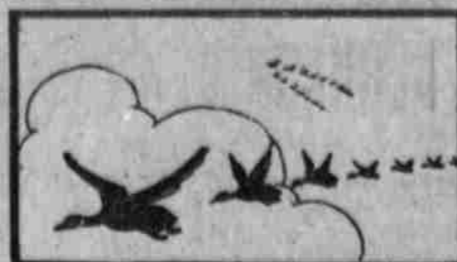




BRANT SHOOTING ON GREAT SOUTH BAY



BY EDWIN MAIN POST

THIRTY years ago this spring my wise father built a flat-bottomed sloop, 45 feet long on the keel and 17 feet wide, with an enclosed cabin that has square windows instead of portholes, and a headroom of six feet all over it. This cabin is 21 feet long, and consists of one large room with four wide berths, and a toilet room and a kitchen on either side of the centerboard, at the forward end.

Father named the boat Macy, after an old friend, and has had her continuously in commission since she was launched; and Andrew Sammis, her first captain, is still in charge—a bit gray now, but still the same careful and trustworthy skipper as of yore. With the opening of the ducking season in October she goes into what we call winter commission, and when the end of the season comes around she is hauled out, thoroughly overhauled and prepared for the summer work. A few years ago we built an overhanging stern on her and installed a gasoline engine, so that we are no longer the slaves of the wind god. The "Macy's Baby," as the stoolboat that carries the battery is called, is always at her stern, and this, with the addition of two skiffs and one or more dinkies for use in the ice, makes quite a formidable tow for the old boat. When we have more than a day or two to spend in the quest for the wily duck, we send the Macy out early to get a good place, and have a catboat meet us at the dock to sail over to her. Generally we catch a train that arrives at Babylon at half-past three o'clock, and we reach the dock ten minutes afterwards.

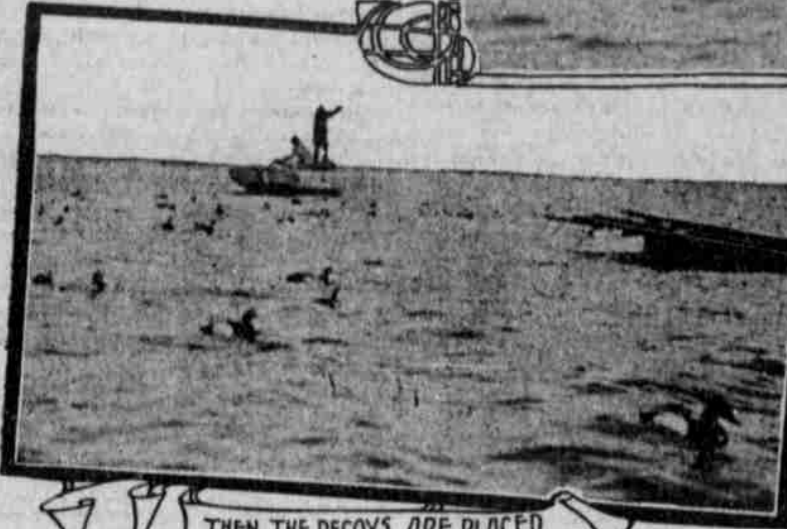
Lay aside for a few moments your



RETRIEVING THE BATTERY



SETTING OUT THE BATTERY



THEN THE DECOYS ARE PLACED



NOW LET 'EM HAVE IT

troubles and worries, and come with us down to kill some brant. It is half-past one o'clock, and I look up from my desk and see my father's smiling face as he says: "Come, Buster, it is time to start." In a moment I have put on my coat and hat, and we are on our way to the Wall street entrance of the subway, as happy as ever two schoolboys starting on a holiday were. We meet you on the platform, and I relieve you of your bag or gun as we board a Brooklyn train. We change at Atlantic avenue to the Long Island train, and soon are at Jamaica, where we change once more to the local steam train and while away the next hour in swapping stories. The train stops at Babylon, and we pile out on the platform and into the dilapidated hack that takes us down to the dock. As it is early in the season and the days have not yet shortened enough to make it impossible for us to reach our destination before dark, the Macy is awaiting us, anchored just off the dock, and we see our good George coming off in the little skiff to speedily set us on board.

