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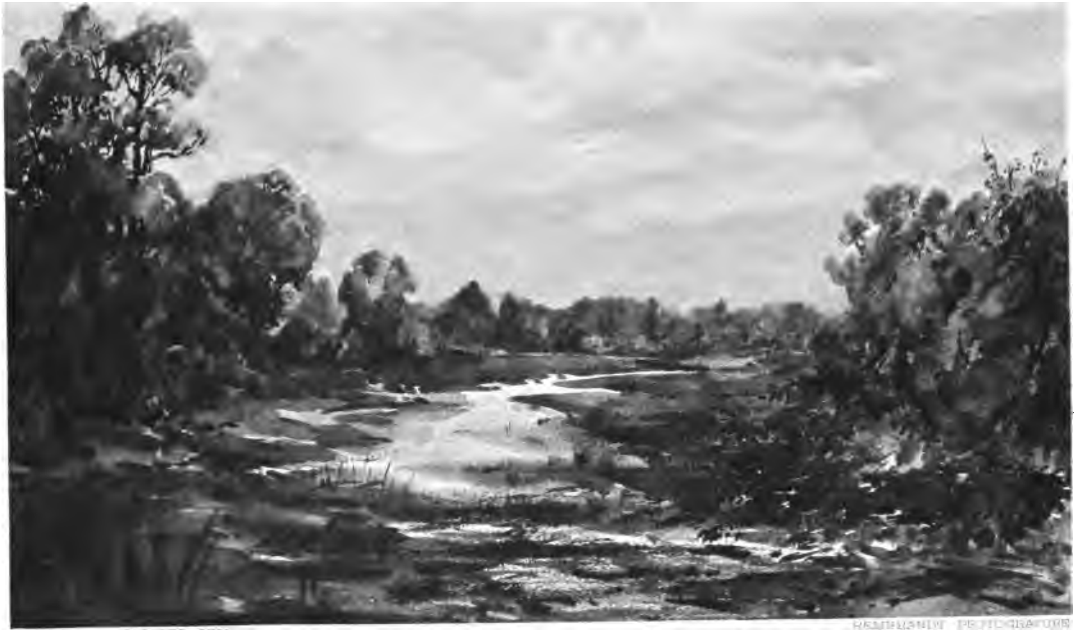
THE NEW FOREST



R.C DE CRESPIGNY, PINXIT.

REMBRANDT PHOTOGRAVURE

THE FOREST AFTER RAIN.

FRONTISPIECE.

THE NEW FOREST

ITS TRADITIONS, INHABITANTS AND CUSTOMS

BY ROSE C. DE CRESPIGNY,

AND

HORACE HUTCHINSON

AUTHOR OF "GOLF," IN THE BADMINTON SERIES

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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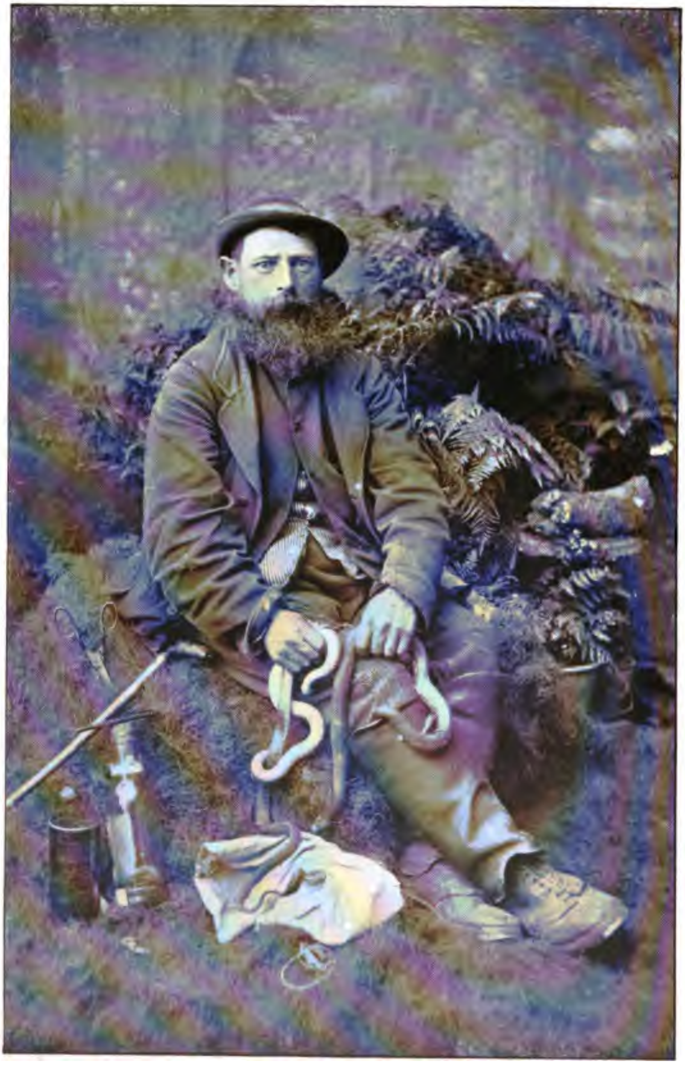
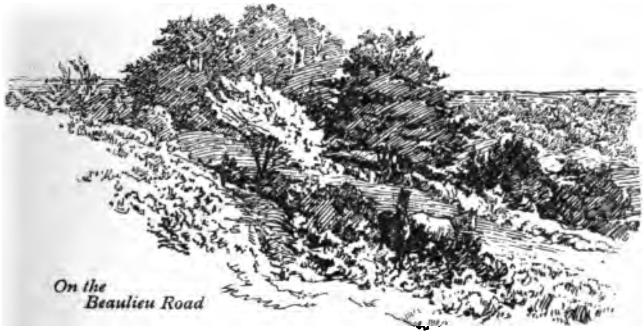


Brusher Mills. [*Frontispiece.*



On the Beaulieu Road

THE NEW FOREST

INTRODUCTORY

THE "New Forest" is a title that is exceedingly familiar to all of us, and yet to the great majority it is a title of very vague import. We have heard of it even from our earliest days. It is endeared to our memory as the place in which William Rufus met his death, according to our most childish history book, by the stroke of that unfortunately deflected arrow of his hunting companion, Walter Tyrrell. A little later in life it became sanctified to us by the reading of the "Children of the New Forest," and we followed, in mental vision down all its glades, Humphrey setting his snares for the hare and lying in wait for the fallow buck. From all this—from the arrow manifestly deflected by a tree-trunk, and from the general sylvan atmosphere in which the Children of the Forest had their being—we gathered the impression of a vast woodland solitude peopled with delightful things, a home of birds and beasts and everything blessed. But in our later wisdom, having learnt with painful surprise that the Scottish so-called "deer forests" had not a stick of timber, comparatively speaking, upon them, some of us may have come to entertain a suspicion of the import of the name of the Forest which is called New, and may have grown to picture that, too, as a waste of heathy moorland.

Happily, there is no ground for these suspicions of maturity. The simple faith of childhood for once was justified. The New Forest is, for the most part, as its name implies, a vast woodland region—a charming relic of the past life of a now shop-keeping nation. There the wayfarer may wander a summer's day long, and actually lose himself in solitudes peopled only by charcoal-burners, gypsies, and the beasts of the field; need hear no rattle of wheels nor screech of steam-engine; may even forget for some happy hours that he is an Englishman of the latter end of the nineteenth century.

All this delight he may find within two hours, by train, of London. The Forest embraces, in its entirety, over 92,000 acres. Of true, unblemished forest, which neither squatter nor royal favourite has appropriated, there are 62,746 acres, over which every man may roam without let or hindrance. Certain patches, here and there fenced in from the cattle and the sportsman, are kept as sanctuaries and resting-places of the sorely harried wild things which maintain the struggle for existence. For the rest, the Forest is as much his own, for all lawful purposes, as if it were within his own park gates. "Lawful purposes" in an afforested district—that is to say, in a district which is subject to forest law—has a special sense; but hereby hangs a tale of some length, which it will be well to uncoil before proceeding very much further.

In the first place, however, to give a very rough outline of the position and extent of the Forest, it may be well to say that its boundaries are: Wiltshire, on the north; the Solent, broadly speaking, on the south; a line running a few miles within the course of the Christchurch Avon on the west; and on the east a line running irregularly northward from Southampton Water.* Now, this considerable district, though so largely and generally wooded as to have every title to the name of forest, includes, nevertheless, stretches of bog and heath within its acreage; and, although for the most part a delightful solitude, its boundaries embrace several villages and many demesnes, of which—exclusive of Lyndhurst and the private properties in its immediate neighbourhood—Minstead and its manor house, the village of Beaulieu and the property of the same name, Brockenhurst Park with the village at its gates, Burley village and manor, and Canterton, are some of the most important. Main roads run through it from Christchurch to Southampton, passing through Lyndhurst, and from Cadnam to Lymington, intersecting each other at right angles.

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* See Map at end of volume.

Referring back now to the reminiscences of our earliest history books, we may recollect that the name of Norman William, the Conqueror, was presented to our horrified view as that of a king who created this vast hunting-ground for his royal leisure at the expense of villages burnt and razed to the ground; of churches treated in a similar barbaric fashion—in fact, of the whole region made desolate and turned into the likeness of a land devastated by war—so that fine covert for boars and wolves might spring up from its ruins. It was an engaging picture; but even in those nursery days the critical eye of that most realistic age of childhood regarded the ruined villages with suspicion, as an indifferent method of tilling the soil for the growth of covert. At all events, it used to strike us that Norman William must have had a forward-looking and sanguine mind, for, at best, it would be some years before much forest sprang from the ruins; and in those days, if men did not live so quickly as we do, they certainly died more quickly—especially kings; the second William is a ready-to-hand instance. However, there are not wanting other evidences to exonerate the Conqueror from suspicion of an act so contrary to all the artfully conciliatory nature of his general policy. Domesday Book itself, as well as certain ancient charters, hold record of compensation made, on very modern lines, to owners whose land was put under the forest law: for this, in sober truth, is the meaning of that phrase "afforesting," which has brought so much discredit on the first William. He put this extent of ground—an extent roughly very similar, if slightly larger, so far as our means of judging serve us, to the New Forest of to-day—under "forest law." These laws were severe enough, no doubt, making it a deadly felony to destroy game within the limits to which the forest law applied. Of course there were opponents of the game laws in those days, as there are in these; and, on the whole, the proceeding was, without question, a high-handed and "conquerant" one. But not only is there no trustworthy evidence to show that villages and churches were laid in ruins to form the king's hunting-ground, but there is visible evidence to the contrary, both in the musty writings aforesaid and in the stones and mortar of certain churches—such as those at Brockenhurst and Milford, standing to-day as they stood at the time of the afforesting of the district—churches which certainly ought to have gone the way of ruin, according to the ruination theory of the Conqueror's proceedings.

