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WESTERN CARTRIDGE CO., EAST ALTON, ILL.



## Shooting the Shoots

By Wilbur Rogers

riage bureau. Nothing of the sort. I'm here to tell anyone who has the courage to read this article that I'm a nut, a bug. I like tennis. I can sit through a football game without yawning. I have even been known to be among those present at a world series party. But I do none of these things when the range calls. And it is not the kitchen range either.

Everyone knows Annie Oakley. Everybody knows she can shoot as easily as she can eat. And, at the same time, everybody knows that Annie Oakley is the best shot that there is, and that it is impossible for everybody to be exactly like her.

Having relieved the system of that mass of complicated English, let us consider the case. Annie Oakley has been shooting—well, say for a great many years. Not that she would object to stating her age, but, to be frank, I do not know it, and I have no means of finding it out.

But I do know one thing about her. Annie Oakley certainly can shoot.

I can remember dangling my skinny legs off the softer side of a hard pine red seat and watching her do it. Boston, in those innocent days, had no police strikes upon which we could practice, and we were forced to get our appreciation of good shooting from Buffalo Bill and the following of hectic young men and women which was his.

When Miss Oakley whanged away at one, two, three, or even a dozen glass balls, we were sure of the same result. Those balls were going to break into more pieces than your pet china does when you are not watching your Slavonic maid with care. It's an axiom. It's as certain at taxes and death, to be original.

The point lies here. Just because Annie Oakley can do it so easily is no reason why the rest of us shouldn't practice. We will probably never acquire her ability, but I'll remark that we are sure to get her enthusiasm.

Shooting has that effect. If you wish a complete rest in the seclusion of the veranda or the depths of the porch hammock during this winter vacation, stay rigidly away from a gun, be it a shotgun, a revolver, or a rifle. If you don't that little girl from Pittsburgh is likely to acquire a new escort, unless, of course, you are able to entice her away from the ball room long enough to get her middle finger on a trigger. If that happens, ask your friend's congratulations, for she will be a better sport, a better shot, a better pal and, if you feel so inclined, a better wife.

It is not my purpose, however, to discuss matrimony or any feature of it. I am not advocating shooting as a mar-

Personally, I'm for the rifle shooting end of the game. But I readily and cheerfully admit there is a thrill in a shot gun or a revolver and even the machine guns carry their full portion of real pleasure. Did you, by chance, ever have the opportunity to shoot a machine gun?

That, if I may run away a second from the main discourse, is a peculiar point with me. Not so long ago I enlisted in the New York State Guard for the avowed reason that I was going into a company which was a machine gun outfit. And two weeks after I had joined the blamed thing they made it a field gun artillery regiment. O tempora!

The fact is, courageous friends, that you have merely to place a shot gun or a rifle into your hands and let go at something tangible to get what I mean. Maybe you won't hit something tangible the first time you try. But you will stay out there until you do.

After that you may be seen any bright evening informing your friends that you are Deadwood Dick in disguise and that you can hit anything from the elongated side of a barn door to the top of a pin at 300 yards. Shooting gets us all that way just as golf does.

At that, the shooting liar is a jolly sort of cuss. He will tell the crowd at the club how much real ability he has, and when he gets to the range, and makes his paltry 31 or 32 out of a hundred, he'll rub his wrist gingerly and wonder if the bridge game last night wasn't too strenuous on his delicate tendons. But don't be too hard on him. You take the gun and probably you'll shoot away your inherent honesty too.

Just to show what a real thrill there is in shooting, consider this. Last August there was a party of New York newspapermen visiting the Caldwell, N. J. range, which is the largest rifle shooting range in the world. Because they were New York newspapermen they were scoffing and jeering at anything so trivial as spending the afternoon on the firing line. It meant little less than nothing to them.

But just about that moment there came into the picture a nice comradely young woman who was as long on looks as she was on courage. She heard the scoffing, and dared any two of the news-

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