

said that rabbits could get no food for a week. I hope that the physician and not the forest warden is right.

CHARLES LOSE.

The Last Black Duck.

THE long blue shadows were stretching across the dazzling whiteness of the snow, settling into every path and foot track. The last of any tenderness the winter day had held was turning into the purple of the horizon-sky which melted through a span of cold red to a hard, brilliant zenith. As I turned, before going in to the fire-side to watch the masses of new white ice hurrying down the river with the ebb, I saw four black ducks swimming up against the north-west wind, their dark backs conspicuous amid the ice and dancing water that was resplendent in the rays of the setting sun.

The great fields of ice and the strong ebb made the river smooth in spite of the cutting wind, and as I again turned to go, the snow creaking under my feet, I resolved to make a determined effort to outwit those ducks. Gun, shell belt and glasses were had in a moment and I was plunging down the steep hillside, the snow spurting at every leap.

From the hilltop the river and the ice spread out like a map, a checkerboard of the elements, a maze understood, but from the beach how different! Somewhere out in that tangle of relentlessly moving ice were the ducks. I knew, ready to bolt through the air and disappear at the slightest hint of danger or carelessness on my part. The ice was going past almost as fast as one could walk, pushing and crowding, rattling and jingling along the shores, the great piled-up floes in the channel moving in silent dignity, the broken, heaped-together hummocks flushed with pink of the sunset, unshaken by the waves that lapped their sides. A big floe was bearing down on me, pushing the little cakes together and grinding along the edges of the cove ice, making me hurry desperately to get out and away before it shut me in. Not to beat it meant a long wait and a long detour—and no ducks. I was in the nick of time, the long, narrow canvas boat racing away as I jumped on my oars, in a moment leaving the home cove and the pursuing ice floe behind. Again the scene changed. Clear of shore and its noise of heating, cracking ice all was silence and peace, only the creak of oar locks and lisp of icy water kept me company as I sped away before wind and tide. December ice is the ice to fight; it is tough and sharp and grows, clutching the water with fang-like fingers even as you break it; it is aggressive and limitless; about it none of the soft, retreating spirit of the ice of spring.

Soon I saw the ducks, four specks in a big open space. I drew up behind a floe and prepared for action. First I pulled some cakes of ice over the boat, then adjusted the underwater paddles, stowed away my oars and lay flat on my back to paddle. Overhead the stars were showing brightly, here and there, as the sun dropped lower, and the moon, two days of the full, looked out in silvery paleness from the eastern sky. My boat, less than three feet wide and only showing six inches above the water, was not only painted to look like ice, but was coated with ice from the water that had splashed on her and was loaded with small floes

withal. Steadily the ducks looked bigger until I could see them plainly without the glasses as they lightly breasted the waves as they headed up wind and quarteringly toward me. A train came along, its steam billowing up, untouched by the cold air, the rails ringing with the frost. While the train was passing I ceased paddling, simply holding the boat steady. The train gone and the ducks settled down, I again pushed on, slower and slower as I drew near. The sun glinted on their bills and I could see the gray patch on their cheeks—my time had come. Quickly rising and swinging the big gun with all my strength, the ducks beat me by yards. With a lispng quack, quack, of one of the drakes their silver-lined wings flashed as they leaped like bomb shells straight upward.

Swift as they were, the shot was swifter, and one of them came slanting back with a tumbling splash into the water. The second barrel was a clean miss and I watched the three bore their way through the wind until I could see them no more. But one was mine. Its sleek warm body lay on my coat, a bit of wild nature, the very essence of all this vast cold, this ice and water and hard, clear sky.

All the creature comforts that the race of man must toil and struggle for the wild duck has as nature's gift—its beautiful coat of feathers, impervious alike to tropic rains and northern snow, to wind and ice; its wonderful wings that carry it through the sky and across continents, its folding paddle-like feet that send it scudding over the water or diving underneath, its bill that can strain and puddle from the water everything it needs. The mystery of life seems hidden in its bright brown eyes.

Two days later the river was closed. The cold had won in its struggle with the tides.

JULIAN BURROUGHS.

Disposition of License Money.

ALGONA, Iowa, Feb. 2.—*Editor Forest and Stream:* At the last session of the Iowa general assembly a gun license law was passed. It was thought at the time by the "powers that be" that a license of one dollar each for resident shooters and ten dollars each for non-resident shooters would bring into the State treasury about \$10,000, and that that money could be used for the protection of game. According to the press of the State there has been paid for licenses over \$100,000. That money is now in the State treasury and the great men of the State do not know what to do with the money. I wrote to the Governor and also to the fish commission and asked them to stock the State with game, as the shooters had paid in the money and they ought to have the benefit of it. Nothing has as yet been done.

It seems to be a case of having too much money. The authorities act as though the shooters of the State had no rights in the matter. I wrote to the State Press and suggested that the State buy several thousand Mongolian pheasants and Hungarian partridges, also about 5,000 whitetail deer and place them in the different counties and protect them for five or ten years. There is plenty of money to do the work with and the shooters of the State want something done.

I am receiving letters from all parts of the State asking if there is no way in which this

money can be used to stock the State with game. It would be my idea to have the shooters write to the authorities and demand that something be done. We have paid in our money for the work. Now let it be done and done well. The shooters do not object to the license law, but they want the money to go where it belongs. I am inclined to think that 100,000 shooters will be heard from next fall unless there is some man made to do some work. There is no reason why we cannot have plenty of game.

JOHN G. SMITH.

Mr. Roosevelt's African Expedition.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT has reported to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution that the expedition under his charge has finished its work in British East Africa and is about to leave for Uganda. Mr. Roosevelt is expected to reach Khartoum March 1. Writing from Nairobi under date of Dec. 15, 1909, he enumerates the collections made as:

Mammals, large, in salt.....	550
Mammals, small, in salt.....	3,379
Birds	2,784
Reptiles and batrachians, about.....	1,500
Fresh water and marine fishes, about....	250

Total vertebrates 8,463

Besides these there have been collected a large number of mollusks and other invertebrates, several thousand plants, a certain amount of anthropological material, and about 2,000 photographs. There have also been sent on about 150 skulls of large mammals, picked up on the field, but without skins. It has recently been learned that Mr. Roosevelt has killed two specimens of the very rare white rhinoceros, an adult female and calf.

Of the collections above enumerated only a small portion has as yet reached the institution.

A Deadly Aim.

THE real origin of the greatest fake hero story ever told has come to light in a scrap book owned by an old resident of Washington.

A group of Revolutionary heroes were standing before an old bar in Washington, and from the lips of each there fell wondrous stories of what he had done in the shock of battle or the frenzy of the charge. Finally one old fellow with long, white whiskers remarked:

"I was personally acquainted with George Washington. I was lying behind the breast-works one day, pumping lead into the Britishers, when I heard the patter of a horse's hoofs behind me. Then came a voice:

"'Hi, there, you with the deadly aim! Look here a moment.'

"I looked around and saluted, recognizing Gen. Washington, and he said:

"'What's your name?'

"'Hogan,' I said.

"'Your first name?'

"'Pat, sir—Pat Hogan.'

"'Well, Pat,' he said, 'go home. You're killing too many men.'

"'I think I'd better get a few more, General,' I said, kind of apologetic.

"'No,' he said, 'you've killed too many. It's slaughter. And, Pat, don't call me General; call me George.'"—Washington Post.