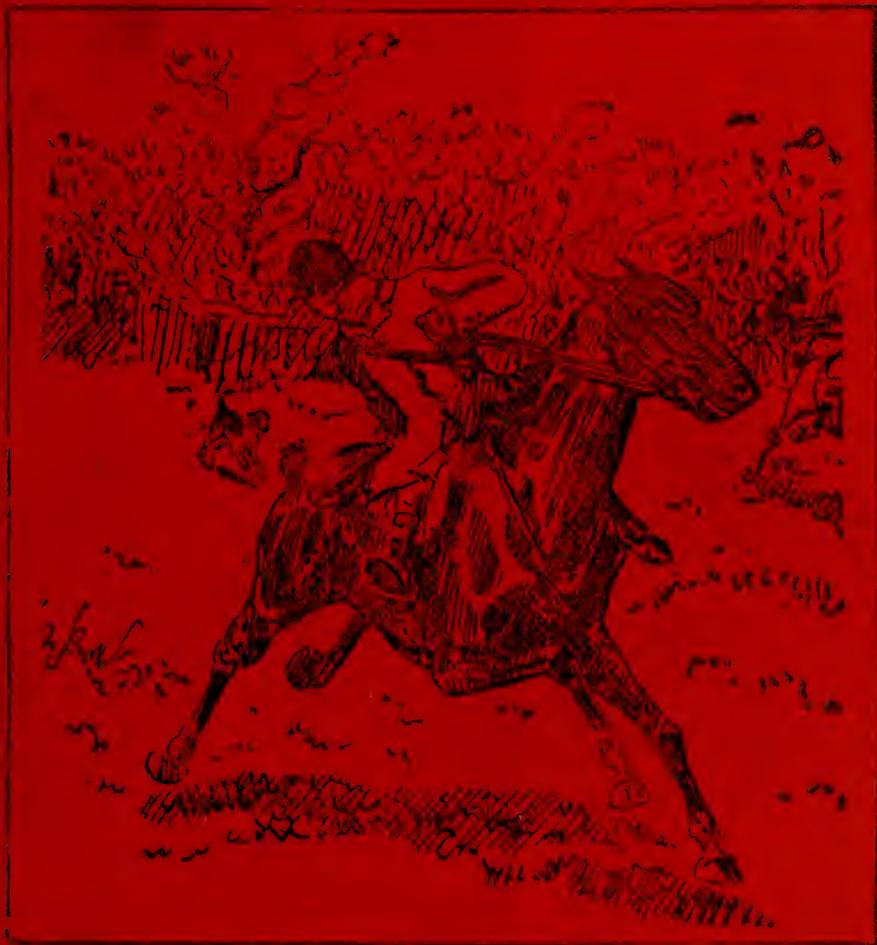


# FLOWERS OF THE HUNT



BY

FINCH MASON

Illustrated by the Author







FLOWERS OF THE HUNT.





LOWERS

OF



THE HUNT

BY

FINCH MASON.

With Forty Illustrations by the Author, including  
Twenty Full-page Sketches.

LONDON :

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TO  
"SPORTSMEN" IN GENERAL,  
AND  
HUNTING MEN IN PARTICULAR,  
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED  
BY  
THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,  
THE AUTHOR.



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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AID an old Etonian to me the other day: "In my time (and I dare say yours) there was always one particular boy in the school noted for the habitual possession of a worse hat than any of his fellows'." In my day a youth named Mc—— was the celebrity in that way. His head-gear was invariably something dreadful to contemplate. When, therefore, he appeared one day at "absence" in the school-yard, wearing an apparently bran-new "tile," with a lustre upon it that "The Glossy Peer" himself might have been proud of, he created quite a sensation amongst his friends of the Remove. Finally, Doctor Hawtrey, dandiest of pedagogues, noticed the circumstance, and, bowing ironically, said in his mincing manner: "I congratulate you, Mc——, on the possession at last of a new hat." "Wrong again, sir," replied that unabashed youth, "*It's the old 'un done up!*"

This, gentle reader, is the case with this book. Some of these papers appeared a few years ago in the

columns of *Bell's Life in London*, now amalgamated with the *Sporting Life*, to the courtesy of whose proprietor I am indebted for permission to republish them, and to whom I now beg to express my thanks.

Since then they have been to a great extent rewritten, and many new "Flowers" added to the bouquet. The author ventures to think that, like the Etonian's hat, they have lost nothing by being "done up." If the public will only endorse that opinion, he will be well satisfied.

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# “FLOWERS OF THE HUNT.”

BY FINCH MASON.

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## THE MASTER OF THE HOUNDS.



HALF-PAST TEN o'clock to a minute, and “here comes my lord,” exclaims one of the many sportsmen assembled at the meet of the old Harkaway Hounds at No Man’s Land.

“Punctual as clockwork, ain’t he?” remarks Farmer Jowlekins, admiringly. “Pity he isn’t a bit more affable though,” adds he.

Sooth to say, Lord Daisyfield *is* just a trifle too much of the standoffish order to be a thoroughly popular Master of Hounds.

However, doing the whole thing at his own expense, as he does, and, what is more, doing it uncommonly well, and being a first-rate sportsman and horseman to boot (not that the two always go together, for there are heaps of men one knows who can ride like blazes, as the saying is, but yet are shocking bad “sportsmen” at heart—men who would just as soon ride after a red herring as a fox any day of the week, so long as they can gallop and jump to their heart’s content), no one can deny his being the right man in the right place.

Hats off is the order of the day, as my lord trots up to his hounds, Trimbush and Traveller rushing forward with a great show of affection to greet him.

A tall, slim man of about fifty or so, dressed to perfection, and mounted as he is on a great slashing, well-bred brown horse, which he sits to admiration, there is no getting away from the fact that he looks all over, from the crown of his curly-brimmed hat to the soles of his highly-polished top-boots, exactly what a Master of Hounds should be.

A year or two ago a dreadful trick was played upon his lordship, a trick indeed altogether so painful to his feelings that he was all but throwing up the hounds in disgust.

The Harkaway, as doubtless the sporting reader is aware, are never advertised in the papers as most of the other packs of the United Kingdom are.

One reason being that they never have been during their existence, and my lord, who is very Conservative in all his notions, don't see why he should begin now. Another is, that he thinks that by not advertising his meets, he keeps off a lot of what he is pleased to term "Those nasty London people," from honouring his hunt with their presence.

Now, one of these gentry, a blustering, swaggering, loud-talking, red-faced personage, Baggs by name, took it into his head one fine day to hunt with the Harkaway; and for one whole season, and the beginning of the one we speak of, he had kept his horses at the Daisyfield Arms at Bullerton, and made his appearance regularly, three times a week, at the meet of his lordship's hounds.

His sonorous "Good morning, my lord," as Lord

Daisyfield trotted up to the hounds, used very nearly to make his lordship sick. Enquired his nephew, the Hon. Dick Lavender, on a visit to my lord, as the two cantered up to the meet, one fine morning, and, as usual, were met and saluted by Mr. Baggs :

“Who’s the red-faced party with the brown tops and the alarming voice, uncle?”

“That dreadful person, Dick?” replied my lord, with a grimace and a shudder. “Goodness only knows. My huntsman tells me he’s ‘something in oil,’ and that’s all I know. And,” added his uncle, “I conjure you, ride over him, Dick. *Ride* over him the very first opportunity, there’s a good boy, and you’ll be conferring a most inestimable favour on both myself and my Hunt.”

Well, the irrepressible Mr. Baggs continued to hunt on, week after week, day after day, regardless of all the noble Master’s black looks. Lord Daisyfield literally hated the very sight of him. He was *always* a “hollerin’,” as the first whip remarked.

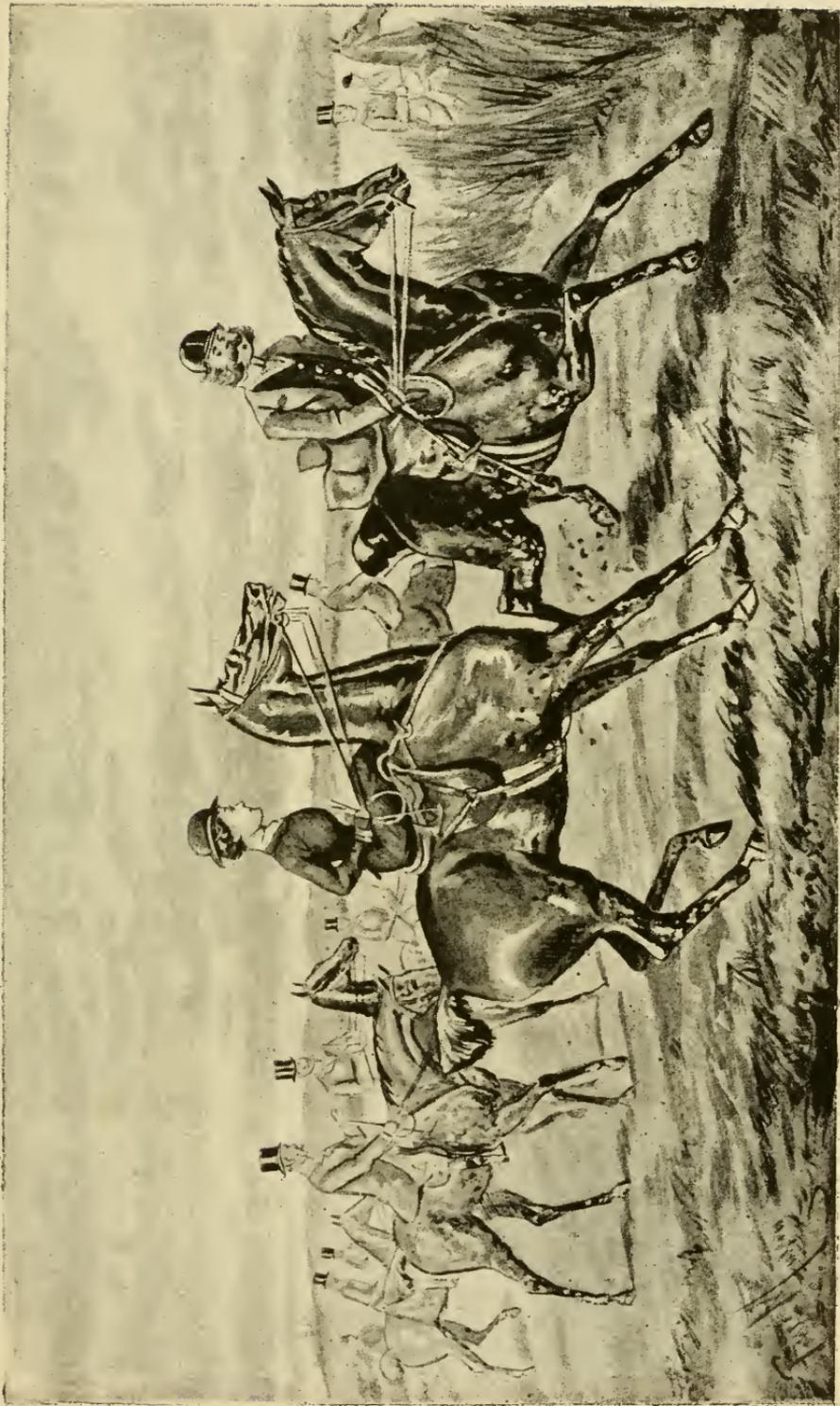
“Who the blank taught *you* to holler?” said the huntsman to him one day, galloping up a ride very irate because the fox would not break, and catching old Baggs at the far end shouting like mad, for he had just viewed the fox crossing the ride.

“Who the blank taught *you* to holler? Can’t ye leave the ’ounds alone, yer silly man?” added he, as he plunged short into the wood, nearly upsetting poor Mr. Muff, who was standing in the way.

Then he had ridden over a hound or two. Old Barbara, one of my lord’s favourite hounds, did not get over that kick in the ribs the great Baggs’s brute of a grey mare gave to her one day, for a fortnight at least.

Lastly, he put a finishing touch to his delinquencies by one day crossing pretty little Miss Bluebell, who was the favourite of the hunt generally, and an especial pet of his lordship's, just as she was in the act of riding at a fence, and all but upsetting her, horse and all. Indeed, if the fair lady, who could ride like a bird, had not had her horse well in hand, she might have had what is commonly called a nasty fall. Desperately angry with this last feat was my lord, who had just piloted his fair friend over the fence in question, and had turned in his saddle to watch her performance. He had half made up his mind to ride back again over the fence and horsewhip his enemy, but before he could do so, Miss had set her horse going again, and in another second came bounding over the obstacle as light as a cork, and was once more at his side. "Did you thee that thtoopid man, Lord Daithyfield?" lisped she. "Indeed I did, my dear Miss Bluebell. I do trust," said he, with a paternal squeeze of her neatly-gloved hand, "I *do trust* you were not alarmed. *Do* have a little orange brandy from my flask. No? Well, well, I'm glad it's no worse; and that wretch of a man, too, who's always doing something to annoy me. I do really wish he would break his neck," wound up my lord fervently.

If Dr. Watts is to be believed, that mischievous old sportsman, Satan, is always able to find some work for idle hands to do. Accordingly, one fine afternoon, after a blank day, it happened that Master Frank Larkins, late of Eton College, Bucks, and now of Christ Church, Oxford, and his friend, Dick Upton, also late of Eton, but just now gazetted to the 116th Lancers, were jogging homewards together, smoking their cigars, and chattering like magpies. They had



THE MASTER OF THE HOUNDS—  
*Mr. Baggs nearly upsets Miss Bluebell.*



talked over all the events of the day, abused their friends, discussed the hounds, and criticized the huntsman, until at last they had run themselves clean down, like a Dutch clock. Stop; they had not even mentioned the great Baggs. I am quite certain, therefore, that it *must* have been his Satanic Majesty's doing that suddenly induced that mischievous dog, Larkins, to exclaim, with an exultant slap of his dogskin-gloved hand on his thigh:

“By George! Dicky, my boy, *sich* a game's suddenly occurred to dis child! You know how Lord Daisyfield hates and abominates old Baggs. What a lark it would be to send him a card of the meet with my lord's compliments.” (The card was only sent about to the regular people of the hunt, and, needless to say, Mr. Baggs never got one, but had to depend on the great Mr. Shrub, of the Daisyfield Arms, for all information connected with the Harkaway.)

“I knows his address, sir, as old ‘Spankie’ at Eton used to say. The old beggar gave me his card, and said he ‘oped I’d come and see him, when I liquored him up one day after a fall he got.”

Dick was charmed with the notion, and the pair at once put their horses into a jog-trot, with the object of carrying out their plan whilst it was fresh in their memories. Sure enough, when they reached home, they found the card with the meets for the next fortnight waiting them on the hall-table. Forthwith, then, it was placed into a fresh envelope, “with Lord Daisyfield's compliments” written across the top, and duly directed to their victim, and popped into the post-bag.

When the great Mr. Baggs on the following Monday morning came down to breakfast, and, opening his letters,

came at last to Messrs. Upton and Larkins's missive, his surprise and delight knew no bounds. He could scarcely believe his eyes in fact. His hand trembled so, that he spilt half his coffee over his beautiful new velvet smoking-suit (French blue, with foxes' heads embroidered all over it), and he was obliged to have a glass of his best liqueur brandy to steady himself. "With Lord Daisyfield's compliments!" gasped he.

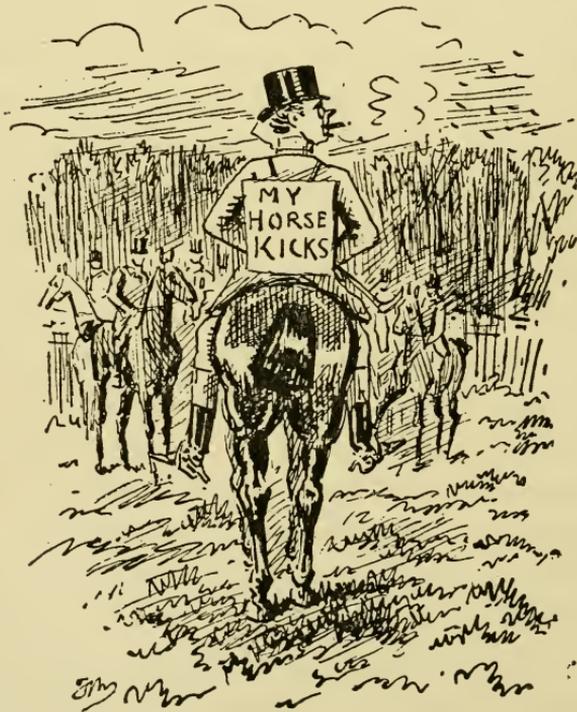
"Well, I always *said* his lordship was a first-chop feller, and now I'm sure of it; so here's 'is jolly good 'ealth, and 'is 'ounds' too!" and with that Mr. Baggs tossed off another glass of *eau-de-vie* to the toast.

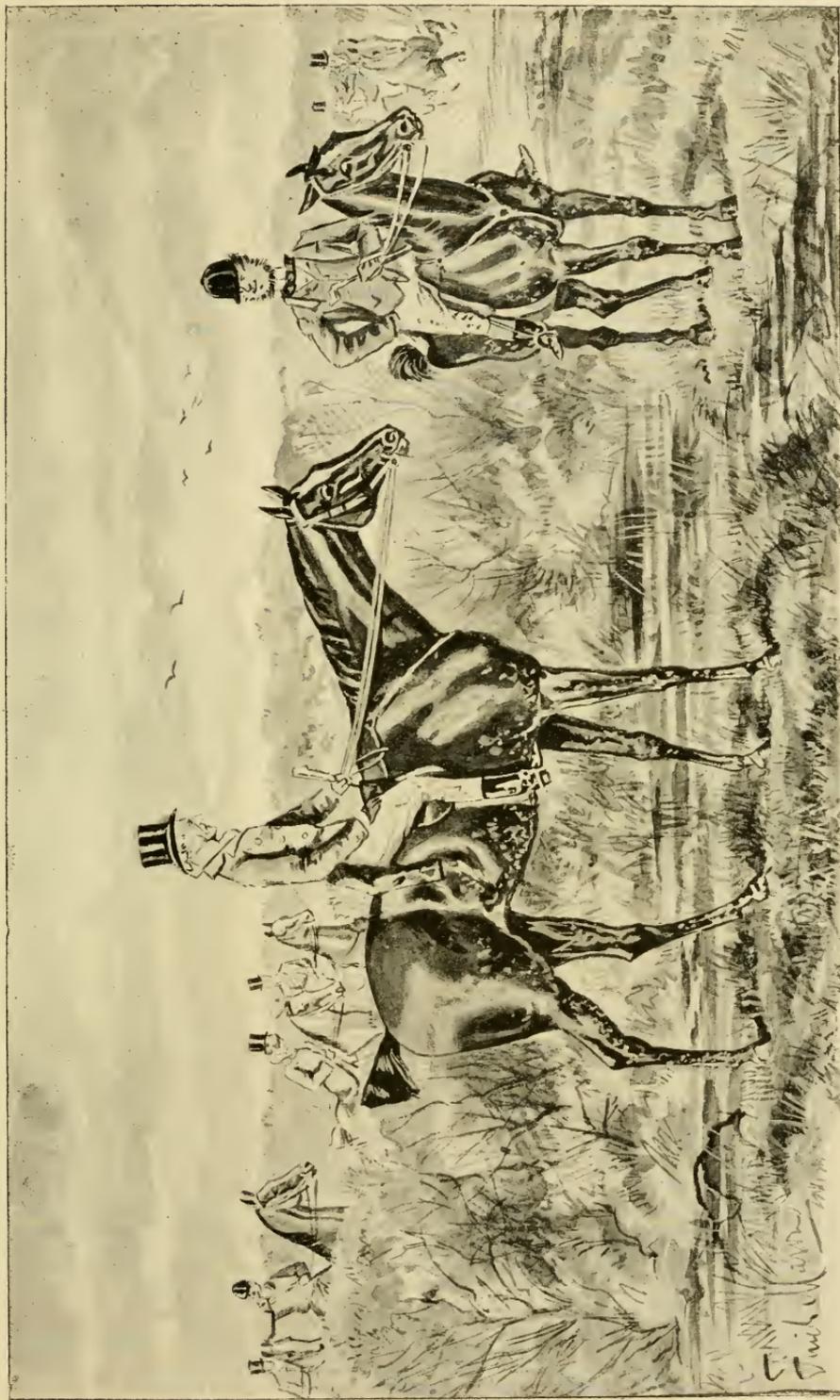
The next day, Tuesday, the Harkaway Hounds met at "Slipperfield Common," and amongst the earliest arrivals, as the papers say, you may be sure were Messrs. Upton and Larkins, looking as if butter would not melt in their mouths, and Mr. Baggs—Mr. B. on his best horse, with his best coat, and a brand new cap on, and in a perfect fever of excitement; indeed, he hadn't slept a wink all night. Such dreams he had had! Delightful visions of slapping my lord familiarly on the back, and calling him "Daisyfield, old boy," his lordship retaliating with "Baggs, old pal;" of Lady Daisyfield presenting his daughter Julia at the next drawing room, and a hundred other pleasant fancies. Five minutes to the half-hour. And is it? Yes, here comes my lord. The grateful Mr. Baggs can scarcely keep himself from galloping off to meet him. However, he waited until the noble Master joined the crowd of horsemen, and then came gallantly to the front, cap in hand. "Good morning," my lord, said he. "Allow me to thank you most 'eartily for your condescension in so kindly

sending me the card of your meets, my lord. You need never be afraid, I can assure you, of my ever insulting you by ever 'unting with any other 'ounds but your lordship's gallant pack, and if, as I 'ope, my lord, some day when you are in town, and should be passing my way, you'll just give me and my daughter Julia a look in, I can assure you, my lord, we shall be most proud and 'appy." And Mr. Baggs, having thus delivered himself, resumed his cap, and beamed pleasantly round on the assembled company. As for my lord, he was struck speechless with astonishment and disgust. At last he gasped out, "Good heavens! *he says I wrote to him.* Give me my sherry-flask, Robert," and, with a withering glance at Mr. Baggs, he took the flask from his second horseman, and swallowed half the contents at a gulp. "A thing," as the groom remarked afterwards, "I never see my lord do afore, so early in the day, ever since I've bin in his service." The story of the hoax spread like wildfire, and the wretched Mr. Baggs wished himself anywhere before the day was out. Lord Daisyfield, too, was very angry at such a liberty having been taken with his name. However, when he heard next day that Mr. Baggs had actually removed his horses from the Daisyfield Arms, and had left the country for good, having given out, in fact, that in future he intended to hunt with our Most Gracious Majesty's Staghounds—the Harkaway Hounds being too slow for him—his wrath was appeased, and everybody agreed that when his lordship turned up, punctual as usual, at the next meet of his hounds, and found no Mr. Baggs to give him greeting, and, what was more to the purpose, that he was never likely to be bothered by that worthy again, they had never seen

him look so cheerful before. The muscles of his generally severe countenance relaxed from their accustomed hardness into a gratified smile; in fact, if one might say so without offence, his lordship for once in his life looked as "pleased as Punch."

And now the noble Master consults his watch. Time's up—'tis the half-hour exactly. The hounds move on; horses begin to squeal and kick; nervous riders begin to look blue. Away we all go to Raddleton Wood—a sure find. A wave of the huntsman's hand, and in go the hounds, and whilst they are busy drawing for the "little Red Rover" we will mingle with the crowd in the big ride and endeavour to pick out a fresh Flower for our next sketch.





MR. GRIMBOY—

*"No, sir; I am of opinion that they will not find, sir."*



## MR. GRIMBOY.

## THE FATHER OF THE HUNT.

“HINK the 'ounds 'll find 'ere, sir?” inquires little Jack Sprouter (from London), splashing up to a solitary horseman, who is sitting solemnly on his horse right in the middle of the very swampy, snipe-inhabited-looking scrubs belonging to Tackleton Wood. The horseman addressed turns round in his saddle, eyes Sprouter from head to foot, and replies gruffly, in a most decisive manner, “No, sir ; I am of opinion that they will *not* find, sir.”

He then frowns grimly, relapses into his former statue-like position, and proceeds to mutter audibly to himself, Mr. Sprouter, who is all attention, just catching such interjections as “Damned railways.—Never any foxes here now.—Billy Button.—Infernal counter-jumpers down for the day.—Hounds going to the devil,” and so on. Truth to tell, the cockney is rather relieved than otherwise by the statue’s reply, for he likes splashing about in the renowned Scrubs, uncommonly. There

is no danger about it, and it makes one look like an out-and-out sportsman, a tip-top Nimrod, he thinks, to get back to town well splashed all over with mud, so he drops his reins on his horse's neck, and proceeds very deliberately to eat his sandwiches, and take a suck at his "monkey," as he calls it. The Scrubs is the place of all others for sportsmen like Jack. It consists of a large extent of scrub, surrounded on three sides by big woods ; it is wet there at all times, so after heavy rain it is in beautiful order, and Jack and Co.'s horses sink into the binding clay over their hocks at nearly every step. In former days it used to be a great resort of foxes, in fact was one of the greatest strongholds for them in the country, but two lines of railway run right through the heart of it now, besides which the shooting is let to one of the wrong sort, who abominates "Sly Reynolds," and, as he is aided and abetted by a vulpecide in the shape of a keeper, it is not to be wondered at that of late the Scrubs have very often been drawn blank. Indeed, a find there now is the exception, not the rule.

A greater contrast to each other in the two sportsmen we have introduced cannot well be imagined. Mr. Jack Sprouter is a small, pert-looking little gent, with sandy hair and whiskers. He wears a cap, and a particularly badly-made red coat. A stick-up collar, with large blue spots, surrounds his little neck, and round the collar again comes a blue satin tie (with white spots this time), folded in a bow, the ends terminating in a fringe. His breeches are of white cord, and look as if they had been shrunk in the wash. His boots, very badly blacked, have brown tops, and, to add to the general effect, he has

contrived to put his spurs on all wrong. Add to it all an unhappy-looking two-guinea-a-day hunter, who is adorned with a shockingly bad saddle and bridle, and you have the picture complete.

Now for his companion. Imagine a small, thin, shrunken figure, clothed in a tightly-fitting red coat of the old swallow-tailed pattern; the rather querulous looking-face is set off by a hat, placed well down on his head, giving the appearance thereby of being a size or two too large for the wearer. The brim of the hat is turned up, so much so that it might be likened to a railway arch, and the end of a yellow bandana peeps slyly out from the back. The old gentleman's necktie is white, and folded goodness knows how many times round his neck. An old-fashioned chain, with a heavy seal at the end, dangles from his breeches-pocket; his breeches and boots are as near perfection as possible, and he bestrides a well-bred, clever-looking hunter, whose closely-docked tail and goose rump makes him look nearly as old-fashioned as his master. In fact, the pair look as if they had suddenly sprung out of one of Alken's pictures. Mr. Grimboy, of Mistletoe Grange (for he it is whom the audacious Sprouter has just had the temerity to address) is looked upon as the Father of the Hunt, a title to which he has every right, seeing that he has lived and hunted in the country ever since he was a boy, and no one seems exactly to know how long ago that was. No one indeed knows his age; some say he is eighty, some say he's ninety—pretty little Miss Chatterton, indeed, going so far as to declare that she ith *thure* dear o'ld Mithter Grimboy must be a hundred at the very least. Miss C. probably exaggerates a little, as fair ladies are apt to do sometimes, but this is very certain, old

Tom Grimboy has forgotten more than a good many of the members of our redoubtable Hunt know. He lives all by himself at the Grange, where he dispenses hospitality in a stiff, old-fashioned sort of way. To see the old gentleman to perfection one must behold him in the evening. Blue coat and brass buttons, pumps and black silk socks, and *such* a white neckcloth! Jovial Sir Harry Bluff offended him mortally one night after dinner at the Chirpingtons, by swaggering up, just as Mr. Grimboy had brought himself to anchor in front of the drawing-room fire, and was helping himself to a comforting pinch of snuff, and, giving him a poke in his stomach, saying, at the same time, in his hearty way (Mr. Grimboy hated hearty ways), "Well, old boy, does your skin feel pretty tight, *heh*?" Mr. Grimboy ordered his carriage on the spot, and Sir Harry and he did not speak to each other for ever so long after.

All modern innovations, more especially railroads, he hates with all his heart and soul; whilst for all institutions of the past he has a proportionate veneration. For instance he is a staunch upholder of the now defunct practice of duelling, indeed it is rumoured that the old Squire played a prominent part in more than one affair of honour in his younger days, and it is also said that, quiet old gentleman as he now is, he was just as cheerful a dandy as any of them in the roystering days of Carlton House and the Pavilion. Sometimes when after dinner a bottle of good wine has warmed the cockles of his venerable heart and made his old eyes sparkle with something of their former brilliancy, he will launch out with unmistakable pleasure into stories of his goings-on in company with the author of "The School for Scandal," and Beau

this and Tom that. Then he will get quite excited, kick out his little shrivelled legs under the table, and go on to relate with much gusto how he horsewhipped Mr. Lamb-skin, the attorney, at Bullerton, one fine day. "It would have been all very well, but, begad! I got hold of the wrong man, sirs, and had to pay five hundred pounds, damme! *Five hundred pounds!* Fancy that, for thrashing a damned attorney! Dear, wasn't it? It was pleasant at the time, though. Gad! how he bellowed when I gave it him." Horsewhipping the attorney was not the only scrape of the kind that the irascible Mr. Grimboy had to pay for. As we have before mentioned, the Squire had a mortal aversion to railways, and in the early days of the reign of King Hudson he lived in perpetual dread of the iron road encroaching on his domain. At last his dream came true. Sitting one hot summer's night after dinner over his wine, in company with the curate of the parish—a mild youth fresh from the University—they were suddenly interrupted by the abrupt entrance of Mr. Mulbery, the butler, who rushed into the room purple in the face with excitement. "They're come, sir, they're come!" gasped he. "Who's come, you fool?" replied his master. "Why, the railway people, sir. Giles has just come up to say that there's, a lot of 'em at this moment, a measurin' with their nasty tapes and lines, and the like, down in the walley."

"*Come on,*" shouted the Squire, "*Come on,*" and away he went, pumped and silk-socked as he was, not even waiting for a hat, followed by the curate, who caught up a thick stick in the hall as he passed, and trotted along behind the irate Squire, mentally repeating as he went along an impromptu prayer against battle, murder, and sudden

death, for, poor man, he did not know what might happen. Away went the Squire across the bowling-green, along the pleasure-ground, past the summer-house at a hand-gallop, and out at the postern-gate into the road. Sure enough, in the field on the other side, were four men busily employed with tapes, &c. As the Squire, now nearly breathless, arrived at the scene of action, the man in command of the party was just pencilling down some notes on a huge plan. He was a big man, a Scotchman, with a back as broad as a prize ox at Christmas-time. It was David and Goliath over again. Rushing up to the astonished engineer, without a word of explanation, Mr. Grimboy snatched the plan out of his hands, and, tearing it into three or four pieces, threw it on the ground and stamped on it. This done, he went straight for the enemy, and, turning him round, gave him, with all the force he could command, a terrific kick on what the Yankees would call the *Western* side of his person. That the Scotchman was astonished considerably, may well be imagined; it was some minutes indeed before he could collect his faculties. At length he spoke.

“Eh, mun,” said he, rubbing himself, “Eh, mun, but ye’ll pay for this, or me neem’s not Sandy Macgregor.”

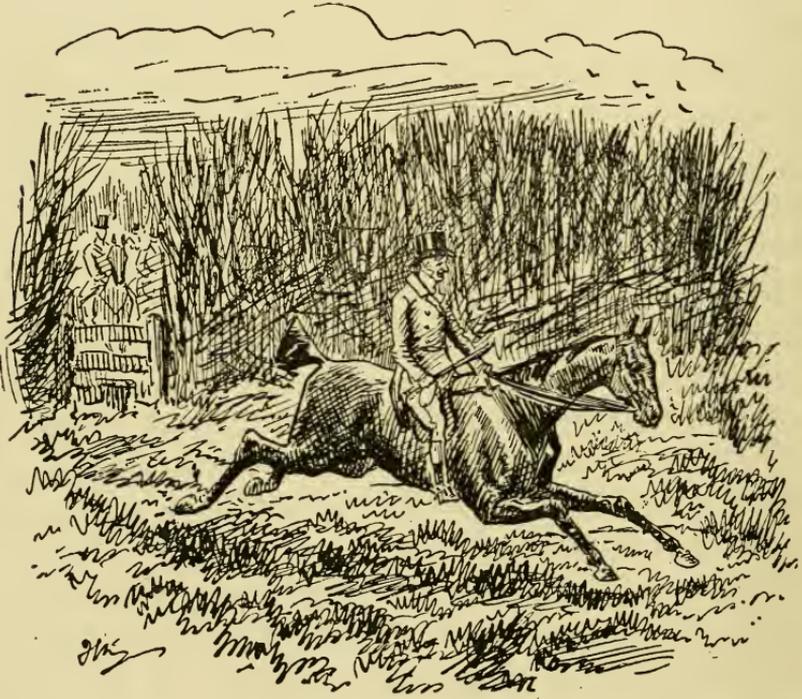
“Get off my ground, you infernal scoundrel, or I’ll throw you into the river,” shrieked the Squire, and the big Scotchman, looking round and seeing some stalwart keepers and other myrmidons of the Squire approaching the scene of action, thought discretion the better part of valour, and walked off, vowing as he went that “he’d heve setisfaction for the assault.” We forget how much this little adventure cost the Squire, but it was a con-

siderable sum, and, to add to his discomfiture, a Bill was passed soon after enabling the railway company to go where it pleased, and accordingly before long it was to be seen twisting and turning through his domain, like the great sea-serpent, in spite of all his remonstrances and occasional assaults and batteries on the company's servants. Mr. Grimboy never misses a meet of Lord Daisyfield's hounds by any chance. No weather stops him; no distance is too far for him, old as he is; he is always there at the finish, and his horses all seem to have the knack of going where other people's can't. You will see old Grimboy ride quietly up to a bullfinch that you can't see through, and squeeze through it between two ash-stems, where one would imagine there was not room for a rabbit to pass. It's the "hands" as does it, as the horse-dealer said. Young Vainhopes thinks he will do the same; and, lo and behold, he comes out the other side, with his hat smashed, his nose barked, a piece of stick in his eye, and a coat-lap nearly torn off, to say nothing of his horse's legs being filled with thorns, whilst old Grimboy careers away across the next field, with neither a scratch nor a tear, and as smart as if he had just turned out of a bandbox. Vainhopes would give anything to know "how he does it."

"Hark! is that the horn?" "Yes. Mr. Grimboy was right." The once-famous Scrubs have been drawn blank, and the huntsman is getting his hounds out of cover. Mr. Grimboy, muttering invectives against all railways and all fox-slaying owners of coverts, retires from his splashy position, and joins the rest of the field.

The order is given to go and draw Cranberry Wood, a covert belonging to Mr. Grimboy himself. The old

gentleman's face lights up with satisfaction when the order is given, for he knows it is a sure find, and there we will leave him, with the wish that he may have a good gallop with the afternoon fox.



## TOM TOOTLER.

## THE HUNTSMAN.

“**M**ISTER TOOTLER be along with the 'ounds, sir,” says a bare-armed helper to us, as we pull up one fine frosty afternoon in front of the kennels inhabited by the Harkaway Hounds, and belonging to Lord Daisyfield, and make inquiries for the huntsman. “Mister Tootler be along with the 'ounds, sir. If you'll get off, squire, I'll take the cob in and give him a feed whilst you stop.”

Consenting to this arrangement, we dismount and stump off in search of the redoubtable Tom Tootler. We run that worthy to ground, as our friend, the helper, predicted, in the kennel; in fact, as we tap at the gate we discern him through the bars in the act of stroking with his hunting-whip the black-and-tan back of his favourite, hound, Warrior, and expatiating on that sagacious animal's merits to his friend, Mr. Marrerbone, the well-known sporting butcher of Bullerton,—Marrerbone having druv over, as he calls it, in his gig just to have a friendly glass, a look at the hounds, and wish his old acquaintance, the Huntsman, a happy noo year, and many on 'em. They have had their glass, and have inspected all the hounds, on whose merits Mr. Marrerbone waxes extremely loquacious, the brown brandy, acting on the frosty air, giving him a confidence in his subject that, perhaps, he would not have, on an

ordinary occasion, possessed. Indeed, if the truth must be told, Mr. "Hem," as the Huntsman calls him, is a far better judge of a baron of beef than a fox-hound. Tom Tootler gets somewhat put out at last, for Mr. Marrerbone, notwithstanding the astounding stories Tom relates of old Warrior's sagacity and staunchness in the field, and his encomiums on the old hound's make and shape—"There's a head, there's legs, there's a back for you," says Tom—won't have him at any price, but vows that old Tomboy is far better looking, better shaped, ay, and a better hound altogether, he'll be bound, than yon ugly-looking beggar. Tom, in return, with a snort of disgust, vows that if he had had *his* way the redoubtable Tomboy would have had a rope round his neck long ago—not that he really meant what he said, for, as he very well knew, old Tomboy was as good a hound as any in the pack.

At this juncture Tom catches sight of us for the first time, and perhaps our advent at that particular moment was lucky, as the worthy pair, judging by appearances, were decidedly getting their "frills out" as the saying is.

Mr. Marrerbone, seeing us, bids his entertainer farewell, and Tom opens the door for his egress and our entrance.

"Marnin', sir, *Marnin'*. Don't look much like huntin', do it, Squire?" begins Tom. "Will you come in and have a look at 'em, sir?" he goes on. "Down, Traveller! down, good dawg! Take my whip, Squire. Never mind me, sir, I've got another here." We then proceed to do the hounds—now praising this one, now that. "What a day that was from Raddleton Wood! eh, Squire? Ah! here's old Priestess. D'ye call to mind old Priestess that day, Squire?"

“ Good bitch, Priestess,” says Tom, patting her as she jumps off the bench to greet us, as we poke our noses into the kennel where she is. “ And now, Squire,” says Tom, as we bid adieu to the hounds, “ come into the house, and have a glass of old ale. Won’t do you no harm after your ride, specially such a cold day as this,” adds he, stamping his feet on the hard ground by way of emphasis. As there is nothing better in our opinion on a bright frosty morning than a glass of real good ale, we accept his invitation forthwith, and, ordering the hack to be brought round in half-an-hour, we accompany the huntsman to his snug-looking, ivy-covered house.

Tom Tootler is a fresh-coloured, keen-eyed, dapper little man of some forty-five summers or thereabouts; his compactly-built frame looks as if it did not carry an ounce of superfluous flesh, whilst his ruddy face and clear eye denote what good condition he is in; his closely-cropped hair is just tinged with grey, and if it were not for that sign of age he might very well pass for at least ten years less than he really is. A dark-coloured single-breasted frock-coat, white cord breeches, and leather gaiters, is his costume on the day of our visit, and very neat and natty he looks, quite, in fact, what a huntsman in mufti should be. But to see him at his best one must behold him on a hunting morning. What a swell he is! “ Wonderful smart, *surelie*,” say the old women in the villages, as he trots past on his way to the meet. We’ll say the hounds meet at Magnum Bonum Castle, the abode of the Marquis of Carabas. Tom, with his hounds and his men, trots through the big park-gates in state. Having done that, bidding the lodgekeeper’s pretty wife good morning as he

passes, it is a treat to see Tom set his horse into a canter as he gets on to the turf, he rising in his stirrups and making much of the hounds. Who wouldn't be a huntsman? Watch him as he goes airily along, his horse, a three-hundred-guinea one, snatching playfully at his bit, and whinnying with delight as the hounds gambol about at his heels. With what an air, too, he pulls off his cap in honour of the ladies of the house, who are looking on from the lawn! The swell London footman, who is handing the liqueurs about, an exotic of recent importation, and whose first experience it is of life in the country, is so impressed with his manners that he even *sirs* him as he comes round to him with the curaçao, cherry-brandy, &c.

Our huntsman finds a happy combination of the *suaviter in modo* and the *fortiter in re* the most effective in dealing with his field, and adopts it accordingly on all occasions. His "Hounds, gentlemen, if *you* please;" "Thank you, gentlemen, *thank* you," is quite irresistible. "Ah, my lord's hounds are too slow for *you* I'm afraid, sir; can't get out of your way, poor things!" was all he said when young Graceless rode over Barbara one fine day, his sarcasm shaming that gentleman far more than any amount of abuse would have done.

