CHAPER XII

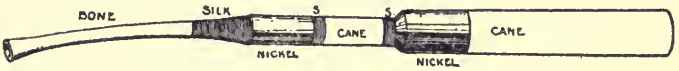
ON CALLERS AND CALLING

THERE are in use by all hunters who still-hunt the turkey, instruments used for imitating the call-notes of this bird; a few lines on these useful implements will not be amiss here.

The box or trough call, the splinter and slate, the leaf call, all have their merits, and can be made to imitate the different notes of the hens and young gobblers. The leaf call is simply a tender leaf from particular trees, held between the lips, and when well executed, the call with it is good. The box call is said to make excellent imitation of the hen call, but I have yet to see one that satisfied me. The box call is made by taking a piece of wood, preferably poplar, or some other soft wood, about four inches long, two inches deep, by one and a quarter thick. Mortise a square hole in this block, leaving the ends

one half inch thick, one side one eighth, the other quite thin. The mortise is one and a half inches deep. A piece of slate some four inches long by half an inch wide is drawn across the thin edge of this box in various positions, and one skilled in the use of this call can obtain very good results. The call most in use by the backwoods turkey hunters in the Southern States, and one that causes the death of more turkeys than all other call devices put together, is simply the hollow wing bone from the second joint of a hen turkey, with both ends cut off to allow free passage of air. One end is held with the lips in such a manner that the inside portion of the lips covers the end of the bone. The breath is then drawn in sharply, and when one is skilled in its use the different call-notes of the hen turkey can be produced perfectly. There are several other devices much after this order, but I have never found use for any of them; in fact their defects prompted me to invent a call of my own, which I prefer. First, get the smaller bone from the wing of a wild hen turkey: the radius of the forearm. Hallock says the larger bone, but he is wrong. The bone should be thor-

oughly cleansed of all its marrow. After cutting off nearly one half inch from each end of the bone, the ends are made quite smooth with a file, all rough surface removed, and the bone finished with fine sandpaper or emery. The round end of this bone is packed and glued into the end of a piece of reed cane joint two inches long and three-eighths in diameter. Then a nice nickel-plated ferrule or thimble is fitted on the cane to prevent splitting, and the sloping end is wrapped



JORDAN'S TURKEY CALL

with silk. Next, get another joint of cane that the first piece will just fit into and glue them tightly together; then cut off until the right tone is produced. The flat end of the bone is used as the mouth-piece. The end of the bone that is inserted in the cane is wrapped with tissue paper wet with glue and pushed firmly into the cane three quarters of an inch, and care must be taken to make this call air-tight at the joints; when the glue dries, it will be strong, air-tight, and durable.

The bands or ferrules are intended to make the instrument doubly strong, as well as to improve its looks. It is a tedious job to make a good call, but when you have one properly made, it will last a great while, and I think this particular call is the best in the world.

There is one objection to the box, slate, or similar calls: they make quite a noise near by but can not be heard any distance. The instrument I make can be heard a half or three quarters of a mile away.

This call is used by taking the flat bone end between the lips and by measured sucking motion the notes are produced. The cluck is produced by placing the tip of the tongue on the end of the mouth-piece, and giving a sudden jerk and suck. This, according to my opinion, is the most natural cluck that was ever made by any instrument, and it can be modulated so as to seduce or alarm at the will of the operator.