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LIFE AND TIMES

OF

“THE DRUID”

(HENRY HALL DIXON).

BY

HON. FRANCIS LAWLEY.

LONDON:

VINTON & Co., LIMITED,

9, NEW BRIDGE STREET, LUDGATE CIRCUS, E C

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DEDICATED,  
BY KIND PERMISSION,  
TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF ROSEBERY, K.G.,  
IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF  
HIS WELL-KNOWN APPRECIATION  
OF "THE DRUID'S" WRITINGS,  
IN CONNECTION WITH WHICH HE HAS LATELY  
DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS  
"ONE WHO FINDS CONSTANT REFRESHMENT  
"FROM READING A FEW PAGES OF THIS  
"HEALTHY AND VIVID AUTHOR,  
"HALF SPORTSMAN AND HALF POET,  
"WHO HAS PRODUCED  
"A NUMBER OF VOLUMES,  
"WHICH IN THEIR WAY ARE MASTERPIECES,  
"AND WILL NEVER BE SURPASSED."



## PREFACE.

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IT is time that a life of perhaps the most pleasing sporting writer of the present century should be written, or attempted. After searching every Encyclopædia and Dictionary of Biography upon which I could lay my hand, I have not been successful in finding the name of "Henry Hall Dixon" in any of them. On the other hand, there is in all a memoir, sometimes a prolonged memoir, of Mr. William Hepworth Dixon, although it is more than doubtful whether any of his numerous books will live as long as "Post and Paddock," or "Silk and Scarlet." The only volume in which I can find any mention of my present hero is in a work called "Celebrities of the Century," edited by Lloyd C. Sanders (formerly Exhibitioner of Christ Church College, Oxford), and published by Messrs. Cassell and Co. (Limited) in 1887. The notice to which I refer is in the following words:—

"Dixon, Henry Hall; born 1822, died 1870:

sporting writer, well known through his pseudonym 'The Druid:' was the son of a cotton manufacturer, and was educated at Rugby under Dr. Arnold. He contributed largely to the Press on sporting and agricultural matters, but is now chiefly remembered for his admirable memoirs and descriptions of country life in 'Post and Paddock' (1856); 'Silk and Scarlet' (1858); 'Scott and Sebright' (1862); 'Field and Fern' (1865); 'Saddle and Sirloin' (1870); and also for his treatise on 'The Law of the Farm' (1858; fourth edition, 1879)."

Little surprise need be felt that the "Dictionary of National Biography," edited at first by Mr. Leslie Stephen, and now by Mr. Sidney Lee, should omit all mention of "The Druid." From the first commencement of that monumental work down to the present hour, when it is more than half completed, sport of all kinds has, as a rule, been insufficiently treated, or altogether ignored. It is to be regretted that the editor or editors did not select for the task of dealing with open-air sports some expert who was as fond of them and as capable of doing justice to their most conspicuous votaries as Mr. Joseph Knight is of commemorating actors, actresses, and dramatists. This is all the more to be regretted, because the lives of the three Chiffneys (not Chifneys) have been well handled by Mr. G. C. Boase. Surely, however, Elnathan Flatman, commonly called "Nat,"

deserved a *vates sacer*, if for no other reason than that the example of as honest a jockey as ever got into the saddle might with great advantage have been held up for imitation and emulation by other members of that dangerous profession. No trainer, except William Chiffney, has thus far found a place in this storehouse of biographies, and no jockey, with the exception of George Fordham. It is earnestly to be hoped that among the lives still to be treated, those of Robert Robson, once called the "Emperor of Trainers," of James Robinson, the Prince of jockeys, of John Scott of Whitewall House, Malton, and of his brother, Bill Scott, will not be forgotten. As regards other trainers and jockeys, few, I fear, are likely to find admission to pages which ought surely to be devoted to *quicquid agunt homines*. It is true that in the memoir of the three Chiffneys mention is made of "the famous jockey, Frank Butler," who was nephew to the younger Sam Chiffney and of William, his brother. When, however, Frank Buckle, the Dawsons, the two John Days, Alfred Day, Flatman, Conolly, Forth, Frank Butler, Job Marson, and many others, are unnoticed, and only the two Chiffneys and George Fordham mentioned, there is a sense of incompleteness in the *ensemble* of a work to which in other respects I myself owe deep obligations, and which, in the regularity with which its volumes appear, and in its general fulness, accuracy and excellence, awakens

gratitude and pride in the minds of all capable of loving and appreciating literary work honestly, and for the most part elegantly, executed.

That "The Druid's" memory deserves to be held in honour by succeeding generations will be cheerfully conceded by those of his admiring contemporaries, whom the scythe of the universal reaper, Time, has not yet mown away. It may, however, be necessary to impress upon younger readers of this work that "The Druid's" claims upon their attention rest mainly upon the following substantial foundations :—

I.—"The Druid" was one of the most inflexibly honest, upright, and just men that ever lived, and could not be induced, on any pretext, to accept the slightest pecuniary reward for his writings, beyond the small honorarium paid to him by his employers, which never exceeded six hundred pounds a year, all told. In the following pages it will be found how he made the late Mr. Rarey's fortune, and how the attempts of the latter to give a complimentary present to Mrs. Dixon, in recognition of the invaluable services rendered to him by her high-minded and disinterested husband, were indignantly repulsed by "The Druid" himself. So delicate was his sense of honour that when he went down to a stud farm to describe a yearling sale he would not even accept luncheon from the owner of the place lest he might be suspected of being biassed, if his

honest conviction led him to praise some of the lots brought up for auction. The disappointment of his eldest son, Mr. Sydenham Dixon, when, as a hungry boy of twelve, he was forced by his father to turn away from a bountiful luncheon, to which both were invited, and to munch some dry bread and cheese in a public house, is amusingly described in Chapter VIII. of this work.

II.—“The Druid” was never known to wager more than ten shillings upon a horse race, and, as a rule, he never betted at all. In the preface to his “Post and Paddock” he tells us that “he has simply written of the Turf as he has known it for some years past, not through the feverish medium of the betting ring, but as its leading features were brought to his mind by an occasional stroll on to a racecourse on a crack afternoon, through the boxes at Tattersall’s, or among the paddocks of a stud farm.”

III.—As regards the accuracy of his descriptions “The Druid” has never been surpassed when he wrote of scenes which came under his own observation. Lord Rosebery has spoken of him with rare penetration as “half sportsman and half poet;” and the amount of poetry which he infused into his writings will be recognised by those to whom many passages, scattered like gems throughout his works, are as familiar as they are to Lord Rosebery himself.

IV.—“The Druid’s” equal in endurance of hardship, exposure to weather, scanty fare and personal discomfort, and the courage with which he faced and disregarded them all, and never flinched even when suffering from painful sickness and exhausting disease, is not to be found among writers for the Press, dead or living. Many years ago I received a letter from Dr. Bradley, now Dean of Westminster. Dr. Bradley was at Rugby and in the same house with “The Druid,” who visited his old school-fellow, then Head Master of Marlborough, under the following circumstances. At the time of which I am now speaking there was no railway to Marlborough, and the nearest station was Swindon Junction upon the Great Western Railway, distant about thirteen miles from Marlborough. One summer afternoon there appeared at Dr. Bradley’s door a travel-stained pedestrian with a huge portmanteau on his shoulder, which he had carried all the way from Swindon to Marlborough across the Wiltshire Downs. It proved to be “The Druid,” who had made his way on foot to Marlborough in order to inspect the racing establishments in the neighbourhood—that of Alec Taylor at Fyfield, where Sir Joseph Hawley’s horses were then trained; that of Jones, Alec Taylor’s nearest neighbour, from which Marlborough Buck went forth to run second to Teddington for the Derby of 1851; and that of



Treen, at Beckhampton, (now occupied by Sam Darling,) at which for many years the horses of Sir William Gregory, Captain Mervyn Archdall, and Lord Bolingbroke were prepared for their engagements. "The Druid" was hospitably entertained for three days by Dr. Bradley, who in the letter to which I am now referring spoke of him as "the horsiest Christian that he had ever encountered." When it is remembered that "The Druid" rode on horseback from the Orkneys to Kensington in the severe winter of 1864-65, arriving at home "in the snow of a February night, with fourpence in his pocket, on the back of a Highland garron which he had bought for £7 10s. at Pomona, in the Orkneys," little surprise will be felt that from the effects of that exposed and trying journey he never recovered.

As a slight tribute to the memory of one of the most unselfish, courageous, modest, conscientious, and pure-minded of men, the following pages are offered by his friend and admirer,

THE AUTHOR.



## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
PREFACE ... ..	v.—xi.
CHAPTER I.—Birthplace and its Influences ... ..	1
CHAPTER II.—Birth and Parentage ... ..	29
CHAPTER III.—Rugby Days ... ..	45
CHAPTER IV.—Cambridge Days and early Married Life ...	82
CHAPTER V.—Further Reminiscences of his early Life ...	114
CHAPTER VI.—“The Doncaster Gazette” ... ..	133
CHAPTER VII.—“The Druid’s” Eccentricities and Absence of Mind ... ..	183
CHAPTER VIII.—Reminiscences by his eldest Son ...	198
CHAPTER IX.—Decline of Cumberland Wrestling ...	212
CHAPTER X.—“The Druid’s” Versatility ... ..	235
CHAPTER XI.—His many-sided Sympathies ... ..	257
CHAPTER XII.—His Love of Children ... ..	275
CHAPTER XIII.—“The Druid” as a Politician ... ..	287
CHAPTER XIV.—The “Old Mortality” of the Turf ...	308
CHAPTER XV.—“The Druid’s” Endurance, Character, and Death ... ..	322



## ILLUSTRATIONS.

---

	PAGE
Dixon, Henry Hall ... ..	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Rugby, The Schools ... ..	to face 45
Rugby, The Head Master's House ... ..	,, ,, 63
Zetland, Earl of ... ..	,, ,, 173
Sykes, Sir Tatton ... ..	,, ,, 192
Lynes, G. B. ... ..	,, ,, 253
“The Orkneys to Kensington with Punctuality and Dispatch” ... ..	,, ,, 329



# LIFE AND TIMES OF "THE DRUID."

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## CHAPTER I.

### HIS BIRTHPLACE AND ITS INFLUENCES.



It is worse than useless to attempt to write a man's life unless something is first said about the place and atmosphere in which he was born.

Horace Twiss, in his admirable biography of Lord Chancellor Eldon, attributes no small portion of his hero's success in life to the fact that he was born at the foot of a "chare." The narrow streets, or lanes, in Newcastle-on-Tyne are called, in local phraseology "chares," and Lord Eldon is said to have remarked one day from the

Bench in the Court of Chancery that he himself had been born in a "charefoot." It was in a "chare" of this kind that William Scott, father of Lord Stowell and Lord Eldon, passed his active and useful life, and each of these great legal luminaries remembered to his dying hour the Grammar School at Newcastle in which their education commenced. It was presided over by a clergyman named Moises, of whom Lord Eldon writes, in his "Anecdote Book," that "The head master was that eminent scholar and most excellent man, the Rev. Mr. Moises, whose memory I shall hold in the utmost veneration so long as I continue to exist." Mr. William Scott "gathered gear" enough as a "hoastman" or coal-fitter, to send his two famous sons, William, Lord Stowell, and John, Lord Eldon, to Oxford, where the elder graduated at Corpus Christi College in 1761, and the younger at University College in 1766.

It was due, however, to the industrious and thrifty habits which the two boys picked up at their father's well-ordered home in Love Lane, Newcastle-on-Tyne, that when they



went forth into life, no work and no privations proved to be greater than they were able to bear. In like manner Mr. Henry Hall Dixon, a sketch of whose "Life" I have undertaken to write, owed no slight debt of gratitude to the county in which he first saw the light.

The true history of the "Border" can best be found in the writings and poems of Sir Walter Scott, whose famous lines :

" St. George ! a stirring life they lead  
Who have such neighbours near,"

tell of the stormy times passed by the dwellers in Cumberland and Westmoreland when the Solway Firth was their sole protection against the Scottish moss-troopers, of whom for all time William of Deloraine will stand as the typical representative. But the Solway, although in many places about twelve miles broad, was no adequate protection against an enterprising, aggressive, and warlike people. It could be crossed at low tide by horsemen well acquainted with its sands and eddies, and for this reason the northern half of Cumberland was constantly exposed to the

depredations of the Scots. No village, no farmstead, no cattle-yard, no stable full of horses was safe against the incursions of these lawless and daring marauders, who carried away all that they could drive before them into Annandale and Nithsdale.

For these obvious reasons the people of Cumberland found it necessary from the earliest times to stand to their arms in order to resist and drive off their troublesome tormentors. They fortified their houses, leaving a large vaulted chamber beneath into which their cattle were driven at night. Along the whole length of the Border, castles—or as they were called, Peel Towers—were erected at a distance of a mile from each other, and in some cases there was an underground road of communication between them. Some of these old keeps still survive, disclosing walls about ten feet in thickness, a few feet above the ground. They were divided into three storeys, the lower one being an arched stable where the cattle found shelter. The massive door was then fastened, and the men mounted to the upper rooms. If assailed, they betook themselves to their weapons,

and threw down from the roof huge rocks, or poured boiling water or molten lead upon those who ventured to attack them. But when the cattle had been safely housed this was rarely attempted, for the moss-troopers were in too great a hurry to sit down before fortified places.

In the meantime alarm beacons were blazing from every hill-top, and church towers were used for the same purpose. The Cumberland and Westmoreland peaks and towers, which were lighted up to call the surrounding country to arms, were at Blackcombe, Skiddaw, Landale Top, Carlisle Castle, Mulcaster Fell, St. Bee's Head, Workington Hill, Brampton Mote, Dale Raughton, and Penrith. In course of time there grew up in Cumberland families of freebooters, among whom the Græmes, the Rutledges, and the Howards soon became as dashing and fearless as the Elliots, Armstrongs and Scotts from the northern side of the Border. This unsettled condition of affairs led to the destruction of all morality and order, with the result that on both sides of the Border, freebooting and cattle-stealing

were regarded as honest and respectable professions. The women were as bad as the men, and the Scotch gudewife who reminded her sons when they sat down to dinner that the last fat sheep was in the pot, and that if they wanted something to eat next day they must go and fetch it, was more than matched by the Cumberland matron, who served up three pairs of spurs in a dish, from which she pulled off the cover, exclaiming to her husband and her two sons that as she had no meat for them to eat, it was time for them to buckle on their spurs and go forth to seek some.

Between the two countries there was a long strip called the Debatable Land, which lay to the north of Carlisle, between the rivers Esk and Sark. It belonged neither to England nor Scotland, and was infested by thieves, outlaws and "reivers" from both, to whom its boggy and mossy surface afforded a safe sanctuary. These desperadoes had, as Camden says, "no measure of law save the length of their swords;" and when caught alive, which was seldom the case, they met promptly with Jedburgh, or

“Jeddart” justice—that is to say, they were hanged first and tried afterwards. Worst of all, says the “History of Cumberland,” were the Græmes of Netherby, from whom were descended the brave General Elliot, who defended Gibraltar, and Sir James Graham, with whom “The Druid” was always a great favourite. When the hungry Scots prepared for a southward raid, they either waded the Solway, or forded the Liddel or the Esk. Crossing the Border by secret ways known only to themselves, and with a bag of oatmeal slung to every man’s saddle-bow, they met at some appointed tryst, and flung themselves upon a lonely farmhouse, whence they drove off the cattle and sheep. Many a time were they hunted with sleuth-hounds, which tracked them to their retreats among the hills, and it was not until long after the Union of England and Scotland took place in Queen Anne’s reign that the Border feuds began to die out, and the inhabitants on either side were left to cultivate their rugged acres in peace and tranquillity.

It is said that even to this day it is difficult to induce a Carlisle jury to convict a man of

murder, but when, on the other hand, the offence is cattle lifting or sheep stealing, conviction is certain. From these lawless surroundings and antecedents sprang the Cumberland "Statesmen" or yeomen farmers, who were neither squires nor labourers, and until a comparatively recent date lived without money, and got all the necessaries of life by a system of exchange or barter which they carried on with their neighbours. Uncorrupted by luxury, and blessed with enough of this world's goods to get through life, they passed their blameless existence among the lonely scaurs, hills and fells of their native land, and were as "stout of heart and steady of hand" as their forefathers, who lived always on the alert to resist the armed irruptions of the thieving Scot. "They bear the greatest fatigue," writes one who knew them well, "with patience and endurance, and living contentedly on humble fare, offer the best that their houses contain to strangers who seek their hospitality. Though not rich in money or land, they are rich in character and healthful contentment, their houses being schools of thrift and industry. The clothing

is made at home, by women who spin their own linsey wolsey, while the men go to kirk and chapel in homespun hodden gray. Stalwart sons and comely maidens are brought up on porridge, oatcake and milk ; in fact, they desire no better food. Occasionally barley bannocks, Whillimer cheese (a corruption, I believe, of Windermere), potato-pot, and a bit of bacon vary the humble repast." On this fare the Cumbrians thrive well, and become lusty and strong. For the most part they are men of large stature, big boned and broad chested, with firm muscles, well-knit joints, and sinewy arms, which give them great advantage as wrestlers, and what they want in agility and suppleness they make up in sturdy stiffness and strength.

In 1828, when Sir James Graham was appointed High Sheriff of Cumberland, he was met outside Carlisle by a cavalcade of mounted "Statesmen," whom he called "a body of men not to be matched in any other part of the kingdom." It is sad to be compelled to confess that the Cumberland Statesman is already a thing of the past. One of the greatest misfortunes connected with Free

Trade is that small holdings have disappeared under its influence, together with those fine specimens of yeomen farmers who were once the strength and pride of England, and of whom Dr. Lonsdale wrote, in 1860, that "many a canny homestead, where yeomen had for centuries held their own and taught their sons and grandsons the proud traditions of their race, no longer affords shelter to the 'weel-kennt folk of ither days.' Even the names of the founders of these time-honoured families are forgotten, and in many rural districts this disappearance or obliteration of names awakens reflections of a by no means agreeable kind. Among many changes affecting men and interests in the northern counties of England, none is more marked, none sadder, than that arising from the ceaseless acquisition of real estate, and the absorption of small holdings by large landed proprietors, who are scarcely known by sight to the people among whom they live."

How much "The Druid" owed to the brave and rugged character of the simple, manly, and truthful Cumbrians among whom



he was born will, I think, be apparent from the following description of him written by his widow, whose love for him has survived and been intensified by the twenty-four years which have elapsed since his death.\* It was from Cumberland that he acquired the noble qualities with which he is credited in the following sketch, to which any word added by me would be superfluous, if not an impertinence.

“The Druid,” writes his widow, “was a man of iron will, and indomitable perseverance, and with absolutely no regard for the ordinary comforts of life. He would rise at daybreak, if his work called him to make

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\*Dr. Smiles, the able biographer of “George Moore, Merchant and Philanthropist,” tells us in his preface, that he was for a long time unwilling to write the life of a man whom he had not known personally, and who seemed to him to offer nothing but ordinary and prosaic materials for treatment. “It was not,” he adds, “until Dr. Percival, head master of Clifton College (now of Rugby School), called upon me, that I ascertained something of the actual life and character of George Moore. He spoke to me of the man and not of the warehouseman. He said in a letter which I afterwards received from him: ‘There is so much genuine character in Cumberland folk that

such an effort, but his general habit was to sleep till noon, all his hardest work being done between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. His hours for meals were most irregular. Breakfast he rarely took, and his lunch often consisted of a biscuit and a glass of milk. One large meal was all that he seemed to need, and this was usually taken late at night. Till illness obliged him to follow his doctor's instructions, water was his sole beverage. He had a weakness, however, for a cup of tea in the afternoon. His dress was as little studied as his other personal comforts, and in order to induce him to put on a new garment it was needful to secrete the old one, and

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I feel sure you will be attracted by them. You will find that the incidents of Mr. Moore's boyhood and early life are sufficiently characteristic to enable you to use some of the excellent material furnished by the habits and traditions of the district. Then I hope you will also find sufficient illustrations in his middle life of his splendid pluck and energy, and again in his later life of his rare liberality. This last trait ought to be instructive because of its extreme rarity among men who have had to struggle as he did. I have never come across any other self-made man who had so entirely got the chill of poverty out of his bones.' "

place the other in its stead. His one real anxiety seemed to be about his gaiters, without which he never went abroad, and so much store did he set by them that when his sons had to pass through an ordeal of any uncommon kind (such as a competitive examination or making an offer of marriage), he invariably offered to lend them his gaiters. He entreated permission to wear them on his own wedding day ; and on being refused, tucked them into his pocket and put them on when fairly off with his bride for Northampton Station. Occasionally he picked up queer-looking garments in out-of-the-way places. One huge white driving coat I well remember ; it had six capes, and possibly once belonged to the driver of a stage coach. Arrayed in this, and pacing up and down a railway platform, talking to himself, or rather, repeating aloud some quaint story he had heard or read, he often attracted attention. One day I was seated on a bench in a railway station when a gentleman remarked to me, 'What eccentric characters you meet everywhere! Only look at that fellow in the queer coat, muttering to himself like a man

in a dream. I should like to know who and what he is.' 'Oh!' I replied, 'I can soon satisfy your curiosity—he is my husband; let me introduce him to you.' Need it be added that the unhappy wight vanished through a side door.

"One other point affecting 'The Druid's' personal appearance caused him much anxious care and thought. On the top of his head one rebellious lock of hair persistently stood erect. To control it he always kept a hair brush in his pocket, of which he made vigorous use on all occasions, seasonable and unseasonable. Failing in this way to reduce it to order, he resorted to such profuse applications of pomatum, that on dining at the house of a prim maiden lady, he leaned his head against the delicate paper of her drawing-room, when a deep round stain was left upon the wall, which gradually grew in size until it met her horrified gaze.

"It was his constant habit to walk when time permitted. He thought nothing of twenty or thirty miles, carrying a knapsack, made pretty heavy by note books, and works of reference which were his invariable com-

panions ; more frequently than not, he would tramp on and on, mile after mile, without giving a thought to food. This in some measure resulted from his determination to spend nothing on himself. Ever liberal to his wife, children and friends, he grudged the smallest outlay on his own personal wants."

Who can doubt, after reading the above touching sketch, that "The Druid" owed many of the attributes which made him what he was to the Cumbrian blood which flowed in his veins? His family sprang originally from a race of "Statesmen," whom he resembled in the austere simplicity, the sterling honesty, the fearless truthfulness, the courageous endurance of fatigue, the indifference to danger, exposure and hard fare which were the most marked of his characteristics. The gradual evolution of his life I shall endeavour to trace out in the following pages, but before closing this chapter I cannot refrain from quoting a few sentences from the lecture which the late Professor Freeman delivered at Carlisle on the place in English history filled by that ancient city. It was one of

those singularly able addresses which he delivered sporadically in English cities for the Archæological Institute, whose journeyings through many parts of this island he accompanied. I can imagine nothing which would have afforded "The Druid" more pleasure than to listen to Professor Freeman's exhaustive unravelling of the early history of Carlisle, and among many other passages which I have marked for citation, none would have been more appreciated by him than the following :

"I have defined Carlisle as being that one among the cities of England which, having once become English, became British again. The unbroken English life of Carlisle begins with the coming of William Rufus and the settlement of his southern colony. For two hundred years before he came it had been British or nothing. For at least two hundred years before that it had been part of an English kingdom, that of the Angles of Northumberland. For at least two hundred years before that it had shared the independence of those parts of Britain from which the Romans had gone, and into which the Angles or the Saxons had not yet come. Of the Roman

and British life of the city we have little to tell; but that it had a long Roman and British life no man can doubt. Under various shapes and corruptions of its Roman and British name, we find it in every list of the cities of Britain. Luguballium or Luguballia occupies a site which seems marked out by nature for a great fortress. It is a site specially designed to guard a border, to defend a land against dangerous neighbours, who may one day become wasting invaders. And this duty the hill of Luguballia has had laid upon it through more than one long period, in the hands of more than one set of masters. I was once tempted to say that it is not without a certain fitness that the spot which was to be the bulwark of England against the Scot should of itself put on somewhat of a Scottish character. I pointed out that the castle hill of Carlisle bore a strong likeness in miniature to the castle hills of Edinburgh and Stirling. In all three the castle crowns a hill, steep at one end only. It crowns it therefore in a different sense from those hill towns where the fortified acropolis forms the centre of the city. At Edinburgh,

at Stirling, at Carlisle, the castle alike crowns and ends the city. It is at once an acropolis and an advanced bulwark. All three strongholds are emphatically watch towers, homes of sentinels, standing and looking forth to guard the land of their friends, and to overawe the land of their enemies. . . . That duty was at least as well discharged by Stirling in the hands of an English-speaking king of Scots as it was by Carlisle in the hands of a French-speaking king of England. What distinguished Carlisle from its two northern fellows is that while it has shared with them the championship of Teutonic Britain against the Celt, it alone of the three had already held an analogous place in days before any part of Britain was Teutonic."

I have come across one other passage which it would have given "The Druid" unfeigned delight to transcribe. It is from "The Old Manorial Halls of Westmoreland and Cumberland," by Dr. M. W. Taylor, F.S.A., Vice-President of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archæological Society. The work was published in 1892, and is the best and fullest record of



the fortresses and Peel Towers (Dr. Taylor calls them "Pele") that I have ever come across. In the first place Dr. Taylor gives us a graphic description of Yanwath Hall, about two miles from Penrith, on the right bank of the Eamont river. The Peel Tower of Yanwath, like all Border towns of the same epoch, was built for defence, and as a place of refuge for men and cattle from the incursions of Scottish marauders. It occupies a commanding position on the south bank of the stream, so as to interpose the river between the fortalice and the enemy. The situation was chosen to guard the ford over the river, which is within half a bow shot. Before the period of stone bridges, the ford at Yanwath was the most important of the passages across the Eamont. The lines of a British stone avenue lead to it from the south, and give the nearest access to Penrith, or *Voreda*. This ford would, from its shallowness, afford facilities for the passage of horsemen and waders when the more formidable waters at Eamont and Brougham were not practicable. "Let our fancy," writes Dr. Taylor, "carry us back

to some of the scenes which may have been enacted in the hall at Yanwath during the fourteenth century. At the far end was the dais, or raised platform of two steps, with its high table for the lord and lady and their principal guests. Down the hall in two rows were ranged the table-boards on trestles, and the benches for retainers of inferior degree. No carpet covered the floor, but it was strewn with sweet rushes, lavender, and fragrant plants. The lower part of the walls was roughly cased with wooden boards, whilst the upper part was covered with crimson cloth or canvas. From the stag antlers on the walls hung the furniture of war—shields and targets, lances and pennons, broadsword and battle axe, sheaves of arrows, and the long-bow and cross-bow, together with the trophies of the chase. Here, also, hung the beautiful burnished armour, which at this period had attained its zenith of perfection, and was ready to be donned hastily at night on the alarm note of the warder's bugle on the tower signalling the firing of the beacon at Penrith. Under the benches dozed the quick-scented bloodhounds, kept

by the Lord for the chase, and, if need were, for the pursuit with hot-trod of the red hand moss-troopers from over the Border. The pursuit of 'hot trod' was a power given by the Border laws to the Wardens of either kingdom in following malefactors or cattle lifters, which made it lawful to pursue the chase with hound and horn, with hue and cry, across the marches into the opposite realm, where the fugitive might be apprehended or slain. Over the chimney piece in Yanwath Hall were blasoned the armorial bearings of the Threlkelds. On the wall behind the dais there was a hanging of arras tapestry representing some famous incident of chivalry, the work of the fair ladies of the house—an art but lately introduced into England. The period was at the end of the long reign of Edward III., or the close of the fourteenth century, the most brilliant for prowess in the whole history of England. The great North of England Barons, Roger de Clifford of Appleby, and Rainulph de Dacre, of Dacre Castle, near Penrith, Commissioners of the Border Marches, were ordered by Royal mandate to repair to their

northern estates and arm their followers against the Scots. The Lord of the beautiful domain of Yanwath was William de Threlkeld. Let us picture him sitting down to dinner surrounded by his vassals and men-at-arms, who might presently be wanted on the Scottish Border. Nor is the Church unrepresented, for the white and black garb of the monk rustles softly amid the clang of the half mailed knights, and the grace is said by the abbot of the neighbouring monastery of Heppe.

“The hour is half past ten a.m., for our forefathers rose at five. On the upper table the white cloth is spread, and the trumpet sounds the call for dinner. The pages bring in ponderous dishes for the banquet, a bountiful and varied fare. Salmon from the pool in the river below, served sodden and with verjuice sauce; the great grey lake-trout from Ullswater; eels from the Stauke at Pooley baked in crust; the head of a grisly wild boar speared in Grisdale; venison from a stag shot by the bowmen in Martindale, or from a noble stag run by the sleuthhounds from the Manor of Oglebird and

gralloched in the forest of Inglewood. Nor do the men-at-arms below the salt fail to pull their knives from their girdles and help themselves with their fingers (there were no forks in those days) to slices from the baron of beef taken from an ox stolen from the Elliots of Liddesdale, or on the braes of Annandale. The high table lacks not for more refined samples of the culinary art; highly flavoured pastries, poignant ragouts and stews seasoned hotly with spices and coloured with saffron, for our ancestors were *bon vivants* in their way. Mead and sack, Malmsey and Rhenish, flagons of high-spiced claret cup and ippocrass, wassail and mazer bowl pass freely from hand to hand, and the obsequious cellarer, with his black jack stoup, makes many a trip to the buttery hatch for the nut brown ale to fill up the horns of his thirsty comrades. And all the while the fool in his motley cracks his ribald jokes, and the band of jongleurs or wandering minstrels in the music gallery strum their merriest airs to divert the company, and sing roundelays narrating how the Scots fell at Halidon Hill, or some Border knight won his spurs at Crecy or Poictiers."

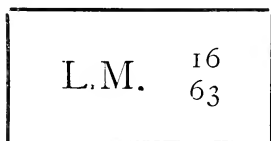
Let us turn to more modern times. There are few racing men in whom "The Druid" would have taken more interest than in Captain James Octavius Machell. It is well known that a painting of Crackenthorpe in Westmoreland, "rebuilt by Hugh Machell, 1629, sold by Launcelot Machell, 1786, and re-purchased by James Machell, 1877," hangs upon the wall of Captain Machell's study at Bedford Cottage, Newmarket. It may not be out of place to give briefly the history of the Machell family, extracted from the work from which I have already quoted, merely adding that the above-mentioned Launcelot Machell was the father of two sons, Hugh and Thomas, the younger of whom was one of the most famous antiquaries that the county of Westmoreland ever produced.

#### " CRACKENTHORPE HALL.

" This mansion lies two miles to the north of Appleby, charmingly situated on a fertile river-holme on the east side of the river Eden. The only remnant of the old manor house is the kitchen and back part of the

premises, which present some square mul-  
lioned windows and an apartment now di-  
vided by separate partitions which was once  
a portion of the old wall ; it still retains the  
old chimney piece with a wide arch flush  
with the wall. The house is of interest as  
having been the ancestral home of the Rev.  
Thomas Machell, the Antiquary, to whom we  
have so often referred. The Machell family  
resided here, and continued the name as  
possessors of the Manor of Crackenthorpe  
for at least 600 years. The pedigree and  
succession are set forth at great length in  
the fifth volume of MSS., now in the Dean  
and Chapter's Library at Carlisle, by the  
Rev. Thomas Machell, who, in his great  
zeal for the antiquity of his name, did Latin-  
ise it into the form of "Malus Catulus,"  
and supposes that they descended from the  
Catuli among the ancient Romans. With-  
out giving credit, however, for the validity  
of these pretensions, there is no doubt that  
this name existed at the time of the Con-  
quest, and, in fact, it is found in Domesday ;  
the first mention of it in connection with  
the Manor of Crackenthorpe occurring in the

person of one Halth de Manchæl, in the reign of Henry II. None of the family ever acquired the rank of knight, but they seem always to have maintained their position as gentry and squires of moderate possessions and means. There is a stone now set in the wall of the stabling with initials and date in raised characters, thus :—



“ This stone refers to Launcelot Machell, the father of two sons, Hugh and Thomas, and it was doubtless raised to commemorate some alterations he made in the old hall. Hugh succeeded to the estate, and Thomas was at the same time Fellow of Queen’s College, Oxford, Fellow of the Royal Society, Rector of Kirbythore, and Chaplain in Ordinary to King Charles II. It is to his method and diligence as an antiquary in collecting, recording and preserving information concerning various parishes in the two counties that all our local histories have hitherto been so much indebted.



“ The arms of the Machells were : Sable : three greyhounds courant. Argent : collared Or. On the gable of the present building there is a carved stone with an escutcheon, surmounted with a helmet, mantlings and crest. The crest represents the head and neck of a nondescript animal—it might be a deer or goat with straight horns. The house, as it now stands, appears to have been built during the last twenty years of the seventeenth century, and the design probably arose under the inspiration of Thomas Machell, the Antiquary, who was a devoted admirer of Palladian architecture, which at that time was supplanting our national style throughout the country. It is a single, narrow, tenemented building, with an extensive frontage, and rows of numerous windows in the modern style. There is a very fine black oak staircase with twisted balusters leading to the second floor. Here there is one apartment which affords a good example of the style of high, oblong panelling in soft wood used at the end of the seventeenth century. Within the framework over the mantel there is a painting on panel ; it is in its original site, and represents a hunt-

ing scene. Though not a Snyders, it may readily have been the work of an itinerant Dutch artist in the reign of William and Mary.

## CHAPTER II.

## BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.



ENRY HALL DIXON was born in Cumberland on May 16, 1822, and was the second son of Mr. Peter Dixon, a large cotton manufacturer residing at Warwick Bridge, near Carlisle. In 1820, Mr. Peter Dixon, being then thirty-one years old, married Miss Sarah Rebecca Clarke, only daughter of General Tredway Clarke, who for many years was the senior General in the Honourable East India Company's service. Mrs. Peter Dixon was a woman of high intellectual attainments and romantic disposition, which she imparted to every member of her large family. What Mr. Peter Dixon was will be revealed by the following details, supplied to me in great measure by members of his family.

Before moving to Carlisle early in the present century, the Dixon family had lived for a considerable time at Whitehaven, where "The Druid's" grandfather (whose Christian name, like that of his father, was Peter), amassed a very comfortable fortune. He was a leading and successful merchant and shipowner in Whitehaven, and became united in marriage to Miss Mary Ferguson, the only daughter of a prosperous citizen of Carlisle. In consequence of this connection the elder Mr. Peter Dixon emigrated from Whitehaven to Carlisle, which circumstance was probably the cause of as great a change in the character, prosperity, and general appearance of that famous little town as any other event of a like kind which ever befel it. At the time when Peter Dixon the elder first settled in Carlisle, no such thing as manufactories existed there. Handicrafts there were on a small scale, the result of which was that fish-hooks, whips, and hats of a peculiar style were turned out in abundance, and that a few school books—principally of a geographical nature—were printed in and about English Street. In addition, there were a few

hand-looms producing calicoes and rough cottons by manual industry, but not to such an extent as to deprive Carlisle of the character of a quiet, sleepy old cathedral city, the capital and market town of a large surrounding agricultural district, which was inhabited by old county families who looked down somewhat contemptuously upon their urban neighbours within the walls. Nothing broke the unvarying stillness and monotony of the streets of Carlisle except the weekly Saturday market, when the farmers and their wives for miles round came trooping into the city to dispose of their country produce. Once a year, in August, His Majesty's Justices of Assize (I am speaking of a time long anterior to Queen Victoria's reign) entered the city, escorted by the sheriff and gentlemen of the county, to deliver the gaol of its scanty contingent of criminals, and occasionally to leave some poor wretch to be hanged for murder or horse-stealing, the latter being then a capital offence. At the close of the Assizes, a county ball was invariably held, followed by the annual races, at which all the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood,

accompanied by their wives and daughters, made a point of being present. At the races His Majesty's Plate was always the great event, and the most prominent equipage on the course was Lord Lonsdale's carriage, drawn by four, and in earlier days, by six superb horses. When a Parliamentary election came round, the blues (Liberals) and yellows (Conservatives) met in hostile array, and electors were brought into the town from all parts of the kingdom, and kept there in luxury at the expense of one or other of the candidates, who were expected to disburse at least one thousand pounds every day. The contest generally ended in the return of one member on either side, but the destruction of a vast number of window panes, and the consumption of unlimited quantities of whiskey and beer were good for trade, and caused elections to be regarded with great favour by the inhabitants of Carlisle, which, like other towns of small population endowed with the right to send two members to Parliament, throve upon a general election, as in former times the dwellers on the rugged and iron-bound sea-coast of Cornwall grew fat upon shipwrecks.

The immediate cause of the elder Mr. Peter Dixon's transference from Whitehaven to Carlisle was the death of some members of his wife's family, who were engaged in carrying on a cotton manufacturing business at Langthwaite Mills, Warwick Bridge, near Carlisle, subsequently known as the Warwick Works. The deaths of Richard and John Ferguson, brothers of Mrs. Peter Dixon, left the Langthwaite Mills without any one to conduct them, and in addition Mr. John Ferguson left a large family slenderly provided for, which made it desirable that some one with brains and capital should succeed to the business. Mr. Peter Dixon the elder determined therefore to take to the cotton factory, which had been left like a derelict by his two brothers-in-law; and, assisted by his sons, John, Peter and George (the second of whom was "The Druid's" father), he soon created the new firm of Peter Dixon & Sons, with which the commercial history of Carlisle was for so many years connected.