The subject of our sketch commenced his sporting career as second horseman to that well-known sportsman Sir Harry Hotspur, the Master of the Danbydale Hounds, a post for which his light weight and capital hands and seat well adapted him. He had not been two years in Sir Harry's service, when, quite unexpectedly, a great piece of luck came to him, for it happened, one fine day, just at the commencement of the season, that the second whip was unfortunate enough to break his leg

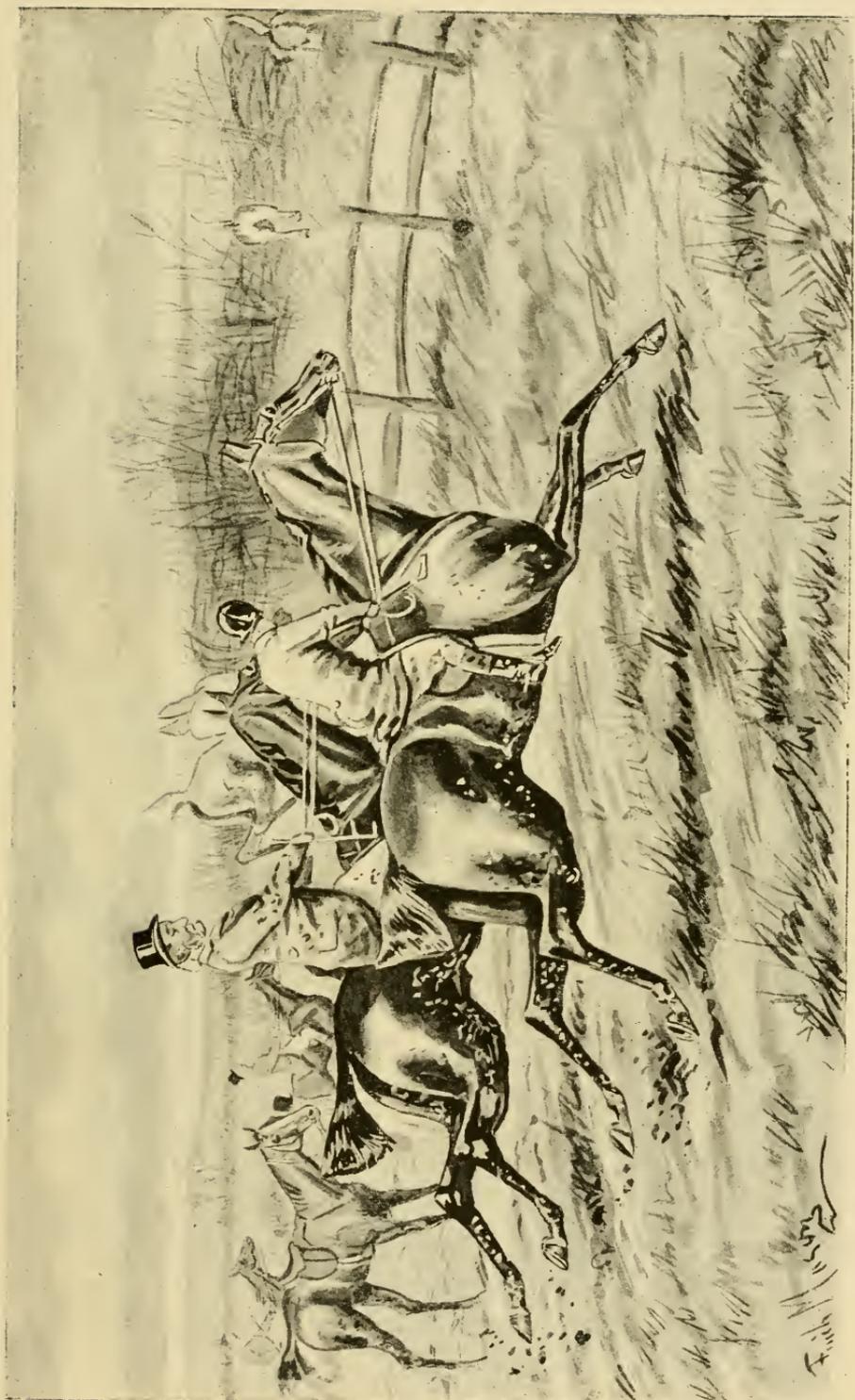
in the course of a run, and Sir Harry, not knowing what to do for a substitute, at the Huntsman's suggestion told Tom to take his damaged whip's place the next day the hounds met, and do his best. Tom was delighted. He was passionately fond of hunting, and, as he had kept his eyes well open and his wits about him all the time he was riding second horse for Sir Harry, he was enabled to make an uncommonly good *début* in his new profession. The Huntsman took to him uncommonly, and Lady Hotspur tried to get her husband to keep him on permanently as second whip, she being much struck by Tom's good-looks, his predecessor being anything but a beauty to look at. However, that arrangement the Baronet flatly declined to agree to; fair play, as he very justly observed, being a jewel. So when the invalided whip returned to his duties Tom had to look out for a new place. This he very soon got, and he whipped in the whole of the next season, and the one after that, to Major Bullyboy, who hunts the Slopshire Hounds. The principal characteristics of the Slopshire country are enormous great straggling woodlands, small fields, rough, unkempt looking fences, and a deal of ploughed land. Here Tom learned a good deal of woodcraft, and saw an amount of rough woodland hunting that was invaluable to him in after-life. Finding the country rather too slow for him, he left at the end of his second season, and we find him the following one whipping in to a pack of staghounds. The huntsman leaving soon after, Tom was promoted to the post. Three years with the stag satisfied him, however, for though uncommonly fond of galloping and jumping, yet he still had a hankering after the old legitimate game. So he left the stag, and took to fox again, as first whip this

time with Lord Daisyfield. After serving four years in that capacity, it happened that the huntsman died. Tom was installed at once in his place, and there he has been ever since.

“And now, sir,” says Tom, as we bring ourselves to anchor in his snug parlour, and his neat servant-maid appears with a brown jug and glasses, “try a glass of the ale. I think you’ll say that it ain’t the washin’ from brewers’ aprons as some of the stuff they sell nowadays, is—indeed it’s some Mr. Maltby, the brewer, gave me at Christmas-time, Squire.”

The ale fully comes up to Tom’s opinion of it, and then ensues a delightful conversation about hunting, nowhere to be arrived at to such perfection as in a huntsman’s parlour. Now Tom relates some old story; then we recall to him some reminiscence of bygone days. Tom calls to mind another, then we strike in once more, and so on.

“Eh,” says Tom, after a pause, “Eh, I was glad to see Squire Curzon looking so well the other day, when he was staying with my lord. I didn’t know he was there until he come up to me at the meet at the Cross-roads last Toosday, and said, in his hearty way, ‘How are ye, Tom?’ I hadn’t seen him since I hunted them stag-hounds years ago. What a rare sort he was to be sure! and *my!* didn’t he ride in those days! His brothers, too—three on ’em there was; it’s hard to say which was the best on ’em, but I think, p’raps, the Parson was the neatest of the lot—him as rode in the Liverpool Steeplechase a time or two, as you may perhaps recollect, Squire. But, Lor’, they was all first rate. The worst of ’em, if there *was* a worst, was good enough to see a run out in



**TOM TOOTLER—**

*“Well, Squire! are they fast enough for you to-day?”*



any country, no matter what the fences were like. I shall never forget one day when I was with the stag. The Squire and all his three brothers was out, for, though they did not come with us reg'lar like, they was hawful fond of gallopin' and jumpin', I can tell ye. Well, we had a *tremenjuous* day. The pace the 'ounds went was something to be remembered, I can tell ye, Squire. I got my second horse just in the nick of time, or I shouldn't have seen the end of it. Well, Squire Curzon and his brothers, they rode, they did, as I don't believe any four brothers ever rode afore. I see at last the Squire's horse was about done, and I begins a chaffin' of him. The Squire was a rare one for a bit o' fun and would often give me a turn, saying his hounds was twice as fast as mine, etcetera. So I says quietly, 'Well, Squire, are they fast enough for you to-day?' I see, just as I said it, the Squire turn from the fence, and was looking out for a gate; but, Lor' bless yer, he was ready for me with an answer directly, he was.

“‘Fast enough for me!’ says he—‘no, not *'arf* fast enough, only I'm on a damned cock-tailed brute I only gave forty pound for at Tattersall's last week, and I brought him out with these Staggers of yours just to see what he was made of!’ and with that he gets into the lane and goes straight home, and lucky he did, for we didn't take the stag for half an hour after that. Well, who should I come across not many days arter the run I speak of, but the Squire's stud-groom, Joe Blackbird; so I says to him, ‘Joe,’ I says, ‘what d'ye mean by mounting your master,’ I says, ‘on a forty-pound screw the other day when we had such a hawful run with our hounds?’ ‘*Wot!*’ he says, ‘the brown as the Squire rode second 'oss d'ye mean?’ ‘That's him,’ I

says. 'The Squire told me hisself he only give forty pounds for him at Tattersall's, and he was dead beat—could 'ardly wag, indeed.' 'Well,' says Joe, a bustin' out a larfin', 'well, you *are* a old softy. The Squire *must* a bin a gammonin' on you to some toon. Why, now,' says Joe, a gettin' confidential like, 'I'll tell you something private about the screw in question. The Squire bought him last week, that's right enough, but he *didn't* buy him at Tattersall's, and he *didn't* give forty pund for 'im neither, for he bought the 'oss from Noocome Mason, and he gave the small sum, the *small* sum,' says Joe, getting quite sarcastic like, 'of three 'underd and fifty guineas for 'im.' So you see the Squire got the best of the chaff, after all, didn't he, sir?'"\*

"Maybe," continued Tom, "you noticed the Hurl of Hacklefield out with us, that same day at the Cross Roads. Very glad to see him I was, and he seemed pleased to see me too, and came up as hearty as possible. The sight of him reminded me of a thing that happened, pretty near the very last time as I saw him, when I was huntin' them staghounds, and his Lordship kept as he does now, the Vale of Hogwash. My! what a day that was to be sure. My hounds was running, but not hard, for there was a bad scent—being it was just the end of the season, you see sir, and the ground being very dry—when all of a sudden my lord's pack, after their fox, makes their appearance, and before you could say Jack Robinson the two of 'em—the Foxhounds and the Staggers—gets mixed up alltogether. I

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\* In relating this little anecdote, no slur is intended to be cast on the good name of that celebrated dealer, the late Newcombe Mason. The horse no doubt was a clipper (the Squire was too good a judge to buy a bad one), but was presumably not fit on this particular day.—F. M.

must tell you, sir, before I goes on with my story, that my lord and Mr. ——, my master, were not at all on friendly terms—quite the contrary, in fact—though I never rightly made out the reason why. Anyhow, there is no doubt about it, they both hated the very sight of one another. To make matters more confusing, we happened, at the very moment of the two packs clashing, to be on Mr. ——'s own land. Hup comes my lord, boiling over with rage—he'd a *hateful* temper, sir, when roused.

“ ‘Stop your d——d hounds, sir! Stop 'em, I say, directly, do you hear?’ he shouted to Mr —— (for old Bountiful had just hit the scent off again, and we were on the move).

“ ‘Stop *my* hounds, on *my own* land!’ almost screamed my master in reply. “ ‘Why, what do you mean, you red-topped old wagabone, you?’ (My lord has reddish hair: you know, sir.) ‘What next, indeed? I never heard of such impudence in all my born days!’ Well, sir, at it they went, 'ammer and tongs, slanging of each other like a couple of bargees; such hateful language I don't think I ever *did* hear, and all the gentlemen, sitting on their horses, laughin' fit to kill themselves at the row, and encouragin' the pair, until I expected every minute to see 'em pitchin' into one another with their huntin' whips. 'Owever, just as they had pretty nigh exhausted theirselves, away went my hounds at score, and we took the stag twenty minutes afterwards, and very glad I was of it, I can tell you. I believe my lord and Mr. —— made friends with each other since I left that part of the country, and a good job too, for they was the right sort, both on 'em; and thorough sportsmen as well. And it's a pity when two like that fall out, aint it, sir?’ ”

Just as Tom had finished this little reminiscence of his stag-hunting days, the trim domestic before mentioned entered with a notification that the huntsman was wanted outside by someone who wished to see him with regard to the purchase of a horse for hound-consumption, so we rose to take leave of our host at the same time. "What is the time?"

"Goodness gracious me! we've sat here more than an hour. Tom, I must be off, or I shan't get home until dark. Ah! here's the hack just as I wanted him. Good-bye, Tom. The frost looks like going, I think—it's too white to last; so, in all probability, we shall see you and the hounds next Tuesday, same as usual, at No Man's Land." Tom, looking up at the sky, agrees with us, with regard to our forecast of the weather, and bidding us a cheery good evening, retires into his house, and we, having lit a fresh cigar, trot gaily along, homeward-bound.



## THE CHIRPINGTONS OF LARKLEY HALL.

**W**E have hitherto picked out for the gentle reader's edification only solitary flowers, "buttonholes," so to speak, from amongst the varied assortment to be met with in the course of the hunting season with our renowned pack of hounds, but this time we must alter our programme a little, and endeavour to give a slight sketch of, not one flower, but a whole bunch, all at once. For the fact of the matter is, that the Chirpingtons are one and all such a united family, such a happy family, and last, but not least, such a "sporting family," that it is quite out of the question to separate one from the other. We don't think we shall be going very far wrong, indeed, in saying that Tom Chirpington is about the most popular man in the whole county, and his wife the most popular woman. As regards the latter, a pretty good proof of her popularity is that not one of her own sex seems ever able or even desirous of picking holes in her, and that, the reader must allow, speaks volumes in itself. Why, even Mrs. Babblers, the bishop's wife, in whose drawing-room at the palace, half the gossip and mischief-making of the country is

brewed, can't find it in her acidulated old heart to say anything bitter of Mrs. Chirpington to her cronies at her five o'clock tea table. It was Mrs. Babblers who was the sole cause of the separation for more than a year between Colonel Sprightly and his pretty young wife. It was only by the merest chance indeed that the Colonel at last found out his mistake. When he *did* find it out he hastened to make it up with the poor little woman, you may depend, and they now live together again the happiest of couples. Mrs. Babblers says that, in *her* opinion, the Colonel is but a poor, weak creature. The gallant officer himself, I regret to say, is rude enough to express his feelings since the occurrence in the most open way, and has been heard to aver over his after-dinner bottle of claret that, if he had *his* way, he should uncommonly like to burn that old Jezebel (as he irreverently terms Mrs. Babblers), for a witch in front of her husband's cathedral. "As for the bishop," goes on the gallant officer, "why, he's a dashed good fellow, and I'm sorry for him, begad I am."

No, even Mrs. Babblers can't say a word against sporting Mrs. Chirpington, though her sense of decorum was so considerably shocked one fine afternoon when out for an airing in her carriage, by meeting the hounds in the midst of a run, and beholding Mrs. C., her face red, her hair ruffled, and her habit torn, come bounding over a big fence into the road, and then across and over the opposite one, also a big one, like a flash of lightning, "before her own husband actually," would say Mrs. Babblers when describing the incident (Chirpington's second horse had not turned up at the right moment, and he was consequently a bit behind-hand).

To see the Chirpington family at their very best, you must look in upon them on a hunting morning. Exactly as the big stable clock strikes half-past eight o'clock, downstairs clanks Tom Chirpington himself. Tom is rising forty-five, as he says, and is just about as hale and hearty a looking Briton as you would find in a day's march. Altogether a man one would rather drink with, than fight with, any day of the week. He's not so slim by a good deal, as when a shining light of the 'Varsity Christchurch drag, he was the very apple of Jem Hill's eye; but the same spirit is in him still, and though he don't shove 'em along in the reckless style he was wont to do in the Bradwell Grove and Sturdy's Castle days, it still takes a man all his time to beat him. As a hard-riding friend remarked of him, you never know how fast Tom Chirpington's going until you get "*alongside* of him." Needless to observe, his "get-up" is perfection, and he looks the *workman* all over from head to heel. As Squire Tom enters the bright-looking breakfast-room, with its mullioned windows and oak panelling, covered with portraits of bygone Chirpingtons, male and female, great is the welcome accorded him. Comely Mrs. Chirpington, attired in the neatest of habits, and looking fresh and rosy as only an English woman can look, smiles at him from behind the tea and coffee at the end of the table. Two little girls (the very moral of their mother, as the old nurse says), aged eleven and twelve, rush forward, nearly tumbling over their habit skirts (for they are going to hunt, too, mind you) in their eagerness for a kiss from papa. Young Tom Chirpington, aged fourteen, the son and heir, a good-looking boy, home from Eton, rises, blushing, from his seat, for this morning (an eventful morning, to be marked with red letters in his

calendar) he has donned his first pair of breeches and boots. Certainly the breeches are brown cord, and the boots are what are commonly called butcher-boots; but that don't matter, they are real breeches and boots for all that. Lastly comes the youngest, consequently the pet of the family, Master Geoffrey, aged nearly ten. Geoffrey has his mouth full of sausage and a tear in his eye. Poor little man! Christmas fare has had its effect on him, and his mother, noticing his looks, had an idea of substituting for his day's hunting a dose of something pleasant and a quiet day in the nursery. However, old Major Jollyboy, who is staying at the Hall, intervenes, and Mrs. Chirpington promises to speak to papa on the subject. And what says Papa? Why, hunt of course, you young sinner, and we'll physic you in the morning, eh, Geoffrey? The grateful pet grins with delight at his friend the Major, who comes second only, in his estimation, to his father, and pitches into his breakfast with renewed vigour, whilst the Squire, putting his big watch down on the table at his elbow, works steadily away at his. "Time's up! Here come the horses!" Up get everybody from their seats, young Tom kicking his legs about with as near an imitation of the Major as he can command at short notice.

At last everybody is mounted, including the younger branches of the family, and a start is made forthwith, the Squire and his wife leading the way, and the youngsters jogging along behind, in charge of an old groom of quaint appearance who answers to the name of John. John Jones is a Welshman by descent, and has been in the family for years, and has now constituted himself into a sort of riding master and head nurse to the children, with

whom he is, needless to say, first favourite. It is John this, John that, all day with them ; nothing can be done without John. John is a great character in his way, nearly everybody in the country-side knowing him. On his first visit to town with the family one London season, he was taking care of the children during their ride one day, in the Row, when his master, who was sauntering along, came suddenly upon them, and noticed that John touched his hat to every equestrian who passed him ; his arm, as may be imagined, being, in consequence, kept in perpetual motion.

“ Why, John,” said the Squire, “ what on earth are you doing ? You don’t know all those gentlemen and ladies, do you ? What do you touch your hat to them for ? ,’

“ Indeed, to goodness, I thought they was gentlemen,” was the old servant’s simple reply.

Another day he was sent up to Tattersall’s with a small draft the Squire wanted to get rid of, including a mare named Post Haste, belonging to Mrs. Chirpington.

“ Well, John,” said his master, when he returned, “ and how did the sale go off ? Who sold ’em ? Were there many people there, eh ? ”

“ There was few people till our horses come,” replied John, “ and then they did crowd in, in hundreds, Squire. I did never see nothing like it. Mr. Pain, he sold them, but when it came to Post Haste, Mr. Tattersall come himself.”

(It must be mentioned here that old John had an affection for Post Haste, and was indignant at her being sold.)

“ Gentlemen,” said he, with a knock of his hammer, “ this is Post Haste. You all do know about her, and what she can

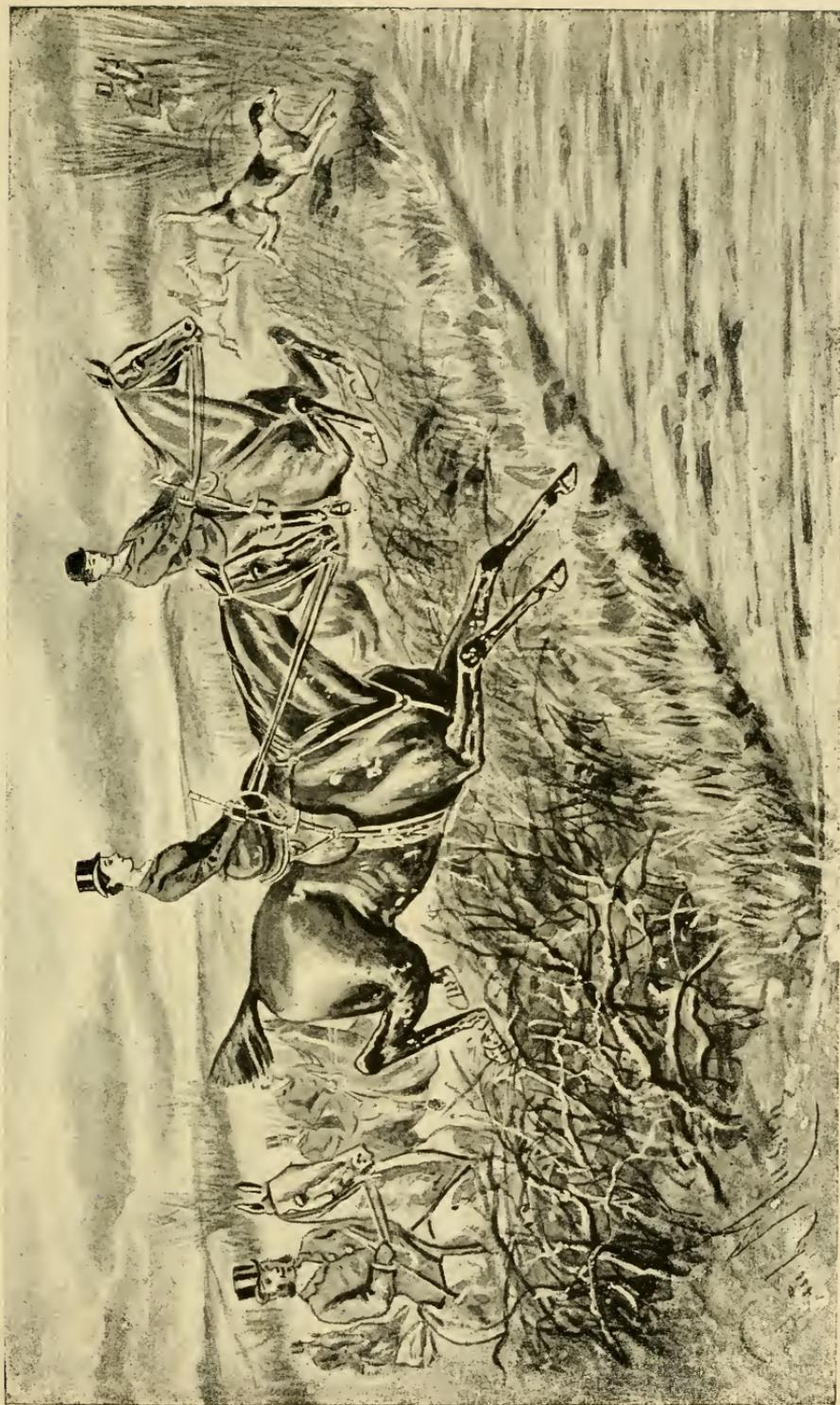
do. You also know the lady who has been riding her. Gentlemen, I will say no more."

"Come, come, John, that won't do," said his master, much amused.

"I declare to God it is true," replied John, not moving a muscle of his face, and rubbing away at a curb chain. Needless to observe, the whole story was pure invention on the old groom's part, from beginning to end.

And now let us imagine this hunting family arriving at the meet. Here come the Chirpingtons, announces somebody; and it is soon "Morning, Tom!" "Mornin', squire!" in every direction. Off come the velvet caps of the huntsmen and his whippers-in, as the squire rides up to have a friendly word or two with the former, and a look over the hounds. My lord by this time having arrived, and exchanged his hack for his hunter, consults his watch, and, finding that "time is up," gives his customary nod to his huntsman, who forthwith moves off with his hounds, followed by the large field, towards an outlying cover belonging to Tom Chirpington, which they have decided to draw first. It is generally a sure find, but to-day it is indeed, a case of "look sharp," and no mistake about it, for scarcely are the hounds in at one end than the fox is out at the other.

The huntsman gets his hounds out like lightning, and away they go, at a pace that looks uncommon like killing, the lucky few who have got well away hugging themselves as they note the fact that the majority of the field have been left in the lurch. We pull up our cob and proceed to enjoy the fun. Well in the van, alongside of Lord Daisyfield, we can make out the squire, his wife, and their eldest boy—the latter admirably mounted on a clever



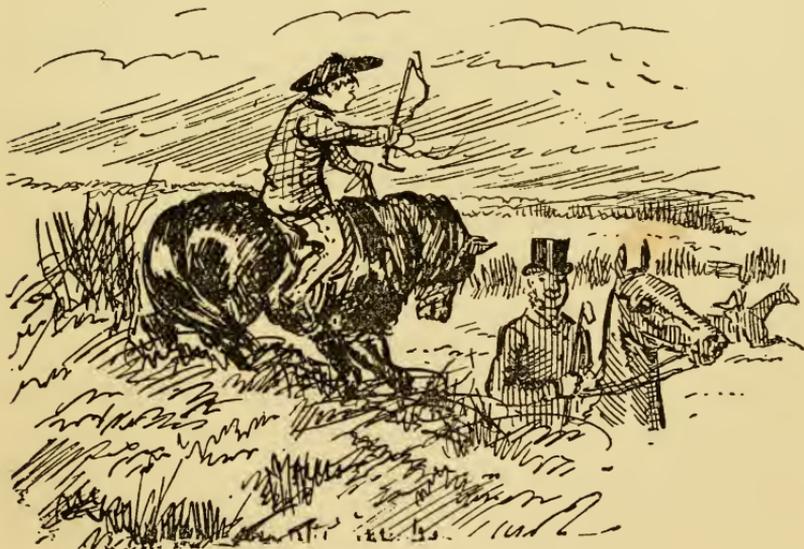
THE CHIRPINGTONS OF LARKLEY HALL—  
*"Well in the van we can make out the Squire and his Wife."*



light-weight hunter—all three going as straight as a line, and throwing the fences behind them like a school-girl does a skipping-rope.

On come the laggards, powdering along like a regiment of cavalry, but unless there is a check soon, their chance of ever catching the leaders seems a remote one, such a rare start have they got. Here, too, comes that veritable chip of the old block, the youthful Geoffrey.

“Forrad! forrad!” squeaks the young one, as he passes us, his pony in a lather. Finally, appear upon the scene the two little girls, escorted by old John. The little maids’ faces are quite rosy from the exercise, and their glossy hair is flying in the breeze. They, too, are soon out of sight. We have seen the last of the Chirpingtons for to-day. So just the least taste in the world of orange brandy, one more cigar, and then away for home and luncheon.



## THE REV. MARMADUKE MERRYTHOUGHT.

## THE CHAPLAIN OF THE HUNT.



CHAPLAIN nowadays seems a necessary appendage to every association of any importance, from the British Army down to, say, the Gig-lamp Makers' Company, with whose jovial spiritual adviser, indeed, we are personally acquainted, and proud to know him, especially when he invites us, as he sometimes does, to his worshipful company's hall for a light little luncheon, or what vulgar people would call a "snack," consisting of the native oyster, the succulent turtle-soup, and the exhilarating champagne. It's about as good a luncheon as a man can have, and we swagger along westward after one of these entertainments feeling as if the whole of London belonged to us.

Private individuals, too, as well as regiments, societies, &c., indulge in the luxury of a chaplain.

Take, for example, Mr. Benjamin Bobbin, of Birmingham, who has made a fortune in staylaces. Bobbin thinks it necessary, in order to show off his "brass" as he calls it, to set up as a country gentleman at once, if not sooner, with which laudable purpose he forthwith buys a bit of land, on which springs up in less than half a no-time a huge nondescript sort of mansion, in appearance not at all unlike one of her majesty's prisons, and which he is pleased to adorn with the high-sounding name of castle.

"It only wants a moat to be puffect," said Mr. Bobbin

to an admiring friend, "and," he added, "if it had not been for Mrs. B. insisting upon it that it would make the 'ouse so damp, blow me if I wouldn't 'ave 'ad one."

Of course he has his Master of the Horse, and his Groom of the Chambers, and a sort of bailiff, whom he is pleased to call his Land Steward, notwithstanding the fact that there are only 300 acres of land attached to the whole estate, fifty of which belong to the park round the "House that Bobbin built." He has all these, and, determined not to be outdone by his next-door neighbour, the "Dook," as he calls him, he first of all builds a church in his park, taking care to put in it an elaborate organ and no end of painted windows. He next rummages out from somewhere a poor weak little party, whom he remunerates with a hundred a year and a room at the top of the 'ouse—we beg pardon, "castle"—and who, from that time forth, is known as Mister Bobbin's private chaplain.

The last we heard of Mr. B.'s private chaplain was that he had walked off one fine day in company with the youngest Miss Bobbin (as ill luck would have it, the only good-looking one of the lot). Whether the ex-staylace-maker will eventually forgive the errant pair remains to be seen. We believe that he is now looking out for another chaplain—an old and ugly one preferred. But, bless me, how we are digressing! The readers will say, what on earth has all this got to do with the Harkaway Hunt? Well, only this, that, if all these buffers we have mentioned, these retired staylace-makers, these army soldiers, these gig-lamp makers' and candlestick makers' companies, &c., possess an ornament in the shape of a chaplain, why, we ask, should not the estimable company of sportsmen forming the Harkaway Hunt indulge in a similar treasure?

And where, I should like to know, would you find a better man for the post (an honorary one) than the Rev. Marmaduke Merrythought?—irreverently called by the young and frivolous members of the hunt, “The Bishop of Soda and B.”

“Here’s the Reverend!” “Hallo, your grace, you’re late!” are some of the exclamations our chaplain is met with as he arrives at the meet at a hand-gallop, his hack all of a lather. A fine, hale, athletic-looking man is our pet parson. A trifle over fifty in years is he, and very lightly he carries them; if it were not, indeed, that his closely-cut hair and whiskers were decidedly grey, one would not take him for a day over forty. One can easily believe, on looking over the man, all the numerous stories there are of not only what the Reverend *could* do, but what he *can* do. Of course he was captain of the Eleven when he was at Eton; and you might also be pretty certain that he made one in the ten-oar. Old Etonians of his time talk to this day of the great battle he fought with a butcher, the pride of Peascod Street, in Bachelor’s acre, one Windsor Fair time. The butcher was the bigger and heavier man of the two by a good deal, but Merrythought, major, proved his master in the long run. There was a soft bit in the butcher’s heart, and a right-hander in the sixth round, which floored the knight of the cleaver like one of his own bullocks, settled the matter effectually, for, to the disgust of his friends, the butcher turned it up most unmistakably, and would fight no more. So Merrythought, ornamented with a black eye and with a sprained thumb, put on his coat, and marched off to Eton, accompanied by his admiring friends.

Oxford and Christ Church followed, where he had not

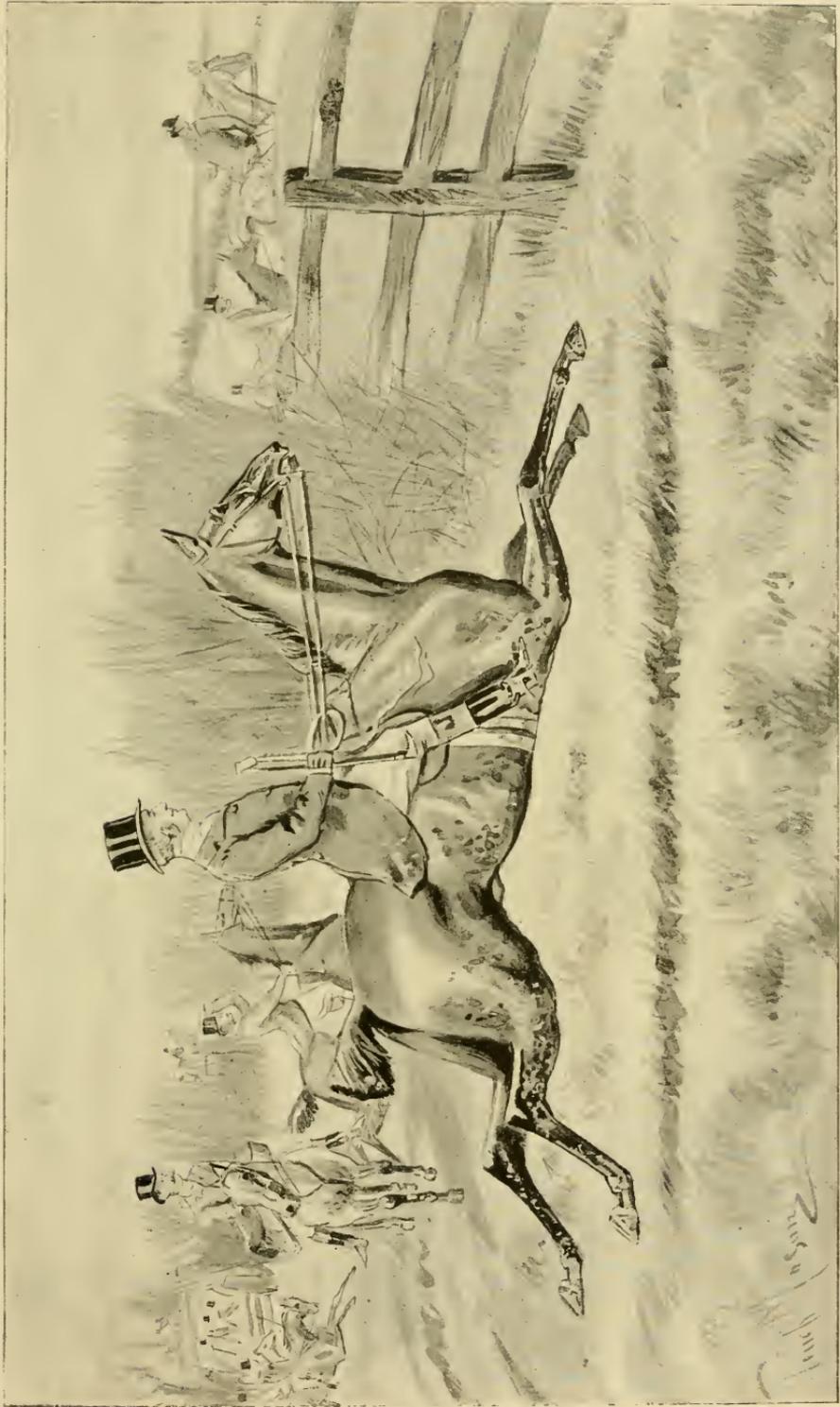
been up very long before he found himself installed as Master of the Drag. Jem Hills and he soon became fast friends, you may be sure; and at last no meet of the Heythrop or Bicester seemed perfect without the sporting undergraduate, who was so soon destined for the Church, putting in an appearance. He was uncommonly fond too of donning the silk as well as the scarlet, and many a time was his smart jacket (pink with blackhoops) the first to catch the judge's eye at Aylesbury, well beloved of undergraduates. We rather think that it was just about that period, between leaving Oxford and entering the Church, that he so distinguished himself by riding his friend Sir Reginald Rattlebone's brown horse Blueskin in the Liverpool Steeplechase. Uncommonly steadily and well the embryo Archbishop of Canterbury rode, too, and it was just on the cards that he might have won had he not been cannoned against and knocked over at Becher's Brook, the second time round. Captain Coper, who rode the winner, told him years after that he looked so like winning up to the time of his fall that he almost gave up his own chance as lost. "It ain't generally known," naively remarked the Captain with a grin—"it ain't generally known, don't cher know, that I was not only riding old Peter the Great, but, by Jove, I was *riding the lot*, sir—squared 'em *all*, every mother's son of 'em, by Jove, except you, Merrythought, and I should have tried it on with you; but, to tell you the truth, I didn't think you had the ghost of a chance, and until I saw you knocked over at Becher's Brook (it wasn't an accident, I'm afraid, eh?), I trembled for my money, I can tell you." That memorable occasion was our worthy chaplain's very last appearance in cap and jacket. He took holy orders, and was duly appointed

to a curacy soon after, and preached his first sermon with great applause, especially distinguishing himself by upsetting the pulpit-cushion on to the head of old Betty Martin, who happened to be fast asleep underneath. Old Betty hobbled out of church in a great hurry, and could not be persuaded for a long while that the roof was not coming down, or that the end of the world had not come. "Well done, my boy, well done," said the Squire, clapping the blushing curate on the back, after service, as he emerged from the vestry-door. "Well done, my boy! you shall have a mount on Tam o' Shanter, on Tuesday, and you don't get such a chance as that every day, let me tell you." Our friend liked the curacy uncommonly. The Squire of the parish was a sportsman all over, and his chief, the rector, was always away, so he hunted, and shot, and fished pretty nearly the same as ever, the only difference he made being to wear a black instead of a scarlet coat out hunting, and to have the colour of his tops altered from a creamy to a brownish hue. That, he thought, gave them a more clerical appearance. He was rather glad to change, too, because the old Oxford recipe was a very expensive one. We don't know whether or no apricot-jam and champagne, formed the principal ingredients (in those days it was a popular notion that the sporting lights of the 'Varsity never used anything else for their boot-tops), but anyhow it was expensive, and he was glad of a change.

At last came the fat living in the gift of an old uncle that he was lying in wait for ; in fact it was the promise of it eventually that induced him to go into the Church. A month or so after and we find him comfortably installed in the snug Rectory-house belonging to the parish of

Wingfield, where, indeed, he has been ever since. Of course he took unto himself a wife, and under their united auspices the parish was soon in apple-pie order, for our Rector, despite his sporting proclivities, knew exactly how things ought to be, and *would* have them done accordingly. The place had been neglected terribly of late, for his predecessor in office was a very old man, and was not competent, even if willing, to see about things at all; the consequence was that everything had been conducted in the most rough and ready style imaginable for a very considerable period. Sometimes there was no service, sometimes there was. Then the poor old Rector would read the wrong lessons, the schoolboys played marbles and cracked nuts under his very nose, whilst a select body of village roughs would amuse themselves during service by shouting and singing, and playing leap-frog over the graves outside. The Rev. Marmaduke very soon altered all that. The yokels outside persisting in kicking up disturbances, notwithstanding repeated remonstrances on his part, he just sallied out one Sunday in the middle of his sermon, stalked down the aisle, and into the graveyard, where, catching the biggest of the offenders, he administered a sound drubbing to him on the spot. There was no more leap-frog ever again. A new schoolmaster was appointed—a young man, with a sharp eye and determined mien, a very different customer to tackle from the last one, who was stone-deaf and half blind into the bargain. Little Johnny Stout detected in the act of cracking wood-nuts in church, got such a dressing next day that he was sore for a week after. Then the church music. When the new parson came, there was an orchestra in the gallery,

consisting of a double-bass, a violin, a trombone, a bassoon, and a clarinet. The Reverend was fond of music, and the performance in the gallery of a Sunday upset him terribly (he was celebrated at Oxford for his singing, and the style in which he used to favour the company with "Nix My Dolly" and other popular songs would always bring down the house at supper and wine parties). The band then was promptly done away with, to its members' great indignation—their leader, Amos Rose by name, who played the clarinet, turning Dissenter in disgust, not that it mattered much, seeing that shortly after he got five years for taking a pot-shot at one of Lord Daisyfield's keepers, who happened to come across him just as he had knocked a fine fat cock-pheasant off his perch on a fir-tree one shiny night in the "season of the year," as the poacher has it in the old song. That feat accomplished, our energetic Rector proceeded at once to go round with the hat, with a view to buying an organ, and got the necessary funds in less than half a no-time, making up any deficiencies from his own pocket. The new organ appeared ; the new schoolmaster played it ; Mrs. Merrythought took the children in hand ; and very soon the singing was good enough for anything. Everything then being put shipshape in the parish, for the Reverend fully recognised the sense of the old saying, "Business first, pleasure afterwards," he thought that it was about time that he began to see to the furthering of his own amusements ; so accordingly some fresh stables were built ; two more nags added to those he had brought with him ; and shortly after Christmas the Reverend Marmaduke was enabled to make his first appearance with the Harkaway Hounds in a becoming manner, and



THE REV. MARMADUKE MERRYTHOUGHT—  
“When the country is roughest he’s most at his ease.”



most regular has he been in his attendance ever since, scarcely ever, indeed, missing a day. In fact, he is a model chaplain in every way. Watch him now, as, having changed his hack for a hunter, he moves off to say a word to the noble Master of the Hounds, and say if the subject of our sketch don't look like business all over, from the crown of his hat to the toes of his very perfectly varnished boots, and, if you only wait until they find, and you get away with them, taking the "Bishop" as your pilot, you will be pretty certain to find yourself at the end of the day recalling to memory those lines of Major Whyte-Melville's—

When the country is roughest he's most at his ease;  
When the run is severest, he rides like a man.  
And the pace cannot stop, nor the fences defeat,  
This rum one to follow, this bad one to beat.

About a week before the Derby our Chaplain and his family betake themselves to town for a month or so for the May Meetings, as he will tell you. Not that we ever remember seeing him near Exeter Hall, in our life. When in town the Reverend's programme for the day is something in this wise: after breakfast he will saunter down Pall-Mallwards to his club, which is, of course, the Oxford and Cambridge. Arrived there, he will repair to the smoking room, and read the paper over a quiet weed. When he has done that, it is about time for the park. So he will repair home; take one or both of his daughters, and saunter down Piccadilly, stopping on the way, you may be sure, at Messrs. Fores's to have a stare at the sporting prints. The park reached, he will sit down and watch with a critical eye the cavalry as they pass in review before him—home again to luncheon—club again, and another cigar, and a talk with a friend or two—go home—

dress for dinner, and opera or theatre as the case may be.

You are sure to run against him in the paddock at Epsom every day of the summer meeting, looking more like an owner of one of the favourites than a country parson—his white tie, indeed, knowingly folded in a diamond shape, and hardly excelled even by that wonderful choker worn by the late “ginger” Stubbs, excites the admiration, not to say envy, of all beholders. The Reverend, though not a better as a rule, always likes to, have his “tenner” on something for the Derby, and it would not be very unwise to follow my leader, and do as he does, for he is never a great way off the winner when he does take it into his head to back one. Eton, where he has a boy, of course sees him on the 4th of June, ready armed with a pocketful of sovereigns, for he is a rare hand at tipping schoolboys; and as we find our way to a friendly drag the first day of Ascot Races, with a view to luncheon, an eye winks cheerfully at us from over a huge double-handled mug filled with champagne cup, which cup, by and by, being removed, with a prolonged “Ah” of satisfaction, discloses to view the ruddy face of our reverend chaplain, who is beaming with smiles, and apparently as happy as a king. After Ascot the Reverend begins to think about going home again, where fishing and shooting keep him going until cub-hunting begins, of which amusement he never misses a day, getting up at most unearthly hours in order to be at the meet.

