WITH NUMBER SIX SHOT

SAN FRANCISCO SPORTSMEN, FAMOUS FOR THEIR SCORES AMONG THE TULES, TELL THEIR BEST YARNS OF THE DUCK PONDS

WHEN the law swings open the door on October 15 of every year and bids water fowl fly forth to chance it with the gunner do the graceful cattails of the sloughs seem to beckon you to come and share the sport—does memory waft to you the fragrant odor of the marsh grass? Can you hear of the wild goose cry, the plaintive call of the swan, the note of the mallard or the teal, the rustle of a wing? When the quick, sharp crack of the nitro powder or the deeper, longer shock of the black explosive sounds to you, when you see flight arrested, a feather floating here and there, a bird tumbling from the sky, do you thrill with the ecstasy that thrills a conqueror? If you do, you're a sportsman, and herewith sportsmen of your kind will talk to you and tell you of the days most replete with incident they ever passed on the marsh with gun in hand.

President Harrison's Hunt.

"Beyond a doubt the most remarkable shoot ever held in California was that at which ex-President Benjamin Harrison participated in 1897," said R. J. Smyth, who conducts a restaurant on Mission street, near Eighth. There is not a duck hunter in the State that does not know Smyth and his yarn should hold the interest of them all.

"Ex-President Harrison's shooting trip was arranged by Ed H. Plant, the most skillful caller of water fowl in the State," continued Smyth, "and to assist him in the work he took along Claude Kagee and Abe Crump, also experts on the marshes. In the President's party were Joseph McKenna, now a Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and Andrew Jackson, not he of historical fame, but the man who made a certain soda water famous. The shoot took place on the Glade ranch, north of Rio Vista.

"Several amusing incidents occurred as the party was proceeding toward the hunting grounds. One old-time hunter was met, and Plant, stopping him, said: "'Jim, let me introduce you to Benjamin Harrison, formerly President of the United States.'

"'Quit your skylarkin',' answered Jim. 'Formerly President of the United States. Huh! Go ahead and take out your tenderfoot and teach him to shoot if you think you can, but don't try to make a fool out of me.'

"Mr. Harrison laughed heartily and the party moved on to the hunting grounds. Notwithstanding the incredulity of Jim, the hunter, the news had become noised about that the ex-President was out for a shoot and when the hunting grounds were reached the crowd thought it had struck the fair grounds.

"Teams had arrived from every point of the compass, each wagon bearing a farmer, his beribboned wife and plump-cheeked children. They made a rush for Mr. Harrison and wrung him by the hand and it was some time before we could clear the field. This was finally accomplished, the wagons fairly lining the fences. It was then that Ed Plant's remarkable powers as a caller were put to a test.

"Notwithstanding the crowd around the fences of the place, he soon raised geese from distant fields and had them circling around above the head of the ex-President. Mr. Harrison killed seventy-seven honkers. He was a good, clean shot and seldom missed his bird. I don't believe California will ever see the equal of that hunt again.'

Saving a Cargo of Ducks.

"As a fisherman always talks of the size of his catch, I am going to indulge the same privilege and talk of the biggest bag I ever helped bring to earth," said Ed Ayers, who dispenses drugs out on Van Ness avenue, except when he is out hunting. "I was out in the Suisun marshes with Jim Maynard," he continued. "By 4 o'clock we had exhausted all of our shells, but piled around our blind were 184 ducks. I am talking, mind you, of a day before the fifty-limit law went into effect.

"As we expected a great day's sport we took along a horse, or, rather, a goat the livery man told us was a horse. When we got ready to start home we led the ancient steed over to the blind, on the shore of a slough, and began to pile the ducks upon him. Well, as we swung aboard the last bunch of ducks (there were between 300 and 400 pounds of them) that goat looked around with an expression such as must have clouded the features of the camel of Scripture when they threw the last straw upon his back. He looked pained, but we attached no significance to this expression until later.

"We had proceeded but a short distance on our way to the station when, we will always believe, out of pure cussedness that horse sidestepped out into a soft place, stumbled, fell, floundered and then sat down, only his nose, expressionless eyes and ears protruding above the muddy water. With visions of a damage suit with the liveryman as plaintiff, inspiring us to rapid action, we tore down about a mile of rail fence, pulled up posts by the roots and soon had a barge built under that steed big enough to float an elephant.