Of the three above-named sons, Peter was decidedly the ablest and most energetic. At

the age of eighteen he was placed by his father in full charge of the Langthwaite Mills, and thus his association with Warwick Bridge began in 1807, and was continued until he died there, nearly sixty years later. Through early manhood, through middle and married life, and through his long and gentle decline, softened by the tenderness of his disposition, and the affection with which he was universally regarded, he lived a virtuous and unambitious life, dwelling among his own people until at last he was borne to the grave under the shadow of the church which his own pious zeal had raised, and within sight of the beautiful residence at Holme Eden, which he had built for himself in 1840, on a "holme," or meadow, by the banks of the river Eden. "This noble pile" — says the "Handbook to Carlisle" — "is one of the happiest modern efforts in the Tudor or castellated manor house style, its architect being the late Mr. W. C. Dobson, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who was also the architect of St. Paul's Church, at Holme Eden, which Mr. Dixon built and endowed with a sum of £2,500, producing an income of £100 a year.



The house at Holme Eden forms a striking feature in the landscape as the traveller descends the hill from Carlisle to Warwick Bridge."

The situation to which young Peter Dixon succeeded in 1807 was a trying one for a boy in his nineteenth year. A friend who knew him well wrote of him in the following words :—

"Many a one in his situation, and at his age, would have failed and made a mess of it. But Peter stuck manfully to his work. It was a striking instance of early aptitude for business in one so young, to have the sole management of so extensive a concern, with numerous workpeople under him; and doubtless, being thrown mainly on his own resources, he there acquired those habits of energy, decision, self-reliance, and sound judgment which so distinguished him, and contributed to his success in after life.

"He worked hard, and threw his whole soul into his work. He was a grand example to the young men of his day. He was an early riser—the secret of success in life—and every morning, through winter and summer,

he was at the works when they started for the day, seeing that all were at their post, and getting through an hour or two's hard work before breakfast, and before most young men were out of their beds. This practice he continued till late in life, when failing health obliged him to give up the active habits which he had so long and sedulously cultivated.

"There are still some who can call to mind his activity in other pursuits as well as in his business. Some few Volunteers, now 'in the sere, the yellow leaf,' will remember him in the green uniform of the Cumberland Rangers in the time of the war; and here and there an old sportsman will recall his red coat when he hunted with the Inglewood hounds.

"Mr. Peter Dixon early began with his eldest brother, Mr. John Dixon, to take a part in public affairs, and there is hardly an event in the commercial or political history of Carlisle in the present century with which they and the firm to which they belonged were not more or less connected.

"As a politician Mr. Dixon began life as

a supporter of Mr. Pitt, and was a member of the Pitt Club, then established in Carlisle. But after the decease of that distinguished statesman he modified his views, and united himself to the Whig party, especially to those who advocated a reform in the representation, and the removal of all shackles on commerce. There were several circumstances which led to this change of party, though, as Mr. Dixon used to maintain, it was not he so much who had changed his views, as the supporters of Mr. Pitt who had changed theirs, and had ceased to carry out the liberal policy of their leader, who, had he been permitted to live to the termination of the war, would, as Mr. Dixon believed, have been the first to initiate many of those changes or reforms which have since taken place. In truth, it was not surprising that a man of the late Mr. Dixon's character and tone of mind should be an ardent reformer. There were, undoubtedly, many grave abuses both in Church and State, and especially the former, which forcibly affected a mind such as his, and led him to take an active part in their removal. It was under the influence of these

feelings that Mr. Dixon and his brothers associated themselves strenuously with the Reform agitation, which led to the passing of the Reform Act of 1832, and also with the Anti-Corn Law League, which resulted in the repeal of the Corn Laws. In the latter struggle, his firm, and especially his elder brother Mr. John Dixon, took a most prominent part, being leading members of the League.

“Mr. Dixon never introduced any rancorous feelings into politics. He was a good-open-hearted, thorough-going political opponent, but when the contest was over he would shake hands and retain not a trace of bitterness.

“After the passing of the Municipal Reform Act, Mr. Dixon took part for some time in municipal affairs, and was the second Mayor of Carlisle under the new régime. He retired from the Council, however, at the expiration of his year of office, in consequence of a difference of opinion with his constituents and the majority of the Council on the subject of the election of Aldermen—a question on which the universal practice

subsequently adopted throughout England justified the correctness of Mr. Dixon's views. He maintained that it was the proper course, and most in accordance with the intention of the Act, for the Council to elect the most fitting persons as Aldermen from the citizens who were qualified, without reference to whether they were members of the Council or not. It was maintained on the other side that no one should be elected Alderman who had not first gone through the ordeal of a popular election to a seat on the Council Board.

“It was in commercial matters, and in promoting the trade and interests of Carlisle that Mr. Dixon's judgment and ability were most prominently displayed. He was one of the promoters of the Carlisle Canal, for uniting Carlisle to the Solway Firth at Bowness—an undertaking which gave a greater impetus to the trade and prosperity of Carlisle than any other event in its previous history. Unhappily the undertaking was not advantageous to its promoters in a pecuniary point of view, for just as it was beginning to be remunerative and to pay a fair dividend, the introduction of

railways—an event quite unlooked for when the canal was set on foot—knocked it on the head, and diverted its traffic into other channels. Mr. Dixon was the first establisher of steamboats in connection with the canal between Port Carlisle and Liverpool, and was for many years the active and energetic Chairman of the Steamboat Company, formed for that purpose, which proved a highly remunerative concern until railways put a period to its existence. He was also concerned in promoting the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway, forming with the Carlisle Canal a connection between the east and west coasts, and a feeder of traffic to the older undertaking. In connection with the railway he assisted in bringing cheap coal to Carlisle, in conjunction with his brother, Mr. John Dixon, by opening out and working the Blenkinsopp Colliery."

The establishment of which "The Druid's" father was a member, when the cotton manufacture was in its most flourishing state, became a concern of very great extent. In 1835, he and his partners erected their immense cotton mill and works in Shaddongate,

Carlisle, which, with the lofty chimney, upwards of 300 feet high, and designed to carry the smoke clear over the town, form so conspicuous and handsome an object on entering Carlisle from the west. At that time the firm employed thousands of hand loom weavers, scattered over all parts of the north of England, the south of Scotland, and the north of Ireland. In the north of Ireland alone, about 3,000 hands were employed, there being a regular agency at Belfast for managing this part of the business. Before long all this was greatly changed. Handloom weaving was soon superseded by power looms which Messrs. Dixon erected extensively at their works at Carlisle, thus extinguishing the hand loom weavers.

Amidst all the strain, anxiety, and excitement of trade, "The Druid's" father was not unmindful, both for others and himself, of what he called "the better riches." When not actually engaged in business, he took great delight in visiting his workpeople at their homes, looking to their domestic comforts, and imparting to them religious instruction.

On the Sabbath, in the interval of public worship—from which, until his health began to fail him he was never absent—he visited the aged people in the neighbourhood and read and explained to them the Scriptures, while each returning Sunday morning found him superintending his school or in the centre of his own class.

No man is entitled to look for an unbroken course of prosperity, and Mr. Dixon was no exception to the rule. His latter years were crowded with trials and difficulties of various kinds. His eldest son, Mr. Peter Sydenham Dixon, "The Druid's" elder brother, a young man of great steadiness and promise, who took an active part in the management of the business, became afflicted with total blindness, and at last, in 1857, was suddenly cut off by scarlet fever, leaving a widow and young family. About the same time, and indeed for some time previous, Mr. Dixon's own health had begun to fail. A paralytic stroke came on, which at last almost deprived him of speech, besides seriously affecting his general health. At length he was compelled to withdraw wholly from active business, and



for the last six or seven years of his life he never left Holme Eden.

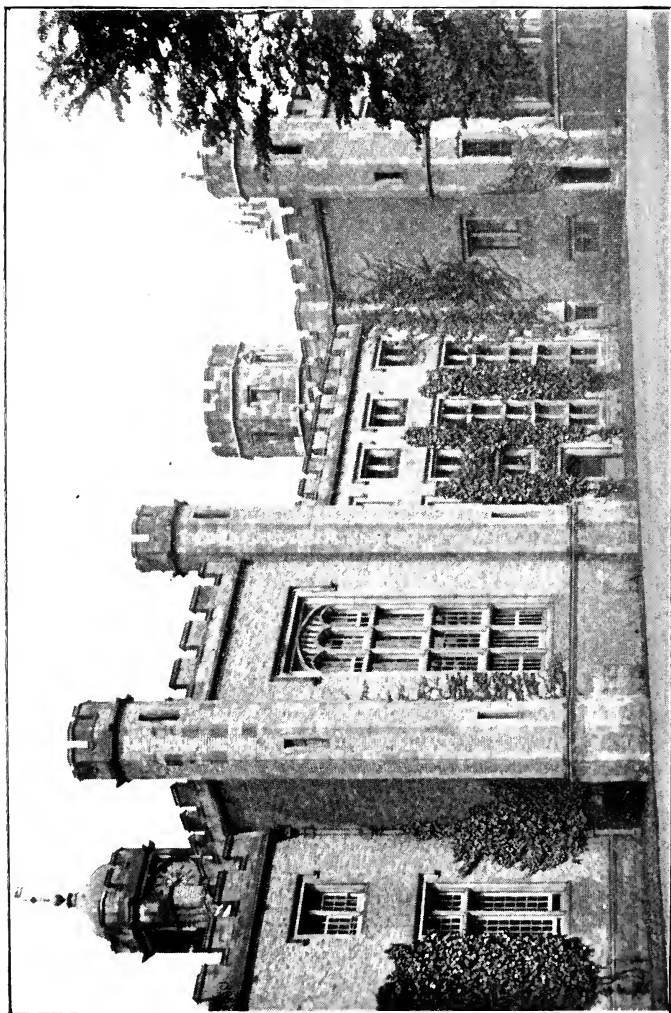
Then came the deaths of friends, and of his own brothers, till he was left the last survivor of a once numerous family, seeing also numbers of his own years remaining hearty and strong whilst he was laid aside, the wreck of his former self. Perhaps, however, these last were his happiest days. Necessarily withdrawn from contact with the outer world, he had time to give his mind more intently than before to the great concerns of the future. The Bible became during the last few years of his life his constant study, and, soothed by the unremitting attentions of his family, his days passed gently away, until on April 28, 1866, the end came.

It will be seen from what I have said that "The Druid's" father was no ordinary man. He combined with great energy and decision of character a remarkable quickness and clearness of judgment, which led his opinion to be greatly deferred to by the other members of the firm. Even to the last his counsel was sought and valued by his partners. In addition, his great heartiness and cheerfulness,

combined with his genuine kindness displayed towards all connected with or dependent on him, made him a general favourite.

He was no public speaker, which led him to take a less prominent part in public affairs than he would otherwise have done. What he had to say, however, expressed in one or two short pithy sentences, was always the outcome of a well-weighed opinion, and was invariably listened to with attention and respect. Mr. Dixon, though he had not, owing to the early age at which he engaged in business, the benefit of the extended education which young men in his position now receive, was a man of considerable and varied information, and having improved his mind by reading and reflection, his conversation was always interesting and instructive, so that he never opened his mouth without saying something worth listening to.





*From a Photo by E. H. Speight, Rugby.*

RUGBY, THE SCHOOL.

## CHAPTER III.

## RUGBY DAYS.



It is worthy of passing remark that the two best sporting writers of the present century were both educated at Rugby School. Very different, however, were the conditions and circumstances which surrounded Charles James Apperley, or "Nimrod," when he entered Rugby in 1790, from those which Henry Hall Dixon, or "The Druid," encountered there when first he passed under the arches of its Elizabethan quadrangle in 1838. In the former year Dr. James wielded, as head master, the instrument from which Horatius Flaccus, the Roman poet, suffered such torments at the hands of "plagosus Orbilius;" in the latter, Dr. Arnold—the greatest and most high-minded schoolmaster that England has ever

seen—presided over the fortunes of Laurence Sheriff's famous foundation until he had set his stamp upon public school education all over the world—a stamp which time will not soon efface. "Nimrod" has left us a spirited sketch of the Rugby of his day, accompanied by well drawn portraits of "Master Langley," landlord of the Spread Eagle Hotel, and of "Old Brummage, of the Black Bear," which reveal that there was no harder drinking school in England. The boys got drunk with impunity, unless the offence was so glaring as to attract notice from some master, who had little alacrity in spying out what he did not want to see, and still less in reporting the culprit to Dr. James, who never failed to flog him unsparingly, without putting an end to the bibulous propensities of his school mates. "Nimrod," and other boys of sporting proclivities, were regular attendants on foot at the meets near Rugby, of the Warwickshire and Pytchley hounds. The school discipline was so lax and education so neglected that the class list at Oxford and Cambridge rarely contained a Rugby name, and Walter Savage

Landor, a contemporary of "Nimrod," has left it on record that, having learnt nothing at Rugby, he was obliged to leave Trinity College, Oxford, without taking his degree.

It was the most fortunate circumstance of "The Druid's" life that the school which he entered in 1838, at the mature age of sixteen, was the best for educational purposes that England or any other country had ever known down to that date. "Those," says Dean Stanley in his celebrated "Life of Dr. Arnold," "who look back upon the state of English education in 1827 must remember how the feeling of dissatisfaction with existing institutions, which had begun in many quarters to display itself, had already directed considerable attention to the condition of public schools. The range of classical reading, in itself confined, and with no admixture of other information, had been subject to vehement attacks from the Liberal party, generally on the ground of its alleged narrowness and inutility; while the more undoubted evil of the absence of systematic attempts to give a directly Christian character to the education of the English gentry, was becom-

ing more and more a scandal in the eyes of religious men, who at the close of last century and at the beginning of this were lifting up their voices strenuously against it. A complete reformation, or a complete destruction of the whole system, seemed to many persons sooner or later to be inevitable. The difficulty, however, of taking the first step, where the alleged objection to alteration was its impracticability, was not easily to be surmounted. The mere resistance to change which clings to old institutions was in itself a considerable obstacle, and in the case of some public schools, from the nature of their constitution, almost insuperable. Whether among those engaged in the existing system, or those most vehemently opposed to it, it must have been extremely difficult to find a man who would attempt, or, if he attempted, carry through, any extensive improvements."

At this juncture Dr. Arnold was elected, in 1827, to the supreme command of a school, which, thus far, although founded in 1567, had made but little mark upon the history of this country. Dr. Arnold's chief aim was to make the boys entrusted to his charge Christian



gentlemen in the first instance, and good scholars in the second. "The business of a schoolmaster," he used to say, "no less than that of a parish minister, is the care of souls." It is impossible to conceive anything which would have filled him with more horror and alarm than the Convention of Head Masters at Merchant Taylors School in December, 1892, at which it was seriously debated whether religion had anything to do with public school education. In opposition to this Pagan theory, Dr. Arnold held that his pupils ought to be treated as boys whom he desired to make fit for growing up to be Christian soldiers. His plan of education, in short, was not so much based on religion, as in itself religious. "He would," writes Dean Stanley, "dwell on the satisfaction he had in being head of a society where noble and honourable feelings were encouraged, or on the disgrace which he felt in hearing of acts of disorder, selfishness, treachery or violence; or, again, on the trust which he placed in the honour of his boys as gentlemen, and the baseness of any instance in which that trust was abused. 'Is this a

Christian school?' he indignantly asked at the end of one of his addresses, in which he had spoken of an extensive display of bad feeling among the boys, and then added, 'I cannot remain here if all is to be carried on by constraint and force; if I am to be here as a gaoler I will resign my office at once.' Few scenes can be recorded more characteristic of him than when on one of these occasions he had been obliged to send away several boys, and when in the midst of the general discontent which this excited he stood in his place before the assembled school and said, 'It is not necessary that this should be a school of four hundred, or three hundred, or even one hundred boys; but it is necessary that it should be a school of Christian gentlemen.'

Perhaps there never came under his fatherly supervision a boy better calculated to derive a lasting advantage from his precepts and example than the hero of this biography. In addition to a romantic and poetical imagination, to a fervid love of his native country and of beautiful scenery, and to a passionate attachment to antiquity,

Henry Dixon possessed a scrupulous regard for truth, a sense of responsibility in all that he undertook, and a simplicity and manliness of character which commended him especially to Dr. Arnold's liking. A great classical, and still less a great mathematical scholar, it was not in Dr. Arnold's power to make out of him. It should be mentioned that as a nine-year-old boy Henry Dixon had a severe attack of ophthalmia, which troubled him off and on for the next six-and-twenty years, often confining him to a darkened room and necessitating complete idleness for a month at a time. The result was that his early education was greatly interfered with, and that instead of entering Rugby at the age of eleven or twelve, he was kept back until his sixteenth birthday had passed. As a Rugby boy he suffered so severely from ophthalmia that for at least one-third of each term passed by him there he was totally disqualified for work, being unable to write a word or read a line.

Like Dr. Arnold himself, Dixon had no aptitude for mathematics, and his taste for classical literature (as he showed subse-

quently in his writings) led him rather to appreciate the beauty of thought enshrined in the Greek and Latin poets than to study the construction and grammatical niceties of the language in which those thoughts were clothed. In all other respects he was a model pupil—one specially framed to win the highest approbation of the great head master whom he served and looked up to with little less than idolatry, and after whom he named one of his sons.

The laws of Rugby School require that if a boy is not in the Sixth Form at eighteen years of age he is compelled to leave. At the close of 1840 Henry Dixon was still in the Twenty—the Form interposed between the upper Fifth and the Sixth. He was born in May, 1822, and had therefore attained his eighteenth birthday some months prior to the Christmas of 1840. Under these circumstances the following letter, addressed by Dr. Arnold to Dixon's father, will speak for itself.—

“ Foxhow, Ambleside,

“ January 1, 1841.

“ DEAR SIR,—I cannot deny myself the

pleasure of writing to you to express my very high opinion of your son's principles and conduct, and my sincere regret that he should have left Rugby without my having had an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with him by his being under my own immediate instruction in the Sixth Form. I was very glad to give him the prize for composition in his Form, and to see the very creditable place which his name holds on the Class Paper. With my sincerest wishes for his future happiness, and hoping that I may not altogether lose sight of him in after life,

“ Believe me to be, dear sir,

“ Very faithfully yours,

“ T. ARNOLD.

“ To Peter Dixon, Esq.,

“ Holme Eden,

“ Carlisle.”

It should be added that before Henry Dixon left Rugby he was requested one morning by Dr. Arnold to accompany him into his study at the School House. Upon that occasion “the Doctor” (as he was always called by his pupils) thanked the youth who stood before him for the support and encour-

agement he had always given by his good example and high principles to the moral elevation of all around him. "I value character and example much more than talent and scholarship," added the famous head master, as he shook hands warmly with the pupil whom he never saw again. It is suggested to me by Mrs. Dixon, who has already out-lived her husband by twenty-four years, that when Dr. Arnold shook hands with Henry Dixon it was not alone the moral but also the physical qualities of the pupil which won the Doctor's commendation. At that time the eighteen-year-old boy was six feet high, and proportionately strong. Rugby has always been noted for the superior running and jumping of its boys, and some of the gates which the best jumpers cleared — notably Cole's gate on the Hillmorton Road — are still pointed out to each generation of new comers as tokens of the athletic prowess and activity of their predecessors. At the time of which I am now writing, Mr. Bonamy Price's house, on the Barby Road, was fortunate in possessing three of the best athletes in the school: to wit, Hodson, subsequently

of Hodson's Horse; Sir Richard Temple, who was Finance Minister of India under Lord Lawrence, and is now a distinguished M.P.; and Henry Dixon. The last named was not very popular with his schoolfellows from his disinclination to join in their games and sports, but they could not refrain from respecting him, when, in order to avoid being incessantly badgered to join in "big side runs," which he detested, he jumped a gate nearly six feet in height, opposite Price's house, and said he would run as often as they pleased if any boy in the school would follow him over that gate. Until quite lately it was still shown with pride under the name of "Dixon's gate"—a name which it bore ever since he cleared it, backwards and forwards, on many occasions. The approach to it from the Barby Road was uphill, and even in recent days, when the records of Mr. M. J. Brooks of Oxford University, who cleared six feet two and a-half inches in 1876; of Mr. P. Davin, who cleared six feet two and three-quarter inches at Carrick-on-Suir in Ireland in 1880; and of Mr. W. Byrd-Page, who cleared six feet four inches in America in the same year,

are enough to provoke widespread amazement, I doubt whether any of the three above named champions would, as an eighteen-year-old boy, have tackled "Dixon's gate" from the Barby Road. A tradition still survives at Rugby that from 1840 until 1880 no boy ever attempted to jump that tremendous obstacle.

I subjoin the following "Random Recollections," written by "The Druid" many years after he had left Rugby.

"RUGBY: ITS SPORTING AND SCHOOL  
RECOLLECTIONS.

"There is an innate love of sporting in the breasts of all Englishmen, which first develops itself in their desperate efforts as infants to imitate the cry of every animal, and makes them in after years

"Gaze from Grand Stands with their hair silver gray,  
And totter 'neath guns till their ankles give way.

"When it is the good luck of boys to have been begotten by a good sportsman, they are often entered to hounds at a very early age,



and sometimes ride with better nerve than at any other period of their lives. I may also add, in confirmation of this, that I never saw boys handle a gun so early or so well as the young Cokes of Norfolk did. Precocious sportsmen of this kind are generally looked on with the deepest reverence by their younger schoolfellows, who accept all their stories, true or legendary, for gospel, and lament the hard fate which may have assigned the direction of their own lot to a matter-of-fact guardian or a serious aunt. Boys, however, seldom take much interest in racing unless they are bred in the very vicinity of a racing stable, and have been accustomed to drink in inspiration from an occasional private view of a 'Yorkshire gallop,' or a 'rattling sweat,' or from hearing a groom relate how some famous trainer's head lad had put him up to a good thing for the Chester Cup or the Derby. When they make their *début* at a public school, their eyes and ears soon begin to get more widely opened. *Bell's Life*, *The Era*, and *The Sporting Magazine*—which high-minded masters of private 'academies' regard, along with Ainsworth's novels, as works

of Belial, and calculated to warp youthful minds from Herodotus and quadratic equations—meet their eye in their 'studies' and on the hall table. They begin to take tickets on the sly in Derby and Leger lotteries, and think that they are already 'fast men' on the strength of the investment.

"It was my fate to be at Rugby in the lamented Dr. Arnold's days. 'Eton gentlemen, Harrow bucks, and Rugby snobs,' had long been a proverbial saying. 'Snobbishness' may be essential to greatness in classical and in other terrestrial pursuits, but it is only fair to say that Charles James Vaughan and Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, two of the most accomplished sons of the sister universities, were, together with Macready and 'Nimrod,' educated at 'this town of thirteen fairs.' When I first went there everything about it was calculated to encourage a sporting taste. Lord Chesterfield was living at Abington Abbey, near Northampton, and hunting the Pytchley in a style I have never seen approached since, and many is the time when I have rushed off after second lesson in the generally visionary hope of seeing his hounds

draw Hillmorton Gorse. Mr. Bradley's stag-hounds were also in full force, and one day I well remember that they collared their stag opposite the school gates, and raced up and down the town with him, until he shook them off by leaping a seven-foot spiked gate without a falter. Steeple-chasing, too, was just becoming all the rage, and the kind-hearted Dr. Arnold being determined that 'the fellows' (as he used to call them) should have no pretext to disobey orders, dispensed with 'calling over' one afternoon, in order to let them see the fun which was going on at Dunchurch. The result of that day may be told by the quotation of a dog-Latin verse from a 'Vulgus' of the next morning in the Fourth Form. The maker of it (now a grave Judge of 'niggers' in the Punjaub), if he reads these words under his fluttering punkah, will no doubt recognise the last spirited pentameter, containing, like a woman's post-script, the gist of the whole matter :—

“ ‘ Lottery primus erat, Nonna secunda fuit,’

which I must translate for the benefit of those who are unaware that, in 1840, the Dunchurch

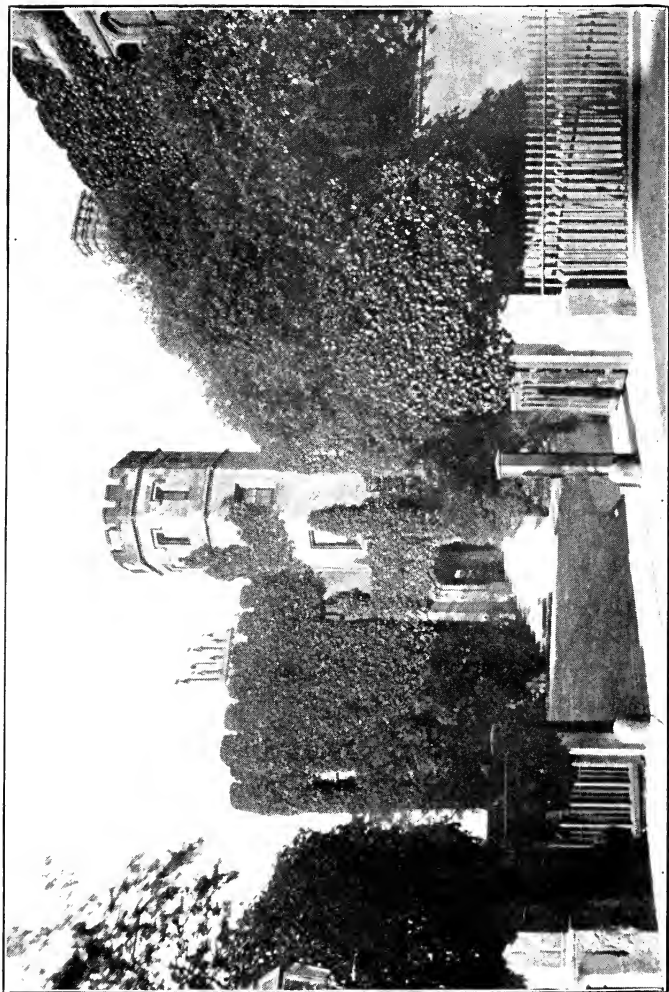
steeplechase ended thus: Mr. Elmore's Lottery (Jem Mason) 1; the Marquis of Waterford's The Nun (Wm. MacDonough) 2. Those were the days when grey 'Cigar' was in his prime, and steeplechase handicapping was unknown, when 'Jem Mason,' prince of riders, was winning everywhere, over fences either natural or artificial, from the Liverpool Grand National to the Bayswater Hippodrome Prize. At Dunchurch, Mason's riding was, as usual, superb, and as he and the late hapless William MacDonough jumped into the corner of the winning field at the same moment, I could not help contrasting the ridge and furrow selected by the latter, with the cool judgment displayed by Jem Mason, who galloped along the bottom ridge till he reached the one running up directly between the flags, and then setting the old brown gelding going in earnest, just passed The Nun a couple of lengths from the winning post. The recovery of his horse by this brilliant rider, as he bungled in jumping a hurdle at the Bayswater Hippodrome, was one of the finest pieces of horsemanship I ever remember; in fact, I have seen it equalled but once,

and that was when Allan MacDonough was riding his own horse, Sir William, over a gate into a lane, in the Cheltenham steeplechase. But I must hark back. When steeplechases became general, Rugby, as a matter of course, could not rest without one of its own, the town standing £15 and the Rugby boys £15, to the sincere mortification of their head master, who contrasted the amount mournfully with the solitary sixpences and pennies which found their way into the alms box of the chapel, along with innumerable buttons and 'orders for £1,000,' upon the 'Bank of Elegance.' Races within reach there were none, and the only time I ever saw young blood stock in the town was when a locomotive ran into a horse box, which was conveying two of the Marquis of Westminster's young things from his stud farm at Rickmansworth to John Scott, his trainer's, quarters at Whitewall, in Yorkshire. The steam scalded them dreadfully, and they were brought to the Rugby Inn, to be placed under a Veterinary Surgeon. A more painful sight cannot be imagined, as the skin was burnt off in large patches as well as

the hair. One, a black filly, soon died, but the brown colt recovered (almost as unexpectedly as 'Resurrection,' who, when a foal, was thrown on to a dung-hill for dead, and revived from the heat), and was christened Auckland. He subsequently won a few races, disputing with Belgrade the honour of being placed third to Attila in the Derby. The old Marquis did not omit to send in a claim against the company for £3,000, which I believe was immediately paid.

"The school fights were conducted in an unique fashion, and were strictly forbidden to take place in private. The consequence was, that boys mostly had to sleep upon their valorous determination to fight on the morrow, and found themselves wonderfully cooled by the end of 'first lesson.' If, however, sleep had not acted as a sedative, eight o'clock was the appointed hour for the tournament. An immense ring was formed near the school chapel, and the windows of the adjacent houses on the Dunchurch road were as full as those of Water Terrace, overlooking Horsemonger Lane Gaol, when Mrs. Manning gratified the gaze of Charles





*From a Photo by E. H. Spaight, Rugby.]*

RUGBY, ENTRANCE TO HEAD MASTER'S HOUSE.



Dickens, who was picking up a little 'character' under the gallows for his 'David Copperfield.' At the end of ten minutes, or less, a tall figure was generally seen hastily issuing from the little door of the turret which flanked the head master's house, and opened into 'The Close.' 'The Doctor! the Doctor!' rang from every tongue; combatants and spectators rushed from the spot, and the belligerent pair were forbidden to fight again. As just sufficient time had been given them to find out which was the better man, a respect for each other's prowess often produced a fast friendship; and, owing to this admirable system, few fights came off in a half-year, to the great disgust of the resident juvenile 'Fancy.'

"During the horse fairs, it was our delight to interview the thoroughbred stallions, such as Belzoni and Mazeppa, which travelled about the country for the benefit of the farmers. Lord Westminster's famous sire, Pantaloon, had not as yet been hired by Lord John Scott to stand at Cawston Paddocks, where afterwards he became so distinguished. It was at a much later date that

I made acquaintance with him, and with his faithful custodian, Hemming, stud groom to Lord John Scott, whom I understand that Matthew Dawson prefers to all the other masters whom he has served in his long career.

“Let us revert, now, to more strictly boyish amusements than horse racing. For ‘big side runs,’ in which boys in the Upper School were almost compelled to join, I never had much liking, and generally declined to take part in them, although well aware that my refusal made me unpopular with my fellows. But I took the greatest delight, when free from ophthalmia, in ‘big side jumping,’ although to this day my joints warn me of the severity of the strain to which I subjected them in jumping high gates, and plunging into brooks which were too wide for me or anyone else of my age to clear. ‘Hare and hounds’ was also a very popular pastime with many, and the hares had special orders, when they pulled up at some well-known public house after they had completed their twelve-mile circuit, to prepare plenty of bread and cheese and home-brewed

beer for the hungry and thirsty hounds, who seldom succeeded in catching the hares. I remember that the newly appointed rural police thought that it was part of their duty (which, indeed, the farmers represented it to be) to apprehend either the hares or the hounds for trespassing upon private grounds, and breaking down fences. These worthies, however, had but a poor chance of catching boys in prime condition and able to stand a ten or twelve mile gallop without flinching. When the guardians of the peace found that they were not fleet enough to catch the delinquents, they had recourse to all kinds of Ulyssean stratagems, such as hiding behind hedges or barn-ends to lay hands upon some stray offender. If by chance one was ever captured, no policeman that I ever heard of was proof against receiving a quart of beer in exchange for a release.

“One of the most amusing incidents during my Cambridge career, which I cannot refrain from hanging on to my Rugby reminiscences, was the announcement which thrilled the University in the year when Attila won the Derby, that a couple of prize-fighters,

called Johnny Broome and Bungaree (an Australian) were about to settle their differences in the fistic ring at Six Mile Bottom, not far from Newmarket. Upon hearing this alarming news the Tutor of one of the largest Colleges at Cambridge determined to prevent the University men under his charge from attending this pugilistic encounter. Accompanied by a few other Dons, whom he had pressed into the service, he took up a position at the 'Paper Mills Toll Bar,' between Cambridge and Newmarket, and pouncing upon every man belonging to his College who rode up to the toll bar, requested him to take his ride in another direction. The moral triumph of the Dons was short-lived. One or two of the acutest of them soon observed that the clothes of the 'countrymen' and 'grooms' who jogged along the road on Cambridge hacks did not seem made to order, and that the slang in which they addressed each other savoured more of London and of the classics than of high-pitched Suffolk. Perceiving that it was all a plant, they resigned their disciplinary task in despair. Nevertheless, one of the most

distinguished of them, zealous for the welfare of his erring pupils, would not be baffled, and pushed his clever bay nag on to Newmarket. There, after he had been sufficiently bewildered by the betting hullabaloo in the High Street, he reached the 'ropes and stakes' of the prize ring in safety. With a desperate hope of seizing and admonishing some of his young men, he got a countryman to hold his horse, invested a fractional part of his Fellowship receipts in an inner circle ticket, stuck it in his hat, and placed himself next to the cords. His position here was one of no ordinary tribulation. Three times was his hat knocked over his eyes by disguised undergraduates; a pick-pocket's long-haired child, who was on active duty that day among his elders, and whom from parental instinct the kind-hearted Don innocently endeavoured to protect, took a fancy to his silk handkerchief; and the 'roughs' pressed upon him sore, and used considerably stronger language towards 'Old White-choker' than that in which Demosthenes defied the Macedonian. He was especially annoyed, to boot, with the polite

attentions of a 'cad' in very *outré* raiment, who insisted upon following him about from place to place in the ring, and upon calling his particular attention to the style of Broome's hitting. Little did he think that his tormentor was a Junior Fellow of his own College, who, when his classical honours were attained, became, and still is, a capital farce writer and on the editorial staff of *Punch*. The fight drew to a close without giving poor 'White-choker' a chance of spying out a single pupil, and at last he regained his horse and fled as swiftly as did Dominie Sampson from the presence of Meg Merrilies. Added to this a sporting paper, in its next number, gravely announced that 'Among the members of the fancy present we observed the Rev. Dr. ——, who seemed to take the deepest interest in the proceedings.' His troubles did not, however, end here, as his brother Fellows, unwilling to let the joke die, informed him in the 'Common-room' that Bungaree was dead, and that as he, a well-known University dignitary, had been present aiding and abetting, he would of course be included among the persons in-

dicted for manslaughter. For many days he knew no peace, and took it as a personal insult when a sporting Fellow Commoner—who figures in that well-known picture, ‘Herring’s Steeple Chase Cracks’—gravely requested his opinion, conjointly with that of the Senior Dean, during dinner in Hall, as to whether he ‘should finally stand on Cotherstone for the Derby.’ The ‘participation in such a disgraceful scene by the children of parental Granta’ (as one of the Dons remarked) led to a crusade against pugilism in Cambridge, and no more Sambo Suttons and ‘Deaf Burkes’ were found enjoying suppers in College or opening sparring-rooms. It transpired that Sambo had wheedled several Undergraduates into standing part of his stake for a match in which he cut up as soft as a Cambridge ‘butter-yard.’ At last the University promulgated its ukase against ‘professors of the fistic art,’ and Cambridge no longer remained the favourite haunt of ‘Deaf Burkes.’ That worthy’s conversation, it must be admitted, was remarkably droll and dry, and although he was guiltless of spelling and incapable of reading, his head

was so hard that a Damascus blade would have been blunted by it. His great theme was his old patron, 'the Marquis,' and he would often remark with the greatest solemnity of manner while sipping his punch, 'Gintlemen, I *have* been *oncommon kind* to that young man; I used to drive him in my gig and teach him to foight.' The acme, however, of the sporting Cambridge man's delight, was a ride over to Newmarket during the Meetings. As a general thing Undergraduates bet very little, and then not very successfully unless they have some cautious 'old bird' at their elbow. They are pretty constant on all the good days during the season, and it is amusing to see them disappear, like a regular squadron of dark-coated cavalry, through the gate by the Ditch Stables about half-past three, in time to get marked before a quarter to five in Hall. On the Two Thousand day 'missing Hall' is winked at by the Dons, and men who have not a thought during the year beyond the Triposes and the University Scholarships, cut Hopkins and all the other Tutors and take a place in a drag for Newmarket. While



Gorhambury Races were in existence in 1842, some Cambridge men, hearing that the sister University intended to have a very slap-up drag there, went to great expense to get up a rival coach, in order to cut out their Oxonian contemporaries."

A somewhat different version of the above transactions is given by Judge Thomas Hughes, Q.C., in his proslution upon Rugby School, which appeared in the *English Illustrated Magazine*, in 1891. After mentioning that in the reign of Dr. John Wooll, which ended in 1827, many "big fellows" at Rugby owned beagles and went out shooting in the neighbouring woods, fields, and coverts—their shooting being almost without exception poaching—and that others who were bibulously disposed had private cellars in their studies, Judge Hughes proceeds to state that when Arnold succeeded to Wooll he found Rugby "as rough and turbulent a place of higher education as ever fell to the lot of any man to take in hand." Judge Hughes is justly and contemptuously indignant at the ignorant and impertinent comments made by a writer in the *Scots Ob-*

*server* of August 23rd, 1890, to the effect that "Arnold had been considered a bug-bear and a nuisance by many generations of Rugby boys, as he combined with divers excellencies the weakness of being a prig, and the breeder of prigs—the sort of person, in short, whom prigs of all succeeding ages will be lamentably prone to deify." It would be about as correct to call Dr. Arnold "a prig" as to denounce Mr. Gladstone as an idle man. It has been my fortune to see a great deal of active hostilities as Special War Correspondent of two great London daily newspapers, and I have often regretted that Dr. Arnold was not born a soldier, for in all his writings, and especially in his "History of Rome," his Edition of Thucydides, and his "Lectures on Modern History," there are abundant indications that he would have made one of the most accomplished and successful Generals that these islands ever produced. Apart from other noble qualities, a manlier, simpler, more unaffectedly sincere and guileless man than Dr. Arnold never drew the breath of life, and the one quality which, above all others, distin-

guished him was the possession, in the highest degree, of masculine common-sense. It is, therefore, an insult to all the old "Rugs." who knew Dr. Arnold well, and now worship his memory, that an anonymous Scotch "ink-slinger"—the American phrase is singularly applicable to ignorant writers of this reckless class—who never saw Dr. Arnold, should presume to brand the greatest school-master that ever lived and his pupils as "prigs." Turning from "this noteless blot on a remembered name," let me resume my quotations from Judge Hughes's interesting article. Thus he writes:—

"I never could quite ascertain how the beagles and guns were put down, but from hints let drop by old Thomas, the head porter at the School-house and the Doctor's right hand man, I believe it to have been in this way. Every boy had a spending home (as it was called) at one of the confectioners in High Street, where he left his books, bat, fishing rod, and other like articles, to save a journey backwards and forwards to his boarding house, and where he spent his spare cash. It was in the back yards of

these houses that dogs and guns were kept, and Thomas quietly intimated to the keepers of each that any house harbouring either dog or gun would at once be made 'out of bounds'—a penalty involving almost certain ruin. The cure was perfect. In all my time there was no dog kept that I ever heard of, and only one gun, a double-barrelled sporting rifle, which had been given to its owner by a returned Indian uncle, and which it took him all his time to hide away."