Let us have a quiet peep at our Chaplain in his own church at Wingfield. It is September, and we are on a short visit to him for some partridge-shooting. We are attending the Sunday afternoon service, and that

second glass of brown sherry after luncheon, and the heat of the day combined, have, to say the truth, made us uncommonly drowsy. The old-fashioned square pew, too, we are in, is uncommonly comfortable. The hum of a bumble-bee buzzing around, and the snore of a fat farmer in the pew behind us, seem to act like laudanum upon our senses. In two seconds we are sound asleep.

A prayer-book suddenly drops off the seat with a bang, and wakes us up with a start. Have we been snoring, we wonder? Dear me! we trust no one observed us. We must have been asleep a quarter of an hour; for, as we rub our eyes and endeavour to wake up, we hear the Reverend's clear voice bringing his no doubt excellent sermon to a close thus: "And now, my brethren: Mark the difference between these two men—Esau was a gentleman and a sportsman, but Jacob, my brethren, Jacob was a *Jew*."



## MR. AND LADY THOMASINA CLINKER.

“**B**Y Jove! Tommy, we’re floored; and we’re late too. What on earth’s to be done? These are awful rails, you know. Will Rufus do ’em after me, d’ye think? We are bound to be late if we turn back. What shall we do, old boy, eh?”

“Oh! Johnnie, we *can’t* turn back, you know, and such a day, too, as it is! Oh, no! Let’s have a shy at them, dear old man. Give me a lead, at once, sir. I dare say you’ll break the top rail.”

Now, anyone not being well acquainted with the members of our renowned hunt, on reading the above conversation, would naturally imagine that it was being carried on between two of the male sex, in which case they would be entirely wrong, for the two speakers are respectively a remarkably good-looking young gentleman, exceedingly well got up in hunting-costume, and who answered to the name of Johnnie—full name, Mr. John Clinker, of Fernleigh Lodge; the other, a very charming curly-haired, blue-eyed, thoroughly English-looking young woman, who answers to the masculine-sounding name of “Tommy,” and who is no other than Lady Thomasina, the fascinating and hard-riding spouse of the aforesaid John, commonly called “Johnnie” Clinker.

Lord Daisyfield’s hounds are on this particular morning (*such* a hunting morning as it was, too, as Lady Tho-

masina said with feeling; southerly wind, cloudy sky, and the rest of it all complete) at Cropperton Gate, one of the very best meets of his lordship's hounds. Johnnie and his wife have sent their best horses on, and have duly started for the meet, taking a short cut well known to them. Now through this farm, now through that, now over a couple of fences to save a mile of road, and so on. They have done about four miles of the distance, are through Oakover Wood, and then proceed in Indian file down the steep and narrow pathway of a little spinney. Johnnie lifts confidently the latch of the small bridle-gate, and emerges into the valley.

What horrible sight is this that meets his eye? Johnnie and his wife can scarcely believe their senses. Why, it was only a month or six weeks since they were here. What has become then of the fat-looking pasture, with the prosperous-looking lot of beasts and a horse or two, all scattered about?—the rich-looking grass almost seeming to say, "Now then, my boys and girls, give your horses their heads, and have a good gallop over us." The pasture is there certainly, but how changed! The cows and horses have disappeared, and are replaced by a couple of hundred or so of that important class of British workmen commonly called "navvies," with their huts, and their horses, and their carts, and their wheelbarrows, and who are one and all as busy at work as a colony of bees. Tipping and shunting, wheeling and digging, measuring and planning, cussing and swearing; and all at the instigation of the worshipful body of directors belonging to the Great Smashem and Crumple-em-up Railway Company.

By way of marking the limits of the land they have acquired for the new line, so that there might be no mistake

about it, the aforesaid navigators have playfully put up all along the line for miles, a great strong oak post and rail, and it is the sight of this formidable obstruction that so appals for a moment our two hunting friends. At the sight of the red-coat the navvies are up in a moment, and begin to chaff. Eh, lad!" shouts one big fellow with a grin, "ye'll hev to gan back, arm thinkin'." Johnnie offers half-a-crown to one of them to pull off the top rail, but the ganger, a big angular-looking Scotchman, coming up, sternly forbids anything of the sort. Noo, says Mr. Sandy M'Tavish, "I wunna giv me consint on ony accoont, mun, to demegin' the company's pruperty."

"Oh, you won't, won't you?" replies Johnnie, in answer to this rebuff, getting out of patience. "Oh, you won't, won't you? Then get out of the way, you ugly Scotch sinner, or I shall ride over you." And, turning round without more ado, he gives his horse a good run at the rails, and gets over cleverly, nearly knocking over the big Scotchman as he lands. His hunter hits the top bar, but it doesn't so much as bend.

"I'm coming, Johnnie!" he hears his wife call out behind him, and before he can say "Jack Robinson," she has set her horse going, increasing her pace as she nears the formidable post and rails, and in another second is at his side. The navvies are delighted, and cheer with might and main. Without even being asked, the biggest of them at once proceeds to break down the opposite rail, much to the indignation of the tall Scotchman, who vows vengeance against "yon rackless young faller," as he calls Johnnie, who, with his wife, is now half a mile off.

"Eh, but yon's as bonny a lookin' lass as iver I see," says an admiring navvy as, having watched the pair out



MR. AND LADY THOMASINA CLINKER—

*"I'm coming, Jöhnnie!"*



of sight, he resumes his work ; a remark that is echoed by all the company.

To return to our sporting young couple.

The whole hunt were delighted two years ago, when it was found out that Johnnie Clinker and his newly-married wife, Lady Thomasina, had taken Fernleigh Lodge, and intended to hunt regularly with the Harkaway. They were both well known, and great favourites, for Johnnie's papa, Clinker, sen., owned a large estate in the county, to which his son, being the eldest, was, of course, heir ; and was not Lady Thomasina the daughter of Lord Lovelock, who lived in the adjacent county ?

Lady Tommy was a favourite with everybody.

She set everybody going (and we think it will be generally allowed that country people want a deal of waking up at times).

Who was it urged on and bullied all the bachelors in the county until they consented to give that capital ball at the Town Hall of Bullerton, in November last ?

Lady Tommy, to be sure.

Who got up and headed the subscription for the Ladies' Cup at the Hunt Steeplechase Meeting (the most popular race of the day, as it turned out) ?

Why, none other than Lady Tommy.

Yes, she is here, there, and everywhere, You'll see her dancing the very last dance of all at half-past three in the morning ; and you may go to the meet of my lord's hounds at Thornmanby Thicket that identical morning, and there I'll wager anything you'll see Lady Tommy, accompanied by her faithful Johnnie, chattering like a magpie, and looking as fresh as paint. Johnnie and she talk to each other more like a couple of boys than man and wife,

to the great amusement of everybody. Her detractors declare Lady Tommy is bad style, and dreadfully fast. Perhaps she is a wee bit slangy, but she is none the worse for that. It is a pleasant sight on a non-hunting day to see her ladyship turn out for an afternoon amongst her pet poor, thick-booted and ulster-coated, with a huge basket filled with good things in one hand, and a thick stick with a crook to it in the other. She is accompanied on these occasions by a whole tribe of dogs, ranging in species from the retriever to a Yorkshire terrier, and, if he is not shooting, she will probably be escorted by the faithful Johnnie, who, in that case, carries the basket, and slouches along by her side in a submissive manner, with a huge cigar in his mouth. As they enter one end of the village, the curate bolts out at the other—that good man is of Ritualistic principles, and mortally afraid of Lady Tommy, who, as she says, chaffs the life out of him. “Tally Ho! Yonder he goes!” laughs her frolic ladyship, as she and Johnnie catch sight of his long-coated, squashy-hatted figure, striding along in the distance. Right glad are all the people to see her, you may depend. Old Dame Trot, who lately shuffled off this mortal coil, was asked by the parish doctor one day whether she wouldn’t like to see the clergyman. No, said the Dame, she didn’t know as she wouldn’t rather not, but she *would* like one thing, that she would, and that was to see the little ladyship, as she called Lady Tommy, once again. “Deary, deary me,” said the poor old woman, “the sight of her curly hair and her purty face seems to do me more good, it do, than all the doctor’s stuff or sermons in the world.”

Particularly well posted in all sporting literature is her

ladyship. On her bookshelves you will find nearly every work connected with sporting that has ever been published—*Jack Mytton*; *Soapy Sponge*; *Ask Mamma*. There they are every one of them.”

Said little Lord Numskull to her one day (he had just been plucked, poor young man):—“If those old slow-coaches had only examined me, you know, about Jorrocks’s Hunt, or *Bell’s Life*, or something cheerful, instead of all that antediluvian rubbish, that, ’pon my-soul, no one can remember, I should have passed all right, I’m sure I should.”

“Oh, you are, are you?” replied her ladyship. “Suppose, now, I examine you a little. Let us, Lord Numskull, take, by way of commencement, Mr. Jorrocks’s Hunt. Now then. Attention!

“Question 1: What happened to Mr. Jorrocks on the Cat and Custard-pot day?”

“Ah! you know that. Yes; quite right; go up to the top of the class.

“Question 2: Describe as accurately as possible Mr. Jorrocks’s great run from Pinch me near Forest.” And on went her ladyship with her questions, until her husband stopped her, saying: “Shut up, Tommy, you bully you; Numskull has had enough of examiners lately, without you, I know.”

We left Johnnie Clinker and his wife, just having cleared in gallant style the post and rails belonging to the Smashem and Crumple-em-up Railway. So we must forrad on, and catch them up. The hounds have met, and are already off to draw Tinkler’s Gorse. Tinkler’s Gorse lies on a hill—it’s a sure find. So, on our pony we can see a good deal of the fun in a quiet sort of

way. Ah, I thought so; the hounds have not been in cover three minutes before Harry the whip's cap is seen in the air, at the bottom corner, and—"Tally-ho!" yonder he goes! The thief of the world gives a flick of his brush as much as to say, "If I *am* to be settled to-day, you'll have to do all you know, my fine fellows." Twang, twang, twang, goes Tom Tootler's horn. Here come the hounds! My word, what a chorus! Horses are mad with excitement; even our pony begins to fidget about. We can see the whole that takes place in the valley below. There goes Lord Daisyfield, close to the hounds, as usual. There goes Tom Tootler close to him, and there go, just behind him, Johnnie Clinker and his wife, Lady Tommy—her horse, apparently a little out of her hand—leading. And now that we have seen our friends in a good place in what promises to be a first-rate run, we will bid them both good-bye.



CAPTAIN DABBER.

“**M**ISSIS PLUMMER !”



“Comin', sir.”

“Have ye got my sandwiches and the ginger-bread nuts ?”

“Here they are, Captain,” gasps Mrs. Plummer, who has at last arrived at the top of the kitchen stairs, for Mrs. Plummer is short and fat, and the stairs are long and difficult to ascend to a lady of her calibre.

“Here they are, Captain, and the sherry-flask's a'ready in the saddle.”

“And the small brandy-flask, Mrs. Plummer ?”

“Here it is, sir.”

“And, Mrs. Plummer, did ye say there was beefsteak puddin' for dinner or the leg of Welsh mutton ?”

“I'm a keepin' the mutton for to-morrow, Captain. There's a dozen oysters (the last of the barrel, sir), the beefsteak pudden, the woodcock you shot yesterday, and a apple tart to foller.”

“Very good, Missis Plummer ; pop a bottle of champagne into the ice pail, about half-past six, and decant a bottle of the red seal as soon as I'm gone, and leave it on the mantelpiece, there's a good creature.” And, so saying, Captain Dabber, or as he is generally called by the natives “Charlie Dabber,” emerges solemnly from the front door of his snug habitation, known by the name of Ivy Lodge, and swinging his fifteen stone of humanity on to the back

of his flea-bitten, Roman-nosed, grey hunter, waves his hand gaily to his admiring housekeeper, who waits at the door with folded arms to see him off, and jogs steadily off to meet Lord Daisyfield's hounds at Tilbury Cross Roads.

Captain Dabber is a short, stout, powerfully-built man, with a stubbly beard and moustache of a mustard and pepper hue, and at the present moment is attired in a cutaway coat of dark green cloth, with brass buttons. White cord breeches, and brown-topped boots adorn a pair of very serviceable-looking legs, and the whole is topped up with a velvet cap. As he himself expresses it, he was "foaled" in the county, and as he has shot and hunted, fished and walked, and driven pretty well all over it in the course of his fifty-five years of existence, why he may be said to be conversant with every inch of it, and in return to be pretty well known in it, himself.

Now, it was the original intention of our friend's parents—as worthy an old couple as ever lived—to send their hopeful son (who was their only child, by the way) into the Church, when he had arrived at years of discretion; and, with this object in view, they began, of course, by thoroughly spoiling him. Being a strong healthy urchin, with a tendency to low company, and always brimful of the most exuberant spirits, he began by the time he was twelve years old to get a trifle out of their hand; so they sent Master Charles off to school, with a view to sobering him down a bit. He evidently possessed no scholarly tastes, however, for he ran away from the first one, and was expelled from two others, one after the other.

The two old people were nearly brokenhearted, as may

be imagined, when their darling was returned for the second time on their hands, marked "incurrible." There was no doubt about it, as the old nurse expressed it, the boy was a regular young "Rooshian. What to do with him now was the question. It was no use thinking about the Church; it was all they could do to induce him to occasionally enter one, and then only by bribery and corruption on his mother's part. The boy was evidently not a fool. Why should he not succeed if trained for mercantile pursuits? "Who knows?" observed his fond and ever-sanguine mother: "perhaps dear Charles may eventually turn out a second Dick Whittington, and become Lord Mayor of London in process of time." Her husband shook his head rather dubiously at his wife's remark; however, he thought there was no harm in giving the lad a trial. Accordingly, a seat having been duly found for him in a large counting-house in the City, and an arrangement made with a highly respectable family, in Bloomsbury Square, to board and lodge our hero during his sojourn in town, with strict orders not to allow him a latch-key on any pretence whatever, the youth was launched on his new career, the fact being duly impressed upon him at starting, that, if he only behaved himself and worked hard, he was bound eventually to become a very great man.

Alas! the "castles in the air" built by poor old Mr. and Mrs. Dabber were destined before six months were over to come with a crash to the ground. One fine day the fond old couple took it into their heads to go up to London with a view to giving dear Charlie a pleasant surprise. Having ordered rooms at the Golden Cross, where the coach stopped, old

Dabber, leaving his wife at the hotel, wended his way into the City to call on Charlie, and invite him to dinner and the play that very evening.

"How glad the dear boy will be to see me, to be sure," thought the worthy old gentleman, as he plodded steadily along Cheapside; "I'll ask 'em to give him a holiday to-morrow, and his mother and me will have him all to ourselves, and we'll make a reg'lar day of it—do the Tower o' London and the Monymment—we'll see a little life, in fact, the three of us. Ha! ha!"

.....

"Mr. Dabber has not been to the office now for three weeks—laid up with pleurisy at his father's place in the country. He is expected back, however, to-morrow or the next day. Who shall I say called?" "I—I won't leave any name, thank you," faintly murmured the poor old man. "Merely say an old friend of his called. That will be sufficient. Good morning, sir, and thank you."

Poor old Dabber, on getting into the street, at once took a hackney coach and drove straight to the boarding-house in Bloomsbury. As he expected, precisely the same answer awaited him here. That was not all, however. When the mistress of the establishment turned up and heard from his father's own lips that Master Charlie was not where he was supposed to be, a sudden light seemed to dawn upon her, and forthwith such an account of his son's goings-on was poured into Mr. Dabber, senior's, ears, as fairly horrified him. When the landlady, tightening her lips and drawing in her breath, got as far in her narrative as: "*Now*, I think I can guess what has become of Betsy!" (alluding to an under-housemaid of a frivolous

disposition and prepossessing appearance who had disappeared oddly enough about the same time that Charlie had) the old man, gathering up his hat and umbrella, fairly bolted from the house.

When the prodigal son did return (the poor boy had been to Margate for a little fresh air, at which vivacious watering-place, just about the same period, the abandoned Betsy might also have been seen flaunting about in an alarming hat and feathers) his father talked to him like a book, you may depend, and Charlie, struck with remorse, promised to return to his duties in the City and be a good boy for the future. But it was no good. In spite of all his good resolutions he at length came to the conclusion that quill-driving was not his forte. A hunting-saddle he liked much better than a three-legged stool to sit upon, and a "Joe Manton" to handle was infinitely preferable to the office ruler. Accordingly he discarded the counting-house in the City, or rather, to be strictly accurate, I should say, the counting-house in the City discarded *him*.

The old folks at home, now, did not know what on earth to do with him. They tried him at engineering, they tried him at land surveying, then they tried farming, but finally Charlie chucked them all up one after another. He liked farming certainly the best of the lot, for he found the big grass meadow at the back of the house was the place of all others to shoot pigeons in, and he amused himself and his friends accordingly.

Then he started a steeplechaser or two, and broke down his own fences and rode over his own wheat with the greatest pleasure in life, whilst giving them their gallops.

Things at last came to a full stop at the farm, for one fine day those eminent pugilists, the Whitechapel Wonder and Curly Bob, with a select horde of ruffians, appearing in the neighbourhood with a view to settling their little differences by an appeal to their fists, and casting about for a convenient spot to bring off their little mill, suddenly came across that scamp Charlie, who happened to be shooting partridges in a turnip-field next the road; he, quickly seeing how matters stood, forthwith invited them to make any use of his land they thought proper, and accordingly, taking him at his word, the whole lot of them marched into his eighteen-acre grass field, and fixed the ropes and stakes without more ado, kindly giving their host, in return, a seat in the inner ring free, gratis, for nothing. It was a capital fight, and the Whitechapel Wonder quite put all his previous performances in the shade, for, getting his opponent on the ropes in the last round, he half killed him before he let him go. Though pleasant while it lasted, Charlie found it in the long run rather an expensive day's work, for, besides losing fifty pounds on the fight, the mob broke into his house, and walked off with everything they could lay hands on, and finished up by playfully setting light to all the ricks in his stackyard (not insured). To make matters worse, as he lay tossing in bed at eleven o'clock the next morning with a rattling headache, who should send up his card but his infuriated landlord, who, being an active magistrate, was naturally indignant at such goings on. High words ensued, the worthy beak telling Master Charlie that he would not allow such a young blackguard as he was to remain tenant of a farm of his any longer; Charlie, in return, requesting his landlord to

go to the devil. The sheriff shortly afterwards walked in, and collared the redoubtable steeplechase horses. The following week there was a sale, and then the poor old Dabbers found their hopeful son thrown on their hands once again. The last disappointment about finished them. Not long after, old Dabber died, and was quickly followed by his wife, and Charles then found himself the proud possessor of Ivy Lodge, a snug little house, with about three hundred acres of land attached to it, and a nice little fortune of some fifteen thousand pounds.

The fifteen thousand pounds lasted, as the reader may imagine, having an insight into our friend's mode of life, as many months. (A bad Cambridgeshire, we rather think, gave him his *coup de grâce*.) Ivy Lodge was announced in the local papers as to be let, and its owner disappeared altogether from the scene. There were all manner of conjectures as to what had become of him. Some said he had turned soldier, and had gone to Spain to fight with General Evans. Someone else heard he had been pressed for the navy, and was serving as a common sailor before the mast. Then came a report that he had been in England all the while, after all; and a story got about that he had been mixed up in some ugly transaction on the Turf, and had been warned off Newmarket Heath. For some years nothing more was heard of him. Ivy Lodge was tenanted by two old maiden ladies, and Charlie was nearly forgotten. Suddenly, one fine day, he turned up, like a bad shilling, as "What do you think? A Master of Stag-hounds." In the neighbourhood of London, too. His opening meet was announced with a flourish of trumpets in all the sporting papers, and it coming to the ears of some of his friends in the old country, they determined to

be at his first meet and see how he did things. It was as well they did, for, as it happened unfortunately, Charlie's first meet was his last. It happened in this way:—The Captain, as he was now called (why or wherefore nobody knew exactly), like a careful man, had taken the wise precaution of having all the subscriptions to his hunt paid in advance—short credit, in his opinion, making long friends. Our friend, then, was enabled to appear on his opening day in high feather—brand new coat, brand new cap, brand new breeches and boots, brand new everything. Not only that; fixed in his saddle was a splendid silver hunting-horn, presented to him by the members of the new hunt the night before at a big dinner given in his honour at the Ship and Turtle Tavern. In short, he was no end of a swell. Well, the sporting Cits were all assembled at the meet, Charlie, in the centre of them, sitting on his horse amongst his hounds as cocky as you please. What a great man he felt that day! Napoleon at the battle of Marengo was nothing to him. How his field admired him! “What a splendid pack of dogs!” exclaimed one enthusiastic old innocent; “Magnificent 'ounds,” cried another. (They had only cost a pony at Aldridge's, the whole lot.) “What a splendid hunter!” remarked another, pointing to the Master's horse. At last came the cry of “Here's the deer cart!” and sure enough the great lumbering vehicle was seen coming along in the distance. The Master trotted forward, with a self-satisfied air, to meet it. Approaching nearer he saw at a glance from the driver's face that something was wrong. “Well, what's made ye so long?” said he, sharply, as the man pulled up short. “We've been waiting ever so long; turn him out as quick as you can; come, *look*

*sharp!*" "Turn him out," laughed the driver, scornfully. "That's a good 'un. I 'ain't got one to turn out, Master. I went up to Muster Polecat's in the Marrerbun-road, as you told me, and he ses, ses he, 'Ave you brought the money for the stag?' ses he. 'No, I hain't,' ses I. 'Vell, then,' ses he, a turnin' short round on 'is 'eel as he spoke, 'you jest go an' tell your guvner I hain't a goin' to part with my wallable hanimals until I sees the colour of 'is money,' he ses, so with that, Master, I makes the best o' my way to tell ye." Here was a pretty go. The Captain for once was "done brown," and he did not for a moment know what to do. However, he went back to the assembled sportsmen with the best face he could command. "Infernal nuisance! Stag taken suddenly ill; suppressed gout—a thing stags were very liable to—excessively sorry! If he had only have known earlier would have asked his great friend, Lord Lambswool, for one or two from his park. Would give it that idiot, Polecat, for not letting him know earlier, directly he got back to town. The only thing he could think of to wile away the day would be to go and draw for a hare. Was quite sure the farmers about wouldn't mind." The field agreeing, after a good deal of grumbling, the Captain turned short out of the road into the first fallow field he came to, and to the great delight of everyone they had not been in it two minutes when up jumped a banging great hare.

Away they all went, the hare just skirting a farmhouse. The wily and foreseeing Captain, thinking the tenant might not be best pleased at a stranger coming over his land, gave his farm a wide berth, and with only two of the field got well away. Not so the others, who rode into the

farmyard to avoid a nasty-looking fence, and were there and then impounded by the indignant agriculturist, who declined to let them go until they stumped up a sovereign apiece. The next day our friend (who killed his hare, by the way) got a series of most indignant letters from his stag-hunting friends, some of them indeed being actually mean enough to ask for their subscriptions back. So he took the virtuous indignation tack, and gave up the whole thing, kindly making the Hunt a present of his valuable pack of hounds.

Charlie was now at uncommonly low water, everything seemed to go wrong. Jenny Jones, whom he had backed for as much as he could get on for the Cambridgeshire, with a view to keeping him comfortably for the winter, failed to get a place even. His watch and chain, even the presentation hunting horn, disappeared on a long visit to his confiding uncle's, and his green coat, his cap, and his lily-white cords and brown-topped boots, might have been seen any day in the week airing themselves outside the fusty emporium of Mr. Solomon Isaacs in Holywell-street. There is a story told of him about this period, that, whilst on a visit to a country house, the footman appeared one morning in his bedroom to lay out his clothes, &c., when the following dialogue took place between the two:—

Footman: "Please, sir, I don't see no clean shirt."

Charlie (sitting up in bed): "No clean shirt! Why, where's the one I sent to the wash on Saturday?"

Footman (grinning): "Please, sir, it come in two."

Charlie (subsiding on to his pillow): "Came in two, did it? I wish to heavens it had come in four then, for it's the only one I've got."

Our worthy friend didn't know what to be at. He was too heavy for steeplechase riding, he was too ugly for an artist's model; at last, as he turned it over in his mind in bed one morning, he had just settled with himself that he would shave off the scrubby moustache and beard he usually sported, and advertise for a situation as coachman in a respectable family (wouldn't he rob the cornbin! he thought to himself), when rat-tat came the postman's knock at the front door, and by and bye the dirty servant-of-all-work appeared bearing a letter for the Captain—a letter, too, with a black border two inches deep at least. The worthy Captain's heart beat as loudly as the tick of a Dutch clock as he opened it. It proved to be from the well-known firm of lawyers, Messrs. Weezle and Stote, of Lincoln's Inn, acquainting him with the fact that his aunt, Miss Tabitha Tipcat, had lately departed this life, and had left him, with the exception of a few trifling legacies, all she possessed. Charlie was in ecstasies; he was set up again for life. He'd turn over a new leaf altogether, and be a good boy for the rest of his days, "hang'd if he wouldn't; he quite made up his mind to that." When he had dressed himself, he went straight out, and ordered himself a capital dinner at a certain snug chop-house he was aware of. He also ordered a bottle of champagne, a luxury he had not tasted for goodness knows how long. He then swaggered off to order his mourning, and draw the lawyers of a little ready money on account. Over his coffee and cognac that night after dinner he puffed his cigar, and arranged all his plans for the future. The old ladies' lease had just expired, so he would be enabled once more to inhabit Ivy Lodge. The following week all was settled. Mrs. Plummer was installed as major domo, and

under her able management everything was soon in apple-pie order, and our friend the Captain found himself enabled to set up as a country gentleman forthwith. He farmed a little, shot a little, hunted a good deal, and went to church as regularly as clockwork. He was churchwarden for a time (fancy that!), in which capacity he was most energetic—rather too much so, indeed, for the vicar, with whom he nearly came to blows one fine day in the vestry.

One personage there is in the county who, as he says, can't abide the sight of him, and that no other than the noble M.F.H., Lord Daisyfield to wit, who never tires of relating how that horrid "Mister Dabber," as he calls him, served him out that time at the county races some few years back. Now be it known that Lord Daisyfield in his younger days, when he was the Honourable Reginald Cowslip, was one of the most accomplished gentlemen riders of his time. Croxton Park would not have been itself had not the Honourable won a race or two each day. In fact in every race eligible for the gentleman rider there was his name to be found amongst the performers. However, when he succeeded to the title he thought it more becoming his station to relinquish his favourite pursuit, and the only occasion he now thought fit to appear in silk was once a year at the race meeting held in his lordship's own Park at Wortlebury. Great was the cheering when Lord Daisyfield, got up to perfection ("Sich a neckcloth and *sich* smart boots I never did see, surelie," remarked Farmer Butterboy on one occasion), would carry off the Hunt Cup. Well, about the second year after Captain Dabber had settled down to live quietly at Ivy Lodge, the races came round as usual, and on the numbers going

up for the Hunt Cup it was seen that there were only two runners, viz. :—

1. Lord Daisyfield's bay horse Sir Marmaduke (Owner), *crimson and black cap.*
2. Capt. Dabber's brown horse Lablache (Owner), *blue, red belt and cap.*

Now, the redoubtable Charlie's steed Lablache was a confirmed roarer, consequently it looked any odds against his getting the severe two miles and a half of the Hunt Cup course ; extravagant odds, therefore, were offered on his lordship's mount ; not that there was much betting, it being one of the good old country meetings, where people came to meet one another more for goodfellowship than to make money. Down the course they went in their canter, his lordship first, old Lablache grunting and wheezing along after him. Now, though Lablache was such a bad roarer he possessed a good turn of speed, and was, besides, better bred than Lord Daisyfield's horse, so accordingly as the pair were on their way to the post old Charlie sidled up to his lordship, and proposed making a waiting race of it, and not to really gallop until the bend for home, by which means they would make perhaps a semblance of a race so as to amuse the country folk. His lordship, eyeing his opponent's Roman-nosed steed with some contempt, agreed to the proposal. "*Most* happy, Mister Dabber, I'm sure," replied he with a polite bow, for my lord was always the pink of politeness.

The next minute they were off.

"Whoy, Mas'r's old ploo' mear, Jessie, could go varster nor that theer," remarked a chawbacon, looking on with his mouth open, as the pair went lobbing along about two miles an hour. "Noo they're a-coomin' along varster," said he as they rounded the bend, and, eh ! what ! why you

don't say so!—folks rub their eyes—old Lablache's great, ugly head is on a level with his lordship's knee, and what is more, that old sinner, Charlie Dabber, is sitting as still as a mouse on his horse. Not so Lord Daisyfield, who sits down to ride in earnest. Memories of Croxton Park and the Bibury Club, flit rapidly across his brain, and he does all he knows, which is a good deal you may depend. No good. They near the Stand. Old Lablache draws level. His lordship's whip is out, but it is all over but shouting. Steel and whalebone are not a bit of use this time; the despised one shoots out, and wins, hard held, by a length.

"*Cuss him!*" gasped Lord Daisyfield to himself as he returned to scale.

"*Done, old Stiffneck, by Jupiter!*" ejaculated the de-praved Dabber, putting his tongue in his cheek.

So intensely disgusted was Lord Daisyfield that he vowed he would never ride again, and he kept his word; indeed, everyone agreed it was too bad of that horrid Captain to serve my lord such a shabby trick.

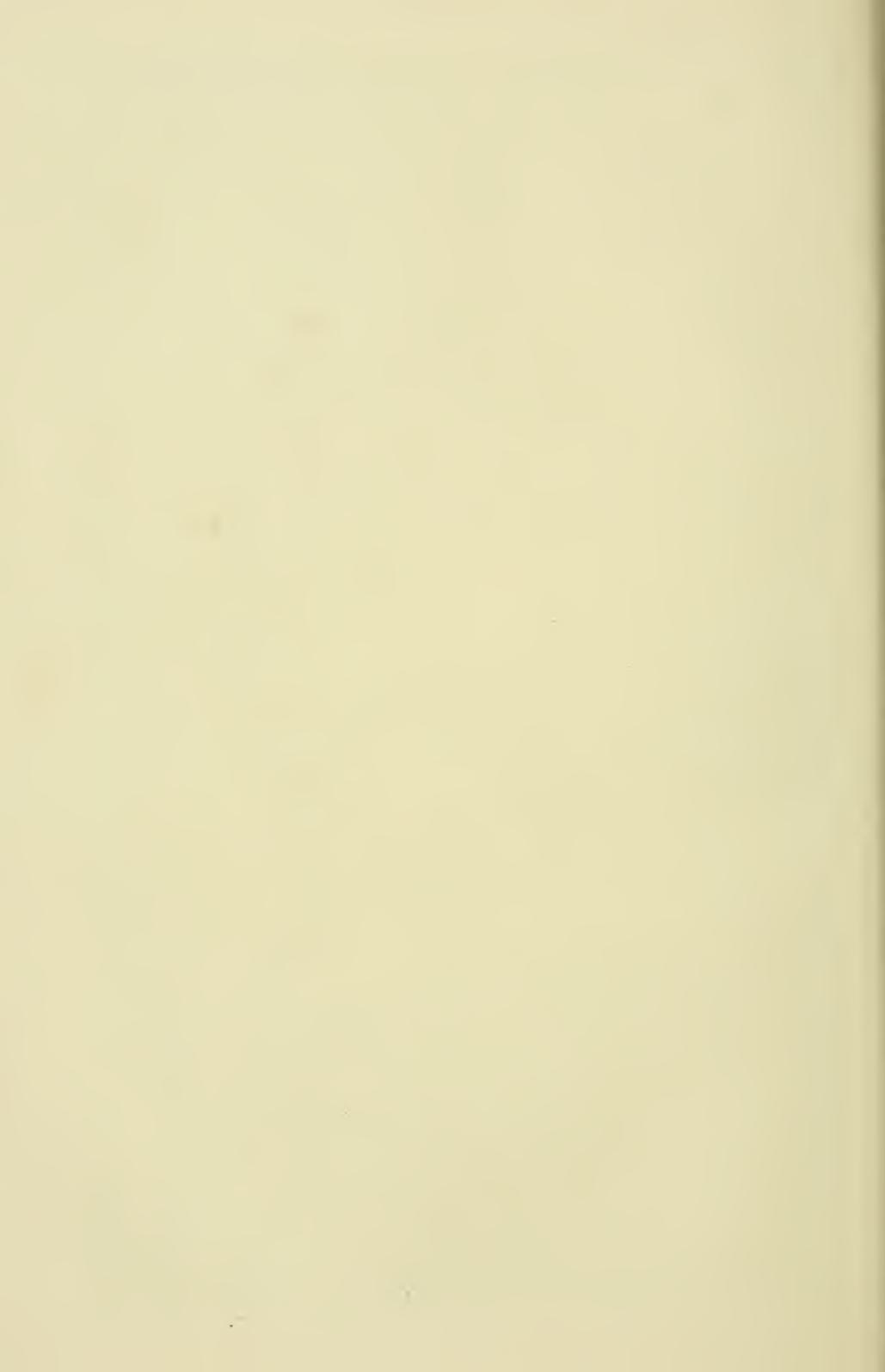
And now we will bid old Charlie good-bye. Let us suppose the hounds find in Scrub Wood, and go away at a rattling pace.

"Ah, I thought as much," grunts the Captain. "Off to Benderby." So saying, he proceeds to take a lengthened swig at his sherry-flask, lights a cigar, and turning his horse's head, makes the best of his way into the high road. Once there he pounds steadily along in the direction he thinks the fox is making for, and as he is right nine times out of ten it is not unusual for him to very often arrive there before "Sly Reynolds" himself. Then comes the break up, and the Captain, sticking a



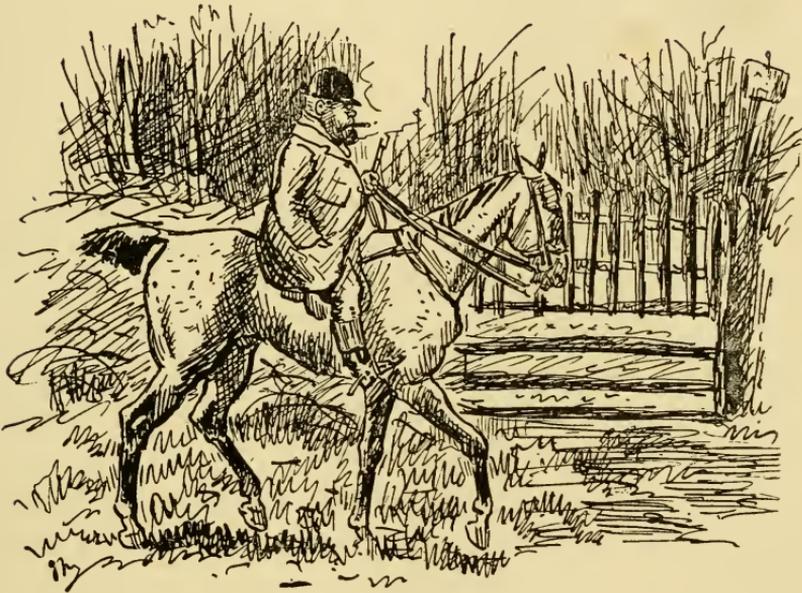
**CAPTAIN DABBER—**

*“The despised one shoots out and wins, hard held, by a length.”*



fresh cigar in his mouth, jogs steadily home, with a terrific appetite for dinner.

Which dinner (not a bad one, we know) we will now leave him to enjoy.



CHARLIE WILDOATS.

**I**T'S very late, sir! The'yve nearly finished breakfast, sir, and the horses are just a-comin' round. The Squire's sent word up twice, sir, to me to let you know. *Mister Charles* (bawling in the sleeper's ear), it's gone ten, sir; it 'ave raly."

"Whatsh matter? Not time to gerrup, is it?"

"Yezzir; it is, indeed. You'll be hawful late, Mister Charles; you will, indeed, sir."

"By Jove! no idea it was so late. Yaw-aw-aw-ah. Get me a brandy and soda, Wiggins, will you, and tell my uncle and all of them not to wait, and order the hack to come round in a quarter of an hour."

And Wiggins, disappearing with a groan of anxiety, the sleeper once more turns round, with a grunt, and is fast asleep again in two seconds.

Five minutes elapse, and re-enter the faithful valet.

"Oh, Mister Charles! Mister Charles, *do* wake up, sir. They've hall started: they 'ave, indeed, sir. You'll never get there in time."

"Lor' bless me, you don't say so! What do you mean by not calling me, eh? Go and get me a cup of tea and some toast, and tell Tom to bring the hack round in ten minutes."

So saying, Mister Charles springs out of bed, and splashes into his bath, without any more delay.

At the end of half an hour—for, of course, it is out of the question for such a heavy swell to dress in ten minutes—the lazy one clanks downstairs. “Yes, it’s a cold morning—very—and a glass of curaçao won’t be amiss. Yes, just a drop of brandy in it, Robert. That’ll do. Wiggins, where the doose are my mittens? Oh, all right, here they are.” And at last the gay sportsman gets on his impatient hack, but he’s not off yet. “Stop!” he cries; “I’ve left my fusee-box upstairs; just go and get it, will you, one of you. Thankee!”

And now, with a “Cut along, old girl,” to his hack, away goes young Nimrod at a hand gallop, to the great relief of the servants, who want to be off to a bicycle match that has been arranged to come off that morning, whilst the family are away at the hunt, between one of the footmen and the simple carpenter of the village, the lacquey in question having ventured a quarter’s wages on the result.

Charlie Wildoats, the subject of our sketch, is one of those happy-go-lucky erratic young gentlemen one so often meets. He never seems to know his own mind two minutes together. Punctuality, it is needless to say, is a virtue utterly unknown to him; indeed, his uncle and guardian, whose heir he is, and with whom he is supposed to live when he is at home, goes the length of saying, “I really believe, I do really believe, that Charlie will be too late for his own funeral, begad! One never knows where to find him.” One day one meets him at Rome, throwing confetti at his friends from a balcony in the Corso. Next week he is flourishing in the Vale of

Aylesbury with the Baron, riding with a loose rein, at the doubles in the vale, utterly regardless of his own neck and his horse's, and, probably, in the course of the day coming to immortal grief in the Rousham or some other equally celebrated brook. Another day, strolling into your gun-maker's, you'll find him talking away like a house afire to the proprietors of the establishment, and ordering express rifles and other murderous weapons, regardless of expense. "Sick of England, old man," he will say, "going in for big game—elephants, tigers, and what not, eh! Tom Blazer and Billy Campbell, that's the party. Why don't you come too, old chappy? And, lo and behold, a week after, as we are seated quietly in the stalls of the Frivolity Theatre, looking on at the new burlesque, who should come swaggering in, rather red in the face, with a huge camellia, as big as a cauliflower in his coat, and late, of course, but our erratic young friend. "Not going, old man, after all," he tells us in a hoarse whisper. "Uncle old, and all the rest of it. Didn't like to leave him, you know—hard lines on the ancient. What?" Miss Nelly de Vere, *née* Baggs, who has a part in the extravaganza, is in a great state of excitement, we notice, directly she catches sight of him in the stalls. She sings straight at him, and even goes so far as to wink at him occasionally, while Charlie, who has evidently been dining, applauds vigorously, more especially after her walk round and breakdown in the fifth scene.

We left our young friend at his uncle's front door, late as usual, just starting off for the meet. The reader can imagine how he hustles his unfortunate hack along. Not a soul is in sight as he pulls up at the

rendezvous except his groom. "They've drawn Tilbury Dean blank, Squire Greenfield's man just told me," that worthy informs him as he gets off the now smoking hack; "and they've trotted horf to Willoughby Wood, where they're sure to find, they say, and you'll catch 'em up, sir, if you go through the gate yonder, and along by Farmer Joskin's." So, taking the servant's advice, Charlie, hastily mounting, sends his horse along best pace; through old Joskin's strawyard, into his meadow beyond, over a stile into a lane, over the fence the other side, and in due time makes his appearance in the principal ride of Willoughby Wood, now filled by the members of the hunt. "What a lazy beggar it is!" says Tom Larkington. "I wish we had found and got away without you," adds he. "Knew you wouldn't find at the Dene," returns Charlie, "so took it out in sleep, you old muff." Lord Daisyfield and his huntsman alike look upon our dandified friend with distrust. You might just as well holloa "hold hard" to a brick wall as to Charlie, and woe betide the hounds when he is close to their sterns, for he is extremely likely to be on the top of some of them if they don't look sharp and get out of his way. Every hunt in England knows him and his little ways. How old Squire Rasper, who hunts the Rummagemshire country, loves him! Our friend made a descent on that country last year, and, finding the company pleasant and the champagne good at the principal inn, stayed there for five weeks. He was as fit as a buck-rat up a sink all the time, as he elegantly expressed it, and seemed to take a glory in riding at all the biggest fences he could pick out, no matter whether hounds were running or not. Of course he rode over a few of old Mealmouth's—as he irreverently called the Squire—hounds. At last one

day the latter, fairly losing his temper, told him point blank that he'd trouble him to pay his subscription like the rest if he intended coming out again. That very day, as it happened, the hounds had a wonderful run, the best they had had all the season, indeed; fifty minutes without a check, winding up with a kill in the open. Our friend, who, as usual, rode like a demon, trotted up to the Squire after the hounds had broken up their fox, and, clapping the worthy gentleman on the back as if he had known him all his life, said, "Well, old boy, that was a devilish good run, 'pon my soul, *that* it was; a *devilish* good run, and does you and your bow-wows credit; it does indeed! I tell you what, when I get home I'll hunt about and see if I can't find a pony for you, and if I do I'll send it you to-morrow, by Jove I will!" How delighted the old boy was at this speech may be imagined.