"Evidently expecting that it was our desire to save our ducks as well as his contemptible self, the brute began to thresh around him, kick, snort and paw. We rushed salvage proceedings then, I can tell you, but before that steed signified his readiness to walk out on the boards we had laid for him, and shake the mud of the Suisun marsh out of his shaggy coat, he had beaten our entire bag of 184 four feet under the landscape.

"'Better restore the fence, hadn't we, Jim,' said I.

"'Got any shells left?' asked Jim.

"'No. Why do you ask,' said I.

"'Well,' he answered, 'I thought I'd like to shoot out the brains of this beast and scramble them for dinner.'

"Then we slowly repaired the fence."

A Great Day's Shoot.

"Fun!" said F. M. Haight of the Palace Hardware Company, "well, you should have been with me the day Mr. Frank Brandon of the Last, a victim of the monocle habit, went gunning with me up on the preserves of the late Hermann Oelrichs, on Suisun Bay. There was no better hunting ground in California than these preserves and a real hunter could go out in his slippers and bring back the limit. We loaded Brandon up with 250 shells, deposited him in a blind and took our stations at various points. All through the day Brandon kept busy and couldn't have made more noise had be been defending Port Arthur. Half an hour after we reached the clubhouse Brandon came in, beaming with happiness.

"'Only got seven shells left,' he volunteered in treble voice, 'and I would have shot them off, too, only my shoulder got too sore. But it was the best day's hunt I ever had.'

"Then he wiped the moisture off his monocle, and reaching carefully into his bag drew forth two underfed ducks and a mud hen.

"'What do you think of that for shooting?' he asked, proudly.

"'Great work,' I said; 'but you should never bring back a shell.'"

When Dead Birds Fly Away.

There is no more accurate shot at trap or in field than Otto M. Feudner, and, after his years of experience, four of them passed with the skilled hunters of the State, when he says an event of the hunt is unusual, it is. As he fondled a new automatic shotgun he told this story:

"Hans Schomer of Dixon and I were gunning at the Sink of Putah in the Sacramento Valley. We had our bags pretty well filled and were about to quit for the day when two honkers came soaring along. Quick as a flash Schomer gave the right barrel to one and the left to the other, and both came down like meteors. One struck just outside the blind, the other 150 feet up the bank. Schomer picked up the first honker, wrung its neck vigorously and tossed it into the blind, then walked to the other, picked it up by the neck and started back. Just as he turned he was astonished to see the honker whose neck he had wrung before tossing it into the blind raise in graceful flight and with a call to its mate sail away. With a quick flap of its wings the apparently dead bird he was carrying wrenched out of his grasp and away it soared.

"'I'll be d—d!' was Schomer's only comment.

"Two years ago I was hunting at Mount Eden with Dr. Charles H. Bell. He brought down a spoonbill and placed it in his sack with other birds. Later in the day he had occasion to look into the sack, when out flapped the spoonbill full in his face. Grasping his gun, Dr. Bell fired twice at the fleeing bird, but missed, started to laugh, missed his footing and, gun and all, toppled over into the salt marsh. We fished him out. He didn't complete his laugh."

George G. Frazer, contracting agent for the Chicago Great Western Railway, with headquarters in this city, is another of the many to pay tribute to the wonderful power of Ed H. Platt as a caller of any waterfowl that flies in the air. "At Johnson's grocery at Rio Vista a bet was once made," said Frazer, "that Plant could not call a swan that was seen approaching in the distance down into the streets of the town. Plant took the bet.

"Standing in the center of the street, Plant began to call, and it was but an instant before his cry, or rather hoarse whistle, reached the swan sailing on high, and it began to wheel in ever-narrowing and lowering circles. Down to the very housetops he brought the bird, when a cheer uttered by some spectators alarmed it and it started away. Moving along the streets Plant kept calling. Again the bird circled lower and lower and settled on a pond just at the outskirts of the town, where it was shot. Plant was awarded the bet, it being the judgment of all, even the man who laid the wager against him, that it was the cheer that drove the bird away from the street."

Towed by a Pelican.

Clarence Nauman of the firm of C. Nauman & Co., produce merchants, who brings down a bird every time he pulls the trigger, tells one of the best stories in the bunch.

