

WILD GOOSE SHOOTING AT SWATOW.

GOING STRAIGHT ON BOARD the very smart and luxuriously-fitted little steamship *Haloong* on the night of Dec. 23, or rather morning of the 24th, after a performance of "Iolanthe" by the Hong Kong Choral Society, of which my companion J. O. was the able conductor (and a very good performance it was), we indulged in a nightcap, and turned into our roomy spring-mattressed bunks, touched the button of the electric light, and so to sleep for a few hours, the steamer being supposed to go at daylight. It was eight o'clock, however, before we left Hong Kong, and after twenty-two hours against a fresh N.E. monsoon, found ourselves anchored at Swatow harbour, very shortly after which our friend M. came off in his gig, and, transferring our traps, gun, boy, and cook to the centre-board yacht *Maid of Kent*, kindly lent us by Mr G., and which was fitted as a houseboat, we went ashore, and enjoyed a good breakfast with Mr and Mrs M. We spent the morning purchasing provisions for a week, and weighed anchor at 1 p.m., taking in tow two "tick-a-tacks," which are small, flat-bottomed, open boats rowed by one man, who stands at the stern and rows forward with one oar over the gunwale, always on one side, and it is not easy to understand (much less to do) how the boat is propelled in a straight line. These boats with two men in them do not draw 6in. of water, and when that falls, the man quietly steps out over the stern and pushes the boat over the mud flats. After about ten miles' sail we arrived at the top of the bay, and, getting into one of the tick-a-tacks, shot three duck and a curlew.

Swatow Bay has a narrow entrance from the sea, with high land on either side; it then opens out and extends inland for about fifteen miles, where it again narrows to about one mile wide, at which point the town is situated. It then suddenly opens out, forming an inner bay of about twelve miles by six, and it is in this inner bay and the low-lying land round that the shooting is to be had. There is a narrow, deep channel, but all the rest is very shallow, with extensive mud flats and large tracts of low-lying paddy land, with the usual bare, rocky hills of this part of China in the distance. Several rivers run into the bay. Housing the yacht up a creek, we turned in very early, as we were intent on devoting ourselves chiefly to wild geese; at least, I was, for I may here mention that my ohm is really not a sportsman, but accompanied me for the change and holiday. I must not say too much, however, as he immortalised himself the following morning by a right and left at geese, and that with a 12-bore, while I was shooting with a single central-fire 4-bore by Blaud.

The *modus operandi* was as follows: Ashore and in position before daylight for the morning light shooting, at which only one or two shots could be had, as the geese then all left the feeding grounds and settled either in the open paddies, or else in the large shallow lagoons, which are really paddies in course of formation, having been banked round from the mud flats, and are then allowed to silt up. These lagoons are usually about one mile long by about a quarter wide, and there is not a vestige of covert but the banks. After the birds have settled down in their resting-places for the day, they can be approached by careful stalking, and, if lucky, four, or sometimes five stalks can be made, by which time they have become wide awake, and got together in such large flocks and in such inaccessible places that there is no getting near them. It being then usually about 9 a.m., we tramp back to our boat with four or five geese, and lie off for the day, or go out in a tick-a-tack after duck and teal in the bay till about four p.m., when it is time to get into posi-

tion; they are supported about 10ft. off the ground on very thin bamboos, and extend for miles. The duck are driven towards them, and, being almost invisible, they fly with their necks stretched out, and drive their heads through the meshes, when the natives run in and secure them. It may also be interesting to some of your readers to know how the wily snipe is caught by the still more wily Chinaman. Having selected a good paddy field, they lay down some hundreds of baskets. The baskets are made very open, of fine split rattan, about 1ft. 6in. long and 1ft. diameter, narrowed to a neck at one end of (say) 4in. diameter, and then opening out to a bell mouth. Inside the neck are a number of fine split rattans, pointing inwards, which can easily be pushed open going in, but quite prevent a bird returning. They are laid in a rut or plough mark, where a small puddle of water lies, and are baited with a fish about 1in. long. I do not believe the snipe eat fish, but the water being muddy, the fish make a stir, which doubtless attracts the bird. I have taken the snipe out of these baskets, which have a small cover at the large end for the purpose, and throw them up to have a shot at. Quail are considered a great delicacy by the Chinese, but they will not eat a snipe, which are only caught for the European market. I saw no attempt to catch the geese, and was told "no can."

We came back by the same steamer on her return trip to Hong Kong, and did the 180 miles in just fourteen hours, having been away ten days in all, and had lovely weather the whole time, feeling no end the better for the change, and having missed all the heavy dinners, &c., customary at this festive season.

