



And Now He's A Crack Shot

When Buffalo Bill had dropped the last great horned owl with his trusty flobert every juvenile cap in the far regions of East Broad St. was full of holes. Literally, he wrecked 'em. Mothers' suggestions that tin cans would do just as well were received with scorn. Who ever heard of holding up a thing labeled Gilby's Hot Tomale Brand Tomatoes and calling: "Great guns, Bill, old boy, you got a whopper that time! Betcha this one weighs twenty-five pounds! Look at them horns!" No, sir, they must have caps, old worsted caps; and the more mothers darned 'em and patched 'em the more nearly they resembled the real thing. So mothers acquiesced and contributed to the illusion with bright calico patches.

All went well until Lieut. Lee Bowler discovered that the new kid in the neighborhood had a football. It would be great sport, he thought, to kick high ones for Buffalo Bill to shoot at. "Just a twister he can't hit," he assured the kid. "It'll fly like a wild goose." But Buffalo Bill never missed. At the crack of his rifle, the "wild goose" exploded in mid-air, and the kid ran home to cry in his mother's apron. That evening a great marksman made the startling discovery that his talent was inherited. "We've had enough of this cowboy foolishness around here," declared his sire, finishing off with a bull's eye.

Thus ended the age of make-believe in the life of an imaginative youngster who aspired to be a cowboy king. Henceforth, Harry Miller spurned a nom de plume, and went forth to make good on his own. Through the strategy of his uncle, Lit Welsh, he was permitted to have a shotgun on his eleventh birthday and went with him often to shoot quail and grouse in the Somerset hills and ducks on the Eastern Shore. Soon he was matching his uncle bird for bird—a sure proof of progress, for Uncle Lit was one of the best shots in town.

Returning home from a week of failures one November afternoon, Harry saw Prof. Savitz, then superintendent of Westfield Schools, watching the antics of a hell diver on Clark's pond. Here was an opportunity to atone for bad marks. "Would you like to have that hell diver, Professor?" he asked hopefully. "Indeed I would," replied Prof.

Savitz. "How will I catch him?" "Oh, that's easy! You just wait here a minute." And Harry turned on his heels and ran home to get his gun. As usual his aim was true. The hell diver went down twice, but his third appearance was fatal. Assuring Prof. Savitz that he'd deliver the bird in person, he took the hell diver to a taxidermist and had it mounted. "Guess the Professor was pleased," he confided in his Uncle Lit. "Gee whiz, if mother was to find out I was 'way behind in my lessons, I'd lose my gun." Cautioned Uncle Lit: "Better watch out, then, or you will. The Professor will keep a sharp eye on you now."

Nothing could lesson the boy's ardor, however. He slept with his gun at his bedside, and practiced mornings before going to school. On Saturdays and holidays, in the open season, he was in the field from morning to night. Whenever there was a match at the Carteret Gun Club he took a station outside the grounds to shoot birds that had been missed, and he did so well that Cy Wilcox, assistant manager, invited him inside to keep score. One day he got twenty straight shooting with Harry Kirkover and Dan Bradley. "Keep it up, kid!" encouraged Bradley, "you'll get there."

In 1938, Harry Miller took up a year-round sport, clay bird shooting, and was soon rated among the crack shots. He won the New England championship twice; the New Jersey and Connecticut championships each once. His record at Hartford has not been surpassed; he broke 178 straight, scoring 198 out of 200.

Form is the determining factor in matches when the best shots of the country compete. Miller finished near the top in the marathon at Yorklyn, Delaware, breaking 483 and 485 out of 500 in two trials. The winner, George Newmaster of Lebanon, Pa., broke 499. Miller defeated him in the Connecticut championship. It is not unusual for him to break 150 straight. Though his hair is fast turning white, he retains his youthful enthusiasm. Only the other day he was observed demonstrating to Don Pearsall the proper way to handle an imaginary gun from every imaginary angle. All of which goes to show what an ambitious kid can do if he gets off to the right start in the world of make-believe.