

## On the Trigger's Pull.



HERE is always trouble of one sort or another when a woman meddles with those things which do not concern her sex.

Obviously, carbines were none of Miss Mivart's concern. If she felt that she had to play with firearms she should have kept to Flobert rifles. Nothing would do, however, but that she must learn to shoot a carbine, and the result was that the whole post rose up and cut Burton, to a man; so that there was no peace for him any longer in that regiment and he had to seek transfer to another. There were other results, also, but they come further on.

Some thought that what Miss Mivart did was done on purpose, and some thought that it was a piece of idiotic silliness. The latter based their argument upon the general frivolousness of her ways, and upon the innocence of her round, blue eyes. The former held to the belief that Miss Mivart was one of those women favorites of Fortune who look greater fools than they are. They said, with a certain show of reason, that Georgia Mivart was a child of the service and not an importation from civil life. She had been born in a garrison and had played with rows of empty, green-rimmed cartridge-shells at an age when most little girls play with paper dolls. She had hummed snatches of the bugle-calls before she could talk, and the person she had admired the most and obeyed the best for the first dozen years of her life had been Kreuzer, Captain Mivart's two-headed striker. A few years of boarding-school back East could not have obliterated all that.

Besides, the veriest civilian, who has never come nearer to a carbine than to watch a Fourth of July parade, might reasonably be expected to know by intuition that in a target-practice competition every trigger has got to pull just so hard, whatever the regulation number or fraction of pounds may be. Otherwise, it is plain that the nearer you come to a hair-trigger the better your aim will be.

However, whether Miss Mivart was fully aware of what she was doing, nobody ever knew, unless perhaps it was Greville—and he, like Zuleika, never told. But Burton had a bad time of it, and all his beautiful score went for worse than nothing at all.

That, though, was the end. And the beginning ought to come first. The beginning was when Miss Mivart undertook to learn to shoot a carbine.

There was a target-practice competition going on at the post; not one which was of any interest to the service, or even to the department at large; just a little social affair, devised to keep up the esprit de corps of the troops and to lighten the monotony of life. There were three contests, one for individuals and companies, as such; one for individual privates, and one for the officers. This last was to finish off, and then there was to be a big hop.

Every one knew from the first, when Burton and Greville shot with their troops, that the officers' competition would lie between them. This made it interesting in more ways than one, because the rivalry was not confined to the target range, but extended to the winning of Miss Mivart's hand and heart, and every one believed that this would settle a matter she did not appear to be able to settle for herself. Not that she was to blame for that. Any one, even a person much more certain of her own mind than Miss Mivart was, would have been put to it to choose.

They were both first lieutenants, and both cavalrymen, and both good to look upon. Burton was fair and Greville was dark, but she had no fixed prejudices regarding that. She had often said so. Also, both were as much in love with her as even she could have wished, and were more than willing that all the world should see it—than which nothing is more pleasant and soothing to a right-minded woman.

The rifle contest lasted ten days, during which time the air hummed with the ping and sing of bullets over on the range, and with the calls of the markers in the rifle-pits. Only scores and records and bets were thought and talked about.

Miss Mivart herself had bet, with all the daring wickedness of a kitten teasing a beetle. She even went so far as to bet on both Burton and Greville at once. The adjutant undertook to explain to her that that was called "hedging," and was not looked upon as altogether sporty. Miss Mivart was hurt. Was it really dishonest, she wanted to know. The adjutant felt that he had been unkind. He hastened to assure

her that it was not—not dishonest in the least; only that it took away from the excitement of the thing to a certain extent. Miss Mivart smiled and shook her head. No, she didn't think it did, because, of course, she knew herself which one she wanted to have win. The adjutant admitted that that might possibly be just as interesting for herself and the fortunate man. And which was he, if he might ask. Miss Mivart shook her head and smiled again. No, she didn't think he might ask. As the man himself didn't know, she could hardly tell any one else just yet, could she? She had her own ideas about fair play.

"I can shoot a carbine, myself," she told the adjutant, with her cleft chin proudly raised; "and my shoulder is all black and blue. Mr. Burton is teaching me."

"Oh!" said the adjutant, "and what does Greville think about that?" The adjutant was married, so he was out of the running.

"Mr. Greville is teaching me, too," said Georgia; "and here he comes for me now."

Burton was safe on the target range, over behind the barracks. Miss Mivart and Greville went in the other direction, by the back of the officers' row, over in the foothills across the creek. Greville nipped the top of a big red pasteboard box to the trunk of a tree, and Miss Mivart hit it once out of sixteen times—when she was aiming at the head of a prairie dog at least twenty feet away to the right. The other fifteen shots were scattered among the foothills.