Dr. Arnold found it more difficult, however, to deal with the horse-loving section of boy-sportsmen. Rugby is situated in the middle of a fine hunting country, and at Dunchurch, three miles away, there were large livery stables at which hunters and hacks could be hired. Moreover, the little town itself was full of sporting inns, where horses of all kinds were held in high honour, and sporting pictures hung upon every wall. It was a steeple-chasing age, and many a study (by which name the tiny rooms assigned to Rugby boys in every boarding house were known) had pictures of such famous steeple-chasers as Vanguard and

Cigar, Gaylad and Vivian, the Switcher and Lottery, finishing, after four miles across country, at Worcester, Newport Pagnell, or St. Albans. It will be readily understood that there was no lack of Rugby boys with a decided turn for horse-racing and cross country sports, and Judge Hughes refers specially to one boy who was with him at the School-house, and who was notorious for boasting about his horsemanship. This young braggart offered to ride against any other boy over four miles of fair hunting country, and at last was taken up by Mr. Uvedale Corbett, who is now a well-known Cheshire squire. Mr. Corbett chose for his mount a chestnut horse famous for his jumping powers, who belonged to a Rugby inn-keeper named Chater. The challenger had to put up with a bay horse, the property of another publican, who was known to be very fast, but an uncertain fencer. The race came off before a select circle of boys "in the know," with the result that the challenger was beaten, to his own infinite mortification. He attributed his defeat to the vast superiority of Chater's horse; whereupon Corbett

offered to change horses, and ride the match over again after dinner. Of course the story that another match was about to come off got wind at dinner, and there was a strong muster in the field below Bilton Church to see the start. The race was a point-to-point gallop from Bilton Church to Newbold Steeple, and the course pursued by the riders crossed the London and Birmingham Railway, which at that time was in course of construction, and had been marked out by Mr. Robert Stephenson, C.E., with stiff post and rails on each side. At this point many lower boys were assembled, in the hope that the School-house champion, who was a notorious bully, might come to grief. The rider of Chater's chestnut took the lead, and was first over every fence. His opponent waited steadily, never allowing his horse to refuse, which he had done repeatedly in the first race. In this manner they jumped into the last field, adjoining Newbold Church, with the chestnut still leading and the bay lying at his quarters. Then Uvedale Corbett called upon the latter, and passed his rival without an effort, winning easily by half-a-dozen lengths.

Everyone expected that there would be a row on the following morning, as it seemed certain that the Doctor would hear all about the match. Nothing, however, happened, and consequently the riding fraternity became so elated that they resolved to have a big race, for which there were several entries. Horses were supplied by the stables at Dunchurch, and the intending riders, accompanied by the umpires, were actually walking over the proposed course when the Doctor's tall form was seen stalking across a neighbouring field. He passed close to a knot of boys, who saluted him in the usual fashion by touching their hats, but had no occasion to shirk, as they all belonged to the Sixth or Fifth Forms. That evening, however, Corbett was sent for by the Doctor, who addressed him in much the following words:—

“Corbett, I know all about the match you rode the other day, and had I taken public notice of it I must have expelled you both. This would have greatly damaged your own prospects at Oxford, where you have just matriculated; but I have written to your father to tell him of your flagrant breach of

discipline, and have now this further warning to add. I know what you and your friends are intending, and shall expel every one who rides and every one who looks on. For this purpose, I will have the roads strictly watched." Needless to say no steeple-chase came off, and none was ever attempted again.

A few weeks later, there was a Grand National Steeple-chase at Dunchurch, with which, except as spectators, the Rugby boys had nothing to do. How did Dr. Arnold, the "master-prig" of the Scottish calumniator, deal with this untimely incident? It will be observed from the following letter written by Arthur Hugh Clough to Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, subsequently Dean of Westminster, that the version given in it differs slightly from that of "The Druid." Clough writes:—

"I went with Arnold's two youngest sons to a grand steeple-chase which took place near Dunchurch. The Doctor very wisely and indulgently altered the hour of calling over, and took off the Dunchurch prohibition for the day, so at least nine-tenths of



the School went there ; indeed I don't know that more than from twelve to twenty were absent. As soon as Arnold left the School-house hall at dinner (he just comes in, you remember, to hear the names called over), the whole house, with the exception of myself and seven others, started off, leaving their dinners and the empty tables behind them. Ten minutes later we were all off, except three, after them. The most remarkable animal there was the Marquis of Waterford, who was riding his own horse in jockey attire. Lee, master of the Fifth Form, set a vulgus on the subject, and among other curiosities had the following verse sent up to him, 'Primus erat Vivian, Jerry secundus erat.'"

"The Druid's" account of this memorable line is that it ran, "Lottery primus erat, Nana secunda fuit." It is possible, of course, that there were two steeple-chases at Dunchurch, in the first of which Vivian and Jerry were the two leading horses, and another, six or seven years later, in which Lottery and the Nun occupied the same positions. I have a distinct recollection of seeing the last-named

steeple-chase, in which Lottery was ridden by Jem Mason, and the Nun, by William McDonough; and this was, doubtless, the race at which "The Druid" was also present. It must be added that "The Druid" was some years younger than Clough, who was head of the School when "The Druid" and I were only fags.

It remains for me now to notice the fishing difficulty, which was the hardest nut that the Doctor had to crack. It was well known, according to Judge Hughes, that the School paid a good rent for the fields on the Rugby side of the Avon, and assumed that this included the right to net the river. This was disputed by the owner of the opposite bank, Mr. Boughton Leigh, and many squabbles arose between his keepers and the Rugby boys. At last a keeper tried to seize the nets, and the boys ducked him in the river. Complaints were at once addressed to Dr. Arnold, who appealed to his Sixth Form Præpostors to give up the names of the culprits. Nothing, however, came of it until at last the keeper stood outside the big school at calling over time, and easily identified five

of his assailants, who were then and there expelled. "After fifty years," adds Judge Hughes, "their names may safely be given: Rose - Price, Torkington, Wynniatt, and Peters, Cock of the School, and another I have forgotten, unless it was Gaisford, son of the Dean of Christ Church. A tremor ran through the School as Oswell, handsomest and most renowned of athletes, passed out and was not recognised. He stayed on some two years more, accomplishing, before he left, a feat which I can scarcely credit now, though I saw it done myself. This was the throwing of a cricket ball from the little side ground over the elm trees into the School-house garden. George Parr, the famous professional, threw a ball some years later a hundred yards each way; but I am convinced that Oswell could have beaten him. He, however, was then in Africa with Livingstone, shooting elephants, and sharing the ivory with the great missionary. After this crisis there was no more netting, but the suppressed fire of the disputed fishing rights still smouldered on, and was the cause of many a flogging all through Arnold's reign."

## CHAPTER IV.

## CAMBRIDGE DAYS AND EARLY MARRIED LIFE.



FROM Rugby Henry Dixon went, in 1841, to Trinity College, Cambridge; but there is nothing to show, so far as I am able to ascertain, that his partiality for horse-racing was acquired, as has so often been the case, from the proximity of Cambridge to Newmarket. At College his life was very studious and retired; so much so, indeed, as to justify the remark made long subsequently by "Argus" of the *Morning Post*, that Henry Dixon was "as shy as a woodcock." His predilections were in favour of the Classics, and, as I have already said, he had no taste or faculty for shining in Mathematics. Unfortunately the same deadly foe—ophthalmia—which had marred his Rugby career, interfered not a

little with his work at Cambridge, where he was haunted by perpetual regret that he had not been permitted to matriculate at Oxford, rather than at the head-quarters of Mathematics. To this, however, his father would not consent, as Oxford was at that time infected with the High Church doctrines of Dr. Newman and Dr. Pusey. Under these discouraging circumstances Henry Dixon addressed himself to the uncongenial task of preparing to pass for his mathematical degree. It cost him no ordinary effort, and in the end he had to content himself with the humble place of "wooden spoon." This degradation, as he regarded it, preyed on his sensitive mind; but the prospect of doing himself more credit in Classics and retrieving his comparative failure in Mathematics buoyed him up with hope and eager expectation. At this critical moment he made an offer of marriage to the young lady who subsequently became his wife, and was met in the first instance with a refusal. Miss Caroline Lynes, third daughter of Thomas Lynes, Esq., of Hackleton House, Northampton, had long been the object of his

affections, but with characteristic modesty he had said and done little to reveal to her the true sentiments of his heart. Both were very young, and her refusal, although natural under the circumstances, inflicted upon him a blow which was more than he could stand. His health suffered to such an extent that brain fever ensued, and on the morning when the classical examination commenced, he was unable to leave his bed. On recovering, he applied for permission to be examined in Classics, and was told that the mathematical degree through which he had contrived to shave, was sufficient to make him a B.A., and precluded a further attempt in another field wherein he would doubtless have achieved some distinction. The disappointment cast a cloud over his after-life, and depressed his spirits whenever his mind reverted to his College days. Upon further acquaintance with him Miss Caroline Lynes was induced to change her mind, and to accept the offer which she had previously declined. They were married (as will be seen from the next chapter) in May, 1847. At that time Henry Dixon's father was still

a prosperous manufacturer in Carlisle, and it might have been anticipated that the son would have embarked upon the same business. He was, however, the second son, and so far back as 1837, when he was only fifteen years old, his father had called upon him to designate the profession which he would prefer to follow. The subjoined answer, which is above the ordinary mark of a boy of his age, shows that at that time his desire was to become a Barrister :—

“ Skelton,

“ November 10, 1837.

“ MY DEAR FATHER, — As Mr. Dayman [his schoolmaster at that time] has very unexpectedly determined to visit you on Monday, and you specially desired to receive my answer, I must ask you to excuse a much more hurried letter than I would otherwise have written. The question propounded to me in your letter of the 3rd inst., is one of the extreme importance of which I am fully convinced, and I will endeavour to speak as explicitly as the somewhat limited consideration which I have hitherto given to the subject will warrant. With respect to the

study of the law, nothing has intervened since the subject was last named, to induce me to alter the wish I then expressed; and, as far as I can judge, provided that no serious obstacle opposes itself, I may truly say that the profession of a Barrister is the one which I would wish, if possible, to follow. Of the hard work and close application which is required for such a profession, I am fully aware, and I trust I will not be found wanting in the necessary qualifications when put to the test. With regard to the College, I have of course nothing fresh to add; in fact, I imagine this will be fixed between Mr. Dayman and yourself. Christ Church seems to be the one he most strongly recommends, as best suiting my line of study. I hope you will excuse brevity, as my watch warns me that I have encroached far beyond my usual hour of rest. With love to my mother and all at home,

“ Believe me to be

“ Your affectionate son,

“ HENRY DIXON.”

Marriage and its responsibilities appear to have reconciled him to the profession of an



Attorney, and he and his young wife took up their abode in Doncaster in 1847. It would have been impossible to select a position or circumstances better calculated to foment the taste for horse-racing and country life which must undoubtedly have been innate in "The Druid's" breast. Doncaster, with its rich traditions as a sporting centre; with its Turf Tavern and adjoining paddocks, then presided over by Mr. Bowe, who had formerly been employed by Lord George Bentinck as the nominator of many of his racehorses; with its annual race meeting; with its historical 'Town Moor; and finally, with the attraction presented by it as the residence of a sporting writer of no ordinary capacity, in the person of Mr. James White, who contributed to the *Doncaster Gazette* under the name of "Martingale," was pretty certain to inoculate the young articed clerk with that abounding love for field sports which afterwards bore such rich fruit. Doncaster had, in addition, been the home, shortly before that time, of Mr. J. F. Herring, the celebrated horse painter, who came there an unknown stranger from London, in 1814. Fortunately he had

taken a few lessons in painting before leaving London, and as he passed along the High Street at Doncaster in search of work, he saw a rough country practitioner attempting to paint an equestrian portrait of the Duke of Wellington on the panel of a new coach, called "The Commander-in-Chief." Herring offered to take the brush from his predecessor's bungling hand, and was so successful that the coach-builder immediately engaged him at three pounds a week to paint panels and signs. Before long his fame began to be talked about in the neighbourhood, and some hunting squires and yeomen gave the young artist commissions to paint their favourite horses; but it was as a portrayer of thoroughbreds that his great renown was ultimately gained. For nearly forty years he continued to paint every successive St. Leger winner, and ended by being appointed Horse Painter to the Prince Consort about the time when "The Druid" first made his acquaintance.

I should mention that before embarking upon the career of a professional painter, Mr. Herring tried his hand on the box of

the "London and York Highflyer," in order better to learn the business of painting horses. He held the reins as coachman for about three years, beginning in 1818, and throwing them aside in 1821, when Mr. T. O. Powlett's Jack Spigot won the St. Leger. This was the first of Herring's St. Leger winners, and also the first of Bill Scott's many triumphs in Yorkshire's greatest race. Mr. J. B. Muir, the most indefatigable of delvers in the mines of the past, has lately exhumed the additional fact that Jack Spigot was trained at Middleham, by J. Blades, Mr. Powlett's private trainer. Here let me turn to "The Druid's" pages ("Scott and Sebright," pages 85-91), for a description of Mr. J. F. Herring's declining years, which were passed at Meopham, near Tonbridge in Kent, where "The Druid" visited him and recorded his experience in the following words:—

"'Him go vip, vip, vip; vot he know about horses?' said a jealous old artist, when Herring, the well-known coachman of the 'London and York Highflyer,' had thrown aside the reins in Jack Spigot's year, and

fairly cast in his lot with the mahl-stick. I thought of the saying as, under the guidance of 'Sailor Jack,' another of the North Road men who had followed Mr. Herring's fortunes, and then looked after his Arabs, we bowled over the three miles from Tonbridge to Meopham Park. Even in the tender sunshine of a May morning, the hop fields with their countless wigwams of poles wore a very dreary air, and made us long for the autumn, when their rich green clusters will once more claim to be Barley Brides. The carriage-drive shaded by oaks with large fantastic arms, which would have made Parson Gilpin of the New Forest gaze for a moment and then rush for relief to his pencil, is kept in faultless 'Quicksilver mail order,' as a memento of the old whip days. Scarcely a wheel has touched it since Charles Herring was borne over it in 1856 to his grave, and it is really sacred to his memory. And well it may be, as a better son or a more skilful lover of art for his years never passed to his rest. White and red rosebuds just bursting into bloom, clustered round the verandah, and from it the outline of the pleasant woods of Penshurst, which

“ ‘ Heard the sounds of Sydney’s song,  
Perchance of Surrey’s reed,’

was just visible in the drowsy distance. Partridges were feeding on the lawn, and scarcely caring to rise on the wing, or run behind the purple beech at your approach ; and the deep coo of the wood-pigeons as they perched on the Scotch and silver firs, which towered above the thickly interlaced grove of holly and laburnum, vocal with its songs of spring, was all in harmony with a painter’s home.

“ Jack, the thirty-seven inch pony, was free to range where he liked, and he mounted the steps of the front-door and walked gravely into the room, in search of his gingerbread, or to inquire if he was wanted for the basket that day. Favourite as he is, I did not meet with him on canvas, and in this respect he differs widely from the white Arab Imaum, of which the story goes that he has not been seen to lie down for at least eight years. He sleeps leaning against his stall, and like the oldest Alderney, and the donkey which runs unicorn in the bush-harrow and roller team, and wins half the saddles in the

neighbourhood when so disposed, he is on canvas all the world over, in nearly a hundred positions. Sometimes an Ironside stables him in a cathedral nave, or he waits for some boisterous Cavalier hard by an ale-house bench. He was one of the four first horses that was ever sent over by the Imaum of Muscat to Her Majesty; and was made a present to the Clerk of the Royal Stables, who sold him at Tattersall's. When it became necessary to have a model for the dead horses which Mr. Herring was to have introduced into the Battle of Waterloo at the Gallery of Illustration, he sent for Pedro, a black man from Batty's Circus, and had the Arab taught to lie down. With a few lessons he became so complete a trick horse, that Pedro declared he wanted nothing but youth to beat the Bedas, and other time-honoured pets of the horse ballet, quite out of the field. He looks pecky, and worn now, and his tricks have rather departed from him; but in his prime, Mr. Herring was followed by a gentleman into a yard in Piccadilly, and had two hundred guineas bid for him there and then. In spite of the

prejudice against the Arabs, he was wonderfully stout, and when his master drove him from Camberwell to Stevenage and back, about seventy-five miles in one day, to paint *The Switcher* and other steeple-chase cracks for Lord Strathmore, he was fresher than the English black, who was in the phaeton by his side, and had never shirked his work by comparison before. Her Majesty, hearing of Mr. Herring's severe asthma, which for some time quite disabled him from leaving home, sent down three of her horses for him to paint. They included *Korseed*, a white Arab, *Bagdad*, a black charger which belonged to the late Prince Albert, and *Said*, the Arab on which Mr. Meyer instructed the Royal children. The latter is among the Osborne collection, with a background of white land and Arab tents, in the composition of which Mr. David Roberts, R.A., gave Mr. Herring the advantage of all his Eastern lore.

“The painting-room almost adjoins the stable, but it has been little used since his son's death. A model of a coach in a case rests upon some packing boxes, and the

original sketch of the picture which he took of the beautiful Attila, just before the Derby winner went abroad, is the only tenant of the easel, but the sketch, like that fatal journey, was never completed.

“Mr. Herring was then about sixty-seven, or just the mean in age between his old friends, John and William Scott. Doncaster and its Town Moor associations naturally whetted his zeal for the brush long before he took to it as a profession, and many a horse and mail-coach sketched by him crept on to tavern walls and sign-posts. His earliest anatomy study was the fractured leg of Spartan, one of whose small bones near the pastern was completely pulverised by his break-down; and Smolensko and Comus were the racers on which his ‘prentice hand’ was tried.

“A gigantic ‘Horse Fair’ adorns the lobby, which is, as Mr. Herring’s pictures invariably are, ‘all daylight.’ The Mail is again in requisition, following in the wake of a gig whose horse trots right out of the picture, and whose driver casts a glance at the troops of nags and stallions which are



dispersing to their stalls when business is over. All kinds have mustered there, and the supply of ginger-bread nuts in the drawer must have been unlimited. Then we get among the eight-day waggons and a pair of the 'blue jacket and white hat line,' stopping for refreshment at one of the old road-side inns near the orthodox trough and tree. Wood-piling and hop-picking are not forgotten. It seems that there is a family in the neighbourhood who especially pride themselves on the former accomplishment; and accordingly, at half-past six one summer morning, Mr. Herring sallied out and caught them by appointment just at the most picturesque crisis, when the timber is slung aloft, and the truck is being backed under it. In the other, the artist in a straw hat with a black ribbon and mahogany tops, plays 'Farmer Oldfield,' and does not look, as he gazes complacently at the fast-filling bins, as if the iron of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was piercing his soul. The jaunty ribbons and tunics of the hop-pickers blend very prettily with the green avenues which they are ruthlessly rifling, and the farmer's daughter with her bonnet carelessly tossed

back is taking the tally as the widow brings up her bin to be measured.

"At that time Mr. Herring painted in his dining-room, which was hung all round with prints from his works, of which 'Distinguished Members of the Temperance Society' was the premier. It is there that he loved to grapple with the Giant Fore-shortening, who has given the cross-buttock to so many, flinging him in picture after picture. Leading lines have always been his great guide for perspective, and he invariably works from left to right. His great racing pictures were generally got by the aid of a sketch-book, with ideal horses, which a few strokes from life at the post convert into portraits. Of Vision he had no sight at all, but sketched her years after her death, merely from the description of Will Beresford, who pronounced the likeness perfect. All the elder heroes arrested my attention as I turned from a gigantic Dutchman\* in full gallop and scanned the oil treasures of his portfolio. Sultan was there, with his beautiful Arab head and dish nose, not more

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\* Now in the Earl of Rosebery's collection at The Durdans.

beautiful, but more masculine in its expression than Attila's. Langar's was another of the glorious heads, and so were Dr. Syntax's, Mameluke's, Partisan's, and Venison's, with his deep jowl and tapering nose. Mr. Herring considered that the coarsest thoroughbred horse he ever painted was Ardrossan, the sire of Jack Spigot (the first of his St. Leger winning series), as his neck was really heavier than even Stubbs's sketch of the Godolphin Arab; and Welbeck, the sire of the neat little Bedlamite, ranks nearly as high in his list of the Ugly Club.

“Next I came across the original sketch of Bay Middleton, just as it was left about a quarter of a century ago. It occupied only one hour and ten minutes, but looks like the work of a whole day. No horse impressed Mr. Herring more firmly than this son of Sultan with the belief that he had the heart and muscular energy to do what he liked with his fields. George Villiers, Fifth Earl of Jersey, stood by the easel watching every stroke as it was dashed in; and seldom had painter a higher stimulus to bring all his power into his hand.”

It will be readily believed that "The Druid's" residence at Doncaster and the atmosphere of horse-racing in the midst of which he lived, were eminently calculated to develop and increase the taste for the Turf which, as I have said, must have been born in him as a natural instinct. To use his own words, it was at Doncaster that "he was bitten by the tarantula of horse-racing"; that he found constant opportunities of making acquaintance, not only with trainers and jockeys, but also with those gnarled and rugged bits of horsey character with which Yorkshire and its race-courses abounded about that period, and which the all-assimilating railway has now destroyed. Messrs. Baxter, the Solicitors to whom he was articulated, were bigoted Tories, and the whole of Henry Dixon's political pre-possessions were of a Liberal type. There was in "The Druid's" surroundings every conceivable stimulant calculated to whet his appetite for assuming the *rôle* of a sporting writer; and no better opportunity than the present will be found to say a few words about "Martingale," who became "The Druid's"

intimate friend, and confirmed him in his determination to embark upon that literary career which subsequently made him so famous.

It was not long before young Henry Dixon was tempted into print. Beginning his adult life in an Attorney's office, he resembled his old friend Mr. Daley (long the Clerk of the Course at Carlisle), in that neither of them "enjoyed calf skin." Mr. Daley took to "bossing" the race-course in his native town, and to cultivating his fine baritone voice for the duties and rewards of a professional singer; while it was through the advice of James White, or "Martingale," of Doncaster, that Dixon himself became a public writer.

The following extract from "Saddle and Sirloin," a work which was published in 1870, contains a handsome tribute to "Martingale," and is a favourable specimen of "The Druid's" best manner:—

"None loved the Town Moor better than poor James White, or 'Martingale.' Thirty years ago he was in his zenith, with his book on 'Country Scenes,' and as a contributor to

'Bentley'; and his powers knew no decay. He was quite the prose poet of Nature, and no man that I ever met was so keenly alive to her beauties, and could word-paint them so well. Edlington Wood, which seldom fails to produce a fox, when the Fitzwilliam hounds give it a call, was one of his especial haunts when he was well and vigorous. He seemed to know the haunt of every badger, the name and the note of every bird, and the *genus* of every wild flower that grew on its banks and glades. He liked to wander away from Doncaster 'when the mavis and the merle were singing,' and, regardless of the prosaic days in which his lot was cast, take his dinner with him and 'have a word with the woods.' Weaving an old legend into shape pleased him best. The deserted hut, where a poacher had lived and died, a very lord of the soil to the last, seemed to conjure up in his mind a network of dark romance; and Sherwood Forest and Merrie Barnsdale were themes which never palled.

"His racing writings were very numerous, but as he rarely left Doncaster, he was too often compelled to take his description second

hand. In dealing with current racing topics he was far too discursive, and pitched his key-note so high that matter-of-fact readers grumbled after wandering through a labyrinth of fine words to find hardly one grain of fact. His strength lay in his 'Turf Characters,' and in his recollections of the Doncaster of the past. If he was not in the *Doncaster Gazette* office, hard at work upon his beautifully small and neat manuscript, or in a chancel seat of the old church, or in Edlington, or Wheatley, or Sprotborough Woods, the Town Moor was a sure find for him, and he was pretty certain to be talking to himself. He generally stationed himself upon the St. Leger Day somewhere between the Red House and the hill to catch the first symptoms of the 'pace complaint.' St. Leger after St. Leger was a scene he could unfold with a master's hand. Every little incident from the Duke of Hamilton's day had been treasured and invested with significance, and as John Jackson, the celebrated jockey, lodged with him for a series of years, he had a chance of posting himself up, which he took care to use to the full."

It will be found in the next chapter that Henry Dixon's first "copy" was sent to *Bell's Life* when its writer was a Rugby boy, aged seventeen years, but he began his real literary career first as contributor, and secondly as editor of the *Doncaster Gazette*, with which "Martingale" had been connected for many years. Before long it became generally known that "The Druid" was wasting his precious time in writing on sporting topics, and when in addition he ventured upon a few verses, it drew down upon him the serious displeasure of his father, whose feelings were akin to those of Frank Osbaldistone's parents in Sir Walter Scott's novel of "Rob Roy," when they found that the son whom they had sent to Bordeaux to familiarise himself with commercial details and study book-keeping by double entry, was gradually assuming the similitude of

"A clerk condemned his father's soul to cross,  
Who penned a stanza when he should engross."

Henry Dixon had been sent to Doncaster to mug at the law, and lo and behold! he was settling down into a Turf writer. The affection between his father and him knew



no abatement during the old man's lifetime, and the yearly allowance of the son was never stopped. Accompanied by Mrs. Dixon and their children, "The Druid" never omitted to pay an annual visit to Carlisle, although it could not be concealed that his sporting and poetical tastes grated sharply upon the more prosaic intellect of his father. At last, however, a book appeared from his pen, "The Law of the Farm," which gladdened the old man's heart so much that he sent a cheque for £100 to assist his son's struggling family, which had then taken up its abode in Kensington Square. When he made his way to the metropolis, he was fortified by a strong letter of introduction from "Martingale" to the late Mr. Vincent Dowling, who was then the Editor of *Bell's Life in London*, undoubtedly at that time the first sporting newspaper in the world. Into the service of that great journal he entered in 1850, and here I may quote an extract from a letter of his own, illustrative of the sturdy independence of his character. "I began my career by editing a Liberal paper in Doncaster for three years, and in

1850, I came up to London and wrote political verses in *Punch* and the *Examiner* for a time. Towards the end of 1852 the late Sir James Graham, who had just been proposed for Carlisle by my father, got hold of an article of mine, which seems to have pleased him. He sent for me to the Admiralty, and giving me a kindly welcome, took the article out of his desk and told me he had shown it both to the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Gladstone, that they both agreed with him that it was the only really fair account of the reasons which induced the Peelites to combine with the Whigs to throw out Lord Derby. Sir James told me he was empowered to offer me a post under Government. This I declined, telling him I was young and strong, that I had gone through a bitter disappointment, and wished to go to the Bar and try to retrieve it."

Here, again, trouble with his eyes, small means, and a rapidly increasing family impeded his hopes of success.

Many generations of readers will doubtless rejoice that "The Druid" turned a deaf ear to the overture made to him by Sir James

Graham. He would probably have made a very moderate official, and his roving life, from county to county, from stud farm to racing stable, from one kennel of hounds to another, from race meeting to coursing meeting, from spots sanctified in his eyes by having been the birthplaces of illustrious race-horses to the graves in which Derby or St. Leger winners were buried, would have been exchanged for a dull daily walk from Kensington to the Admiralty and back for dinner. There have been clerks like Charles Lamb, in whom the literary vein was so strong that even the atmosphere of the India Office could not repress it. Charles Lamb entered that great Department of State (as it then was) in 1792, and retired upon a pension in 1825. His first poems appeared in 1798, and from that time forward his pen never was idle. From it flowed in rapid succession dramas of which the very names are now forgotten, and criticisms and essays some of which will only perish with the English language.

The first series of "Essays of Elia" appeared in the *London Magazine* between

August, 1820, and October, 1822 ; the second series between May, 1823, and August, 1825. All the above were written while Charles Lamb was an India office clerk, and so little was his genius impaired by its uncongenial surroundings that the "Essays of Elia" reflect all his unique qualities of grace, quaintness, humour, and tenderness. They are written, as Judge Talfourd said of them, "with a smile on the lip and a tear in the eye" of their author, and are full of his whims, his wit, his poetic susceptibility, his charity, and sympathy.

There is little probability, on the other hand, that had "The Druid" become an Admiralty clerk he would ever have produced "Post and Paddock," "Scott and Sebright," or "Silk and Scarlet." The chief merit of these fascinating works is that they are from the pen of a poet who was as great a lover of Nature as Wordsworth himself, and derived all his strength from her tender embrace. Charles Lamb was as devout a worshipper of Fleet Street as Dr. Johnson himself, and as a critic of books he has no superior, with perhaps the exception of Cole-

ridge, his schoolfellow at Christ's Hospital. "The Druid," on the contrary, was a devotee of country life, and never happier than when taking long walks with his knapsack slung over his shoulder, along country lanes, or across billowy downs. "Elia's" strength was called forth by contact with crowded cities, and by studying the noblest thoughts of the immortal dead. "The Druid" was at his best among horses, dogs, birds, cattle, and sheep, which, chiefly on foot, he wandered all over these islands to discover, and from which, and the scenes wherein their lives were passed, he derived his best inspiration. An official life in London might have made his struggle with poverty less severe; but it would certainly have deprived him of opportunities for collecting the materials out of which he compiled a series of books, the vitality of which is attested by the new edition, which, nearly a quarter of a century after their author's death, will be published simultaneously with this sketch of his life.

There is nothing, however, to forbid the still surviving members of his family to regret, in common with his friends, that he saw fit

to decline one overture which was made to him in 1851, and which would have placed him in the position which of all others he was best qualified to fill. In 1851, Mr. Vincent Dowling's health had begun to give way under the strain of conducting a big weekly paper at high pressure. Mr. Clement, the owner of *Bell's Life*, had long been on the look out for a successor to Mr. Dowling, and not much experience of "The Druid's" accomplishments and character was necessary to make it clear that in him the right man had at length been found. The place was by no means an easy one to fill; and no man was better aware than Mr. Dowling that, as a rule, sporting writers are not made of the stuff calculated to blossom out into reliable Editors. No man placed in the trying position occupied for twenty-eight years by Mr. Dowling as Editor of *Bell's Life*, could have acquitted himself better than he did. His character was, in truth, singularly noble and upright; his insight into human nature was more than usually penetrating; and in all the responsible trusts which he accepted as holder of stakes and referee for pugilists who

were about to meet in the prize ring, his honour was so unimpeachable that not a word of remonstrance was ever raised against any of his decisions. Moreover, there was in him a vein of poetry, of sympathy, and of refinement which made him peculiarly susceptible to qualities and attributes of a like nature which abounded in "The Druid." When, therefore, the latter refused to accept the post of Editor which Mr. Dowling, acting as spokesman for the owner of the paper, offered him *con amore*, it will readily be conceived that this decision was received with surprise and regret. That surprise and regret I must confess, that writing more than forty years after the event, I share to this day; for it seems to me by no means impossible that had "The Druid" consented to succeed Mr. Dowling, he might have been alive at this moment. He fell a victim to the exposure, fatigue, and hard fare which he imposed upon himself in the conscientious performance of arduous and self-denying duties for which he was wretchedly paid. On the other hand, the position of Editor of *Bell's Life*, with a salary commencing at

£1,000 a year, and with a contingent interest in the success of the paper, would have preserved him from the hard struggle with poverty, which he was of too delicate and refined a nature to endure with impunity. When I mention that "The Druid's" family consisted of seven sons and four daughters, and that his income, when at its highest, never rose above £600 a year, and was often under £500, it needs no words of mine to point out that—

"Haud facîle emergunt quorum virtutibus obstat  
Res angusta domi."

That he did so much under these narrow-  
ing and depressing circumstances is much to his credit ; but still more should it be imputed unto him for righteousness, that he bore himself like a white-souled Sir Galahad among the temptations and snares with which horse-racing is always surrounded, and was untainted by intercourse with the low and often disreputable waifs and strays of the race-course, among whom his lot was not unfrequently cast, and with some of whom he had a strange and mysterious sympathy.



The following tribute to Mr. Dowling's worth appeared in the *Illustrated London News* of November 13, 1852.

“The career of Mr. Vincent George Dowling, who died on the 25th ult., presents a remarkable instance of a long life honourably devoted to the services of Journalism, and of unceasing energy to meet the requirements of the growing intelligence of newspaper readers.

“Mr. Dowling was born in the metropolis, in 1785, at which time his father was connected with the newspaper press, in Ireland, where the younger Dowling received his early education. He returned to London with his father, after the Union, and occasionally assisted him in his duties for the *Times* newspaper which he had just joined. Soon after this Mr. Vincent Dowling engaged with the *Star*; and, in 1809, transferred his services to the *Day* newspaper. In 1804 he became a contributor to the *Observer*, thus commencing his connection with Mr. Clement, which continued until the death of the latter gentleman in the present year. In 1824 Mr. Dowling became Editor of

*Bell's Life in London*, in which position he continued to the period of his death; and it is but justice to add that, to his unceasing energies through eight and twenty years, is to be attributed the great and well-merited success of that journal. Mr. Dowling used to relate that he was present in the lobby of the House of Commons when Bellingham shot Mr. Percival in 1812; adding that he, Mr. Dowling, was the first person who seized the assassin, although the priority is claimed by Mr. Jerdan, in his recently published 'Autobiography,' who states that Mr. Dowling was among the earliest of the crowd who came up after the seizure. Mr. Dowling added that he took the weapon from Bellingham; that he had often sat by him in the gallery of the House, and had at his request pointed out various members.

"When Queen Caroline was about to return from the Continent, after the accession of her husband, George IV., Mr. Dowling proceeded to France to record her progress for the *Observer*; and the day before she arrived in England, Mr. Dowling, at the request of the Queen's principal attendants, agreed to

bring her despatches to England, which he did in an open boat pulled by five Frenchmen. It was a stormy night, and he was nearly twelve hours in crossing the Channel, having to make a long stretch up the French coast before the crossing could be effected in safety. He had the satisfaction, however, to arrive first in London with the news.

“Mr. Dowling claimed to be the originator of the plan on which the new police system was organized; even the names of the officers—inspector, sergeant, &c.—were published in *Bell's Life* nearly two years before the system was proposed by Sir Robert Peel.

“Mr. Dowling was highly respected for his many excellent qualities, and his loss is deeply deplored. He was thirteen years a Guardian, and for many years Chairman of the Board of Guardians of the Strand Union. He was also a Trustee and Manager of the Holborn Estate Charity of the parish of St. Clement Danes.”

The “Dictionary of National Biography” adds: “Mr. Dowling died at Stanmore Lodge, Kilburn, from disease of the heart and dropsy, on October 25, 1852. He was the elder brother of Sir James Dowling.”

## CHAPTER V.

## FURTHER REMINISCENCES OF HIS EARLY LIFE



HE first time that the young lady who subsequently became "The Druid's" wife ever saw her future husband, was when he was pointed out to her in the Close, or playground, of Rugby School. At that time she was fifteen years old, and he was seventeen. He was lying on the ground at full length with a bit of paper stretched out on a flat board before him, and a pocket ink-glass by his side. His thoughts were absorbed by the "copy" which he was writing, and the school-boy who pointed him out exclaimed contemptuously, "Look at that ass! He never joins in any of our games or sports, but writes everlasting yarns for *Bell's Life*." The *nom de plume* under which Henry Dixon

then wrote was "General Chassé," which name he borrowed from Sir James Boswell's celebrated chestnut horse, who was then winning Cups and long-distance races in Scotland and the North of England, and was at all times a special favourite with "The Druid." Reverting, however, to the young lady to whom he was afterwards united in marriage, it gives me great pleasure to add the following account of his courtship, written by the hand which alone should hold the pen on such a theme. His widow writes as follows:—

"My brief and imperfect sketch of 'The Druid's' daily life, tastes, and habits would be incomplete were I to fail to make mention of his married life, especially during its earlier years, and also to touch lightly upon a few incidents of his courtship, which he conducted in a very eccentric and original fashion. He first met Miss Caroline Lynes in the Isle of Man, either in the autumn of 1844 or in the spring of 1845. He was reading there for his degree with a tutor who knew her brother intimately, and thus he soon became on friendly terms with the Lynes family. His choice of the Isle of Man was, as usual with

him, fixed on by chance. He had two plans in view for that particular Long Vacation, and was terribly perplexed as to the question which plan would best forward his interests. At length he decided on writing to both the tutors who were making up reading parties, and putting the two letters in his pocket, he went after dark to the Post Office, slipped in the first letter upon which his hand fell when he thrust it into his pocket, and only found out on returning to his rooms that he had pledged himself to visiting Mona's Isle, instead of the English Lakes. Small accidents of this kind bring about issues which fundamentally affect the whole future of a man's and a woman's life.

