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# Six-Gun Improvements and the Berns-Martin Speed Holster

By ELMER KEITH

ANY Colt or Smith & Wesson fixed-sight revolver can be easily target sighted. With the Colt Single Action and new service guns it is necessary to make a band-type front sight for best results. Of course a higher standard front sight can be fitted, but it is not as good as a band front sight with separate blade. The Colt Official Police has a front sight like that of the fixed-sighted Smith & Wesson guns. This type of sight has a fairly broad base, then is cut away about half way up to form the blade or front sight proper. Such sights, both Colt and Smith & Wesson, may be easily changed by cutting off the front blade down to this wider base, then milling a slot the full length of the base and fitting a blade front sight of any desired height, width or shape. This blade may be anchored with either a pin or a screw, the latter being the more convenient, as it facilitates the changing of blades when necessary.

Blades may be made sloping down from front to rear so that they will not catch in quick-draw work, or they may be made of the Call type with gold bead, and in any width to suit the shooter. They may also be made adjustable for elevation for the target shooter. I have used a 1917 model Smith & Wesson that H. W. Bradley of Salmon, Idaho, fitted thus with adjustable front sight.

For fitting an adjustable rear sight, there are a great many arrangements, both good and bad. The top of the frame may be milled out and a rear sight like the Smith & Wesson target fitted, though this type of target rear sight is very susceptible to damage in carrying or in severe usage. The

best and cheapest target rear sight I know of is the Colt .22 Automatic sight dovetailed into the rear end of the revolver frame. With the sighting notch cut out to correctly conform with the front sight, this makes an excellent combination and is very strong and dur-

able. This type of sight can also be cut off up to the top of the dovetail and another base welded on with an extension, thus setting the sight proper about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch to the rear, just out of the way of the hammer. This gains  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in sight radius. The front sight may be made with the blade having its highest or sighting portion as far forward as possible, and so gain another  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in sight radius. I used for some time a 1917 Smith & Wesson revolver sighted as above, with excellent results, doing some of my best long range shooting with it.

Two other ways of gaining sight radius are by flat-topping and extending the frame back about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch, or welding on an extended sight base. Frames may be either blued or case hardened in colors; H. W. Bradley employs the latter method, which I really believe is the better. I believe O'Meara usually blues his frames after flat-topping. There is a lot to this flat-topping. Properly done it adds materially to the efficiency of the gun. I have seen several frames that were not properly flat-topped, the barrel threads having been burned so that the barrels had to be sweated in the frames. Such a job is no good. Bradley recently turned out the best flat-top S. A. job I have ever seen, the threads not hurt in the least.

Both Colt and Smith & Wesson double action heavy caliber guns may be easily converted into really efficient pocket guns, or so-called Detective Specials. With the Smith & Wesson the barrel should not be cut off shorter than just flush with the forward end of the ejector latch; then a band front sight can be made up and the lower

part of the band cut away so it will fit just above the ejector latch. It can then be both sweated and pinned to the barrel and make a very neat, strong job. Either the standard fixed sight can be used on the rear, or one of the special rear sights. The Smith & Wesson will be found a very good fit for most average size hands. The Colt New Service will be found ideal for men with extremely large hands, and can be cut off to the ejector rod, making a very short gun. If such guns are to be used only double action, as McGivern uses them, then the hammer spur can well be cut off, leaving nothing to catch in the pocket or on the clothing.

Many men have extremely long fingers, and have trouble getting their fingers into the trigger guard as quickly as they should under stress of excitement, or in extreme speed tests. For such the best and only cure is to cut out the front portion of the trigger guard, so that there is nothing in the way to prevent the trigger finger from finding the trigger in the least possible time. Berns cuts out his slip gun trigger guard this way, as does FitzGerald of Colt's. Newman often cut his trigger guards away entirely on his slip guns. Newman's pocket guns were a pair of  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch .45 Colt slip guns. He habitually carried these guns in his front trousers pockets.

