 17*l.* to 25*l.*, with a gain to themselves, it would not be very surprising if a lockfast could be made for the latter sum, nor ought there to be much fear about its safety or good workmanship. Your correspondent "Broadcast," I am glad to see, mentions Greener's breech-loaders, and, while giving them all the praise I believe they deserve, says that he never finds the cartridges stick. If they ever do, the most simple instrument I know of is the ordinary cartridge-drawer, which is in all Germans. I have continuously seen it used when shooting in Germany, and have admired it so much for its simplicity and great leverage, that I shall have some made to pattern.—JAGER.

THE SHOOTING POWER OF GUNS.—In THE FIELD of Dec. 10, your correspondent "High Elms" offers a wager of half-a-crown a shot against "Woodcock" hitting the figure of a grouse in such a way that the bird would fall dead at sixty yards. I have been trying a few shots, in order to see what might be made of such an offer, and the opinion I have formed is, that if "Woodcock" has what I call a good gun, he would decidedly have the best of the bargain. Of course, much would depend on the drawing of the bird, and there might be two opinions as to the shooter being really struck. I have a pattern of a flying bird, considerably smaller than a grouse, at which I fired twelve shots at sixty yards, and missed it once, putting in from one to four pellets. Three guns were used, a 12-bore muzzle-loader, and 14 muzzle-loaders. With the heaviest (7¼lb.) I used 3drs. of powder, and with the lightest (6lb. 10oz.) 2¼drs., 1¼oz. No. 8 shot in each. With regard to testing guns, I must confess that I would rather witness an experiment, than take a statement from anybody. This being so, I cannot expect a mere statement to be accepted from me, especially as I have an interest in making my guns appear better than they are. If the above shots are considered anything extra, I am ready to repeat them in the presence of any gentleman who takes an interest in the matter. The charging of the gun is an important matter. Give me leave to charge how I like, and I will make a better show than the above. To wholly hit the figure of a bird, the experimenter will find it best to charge light with powder and heavy with lead; but as each pellet is supposed to be driven with such force as to kill a bird, it is only fair to see that there is neither more shot nor less powder than what is stated. I can inform your correspondent "High Elms" that there are none of the Mabsons in the trade now. The last of them retired, I think, about 1851.—AN ENGLISH GUNMAKER (Glasgow).

* An instance of this occurred two or three months since. A gun case was thrown down at a railway station, and one of the cartridges packed therein did explode, but without igniting the other.—ED.

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