

# Women as Hunters

## THE PART THEY TAKE IN THE SPORT TODAY



She Mustn't Forget to Clean her Gun.



Really Big Game

Whirr of Wings Does Not Disconcert Her.

Bridging Home the Quarry.



No Sport Sets the Blood a-tingle More than Tracking.

**B**O, baby hunting. Mamma's gone a-hunting— chants one ardent lover of the trail, editing her nursery rhymes in strict accordance with the times.

Let one of us weaker vessels dare to swing gun and bag over her shoulder and trudge along watching for signs of life in the tangle of growth about her, wild with the keen excitement of matching wits with the subtle creatures of the forest, and immediately she is made the target for a volley of feminine protests.

Your only defense is silence. Your only hope (if you care for the criticisms at all) or convincing any of your critics is to beguile her along on your next trip.

One experience is enough to make a convert of any woman.

Each year sees more and more women "go into the woods" and go after really big game. A woman's first outing is usually taken under protest—perhaps her husband or brother or rather is an enthusiast, and she goes along, dutifully, but without interest. After that, she's at her happiest trudging along over trails, over swamp and mountain. Discomfort doesn't count with the fascination of it.

Your amateur in the ways of the wilderness is easily recognized. "A first-year woman," she is called—she of the well-boned leggings and irreproachable suit, with every piece of clothing chosen deliberately for effect rather than for comfort. You look at her half pityingly, half enviously—you who are old hunters—pitying her ignorance, envying the sudden revelation of the wonder of it all, that is sure to come to her.

The second year she is wiser—chooses heavy boots and corduroys, and cuts her skirt shorter.

—But the third year finds her well versed in the styles of the woods. Cloth leggings and heavy high boots give way to stout shoes and leather leggings, or to picturesque ugly puttees. Or she even chooses regular lumberman's shoes, made of the heaviest rubber imaginable, low and laced up with strong white tapes—hideous, disfiguring, but absolutely waterproof. With these she wears heavy woolen stockings—four or five pairs of them sometimes piled on all at once.

### LONG SKIRTS IN THE WAY

There's as definite a difference in the length of her skirts. The first year they come modestly down to her ankles, and are the cause of a few falls and more loss of game than even her own bungling use of her gun. The next year she shortens them, and at last comes bravely out with skirts just below her knees.

Her hair she tucks up rigorously so that it will stay, and covers it with an old cloth hat. By this time, too, she is in intimate terms with her gun.

Then—off with a guide for a long day of it, trudging along through swamp and thicket; following the deer-run, with the mad, keen desire of the chase on you. Your blood pounds in your veins—surely the deer you're stalking will hear it! Your skirt catches—your only care is that the noise of its tearing will frighten the game.

A long, weary wait follows, as you crouch down behind a log in ambush.

You sink into a reverie. All those wretched protests come to your mind—perhaps, after all, the sport is cruel. You imagine yourself hunted, and wonder what the terror must be of being followed to the death.

For the least part of an instant you wonder if you oughtn't to return to civilization, oughtn't to leave to men the blood-battles. And then!

Then the least possible motion from the guide—just the bend of a finger—and your rifle comes up so softly to your shoulder, your shot rings out as a deer pauses, one foot held high, listening, and turns to run—too late.

You've made the "first kill" of the season—you, a woman! You forget your qualms of conscience, and gloat over your success.

Back to camp you go, walking sedately with your guide, who plods along (so slowly!) with his precious burden.

You receive an ovation at camp. Successful and unsuccessful hunters alike crowd around—everybody criticizing and praising and envying your shot. You stand silent—bursting with pride. Your guide waxes loquacious—here's the woman of it—you blast and bludge, but make no effort to stop his wild extravagance of speech.

### OUT ALL NIGHT—NOT A SHOT

That is, your guide crags—if he's experienced in the ways of hunters. If he doesn't, you never engage him again!