The base pin of the S. A. Colt can be improved by making a new one of tool steel with a large head that is easily grasped for removal. Also the base pin catch as regularly furnished on S. A. Colt guns is totally inadequate for heavy caliber guns with full loads, and will nearly always fail to hold

the base pin in place under extreme recoil. There are several methods of curing this trouble. A longer and stiffer spring may be used, which often does the trick. The old screw-type base pin catch is better. The best base pin catches I have ever used



MODEL 1917 S. & W. FITTED WITH ADJUSTABLE TARGET SIGHTS BY W. H. BRADLEY

were designed by Harold Croft, in two general types. One is a lever fitted into the front of the frame, that locks crosswise of the base pin. This has a small spring plunger, fitted at my suggestion and similar to the old Sharps, to hold the lever in place. The other catch that Croft designed is much more simple, more easily fitted, and to my notion is the best of them all. The hole through which the regular spring screw type of catch is fitted is drilled out slightly larger, and a pin with a small lever at the right-hand end is fitted in this hole. The pin is cut away at one point, so that when the lever is turned up, the base pin can be removed or slid back into place. When the lever is turned down, the round body of the

pin locks tight in the corresponding cut in the base pin. There is also a small pin on the inside of the lever at the bottom, that locks in a small hole on the side of the frame, when the lever is turned down. I shot over 500 of the very heaviest black-powder .45 Colt loads through one of Croft's guns so equipped, and there was never the slightest sign of loosening of the base pin.

Croft and Sedgley designed a main spring similar in shape to the one employed in the Colt Officers' Model. This spring speeds up the action somewhat, and has never given the least trouble. However, I do not believe it will stand as much abuse as the Newman spring. The latter is slower, but is unbreakable; it cocks very

softly and easily, and is always sufficiently strong to fire the primers, and with the minimum of jar.

When frames are flat-topped and extended, or just an extended rear sight base is added, then the top of the hammer is cut off to allow the hammer to go in under the extension. This also lightens the hammer jar and speeds up the action. Hammer spurs can be cut off and welded on in a lower position, and the general contour of the thumb-piece altered to conform to the general design of the Bisley thumb-piece. The Bisley thumb-piece is by all odds the nicest and best hammer spur of all, though one has either to remodel a Bisley or wreck one to get the thumb-piece to weld on to the S. A. hammer. Hammers are carefully

in a Single Action a loose firing pin, entirely separate and detached from the hammer. This enables him to further lighten the hammer, and does away with any possibility of the firing pin hole in the recoil shield enlarging; and it is also an improvement on the recoil shield or plate. Bradley has now gone a step further and made up a rebounding firing pin for the S. A. similar to that in the .45 Colt Automatic. The pin being itself shorter than the distance between hammer face and primer, the gun is absolutely safe with all six chambers loaded. The hammer is best carried right down on the frame, and no amount of pounding on the hammer will fire the gun. A spring holds the firing pin back to receive the hammer blow, the pin being driven

rehardened after this work is done.

Single Action guns may be quickly converted into slip guns by the removal of the trigger and the addition of the Newman slip hammer and main spring. If it is desired to lighten the regular S. A. mainspring, this may be easily done by loosening the mainspring screw and putting a leather shim under the lower end of the spring, below the screw, and then tightening the screw. Any desired stiffness can be secured by the use of shims of different thickness.

Single Action Colts may be made safe with six cartridges in the cylinder by the addition of another bolt cut on the cylinder so that the cylinder can be locked between chambers. Croft designed and had fitted



TWO .38 COLT LIGHTNING MODELS. UPPER ONE WITH GRIP CHANGED BY BRADLEY



SINGLE ACTION FLAT TOP WITH REBOUNGING FIRING PIN, SPECIAL BASE PIN, AND GRIP SIMILAR TO CROFT GRIP EXCEPT CUT DOWN TO FIT A SMALL HAND. BASE PIN CATCH NOT YET FITTED. WORK DONE BY BRADLEY



A CUT-DOWN MODEL 1917 S. & W. REVOLVER

LATEST DESIGN OF  
BERNS-MARTIN  
HOLSTER



forward like a bullet and continuing to move after the hammer has come to rest against the frame. The momentum of the firing pin explodes the primer. I believe this is one of the greatest improvements recently made in the S. A. Colt.