As you board the skiff you will not have to ask George, "Are there any birds?" for he will say: "Brant? Why, there's 5,000,000 of the cusses in Cedar Island cove. We'll have some of 'em critters, and don't you forget it." Captain Andrew greets us with a cheery "Good day, gentlemen," as we reach his side, and you enter the cabin to find upon the table a pleasant welcome in the shape of a generous drink for each of us. My father's hearty toast, "Glad to see you on board, sir," makes you feel at home at once.

We promptly lay aside our "store clothes" and don our old shooting things, as the men get the anchor up and hoist the sail, and are soon in the cockpit enjoying the fresh air. Our progress is slow and stately, due to the flotilla behind us, but we have only about four miles to go. Notice now the third member of our crew, a big, tall, fair-haired man with a smile that never comes off. This is Ansel, a newcomer to the Macy in comparison with the skipper, for Ansel has been with us only 20 years. He is a very important personage, for he is the engineer, chef, mate, general utility man and fun-maker for us all. Hark! There is his voice now calling us to dinner.

You sit down before a smoking leg of lamb and dishes of vegetables, with an appetite to which you have been a stranger for a long time, and eat and eat of the good things before you until you are astonished at yourself. Topping off with some of the chef's famous pudding, and helping yourself to a good cigar from the box on the centerboard trunk, you are content. I take the wheel to let the men go below to eat their dinner, and by the time they have finished we arrive at the place where we will test out the battery in the morning.

At ten o'clock we turn into our berths ready for an early call to breakfast. At four o'clock we are called, and by the time we are dressed the breakfast is piping hot on the table. We hurry through our meal to let the men eat theirs, and while they are fixing out the battery and stool, we take a bit of a nap.

The skipper calls us when he sees the men have the stool nearly all out, and you and I put on our sweaters and a dark coat, take our guns and shells, and get into the skiff, to be rowed to

the battery. The battery, or "box," as it is more often termed, is set pretty well to the windward of the bulk of the decoys, with just enough of them around it to hide it from birds coming down on the head; and in getting in we pick our way carefully through the decoys and step from the skiff well over toward the center, so as not to get any water in the boxes. On the deck of the box we have 12 iron decoys that are cut off on the bottom, so as to loom up higher than those on the water, and these we distribute around, heads to the wind, to make the box lay level. We each have a rubber cloth and an old sweater to lie on, and a cloth-covered rubber pillow for our heads. Adjusting these comfortably, we load our guns, cock them and place them against the side on our right hand, taking care to keep at least two inches of the barrels over the end of the box, so that in case of an accidental discharge there will be no hole blown in the box. Long experience in battery shooting has taught me that the longer the barrels of a gun are, the safer it is, and I heartily recommend 32 inch barrels.

Being all ready to lie down, with only our eyes above the level of the water, and await the coming of our quarry. Two men with sharp eyes can keep a pretty thorough watch, except just behind them, and birds coming from that quarter generally swing off to one side or the other of the stool so that they can set their wings and light among the decoys headed up to the wind. You, as the guest of honor, are in the left-hand box, and just as the sun is rising I see a bunch of brant coming in over the beach from the ocean where they have been roosting. If they are headed in our direction, and I think they will pass near enough to see our stool, we lie very close, and occasionally I call them; but the moment they see the stool—and you can always tell this, because they give a sort of dart up in the air and, if they are coming in, settle down again headed toward us—I make no further calls, but say to you: "They are coming in on your side. Lie perfectly still until I say 'Now!' and then give it to them."

It is one of the most inspiring sights in the world to see a bunch of these lordly birds headed for the stool, and a great many people are deceived as to the distance they are off, on account of their great size—often losing a chance by raising too quickly. I watch them with one eye above the edge of the box as they set their wings and come gracefully to the stool, and when they are in good range, I say: "Now! Let's try 'em!" and we sit up with our guns in our hands and fire. As they are on your side and headed up to windward, you will get the best show, because I must shoot at the tail of the bunch and will not have as good a chance to catch a double as you. You can count on my killing right and left however, and as my second bird starts to fall, I see you have three down.

