

adjustment, and the outcome is being interestingly watched by many sportsmen as well as those whose proprietary rights will be affected by the decision.

Swinging out from the Portland docks at midnight once a week in the fall and winter months, the hunting boat, as it is called, turns her prow to the north star and makes cautious way toward the great Columbia. The night, as a rule, is dark and stormy, but from a mammoth bullseye lantern along the fore deck shoots out over the water's surface a gleam and flare of light, which makes clear the way. As the boat goes "chuffing" on through the black night, loaded down with human freight, and lighted up from stem to stern with colored lights fore and aft and up aloft, she presents a spectacular scene which never fails to call back from over the water a lusty cheer from the fisherman's boat as he drifts on the tide with his net. As many, perhaps, as 100 souls are aboard the midnight steamer, each and all bent on having a good day's sport on the morrow over his own privileged ground. In the ladies' cabin of the steamer the piano is kept constantly going, while all about in grouped form the happy-hearted hunters sing merrily and heartily as they never sang before, in sweet accord with mandolin, guitar and violin. All the college choruses go ringing out over the billows, and the sweet strains of the instruments ring yet in memory's hall of all. In the forecabin are scattered or crowded pell mell those who failed to get "standing room only" in the concert hall of the ladies' cabin. Some are talking gun and some are talking dog. Business left behind is never brought up. Mirth, frolic and fun prevail. A hot rubber of whist is being carried on in this corner of the cabin, while in yonder corner some gentleman sportsman has invited down with him an old college chum just out from the east, and he is showing his coterie of new-made acquaintances the sort of shooting irons canvasbacks are tossed into the Chesapeake with, and explaining the patent forend and treble wedge bolt system as modernized back east. On the lower deck our friends, the dogs, are kept. What a true and devoted friend is a dog—a simple dog! Scotch terriers, bull dogs, mastiffs, grey hounds, watch dogs, farm dogs, dogs with spots on them, yellow dogs, and just common city dogs that chase cats, can be seen on the hunting boat; but, as a rule, the finest bred setters predominate, with an occasional pointer. And what din they make when each one fancies its master has just got off the boat where it last landed and gone ashore and left poor Carlo behind! What faces some of these dogs have! Some are all intelligence, with quick, fiery eyes; others with an expression as legible as if written across the collar around their necks, "I am not your dog, sir—pass on;" and then some have faces just as indicative of their character as a man's is of his, and a good deal cleaner.

The echoes of the breakfast bell have become lost up in the dark pine wood that skirts and hangs almost menacingly over the channel where cautiously the steamer picks her way for fear of stranding upon some hidden rock, ever now and again jingling and jangling one bell—two bells—three bells—and shoving her nose into the bank and brush. Out skips a happy, jolly sportsman, with a string of decoys over one shoulder, his hunting boat over the other, his gun under his arm, and rubber coat and ammunition bags and luncheon under the other, yanking along behind him up the long gang plank into the brush his famous, red, Irish setter—"the best dog on earth."

And so it is that this great boat load of gunners is set loose along the various lakes and sloughs just before day breaks. They are scattered along at either hand for a distance of twenty miles or more in length and across a territory of some four or six miles wide. Those fortunate in having privileges over choice wapato lakes shoot from a crude, brush ambuscade, called a blind, from along shore, from behind which unassuming structure sits the expectant nimrod, eying the heavens right and left for the speeding flock. Scarcely does one get comfortably seated within his castle wall before that inimitable

and mysterious whizzing of the ducks is heard as they come zipping about him, in and out and over the lake, past his blind. These blinds are built of twigs, boughs and roots of the neighboring willow bush or cottonwood, which grow on all sides. The boughs are shoved down into the mud in semicircular form to a circumference of, perhaps, ten or twelve feet, and to a height level with the hunter's head as he sits within, with a four-year-old willow branch for his seat. There he sits, now complacently pulling away at his pipe or Havana, with his shell bag spread out handy by his side and his lunch cozily tucked away in the ripped blind, his trusty hammerless laying across his lap, while his kennel winner charges faithfully by his feet, watching every movement his master makes to know when duty calls. Some hunters use decoys to shoot over, and others conceal themselves in the thick shrubbery fringing the ridges of land that surround the lake and perform the great feat called "sky scraping," or knocking ducks down out of the clouds as they fly back and forth overhead 100 yards or more. It takes a thorough scholar to do this sort of work. The execution must be very perfect to succeed, and is, therefore, the highest degree to which a wing shot can attain. And then there are some hunters who build floating blinds on rafts or boxes out in the water, from which they shoot; but this habit is severely condemned by all sportsmen.

And yet is there still another class of hunters—a shiftless, irresponsible and ill-mannered set, who are too unmethodical to build a blind and sit down and wait for their game, but must be off and away, banging right and left at ducks a mile in the air, or else at the little, innocent chippy birds that sing in the bush, always, however, firing their gun off just as some poor devil, who pays \$100, or more, for his lake, is about to get in a dead double on a pair of mallards he has been following, with squinted eyes and bowed head, around and around the lake, just out of reach of his blind, all the morning. I have diligently sat all day in a blind, with no more than one measly duck as a reward of my patience, and seen one of these pot hunters deliberately creep in on an adjoining lake and from the cover of a log or tree pour a deadly volley of shot into a flock of ducks in the mud and pick up a dozen.

The mallard is our principal duck, but canvasback come in some seasons very plentifully, and afford the very choicest of decoy shooting. Jack Knott, Sim Reed, Millard Lowndale and Captain Rockwell have made the largest killings ever made on these birds. These gentlemen shoot over Bachelor's island, twenty-five miles

down the Columbia from Portland. Widgeon and teal are our most plentiful game bird, while black duck, sprigtails, spoonbills and grey ducks fill up the trash line proper. On some of the wapato grounds great droves of wild swan come at certain seasons of the year and stay some three or four or five weeks. When hunted they fly away to the sand bars of the Columbia river and rest secure from danger. The Canadian goose comes with us in December and stays till March, preceded and followed by the little black brant of California and the yellow-legged and mottle-breasted summer goose.

I love books; I could feast eternally off them, provided I had a fair sprinkling of duck shooting thrown in once in a great while. The other day I was going through that marvelous work of art, composition, biography and history, called the "History of the City of Portland," wherein every one was permitted to crown himself a king at so much per line, and found there the name of Charlie Saline, of Saline's Landing, which henceforth goes into the history of the famous shooting grounds of the North Pacific coast, as, perhaps, will a word or two of what I pen herein today. Saline's Landing is where that veteran of sportsmen, Boss Schenck, late appraiser of customs for this district, did his shooting. He never came back to Charlie Saline's cabin



DECOY SHOOTING FROM THE BLIND.