The safety and half-cock notches should be cut off the Single Action hammer before it is re-casehardened. These are not necessary, and cause much trouble when the gun falls into the hands of a novice or someone not familiar with the S. A. Of course if the gun be a slip gun, these notches make no difference.

Anyone interested in the Single Action Colt should read Mr. Hathaway's article in THE AMERICAN RIFLEMAN of April, 1927. For the benefit of those who have not a copy of this issue, I will briefly cover some of the more important changes to hammer, bolt, and bolt-and-trigger spring as described by him. First, take the hammer. The little sharp-cornered pin that times the release of the cylinder bolt is usually furnished about twice as long as necessary, and thus causes the bolt prong to be sprung in twice as far as necessary. This sometimes causes the bolt prong to break, especially in very cold weather. Grind this pin down, perfectly flat and parallel with the surface of the hammer from which it projects. Grind it off about

half way down to the hammer, or until the remaining portion of the pin is equal in thickness to the bolt prong that it actuates. Care should be taken not to alter the slope of the pin as that would change the timing of the bolt. Next, take the bolt. Determine first if the bolt is drawn down farther than necessary to release the cylinder when the cocking operation is commenced. If so, then the end of the bolt prong that works in conjunction with the above-mentioned pin on the side of the hammer, should be carefully dressed off, a little at a time until the bolt is just drawn down flush with the frame, thus greatly lessening the amount of bending imposed on the bolt spring. Next, take a small, round jeweler's, or so-called "needle," file, and round out the end of the square dividing cut that separates the two prongs of the bolt. Breakage usually occurs where the operating prong joins the main body of the bolt. Rounding out this sharp inside corner greatly lessens the liability of breakage. Next take the bolt-and-trigger spring. The bolt spring, or shorter prong of this spring, is where the grief usually occurs if at all. This bolt half should be tapered from the base out to the tip, where it bears on the bolt, such tapering to be in the thickness of the spring, and not in the width.

If this is done carefully, there is mighty little possibility of a bolt spring ever breaking. Pay no attention to the slight up-turn at the end of the spring, and file just as if the spring were flat, removing the up-turned tip. This spring should be tapered to about half its thickness on the extreme tip, and should be an even, gradual taper from full thickness at the base, to the tip. It is very important to file lengthwise of all springs so that no scratches will result across their surfaces that might in time form cracks. Personally, about the only trouble I have ever had with S. A. parts breaking has been with the bolt and the bolt spring, and this in extreme cold weather in Montana before I learned to properly alter these parts. At that, I have never had more than two of each part to break, and none since I began altering them. The hand should be cut off until it just does turn the cylinder into place, and no more, when the hammer is pulled all the way back. If it tends to turn the cylinder past center, then it is very hard on the bolt and bolt cuts in the cylinder, and also

on the hand itself. If all the moving parts in the action are carefully hand-polished, the smoothness of the action can be improved very much. The S. A. Colt is not obsolete, and I doubt if it ever will be.

Most double action Colt and Smith & Wesson guns are very carefully fitted and finished inside, and there is seldom any work necessary on their actions, except adjusting trigger pulls and the lightening of the Colt double action mainsprings for extreme rapid-fire double action work. I believe Ed. McGivern of Montana uses all Colt double actions with the mainsprings as issued, and he shoots double action altogether for fast aerial or group shooting. He has followed this trick in exhibition shooting, as well as practical self-defense work, for a good many years, and no doubt his trigger fingers are very well developed, and a little difference in the weight of the D. A. pull does not apparently bother him in the least.

