

RIFLES FOR INDIAN SPORT.

SIR.—In your issue of June 14 your correspondent, "Kifaru," writing from Persia, discusses the respective merits of solid versus soft nose bullets for use against bison, &c. It is now twenty-one years since I killed my first elephant in the Malay States, and since that time I have had many trips after elephants, rhinoceros, and seladang (bison) in the jungles of Malaya. Putting the black powder rifles, which I used in the earlier days, out of the discussion, my experience with H.V. cordite rifles dates from 1904. I then obtained a .500 D.B. cordite rifle, firing a 300-grain charge of 80 grains of cordite and carrying a 570-grain bullet. I have used this rifle, and another one similar to it, for Malayan big game ever since. With this rifle I would never think of firing at a seladang with a solid bullet. Even with the soft nose I have several times had the bullet pass right through the body. This had happened when the beast fired at has been exactly "square on," and the bullet has merely had the resistance of the ribs and the lungs to overcome. With such results as examples before me, I have never contemplated the use of solids against seladang. Even firing at a rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sumatrensis*) I would recommend soft-nose bullets. I killed a rhinoceros a year or two ago with a solid bullet through the lungs, the bullet passed right through the beast and through a small tree on the other side, and then on into the jungle to goodness knows where. A rhinoceros hit in the head with a solid bullet has the skull entirely ruined, as I know to my cost. In fact, I would feel inclined to say that a soft-nose bullet fired from a .500 cordite rifle is good enough for anything, except the head shot at an elephant. Then, of course, you must have a solid. I believe some hunters make a compromise between the solid and the soft nose by loading the right barrel with a soft nose and the left with a solid, or vice versa. Personally, I think that this would only complicate matters when shooting in dense jungle. One is extremely unlikely to have a good enough view of the beast you wish to bag to enable one to know within a few inches where that portion of his anatomy begins which should be tackled with a solid, or where the other part ends which should only be assaulted with a soft nose. I have many specimens of almost perfect mushrooms cut from under the skin on the "far side" which I have taken from seladang that I have shot. I should state that shooting in the very dense forest that we have in this country one has to get very close to one's beast before one has the least chance of a shot. The average shooting distance would be, I should think, within twenty yards; of course sometimes one gets very much closer. You want a heavy rifle that will do its work without any hesitation at such close quarters, and for elephant, rhinoceros, or seladang shooting in the Malayan forest I would plump for a .500 cordite rifle every time. THEODORE R. HUBBACK.

Pertang, Jelebu, Federated Malay States.

NO. 7 SHOT.

SIR.—I have been carefully studying the very interesting pattern tables in the last two issues of the *Field*, and am still unconvinced that No. 7 is not the best all-round size of shot for the 12-bore, whether cylinder or any degree of choke. If you were certain of what was going to get up next it might be worth while to carry about No. 7 and No. 5, but two sizes of shot in pocket or bag are a perfect nuisance, and one is almost sure to have the wrong size in the gun for the shot that presents itself, even if you have not put the wrong cartridge in by mistake. I have never found No. 7 lacking in necessary penetration up to the longest ranges at which it is fair to fire at a bird, and unquestionably the more pellets you can put into a bird without damaging the meat the better chance you have of seeing it in the bag.

Those aristocratic sportsmen who spend their time shooting where everything is prearranged, and the kind of game and the approximate range can be foreseen with some degree of accuracy, can afford to have a man following them about with two or three bags containing different sizes of shot; but the more humble shooter, who forms the vast majority, and does what is called "rough shooting," never knowing whether a snipe or a pheasant is going to get up next, and who carries most of his cartridge supply in his pockets, had better stick to one size, and I, for one, shall continue to make that size No. 7, having found it amply sufficient for all needs. All kinds of game and wildfowl, up to duck, yield readily to its gentle influence, provided the gun is held straight and given enough forward swing. To put it shortly, No. 7 kills the big bird as well or better than No. 5, and deals with the little bird when No. 5 would go all around it.

How interesting to that hardy little minority who call themselves "wildfowlers," of which minority I am a unit for a large part of the year, would be a similar table worked out for the larger bore guns, say, 10-bores and 8-bores, and shot sizes from No. 5 to BB; but I suppose, being such a small minority, that is too much to ask for. Personally I confine myself to No. 4 and No. 1 in the 8-bore, the latter only for very big birds with very thick feathers or a long shot into a large bunch where the widely scattered shot has many opportunities of scoring hits.

C. A. NORTON,
Eddystone, Emsworth.

[Our views as to size No. 7 are practically as out-and-out as those of our correspondent, but we are bound to give due weight to both sides of every case. We imagine our belief to be based on sound logic and a wise interpretation of facts and experience; but as human nature is not infallible a loophole must always be left open for the possibility that an error has been made. Chemists are said to school their minds to the eventuality that some day they may have to disown the atomic theory. If our correspondent will send us what he considers to be in heavy wildfowl guns the equivalent standard charge to 1/2 oz. in game guns we will endeavour to satisfy his needs.—ED.]

APERTURE SIGHTS.