Now, he who wishes to read this tale with all its bearings, and, in fine, all the history relating to the New Forest, can do no better than read it in Mr. Wise's book, which, published thirty years ago, is still, beyond question, the standard work on the

Forest. It is a work of great care and research, charmingly illustrated, and in every way excellently "got up." Such commendation, of course, suggests the pertinent question—"If such an altogether excellent work is in existence, what, in the name of goodness, is the use of writing any more?"

The answer that is most obvious is that Mr. Wise's book, as aforesaid, was written and published thirty years ago. With a book which treated of any other corner of England, very likely such an answer would suffice; but it is not sufficient in the case of a book that treats of the New Forest; and for this reason. Not only has the condition of life in the Forest undergone next to no change during the last thirty years, but it is extraordinarily little changed from what it must have been three hundred years ago, nay, even in the days in which Norman William went a-hunting in it and created it the New Forest of the King's Venery. It was the New Forest then; it is the same New Forest—now that it has become a very old forest—to-day. There are no boars and wolves in it now, and the fashion in dress of the human inhabitants has changed just a little, but the human inhabitant has not changed his nature, nor greatly, we may suspect, his ways. West Saxon he was then, and West Saxon he is now; and of all men in the world, perhaps—since Japan has taught China that it is time to change—the West Saxon changes, as he does everything, the most slowly. The Egyptian of the Forest is to-day much what he was then, and there is probably little alteration in the manners of the fallow deer. The court in which the verderers, who are a sort of tribunes of the commoners, adjust, or fail to adjust, their everlasting differences with the Crown officials of the Forest, is still called the Court of Swain-mote—a name which in itself takes us back to days before the coming of the Norman. Penalties for slaying or stealing of deer are not so Draconian now as to entail the loss of eye or limb or life: imprisonment without the option of a fine is the severest punishment;

but even that carries us back to the respectable antiquity of the youth of Shakespeare. So that, altogether, it will appear that we have given as yet no pertinent answer to the pertinent question:—"Why write, since Mr. Wise wrote so wisely and so well only a short space of thirty years ago?"

The true answer is that, without presuming to criticise and without aspiring to emulate Mr. Wise, one may perhaps, without presumption, hope to supplement him. For Mr. Wise dealt eruditely with the dry bones of a past which he arranged in perfect osteological order, and therefrom produced a skeleton on which the life of the Forest is formed even to-day; but he did not attempt, except cursorily—it was not part of his main purpose—to draw a picture of that life, of that queer, old-world life which exists still, as it has existed for centuries, with its customs, its traditions, its folk-lore, and its daily pursuits and interests. He has told us where this and that road leads to; the qualities of this or that character of soil; the associations of this or that historical landmark, and has dealt with all historical questions in a manner that we have not the learning to compete with. But, on the other hand, he has not told us, when we see a gypsy or a charcoal-burner, what is that man's way of life and thought; nor of the creatures of the Forest, and of its floral beauties, how they live and move and have their being. It is in this humble direction that we venture a hope that we may add something to his work; something that will give the visitor to the Forest a livelier and more understanding interest in all that meets his view as he roams in it, and may give to one who has not visited it a distant view of the sylvan scenes and the players who act in them.

Monarchs since William's day have been in the habit of taking their pleasure in venery in the Forest. Some of them have dealt less considerately with the original holders of land in the Forest than he; taking away from them, in some cases, those peculiar privileges which he accorded to them by way of compensation when he afforested the district.

These, however, were restored them in King Henry III.'s reign by a special charter, and in some cases they are maintained even at the present date. In Edward I.'s time the Forest had a larger extent than ever before; but in his reign its boundaries were curtailed and subsequent occasional appropriations have reduced it to its present area.

The great Tudor, Henry VIII., varied the sport in the Forest by hunting the Cistercian monks from the Abbey of Beaulieu; and emulated the worst actions imputed to the Conqueror by laying the Abbey itself in ruins. In estimating the authority for the early history of the Forest it is always to be borne in mind that the chief historians of the day were the monks in their holy houses, on whom we may surmise that the afforesting of the region bore somewhat severely, not only in taking from them much of their cultivated land, but also in laying a veto on the supply of fat bucks which previously, we may suppose, had been plentiful enough in their larder. It is with reluctance that we have to part with the innocent if unhappy theory of the accidental deflection of Walter Tyrrell's arrow which found its way into the Red William's heart. Sundry evidences, such as a remarkable coincidence in the dreamings of certain abbots of holy houses, which all went to portend William Rufus' sudden death, seem to point to the conclusion that that death was not so altogether unpremeditated as the historians of our childhood would have us believe. It seems more reasonable to think that these saintly men had determined to express their disapproval of Rufus' hunting in preserves which they had once looked on as their own by arranging for his sudden removal, and had selected Walter Tyrrell as the fitting instrument for executing the judgment of Heaven. And this probable act of violence throws a lurid light on the spirit in which the monkish accounts of the original afforesting are likely to have been written.

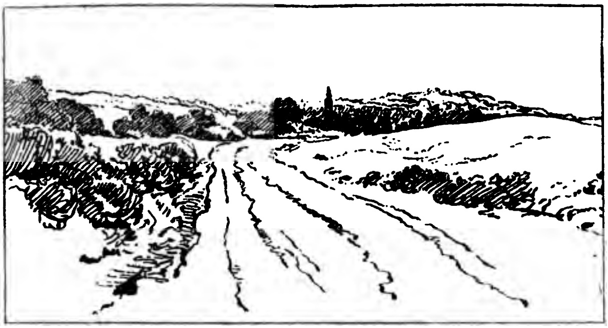
In addition to Mr. Wise's great work there are, of course, the ordinary guide-books; but these, though serving their peculiar purpose excellently well, are likely to leave on the mental palate of the general reader the flavour expressed by the remark of the Scottish student, who had read from end to end of his Liddell and Scott's Lexicon, that "it was verra interestin' reading, but a trifle disconnectit." They are excellent as travelling companions, but not always exhilarating for steady reading in an armchair.

From the point of view of the visitor, Lyndhurst, which may be called the capital of the New Forest country, may also be regarded as the centre or ganglion from which the great roads through the Forest star themselves out in all directions: to Beaulieu and from there on to Hythe; through Emery Down to Stoney Cross; to Lymington through Brockenhurst; to Christchurch; to Salisbury through Cadnam, Bramshaw and the northern part of the Forest; and to Southampton.

Besides these principal roads there are numberless tracks, used by the foresters for the carting of poles and bracken fern through the Forest, all of wonderful sylvan beauty and bearing a remarkable resemblance to each other, yet known to the *habitués* of the Forest as intimately as the corners of their own hearths or caravans. None, however, of the most secluded woodland paths surpasses in beauty the stretch of high road from Brockenhurst to Lyndhurst, where the birch trees seem, as it were in conscious loveliness, to have grouped themselves in clumps for the express purpose of displaying all their graces and the glimmer of their silvery stems against the mass of darker foliaged trees. The road from Ringwood to Southampton is of Roman construction. In six miles of its length it runs through a part of the Forest than which none is more wildly picturesque. At Stoney Cross this road passes the old coaching inn which stands within a mile of the spot where King Rufus is supposed to have met his death.

On the whole the northern part of the Forest is the more wild and hilly, and from its upland heaths the roamer will get extensive views, over acres and acres of undulant woodland, away down to the very sea in the Solent or Southampton Water.

Many a regret has one heard expressed that the beauty of the Forest scenery is nowhere enhanced and supplemented by a river of any magnitude traversing its glades. There are small streams, the home of small trout, in plenty, but no large river. In truth, all such regrets are ill-considered. Beyond question a winding Wye, or the Hampshire Avon itself, could its course be but slightly diverted, would add to the Forest's beauties, other things being equal. But would other things, in that case, be equal? Would the Forest, in that case, be in existence at all—enjoying any such beautiful existence, that is to say, as delights us to-day? It is more than doubtful. Practical man looks upon his Wyes and Avons with the eye of an utilitarian rather than of a Ruskin. Had such a river coursed through the Forest, man would for years have used it as a means of transit. A towing path would have wound its way along the banks, and bargees have wound their way along the towing path; and few things can be conceived more at variance with the peaceful, sylvan charms of the Forest, and more potent for their destruction, than the masterful doings and the forcible sayings of a river-faring folk. And if any shall reply that probably, rather than the bargee, the blazer-clad river tourist, with his charming ways, would have possessed the bank, one may accept the answer without appreciably weakening one's contention that a large river is better away.



Looking towards Lyndhurst from the Beaulieu Road.

THE FORESTER

THE life of a country gentleman in the New Forest is especially to be envied in this last decade of the nineteenth century because, in one great essential feature, it differs from the life of the country gentleman elsewhere. The agricultural question in its most grievous form for him does not exist. At worst its breath comes on him tempered through the protecting oaks and beeches. He does not know the vexation of great farms thrown tenantless upon his hands, for, in a broad way of speaking, there are no great farms.

Of course, on the Forest's borders there are demesnes which have extensive arable lands attached to them, but these all let readily; and within the bounds of the Forest itself properties run small, and their owners dwell in peace and comfort. It is very possible for the thought to occur that the blessings of peace may fall in too full measure upon the Forest landowner, seeing that the ordinary pursuit of the nineteenth-century landowner, namely, tenant-hunting, is not for him. How, it may be asked, can he contrive to pass his days—a country gentleman with whom farming goes easily, and who knows not the need of a tenant?