Although I have used a six gun practically all my life, I had never until recently attempted aerial shooting or any double action shooting except the occasional bust-



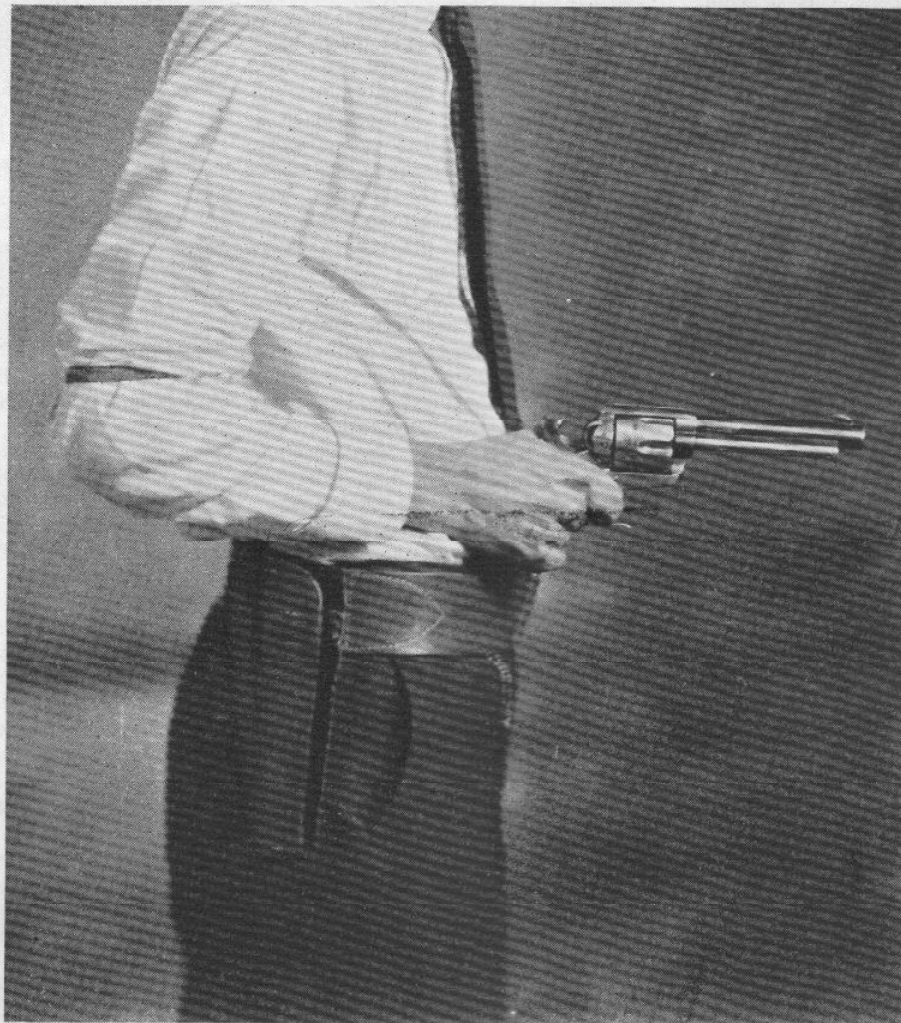
IN ACTION  
THE HOLSTER

ing of a beer bottle thrown up by some cow-puncher friend, and a little fast hip shooting from an old rod-ejector D.-A. Colt. I have known that McGivern could make six hits on fairly large tin cans thrown up by an assistant, using a .38 Special O. M. Colt. I have often heard men say that it couldn't be done, but for my part I know McGivern would never have claimed to do this stunt unless he had actually done it,

and done it many times at that, as he is always very conservative in reporting his work. Also, John Newman managed to fire six shots from a slip gun at a can thrown up around 18 or 20 feet in the air, making four or five hits, I have forgotten which. Through the kindness of a gun crank friend I had the opportunity to try this stunt myself with a new .38-44 Smith & Wesson, with various loads. I started in a few days before Christmas, and though I was able to get off only one shot at the beginning, and quite often missed that one shot, I soon worked up until I was making two, and often three, hits. I threw a gallon

can up left handed, and fired right handed. I practiced quite a bit, snapping on empty cases. By Christmas I had made five hits once, and once had put all six shots through a can before it came down to the level of the gun. This with Standard Western full-power loads in the .38 Special. I managed to make four and five hits quite often after a little more practice, also the same number with the Western Super Police loads, which have a little more recoil, which slows one up. I tried two different Officers' Model Colts, but found the mainsprings too strong to make more than four hits. I guess my finger isn't as strong as