"I was out in my canvas boat on Big Lake, near Clarksburg," said Nauman, "and when a big pelican went flapping awkwardly overhead I could not resist the temptation, and, raising my gun, fired. The great bird, its wing broken, came tumbling down and I set out after it. As it was in possession of its full strength with the exception of the wing, it gave me a hard row, but I finally got close enough and actually lassoed the astonished creature with the lopped painter of the boat. The way that pelican dragged that boat about at first was alarming, but finally it lost its terror and began to swim leisurely around the lake.

"Whether or not they were attracted by the strange sight of the pelican drawing the boat around the lake I will never know, but the fact remains that a number of 'cans' began to circle above and crane their necks at me. So I quietly lay down in the bottom of the boat, and whenever one of the birds came in range I let him have it. I didn't get the limit, but I got a good bag. It was the easiest day I ever passed on the lake, and as a motive power the pelican proved to be beyond exhaustion. If I could have schemed out a way to keep him I would have counted him till death came to him naturally my hunting partner. But as I could not keep him, and as he was wounded, I executed him at the close of the day, but not without my thanks for his service and regret that it had to be so."

The Undigested Beef Stew.

"Keep in mind that after a day's shooting a hunter is always nearly starved to death and you will enjoy this yarn the more," said Tom Lewis, secretary of the Union Gun Club, and one of the best shots in California. "About two years ago a friend of mine suggested that we skirt the northern arms of the bay and bring home a good bag of ducks. I consented, and bright and early we started.

"The ducks were not as thick as we had expected, so we kept moving, and by evening we were famished and still far from the railroad. Spying an Italian working in a little clearing, I suggested to my friend that we buy something to eat from him. Approaching the Italian, I explained how hungry we were and offered to purchase the dinner from him, but, good soul, he was generous, spurned our money and told us to go up to the house and tell his partner to give us supper.

"When we reached the little farmhouse we found the partner referred to slowly stirring a kettle of fragrant stew as he hummed a tune of old Italy.

"'Ah, da starve; sita da down,' said the Italian with a welcoming smile.

"We obeyed and soon were enjoying the steaming stew, the best we had ever tasted, both of us agreed. Soon our plates were empty.

"'Have more,' again said the Italian. we accepted with thanks, and again we polished our plates.

"'Have more,' again said the Italian.

"'Well, we don't want to rob you,' said I, 'You have been very generous.'

"'Never minda,' interrupted our genial host. 'Plenta da beef, plenta da beef. Damada cow, she get seek, she die yesterday. Plenta da beef.'

"My friend and I rose simultaneously, glanced quickly at each other and going forth into the air leaned over a rail fence. We did not digest the beef."

An Admiral in a Barrel.

Frank Maskey, the candy manufacturer, and one of the most ardent duck hunters on the coast, relates a tale of how Admiral Goodrich stood in a barrel half filled with water, taking all kinds of chances of contracting pneumonia, just to shoot some canvasbacks.

"I promised the admiral to give him a good shoot," said Maskey, and I made arrangements to shoot over the Pringle Club's ponds on the Suisun marshes. When we arrived the weather was threatening, and Miller, the keeper, predicted that a storm was due, and it looked as if the 'cans' would be numerous. We left early that morning, and I took the admiral to the barrel from which he was to shoot. To my surprise I found it was leaking and partly filled with water.

I apologized to the admiral for not having a more serviceable place to shoot from, and advised him to return to the clubhouse until we could make better arrangements.

"But the ducks were flying, and the admiral was game, and he climbed into his blind. I left him and returned to the clubhouse. About two hours later I went back to the spot where he was shooting, and found the water was up to his waist.

"I noticed several ducks swimming around his decoys, and I said to him, 'Why don't you shoot them?'

"'Why,' he said, 'they have been here all morning, and they are attracting other ducks.'

"'Won't you come back to the clubhouse and dry your clothes, admiral?' I asked.

"'Oh, how can I leave this spot while those birds are flying in the distance. Just leave me here another hour,' he pleaded.

"The water in the barrel kept getting higher, but the admiral kept warm with pent-up excitement, and when the moment came, turned loose with both barrels. He was rewarded for his fortitude, for his aim was accurate."

Native Son or Pioneer.

"Let others tell about their skill with the gun," said acting Mayor James L. Gallagher, "but I'm going to tell you of the roughest experience I ever had in

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