The truth is that this New Forest, designed by the first William as his happy hunting-ground, has fulfilled, and continues to fulfil, that excellent intention so admirably well that from first day to last of the year the lover of field sports need be at no loss for good entertainment. In point of fact, one is tempted to describe this Forest as a perfect Paradise of the moderately-endowed country gentleman. For one thing, as aforesaid, the agricultural question practically does not exist for him—which consideration in itself seems to rid country life of one of its most purgatorial conditions. But there are, in addition, positive blessings. Elsewhere, the country gentleman's property is circumscribed by his neighbour's landmark, which there is no removing. But here, in the New Forest, no neighbour can set up a landmark. For the country gentleman's purposes—that is to say, for riding over, walking over, shooting over (if he choose to take out the license), the whole extent of the Forest is as absolutely his as if he were possessed of it in fee simple. It is all his own private preserve. To be sure he shares the shooting with a certain number of others; but that number is limited, and the Forest is so large that the sportsmen do not interfere with each other. They are sufficiently numerous, however, to keep the furred and feathered game in a constant state of unrest, so that the patience of the stalker is put into request as well as the skill of the marksman. It is truly the hunting of the wild thing in its native wilderness, this shooting in the Forest; and if it have less attractions for some than the big battues of corn-fed pheasants, it has at least, by way of compensation, peculiar attractions of its own which are becoming very hard to come by in populous England.

The sportsman of the Forest needs to be acquainted with the ways and walks in life of his quarry if he means to bring it to the bag; he needs, in fact, to be a naturalist as well as sportsman, if, indeed, the latter term, in its true sense, should not be held to include the former. Besides this knowledge of the ways of beasts and birds, which grows with him instinctive, he acquires also a marvellously instinctive knowledge of the Forest paths. To the uninitiated in Forest lore, each path looks like another. To the forester, though he cannot tell, in words, the difference, each has its features. He knows them by an instinct which he can neither explain nor convey to another. No less instinctive, apparently, is his knowledge of the fence which, in a part of the Forest unfamiliar to him, divides the common land of the Forest from the private properties. To another man this fence looks just like that which the forester lately hopped gaily over, knowing that it divided one part of the Forest, merely, from another. This fence looks precisely similar; the forester does not pretend to any previous acquaintance with it, yet he tells you—though he cannot tell you why—that this is a fence of some private property, and you had better believe him. He, at all events, will not cross it, except on some very urgent business—say, a house on fire, or a wounded rabbit. When he sees a pheasant in a game-dealer's shop it is odds that he would identify it at once if it were a forest-bred one.

So what the country gentleman lacks in painful knowledge of the agricultural question, he makes up for by a pleasant knowledge of the Forest fauna and flora. If he have a knowledge of soils to boot, it may teach him a further lesson of thankfulness that agriculture is not the staff of his life, for the Forest soil is not a rich one. Hay is the best part of its produce for farm purposes, but there is no sign to-day of the heavy crops on which the inhabitants of those fabled villages, demolished by the Conqueror, must presumably have battened.

From October 1st to February 1st the forester, if it please him, may spend three days out of every week of his leisure in the wild, rough shooting. When the shooting has come to an end he may still hunt deer and foxes right on into May, in an ordinary season; and in June he may hunt the otter. All the summer through he may be playing cricket; there are grounds at Lyndhurst, at Bramshaw, at Brockenhurst, at Bartley, and at Burley Lawn. Of these the first two are the best and most frequented. The Lyndhurst ground is situated at Bolton's Bench, eastward of Lyndhurst village; and its wickets are quite excellent. The pavilion is a picturesque structure, with a thatched roof which is partially rent off it yearly, and with admirable regularity, by the equinoctial gales.

The Bramshaw ground is in one of the most beautiful of the many beautiful spaces in the Forest, and for the loveliness of its surroundings is not to be beaten by any cricket ground in the kingdom. But other neighbouring grounds are scarcely less beautiful; and everywhere throughout the Forest, in the summer time, where one finds an open space, one may find also a boy wielding a stick by way of bat opposed by another wielding maybe a golf ball by way of cricket ball—for of golf, too, there is plenty in the Forest, and golf balls are more abundant than the costly cricket ball.

Lyndhurst, again, that great centre of the Forest, is the central point also of its golf. Eastward of the village, round and about the cricket ground and the thatched pavilion annually unroofed by the winds, lie the nine holes of the Lyndhurst course, on a light sandy soil which grows a nice short grass excellently adapted for the game. The holes are guarded by whin bushes; and roads, sandpits, ponds and houses add a pleasant variety to the hazards.

The other principal golf course of the Forest is at Bramshaw, these two localities dividing the glories of the golf as of the cricket. Before the opening of the Bournemouth Corporation's course on the Meyrick Park, there used to be a golf course at Brockenhurst; but of late the bulk of its supporters have deserted it in favour of the more conveniently accessible course at Bournemouth. The aspect of the Bramshaw course has been spoken of by a golfing authority as "likely-looking woodcock ground." Nevertheless there is fine golfing quality about its nine holes. The putting greens, though small, are good. The lies through the green are not all they might be, but the holes are of fine length, and altogether give a stouter test of golf than the Lyndhurst course. They have not the advantage, however, of so sandy a soil, and suffer more from the effects of wet and wintry weather. Few golf clubs are so doubly blessed as that which, under the name of the New Forest Golf Club, has two such alternative courses for its playgrounds. At Southampton there is a green within very feasible reach of the golfer of the New Forest, and there are one or two small private courses within the boundaries of the Forest itself. On the whole, therefore, if none of the grounds be quite of the first class, the golfer need find no lack of various scope for his energies.

One of the Bramshaw greens occupies

almost the exact site of a spot of later but scarcely less engrossing historical interest than the stone beside which Rufus died—the spot, namely, on which stood the gallows for the accommodation of the last Englishman who was hanged in chains. If a man were to dig deep enough with his niblick, he might, perhaps, reach the chains, or, possibly, the bones, even now. At all events, the hole in which the gallows stood remains, looking much like every other hole—a bad lie for a golf ball. The worthy who was hoisted to such eminence had distinguished himself by robbing a lone old woman and then setting fire to her cottage over her head. With excellent forethought he went straightway and communicated with the police, saying that he feared an accident had happened, for he had seen the cottage in flames. Unluckily he had miscalculated the energy of the fire or the old woman's tenacity of life. When the police arrived she was still breathing, and with her last breath denounced her astonished incendiary. So they hanged him in chains beside the high road as a warning to others lest they should make a like miscalculation. There, after a while, he became so great a terror to other senses beside the visual ones of passers-by that they removed him to the less prominent position close to the present golf hole. Here his friends constantly passed him as they went to and from their work in the Forest. To them he was a friend still, despite his elevation. One old man loved to tell how he often used to tap the skeleton on the back of the head, as he passed, with a cheery "How bee'st, Jim?" in order, as he used to say, "to see the tom-tits fly out at his eyeholes." To others, who had not known him, and especially to children, he was a terror. The end of him was that a sailor, to win a drunken bet, went out one night and cut down the gallows; so that now all that remains is the hole in which they stood.

Enough has surely been said to show that the adult child of the New Forest need have no lack of employment for his leisure. He has hunting, shooting, cricket and golf, and though the fishing in the Forest itself is a poor thing, because the streams are small, near by he has the wide Avon in which are trout of great magnitude, and of such sophistication that it needs to stalk them where they rise, and cast over them with the dry fly which shall float on the water's surface. This pastime, however, is not of those which are pursued within the boundary of the Forest proper. Of course, at every country house a lawn tennis court may be had merely for the laying, but the game does not compete at all with the keener delights of cricket and golf. Finally, if a love of horse-racing be one's foible, one may indulge it, in moderation, at the annual race meeting at Brockenhurst, where the entries are chiefly confined to Forest ponies.

It was not always so. "Our great national vice," as a cleric sagely put it, until lately found annual indulgence on a racecourse just outside Lyndhurst. But the meetings were put down by an untoward agency. The great event of the day was in progress ; it was a close finish, necks were craned forward as the horses came up the straight, there were shouts of eager enthusiasm, pulses throbbed at fever speed. On the ground, however, was one who, we may presume, did not share the throbbing enthusiasm; and while all the rest of the New Forest was absorbed in looking at the racing horses, he walked off into the security of a thicket with the race cup, the big prize of the meeting, under his coat. This incident seems to have had a blighting influence on the Lyndhurst races, for they were discontinued from that date. Is it not a reasonable suspicion that the agent in the disappearance of the cup, and the consequent abandonment of the races, was an emissary of the sapient cleric quoted above? It is all a presumption, for no one to this day, who has thought it worth while to mention it publicly, has seen anything of the *deus ex machinâ*, or of the cup.

This account, then, must suffice, of the pursuits of the country gentleman in the Forest, except for such further account as shall be given of each form of sport under its special heading. For though it is, of course, true that the delights of the country gentleman's life are increased just in such proportion as he is naturalist, geologist, botanist, lover of landscape and cloudscape —in fact, in proportion as he is lover and observer of nature—yet this is the common inheritance of all country folk and not the peculiar portion of children of the New Forest, albeit that there is no corner of England which lends itself so kindly to such pleasant interests. But, after all, the lover and observer of nature will include among the subjects of his love and observation, and put foremost of them, that "noblest study of mankind," and chief of Nature's children, man. And in this regard, no less than in meaner ones, he will find that the New Forest opens for him an interesting and peculiar field for observation. The gypsies and charcoal-burners will occur on first thoughts as each, in their special way, a people curious and apart. But though this is true, it is also no less true that the ordinary inhabitant and labourer—so to speak of him, for courtesy's sake—of the Forest is scarcely less individual and interesting. The West Saxon is a curious creature, and generations of life in the Forest have rendered this particular West Saxon more peculiar than the rest. In many characteristics he resembles the Celt, notably in love of leisure—which the man of the leisured class will call, in him, a love of loafing—in virtue of which "labourer," as applied to him, must be regarded merely as a courtesy title. He will labour a day, perhaps a week; even, at a great strain, a month; but a year—no. It is not his way; it is not according to his traditions; it is not among his inherited qualities. You may, it is true, get a year's work out of him; but it can only be by changing the nature of his employment. You will never get him to go on working, "steady on," at the same job. Of course, when one writes "never," in this cock-sure way, one does not mean to be brought up like the man who said there were "no apples" in a certain orchard, and was confronted by a man who had seen *one*. There may be—there are—exceptions to the rule which we are stating about the disinclination of the forester to steady work, but the exceptions are so few that they do not go to make up a jot of evidence against the rule. But if they have this quality of the Celt, which certainly is in the nature of a defect, they have also, in compensation, many of his most charming qualities. They have his gentleness, his courtesy, his kindliness, his readiness to oblige—they have, in a word, his charm. They have not, however, either his vivacity or his wit. They are a slow-witted people, and slow to move; but, on the other hand, though they are 'cute enough up to a certain low point of cunning, they have not the Celt's disposition to untruthfulness. As a rule, according to the writer's observation, all the uneducated class are disposed to untruthfulness. It needs education or a George Washington to recognise the great worth of accurate statement; but, judged by the standard of the little educated, the New Forester is a fairly truthful person. They are a simple folk, easily content, with no ambitions. The necessities of life are not lacking to them, and they have the Forest as their ancestral home. Their income is derived from a regular succession of jobs which vary with the seasons. Haymaking, in the early summer, employs, for a time, a large proportion of the people. The autumn is the season of harvest. Besides these, which are industries familiar enough over the length and breadth of England, there are some which are peculiar to the Forest. Among the chief of these is fern cutting. The bracken fern is used for litter, and, generally, for all purposes which are served by straw in corn-growing districts. Tickets are obtained from the Crown officials for the cutting of the fern, and each ticket sets forth the number of loads of fern which it carries permission for cutting. No cutting is allowed before September 20th, for if the stem were cut while the sap was in full flow the fern would bleed to death. The carting of fir poles and other trees for those who have the rights of taking the timber as it is thinned, from time to time, by the Crown officials, is also an active autumnal industry.