Charlie was considerably sold once, though, when staying in a certain country house, by one of his little jokes not coming off at all in the way he expected. There happened to be staying, amongst others, in the house, a quiet, demure little old gentleman, Scumbler by name. Mr. Scumbler was unlike the other guests who were there, simply for such amusements as the house afforded. No; he combined business with pleasure, and whilst the house party were busy shooting the covers, driving wild partridges, or pursuing the fox every day, he was engaged in a temporary *atelier*, touching up and restoring a lot of the old family pictures. At dinner the old gentleman would put in his appearance, and very pleasant he would make himself, for he had travelled in many countries, and

could talk about pretty nearly every subject that cropped uppermost. In the billiard-room he came out uncommonly strong, and he astonished Master Charles very considerably the night he arrived by beating him twice running at billiards—very easily, too—and Charlie fancied himself very much at the game. In the smoking-room, with one of the host's biggest cigars in his mouth, and some brandy and soda in a glass the size of a stable-bucket at his elbow, the little old gentleman would come out stronger than ever. His stories, as the night grew older, waxed fuller in flavour, and, told very quaintly, in a thin pipy sort of voice, they what is called "fetched" the gorgeous satin-and-velvet-coated young gentlemen vastly. One night the whole party, having got tired of billiards and blackpool adjourned in a body to the smoking-room, the conversation forthwith turning on hunting (as it happened the hounds were to meet in front of the house the following morning). The artist listened with pricked ears to the talk, and at last, after a meditative pull at his tumbler and a long puff at his cigar, he announced his intention of giving himself a holiday for once and coming out to see them. "I haven't seen a red coat or a pack of hounds for years," said the old gentleman, "and upon my word it will be a great treat to me."

"And, by Jove! you *shall*," struck in Charlie, in his boisterous way; "and I tell you what, my old cockalorum, I'll mount you on my chestnut mare Molly Bawn, I'm blessed if I won't." All manner of questions the artist asked—"Was she quiet? Did she rear? Would she kick? Did she pull at all?" "Of course not. A baby in arms might ride her," declared Charles, notwithstanding the fact that Molly had played no end of games with him on more

than one occasion. Comforted by that announcement, Mr. Scumbler swigged off the remainder of his soda and brandy, and, bidding "Good night" to the assembled company, took himself off to bed the better to ensure his nerve for the morning.

"What a lark it will be!" exclaimed Wildoats, as soon as he was well out of the room. "Molly Bawn's as fresh as paint, and I don't suppose the old buffer's been outside a horse in his life before." "Too bad, Charlie!" remarked one of his friends. "By Jove! that brute of yours will settle the poor old chap—it's not fair, 'pon my soul it ain't!" said another. To all of which Charlie simply replied, "Bosh!" adding that "the mare would be certain to kick the old gent off before he had been on her back five minutes, and being kicked off ain't anything—might happen to him off a moke at Blackheath—dessay it has before now." So saying he took his flat candle, and marched off to roost, as he called it.

The morning broke; the breakfast came; the hounds arrived. There was the usual influx of scarlet coats into the dining-room; such gobbling and guzzling, champagne-drinking and curaçao-nipping, chattering and laughing. At last they had all done, and away everybody started to draw for a fox. The belt round the park being drawn blank by way of commencement, a move was made for the Home Wood. "By George, they've found, I do believe!" exclaimed Wildoats, who was in a small ride engaged in a desperate flirtation with Lady Blanche Fakeaway. For the moment so engrossed was he, that he had clean forgotten the hounds, the artist, everything indeed. "Come on, Lady Blanche, I do believe they've given us the slip." Crash through



CHARLIE WILCOATS—  
*Mr. Scambler has a day on Molly Bawn.*



the underwood they went accordingly, and what a sight met their eyes when they arrived at the end of the wood! Four fields off are the hounds, running like smoke, and not above six or seven people along with them, for half the field have been left behind in the wood. Charlie forgets all about poor Lady Blanche, and sends his horse along as if he was riding for his life; the hounds making a turn, gives him a slight advantage he quickly makes use of; he is within two fields of them—and what! “Why, who on earth is that chap in the brown shooting-jacket and wideawake-hat riding quietly and well close to the hounds, and taking fence for fence with the huntsman? It can't be; but by Jove, it is; it's that blessed old artist, I'll be hanged if it isn't—on my chestnut mare! By Jingo, who'd have thought it? Look at that!” exclaimed he, as he saw brown-coat sending Molly Bawn at a great white gate, which the mare jumped like a bird. Charlie's horse was getting pumped, and no wonder; his second horse was nowhere to be seen, and the hounds seemed to get further and further away from him every minute. At last it was all up with him. Down came his horse with a plump in the ditch, the landing side of a nasty fence. His fun was over for the day. Some yokels helped him to get his horse out, and, getting into the road, he wended his way sorrowfully home. In process of time Mr. Scumbler was seen riding slowly up the avenue on Molly Bawn, that clever animal done to a turn. Charlie hurried out to meet him. “Why, hang it, man,” said he with a slight tone of annoyance, “I thought you had never been on a horse in your life, you told me. Why, when I left 'em you were riding like a bird. Do you *always* ride like that?”

"Well, my dear Mr. Wildoats," replied Mr. Scumbler, the faintest vestige of a grin passing over his face, "I'll tell you all about it. The fact is, *I was brought up as a groom*. So I think you'll agree with me that I *ought* to know something about it."

How Charlie Wildoats was chaffed in the smoking-room that night can be imagined. He took it in good part though, and swore that old Scumbler was a trump. The bold artist has had many a good day on Charlie's nags since the Molly Bawn day, for the oddly assorted pair have become fast friends. In fact, going to pay Scumbler a visit a short time ago at his studio in Berners Street, there was Charlie, to our great astonishment, a huge cigar in his mouth, sitting—red coat, top-boots, and all—for his portrait, to the worthy painter, which portrait we hope to see on the line at Burlington House very shortly.

To return to Willoughby Wood. They find sure enough, and we, getting outside the covert as quickly as we can, from our pony's broad back watch comfortably all the vicissitudes of the chase. By Jingo! the fox has crossed the river, I do believe. He has, too. The leading hounds plump in, the rest follow. The huntsman goes at it full tilt, the field to a man turn away and gallop in search of a bridge. Stay, I am wrong. One man in scarlet, evidently rather behindhand, comes straight at it, a hundred miles an hour, notwithstanding its swollen state. Who can it be, I wonder? I seem to know the figure, too.

"I'll tell you who it be, zur, says a gamekeeper who is standing on the top of a fence, at our side, as the horse and rider land with a loud splash right in the middle

of the river, and are now seen swimming for the other side. "I'll tell you who it be—it's that 'ere Muster Wildoats, that's who it be."

"Well done, Charlie!" say we.



## MR. SAMUEL SHRUB.

“LL right, squire! My old horse don't kick,” says a cheery voice in front of us. We are wedged in the middle of the crowd of horsemen entering Raddleton Wood, and as our mare playfully nibbles the tail of the horse in front of her, we naturally look out for a squeal and a hearty kick out. The owner of this well-mannered animal is a jolly-looking, middle-aged, stoutish man, clad in a green coat, brown cords, and butcher boots; his head is covered with a low-crowned felt hat, a Manilla cheroot adorns his mouth, and he is none other than Mr. Samuel Shrub, the well-known sporting landlord of the Daisyfield Arms, the principal inn of the town of Bullerton.

The Daisyfield Arms, besides being used by all the county people, is *the* sporting house of the country-side. Bullerton, as everyone knows, lying right in the heart of the Harkaway country, besides being within easy reach of three other packs of fox, and one of staghounds.

Mr. Shrub, then, is a most important, as well as popular personage; nothing, indeed, in the sporting line being apparently able to take place in the county without his assistance and advice.

Is there a meeting of the hunt to be held, where does it

take place but in the largest room of the Daisyfield Arms?

Where does our race committee arrange the plans for its annual spring meeting, and receive its entries, forfeits, &c.? Why, at the Daisyfield Arms, to be sure.

(Secretary and Clerk of the Course, Mr. Samuel Shrub.)

Then—Should that reckless soldier, Captain Wildoats, of the Bays (“Timber” Wildoats, as he is called, because of his partiality for riding over five-barred gates, posts and rails, and hog-backed stiles whenever he gets a chance), break a collar-bone, and a rib or two, as is not seldom the case with him, in the course of his day’s amusement—what becomes of the gallant officer? Is he conveyed in a fainting state by the next train back to town? or is he taken to the Swan or the Angel? Not a bit of it. Mr. Samuel Shrub takes precious good care of that. It is the ancient cognac from that worthy man’s flask that brings the captain to after his cropper. He it is, and none other, who rides in person beside the fly which conveys the damaged captain back to Bullerton, and, in fact, does not let him out of his sight until he sees him snugly ensconced in the funereal-looking, but comfortable four-poster, in the state room of the Daisyfield Arms. The doctor of the place and Mr. Shrub then rub their hands with mutual satisfaction, for it is at least a three weeks’ job. Not so mine hosts of the Angel and the Swan, who abuse freely that “dashed impostor,” as they irreverently call Shrub, and his tricks and his dodges, over their brandy and water that evening.

It is an impressive sight to see the air with which he carries round the plate in church (for Mr. Shrub is a churchwarden, and much respected, as they say, by the

Rector), and enough to fill the bosoms of his fellow townsmen with envy, hatred, and malice.

Diggles, the landlord of the Swan, swells with anger at the sight (a bad-tempered man is Diggles), and clutches his great fat church-service as if he would uncommonly like to brain the excellent Shrub with it. Note too the scowl he gives as he almost "shies" a crown-piece into the plate when it comes round. Our wily churchwarden serves him out, though, by pretending he has not seen the gift, and then, discovering his mistake, begging his pardon with much apparent concern.

He's known, too, in London is our sporting landlord, let me tell you. Let the reader imagine himself, on a bleak, cheerless afternoon in December in the exceedingly comfortable smoking-room of the "Junior Mars and Neptune Club." There he will behold Lieutenant Rag, of the Lancers, and Captain Famish, of the Roans, soused in a couple of arm-chairs, smoking their after-luncheon cigars, and discussing the affairs of the nation. Having settled everything to their mutual satisfaction—from the arrangement of European difficulties generally, to the great superiority of the understandings pertaining to charming little Miss Poppet, of the Lollypop Theatre, over those belonging to Violet De Courcy (*née* Sniggs), of the Frivolity—the lower limbs of the latter being contemptuously described as "like *broomsticks*, by Jove!" they turn their attention to hunting.

Says Lieutenant Rag to Captain Famish, lazily puffing a huge cloud of smoke from his lips, and watching it disporting itself as it curls itself away in a variety of rings towards the ceiling, "I say, ole fler, do you think hounds'll go to-morrow, eh?"



MR. SAMUEL SHRUB—  
"Mornin', Captin', mornin'."



“Pon my soul, I dunno,” replies Famish, removing his cigar from his mouth, and turning a very bloodshot looking pair of eyes towards the window. “Let’s go down into the hall,” continues he, rising and giving himself a hearty stretch. “Let’s go down into the hall and see if there’s a telegram from that ‘old wascal’ Shrub there.”

Accordingly the pair descend, and sure enough there is the expected telegram staring them in the face.

From	To
Samuel Shrub,	Hall Porter,
Daisyfield Arms,	Junior Mars and Neptune Club.
Bullerton,	
Frost breaking up fast.	My Lord sure to hunt to-morrow.

“Hooray!” exclaims Rag, in great glee, thinking how he’ll shove that chestnut five-year-old of his along.

“Ha-hum! I don’t know, reely,” says Famish, pulling his moustache meditatively. “I don’t believe they *can* hunt to-morrow. Frost *can’t* have got out of the ground yet awhile. B’lieve it’s a dodge of old Sammy’s to get us down there and drink his infernal champagne. No, no, I shall wait a bit afore I go down, Rag, my boy.”

The fact is, if the truth *must* be told, that though a hard man enough, when fit and well, the bold Captain Famish’s nerves are just now not quite the thing, don’t you know, and he can’t help thinking how disagreeably fresh his two nags will be on the morrow. He did not bargain either for the frost breaking up quite so soon; consequently for the last ten days or so he has been making freer with sodas and brandy, and the small hours of the morning, than is conducive to riding with comfort, to say nothing of boldness, over a country.

Old Shrub is in his element on a hunting morning. “Mornin’, squire, mornin’,” or “Mornin’, captin’, mornin’.”

is his greeting to a stranger. If without hair on his face in the shape of a moustache, he addresses him as if he took in at a glance that he is a deputy-lieutenant, chairman of Quarter Sessions, and owner of no end of broad acres. How delighted little Joe Figgins (Figgins and Blobbs, St. Swithin's-lane, E.C.) was, on his first appearance with our justly-celebrated pack, at being addressed by the wily Shrub as "squire!" He has affected the country gentleman ever since. To hear him talk of the weather and the crops to his friends in the City is a caution. He even *dresses* the part—double-stitched Melton coat, with long skirts, birdseye necktie folded three times round his neck and terminating in a bow, and drab gaiters over his double-soled boots.

To the stranger adorned with a moustache is given the military appellation of captain, sometimes even major, or colonel—a compliment greatly appreciated by no end of Mr. Shrub's chance customers.

"All gone on, squire," says he, as we trot gaily up to his door (*en route* to the meet), and pull up for a moment for a chat with old Sammy. "All gone on, squire. Not 'untin' myself this mornin'; got a touch of the old complaint, squire. Just seen Lord 'Enery 'Ill and Lady H'eva off in the fly. All the 'ard ridin' division down from town. Colonel Somerville, the great hauthor, squire—wrote *Melton Mowbray*, you recollect; Major Box; Honorable Robert Brimstone—'arder than ever, they say, with the stag; Mrs. Slyboots, *you* know, squire (here Mr. Shrub, looking very sly, puts his fat forefinger to the side of his nose, and nearly winks the left side of his face off).

"And some of them 'n-a-a-rsty Jews'—*Can't abide*

*them Jews!*" winds up Mr. Shrub, who has probably been hit hard by some one or other of the fraternity at one time or another.

Such is a slight sketch of this jolly-looking Boniface, who is good enough to press his hunting flask on us (with something good in it, you may depend), with the remark, "Nothin' like a little jumping powder, squire, is there? And it's cold work standing about in a big covert, such as Raddleton Wood, here, on a bad scenting day, like to-day, ain't it?"



## THE HON. ADOLPHUS LIGHTFOOT.

## THE YOUNGER SON.

“**H**ALLO!” suddenly exclaims our friend, Charles Wildoats, who on foot, busily engaged in tightening his horse’s girths, looks round, from beneath the saddle-flaps, with a red face and a very large D on the tip of his tongue, to see whose approach it is that causes his horse suddenly to fidget about. “Hallo!” why here’s the old original ‘Younger Son,’ I declare! bless his old heart! Stand still, *do*, you idiot!” (this to his horse). “You’ve seen old Dolly often enough before, I’m sure.”

“Well, you old sinner you,” goes on Charlie, as a slim, well-dressed man, much moustached and whiskered, whose age might be anything between fifty and sixty; a certain haggard look about the region of the eyes telling its own tale, and probably making him appear older than he really was, now rode up and joined the group of sportsmen assembled in one of the big rides of Oakapple Wood, one of the largest covers in the Old Harkaway county, and which Lord Daisyfield’s hounds were now drawing for a fox. “Well, you old sinner you, who’d have thought of seeing you? Why, I thought you were larking about in Paris or some other equally naughty place, and here you are, turning up in Oakapple Wood, looking as virtuous as

if you'd never done anything wrong in your life. What do you mean by it, eh?"

The Honourable Adolphus, or, to give him the name he is best known by, Dolly Lightfoot, is one of the most popular characters in the county. A brother of the present Viscount Trottop, he lives when he is at home, which is not very often, by the way, in a pretty little house called *The Pré*, bequeathed to him by an elderly aunt some years before. Artful Dolly is extremely fond of informing people that he is, what he is pleased to term, a poor devil of a younger son. Thus, when asked, say by some good clergyman, for a subscription to a new organ for his church, or perhaps tempted to buy something very sweet in the way of horseflesh by a silver-tongued dealer, he will reply to the former in the most open-hearted manner imaginable: "My dear sir, nothing, I assure you, would give me more pleasure than subscribing handsomely to your new organ. I dote on music. I positively adore it, I do, indeed; and the organ, in my opinion, is the grandest, the very grandest instrument in the world. You will scarcely believe it, but when I was a boy at Eton—a happy boy at Drury's (you have read *Praed*, of course) I constantly on a half-holiday, when my schoolfellows were devoting themselves to football and other amusements, used to rush up to St. George's Chapel, at Windsor, to attend afternoon service, for the sake of hearing the anthem, and if I could only succeed in getting up into the organ-loft, my happiness was complete." (Dolly forgot to add that on one memorable occasion he got into the organ-loft before the organist arrived, and amused himself in the interval with sticking the keys of the instrument together with beeswax, so that playing on

it was impossible during the service.) "I feel sure you will understand me and enter into my feelings when I tell you that, having only a younger son's portion, it really is as much as I can do to make both ends meet. But if five shillings, or say half a sovereign—half a sovereign—is any good, why, here it is, don't you know." And away will go the worthy rector with Dolly's half-sovereign, or, what is more likely, the promise of the same, in his pocket, quite impressed with that elderly reprobate's conversation, telling his wife, indeed, when he reaches home, that he don't believe half the stories they tell of that gentleman's goings-on.

To the horse-dealer our friend takes a different tone, though the principle is the same. "No, dash it all! Snaffle," he will say, "you must draw it mild, 'pon my soul you must; that's an uncommon nice horse and I'll take all you say about him as gospel; but three hundred guineas, you know, to a poor devil of a younger son like myself will never do. Quite out of the question, in fact. I'm not one of those chaps rolling in money, who buy their nags just in the same way they do their boots and gloves, and when they do get a good 'un, don't appreciate him. No, I'm different. A good horse is a luxury to a pauper like me, and, if I was to buy this one you're now showing me, I should laud him to the skies, and never tire of telling people all about him, and who I bought him of. Why, you'll hardly believe it, but here am I at this moment actually reduced to smoking Mexican cigars" (Dolly was at that identical moment smoking one he had paid Benson ten guineas a pound for) "at threepence a piece—three-pence a piece, I give you my word!—obliged to retrench in fact, all round. Come now, Snaffle, you and I have had a

good many dealings together, and I should like to buy the brown horse, 'pon my soul I should. But the price is positively prohibitive; it is, really. I know you like to see me well mounted, Snaffle, so I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll write you a cheque for two hundred for him, and I'll give you a couple of dozen of champagne and the best tip for the Lincolnshire Handicap you ever had in your life, *in*. And the deal was pretty sure to end in our friend getting the horse at his own price or nearly so. As Mr. Snaffle said, he had such a pleasant way with him, there really was no resisting him.

The "poor devil of a younger son" dodge, in fact, was a very paying one, though not strictly true, for, though the Hon. Dolly's younger son's portion was not a large one, and had indeed been long since got through, he had a very nice little income of some three thousand a year, derived from the same beneficent aunt who had bequeathed him the Pre, every sixpence of which, probably a little over, its lively owner carefully lived up to. Well might he say of himself, that he was a "man of pleasure."

Dolly's existence indeed was one perpetual holiday. And there really was no vice about him, not one bit. He was simply one of those men—and there are some few of them about—who possessing an admirable digestion and an unlimited capacity for enjoying life, go in steadily for making a business of pleasure. People shook their heads when they heard of our friend's goings-on, and remarked, "Ah! it's all very well while it lasts, but a time *will* come." The time, however, in Dolly's case, seems a long time coming, for there he is, getting on for three score, and still "going strong," as the racing people say. Then it must be owned that, though he takes his full whack of

pleasure and denies himself nothing if he possibly can help it, he takes great care of his constitution, for, the moment he feels that he has been overdoing it, he leaves off and retires gracefully to the Pré for a while. This is what he pleasantly terms "taking a pull." "Nothing like a run in the country, and a course of new-laid eggs, fresh milk, early morns, and all that sort of thing, if you're a bit off colour," says he. And, after a fortnight or so of voluntary rustication, Dolly, being tired of country life and feeling that "Richard is himself again," will once more hie away to the pleasures of the town.

How in the world he manages to do all the things he does in the course of the year, without breaking down, is to us, and numerous other people, a perfect marvel. Cosmopolitan in his tastes to a degree, nothing apparently can go on in the shape of amusement without his being there; he is one of those men, in short, that you are perfectly certain to meet wherever you go. We really believe if we were to make a journey to the North Pole to-morrow, we should find Dolly there before us. You'll meet him at eleven o'clock p.m. at a reception at the Foreign Office, and an hour afterwards you will find him assisting at a glove contest between two aspiring novices at Billy Daw's well-known crib off the Haymarket. We never yet went to Cremorne on a fine summer's night without seeing him, and the only time we ever ventured inside the Casino in Great Windmill Street, which we did at the instigation of a graceless nephew, who was anxious to initiate us into what he called "life in London," the very first person we came across was naughty Dolly, who was whirling what the police-court reporters call a "stylishly-dressed" young lady along at the rate of a hundred

miles an hour, in the wind-up galop. At all the principal races he puts in an appearance, you may be sure. Cowes knows him; so does Scotland, on the 12th of August.

He comes south about Doncaster time, and from that right away to Christmas he visits in turn, and is welcome in all—for he is capital company—the best country houses in England.

One July, wanting a little change, we took it into our head to run over to Boulogne for a few days. We went accordingly, and, not being able to get a room at the Hotel de Paris, put up at another hostelry, whose name we forget, situated exactly opposite the famous Etablissement. The day after our arrival, betaking ourselves to the little restaurant on the pier for the purpose of luncheon, who should we find, presiding over the very noisiest party of ladies and gentlemen we ever came in contact with, but Dolly Lightfoot! Nothing would satisfy him but that we must join his party at once. And we are bound to say we never enjoyed a déjeuner more than this particular one. The ladies—English actresses all of them—were over at Boulogne taking holiday—high holiday indeed—and were apparently, one and all, enjoying themselves to their hearts' content, so much so that it was quite a treat to see them. How they pitched into the soles à la Normand and the sweet champagne, and laughed and chaffed; bless their little hearts! Dolly, too, was in his element. Altogether, it was about the cheeriest meal we ever sat down to, and one we recall to our minds with pleasure. That evening Dolly engaged himself to dine quietly with us at our hotel, to hear all the news from Buttercupshire, as he said. Now, opposite to us at the table d'hôte were

seated about the most serious family it was ever our lot to contemplate. It consisted of papa, mamma, two cubs of sons just merging into manhood, three girls in their teens, and their governess.

There they sat, without opening their mouths except to eat. Mamma looked crushed, the boys looked sulky, and the girls, who were pleasant, rosy-cheeked damsels enough, were evidently kept under. We very quickly decided that it was

“The father, who was so grim a guffin  
He never liked no fun nor nuffin,”

who was the cause of all this, and we pitied his family accordingly. He was, indeed, a morose-looking party. The words of the ballad-writer applied equally well to the said family, for

“They each had a face as long as a ladder,”

and certainly

“Father and mother, sister and brother,  
Never spoke a word to one another.”

except when any of them wanted anything, when the word was passed down in a whisper to the poor little governess, being the only one of the party who understood the language of the country, with orders to ask for the article required. Miss Brown's (that was the little governess's name) face would then be suddenly suffused with blushes until she looked like an animated peony, and she would then, conscious that not only were the eyes of the Serious Family on her, but the whole of the *table d'hôte* as well, murmur forth a request to the waiter to bring “du pang” or “der l'eau” as the case might be. To which the *garçon* would invariably reply in a condescending tone of voice, “Zom brad? yas; won mineet, mademoiselle!”

Now, the volatile Dolly, who, never being able to be serious for two minutes together himself, had a natural

abhorrence of serious people of any description, took a violent dislike on the spot to the father of the family opposite. He said he gave him the blues and spoiled his dinner.

"I say, old fellow," whispered Dolly in our ear, "it is as plain as a pikestaff that the head of the family opposite is a remarkably fine specimen of that very detestable animal known as 'The Domestic Tyrant.' I can see with half an eye that that poor wife of his is 'crushed,' if ever a woman was in this world, and as for those three poor girls (not half bad-looking, are they?) and the heavily-handicapped little governess, the way that they are 'kept down,' when I know they are positively bursting to enjoy themselves, is quite heartrending—now, isn't it? I can't stand it any longer, 'pon my soul I can't, and I shall take it upon myself to wake 'em up a bit, and I'll begin with the old 'un. Here goes!" And, suiting the action to the word without more ado, Dolly, leaning across the table, paved the way for conversation with a polite request in French to the serious father to pass a dish of olives, which was placed opposite him. As that gentleman only stared hard and gave a sort of gasp in reply, for he did not understand (as Dolly did not intend he should) what he was asked for, Dolly repeated the request in English. The olives were at once passed, and the recipient forthwith commenced a conversation with the serious father. He began by informing that gentleman what great pleasure it gave him (Dolly) to find himself seated at dinner in a foreign seaport town amongst so many of his compatriots. Then, turning in a deferential way to the serious man's wife, he ventured to express his own opinion that she would not find the "filet de bœuf à la jardinière" they had just been helped to a portion of, so succulent as the rump-steak of her native land.

Nothing like the good roast-beef of Old England! Don't you agree with me, ma'am?" inquired Dolly. And so he went on. Two minutes more and he was taking wine with the parent birds (having ordered a bottle of champagne for the purpose), and by the time the "poulet au cresson" stage had arrived, not only Dolly, but we ourselves into the bargain, were, to our unbounded astonishment, on the most familiar terms possible with the whole family, including little Miss Brown.

When we rose from dinner, cards were exchanged between Dolly and the serious gentleman, and to see the former's face as he handed his bit of pasteboard to the other, with an elaborate bow, was worth a good deal. It was plain to the naked eye that the name worked wonders. Dolly, in fact, had it all his own way, and (to use his own words), walked over the course.

The Simpsons (that was their name) *had* intended to take a quiet stroll on the sands, and then to bed; but Dolly would not hear of it. There was a dance at the "Etablissement," and to it they must all go. And to it they did go, Dolly leading the way with Mrs. Simpson on his arm.

It certainly was a case of what Mr. J. L. Toole would call "Going it" with the Simpson family that night. I am sure they had never had such a lark before, and possibly not since. Notwithstanding Mr. Simpson, senior's, stern admonition to his son of "No *gambling*, George, mind!" we, in the course of the evening, beheld that youth and his brother investing their pocket-money like men at the "little horses." The quadrille, too, with the entire Simpson family, shall we ever forget it?

Dolly, knowing several young Englishmen present,

trotted them out for the Misses Simpson's benefit, and the consequence was that those damsels danced away to their hearts' content. Judging by his looks the "Domestic Tyrant" did not half like the look of things; however, for once in way he was not allowed a voice in the matter. Finally, at the end of the entertainment, instead of going quietly home to bed, our volatile acquaintance insisted on the whole family accompanying him to the famous tart-shop in the town, an attention highly appreciated by the younger branches of the Simpson family, you may be certain. Heavens! how (incited thereto by Dolly) they pitched into Madame's insinuating pastry. It did one good to see them. In short, if ever that gay specimen of a philanthropist, Dolly Lightfoot, deserved well of his country, it was on that eventful evening. No wonder that poor, crushed Mrs. Simpson expressed her opinion to us in confidence, as we walked home at two o'clock in the morning, that the Honourable Mr. Lightfoot was the most perfect member of the aristocracy she had ever beheld.

Dolly is, in fact, popular wherever he goes, and nowhere more so than in his own county of Buttercupshire. The ladies all like him (he is *such* fun, they say, and so delightfully *wicked*); the men swear by him as the best of good fellows; and children positively adore him. Dogs, too, always take to him at first sight; a good sign, in our humble opinion.

With dependants also he is a great favourite. Tom Tootler's cap comes off with a sweep and his whippers-in grin double, when Dolly canters up to the meet; the game-keepers, too, always take care he is put in a "good place" at their masters' battues. He can shoot uncommonly straight, and no doubt he is a "good tip," but we fancy it

is the pleasant way he has with him, as they say, that works the oracle for him as much as anything. With regard to his hunting, the Honourable would have you believe that he had long ago lost his nerve and now never rode a yard. This, however, is altogether wrong. He is somewhat erratic in his behaviour in the hunting-field, it is true ; that is to say, sometimes he may be seen when the hounds find and go away, instead of following them, piloting a whole lot of little boys and girls along a line of gates and gaps, and sending all of them into fits of laughter with his fun as they gallop along. Another day he will have a fit of the blues on him and will go straight home after the meet.

Two days afterwards, perhaps, he will be caught in the right humour and will ride like a demon, showing more of them the way than will show him, you may depend. In fact, he really is a very fine horseman. In former days no one was better known in all Leicestershire than the Honourable Dolly, and though, owing to his means, his stud was but a limited one compared to most of the others there, there were very few could beat him, even there. As a gentleman rider, too, both in steeplechases and on the flat, he made his mark. The former amusement he has, of course, long since abandoned ; but occasionally, even now, he will make his appearance in a hunters' race, on the flat, and he nearly always figures in silk in the one gentlemen-riders' race of the day, at the Bullerton annual meeting. It is a great sight to see Dolly, got up regardless of expense, white kid gloves, irreproachable breeches and boots, etc., kissing his hand to the ladies as he walks his horse past the grand-stand.



**THE HON. ADOLPHUS LIGHTFOOT —**

*"It is a great sight to see Dolly got up, regardless of expense, white kid gloves, irreproachable breeches and boots, &c."*



Practical joking is a favourite amusement of his, and his little bachelor dinners at the Pré usually finish up with something of that sort. In one notable case, however, Dolly's little joke came off the wrong way, it was a regular case of "sold again," in fact. This is how it was. Old Captain Dabber, whom we have already had the pleasure of introducing to our readers, whenever he dined out in his immediate neighbourhood always made a practice of driving over in a chaise of antique pattern, drawn by a sturdy black pony of mature age. Mrs. Plummer, the Captain's fat house-keeper, often protested against this arrangement, telling her master that she was sure that some night or other he would be waylaid and robbed, besides which, it was not at all the correct thing, in her opinion, for a gentleman of his position to drive about like that without a liveried servant. To which the Captain replied that he feared no man; which was true, for old Charlie, besides being what they call a stiff-built fellow, was a rare hand with his fists, on occasion, as a poacher whom he once caught redhanded one day could have testified; he rather liked a "breather," indeed, than not. And as for appearances he added, "I've got too old to care for appearances, Plummer." So the house-keeper, finding her remonstrances of no use, held her peace for the future, and left her master and the black pony to "gang their ain gait," as the Scotch say. Now it so happened that our volatile friend, the Honourable Dolly, also possessed a black pony, not at all unlike his neighbour the Captain's in appearance, though intensely unlike him in manners and general deportment. He was best described, in fact, as not a bad one to look at, but decidedly a rum 'un to drive, for, having a very capricious will of his own, if he took it in his head not to go in the direction he was

wanted, no power on earth could make him. You might flog him until you were black in the face—move he would not. His owner, though, was fond of the brute in spite of his faults, and though he was always vowing he would shoot him or sell him, he never did, and the black pony consequently passed his time very pleasantly, his principal work being to go backwards and forwards to Bullerton whenever things were required for the house, such as fish, or parcels from the station and such like. There was one thing that old Satan—that was the pony's name—had a more rooted aversion to than anything else, and that was water. Knowing that peculiarity of his, Mr. Lightfoot's men never dreamt of attempting to cross a ford with him. They had all of them, including their Honourable master, had a try at various times, but it was no go, and at last having stopped, dog-cart and all, with the Honourable's swell stud-groom in the middle of a river, and kept him there for three mortal hours before he would stir, they gave it up as a bad job. Satan was pronounced incorrigible, and for the future was allowed to run loose as far as water was concerned. The younger son then, feeling rather bored and cudgelling his brains as to how he could have a bit of fun at someone else's expense, suddenly bethought him of a plan.

Now, old Charlie Dabber, whenever he drove that way, either by day or night, instead of coming along the road like an ordinary mortal, was in the habit of using a cart-path that ran through a neighbouring farm and brought him down to the river-side. He would then, by crossing a couple of fords, succeed in saving himself nearly two miles, and—what he thought a good deal more of—a pike into the bargain. Now, the Honourable was well aware of this practice of the Captain's, and it struck him that it would be

great fun to ask that worthy over to dine—getting, of course, some congenial spirits to meet him—fill him as full as he could possibly hold of good wine, and finally instruct his people to harness Satan the incorrigible to the Captain's shandry-dan-rattle-trap, instead of his own respectable quadruped. The pair were very much alike, and Old Charlie Dabber, with his skin full of wine, would never twig the difference, even if he looked, which was highly improbable. "By Jove!" exclaimed Dolly, "that *is* a happy thought, and no mistake!" Accordingly he proceeded to issue invitations to Captain Dabber and a few choice spirits for one of those snug little bachelor dinners for which the Pré was so justly celebrated. Well, the eventful evening (a dark one in November) arrived, the guests came, the dinner went off remarkably well, as there was every reason why it should, the cooking and wines being simply perfect; and finally, at one o'clock in the morning, the venerable Dabber, with fifteen pounds in his pocket (his winnings at brag) and one of his host's largest cigars in his mouth, got into his elegant conveyance, tucked himself comfortably in, and, giving the reins a shake, disappeared into the darkness of the night. It *was* a dark night too, dark as pitch—no moon, no stars—and a slight rain falling.

"We'll wait here," said Dolly to his friends, as they stood in the porch; "the first ford is at the bottom of the hill, not a quarter of a mile off, and we're sure to hear old Charlie shout when Satan stops short in the middle (which he's safe to do), and then we'll go down and see the fun. I've sent one of the men down there, too, so there can be no mistake.

Well, they waited and waited, but no shout came, and

finally the stableman told off to reconnoitre came back with the intelligence that the Captain had driven straight through both fords, and by this time was nearly home. A roar of laughter went up at the news. "Well!" exclaimed the disappointed Dolly to his laughing friends, "hang me, if that ain't the rummest go I ever knew! After that we had better go to bed." As he lit his candle, he could not resist making an exceedingly bad joke. "What the Devil does old Satan mean by it?" said he. When the gallant Captain Dabber came down to breakfast in the morning, and was informed of the change of ponies, he chuckled hugely to himself, for he had heard all about Satan's peculiarities, and having promptly "Olivered," as he called it, to the trick they had *attempted* to play upon him, he, without loss of time, dispatched the following note by one of his men:—

IVY LODGE,  
Wednesday.

DEAR LIGHTFOOT,

You are evidently too liberal with the strong beer in your servants hall, for your fool of a man popped your pony, instead of mine, between the shafts of my trap last night, and I did not discover it in the dark, though I thought the beggar was uncommon slow. I now send him back. Kindly return my beast by bearer.

Yours truly,

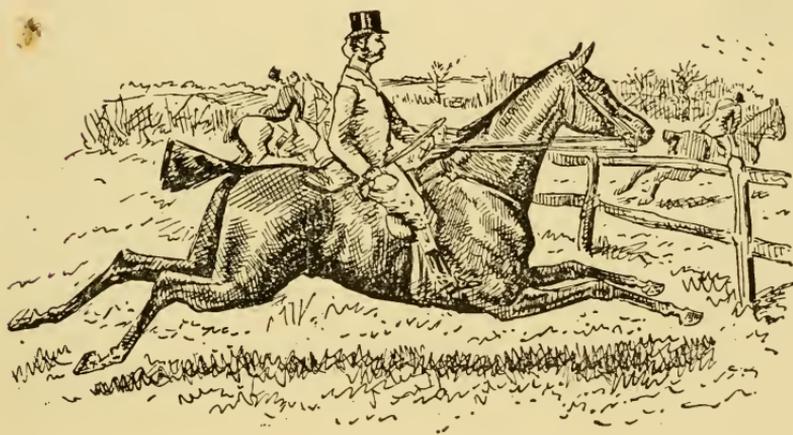
CHARLES DABBER.

P.S.—I've told my man to be sure and stick to the road, as I know your pony doesn't as a rule care about facing water, though he came through the fords last night as pleasant as possible with *me*. But there, I always had a wonderful way with women and horses.

To the Honourable Adolphus Lightfoot.

"There, that'll *fetch* him!" said old Charlie, with a grin, as he fastened the envelope down with a lick of his great tongue and handed it to Mrs. Plummer to give his man.

There was no doubt about it, the Captain had the laugh entirely on his side, and Dolly, for once in a way, found himself hoist with his own petard. "Confound you! you old brute, you!" said he, shaking his fist at the unconscious Satan, who was pegging away at his corn in his loose-box as unconcernedly as possible. "It's all your fault! I've a devilish good mind to have you shot, 'pon my soul I have, for making such a fool of one!"



## THE HARKAWAY HUNT BALL.



FROM the number of carriages of all sorts that come rolling into the usually quiet little town of Bullerton, on this bright January afternoon, a stranger of an observant nature would at once come to the conclusion that something out of the common was going on. Little Tommy Blobkins, traveller to Messrs. Mulleygrubs, the celebrated pickle merchants, scuttling briskly along from one grocer's shop to another in quest of orders, is so struck by the general commotion and the unusually busy look of the High Street, that, pulling up in front of a smart-looking groom just emerging from the stable-yard of the Daisyfield Arms, he accosts him with : "What's up to-day, do you know, Mister?"

"'Arkaway 'Unt Ball, to be sure," was the reply, in somewhat sneering tones, as much as to say, "I should have thought everybody knew that."

"A once-a-year splash, I 'spose?" said Tommy, as he prepared to resume his walk.

"Yes, it's a h'annual affair," replied the groom, lighting his pipe, preparatory to a stroll through the town.

Next to the Hunt Steeplechases, the Hunt Ball, given

every year at Bullerton Town Hall, is unquestionably the most popular institution of the year in the county of Buttercupshire ; in point of fact, we don't think we should be far wrong in saying that with the fair sex generally it takes precedence, in point of favour, over the former amusement. The men like it too, more especially the dandy element ; the scarlet coat and white silk facings, the recognised Hunt uniform, in their opinion having the effect of making them positively "killing." It is wonderful how men fancy themselves in a red coat. It is our firm opinion that if everybody was compelled to wear black out hunting, the fields all over the country would be decreased in point of number to a marvellous extent. It's the bit o' pink makes the Nimrod in very many cases, depend upon it.

The hotels at Bullerton, as may be imagined, are one and all full to the muzzle, especially the Daisyfield Arms, kept by our old friend Mr. Samuel Shrub. That worthy Boniface is in his glory to-day. Attired in his favourite bottle-green coat, with the black satin stock and diamond pin only worn, as he says, on high days and holidays, and bonfire nights, he bows low to Lady Tozer, as she descends majestically from her carriage, at the door of his hotel, and proceeds with her two daughters to the rooms prepared for them. The next minute he is exchanging pleasantries with his great favourite, Lady Tommy Clinker, who drives up in her mail-phaeton, her fond husband by her side as usual. The arrival of that lively gentleman Charles Wildoats, at this juncture, is of course the signal for more chaff—chaff, too, of a most boisterous description, judging from the sounds of laughter emanating from old Sammy's sanctum, whither Lady Tommy insists

on going to indulge in a cup of tea, in preference to her own apartments, needless to say to the intense gratification of its jolly owner.

Darkness sets in, and with it some snowflakes make their appearance, leading those ballgoers who have elected to put up for the night at Bullerton, instead of undergoing the martyrdom of a long drive home, to congratulate themselves on their good policy.

Nine o'clock comes, and carriage after carriage now make their appearance in the town, and, having deposited their precious burdens at the Town Hall, disperse to the different inns, the snug taprooms of which are soon full, almost to overflowing, of Jehus and Johnnies of all shapes and sizes, from Lady Sheepshanks' magnificent London coachman, twenty stun if he's an ounce, to Mr. and Mrs. Hardup's shrivelled-up little old retainer, who is not only the family coachman but looks after the poultry and the pigs, does the garden, and on emergency waits at table, and all for a consideration that would scarcely keep the London man in "baccy."

Ten o'clock, and the principal room of the Town Hall is filling rapidly. The ball-room is decorated with the usual festoons of artificial flowers, pink muslin, sporting devices, and mottoes—"Floreat Scientia," etc.—without which of course no Hunt ball would be considered perfect. The noble M.F.H. (Lord Daisyfield) and the rest of the stewards are busy welcoming everyone as they enter the room. Little Joe Trimmer, the mighty "We" of the *Bullerton Gazette*, is seated at a table at the top of the stairs, busy putting down the names of the visitors for insertion in Saturday's paper. (It was the learned Joseph, if we recollect right, who last year, in reporting the

Bachelors' Ball for the edification of his readers, spoke of it as having been given by the "Benedicts" of the county.)

"Sir 'Arry and Lady 'Otspur—Lord George Spratt," bawls the waiter stationed at the doorway of the ball-room. Cunning little Joe shakes his head. "No, no, that won't do—that's an 'oax, that is," exclaims he. "Lord George Spratt indeed!—there's no such name as *that* in the Peerage, I'll go bail."