McGivern's. I need about 20 years more practice. With the Smith & Wesson I found that I could turn the mainspring tension screw out three to four full turns and still fire the cartridges. This is a great help to a fellow with a weak trigger finger, raised on the Single Action. I tried a box of Remington Kleanbore .38 Short Colt cartridges with outside lubricated bullets, in the same .38-44, with the net result that



HOW THE BERNS-MARTIN HOLSTER IS WORN

my last five strings of six shots each were all hits on the gallon cans. Of course these little loads had no recoil at all and enabled one to stay on the can much more easily. I am going to try this stunt with the slip gun next, and then try it on smaller objects. This shows what progress even a S. A. man can make in a short time and with only 500 rounds of ammunition. The Colt mainspring could be cut down so it would still fire the primer and greatly speed up the action for fast work.

When beginning this sort of work I believe the best guns would be the new Colt Officers' Model and Official Police in .22

caliber, with the mainsprings lightened as much as possible; the new K-.22 Smith & Wesson, and the new Colt Ace. I do not like the Smith & Wesson .22 32. It is so light, especially in the barrel, that it feels much like a fly rod in the hand. The Colt Woodsman is very much the same.

Personally I prefer the Government model Colt automatic to any and all other automatics. The Ace, the Super .38, and

the .45 will make a most excellent outfit for the users of automatic pistols. The Super .38 and the .45 could be greatly improved by fitting them with higher, adjustable sights. The later issues of the Super .38 came out with wide front and rear Patridge type sights, which are a great improvement over the older sights. Of course sights of any design can be easily fitted to these guns, and when this is done it is much easier to do the fine shooting with them that they are really capable of doing. O'Meara, Jas. V. Howe and Bradley are equipped to do any of the remodeling jobs I have mentioned.

The Croft No. 3 grip is the only one that is any improvement over the standard S. A., and then only for slow fire. This is a most excellent grip for any deliberate shooting. The hammer must have a base welded on like that of the Bisley to fill the cut in the high back strap when this grip is used.

Six-gun grips can be changed to almost any desired shape and size. This is accomplished by cutting off, welding, and bending the straps to any desired shape. Of course the straps of the S. A. and the first model of Colt D. A. guns are the easiest of all to alter, but other guns may be changed if necessary. An example of this is illustrated in a first model Colt, a

.38 or so called "Lightning" model, altered by Bradley. The original and improved grips are shown for comparison.

Many grips can be completely and easily changed by restocking with larger grips of wood or ivory. In wood, only Circassian walnut should be used. It is hard enough to take the checking properly, and thus make a good job, and one that will last. To my mind, nothing equals good, full, elephant ivory grips, with the right or left grip (depending upon which hand the gun is used in) carved in relief. Such carving fills out the hollow of the hand and affords a very secure hold. Even plain uncarved ivory has a sticky feel when any appreciable pressure is applied, and is not slippery like pearl or hard rubber. Any design, almost, can be employed, such as an American eagle, Mexican eagle, ox head, buffalo, Indian head or eagle head. I recently saw a friend's .44 S. & W. fitted with carved ivory depicting a full African lion, and it made a very fine and beautiful grip. Ivory gradually colors with age, like an old meerschau pipe, which adds greatly to its natural grain and beauty.

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When a sailor, and especially one who has been a member of the Navy Rifle Team for a good many years, gets marooned for shore duty on the coast of Alaska for any length of time, he is apt to think things, and has plenty of time for so doing. Then when said sailor gets a chance again to associate with his old cronies, he is apt to put some of his thoughts into action.

