SNIPE SHOOTING IN BURMA.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM PIKE, K.C.M.G.

EARLY in 1906, when stationed at Mandalay,-H. and I arranged to have a whole day’s snipe shoot on the Obo Canal, some four miles west of the Fort.

We started off on the evening of January 13, and having arrived at Obo village, got a boat and went up the canal above Tambew village, where we landed and after a little search found good camping ground close to the canal. Our boys soon put up our mosquito nets, and after a hearty supper we turned in.

We were called an hour before daylight, and after a comfortable breakfast, H. and I started to the nearest “paddy” (rice) fields, and as soon as the light permitted we were well into the snipe. The first hour was bitterly cold and the birds very wild; H. managed to get a good many, but I was not shooting up to average. We had six small Burmese boys to pick up and carry the birds and had arranged that they were to be paid according to the “bag.” This is an excellent plan in India and Burma and very rarely is a bird lost—the marking down and finding of the dead birds by these small boys is truly marvellous. In those good old days I used to give eight annas for each fifty birds, but I fancy this is far more now.

We shot steadily through the day with occasional rests for sandwiches and cold tea, and on counting up our birds on our return to tea we had a nice bag of 123 couple of snipe and four various.

We returned by boat to Obo and thence by ghiarry to Mandalay, very tired, very dirty, but very pleased with our day.

The snipe shooting round Mandalay is excellent throughout the months of December, January and early part of February, but the birds do not always go to the same places each year and it is best to find out where they are before “going for” a big shoot.

There are some places which always hold snipe in enormous numbers. I once had a bet with a man who said that snipe once in did not move about much. I did not agree and backed myself to kill twenty-four couple of snipe every day for six consecutive days in one small marsh of about three acres. I won by an average of twenty-five couple. The gheel was shot out by each evening and was full of snipe again next morning.

These long days in gheels and paddy fields cannot be undertaken unless one is very fit and well, as the walking is of two classes, both bad, i.e., (1) soft mud or marsh up to the top of the boots or higher; (2) a precarious line of advance on the little bunds between the rice fields,
The Jenolan Caves

which are as a rule not more than eighteen inches wide and built up here and there with soft mud which has to be avoided or a fall is certain. (N.B.—After any sort of a fall in soft ground like this, take out your cartridges and see that the barrels are clear.)

Burma is a sportsman's paradise and the Burmese most keen. Their jungle huts are usually very clean and I have slept several times in them.

Snipe in Burma, or in any hot country are nothing like so difficult to kill as at home, except perhaps during the half-hour or so between dawn and sunrise. H. on the above occasion was shooting superbly, his "pick-ups" amounting to nearly four-fifths of those fired at. He had just come from winning the last Grand Prize at Monte Carlo.

Travel.

THE JENOLAN CAVERNS.

BY COLONEL S. F. CLARK.

Probably few people in England have heard of these caves, but they are one of the prides of Australia, and all visitors to New South Wales are expected to see them. The Government Tourist Bureau in Sydney makes the path of the traveller to Jenolan very easy, and for the sum of seven pounds it will take him from Sydney to the caves and back on a five-day trip, will board and lodge him at the excellent Caves House Hotel, and will show him four of the caves. If he wants to see any more of them he can do so by paying the usual fees, two to five shillings per cavern. We did this trip, and I shall try to tell of what we saw, beginning with some words on the journey.

We left Sydney on a Monday by the 9:25 a.m. train for Mount Victoria, the farthest of the holiday resorts on the Blue Mountains. These heights are very dear to the hearts of the city folk, and at Christmas or Easter the number of people who are compressed into a mountain hotel or boarding house is astonishing. The ranges begin thirty miles from the capital, and in the early days of colonization the time soon came when the settlers felt shut in by them. For the progress of the colony it was imperative to get over the mountains into fresh lands beyond where the flocks and the herds could multiply, but for a long time every effort to do this failed, for no white man could find a path across the barrier. The height was nothing—under 4,000 feet—but the precipitous cliffs which bounded the valleys like great walls were unscalable, and man after man was beaten in the attempt to win the reward which the Government at last offered to anybody who could find a passage through the ranges. Even the indomitable Surgeon Bass of the Royal Navy, a man with the soul of an explorer was