

HUNTING THE EGRET



"IF YOU'RE CRAFTY AND QUICK AND ACCURATE YOU CAN SOMETIMES BRING DOWN SEVERAL OF THE SCARY BIRDS BEFORE THEY GET OUT OF RANGE. BUT A FEW OF 'EM PAYS BIG."—DAVID W. BENNETT, PROFESSIONAL EGRET HUNTER.

POMONA, April 1.—David W. Bennett, the most experienced and famous hunter in the world for wild egrets and herons, has been in Los Angeles and in his orange grove in the San Gabriel Valley for a week. He has been resting in California for a month, and he will go back to hunting egrets off the coast of Mexico and Central America some time in May.

Orleans a few months later. Our next-door neighbor was a wholesale milliner, and he said he would buy such stuff for \$5 for each plume and take all I could get. I could have easily got and brought home over 500 such heron plumes, and, of course, I resolved to go back to Central America the very next year to hunt egret feathers. That is how I came to get into this business.

In that region to keep me busy as long as I care to stay by the egret hunting business. But everywhere in the regions I have been in and have ever heard about a rapidly growing scarcity of egrets is evident.

valorem on all my egret feathers sent to New York, but now they are admitted free of duty, and we hunters get the 10 per cent difference. The price for my feathers depends upon the condition of the stock and the manner and place in which I market it.

glass and scrutinizes each plume with all the nicety of a bird examining a flower. A background of white is always used with each plume, so as to make the faintest discoloration more perceptible. That is the time that the hunter or seller has to put in his best bits of fine work for a shrewd buyer will find some defect in color, shape or firmness in the whole of a man's stock and knock the price down \$1000 or more unless the seller raises a rumpus at such proceedings and acts independently.

"We generally reckon that an egret that is got without damage to the feathers is worth about \$3.20, and each heron \$1.85.

ter must be the foxiest kind of a hunter. "Talk about the artifice and skill of duck and squirrel hunting! Why, both are boys' play by the side of shooting egrets or herons for a living. These birds are the most cautious and wary of any I have ever known or heard of.

"Egrets seem to almost smell the presence of a man with a gun. I know of no decoy that could be used with egrets or herons, but even if it could once be used, that would be the last of that trick in that locality, for by some sort of freemasonry all the bird's family and cousins for miles around would be warned of the delusion.

ing at the shoals along the shore. "We get our craft in position, one man in a boat, before 4 p. m. and conceal ourselves and our boats with reeds and foliage just as duck hunters do. Along about 6 o'clock the birds come back to their nests and then we watch our opportunity for shots, and, by long experience, I have learned the proper moment it comes. Just at the proper moment I will shoot, and in a fraction of a second my hired shooters will follow with their guns. Generally I can get three or four successful shots at the frightened birds before they are out of range, for they are so easily frightened that they are powerless of flight for a moment and make good targets of themselves.

"After we have got our birds and have picked the few feathers we want from each we plan another onslaught in another locality. If we are lucky we may soon get located, while only five miles away, and the unharmed birds have flown away, we row about and gather the harvest.



PLUMES OF THE WHITE HERON.

THE CHEERFUL KIND OF BOMB THE AMERICAN PRESS FIRED AT SPAIN LAST WEEK