Then her shoulder hurt her so that she was ready to cry. Greville would have liked to have her cry upon his own shoulder, but, as she didn't, he did some fancy shooting to distract her. He found a mushroom-can, and threw it into the aid and filled it full of holes. She had seen Burton do the same thing that morning with a tomato-can. In fact, from where she sat now, on a lichen-covered rock, she could see the mutilated can glittering in the sun, over beyond the arroyo. So she thirsted for fresher sensations.

"I'll tell you," she said to Greville, as he held up the mushroom-can for her to inspect the eight holes he had made with five shots, "let me toss up your hat, and you make a hole through the trade-mark in the crown."

It was a nice, new straw hat. Greville had sent East for it and it had come by stage the day before. It had cost him, express paid, four dollars and seventy-five cents. This, too, at a time when anything he had left after settling his mess and sutler's and tailor's bills, went into stick-pins and candy and books and music and riding-whips for Miss Mivart. But he took off the hat and gave it to her without even a lingering glance at that high-priced trade-mark within. And he felt that it was worth four times four dollars and seventy-five cents when she picked up the tattered remains, at last, and asked if she might have them to hang in her room.

Then she looked down at her grimy hand and considered the first finger, crooking it open and shut. "I think it's going to swell," she pouted. "That is a perfectly awful trigger to pull."

Greville did what any man might have been expected to do. He caught the hand and kissed it. Miss Mivart looked absolutely unconscious of it. She might have been ten miles away herself. Greville, therefore, thought that she was angry, and his heart was filled with contrition. Yet he was old and wise enough to be a first lieutenant. He walked beside her back to the post in a state of humble dejection she could not understand. The next morning it was Burton's turn. Greville was over on the range now, vainly trying to bring his record up to where Burton's was. This time Miss Mivart fired at a white pasteboard-box cover, and hit it three times out of twenty. She was jubilant, and so was Burton, because she was making such progress under his tuition.

"That's an easy carbine to shoot, isn't it?" she asked as they wandered home; "it isn't at all hard to pull the trigger."

Burton glanced at her, and she met his eyes innocently. "It's just like any other trigger," he told her.

"Yes, of course. And is that the very same carbine you use in the competition—the one you shot with yesterday, and will use this afternoon when you finish up?"

He told her that it was.

"Well," she said, complacently, "I think I'm doing very nicely, don't you. I hit the target three times, and my first finger doesn't hurt a bit—this morning."

That afternoon the competition came to an end, with Burton a good many points ahead of Greville. And that night there was the big hop. It had been understood from the first that the man who won was to take Miss Mivart

to the hop. So she went over with Burton, and gave him one-third of her dances. Greville had another third, and the rest were open to the post at large.

Greville did not look happy at all. It was not the target record he minded. He never thought about that. It was having to go down the board-walk to the hop-room behind Burton, and to watch Miss Mivart leaning on his arm and looking up into his face from under the white mists of her lace hood. He was not consoled at all when she looked up into his own face even more sweetly at the beginning of the second dance, and whispered that she was "so sorry."

Now as the second dance had been Greville's the third was Burton's. That was the way it had been arranged. As the band began the waltz, Miss Mivart stood beside Greville in the center of quite a group. The commanding officer was in the group, so was Burton's captain, and so was the adjutant. There were some others as well, and also some women. Miss Mivart may have chosen that position, or it may simply have happened so.

Any way, just as the waltz started, Burton, light-hearted and light-footed, came slipping and sliding over the candle-waxed floor, and pushing his way into the midst. "Ours," he said, triumphantly.

But Miss Mivart did not heed him at once. She was telling them all how she had learned to shoot a carbine as well as any one, and they, the men, at any rate, were hanging on her words.

"Mr. Greville taught me," she said, "and so did Mr. Burton." This was the first either had known of the other's part in it, and they exchanged a look. "They taught me with their own carbines, too. The very same ones they used themselves in the competition. But I shot best with Mr. Burton's carbine. He must have fixed his trigger to pull more easily; it was almost like, what do you call it, a hair-trigger?"

She looked about for an answer, and saw on their faces a stare of stony horror and surprise. They had moved a little away from Burton, and the commanding officer's steely eyes were on his face. The face had turned white, even with the sunburn, and Burton's voice was just a trifle unsteady as he spoke.

"This is our dance, I think, Miss Mivart," he said.

The innocent, round, blue orbs looked just a little coldly into his. "No," she told him, "I think you are mistaken. It is Mr. Greville's dance." And she turned and laid her hand on Greville's arm.—San Francisco Argonaut.