"All the strangers who were temporarily resident at Douglas, in the Isle of Man, made a point, at that time, of hurrying to the pier every day that the Liverpool boat arrived, and amused themselves by watching, with unsympathetic glee, the melancholy, washed-out appearance of the hapless victims upon whose faces sea-sickness had left its strongly-impressed mark. In those remote days the passage was twice as long as it is now,

and the boats much smaller. On the particular day selected by Mr. Lynes to transport his wife and three daughters to the Isle of Man, a fierce gale was blowing, and 'The Druid' was an eager spectator of the landing of the woe-begone and battered party. Miss Caroline Lynes had been a great sufferer, and with dishevelled hair and ghastly countenance she staggered off the boat, only too glad to touch *terra firma* once more. Incredible as it may appear to some who read these words, 'The Druid' told her some years afterwards that with him it was love at first sight. 'I felt,' he said to her, 'that I would marry that girl or know the reason why.' A month spent in the Isle of Man in delightful weather brought the young pair together almost daily at pic-nics and on exploring excursions; but so slow and diffident were the advances made by 'The Druid,' that the young lady returned home without a suspicion of his real feelings towards her. Occasionally he invited her mother, her sisters, and herself to tea, and made Cumberland girdle cakes for them with his own

hands, which attention he supplemented by offering them huge strawberry jam tarts, of which she subsequently discovered that he was inordinately fond. To her unsophisticated mind his attentions, such as they were, conveyed no definite meaning. Before parting, however, he contrived to obtain an invitation to pass a few days at her father's place, Hackleton House, in Northamptonshire, where, during his next vacation, he suddenly put in an appearance one sultry August evening, seated as a passenger in the village carrier's cart.

"Can it be wondered that the strong Tory prejudices of the Lynes family were revolted and shocked by such unconventional behaviour! It was subsequently explained by 'The Druid' that he learnt, in that mysterious way he had of finding out everything, that the carrier was well known in Northampton to be full of queer stories and local histories, and that he had picked up odds and ends of information on all kinds of subjects. As fond of quaint characters as was Sir Walter Scott himself, 'The Druid' could not resist the temptation of



a seven-mile drive in company with a man who, he expected, would provide him with material for his next week's contribution to *Bell's Life*. A second compromising and somewhat embarrassing incident occurred on that same evening, when he went up to his bedroom to prepare for the evening meal. In the room he found a spacious cupboard filled with ladies' dresses hanging from pegs. In the hope of discovering, by some miraculous intuition, a dress which belonged to his lady-love, he opened the door and entered the cupboard, little dreaming that the door closed with a spring lock, which could not be opened from the inside. To his ineffable horror and surprise he found himself fast bound in prison, while the gong was sounding and the family below all assembled for their evening repast. There they continued to wait while Mr. Lynes enforced the strict discipline and respect for hospitality for which he was celebrated in Northamptonshire. At last, however, his patience began to fail, and a few stinging remarks issued from his lips. After passing an uncomfortable half-hour, the famished group caught

the sound of shouts, kicks, and signals of distress issuing from the quarter of the house in which 'The Druid's' bedroom was situated. A search party was immediately instituted, and the prisoner was at length released from his humiliating position. On coming down he looked decidedly sheepish, and returned the very vaguest replies to the eager inquiries addressed to him as to the cause of his entering the cupboard at all. The visit passed away, however, without advancing him more nearly to that successful end of his courtship which he so ardently desired.

"Many months were still to pass away before any chance of meeting his *inamorata* once more was likely to recur. He found it impossible to pay another visit to that little village in Northamptonshire, round which all his hopes and aspirations revolved. No chance of communicating with Miss Caroline Lynes suggested itself to him, and at last he became so anxious that he could no longer live without getting some authentic tidings of the young lady's well-being. At this juncture he bethought himself of a younger

brother of his own, who was engaged in a mercantile house in London. To him he addressed an appealing letter from Cambridge, begging him to get down to Northamptonshire in time to go to Piddington Church next Sunday morning. He described to his brother the exact position of the pew occupied by the Lynes family, and the seat usually occupied by Miss Caroline Lynes. 'If you love me,' he wrote to his brother, 'find out if my little girl is there, and send me word how she is looking.' Fifty years ago a journey of sixty miles into the country was a very different thing, and much more costly than it is now. Nevertheless the delicate mission was faithfully carried out by 'The Druid's' brother, who reported that the 'little girl' was in her seat and seemed all right, but so devout that she never looked off her book.' Baffled in his attempt to catch a sight of her face, the emissary did his best to give a description of her dress and bonnet. Truth," adds "The Druid's" widow, "compels me to confess that the devotion spoken of in the report was due to the presence in the pew of my

stern father, who regarded inattention at church as a moral offence, which seemed to him as unpardonable as it would have done to Sir Walter Scott's 'Davie Deans.' "

I have already stated that the first proposal made by "The Druid" to Miss Caroline Lynes was rejected. Her refusal affected him so deeply that his health gave way, and he was unable to put in his appearance at the schools for the classical examination, in which he had such hopes of distinguishing himself. A few months later other opportunities of pressing his suit presented themselves, and his quiet determination and persistent constancy won for him the fulfilment of his ardent desire. An engagement was entered into, which terminated eight months later in his union with the young lady, to whom he was married on May 12, 1847. The incidents of a simple marriage in a small village church seem hardly worthy of record, but two characteristic touches illustrative of the bridegroom's disposition have often been spoken of in the Lynes family, and are still remembered with interest by some of its surviving

members. The bride, following the universally accepted belief that on her marriage day her lightest wish must be regarded as law, whispered in the ear of her future father-in-law that she would like four grey horses attached to the carriage which was to take her and her husband seven miles to the nearest railway station. The greys duly arrived, and even amid the pangs of parting from her parents and family, the young wife felt a ray of gladness at the thought that her equipage would produce no ordinary sensation in the minds of the simple villagers among whom her early days had been passed.

Alas for the instability of earthly hopes! "The Druid" had a mortal objection to display or ostentation of any kind, and just before the carriage drove up to the door he ran out and with his pocket-knife cut the traces of the two grey leaders, and told the post-boy to go about his business. The disappointment of the crestfallen lady may well be imagined when he handed her into a carriage drawn by only two greys. All that she remembers further about that memorable day is that just as the young couple issued

from church, a tiny sweep thrust his black head through the top of a cottage chimney which stood opposite the church, and, waving his brush wildly in the air, shouted out his congratulations and good wishes for the health and happiness of the bride and bridegroom.

They did not take any wedding trip, but went straight off to Doncaster, where "The Druid" had already resided for about fifteen months. During that time he was, as I have already said, articled to Messrs. Baxter, the well-known Tory solicitors of Doncaster; but encouraged by "Martingale" and the proprietors of the *Doncaster Gazette*, he had from the first contributed many political and sporting articles to that journal, of which in 1848 he became the editor.

At Doncaster they passed the first three years of their married life, living at first in very modest lodgings and in a very quiet street. "The Druid" had occupied three rooms before he brought his wife back to them, and the only special preparation he had made for her reception consisted in the purchase of four very

large pin-cushions, covered with yellow satin trimmed with lace. One other comical incident of their early married days his widow recalls with merriment. She asked him for the tea caddy, and he confessed at once that he had never owned that necessary appendage. He directed her, however, to pull out a drawer in his wardrobe, "where he always kept his tea, so as to have it handy." There, sure enough, it was, lying loose among his white shirts, and scattered all over the drawer. Happily a very efficient maid, whom Mrs. Dixon's mother had sent with her daughter from Northamptonshire to the new home in Doncaster, soon reduced all this chaos to order. Not many days passed, however, without her discovering that she had married a man to whom incessant employment left little time to bestow on his wife. What between his long office hours in Messrs. Baxter's law establishment and his literary labours for the *Doncaster Gazette*, he seemed quite to forget that his wife wanted any amusement. She had long been the most petted member of a large and happy family,

and the sudden contrast might have seemed irksome, or even insupportable, had she not fortunately found a large family of cousins, that of the Rev. Mr. Preston, who had ten sons and daughters, residing at Doncaster, who received her with unwearied kindness and affection. Business frequently called "The Druid" away, and without the companionship of her cousins, his deserted wife would have been sorely tried by long spells of solitude.

At the end of eleven months a small house fell vacant at the top of Hall Gate. It stood just opposite to Mr. Preston's residence, and just suited the moderate income of the young couple. They contrived to furnish it very comfortably for eighty-five pounds, which they had saved out of "The Druid's" earnings during the first year of their marriage. The change of quarters was effected in a strange and exceedingly thrifty fashion. In the dusk of the evening "The Druid" and his wife might have been seen gliding up Hall Gate laden with books, desks, household linen, hassocks, and all sorts of heterogeneous personal belong-



ings. They were followed by a one-legged porter who owned a truck, on which the larger articles were piled. Very proud they were of their first little house, and here their first child, Sydenham Dixon, was born in May, 1848, an exceeding great joy to both father and mother, the latter of whom from that moment forward lost all sense of loneliness.

All that time "The Druid" lived on terms of great intimacy with Rev. Dr. Sharpe, vicar of Doncaster. The parish church of St. George's was one of the oldest and most interesting in Yorkshire, and its central tower was celebrated far and wide. It was the church bells of St. George's which sounded so pleasantly in the ears of "Dr. Dove," whom Southey has immortalised in his "Doctor"—a book in which "The Druid" took great delight, and from which he quoted freely in his description of Doncaster race-course in "Silk and Scarlet." Unfortunately, this church was totally destroyed by fire on February 28, 1853, and was rebuilt at a cost of £45,000 by public subscription, Sir Gilbert G. Scott, whose reputation in the eyes of posterity may

be safely trusted to rest on this noble structure, being the architect. The Rev. Dr. Sharpe, who had been Curate and then Vicar of Doncaster for the whole of his adult life, was also a very successful schoolmaster. He was a dignitary of singularly stately manner, a fact which lends additional point to the following story. When her first-born son came into the world in 1848, Mrs. Dixon went, on her recovery, to be churched at St. George's, and was accompanied by her husband, who insisted upon kneeling beside her at the altar. After performing that part of the ceremony which related to the mother, the Vicar leant forward, and, with a grave smile, whispered into "The Druid's" ear, "Do you desire to be churched, also, Mr. Dixon?" "No!" he answered, with something of impatience, if not indignation, in his tone, "but nothing shall prevent my returning thanks with my wife." One other little incident connected with the same church was the cause of much amusement at the time of its occurrence. Shortly after his marriage "The Druid" suffered from several inflammatory attacks of the eye

which greatly affected his sight, and compelled him to confine himself to a dark room. He was told by his Doctor that unless he would keep his head covered in church it would not be safe for him to attend divine service. Accordingly he lost no time in repairing to his barber, from whom he purchased a flaming red wig of scanty dimensions—so much too small, indeed, for his head, that it left a fringe of his own black hair plainly perceptible under the red covering. As he walked up the nave his tall figure commanded general attention, and an audible titter ran round the church. Utterly unconscious of the merriment he was exciting, “The Druid” stalked solemnly into his pew and took his seat by the side of his wife. Presently the suppressed laughter swelled into an irrepressible roar, and the cause of this indecorous scene at length took in the situation. Shocked at the unseemly mirth he rose from his pew and walked slowly out of church, shaking as it were, the dust off his feet as he left the building.

A time came, all too soon to both of them, when they had to exchange their cosy home

in the bright little Yorkshire town which "The Druid" loved so well, for an unknown house in the great wilderness of London—that wilderness with which neither of them had the least acquaintance. On reaching King's Cross early in the spring of 1850, it suddenly struck him that he was entirely ignorant in what part of the Metropolis he was to search for a habitation. The party consisted of himself, his wife and two children, and also of a sister-in-law, together with her child and nurse. All that they could muster between them in the way of money was twelve pounds. He consulted his wife, who having once put up with her father at the Golden Cross Hotel, Charing Cross, suggested their driving there without further delay. In their total ignorance of London prices they imagined that twelve pounds would hold out for several days, but luckily it occurred to them to ask for the bill on the eve of the second day. To their consternation they found that it already exceeded ten pounds, and rising betimes next morning "The Druid" rushed off on foot to Chiswick, and poured out his tale of distress

to an old college chum, who together with his wife resided there. Most generously did these good Samaritans receive and welcome the whole party, until on the expiration of ten days, "The Druid" secured a small house in St. George's Terrace, Gloucester Road. Curiously enough that modest row of houses still exists, having undergone no change during the three and forty intervening years. They had not lived there long before life assumed a sterner and graver aspect. Expenses increased, prices were higher than at Doncaster, and the struggle for existence became fiercer and fiercer. "The Druid" soon got an engagement in the service of *Bell's Life* at three pounds a week, and worked early and late to increase his income by writing for other papers. He was often compelled to travel for weeks together, and his wife, whose cares and anxieties were rapidly increased by the birth of three more sons, found ample employment for hand and brain. Nor had she leisure to dwell on personal discomforts, or indulge in the sense of loneliness which now and again oppressed her. The patter of her children's

little feet, and their sweet infantine laughter beguiled many a weary hour, but occasionally her heart yearned sorely after the sympathy and constant companionship of a loved husband.

## CHAPTER VI.

“THE DONCASTER GAZETTE.”



HE only four newspapers to which “The Druid” was a regular paid contributor, and on the staff of which he held a permanent position, were the *Doncaster Gazette*, *Bell's Life in London*, the *Mark Lane Express*, and the *Sporting Life*. That he sent voluntary contributions, for which, in most cases, no payment was asked, to other papers and periodicals (and especially to the *Carlisle Journal*) is well known to his family. He was also a contributor of verses to other journals, of which he specifically names two—*Punch* and *The Examiner*—and in addition he wrote irregularly for the *Daily News*, though he was never on the staff of that journal, the Editor

of which, however, held him in much esteem. I can well remember that when "The Druid's" article on the Marquis of Hastings (who died in 1868) appeared in *The Daily News*, Mr. Labouchere, who was then the proprietor of nearly half that journal, was so much delighted with the proclusion in question that on hearing of its writer's precarious state of health, he urged Mr. (now Sir J. R.) Robinson, the Editor, to spare no effort or expense in order to keep so valuable a contributor alive, if it were possible to do so. Unfortunately, "The Druid" himself was at that time not far from the end of his tether, and, in his own words—applied to the unfortunate but gallant young Marquis of Hastings—"all the wheels were down."

I have before me as I write these words almost all the articles written by "The Druid" for the *Doncaster Gazette* between 1847 and 1850, when he moved from Doncaster to London. After his arrival in the Metropolis he was in the habit of sending a weekly letter to the *Doncaster Gazette*, which he headed either "Metropolitana," or "The Weekly Compendium." These



contributions are, like all newspaper articles, of an ephemeral kind, and it is hardly fair to reproduce any of them in a book published forty years and more after they were written. They show, however, that “The Druid’s” repertory was unusually large, and his acquaintance with Indian subjects—a country which he had never visited, and of which, about that time, few young and untravelled Englishmen of his age knew anything at all—very striking. When it is remembered that the following article was the work of a young man of twenty-six who had never left his native land, it will be read with interest by many who have been accustomed to regard “The Druid” as a sporting writer and nothing more. It appeared in the *Doncaster Gazette* in March, 1849:—

“WAR IN THE PUNJAB.

“The last Indian mail has brought despatches from the Punjab, rife with deep and melancholy interest. Early on the morning of November 21, 1848, Lord Gough took the command of 22,000 men and 100 guns, near the banks of the Chenab. On the right bank

of that river, and immediately opposite the town of Ramnugger, his enemy, Shere Singh, was posted with 30,000 men and 32 pieces of cannon. Rising in the fastnesses of Thibet, the Chenab pursues a course of 540 miles. It is the largest of the five rivers which intersect the Punjab and give it its name, and, though deep and rapid in some places, the channel between an island and its left bank, on which our troops were stationed, is a mere sandy water-course, about thirty yards wide. This island was held by 4,000 Sikhs, with six guns. At two o'clock on the morning of the 22nd, a strong force of our cavalry and infantry were ordered to parade, and then march forward noiselessly to Ramnugger, from whence the Sikh detachment, who had unaccountably learnt this movement, at once retired. On reaching the left bank the Royal Horse Artillery were ordered to the front, and promptly opened fire on the Sikhs in the island. The heavy guns of the enemy soon proved too much for the English six-pounders, and orders were given to retreat. At this critical moment it was found that one of the guns had sunk so deep into the sand

that it was impossible to extricate it. The unharnessing of horses from other guns to draw it out was observed by the Sikhs, who directed such an overwhelming fire upon it that the Artillery were obliged to spike and leave it. The enemy next endeavoured to lure the British advanced guard within range of their guns on the right bank ; but this feint failing, 4,000 Sikh cavalry crossed the sandy water-course from the island and rode within a very short distance of our troops. This was too much for Lord Gough's patience; the bugle was sounded, the word 'Charge' rang through the ranks, and in a few moments the 14th Dragoons and the 5th Bengal Cavalry were hotly engaged under a most deadly volley from the island. Three times did the brigade return to the attack. In the second charge Colonel Havelock, who was leading it on, was shot, and just as Colonel King led back his men from the third, General Cureton met him with orders from Lord Gough to desist. Scarcely had the gallant General uttered his message before he staggered back, dead, with a ball in his forehead and another in his chest. In these

three desperate onsets two more officers were killed, two severely wounded, and forty-five rank and file either killed or wounded. Such was the eccentric but kind feeling evinced by our Mahomedan troops towards their British comrades in these charges, that the £50 which Lord Gough presented to them in token of their valour was promptly laid out in a dinner to the 14th Dragoons. On the 30th November a ford was discovered above Ramnugger, which General Thackwell immediately crossed and attacked the left flank of the Sikhs, while Lord Gough assaulted them from his old position. With a very slight loss our troops succeeded in driving them westward, carrying their camp, baggage, and wounded with them towards the mountainous country. A decisive defeat of the insurgents is much needed, if we are to retain our prestige and authority in the country. The whole of our troops on the verge of, or within, the Punjab are divided into six divisions, making a total of 49,000 fighting men (12,130 of whom are British), with 180 pieces of cannon. The death of General Cureton is a deep national

loss. He fell at the head of the very regiment to whose barracks in England he was first marched, a raw boy, with the gay recruiting ribbon on his hat. He had served his country for half a century, rising from the ranks, and had borne the burden and heat of the day with the Duke throughout his Peninsular campaigns. He had been witness of that greatest of all Indian sieges—Bhurtpore; had triumphed over the fall of Ghuznee; had led his regiment through all the battles under Lord Hardinge, which ended in the reduction of Gwalior and the occupation of Lahore. The tributes of deep sorrow to his memory which fell from the soldiers as they crouched round their cheerless watch-fires on that eventful night will find an echo in the breast of every admirer of true British valour.

“Considerable anxiety is felt throughout the country for the arrival of the next Indian mail, which is expected to bring the news of some very decisive movement on the part of the British troops. The conduct of Lord Gough in allowing his men to charge the Sikhs, when there were no Sikh guns on

this side the Chenab for them to take, and the enemy too strongly posted beyond the nullah to be driven away by a single regiment, has been the subject of the strongest animadversion, both in his own camp at Ramnugger and in all English military circles. Such deaths as those of General Cureton, the finest cavalry officer in India, along with Colonel Havelock and many gallant comrades, form a bitter commentary on their leader's supposed rashness.

"It seems probable that if Shere Singh can fully elude the wariness of General Thackwell, who has crossed the Chenab and already given him a severe check, he will retire to the hill country and maintain a harassing guerilla warfare. Sir Charles Napier, 'own brother to the devil,' as our Indian enemies feelingly term him, used to hunt them most successfully through a country of this nature, and General Thackwell, the one-armed hero of the Peninsula, will, it is thought, soon earn for himself a similar title.

"When the war is concluded, one of two alternatives remains for us: either to withdraw behind the Sutlej, or to annex the

whole of the Punjab, making the Indus our boundary. Throughout the whole of the Punjab, the Hindus and Mahomedans are heavily oppressed by the Sikhs, the latter in particular. 'If you meet a Hindu, beat and rob him; if a Mahomedan, kill him outright,' were the genial directions issued by Har Gorind, a great Sikh leader, to his subalterns. Hence, the British occupation of the entire Punjab would be hailed as a peculiar blessing by these persecuted natives. The fertility of the Punjab, which is watered by five rivers, is such as to present the idea of an Indian garden of Eden. The crops of wheat, after being twice mown down, cannot, after all, be prevented from producing an abundant harvest, while indigo flourishes in equal profusion. We trust that under the auspices of Earl Dalhousie this beautiful region may soon be turned to nobler purposes than affording a station for Sikh field pieces under hireling French gunners."

It will be inferred from this article and from many others like it, that their writer's attention was directed about that time, not to

musty law books, but to general literature, with a strong bias towards sporting. To say the truth, no greater mistake was ever made by an attached and conscientious father than when Mr. Peter Dixon sent his son to Doncaster and articled him to such a firm of solicitors as that of which Mr. Robert Baxter was the head. To begin with, Mr. Baxter was an ardent Conservative, and the trusted agent of that party throughout the West Riding of Yorkshire. Secondly, he detested horse-racing, and was engaged all through his long life in endeavouring by every means in his power to abolish the Doncaster race meeting. From him and the narrow sect of Calvinists with whom he was in sympathy proceeded those biblical texts fastened on the elms which line the North Avenue at Doncaster, along which every frequenter of the races must necessarily pass. These texts threatened all who repaired to the race-course with unutterable woes and disasters here and hereafter, and it is certain that "The Druid," who was in every respect as good a Christian as Mr. Robert Baxter, and much more tolerant, must have regarded the latter's denunciation



of field sports with disgust and aversion. It is probable that if “The Druid” had been sent by his father to study law in London directly after he had taken his degree, he might have escaped many influences to which Doncaster necessarily exposed him. Nothing, however, could have been less judicious than the course taken. The youth who had been sent to read law at a solicitor’s office, to copy precedents, and to make out indentures, found metal more attractive in the Editor’s room at the *Doncaster Gazette*, where he was soon supplied with abundant occupation for his pen. He was too sincere and unsophisticated a man to conceal his Liberal proclivities, and there is every reason to believe that Messrs. Baxter & Co. were only too glad when he absented himself from their office. From contributing articles on all sorts of subjects to the *Doncaster Gazette*, he rose to the position of manager of that journal, and was by many regarded as its avowed and acknowledged Editor. Through his friend, “Martingale,” he soon made the acquaintance of every sporting character in the neighbourhood, and his natural appetite

for conversing with all sorts and conditions of men, and of being equally at home with the peer and the peasant, found ample scope for indulgence. The following letter, addressed by the Rev. W. B. Philpot, who was at Rugby with "The Druid," to the latter's wife, speaks of "The Druid's" familiarity with all classes of society, from the highest to the lowest, in language so expressive that I gladly find room for it here :—

"The Beach House,

"Littlehampton, Sussex.

"September 12, 1865.

"DEAR MRS. DIXON,—We had a delightful day at Hurstmonceaux. Your husband is the only man in England who can thoroughly appreciate on one afternoon the shape and make of a female thoroughbred and the memory of a masculine divine ; who can understand Julius Hare in his surplice and Hodge in his smock. I never knew anybody who so completely, so poetically, and philosophically enjoyed the pleasures and pastimes of the moment, and yet had a

loftier range and a higher relish for the holy principles of the past and present, and for those of Eternity. Nor do I think that there are many who can write a more musically balanced English sentence. We enjoyed our afternoon vastly. I send this to you not knowing where 'The Druid' may now be housing. For aught I know, he may be pumping some decrepit herdsman in a remote ingle-nook or chimney corner, or stalking over some desolate moor to verify an illusion.

"Believe me,

"Always yours faithfully,

"W. B. PHILPOT."

Perhaps the greatest talent possessed by "The Druid" was his capacity for getting humble and unlettered men to put confidence in him, and unbosom themselves of their choicest secrets for his benefit. Never was this more exemplified than in the case of what he calls "Dick Christian's Lectures." He tells us that it was on a cold, frosty evening early in January, 1855, that he first met "that great Professor of rough-riding," from whom he sought to learn how horses were tamed

and fields were won. Dick Christian was seated by a comfortable fireside in Chapel Street, Melton, when "The Druid" pulled forth his trusty steel pen to report the old man's "Lectures." "I had never seen him before," he adds, "and came to the conclusion that seventy-eight winters had dealt gently with the veteran. There he sat, the same light-legged, sturdy, five-foot-six man, with nearly all the muscular breadth of chest and vigour of arm left which had enabled him, in his heyday, to lift a horse's fore-quarters as high, if not higher, over a fence than any man that ever rode to hounds. He seemed to be anxious to jump off at score upon his great Marigold feat, the account of which had just been cut out of an old newspaper, and sent to him by a friend; but I called him back, and asked him what sort of a boy he was, and got him well away on that theme at last."

I do not think that in the whole of "The Druid's" writings there is a more creditable specimen of his unrivalled powers of ingratiating himself with men of low degree and getting them to unfold their thoughts and

experiences than the second portion of “Dick Christian’s Lectures” supply. “Dick Christian,” writes “The Druid,” in the first chapter of “Silk and Scarlet,” “had practically sounded the depth of every ditch and brook in Leicestershire for more than half a century; but its fox-hunters had never half sounded him in return. They little knew what a capacity for authorship, which was not destined to blossom until its seventy-eighth spring, lurked in that thick-set frame and merry twinkling eye. Seated beneath the chestnut shade, I found him as remarkable in his language as he had been when I gave him his first trial eighteen months before, and firmer than ever in his hero-worship of Mr. Assheton Smith, Sir James Musgrave, and Captain White. It was not for any lack of epistolary stimulants on his part that I delayed my visit so long. He fairly thirsted to be in print once more, and the post had brought me many an admonition to this effect. He kept on writing: ‘You don’t know what injury you are doing yourself and me by delaying my second Lecture so long.’ It seemed to me that in the first effort we

had indulged enough in mere table-talk, and hence I determined to make a gig-survey of Leicestershire with him by my side, and ask him to point out the leading features in that Waterloo of his existence, where he had so often fallen and fought again next day. The season was hardly in character with the trip. Thorpe Trussels was radiant with dog-roses, and honey-suckles clustered among the hedges of Ashby Pasture; but he assured me that his hunting recollections were just as vivid in summer as in winter, and soon sketched out a comprehensive journey through the Belvoir, the Cottesmore, and Quorn countries. Three sunny mornings we proceeded merrily on our way; and although Dick added another tumble to his mammoth bead-roll, and although the jolting occupation-roads threatened at intervals to play havoc with my notes, I found his geography of the most jocular order, and travelled over his memory with a will."

The additional tumble mentioned in the above passage came about in the following way. The well-matched pair were proceeding in their gig, when Dick observed:

“ We’ll get a short cut down here past Cream Gorse. Blamed if I know much about these roads, but I’ve been across them fields thousands of times with the hounds, and out larking with the gentlemen, too. I scarcely ever fell when I was out larks. I’ve been fox for the gentlemen all over the country; it didn’t signify what part of the country you were in if they wanted a lark. I don’t just see how we’ll get out of this field; we must just go back through the gate. Dear me! What’s coming?

\* \* \* \* \*

“ There’s a go! Get to the horse’s head! I wish we’d never comed here. I kep’ on a-talking, and you kep’ on a-writing, and we never saw that grip. What a crumpler I comes out of the gig! I drives my nose right into the ground, then you tumbles out on top o’ me, and pins my legs right down. There’s above twelve stone of you. I always likes to hitch my legs out of the way, but you fairly held them fast. I thought the wheels would be over me. It’s all very well for you to laugh; you’ve been doing nothing else these ten minutes; but your hat’s quite as bad

knocked in as mine. There's your notebook; I see it come flying over my head. That'll be your pencil in yon tuft of grass. Deary me! How Captain White would a-laughed had he seen us! This pimple's bleeding on my nose; it was stuck in the ground, I don't know how deep. That'll only be a graze on my eyebrow; I'm bleeding badly though. Just lead the horse, and I'll get to the pond and give myself a wash, and get you to give me a bit of a rub down. It's a bad job trying these short cuts, except you're on a horse; we must keep it snug when we gets back to Melton."

It is evident from this and many other passages that the two companions suited each other to perfection. We owe it solely to the laborious and painstaking activity shown by "The Druid" in never missing a chance of picking up interesting "copy," that these "Lectures," embodying more than can elsewhere be found about the earliest days of steeplechasing, or, as it might more correctly be called, point to point riding, were committed to paper for the amusement of a large and varied assortment of sporting



readers, before Dick Christian and “The Druid” passed away.

I must dip again into the same lucky bag to hunt for another of Dick Christian’s gems. “The first night,” he told his *vates sacer*, “that I ever slept at Melton was the night before the first steeplechase that was ever run in Leicestershire—mind you put that down! The race was between Lord Forester, Sir Gilbert Heathcote, and Mr. Meynell. It was for one hundred guineas a side; eight miles from Barkby Holt to Billesdon Coplow and back again; no rules as to gates or roads, each to come as he could. It was a grand race until three-quarters of a mile from home. Poor Sir Gilbert! He got jammed in a bullock pen, that threw him last; and Mr. Meynell won. . . . Clinker’s and Clasher’s, again, was a great match; they said it was for fifteen hundred guineas a side. They sent for me the night before, did Captain White and Captain Ross, and locked me into their room; then they gave me their orders. They said, ‘We mean you to wait, Dick.’ I says, ‘You’d better let me give the horse his head, and allow

him to go along and not upset him ; he'll take a deal more out of himself by waiting.' So I gets them persuaded to change their minds. Old Driver, the groom, was outside listening, and he comes up to me,—'What do they shay? What do you want to wait for?' So I tells him that I was to go along, and that pleased him powerfully, it did. Next morning we weighed at Dalby, the Squire and I. Bless me, I was never in such condition, and away we trotted to Gartree Hill. They were walking the horses about, and Captain Ross says to me, 'Clinker looks well, don't he?' 'He looks too well, Captain,' I answers. Then he lifts me up on to Clinker's back, and tells me the orders were changed, and I must wait. 'It's giving away a certainty,' says I, 'and if I get a fall then, I'm all behind.' But it was no manner of use talking. Sir Vincent Cotton and Mr. Gilmore, they started us, and Mr. Maher, he was umpire. We rode twelve stone apiece ; I was in tartan, and the Squire, of course, he'd be in green. When we were at the post the Squire says, 'Now, Christian, I know what your orders are ; but I do ask

one thing—don't jump on me if I fall.' I said, 'I'll give you my word, Squire, I won't.' The gentlemen could hardly keep with us when we got off; some of them had two or three horses fixed at different points. We were almost touching each other over Sharplands, and just before the road I says, 'Squire, you're beat, for a hundred'; but he never made no answer. Joe Tomlin and Charles Christian stood close over against Twyford Brook; I got well over that. Then we had some rails, such stiff 'uns! Clasher hit 'em with all four legs, and chucks the Squire right on to his neck; Clinker took 'em like a bird. We were each in a mess soon; the Squire, he lands in a bog, and his horse makes a dead stop; it took a deal out of him. Then I jumps right into a dung heap up to Clinker's knees; I had no manner of idea the thing was there. Going up John o' Gaunt's field we were close together, but I turns to get some rails in a corner—he was such a rare good 'un at rails, was Clinker—I thought he was winning, but, deary me! down he comes at the last fence, dead beat. There he lays for

some minutes, and then gets up as lively as ever. The horse, indeed, looked in no manner of form to run four miles across country; as round as a hoop, and for all the world as though he were going to Horncastle Fair. They held Clasher up and flung water in his face, and he won in the last hundred yards from superior training. Many didn't like Clinker, but I hardly ever got on so good a steeplechaser. How hard the Squire did ride that match-day, to be sure! I went up to call on him, when he was an old man, in St. John's Wood, one afternoon, and he pointed to the picture of the finish hanging up opposite the fire-place, and says to me, 'Dick, that Clasher and Clinker day beat me a great deal more than the two hundred miles against time at Newmarket.'"

Not forgetting the words printed at the head of this chapter, it becomes me now to return to the newspaper in which "The Druid" first made his mark, and which he held in sincere esteem until his dying hour. I give the two subjoined articles from the *Doncaster Gazette* as evidences of their

writer's *prima maniera*, which differed not a little from the grace and polish of his style at the close of his career, as will be seen by those who read the third article, upon the death of the Marquis of Hastings, which appeared in the *Daily News* of November 11, 1868.

*Doncaster Gazette, October, 1848.*

"DEATH OF WILLIAM SCOTT.

"We sincerely regret to have to announce the death of that once eminent jockey, Bill Scott, which took place on October 26, 1848, at Highfield House, near Malton, and within a quarter of a mile of his brother, John Scott's, famous establishment at Whitewall. During the whole of this year, but especially since his journey to Guildford last month to give evidence respecting his horse, Sir Tatton Sykes, which he did in his usual quaint and racy manner, he had been in a declining state of health owing to the breaking up of that once powerful constitution with which he had trifled not a little. At last he sank into the grave, within a few days

of Lord George Bentinck, at the comparatively early age of fifty years. The last time he appeared as a spectator on a race-course was at the last York August meeting, when he came from Malton for the day to see Springy Jack run, and be beaten, for the Great Yorkshire Stakes. His first public appearance in the pigskin was in 1814, when he rode 6 st. 10 lbs. on Belville, and his last appearance was on Mr. Conway's Snowball, at the York Meeting of 1847, so that his whole career in the profession extended over thirty-three years. He was the most fortunate jockey of any age. In 1821, he first won the St. Leger at Doncaster with Jack Spigot, and also steered to victory in the same race Memnon, The Colonel, Rowton, Don John, Charles XII., Launcelot, Satirist, and Sir Tatton Sykes. His Derby successes began in 1832 with St. Giles, and a little later Mundig, Attila, and Cotherstone bore him home in triumph past Tattenham Corner, as well as Cyprian, Industry, and Ghuznee in the Oaks. Many of his St. Leger winners he had skilfully handled when two year olds at York and Doncaster, winning the Cham-

pagne Stakes nine times, and the Two Year Old Stakes six times over the latter course. His principal Cup victories were achieved for the late Marquis of Westminster on Touchstone. He had always an immense advantage over other jockeys, as he had the pick of his brother John's Leviathan stable, while the others were obliged to mount anything they received orders for. It was his fate to be engaged in the only two dead heats ever run off thus far in the great events at Epsom and Doncaster. In the south on The Colonel he finished second best—was indeed outridden by Jim Robinson on Cadland; but he reversed the decision in the north on Charles XII. in a similar second round. After The Colonel's dead heat, Bill betrayed very great nervousness, and many who saw his agitated manner as he stood sucking an orange in the weighing house, just before mounting his chestnut, laid heavily against him on the strength of it, especially as Robinson's nerve in those days was imperturbable. Eleven years later, at Doncaster, Bill Scott evinced no such symptoms, as he was on his own ground and felt confident that if he only

reversed the style of running in the dead heat, the big horse would outstride the little one, despite all that Patrick Conolly could do. Both the riders in this last memorable struggle have gone to their graves within a few years of each other. Like the ironcast Captain Becher, Bill Scott met with some severe accidents during his long career. He got his collar-bone broken when Epirus fell in the St. Leger of 1837 (which he would certainly have won), and received a severe contusion out hunting in the winter of 1843, which prevented his riding another race for some time. He had never the good luck, like Macdonald in 1840, to be presented with a whip by Royalty; but along with his brother John he had the honour of an interview with Her Majesty, when, accompanied by Prince Albert, she rode over, on the Monday before the Epsom meeting of 1843, from Esher to Leatherhead, to interview Cotherstone; and he was often heard jocularly to remark in connection with that event, that had she only known what he and Cotherstone were going to do on the next Wednesday she would have made them both Baronets on the spot.



This dignity he himself conferred on his horse, Tibthorpe, after he had won the Two Thousand Guineas Stake at Newmarket in 1846; and the venerable Sir Tatton Sykes disclaimed all jealousy at the nomenclature as, after the St. Leger of that year, he led his equine namesake back to the weighing house amidst the thunders of half Yorkshire, who were delighted to see Bill Scott win once more. He could scarcely be termed a brilliant jockey, although being always on cracks with something left in them at the finish, he was generally enabled to get home. By the side of such a powerful horseman as Harry Edwards, who defeated him at York on Naworth in a terrifically contested race, he did not shine to much advantage. His seat on horseback was very good, and the style in which he roared out 'Faster, faster!' to Nat on Van Amburgh, who, knowing that Coronation was short of work, was making severe running for Satirist in the St. Leger of 1841, and finding that Nat could go no faster, went past him like a shot on Satirist, stamped him a consummate master of the pace branch of his art. A

more tremendous rallier of a slug never existed, and his riding of Mundig for the Derby of 1835 was one of his best efforts. Latterly he was exceedingly weak, and in his last race for the St. Leger he shouted out to Sam Day on Tom Tulloch that it was 'None of the Pigburn family but Sir Tatton that was a-coming.' Finally, he just escaped the rush of Frank Butler on Iago, which, had the race been two hundred yards farther, might have been fatal, not from any fault of Sir Tatton, but from his rider's weakness. A son and a daughter survive Bill Scott, his wife having been dead for some years. Long will he be remembered in Yorkshire as 'Glorious Bill,' and those who witnessed with regret his eccentric Mytton-like aberrations will, now that life's fitful fever is over, testify to the kind and manly feelings which never deserted him to his last hour. His mortal remains were consigned to their last resting-place in the churchyard of Meaux Abbey, near Beverley, but illness prevented his brother John, who had been unintermitting in his kindness during poor Bill's illness, from attending the funeral. On the same

day, and within a mile of Highfield House, another jockey belonging to a previous generation, John Shepherd, died in his eighty-fifth year. In his early years he had won the St. Leger thrice, on Lounger, Quiz, and William, to which he added one Derby victory on Lord Foley's Paris. Like Bill Scott, he died poor; in short, John Shepherd was the first recipient of charity from the Bentinck Fund, which was founded in 1844."

In connection with this article, I am assured by Mr. Campbell R. Bedford, whose letter bears the date of "Knockhill, Ecclefechan, August 7, 1893," that Bill Scott was not buried in the churchyard of Meaux Abbey, but underneath the aisle of Waghen, (pronounced "Wawne,") Church, which is about a mile and a half distant from Meaux Abbey. Mr. Bedford's words are as follows:—

"Bill Scott was buried in a vault underneath the aisle of Waghen Church, in close proximity to the bodies of the Richardsons, his wife's family. Mr. Jackson, who resides opposite the church at Waghen, and occupies the adjoining farm on the Waghen estate, was

present at his funeral, and pointed out to me the stone slab on the pavement of the church which covers his remains. There is no inscription to his memory, and no '*Hic jacet*' marks the last resting place of one of the most renowned horsemen in the annals of the British Turf."