SIR.—I am sorry I missed seeing Major Barrard's letter in your issue of June 21, so that it is not easy to comment on Major Curry's reply thereto. My own opinion, such as it is worth, is that one can make considerably better shooting with aperture than open sights, and that not only at the target but at game as well. The great objection to the open backsight is that it has to be focussed, whereas when an aperture backsight is used the eye is only occupied with the foresight and the object. Aiming is thus simplified, and consequently quickened. Of course, the backsight must be after the Lyman pattern, with a large hole and no shade, so as not to intercept light. There are numbers of other excellent inventions which lack popularity, for, to put it euphemistically, we are an ultra conservative race. The reply to Major Curry's "Why?" is most certainly not that open aperture sights are superior to peep sights. Personally I have used aperture sights for all kinds of shooting: blackbuck at full gallop, bear in a bad light in tree jungle, pig, ibex, shapoo, chink, and so on, and so on. I have had Lyman sights fitted to all kinds of rifles, and have never known them get out of order or fail me. A sight which folds down on the grip of the rifle is in a particularly safe place, and not liable to damage. I have constantly got hares in the dusk, using Lyman sights, when open sights would have been useless. The pinhead was invisible in the bad light, but I could just see enough to get the circle of the foresight hood round the hare, and at short ranges this gave sufficient accuracy to hit. It is hardly necessary to add that a peep sight must be close to the eye, when aim is being taken, otherwise it is useless.

FLEUR-DE-LYS.

SMASHED BIRDS.

SIR.—Mr A. P. Cook has a very reasonable argument against deflection in pointing out that the smashing is far more noticeable in the case of crossing birds shot too close, as the entrails are knocked out, which does not occur with the oncoming bird referred to. However, not even this reasonable suggestion can have any force. The type of oncoming bird, shot within ten yards, would at least have the breast full of pellet holes if there were no deflection, yet I have ever found this to be the case. If Mr Cook will pluck a fresh killed bird, and fix it in identical position with an oncoming bird, and then put the centre of a charge of No. 6 into it at a range of 15ft. to 20ft., he will I think agree that the bird is "smashed," even though the entrails may not protrude. It will perhaps not look so bad as the similar crossing bird, but the breast will be so lacerated as to be unfit for the table.

MANNLICHER.

THE LATE MAJOR JOHN MCINTYRE.

MAJOR MCINTYRE, whose death at Cardross, aged eighty-five, was announced, was a member of the old Dumbartonshire Volunteers. One of the finest rifle shots of his day, he attended Wimbledon for twenty-five years in succession, won many prizes there, and had a place in the Scottish Eight and Scottish Twenty. He was also an enthusiastic curler, and an original member of the Cardross Golf Club.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

RODS FOR DECOY PIGEONS IN TREES.—I should be grateful if any of your readers would tell me where I am likely to be able to buy the jointed bamboo rods recommended in Sir R. Payne Gallwey's *Letters to Young Shooters* for decoy pigeons in trees.—VATOR.

WEIGHT OF GROUSE IN IRELAND.—On Aug. 30 I shot an old cock grouse in co. Antrim which weighed 1lb. 13oz. I should like to know if this is exceptional.—N. M. [The average weight of grouse in Scotland for old cocks is 10 1/2 oz. to 25 1/2 oz., and for old hens 18 1/2 oz. to 22 1/2 oz. In Yorkshire (Upper Swaledale) 28oz. to 30oz.; in Wensleydale, cocks 24oz., hens 20oz. In 1872 (a great year for grouse) an old cock was shot at Pateley Bridge that weighed 32oz.; but this has been eclipsed by one of 34oz., reported in the *Field* of Nov. 16, 1901.—ED.]

REPORTS FROM THE MOORS.

ABERDEENSHIRE.

GAIRNSHIEL LODGE, BALLATER.—On Aug. 29 and 30 a party of seven guns killed 38 and 45 brace driving. Weather cold and windy. Birds strong and healthy. A fair show of young birds. No disease. Guns: Mr W. G. Waldron, Capt. L. Paine, Mr A. Waldron, Mr W. L. Wood, Mr W. Parish, Mr F. D. Robertson, and Mr E. B. Waldron.

BUTTESHIRE.

DUBBIGHARAD LODGE, ISLE OF ARRAN.—On Aug. 25 and 27, the Hon. Francis and the Hon. Alfred Curzon, Mr R. N. Curzon, Mr R. Senhouse, and Mr P. Bathurst killed 13 brace, 7 plover, 9 duck, 4 grouse, 3 blackgame, 3 pigeons, 1 sandpiper, and 1 hare. On the 28th, Hon. F. Curzon, Mr Waller, and Mr R. Curzon had 25 brace of grouse, 3 snipe, and 3 rabbits. This is the largest bag of the season, and likely to remain so, and the fact that thirty-five were old birds is merely another reminder of the shortcomings of 1919. On the 30th, Mr Waller, Mr G. and Mr R. Senhouse had 19 brace, 2 woodcock, and Mr R. N. Curzon the first stag, 10 points, 17st. 12lb., in very fine condition.

DUMBARTONSHIRE.