### Expressing His Disgust.

Probably most writers of serial stories are familiar with the sensation of receiving letters of commendation or disapproval from interested readers who are following up the stories as they appear in their regular weekly or monthly installments. Occasionally some curious person asks for private information as to what the outcome is to be, while others offer suggestions as to the disposition to be made of the villain, or express a fear that the author intends to marry the hero to the wrong woman.

The writer of a serial story in one of the popular magazines a few years ago received the following letter from an indignant reader. The names are changed for obvious reasons:

"Dear Sir: I take the liberty of telling you that I regard your 'Simeon Stacy,' now running through the Blank Magazine, as a little the thinnest novel I have ever read. Furthermore, the principal character in the story, to whom you give the title role, so to speak, is so thoroughly detestable a man that I have taken the most effective means in my power to show my contempt for him by changing my name—which happened to be the same as his—to something as unlike it as possible. Yours truly,

"ANDREW JACOBSON,  
"(Formerly Simeon Stacy)."

### Ungallant.

There is a suggestion of ungallantry in the latest telephonic invention adopted in Paris. Hitherto, in the French capital, as elsewhere, the central exchange has been managed—or, as French telephone users alleged, mismanaged—by women. But when busy men have called up other firms and offices they have often been delayed by the conversational tendencies of the young ladies at the exchange. It is decidedly maddening to have an important telephonic interview punctuated with "He's awfully handsome!" or, "I'm going to wear my pink blouse," and they have determined to put a stop to it in France by superseding the telephone exchange girls by an automatic apparatus.

### Heating in Uruguay.

Few houses in Uruguay are provided with stoves for heating purposes. No chimneys or fireplaces are provided, as a rule, one house recently built at a cost of \$14,000 having for its only chimney a stovepipe from the kitchen.

When a woman says, in excuse for her flowerless garden, that she doesn't "understand" the care of flowers, it means that she doesn't want the work.

## Science AND INVENTION

Recent experiments by Monsieur Janet show that the temperature of the carbon filament in an electric lamp is between 2,900 degrees and 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

For the extraction of rubber from the rubber tree a new process consists in cutting up the bark and roots and soaking in dilute sulphuric acid. This decomposes the woody portions without affecting the India rubber. In this way the rubber and bark and roots are separated.

An extensive building has recently been opened in Leeds (England) to be devoted to the development of clothworkers' research, dyeing, etc. It is the intention of the Clothworkers' company of London that this college should become the leading and most complete example of a textile and dyeing school in the world.

In Strasburg an engineer has invented a substitute for gutta percha. In ordinary temperatures the mass is hard like pitch, and while not being brittle is firm against pressure. It does not break when hammered, even at the freezing point. Thin plates were subjected to the action of sea water with good results.

As the result of twenty-nine years of experiments at Rothamsted, England, it is shown that in the winter months more than half of the amount of rain that falls penetrates into the soil, and becomes available for the supply of springs, while in the summer only one-quarter of the rainfall is absorbed by the soil. The maximum quantity of water in the soil is at a depth of about forty inches.

At a recent meeting of arboriculturists in France, the question was debated whether spiders should be suffered to spin their webs on fruit walls. The general opinion seemed to be that the webs were more useful than objectionable. It was remarked that they prevent the incursions of earwigs and similar insects, and also interfere with the operations of noxious flies whose larvae ravage leaves and fruits.

A remarkable effect of the great hurricane of 1898 in the West India Islands was the complete disappearance from the island of St. Vincent of a species of humming bird, which, previous to the storm, had been one of the commonest and tamest birds that inhabited the island. Other species of humming birds, of a larger size, survived the tempest, and are yet to be seen in St. Vincent, but the little bronze-green birds with erected crests, which formerly attracted much admiration, are all gone.

L. M. Loomis, the Californian ornithologist, who has been studying the question of bird migration on the Pacific coast, concludes that those which he has observed shape their course by landmarks, and possess no mysterious superhuman faculty for determining direction, such as some persons have imagined that birds are endowed with. When a fog prevails the birds are bewildered and lose their way. In brief, Mr. Loomis thinks that bird migration is a habit evolved by education and inheritance, and owing its origin to the failure of food in winter.

No one knows just what happens when one drops a lump of salt or sugar into a bowl of water. We may believe with Prof. Ostwald and his followers, that the molecules of sugar merely glide everywhere between the molecules of water, without chemical action; or, on the other hand, dismissing this mechanical explanation, we may say with Mendeleef that the process of solution is the most active of chemical phenomena, involving that incessant interplay of atoms known as dissociation. But these two explanations are mutually exclusive, and no one can say positively which one, if either one, is right.

### GENTLENESS IS NOT A VIRTUE.

Some Cases in Which It Is Singularly Out of Place.

A young man at the art school had just finished painstakingly sharpening three or four sticks of charcoal for one of the girl students.