Leaf-gathering is another form of odd job for which tickets are issued by the Crown; and in the early winter it is common to see men beneath the beech trees busied in stuffing big sacks full of the fallen leaves, which will form fine leaf-dressing for garden soils when the process of decay has advanced a little further.

Those who have what are called " turbary " rights have a further resource in the cutting of turves for fuel. The turf in the New Forest is cut in less thick and solid junks than the peat of Ireland or Scotland. It is skinned off in thin strips by an instrument specially designed. In its manner of burning, too, it differs from the peat, smouldering in a dull, uninteresting way without any quips and antics of leaping flame, or steady joy of brightly glowing incandescence. Such as it is, however, it is, no doubt, a boon.

Shortly before Christmas comes the holly cutting, again a ticket-of-leave affair. The Forest holly bears a plentiful stock of bright berries, and many of the butchers' shops in London owe their brightness at the festive season to the New Forest, to the mutual advantage of butcher and forester. Temporarily it strips the Forest of some of its beauty, but on the whole this annual cutting, though hard on the food supply of berry-eating birds, is said to benefit the trees.

The spring is the season for "rine-ing," that is to say, for stripping of their bark the fallen oak trees, and piling the strips in long low stacks—a picturesque scene for the spectator.

Then, all through the shooting months there is occupation after the forester's own heart in "beating" for sportsmen who have taken out the license for shooting in the Forest. Some there are—old and guileful—who, taking a public-house as the centre of their operations, will lead a simple stranger beating round and round it all day long, with frequent intervals for refreshment. Such villany is not common. With most, the love of sport inherent in them is strong enough to master the love of beer, doubtless inherent also, and they will take pride in showing the new-comer such sport as the Forest affords. The same instinct supplies them with a constant odd job, when others fail, in snaring and capturing by any poaching means the rabbits which still survive the war constantly waged against them in the Forest.

In addition to all these aids to existence the commoner also exercises his right of turning out domestic animals to graze, such as horses, ponies, cows, and pigs. Almost every commoner has an old brood mare, and one of the most frequent sights of the Forest, in the autumn, is an old black sow followed by her troop of lesser but equally black offspring. The Forest in ordinary seasons supplies sufficient food for these creatures to "find themselves," and this, with the rights of turbary and wood-cutting for fuel, which go with most of the cottages, keeps the wolf of starvation or even of penury from the door, and makes existence an easy and untroubled thing.

Thus the forester is like the Olympian gods, living easily; but there is no doubt that in neither case does the "easy life" lead to a very high standard of moral excellence nor to the development of that "grit" of character which is the pride of the modern Anglo-Saxon. The New Forester is a loafer, a dreamer of dreams, a poet, in all but the production. He is content to be a fly on the wheel of life without caring to help its impetus; he is, in fact, somewhat of a "gentleman," in his kindly, idle gentleness. He is more like the Latin than the Teutonic gentleman—like an Italian *lazarone*, say, who is always a gentleman. Yet he has an independence which certainly the *lazarone* would be the better of. But monotonous work he will not do. For a while he may gratefully accept it; but when the haymaking or rine-ing come round he will take his leave of you, very courteously but very firmly, and will express no penitence if you find him loafing idly in the Forest—his market-place—when these occasional jobs are over. Doubtless there are worse ways of life; but a result of this lack of sticking power is that the forester rarely excels—"unstable as water," etc.

One thing he can do, however, against any man—he can throw a stone or a cricket ball. A great amusement of the foresters is to turn out in bands and go "squogging" with a "squoyle." A "squog" is a squirrel and a "squoyle" is a handy little club of wood, like a policeman's truncheon, weighted with wood or lead. It is used as a missile, and is, therefore, rather a knobkerry than a truncheon. New Year's Day is the great date for these squirrel-slaying enterprises. They hunt the poor little beasts from tree to tree Wherever one shows round a trunk or branch, whang goes a "squoyle" at him. The foresters become great adepts at the throwing, and numbers of "squogs" are brought to bag. They are eaten in pies, or are baked, as the gypsies bake the hedgehogs, in moulds of clay, and their flesh is excellent eating. This "squogging" develops a wonderful power and accuracy of throwing in the forester, and when you impress him into service as substitute on the cricket field you will be surprised to find this creature who runs after the manner of the plantigrade, and uses his bat as if it were his fern-sickle, returning the ball from long-off like Briggs from coverpoint.

It seems to be indispensable from dwelling in countries of peculiar natural charm, whether of lake, of mountain, or of forest, that the native of such regions, when his life business takes him to other lands, should become afflicted with most invincible nostalgia. It is so with these New Foresters. Many of them have gone away and got good berths in distant countries, but the imperious need to be back in their native land of sylvan glade and greenwood tree has, sooner or later, proved too strong for them, and they have returned to end their days, as they began them, in loafing through the woodland and across the marshes in company with the spirit of Pan and his attendant fairies and dryads.

THE LAW OF THE FOREST

WITH regard to the vexed question of the "afforesting," having shown fairly clearly what it is not—namely, that it is not a matter of blazing and demolished villages and fair corn-lands laid waste—it remains to ask, on the affirmative side, what it is; for the "afforesting," if it does not mean exactly what it is said to have meant, has a certain definite meaning, nevertheless. The Forest is not as other lands; it is under special laws and regulations, some of them dating back to very early days. For the exceedingly high-handed way in which the demesnes of private individuals were "afforested" to the use of the Crown in those early days, a certain ingenious and loyal scribe has offered a gentle apology. The King, according to Manwood's "Laws of the Forest," was so oppressed and over-weighted by the business of governing the realm, and administering justice among his subjects of those troublous times, that the afforesting of lands for his peculiar enjoyment was only to be approved of as some sort of compensation for his arduous duties.

Before the days of King Canute every wild bird or beast in the kingdom was a royal perquisite. There were no rules about the matter: the one rule was the royal and simple one—they all belonged to the King. If the King's rights were in any way interfered with, he, and he alone, dealt with the offender, meting out to him such punishment as he deemed fit. Canute, apparently, was dissatisfied with the arrangement. In truth, it was one-sided; but, since it was "his-sided," it is singular in the annals of unconstitutional kings that its injustice should have troubled him. This Canute, however, was a sagacious monarch. Though a King of Britain, he could even distrust his ruling of the waves. With the prudence, which made him prefer a seat above high-water mark, he passed a law permitting proprietors to hunt and kill the wild things on their own demesnes. The prudence of this is obvious: it made them so much less likely to hunt and kill his beasts. Good King Canute, therefore, established to each landowner this private property in the beasts of his fields and forests—always, however, subject to the right, still existing in the Crown, of "afforesting" to the royal use such lands as it pleased.

It was in the exercise of this right that William the Conqueror "afforested" the Forest which is called New. It was a district conveniently adjacent to Winchester, and to the much-frequented seaports of Christchurch and Southampton. The "afforesting," no doubt, was a bother to the proprietors—they could no longer enclose the land nor hunt in it at their pleasure. By way of compensation he gave them certain rights and privileges, which shall be detailed shortly.

The Norman kings were true sons of Nimrod. In the reigns that succeeded the death of the first Norman more and more land became afforested for Crown use. By the time of King John the afforested area had so increased that it had become a subject of dissatisfaction to the whole nation, and under Henry III. it would seem as if nearly the whole of England had become, in the technical sense, forest. After this matters began to right themselves. In Edward I.'s reign many districts and demesnes, not being Crown property, were dis-afforested by the King's order, and restored without restriction to their owners. The New Forest, however, remained, and remains to this day, its area slightly diminished, but still an afforested district, though others beside the Sovereign are allowed to hunt within its boundaries.

The beasts of the chase, as generally recognised, were five in number—the buck, the doe, the fox, the roe, and the martron or marten cat. Of birds, and what were called beasts of warren—the hare, the rabbit, the pheasant, and the partridge—were the peculiar property of the Crown. It is not necessary to detail all the divers pains and penalties attaching to the unlawful killing, wounding, or even hunting of any of these; but it is to be observed that all of them, with the single exception of the marten, exist and are hunted in the New Forest at the present day.

The restrictions in regard to tree-cutting in afforested lands probably had their origin in the consideration of the trees as covert for the creatures of the chase. No man was allowed to fell trees on his own ground if it lay within the Forest boundaries, without a special license from the King or his officer. That particular law is no longer in operation, but the regulation and management of the timber is, and generally has been, a subject of very careful attention. There were no nurseries for young trees, but the temporary fencing in of certain portions to protect the growth of saplings was in practice from a very early date. In Queen Elizabeth's time the Forest flourished exceedingly, and supplied all the timber for the Navy—at that date of great naval activity. The Stuarts managed the Forest with the same degree of capacity that they applied to most departments of government.