R. K. L.

RECOIL.

SIR,—All lovers of the gun should be grateful to you for your experiments and researches *in re* recoil. As one of those shooters who like to understand all about what they handle, and who use theory in practice, I follow the discussions in *The Field* with the greatest interest. Before reading your articles and your correspondents' letters on this subject, I had always thought that recoil was simply the push-back of the powder on the breech of the gun, from the purchase of the weight of the bullet and of the air in the barrel and the friction—though why the recoil never threw the bullet out of the line of aim I never could explain. To illustrate what I mean by the simple push-back, I will mention a simple experiment—which as yet I have not found time to try, but which anyone else has my full consent to carry out. Let the experimenter take an iron rod that will just fit the bore of his gun, and about a yard in length. Fix one end firmly into a good stout tree, so that the rod projects horizontally about 30in. from the trunk, at about 5ft. from the ground. Then, having loaded his gun with 3drs. of C. & H. No. 4, or the equivalent of E.C. or Schultze, and with powder wads, slip the muzzle on to the rod, push it home, place his shoulder to the heelplate, and fire. The better the barrel, the more instructive would be the push-back or recoil; and the seeker after truth might send the gun and his shoulder to the office of *The Field* to be examined and reported on.

The effective recoil taking place after the shot has left the gun explains many difficulties, but, so far, has hardly been all explained itself, if no vacuum occurs, and there is no rush back of air into the barrel. I have always thought that there was a vacuum created by the outrush of the charge, from noticing that when I used paper cases in my gun, and before the chambers had been truly bored (I always use Perfects now); the cases were creased inwards all the way up by the air

SPORT IN NORTH BORNEO.

SIR,—In answer to a query in your pages recently as to sport in North Borneo, I may state that we have elephants, rhinoceroses, lissang (*Bos banteng*), sambar (*Rusa equina*), bears, orang-utans, wild pigs, kedjan or roedeer, and many other smaller animals. The largest feline we have is the clouded tiger, so-called, by no means a formidable animal; the skin of one I have, the largest I have seen, measures 3ft. 10in. from the nose to the root of the tail. The tapir, said to be a Bornean animal, I have never seen or heard about at all. The country is an enormous forest, fairly open and traversable in most parts, but, being uninhabited and without roads or paths in the best game districts, and there being nothing to attract animals to one part of it more than another, sportsmen can only enter it at such places as they think best, and wander about in the vague hope of stumbling across something by accident. To judge by the tracks, animals should be common enough; but, if seen, it is usually only for an instant or two before they are lost to sight amongst the undergrowth and tree trunks. Tracking seems useless. When first I came to Borneo I frequently used to follow the fresh tracks of elephants and rhinoceroses for hours into the forest; but only on one occasion did I nearly come up with my animal, a rhinoceros, and on that occasion all the satisfaction I had was to hear a heavy crashing in the undergrowth, beginning at about twenty yards from me, and rapidly dying away in the distance, without my having had a glimpse of the animal. One drawback to tracking is the necessity that exists for you to mark the way you go, as nothing is easier than to get lost, and to get lost in the vast Bornean forest is a very serious matter.

So far we have simply never been visited by any sportsman, while the residents in the country are always so full of business that they never have time to think about shooting. If anybody came who had had any experience in large game shooting, I dare say a week's journey into the forest for that purpose would result in the bagging of two or three elephants and rhinoceroses. Up to the present time no one has ever done more than make a day or two's trip to some place in the neighbourhood.

Last year some path-making was undertaken by the Government, and by the path-cutters and some other people, about twenty elephants were shot, the majority of them, however, getting off to die in the bush. Mr Allard, the sub-manager of the British Borneo Gold Mining Company, was the first European to kill an elephant, he having bagged two while on an expedition up the Sejama river.

Deserted native campings, whose sites are overgrown by grass, are a certain find for deer and lissang (*banteng*). In some parts of the north coast, near Malludu Bay, there are grass plains abounding with game, which is easily approachable, and good bags are frequently made; but rhinoceroses and elephants are not found there. Up the Kina Batangan places can be seen where the ground is fairly puddled up by tracks of elephants, rhinoceroses, deer, and lissang.

In Elopura there is an hotel, from whence sporting excursions can be arranged to the Kina Batangan, Segama, and other places. MYNAH, Elopura, Bay of Sandakan, British North Borneo, Feb. 17.

GUNS BURSTING.

SIR,—In answer to P. H. R., permit me to offer the following probable explanation concerning the bursting of his gun. The paper portion of the cartridge case might either have been torn or discon-