Lord George, a tall good-natured dandy, late of one of Her Majesty's regiments of footguards, hearing his name mentioned, turned round to find out what was the cause. Needless to say he was highly amused. "I can asshaw you my name *is* Lord George Spwatt," said he, "at least so I was cwistened; so, if it's wong, don't blame *me*, dontcherknow." Many and profuse were the man-of-letters' apologies, but for all that he was far from being convinced that the Peerage contained the name of Spratt within its aristocratic pages.

And now, the room being pretty full, Messrs. Tootle and Binney's renowned band strike up the opening bars of a quadrille, and Lord Daisyfield, taking pretty Mrs. Tom Chirpington under his scarlet wing, makes his way to the far end of the room; Dolly Lightfoot and Lady Thomasina Clinker follow as their *vis-à-vis*. Before you can say Jack Robinson, fifty couples of dancers have taken their places, the leader of the band stamps his foot, his merry men strike up the music, and the ball begins in downright earnest. The quadrille over, waltzes, polkas, and gallops follow one another in rapid succession, and the fun gets fast and furious. Not a Flower of the Hunt is absent. One would have thought a ball-room would be

hardly the place to find old Charlie Dabber in somehow, but here he is nevertheless, hovering round the doorway, and making tender inquiries as to where the oyster-room is, and when it will be open. For, as Charlie well knows, one of the institutions of our Hunt Ball is a small room set apart for the consumption of the native oyster and the brown stout of the period, and mighty popular this particular apartment is, especially with the elderly gentlemen, some of whom don't leave the room until the oysters have run out. How many dozen old Dabber manages to swallow during his stay, we should be afraid to say, but we should imagine that, what with the natives, the supper he subsequently disposes of, and the quantity of champagne he consumes in the course of the night, he must have more than paid for his ball-ticket. Of course, Lord Daisyfield resents the presence of Captain Dabber very warmly. He has never forgiven him and never will for the way he jockeyed him on that broken-winded screw of his at the Hunt races some years ago. "The fellow is not a gentleman and has no business here!" says his lordship in his most emphatic manner, to a friend in the supper-room, eyeing his unconscious enemy pegging away at a cold turkey as if he had had nothing to eat for a week. The Captain, looking up by-and-by, with his mouth full, and catching my lord's eye, makes him a polite bow, a piece of civility the noble M.F.H. takes not the slightest notice of. "Impudent rascal!" he mutters to himself as he leaves the room. "Pompous old ass!" says the shameless Dabber, holding out his glass for some champagne.

"Champagne, sir?" says a waiter, addressing an elderly gentleman in the Badminton Hunt uniform, who has just strolled up. "Champagne,—well, upon my soul, I scarcely

know. I wonder where they get it?" mutters the stranger in an audible voice.

The Chaplain of the Hunt, the Bishop of Soda and B, who is refreshing his inner-man close by, happens to overhear the stranger's *sotto-voce* remark, and promptly eases the latter's mind by informing him that the wine comes from the renowned cellars of Messrs. French, of St. James's Street. "Quite right to be cautious though, all the same," adds the reverend; "nothing so deleterious as bad champagne—nothing." Needless to say the man from the Badminton country promptly has his glass filled, and he and the Rector are soon hard at it. The last good things with the Duke's and the latest doings with Lord Daisyfield are discussed *con amore*, and it is not until the pair have made the bottle of champagne a "dead man" that they leave off, and go once more to see how things are going in the ball-room. The Lancers is going on as they enter, and one set in particular, in which Master Charles Wild-oats and Lady Thomasina Clinker are conspicuous, judging by the noise and laughter arising therefrom, seem to be enjoying themselves thoroughly.

One of the party, a young guardsman from Town, has a pheasant's tail, extracted from a game-pie by Dolly Light-foot, sticking out of his coat-tail pocket, and the fact of his being unaware of the trick that has been played him, makes the laughter louder than ever.

"Perfectly disgraceful, I call it," says Mrs. Meagrim, who, with her three plain daughters, is ornamenting the side of the room. "I don't know what would have been said when I was a girl," she adds with a spiteful sniff, "if people calling themselves ladies and gentlemen had deported themselves in that noisy fashion." That ancient

virgin (or "capering elder," as Dolly Lightfoot calls her), the Honourable Miss Caradoc, who is sitting next to her, whose withered old cheeks are painted and powdered like those of a clown in a pantomime, and who at the present moment is extremely put out because no one has been gallant enough to take her down to supper, cordially agrees, and adds a few especially spiteful remarks on her own account, having reference to the curly head and appearance generally of the merry Lady Thomasina. In another minute though—and we are really delighted to record it, as we are all good deeds—the hungry old lady's face brightens up, for who should suddenly present himself but the ever-popular Tom Chirpington, who, if the truth must be told, has just been sent across from the opposite side of the room by his ever-thoughtful wife. "What!" exclaims he in apparent horror, "not been down to supper yet, my dear Miss Caradoc? Don't tell me that! please don't! What have all the men—including myself—been about? Take my arm this moment, and come along." And it is an odd thing, but when the gallant Tom leads the now-satisfied spinster back to her old position against the wall, she seems quite a different person altogether; her old eyes sparkle, she smiles benignantly round; and, adjusting her *pince-nez*, she declares that, in her opinion, *dear* little Lady Thomasina, who at that moment has just whirled by in the arms of young Courtly of the Blues, is *quite* the prettiest person in the room. After that, who will doubt the efficacy of the glorious vintage of Champagne?

It is now getting latish, and some of the Flowers of the Hunt, such as dear old Mr. Grimboy, as Mrs. Chirpington calls him, have had about enough of it. Pretty little Miss

Bluebell has actually managed, after a deal of persuasion on her part, to inveigle the old gentleman into dancing a quadrille with her in the course of the evening, and the Father of the Hunt, now it is over, is immensely proud of the feat, and goes off to his carriage as pleased as Punch, not only with himself but all the world in general, more especially the pretty little Bluebell, on whom he would certainly have bestowed a fatherly kiss, had he had the chance. If it is true, thinks he, what Miss Mouser confided to him not long since—that it is a case of a match between her and Charles Wildoats—he'll give the dear little girl such a present as never was.

The room is now beginning to thin rapidly, rumours of a nasty night and snow falling are rife, and people are getting to their carriages before it gets worse.

Half-an-hour more, and the Harkaway Hunt Ball is an event of the past. The indefatigable members of Tootle and Binney's band, having fiddled away all night with only port wine to sustain and keep them going, are now enjoying a hearty meal, well earned if ever a meal was, with plenty of champagne to wash it down, in the supper-room, which they have all to themselves. The champagne they could have had before had they wished, but, on its being offered to him at the commencement of the evening, by one of the stewards, the leader of the band replied that they would prefer port wine while they were playing, as being better to work on, but that, if agreeable, they would wind up with some "sparkling" at the finish of the entertainment.

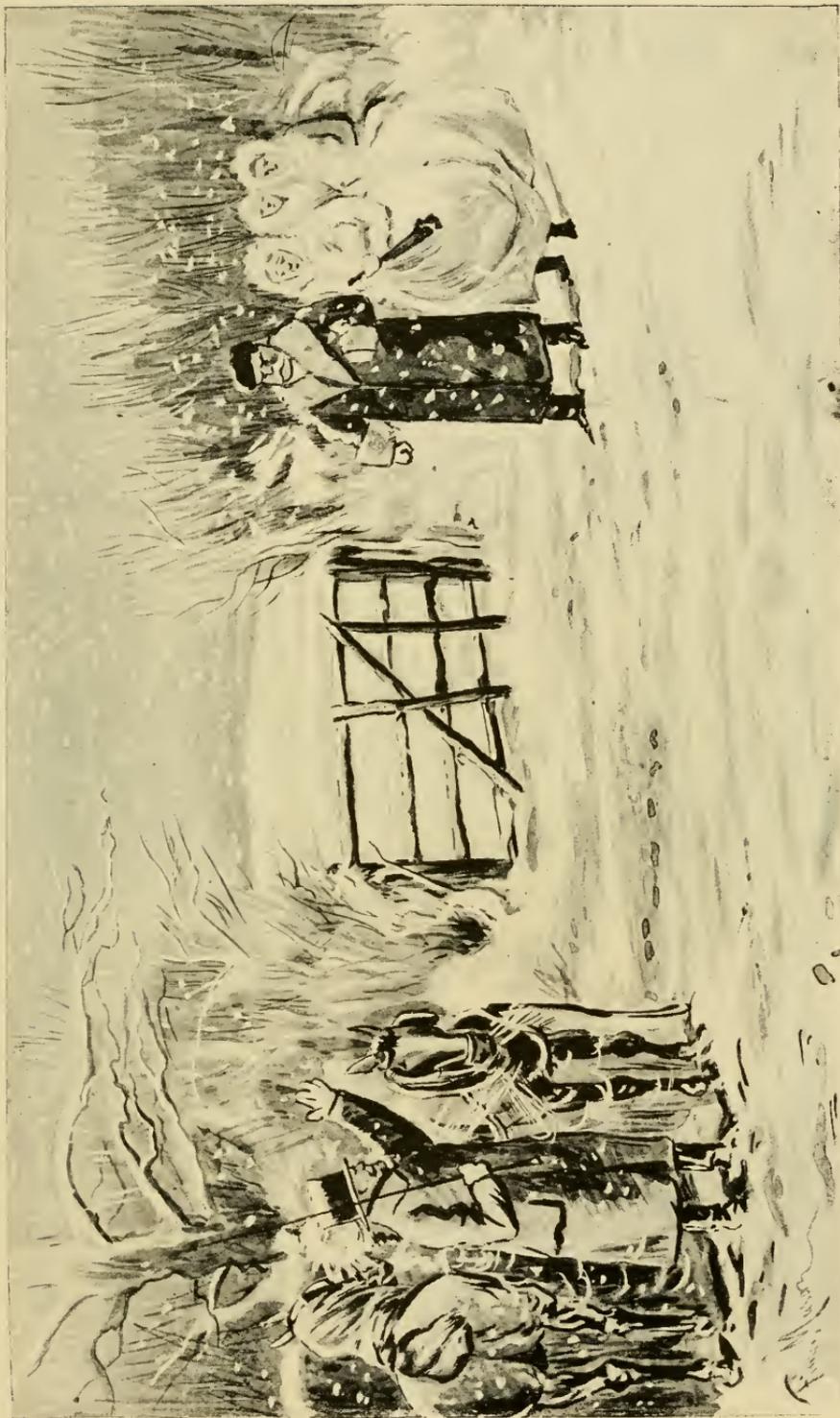
There is no mistake about it, it is a very nasty night, a very nasty night indeed, making the good folk who are driving home wish they had taken up their abode for the

night in the town, and those lucky ones who had elected to stay where they were—including Charles Wildoats, now an engaged man (for Miss Mouser's surmise confided to Mr. Grimboy turned out to be correct), and just then occupied in playing nap and drinking gin-sling with a select company of friends as noisy as himself, in old Sammy Shrub's sanctum—congratulate themselves that they have not a long drive in the snow before them.

And those ballgoers snoring away comfortably after their exertions in the cosy old-fashioned bedrooms of the Daisyfield Arms and the other Bullerton hotels, certainly have the pull over their homegoing friends; for numerous are the disasters to be heard of the next day to some of the latter division.

Miss Mouser's horses fell over a donkey fast asleep in the middle of the road—the only one not damaged or frightened in any way being the donkey. Jock Merri-man, better known as the Bullerton Post-boy, and the independent Jimmy of the neighbourhood, managed to upset Captain Glanders, Mrs. Glanders, and the two Misses Glanders, into a deep ditch, three miles from home, and, the pole being broken, to say nothing of the traces, the unhappy quartette had to make the best of their way home on foot.

The Captain's language, needless to say, was quite equal to the occasion, and his equanimity was not improved by Jock informing him that he had upset 'ould Admiral Trimmer that night week, and Major and the Honourable Mrs. Mousetrap the week before that. "They're both on 'em greeter folk than wot *you* be," said Jock coolly lighting his pipe, "and they didna say hef the hard words as you hev." The Captain walked on after his family, all



THE HARKAWAY HUNT BALL—

*“The Captain’s language, needless to say, was quite equal to the occasion.”*



the time growling like a bear with a sore head. A sudden happy thought occurred to Jock. "Hi!" shouted he, when the angry Captain had gone some fifty yards. "Hi! You mun hev the carriage to sleep in, if you like till mornin'! Yis or no?" "Go to the devil!" roared back the now furious Captain, "and tell your dashed master if ever I get into one of his dashed conveyances again, may I be dashed."

"Ah, well, there's some fules in this warld as don't know wot's good for 'em. Good-night, Cap'n, and better manners to 'ee." And so saying Jock, having previously tied the two old screws to a neighbouring gate, coolly opened the door of the carriage, shut himself in, and slept away comfortably until morning.

That was an uncomfortable adventure, too, that befel the Stuffys that snowy night, or rather morning. The occupants of the Stuffy equipage consisted of Mr. Stuffy (an extremely fussy, irritable old gentleman), Mrs. Stuffy (an excessively nervous lady), Miss Stuffy, and a young gentleman from town, supposed to be engaged to that young person. The parent birds were both fast asleep, and the engaged couple were pretending to be, whilst they squeezed each other's hands and made the best eyes they could at each other in the dark, when the carriage suddenly came to a full stop. "Pa! wake up! Oh, Adolphus, do wake pa! I'm sure something has happened!" ejaculated poor little Miss Stuffy in imploring accents.

And Pa being woke up with a good deal of difficulty, at last let down the window, and, putting his bald head out, bawled out, "What's matter now? What's matter? What are you stopping for?" A voice, thick in utterance

and beautifully scented with rum, replied, "*Imsureidon-knowhereweare* (hiccup)." Here was a pretty go!—eight miles from home; the coachman drunk as an owl; the footman (a new one) not knowing a yard of the way; and snowing like fun! There was only one thing to be done, and that was for poor old Stuffy to turn coachman himself, which he did, solacing himself by abusing the coachman all the way home, and discharging him in the morning. Small consolations for being laid up for a fortnight after, with a violent cold and an attack of gout, brought on by exposure to the elements.

If the weather, however, was not all that could be desired, the Harkway Hunt Ball was, as it always is, an unqualified success—as all such cheery reunions should be. So, long may it flourish, say we.





MR. METAL—

*“That’s a fox for a monkey!”*



MR. METAL.

HAT'S a fox, for a '*pony*,'” remarks, for the benefit of the scarlet-coated, cigar-smoking crowd assembled in a ride in Oakover Wood, a sharp-looking, grizzly-haired, middle-aged man of rather prepossessing appearance, attired in a well-cut black coat, white cords, and brown-topped boots, the said boots being extremely thin, and looking more adapted for the steeple-chase than the hunting-field. His hat is stuck in a knowing manner rather on one side of his head; a cutting whip, instead of the orthodox hunting-crop, is grasped in his dogskin-gloved hand; and he is mounted on a weedy-looking thoroughbred bay, possessing a pair of exceedingly doubtful-looking forelegs, and an extremely wicked eye.

“That's a fox, for a *monkey*,” exclaims he, rising in his price, and looking round as if to say, “Who'll take me?” This time the melodious voices of three or four hounds in the deep dell to his right are heard, giving tongue in a more decided manner than before, bringing all their comrades to their side at once to find out what the matter is. See! Bellman and Boisterous come up in a deuce of a hurry, jealous of some of the younger members of the pack; and Ravager too—steady old Ravager—bristling with impatience. “Hooick to Ravager, *hooick!*” cheers

Tom Tootler. "Have at him, old man! By Jove, it is a find for certain this time!" The ancient Ravager, whose opinion is thoroughly to be depended upon, gives vent to his feelings in one prolonged note, which in a second is taken up by the eager pack.

"*There's a 'coal-box' for you,*" exclaims our cheery but slangy young friend, Charles Wildoats, just arrived, late as usual, with a grin of delight, as he chucks his cigar away, and gives his mare a hearty slap on her glossy neck, which the mare, who is trembling with excitement, acknowledges with a playful bite at the toe of his highly-varnished boot. Surely that's a halloa! Yes, there it is again! An unmistakable "Tally ho" this time comes wafted on the breeze to the ears of our sportsmen in the ride. Lord Daisyfield comes crashing and smashing through the hazel stems in a desperate hurry, and gallops down the ride as hard as ever his horse can lay legs to the ground. There is a rush of cavalry after him, headed by Charlie Wildoats, who, as he says, always likes to be "all there when the bell rings," and lastly comes our friend in the black coat and steeplechase boots, whose vicious-looking thoroughbred had stopped to kick for a minute or two, but who now goes along smoothly enough; his rider with his hands well down and his feet stuck out in true Newmarket style. Mr. Metal, for that is the name of our black-coated friend, is by vocation a bookmaker, in his case apparently an uncommonly profitable profession, and a great sensation he made when three years ago he made a sudden descent on the county, bought what was called by the auctioneers the Binfield Estate—which estate comprised about 700 acres of land—pulled down the ex-

tremely dilapidated mansion situated thereon, and, with the help of an aspiring architect, built a hideous-looking yellow-coloured, slate-roofed, plateglass-windowed house, which he dignified with the high-sounding but somewhat eccentric name of "Cockamaroo Hall," so called because a horse of his of that name won the Cesarewitch, or, as he himself would call it, "Seizerwitch," a few years ago.

The builders and painters, and plumbers and glaziers, painters and decorators, upholsterers, and such like having at last all taken their departure, Mr. Metal one fine day, with his daughter, Arabella, his thoroughbred nags, his *Racing Calendar*, and his *Ruff's Guide*, arrived by the midday train at the little out-of-the-way station belonging to the Great Smasham and Crumple-em-up Railway, called Sleepyfield, and was soon installed comfortably at Cockamaroo Hall. The news of the arrival of course spread like wildfire, and many were the conjectures as to what the Metals were like.

Mrs. Blenkinsop, their next-door neighbour, went about asking everybody what sort of a person a "Black-leg" was. She had heard the poor dear Major, she said, often speak in terms of horror and disgust of them. The late Major Blenkinsop, we *have* heard, was uncommonly well qualified to pass an opinion, for a little bird once whispered to us that it was during that gallant officer's sojourn in that distinguished regiment, the 40th Lancers (The Queen's Own Blusterers), that that ugly card-playing scandal arose, winding up with a duel and a court-martial to follow, in which occurrences the Major played one of the principal parts, rumour said, with anything but credit to himself.

The Major's relict then, looked on the Metals, *père et fille*, in the light of a species of social vermin, and, in consequence, she took especial pains to warn her hopeful son, Bloomsbury Fitzfoodle Blenkinsop, a youth of singularly mild and tame-rabbitsy disposition, goodness knows how many times a day, on no account ever to cultivate, on any pretence whatever, the acquaintance of either Mr. or Miss Metal.

Their appearance at church, too, on the first Sunday after their arrival, caused great excitement amongst the natives. Mrs. Blenkinsop and her friends had pictured to themselves a stout, coarse, vulgar-looking man, with a tendency to tight trousers and horse-shoe pins, accompanied by a snub-nosed flashily dressed damsel. Instead of which they were quite flabbergasted to behold in Miss Metal a remarkably good-looking, ladylike girl, uncommonly well dressed, from the top of her pretty French bonnet to the tips of her very neat boots; and in Mr. Metal, the blackleg, the turfite, the everything bad, a particularly quiet-looking, sedately-attired person, who might indeed, from the solemnity of his attire, have passed as pretty nearly anything one chose to fancy—a great London merchant, for instance, a lawyer in large practice—anything, in fact, but a betting man. His well-cut Poole-made black coat contrasted most favourably with the baggy, ill-fitting garments belonging to Mr. Turtleton, the rich banker, who occupied the pew opposite. Mr. Bleater, the curate, looking up from reading the lessons, caught pretty Miss Metal's eye, and was so struck all of a heap, that he lost his place on the spot, and blushed in a painful manner under his spectacles. Bleater arranged with himself forthwith that he would call on the morrow at

Cockamaroo Hall, and as for Bloomsbury Fitzfoodle Blenkinsop, he was a gone coon from the first moment he set eyes on her. He also determined to make acquaintance with the newcomer's charming daughter immediately, if not sooner, in spite of mamma and everyone else. How nice it would be, he thought, chasing butterflies and hunting for stag-beetles, with *her* for a companion. (Bloomsbury was a great entomologist.) He wondered, too, if she liked tame rabbits, and guinea-pigs, and bees. Yes, he thought she looked as if she did. How delightful it would be to get her over to luncheon some day, and take her with him afterwards—all by herself of course—to feed his numerous pets. Oh, sly, sly Bloomsbury!

Mr. Bleater, the curate, called the next afternoon, and was asked to stay and dine, which invitation he accepted. He did not, it is true, quite understand the horsey talk and racing reminiscences told him after dinner by his host, but he *did* understand that the claret he drank a skinful of quite came up to its owner's description of it, when he called it "first chop." A stiff brandy and soda and a big cigar about did for the curate, whose utterance was a trifle thick as he said, "Goori! Mr. Metal; goori, sir! Very pleased, indeed, to make your (hiccup) acquairansh." The rector then called. Would it be asking too much if Mr. Metal could give him a few flowers and evergreens for the purpose of decorating the Church for the forthcoming harvest festival? "Not a bit! Go to my 'ead gardener," replied Mr. Metal, "and ask him for whatever you want, and welcome." The Rector thought, as he was about it, he might as well produce his subscription list for the new organ. He did so accordingly, and Mr. Metal, instead of, after a lot of haggling and cross-ques-

tioning, and grumbling, producing a miserable half-sovereign from his waistcoat-pocket—like that stingy old dog Turtleton (who has forty thousand a year at the very least) did the other day—simply observing that he liked a horgan in a church uncommon, just sat down and wrote the rector a cheque for a “pony,” as he called it, on the spot. Mr. Metal thus “stood in,” to use a slang expression, uncommonly well with the church, but the ladies in his neighbourhood would not have him or his daughter at any price, notwithstanding; so they had to depend entirely on their own personal friends from town, and sundry gay bachelors, like Captain Dabber and Charlie Wildoats (the latter an old acquaintance of the book-maker’s), for company. Mr. Metal used to come out in great force on those festive occasions when he had a few friends to dinner. On those occasions nothing was too good for him and his guests. The *menoo*, as he called it was written in his daughter’s very best hand, as taught at the very exclusive school at Brighton, in which she had passed several years, and an uncommon good *menoo* it was, for Metal possessed a cook who had received *her* education under no less a personage than the great Francatelli himself. Old Captain Dabber, who knew what was what as well as any man living, would have two helps of *Suprême de Volaille*, and give a growl of satisfaction as he gobbled away at it, like a dog over a good bone. The haunch of venison would have a history—just sent him by Sir Charles Flutter—(Sir Charles owed Metal a bit). The grouse came from a prominent member of the Jockey Club’s moor: and the claret—wasn’t there a history about the claret? “Poor Lord Dreadnought—it’s *his* claret,” would say Metal, heaving a sympathetic sigh,

as the second bottle made its appearance. "Poor Lord Dreadnought! Fine, honourable young fellow, gentlemen—owes me seven thou', he does; and I give you my word I don't care whether he pays me or not. Brass and Stitch, the bookmakers treated him uncommon bad, warning him off the Heath as they did—too bad it was. I had a bet with him on the Middle Park one year—6 to 4 in thousands he laid me on his mare, Jane Heyre, who was such a blazin' favourite that year, you recollect. Now, he never put it down in *his* book, but *I* did in mine, and the mare lost, and the poor Marquis he dropped a heap o' money—a heap o' money—over it. Well, I reminded him of it afterwards, and instead of shufflin' over it and disputin' it, as a lot I could mention would have—not having it down in his book, mind you—what did he do? Why, he hup and said, 'Quite right, Metal—quite correct. I'll pay.' And pay he did; and he's a honerable feller, gentlemen—a honerable feller, that's what I call him. 'Ere's his 'ealth; and may he soon get round, and long be a h'ornament to the British Turf!"

Metal owns and runs a few horses on his own account, but, good judge though he is, he is extraordinarily unlucky with his own cattle. If he has one well in in a big handicap, it is sure to go wrong the day before; or a promising youngster makes his first appearance in a two year old race at Newmarket, and Metal, striding into the ring to back him, finds he has been forestalled, and has to take a short price about him. He has three or four of his thorough-breds that are not much good at racing, up for his own and Arabella's riding, and nice games that young lady has with them sometimes. She is a good horsewoman, with one exception—her hands—which, as her father says, are like *h'iron*.

“ Well, Mr. Metal,” say we, as we come across him in the paddock on the Derby Day, gravely looking the favourite over. “ What do you think of him, eh ? ” “ Well, he’s a race-horse, that’s about what he is,” is his reply ; “ and what is more to the purpose in my opinion, mind ye, he’s a *consistent* little ’oss. There hain’t much on him, but what there *is* of him is good.” Volumes could not express more.

Shooting he patronises a little now he is a real landed proprietor, but we are bound to say he is but a numb hand at it, and how reckless !

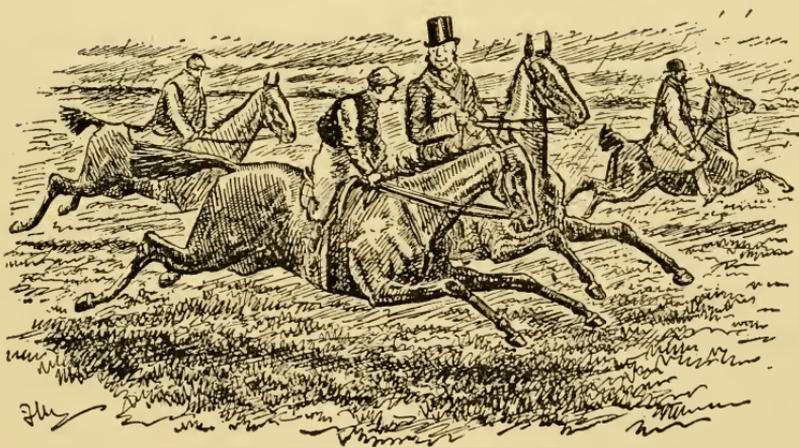
“ Mr. Metal, Mr. Metal, good Gad ! your gun’s at full cock ; are you aware of it ? ” we exclaimed to him one hot September day, as we came up to him, leaning over a gate, with his chin resting on the muzzle of his breechloader, both barrels of which are at full cock !

“ Ah, so they are,” was all he said, coolly looking down, and seeing we were right, and resuming his former position. We fully expected to see his brains scattered over the next field every minute. An elaborate luncheon would be sent out on these shooting expeditions, and sometimes our metallic friend would be extremely puzzled by the wonderful productions of the artist in his employ—the afore-mentioned pupil of Francatelli. One fine day in September we recollect watching the luncheon being turned out of the basket. Out came no end of good things, amongst others a raised pie of majestic proportions, Visions of enormous truffles as big as walnuts flitted through our mind. Our mouth watered. (We are passionately fond of truffles.) Metal did not view the production in the same light.

“ Hallo ! ” he cried, “ why, what the blazes does the cook

mean by sending me and my friends cold pie to h'eat! Take it back and 'ave it 'otted this minute."

People who pretend to know declare that Metal, in his earlier days, once occupied the important post of a "boots" at a country inn, and the story goes that an impecunious party whom he had sometimes given assistance to, being refused on one occasion, taunted him with the fact of his having himself once served in that menial capacity. He is reported to have answered, "Yes, you're quite right. I *was* once a boots, and I'll tell you what it is, my fine feller—it's my private opinion that if *you* had been Boots like me, twenty years ago, you'd never have riz an inch. *You'd ha' been Boots now.*"



## WILLIAM WAGGLETON.

“O along with yer, *do*, Mister Waggleton. I never see sich a man in all my born days, never. Oh, I 'umbly beg pardon, sir,” says, all in a breath, the pretty chambermaid belonging to the Furzefield Arms at Chorlbury, as on our entering the coffee-room of that snug hostelry, about half-past nine o'clock, one fine winter's morning, she, in a great state of giggles, cannons against us in the doorway leading thereto, evidently fresh from an interchange of lively badinage with somebody within.

As we walk into the apartment in question, we behold an elderly gentleman, attired in a dressing-gown and slippers, with nothing else of importance on, warming himself, in a gentlemanly manner, in front of the fire, and partaking of a cup of coffee and some buttered toast.

“Hallo! who are *you*?” is the rather startling question he puts to us, as, wishing him politely good morning, we edge up to the fire. “Ah, don't know you,” he goes on, after we had informed him, looking us up and down with, as we thought, a somewhat supercilious air. “Think I saw you at the ball last night. Came with the Slow-boys, didn't you? D—d bad ball as usual it was, too. Been to it every year for the last twenty-five years, so I ought to know something about it, eh? Old story. Bad

champagne. I know where they get it, and what they pay for it. Thirty-six shillings a dozen, and dear at the price. Sherry, worse, if possible. I'm up to trap though. I don't drink it. Not *I*. Don't *you* believe it. No, I bring some claret in a medicine-bottle, and, what is more, drink it under Furze-field's very nose—under my lady's nose—and under the Dowager's (who's the best of the lot) nose, too. The late lord was a screw—so was his father; but the present one beats 'em all. Wouldn't have come this year, but wanted to hunt this morning. None of the other fellows are up. Poor devils! hot coppers. *What?* Bye, bye. Meet again." And, so saying, this extraordinary personage, who has quite taken my breath away, walks off, and I presently view him from the window, crossing the stable-yard, evidently on a visit to his hunter, his airy attire apparently causing great delight to the servants of the house.

Lord Furze-field gives every year a grand ball at Furze-field House, to the *élite* of the county, and having been honoured with an invitation for the first time (for we had not long taken up our abode in the Harkaway country) we had come to the Furze-field Arms for the double purpose of attending the ball, and going with Lord Daisy-field's Hounds the next morning, there being a lawn meet at Furze-field House. We presently remembered noticing the eccentric personage who had just left the room, at the ball, he having attracted our attention the more particularly from the fact that he was attired in a scarlet dress-coat—the only garment of that colour there was in the room.

"What is that gentleman's name, waiter?" we ask, as that worthy enters with our breakfast. "The gentleman,

sir, who's jest gone hout, sir? Oh that's honly Mister Waggleton, sir. Nobody minds wot *he* says, sir. Wery picoolier gent, sir; don't mind *wot* he does, sir. Comes 'ere hevery year he do for this wery ball, sir, same as you 'ave and the other company. Great sporting gentleman, sir; yessir, *great* sporting gentleman, sir."

This was our first introduction to the very eccentric subject of our sketch. Since then we have seen a good deal of him, rather more, indeed, than we particularly care about, for, as the waiter at the inn very justly remarked, his habits of life are, to say the least, very "picoolier," and in consequence his room is very often a deal pleasanter to quiet and sedate personages, like myself, for instance, than his company. In our case, too, it was rather unfortunate that, very soon after we had made acquaintance with one another, William Waggleton should for some reason or another have taken a very decided liking to us. Why or wherefore we could never make out. The consequence being that we were honoured by a good deal more of his company than we cared about. Like the renowned Soapy Sponge, when once you got him into your house it was extremely difficult to get him out.

Once, indeed, on our return from the Continent, we found him, on our arrival at home, comfortably installed in our house, having been there just ten days. Our man told us he had ridden up one Friday—he lived about fifteen miles off—and on being told we were away, all he said was, "Oh, never mind; he supposed he could have a bed that night." The servants accordingly put him and his horse up. He unfortunately took a fancy to some claret the butler brought up for him; and the next day,

to that domestic's astonishment, not to say disgust, announced his intention of staying until our return, which intention he carried out to the letter.

"The first time I ever met him—confound him!" relates old Colonel Bludyer, "was one September, sir, many years ago, and I was going up to town by the afternoon coach that used to run in those days from Bullerton to London. Well, we stopped to take up Waggleton, who was waiting by the roadside, with a pointer dog at his heels, and a gun in his hand. The inside of the coach was empty, so he and his dog got in. Well, sir, we were going down Brockley Hill—you know Brockley Hill, and what a devil of a steep hill it is, eh? Well, we were going down steadily enough, the two chestnut leaders (rum 'uns to drive, sir, I can can tell you), for a wonder, going as quiet as sheep, when, *bang, bang!* went two loud reports from inside the coach. Away went the horses, frightened out of their wits, and no wonder. It's only a mussy we weren't upset, and all killed or drowned, for there was a thundering great pond at the bottom of the hill in those days. It's done away with now. Well, as soon as Tom Hollystick, the coachman, could stop 'em, he pulled up to see what was the matter, and what do you think it was, sir? Why, that dashed fellow, Waggleton, had loosed off his Joe Manton out of winder—both barrels—to clean 'em, as he said; and he then had the audacity, dash him, to ask what the devil we were stopping for, and told Tom to look sharp and make up for lost time, as he was going to the opera that night, and didn't want to be late."

Everybody in the county, indeed, has got a story of some sort to tell of our friend's sayings or doings. Even those two dear old things, the Misses Pringleigh, sisters of the

Dean of Maryborough, who live in a red-brick house, overlooking the river, just outside the town of Maryborough, never tire of relating how shocked they were, one hot summer's day, as they were sitting under their big mulberry-tree on the lawn, when they suddenly saw a fiend in human shape, who turned out, on inquiry, to be none other than the depraved William Waggleton, deliberately undress and betake himself to the water, for the purpose of enjoying a swim. How they would have thought nothing of that, for it was only natural, but when it came, "*when* it came," said Miss Penelope, with a shudder, "to that dreadful person running round and round the field with nothing on, literally *nothing* on, to dry himself, because I suppose he had no towels, it really, you know, my dear, became *beyond* a joke." One can well imagine, indeed, the two poor old ladies, hastily snatching up their books and shawls, and fairly bolting into the house as our friend was seen coming round for the third time.

There is, indeed, scarcely a soul in the county whom he has not roughed up the wrong way, either by word or deed; even cheery Tom Chirpington can't stand him, and, if he catches sight of him riding up the avenue towards the house, retires to his sanctum, and locks himself carefully in, until he finds the unwelcome guest has departed. Did he not, too, liken that worthy and energetic magistrate, Mr. Slowman unto an "Owl," only "*without the wisdom*"? It was not a bad simile, for, to say the truth, the worthy beak, as to his countenance, is not at all unlike that sagacious-looking bird, more especially when he is occupying the throne, as chairman of the bench of magistrates. Of course, what our eccentric friend had said came round in due time to the ears of the great J.P. himself, and Mr. Slowman ever since

speaks of him in conversation as that "beast Waggleton."

Another prominent member of the bench of magistrates, too, did he manage mortally to offend not long ago. None other, indeed, than Mr. Yellowboy, of Fatfield Park, the great City banker. Mr. Yellowboy is a stiff, pompous personage, with a very great opinion of himself—perhaps a better one indeed than other people have, for in the first place folks, as a rule, don't care about the throaty, consequential air he generally assumes, added to which there are nasty stories about of dead foxes having been found in his coverts, and large steel traps seen lying about in different places on his domain. Yellowboy professes, notwithstanding, to be fond of fox-hunting, and in fact the hounds meet at Fatfield once every season, on which occasion there is always a terrific breakfast, or *déjeuner* as Mrs. Yellowboy calls it. The local reporter comes out with uncommon strength, you may depend, that week in that wonderful journal, to wit, the *Bullerton Chronicle*, and four whole columns are filled with his glowing account of the display, headed in large letters, "The Grand Hunt Breakfast at Fatfield Hall."

Last year Yellowboy outdid himself, for to add to the general effect he had enlisted into his service the volunteer band from Bullerton, who were installed on the lawn in full uniform. They only knew three tunes—two marches and a polka—it is true, but the morning being cold, inclining to frost indeed, and there being no end of champagne about, they blew, and snorted, and banged about in splendid style.

"What an old ass it is!" remarked our young friend Charlie Wildoats, as his mare shied at the band. "Blowed if it ain't like a fair. However, it only happens

once a year, so why shouldn't the old muff enjoy himself, eh? So let's go in and pitch into his pop."

The breakfast over at last, to Lord Daisyfield's great delight, the hounds proceed to draw for a fox in a plantation in the park, where old Yellowboy says he *knows* there is one. He ought to know certainly, seeing that the noble animal in question only arrived the night before, and was only turned out half an hour ago. Sure enough, scarcely are the hounds thrown into covert when a halloo from the far end proclaims the fox is away. Three times round the park the poor half-stupefied brute goes. At last he makes for the kitchen-garden, to the head-gardener's great annoyance, and finally takes refuge in one of the hot-houses. Old Yellowboy is delighted—like the little dog in the nursery rhyme—to see such sport, and the farce ends by the unfortunate fox being lugged on to the lawn and broken up, amidst the plaudits of Yellowboy and Co.—the band, who are now in a glorious state of champagne, celebrating the event by a grand performance of "See the conquering hero comes." A thick voice in the crowd here cries out for three cheers for Muster Yellowboy, and these having been given, that worthy acknowledges them with a series of bows. He would like very much to make a speech, but that Lord Daisyfield, who has had more than enough of it all, bids him good-bye just as he is clearing his throat to begin, and trots his hounds off best pace to Cocklefield Spinney, to try for a fresh fox.

To return to our friend and the Banker. They met one fine day at the usual weekly gathering of the magistrates, and, as they were discussing different matters in their private room, it chanced that William Waggleton

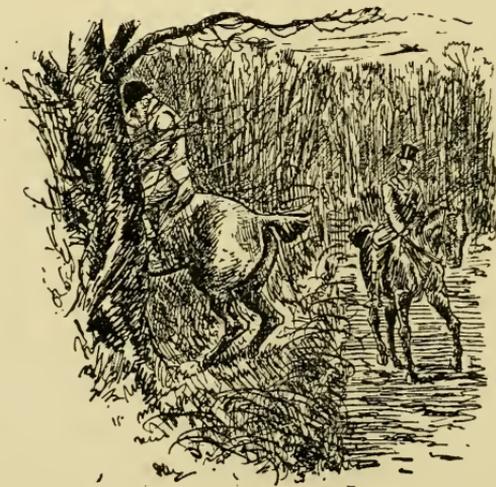
asked if anyone had a pencil. "Who's got a pencil?" quoth he. "Here is one, very much at your service," replied Mr. Yellowboy, in his pompous manner from the top of his black and white checked, stiff-looking neck-cloth. "Here is one, very much at your service, Mr. Waggleton," handing him, as he spoke, an elaborate, heavy-looking gold one, with his crest on a large onyx on the top. "Pah!" said William, with a sneer, taking it up and sniffing it with an air of the deepest disgust. "Pah! *stinks* of Lombard-street!—*stinks* of gold! Who the dickens would use a thing like that? Here, give me another, somebody."

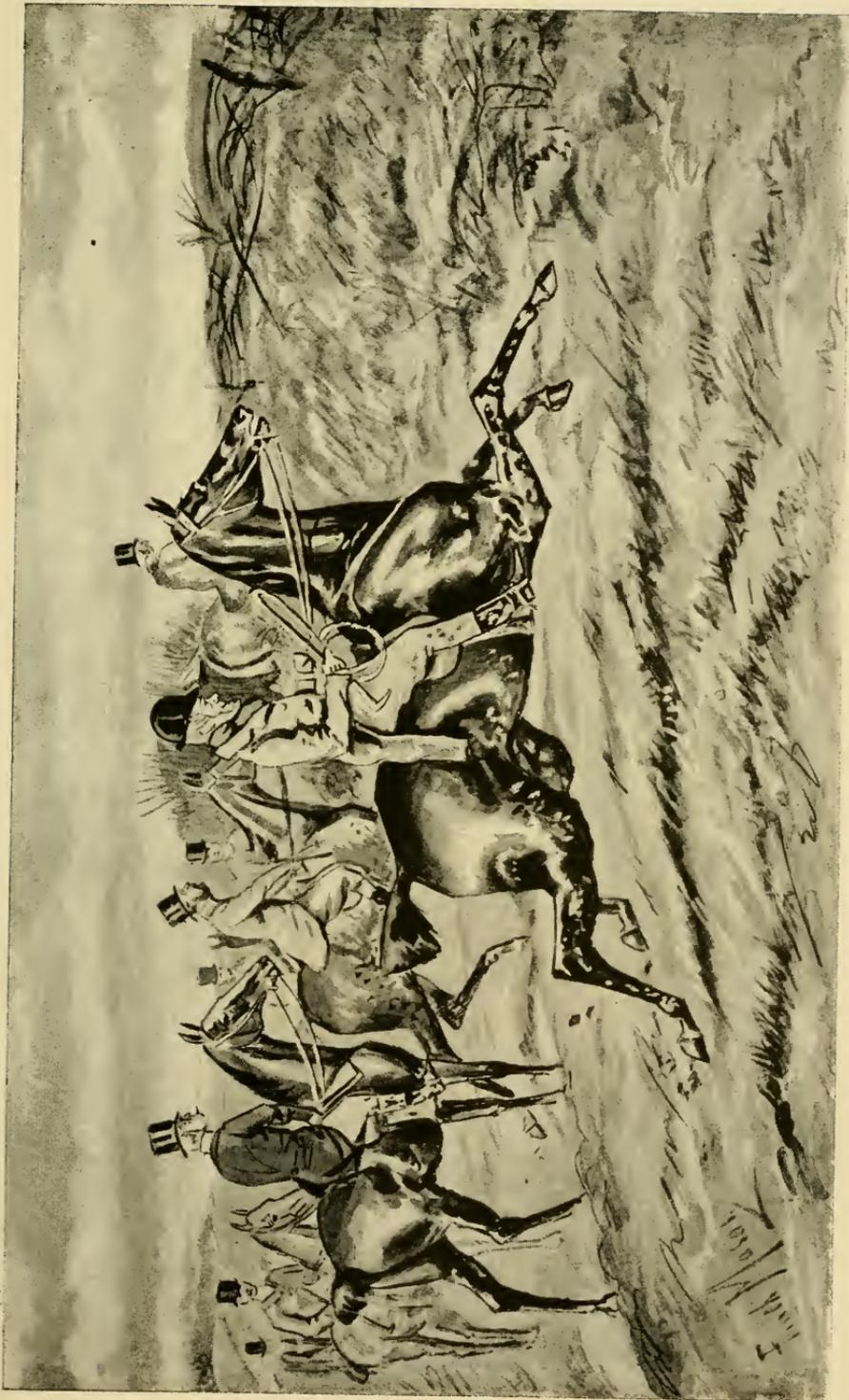
Mr. Yellowboy turned pale with anger. "Well, Mr. Waggleton," said he, after a pause, "after *that* speech, either you or I must leave the room."