In 1608 there were (according to Wise, who quotes from the Journal of the House of Commons) 123,927 sound trees, fit for use, growing in the Forest. The exactness of the enumeration may invite a smile, but there is no reason to doubt its general accuracy. In addition to these, there were many trees fit for fuel only. Compare these figures with the tale of the trees in Queen Anne's day; 12,476 is now the number given of serviceable trees. We are not surprised to learn that Charles I. did not pay the keepers their wages, nor that the latter, under these circumstances, made shift to get them for themselves by selling the timber. Charles II. made an effort in the right direction, by making a nursery for the growth of young trees, but in other ways mis-managed the Forest in right royal Stuart style, and even bestowed on certain of his favourites the revenues from portions of it. A grant of some land in the Forest was made to the Bentinck family as late as the reign of William and Mary, but this was subsequently annulled by Parliament; and in the reign of Anne an Act was passed forbidding any such grants in future, and restricting the length of leases to the duration of three lives or thirty-one years. But though William and Mary made the grant, as aforesaid, to the Bentincks, they made some effort to put the regulations regarding the timber on a better footing, but with little effect, for the regulations were absolutely set at nought, and the Forest was robbed in as barefaced and wholesale a manner as ever. To show by what small acts incalculable damage may be done, Gilpin tells us that two under-keepers, father and son, made a constant practice during the last century of cutting down young sapling timber and selling it for fuel, and that the damage and loss thereby caused has been estimated at £50,000.

This disorganisation continued up to 1848, when a commission was appointed to inquire into its causes, with the result that matters were once again, and, we may hope, finally, put on a proper footing. The wholesale plundering of the woods was effectively checked, and the titles of those who claimed forest rights examined. In 1851—in consequence of great complaint by the commoners—Parliament passed the *Deer Removal* Act. The complaint of the commoners was twofold, first, that the pasturage area for their cattle had been much curtailed by the clearance and enclosing of large tracts of land; and, secondly, that the deer absorbed too much of the grazing ground and left only starvation rations for the cows and horses. The Crown endeavoured to effect a compromise. In return for the commoners agreeing to the enclosure of sixteen thousand acres, the Crown undertook to exterminate the deer. But the enclosing was not done to the general satisfaction, and called into being the New Forest Association, formed with the view of preserving the beauty of the New Forest district, and existing to this day as a thorn in the side of the Crown officials. In 1877 the New Forest Act provided that at no one time should more than sixteen thousand acres be enclosed. The commoners were also permitted, by the terms of this Act, to keep out their cattle the whole year round, whereas before they had been obliged to take them in in the winter, or "winter-heyning," as it was called. At the same time the old "fence" or "defence" month, of which Manwood speaks, was done away with. This "fence" month was originally instituted as a "close" time for the deer, and no one was permitted to turn out cattle in the Forest during the month. For the privilege of the extra pasturage thus afforded, the verderers, on behalf of the commoners, now pay annually to the Crown the not extortionate price of twenty shillings.

The executive officers and the titles of the officials are in many cases such as they were at their first institution. In one notable particular, though the old title remains, the official functions attached to it are diametrically altered. Manwood, in his "Treatise of the Forest Laws," written in the sixteenth century, tells us of the rangers, verderers and under-officers employed in the government of the Forest. There are now no rangers, nor is there any longer a Lord Warden. The latter office existed in 1791, when Mr. Gilpin, Vicar of Boldre, wrote his book of the Forest. In that year the Duke of Gloucester was Lord Warden, and the "woodward," and his attendant "regarders" still survived. The last to hold the office of Lord Warden was the late Duke of Cambridge. The office of "ranger," as well as that of "bow-bearer," seem to have become extinct some time in the course of the last century. The chief officer of the Forest Courts was named the Justice in Eyre. His office eventually became a sinecure, and is now abolished. The verderers' office survives, but has entirely changed its functions. There were verderers of the Forest in King Canute's day, and at the date of Mr. Gilpin's writing they were four in number. Originally appointed by the King to look after the royal prerogatives, they have now become the representatives of the commoners, to defend their interests from being encroached upon by the Crown. Previously to the Act of 1877, the verderers were elected by the freeholders of the whole county, but by the provisions of that Act, their election is vested in the commoners whose interests they represent. That a commoner should have an interest to represent is obviously a consideration which did not present itself to the conquering mind and mood of the first Norman.

To-day there are six verderers, elected by the commoners by open voting; and if another election survives in England into which the use of the ballot-box does not enter, such other election is not known to the present writers. Probably it may be regarded as an unique survival. The verderers must be landowners to the extent of seventy acres in or adjoining the Forest, with the further condition that common rights must attach to each acre of their holding. Every two years two of them retire, in rotation, but are eligible for re-election. The Verderers' Court is called the Court of Swainmote—a name which Manwood derives from an old Saxon word, "mote" equivalent to the Norman "court," and the familiar "swain" or freeholder. Under this name it has held its sittings from time immemorial. At present its members are the six verderers elected as aforesaid and one official verderer, who is appointed by the Crown. In this Court of Swain-mote all offences against the Forest Laws are tried, and details of executive business discussed and arranged. The verderers' office is now one of pure honour and glory. In ancient times their services were rewarded by the curious privilege of being allowed to course and catch what venison they could on their way to the sittings of the Swain-mote Court. Perhaps they succeeded in catching rather too much, or, perhaps, the hunting was apt to make them late for Swain-mote, and the privilege was taken from them. Instead, they were presented yearly with a buck and doe; but seeing that there are no longer —since the removal of the deer by Act of Parliament—buck or doe in the Forest in the eye of the law, it follows that this annual present also has been discontinued, and the verderer needs must go "like snail reluctantly to" Swain-mote, or like a City guinea-pig to whom an ungrateful company no longer allows his fees.

The verderers, as tribunes of the people, are constantly at war with the patrician authority. So far are they set asunder in opinion, that they cannot even call the petty officers of the Forest executive by the same name. Thus, there are, under the supervision of the Verderers' Court, four men whose duty it is to see that the laws with regard to horses, cows, and pigs turned out in the Forest are properly observed, and to receive the fees for pasturage. These men the verderers call "agisters"; but the Crown prefers to call them "marksmen." The latter name is doubtless derived from their further functions in marking the horses and cattle. It is common in the Forest to see horses with their tails cut in terraces or flounces, for this is their method of marking. It gives the ponies an uncouth appearance, of which they seem shyly self-conscious. In these days of short-docked tails it does not matter much, but when long tails, sweeping the ground, were the fashion it must have made social success very difficult for a New Forest pony. What is more important to their owners, it must have docked a certain amount off their selling value.

The functions, if he ever had any, of the obsolete Lord Warden are now fulfilled by one of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests; and, under him, the Deputy-Surveyor, who lives at Lyndhurst, looks after the interests of the Crown. He it is who regulates the planting, cutting and selling of timber; the distribution of fuel and turf to those that have Forest rights; and, generally, all matters of detail connected with the management of the Forest. Under him are ranged a number of lesser officials—such as keepers for the preservation of the game, woodmen and ordinary labourers.

In the year 1854 a great inquiry was made into the titles under which the commoners claimed their several and collective rights. Six years before, a registration had been made of the names of those who claimed Forest rights, but in 1854, for the first time, a really searching inquiry was made into the validity of the claims. The committee which sat for the purpose repudiated many of the claims, but set out such as appeared genuine in a register, which should give them an abiding validity. The fact that the commoners had from old times exercised certain rights—whereas the only right that appears in Domesday Book is that of pasturing pigs—seems to show, either that they must have been granted by way of compensation for the inconvenience inflicted by the afforesting of the district, or else that they already existed and were, therefore, not thought worthy of notice.

The most important privilege ot the commoner now is the right of turning out horses and cattle, but it is a right that is not strictly confined to the commoners. Others are allowed to turn out their cows or ponies on payment of a small fee per head to the verderers. There is more pasturage in the Forest than the beasts of the commoners can consume; but the verderers have not parted with the power to forbid the turning-out of cattle by those who are not commoners, and there is no doubt that the power would be used at once should the pasturage at any time become insufficient for the commoners' wants. No sheep are commonable in any royal forest, except in a few cases in which a special right has been granted.

Pigs may be turned out only by those who have the right, and by them only in the legal "ovesting" or "pawnage" months—that is to say, from September 25th to November 22nd, when the acorn and beech-mast have fallen to the ground of their over-ripeness. It is said that these nuts are most excellent food for deer; but it is more than likely that this fact was not appreciated by the Norman kings, or they would scarcely have allowed the commoners' pigs to range the Forest eating up the provender of the royal beasts. Gilpin is very interesting on the management of the hogs in the last century—there has always been a certain interest and honour about the calling of the swineherd. The herd used to collect the pigs from the farmers who had the pawnage rights, and drive them to a rough shed, built conveniently near water and a plentiful supply of fallen acorns and beechmast. Here he would collect a meal for them, then allow them to wander off a short way into the woods, gathering them together again for their evening meal, in the course of which he sounded his horn continually. Each day he would allow them to stray a little further, the regiment returning at bugle-call to come to mess, until finally he could leave them entirely to themselves for the rest of the months of pawnage, trusting to their return at mess-time, or to the sound of the bugle, which they learnt to associate with the meal.

For each pig turned out, a small fee has to be paid annually, both to the Crown and the verderers.

The rights of turbary and fuel are very much prized by the poorer classes. The

View in the Forest.

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turf is cut under the supervision of one or other of the woodmen, and for this purpose the Forest is divided up into various "walks," each under its own woodman. The current rule for the cutting is "cut one and two left," an injunction the meaning of which is easily seen. The result, a chess-board marking over the ground, is most apparent after rain when little pools of water stand at exactly even distances from each other, and give a curious monotony of spotty aspect to the heath on which the cutting has been done.

There is also a right to the digging of marl or clay, from certain ascertained pits, which attaches to some of the cottages. The marl is used for dressing. Besides the definite rights to fuel, the Forest people are allowed to pick up fallen and dry sticks for fuel, and to break down such dead branches as they can get hold of "by hook or by crook."

