to a line of guns in covert, the latter—if no winged game is expected—should stand just inside the edge of the wood, with their backs to the beaters, and take the rabbits after they have passed. This not only induces the rabbits to face the open, but precludes the possibility of an accident to the beaters. Capital sport can be enjoyed in the summer evenings by stalking rabbits with a pea-rifle in a suitable locality, *i.e.* where no danger to human beings or live-stock can be caused by a stray or deflected bullet. A disused quarry or sand pit is an ideal place for such sport.

One branch of shooting remains to be touched on, namely, wild-fowling, which again must be classed under two totally distinct headings, shore or flight shooting, and shooting afloat with a swivel punt gun. In flight shooting, the sportsman stations himself at a point over which the birds will probably pass at sundown or daybreak in their passage from or to the sea, when going to or leaving their inland feeding places. Success in flight-shooting must, therefore, depend very largely on chance or luck, but given a fair proportion of the latter, it is a fine, wild sport. One essential requirement is a well-trained and thoroughly intelligent dog, and here again no better can be selected than an Irish water-spaniel. No special rules of guidance can be laid down for shore-shooting; the districts are unhappily few and far between where even a moderate bag of edible wild-fowl can be made nowadays, and experience alone can give that knowledge of their habits which is essential to success. Wild stormy weather which drives the birds off the sea is best for shore-shooting.

Punt-gunning or wild-fowling afloat is a sport confined to an exceedingly small number of people, professional or amateur, and is as distinct from ordinary inland shooting as deer-stalking from pigeon-shooting. It may be briefly described as the art of shooting wild-fowl on the sea, or in estuaries of rivers, from a flat-bottomed punt carrying a heavy, fixed gun, weighing anything from 70-170 lb, the muzzle of which rests in a revolving crutch in the bow of the boat, and firing a charge of 1-2 lb of shot. A punt may be either single- or double-handed, *i*.*e.* to contain one or two people, and it is perhaps unnecessary to add the fowl are shot sitting, or just as they rise from the water. It is a sport that contains a considerable element of danger, and requires great powers of endurance and a strong constitution no less than good nerves, and it has been rightly termed a science in itself, only to be learnt by a patient apprenticeship under an experienced teacher.

The art of shooting cannot be learnt theoretically, and can only be acquired by experience and practice. The beginner should, however, from the first seek to avoid an ugly or cramped style, which, once developed, is very difficult to get rid of, and should bear in mind that, in firing at a moving object, his purpose should be not to place his charge of shot where such object is at the moment he pulls the trigger, but where it will be by the time the shot reaches it; in other words the game should run or fly into the circle of pellets. Nor should he seek to effect this by dwelling on his game with his gun at his shoulder—a practice not only clumsy but exceedingly dangerous—but by firing at an imaginary point in front of it. Practice alone can teach the knack of doing this properly; to some men it seems a natural gift, while others do not acquire it in a life-time. A sound digestion is the surest aid to successful shooting, for unless the nervous system be in perfect tune, brain, eye and hand cannot act in that spontaneous sympathy necessary to quick and pretty marksmanship.

None the less a good deal depends on the gun, as well as the man who uses it, and in choosing a fowling-piece it will be found an advantage, no less than an ultimate economy, for the young shooter to place himself in the hands of a London gunmaker of repute, and pay a good price for a good article. A r2-bore is the generally accepted gauge for modem shot guns, and this should weigh from 6½-6¾ lb. Of late years it is gradually becom­ing customary to reduce the length of the barrels from 30 to 28 in., a most decided improvement, as without diminishing the killing-power of the gun it improves its balance, and so lessens the probability of shooting under game, a very common fault among sportsmen. Excessive choking is to be deprecated; a pattern of 140 for the right and of 160 for the left barrel will be found amply sufficient, and a load of 40-42 grains of nitro- powder with 1 or 1⅛ oz. No. 5½ unchilled shot will meet all ordinary requirements of the shooting field. A thoroughly good hammerless ejector gun can be obtained from a first-class London gunmaker for 35-45 guineas, and a pair for £75 to £100, but these prices are capable of considerable modification or the reverse. Single-trigger guns are the latest fashion, but no special advantage can be claimed for them.

The bibliography of shooting is very extensive, but the following works may be cited as standard ones on the subject: The “ Bad­minton Library ” *Shooting—Hints to Young Shooters,* by Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey; “The Fur and Feather series of publications; *The Gun and its Developments,* by Greener; and for wild-fowling, Colonel Hawker’s evergreen *Instructions to Young Sportsmen·, The Art of Wildfowling,* by Abel Chapman; *The Fowler in Ireland,* by Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey; and *The Wildfowler,* by Folkard.

Big Game.

The pursuit of large game, whether for food or sport, has ever exercised the greatest fascination for mankind, and with the rapid opening up of vast continents hitherto unexplored, and the introduction of breech-loading rifles, it has assumed an importance within the last few decades that bids fair to render it a thing of the past before the end of the current century. The present generation has seen the bison, which formerly roamed the American prairies in countless millions, wiped off the face of creation; the veldt of Southern Africa, which teemed in equal proportions with big game of every description, has become a pastoral country, where a few of the commoner varieties of antelope are suffered to exist under much the same conditions as the semi-wild deer of the Scottish Highlands; and even the jungles of Hindustan, save where jealously preserved by native potentates, show signs of exhaustion as regards the larger fauna. True, wherever the white man holds sway, the danger of extinction has been recognized; close-times have been instituted; reserves set apart wherein the animals may breed unmolested, and the number of each species that may be killed, restricted; but it is doubtful whether these laws, wholesome and well-intentioned as they are, can do more than retard the ultimate destruction of big game outside such reserves as the Yellowstone Park in North America. Within the pale of this no rifle is ever fired, and the game has prospered correspondingly, but once let a single head of it wander outside the restricted area, and its doom is sealed. Moreover, there are still vast tracts in Africa, and to a limited extent in other parts of the globe, where big game forms the staple meat supply of the aboriginal inhabitants, who, in addition, are no longer dependent on their primitive weapons of the chase, but are equipped with more or less efficient firearms. Great regions are however still to be found, of which sportsmen have as yet barely touched the fringe. The dense forests of Western Africa are practically unexplored, much less shot out, and Central and Eastern Asia, the Dutch East Indies, and Borneo and Sumatra, offer an almost virgin field for sport with big game. Save for the Barren Grounds of the Arctic regions and some parts of the extreme north-west—though Alaska now enjoys particularly stringent game laws—the North American continent is fast becoming denuded of big game; but in Europe, within a week’s journey of London, the mountains of the Caucasus and the forests at their feet are only known to a handful of intrepid explorers. It will thus be seen that although good trophies, whether of hide or horn, are yearly becoming scarcer, fair sport is yet obtainable in those parts of the world where big game is indigenous, though the days are long past when a sportsman could shoot at his own discretion over the whole of Africa or North America, or when the globe-trotter visiting India could count on big game shooting as forming part of his programme.

Indeed, in view of the increased, and increasing, facilities for world travel, and the prevalent fashion for sport, it is probable that in course of time big game shooting will be universally