Such is the case with one J. E. Berns, not unknown to these columns, or to Camp Perry. It so happened that friend Berns got marooned in Alaska with a 7½ inch S. A. Colt slip gun, and no proper way of carrying his artillery. Berns found that when he packed this long gun in an ordinary open-top holster, it projected down his leg quite far, and was apt to get into the snow he was wading through. He also found that this longer gun was much slower to get into action from the holster, as it required raising quite high to clear the holster. Still, he liked this long gun, especially for game shooting, and set to work to devise some sort of holster in which he could carry it rather high when hunting on foot, and in which it would also be well hidden under the coat in street attire, and still be easily and quickly accessible from this high-belt position. Being a fine target shot and used to having his sights smoked black to prevent reflection and glare, Mr. Berns also wanted a holster that would carry the gun without rubbing the soot from the sights.

While at the job Mr. Berns decided to include several other important features in the new holster design. The photos tell how well he succeeded. In this work he

was fortunate in having the assistance of Mr. Martin, also of the Navy Rifle Team, who is not only an excellent shot, but a very skilful leather worker as well.

I had the pleasure of trying out the first two of these holsters that were made, and found that for a long-barreled six-gun, if not for any six-gun, and for a right or left-hand draw from the hip, this was the fastest rig I had ever encountered. This is the only belt holster that I know of that permits the wearer to get his gun quickly from the high-belt position on the right or left side, and it does not make any difference what the length of the barrel may be. Of course when the gun is worn under a coat, the cross-draw holster and a short gun are a faster combination; but many officers prefer a gun on the right hip, especially in warm weather when the coat is worn unbuttoned, as the right hip position is not so conspicuous.

For the peace officer's use this holster has many good points. The housing, that completely covers the trigger guard, absolutely prevents the gun from being pulled out by anyone from behind. There is a sole-leather shoulder fitted snugly to the muzzle, which holds the gun tight in connection with this trigger-guard housing. The holster is fitted with a block of sole leather or plastic wood under the trigger guard. A bolt locks this securely to the back portion of the spring, which is much like the spring of the shoulder holster. Leather stops are fitted on each side of the belt, preventing the holster from sliding during the draw. No leg strap or tie string is needed on this holster, unless one is breaking saddle broncos, when of course he must needs tie his gun down to prevent the hammer spur from striking his elbow. I have had this occur while riding hard bucking horses.

One can get a gun from this holster from many positions in which it would be extremely awkward to draw with any regular open-top holster; while sitting in a car seat, for example, or at a table. This outfit is much faster, especially for a long gun, than any other in existence today. With a shoulder holster one is compelled to change or shift his grip on the gun after drawing, before he can shoot. This is not necessary with the cross-draw and regular hip holsters, but the gun must be drawn up clear of the leather before it can be poked ahead at the target, and fired. With this Berns-Martin Speed Holster all that is necessary is to jerk the gun out of the holster straight ahead toward the object, firing as the wrist snaps the gun up into line. With a little practice in gripping the gun the same each time, it can be drawn and fired, and a hit recorded on the man target at 10 yards, in ¼ second or less if the hand is on the gun at the start; and in ½ second or less if the hand is a foot or more above the gun.

When one is facing the target or adversary, he can make a hit quicker from this type of holster than from a cross-draw holster. For one thing, the gun is jerked straight toward the target, while the cross draw necessitates either turning the whole body sideways to the target, or else stopping the swing of the gun and arm at the right instant to line it up with the mark. I do not believe there is any method of packing a gun that is as fast to get into action with as a holster hung low on the right leg, if the gun hand is away from the gun at the start of the draw. Of course, this applies to wearing the gun openly without a coat. When covered by a coat, then I believe the cross draw is the faster, as the left hand can be used to pull the coat out of the way at the same instant that the right hand goes for the gun. The coat must be worn partly buttoned, though, or the gun will show. This speed holster is less conspicuous than a cross-draw holster, and the coat can be left open if the gun belt is also used for a waist belt.

