

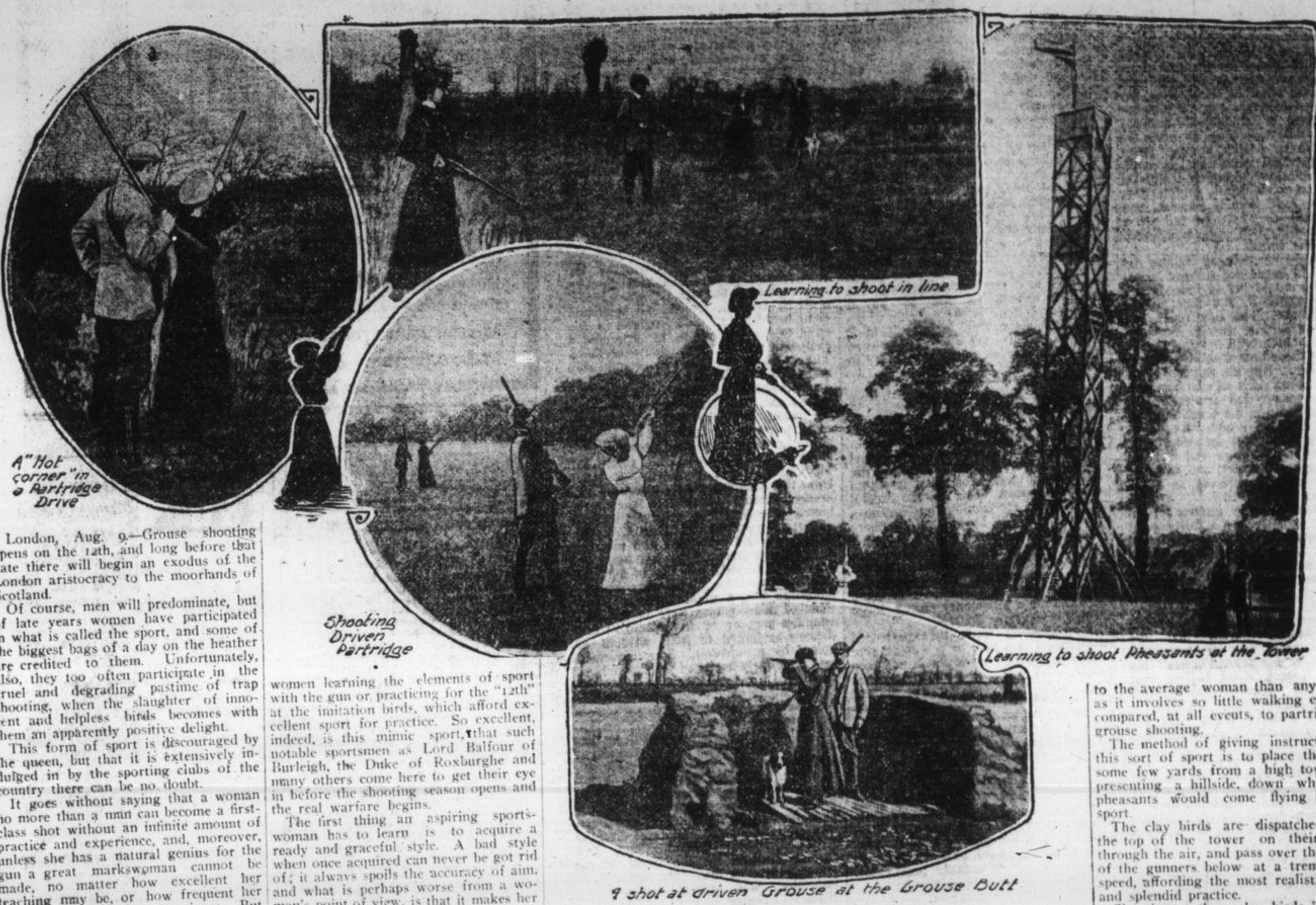
The Daily British Whig

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WOMEN PREPARE FOR SLAUGHTER OF BIRDS.



London, Aug. 9.—Grouse shooting opens on the 12th, and long before that date there will begin an exodus of the London aristocracy to the moorlands of Scotland.

On the 12th, men will predominate, but for late years women have participated in what is called the sport, and some of the biggest bags of a day on the heather are credited to them. Unfortunately, also, they too often participate in the cruel and degrading pastime of trap shooting when the skill of innocent and helpless birds becomes with them an apparently festive delight.

This form of sport is discouraged by the gentry, but it is extensively indulged in by the sporting clubs of the country there can be no doubt.

It goes without saying that a woman no more than a man can become a first-class shot without an infinite amount of practice and experience, and, moreover, unless she has natural genius for the gun a great marksman cannot be made no matter how excellent her teaching may be, or how frequent her practice and wide her experience. But with proper instruction it is quite possible for the average woman to become a very passable shot, and there is no doubt that the increasing number of reliable markswomen to be seen at all big shoots is due to the fact that far more attention is paid to the education of the sportswoman than was the case ten or twelve years ago.

The West London Shooting School is crowded at this time of the year with women learning the elements of sport with the gun or practicing for the "12th" at the imitation birds, which afford excellent sport for practice. So excellent, indeed, is this mimic sport, that such notable sportsmen as Lord Alhoff of Burleigh, the Duke of Roxburghe and many others are here to get their eye in before the shooting season opens and the real warfare begins.

The first thing an aspiring sportswoman has to learn is to acquire a ready and graceful style. A bad style when once acquired can never be got rid of; it always spoils the accuracy of aim, and what is worse from a woman's point of view, is that it makes her look anything but graceful.

The correct methods of holding the gun, bringing it to the shoulder and taking aim have all to be studied carefully and mastered before the embryo marksman is sent to the education of her sporting education.

After these initiatory lessons have been thoroughly mastered, the aspiring sportswoman can try her hand at knocking over driven grouse, which is

shooting of an exceptionally difficult kind. The pupil is posted in a grouse but precisely as he would be on the moors, and the mimic birds come fast and at terrific speed, the flight being rather low, as is usually the case with driven game.

In this position she learns how to take approaching shots, and by wheeling quickly round she can practice at the

birds as they go whirring past the butts. By the time a sportswoman is able to knock over these birds with any degree of certainty she has made considerable headway to becoming quite a passable marksman, for they are very tricky shooting, and put her skill to a severe test.

In this position she learns how to shoot at driven grouse at the grouse butt.

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to the average woman than any other, as it involves so little walking exercise compared, at all events, to partridge or grouse shooting.

The method of giving instruction in this sort of sport is to place the pupil some few yards from a high tower representing a hillside, down which the pheasants would come flying in real sport.

The clay birds are dispatched from the top of the tower on their flight through the air, and pass over the heads of the gunners below at a tremendous speed, affording the most realistic sport and splendid practice.

Shooting at these clay birds is really exciting, and if aristocratic women stopped at this there would be no harm done. But live birds shot from traps is another thing, and the sooner it is learned the better opinion the better.

Shooting on the moors should also be shunned by every woman of dignity and refinement. But it is the fashion, and in England the fashion rules.

Of all classes of sport with the gun, pheasant shooting appeals perhaps more

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