the birds to rise high, and get well on the wing. This is some­times attained by cutting away the undergrowth at the end of the covert where it is purposed to flush the birds, but this is also liable to make them break back over the beaters. Where pheasants exist in large quantities, “ false coverts ” of spruce or fir loppings should always be placed at the flushing-point; the birds should be collected as quietly as possible in these, and then sent forward over the guns in small quantities at a time.

Of other recognized British game-birds—as distinct from wildfowl—it is only necessary to dwell on the most beautiful of them all, blackgame. These, though far more widely diffused than the red grouse, are not nearly so numerous. This is possibly due to altered agricultural conditions, the laying to pasture of much of the arable land which formerly fringed the Lowland moors, and the consequent surface-drainage which is responsible for the destruction of many young birds; but the chief cause lies in the wholly inefficient close-time afforded, which should be extended by at least a month. Black- game- and grouse-shooting differ in no way in their methods, though the former are far more difficult birds to handle by driving, while really fascinating sport can be obtained by stalking the old cocks with a miniature rifle.

*Ptarmigan* are practically confined to the summits of the higher Scottish hills, which are usually reserved for deer-forests, and, therefore, offer no opportunity for sport with the shot-gun. In mild still weather they give but poor sport, running persistently in front of the dogs, or sitting until they can almost be knocked down with a stick, but on stormy days they rise wild, and afford splendid sport, especially in conjunction with the wild and romantic scenery in which they are found. They are of course invariably shot over dogs.

*Capercally,* once extinct in Great Britain, were reintroduced into Scotland about 1835, and now exist in tolerable numbers, chiefly in Perthshire. Being a forest-haunting bird, they are usually driven to the guns like pheasants, but apart from their rarity and size, they are not held in great favour as sporting birds, while owing to the great damage they do to young coniferous trees, they are not encouraged to multiply on estates where there is a large acreage of growing plantations. Capercally are very courageous birds, and the writer has seen a winged cock attack and hold at bay a dog sent to retrieve it.

*Snipe* and *woodcock,* though properly wild-fowl, are usually regarded as belonging to the category of game-birds. Though both the full-snipe and the woodcock breed to a limited extent in the British Isles, they may more correctly be described as autumn and winter migrants to them. The varieties then to be shot are the full-snipe, the jack-snipe and the great or solitary snipe; but the latter is exceedingly rarely met with, and the jack-snipe is becoming scarcer every year. Neither of these latter varieties breeds in the United Kingdom. Snipe are exceedingly erratic in their movements, which are largely influenced by the weather; like the woodcock they are here to-day and gone to-morrow. They haunt moist, or marshy localities, and the finest snipe shooting in the British islands is to be found on the Irish bogs. In hard frosts they should be sought near running water. As a general rule a dog is not used to find snipe, but where this may be considered necessary, a well broken Irish water-spaniel is to be recommended. These are the most intelligent of dogs, can be trained to point and retrieve as well, and are capable of standing wet and cold with impunity. It is a generally accepted axiom that snipe should be walked up, down wind, since they offer an easier mark when rising against it, but in the writer’s experience this is more than counterbalanced by the fact that snipe, which are particularly susceptible to noise, lie far better when approached up wind. To kill snipe well is the most difficult knack in shooting, and one to which few men, however good shots they may be at other forms of game, rarely attain.

*Woodcock* arc rarer birds than snipe, and even more erratic in their movements. Large quantities of them usually arrive in England with the first November combination of an easterly gale and a full moon, but they cannot be depended on to stay more than a few hours in the locality where they alight. In Ireland, however, they are far more constant in their habits, and it is here that the largest bags of woodcock are made in the United Kingdom. Though woodcock are properly forest, or covert-haunting birds, in many parts of Ireland and the Western Highlands of Scotland they frequent the open bogs and moors, where they are shot over pointers or setters. Otherwise no particular rules can be laid down for their pursuit, beyond the fact that they are very conservative in their choice of a hauut, and that year after year cock may be found in the same spot. Woodcock are usually esteemed difficult birds to shoot, but more are missed from over-eagerness on the part of the shooter than from the difficulty of the shot they present. Still in thick covert they undoubtedly require a quick hand and eye acting in unison, to kill them neatly.

Of quadrupeds or ground-game, only three varieties, the roe-deer, the hare and the rabbit, are preserved for sport with the shot-gun in the United Kingdom. The first- named, though found in a few widely distant districts in England and Ireland, is chiefly associated with Scotland so far as shooting is concerned. It is essentially a forest-loving animal, and is usually killed by driving it up to a line of guns, when, if close enough, it will drop to an ordinary charge of No. 5 shot; but a heavy load of B.B. or No. 1 is a far preferable, and more merciful, gauge to use. Roe-deer arc not easy animals to move in a direction in which they suspect danger, and the more quietly a drive is conducted, the greater the chance of success. A few men walking carelessly through a wood, *i.e.* as if beating were not their object, will drive roe, and especially the cunning old bucks, with far greater certainty than an array of shouting, stick-rapping beaters.

Far finer sport, however, in every sense of the expression, can be obtained by stalking roe-bucks during the summer months with a small-bore rifle, carrying a hollow-nosed, and not a solid bullet. The most suitable opportunity for this is at sunrise or sunset, when the roe will be found feeding in the more open spaces in the woods. The same animals will nearly always be found in the same locality, but they are exceedingly wary creatures, and the old bucks are quite as difficult to stalk as a red-deer stag.

The *hare* no longer exists in the same quantities as formerly; indeed in many parts of Great Britain it is practically extinct, the result of the Ground Game Act of 1881. No special methods are employed for shooting hares, nor is any great skill requisite for doing so, but sportsmen should always bear in mind that unless hit in the head or heart hares are not easily killed dead, and should, therefore, refrain from firing long shots at them, especially when they do not offer a broadside shot.

It is to be presumed that the Ground Game Act was specially directed—and with reason—against rabbits more than hares, but the former show little or no evidence of being affected by it. Yet from every point of view, except perhaps that of shooting, they are far less valuable, and more noxious, animals, which ravage alike the young plantations of the landlord and the crops of the tenant farmer. Where they are preserved in large numbers, the most usual method of shooting them is to ferret them out of the burrows as short a time as possible before the day fixed for shooting, and then fill in the mouths of the holes with well beaten soil, which should also be drenched with paraffin or tar to deter the rabbits from digging their way in again. If this be carefully done, and plenty of covert—coarse grass, bracken or gorse—be available, in fine dry weather the rabbits will lie out for two or three nights, but in the event of heavy rain or especially snow, nothing will prevent them going to ground again. Where natural covert is scarce, it can be supplemented by strewing brushwood and fir-loppings under which rabbits will readily shelter. In beating for rabbits, the beaters should not merely tap with their sticks, but should thrust them into the clumps of grass and underwood; otherwise many rabbits will be passed over. When rabbits are driven up