"Very good. *You* leave it then," rejoined Waggleton. "I *shan't*, that's very certain." And the infuriated banker, whose hair stood on end at such behaviour to one of his importance and wealth, actually did leave the room there and then, to the secret delight of the other beaks.

Another of his great delights is to get hold of some stranger out hunting who can't ride much, and pilot him. And pilot him he will too, to such a tune that the novice may think himself remarkably lucky if he gets through the day without coming to grief, for William Waggleton is a consummate horseman himself, and seems to be able to creep and crawl (if he can't jump over) through any conceivable place. He wears out hunting a high-collared scarlet coat, a large yellow handkerchief is folded round his neck, and he sports a velvet cap. There is not a field or a fence in the country that he does not know. In a

run he takes a line of his own; wide of the hounds, but still never very far off, for his wonderful hands seem to have the power of shoving his horse just wherever he pleases. Besides being a good and bold rider he is a good sportsman in every way, whether whipping for trout, following the hounds, or ranging the stubbles with dog and gun. William Waggleton, in short, would be, to use Tom Chirpington's words, a "devilish good fellow if he were not so confoundedly quarrelsome." "But it is his nature to," as Doctor Watts has it, so we suppose he can't help it. . . . The hounds are not running. Everybody is going over a gap in a large fence, and we are preparing on our pony to follow suit. Not so Waggleton, who is on a new horse he has just bought, and means to have the fence—a large one. We hear him soliloquising to his horse thus: "Now look here, you fool, here's a big ditch *this* side, and I think there's a big ditch on the other—there's a good big fence, as you can see, between. If you make a mistake you'll come to grief and hurt yourself. *Come* up, you brute!"





WILLIAM WAGGLETON—  
*"Come up, you brute!"*



## MR. BENJAMIN BOBBIN.



COUPLE of years ago the Great Smashem and Crumple-em-up Railway Company—having previously obtained the permission of Parliament to do so—proceeded to start a line from London to the North on their own account, they having, up to that time, been merely associated with another company, paying them, in fact, very heavily for permission to run their own trains over the other's line. As anyone can see by looking at the map, their new line of railway goes twisting and turning right through the very heart of the Harkaway country.

Now, there is not a more charming place in the whole county than Oakley Hall, the home for I don't know how many generations past of the Gooseys. The Gooseys are descendants of the celebrated Godfrey de Goosye, who came over with the Conqueror. Goosyes by the score are buried in the little church in the park—Dame Margaret de Goosye, Dame Constance de Goosye, Hugo Malvoisin de Goosye, his son, Reginald de Goosye, and heaps more too numerous to mention. It was during the period when that merriest of monarchs, Charles II., occupied the throne of England that the name of de Goosye became altered to that of Goosey, and we believe it came about pretty much in this way: The head of the family at the period mentioned was a Colonel George de Goosye

one of Prince Rupert's most roaring cavaliers, a bosom friend of wild George Goring, and a great favourite with His Majesty. The Colonel, aristocrat as he was, was as ignorant a dog as you'd meet on a day's march anywhere, and as he had a playful habit of drinking hard all day—glasses of this, and stoups of that (what a stoup was we don't exactly know, but suppose it to have been a sort of article answering to the soda-water tumbler of our time)—besides consuming at dinner enough claret and Burgundy to satisfy ten ordinary cavaliers, he was generally in a state of fuddle, and when he was in his cups the spelling of his name would puzzle him very considerably. So on a hot night at the club, when the jolly Colonel had lost all his ready money, and his I O U's in consequence began to circulate, he would sign his name simply George Goosy, or Goosey, the "y" and "e" of the last syllable and the "de" in front proving too many for him. His friends who were honoured with his correspondence naturally thinking that he was the best judge as to how to spell his own name, followed suit, and so that's how it was done, as the conjurers say.

Now the richly-timbered and beautifully-undulating park, as the glib-tongued auctioneers delighted to call it in their advertisements, belonging to Oakley Hall, happened to come right in the track of the new line of railway, and accordingly one fine morning Colonel Algernon Goosey, the then proprietor, received formal notice from the worshipful board of directors that they were going to run their line right through the bottom of it. The Colonel was at first furious. He was particularly cock-a-hoop just then as it happened, for had not his horse Gil Blas just won the Two Thousand Guineas, upsetting all the favour-

ites, his gallant owner having thereby landed a pot of money, and did he not expect as a natural sequence that the same noble animal would win the Derby?

Never was such a favourite as Gil Blas. The Colonel looked upon the Derby and its profits in bets and stakes as already in his pocket, and the idea of a beastly railway running through his park was really one too many for his feelings; and he snorted, and puffed, and swore, and wrote abusive letters to the company every day in the week. The railway people were so impressed with his language that they actually sprang ten thousand more than they had first offered as compensation. But no go. "Hang their money!" would exclaim the Colonel in his wrath. The Derby Day arrived. The Colonel started from his lodgings in St. James's Street on the eventful morning, his drag loaded with heavy swells, culled principally from his old regiment, the Grenadier Guards. The Colonel's whiskers and moustache were curled with extra care, and his face wore a look of the greatest confidence as he took hold of the ribbons to tool the party down to Epsom. The Downs are reached. The favourite is visited. Nothing looks so well in the paddock, and five minutes before that terrible bell rings the Colonel makes his last bet—5 to 4 in thousands—with Lord Fiddlededee, Gil Blas against his lordship's horse, Jack in the Box, in their places.

The bell rings. They're off. What a start! Gil Blas leads round Tattenham Corner. Gil Blas wins in a canter! No he don't! What about Jack in the Box? "Now, then, Jack in the Box wins for a 'monkey!'" shouts the biggest man in the ring at the top of his voice. My eye, what a race! Nobody names the winner! It's a

dead heat! No it ain't. Jack in the Box has won! Up goes his number—4—on the telegraph board, the favourite second, beaten by the shortest of heads. "Capital race, was it not?" and "Come across to the drag and have some lunch, old fellow," says the Colonel, who is a rare plucked one. The Colonel was hit hard, there was no denying it; so confident had he been that he had not hedged a shilling of all the money he had backed Gil Blas for. He had no children, and the old place was heavily mortgaged. Why not sell it outright, now this railway was going to spoil it in a picturesque point of view? His next-door neighbour, too, old Admiral Hunks, he knew got a tremendous price for his place since the railway had come. Why shouldn't he go and do likewise? Thus reasoning with himself, the Colonel accepted the railway company's terms, and forthwith proceeded to put Oakley Hall into the hands of Messrs. Puff and Butterwell, the well-known auctioneers, with a view to sale, and soon there were such advertisements in *The Times* and *Field* as never were seen. What an earthly paradise they made it out to be! The Garden of Eden was nothing to it. Messrs. Puff and Co., in fact, gave it as their private opinion that had Adam seen it he would have let Eden at once to a moral certainty, and taken up his abode at Oakley.

Our friend the Colonel was sitting over a late breakfast one fine September morning, and had just ordered his butler to tell the keeper he would shoot that day, when a noise of carriage-wheels in front of the house announced the arrival of an early visitor. Tingle, tangle, tingle went the hall-door bell. "Who can it be at this time o' day?" thought the Colonel, laying down the *Morning Post*, and stopping on the way a piece of devilled kidney he was

about to put into his mouth. In came the footman, bearing a card on a silver salver.

“Come to see the ’ouse and grounds, sir,” said the man, handing the card to his master.

The Colonel, taking it up and glancing at it, found printed thereon—

MR. BENJAMIN BOBBIN, J.P.,  
HOLLYHOCK HOUSE,  
BIRMINGHAM.

“Show him in,” said the Colonel, and in another minute the servant re-entered the dining-room, ushering in Mr. Benjamin Bobbin, and, bows being exchanged, the two proceeded to business.

“First of all you must be hungry and thirsty after your railway journey. Won’t you take anything?” said the host.

“Thankee, sir,” replied Mr. Bobbin, “I think I *will* pick a bit, if you’ve no objection, for, to tell you the truth, the drive in the fresh morning hair has made me uncommon peckish—downright hungry, in fact. But don’t order hanythink ’ot. No, pray don’t! A bit of cold partridge, and a mossel of that fine-looking ’am I see on the sideboard yonder ’ll just do me, thankee, and, if it’s ’andy, I shouldn’t mind a glass or two of Shammy, just to wash it down, yer know. (Mr. Bobbin had an idea that it was quite what he called the “cheese” in polite society to drink champagne on all occasions.)

“Certainly,” said his host, smiling. “Bring a bottle of champagne,” said he to the butler.

Mr. Benjamin Bobbin having eaten and drunk to his satisfaction, proceeded to business. "He had made a 'eap of money," he said, confidingly, to his host, "a 'eap of money in the iron trade, and he was now about to retire and live in the country."

He was accordingly looking about for a property to suit him, when Messrs. Puffor's magnificent advertisement attracted his attention. "An old h'ancestral 'ouse like this is just the very harticle that me and Mrs. Bobbin was on the look out for," said he, looking round, as he spoke, at the portraits of defunct De Goosyes, which covered the oak-panelled room; "and if," added he, "there should be such a thing as a ghost on the premises, I don't mind telling you, between ourselves, Colonel, that it will be an additional indoosement to me to purchase; not that I'm at all hanxious myself, but i'ts an obby of Mrs. B.'s, you hunderstand."

"Well, the house is old enough, in all conscience," replied the Colonel, thinking what a rum chap Bobbin was; "and I dare say there's a ghost knocking about somewhere, though I can't say I ever saw one myself. However, come and look round, Mr. Bobbin, and see the place for yourself."

Mr. Benjamin Bobbin was a fat, vulgar-looking man, of about fifty-five or so. Dressed in what he thought the height of fashion, his necktie was fastened with a sailor's knot, stuck in which was a huge pearl as big as a walnut, surrounded by brilliants. He wore a white waistcoat; a massive gold chain kept guard over his extensive stomach; black trousers, with a stripe, covered his extremities, and his rather nubbly-looking feet were encased in the patent leather boots of the period; he sported lavender-coloured

gloves, and a gold-topped stick, and his hat was about the glossiest you ever saw. Altogether he looked what he was—Brummagem all over. "And now," said the Colonel, having taken him all over the house, "let us go outside and see what there is to be seen. First of all, I will show you my 'ruin.' People come for miles to see it. You have heard of it, no doubt—the old ruined chapel of the De Gooseys, have you not?"

Mr. Bobbin was not quite sure, but thought "he 'ad."

"Now," said the Colonel, with conscious pride, as they reached the ruin in question, "what do you think of that, heh?"

"Why," replied Bobbin, straddling his legs and picking his teeth with a gold toothpick the while. "Why, I don't think much of it, do you know. It strikes me as being pretty much the same sort of place *I shoot my coals in at 'ome.*"

The disgusted Colonel turned away to conceal his indignation.

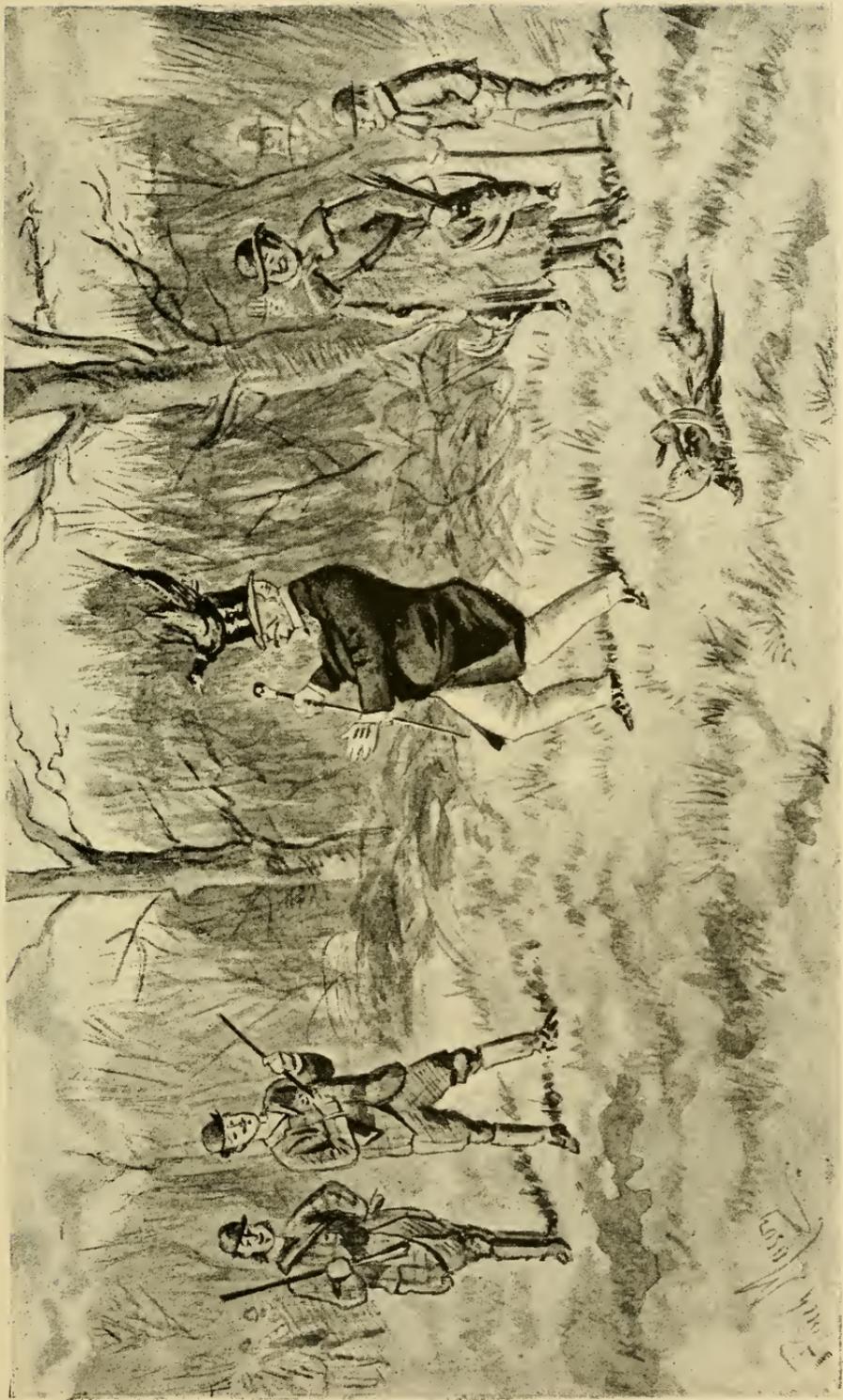
"Dashed snob," muttered he, "he and his coals, indeed—curse his impudence! I'll stick on ten thousand for that speech, hang me if I don't. Daring to compare my ruins to his filthy coal-hole. Never heard of such impudence."

Mr. Bobbin, of Birmingham, at length took his leave, and the result was that, after the usual haggling and bargaining and disputing between the Colonel's and Mr. Bobbin's respective lawyers, the bargain was closed; the purchase money paid over; and the ancestral halls of the Gooseys passed out of the Colonel's hands for ever, into those of Mr. Benjamin Bobbin, of Birmingham.

The Bobbin Family, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Bobbin,

Master Bobbin (a plebeian-looking youth just leaving Harrow), and two Miss Bobbins ("Fifty thou' *down* my gals 'll have when they marry," their parent informs every one)—in due course of time settled down in their new home, and instead of the manly figure of the Colonel, walking his fields, gun in hand, might now be seen the vulgarly-attired Mr. Bobbin, puffing and blowing through the mangold-wurzel, in search of partridges, missing every shot, to the keeper's great disgust.

About the first thing Mr. Bobbin did after his arrival was to affront our friend, Lord Daisyfield, mortally. He had only been out hunting once, and that was with the Brookside Harriers, on which occasion the huntsman came round with the cap. So being, as he said, fond of 'orses and 'ounds, and wishing to do the right thing, he penned an epistle to Lord Daisyfield, enquiring if his was a subscription pack; or, did his huntsman come round at the end of the day with his cap the same way that the huntsman of the harriers did? My lord was furious of course, and never took the trouble even to answer his letter, which he threw into the fire on the spot. Nothing daunted, Mr. Bobbin proceeded to lay in a stableful of horses, quite regardless of expense. Nothing under three hundred guineas would tempt him, and the dealers giving each other the "office," some uncommon dear bargains he got hold of. The swell stud-groom he got afterwards, straight from Melton, when he saw the nags, expressed his opinion that there were only two in the whole lot worth their hay and corn. These, of course, he kept aside for his own use. "It's no use, Tommy; it's no use," said he, one market-day at Bullerton, to his friend, Sir Charles Brusher's coachman, as they were having a friendly glass



MR. BENJAMIN BOBBIN—

*Charlie Wildonts teaches Mr. Bobbin how to shoot a rocketeer.*



together, "I *can't* make a gentleman hof'im. I *must* give 'im up at the end of the season, for I raly can't stand his vulgarity any longer."

Early in November Bobbin proceeded to give a house-warming, in the shape of a dinner party, followed by a ball. His house was crammed to the muzzle, for people will always cotton to anybody with lots of money nowadays. Two or three hard-up baronets and one noble lord even honoured him with their presence. Charlie Wildoats, too, made one of the house party, and great fun he had—he at once constituted himself adviser in general to Mr. Bobbin. The day of the ball there was to be a grand battue, so our mischievous friend promptly told Mr. B. confidentially that it was always the correct thing for the host on these occasions not to shoot himself, but to come out in his Sunday best and simply direct the proceedings. Accordingly Mr. Bobbin appeared at breakfast in frock coat, light trousers, and patent leather boots, as if he was going to walk down Bond Street. Wildoats frightened him out of his life on several occasions by shooting rabbits close to him. Once he very neatly dropped a rocketeer right on Mr. B.'s glossy Lincoln and Bennett. This last event finished the new Squire, and after luncheon—a hot one, with no end of champagne—which took place in a tent, he took his departure.

Dinner-time came, the guests arrived, and Bobbin led the way into the dining-room, with old Lady Foodle on his arm.

"Ah! my lady," said he (he had been the night before to a great dinner party at the Mansion House)—"ah! my lady, this time last evenin' I was a 'harmin' a *Duchess* downstairs."

The dinner party and the ball were tremendous successes, and the Bobbin family decidedly scored. Mrs. Colonel Bluebottle, who was one of the leaders of fashion in the county, expressed her opinion that "The Bobbinses, my dear, are parvenoos—mere parvenoos, of course, but worthy people, on the whole, really ve-e-ry worthy people, indeed."

Mrs. Bluebottle herself, of course, was qualified to be a judge, being a daughter of a ham and beef shop proprietor in the Borough. Bluebottle had come across her at a *table d'hôte* at some German watering-place, and finding out that she had got lots of stuff, as he elegantly called it, he quickly popped the question, and soon after married her.

Mr. Benjamin Bobbin, though hardly what one would call a sportsman, is a Flower of the Hunt for all that, and, in fact, he has written to ask us to be sure to include him in our sketches.

He adds, in a postscript, that his friend, Charles Wild-oats, has promised to use his best influence with Lord Daisyfield to try and induce his lordship to bring his hounds to meet at Oakley Hall one day soon; and if they do, winds up Mr. Bobbin, "what a flare up I will have to be sure!"



## RALPH DUCKWORTH OF THE WILD FARM.



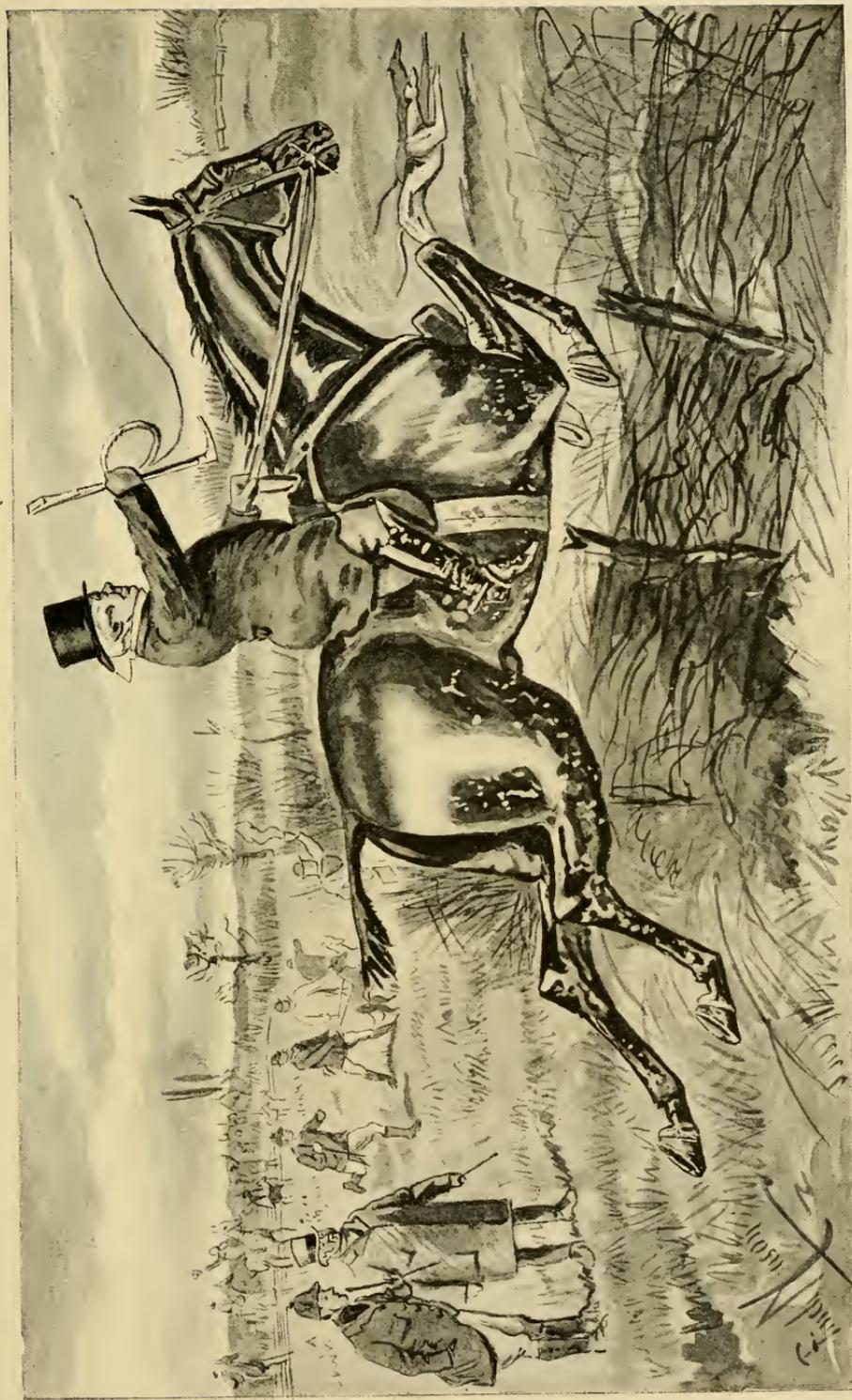
IF we were called upon to-morrow to point out the best specimen, in our opinion, of the typical sporting Yeoman (we like the word) amongst the many good fellows of that class who hunt with Lord Daisyfield's hounds, we should, without a moment's hesitation, name old Ralph Duckworth, of the Wild Farm.

The extent of the said Wild Farm is not more than five hundred acres, at the very outside, neither is the house a very large one, as farmhouses go, at the same time it is exceedingly comfortable *inside*, and picturesque *out*, and well in keeping with its cheery and prosperous-looking tenant. It nestles down in a little corner of its own, close by the riverside, so close, indeed, that, standing at the back door, you could throw a fly into it if so inclined. Altogether, it is a very snug place; bright in summer, with its little flower garden, gorgeous with scarlet geraniums and yellow calceolarias, and cheerful-looking even in winter. The men about the place, too, all look—as, indeed, they are—well fed and contented, and most of them, you would find, on

enquiry, have lived on the farm from early boyhood. The land, too, is well done by. It is fine rich soil, and always seems to produce finer roots and wheat than elsewhere. And yet old Ralph does not seem to pay much personal attention to farming operations, but appears to leave most matters of detail to his men. Indeed, his principal occupation apparently, when not hunting or coursing, is galloping about the country (he is hardly ever seen out of a gallop—and a devilish good pace, too, as he once observed to someone who twitted him on that score) on a certain rat-tailed horse of his. A bachelor, Ralph's establishment is presided over by a widowed sister, as comfortable-looking a woman as her brother is a man, and just about the very best hand at making cherry brandy, or orange gin, you ever met. Having partaken of a countless number of glasses of those seductive cordials at various times on our visits at the Wild Farm, we are well qualified to give an opinion. We should add that Ralph, like Mr. Sponge's horsedealing friend, Mr. Benjamin Buckram, possesses a snug little independence of his own; consequently he is well able to maintain the hospitality it is his delight to extend to everyone, and indulge in his favourite sport to his heart's content, without any qualms of conscience on the score of undue extravagance.

“What is this pet farmer of yours like in personal appearance?” we fancy we can hear the reader exclaim at this point.

Well, he is a stout, hale-looking man, of middle height, standing on a pair of rather bow legs; possessing a large, round, pleasant face, a complexion the colour of port wine, and white hair. He has never been seen in anything but a chimney-pot hat—felt on weekdays, silk on Sundays; and



RALPH DUCKWORTH OF THE WILD FARM—  
"The old man on these occasions always acts as judge."



he swings about "sixteen stun," into the saddle, whenever he mounts his hunter. We must add, that his port-wine complexion is in no wise attributable to drink, for though fond of conviviality, and social to a degree, Ralph is really as temperate a man as ever breathed. To sum him up: his age is sixty, more or less—probably more; he is a sound Churchman; whilst in politics he is the staunchest of Tories. Finally, he probably has not an enemy in the world—certainly not in Buttercupshire. Ralph, though nothing like so keen about it as hunting, is very fond of a day's coursing in a quiet sort of way—he usually has a brace of fairish greyhounds somewhere about the premises—and it is a favourite game of his to assemble some of the neighbouring farmers who are fond of the sport (it is a curious fact, that farmers, though they are always enlarging on the mischief done by hares, are nearly all lovers of the leash) and have a course over his farm, always prolific in hares. The old man on these occasions always acts as judge, and, the moment the dogs are slipped, rides to them like a man. He does not go in for red or white flags in the orthodox style, but to hear him shout, "The black dog's won!" or, "The fawn's got it!" and to view his jolly old face, positively beaming with pleasure, as he rides back to the coursers, is worth going miles to witness. His judgment is never cavilled against, you may be sure.

Though he possesses the right of shooting over his own farm, he is no gunner himself; indeed, whenever he wants his birds killed, he is good enough to come galloping up to ask us to do it for him, at which we are always delighted, as it is a remarkably good farm for birds, even in bad breeding seasons, the hedges being of the

old-fashioned straggling order, affording plenty of shelter, and the cover invariably being good. On these occasions we are expected to take lunch at the farm (to bring our own grub would cause dire offence, you may be sure); and, seeing that the lunch is always of a most substantial nature, finishing up with dessert, and port wine of a fruity character, combined with a good deal of body, and of which you are almost in duty bound to partake, it may be easily imagined, that *after* lunch we feel much more inclined to sit down under a hedge and smoke a cigar, than to tramp the fields after partridges. Knowing, therefore, what we have to expect on these occasions, we take very good care to get well into our birds before one o'clock. The name of Ralph Duckworth will always be green in our memory, if it was only for one circumstance. We were riding one hot September afternoon along a bridle-road that went through his farm, when to our astonishment we suddenly saw the farmer himself, attended by one of his men, working a turnip-field, gun in hand.

Transfixed with astonishment we pulled up. By-and-by he saw us, and walked up. "I'm uncommon glad to see you," said he, "for I've got a friend coming down from town to-night, and I want a brace of partridges very bad. So I took this old gun of mine, and started out, but, lor' bless you, I can't hit 'em, however hard I look at 'em. Will you get off your pony, and kill us a brace? I shall take it so wery kind if you will?"

This was an appeal impossible to resist, so down we got, and proceeded to handle the old gun. It was a queer, old-fashioned-looking weapon, but well balanced, and very

handy, with a pistol-handled stock, and—wonder of wonders—*flint-locked!*

Quite delighted, away we went, and were lucky enough to kill old Ralph his brace of birds almost immediately. And exceedingly proud we are of being able to say that once upon a time, in the course of our career, we have shot game with a flint-gun.

But it is in the hunting-field that Ralph is seen at his best. He takes the same position amongst those of his own class that Mr. Grimboy, hunting with Lord Daisyfield (the Father of the Hunt), does with the gentlemen, and lays down the law accordingly. Like all great men, though, his proud position is not altogether a sinecure, there being two Richmonds in the field in the shape of a pair of elderly sportsmen, named respectively Harry Goldacre, formerly huntsman to the Old Harkaway, and old Joe Jollikins of Crabtree Farm, in both of whose ancient bosoms lurked a long-planted feeling of jealousy towards our friend of the Wild Farm, which showed itself on every available occasion. He achieved so great a triumph over them, though, on a certain occasion not long ago, that we cannot help relating it here. So decisive a victory was it indeed, and so thoroughly did his great mind assert itself, that we doubt very much whether his two rivals, crushed and pulverised as they were, will ever succeed in rivalling "Phoenix," and rise again.

The hounds had just drawn a wood of moderate size—some twenty or thirty acres perhaps—blank apparently, and, leaving that, proceeded to draw another covert belonging to the same owner, which was separated from the former wood by only a narrow six-acre field; the two

woods, in point of fact, all but joined each other. Well, they had not been in covert five minutes before a holloa from the far end announced that the fox had been viewed away, and in a trice the first whip, who was hunting the pack in the absence of Tom Tootler (rendered temporarily *hors de combat* from a fall the last day they were out, and consequently "staying out" as the Eton boys call it), brought the hounds up, and away they went, best pace. Guessing pretty well the point the fox would make for, away we pounded in that direction, accompanied, as usual, by a whole lot of dear little boys and girls, and one or two old boys and girls, too, for that matter, who, relying on our knowledge of the country, and (so they tell us) our well-known sagacity as regards the run of the fox, are good enough to honour us with their company on these occasions. Well, away we all went, now down this lane, now down that, then a short cut through a farmyard, and a line of gates, anon pulling up to listen, and so on. It was during one of these stoppages, on this particular day, that, hearing a clattering of boys behind us, we turned round, when, to our surprise, who should gallop up but our ex-huntsman, old Harry Gold-acre, and his friend Joe Jollikins. "Hallo!" said we, "why, what brings you two young fellows along the hard high road, eh? Have some of 'em pounded you, or are you thrown out?" "Neither the one nor the other, squire," replied Harry, with one of his woodenest grins. "We was havin' a hargument with that silly old fule of a Ralph Duckworth; he would hev it as the hunds had got separated in them two woods, and that one lot was a runnin' their fox in the fust, at the werry same identical moment's the rest on 'em was drawin' at the t'other, and

that they killed and left him directly they heard Ned's horn. We both on us see half-a-dozen hunds leavin' the wood, that's right enough; but as for havin' killed, as he ses, that's all nonsense, and so I told him. The old man betted of us a new hat apiece that he's right, which Joe and me accepted, and I'm blessed if we didn't leave the poor old feller a pokin' about the wood, and vowin' and swearin' as he wouldn't leave it until he found the dead fox. I told him that he and his old rat-tailed 'oss 'ud lose themselves if they didn't mind, like the babes in the wood, and that some'un 'ud coom in the mornin' and find 'em both covered with leaves by the robin-redbreastesses doorin' the night." "Haw! haw! haw!" laughed the hoary narrator, slapping his thigh with intense relish of his own little joke.

"You see, sir," broke in old Joe, "Tom Tootler being hill, and Ned Stumps not being quite in the way of it like, the 'ouns I 'xpec' got a little out of his hand, and when silly old Ralph heerd 'em, they was a runnin' hare, no doubt. That's what they was a-doin', depend upon it."

Two days after this conversation, it chanced that we made one of a shooting party engaged in beating these identical woods. We had told the story of old Ralph and his hunt for the dead fox to our host, who was much amused thereat. His keeper, of course, knew all about it, and had assisted, indeed, in the search, which, by his manner, he evidently looked upon as a "wild-goose chase." Well, we were walking in line, beaters and all, in the course of the morning, through some young wood, when suddenly our host, who was on my right, shouted out to us to "come here!" We went accordingly, and there to our as-

tonishment was the body of a dead fox, who evidently, from the signs about him, had met his death in the legitimate way. All the other guns came up to have a look, and then the cry went forth of "Bravo, Ralph!"

"Leave him just as he is," said our host to the keeper, "and one of you run up to the house and tell somebody to start off on a horse at once to the Wild Farm with this note. The Squire tore a leaf out of his memorandum book as he spoke, and scribbled a few hasty lines to Ralph. We then resumed our shooting. One o'clock came, and we had just sat down to enjoy that which was certainly not the worst part of the day's entertainment, namely, our luncheon, when the sound of a horse galloping was heard, and in another minute our jolly old friend Ralph Duckworth appeared, his rat-tailed horse in a lather, and he himself with his jovial countenance more rubicund than usual from the haste he had made. When he heard of our find, the old fellow's delight knew no bounds. Nothing would serve him but he must go and look at the fox with his own eyes that very instant. He would neither bite nor sup, he declared, until he did; and, seeing there was no help for it, the head keeper forthwith took him away to where lay all that remained of poor Reynard. By-and-by the worthy pair returned, bringing the fox along with them, and then, quite satisfied, old Ralph, having given his rat-tailed favourite to one of the beaters to walk about, wanted no more persuasion, but sat down with us and set to at the good things put before him with the air of a man who felt he had thoroughly earned his food. We omitted to add that at the same time that our cheery host despatched his messenger to the house to send off a mounted man to fetch Ralph he

also sent word to his butler to send some champagne out for lunch instead of the usual bottled beer. "I don't hold much," said the Squire, "with champagne and all that sort of thing, out shooting, as a rule; but this is a special occasion, and I feel that our friend P. J. (his pet term for Perrier-Jouet) must flow in duty bound." So, accordingly, when old Ralph and the keeper returned with the fox between them, "*pop*" went a magnum of '74. We had quite a set to, in fact. Old Ralph was fond of champagne, and sucked it down like mother's milk; and, what with drinking to fox-hunting and to each of us, and himself, several times over, to say nothing of a glass or two of curaçao, thrown in, by the time the old man mounted Rat-tail again, he was about as cheerful as they make 'em, as our host dryly observed. Having lit a huge cigar, he went off at a gallop as usual, amidst a volley of hunting cries from all of us, and the last we saw of him was diverging from the ride, and taking the fence out of the wood at a fly in his usual impetuous manner. "And now, you fellows," said the master of the sports, "if we haven't driven every pheasant and rabbit out of the place with the noise we've been making, we'd better make a start again, for it will be dark in another hour and a-half."

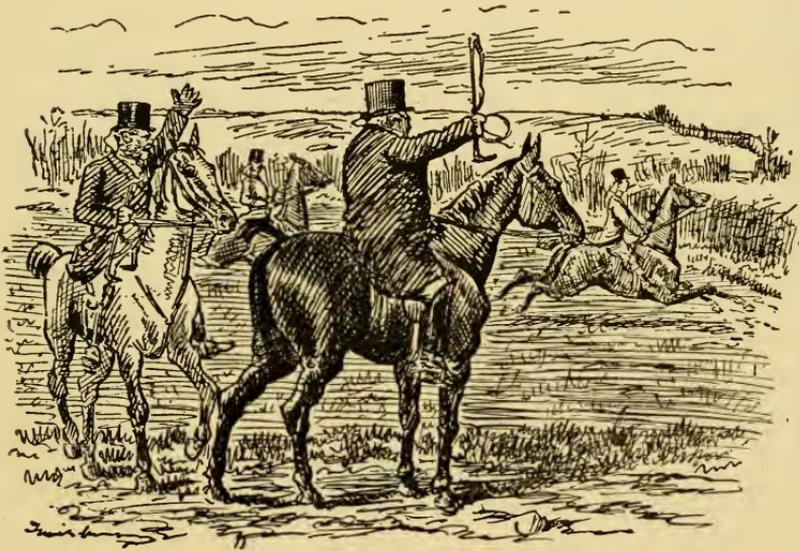
Lord Daisyfield, as we have mentioned in our sketch of him, is a bad hand at blowing up an unruly field, having a great aversion to the use of strong language. He is in the habit, therefore, when anyone offends him in the field, instead of calling the culprit over the coals himself, of setting Ralph Duckworth, who always has a fine natural flow of language at his command, at him.

Some years ago his lordship was exceedingly put out at the conduct of a London horse dealer, who ought to

have known better, who, putting up a lot of horses at Bulletron, was in the habit of mounting all his rough riders on them, and sending them out with my lord's hounds, with orders to ride over everything they came across, with a view to sale. The farmers very naturally objecting to having their fences broken down and their wheat ridden over when hounds were not running, complained to Lord Daisyfield, who spoke to the dealer on the subject, declaring if it happened again he would take his hounds home. Mr. Dealer, being a bumptious young cockney of the most aggressive type, was not a bit put out, and fairly staggered my lord by his impudence. There was no alternative but to set Ralph Duckworth at him. This he did, the result being a slanging match between the two, in which, we are bound to say, the cockney dealer got far and away the best of it. Ralph, however, was not to be done. Later on in the day, the dealer himself was riding leisurely at a fence, when who should cannon up against him (accidentally, of course) but Ralph Duckworth, with the effect of nearly sending him horse and all into the ditch. A fresh interchange of compliments took place, the affair ending by the irate farmer fetching his adversary such a crack between the eyes with the butt-end of his hunting-whip, as caused that worthy to vacate his saddle and roll on to mother earth in an insensible condition. The victory was a decisive one, for the dealer removed his horses from Bullerton shortly after, and Lord Daisyfield's hunt consequently knew him no more.

Let us now bid adieu to our old friend; and long may it be before that stout old figure in the roomy black frock-coat, very open at the chest, the Bedford cords, and the

jackboots is absent from the covert-side. When that time does come, as it must eventually to all of us, it will be a long while before Lord Daisyfield's hunt finds such a good specimen of a representative British Yeoman of the old school, as Ralph Duckworth of the Wild Farm.



## MR. AND MRS. SPARKLER.



WHEN it came to the ears of the good people of Buttercupshire, that Crackleton Court, one of the numerous country seats of that well-known ornament to the peerage, Viscount Stiffnecke, which has been shut up for many years, and consequently was a dead loss to the county in the way of festivities of any sort, had at last been let for a term, together with its first-rate shooting and fishing, to a wealthy young gentleman, of the name of Sparkler, a thrill of joyful expectancy ran through their midst. Fond matrons marked him down at once as an eligible mate for Rosey, or Blanche, or Violet, as the case might be; whilst fairy visions of balls and garden parties on a large scale disturbed the natural rest of all the young ladies themselves.

“He is *extremely* good looking; quite young, has only just attained his majority, indeed—and so rich!” thus spoke Mrs. Gapeseed, the great purveyor of news, and champion gossip of that part of the world, who was making an afternoon call at the Timmins’s, clasping her hands ecstatically, as she spoke, and turning up her eyes until you could see nothing but the whites, or, to be strictly accurate, the yellows; for Mrs. Gapeseed, being what the doctors call rather a “livery” subject, did not, in consequence, possess that clear skin and bright optic

that one always associates with a clean bill of health, and a good digestion.

"You really think he is as well off as they say, do you?" said Mrs. Timmins, in a careless, indifferent, sort of manner, as if it was quite immaterial to her one way or the other, though in reality she was at that moment turning over in her mind which of her girls would be most likely to suit the young millionaire.

"Pooh!" replied Mrs. Gapeseed, pursing up her lips as she spoke, "I know it for a fact—a pos-i-tive fact, my dear. Oh, yes. As I was on my way here, I met Mr. Sheepshanks, Lord Stiffnecke's agent; so I immediately pulled the check string, stopped the carriage, and asked him *all* about it, and he very kindly gave me e-very information, full particulars, in fact, I may say."

"*Really!*" replied Mrs. Timmins, "I merely asked, you know, for people *do* exaggerate so about that sort of thing, that one hardly knows sometimes *what* to believe."