"Anything more I can do for you?" he asked lingeringly.

"No, I thank you; it was just splendid of you to do this for me."

With a bow and a timid smile of pleasure the young man moved away. "Isn't he a real nice boy?" asked the girl who had been favored of her friend who sat at the next easel.

"No," was the uncompromising answer of the next girl, who was older and possessed of more vigorous views.

"Why—why—"

"No; he's not a nice boy; he's a real nice girl. He's the most negative specimen of a young man I ever saw. Why, if another fellow stepped purposely on his toes he'd apologize for being in the way."

"But he's gentle and of very sweet disposition," argued the first girl.

"Granted, but he might be all that and still be a little more of a man. Now, what I like in the way of a man is one who is noble, gentle, chivalrous and

generous, but with plenty of firmness, and with strong, well-defined views on every subject. A man should always be at the positive pole; make him negative and he isn't a man. Your real nice boy is 'nice' because he's too meek to be anything else. I've been watching him for some time, and, do you know, what I've had an aching desire to do?"

"No; what?"

"I long to go up behind him, hit him a hard slap between the shoulders and urge him to brace up. Of course, it would be rude," finished the older girl with a sigh.

"I have a married friend who has a boy of 10," resumed the older girl, after a pause during which she industriously filled in several square inches with light and shade. "Her boy was inclined to belong to your 'real nice girl' sort of being. Of course, it followed that other youngsters 'picked upon' him a great deal. His mother paid for a course of instruction in the manly art for him. Then she told him that every time he got into a fight she would give him a quarter."

"Horrible!" shivered the other girl. "That would make a regular bully of him, I should think."

"It hasn't had that effect. He isn't of the bullying kind. He's muscular now, though his build is so slight that one would not suspect him of strength. He's gaining in firmness and quickness of decision, and his mother tells me that her conscience doesn't trouble her a bit. One of the greatest parental crimes, she thinks, is to turn a girl-boy out into the world. He's only imposed upon now by boys who don't know him—and they never try it a second time. I'm in love with that mother, and her son, whom I used to secretly detest, now challenges my admiration."

"I—I don't know," said the younger girl dubiously. It is a doubtful matter, to be sure. But there is no doubt that most women like a man or a boy who can fight on occasion.—Boston Transcript.

### CRUEL RAILWAYS IN RUSSIA.

They Kill Ten Times More People than Those of Any Other Country.

It appears from railway statistics, recently given to the public in Russia, that the Russian railways kill ten times more persons each year than do those of any other country. By similar statistics printed some years back the United States led the other countries in this respect, but since 1893 Russia has had the bad pre-eminence of leading the world as respects the numbers killed yearly in proportion to the numbers carried on its railways. Out of 500,000,000 passengers on the American railways the fatalities are 6,800, including employes; while out of 52,000,000 passengers on the Russian railways the fatalities are 6,107. Including the Siberian railway Russia's mileage is about 25,000 miles, while that of the United States is about 186,000 miles.

The United States commercial agent in Vladivostok reports to the State Department that experiments have been made on the St. Petersburg and Warsaw road with an invention designed to give warning and lessen the deadly effects of railroad collisions. Two wrecking railroads were provided; on the first the sleepers were displaced, on the second the rails were displaced. In both cases the stoppage was immediate by the aid of this device, without outside help and without injury to the moving trains. The essential feature of the invention is an iron tube, of usual construction, connected with the general system of brakes and placed in front of the wheels. At the least irregularity in the movement of the train the tube, in consequence of certain cuts made on it at intervals, breaks, and thus produces the immediate stoppage of the train, locomotive as well.

### Posted.

She had met her city cousin at the train, and as they rode down Grand River avenue on the street car she took a prideful pleasure in pointing out the objects and buildings of interest.

He evidenced the proper appreciation, making highly complimentary remarks and no belittling comparisons with institutions in his own city. Passing the corner of Grand River avenue and Cass street, where the new G. A. R. structure is approaching lines of architectural beauty, she rapturously exclaimed:

"Now that will be one of our grandest buildings. Don't you think it will be a beauty?"

"What building is it?" he inquired.

"That," she said, with becoming pride, "is the Gar building."

"The what?"

"Why, the Gar building, and it will be just too beautiful for—"

"What is it—a hotel?"

"No-o-o, not a hotel; it's just a private residence. Mr. Gar, who is immensely rich, is going to live there, I believe."

A faint suspicion of a smile hovered about the mouth of the city cousin as he glanced sideways at his intelligent guide.—Detroit Free Press.

### Horses Exported.

In the nine months ended March 1, 1900, 39,625 horses were exported from the United States, at an average price of \$120.