ROXBURGH PENINSULA.—On Sept. 8, 41/2 brace of grouse were killed by eight guns; Lord Inverclyde, Mr Brooman-White, Major Leshallas, Col. Darroch, Mr Greenfield, Col. Ferguson-Buchanan (of Auchentorlie), Capt. Alan Burns (of Cumbernauld), Mr R. Darroch. First shot of the season. Bad weather. Birds strong and healthy, but not plentiful. No disease.

FORFARSHIRE.

GLENMARKIE.—On Aug. 28 and 29, 121 1/2 brace of grouse and 31 brace of blackgame and 5 1/2 brace of grouse and 4 1/2 brace of blackgame were killed by eight guns (Mr Arthur J. Cox and party), driving. Birds very healthy and strong.

PERTHSHIRE.

LAVERS.—On Sept. 3, 18 brace of grouse were killed by five guns: Major Graham Sterling, Mr J. Stewart, Mr H. Adam, Dr James Watson, and Capt. N. F. R. Rockey. Birds very scarce, but in good condition, and entirely free of disease. The gun had to be abandoned early in the afternoon on account of heavy rain and thick mist, conditions partly responsible for the light bag. The bag also contained a number of hares and rabbits.

TRINAFOUR.—Mrs. Robertson's party has had the following bags during August: 12th (four guns), 18 brace of grouse, 1 woodcock, 1 snipe, 15 hares, 4 rabbits; 14th (two guns), 11 brace of grouse, 1 woodcock, 5 hares; 18th (three guns), 17 1/2 brace of grouse, 5 hares; 21st (three guns), 25 1/2 brace of grouse, 1 blackgame, 5 hares; odd days (one gun), 6 brace of grouse, 1 blackgame, 1 snipe, 1 woodcock, 3 hares, 11 rabbits. Total group for August, 76 1/2 brace. Birds scarcer than usual, but strong on the wing, and no sign of disease.

INVERNESS-SHIRE.

KILBRIDE AND COBLE LODGE, BROADFOOT.—On Aug. 28, 81 brace grouse, 1 snipe; Sept. 2, 5 1/2 brace grouse, 1 wild duck, 1 hare; and Sept. 4, 6 brace grouse, 7 snipe, were killed by Mr C. H. N. Bunbury, Mrs Bunbury, and Mr J. L. Reid. Birds scarce. Mostly old birds were shot. No disease. Indiscriminate heather burning is almost entirely responsible for scarcity of birds. Large tracts of the best part of the moors have no heather left, and the keepers tell me that a large number of birds were burnt in their nests.

CLIFF TOWER.—On Sept. 1, 6 brace and 8 the following bags of grouse were obtained, viz.: 34, 35, 66, 48 brace. Driving. Game: Messrs J. H. Pease, Wilson Pease, C. Leslie Fox, Majors H. Drake, F. Drake, A. Mackenzie. Very strong south-westerly gales prevented the bags being larger. No disease, but birds very patchy owing to lack of heather burning.

THE MIDDLESEX GUN CLUB.

On Saturday the weather conditions were perfect. The programme included a driven bird event, five pairs of birds being thrown over a natural hedge and over the shooter. Considerable interest was taken in this event by all present. Leading scores:

C.B.S.A. Medal: Messrs Clare, S. Spence, S. Handicap Cup: Mr Goodwin, 3 (4)=7. Trap Gun Event: Mr C. Bass, 2 (7)=9 (won on shooting off tie); Mr Spence, 5. Mr Palmer, 9. Cigar Box: Mr Spence, 6 (8)=7. Victory Cup: Mr R. Palmer, 2. Tower Sweepstakes: Mr Biddle, 2 (7)=9. Handicap by Distance Event (first miss out two chances): Mr Green, 13yds., 7. Driven Bird Event (scratch): Mr J. Spence, 6. Mr Goodwin, 6. Handicap Sweepstakes: Mr Morris, 4 (5)=9. Handicap Sweepstakes: Mr Bass, 2 (6)=8.

B.S.A. Rifles and Shot Guns.—In a catalogue just issued by the Birmingham Small Arms Company some very interesting particulars of a general character are given as to the making of service and other rifles, shot guns, and air rifles. The catalogue is illustrated and exceedingly well produced.

Partridge Shooting in Essex.—Over the Blake Hall shootings on Sept. 1 forty-three brace of partridges and on Sept. 2 thirty-one brace were killed by Mr W. B. Gladstone and party, driving, 80 per cent. being young birds. Several fields still uncut. There had been no keeper for three years till May, 1919, and two lines of trenches (home defences) were dug and filled in on the estate. The above facts taken into consideration show that partridges have done really well in this part of the world, which at the best of times is not a good partridge country.

Exhibition of Mr Frank Wallace's Drawings.—Readers of the *Field* who are familiar with the work of Mr Frank Wallace will be interested to know that he has arranged to exhibit a collection of his drawings in Inverness from Sept. 15 to 20. They will include sketches of red deer and roe, stalking scenes, and a few drawings of big game. Travellers with time to spare in Inverness may like to be assured of passing a pleasant quarter of an hour in the company of Mr Wallace's spirited productions. The exhibition will be held at the well-known rooms of Messrs Fraser and Co., Union-street.