You rest on your jurels a day or two—you're a recognized hunter, now—picking up a few ducks (though a sneak-box is terribly trying), or partridges, and learning to eat them cooked in true sportsman's style, so that "the blood follows the knife." Then comes one of those curiously black nights, when even the stars seem too far away to light a path. It's an ideal night for Jacking.

Off you go, up a creek, with the Jack-lanterns perched high in the bow of the canoe—way up in the tip, with a guide kneeling in the stern, still-peddling; and you, your self, clad in your warmest clothes, crouched down just behind the Jack.

A Jack is an oddly constructed lantern, which biases out in front and leaves the canoe and its occupants in shadow. When the deer comes down to drink at night, the light attracts his attention, he stops to watch it—deer are curious folk—lets it get nearer and nearer, until—perhaps you get your chance.

Off you go, up all night, with never a shot. Away off in the distance you hear the deer bleating, and whistling, and the faint crash in the underbrush tells an interesting tale.

And that is all. The first year of it all, the first—

ing along with never a sound but the mysterious forest noises to break in upon the dreamlike scene affects your imagination strangely. You never forget it.

For, paradoxical as it is, you must have a wealth of sentiment to be a sportsman. The spicy smells of the little plants you crush underfoot; the surprise of a maple tree's flaming underfoot in the midst of a forest of

monotonous green; the sudden rifts in the woods, through which break visions of lake and mountain and river must mean wonderful things to you.

Women almost never hunt bears—that is, go out with the dogs, tracking one down. It's too dangerous to pre-serve the element of sport in it. But when reports come into camp that a bear has been seen about this part of the forest or that, some woman takes a guide and goes out on the chance of meeting it.

And, occasionally, a woman does shoot a bear—kills it in a single clean shot, and without needing the help that her guide stands ready to give. For dangerous sport like that she leaves off her skirts, appearing in bloomers and leather leggings—there must be no hindering, no catching by the underbrush if she has to spring aside suddenly. A wounded bear is a terrible enemy.

## Quail Hunting in the South, Where Big Bags Are Taken

**A**LTHOUGH the whirr of the wings of the quail is heard with sufficient frequency in the Northern States to stir the blood of the most blasé hunter, it is in the South that really big bags, sixty birds, ninety birds and sometimes a hundred or more in a day or two, are to be had.

In Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia and other Southern States, there are still wide expanses of sod-grass fields and plenty of mountain forests and lowland thickets in which the birds may dwell, feed and multiply.

Even in these favored places, however, the habits of quail are changing. It is observed that grown birds when flushed make longer flights than formerly, sometimes being on the wing for 500 or 600 yards. Time was, too, when a covey flushed in the open field would spread out in fan-like formation, and not leave the open ground at once. Now the habit of most of them is to dash for the nearest shelter and the heavy woods.

In course of time quail shooting will probably come to resemble that of gunning after woodcock, with the rapid flight and devious twists of the quarry.

Even now it is said that quail have taken to roosting

George W. Vanderbilt, upon his Blitmore estate, near Asheville, has an immense preserve, but this is closed to all except the owner's friends.

There are still open to the visitor hundreds of thousands of acres of lowland, woodland and mountain upon which game is yet fairly plentiful. Last year two gentlemen from Philadelphia spent two days in the neighborhood of Raleigh and bagged ninety fine quail in that time. The year before they brought down seventy-two in two days.

Visitors to most of the North Carolina hunting sections need only take with them guns and ammunition. They will find at almost any town or settlement competent guides with good dogs. Services of these may be had at reasonable rates.

Among the towns located in quail sections of more or less promise are Ashboro, Aberdeen, Barber, Blanche, Clayton, Climax, Concord, Julian, Franklinton, King's Mountain, Manson, Marion, Wakeview, Morganton, Newton, Ore Hill, Osgood, Oxford, Raleigh, Reidsville, Shelby, Statesville, Stokesdale, Thomasville, Walnut Cove, Waynesville, Winston-Salem, Brevard, Lake Toxaway and Sapphire.

the quail hunters' paradise. Other counties in the middle and western sections of the State may well rank with it. There are grain fields flanked by pine forests and thickets of underbrush and plenty of wild berries that the birds love.