"Well done, my friend. We are not going to be skunked to-day. There are five others, anyway."

Now we lie close, and they come straight for our stool. If I were to flop even once after they have seen the stool, they would be off like a shot—and it is just here that the science of using the flopper means so much. This time they head up on my side, and, when I give the word, we fire, you to kill two, while I am lucky enough to double with each barrel. When George arrives with the skiff and we tell him 11 are down, he smiles all over.

I call to George to bring father down when he comes out to pick up again, for your day would not be complete without an hour or two in the box with that peerless sportsman, who is today, at the age of 77, one of the best shots I have ever seen. We kill again, and George comes down with father. As I get into the boat, father steps into the box with agility equal to mine, and I leave you to an enjoyment that has been the dearest privilege of my life. We have scarcely reached the Macy when you swing again, and I take up the glasses to watch with interest your good work.

As noontime comes we get the Macy underway and drop down to the box, to reward you with a cocktail when you come aboard, and have all ready a smoking lunch of Ansel's best. After lunch we take turns in the battery, and, when the time comes to take up, we count a row of brant along the washer and find 35. We return to Babylon in ample time for you to catch your train, and we do not let you go until you promise to come again.

TO DRAW AND HOLD TRADE

"Most of us," said Mr. Shovelton, "are looking out for ourselves; I think we'll all admit that. The trouble with most of us is that we don't do this intelligently; we are always thinking of ourselves and our own interest only; and that's where we slip a cog. Let me illustrate:

"I buy fruit to carry home; I've done that for—well, a good many years, and for a long time I bought around in various places. Then one day some years ago I stopped at a store where I liked the looks of the fruit and where as I noticed a moment later, the paper bags were a little heavier than those I had been accustomed to find.

"And when this dealer had put the fruit in one of these bags he didn't simply twist the neck of it and hand it over to me so in a form inconvenient to carry. He folded the top of the bag over and rolled it down to form a handle—a grip piece; and then he tied this bundle around securely with twine, thus making it up altogether into a bundle that was secure and handy to carry.

"Of course I liked all that, and I found that he always did up his packages so or putting on sometimes a wood and wire handle; but always he made the package secure and handy for me. He had some thought for me, and I've been buying of him ever since; and if he should move I'd follow him. I would go out of my way to trade with him.

"The moral is this: Any small storekeeper, if his goods are right, can build up a trade and hold it and increase it if he has the intelligence and the human quality that prompts him faithfully to consider not himself alone but as well the wants and interests of his customers."

to come down in the skiff and pick up our game.

There are three things of great importance in battery shooting; the first is to be able to kill when the bird is in range, the second to be able to call, and the third to know how to use the "flopper." Naturally the query rises to your lips, "What is a flopper?" It is a bundle of worn-out mittens, tied together with a bit of string, that I keep in my hand as we lie in wait for the game, and it is used to attract the attention of birds that are passing too far away to see the stool. As I am about to explain the use of the queer contrivance, I see

a bunch of brant leading through the bay to the north of us, about a mile away. If they keep their present course they will pass us without seeing our stool. Something must be done to attract their attention. Quickly I flop the flopper up above the level of the box two or three times, carefully watching for any sign that the birds have noticed something. If there is no such sign, I flop again. Ah, this time they have seen it, for they rise in the air and head toward us.

IN THE PUBLIC EYE

CHOSEN SENATOR FROM MAINE



No climate in the country has been regarded as less encouraging to the growth of Democratic timber than that of the Pine Tree state, but since the thaw of last September the meteorological conditions have been altered.

It was admitted by some political Jeremiahs that a Democratic governor might slip through the breach in the Republican lines and intrude himself at Augusta, but the most enthusiastic visionary hardly dreamed of a Democratic legislature or a Democratic senator. Not since 1856, when Hannibal Hamlin crossed the Kennebec, had a Democratic senator been sent to the national capital from Maine, and not for thirty years had any New England state elected a Democratic senator.