The next article chronicles one of the most remarkable scenes ever witnessed upon the Doncaster Town Moor. The appearance of its course during the final heat of the St. Leger in 1850 will never be forgotten by those who were present—their number is now small—on that memorable day.

#### THE DONCASTER ST. LEGER OF 1850.

From the *Doncaster Gazette*.

"The morning of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Great St. Leger was dark and lowering, and in spite of the weather-glass many began to look out with no little dread for a second edition of its damp predecessor, when the Flying Dutchman won in 1849. These fears, which soon proved groundless, seemed, however, to have taken a remarkably slight hold of the breasts of the excursionists to Doncaster. The hard-

ware youths were up with the lark, and though the first Sheffield train was not announced to start until 10 a.m., we learn that by six o'clock all the carriages in the station-yard were filled by 'noble sportsmen,' who breakfasted, sang, and indulged in every kind of frolic, relieving their feelings at times by roaring out in no very *recherché* language to the railway officials 'to 'arness a puffin' Billy and tak' us on.' About half-past ten o'clock the inmates of St. Sepulchre's Gate in Doncaster became sensible of these and other fashionable arrivals, and for upwards of four hours there was one perpetual chorus of engine whistles in the station-yard. Those who have been accustomed to attend Doncaster Races for the last half-century assured us that the crowd which kept steadily tramping past the 'Salutation' Inn was far bigger than they had ever seen before. It was evident from the buzz of conversation that Voltigeur was the horse of the million, and that they had come to see him win and nothing else. His opponents were reduced in number at nine that morning by the scratching of Cyprus and Mulgrave, thus leaving

the Whitewall stable without a single representative. It lost all hopes of winning the St. Leger when Clincher met with an accident at Pigburn, and was scratched some weeks since. When the first two events (the Doncaster Plate and the Municipal Stakes) were over, the ominous words 'Great St. Leger Stakes' were sent up the telegraph slide, and every one awaited in breathless impatience the solution of the great secret. At that moment the scene on the course was most extraordinary, and such was the anxiety of the crowd to catch a glimpse of the St. Leger horses, that it was with the greatest difficulty that the course could be kept clear. The men on horseback were powerless in the hands of the thousands who could hardly be forced to leave running space, and it was the universal remark that a much stronger body of mounted officials must be placed on duty next year. As it was, the deciding heat for the St. Leger was positively run off down a narrow lane of human beings for the last 400 yards, and Robinson on Russborough had fairly to clear the way for himself and his antagonist.

Pretty Pitsford was the first to show in the Grand Stand enclosure, and just as he entered it Voltigeur was espied, with Job Marson up, emerging from the Carr-House Lane. His party thought it best, in spite of the quiet temper of their horse, to saddle him in as much privacy as the fond public chose to allow to them. Voltigeur only came into the enclosure for an instant, and then sallied forth for the fray. Alfred Day mounted Pitsford as soon as he reached the weighing-house, and walked him three or four times round. Although the horse was undoubtedly light, he seemed the impersonation of health and spirits, and arched his neck proudly as if nothing could stop his reversing the Epsom verdict. His friends professed themselves confident; but the majority, although they well knew that the ground was just in the state for him to indulge in his favourite feet-rattle accompaniment, felt that there was a want of substance about him, and ran over the work he has gone through since he won the Two Thousand Guineas, declaring that such a slack-loined horse was not the boy for the St. Leger course by

the side of such muscular competitors. As Voltigeur quietly paraded past the enclosure, with a gait as sleepy as that of 'lazy Lanercost,' cries of 'He's ower big!' and 'He's devilish dull!' burst from many a pair of lips. His friends, however, knew better, and felt that the Derby winner's heart was in the right place, and that he had not an ounce more flesh on him than a horse of his make should carry. He is a dark brown colt, rather above 15.3 in height, without one spot of white, except a little on the off hind foot. His head, which is coarse and large, is fixed on to a very muscular, stallion-like neck, while he is blessed with fine oblique shoulders, powerful quarters drooping towards a somewhat shabby tail, muscular thighs, good hocks and knees, and abundance of bone. As soon as Marson sent him down a cracker from below the distance, his action was greatly admired, and the workman-like action of his hind legs was especially commented on. Russborough had plenty of eulogists, and inspired extra confidence in some who swore that he was one of the finest horses in the race. He is a dark



chestnut, reminding one not a little of his celebrated mother, Cruiskeen. Robinson, his jockey, in spite of having been very much off in the spring, and obliged to substitute a dressing-gown for the sweaters during the first three Newmarket Meetings, looked as fresh as paint, and in wonderful spirits, not hesitating to declare that he would frighten the crack amazingly, if he did not beat him. Windischgratz went as if he had seven-leagued boots on, and seemed to get over an enormous space of ground at each stride; but although there was no fault to find with his condition, several spectators took objection to his light middle-piece. Bolingbroke did infinite credit to the presiding genius of the Palace stable, and the only fault brought against him was that his action was a little expensive. Chatterbox was not liked; while The Italian was decidedly the compactest and smallest horse in the race. He presented a great contrast to Beehunter, who, although a fine slashing animal, was sadly too narrow in his back, and showed symptoms of having had quite enough of it this year. Poor Mildew had

hardly walked down to the distance when Marlow found him to be so lame in his off foreleg that he turned him round without further parley and returned him into the hands of Smith, his trainer, thus reducing the number of starters to eight, the same as in Van Tromp's year. At last the flags were lowered, and away went the eight in a cluster, Nat going in front at once and cutting out the work with Beehunter; Chatterbox and Russborough well up, and Voltigeur settling down about seventh. Along the flat the pace was very slow, but when they reached the foot of the hill Beehunter seemed to warm to his work, and led them up and over it at capital speed. No change took place in their Indian-file positions until they approached the Red House, when Marson took Voltigeur well by the head and administered a couple of smart strokes of the whip to rouse him to a sense of his position. The gallant brown answered immediately, and at the Intake Farm was fifth, with Pitsford and Beehunter on his left, Bolingbroke on his right, and Russborough and Italian at his quarters. Just at this point

Bolingbroke looked formidable ; but in another hundred yards he began to hang towards the rails, and Marson, seeing at a glance that he would be shut out, promptly shot his horse through the gap and took the lead at the distance, Russborough being handy on the off-side. Half-way up the distance Marson steadied his horse, who seemed to be in slight difficulties from the severe pace, and just when he got him extended again Jim Robinson, with a well-timed effort, swooped down upon Marson, and after a thrilling finish, made a dead heat. As Russborough was nearest to the Judge the great majority of spectators thought that he had won, and when the fielders learnt the decision their joy knew no bounds.

"The two antagonists made their way back to the enclosure, and were keenly scrutinised as their jockeys dismounted and unsaddled them. Some strong suspicions were expressed that Russborough was a four-year old, and an examination of his mouth was demanded by Lord Zetland. The horse was examined by Mr. George Holmes, the well-known veterinary of Thirsk, and by Mr. J.

Shaw of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, who pronounced him all right. A little after five, when all the other races were over, the two champions of the day were again seen approaching the enclosure in their sheets. Robinson jumped into the pigskin with a jaunty air, and a whisper went round that he was going to make it hot for the Richmond-trained horse, by forcing the running. Marson then came out from the weighing-house, looking very pale but full of quiet confidence, and mounted his horse on the course. Another canter, and another parade, and the two were again alongside Mr. Hiburd, the starter, waiting for the signal. Robinson at once showed that his cutting down intentions had not been misrepresented. The moment that the flag dropped he was off like a shot, and Marson as quickly got Voltigeur on his legs and laid off two lengths. The pace quickened as they rose the hill, and the fielders were in high hopes that the two lengths would become four when the T. Y. C. post was reached. They reckoned, however without their host, as the two steeds kept in exactly the same position

till the Red House was passed. Into the straight running Russborough came with the same strong lead, Robinson glancing over his shoulder at Marson, who sat with his hands well down on his horse's withers, and as cool as an iceberg. The vast crowd closed in upon them, and the roar of a hundred thousand iron voices fairly rent the air. 'Voltigeur's beat!' and 'Is 'er beat?' was Bob Hill's response; 'You maun't tell me that; I knaws 'im better—Job's a coming!' And sure enough, Job, half way within the distance, slipped a finger off his rein, gave the Derby winner a sharp reminder with his spurs, had him at Russborough's girths in the next three strides, and handed him home a clever winner by a length. The hurrahs that greeted horse and jockey as they returned to the Stand were perfectly deafening, and became, if possible, louder when the Countess of Zetland descended with her husband and patted the conqueror's neck. Spotted handkerchiefs, symbolising Lord Zetland's colours, were waving everywhere, hats were flung recklessly in the air, and even the fielders cheered because one of the right sort

had won. This was Voltigeur's third race, all of which he has won, and it is remarkable that Charles XII., the only other son of Voltaire who ever gained the St. Leger, had to run two heats for it. It is also worthy of notice that at this moment Surplice, the Flying Dutchman, and Voltigeur, the only horses, bar the almost forgotten Champion, who ever won the Derby and St. Leger, are standing at the Turf Tavern, Doncaster. This is the third time that Marson has won the St. Leger, Nutwith and Van Tromp having been his two previous winning mounts."

"The Druid" omits to mention in this article that but for an accident which brought John Scott, the famous Yorkshire trainer, upon the scene, Voltigeur would never have won the deciding heat. After the dead heat Bob Hill, the trainer of Voltigeur, knew so little of his business that he was about to take his horse into a stable, to have him rubbed down, to give him a feed of corn, and to allow him to rest for a couple of hours before pulling him out again to meet his formidable Irish antagonist, who was the better





Letland



trained of the two horses. Fortunately a backer of Voltigeur, who knew that if the horse was allowed to stand still for a couple of hours he would be so stiff after his severe race that it would be impossible for him to move, still less to raise a gallop, implored Bob Hill to change his tactics. The Richmond trainer, who was decidedly the worse for liquor and half mad with excitement, was much too obstinate to listen to the remonstrances of his companion. At that critical moment the latter caught sight of John Scott, who was engaged in conversation with the late Sir William Milner, the *fidus Achates* of Lord Zetland. Quicker than thought John Scott's authority was invoked, and he instantly pronounced: “ If you put Voltigeur into a stable and allow him to get stiff, you might as well shoot him through the head. You must keep him walking about the whole time until he runs for the deciding heat. That was what I did with Charles XII. after he had run a dead heat with Euclid eleven years ago.” Against the authority of John Scott there was fortunately no appeal.

The last of the three articles alluded to above appeared in the *Daily News*, on Nov. 11th, 1868, headed :—

“THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS.

“‘The Earl’s year’ has reached a sad climax in the death of its leading actor. ‘The Spider and the Fly’ drama is ended. That poor coroneted youth, who had crowded into six years more Corinthian excitement and weightier Turf cares than many ‘fast men’ know in a lifetime, has laid down his weary load at last. He was only twenty-six in July, and had already frittered away two fine family estates. Betting is said to be the touch-stone of an Englishman’s sincerity ; but with the Marquis a craving for the odds had become a passion or even a disease. He worshipped chance with all the ardour of a fanatic. His wits were, he considered, worth to him in the betting ring at least £20,000 a year, and he sometimes threaded his way through the mazes of trials and public running with all the sagacity of a wizard. His public *coups* were often so brilliant that it was hardly to be wondered at that he believed in his own destiny, and his

power to break the Ring. It mattered nothing to him whether the draining or other improvements on his Donnington estate were stopped, if he only got fresh supplies for another Newmarket campaign. The Ring, on the other hand, had marked him for their own and never left him. They would cluster beneath the Jockey Club balcony at Epsom, holding up their hands to claim his attention, and catching at his replies like a flock of hungry hawks. There he would stand, smiling at the wild tumult below, wearing his hat jauntily at one side, a red flower in his button-hole, and his colours round his neck, perfectly cool and unruffled, while ‘the talent’ made his horse a hot favourite at once, and a few slipped back to the Ring to follow his lead. For a time he was a perfect Cocker ; but he fell at last in the unequal strife, and the men who had ‘drawn’ him most copiously were among the first to set their faces sternly against him when, bereft of resources, he wished to see the Heath once more.

“The Marquis’s taste for the Turf was not an hereditary one. His father’s heart was

with hound and horn. He loved to halloo 'the red rascal' over the rides far better than to watch the 'Leger horses close up round the Red-house turn. The men of the Midlands still speak of him as quite a representative sportsman, with Will Goodall and Sir Harry Goodricke, whom they lost so early. He would hardly have stepped aside to see a race; but a scarcity of foxes in Charnwood Forest, or finding himself above twelve stone on the scales would have sorely vexed his soul. His son cared for none of these things. Still, he could not bear to see the Quorn without a Master, and stepped boldly into the breach when Mr. Clowes resigned in 1866. He wore the horn at his saddle bow for conformity's sake, but he never blew it, and let the field go its own way, hunting the country on no system. A bit of a gallop, a check, and then trotting off to sift a favourite gorse for a fresh fox, jumped much more with his humour than an old-fashioned hunting run, where hounds had to puzzle it out. Often, when his hounds had reached the meet, ten or twelve miles away, he was hardly out of bed, and he would turn up 'on wheels,'

and occasionally from London by special train, and give Wilson the word to draw when half the field had gone home. No wonder that caricatures were drawn, and squibs flew gaily about, and that even Leicestershire said it would rather be bled in the purse-vein than have the country hunted gratis in such fashion. Satirical verses failed to sour him. He took the sting out of their tail by reprinting them at his own private press, and posted them far and wide. On the last day of his Mastership he slipped quietly away to the station, and when they looked for him to give him a parting cheer he had been gone well nigh an hour

“The honour of being ‘the man who belongs to the Duke,’ or ‘the Earl,’ or ‘little Lecturer’ was no burden to him. He took quite naturally to the Turf from the first, enfolded under the wing of Danebury. In 1862 not six people at Newmarket knew who the slim lad was on the grey cob; but the Ring soon saw that he was a veritable Hampshire ambassador when he put down the money so unflinchingly on a Danebury pot. To John Day’s suggestion that in his posi-

tion he was morally bound to have a nice yearling or two of his own he lent no ungracious ear. When the rivalry round the Hampton Court and Middle Park rings almost foamed into madness, and 2,500 guineas and 2,000 guineas were among the yearling prices of one afternoon, he was never tempted beyond 1,650 guineas for King Charles, and 1,500 guineas for Robespierre. The former would have been dear at fifty guineas, and the latter won well in the colours of another. His two best horses, the Duke (500 guineas) and the Earl (450 guineas) were among his cheapest purchases. The late Alfred Day first wore his colours on Garotter in the Althorp Park stakes at Northampton, and Sam Rogers won a Maiden Plate on that colt a few weeks afterwards. The first great victory for the 'red and white hoops' was the Cambridgeshire of 1864, with Ackworth, who had been esteemed a dear 2,000 guinea purchase. Gradually his stable swelled to upwards of thirty, and about £70,000 were the spoils of six seasons. Catalogue was one of his great pets, and he did not care how much he backed her for in a selling sweepstakes,

and how dearly he redeemed her. A cycle of barrenness followed one of profusion, and Mr. Padwick graciously allowed him, in 1865, to have Kangaroo at 12,500 guineas, not one sixpence of which ever came back; while The Duke was useless from influenza, till half the season was over. In 1866, which produced him a One Thousand Guineas winner in Repulse and a Goodwood Cup one in The Duke, the stable was once more at a deadlock for a Cesarewitch horse, but Lecturer, a foal from the Sledmere sale, carried 7 st. 3 lb., and won, it was said, £40,000 for the Donnington party.

"A winter's reflection convinced his Lordship that Hermit could never win the Derby, and £103,000 was the price he paid for his thoughts. People were once wont to tell, almost below their breath, that 'Davies the Leviathan' had been known to pay away £70,000 or more on the Derby. The present age is capable of greater efforts, as before Monday came round, the bankers and solicitors had consulted, and the whole of the Marquis's losings were found for him. Thus was panic averted from 'The Corner,' but,

the fair lands of Loudoun passed from the Marquis's hand. At Ascot his lucky star rose once more. Lady Elizabeth and Lecturer were both in form, and his lordship kept backing them, and piling on the winnings again by a sort of geometric progression, gambling till he had won nearly half 'his ain again.' It was now the turn for reverses. He rather fancied The Earl, but the stable overruled him in favour of Lady Elizabeth. The flying filly came back, with sadly chequered fame, a bad fifth for the Middle Park Plate, and yet the victress in one of the most wonderful of modern matches at 9 lb. with the three-year-old Julius.

"The Marquis had now fallen back again to nearly the same 'agony point' in finance as when he saw the 'all-rose' handed home for the Derby. A weary winter followed, and he was so driven from pillar to post by money troubles and creditors that he lost his interest in Turf matters and his head for calculation with it. The irritable Lady Elizabeth wasted to a shadow in her training; and how The Earl was scratched, and then became the hero of the Grand Prix and of Ascot, and how




the few words that were dropped at York proved the precursor of his 'Leger doom, are all dark passages of Turf politics, and not easily forgotten. We saw the last of The Earl when he was bought in, as stout as a burgomaster, for 3,900 guineas at Tattersall's, and then he departed to Findon with a leg, as to whose chances of standing a preparation each man seemed to differ with his fellows.

“The Marquis had been abroad all the summer in his yacht, but no northern breeze could fan him back to health. He came to Doncaster from Norway on crutches, looking very ill and nervous, and well he might, as, instead of having a St. Leger winner, he had only the lean comfort of a veterinary certificate from Mr. Mavor. At the First October he was on Newmarket heath in a basket carriage, which he only quitted to say a word to the pretty Athena 'which once was mare of mine,' when she was led back a winner. As at Doncaster, he did not go beyond 'a pony' or two. 'Mind, I'm to have this paid,' said one vulgar Ring man when he booked it to him; and after that week they saw him no more. Nearly seven

seasons had passed by since he first came, a lad of nineteen, fresh from Eton to Newmarket, and he left it a shattered man, only to die. Some time he spent at Folkestone, and visited town for a few days before he set out for a winter sojourn with his wife on the Nile. A few friends dared to hope that he might come back a new man and live quietly in his old country home, and train foals by The Duke and Lecturer. It was not to be. 'All the wheels were down,' and now the fourth and last Marquis of Hastings lives only in race-course story."

## CHAPTER VII.

“THE DRUID’S” ECCENTRICITIES AND ABSENCE  
OF MIND.

N the essay upon Dr. Johnson's life and character, contributed by Lord Macaulay to Adam Black's "Encyclopædia Britannica" (which is, to my thinking, the best article of the kind that ever came from the great essayist's pen), it is said that "eccentricities less strange than those of Dr. Johnson have often been thought grounds sufficient for absolving felons, and for setting aside wills. His grimaces, his gestures, his mutterings, sometimes diverted and sometimes terrified people who did not know him. At a dinner-table he would, in a fit of

absence, stoop down and twitch off a lady's shoe. He would amaze a drawing-room by suddenly ejaculating a clause of the Lord's Prayer. He would conceive an unintelligible aversion to a particular alley and perform a great circuit rather than see the hateful place. He would set his heart on touching every post in the streets through which he walked. If by any chance he missed a post he would go back a hundred yards and repair the omission."

Those who knew "The Druid" best and passed most time in his company were of opinion that his eccentricities and oddities were, to say the least, as strange and startling as those of the great lexicographer for whom he entertained so great a reverence. As years settled down upon "The Druid," he became so absent-minded that it was difficult to maintain a conversation with him upon any subject for more than two or three minutes. He had lived so much in the solitude of his own thoughts that he passed half his time in total unconsciousness that others were in the room and trying to talk with him. So inattentive and unobservant

had he become towards the close of his laborious and self-denying life that it was not uncommon for him to pass old friends in the street without giving them any sign of recognition. As he stalked along, taking enormous strides, his gesticulations and soliloquies resembled those in which Dr. Johnson, Charles Lamb, and Thomas Carlyle habitually indulged. The Rev. R. F. Lynes, "The Druid's" still surviving brother-in-law, has been good enough to confide to me the two following anecdotes which, better than anything that I can myself write, will show what "The Druid" was in the last few years of his life.

The first is as follows:—

"In September, 1865, 'The Druid' went down to Rushton, a country village in Northamptonshire, not far from Market Harborough, where I was in temporary charge of the parish, to spend a Sunday with me. He had been told to get out of the train at Kettering, and to take the main road for a mile or so, until he came to a stile whence a pleasant path through the fields would bring him direct to the village, and be a consider-

able saving of distance. He decided to do so, and had walked for nearly a mile when he saw some way ahead a labouring man engaged at work on the road. Feeling sure that this man would be well acquainted with the neighbourhood he determined to ask him to direct him to the path. Then it occurred to him 'What can I give this fellow? He looks poor enough, and I should like to give him something useful. Ah! I have it, I'll give him my hat.' He took from his head the article so-named, a very shiny and ill-favoured specimen, and debated with himself in which of the two—the dilapidated hat just snatched from his head or a decidedly battered wideawake he was carrying in his hand—he would look least disreputable as he emerged next morning from the Rectorial mansion to go to church. He came to the conclusion that his gentility would be sufficiently secure with the wideawake, and so, with a hat in each hand stretched out before him, and with uncovered head he moved swiftly on. It was raining smartly at the time, and his appearance and manner seemed, to put it mildly, a little odd. At any rate the roadman thought so, and as

'The Druid' came nearer and was seen gesticulating and flourishing the hat and wideawake, and muttering aloud in a way peculiar to himself, the man began to feel more and more uneasy—in fact he was thoroughly frightened—and wherever 'The Druid' might be going, he thought to himself there could be no doubt as to where he had come from, and acting upon this impression he took to his heels. 'The Druid' shouted to him to stop, and kept calling out 'I have something for you;' but all in vain. The man, entertaining no doubt now but that he was being chased by some dangerous escaped lunatic, hurried on as fast as his legs would carry him. 'The Druid' hotly pursued him, and though running the faster of the two half a mile had been covered before he overtook the fugitive. Thereupon he threw his hat at the man and said, 'There, you may take that and keep it, but come along with me, I want you particularly. It was just what the man particularly did not want, so he dashed off again, but was so terrified that he tripped and fell to the ground, shouting 'Murder,' and no one being near,

gave himself up for lost. It took some minutes before 'The Druid' could convince the poor runaway that no harm would befall him; but the gift of a shilling had a wonderfully soothing effect, and when the stile was reached they parted on the most friendly terms, the roadman exclaiming heartily, 'I 'opes I may soon meet yer honour agin.'"

The second anecdote treats of an incident which produced an amazing effect at Penzance at the time of its occurrence, and was narrated to me shortly after, when I paid my first visit to Cornwall in 1868, not long after the close of the American War. It runs as follows:—

"In the winter of 1867, Henry Hall Dixon went to pass a few days with a friend at Penzance. There being a splendid reading room there, he at once asked to be introduced to it. Next day his friend took him into the room at an hour when it was generally much frequented, and found most of the chairs on either side of the long table that ran down the centre of the room occupied, and all the newspapers engaged. There was, however, one seat vacant towards



the end farthest from the door, and this 'The Druid' at once appropriated ; but not a paper could he get hold of, which seemed to aggravate him not a little. He had with him a huge rough stick, resembling a cudgel such as an Irish cattle drover might carry, and this, with a bang that startled everybody in the room, he allowed to drop upon the table just in front of him. Simultaneously in a hoarse whisper which was quite audible all over the room, he looked towards his friend, and muttered, 'I say, Bob, do you think some of these fellows will clear out soon?' He then proceeded to divest himself of his collar and necktie, and these also he placed on the table before him. The people around began to smile, but when he commenced soliloquising aloud in an incoherent fashion, and rubbing his hands somewhat vehemently together and laughing at intervals very excitedly, their faces wore a more serious aspect, and those nearest to him, one by one, got up and made as though they wanted to speak to some one or look for something at the other end of the room. In less than half an hour the whole company

had disappeared, and 'The Druid' found himself the sole occupant of the table, and in possession of all the papers, to the exhaustive examination of which he devoted himself to his heart's content."

"The Druid's" indifference to money was truly remarkable, considering the ever-growing demands and necessities of his family. Very early in his married life, he insisted that his wife should become his sole banker, and in her rare absences from home, one of his greatest anxieties was caused by his being left as purse-bearer. His eldest daughter relates a funny anecdote of her father's conduct on one of these occasions. Entering his study, she found him surrounded by cups of various shapes and sizes, all labelled, and all containing various sums of money. In answer to her eager questions, he explained that he was keeping the house money in separate parcels for "mother," and that no one must touch it till she came home. The child thought it a strange mode of securing its safety, but did not dare to remonstrate. He never carried money about him, and frequently found himself reduced to great

straits in consequence. Happily he had a faithful friend ever near at hand, in the person of an old woman, who kept an apple-stall in the Strand. From her he continually borrowed small sums (seldom exceeding sixpence in amount), to be punctually repaid the following day. In another way he also repaid them by little kindnesses, as for example, when he met her one evening, wending her way home, in a pouring rain, without any umbrella. Forthwith he sheltered her beneath his own till she reached the desired haven. He enjoyed to the full the amazement of two or three fashionable friends whom they encountered by the way.

On various occasions he sturdily refused large sums of money (often sorely needed at home), which were pressed upon him by the owners of large herds in grateful recognition of services rendered. He declared that such gifts might be looked on as calculated to warp his judgment, or fetter the uncompromising freedom of his decisions. Similarly, when he had given most valuable help and support to Mr. Rarey, the horse-tamer, during the many months of the

latter's stay in England, no entreaties could prevail upon "The Druid" to accept any remuneration. In despair, Mr. Rarey laid a bag of gold at the feet of Mrs. Dixon, who, however, was sternly commanded to return it without a moment's delay.

Many a story could be related illustrative of the grand simplicity of his character. When in Scotland he would be the honoured guest of a nobleman one night, and sleeping in a herdsman's hut the next, equally happy and at ease with both, and in each case received with a hearty welcome and keen appreciation. So many-sided was his character that there existed some secret bond of sympathy between him and "all sorts and conditions of men." Interesting records exist, in his own works, of his warm friendships with the late Sir Charles Knightley, with Sir Tatton Sykes (both the present Baronet and his genial father), with Mr. George Moore, the philanthropist, and with a host of other great and good men, who treated him with marked respect, and in some cases with affection, and this, in spite of occasional grave differences, both in re-



THE LATE SIR TATTON SYKES.



ligious and political opinions. Sir Charles Knightley revelled in "The Druid's" rich store of anecdotes and varied lore, conferring upon him the rare privilege of being admitted to the Baronet's own sanctum at Fawsley Park in Northamptonshire, at all hours of the day and night.

During his many travels, mostly on foot, he carried a heavy, rough cudgel, for which he sometimes found good use.

Passing one day through Brighton he encountered a fierce bull dog, long the terror of the residents in that part of the town through which he was walking towards the Station. Something aroused the animal's wrath, and he sprang at "The Druid's" throat. A terrible battle ensued, which was eagerly watched by an excited crowd. The struggle terminated eventually in the death of the dog, though not till many vigorous blows had been dealt with the formidable bludgeon which, fortunately, he carried in his hand. His wife still preserves it among other precious relics. Only a week or two before his end came, when he was too feeble to cross the room, even with the assistance of his trusty stick,

he put it into her hand, saying, "Take care of this, dear, and keep it near you for my sake; it is all you will have left ere long of your poor old man."

He had another very narrow escape when inspecting a herd in the north of England. Having wandered away from the herdsman, he entered a building whose sole occupant proved to be a surly bull. The savage brute made for him without an instant's delay. "The Druid," preserving complete presence of mind, backed against the wall and awaited the bull's rush. Fortunately the beast's horns were wide enough to encircle "The Druid's" body without wounding him; and there he stood, pinned to the wall, but uninjured, until the bull's keeper arrived, and rescued him from his perilous position.

At all times his mind seemed too absorbed and preoccupied to have leisure for ordinary matters. On one occasion he slipped a bottle of ink into his pocket and went out to visit a clergyman who took him into his church. The chancel was paved with the purest white marble, and after a while to their dismay they saw a track of black spots



momentarily increasing in number. The Vicar, with a horrified look, exclaimed, "Why! it's dropping from your pocket!" Putting his hand into the pocket of his coat and drawing it forth steeped in ink, "The Druid" confessed that he was quite unconscious of having been the cause of such a disaster, and slunk silently out of the church. In more than one instance he went to church in a pair of carpet slippers. Once he set out to sleep at the house of a friend who lived not far away, and was seen by his wife crossing the street with a brass candlestick in his hand in place of his carpet-bag.

It was his habit to write verses or articles when travelling on the railway, and twice in his life his train was shunted into a siding, and he continued his work for a considerable time before a porter discovered him and made him aware of his ludicrous and unfortunate position. The second time this happened was at Derby, where he was eventually roused by the jeers of some navvies working on the line.

His utter indifference to meals arose, in part, from absence of mind; in fact, he rarely

seemed to know whether he had dined or not. A sister-in-law, at whose house he was staying *en route* for Scotland, tells how the family were all sitting round the dinner table, *after* that meal was over, listening to his varied anecdotes, when he suddenly pulled out his watch and said, "Laura, do you know how late it is? When are we going to have our dinner?" Nevertheless, he always expected to find hot meat, vegetables, and pudding awaiting him when he reached home, however late it might be, and it was often after midnight. His favourite dish was roly-poly jam pudding. He always swallowed his food scalding hot, and one evening after his meal was over, he complained of a very sore throat, and sending for the family physician, declared himself to be the victim of diphtheria! After a brief examination the doctor found he had burnt a large bit of skin off his throat. On another occasion it was intimated to him that an unduly large amount of food was being consumed habitually in the kitchen, and he resolved, very reluctantly, to speak to his five maidservants in a body. They filed

into his study, and ranging themselves before him and his wife, solemnly awaited the scolding they were about to receive. At its conclusion the cook, as spokeswoman, burst forth as follows: "I think Missus might know where all the food goes, seeing as 'ow Master goes a messing about the larder in the middle of the night, and yesterday night ate the whole of a *rolly-polly* pudden in a few seconds."

After this crushing rejoinder the crestfallen "Druid" meekly dismissed the offending but triumphant domestics: triumphant because they felt more secure than before in giving tea and supper parties to their several "followers."

## CHAPTER VIII.

REMINISCENCES OF "THE DRUID."

*By his Eldest Son, Henry Sydenham Dixon.*

HOUGH it may seem singular that his children—and particularly his eldest son, who from 1866 to 1870, was associated with him in a certain amount of his newspaper work—can contribute so little to a biography of "The Druid," the causes are not far to seek. In the first place, his health was so bad during the last few years of his life, that he was constantly confined to his room for weeks together, during which time we saw very little of him; in the second, during his rare periods of comparative convalescence, he was generally travelling to collect materials for whatever book he happened to have in hand at the time; and, in the third, his absent-mindedness had

increased to such a degree that it was almost impossible to carry on anything like a connected conversation with him. Perhaps, after three or four attempts to attract his attention, a start would be effected, but, long before the subject was threshed out, his mind would have wandered to something else, and he would be engaged in an audible and animated discussion with himself on some totally different topic. Never was there a more indefatigable worker, and never did a workman use worse tools. That there should never, by any chance, have been a decent pen on the premises, is no novelty in the house of a literary man, but the entire absence of writing paper was a little strange. The blank sheet of a letter, the back of a circular, even an old envelope turned inside out, or any other scrap of paper that happened to be handy was promptly utilised, and the finished copy of one of "The Druid's" articles, or a chapter of one of his books, presented a remarkable and unmistakable appearance. With so many irons always in the fire, there could be no regularity in his hours of work; but he

always appeared to regard rest or recreation as totally unnecessary, and, except upon a Sunday—on which day no press of work would induce him to put pen to paper, though he was often waiting, all ready to begin when the clock had struck twelve at night—I can never remember seeing him sitting in front of the fire with a book or newspaper in his hand. When on his numerous railway journeys he invariably wrote in the train, and, no matter how heavy a day he might have gone through, the moment he had swallowed a hasty dinner work was resumed, and he invariably wrote far into the night. In fact, he lived with a pen or pencil in his hand, and I can well remember that, on the occasions of our great annual treat, when, each Christmas, he took his elder children to Astley's, we had scarcely settled down in our places before he was seated, right at the back of the box, with a big book on his knees in lieu of a desk, and there he would remain, steadily writing, until the fall of the curtain. I know this always produced a profound impression on us, for we never could understand how

it was possible for any one thus to resist the absorbing attractions of "The Battle of Waterloo," "The Siege of Delhi," or whatever equestrian drama happened to be in the bill. Such incessant application would have been a terrible tax on the strongest constitution, and it will readily be imagined how marvellous must have been the will-power ceaselessly exercised by a chronic invalid, and kept up by him unflinching through a long series of years.

From his early boyhood "The Druid" was never free from illness of one kind or another for long together. For many years his eyes gave him an immensity of trouble, necessitating constant visits to the leading oculists of the day, and often obliging him to spend long periods of seclusion in a darkened room. Then came a veritable plague of boils, from which he must have endured tortures, and these only left him to be succeeded by asthma, from which he suffered so severely that for weeks together he could never lie down, but passed night after night in the old arm chair in which he ultimately died. In addition to all these troubles he had to

undergo one or two operations every year for polypus in the nose—a disease which, combined with asthma, made it almost impossible for him to breathe at times. Yet no one ever heard him utter a word of complaint, and, unless exceptionally ill, he was invariably very cheerful. Still, towards the end, he undoubtedly felt life to be a burden almost too heavy to bear, and was ready and eager to lay it down. Indeed, almost the last words he said to me, when I broke down on receiving some minute directions from him as to his funeral, were, "Don't grieve, dear boy; I shall be the happiest man at my own funeral."

Owing mainly to his incessant exertions at Rugby and Cambridge, to make up for the time lost by enforced idleness through illness, "The Druid" does not appear to have taken part in any of the customary boyish games; yet never was there a more catholic lover of almost every branch of sport. Perhaps cricket was his greatest favourite, and, though he had never touched a bat or ball, he had a fine theoretical knowledge of the game. On a few never-to-be-forgotten occasions he took



one of my brothers and myself to a great match at Lord's, and, though more than thirty years have passed, I can still recall how we all three lay on the grass and watched the elegant defence of Richard Daft, or hastily dodged to avoid one of George Parr's slashing square leg hits. In those days county cricket was of comparatively small importance, and it was the periodical battles between the All England and United All England Elevens that excited the greatest public interest. This was the time when the three Cambridgeshire cracks, Hayward, Carpenter, and Tarrant, were perhaps at their best; when Caffyn and Julius Cæsar were doing yeoman service for Surrey; when H. H. Stephenson was keeping himself in good condition all through each winter by acting as huntsman to a pack of harriers; when Jackson's deadly bowling was at its fastest; and when Tom Lockyer's incessant clowning—clowning, by the way, that was never allowed to interfere with business, as any rash batsmen who attempted to take the smallest liberty promptly discovered to his cost—had made him about the most popular

wicket-keeper of all time. On these halcyon days—and I am sure there are no such summer days now—"The Druid" would for once forget to produce the never-failing pencil, or only use it to keep our scoring card religiously "up to date," and would watch every ball bowled with all the zest and enjoyment felt by either of his boys.

About the time that the memorable battle between Sayers and Heenan had set all England talking on the subject of pugilism, he went to a few exhibitions of boxing; but it was not a form of sport to which he took kindly, and I do not think that he ever attended a prize fight in his life. The advent of "Deerfoot," on the other hand, awoke in him a very strong interest in pedestrianism, and he was constantly to be seen at Hackney Wick and the West London grounds, both of which have long since been swallowed up by bricks and mortar. He was an enthusiastic believer in the Indian's powers, and witnessed nearly all his races against "Young England," the "Crow-catcher," the "Gateshead Clipper," the "Norwich Milk Boy," "Jenny Jones," the

“American Deer,” and many another bygone celebrity of the cinder path. It was not very difficult to persuade him to take me with him on most of these occasions, and I then acquired a taste for running which resulted in the accumulation of a certain number of silver cups in later years. Needless to say my father always took the keenest interest in my performances. At the time that he was dying, I had won a certain challenge cup for two years in succession, and only one more victory was needed to make it my own property. He knew that he could not possibly live until the day fixed for the race, and his latest command was that I was on no account to resign the cup, under the idea of paying respect to his memory, by not running in public so soon after his death, but that I was to run and win. I ran, as he ordered, and, under the circumstances, I don't think I could have been beaten on that day. Fancy a man in such a state of suffering having a thought to spare for such a trivial matter, though nothing which interested any of his children was ever trivial with him ; but it was so with my father all through his

life—every thought was for others, never a one for himself.

I do not suppose that "The Druid" ever had a billiard cue in his hand, yet the meeting of John Roberts, sen., and William Cook for the championship—the first match for the championship that had taken place for upwards of twenty years—excited him immensely. It was played only a month prior to his death, when he well knew that he would never leave his room again alive, so he had to send me to represent him at St. James's Hall, with the strictest injunctions that nothing was to prevent me from bringing him the result on my way home. The game of 1,200 up, the first ever played on a small pocket table, was an unusually prolonged one, and it was after two o'clock on a bitterly cold morning when I stood under his bed-room window, shouting to him that Cook had won. He could not, of course, leave his bed, nor open the window, so communication was difficult; nevertheless, I was not allowed to go home until I had yelled out a complete epitome of the match at the top of my voice; a proceeding that must have woke up everyone within a hundred yards.