All these rights belong not to the individual, but to the house, be it cottage or manor house. Should the house or cottage be sold, they pass with the tenement. And not only do they belong to the house, but to a special portion of the house, namely, the hearthstone or fireplace, so that if the proprietor pulls down his old house and rebuilds or moves his situation, he is careful to preserve the old fireplace, though the rest of the building be taken to pieces stone by stone. It is for this reason that we sometimes see in the Forest a fireplace curiously situated in a cabbage bed or an orchard with no apparent function or reason for existence. It stands there in witness of its owner's forest rights to fuel.

To some of the manor houses an extraordinary number of rights attach. Brockenhurst Park, about three miles from Lyndhurst, is one of the richest. Its rights include pasturage for all commonable animals, *levant* or *couchant*, according to the ancient terms—always excepting sheep—the right of marl digging at all times from the pits, common right of turbary, and of digging and cutting heath and furze yearly, the right to fifteen loads of good fuel for the house itself, as well as innumerable rights attaching to the farms and cottages on the estate. Surely, in the olden days my lord of Brockenhurst was a man of a strong right arm, or else one unusually well versed in the arts which commend a subject to his sovereign.

KNOTTY POINTS

WE have already indicated that the interests of the Crown and of the commoners in the Forest now and again conflict. Indefiniteness seems to be a quality altogether inseparable from common rights. It is almost inevitable, from the nature of the case, that such rights should be indefinite, for in general they have not been put into writing. Their sanction is only the sanction of custom or tradition, and their origin is lost in the mists of antiquity.

As a rule debatable points of law have very little interest for those who are not affected by the issues of their decision. The debatable points, however, which have now and again been raised—with perfect dignity and temper—between the Crown representative on the one hand, and the "verderers," as representing the commoners, on the other, have a certain fascination which they owe to the picturesque qualities of the woods and glades which are the subject of debate, and to the ancient conditions and customs in which either side has sought the basis of its arguments. We may well conceive that in the days of the early Norman, of the later, but not lighter-handed, Tudor, and the Stuart, to whose divine right all meaner interests were subservient, the question of these common rights was not a very prominent one. If men had rights in those days, and the right was not backed by might, it were the better part of valour to go on exercising that right with discretion, and without making too much noise about it—to grin and bear it, and keep what remained of the right in silence, when the greater portion was taken away by the high hand of some royal or noble usurper. "After me is manners for you" was the maxim of these earlier sovereigns for their subjects; but in our latter days, when men are so far equal that the rights of the subject have equal validity with those of the Crown, the problem suggests itself of analysing the respective rights, and finding on what basis they rest.

We have observed that in the case of all common rights these grounds are hard to re-discover, owing to the dust of ages overlaying them. To this general difficulty there is added a special one with regard to the commoner's rights in the New Forest, arising from the twofold foundation on which they rest or may rest. They may have their origin in customs existing previous to the afforesting of the district; they may have been given in compensation for the inconvenience of the afforesting, or they may have existed by right of previous custom and been approved and affirmed at the time of the afforesting. It is sufficient merely to name the alternatives, to show what a noble field they offer for the growth of debatable points. It is surely greatly to the credit of those to whom it falls to debate the points that such debates have always been conducted so temperately and moderately that even many of the dwellers in the Forest itself know scarcely anything of the issues. Even the alternatives stated above do not exhaust the possible complications, for such rights as existed—or were created—at the date of the afforesting have since that time been encroached on in some cases, in others the holders of the rights have extended them, unrebuked, until custom has given the encroachments and extensions as valid a title as attaches to most of the original privileges. Technically, by the Deer Removal Act, the Forest passed from the jurisdiction of the *charta de forestâ*; but in practice, when points of difficulty crop up, the Crown and verderers have to dive into the remotest past for their authorities, so that it is little wonder that a learned judge should lately have described the points of law that arose in dealing with the New Forest as "delicious."

When the deer were removed, at the commoners' instance, the latter ceded to the

Crown, by way of compensation, the right of enclosing ten thousand acres in addition to the six thousand which the Crown was previously entitled to enclose. It was most natural that under the circumstances the Crown should have elected to enclose what seemed to be the best of the pasturage ground, and equally natural that the commoners should have deemed themselves rather hardly dealt by when they found this good food for their cattle taken away from them. There was at this time a curious and significant coincidence between this dissatisfaction of the commoners and some very large forest fires which were generally found to have had their origin near one of the detested enclosures. There grows in the Forest a peculiar fungus which possesses, when dry, all the properties of a slow-match. Such a natural product appears in the nature of a special providence to the incendiary, who can light his fungus and be safely away from the scene of the consequent conflagration by the time it breaks out.

To meet the general complaint an Act of Parliament was passed in 1877, by which the Crown was prohibited from enclosing any part of the Forest which had not been enclosed before, limiting the total extent of the enclosures to sixteen thousand acres, and providing that no single enclosure should have a smaller area than three hundred acres. To determine precisely what portion of the Forest had or had not, at any previous date, been enclosed, might of itself appear to suggest points for debate; but the provisions of the Act are carried out in a spirit of mutual consideration which minimises its debatable issues.

Now, presuming the rights of the commoners, broadly speaking, were granted to them by way of compensation, when the district was put under the Forest laws, it follows, as a natural consequence of that presumption, that with the removal of the deer and the passing of the Forest from the jurisdiction of the *charta de forestâ*, the common rights ought, in strict equity, to have lapsed also. The Crown, therefore, acting on this presumption, objected to the proposition of the commoners that they should be allowed to turn out their cattle all the year round as soon as the deer were removed. "There are now no longer any deer," said the commoners. "Wherefor, then, keep up your 'fence,' or defence, month and your winter 'heyning'?" The reply of the Crown was that it was only by way of compensation for the inconveniences of the afforesting that the commoners were given the right of grazing at all. This view, however, was disputed by the verderers, on the commoners' behalf. They contended that the rights were *bonâ fide* "common" rights, and existed prior to the date of the afforesting. In support of their contention they quoted Manwood :—"The observing and keeping of the fence moneth in forests seemeth to have been in use so long that there is no certain beginning to be shewed of it, and therefore the antiquity of the same must needs be the greater; for" (and this is a very shrewd observation) "that thing is always very ancient whose beginning cannot be shewed. And there are now no laws to be shewed that were before the time of Canutus, and there can be no beginning of the fence moneth shewed since the making of Canutus' laws, therefore it is to be thought that the same was in use when that Canutus made the canons of the Forest laws."

Thus Manwood: and on his testimony the verderers argued that if no cattle had at that time been turned out to pasture, the "fence moneth" would have been a vain superfluity, and that it follows therefrom, that the right to turn out cattle was at least as ancient as the institution of the fence month. They claim, then, that its institution and the institution of the winter heyning were simply in the nature of curtailments of grazing rights previously existent, and, in fine, that the provisions with regard to the grazing were worded in the *charta* rather as if they were in the nature of restrictions than of grants, seeing that their tenour is rather to *forbid* the turning out of cattle during the specified months, than to *permit* their being turned out at all times with the exception of those months. In spite of his own statement, quoted above, it seems to be Manwood's opinion that the rights of the commoners were given them by way of compensation; but five hundred years elapsed between the actual afforestation and Manwood's writing, and seeing that he lived in an age whose strong point was not its historical criticism, we are perhaps justified in preferring an inference from his facts to his unsupported opinion. With reference, indeed, to the privilege of turning out hogs in the pannage month, this can scarcely be regarded as a very generous form of compensation seeing that the word pannage or pawnage itself is expressly said to mean "the money or profit that was due to be paid to the king." It is, at least, a form of "compensation" which the king might have bestowed without much grieving of heart; but "one for the commoner and half-a-dozen for the king," was a good working maxim in those days.

Some of the forms of title or tenure are singular enough in themselves to raise a host of questions. Up till the end of the last century "keyhold tenure" was a common form of holding, whereby if a man could build a hut in a single night, so that the fire could be alight in the hearth the next morning, the hut and an adjoining plot became his in perpetuity. In one or two places whole villages sprang up in this mushroom-like fashion. It scarcely needs to say that "keyhold tenure" is no longer recognised.

The Manor of Bury used to be held on the condition that the owner should supply to the king, whenever he hunted in the Forest, two milk-white greyhounds in silver couples. George III., on the occasion of his visit to Lyndhurst, was actually presented with this probably unique gift.

In such fruitful fields of discussion it seems unlikely that the law of the New

Forest will ever fail in a flourishing crop of those questions which the learned judge styled "delicious."

There exists a body, somewhat akin to the Commons' Preservation Association, which, under the name of the New Forest Association, occupies itself with the æsthetic interests of the Forest. It found every justification for its existence when, shortly after the passing of the Deer Removal Act, the Forest authorities entered upon a wholesale laying of the axe to the roots of some of the noblest and most beautiful of the trees. King's Garn was stripped of its magnificent beeches, and Sloden of its ancient and hoary yew trees, while in their place were planted—in stiff rows which suggest a market garden—oaks, larch, and fir trees. It is partly owing to the efforts of the Association that the Act of 1877 prohibits the felling of the ornamental woods, or of any trees whose removal is not required to give space and light for the growth of their neighbours, or to supply the commoners with their due share of fuel. The present Deputy-Surveyor, the Crown's representative, has the preservation of the natural beauties of the Forest greatly at heart—he is, therefore, altogether at one with the Association in regard to the objects which the management of the Forest should pursue, yet, singularly, enough, is somewhat at variance with them in regard to the best means for attaining it. Broadly speaking, the point at issue between them is whether the sylvan beauties are, on the whole, better served by fencing sapling trees or by letting Nature take her course and rear her floral children entirely by her own unaided processes. The Crown is in favour of enclosing—the Association of letting the trees alone to struggle for their existence.

The view that attracts, at first glance, is the latter. Man, however hard he labour, cannot rival the careless harmony of Nature—his most spontaneous and artistic efforts will always look studied. It is argued, on the side of the Association, that, as a matter of fact, more young trees are now growing in the Forest than are necessary to repair the ravages of wind and weather and natural decay. If, in certain places such as Bratley Wood, the beeches grow so closely that the drip and darkness from their foliage prevent the growth of any grassy carpet beneath them, yet, when one of the giants falls and leaves a gap in the umbrageous roof for the entrance of kindly sunlight, the tangle springs up forthwith and at once forms a protection for the seedling trees. Moreover, the meandering paths traced by the cattle, as they move from place to place in search of new pasture or of water, form of themselves a feature of beauty and of interest which is seldom seen elsewhere, and which would be much modified, in the view of the Association, if the winding ways of the cattle were to follow the boundary of an enclosure fenced in by man.