So, as Democratic senator from Maine, Charles F. Johnson will naturally be the center of interest when he reaches Washington to supplant Senator Eugene Hale. He has had less experience as a legislator than his distinguished predecessor, but he has had long experience in public life.

The newly elected senator was born 52 years ago in the old town of Winslow, on the Kennebec. He was sprung of New England stock on both sides, his father being a harness maker, not a poor man, but by no means affluent. Young Johnson was educated in the country schools and went in due time to Bowdoin college, entering with the class of 1879.

After his graduation he studied law, teaching school in the meantime to bring in some money. He was admitted to the bar in 1886 and has continued to practice since then in the town of Waterville.

GOVERNOR-ELECT OF GEORGIA



Governor-elect Hoke Smith of Georgia, who exposed a plot of New York cotton speculators to infect the cotton fields with the boll weevil for the purpose of cutting future crops short and enabling the speculators to win a fortune by going "long" of the cotton market, was a member of President Cleveland's cabinet. He was last fall elected governor of Georgia.

The first information of the plot came in a letter to Mr. Smith from a man whose name he refuses to give, but in whom he places entire confidence. At Mr. Smith's request the writer came from New York for a personal visit with the governor-elect.

Convinced by the evidence offered by this informant, Governor-elect Smith gave prompt warning to the farmers and the planters of the south that two plotters have in their possession at least 1,000,000 live boll weevils, and are waiting their opportunity to scatter these disastrous insects over Georgia and South Carolina.

The exposure created the liveliest interest throughout Georgia, especially in view of the fact that very recently the experts of the country gathered at Atlanta to make plans for combating this insect.

Governor-elect Smith is a native of North Carolina, but studied law in Georgia and was admitted to the bar in Atlanta, where his home has been since 1872. He has been a delegate to two national Democratic conventions and was secretary of the interior under Cleveland from 1893 to 1896.

HANDLES BIG EDITORIAL JOB



Hugh Chisholm gave a dinner recently to the American contributors to the Encyclopedia Britannica. There are 1,500 contributors to this stupendous work in England and America. They have written 40,000 articles, comprising 50,000,000 words. Editing all this is an enormous undertaking and even the proof reading is a stupendous job.

The issuing of the encyclopedia is the greatest undertaking in modern literature. Even the binding of it may create a panic in the market for fine leather. The binding of 1,000 copies requires 15,000 skins. What makes the task of producing the work more serious is the fact that it is brought out in 28 volumes simultaneously, whereas the last previous edition was published one volume at a time and took 14 years to complete.

Mr. Chisholm has 64 editors working under him and the cost of preparing the issuing of this edition is the fact that for the first time in its history the encyclopedia is to be printed on India paper as well as on the ordinary stock. The India paper edition will occupy so small space (28 inches in all) that the entire 28 volumes and index can be lifted at one time. Mr. Chisholm has been in charge of this work for eight years. He came to it from the position as leader writer on the London Times and he expects to go back from it to his newspaper work.

ELECTRIC RAILWAYS EXPERT



There is now a movement in New York for the building and operation of a new subway to relieve the congested traffic conditions, and one of the prominent bidders for the work is Frank J. Sprague, whose portrait is shown. Mr. Sprague is one of the best known and most highly successful electrical engineers in the country. At one time he was an assistant to Thomas A. Edison and is known as the pioneer of the modern electric railway. He founded an electric railway and electric companies and has been engaged in electrical work in navy yards, torpedo stations and battleships.

The other bidders are William McAdoo, who constructed the Hudson river tubes; John Bradey, a large contractor, and the management of the present subway.

One of the greatest problems confronting New York today is that of transportation. The facilities for handling its millions of residents are entirely inadequate and patrons of its subway, surface and elevated lines are crowded into cars like cattle. It is doubtful if any other community in the country would submit to the conditions which are declared to prevail in the metropolis.