His love for racing and coursing needs no comment here. Towards the end of his life, his fondness for the horse was as strong as ever, but his interest in the race itself had very much evaporated. Indeed, I have been with him at Epsom on an Oaks day when he has looked the fillies carefully over in the paddock, just strolled out to catch a glimpse of the start from a distance, and then made straight for the railway station, quite content to read the placings when he got back to Fleet Street. Perhaps rowing was the sport which appealed to him the least of any. The pages of the "Omnibus" contain little reference to the Inter-University boat-race, though it is rowed at a time when matter is by no means too plentiful with the sporting journalist; nor was "The Druid" ever present at Henley Regatta, which one would have imagined likely to afford him congenial material for an article or two.

Only on one occasion can I remember to have seen my father fairly lose his temper, sadly as our false quantities tried him when he assisted us in preparing our lessons for

the following day, and I think the provocation he received fully justified his doing so. He had taken my mother and three or four of us children to a firework night at the Crystal Palace. There was the usual crush on the way to the railway station when the time came to return home, and, at one point, this was made worse by the foolish action of a little man, who placed one of his arms right across a narrow door-way. Seeing that my mother, who was just in front of him, was in danger of getting hurt, my father reached over her shoulder and quietly moved the man's arm in order to let her pass. The obstructionist took no notice at the moment, but just as my father had begun to descend the long flight of steps to the platform, a violent kick from behind nearly precipitated him and the youngest child, who was in his arms, from the top to the bottom. However, he managed to keep his balance, and reach level ground in safety, and then I have a vivid remembrance of his giving a very pretty exhibition of Association football, from one end of that long platform to the other, his cowardly little assailant enacting

the thankless part of the ball with great success. The whole scene is as fresh in my memory as if it had occurred yesterday, instead of nearly forty years ago; I seem still to hear the delighted cry of the baby, who was in my father's arms throughout the entire episode, and who evidently considered that some new and beautiful game was being played for his special benefit. "The Druid" was himself again almost immediately, and our train started as he was leaning out of the carriage window, and blandly assuring the outraged wife of his victim that "a little brown paper and vinegar, my dear madam, will make your husband as good as new again."

No man ever scorned a lie more thoroughly, or had a deeper contempt for anything like a mean action, and his jealousy for the perfect independence of the Press was possibly carried to extremes at times. He first took me to a sale of blood stock about 1860, and we arrived early, in order that he might have plenty of time to look over the yearlings in their boxes before the sale opened. When this proceeding was over, I

began somewhat eagerly to anticipate making use of the two luncheon tickets that had been presented to us on our arrival, and was much disappointed when my father proceeded to a small public house in the neighbourhood, and bought some bread and cheese, which he shared with me. When I asked the reason of this extraordinary neglect to "take the goods the Gods provide," I was told that he could not conscientiously write favourably of the yearlings, and would not, therefore, accept the hospitality of their owner. Perhaps it is excusable that this motive was quite above the head of a boy of twelve, and that I munched my very inferior cheese with many regretful longings for the flesh-pots of Egypt.


Never anything of a "ladies' man," his love for his wife was very deep and touching. Towards the end, when he was still struggling to town each day, she would walk with him, to help him to the top of the street, where he used to catch an omnibus. Occasionally, when she was dressed, he would send her back to her room to put on a smarter pair of boots, or some new gloves,



and then would wait for her on the pavement "to see how nice you look as you come out." How many men have so much lover-like feeling left when within measurable distance of their silver wedding day? He died too early for most of his children to realise what they had lost; but if he has left his sons an example that they cannot hope to emulate, he has bequeathed them a memory that one and all of them have ever regarded with the deepest reverence.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE DECLINE OF CUMBERLAND WRESTLING.

 T is a matter of almost universal regret that many of the manly exercises which found favour in the eyes of the last two generations are beginning to pass away, and in some cases, have already disappeared. The great philanthropist, Mr. George Moore, for instance, who was born in 1806 and died in 1876, used to attribute no small portion of his success in life to the initiation into Cumberland wrestling which he received at a very early age. When eight years old he was sent to a day school at a place called Bolton-Gate, about two miles from Mealsgate, in Cumberland, where he was born. At that time schools were very much rougher, especially in the North of England, than

they are now, and the account given by George Moore of "Blackbird" Wilson, his schoolmaster, would appal many a tender-hearted mother if she thought that her little son was about to undergo such horrors as the hero of Dr. Smiles' best biography encountered between 1814 and 1818.

"He was called 'Blackbird' Wilson," writes George Moore, "because he could imitate the song of any bird, and especially the blackbird. He was an old man and fond of drink. His scholars were sent out to fetch it for him three or four times a day. With a thick ruler, which he brought down sharply upon our backs, he used to drive learning into us. He often sent the ruler flying among our heads, and the wonder is he did not break our skulls. His rule was to drive reading, writing, and arithmetic into us by brute force. He never attempted to make learning attractive. Such being the case, I was never fond of school and often played the truant. Indeed, I should have been much oftener absent but for the dread of the terrible floggings which were then common. My determination not to study

followed me through my school days. My faults were those of an energetic and wayward disposition, unhelped by a mother's sympathy and solace."

The amusements of the boys were in some respects peculiar to the district. Wrestling, or as it was called in the Cumbrian vernacular, "worsling," was the favourite sport. At it the boys tried their strength with each other on every possible occasion. They got to know the best way of "takin' haud," and became familiar with all the technical terms and phrases of the game, such as chips and hypes ; buttocks and crossbuttocks ; the back-heeling, the hank, and the click inside. The wrestling of Cumberland and Westmoreland is well known to be less savage than that of Cornwall. There is no hard kicking of the shins or legs, and the combatants, whether men or boys, never cease to be good friends. "Men of all classes wrestle," says George Moore, "statesmen, ploughmen, cobblers, labourers, and even clergymen. One of the most noted wrestlers in Cumberland was a curate — the Rev. Abraham Brown." The boys began to test

their physical powers early on the village greens. George Moore, whom the late Archbishop Tait, also a Cumbrian, subsequently pronounced to be the best and largest-hearted Christian that he had ever known, tried his strength upon his school-fellows by "takin' haud" of them. Strong and wiry, persevering and tenacious, he soon learnt all the tricks of the art, and before he left school few boys could cope with him. It was hardly to be expected that he should receive a very learned education at "Black-bird" Wilson's school, seeing that his father paid but six shillings and sixpence a quarter for his tuition. His next move was to a finishing school at Blennerhasset, where he remained only for one quarter, at the cost of eight shillings. "Here," he says, "for the first time I felt there was some use in learning and began to be ashamed of my own ignorance. The master was a very superior man, in fact a sort of genius. However, I had made up my mind, when thirteen years old, to go away from home and fight the battle of life for myself."

"The Druid's" regard and admiration for

George Moore were so pronounced that I am tempted to linger a little longer among the thick coming memories which the name of that generous-hearted Cumbrian recalls. Nearly seventy years have now elapsed since, as a youth of nineteen, George Moore set eyes upon London for the first time. Dr. Smiles presents his readers with an interesting sketch of the journey from Carlisle to London, performed by his young hero on the top of a coach in the spring of 1825. It might have been of him that Tennyson wrote his famous lines :

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the  
 strife,  
 When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of  
 my life ;  
 Yearning for the large excitement that the coming  
 years would yield,  
 Eager hearted as a boy when first he leaves his  
 father's field,  
 And at night along the dusky highway near and  
 nearer drawn,  
 Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a  
 dreary dawn ;  
 And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him  
 then  
 Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs  
 of men ;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new,  
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do.

Sixty-five or seventy years ago it took two and a-half days and two nights to travel from Carlisle to London by coach. The road lay through Lancaster and Manchester, whence it made its way across the pleasant midland counties. "At last," writes Dr. Smiles, "on the evening of the third day the coach reached Highgate Hill, from which George Moore looked down on the city of London, the scene of his future labours. Already the prodigious magnitude of the place astonished the young traveller. The coach traversed street after street, going down Old Street and Pancras Road, down Gray's Inn Lane, along Holborn and Newgate Street, until finally it stopped at the Swan with Two Necks in Lad Lane, Wood Street."

It arrived in London on the night before Good Friday, 1825. Next morning all the shops were shut. What was he to do on Good Friday? He knew that all the Cumberland men in London were accustomed to

have their annual wrestling match on that day, and accordingly he repaired to Chelsea to observe their sports. When he reached the trysting place, he found the wrestling green crowded with north country folk ; big, brawny men, with broad shoulders and great girth, professional wrestlers and amateur wrestlers, intermingled with groups of sporting and betting spectators. Among them were many life-guardsmen, as there is no more favourite recruiting ground for troopers for the Household Brigade than the border counties of Cumberland, Westmoreland and Northumberland.

Among the throngs collected together, George Moore found a young Quaker from Torpenhow, in Cumberland, who had won the wrestling belt at Keswick a few years before. The two young men had already met and tried their strength as wrestlers in the north country, and now renewed their acquaintance in the south. Inspired by his rencontre with an old friend, George Moore put down his name as a competitor. Some who were present on the occasion have described him as middle-sized, very strong



looking, with a broad chest and clearly defined muscles. His hair was dark and curly, his eyes brown and glowing with excitement. His face beamed with good humour and health, and his bearing was free and independent to the verge of abruptness.

“To those who do not know the rules of Cumberland wrestling,” writes Dr. Smiles, “it may be mentioned that, although an athletic sport, it is always conducted with perfectly good temper, the loser invariably taking his fall as a joke. It is practised by boys and men on the village greens, and in the north is never mixed up with betting or drinking, although it must be confessed that in London it is not always free from these objectionable elements. The wrestlers stand up chest to chest, each placing his chin on the other’s right shoulder, and his left arm above the right arm of his opponent. Then they grasp each other round the body. There is often a delay and difficulty in ‘takin’ haud.’ Each tries to get an advantage in seizing the under grip. When both have got firm hold, the sport begins in earnest, and each endeavours

to throw his rival. The one who touches the ground first and is undermost, is the loser. Though force and strength go for much, skill is still more indispensable. The 'chips,' or dexterous strokes, are numerous, including the hype, the swinging hype, the buttock, the cross-buttock, the back-heel, the click inside. These would afford ample subjects for the pictorial illustrator of a beautiful athletic art. For example, English sculptors have already imitated the Greek athlete to death. Why should they not give us a taste of English art? Nothing can be seen more lithe, elegant, and vigorous, than the trained wrestlers on an English village green, and more interest would attach to a good statue of a Cumbrian proficient than to one of Automedon, or Castor and Pollux."

In due course George Moore's name was called out, and divesting himself of his shirt and jersey, he stepped into the ring. The first man he encountered was a little bigger than himself, but George Moore threw him so cleverly that the question was asked on every side, "Wha's yon? Whar does 'e coom frae? What's 'is naam?" The

name was soon known, and when, in the next wrestling bout, he again threw his man, applause rang round the ring, and "Weel doon, George Moore!" was echoed on all sides. As the game proceeds, the difficulties encountered by the victorious wrestlers become greater and greater. All the weak and inexperienced men have been thrown and got rid of, and when the strong have only the strong to meet, the excitement becomes intensified to a painful degree. On these thrilling occasions the greatest vigilance is shown by the champions as regards the way in which they clutch or "tak' haud" of their antagonists. Each strives to get some initial advantage, and for some minutes they duck and dodge round the ring, until a loud shout proclaims that "They've haud! they've haud!" The men are locked as in a vice; every muscle is straining and quivering like a taut harp string. Then all the subtlest and most scientific tricks of an art which has been practised among men ever since wrestling formed one of the prizes of the Greek "pancratium," are resorted to on both sides. They are so neatly executed that the "chip"

can only be perceived by the most experienced eyes, and down goes one of the men with the other on the top of him.

As the struggle proceeded our hero had each time a more formidable opponent to encounter. At length he found himself face to face with a celebrated Cumberland champion, named Byers, who had already grassed "a vast o' min." The two antagonists walked round and round each other for a long time in their eager anxiety to get a good grip. Byers was the taller and heavier of the two, and no more accomplished executant of the "right leg hype" ever entered a ring. He very nearly succeeded in throwing George Moore by recourse to this familiar trick, but before long the latter grasped Byers firmly in his arms, and threw him bodily over his head. Again a chorus of approving shouts greeted the victor; but in the last tussle of the day it was fated that he should meet more than his match. His ultimate antagonist was a noted wrestler from Cumberland, who was famous for his left leg striking and for clicking inside the heel. After a long struggle, George Moore went down under this brawny

gladiator's favourite chip. Yet on the adjudication of the prizes of the day, George Moore came out third best. Everyone knew that he was a Coomberland laddie, for his strong Carlisle accent told its own tale. After the sports were over, hardly a man or boy on the ground failed to declare himself George's Moore's well-wisher and friend, and to grasp him by the hand. The incidents of the day could hardly have failed to elate the lad, and nerve him for the battle of life which still lay before him. He retraced his way to the heart of the city, with which he was then so unfamiliar, but in which he was one day to hold up his head as a merchant prince. In the course of the afternoon he learnt that the inn in which he was lodging had fallen into disrepute because it had long been frequented by Thurtell, the notorious murderer of Mr. Weare. In the morning George Moore discovered that he had slept on the very bed which Thurtell habitually occupied. This gave him such a shock that he felt obliged to seek other lodgings, and he was fortunate in finding shelter in Wood Street, at a humble boarding house kept by

a motherly body from the north of England, whose kindness and sympathy helped to give him that lasting belief in the goodness of woman which throughout life was one of his most deeply-seated characteristics.

His determination and pertinacity—valuable qualities to the promotion of which wrestling had not a little conduced—were about to be subjected to a severe test. For the next week he passed every available hour of his time in walking about London, seeking an engagement in some draper's shop. Referring afterwards to the early trials of his young life, he said, "I had no one to take me by the hand, and my appearance was against me, as the Cumberland tailors were not so good then as they are now, so that when I applied for a situation it was difficult to convince them that I wanted a place behind the counter, and not some meaner post. My dialect, too, was no recommendation to me, for although it is pretty broad now, it was much broader then. After beating about London for a week I began to think myself a not very marketable commodity in that great city. Still I per-

severed, going over the whole surface of London on foot, and entering as many as thirty drapers' shops in a day, always with the same result. My second Sunday in London now came round, and I began to realise its loneliness and solitude. Every house looked black at me, and every door was closed. I thought it almost heartless that multitudes should be going about on their errands of worship or enjoyment without taking any notice of me. To those who are friendless, London is the most solitary place in the world. Soon I began the next week, but no better success attended me. At last I was in despair, and resolved to go out to America. I called at Swan and Edgar's, in Piccadilly, and told a young man there, whom I had spoken to before, that I was going to take my passage. He then informed me that Mr. Ray, of Messrs. Flint, Ray & Co., of Grafton House, Soho Square, had sent to inquire if anyone knew my address. Mr. Ray had himself come from Cumberland, and was the son of a Cumberland 'statesman.' He knew my father's family, and wished to befriend me. I flew

to see him, and he engaged me, more from pity than from any likelihood that I should shine in the service. My salary was to be £30 a year, and joyfully indeed did I accept his offer."

Next day he entered the warehouse in Soho Square for the first time. One who was long employed there remembers his first appearance. He writes, "On incidentally looking across the haberdashery counter, I saw an uncouth, thick-set country lad, standing there with tears in his eyes. In a minute or two a large deal chest, such as Scottish servant wenches use for their clothes, was brought in by a man and set on the floor. When the lad had dried his tears he carried the box upstairs to the bedroom where he was to sleep. After he had come downstairs again he began working, and continued to be the hardest worker in the establishment until he left. Had you seen him then, you would have said he was the most unlikely lad in England to make the great future that he did."

Let us now turn onwards from page 57 to page 80 of Dr. Smiles' admirable "Life



of George Moore, Merchant and Philanthropist." In the first of these two pages, we see the country boy, "uncouth and thick-set," entering the service of Messrs. Flint, Ray and Co., in the April of 1825. At the second page we find him, in the June of 1830, inducted as a partner into the firm of Messrs. Groucock and Copestake, long afterwards known as Messrs. Groucock, Copestake, and Moore. In April of that year George Moore celebrated his twenty-fourth birthday. His rapid success was due to his extraordinary energy as a commercial traveller in the service of Messrs. Fisher, Stroud and Robinson, of Watling Street, City, then the first lace house in the East End. Again his good luck, in being a Cumberland man, was of essential service to him, as Mr. Fisher came from the same part of England. His salary was £40 a year, and he found that he had still much to learn. Soon Mr. Fisher began to blame him for his slowness and stupidity. " 'I have had many a stupid blockhead from Cumberland,' he exclaimed, 'but you are the worst of them all.' He kept on repeating this two or three times

a week for some months, until the conceit was entirely taken out of me—a very good riddance for a lad of nineteen." Among other defects, he became conscious that his education left much to be desired; so he went to a night-school, and frequently sat up studying his lessons until the small hours of the morning. This he continued to do during the next eighteen months, and learnt more than he ever did at any other portion of his industrious life. But the quality to which he mainly owed his subsequent rise, was his indomitable perseverance, which he had first acquired when pitted in the wrestling ring against a stronger opponent. About that time his friendship with Mr. Crampton, a fellow-worker at Fisher's drapery store, commenced, continuing without intermission until they became partners in Cheapside. Writing in 1827, Mr. Crampton says of him: "I found George Moore at Fisher's, and we became close companions. His friends were my friends, and so intimate were we that, although myself a Yorkshireman, I seemed to merge into a Cumberland laddie. George was very clannish and patriotic, but I was

gayer and more frivolous than he, and he never failed to tell me of my faults. He was a strong, round-shouldered young fellow, very cheerful and willing. Among our amusements we attended the wrestling matches at St. John's Wood. The principal match was always on Good Friday. One day we went to the appointed tryst, and George Moore entered his name as a wrestler. The competitors drew lots, and George's antagonist was a lifeguardsman over six feet high. I think I see George Moore smile now as he stood opposite to the giant, who smiled also. Then they went at it in earnest, 'got haud,' and George was gently laid upon his back. By this time he was out of practice, and I do not think that he ever wrestled again. Moreover, his work soon became so hard that he had no time for amusement."

After eighteen months in their service, Messrs. Fisher and Co. found George Moore too good for town travelling, and sent him on the Liverpool and Manchester circuit. He was then twenty-two, and in the northern districts Messrs. Fisher's business had been

badly worked, and had greatly fallen off. There was only one way to restore it—work, work, work. He was at it early in the morning, and late at night. He lost not a moment, and in American phrase, “was no slouch.” Meantime he claimed credit for nothing except zeal and perseverance. His opponents, on the other hand, attributed his success more to his courteous persuasiveness and capacity for work than to the qualities of his wares. At the inns which he frequented he soon became a general favourite. Other commercial travellers used to pack up his goods, and help him on the way, although themselves his rivals. One day a young *commis voyageur*, who had just embarked upon the northern circuit, arrived at the Star Hotel, Manchester, and found a dozen travellers hard at work helping George Moore to pack up his goods. “Who is that young fellow they are making such a fuss about?” asked the new-comer. “Oh! it is only George.” “And who may George be?” “What, don’t you know the Napoleon of Watling Street? Let me introduce you to George Moore.”

His next move was to Ireland, where, for the first time, he encountered Groucock, the traveller who had so greatly interfered with Fisher's Irish business. He was a young man, although some years older than Moore. Before the latter's appearance in Ireland Groucock had taken the lion's share of the lace trade ; but now he had a foeman worthy of his steel. The struggle between them was so keen that Groucock's physical strength was not equal to the tremendous strain. All the time George Moore worked harder than ever, and at last succeeded in getting back all the best Irish customers for his employers. Groucock soon found it necessary to come to terms with his indefatigable competitor. Through a mutual friend he made overtures to George Moore, offering him £500 a year if he would travel for his house instead of for Fisher's. It was, indeed, a tempting offer, for Moore's salary was only £150 a year, out of which he could barely contrive to live. Considering the enormous business that he brought to their firm, it was selfish short-sightedness on the part of Messrs. Fisher and Co. not to have increased his salary. But

his answer to Groucock's overture was firm and emphatic. "I will be a servant for no other house than Fisher's. The only condition on which I will leave him is a partnership." In this way George Moore embarked upon the small business at No. 7, Cheapside, which he afterwards converted into one of the most stupendous and successful establishments in the world. The rest of his career is well known, and my only excuse for devoting these few pages to the commemoration of his name, is that he was, throughout life, an attached friend of "The Druid," his Cumbrian compatriot, and that he frequently attributed no small portion of his own success to the valuable attributes implanted in him by his love and practice of what his fellow Cumbrians call "worsling." It taught him the manliness, courage, and love of open air sports which subsequently culminated in his devotion to fox-hunting, and sent him out in 1816, as a boy of ten, to ride a barebacked horse with John Peel's hounds, over which Sir Wilfred Lawson now holds sway. Many years later, when in 1854 Mr. Alderman Sydney was Lord Mayor of London, he and

the Lady Mayoress accompanied Mr. and Mrs. George Moore down to Cumberland on a visit to that picturesque and romantic county. Almost the first act of the old wrestler was to take his distinguished guests to see some Cumberland wrestling on the island near Low Wood, Windermere. He told them that he owed it to wrestling that he was so hardy and strong at the age of 48, and when he paid his next visit to Cumberland he distinguished himself with Sir Wilfred Lawson's hounds, exclaiming to those around him at the end of the run, that he had never hunted in that country since he rode his father's bare-backed old mare after John Peel's harriers to the refrain of the best known hunting song in the world :—

“ D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so grey ?  
D'ye ken John Peel at the break of day ?  
D'ye ken John Peel when he's far far away,  
With his hounds and his horn in the morning ?  
'Twas the sound of his horn brought me from my  
bed,  
And the cry of his hounds has me oftimes led,  
For Peel's view-holloa would waken the dead,  
Or a fox from his lair in the morning.”

Perhaps there never was a truer aphorism known than that uttered by Judge Talfourd

from the Bench with his dying breath. "If I were to be asked," said he, "what is the great fault of English society, I would say in one word that it is the want of sympathy between class and class." In like manner, no words were more frequently upon George Moore's lips than these:—"Sympathy is the grandest word in the English language. It contains within it a gospel sufficient to renovate the world." Who can doubt that in his case it was largely promoted and encouraged by the ardour and heart with which he threw himself into manly sports and amusements, which made him "hail fellow, well met," with all sorts and conditions of men—a trait which he shared to the full with his friend and admirer, the hero of this book.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE DRUID'S VERSATILITY.



HE memory of racing men is so short, and their knowledge of the performances of great horses which flourished before their time so scanty, that "The Druid's" comments upon the sporting career of one of the greatest pillars of the Turf that the nineteenth century has produced, will perhaps be read with interest by some to whom the late Earl of Eglinton is no more than a name. The following article was contributed to the *Doncaster Gazette* shortly after Lord Eglinton had sold the whole of his stud, including brood mares and horses in training, to the late Mr. John Massey Stanley, who subsequently became Sir John Massey Stanley Errington, and died at an advanced age in 1892.

*From Doncaster Gazette, March, 1855.*

“LORD EGLINTON’S TURF CAREER.

“In these troublous times for the Turf, when credit is low and bidding still lower at Tattersall’s, and when those now left of the gallant red-coated Race Brigade are fain to content themselves with meetings before Sebastopol amid the loud-mouthed diapason of the cannon, in the place of nigger minstrels and of ‘Donkey Jimmy’ in the distance, we bitterly grudge the retirement of Lord Eglinton. It is harder still that the tartan banner should be hauled down so soon after the narrow blue and white stripes of the Marquis of Exeter, and thus that the Northern and Southern Turf should be bereft within the same season of two noblemen who knew no crooked ways, but went straight as Minié ball to the winning chair. Lord Eglinton was entered to the sport very early, and in 1831, two years before he attained his majority, he first brought out the family colours on the Scottish Turf. Ayr was then his favourite course; but in later years fortune, which invariably deserted him at York, smiled on him at Doncaster, and he

gracefully marked his sense of her favours by the presentation of a £200 Plate to its races, which was won by the Black Doctor in 1850. One of his earliest racers was a very elegant grey mare, Queen Bathsheba, who drew first blood for him in a £70 Plate at Ayr. In 1831, his stud only consisted of three, but was trebled before three more seasons were out. At that time George Dawson, father to Thomas, Matthew, Joseph and John Dawson, trained for him at Bog Side, in Ayrshire, not far from Eglinton Castle, and led not a few winners back to scale. His lordship often rode his own horses, and Tommy Lye was in the saddle when professional weights were necessary. Matches, in which his lordship seldom declared to ride under 12 st. 7 lbs., were his great delight, and as Sir James Boswell and Sir David Baird were like-minded, the good people of Ayr found those three names perpetually figuring in the 'correct race-lists' of that day. As a general rule, Lord Eglinton got the better of the Baronets, and the same success attended him in his more recent match mounts at the Eglinton Park

Meeting, where he won three Steeplechases in one day. Butterfly was one of his earliest winners in England, while his colours were successfully carried also by Black Diamond, Potentate, and Bellona. Of these, Potentate ran till he was about fourteen years old, and won forty-two races out of ninety-nine starts—a feat ranking him with those everlasting geldings, Zohrab, Isaac, Naworth, Radulphus, and Clothworker. From 1838 to 1840 the Eglinton stud became a great fact, the two best horses being St. Bennett and St. Martin, who would have won much more frequently had not Lanercost perpetually stopped the way. The former of these Saints commenced well by winning the Northumberland Plate in 1838 and 1839, and one of Lord Eglinton's most dashing victories with this horse was in the Liverpool Cup of 1838, when Harkaway first carried the white jacket and black cap of Mr. Thomas Ferguson on an English race-course. His adherents crossed the Irish Channel, big with the belief that no English nag could live with him; but 15 lb. to St. Bennett was beyond his powers, and he was cleverly defeated by a neck.

“After 1840 Lord Eglinton's stud never numbered more than fifteen, which was about its strength in 1842, when the somewhat mean-looking Blue Bonnet came with such a feverish rush at the Doncaster betting rooms about 8 o'clock on the evening before the St. Leger, and carried out Tom Dawson's anticipations so cleverly on the morrow. The St. Leger was Blue Bonnet's maiden performance, as she had gone dead amiss on the eve of other great engagements at Goodwood, Liverpool and elsewhere, and in fact had travelled hundreds of miles for nothing. With this St. Leger, Lord Eglinton's especial luck commenced, and between 1842 and 1851 he won nearly £18,000 in stakes over its Town Moor. Pompey, who was always an especial favourite of his lordship, won the Great Yorkshire Handicap here in 1843 and 1844, and the pretty white-legged Aristides, after showing temper in the St. Leger, won a £450 stake against Colonel Anson's Armitage in 1843. In 1844, the stud, which then consisted of ten, left Thomas Dawson's stable, as his lordship was anxious to have

them trained in private. Consequently Fobert, who had not been much heard of since General Chassé's time, was installed at Spigot Lodge. Tommy Lye, whose connection with them had ceased after the last Doncaster Meeting, handed over his jacket to Job Marson, who had worn it a few times previously, and continued to do so with considerable success for four seasons. Van Tromp was a foal at the foot of Barbelle, his dam, when Fobert brought out his first batch of Eglinton two-year-olds in 1845; but the season of 1846 was the beginning of the great Eglinton winning cycle. In that year Nerissa won the Chesterfield Stakes; Dolo, thanks to Job Marson's powerful handling, kept his legs in the North Derby at Newcastle-on-Tyne, when Fancy Boy and Sir Tatton Sykes—both of them great favourites for the coming Doncaster St. Leger—were left sprawling on the glassy surface of Newcastle Moor; and next day Dolo won the Northumberland Plate as well. Van Tromp pulled gallantly through his three two-year old struggles at Liverpool, Goodwood and Doncaster, but his defeat for the Derby next

year, for which he started third favourite at 7 to 1, was a great disappointment to Lord Eglinton. At Goodwood next year Van Tromp set matters straight by defeating Chanticleer for the Cup, but in his return match with the gallant grey for the Doncaster Cup he stripped with a carcass like a Durham ox, and quite failed to do himself justice. He only appeared in public once more, to meet the Scotch grey for the deciding game at Ascot, which he won, after making steady running throughout.

“To dilate on the deeds of the Flying Dutchman and upon his tilts with Voltigeur would be a thrice-told tale. Suffice it to say that he swelled his lordship's winnings in 1849 to a net value of £19,500, and that both his trainer and jockey were given to understand that the stud would be sold if he lost the Derby that year, and that they received £1,000 each for the double event (Derby and St. Leger). Spigot Lodge never had reason to rejoice over a Chester Cup, and their best handicap win was the Great Metropolitan at Epsom in 1848, when Glen Sattel only beat old Inheritress by a head

for the 1,500 guinea stake. Elthiron was quite overshadowed by his stable-companion, the Dutchman, but a gamer and more useful animal never wore a bridle, and now that old Pantaloon has gone, Phryne, his dam, will be puzzled to produce an equal to him and to Hobbie Noble.

"Mr. Bowes' luck in breeding four Derby winners from three different mares does not fall to ordinary mortals, and we cannot remember any mare, except Barbelle, who produced two foals of the stamp of Van Tromp and the Dutchman.\* Her appear-

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\* "The Druid" evidently forgot three mares which, previous to Barbelle, had records as distinguished as hers. The first is the third Duke of Grafton's Penelope, who produced Whalebone and Whisker both by Waxy, and both Derby winners. The second is Lord Egremont's Canopus mare, who produced Lapdog and Spaniel, both by Whalebone, and both Derby winners. The third is Mr. Bowes' Emma by Whisker, who produced Mündig by Catton, and Cotherstone by Touchstone, both Derby winners. In addition, Emma produced Mowerina, the dam of West Australian. At a later date Mr. Theobald's (afterwards Mr. Thelluson's) Pocahontas by Glencoe, surpassed all previous records by producing, in three consecutive years, Stockwell by The Baron, Rataplan by The Baron, and King Tom by Harkaway.—(F. L.)



ance is nothing very great, and although she slightly resembles old Beeswing she has by no means so good a back, and only contrived to win two races out of ten starts. Still, she is a mare who would always attract attention in a field, even by the side of Easter, Ellerdale, Alice Hawthorn and Mountain Sylph. Barbelle is now rising twenty, and her breeding luck has been singularly chequered. Her first foal, in 1842, was a brown filly by Muley Moloch, which was not trained. In 1843 she missed to the Bard, and in 1844, '45 and '46 came Van Tromp by Lanercost, De Witt by the Provost, and the Flying Dutchman by Bay Middleton. Then began a series of mishaps. In 1847, sister to Van Tromp died, and his brother, Dr. Ruyter, ruined his back when a foal. In 1849 she missed to Lanercost; Vanderdecken by Bay Middleton arrived in 1850, and in 1851 and 1852 she missed to Bay Middleton. In 1853 a fine racing-like colt by Orlando, named Zuyder Zee, was born, and Melbourne was next thought of, but Lord Eglinton decided to send her to his especial

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favourite, Pompey, and a fine filly with a large blaze to her face was the result. The four of her progeny that Fobert has trained have won no less than £33,300, and the only blot on his lordship's racing escutcheon is that he cut up the Flying Dutchman into lots after the Doncaster meeting of 1855. The price was £5,000, divided into ten £500 shares, two of which were taken by Lord Eglinton, two by Lord Strathmore, one by Lord Airlie, one by Sir George Armytage, one by Sir H. Hume Campbell, one by Captain Archdall, one by Mr. Henry S. Thompson and one by Captain Hamilton.

"The history of Lord Eglinton's racing of late years is virtually the history of the progeny of Barbelle, and of her two paddock rivals, Blue Bonnet and Bellona. His last good horse was Corœbus, who proved, however, to be a very unlucky performer, and broke down for the Doncaster St. Leger, when he had passed into the hands of Mr. Hargreaves. In the end his lordship sold his brood-mares and horses in training to Mr. John Massey Stanley, for the ridiculously small sum of twenty-five hundred

guineas. Luck seems to have deserted the popular tartan jacket after the Dutchman's famous match against Voltigeur in 1851. Beeswing, for instance, who was so lucky when Mr. A. Nichol farmed her stock, never produced anything worth training after Lord Eglinton had leased her. Under such an accumulation of disappointments, there is no wonder that his lordship should have thrown up the sponge. Still in face of the fact that during his Turf career he has averaged about £4,000 per annum in winnings, he can hardly be called unlucky. In conclusion, we trust that Spigot Lodge will still send forth many a winner under more favourable circumstances than have attended it for the last few years."

As a supplement to the above article, I cannot do better than quote the words written in "Post and Paddock," when their author was fresh from what I myself am disposed to regard as the most thrilling and exciting scene that I ever witnessed on a racecourse. "The Druid" writes:—

"For actual excitement during a race, we never saw anything equal to the deciding

heat in Voltigeur's St. Leger, when the crowd pressed on to the course from the Red House bend, and left to all appearance scarcely a four yards space for the two horses. Poor Bobby Hill's state of mind was wondrous to mark. He had been dreadfully put out, because some of the crowd had ironically advised him to put brandy into the water which he had brought for his horse from Richmond, and had even gone so far as to allude to the honoured cow which had been specially put into the Turf Tavern box to air it overnight. Burning with revenge, he had stationed himself close by the Judge's chair to hear his doom, and even then his admiring friends would not let him alone. 'He's beat, Mr. Hill,' exclaimed one of them, as the vast crowd closed in behind the competing twain below the distance, and the roar of a hundred and fifty thousand iron lungs rent the air. 'Is 'er beat?' retorted the little man, skipping frantically upwards to obtain a good line of sight—'Ye maun't tell me; ye maun't tell me! I knaws 'im better—Job's a coming.' Sure enough Job was coming with a ven-

geance ; and Bobby's yell of ' Which wins noo ? Ar tauld ye so ! ' might have been heard at Bawtry as he dashed through the crowd, butting his way like a bull, to get to his favourite's head. Everywhere Voltigeur-spotted handkerchiefs were waving aloft ; hats were recklessly flung away into mid-air, as if their owners intended to trust to a natural growth or a wig for life ; and it was all poor Leadbitter could do to keep order among countless enthusiasts, who would persist in trying to wipe some of the sweat off the winner with their handkerchiefs, and keep it as a toilet memento.

" After the Dutchman's defeat on the subsequent Friday, the scene was quite different. The crowd seemed to be quite paralysed, and utterly unable to believe that such a giant had fallen at last. His backers wandered about pale and silent as marble statues, and Marlow stood near the weighing house in a flood of tears, with Lord Eglinton, himself as pale as ashes, kindly trying to soothe him. The pace at which the Dutchman flew over the hill was such as we have never seen, and the only animal that ever

seemed to us to go as fast as the Duke of Richmond's Officious, in the early part of an Ascot Vase race. The Richmond men became quite alive, as evening drew on, to the greatness of their victory. Such a night of jollity was never witnessed in Doncaster before, and the inns were overflowing to the very kitchens. Strolling into one of the latter about midnight, we espied a large group of grave clothiers; one or two of them smoking pipes, to which the monster cigar at the exhibition seemed a trifle in length; while others, with eyes solemnly fixed ceiling-wards, insisted on waltzing with the cook and other female domestics. We are bound to state that the former seemed by no means to dislike this pleasing recognition of the close of her labours. 'Aren't you going to bed?' we asked of an enthusiastic double event Richmond man. 'Gor to bed, indeed! You aren't 'alf a mon! Wha'd gor to bed when Voltigeur's woon t' Leger and t' Coop?' was the scornful reply. Much as has been said and written about the Dutchman and Voltigeur, we are inclined to fancy that neither of them were such high

class animals as West Australian and Teddington; but it is worthy of notice that these four, and Virago, and Stockwell, who was taken out of training long before he was on the wane, were foaled in six successive seasons."

In addition to the articles which "The Druid" wrote for the *Doncaster Gazette* and the *Sporting Life*, I am indebted to a member of his family for the following list of his contributions sent for many years to the *Sporting Magazine*, which are given in the very language employed by their industrious compiler. It will be seen that three of his best known works made their first appearance in that once famous periodical, as "Post and Paddock" commenced on January 1, 1856, "Silk and Scarlet" upon August 1, 1859, and "Scott and Sebright," upon July 1, 1862. The vast variety of topics handled by this accomplished writer will give a fitting idea of his many-sided versatility.

"THE DRUID'S" CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE  
"SPORTING MAGAZINE."

In 1850 he commenced "Turf Pencil-

lings," under the signature of "General Chassé" and "The Druid."

The following contributions are signed "The Druid":—"My Trip to the Match," June, 1851, a poem (154 lines) on "Great Northern Posters—The Start—The Cantabs—Lincolnshire—Doncaster—Lord George Bentinck—The Express Time—Road to the Course—The Parade—The Match—After Reflections—A Benediction."

"*Voltigeur v. the Flying Dutchman*," January, 1851, a poem (72 lines).

"The Lay of the Horse-Marine" (after the model of Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner"), August, 1851 (32 stanzas, 4 lines each).

"Review of the Steeplechase and Coursing Season," 1850-51.

"Parodies for the Times—the Peer, the Prophet and the Purser," July, 1852.

"The Close of the Racing Season," December, 1852.

"Country Crayons," March, August and December, 1853.

"My Turf Wallet," January, 1854.

"A Week in Westminster Hall," March, 1854.

"The Post and the Paddock," January to May, 1856.

"English Horse-dealers," September, 1856.

"Silk and Scarlet," August, 1859.

"Exmoor Ponies," October, 1860.

"Scott and Sebright," July, 1862.



“SCRIBBLE.”

“Opening of the Winter Exhibition,”  
January, 1852.

“Progress of the Winter Exhibition,”  
February, 1852.

“What we saw in the Great Winter  
Exhibition of 1851-52,” March, 1852.

“The Beginning of the End of the Great  
Winter Exhibition,” April, 1852.

“Last Words on the Great Winter Ex-  
hibition,” May, 1852.

“A Word to the Ignorant,” June, 1853.

“More Words to the Ignorant,” July,  
1853.