All through such sections of the South one may find veteran hunters to act as guides, and there, too, one may find some of the finest and best trained dogs that the sporting world produces.

Many of these intelligent animals have no long pedigree, and would probably out a scovy figure at a bench show, but in practical field work they have no superiors.

Picture, for instance, a couple of well-trained dogs covering a wide range of promising field. Finally they come to a rigid stand, one behind the other. Carefully the gunners advance, there is a startling whirr of wings, and the bang, bang, bang of guns.

Away hurtles the covey in confusion and flight, seeking refuge in a nearby thicket. The dogs carefully follow the flying birds with their eyes, but at present devote themselves to retrieving the fallen birds. After the rest of the field is hunted out, the gunners work the dogs around to get advantage of the wind and so gradually



Pointers in a Field Trial.

Setter Standing a Bird.

in trees, and that they have learned to hover close to the body for protection.

Still there are thousands of quail in the fields and thickets of the Southern States. In 1933 more than 1500 gunners from outside took out the 510 licenses in North Carolina; there were more last year, and this year will probably see several hundred over the number of the preceding season.

South Carolina is not so much visited because of the 25 license fee exacted. The same fee must be paid in Georgia, while in Virginia, like North Carolina, the license costs 10.

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There is one large kennel of dogs and where he employs a number of guides. These preserves are for the exclusive use of visitors to the villas.

Virginia's game fields are many and well stocked. From railroad junctions like Manassas, Charlottesville, Richmond, Danville and Lynchburg the traveler may readily reach fine quail country in almost any direction.

Some of the best quail shooting is usually found in the vicinity of Bealton, Blumont, Clarksville, Emporia, Fort Mitchell, La Cross, Linden, Somerset, Chase City, Edinburg, Franklin, Leesburg, Mount Jackson, Riverton, Warfield, Shelton, Lacroce and Portmouth.

In South Carolina one is apt to find good shooting in the neighborhood of Greenwood, Abbeville, where hunters frequently bag seventy-five in a day; Camden, Barnwell, Carlisle, Columbia, Edgefield, Gaffney, Liberty, Spartanburg, Taylors and Wintersburg.

Quail may be found in Georgia about Baldwin, Brentwood, Buford, Eastman, Hazlehurst, Rome, Suwanee, Warm Springs, Woodbury and other places.

Nearly all the places mentioned in the various States are on or near the principal railroad lines running through the South, and detailed information regarding them may be had of the various passenger agents.

Forsyth county, North Carolina, is often spoken of as

come back to the marked birds, which by this time have become settled and are throwing out scent. In go the dogs again, and soon come to another stand.

So the hunting day goes. At last the sun sets, and the gunner, weary, footsore, but with light heart and heavy game bag, seeks his sleeping quarters to refresh himself for another, and he hopes, a better day.

Quail gunners of the United States are fairly well familiar with territorial and other conditions in Virginia and the Carolinas, because some of the most extensive field trials for prizes have been conducted in those States, especially in North Carolina.

To these field trials sportsmen take their dogs from all parts of the country, and the animals are given a thorough trying out—single, in couples and in groups they are made to show what they can do, in ranging the field, following up a scent, standing birds, retrieving and general excellence.

These trials usually take about a large number of each shot as well as the dog. The trials are given by those who devote themselves to hunting. The trials are given by those who devote themselves to hunting. The trials are given by those who devote themselves to hunting.



Whirr of Wings Does Not Disconcert Her.



No Sport Sets the Blood a-tingle More than Tracking.

And the "camaraderie" of the woods! Perhaps for days you meet no one; perhaps a solitary hunter looms into view. There's no waiting for introductory Every one, like the animals in the "Jungle Book," is met with some form of the greeting, "good hunting."

