

RIFLES AND RIFLE SHOOTING

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Rifles and Rifle Shooting by Charles Askins

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CHARLES ASKINS

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BY
CHARLES ASKINS

AUTHOR OF "THE AMERICAN SHOTGUN"
"WING AND TRAP SHOOTING," ETC.

Illustrated with Diagrams

NEW YORK
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1919

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FOREWORD

THE sword, the lance, the longbow, and the long rifle were the weapons of romance. The sword has been a practically useless arm all these three hundred years, yet it is carried by military men and others simply because of its tremendous hold upon the imagination. The knight and his war-horse, his lance and his great two-handed sword are alive to-day, just as they were a thousand years ago, though his immense blade has dwindled in modern hands to a mere toy to be carried on parade—for four hundred years popular imagination has kept it hung to the soldier's waist after its work was done.

If we are a nation of riflemen to-day, it is not because the nation needs us for its defense, not from military ardor, but for the reason that the American boy is trailing in the footsteps of a lean lanky figure, clad in homespun and leather, across his shoulders the long rifle that never missed. This man of the woods, the plains, and the mountains, iron-like, aquiline, aggressive, unafraid, with a weapon as deadly as death, is still trailing the dark woods, and following him are all the youth of America who know American

FOREWORD

tradition. Hence are we a nation of riflemen who shoot the arm for its own sake and for the beloved tradition connected with it.

English history has its longbow, France, its sword, Normandy, its axe, but American romance has only the rifle. It fed the children of the pioneer, conquered his enemies, made life bearable. Deep in his heart, where dwell vanity and pride, the descendant of the backwoodsman believes that the American is the only real rifleman to-day, and the only one that ever will be.

Then let the romancers romance! Long live Cooper and Leather-stocking! Even Wild Bill and the James boys will do more good dead than they ever did harm alive if they lead our youth to shoot a rifle and shoot it straight. Let us raise more English sparrows, and jay birds, and neighbor's cats for the small boy to shoot at, since he needs them in his business of training to become a rifleman.

CHARLES ASKINS.

Ames, Okla., February, 1912.

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