"Yes; he is even richer than we gave him credit for, according to Mr. Sheepshanks. His father, who died some few years ago, left behind him an e-normous fortune; every penny of which came to this young fellow when he attained his majority, only a few months since. About two hundred thousand pounds, Mr. Sheepshanks *thinks*. Two—hundred—thousand—pounds! Think of *that!*" exclaimed Mrs. Gapeseed, once more exhibiting her gambogey eyeballs to the assembled company.

"Has Mister Sparkler 'bl-ewe' blood in his veins—that is to say, is he of good family—well-born, in fact?" simpered Mrs. Timmins, in her most affected manner.

(Not possessing a very large quantity of the particular

brand she mentioned in her own person, the worthy soul was, of course, very particular about it in other people.)

"Well, no-o-o," replied her friend, "I should hardly imagine that he *had*, you know, judging, at least, from what Mr. Sheepshanks was good enough to tell me. His father, it seems, made his money by manufacturing boot-jacks—or, stay," said Mrs. Gapeseed, tapping her forehead and considering a moment, "stay, I rather think it was bootnails or *hobnails*, *not* bootjacks, he said; or was it boot *blacking*? *Any* how," she continued, brightening up; "it don't matter. I feel certain though it was *something* to do with boots, so, of course, that *would* be rather vulgar, wouldn't it?"

In similar fashion to this, young Mr. Sparkler and his money bags were discussed in half the drawing rooms in Buttercupshire, and the latest intelligence regarding his movements was sought after by Mesdames Gapeseed, Timmins, & Co., with the greatest anxiety.

"When was he coming?" was the question they all asked each other, fifty times a day.

Now the editor of that old-established paper, to wit, the *Bullerton Chronicle and Buttercupshire Gazette*, has a playful habit every week, when short of what is called "copy" (which circumstance, by-the-way, we should imagine to be of tolerably frequent occurrence), of filling up his vacant spaces with extracts from the various society papers of the day. In fact, the contents of his valuable journal always seem made up as follows:—The two outside sheets, back and front, advertisements; emanating principally from auctioneers, money lenders, quack doctors, and vendors of patent medicines. The inside: two leaders; one political, the other on some

subject of local interest, such as the painting by night, in broad red and yellow stripes, of his worship the mayor's front door, by some irreverent wag, or wags, of cheerful temperament; or the stoppage of the clock at the Town Hall. Then come a couple of columns or so devoted to police news, and two more to the goings on at the villages round about, such as penny readings, rows at vestry meetings, between the vicar and his churchwardens (the latter, of course, headed "Disgraceful Scene in a Church"), or some such exciting items. Then there are letters to the editor (usually on the subject of drains). There is a "poet's corner," and there is a whole column headed "Wit and Humour," which possibly might be found amusing, if the reader had not already been made familiar with most of the *bon mots* contained therein, through the medium of one Joseph Miller. The editor has still plenty of space, and this he fills up in the way we have described, viz., with cuttings from the different society journals.

There was no one probably in the whole of Buttercupshire with whose views this little arrangement on his part fell in with better, than our friend Mrs. Gapeseed. That estimable lady, besides being an ardent lover of gossip, for gossip's sake—life, indeed, would not have been worth having without it, in her opinion—was still better pleased at getting it on the cheap as it were. It gave it a sort of extra relish, getting for a penny what she would have otherwise had to give eighteen pence or two shillings for; for the editor of the *Buttercupshire Gazette* did not confine himself to extracts from one journal, but went boldly in for all the sixpennies, the whole *bilin'*, in fact.

Every Saturday morning then Mrs. Gapeseed, after her

usual visit to the kitchen to give her orders for the day, was wont, with the "Gazette" in her hand, to retire to her little morning room, where, having ensconced herself in an easy chair, she would assume a pair of spectacles, and with a placid smile upon her countenance, forthwith proceed to enjoy a quiet morning with her favourite literature.

On the Saturday following her visit to her friend, Mrs. Timmins, Mrs. Gapeseed, according to custom, had settled herself down with toes on the fender and the paper in her hand. She had primed herself with all the latest *on-dits* anent the Royal family, and was now well into the tittle-tattle concerning folk in a less exalted station of life, when she was suddenly brought up short by the following "par":

"The *jeunesse dorée* of the period are certainly, as Mr. J. L. Toole would say, 'going it.' Last Thursday we alluded in our columns to the recent marriage of the youthful Viscount Mudlark, eldest son of the Marquis of Greenwich, to Miss Nelly Bligh, of the 'Hilarity' Theatre. This week we have to make a similar announcement, Mr. George Sparkler, the wealthy young commoner, whose name, owing to an occasional overflow of animal spirits, has been rather frequently before the public of late, having on Monday last led to the hymeneal altar, Miss Dot Golightly, well known at the Music Halls as a serio-comic singer of great versatility and verve. She is best known by her song of the "Boy with the Evening Papers," her characteristic rendering of which ditty took the town by storm some six months ago. The happy pair left in the afternoon for Paris, where they propose to spend the honeymoon, after which they will settle down at Crackleton Court, Lord Stiffneck's beauti-

ful place in Buttercupshire, which they have leased for a term from his lordship.

“As both the youthful Benedick and his bride are partial to the chase (the lady especially being a capital horse-woman, and very well known with both her Majesty’s Staghounds and the Brighton Harriers), we shall, no doubt, hear of them ‘showing the way’ during the coming season, with that celebrated pack, the ‘Old Harkaway.’”

“There now,” exclaimed Mrs. Gapeseed, starting up from her chair, her face scarlet with indignation, “that’s the most shocking piece of news I’ve heard for a very considerable time. To think of the many charming girls there are in this very neighbourhood (in this very house she might have added, for there were five Miss Gapeseeds, all, as David Copperfield’s friend, Mr. Barkis, would say, ‘willin’ to marry the first eligible suitor that came their way), any one of whom would have made that wretched, infatuated young man a most excellent wife. And then to go and fall headlong into the net of that bad, bold-faced, golden-haired hussey (I feel certain she’s golden-haired)—with all his money, too! it’s really too horrible for words. Nobody, of course, will notice them. *I most certainly shall not call,*” said Mrs. Gapeseed, with a virtuous shudder, nearly pulling the bell-rope down in her wrath as she rang for some more coals.

When Mrs. Gapeseed and her friends had got over the excitement caused by the news of this terrible marriage, the next question of course was what this dreadful young person whom the volatile youth had taken to himself for better or worse, was like. They were all dying to look at her. Consequently when it oozed out that Mr. and

Mrs. Sparkler were expected to arrive at Crackleton Court on a certain day, and were pretty certain to attend the meet of Lord Daisyfield's hounds at No Man's Land, the morning but one after, the universal cry of the neighbours was: "*We will be there.*"

And they *were* there, too, to some tune, as the huntsman, Tom Tootler, who had not been honoured with so large a field for some time, declared. Mrs. Gapeseed was there, you may depend, occupying, indeed, a seat in her friend Mrs. Timmins's barouche (Mrs. G., herself, only sporting a nondescript sort of vehicle of the "one 'oss shay" order), and, to insure an extra good view of the bride, that enterprising lady had taken the precaution to bring her opera-glasses along with her. All eyes, with one accord, were turned towards the point whence the party from the Court were bound to come, and at last, after much straining of eyes, a cry came forth from the carriages of "Here they come!"—reminding one somewhat of the murmur that goes up from the crowd on a race-course when the favourite for a great event emerges from the paddock to take his preliminary canter. Up went Mrs. Gapeseed's glasses to her eyes. "I can see her!" exclaimed she.

"*Can you?*" said Mrs. Timmins, clambering up on to the seat in her excitement, and secretly envying her friend the possession of her opera-glasses. "What is she like? *do* tell me," she exclaimed, quite unable to restrain her curiosity.

"She—no! I surely must make a mistake. Impossible! It is, I declare! I do declare!" exclaimed Mrs. Gapeseed, sinking back into her seat, with a horrified countenance, and handing the opera-glasses to her friend. "I do de-





clare she has got a scarlet coat and a velvet cap on, and she is smo—king a—cig—ar just like—a—man! Oh-h-h! my dear,” faintly murmured Mrs. Gapeseed, giving a shudder and a wriggle, as if someone had poured some cold water down her back; “for mercy’s sake tell the coachman to drive home at once! This is no place for us.”

Mrs. Gapeseed’s eyes, or rather I should say her glasses, did not deceive her. Little Mrs. Sparkler, when she cantered gaily up to the meet, wore—as the former estimable person very truly observed—a scarlet habit, a velvet cap, and was smoking a cigar with great apparent satisfaction to herself. More than that, she was, as all the men present declared, an uncommonly pretty little woman. And so she was, if a bright face, a *retroussé* pert little nose, a pair of laughing blue eyes (that had, though, a habit of looking anyone uncommonly straight in the face on occasion), a row of very pearly teeth, and a luxurious crop of glorious chesnut curls, go for anything. Her husband, too,—Doddy, as she called him, and whom she evidently worshipped—was one of those cheery-looking, “happy-go-lucky” sort of young men, of whom his fellow-men would be pretty sure at first sight to say, “He looks a good sort.” And they would have been quite correct in their surmise. Reckless and extravagant to a degree, he might be, and no doubt was, but there was no harm in “Doddy” Sparkler, you might take your oath. Only one person at the meet knew him, and that was our friend Charles Wildoats, who arrived late, as usual, and shook hands cordially with the new arrival. His cordial “How *are* you, Doddy?” was heard all along the line, you may depend, and “It’s all right if he’s a

friend of Charlie's," was the immediate remark amongst the men present, The hounds immediately after moved off; a fox was found in the very first cover they drew, and one of the best runs of the season the result.

Little Mrs. Sparkler went like a bird; in fact, she and Lady Thomasina Clinker, their respective husbands, and Charlie Wildoats, had the best of it throughout. The latter gentleman, after dinner that night, informed his uncle,—with whom, as we have related, Charlie "hung out," as he called it, when he was at home—in answer to an enquiry as to what the new comers were like—for the old gentleman, having met Mrs. Gapeseed one fine day, had heard what that veracious journal, *Truth*, would call some "Queer stories" about them—that "Doddy Sparkler was a capital chap. Knew him at Eton, don't you know? Shoddy, of course; but what the doose does that matter if a feller's a good feller? And as for his wife, why she's a dear little woman, 'pon my soul, she is, Uncle John; and, I can tell you what it is, sir, she can ride like the devil."

Of course it was the old story: the men all swore by the poor little woman, but their wives would not have her at any price. They would not go near her, in fact. However, she seemed perfectly happy with her horses and her dogs and her birds, and above all her "Doddy." She was a perfect Lady Bountiful too in the parish, as the rector could and did testify, and probably did more good to her poorer fellow-creatures in a day than Mrs. Gapeseed, with all her ostentatious charity, would in a lifetime.

As for Lord Daisyfield, he was charmed with the little ex-music hall singer.

She asked him, in her usual off-hand manner, one day out hunting, to come and dine with her some night,

and to the great astonishment of everybody, not only did he smilingly assent, but he went, and Charles Wildoats, who was one of the party, declared the next day that he could not have believed that old Daisyfield could have laughed as he did when, in the drawing-room after dinner, Mrs. Sparkler dressed up in the old familiar war-paint, and sang for his lordship's especial benefit her celebrated song of the "Boy with the Evening Peepers." When between the verses, in the style that always brought down the house at the music halls in the old days, she rushed up to my lord with a bundle of newspapers in her hand, and thrusting them under his nose, screamed out, "Here y' are, *sur!* Speshul 'dish-un! Strange pro-ceedings hin ther Di-voce Court this day! The co-respondent diskivered hunder the Grand Pianner!" the delighted old peer laughed until the tears ran down his face, and, as Wildoats declared, until his white choker (a very formidable affair) became positively limp. Though, as we have before observed the Sparklers—or rather, Mrs. Sparkler—don't go down with the ladies of the county, they are amazingly popular with everyone else for all that. The pair of them, I feel quite sure, might ride over all the wheat in the county, and smash every gate that came in their way, and not a farmer would be found to say them nay. Mrs. Gapeseed having heard sundry rumours of this little attempt of ours at portrait painting, taxed us with it at a dinner party at the Timmins's one fine night. "Of course, Mr. Finch Mason," said she, puckering up her mouth into what no doubt she thought a most captivating grin; "of course you won't include amongst your portraits those very dreadful young people at Crackleton Court? *Such*

goings on (here she closed her virtuous eyes and proceeded to fan herself) I'm told there are as never were! I feel quite certain that if poor dear Lord Stiffnecke had only had the slightest idea what sort of tenants he had got hold of, he never would have let the place to them. That dreadful woman will burn the house down one of these fine nights if she don't mind." "Indeed, I shall though," we replied, "for you must recollect, my dear Mrs. Gapeseed (*dear* Mrs. G. indeed! we can't abide the old woman), that with the internal economy of Crackleton Court I have nothing whatever to do, they will appear in my little book simply as 'Flowers of the Hunt,' and as both Mr. and Mrs. Sparkler wear scarlet out hunting, they ought to be rather brighter flowers than usual, don't you think so?"



## THE HARKAWAY HUNT STEEPLECHASES.

**I**T is a lovely spring morning in April. The sun is shining brightly; the sky is at its very bluest. The air is redolent of primroses and “them stinking violets,” as John Leech’s huntsman called those most charming of wild flowers. Wood pigeons are cooing amorously to one another in the woods, whilst the song-birds—more especially the thrush, the blackbird, and the lark—are carolling, one and all, as if their little throats would burst, as much as to say, “Hurrah! my boys and girls! the horrid cold weather has gone, and now we can enjoy ourselves to our hearts content”—in short, it’s the very day of all others that the cheery-minded person would choose for a merry-making of some sort or another.

So, apparently, seem to think the good Buttercupshire folk residing within the limits of Lord Daisyfield’s renowned hunt, for they one and all seem out and about in their best clothes this fine spring morning. “And why all this unwonted gaiety on the part of the natives?” Ask the first person you meet, when he will tell you that “To-day take place the Harkaway Hunt Steeplechases, to be sure, one of the most popular institutions in the year, and a day always set apart for keeping high holiday, by everyone in the County, both of high and low degree.” The roads are positively crowded with foot-people and vehicles of every sort, and as there is plenty of

dust flying about—one might almost imagine oneself on the road to Epsom. Here comes Lord Daisyfield, in his well-appointed mail phaeton; here comes Johnnie Clinker, tooling a heavily-laden coach, with pretty little Lady Thomasina, looking her brightest, on the box-seat.

Wildoats is close behind on his, the roof filled with dandies of the same pattern as himself. Then comes a barouche, drawn by four horses, with postilions to match. It is the Bobbin equipage, and the foot-people shout "Hooray!" as it passes, much to the delight of old Bobbin, who bows in return, and rewards with a shilling a ragged little Arab who is turning a series of catherine-wheels at the side of the carriage.

"Hi, there!" Another coach comes along, tooled by that lively millionaire, Doddy Sparkler; his wife, with a cigar in her mouth, by his side, and what old Ralph Duckworth, who is jogging along on the turf at the side of the road on his rat-tailed nag, aptly described as rather a mixed lot on the roof. Conspicuous amongst them is that volatile gentleman Dolly Lightfoot. The "younger son" is in splendid form to-day, and is the cause of much hilarity amongst the occupants of the drag, judging from the noise and laughter that emanate from it. "Wo-ho! my boys," from the youthful Jehu, followed by, "Why don't you get out of the way, *stoopid*?" from his lady wife, as the leaders are all but atop of Bill Spriggins, the flying higgler's spring-cart, which has suddenly lurched across the road, its owner being already in a very advanced state of inebriation, and in the very best of tempers. Needless to say, he is not a bit put out; on the contrary, he points to a large stone jar between his legs, and yells out to the delighted Mrs. Sparkler, "Will you hev a drop,

my dear?" The whilom pride of the music-halls is now thoroughly in her element; for the moment, indeed, she almost fancies herself back again at the hall, over on the Surrey side, exchanging pleasantries with the gallery. Needless to say, the disreputable Spriggins is no match for her when it comes to "chaff," and retires, utterly defeated, after a very short bout of it, and on goes the drag rejoicing.

Of course all the houses in the neighbourhood are filled with visitors. Every inn, too, in the town of Bullerton is crammed to the muzzle. The secretary and clerk of the course, Mr. Samuel Shrub, of the Daisyfield Arms, arrayed in the glossiest of new hats, smartest of neckcloths, and brownest of top-boots, is in his glory. The innkeepers, one and all, are doing a rare trade; in fact, the whole town is in a state of excitement. The Daisyfield Arms is, naturally, the centre of attraction, for it is the headquarters of the hunt committee.

Horse-looking men, clad in down-the-road-looking coats and knowing-looking hats, hang about the front door, and talk to one another with such a mysterious air as to give one the idea that they are concocting some deep-laid scheme of the utmost importance to the nation. Vagabonds of all sorts, from goodness knows where, pervade the streets. No steeplechase meeting can seemingly take place without their assistance. The mighty Ginger is there, too, having arrived overnight band and all, and has spent, so he says, a very pleasant evening—profitable as well, no doubt—enlivening the company at the Daisyfield Arms with his ditties. He is telling everyone to be sure and back Lord Daisyfield's horse Cock a Bondy for the Hunt Cup, who is to be ridden by our friend, Charles Wildoats.

“A true gentleman, sir, a true gentleman. God bless 'im!” says Ginger, feelingly. “Well, I knew 'im, I did, when at Cambridge, sir. No, sir, I do *not* play the banjo,” says the distinguished minstrel, turning round, and replying with much dignity to a young farmer who has called on Ginger for a “toon,” as he calls it, on that favourite instrument. “No, sir, I do *not* play the banjo; it's *vulgar*. I perform only hon the Spanish guitar,” at which grand speech the country bumpkin, who thought it fine to chaff Ginger, retires, much abashed, amidst the jeers of his comrades, and wishes he had not spoken.

Who's this with the battered-looking visage, attired in a frockcoat, apparently much too tight for him, and wearing a particularly tall, rather greasy-looking hat on his head? Can it be Billy Daw, professor of the noble art of self-defence, the once well-known champion of the light weights? Yes, it is indeed that distinguished ornament to society, and no other.

How is it he is here? Why, the fact is those troublesome gentry, the Middlesex magistrates, having somehow or another heard of Billy's somewhat disreputable goings-on at his little crib, as he calls it, in the neighbourhood of the Haymarket, have, in a playful humour, amused themselves by taking away his license, so the redoubtable Billy, being at present lying idle as it were, goes from race meeting to race meeting, hunting up former patrons, and reciting his woes as an excuse for appealing to their pockets. “You couldn't lend us a fiver, sir, could yer?” says he, insinuatingly, sidling up to Wildoats, who has just emerged from the hotel, and is now lighting a huge cigar on the steps. “You couldn't lend us a fiver, sir, could yer? I'm *desp'rate* 'ard up, sir,

ever since them blessed beaks come down on me, that I h'am. Lor' bless me, if the Dook was 'ere, and I h'asked 'im for a fiver, why, he'd say, 'A fiver!' he'd say, 'why, d—n yer eyes, Billy,' he'd say, 'here's a *pony* for yer,' *that* he would."

"Well, d—n your eyes, Billy," politely rejoins Wild-oats, who is quite equal to the occasion, "here's a sovereign for you, then. I *ain't* a dook, don't you see; sich is life, eh, William?" and Billy Daw, pocketing his sovereign, a grin pervading his unprepossessing countenance, moves off in quest of a fresh victim. But we must jog on or we shall be late. The races are held about two miles from the town. The course is nearly all grass, and under the great Mr. Shrub's superintendence a temporary stand has been erected, so that all is thoroughly business-like. A piece of ground enclosed with hurdles does duty for a paddock; there is a steward's stand, a saddling-bell—in short, everything all complete; and Lord Daisyfield's huntsmen and whips keep the course.

All the world and his wife seem to have collected together. Such eating and drinking is going on, such chaffing and laughing. Tom Chirpington has got a tent pitched, to say nothing of the luncheon on the top of the drag, and it's—"Do have another plover's egg, Miss Brown." "You bet me a dozen gloves against Mr. Wild-oats; that's it, is it not, Captain Smith?" "I'll take a wing, please." "What, Jack, you here! Come up, old man. How's the mare? Take a pull at the cup. Put some more curaçoa in. Where's the sherry?" "Take you two ponies to one." "Jolly day, ain't it?"—all over the place.

The numbers are up for the Innkeepers' Plate, and

there is a fairish field—seven, eight, nine, ten runners—capital! Tinkle, tinkle, goes the saddling bell. The voices of the betting men are heard from the ring. “I’ll take odds!” “I’ll take seven to four!” “Odds I’ll take” “Will h’anyone back a outsider?” “Won’t *nobody* back one?” yells one fielder, as if in despair.

There is a hottish favourite, seemingly, and it turns out to be Mr. H. Walker’s bay horse, Tipperary Joe, ridden by Mr. Jack Tomkins, a well-known local performer. Jack is a broken-down ne’er-do-weel. He has tried pretty nearly everything by way of profession—farming, auctioneering, horsedealing; he has had a turn at them all, but has failed, and now gets a living, nobody knows exactly how. At all events, this is certain, at the present moment he is entrusted with the mount on Tipperary Joe, and as the horse is a good one, and he himself is a first-rate horseman, the talent forthwith instal him a hot favourite, and commencing at two to one, in a very short time it is a case of odds *on*. In short, the public won’t hear of anything else but Tipperary Joe. But hark! there is a row in the ring. “What’s it all about?” Why, old Shrub, who owns the second favourite, Betsy Baker, is objecting to our friend Jack, as not being a properly qualified gentleman rider. “He *ain’t* a gentleman rider, I don’t care what you say,” says Mr. Shrub, “and if he wins I objects, that’s all, and what’s more,” says the doughty landlord of the Daisyfield Arms, “I objects to his starting.” “Hooray! Here’s a lark.” “Refer it to the stewards,” is the cry. “Here, Mr. Wagg, what do you say?”

“Jack not a gentleman rider! Oh, nonsense,” says Tom Wagg, thus appealed to. “I say he *is* a gentleman.

I know his sisters, I tell you ; see 'em every Sunday in church. His sisters wear silk stockings, therefore they *must* be ladies, and if they're ladies, why it stands to reason Jack *must* be a gentleman."

A roar of laughter followed Mr. Wagg's decision, at the end of which old Shrub retired in high dudgeon, amidst the chaff of the company.

That little argument settled, the horses emerge on to the course, headed by the redoubtable Jack Tomkins ; Tipperary Joe looking and going so well in his canter that he is made a hotter favourite than ever.

"*They're off!*" "A capital start!" "Oh, isn't it pretty?" say the ladies. "There's one down! Oh, dear, I hope he's not hurt!" "Tipperary Joe wins!" is the cry, as the horses are seen coming to the last fence but one. "He's pulling hard! Why, he can't hold him! But, what's this? He's pulling him!" "No, he ain't!" "I tell you he is!" And, sure enough, amid the execrations of the crowd, that scamp of a Jack Tomkins (pulling hard at his horse) allows Shrub's mare to come alongside, and to beat him by a length. Never was such a deliberate case of roping. A perfect rush is made by the infuriated populace to get at the rider of the favourite. Jack Tomkins is off his horse, and in a twinkling makes a rush for the weighing-room, amidst a shower of sticks and stones. He is pale in the face by this time, and just gets in in time, whilst the door is promptly shut in the faces of the enraged mob. What a row to be sure! "Where is he? Come out, you *warmin'!*" shouts one, "and we'll murder you, blowed if we won't!" "Break the door down, mates, and let's limb him," hollōas another. Bang! bang! bang! *crash!* and in goes the

door, notwithstanding Wildoats and the stewards were trying with might and main, their shoulders against it, to keep the mob out. Down it went at last, the foremost of the mob tumbling, in his haste, right over the body of old Charlie Dabber, who had been hurled down in the charge. Charlie, whose breath was nearly squeezed out of his body, promptly seized the ear of his enemy in his teeth, much in the same manner a terrier would a rat, and held on like grim death until the ruffian yelled with pain. Meanwhile, there is a free fight going on. Wildoats, who is ready dressed for the next race, is mistaken by the mob for Jack Tomkins, and a rush is made for him. He and Tom Chirpington, shoulder to shoulder, knock the mob down as fast as they come up. Down they go like nine-pins. The Bishop of Soda and B. too, rushes to his friends' assistance, and comes just in time to floor a cowardly fellow who is aiming a blow at Charlie's head with his stick. "Ah! you would, would you?" says the parson again, coolly knocking his man down with a straight one from the shoulder as he rose from the ground, and came at him. And now a valuable ally suddenly makes his appearance in the shape of Billy Daw, who elbows his way into the room with more force than politeness. "Now then, wot's all this here about?" is his polite inquiry, "and what the blank do you all want in here, you rumbustical wagabones? Git *hout*, will yer? and don't come a treadin' on my patent-leathers. Oh, you'll do it again, will yer?—take that then. Where do *you* like it, mister?—in the bread-basket or the tater-trap, which? Come on, my bloomer, *do* 'ave some more, *please* do. Wot! you *won't*. Well, I really *h'am* surprised." And, using suchlike playful badinage the while, the Pro-

fessor, whose hat had never even been displaced, and who had not even troubled himself to remove the flower that adorned his mouth, kept hitting away right and left at the faces of the angry mob until at last they turned and fled, the garrison sallying forth after them, just as the police, collected from all parts of the course, arrived to their assistance. Billy, indeed, made a capital morning's work of it, as a subscription was got up for him on the spot, and forthwith presented to him.

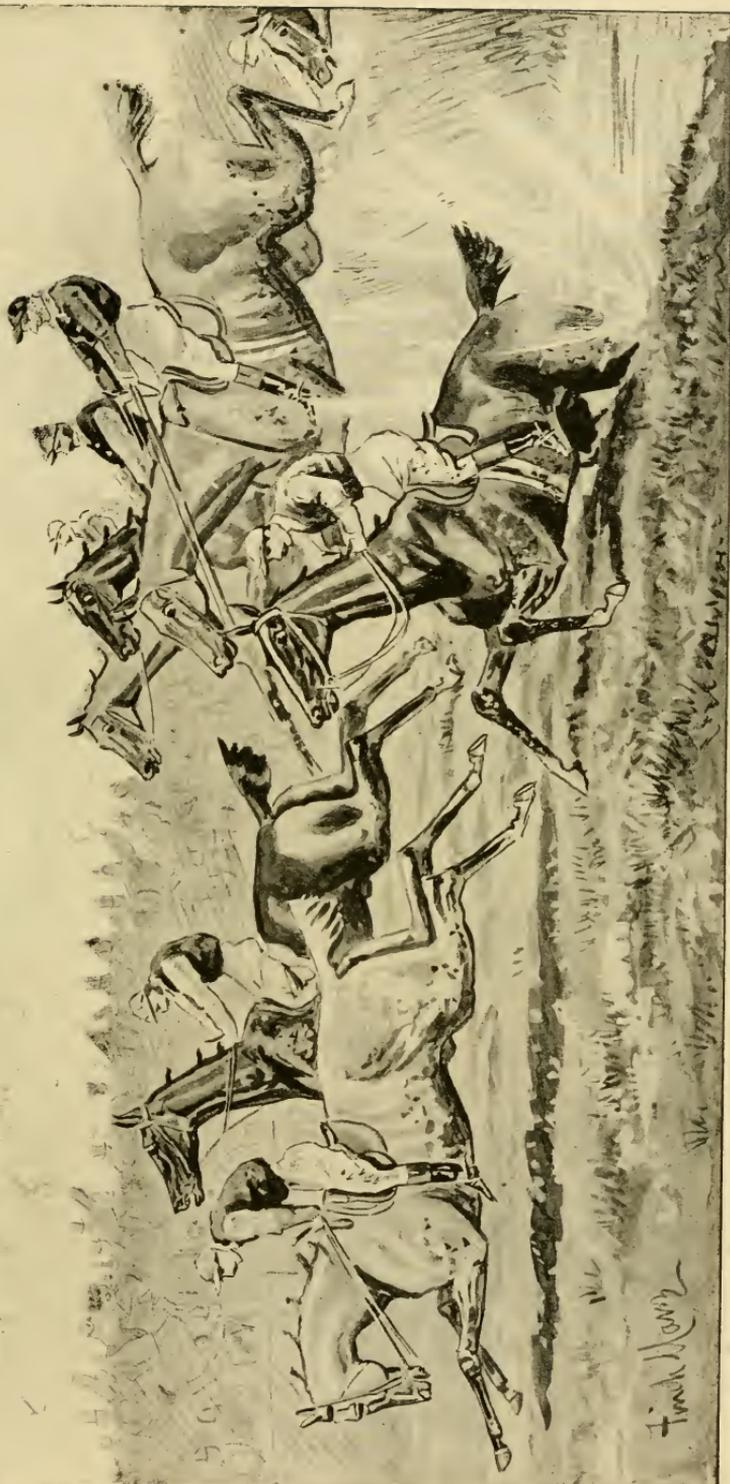
The disreputable Mr. Jack Tomkins bided his time, and whilst the next race was being run, took advantage of it to make his exit, and, getting into a fly, made the best of his way back to Bullerton.

The Farmers' Race is over, and then comes the important race of the day, the Hunt Cup. There is tremendous excitement amongst the ladies, of course, and as the twelve competitors emerge on to the course, and trot and canter past the fair occupants of the carriages, many are the conjectures as to what will win. Little Miss Bluebell declares for the blue and white sleeves and black cap of Lord Daisyfield, worn by Charles Wildoats, and backs that gentleman accordingly for all the gloves she can get on. She will receive half the contents of Givry's shop if Charlie wins.

Our sporting friend, Mrs. Tom Chirpington, again, is backing her husband through thick and thin, and Tom, though considerably larger and heavier than in the old 'Varsity days, when he was wont to take his own part so well over the Aylesbury fences, looks like business all over, as he puts his horse, Jack o' Lantern, at the gorse-topped hurdles in front of the Stand. Lots of the yokels put their crown-pieces on the Squire, as they call him, for

Tom is immensely popular with the natives. Who comes here on the flea-bitten grey?—why, it can't be—yes it is—who'd ha' thought it?—why, it's actually our old friend Charlie Dabber—none the worse for the *fracas* in the weighing-room—that Mister Dabber as Lord Daisyfield calls him. The Captain's fat housekeeper, Missis Plummer, is there, having been driven over by the gardener in a gig, borrowed specially for the occasion. She waves a handkerchief encouragingly to her master as he canters down the course after the others.

They're off at last. Out with the glasses, and let's look at the Flowers of the Hunt for the last time this season. The first fence is cleared without a mistake. The second, a big one, brings two of them to grief, and now they come to the water-jump. Now for it. Charlie Wildoats is making the running, Tom Chirpington, riding steadily and well, next. Over they go. Well jumped! Now for the Captain. Go it, Dabber! The old grey is out of it, that's very clear, but the Captain rides valiantly at the brook for all that. Ha-ha-ha! roars the crowd, for the grey comes flop into the middle of the brook, chucking the Captain over his head. "Oh! Captain, dear, *dear*, Captain, *say* you're not killed—*do* say you're not killed," screams fat Mrs. Plummer, rushing up to the dismounted sportsman as he emerges from his cold and muddy bath, and embracing him most fervently amidst the uproarious mirth of the company. "I knew no good would come o' this nasty 'oss-racin' at your time o' life. Come, 'ome along wi' me, come now, there's a good man, do." Up with the glasses again, for the horses are in sight once more. "Four of 'em in it." "It's a race, it's a race!" cry the excited lookers-on.



THE HARKAWAY HUNT STEEPLECHASES—  
"And now they come to the water jump."



“Tom Chirpington wins, I do believe. No, Charlie Wild-oats will win. Now, Charlie! Now, Tom! Now, Tom! Now, Charlie!” Whack, crack, smack. Surely it’s a dead heat. Mrs. Tom Chirpington sinks down in her seat, her heart beating sixteen to the dozen, and, with a tear in her eye, “Poor dear Tom’s beat!” she exclaims. Alas! she is right. In another moment the numbers go up, and amidst the cheers of the multitude Lord Daisy-field’s brown horse Cock a Bondy is led back to scale the winner of the Harkaway Hunt Cup.



## THE GREAT PRESENTATION DAY.



OUR noble and popular Master, Lord Daisyfield, having entered upon his twenty-fifth year of office, the question was set on foot (by our Reverend Chaplain the Bishop of Soda and B, if we mistake not; if it wasn't he, it was Tom Chirpington) whether now was not the time for the members of his hunt to show their appreciation of his qualities as a sportsman, and the liberal manner in which he had hunted the county for so many years free of cost, by presenting him with some memento worthy of the occasion.

It speaks volumes for the noble lord's popularity, when we mention that the proposal met with the heartiest approval by everybody both high and low. The next question to be considered was what form the proposed testimonial was to take. Each subscriber, of course, had his own notion as to what it should be, and was intensely disgusted if his idea was not adopted. One proposed one thing, someone else another. Mr. Benjamin Bobbin said a service of plate would be the very thing, in his 'umble opinion, for his "lordship to 'and down to his successors as a *hare-loom*," a proposal which his friend Charles Wildoats, now *l'ami de la maison*, at once knocked on the head with the remark that my lord had already got more of that commodity than he knew what to do with. Someone else proposed a shield for his sideboard; another proposed a centrepiece for his dining-table; whilst Mrs. Mountjoy Matchum (this is

strictly *entre nous*, and must go no further) would have been only too happy to present his lordship with an ornament for the foot of his table in the shape of one of her two lovely and accomplished daughters, either of whom would, she felt sure, make him a most admirable Countess. It may seem odd, but it was our old farmer friend, Ralph Duckworth, who finally settled the question.

“What’s *your* opinion, Ralph?” inquired Tom Chirpington, coming across to the old man in Bullerton High Street, one market day.

“Well, *I* says, give my lord his picter,” replied Ralph. “Directly I heard of the idea,” he continued, “I said to myself, a looking up at my print of Old John Ward on Blue Ruin, with his favourite ’ound Betsy beside him, that hangs in my parlour at the Wild; *that’s* the sort o’ thing I should like to contribute to. Get some painter feller down to take him off in his hunting costoom, mounted on Peter the Great, that brown ’oss of his he’s so fond of, with p’raps Tom Tootler and the whips and the ’ounds in the distance, and then we could have a lot printed off, don’t you see, squire, and each of us could have one to frame and hang up.”

The sporting old farmer’s idea “took on,” as the Yankees say, not only with Tom Chirpington, but with everyone else, and was at once acted upon. Lord Daisyfield’s consent had next to be obtained, and, that having been readily accorded (though my lord rather “jibbed” at having to give sittings), nothing more remained but to get hold of a “painter feller,” at once, if not sooner. One was quickly found in the shape of Mr. Scumbler, whose memorable ride on Charles Wildoats’ mare, Molly Bawn, we mentioned in a previous chapter, and to

the interest of whose owner, indeed, the artist was indebted for the commission in the present case.

Well, the picture being at last finished, much to the noble sitter's relief, the only thing to be done now was to present it in due form. This important ceremony it was settled should take place at Fatfield Hall, the abode of Mr. Yellowboy, the banker (William Waggleton's friend), not that that gentleman was by any means a good specimen of the representative sportsman of the period, but the fact of his having a larger house than anyone in those parts, made it come in very handy for the purpose, as one of the committee sagaciously remarked.

The capitalist was delighted beyond measure at the great event taking place at his house, as it enabled him once more to cut out all his neighbours, and come out with the elaborate breakfast or *déjeuner* that he so delighted in. Lord Daisyfield, on the contrary, who was, as our readers are aware, a very shy, reserved sort of man, looked forward to the day with anything but delight. He would ever so much sooner have preferred the picture to be sent to him, and then to have acknowledged it with a polite note. However, that, of course, was out of the question, and not to be thought of for a moment.

The important day at length arrives, and the roads leading to Fatfield Hall are all alive with sportsmen of all sorts—horsemen in scarlet, horsemen in green, horsemen in black, horsemen in blue are seen wending their way to the meet. Vehicles, too, of every description there are, from the stylish mail phaeton and the well-turned-out drag to the seedy old brougham and the four-wheeled chaise, or shay, as she prefers to call it, of Mrs. Brisquet, the butcher's wife. What a lovely spring morning

it is, too! The hedges are already slightly tinged with green, sure sign of the approaching end of the season; the birds are singing like mad in every direction, and our friend Charlie Wildoats, in good time for a wonder, cantering along on a thorough-bred hack, and feeling, as he says, as fit as a fiddle, thinks to himself as the fresh balmy air fans his slightly fevered face, that, after all, there's nothing like the country. Our volatile acquaintance has an especial reason on this particular morning for being in good time, he having what he calls a little game of his own on. Watch him as he canters along, a broad grin pervading his countenance at intervals! What mischief can he have on hand, we wonder?

\* \* \* \* \*

A Sunday or two before the great day, Charlie—it being pouring wet—was obliged to confine himself to the house during the afternoon. So, having got through all his usual Sunday literature—*Bell's Life, The Field, Baily, Pink 'Un, Sporting and Dramatic, Fores's Notes and Sketches*—then a short nap, then a glance at the *Racing Calendar*, then another snooze—he proceeded to light up a cigar, and, putting his hands in his pockets, stared for some minutes in a vacant manner out of the window at the dreary landscape. For some time he smoked and stared, and stared and smoked, and thought of nothing in particular. At last, however, the great presentation day dawned suddenly upon him, and he forthwith set about thinking to himself how he could make capital out of it in the shape of a lark. “By Jingo!” suddenly ejaculated he, throwing his nearly finished cigar into the grate and giving a jump of delight, much to the astonishment of old

Bess, the retriever, who was fast asleep in front of the fire. "By Jingo, I've got it! We'll have a drag! So we will! A drag! The very thing, of course. They never find at Old Money-bag's (as he irreverently called Mr. Yellowboy). Nobody cares either on such an occasion if they do or not, besides which everyone will have their skins full of pop; and won't they ride! Oh, my eye, my eye! what a lark it will be!" and the depraved young man rang the bell for a brandy and soda, and threw himself on the sofa in an ecstasy of delight. Over another weed he very soon arranged all his plans, and before his dressing bell rang he had got everything as nearly pat as possible.

"Who should he get to run with the drag? Why long Tom Springer, one of his uncle's under-keepers, would be the very man. He knew he could run like a lamplighter. Yes, he'd be the very chap—would know every inch of the ground, too. What a lark it would be, to be sure!" and he went off to dress for dinner, as happy as a king.

\* \* \* \* \*

The House of Yellowboy is, indeed, in an uproar, and the banker is in a fever of excitement. His lacqueys have got their State livery on—white coats with blue small clothes and pink silk stockings, and are running up against each other, sending their powder flying about in so doing in every direction. The stout butler is perfectly crimson in the face with his exertions, and looks more like apoplexy every moment.

Our Cræsus has certainly done the thing well, for in the dining room is set out a truly magnificent breakfast. Everything the heart of man—or stomach of man, I should say—can possibly desire is there. The sideboard

positively groans with plate; in fact, there is so much gold and silver ware in the room that one might almost fancy oneself at the hall of the Goldsmiths' Company. At one end of the large drawing room is set out on a large easel, with plum-coloured cloth tastefully draped round it, the presentation portrait of Lord Daisyfield. There is his lordship, as large as life, depicted on his celebrated hunter, Peter the Great, and surrounded by a few of his favourite hounds. The big clock in the stable yard, making nearly as much noise as "Big Ben," strikes half past ten, and the hungry sportsmen begin to arrive. Now in tens, now in twenties, the cry is still they come! The gravel in front of the house is soon in a nice state, cut up, indeed, like a ploughed field. The volunteer band posted on the lawn has learned a new tune for the occasion, and strikes up with terrific effect, the big drum playing the very deuce with some of the excitable horses. See! little Jack Spratt is kicked off right in front of the hall door, just as he was riding up with such an air, too, and the only girl he ever loved looking at him out of the drawing-room window.

Everybody gets seated at last, and clatter, clatter, clatter go the knives and forks. Pop! pop! pop! go the champagne corks on all sides of the room. How they all eat and drink! One would really think they had none of them tasted food for weeks. There's old Captain Dabber, who has eaten until he can hardly see. Look at him, the greedy old cormorant, he has just waylaid a footman with a dish of quails in his hand, and is now engaged working them off, one after the other, with intense satisfaction to himself. At last everyone has done, and by and by a sound like the rapping of a handle of a knife on the table is heard from the end of the room where sits the host, the great Mr. Yellowboy.

“*Silence!*” cries everybody at once, “*silence!*” and silence being at last obtained, Mr. Grimboy, the veteran of the hunt, is seen getting on his legs to make a speech.

In a few well-chosen sentences, very much to the point, he proposed the health of Lord Daisyfield, winding up by begging him, on behalf of his fellow members of the hunt, to accept as a slight token of their esteem and regard, &c., &c., the portrait which they had all seen and so much admired that morning.

My lord responded very briefly, being a man of few words. He thanked them, one and all, for their kindness, in thus thinking of him.

“The beautiful picture they had so kindly presented to him that morning, needless to say, he should treasure beyond everything. There was only one fault to be found in it, if his friend, Mr. Scumbler would forgive him for saying so, which was, that that talented artist had flattered him too much.” (Loud cries of No! No!) “I won’t say the same though of my horse,” said my lord with a smile, “for no artist in England could flatter *him*, he’s the best I ever rode.” (Hear! Hear! And “I’ll give you four hundred for him this minute!” from Charles Wildoats.) “My old friend Mr. Grimboy,” went on his lordship, “who has forgotten more about foxhunting than I ever knew—(‘Not a bit of it!’ from the veteran)—is good enough to say that, during the twenty-five years that I have hunted the country, I have done so entirely to your satisfaction. All I can say is that, if such is the case, I am as much pleased as you are. I can assure you all of one thing, which is, that I have done my best, and that it has been all along a labour of love.”