When the hunter goes on, you both strike off deeper into the woods—he has probably scared your game; and you, his.

There's plenty of other shooting besides big game. Along the coast, there's rare sport in early fall going after snipe and rabbits, and plenty of women do it.

But nothing compares to the excitement of actually stalking game, when you stand or crouch immovable for hours, waiting with every nerve tense for what may come.

There's another part of the life you lead out after game, that is as wonderful in its quieter way as the actual vigorous life of the chase; and that is the life in camp.

Camping, as most of us know it, is one thing; as it is done where hunters meet, it is radically different, or so a woman finds it. Mountain climbing, canoeing and following the most difficult of trails aimlessly is interesting until you've had a taste of the other.

What is the other? A joyous comradeship with the woods—wonderful training of every sense, and the nobbing with guides and fellow-hunters, the spending around to every one in camp a bit of venison, a partridge or duck, or perhaps a bearsteak—part of your kill. The hours in camp are spent lounging, when that gun doesn't need an extra rub, and in studying out ways of shooting better and better. Stories are freely exchanged—stories that best fishing stories hands down in their strain upon credulity.

After it's all over, and you go back to civilization, life seems cramped for a while. There's no breadth of vision, no freedom of movement. Collars choke your long skirts—even those of walking length—are a wearisome drag. You're stifled.

But when you get into harness again, and take up your round of dinners and dances, you are content—dear awhile.

You've lived an open, joyous life for a few weeks, you've "stretched your horizon"; the memory of the deep woods is with you. And when the season rolls round, the call of the woods will sound in your blood—a call you can't resist. You'll not know a moment's peace until gun in hand, you make for the heart of the wilderness.

BLANCHE W. FISCHER

## Eagle Hunting in the Alps

**J**UST at this season eagle hunting in the Alps is at its height. Many English sportsmen and some Americans have joined the Swiss in this perilous and exciting pastime.

Last month an Englishman captured a fine young eagle in the Val Chamuera. He discovered the nest on the base of a precipitous rock, protected from above by an overhanging cliff. The only way to reach it was by a difficult and dangerous climb.

Reach it he finally did, and after a hard fight captured and bound the bird and lowered it to the valley below. In the nest he found the remains of a fifty-pound chamois, three marmots and a lot of bones, feathers and fur.

The same man has captured eleven other eagles, and he speaks enthusiastically of the sport.

Two peasants near Oberbergli took a fine young eagle from its nest a short time ago by descending the face of a cliff 100 feet by means of a single swinging rope. In this nest they found part of a lamb, a pig, several large fowls and a great quantity of animal and bird bones.

Eagle hunting leads the climbers to scale at times what seem to be almost insurmountable rocks in search of the nests. They usually try to capture the young eagles when the parent birds are away.

Allegiance, however, the older birds return unexpectedly and attack with great fury the would-be despoilers of their homes. Many savage encounters and some narrow escapes have been related.

Not long since a mountaineer scaled a peak at Reichenbach and secured two fine eaglets, but was not sufficiently quick in getting away. Attacked by the parent birds, he fell from a rock and was badly injured. One of the older eagles was shot by a spectator. It measured over seven feet across the wings.

## QUEER AND CURIOUS FACTS

Aquatic birds are more numerous than land birds. The Atlantic Ocean has an average depth of 1600 feet.

The grape culture in France gives employment to over two million people.

The native of India has an average life of 34 years, as against 44 in England.

A penny is estimated to change hands about 2500 times in the course of its life.

Opals are so soft when first taken from the mine that pieces can be picked off with the fingers.

Shells filled with oil, intended to calm a stormy sea when fired into it, have been invented in France.

At Quito, the only city in the world on the equator, the sun sets and rises at 6 o'clock, and the day is 12 hours long.

Georgia has held the lead in the production of pineapples for the Eastern market since 1890, and has 100,000 trees.

Germany is Dutch in the north, French in the west, Italian in the south, and Prussian in the east.