This Berns-Martin holster is the only one I have ever seen that does not in any way cause wear to the front sight of the gun. Even shoulder holsters wear the front sight, as this sight takes all the pressure when the gun is jerked out. This wear soon changes the elevation, to say nothing of rounding off the corners of the sight. With the new holster, no leather comes into contact with the sights. This is a great boon to the target puncher, as he can blacken his sights at home, put on his coat, and go to the range with the perfect assurance that the sights will still be blacked when he is ready to fire his string. These holsters can be made either right or left hand.

Martin uses only fine bridle leather in the manufacture of his holsters, doing all the sewing by hand with heavy thread. He does a most excellent job of fitting the holster to the gun. The fit of the gun in this holster is very important, and only the gun for which the holster was originally made should be used in it. Martin only makes up these outfits together, that is, belt and holster complete, so as to insure the holster working properly. Belt stops must be sewn on each side of the holster to prevent the latter's tipping in drawing, and to insure its remaining in one fixed position on the belt. In the place of the belt stops, cartridge loops can be fitted on each side of the holster, if desired. Martin usually stains and polishes the leather to a rich dark russet color.

The cylinder clasp or spring holds the gun very securely. The holster can be inverted and shaken without the gun coming out, yet the gun can be drawn instantly. This is very important for an

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## AUSTRIAN GUN CRAFT

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and artistic decoration. Austria reigns supreme.

In order to illustrate this contention, the pictures of a few arms may serve. All of the pictures of rifles represent arms made to special order as regards caliber, dimensions, and finish. For rifles and shotguns, very little "drop" is my specification key word; for pistols I invariably prefer the "Oriental" form of grip, meaning an obtuse angle between barrel and stock. The decorations in most instances are in the form of oak leaves and some French or English style of scroll engraving, but there are very few game scenes. The latter are beautiful, but the true relief work is so very expensive when performed by a real artist that so far I refrained from making myself a present of a rifle decorated in this manner.

My favorite arm is shown by Figure 1. It is an over-and-under double rifle for the 6.6/70-mm. cartridge, with about 2,100 f. s. velocity and some 1,500 f. p. energy. It is good enough for deer, but is principally intended for the chamois (Alpine mountain goat), and has barrels of about 22 inches. The two barrels are octagon in shape, and of Antinit steel. The matted rib, connecting piece, and locking teeth are milled out of one piece of steel. Not being a friend of hammerless arms, I had the rifle equipped with two rebounding hammer locks of watchlike precision. The stock, which reaches to the muzzle, is of inimitable Styrian walnut, embellished with staghorn ornaments. The rifle is superbly accurate.

Figure 2 shows a single-shot falling-block rifle with Antinit steel barrel, equipped with a 1/2-inch matted rib. The action is of English tool steel, demountable without the aid of tools, every part polished and checkered, the outside decorated with oak leaves and gold-inlaid acorns. It is a take-down, and shoots the 8.2-mm. Manlicher cartridge, which is unequalled for penetration. As regards accuracy, it equals the over-and-under just described.

The next cut, Figure 3, is of a four-barrel combination gun which Mr. Rosenberg, in his article appearing in the December, 1931, issue, called a "monstrosity." Two shotgun barrels on top, two rifle barrels underneath, the latter performing remarkably well at a distance of 50 yards. The gun is intended for small game only, taking the .410 shot and Austrian Hornet rifle cartridges.