“A few more Words from ‘Scribble,’”  
August, 1853.

“St. Rupert's Day,” September and  
November, 1853.

“The Pytchley and Its Neighbours,”  
January, 1854.

“The Frozen-out Fox-hunters,” February,  
1854.

“What the Fox-hunters did in the Thaw,”  
March, 1854.

“Noctes Venaticæ,” May to November,  
1854.

“Nulli Secundus,” January, 1855.

“Confessions of a Sporting Man,” edited  
by “Scribble,” July, August, September,  
November and December, 1855.

"UNCLE SCRIBBLE."

"Letters from my Uncle Scribble," June, 1852, to April, 1853.

"A Country Christmas," January, 1857.

"The Right and the Wrong," January, 1860.

"Our Next Military Examination," December, 1860.

"Sketches from the Gorsehamptonshire Gallery," January, 1861.

"The Portrait Gallery," February to August, 1861.

"Bachelor's Hall," August, 1862, to December, 1863.

"The Last of the Foreign Correspondents," November, 1865.

"GAYHURST."

"Olla Podrida," 1851.

"York Realities and Doncaster Shadows," September, 1852.

"Doncaster Doings," October, 1852.

"A Card of the Races, yer Honour?" September, 1854.

With characteristic modesty, "The Druid" never claimed to be a good judge of horseflesh, and it was known that never in his life had he been on the back of a hunter,





Yours truly  
G. B. Lynes

or followed the hounds across country on horseback. It was universally admitted, however, by those who knew him best, that no man had a keener eye for a well-trained racehorse, as he showed when, just before the Two Thousand Guineas of 1855, he pronounced that he had never seen an animal sent to the post in better condition than Mr. Merry's Lord of the Isles was by William Day. His still living brother-in-law, Mr. George B. Lynes (brother to Mrs. Dixon), was formerly a very successful breeder of hunters and hacks upon his property in Northamptonshire, not far from Althorp Park. Mr. Lynes attributes no small portion of the success which attended his efforts to raise thoroughbred hunters and hacks to the advice given him by "The Druid," when he first started in that line. "I well remember," he writes, "that my first mare for breeding purposes was a rather small animal, sired by Skiff, a son of Partisan. 'The Druid' advised me to put her to the King of Oude, a powerful sire owned for some time by the celebrated Tom Parr. 'The Druid' said, laughingly, that one of

her produce might one day be good enough to carry Royalty, if I took care to have her foals as well broken as it was my custom to do. King of Oude was a horse of immense bone, with large lop ears of the Melbourne type. He had won many Queen's Plates, but through bad treatment on going to the stud he had turned a perfect savage, so that his food and water were frequently lowered into his box from the loft above by his then owner, a distant relative of Tom Parr, and with the same name, who was a tenant of my father. My first foal by him I named 'Rural Dean.' He began by winning the first prize in the lighter class of hunters at Islington, but he was quite able, although called a light horse, to carry thirteen stone. He won the open Brigstock Steeplechase, ridden by the eccentric Dick Webster, who caused great amusement when Rural Dean was shown at Islington, by jumping him into the ring over the boundary fence, and going out in the same way. The attention of the Prince of Wales was called to this horse by Dick Webster, and His Royal Highness ended by buying Rural Dean

from the late Mr. Spencer Lucy, Master of the Warwickshire Hounds. I have been told that the Prince considered him the best all round horse that he ever possessed. His own brother, the next year's produce, jumped six feet over the bar at Islington, and fetched a high price; and in the *Sporting Magazine* 'The Druid' wrote that 'it was an evil hour for Mr. Lynes when, in search of savages, Mr. Rarey bought King of Oude, who showed much more temper and took a great deal more subduing than Lord Dorchester's Cruiser.' "

Rarey then took King of Oude to America, which was a great loss to Mr. Lynes, as he had a standing offer of 200 guineas, for every colt or filly by King of Oude, out of the same mare. Altogether the mare had thirteen foals in succession without one barren year. Although every likely sire that could be got at was employed, she never had a foal of as much substance as the two which she threw to King of Oude. Nevertheless, she never bred a bad one, and nearly all her stock took prizes at the Royal and at other shows,

either as hunters or hacks. It was Mr. Lynes's practice to handle them all himself from a very early age, and in addition to teaching them all to jump, he accustomed them to all kinds of sights and noises, so that they would stand close to a steam engine without fear. For one, got by Vortex, a son of Voltigeur, Lord Penrhyn gave Mr. Lynes a good price. For many years Mr. Lynes took up his abode in Virginia, not far from Charlottesville; a country which he considers to be wonderfully well adapted for breeding blood stock. It was Mr. Lynes who sent Grand Master (own brother to Dame President), over to the United States. The horse has given great satisfaction to the Virginians, who are excellent judges of thoroughbred stock. The late Mr. Ten. Broeck was of opinion that he had never encountered in this country so fine a judge of horseflesh and of racing as Colonel Johnson, of Virginia, about whom he had any number of interesting stories to relate. It is to be regretted that young married couples of small means do not take counsel with gentlemen of high honour and



large experience, like Mr. G. B. Lynes, instead of plunging into American life without any other guidance than the generally fraudulent representations of native land agents who conform to the type of Charles Dickens's "Scadder." I have Mr. Lynes's authority for saying that under his advice several young English couples have settled in Virginia, where they are able to make £400 a year go farther and afford them more enjoyment than four times that sum would yield in this country. The climate is delicious, the grass equal to that of the Curragh. Excellent servants of both sexes can be found among the black race, and there is a little colony of English subjects in the neighbourhood of Charlottesville, who, without renouncing their allegiance to the British Crown, are enjoying life to an extent which they never experienced before, and in some cases saving money into the bargain.

## CHAPTER XI.

“THE DRUID’S” MANY-SIDED SYMPATHIES.



IT is difficult in a few words to analyse the causes which made “The Druid” so popular as a public writer while he was still alive, and have kept his memory so fresh, now that he has been for nearly a quarter of a century in the grave, that a new edition of his work is demanded by a younger generation of admirers who never saw him in the flesh. Briefly comprehended, I should say that his greatest charm was the universality of his sympathies. *Homo sum ; humani nihil a me alienum puto*: “I am a man, and consider nothing that touches or affects my fellow creatures to be a matter of unconcern to myself,” was the motto which he might have prefixed to every chapter that he ever wrote.

Two instances may be adduced of eminent leading article writers, each of whom was superior to "The Druid" in culture and knowledge—I mean the Reverend John Sterling and James Macdonell—of whom little more is now remembered than that their Lives were written, in John Sterling's case, by Archdeacon Julius Hare and Thomas Carlyle, and in James Macdonell's by W. R. Nicoll. Sterling died at Bonchurch in 1844; Macdonell at his home in Gower Street in 1879; and except to a few scholars and, in the latter instance, to his surviving relatives and personal friends, their very names are now almost unknown. What differentiated them both from "The Druid" was that their spheres of interest were more restricted than his. In previous chapters of this Biography I have already stated that "The Druid" had an absolutely unrivalled capacity for getting men, women, and even children belonging to all classes and conditions of humanity to unbosom themselves of their closest secrets for his benefit and instruction. His sympathies were with every one that he approached or with whom he came in contact. Leaning

always to the kindly side of human nature and attracted by it alone, he never wrote a word about anyone which could give him or his nearest relatives pain. Many pages might easily be devoted to an analytical study of his character and of the style of his compositions. It will serve my purpose better, however, and make my meaning more intelligible if I insert *in extenso* the following article from his pen. It should be premised that the year 1859 was remarkable for the number of deaths it produced in every rank of life. The French poet Maleherbe's beautiful lines, written just three centuries since, are so applicable to it that I cannot refrain from quoting some of them here :—

La mort a des rigueurs à nulle autre pareilles,  
 On a beau la prier :  
 La cruelle qu'elle est se bouche les oreilles,  
 Et nous laisse crier.

Le pauvre en sa cabane où le chaume le couvre  
 Est sujet à ses lois :  
 Et la garde qui veille aux barrières du Louvre  
 N'en défend point nos rois.

A year which saw the deaths of Lord Macaulay and the fifth Earl of Jersey, of Hallam, De Quincey and Washington Irving,

of Bishop Maltby and Dean Erskine, of George Peacock, most brilliant of Cantabrigian men of science, and Alexander von Humboldt, of General Thackwell and General Eyre, of old Dick Tattersall and the mad Marquis of Waterford, of Phillips (who defended Courvoisier, the murderer of Lord William Russell, and ruined his own professional career by imputing the crime to two innocent maid-servants when his client had secretly confessed his guilt to his advocate), and of Poor Law Pashley, of Will Goodall and Adelphi Wright, was well worthy to be treated by "The Druid's" many-coloured pen; and there is perhaps no more characteristic specimen of his handiwork than the following proclusion:—

“THE DEAD OF FIFTY-NINE.

“Death last year laid its remorseless hand on even more than its share of distinguished men in this and other lands. Until almost the very last we might have said that it had spared our statesmen, as ‘Prosperity Robinson,’ the memory of whose brief Premiership had well nigh perished, and Henry FitzRoy,

a useful social reformer in his way (though cabmen will never allow it), were the only notable vacancies created by *pallida mors* at St. Stephen's. Whigs, however, and Tories, too, will long miss that small, shambling, ungainly thick-set figure, clad in a snuff-coloured frock coat with velvet collar, which might always be seen close behind the Government bench when the Whigs were in office ; with hat set deep on the back of the head, and pointed out to strangers by the doorkeepers as 'Mister Macaulay.' On him young authors looked with awe as upon one who wrote the greatest article extant on Milton when he was only twenty-five, and who, when barely thirty, hurled back the poisoned arrows of John Wilson Croker at that bitterest of critics. Genius gave Macaulay confidence to meet the man before whom others quailed, and there was never a truer remark made when Croker endeavoured to return the equivocal compliments paid to his edition of 'Boswell' by attacking the 'History of England,' than 'that he had attempted murder and committed suicide.'

"The letters of Dean Milner throw most light upon Lord Macaulay's early days ; and

it is amusing to find that he speaks of him, when a mere boy of twelve on his first visit to the Lodge, at Queen's College, Cambridge, as exceedingly disputatious. In the Dean's 'Life,' the future historian pays the highest tribute to one of the most robust and universal geniuses that Granta ever sent to maintain her fame. Says the Dean to him, 'You are so correct that I don't mind showing you a few squibs upon heads of houses, some thirty years ago, which I have got in a portfolio;' and anon, the lad who hated mathematics so much that he never entered the Mathematical Tripos, even to entitle him to contend for the Chancellor's Medal, confesses that the experiments in physics which the Dean showed him made the subject as agreeable as a fairy tale.

"When the *Edinburgh Review*, 'The Battle of Ivry,' and his speeches on the floor of the House had shown him his power, Macaulay soon acquired a very great contempt for the opinions of constituencies. In fact he thought, with Burke, that they were simply the rungs of the ladder, and ought humbly to wait till they found a man, and

then elect him without asking his opinions on any point. No wonder, then, that Macaulay's friends spoke with affected horror of his having to face 'the coarse realities of Leeds,' when he wanted a seat. On coming back from India, he remarked that he thought his speaking had rather left him, and that he had resolved to speak on every subject, 'if it's only soap, to get into practice again.' The news that he was 'up,' or intended to speak, always drew a very large and attentive House; but even on the India Charter he was not so great as was expected, and his remarks upon gentlemen who had just Bengalee enough in them to call for Bass's Pale Ale or for more violent motion on the part of the punkah, was the only much enjoyed sally that fell from his mouth. Latterly, he seldom took any part in debate, and with the exception of saying a few words when he presented a petition, he never once spoke in 'The Scarlet Chamber.' His last great speech in the Commons was against Lord Hotham's motion for excluding Judges (it was aimed at Sir John Romilly) from the House, and in that he fairly exhausted and



settled the question. He spoke in a stiff artificial position, with his hand behind his back, and occasionally beating a devil's tattoo on his hat. With respect to India, he had a signal advantage over Burke. He had seen with his own eyes what was only pictured to Burke's rich imagination and splendid fancy. The one seemed in his conceptions to stand by the very rice field and the tank, when he rose to Ciceronian magnificence, and from the Manager's box in the hall of William Rufus, denounced Warren Hastings as the oppressor of India; while the other with his wondrous pen dipped deep into Indian life itself, and made us hear the very cymbals of the Nabob in the grove of mango-trees on the fatal night before Plassy.

“Of all Macaulay's reviews, the one on Warren Hastings was considered by the public to be his best; but he, himself, preferred the earlier one on Lord Clive. The Hall scene in the former, and the description of the Jesuits in his first volume of the ‘History of England,’ have been committed to memory by thousands of students, and turned over and over again into Latin prose,

as the 'Lays of Ancient Rome,' have been into Alcaics, in nearly every college and school in the Kingdom. But to our minds, there is a passage in his review on Milton, touching the influence of our Saviour when He appeared in man's form, which is finer in its grand simplicity than all its more elaborate and ornate rivals. It is said that the 'Lays' had been prepared in great measure before he went to India, and that he was wont to repeat them to his sister in their carriage rides. Still he had never committed them fully to paper, and it was at her request when he returned, and she made inquiry after 'Lars Porsena' and 'Black Auster' as dear old friends, that he was induced to write them out and give them to the world. He lived latterly at Holly Lodge, Campden Hill, with only the Duke of Argyll's terrain separating him from Holland House, in whose library many an aspiring young Whig had been nursed on old traditions or artistic treasures into real or mere red tape greatness. Macaulay's recollections of that library and of the 'comrade of Fox and friend of Grey,' who gladdened it with his presence,

were hastily thrown off in a small article of not more than seven or eight pages, which was given almost as a postscript to the *Edinburgh Review* when the late Lord Holland died. It was somewhat remarkable that the hatchment should hardly have been put up above that ancient mansion, for the very last of its line, before the pulse of the great historian, statesman, essayist, orator, and poet also ceased to beat, and 'the frail enfeebled form' was missed from its wonted seat in the old parish church of Kensington.

“ He died just before completing his fifth volume of *English History*; but its predecessors will be much more than a brilliant fragment, for in them the light of his genius will shine for future ages upon some of the stormiest and most eventful periods of English history. In like manner the great Dr. Arnold died at the age of forty-seven, when he was within three chapters of the end of his third volume of *Roman History*, and 'thirsted for Zama.' Independently of the two we have named, the Peerage has had its full share of mortality. Henry, Marquis of Waterford, who did more by his charitable

employment of countless Irish peasants on his Curraghmore estate to put absentee landlords to shame than any man that Ireland ever reared, died in the very prime of manhood, through a fall from his crack hunter over a wall, which a child on a pony might have negotiated with safety. This, too, was the man who twenty years before his hapless death would deliberately sacrifice all his chances of winning a Steeple-chase for the pleasure of leaping an extra gate. Together with the mad Marquis, the fifth Earl of Jersey has also passed away ; the handsomest young man of his time, and formerly one of the gay companions of George Guelph, Prince of Wales, on the Steyne at Brighton, when the Duke of Bedford, Charles Wyndham, Sir John Shelley, Brummell, Churchill, and 'strange anomaly, the little Jew Travis,' all followed in the train of Royalty ; and Sir John Lade drove them in the green German waggon with the six bays, to see Sancho and Pavilion run their match at Lewes. Later years found Lord Jersey the arbiter of fashion and the mould of form, until wearying of racing and of those hunting scenes where as

‘George Villiers’ he had built himself such a name over Leicestershire and at Newmarket, he shrank into the aged octogenarian, worn down with illness and heartbroken at the death of his most cherished daughter, whose proud beauty had made her season after season the reigning toast of the West End. Sporting has also lost Mr. Tattersall, that quaint ‘Bluff Hal’ who always advised young men never to bet and never to join his own rooms, and told a Peer who did not care to go straight his opinion of him as openly as he would have spoken to the humblest stable helper. Hunting, too, mourns its greatest official in Will Goodall; a man without a peer in his profession, and as gentle in speech as he was gallant in action. No ribald songs will ever elevate him to the pedestal of a ‘Tom Moody;’ but his memory will rest in the hearts of sportsmen who recall his prowess over ‘Belvoir’s sweet vale’ with a far more enduring significance. Save and except one very old Bishop, the Mitre has fallen in 1859 from no episcopal head. Bishop Maltby, the pupil of Samuel Parr, to whom the sight of anyone eating fish or poking the fire, was

equally hateful, had abdicated his Durham See many months before his death, and had continued to dig up Greek roots from his Lexicons to the last. Dean Erskine, the devoted admirer of Mechanics' Institutes, has gone as well; and so too has Angell James, the light of the Independents, who preached the funeral sermon over Jay, as Jay in his turn had done over Rowland Hill. No great light has fallen in the surgical or medical world, save Alexander, the oculist; and, wondrous as he was in his couching sleight-of-hand, he was quite below par as a constitutional physician. Thackwell, the brilliant cavalry officer of Sikh warfare has gone to his rest, and reposes in Kensal Green Cemetery, where Tredway Clarke, Gilbert, and so many of his comrades sleep; and so has Eyre, the man of the eagle eye, who exercised his troops before Sebastopol, and had them in greyhound condition, such as no other Brigade could hope to show.

“Phillips, the biographer of Curran, and defender of Courvoisier; Broderip, the police magistrate and naturalist; Stephens, the accomplished jurist; Pashley, whose

pertinacity in arguing Poor Law appeals before the Queen's Bench caused a new Bill to be christened, 'A Bill for the better suppression of Pashley;' and Baron Pennefather, the blind old Judge who, in order that the Whigs might not appoint his successor, stuck to his ermine when the fact of his not being able to scan the features of a witness was a public scandal, are the only lawyers who have fallen by the way-side. Science has, however, lost in George Peacock a brilliant analyst and one of the finest examiners that ever entered the Cambridge Senate House, or tested the merits of the first six Wranglers for a Smith's Prize. Humboldt has gone to his rest at ninety, and left behind him a name for having tied up the fasces of all scientific knowledge, and treated all its lovers as members of one great family. The cautious, calculating Stephenson died within a few days of his rival, the dashing, reckless Brunel, who leaves the Great Eastern steamship, to all present seeming the same useless monument that the Thames Tunnel proved to his father. Painting has lost its discriminating, careful Leslie, its lighter and more airy Stone, and

that once great master of Horse Anatomy, James Ward. Hallam is buried on the same headland where Tennyson sat when Arthur Hallam died, with the wild waves murmuring, and the stately ships at his feet, as he dreamed of

‘ The touch of a vanished hand  
And the sound of a voice that is still.’

“Washington Irving, whose works Dickens used as a boy to place under his pillow, and from whose glorious simplicity and delicate wit the author of ‘Pickwick’ has too often wandered away, can come to England no more to revisit the scenes of his ‘Bracebridge Hall,’ and to wield the poker which he dubbed his ‘sceptre’ at the Red Horse Hotel, Stratford-on-Avon ; De Quincey, too, with all his strange feverish dreams has gone to join the Coleridges, Samuel and Hartley (father and son), Wordsworth, Southey, Arnold, and all that brilliant band which erst made the “Lake country” something far more than a pleasant summer resort ; Leigh Hunt will gladden us no more with his quaint old stories, running back to the very



days when Pitt was seen walking up Regent Street with his nose in the air; and Lady Morgan, the 'Wild Irish Girl,' in her yellow turban, can no longer seek to emulate the glories and the sprightly wit which flashed upon the outer world from beneath the peacock hangings of Mrs. Montague, in Portman Square.

“‘Adelphi Wright,’ as the galleries of every theatre still fondly call him, will never again display his jolly face and his immortal blue coat, white trousers, pumps, and straps at the side scenes, and get, like Liston, three rattling rounds of applause without uttering a word in the character of ‘Billy Leck-a-day,’ ‘John Grumley,’ ‘Jack Grinnidge,’ or ‘Simmons, the Weaver.’ With him ‘Marmaduke Magog,’ whose pomposities once lured us three nights in succession to the pit (a thing that nothing save old Farren and Mrs. Glover in ‘The Vicar of Wakefield,’ ever did before), and those inimitable scenes with the property baby, have all passed away. Let us not think of him as he appeared after being wheeled about a whole summer at Margate with dropsy daily gain-

ing ground. At last he got a little relief, and straightway visited his Adelphi haunts for a brief space; but, alas! how changed from his old roaring, gagging self. It is pleasanter only to remember the days when he could carry through the dullest of plays alone and unassisted before her Majesty at Windsor, when he played up to Miss Murray or Miss Woolgar, scrutinising in detail the whole of the grinning *dramatis personæ* to 'try and find a father among 'em'; or receiving from Paul Bedford when about to engage with him in mortal combat, the comforting assurance that he, Paul, was 'seventeen stun, four pounds and a hounce.' Well might we feel that the gaiety of thousands in town and country had been eclipsed as we stood by his open grave in the very Brompton Cemetery where, eight years before, we had seen him bathed in tears as chief mourner at the funeral of little Munyard, *alias* 'Jemmy Starlight.'"

## CHAPTER XII.

HIS LOVE OF CHILDREN.

*Written mainly by his Widow.*

AMONGST the many traits in "The Druid's" character was one that his family must ever remember with gratitude—his great love for children and his intense pleasure in having his sons and daughters around him in spare moments snatched from almost incessant labour with the pen. No matter how wearied he might be after a hard day's work, or how difficult the subject that he had in hand, he was always ready to listen to their artless prattle and to sympathise with the childish joys and troubles of his little ones. Each new-born infant, as it was put into his arms, was hailed with an ever growing tenderness,

and he would confide to its mother that he really thought the new treasure was "just a wee bit nicer and prettier than the last." He would nurse an infant in long clothes most skilfully and scientifically ; his first visit on returning home from his daily duties in town being ever to the nursery, where the little group longingly awaited the rarely omitted half hour of games with "Father." Then he would rush off to the poultry yard, the habitation of all the children's pets, including the fowls in which he took such intense interest for many years. Lastly, he would look for his wife, who, complaining bitterly one day of standing last on the list, was silenced by the apt rejoinder, "Ought I not to keep my choicest treasure for a final treat?"

He delighted to draw his children out upon any subject that engaged their attention, and was always not only ready, but eager to lend his valuable assistance and advice in the rehearsal of their juvenile recitations and the preparation of their tableaux and charades.

His patience with them at all times was inexhaustible, except when called upon to

assist in their studies, on which occasions he seemed to fail to understand why the unravelling of passages of Virgil or Xenophon should not be as easy to them as it appeared to him, and their apparent stupidity vexed him sorely. He had a great idea that his sons should never miss an opportunity of witnessing events which might "make history," and so keen was his anxiety on this head during the time of the Fenian riots, that, on arriving home on the night of the great open-air demonstration in Hyde Park and finding his elder sons had gone out to witness the scene and, if necessary, to participate in the skirmish as special constables, he insisted that the ten-year-old boy should be roused from his bed and dressed to accompany him to the scene of action. Together they solemnly climbed a tree, and from this excellent coign of vantage watched the arrival of the Life Guards and Grenadier Guards, who subsequently charged and dispersed the rioters, the latter in their fear and haste leaving the Park, not through the gates, but straight over the iron palings, which, not having time to climb, they uprooted and threw down. It was midnight

before "The Druid" and his little boy reached home, and certainly the recollection of that night will never fade from the latter's memory.

Much however, as he loved children, it must be owned that he was a very child himself in their management, and to the last day of his life he held strongly to the belief that no boy's grievance was too great to be overcome by the liberal application of jam tarts, taken internally. He has been known to bid good-bye to one of his boys, whom he had taken from school for a day, in order to go with him on a visit to some celebrated Kennels and to send him back late at night, tired, sleepy and cross, but the proud possessor of six jam tarts, which were mostly negotiated before the school was reached. Despite this treatment the boy still lives, and "The Druid" wended his way home, quite satisfied that he had done his duty. Ill-health alone prevented him from participating in all the sports and amusements of his sons, and eager as he ever was that he might live to see one of them make a name for himself in the scholastic or literary world, it cannot be denied that these

higher aspirations on their behalf would for the time being be forgotten, on hearing of any special aptitude shown, or distinction gained by one of them in any branch of sport or of athletic exercise. When health permitted, he rarely missed attending any athletic meeting at which his eldest son, Sydenham Dixon, happened to be competing, taking the greatest interest and pride in some of the latter's really fine performances on the running path.

His keen sense of humour led him perhaps to forgive and gloss over many youthful errors which had to him their laughable side, but his memory lives with his children as that of an ever-indulgent, ever-loving father, whose untimely death was to them an irreparable loss.

His total disregard of dress and appearance was a source of much embarrassment to all his family and especially to the younger members. One of his sons recalls a prize day at Kensington Grammar School (in which "The Druid" was deeply interested), when on his arrival his general appearance was such as to evoke both merriment and disdain

among the boys. Nor can this be wondered at, for the tall bent figure with the badly cut grey suit, old-fashioned hat, gaiters and huge hockey stick, the *ensemble* being completed by a shepherd's plaid shawl thrown over the shoulders, was a sight calculated to upset the gravity of boys who are naturally prone to be biassed by external appearances.

They thought that his presence there was probably a mistake, but, when after several somewhat dry and formal speeches the queer figure moved to the front of the platform, the careworn face lighted up and the apparently old man became for the moment almost a boy again, whilst delivering a bright telling speech, full of reminiscence and speaking to boys as only one who knew them and their ways could speak, the feeling of partial contempt melted into one of respect and admiration, and he was ever afterwards sure of a grand reception.

His religion was as bright and cheerful as his natural temperament. From his earliest youth, he had a deep reverence for holy things. A few minutes before midnight on Saturday, he always laid aside his writings,



and nothing would induce him to touch them on the Sunday. In whatever house or company he found himself, he would put a prayer book in his pocket and walk away to some quaint old country church. His voice was melodious and his ear correct, and he would join heartily in the musical portion of the service. When at home, he regularly attended church in the morning, and when health permitted, in the evening also. As his children grew up around him, he would tell them wonderful stories and draw pictures, chiefly of churches (he was clever with his pencil), thus rendering Sunday a bright and happy day. To vary the pictures, cabs were introduced taking the people to church ; and on wet Sundays he would draw " Noah's Ark," and all the animals entering two and two. This sympathy with the young extended beyond his own family circle ; many a lad came to him for help and counsel, and it was a delight to " The Druid " if, by some rare chance, he came across one of a studious turn of mind. Cheerfully would he lay aside his own work to coach a boy preparing for school or college exams.,

and one of these who eventually took a splendid degree, came on the eve of his marriage to consult his old friend concerning his speech on the day of the important event. "The Druid" was well known as a concise and effective speaker, and many applications were made to him to write speeches for friends on a variety of topics. On this special occasion he accomplished his task with ease, and being satisfied with the result, sat for hours with the bridegroom elect, rehearsing and amending the carefully prepared composition. The happy morn arrived, and "The Druid" (rubbing his hands as was his wont when pleased) eagerly awaited the moment for the bridegroom to return thanks. When at length it came, the unhappy man rose and began: "Ladies and gentlemen, I beg to thank you for coming here to-day!" Then followed an awful pause, and casting an agonized look around him, he sat down, exclaiming: "I have forgotten every word of it!" The poor "Druid" long suffered from the shock and disappointment. His unostentatious acts of kindness were of constant occurrence, but one in especial recurs to the

writer's memory as a good illustration of his universal charity. He discovered in the Chelsea Workhouse an aged man, who had in his youth been trainer to some nobleman, but now, blind and lame, he seemed friendless and forgotten. For many months "The Druid" went after morning service every Sunday, and with his own hand led the old man back to his house in Kensington Square. There his humble friend got a plentiful meal of roast beef and plum pudding, and after a few hours of cheerful talk, was led back, strengthened and refreshed for the *desagrément* of another week of Union fare.

The house in Kensington Square had behind it a long old-fashioned garden, in which stood a mulberry tree and several pear trees, under the shadow of which he loved to sit in his rare moments of leisure. Beyond the garden was a large yard with fowl houses, kennels, and other minor sheds wherein "The Druid" housed all the family pets. For years he kept a record of every egg laid; nor, when in London, was anyone permitted to go near the nests but himself. When increasing illness, inevitably resulting in decreasing in-

come, obliged him to remove to a smaller house in Warwick Gardens, his one source of regret was the loss of his "live stock." His wife and children still entertain a vivid and tender remembrance of him, as he stood beneath the mulberry tree on the eve of the flitting, and exclaimed, with a suspicion of tears in his voice: "How shall I be able to bear my pain and trouble when deprived of this dear old garden, and the dogs, rabbits, ferrets, pigeons, and doves? I love them every one, even down to the little tame mice that run so fearlessly over my feet."

"The Druid" had an innate respect for true and genuine piety, even when accompanied, as it sometimes is, by a feebleness of intellect. On one occasion, his young sons, purely out of mischief, stigmatised some half dozen of the clergy and other special friends of their mother, as "muffs!" Rising from the table, and demanding silence, he said wrathfully: "Boys! The Kingdom of Heaven will be largely composed of *muffs*, and I earnestly pray that I may find entrance amongst them." He was very reserved on religious subjects, even with his wife; but

though silent, his feelings were deep, and his convictions strong. However ill or suffering he might be, he liked his wife to read a Psalm to him every night; he delighted in the Psalms, although his well-marked Bible proved his careful study of every portion of the Holy Book. Throughout those last four painful years of his existence, he never lay down in his bed, but was "packed," as he termed it, in a spacious easy chair, with head rests, and an inclined board for his feet. Many a time, when he believed his wife to be sleeping, would he pray most fervently for strength to endure to the end. And "endure" he did heroically; rarely did a murmur escape his lips: but rather, a continual thanksgiving for "mercies and blessings," the existence of which those ministering to him failed to discover. By his earnest entreaty, no hired nurse ever attended his bedside, and it is still a tender consolation to his widow to feel that no hand but her own soothed his last days. He wrote to the very last in the intervals of pain, assisted most patiently and efficiently by his eldest son, Henry Sydenham. Very shortly before his death he bore striking

testimony to the power of faith in his Saviour. Addressing some who were near him he said, "For many years I contrived to live pretty comfortably without Jesus ; but I want you all to know that I could not die without Him."

On being told the end was at hand he exclaimed, "Oh, God, I thank Thee ! I could not bear much more."

## CHAPTER XIII.

“ THE DRUID ” AS A POLITICIAN.



EVER yet was there a boy sent to Rugby School to be educated there when Dr. Arnold was in his prime, who was more in a condition to imbibe and sympathise with the atmosphere of Liberal politics which that greatest of schoolmasters diffused around him. What that atmosphere was may be gathered from many passages to be found in Dean Stanley's admirable "Life of Dr. Arnold," one of which and one only, I must ask permission to add to these pages. In chapter iv., the following sentences occur :—

“ There was a peculiar importance attaching in Dr. Arnold's view, to political questions, with which every reader of his works must be familiar. The life of the common-

wealth was to him the main subject of history; the desire of taking an active share in the great work of government was the highest earthly desire of the ripened mind. Those who read his letters will be startled at times by the interest with which he watches the changes of administration where to many the real difference would seem comparatively trifling. Thus he would speak of a Ministry advocating even good measures inconsistently with their position and principles 'as a daily pain—a moral east wind which made him feel uncomfortable without any positive ailment'; or he would lament the ascendancy of false political views as tending to the sure moral degradation of the whole community and the ultimate social disorganisation of our system.

“Conservatism, in Dr. Arnold’s mouth, was not merely the watchword of an English party, but the symbol of an evil against which his whole life, public and private, was one continued struggle. Again, Jacobinism, in his use of the word, included not only the extreme movement party in France or England, but all the natural tendencies of mankind to oppose the authority of law,



divine and human, which he regarded with so deep a reverence. Popular principles and democracy, when he used those words in a good sense, were not the opposition to a hereditary Monarchy or Peerage, which he always valued as precious elements of national life, but were inseparably blended with his strong belief in the injustice and want of sympathy generally shown by the higher to the lower orders. Liberal principles were not merely the expression of his adherence to a Whig Ministry, but of his belief in the constant necessity of applying those principles of advance and reform which, in their most perfect development, he conceived to be identical with Christianity itself. Vehement as he was in assailing evil, his whole mind was essentially constructive; his love of reform was in exact proportion to his love of the institutions which he wished to reform; his hatred of shadows in exact proportion to his love of realities."

I cannot recall any other pupil of Dr. Arnold, during the latter's fourteen years of supremacy at Rugby School, who represented his master's politics so faithfully as Henry

Hall Dixon. No one who reads Mr. Prothero's most interesting and instructive "Life of Dean Stanley" can fail to perceive that his hero had no independent political opinions at all. On the other hand, Henry Dixon resembled Dr. Arnold in the thoroughness and intensity of his conviction that Conservatism symbolised sin, and Liberalism health, vigour, and life. Like the cloud of the poet Wordsworth, "which moveth altogether if it move at all," master and pupil regarded everything which they took in hand as part of their daily religion. Referring to "The Druid," I cannot illustrate my meaning better than by quoting the four following anecdotes, communicated to me by his nephew, Mr. Francis Peter Dixon, of 7, Howard Terrace, Carlisle. I give them in their writer's own words:—

### I.

"At the time of the General Election of 1868, which occurred in the month of November, and resulted in the elevation of Mr. Gladstone for the first time to the proud position of Prime Minister with a large

majority to support him, my uncle, Mr. H. H. Dixon, happened to be visiting his mother, Mrs. Peter Dixon, at Holme Eden, near Carlisle. It was the last General Election which my uncle lived to see. He had been born and brought up at Holme Eden, a neighbourhood full of old associations which greatly interested him, and where, I need hardly add, he was much admired and respected by his numerous friends. My father, his eldest brother, had been dead about eleven years, and I, then a youth of nineteen, was heir to the Holme Eden estate, and residing with my grandmother in order to learn the business of spinning and manufacturing cotton, carried on by the firm of Messrs. Peter Dixon & Co., at Warwick Works, close by. I well remember the earnest political discussions and arguments between my uncle and two of his brothers, Mr. John Dixon of Manchester, and Captain (now General) Dixon of the Madras Native Infantry, both of whom were Conservatives. 'The Druid' was equally strong in his Liberal opinions, and a great admirer of Mr. Gladstone. He had a most wonderful faculty of remembering

political events, and such a quick and ready power of repartee that he was much more than a match for his two brothers, easily refuting their arguments, and holding up their old, high-dried Toryism to such exquisite ridicule that on many occasions they lost their tempers, so that their sisters had to intervene as peace-makers. These discussions were my first taste of politics, and so impressed was I by Uncle Henry's readiness and ability that I became a Liberal, and have remained one ever since."

## II.

"In those times there were public nomination days, which were almost as exciting and interesting as the election days themselves. In Carlisle, a large wooden platform used to be erected for the hustings in the market place, in front of the Town Hall, for the use of the candidates, their proposers, seconders, and principal supporters. The Blues or Liberals were on the right hand side of the hustings, and the Yellows or Conservatives on the left. The audience, an immense crowd holding all shades of political opinion,

filled the large open space in front. It was always a stirring and exciting scene, accompanied at times by much rough horse-play and disorder, by throwing of rotten eggs and other unsavoury missiles at the candidates, and sometimes by the scattering of blue and yellow powder. Occasionally violent rioting broke out among the dense throngs of people below. Well do I recollect my uncle taking me into Carlisle from Holme Eden, and leading me on to the hustings to support Sir Wilfrid Lawson and the late Mr. Edmund Potter, the two Liberal candidates. Being very young, I soon got tired of the speeches and began to move about the platform, approaching rather closely to the Tory side. I was quickly perceived and called back by 'The Druid,' who exclaimed: 'Come away from there, my boy, at once, or your politics may, perhaps, be misunderstood.' After the proceedings on the hustings were over, we went to lunch with a relative, Mr. Silas Saul, a leading solicitor of Carlisle, and the head Conservative agent for East Cumberland. I can well remember my Uncle Henry joking with Mr. Saul at luncheon

about the difference between them in politics, and my uncle's look of delight when he mentioned that he had just come away from the hustings, where, pointing at me, 'he had just been blooding a young Blue.' The result of this election was that Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Potter were both returned, defeating Mr. W. N. Hodgson, one of the sitting members and a Conservative."

### III.

"Simultaneously my uncle took the deepest interest in the election for East Cumberland, which followed the election for the city of Carlisle. He was indefatigable in visiting many of his old friends and neighbours, doing his utmost to persuade them to vote and work for the Liberal candidates, the Hon. Charles Howard of Naworth Castle, and Mr. William Marshall of Patterdale Hall, who between them had held undisputed possession of the seats for that division of the county for many years. At last, after a short and sharp contest, which until the eleventh hour was wholly unexpected, Mr. Marshall lost his seat, having been defeated by Mr. W. N. Hodgson of

Newby Grange, the recently rejected member for Carlisle city. One amusing little incident of this struggle in East Cumberland was that, after much persuasion and no small amount of chaff and banter about the victim being tied to his wife's apron strings (she was a violent Tory), my uncle induced his brother Mr. Tredway Dixon, who was no politician, to vote for the Liberal candidates. So faint was the interest in the election felt by Mr. Tredway Dixon that a week or two later he met Mr. Hodgson in Carlisle, and warmly congratulated him upon being returned, quite oblivious of the fact that he had himself voted openly against him."

#### IV.

"In a few days my Uncle Henry left Holme Eden to spend Christmas with his family in London. This was his last active participation in politics, as his life was manifestly drawing to a close. So strong, however, was in his case the ruling passion even in death, that on the day before he breathed his last—March 16th, 1870—he called for writing materials and drew up on a sheet of

note paper a codicil to his will, leaving to me his share in a freehold house in Carlisle which gives a vote for North Cumberland. As he signed this codicil, he remarked to those standing round his bed, that he left this little property to me because he was not sure that any of his own sons would vote Liberal when he was gone, and that he had confidence in my always doing so. In this way I have possessed a vote for North Cumberland for many years, and have invariably exercised my privilege by voting as I feel sure he would have done had his life been spared."