Now it appears that in ancient days the name of the Forest was "Ytene," meaning "a furzy waste." Obviously enough the name was intended to express the general character of the region to which it applied, and it is the opinion of the Deputy-Surveyor that without some planting and enclosing, the Forest will be in danger of losing all its glories of oak and beech, and of returning to the undesirable condition indicated by its ancient title. Not long ago Mr. Lascelles wrote a most interesting paper on this subject from which we may quote the following extract as embodying his leading views:—

"It is clear that the cultivation of the trees and woods of the Forest was undertaken some time prior to the reign of Edward IV., say, four hundred and fifty years ago. Now I suppose I shall not be very wrong if I put the life of a beech at three hundred years; and though oaks no doubt live for longer, yet in the poor soil of the New Forest their lives do not attain to the average, except in a few favoured spots. It is our beeches that are the glory of the oldest woods, and it is very unlikely that any of those we now see are of older date than the records of the Exchequer in the time of Elizabeth, which I have quoted, at which period the Forest was as much under a system of enclosing for planting as ever it has been since. In fact there is not a single one of the beautiful old woods of the Forest that was not just as much a 'Crown Enclosure' as the most recent of the plantations made under the most recent Act."

These observations are taken from a paper which Mr. Lascelles prepared for the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society, who sent down a deputation to inspect the Forest. He brings forward some documentary evidence in support of his view that a deal of the present Forest—which we are rather loosely inclined to speak of as "primeval"—had been planted by the hand of man, or at least encoppiced to protect the young growth from the cattle. This is a fact, however, that is not denied by the Association. Their contention is, rather, that there is no evidence to show that *certain parts* of the Forest, which are now thriving bravely, have ever been enclosed. Encoppicing need not, of course, imply the destruction of existing timber, nor the planting of stiffly designed rows of so-called ornamental trees in its place. In the reign of Elizabeth a certain John Marlowe was fined for allowing his cattle to stray in Ridley Wood. Ridley Wood is now one of the most beautifully timbered portions of the Forest, and it is not impossible that the restraint placed on John Marlowe and his fellows with regard to the ranging of their cattle may have had something to do with its present flourishing condition. It is evident, at any rate, that the wood at that date was practically enclosed—by a fine, if not by a fence. Mr. Lascelles expresses an opinion in favour of pollarding. This is an operation which was forbidden by law in the reign of William III., who seems to have taken great interest in the arboriculture of the New Forest. But it is Mr. Lascelles' contention that the pollarding would tend to the eventual beauty of the woods, and calls to witness the instances of the Knightwood Oak and the beeches in Mark Ash. The oak and the beeches referred to are pollarded trees, and renowned, far and wide, for their magnificent beauty. That pollarding prolongs the life of a tree there is not the slightest question. In the neighbourhood of Hayes, in Kent, there are still standing—in very solid and verdant strength—sundry oaks which are referred to as "the old (!) oaks at Hayes," in so ancient a document as Domesday Book. Every one of these oaks is pollarded, and there is no doubt that, but for that wholesome check, they would long ago have fallen to the winds and weather, or exhausted themselves in keeping green their wealth of foliage—have died, in fact, of too fast living. Mr. Lascelles' paper gives a very detailed account of the care bestowed in planting the Forest under William III. Regarders attended to watch with their own eyes the planting of the acorns, which were set in a triangular bed—one at each corner. The ground was then sown irregularly with holly berries and hawes, that their growth might give protection to the seedling oaks. The ground was carefully drained and traps set to catch the vermin likely to injure the young trees or the seeds.

From all this care bestowed in times past Mr. Lascelles infers the necessity that no less care and culture should be given to-day in the interests of future generations. Since the Forest, he argues, is none too well—although sufficiently—supplied with timber now, it follows that, but for the care in planting and fencing in past ages, we should have found its woods in poor case, and the whole region in process of reverting to its original state of "Ytene"—"the furzy waste."

Yet another party who have the æsthetic beauty of the Forest at heart occupy themselves with protesting against the spread of the Scottish firs which are becoming very numerous. These firs are, relatively speaking, a new feature, for the first of them is said to have been imported and planted little more than a hundred years ago. The invaders are a hardy race. On the sides of hills, on the open plains, everywhere in fact where the wind-blown seed can

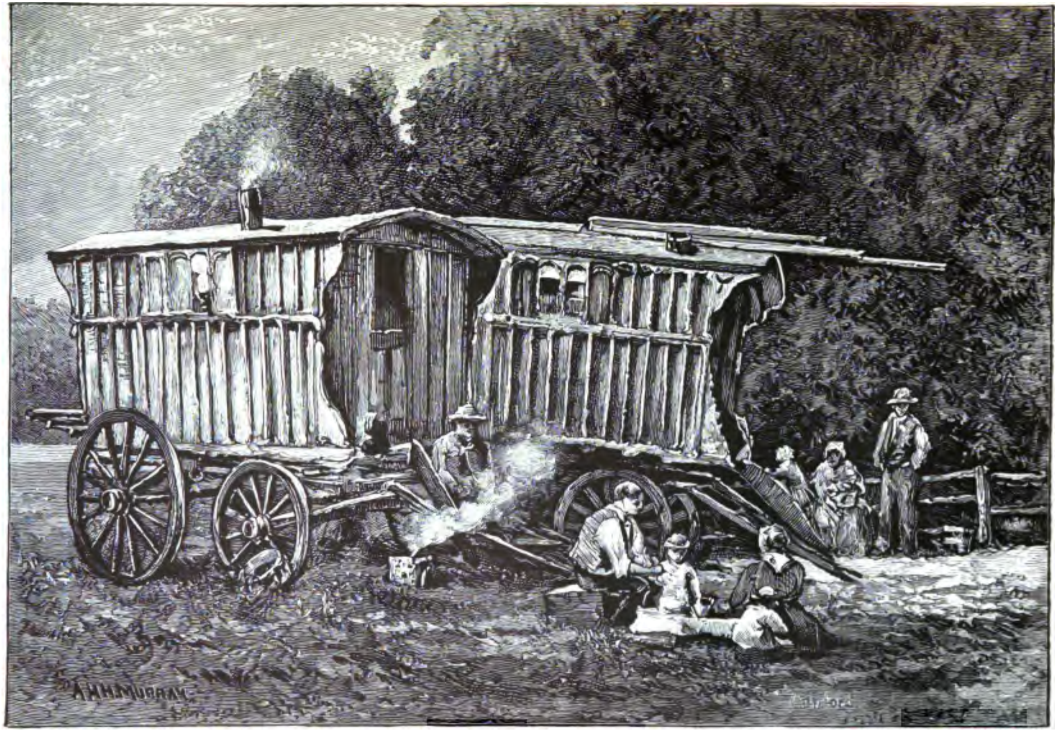
GYPSIES

SURELY there is no man so practical or so worldly as not to have a soft place in his heart for the gypsy. The "immortal child," that survives somewhere in the nature of every one of us, puts out a hand instinctively to the picturesque nomad with his caravan, his Eastern aspect, and indifferent raiment. The New Forest and its immediate neighbourhood offer obvious attractions to the wandering tribes who love the sylvan glades and sheltering woods. The gypsy, though the march of civilisation has robbed him of much of his peculiar charm, has still an alluring personality. A pleasant mystery surrounds him and his unrestricted comings and goings. He preserves some of his old-time customs, and will grin with appreciation if the Saxon address him in a few words, however halting, of the old Romany tongue.

The gypsies of the New Forest are a fairly numerous body, living in vans or tents and paying no taxes—in summer, pitching their camp in the shade of trees, in winter under the sheltering screen of furze and scrub. Fifty years ago the romance with which our fancy surrounds them was something of a reality. Among them there were excellent musicians, some of whom played the violin really well, while the rest would dance to its strains on the greensward according to all the best traditions. Now the violin is scarcely to be heard. Recently a melodeon was among the cherished household gods of a roving family, but in course of years it had grown feeble and asthmatic, and in solemn conclave it was determined that its hour of death had come. Its funeral, with the rites of cremation, was celebrated with some ceremony.

The vans in which the modern gypsy is wont to travel are often picturesque enough, making bright spots of colour as they journey amongst the Forest trees. A glance into the interior, as they pass, will show neat muslin curtains and even a picture or two by way of ornament. The women of the tribe, more especially, occasionally show an Oriental taste for vivid colouring in the way of red and yellow handkerchiefs, but the majority of the people and their children are clad in the unlovely and ragged garments of the common tramp.

Altogether there are about seventy families of gypsies in the Forest. At present the principal names among them are the Ayres, Coopers, Does, Greens, Sherreds, Lakeys, Williams, Peters, Stanleys, Wells, Whites, James, Burtons and Hughes. The Stanleys were the "royal" family in olden times, and later the kingship passed to the Lees, a very old gypsy family. The Lees are now all but extinct, having for their sole representative an old woman whose present name is Pidgely. With her the old kingly line will come to an end. She keeps the name Lee on her van, but so far as one can discover lays no claim to the title of "queen."



A GYPSY ENCAMPMENT.

[*To face p.* 82.

At least it is never accorded her; and, indeed, the monarchical idea seems to have died out amongst them, for there is no acknowledged king or queen of the gypsies to-day.

The rule, once so strictly enforced, that no gypsy should marry one who was not of the Romany race, has lost much of its rigour. It appears to have been in full force, however, only so lately as the date at which Wise published his book on the Forest—that is to say, about thirty years ago. He tells us of a gypsy lass who married an English blacksmith, and was consequently "cut" by all her blood relations. It is to be noticed, though, that this girl was of the Lee family—the royal family at that date—and it may be, though Wise lays no emphasis on the fact, that the exclusive marriage law was observed with greater strictness in the royal family than in others less eminent. Now, however, no formal objection seems to be made to the gypsy marrying whomsoever he or she may please. Nevertheless, the hand of custom is heavy upon them; they continue of preference to intermarry among themselves, and the inevitable result is seen in the prevalence of cretinism and physical deformity and weakness. Unless some more summary fate overtake this non-taxpaying people, their own social customs may bring about their ultimate extinction.