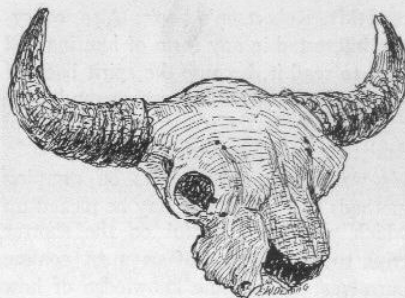
The next in line, Figures 4 and 5, represents a concession to modern times by a sportsman who believes that high-powered bolt-action rifles belong to the soldiers, and that their use on game is not good

sportsmanship. The rifle shown is the well-known Manlicher-Schoenauer, the only bolt-action gun, except the Model 88 straight-pull Manlicher, which is not monstrous in appearance. The barrel is of Antinit steel, with a 1/2-inch matted rib. The bolt handle is fluted, with knob in the form of an acorn, action richly hand engraved and gold inlaid. The rifle shoots the normal M.-S. 6 1/2-mm. cartridge, and is equipped with a Bailie-Grohman adjustable peep sight.

A fine target pistol (Figure 6) for the Austrian Hornet cartridge concludes the show. It is a little gem in appearance, shape and performance, has an octagon Antinit steel barrel with matted top, the action is of the falling-block type, actuated by a concealed lever. A protected precision bead and micrometer notch sight permit of accurate aiming. The arm is richly engraved and gold inlaid, and demountable by hand, without tools.

Most all of the rifle and gun fiends, like myself, who do not consider their arm just a murder tool, uninteresting in itself like a plumber's monkey wrench, all familiar with the German and English sporting weapons; therefore I refrain from sending pictures of those that I own. Everybody can easily make comparisons as regards form and general appearance, but only those who own high-grade Austrian arms will realize the full extent of their excellence.

Apart from firearms, Austria harbors several real artists in the line of knifemaking. The greatest of them all, Professor Bluemelhuber, can be called the only remaining authority on steel carving. The knife called the "Fürstenberg hunting knife" (carved handle shown in Figure 7) is made of one piece of rustless "precious" steel. What this means can only be realized by examining the illustration, and in particular the hollow handle. Before releasing the weapon, the maker "tested" it. With one blow of a heavy mallet he drove the point through a sheet of steel 1/8 of an inch thick, without damaging the point. From the master's own statement I understand that several months are required to produce such a knife. In consequence the price of about \$700 is not unreasonable.



Knives and other edge weapons of distinction and excellence are also produced by Johann Springer's Erben, in Vienna.

A peculiar custom of the old-time European gentleman must be mentioned in order that the shapes of the hunting knives, or rather short hunting swords, may be understood. It is not gentleman-like to carry tools. An ax or hatchet is considered a tool, and in consequence no gentleman will carry one. Therefore, the heavy hunting knife, or Atandhauer (Figure 8) must perform the duty of the small ax. The narrow-bladed "stag catchers" (handle shown in Figure 9) are used to give the *coup de grace* to a wounded stag or deer, because a gentleman should not shoot any game that has been brought down by a shot.

## THE BERNS-MARTIN HOLSTER

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officer's use, as he may lose his footing when running, or be knocked off his feet or rolled over in a scrimmage. Nearly all other belt quick-draw holsters will allow the gun to fall out in such circumstances, unless it is fitted very tight and a leg strap used.

This holster can be fastened to the front of the car seat near the leg, or on the dash or the steering wheel of the car, for quick use. A banker or storekeeper can fasten it just under the counter in any position, and know that he can get his gun instantly if necessary. Such an arrangement is very much better than having the gun in a drawer, or on a shelf where it may be knocked off, and where it is out of reach.

I can see more possibilities and advantages in this holster than in any other I have ever used. It protects the gun perfectly, yet the gun is always accessible. This is the lightest belt and holster combination I have ever seen to be made of such thoroughly strong and durable materials. The inside of the spring is carefully lined with leather, which prevents it from wearing the bluing off the gun. One must see and use this outfit to really appreciate its worth.

Berns and Martin have decided not to patent this holster, but anyone wishing to have such an outfit made up for him can write J. E. Berns, 1903 Sixth St., Bremer-ton, Wash. All outfits made up will have a safety strap as in the illustration, with a strong, durable glove fastener, for use when the gun will not be needed instantly, or when riding. Once unsnapped, this safety strap does not in any way interfere with a quick draw. I take my hat off to Berns and Martin for having produced the fastest, lightest, and most practical belt holster in existence.

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