Reiterating his thanks, Lord Daisyfield sat down amidst a perfect whirlwind of applause.

Tom Chirpington then, in felicitous terms, proposed the health of their host, Mr. Yellowboy, who, he said, had so hospitably entertained them all that morning.

The great banker, who was fond of the sound of his own voice, responded in a dreary and lengthy speech.

An extra loud rapping on the table was then heard above the din, and the volatile Charles Wildoats was seen on his legs, about to address the company. Needless to say, there were not the slightest signs of nervousness about that young gentleman, who was greeted with a roar of applause.

"None of you fellers," said he in his usual free and easy manner, "have proposed my health so far, so, as I'm determined not to be out of it, I have no alternative but to propose somebody else's instead. The toast, ladies and gentlemen, that I call upon you all to drink, is that of our friends the farmers whose land we ride over. (Hear, hear.) No one, I fancy, is better qualified to propose the toast than myself, for I can say, with truth, that I've smashed more of their gates, broken down more of their fences, and carried away more of their land on the back of my red coat, than any other sportsman in the room. (Loud cries of 'hear, hear,' and laughter, from the farmers.) And I hope I shall do the same to a good many more before I have done. (Much laughter, and 'You're welcome, Muster Charles!' from Farmer Jollikins.) I've ridden over your wheat, too, to any amount, but, lor' bless yer! *you* don't mind when hounds are running, do you now?" said Charles appealing to the farmers generally. ("Not a bit on it! Dang the wheat, and the

woats too, for that matter!" roared old Joe Mills of Cherrytree Farm, at the top of his voice, amidst shouts of approval from his brethren.) "Well, ladies and gentlemen, I won't waste your time by buttering the subjects of my toast, for not only would it be a case of 'painting the lily,' but I feel sure that they would not thank me for doing so. So I call upon you all, ladies and gentlemen, to fill your glasses to the brim, and, when you've done that, to drain them to the dregs, to the health of those jolly good fellows, the farmers of Lord Daisyfield's Hunt, coupling with it the name of my dear old friend Ralph Duckworth, who has done his level best to jump on the top of me ever since I first began to hunt in these parts, but has not succeeded yet, and I don't intend that he should."

And, the toast being drunk with enthusiasm, down sat Charlie.

Old Ralph had just got on his legs to reply on behalf of the farmers, when old Joe Jollikins rose at the same time amidst loud cries of "Sit down, Joe! Go on, Ralph!" &c.

But Jollikins, who had had quite as much drink as he knew what to do with, declined to be put down at any price, and having announced his intention of singing a song, forthwith proceeded to give them, amidst the loud laughter of the company, "John Peel." "*Who—hoop*" shouted he at the top of his voice when he had finished, and overbalancing himself, the worthy agriculturist fell backwards, chair and all, and immediately subsiding into sleep, was carted away by two of the gorgeously attired flunkeys.

This *contretemps* was the signal for a general exodus of the company, and now the cry was "to horse!" Cigars were lit, and soon it was, "Where's the man who was leading about my mare?" "*Have you seen my horse?*"

"Where's my groom? Hang the fellow, he's never about when one wants him."

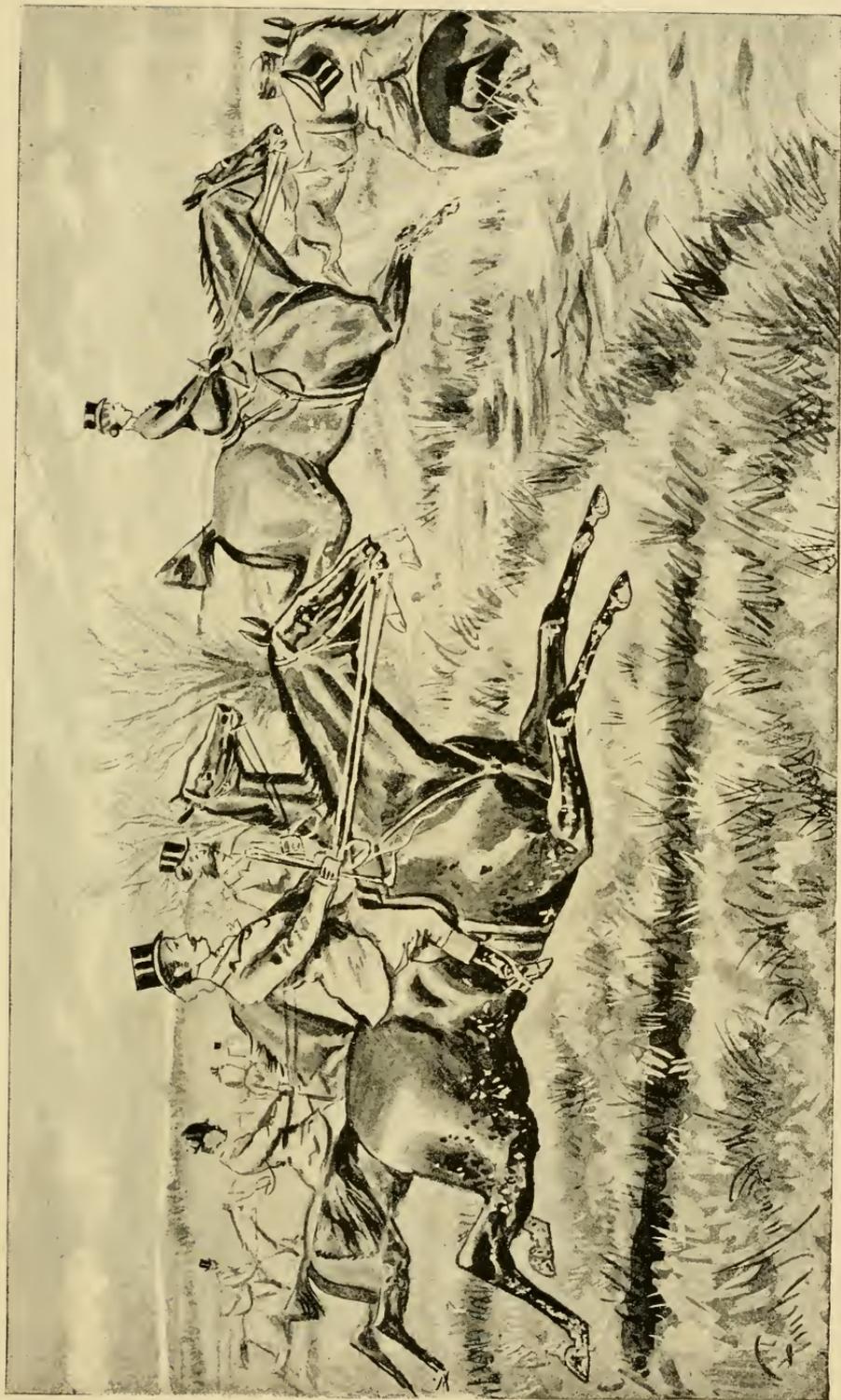
Charlie Wildoats, a huge cigar in his mouth, trots round from the stables on his grey hunter, looking like going all over. He has arranged everything beautifully. His man with the drag has started off some time, and Charlie, as he looks at the flushed faces around him, chuckles to himself as he thinks what jostling and pushing, and thrusting there will be among them when the hounds are fairly off. "Well, Mr. Charles, I dunno how *you* feel, sir," says old Ralph Duckworth, very red in the face, riding up to him, "I dunno how *you* feel, but I feel as if I could ride over any mortal thing, I do." At length a start is made, and forthwith the hounds proceed to draw the belt round the park.

No sooner are they in than there is a whimper. In another second the whimper becomes a chorus. The hounds clamber over the park palings into the road. "He's away over the grass, as sure as blazes," says Tom Tootler as he slips through a gate. "Forrad, forrad!" he cries (Tom has had something to drink, too, and is in a high state of excitement), sending his horse at a formidable fence out of the road.

"*Forrad! forrad!*" A useless cry on his part, for the hounds are running away from him as it is. Lord Daisyfield, Charlie Wildoats, The Bishop of Soda and B—, The Younger Son, Johnnie Clinker and his wife, and Tom Chirpington and his, are close to him. Old Charlie Dabber for once is puzzled; he has never known a fox take the particular line this one is taking. "This is no bagman, I'll swear," said he to himself, and pounding along towards Thrussington Woods, whither

he thought the fox would most likely go, he never saw anything more of them all day.

The hounds keep on, running harder than ever. "Carn't make it off at all," mutters Tom Tootler; "shouldn't never ha' thought there'd been such a scent such a hot day as this here." And now they come to the famous Blessington Brook, which our friend Charlie has taken care to bring into the line. Wildoats goes at it fifty miles an hour, and gets over handsomely. Mrs. Chirpington follows him, the Bishop of Soda and B—lands short, and gets a fall, but is quickly up again. Splash, splash, splash. Three get in all at once; but what are the odds? it won't hurt such a hot day as this. "Hold up, 'oss," roars Tom, as his horse nearly comes down. The country in the rear is dotted for ever so far with redcoats in various stages of discomfiture. At last the hounds throw up their heads, but only for a minute. Wildoats, who has in a miraculous manner got his second horse, cheers them to a holloa, for on the hill yonder, gesticulating like mad, is a figure he knows for that of his uncle's under-keeper, who has run with the drag. A confederate has just turned out a bag fox, as previously arranged. Lord Daisyfield's horse is dead beat; Tom Tootler's can scarcely raise a trot, and at last stops altogether, so Tom gets off, and runs along as best he can. Five minutes more, and the hounds run into the bagman, who, half stupefied as he is, poor brute, is turned by a sheep dog right into the very jaws of the pack. "Who—hoop! worry, worry, worry! Fresh looking fox tew," remarks Tom Tootler, "carn't ha' swopped either." "Capital run, wasn't it, Tom?" says Charlie Wildoats, with a grin, lighting a cigar. "It



THE GREAT PRESENTATION DAY—  
“Wildcats goes at it fifty miles an hour.”



was a capital run, sir, rather *too* capital," replied Tom, looking up into the other's face with rather a sly expression of countenance. "You didn't happen to smell any haniseed did you, Mister Charles, a comin' along, I suppose?" "Aniseed, *no*. What should put that in your head? as if anyone would do such a thing. Here, Tom, here's a trifle in remembrance of the day," and Charlie slips a ten-pound note in the huntsman's hand, "and I say, Tom," adds he, with a wink, "don't say anything about the aniseed—d'ye twig?" "I *knowed* it—I was *sure* of it—never did I believe that there would be such a good fox as that from Mr. Yellowboy's coverts. He never has nothing but them bagmen for us. All right, Mr. Charles—mum's the word—and, after all, we had a rare gallop, didn't we?" And thus came to a satisfactory conclusion what was always spoken of afterwards as the "Great Presentation Day."



## THE BORE OF THE HUNT.

## AND OTHER CHARACTERS.



OF all the bores in our renowned Hunt (and we possess several), George Gander takes the front berth. George is a bachelor, and lives at home with his mother and sisters, and if he only succeeds in boring those highly respectable ladies half as much as he does the members of the Hunt, why, they are much to be pitied, and that's all about it. He is the proud possessor of a peculiarly wooden-looking countenance, wearing a perpetual unmeaning sort of grin, and a wild, vacant-looking eye. He also sports an eyeglass. When hounds hang about all day, as they often do in the forest or some other of the big woods, then our bore is in his element. Only let him once get hold of you in a big ride, and he will never leave you. Imagine a group of sportsmen assembled in the principal ride of Raddleton Wood. "Oh, lord! here comes that infernal bore, Gander!" suddenly exclaims Charles Wildoats, as he catches sight of our friend just turning the corner, and bearing down on the little knot of sportsmen. "Hang it! I can't stand him at any price. I'm off." "Foxes deuced scarce, seemingly," remarks George, having greeted the company. "An idea has crossed my mind," he goes on, "that it wouldn't be half a bad notion to turn down a few jackals. What do *you* say, Jones? What do *you* think, Brown, eh? Will any of

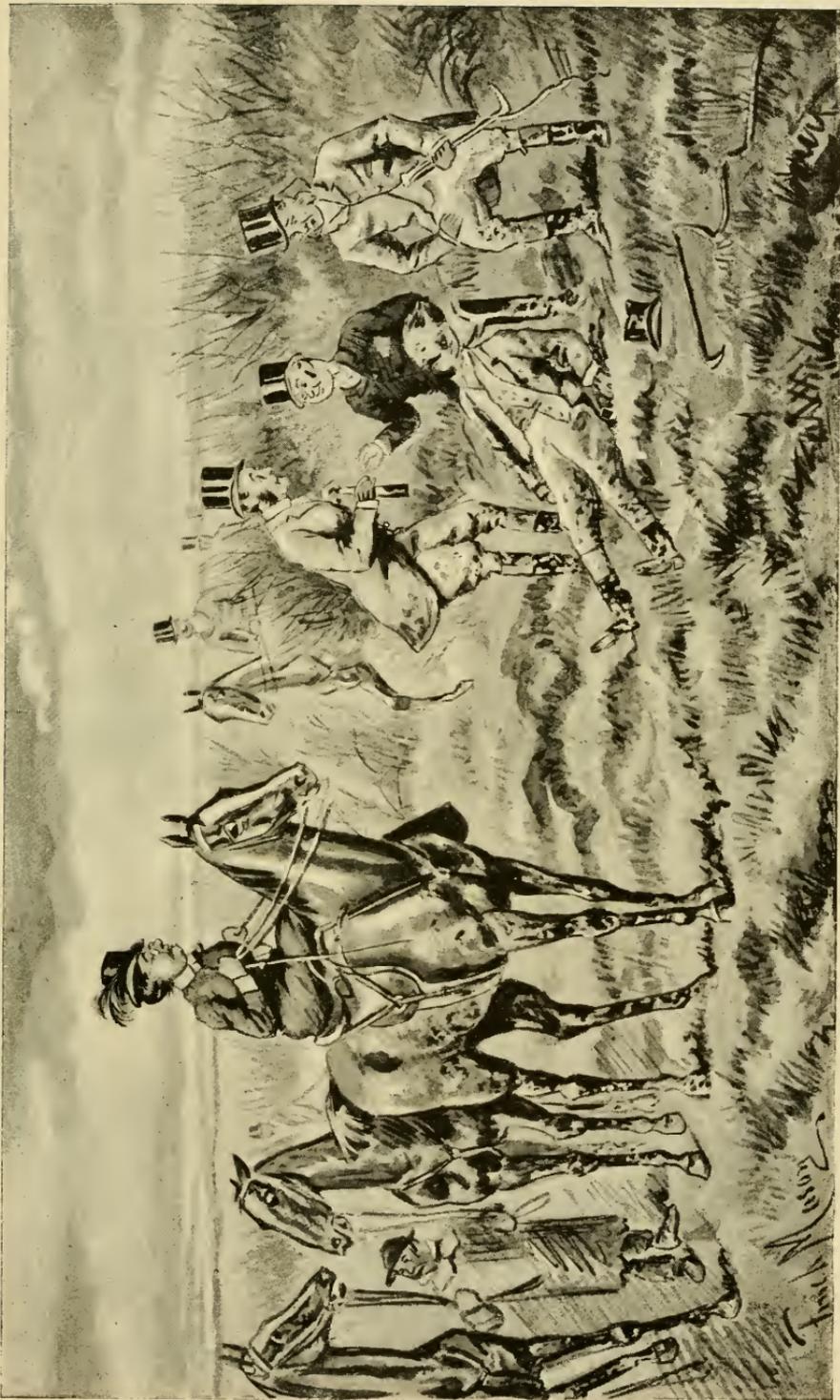
you fellows join me in importing some?" William Waggleton, who is listening, expresses his opinion that they can do very well without jackals, "and Jackasses too, for that matter," he adds with a sneer, eyeing Gander as he speaks, and winking to the company at the same time. The jackal scheme is George's one topic of conversation for the rest of the day. He can't get it out of his perverse noddle at all, and there is scarcely a member of the Hunt, with the exception of Lord Daisyfield, whom he does not drive nearly wild in the course of the day, by dinning his senseless idea into their ears. Another day he will ride up to you, his eyes staring out of his head, and mouth open, as usual, and beg you to tell him, as if it was a question of the most vital importance, how far you think it is between Norbury Church and Chucklebury Common, because Tomkins, with whom he has a sporting bet on of a shilling, says it is so and so, and he is quite sure he (Tomkins) is utterly wrong. The next time, the exact length of the Slopford tunnel will be the puzzle that he calls on you and other unfortunates to assist him to solve. Though Gander does not shoot, whenever he hears of a battue coming off in his immediate neighbourhood, he has a nasty habit of coming, uninvited, to look on at the fun and making himself a nuisance generally. What is worse is, that he is either so thick-skinned or stupid—it is hard to say which—that it is next door to impossible to offend him. For instance, Tom Somerville was having a big field-day in that large covert of his called Coombe Wood, when, at the end of one of the best beats, one of his guests, a swell from town, in one of the guard regiments, rushed up to him, almost with tears in his eyes, with: "I say, old fellow, for Heaven's sake, *do* do something with that awful

cweature with the eyeglass, he has been wowwying me in a perfectly shocking manner, making me miss everything, wight and left, and botherwing me whether I don't think gwouse could not be turned out in woods like pheasants. If he tackles me again," said the unhappy guardsman, "I shall do something despwate, I know I shall." Gander was forthwith remonstrated with by his host, and deserted the guardsman as requested, only, probably, to fasten on another victim immediately after. As everybody says, what *is* to be done with such a man? and echo answers, "What, indeed?"

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That stout sportsman with the velvet cap and the yellow silk handkerchief round his neck, whose jolly red face and white whiskers and moustache remind one somewhat of the pictures one sees in the illustrated papers of Father Christmas, is old John Rooster.

There is no more enthusiastic member of the Hunt than old John. A cheery old bachelor with a snug little independence of his own; he lives in a pretty little rose-covered cottage called Honeysuckle Lodge, and devotes the whole of his energies to fox-hunting and nothing else. Old Jacky, as they call him, is mad on the subject, indeed. A year or so ago, the old man was taken dangerously ill, but, in spite of the doctors, managed to pull through. The wags of the Hunt are very fond of drawing the old boy out on the subject of his recovery, for the benefit of any stranger present. He, in turn, is never tired of relating how he astonished the doctor by a question he put to him, when supposed to be *in extremis*: " 'Doctor!' says I, 'is there any 'opes?' ' 'Opes of what?' says he. 'Why, 'opes of 'unting, to be sure,'



THE BORE OF THE HUNT—

*"Oh, Sir Harry, say you're not dead! do say you're not dead!"*



says I." And then the jolly old sportsman will chuckle and wheeze, at the recollection, until he is purple in the face.

Everybody likes old John. Tom Tootler and his whips cap him as if he were a peer of the realm, and Lord Daisyfield is supposed to come down from his pedestal, and unbend more to old Jacky than any one member of the Hunt. Such a staunch old Nimrod is worth preserving; so, as Rip Van Winkle would say, "may he live long and prosper."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Oh, Sir Harry, say you're not dead! *do* say you're not dead!" exclaims, in tones of the deepest distress, a stoutish lady of middle age, wearing spectacles, and a brigand hat with a large cock's feather in it, riding up to a little knot of horsemen who are assisting to bring Sir Harry Hieover *to*, after a heavy fall, got on landing over a big drop fence. Mrs. Cackler is a remarkable woman in her way, and decidedly of the pushing sort. For instance, she does not know Sir Harry Hieover in the least—he, indeed, is only an occasional visitor in these parts—but on the strength of his fall Mrs. Cackler will be sure to push her acquaintance on the baronet the very next time he makes his appearance with the Harkaway Hounds. Mrs. Cackler, or old Mother Chatterbox as the wags call her, lives in a mildewy-looking little house, close to the high-road, with a stable at the back wherein dwells the fiery steed she rides and drives, and which stable she herself may be seen cleaning out every morning with her own fair hands—for she keeps no groom. On these occasions Mrs. Cackler, in her stable-jacket, and her figure, just a trifle run to seed, unconfined

by any stays; with a broom in her hand and a pair of old slippers on, is not the most captivating sight in the world. She possesses a husband somewhere, but he is never seen, and according to her own account she is entirely dependent on her own exertions for a living. And if perseverance is worth anything, this accomplished lady deserves to get on. She paints portraits of horses whenever she can succeed in getting a commission, which she is by no means backward in asking for, you may depend; and, once having got into a man's stable with its full complement of hunters, it is uncommonly hard to get her out until she has painted the whole stud. Then she has generally got some rare old port to dispose of—a bargain. “Sherry too—are you a sherry-drinker?” She has got ten dozen she wants to sell, some extraordinary Amoroso that she picked up quite by chance lately (she is not at liberty to mention how)—that she is not exaggerating when she tells you it is sherry you don't meet with every day. “Captain Wildoats, you really must let me send you a couple of dozen bottles—only seventy-five shillings a dozen. I know you are a sherry-drinker, and a good judge, for you gave me, I remember, some excellent wine out of your flask, one day, when I felt rather faint, if you recollect.” “Hang the old Jezebel and her sherry!” said our friend, afterwards, “you never tasted such filth in your life, sir. I believe it was nothing but Marsala, with one of the old gal's boots chucked in to give it a flavour. I presented the lot to my man, and, as he's a good servant, strongly advised him not to drink it himself, but to keep it for his enemies.”

“Cigars, too—are you a smoker? I've got a dozen.

boxes of *Magnificos Imperiales*, I should so like you to try. I do assure you, you couldn't buy them at Benson's or Carlin's for double what I'm asking for them. Have one box, and I feel sure you'll want the rest, and only five guineas a pound."

Horseflesh, too, she dabbles in, perhaps more successfully than anything else. Her curious old port, and her brown-paper cigars, are pretty well blown upon by this time, but she really has something decent sometimes in the way of horseflesh—ladies' hacks and clever cobs principally—to dispose of on commission.

We regret to have to add that Mrs. Cackler, amongst her many and varied accomplishments, is a notorious mischief-maker and scandalmonger, and more than one farmer or tradesman has got to thank her for being the cause of unpleasantness between husband and wife. Buying and selling things, though, are her strong points, particularly the latter, as a good many people know to their cost. As old Shrub says, she can lie just like truth.

When Bullerton horse and cattle fair comes round, you are sure to find Mother Chatterbox there, cheapening something, either a pig or a pony, perhaps a cow. Some people even declare she once worsted the proprietor of a drove of Welsh ponies, in single combat; however, as to that we can't say, though, knowing the strong-minded lady as we do, we don't think it so highly improbable. We certainly never met one of her sex more capable of taking her own part. As regards her equestrianism, she appears regularly at the meets of Lord Daisyfield's hounds, when anything like within distance of her abode; and, when they've found and gone away, she'll take a line of gaps and pound along the 'ard 'igh road with the best of 'em,

on the strength of which we think we are quite justified in numbering her as one of the Flowers of the Hunt.

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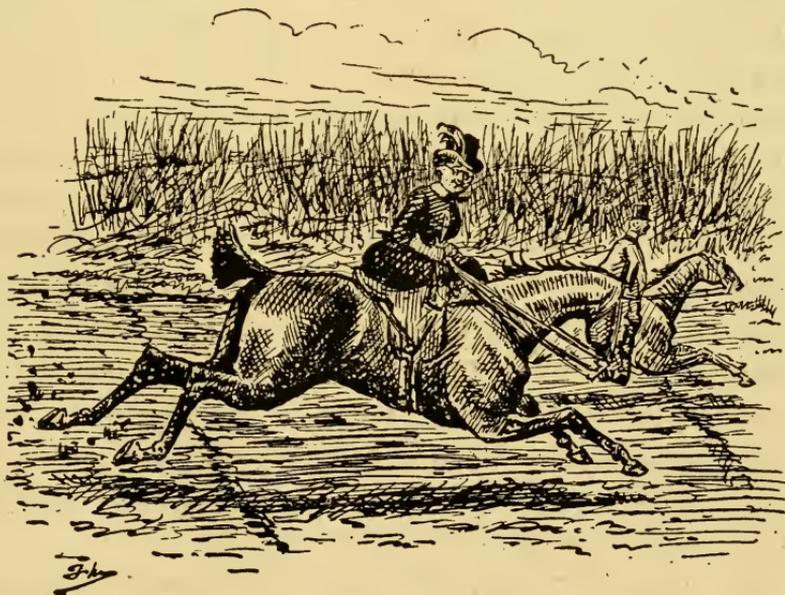
Those two very noisy swells in scarlet, whose voices one hears above everybody's else in the big ride of Scent Wood, are respectively Mr. Markland Monk, of Monk Lodge, commonly called Baron Munchausen, and a retired army captain named Barker, or "Bowwow," as they dubbed him in the service. It would be hard, indeed, to say which is the greatest talker, and more difficult still to determine which is the biggest liar of the twain. Perhaps, as regards the last accomplishment, Markey Monk would carry the day by most votes; he is decidedly the most amusing, as his power of invention is much greater than that of his rival—the latter's lying consisting more of the bragging, blustering kind. The Captain was just such another, in fact, as Mr. Winkle's Bath friend, Captain Dowler. Imagine the fox to have gone away, and Bowwow Barker well wedged in amongst a crowd of horsemen, all brought to a standstill in a little narrow ride, with a bridle-gate at the end, through which only one can go out at a time. You then see this mighty sportsman at his best. Though he knows perfectly well he cannot possibly get through his horses, even if he wanted to do so, which he does not, he is unceasing in his cries of "Get on there in front! *Do* get on, sir! For heaven's sake get out of the way, you, sir, on the grey! Just my luck! Here am I on my best horse, and can't get to my hounds! *Too* provoking!"—and so on to the end of the chapter. When he does get through, he makes a tremendous show of making up for lost time, and the way he makes play across the first field, and over the first gap, is a caution. The first fence he

comes to of any importance is sure to stop him, and, after that, the string of excuses for not being on the spot at the finale is quite bewildering. He always rides well-bred ones, who would be only too happy to *go* if their master would but let them, and it is sickening to watch this blustering impostor, after *making* his horse refuse a fence, *pretend* to be furious thereat, hitting him over the head, and calling him all manner of opprobrious names. But it is after dinner, when, as they say in Ireland, the "drink's in him," that the bold "Bowwow" barks loudest, and (in imagination) rides hardest. Foxhunting coming on the tapis, he will enquire of his neighbour, if he should happen, unfortunately for himself, to be a hunting-man, what, in his opinion, is the best run he ever was in. His visitor, probably answering that he really don't recollect, the Captain forthwith goes off at score, and pours into the poor man's ear an account of *the* best run he ever saw. 'Twas with that celebrated pack, the V.H.W., otherwise the Vale of Hogwash Hounds, on which occasion Bowwow, if he is to be believed (which he isn't), divided the honours of the day with the huntsman, the rest of the field being out of sight at the finish." Another of his favourite forms of speech is : "I was up in town yesterday, and ran up against so-and-so, whom I haven't seen for years. 'By Jove,' he said, 'Barker, what an age it is since you and I met! The last time I saw you, you were riding over the biggest gate I think I ever saw in my life.' And, now I come to think of it," Bowwow will go on, "it *was* a big gate, sir! I'll tell you how it was, &c., &c., &c."

Old Baron Markey Munchausen, on the other hand, is not half such a bore, his lying being positively quite artistic at times. About the biggest "whopper," as

schoolboys would term it, we ever heard issue from his inventive lips was in the smoking-room, one night, at a country house, where we were both guests. The conversation turned on the extraordinary things sometimes found in the bellies of fish when caught: "Ah!" struck in the Baron, "I'll tell you fellows a funny thing that happened to me in Wales last year." (Markey had some property in the principality.) "I was mooning about one day all by myself with my gun, when, casting my eye towards the river, what should I see but my keeper, who was fishing for the house, just in the act of playing a salmon. Shouldering my gun, I walked towards him, and got there just in time to see him land his fish—a thirty-pounder. 'What shall I do with him, sir?' enquired he. 'Shall I take him up to the house just as he is, or shall I split him open for kipperin'? Indeed to goodness!" exclaimed Owen Thomas, 'but he is a fine fish. I declare I did never see a better—no, nevar!' 'Yes,' replied I, 'he *is* a good fish. Suppose you split him for kippering.' No sooner said than done. Owen had his knife in him before you could say Jack Robinson, and as he opened him, what do you think flew out of his inside? You'll never guess. Do you give it up?" "Yes," we all shouted in unison, "we all give it up. What was it, Markey?" "A brace of partridges!" he answered, "a brace of partridges, as I live." "By Jove!" exclaimed his laughing, and, of course, astonished audience; "well, that was a rum go if you like." "By the way," squeaked little Tom Trimmer, after a pause, from the depths of his armchair, "what became of the brace of birds, old fella? You didn't tell us that, dontcherknow." "Ah, I declare, I quite forgot the partridges; glad you reminded me," replied the unblushing narrator.

“Well, when they flew out, as I have described, I up with my gun and *shot 'em right and left.*” “Well, after that,” said our host, rising from his chair as he spoke, I'll take myself off to bed, I think. Good night, you fellows! Good night, Markey! I'm going into C——ff to-morrow, and I'll buy you a kettle in the course of the afternoon.” “What do you mean?” exclaimed Baron Munchausen, starting up, “you don't mean to go for to insinuate that you don't credit my story, do you, you unbelieving infidel?” “Oh dear no. I don't doubt your word for one moment,” replied our grinning host, winking, as he spoke, behind the Baron's back, at the assembled company. “If it had been anybody else, now, I might have had my doubts—what? but with *you*, no! Perish the thought!” “Glad of that,” said the reassured Markey, sinking back into his chair, “for I pledge you my word it is true, it is, *'pon my honour!*”



## THE LAST DAY OF THE SEASON.

A PINK WEDDING AND AN AFTERNOON FOX.

**W**ITH the floor in good order for dancing, a first-rate band (this latter a very important adjunct), a nicely-done supper (Gunter for choice), irreproachable champagne, lots of pretty girls, and nearly everybody in the room knowing everybody else, what more enjoyable institution is there than a county ball?

Nor is that all.

We are inclined to think that those terrible personages, the match-making mammas of the period, find these cheerful reunions uncommonly useful as well. Many a man who has been dangling after a maiden the whole of the hunting season, very likely not quite able to make up his mind, or what is equally probable, afraid to "pop the question," is very apt on one of these festive occasions to make up his mind with extraordinary alacrity. Perhaps not being a good dancer, and aware of the fact, he watches with feelings the reverse of pleasant his charmer being whirled about in the *troistemps* by Jones of the Lancers, a first-rate performer, and whom he hates like poison. (The green-eyed monster comes in here as a wonderful assistant to the wiles of the would-be mother-in-law.)

He d——ns Jones of the Lancers (in confidence, as the

elder Mr. Weller would say) with intense fervour, and takes heart of grace from the champagne bottle. Feeling much better, he d—ns Jones again, and, making up his mind this time to try the “cutting out” game on his own account, “goes in to win,” as the pugilists say, without loss of time.

One might almost liken him to an auctioneer with uplifted hammer, in fact. He sees his fair enslaver in a riding habit. By jove, how it becomes her ! GOING ! He watches her in church. Shares her hymn-book with her ; listens to her sweet voice. GOING ! He beholds her in a ball-room, dances with her, watches her lovely face all lit up with pleasurable excitement, and thinks he never saw such a pretty girl in his life, or one so well dressed, and—GONE !!! Down comes the hammer with a bang.

An angry man hunts in vain for his promised partner in the waltz just striking up. A facetious and observant waiter in the tea room remarks to another waiter, *sotto voce*, that unless he’s very much mistook, it’s a case with them two in the corner. And the tea-room waiter has hit off the situation to a T (no pun intended, really no). Another good man has gone wrong, and it is an engaged couple that presently return to the ballroom. We would not give a snap of our fingers for a ball that was not responsible for at least half-a-dozen engagements of this sort, and we are proud to state that the annual ball of the Harkaway Hunt, described in a former chapter, is by no means behind hand in this respect. We should indeed be almost afraid to hazard a guess as to how many little *affaires de cœur* have been brought to a satisfactory climax within the four walls of Bullerton Town Hall.

In our account of a recent ball there we mentioned that

it was currently reported at an early period of the evening (on the authority of a lynx-eyed maiden lady answering to the name of Mouser) that "at last" (that is how she and others genially put it) our friend, the volatile Charles Wild-oats, had proposed to pretty Blanche Bluebell. The astute Mouser was perfectly correct. Before the Town Hall clock had struck two, the bride elect and the man of her choice had been congratulated by half the people in the room.

We rather think that it was Lady Thomasina Clinker, of the fertile mind, who, on learning the fact that the wedding was likely to come off shortly after Lent, immediately suggested that it was an opportunity not to be lost for a "Pink Wedding." "I'll go and consult Lord Daisyfield about it this instant," said she, in her usual impetuous manner, "and tell him he must make a special meet for that day at the bride's house. I know he will if I ask him prettily."

"Bet you ten to one he don't, Lady Tommy," remarked Major Moustache; "my lord hates all that sort of thing, you know."

"Done with you in gloves," replied her ladyship. "Sixes my size, and I should like sixteen buttons, please. You'll excuse me, Major Moustache, I know, but let me tell you you don't know Lord Daisyfield quite so well as I do. He'll do anything for *me*, bless you! won't he, Johnnie? (appealing to her husband). Yes, Lord Daisyfield shall bring his hounds, and then we'll all go to the church in our hunting costumes, see Charlie turned off, go back to Houghton Manor for breakfast, see the happy pair start for their honeymoon, mount our fiery steeds once more, and proceed to draw Mr. Bluebell's coverts for a fox.

That's my programme ; and now, Major Moustache, give me your arm, and take me to the M.F.H. We shall find him in the supper room, most likely."

Needless to say, Lord Daisyfield, who, prim and stiff though he was, could never bring himself to say "No" to a lady, much less to such a pretty one as Lady Tommy, acquiesced at once to the proposal. As he gallantly put it, his hounds and himself were equally at her ladyship's service.

This was eminently satisfactory, and all that now remained to be done, as Lady Tommy very justly observed, was for Major Moustache to pay up his bet, and for the bride and bridegroom in embryo to name the day.

This was easily settled. Both the contracting parties, being exceedingly well off as regards worldly goods, there was no earthly reason why there should be any unnecessary delay in their nuptials. Accordingly, the first Wednesday in April was fixed upon for the wedding, and Lord Daisyfield being duly informed thereof, arranged for his hounds to meet that day at Houghton Manor, the residence of the bride's father, Mr. Bluebell, to wind up the season.

And now, all the preliminaries being arranged, there was tremendous excitement in the neighbourhood amongst the numerous friends of the betrothed. Such discussions and heart-burnings as to wedding presents as never were. There was Laura Lorrimer crying her pretty eyes out because Florry Granville had fixed upon the very same present. She had already written for it, in fact, to Thornhills, in Bond Street. "Horrid g-g-girl," sobbed poor Laura ; "I'll never speak to her again." Violet Daubeny gave out that she had bought a present for the bride

that she was quite certain no one else would ever dream of, and declined to say what it was; thereby driving fourteen of her bosom friends to the extreme verge of curiosity—not to say envy. The same with the male sex. Frank Morton was furious because Jack Fothergill had bought the bridegroom the very same souvenir that he had, viz., a silver cigar case. “I can’t change it,” growled Frank, “because I’ve had Charlies cwest and monogwam engwaved on the back, don’t you know.” Well, the eventful day came at last, and what a day! “Happy the bride whom the sun shines upon,” runs the old saying, and if there is any truth in it, the fair maiden in this case certainly had good reason for rejoicing, for such a spring morning as that which greeted her as she looked out of her window on this, her wedding day, surely never was. The sun shone brightly; the trees and hedges were already sporting their spring costumes of emerald green; violets and primroses crowded the banks and woods in endless profusion; the rooks were cawing away in the big elm trees, holding a Home Rule Parliament of their own, judging by the noise they made; the wood-pigeons coo armorously to each other in the woods, whilst the air resounds with the notes from thousands of our feathered friends, the song birds; the blackbird, the thrush, the lark, and the linnet, all apparently seeing which can sing the loudest. Altogether, if not exactly coming up to Tom Tootler’s standard of what a hunting morning should be, there is no denying that it is the day of all others for a wedding.

Little Bridlington Church presents both inside and

cut, on this auspicious morning, a sight unparalleled in the memory of the oldest inhabitant of the hamlet. By half-past ten o'clock the sacred edifice, by no means a large one, is crammed to the muzzle by probably the most *severely* sporting congregation that ever assembled inside a church; for certainly three-fourths of the assemblage, both male and female, are attired in hunting costume. The entire hunt is there, in fact, from Lord Daisyfield downwards. Outside, some two hundred hunters, most of them of a superior order, are being led about by grooms and lads of the village. The path leading from the churchyard gate to the porch is lined by farmers and others for whom there is not sufficient room inside the church; conspicuous amongst them being Tom Tootler and the hunt servants, each adorned with a wedding favour of gallant proportions.

Ten minutes to eleven and a distant cheer informs the sporting congregation that somebody of importance has arrived. All eyes are turned towards the door, and enter, gorgeous in scarlet coat, and leathers and tops quite dazzling in appearance, Mr. Charles Wildoats, accompanied by his best man, similarly attired. They take up a position on the altar rails forthwith. Hardly had they done so when another cheer from outside announces another arrival. It is the bridesmaids this time. Attired in white satin riding habits of old fashioned cut, trimmed with gold lace, and wearing hunting caps of white velvet, they create a great sensation. Each of them carries a gold mounted ivory handled riding whip, the gift of the bridegroom, and a huge bouquet of camelias and white violets made in the shape of a horse shoe. Hardly have they got inside the church than a still louder cheer is

heard. This *must* be the bride, and the bride it is. She is *not* in hunting costume, so we will not attempt to describe her dress. Leaning on the arm of her father, a jolly old gentleman beaming with smiles and duly attired like the rest in scarlet coat, etc., she makes the best of her way, accompanied by her bridesmaids, to the altar, and the ceremony forthwith proceeds. Charlie Wildoats was not, we regret to say, quite so well up in the marriage service as he was in—well, the racing calendar, for instance—for when asked by the Chaplain of the Hunt (who, of course, officiated) “Charles Aubrey, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife,” etc., he replied, “Oh, certainly,” which unexpected answer, delivered in a most matter of fact way, caused the bride and her attendant bridesmaids to titter outright, the best man to nearly burst out into a “guffaw,” and a good deal of giggling amongst the rest of the wedding guests. At last they were made man and wife, and after the usual signing of names in the vestry, the newly-married couple, to the strains of the “Wedding March,” proceeded to make the best of their way, amidst the congratulations of their friends, to their carriage. Then a regular stampede ensues, and the cry is, “My horse, my horse, my kingdom for a horse!” Some of the more reckless seize upon the first steed they can lay hands upon. Dolly Lightfoot, who can’t see his servant anywhere, jumps on old Charlie Dabber’s flea-bitten grey, and considerably astonishes that highly-respectable animal by the way he springs him along. Others follow the Honourable’s laudable example, and it is very shortly a case of “Catch who catch can,” and the devil take the hindmost. We will pass over the wedding breakfast. Suffice it to say that the health of the bride and bridegroom (the only toast) was



THE LAST DAY OF THE SEASON—

“Thanks to the champagne consumed at breakfast, the large field rode like demons.”



proposed by dear old Mr. Grimboy as the ladies called him, in his happiest manner, and that an unheard of quantity of champagne was consumed by the sportsmen present. Finally the bride and bridegroom, having changed their garments for ordinary attire, took their departure en route for Paris for the honeymoon amidst a shower of rice and old shoes, and a perfect volley of "Gone aways," "Tally-ho's," and other hunting cries, from the now wine-flushed sportsmen assembled to see them drive off.

"And now," remarked Lord Daisyfield to Lady Tommy, as they watched the receding carriage, "as it's the 'last day of the season,' the sooner we get to our horses, if we are to find that afternoon fox, the better." Accordingly my lord sought his hunter, and very shortly the vast cavalcade followed in the wake of Tom Tootler and the hounds across the park to draw Mr. Bluebell's spinneys. It really seemed as if nothing could go wrong that day, for a fox was found almost directly and went away at a rattling pace over the grass. After five-and-forty minutes as hard as ever they could go, without a check, they killed him in the open. Thanks to the champagne consumed at breakfast, the large field rode like demons; and the quantity of wedding-favours that were distributed in the course of the afternoon amongst the hairy fences in the vale, you would hardly believe. However, ride as they might, the pace was so great that only a select few were on anything like terms with the hounds. "Only eight of us up," remarked Tom Chirpington to Johnnie Clinker. "Oh, and here comes old Dolly! That makes nine."

"Yes," said Lord Daisyfield, as he presented the brush to Lady Tommy, "it's about the fastest thing we've had this season. Where's Charles Wildoats, by the way?"

added he, looking round. "How is it he isn't here? Not come to grief, has he?"

"Why, yes, he has," laughed the Rev. Merrythought "didn't I polish him off this very morning?"

"Why, of course! how stupid of me, to be sure!" replied his lordship as he once more mounted his horse. I declare that for the moment, do you know, I had clean forgotten the 'Pink Wedding.'"



WHO-HOOP!