Another point of resemblance between Dr. Arnold and Henry Dixon as politicians was that both were always eager to give expression to their opinions and convictions in print. In 1831 and 1832 Dr. Arnold, for instance, was so much alarmed by the aspect of English society and by the political agitations caused by the Reform Bill that he set himself to work to impart to the publications of the "Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge" something of a religious spirit bearing upon politics, in which they seemed to him to be deficient. Thus he writes as



follows to a friend: “If there were no other objections to the *Penny Magazine* assuming a distinctly Christian tone than mere difficulties of execution, would most readily offer my best services, such as they are, to the Society, and would endeavour to furnish them with such articles as I desire to see printed by them.”

The most practical attempt, however, at a realisation of these views was Dr. Arnold's endeavour to set up a weekly newspaper called *The Englishman's Register*, which he undertook in 1831, more to relieve his own conscience than with the sanguine hope of doing any good. He was the proprietor, though not the sole editor, and contributed the chief articles in it, signed “A.,” and consisting chiefly of comments on the political events of the day, mixed with explanations of Scripture as it bore upon them. It died a natural death in a few weeks, partly from his want of leisure and from the great expenses entailed upon him, and partly from want of sympathy with his writings in any of the existing political parties. Finding, however, that some of his articles had been copied

into the *Sheffield Courant*, he opened communication with its Editor which he maintained from that time forward until his death, and wrote a series of letters in that paper, some of which were afterwards published separately.

It was probably in consequence of the example thus set by his idolised master that, from his very earliest years, "The Druid" was prompted by an ardent desire to see himself in print. His earliest prolusions at Rugby School have already been noticed, but after his marriage he lost no opportunity of writing political articles in every paper to which he could gain access; nor was it long before some of his articles found favour in the eyes of leading statesmen of that day. It has already been mentioned that his justification of the course adopted by Sir Robert Peel in repealing the Corn Laws was so well reasoned and so admirably expressed that it caught the quick eye of Sir James Graham (then Home Secretary), who sent for "The Druid" and offered him an appointment in the Civil Service if he cared to accept it. "The Druid," however, refused to sacrifice

his prospects at the Bar, and the result was that, happily for his readers, he became one of the most successful public writers of the century. The fervour of his political articles may be gauged by a specimen written when its author was but twenty-six years old.

It should be premised that in 1848, the death of Lord Morpeth's aged father, the sixth Earl of Carlisle, removed the Liberal representative of the West Riding from the House of Commons, and although it was little anticipated at the time, practically brought his public life in England to a close. Lord Morpeth had been returned for the West Riding on eight different occasions, when, in a moment of caprice, such as all great constituencies are occasionally liable to, he and his Liberal colleague, Lord Milton, were defeated in 1841, by Mr. Evelyn Denison and Mr. John Stuart-Wortley. The triumph of the two latter candidates was short lived, as the following article will show. It should be added that Lord Morpeth was the uncle of the present Duke of Devonshire ; that he was Chief Secretary of Ireland from 1835 to 1841 ; and Lord Lieutenant (as Lord

Carlisle) from 1855 to 1858; and again from 1859 till 1864, when he died. In addition, he held many other high political offices.

“ LORD MORPETH'S FAREWELL.

(From the *Doncaster Gazette* of October 27th, 1848.)

“George Frederick, sixth Earl of Carlisle, at length sleeps with his forefathers, in the Mausoleum at Castle Howard; and his eldest son, the true-hearted Morpeth, has, with characteristic good feeling, ‘devoted’ to the people of the West Riding, the ‘last signature of a name which has derived from them its chief illustration,’ throughout eighteen years of a chivalrous political attachment. The dead sire was not unworthy of the son. It is true that the former’s place among his Peers, beneath the shadow of the time-honoured Abbey of Westminster, had long known him no more. He had not, like that son, mingled ‘frank and free with toiling men’ in the busy hives of living industry which dot the vast surface of the West Riding; nor had he, with every English heart bidding him ‘God speed,’ crossed the

blue waves of the Atlantic, and wandered with peace and commerce on his lips amid the infant cities and gigantic lakes and forests of the New World. Still, though he may have lacked the earnest purpose of his 'first-born and his best,' and though he was not snatched by an inscrutable decree 'from the noblest uses of life's prime,' he left no deep blank behind him; but broken as had been his vigour for years by sickness, he proved in age as in youth, no aristocratic laggard in the onward march of the British people. Thus, the glorious truth applied not to him that,

“ ‘The image of a man who died  
In his hey-day of renown,  
Hath a fearful power to which the pride  
Of fiery life bows down.’

“ Nevertheless, when he passed into the unseen world, one of the last great links that bind together the stormy political past and present was for ever broken. He drew his first breath in a century fraught with grand historic remembrances. The fate of the helpless Charles Stuart, and of the gay Scottish chiefs who flocked to his standard when he kept court at Holyrood, was then still fresh in

the recollection of the fair-haired daughters of the 'land of the mountain and the flood'; the rude, loving Highlanders who had drawn their claymores at Culloden, that the 'bonnie Prince might enjoy his ain again,' were still faithful to his memory; the mouldering, ghastly heads of their clansmen, each of whom had issued forth on the fatal sledge, side by side with his executioner, from beneath the massive portcullis of Carlisle Castle, to the dark scaffold on Harraby Hill, had but a few years before been the awe and wonder of the market people as they viewed them spiked above the iron gates of that ancient border town. A century earlier, from ward and keep at midnight, in his own baronial castle of Naworth, 'bugles blew for Belted Will,' as the moss-troopers scoured through the park on their marauding forays. His youthful lot in the latter years of that stirring century was cast in an age teeming with giant intellects, who scarce found their equals even under the fostering sway of Elizabeth. Sir Joshua Reynolds, weary with the labours of his easel, and Samuel Johnson, with the faithful Boswell, eagerly listening for 'thoughts that

breathe and words that burn,' at his side, might be seen arm in arm with Charles Fox, the English Demosthenes, wending their way by the light of a flambeau to their symposium in Gerrard Street, and perchance hailing the timid but self-sufficient Oliver Goldsmith, or the scoffing, licentious Gibbon, bound on the same errand, as they passed along the Strand. David Garrick was drawing tears and laughter by turns, as he wooed the sister Muses on the stage of Old Drury. It was Lord Carlisle's wont, when the interests of the West Riding or of the Abolitionists did not claim his hours, to stand by the piano and listen to the voice of Wilberforce, as sweet and powerful in song as it had been when heard to the cost of the Coalition Ministry by assembled thousands of Yorkshiremen, from the platform in York Castle Yard. The high-souled Windham and the witty Sheridan could nightly command the applause of a listening senate, and Charles James Fox, forsaking his loved Newmarket, and aided by the Duchess of Devonshire's eyes, won his ever-memorable Westminster election, and after being chaired in pomp behind banners surmounted with the Prince's

feathers, and inscribed to Female Patriotism, celebrated his victory at the blue and buff fête of lovely Mrs. Crewe. The late Earl's boyish ears must have drunk in the incidents of those days as they were transmitted to his home through the London journals by the 'God willing, four days coach to York,' or were echoed in the merry Eton quadrangle; and hence when he grew up to manhood, he longed to bear his part, and soon joined the Embassy of the courtly Lord Malmesbury at Paris. After the death of Fox he was more of a quiet spectator of political events than an energetic actor in them. His own life's varied experience had taught him a deep historic lesson. He had heard when a youth of the taking of the Bastille, and the horrors of the three days of July; and he lived to see them again enacted with redoubled fury, when the Tuilleries were sacked and the 'holy man of God,' standing between the dead and the living on the barricade, sank down beneath his death blow. He had 'feared to speak of '98,' and, after the lapse of half a century had witnessed the leaders in a second rebellion about to be consigned to



a life of foreign bondage, in which no holiday ever comes round. He had triumphed over Nelson's despatches from the Nile and Trafalgar; had tempered his joy with deep sorrow, when the black-edged *Gazette* told how his brother, 'young, gallant Howard,' had, ere the cannon of Waterloo ceased to roar, fallen on the battle field with a bullet through his heart; and he had lived to see the crown of Indian victories won by Gough and Hardinge at Sobraon. In the worst of times when the bigot Eldon and the Toryism that revered Gatton and old Sarum were triumphant, and Reform a mere jest and bye-word, he had dared to be honest; and under the banner of Earl Grey, who at last took off the bearing rein from the English people, had beheld the death throes of the haters of civil and religious freedom, as embodied in the Reform and Catholic Emancipation Acts. Knowing, too, from his parent's lips how in the very year of his birth the hardy sons of America, tortured to madness by tyranny and Stamp Acts, had first meditated renouncing the sovereignty of their forefathers, he did not hesitate in the very evening of life to record

his allegiance to the great principles of commercial liberty, to which right, fearlessly promulgated by Richard Cobden and endorsed by the hand of his own son, those very men, no longer aliens in heart, at once set their seal. To watch the career of that son from the day when he heard him rehearse the praises of the sunny skies and fabled roses of Paestum from the very same Oxford rostrum whence Reginald Heber had breathed forth his 'Palestine,' and to read the anxiously looked for letter announcing that Lord Morpeth had appeared in the honours list as a first-class man, served to cheer his sick pillow through many a night of weariness and many a suffering day. The public part of that son's career began in 1830, when by the verdict of all Yorkshire, he was returned at the head of the poll, and joined hand and heart with Henry Brougham, who was one of his colleagues in the great struggles of that stormy period. Eight times was it his lot, as a newly-elected Knight of the Shire, to have the sword girded to his side, until at last the men of the West Riding heard him, as lowest on the poll, take an affectionate farewell of

them for a season. So pathetic were his valedictory words that they would undoubtedly have secured his return had they been spoken before the irrevocable fiat had gone forth. But the manly warning which he then delivered that those great principles which they had just spurned were proceeding silently and irresistibly on their onward though unseen track, had its glorious fulfilment when with Richard Cobden for his colleague he again stood at the Speaker's table and took the oath as their representative. Truly has it been said that the voice of the West Riding is the future voice of England, which no Prime Minister, however reckless, can dare to disregard. By the mouths of the classic Morpeth and the persuasive Cobden she has lately spoken, as she did at the Reform crisis, with a voice of unmistakable power."

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE "OLD MORTALITY" OF THE TURF.



HAT "The Druid" knew about racing, fox-hunting, and greyhound coursing was quite insufficient to fit him for writing upon agriculture, and upon flocks and herds. Sitting, however, at the feet of such a Gamaliel as Mr. Thornton, the far-famed shorthorn auctioneer, he soon acquired an amount of information which enabled him for many years to supply a weekly column, headed "The Farm," to the *Illustrated London News*, which soon became his favourite work. With Mr. Thornton as his coadjutor, "The Druid" also wrote an essay upon "The History of Shorthorns" for the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society*, which succeeded (as all who read it will

readily understand) in winning the prize. I have omitted, however, to state that Henry Dixon's contributions to the *Mark Lane Express* soon had the natural effect of elevating that journal above all its agricultural contemporaries. The modest preface to "The Druid's" last book, "Saddle and Sirloin," refers to this period of his life:—

"The title of this work pretty well explains its nature. 'Sirloin' speaks with ponderous emphasis for itself, and 'Saddle' has a triple bearing on horses, sheep, and pigs. The work is, in fact, a record of what I have seen and heard during the last eleven years in the course of my summer rambles from Cumberland to Cornwall. My business among the leading breeders was in connection with 'The Herds and Flocks of Great Britain' for the *Mark Lane Express*, and with sundry prize essays in the *Royal Agricultural Society's Journal*, the main points of which are here briefly reproduced. A large share of attention has been given to coursing; but racing and fox-hunting have been passed over somewhat lightly, as I have already devoted three books to them."

It must never be forgotten that in "The Druid" we have a writer of great culture, of wide and varied information, and with the instinct of a poet, who took for his motto, "*Juvat integros accedere fontes.*" No racing stable of note, no famous paddocks existed in England to which, at the cost of infinite labour and much exposure to hardship, he did not pay a personal visit, and upon his death the name of "The Old Mortality of the Turf" was justly bestowed upon him by an appreciative friend. Slightly altering the words originally applied to the learned Antiquary who wrote "Camden's Britannia," it might be said with truth of "The Druid," that "he is the common sun, whereat modern sporting writers have all lighted their little torches." His influence upon the class of literature to which he devoted his singular powers has, indeed, been exceptional. That he made occasional mistakes is tantamount to confessing that he was no more than human; but, considering the breadth and length of the canvas that he filled, his errors sink altogether out of sight. It may, perhaps, be remarked of his works that they present a

fuller and more sympathetic view of North country than of South country racing stables and stud farms ; but, in his time, the influence of Langton Wold and Middleham, of Richmond-on-the-Swale and Black Hambleton, had not been superseded by Newmarket, Danebury, Manton, Kingsclere, Lambourne and Stanton. That his title of "The Old Mortality of the Turf" was well deserved, the following passage, selected from many others of a like nature, will sufficiently show :—

“ The Coverdale valley, down which so many jocks have ‘wasted’ in their day, lies in front, with the river Cover winding through its deep dingle of ash and sycamore. In the distance is the ridge of the Low Moor at Middleham, with occasional sheeted strings of racers glancing along its skyline, like scenes in a magic-lantern, and stretching away to the High Moor, which has the frowning Penhill to back it. The old church at Coverham is hard by the Cover stream, and many a racing celebrity lies under its shadow. There sleep old Bob Johnson, the steersman of Beeswing and Dr. Syntax ; Ben

Smith, as green as a young turkey on his mother earth, but a very Talleyrand in the saddle, and the winner of six St. Legers; Harry Grimshaw, of Gladiateur fame; and there, too, old John Osborne now rests his dreamless head. Ashgill, in whose quiet little parlour he used to sit like a wizard, not consulting the stars or perusing the prophets, but weighing handicaps in his good brain balance, is perched high on the hill-side. Below is Tuggill, from which Tomboy and Caccia Piatti used to go forth to clear their pipes in the brisk air; and beyond is Brecongill, which is also associated with some of Tom Dawson's best triumphs with the Eglinton tartan, the Johnstone crimson, the Jardine 'blue with silver braid,' and the 'Jamie Meiklam' stripes."

In the same style and manner are "The Druid's" comments upon the graves of Bay Middleton and Crucifix:—

"The old horse was ill all the summer of 1856, and died on November 3rd of the following year. His heels had been very bad, and kept in perpetual turnip poultices, and for the last three or four days he lay down and



tossed in great pain. The mysterious off foot enlarged considerably, but there was no *post-mortem* upon it. He was buried within ten yards of his stable door ; but a few days after they had to dig down to him, as Lord Jersey sent to beg the near fore-foot. His old mate Crucifix, who just survived him a year, is now buried beside him inside the rustic paling of a small flower plot ; and John and Alfred Day have each planted a cedar to their memory. The spot was all blooming with hollyhocks when we passed it last October to take another glance at old Crucifix. There she stood, quite wasted and listless, under the wall of a loose box, with withers as sharp as a knife. She had kept in pretty blooming condition till her wonted Stockbridge race *levée* was over, and then she began to fail very fast. Since Chalice, in 1852, she had bred no foal, and always broke at the end of a fortnight. Her great peculiarity was the narrowness of her chest ; and hence, in her training, she perpetually suffered from speedy cut.

“ Her legs went within a week after the Oaks race, but the secret never fairly oozed out till the Saturday before the St. Leger.

Looking thinner than she was in her 'sky blue and white cap' days, and with her great hips and deep brisket more prominently marked than ever, she seemed like the last Turf relic of Lord George, whose heart was at one time never far from these paddocks, where Chalice, Slander, Homily, and Simony are now roaming."

Nowhere, however, is his peculiar love of antiquity better marked than in his description of the growth of the Ring, which I extract from "Scott and Sebright":—

"Betting was as tardy in its growth as the American aloe. Owners were ready enough to put down money for a match, but did not care to speculate deeply about other people's horses. Much of that spirit still lingered which had made Lord Grosvenor offer to match any three out of his stable against the same number of the Duke of Bedford's for ten thousand; but till book-making gradually became a profession, getting the odds laid was always a matter of difficulty, and it was told as quite a marvellous thing that Sir John Shelley should win nine thousand guineas on Phantom's Derby in 1811. Another kind of

Ring had risen so high in 1817, when Molyneux was open to 'fight any man born of woman bar Tom Crib,' that the first wits of the day flocked round Incedon at Tom's anniversary tavern dinner near St. James' Square, to hear Edmund Kean return thanks for the Drama and take a second in 'All's Well.' It was in this year that the two greatest certainties in the North and South came to naught. The first favourite, Student, was beaten to a standstill at Epsom by his own 'valet' Azor, and like him, the mighty Blacklock was also snapped by the very last horse in the betting at Doncaster. Still, despite these turns for the fielders, the betting was at least forty per cent. below that of the two preceding sessions. Chester seems to have been the one bright exception. Such was the crush and excitement during the heats, that 'two ladies fainted, and two gentlemen betted over them; two course-clearers were knocked down, and nobody picked them up.'"

Nor is there anything better of its kind as exemplifying "The Druid's" unrivalled familiarity with, and accurate reproduction of

the North country lingo, than the subjoined sketch of a famous Yorkshire character :—

“ Mark Plews was a mixture of blacksmith and farmer, and if there was a Richmond horse in the St. Leger, he invariably stood it. When Vingt’un from Belle Isle was all the rage, Mark and his wife got on without telling each other, he to win £25 for himself, and she £4 in partnership with Mrs. Pierse. These daring ventures got bruited about, and hence when the town express, which was managed on state occasions by sending horses on to Ferrybridge the day before, arrived at midnight, with the news of the defeat, one of the party who sat up for it could think of no other consolation than hoaxing ‘Old Mark.’ The window was not far from the ground, and the delegate was enabled to report, word for word, the matrimonial colloquy, which followed the shout of ‘*Vingt-un’s won.*’ Mark was furious when the truth came out in the morning, and threatened in vain to walk all over Yorkshire, if he could only discover the owner of the voice.

“ He always delivered his mind about man or horse, without fear or favour; and was

looked upon as no mean authority. When the Marquis of Queensberry, whose waist was quite as capacious as his own, requested him to come and give him his confidential opinion of Caledonian's chance for the Leger, he mounted his spectacles and took a protracted survey. The horse's rainbow neck he dismissed in silence, and then he broke out with '*He wants what you and me has gotten, my Lord—hinder ribs, hinder ribs*' ; and in went his spectacles to their case once more."

The above passage, together with many others, exhibit, despite their numerous excellences, one failing in "The Druid's" writings. They were prepared in such hot haste for magazines and newspapers, that their author seldom had time to correct them before they appeared in print. The natural and inevitable result was that occasionally they produced a blurred and confused impression upon the reader's mind. "The Druid" understood so well all the surroundings and accessories of the scenes and characters he described as to forget that his readers were seldom as well informed as himself. Thus he speaks of "Sir Wolly" as dashing the knob

of his walking stick through a pier glass at Doncaster, after the victory of some horse in which he took great pride, without remembering that few readers of a subsequent generation would know that "Sir Wolly" was Sir David Baird's nick-name. Although "The Druid" cared nothing about betting, and never caught its contagion, and although he was seldom in the saddle, never went out hunting on horse-back, and could no more have driven a four-in-hand team than Mr. Bright or Mr. Joseph Arch, I am far from believing that his readers are sufferers in consequence. This, at any rate, was his own opinion, as may be inferred from his preface to "Scott and Sebright":—

"Although the author does not scruple to admit that his hunting experiences have been very much confined to watching the cubs at play near the earths on a summer's evening, to taking notes of hunters at crack meets, much as he was wont to do after the same fashion in Turf pencillings, and to seeing, by dint of short cuts on foot, a goodly number of foxes pulled down in the woodlands, he is not altogether sure that this is not an advantage to his readers in more ways than one

Beckford, Delme Radcliffe, Apperley, Smith, Vyner, Grantley Berkeley, 'Scrutator,' 'Cecil,' 'Harry Hieover,' 'Gelert,' 'Jorrocks' and John Mills have written so much and so well on the science of the sport, that he has been obliged to try and hold his own line, and confine himself to its gossip."

It is a proverbial saying that lookers-on see most of the game, and never yet was there a looker-on who saw farther into the true inwardness of the subjects upon which he descanted than "The Druid." He could trace Velocipede's blaze of light in the face and white legs of a foal distant by three or four generations from that mighty "miler"; the lop ears and Roman nose of Melbourne flashed upon his eye as he saw a far-away descendant of that illustrious sire whom Mr. Sidney Herbert refused to take at 250 guineas; and the elegance of Orlando delighted him when reproduced in the light-limbed Teddington, Ariosto, and Bay Rosalind. He had a word to say upon the peculiarities of soil, herbage, and water which distinguished every famous stud farm in England, and such redoubtable stud grooms

as Isaac Walker, of Streatlam Castle ; Timothy Forshaw, of Knowsley Park ; Tweed, of Leybourne Grange ; and Markham, who, having served General Anson and Baron Mayer de Rothschild, ended by presiding over Lord Rosebery's paddocks at Mentmore ; little thought that the lightest words falling from their lips would, perhaps, be perpetuated by "The Druid" in print. His description of the way in which Wild Dayrell came into the world betwixt night and morning at Littlecote, and of the old butler who insisted upon taking the foal up in his arms, so that he might say he had carried a Derby winner, will never be surpassed ; nor that of the mad pranks in which the Prince Regent indulged at Newmarket, when he mischievously shoved a French Prince of the Blood Royal into the water. Another version of the same story is given in "Tommy Moore's Diary" :—


"26th August, 1825.—Lord Essex told me the anecdote of the Prince of Wales pitching the Abbé St. Phar, half-brother to the Duke of Orleans, into a fish-pond at Newmarket. The Abbé had some method



of tickling fish, and proceeded to show his skill, having first exacted a promise that they would not shove him into the water. He bent over the pond, when the Prince, unable to resist the temptation, pushed him in head over heels. The Abbé was so enraged that, upon getting out, he ran after the Prince of Wales, and, but for the company's favouring the latter's escape, would have used him very roughly."

## CHAPTER XV.

## "THE DRUID'S" ENDURANCE.

“ THOUGHT at first that I would walk all the way, but it was a great mistake. It may answer for a mere light-hearted saunterer who wants to take a few sketches, and his ease in his inn, but not for one who has a responsible task in hand.” Such are some of the words contained in “The Druid’s” preface to the volume of “Field and Fern,” devoted to the North of Scotland, and it is easily intelligible that a man of forty-three who had injured his constitution by total inattention to regular meals, and by walking vast distances in all weathers on an empty stomach, should begin to find out that to tramp thousands of miles carrying his own baggage, was no longer within the

compass of his powers. Readers of his four most interesting works will not require to be reminded that he thought nothing of starting off from London at 4 a.m. with a heavy knapsack on his back, and walking twenty or thirty miles a day for many consecutive days, resting always on a Sunday, when he made it his invariable duty to attend Divine service at some country church. I have already stated in the preface to this volume, that on one occasion "The Druid" walked from Swindon Junction to Marlborough College (a distance of thirteen or fourteen miles) across the Wiltshire Downs, with a large portmanteau on his shoulder, in order to pay a visit to his old friend and schoolmate, the Rev. Dr. Bradley, then Headmaster of Marlborough College, and now the successor to Dr. Arthur Stanley as Dean of Westminster. On another occasion he walked from Chippenham Station to Badminton, ten miles and a half, and back, to inspect the Duke of Beaufort's hunters and hounds, and again he describes himself as lying down under a hedge in the early morning of a summer day, and getting four or five hours of quiet sleep before

he resumed his march. At last he undertook that long journey in Scotland which he describes in the preface to "Field and Fern" in the following words:—

"After working hard for four years among the flocks and herds of England, I was naturally anxious to cross the border, and find new scope for my pastorals. I wished to visit past and present Highland Society winners in their own stall or fold, and to gather evidence from the breeders who stand high in Scottish annals, not only as to the present progress of the stock on which England depends for extensive supplies, but also as to the thoughts and labours of men who have done Scotland good service, and then have passed to their rest. Grouse shooting, deer stalking, and salmon fishing, have their own high lords of the pen; but still there were many points connected with hunting, coursing, racing, and otter hunting which seemed calculated to work into a picture of Scottish life, and to vary the monotony of mere beef and mutton chapters.

"Fancy soon faded into reality, and I found that I had set myself a very serious task. I

had to pluck the heart out of three summers, a winter and a spring; to travel some eight thousand miles; to sleep away from home some two hundred and fifty nights, before I wrote a line. It is very easy to draw up a programme but not so easy to hold to it. I often found a new and valuable witness where I least expected, and had to throw over every plan rather than leave him. There was still, in spite of all the hardship and harass, quite a pleasant soldier-of-fortune sort of feeling in never being sure whether you would turn up at night by the fireside of a golden farmer, or in a hole, or bunk, in the wall at a wayside inn. Mere scenery I was obliged to disregard. In fact it was of no use to me, unless it served as a setting for some crack herd of cattle, or flock of sheep; and acting on this practical view of things I sternly held to my line, regardless of the most glorious combinations of water, wood and mountain, for which other tourists were ever turning aside. I did not even spare a day for the Trossachs, but went 'hot-trod' past the guide post after black faces in the direction of Rob Roy's grave, and my eye might never have rested on Killie-

crankie had I not passed through it on my way to the West Highland herd at Blair Athole. 'Something attempted, something done has earned a night's repose,' was my motto, and I enjoyed one between two and four a.m. in the saddle during a night ride over the Ord of Caithness, while the rain poured down and the mare grazed. 'Cockade,' for so I called her, from persistently wearing her mane on the near side, was not my companion in the summer of 1862. I walked as far as I could, but coaches and railways aided me in a measure, and I wearied sadly under a very heavy knapsack, finding also that such long cross-country walks were not favourable for framing cross-examinations at night. Hence I soon found that I was merely cutting time to waste, and after that discovery pushed my way on to the Orkneys, and asked my good friend Archer Fortescue to buy me a 'garron' before that day twelvemonths."

When the second summer came round there were only two "garrons" of the size he wanted for sale in Pomona; one at £10, and the other, a brown, at £7 10s. The

brown was just the thing, and being in light marching order, “The Druid” was twenty-four pounds lighter than when he left London, which (in his own words) “he carried behind him in the much pleasanter shape of mackintosh and luggage.” “Just fifteen four the lot,” with his saddle, valise and book bag, he set out from Kirkwall upon a brown half-broken four-year-old mare, as rough and uncouth as the half-wild sheep among which she had passed her early years, to make his way to London. “The journey,” he adds, “to a man who has a good horse, and can send his luggage on to points, must be easy and pleasant enough; but when you have a shy, half-bred nag, quite out of condition, and have perforce to spend months and months in roughing it, in a country to which you are not acclimatised, it becomes no merry game.

“ ‘He’ll never get to Lunnon, maister,’ said Dick, the first whip and kennel huntsman to the Orkney Hounds, *sotto voce*, as I took the mare from his hand; and I was not quite clear on that point myself. Still, with fine weather overhead, and a steady practice of getting off to lead for every third or fourth

mile, it is a grand, independent way of travelling. It was positively exhilarating to put the mare's head straight across Scotland, from St. Boswell's to Ayr, and to cut down the hundred miles at four-and-forty a-day; or to rattle from Athelstaneford to Kelso over the Lammermuirs with two shirts and three pairs of stockings on, and the cold cutting your cheeks to the bone. There were, however, sundry disadvantages connected with this primitive mode of locomotion. It is a weary thing sitting three-quarters of an hour on a corn bin at night to be sure that the ostler does your nag justice. Every ferry-boat in the Highlands was fraught with a fresh difficulty; every railway train produced a fresh run off, and I was lucky if I could put my horse's head in the right direction, before she started, so as to get a three hundred yard gallop to the good. It was equally objectionable having to blind-fold her and stuff her ears, and twist her five or six times round, so as to make her forget which way you wanted to go, when late at night you found a Lanarkshire or Ayrshire blast furnace roaring like a lion in your







*Engraved by F. Babbage from a Photograph by Mr. H. Phillips, Kensington.]*

FROM THE ORKNEYS TO KENSINGTON  
(with punctuality and dispatch).  
August 29, 1863—February 24, 1864.

path, and interposed between yourself and your inn.

"However, the book is done—after many interruptions from illness and other causes—and I seemed to breathe freely once more, when I signed the last proof sheet. I can only trust that it may prove to be the scarlet pioneer of a still more extended tour through England, Ireland, and a portion of the Continent; but go where I may, every August will bring with it the old yearning to cross the Tweed, and all the pleasant memories of my journey from the Orkneys to Kensington with punctuality and dispatch."

This pilgrimage from the Orkneys to Kensington "The Druid" accomplished, but it must be added at the cost of his life. Well does his wife remember that terrible home-coming at 11 p.m. in a blinding snow-storm. He rang feebly at the door of his house in Kensington Square, so utterly exhausted that on the servant opening the door he fell into the passage; the "garron" which he was leading escaped into the square, and was caught by the maid servant, and housed in a shed for the night. On "The Druid's"

recovering somewhat from the exhaustion he fervently exclaimed, "Thank God for bringing me home to die with wife and children around me."

Little did he dream of the four years of intense suffering he had yet to endure.

He caught so fearful a cold in a night ride, of which his description is given below, that when he got home asthma marked him for its victim, and for four sad years he enjoyed little rest, either by night or day. With characteristic cheerfulness he used to tell his friends, when they noticed his wasted form and shortness of breath, that he was suffering from foot and mouth disease. It was his custom to muffle himself round the throat, and to walk until he was foot-sore; but those who had known and honoured him for years, and whom he encountered at the annual meetings of the Royal Agricultural Society, and at the Smithfield Club Cattle Shows, saw that his plough was rapidly drawing near to the end of the furrow.

The description of the fatal night ride to which I have already alluded is so symbolical of "The Druid's" pluck and endurance that

it is worthy to be selected for a final quotation :—

“On the occasion of my second visit to Scotland there was nothing for it but to steel myself against all bed-regrets, and to face the muirs at night. I wended my way by a series of zig-zags from Barrock to the high road between Thurso and Lybster, and then struck straight for the coast. The sun went down, and the rain took no half-measures with those exposed to it. Soon every door was barred, and every light put out in the few cabins along the road ; but one family at last responded to my hail with biscuit, cheese and milk, besides offering a bed and abundance of tares. There are many dreary passages in a man’s life ; but wiping down a mare very short of condition in your shirt sleeves in a cow-house, on a wild muir, by a dim spluttering dip, at midnight, with the wind sighing through the broken panes, the heavy rain-drops pattering on the door-sill, and a forty miles’ ride before you, has very few to match it. Still it had to be done ; and I said to myself, ‘If I mun doy, I mun doy.’

“The mountain burns, which soon began to run right viciously, made music to my sorrow, and as the moon sailed out from behind a cloud, and shone on the long pools, which were fast gathering by the roadside, they seemed like polar bears craftily stealing along. I hailed the mail-road at Lybster and the roar of the sea as quite old friends, and felt a little comforted. As for the mare, although she had only known me for two days, she had got so accustomed to my voice that if I fell a little behind, she would stop when spoken to and look round, first to the near and then to the off-side in the gloom, to be sure I was at hand. Weariness at length defied all face-washing at the roadside springs, and two hours of that night are best accounted for in the preface. Be that as it may, the mist-wreaths began to curl lazily up the deep mountain ravines, and away to the vast granite deer forest behind. Morning broke and the rain was gone, while the rainbow spanned the Berriedale valley. There were all the varied purples of the heather, and the rich green livery of fir and larch, to brace man and horse for the dreaded Ord of

Caithness, and the mail, as it rattled cheerfully past, was quite the ‘missing link’ with mankind. Morayshire, on the opposite coast, looked like the outline of a new world beyond a calm, blue, dimpled sea; and as I rounded the last crag near Helmsdale, the gently-curving sands of Sutherland lay at my feet, white and warm in the sunshine.”

This narrative would indeed be incomplete were I to omit to repeat that during his long years of patient, unselfish, and conscientious labour, “The Druid” never realised more than £600 in a single year. During the last few months of his life, his services were retained by Mr. Robinson, of the *Daily News*, to write sporting and agricultural leaders for that journal. Had it been possible to keep him alive by pouring liquid gold down his throat, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Labouchere would gladly have sanctioned the necessary outlay. It was not to be. As he himself said of the prematurely sacrificed life of the young and gallant nobleman who owned The Earl and The Duke, and won the Cesarewitch with Lecturer, “All the wheels were down,” and after the spring of 1870, the

writer who had given more pleasure to hunting, racing, and coursing men than all his predecessors and successors combined, lived only in works which will not soon pass away.

His dying bed was soothed by the unwearied ministrations and tender solicitude of his wife, by the constant affection of his devoted friend, Mr. John Thornton, and by the generosity and kindness of the present Sir Tatton Sykes. Mr. George Moore, together with his charming wife, also visited his sick room continually, supplying hot-house fruit and champagne. Mrs. Moore, on hearing him express a wish for some genuine Cumberland porridge, came and made it for him with her own hands. As he lay with his hands folded across his breast, it might have been said of him, in lines which were never more applicable :

“ No pearl ever lay under Oman’s dark water  
More pure in its shell than thy spirit in thee !



## INDEX.

---

- ABSENCE of Mind, "The  
Druid's," 183.  
Amusements at Rugby, 64.  
Arnold, Dr., of Rugby, 45, 287  
Asthma, 330.
- BARRISTER, Chooses the Profes-  
sion of, 86.  
Bay Middleton and Crucifix, 312.  
"Bell's Life," 108.  
Betting, 314.  
Bill Scott, 161.  
Birth and Parentage, 29.  
Birth - place, and its Influ-  
ences, 1.
- CAMBRIDGE Days, 82.  
Carlisle, 15.  
Children, Love of, 275.  
Contributions to the "Sport-  
ing Magazine," 249.  
Corbett, Mr., Uvedale, 75.  
Courtship and Marriage, 115.  
Crackenthorpe Hall, 24.  
Cumberland, History of, 3.  
Cumberland "Statesmen," 3.  
Cumberland Wrestling, 212.
- "DAILY NEWS," Contribution  
to, 133.  
"Death of William Scott," 155.  
Declines Editorship of "Bell's  
Life," 109.
- Death of "The Druid," 334.  
Decline of Cumberland Wrest-  
ling, 212.  
Defect in "The Druid's" Writ-  
ings, 317.  
"Dick Christian's Lectures,"  
145.  
"Dixon's Gate," 55.  
Dixon, Henry Sydenham,  
Reminiscences, 198.  
Dixon, Henry Hall, born 1822,  
died 1870, 129, 334.  
Dixon, Mr. Peter, "The Druid's"  
Father, 29.  
Dixon, Mrs. H. H., 115, 122,  
275.  
"Doncaster Gazette," 133.  
Doncaster, Residence at, 87,  
124.  
Doncaster Town Moor, 99.  
Dowling, Vincent, Editor of  
"Bell's Life," 111.  
Dunchurch Steeplechase, 59.
- ECCENTRICITIES, "The  
Druid's," 183.  
Eglinton's, Lord, Turf Career,  
236.  
Eldon, Lord Chancellor, 1,  
Endurance, "The Druid's," 322.
- FATAL Journey, 329.  
"Field and Fern," 322.

- Fishing Difficulty at Rugby, 80.  
Further Reminiscences, 114.
- "GENERAL Chassé," 115  
Government Appointment Declined, 104.  
Graham, Sir James, 104.
- HASTINGS, Marquis of, 174.  
Herring, J. F., 87.  
Holme Eden, 34.  
Horse Breeding in Virginia, 256.  
Horse Pictures of J. F. Herring, 93.  
Hughes, Judge, 71.
- ILLNESS, "The Druid's," at Cambridge, 84.  
Illness of "The Druid," 201.  
Independence of the Press, Jealousy of, 191, 209.  
Indifference to Money, 190.  
Influence on Literature, 310.
- JOURNEY to Scotland, 324.
- KEEN Eye for well-trained Race-horse, 253.
- LAMB, Charles, 106.  
"Law of the Farm," 103.  
London, Arrival in, 130.  
"Career in, 105, 130.  
Lord Eglinton's Turf Career, 230.  
"Lord Morpeth's Farewell," 300.  
Love of Children, 275.  
Lynes, George B., 253.  
Lynes, Miss Caroline, 83, 115.
- MACHELL Family, 24.  
Many-sided Sympathies, 258.  
Marquis of Hastings, 174.  
Marriage of "The Druid," 122.  
"Martingale," 100.  
Moore, George, 213.
- NORTH Country Lingo, 316.
- OLD Manorial Halls of Westmoreland and Cumberland, 18.  
"Old Mortality" of the Turf, 308.  
"Orkneys to Kensington with Punctuality and Dispatch," 329.
- POLITICIAN, "The Druid" as, 287.  
"Post and Paddock," 245, 249.  
Prize Fighting, 65.
- REFUSES offer of Government Appointment, 104.  
Religion, "The Druid's," 280.  
Reminiscences by Henry Sydenham Dixon, 198.  
Reminiscences of Early Life, 114.  
Rugby Days, 45.  
"Rugby, Its Sporting and School Recollections," 56.
- "SADDLE and Sirloin," 99, 307.  
"Scott and Sebright," 249, 314.  
"Silk and Scarlet," 147, 249.  
Simplicity of his Character, 192.  
Smiles', Dr., "Life of George Moore," 217.  
Sporting Literature, "The Druid's" Influence on, 310.  
"Sporting Magazine," Contributions to, 249.  
Steeplechases at Dunchurch, 78.  
Steeplechasing at Rugby, 75.  
St. Leger of 1850, 162.  
Sympathies, "Druid's" many-sided, 258.
- THORNTON, John, 308, 334.  
Town Moor, the, 99.  
Turf, "Old Mortality" of, 308.
- VERSATILITY of "The Druid," 235.  
Voltigeur's St. Leger, 163, 246.
- WHITE, James ("Martingale") 99.

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