The number of gypsies in the Forest varies with the seasons and with circumstances. Such an attraction as a fair will draw in many from without the Forest's border, and a fair in prospect will detain many who would otherwise be wandering elsewhere. Their means of livelihood are most precarious, and in winter and times of evil weather their lot must be a very hard one. They earn small sums by the manufacture of clothes' pegs and meat skewers. For the latter there is quite a large demand by butchers about Christmas time. They ply a small trade in rags and rabbit-skins, and show much ingenuity in the plaiting of grass mats. In summer they gather nosegays of wild flowers and sell them in the neighbouring towns. In winter, when flowers are lacking, they take the white pith out of rushes, and with a little moss contrive an ingenious and tolerable imitation of moss-roses. There is something peculiarly fitting and engaging in the use that these children of Nature make of the simple things that Nature strews in their way; but the livelihood that they derive therefrom, if honest, must, of necessity, be meagre. Some ply the less picturesque, but perhaps more reliable, trade of the tinsmith. In the spring before the bees begin to swarm, they busy themselves with making beehives, which find a ready sale. In the summer many of them move farther up the county, or even so far as the neighbourhood of London, seeking jobs in haymaking, fruit picking, harvesting and hopping. A certain number of them go away for the hopping month only, remaining in the Forest all the rest of the year. They travel, like the planets, in something approaching a circuitous route. In winter numbers of them congregate, with their vans, in a field near Fordingbridge, which has been purchased by the tribe as a secure haven during the cold weather. Others dwell in little round-topped tents which look hardly tall enough for a man to stand upright in them. To stand upright, however, is no great need of the gypsy. The recumbent position, as a rule, is good enough for him. Their tents they move from place to place—on donkey back for preference, by hand-cart failing the donkey, and on their own backs as a last resource. The life of the gypsy is a perpetual repetition of "move on!" By law they are not allowed to camp for more than twenty-four hours in any one spot—nor within a certain radius of it—in one county. It does not trouble the child of Nature to evade this law of a senile civilisation. On the Salisbury side of the Forest runs a road bordered by a generous strip of greensward, furze and general brushwood on either side. It is the boundary road of two counties—Hampshire and Wiltshire. The one broad strip is in one county, the other strip in the other. It is a bore, no doubt, but scarcely a grievous fatigue, for the Egyptian to harness in his horse or donkey to his caravan and conduct his household gods across the road, from one county to the other, and so evade the simple law. There their encampments stand on one side or other of the road so long as it pleases them—a picturesque and eloquent endorsement of Mr. Bumble's opinion of the law.

They still use the Romany tongue which their nomad forefathers are said to have brought with them from Hindustan, but its use is not general as in past days. One old gypsy in the Forest, with whom the roving life has agreed well, is a veteran of ninety years, and a veritable store-house of Romany folk-lore. With him many of the old traditions will die out, for to the younger people these things seem in a measure foolishness. The purest in descent of all is the family of White, whose members bear very strongly on their dark features the signs of their Romany blood. So dark are they, that some of them are nearly black. One of the women of the family might sit as a model of the ideal gypsy—or "gipple," as the foresters call them—with the gorgeous handkerchief that she always wears on her head or over her shapely shoulders. A gypsy woman of the Green family was wearing so beautiful a necklace of coral that a lady, meeting her, inquired its history. The answer was, that it was a family heirloom. The same woman, in speaking of a certain very fine donkey, observed that it was "like a Spanish donkey, such as you see in South America," adding that the gypsies often went to South America and back again.

Fortune-telling, probably because it has ceased to be lucrative among a sceptical generation, is said to have quite died out; yet it is only ten years ago that one of the present writers crossed the hand of a fine-looking gypsy woman with a silver florin, which forthwith elicited the orthodox crooning of unintelligible rhymes. Following this sing-song came some more definite divination, conceived, however, after the skilful fashion of the ancient oracles, that were careful to leave open a door for the explanation of any prophecy which failed to "materialise." The fortune-teller concluded with an offer to "cut the planets," of whom she must have learned all her knowledge from the traditions of her astrological ancestors.

Occasionally a gypsy will follow a trade which takes him into the "busy throng," and far away from the trees and glades of the Forest; but in the end he will invariably return to spend his second childhood as he had spent his first. One old man, of the name of Patchly, served in the army all through the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny, eventually returning to the old life, to wander in a van with the rest. There are others who have been in the army and seen service, and yet more who have enlisted in the militia, but one and all come home again to the Forest in their old age to end their days under the greenwood tree. Had not the penalty for desertion starkly confronted them it is likely that they would have given up their profession long before—life in barracks must have been very irksome to them. Accustomed to the free air of heaven, they cannot tolerate a roof over their heads. Doubtless there is an imaginative element in this sense of discomfort, but there does seem to be, besides, some quality in the atmosphere of enclosed places that makes it intolerable for the lungs whose heritage for generations has been the open air. An old gypsy, who had been compelled to pass a short time in the workhouse, observed when he came out that it was lucky for him he was not obliged to stay there longer, for two days more of it would have killed him. Possibly he was mistaken, but there could be no possible mistake about the conviction with which he made the statement. An anecdote that strikes us house-dwelling folk as curious is related of a gypsy boy who recently came into a house, with some other children, to learn some badly-needed lessons. When the lesson was over he was told that he might go. The bare permission was not of the slightest use to him—he had never been in a room before, and had no idea how to open the door.

With all this intense affection and craving for the out-of-door life, there can be no doubt that the gypsies must suffer dreadfully in the hard weather. When it is wet you will not find that they pitch their tents, as might be supposed, under the trees. The tent is rarely new—with the wealth amassed at hopping time they can sometimes afford to renew them—and the great drops falling from the trees would soon go through the poor roof. Quite little children have been seen in winter with icicles in their hair, and often they have but an old skirt to cover them in the coldest nights. It is common to see the children running about in the snow without shoes or stockings. Their food is of the scantiest. In our childhood's days we used to picture them feeding principally off hedgehog roasted in a ball of clay—a culinary process which seemed peculiarly fascinating because it was not beyond our hopes that we might imitate it. But the hedgehog population is not numerous; squirrels, too, are agile and elusive. A favourite gypsy dish is snails toasted on the hot ashes with some salt sprinkled over them. No doubt they are very good. Serious cooking, however, is seldom attempted except on Sundays, when they are fond of making a composite pudding into which vegetables enter as a staple ingredient with flesh trimmings bought cheaply from the butcher when times are good. In summer the gypsy's existence may be tolerable and even pleasant; but one cannot but think that in this climate, at least, the poet who sang "the gypsy's life was a joyous one" was taking full advantage of the poetic license. It is more than probable that he had not given the life he praised a trial.

Those who are acquainted with the gypsy camps speak well, on the whole, of the code of morals that prevails in them. For honesty and sobriety they will bear comparison with most village communities. Doubtless this standard is not an exalted one. In earlier days, and especially before the Deer Removal Act, they used to be inveterate poachers, but now, under the new administration, seem to think the game is hardly worth the candle. It may be that especial vigilance is exercised by the keepers in the neighbourhood of the gypsy encampments; but it is clear that they cannot be in any grave sense a nuisance to the more settled communities, or the latter would not patronise them in their trades of chimney-sweeping, scissor-grinding, and umbrella-mending, which some of the more energetic profess. Of all their sins it appears that the most grievous is their enviable immunity from taxes. It is well, should any of these itinerant gentry come to your doors and solicit custom, to strike a definite bargain before the job is done. They are not above asking a price that is altogether extortionate, and mingling their grumblings with vague menaces when the just fee is given. Possibly the threats are not meant for execution; but we have heard of a resident in the Forest whose gardener startled him somewhat, as he was driving home from dinner at a neighbour's house, by appearing, gun in hand from behind a bush, and handing him the gun as a protection from the dissatisfied gypsies who had grumbled at a fair wage for scissor grinding given in the morning. The gypsies had returned, after the heads of the house had gone out, announcing that they had been sent by the master to get the balance of the wage previously claimed. When the money was refused the gypsies became abusive and were eventually routed only by the house dog. All this had occurred while master and mistress were dining out, and the sudden apparition of the armed man from behind the bush on the lonely road—though it was only the gardener—the further drive home in the mysterious gloom of the Forest with the expectation of attack, and constant injunctions of the husband, who drove, to the wife, who held the gun, not to show the barrel for fear the gypsies should see the moonlight gleam on it "and not attack them," made up as "jumpy" a finish to a festive party as one would be likely to want. It is possible that the lady might, inadvertently, have let a gleam fall on the barrel, for the gypsies—to the sad disappointment of the husband—made no sign.

This, however, was some few years ago, when it was by no means very uncommon for persons driving on lonely roads in the Forest to be stopped and money demanded. But the adventurous spirit which prompted these challenges seems to have quite died away, though the Forest roads are as lonely as ever. After all, this petty robbery was not peculiar to the gypsies, and to this day one sees on the high road between Weymouth and Southampton gentry of the kind that a lady walking alone is glad enough to be safely past.

No doubt the gypsies have a knowledge of their own of those secrets which "the great god Pan" reserves for his own children, but of general matters their ignorance is crass—not one in three could tell you the meaning of Easter-tide or has a notion of its significance to Christian people. There is a curious superstition among them, however, against soaping the face on Good Friday—after all, it appears that Punch's little boy and girl, who proposed to observe Lent by "giving up soap," were not original geniuses. The gypsies, one might suppose, do not keep this distinction exclusively for Good Friday; but it seems that there is a legend among them that Christ went on a journey on that day, and, asking at a cottage for a drink of water, received in response some soapsuds thrown in His face by the mistress. They have the further curious custom, that when a man dies, his widow either buries his clothes or burns them. To sell them, no matter in what stress for money, would be an offence against their most sacred traditions.

It would be very wrong to close ever so brief a notice of the gypsies of the New Forest without a testimony to the good work being carried on among them by the Gypsy Mission, under the management of the Rev. W. Bullen and his wife. They move about from place to place in or near the Forest, visiting each encampment and having an individual acquaintance with every member of it. Their lives are now entirely and nobly devoted to this good end. They tend the sick, supply the most wretchedly poor with all the comforts that they have the power to give, hold services in the different camps, instruct the children, and, in fact, give themselves up heart and soul to their service. Mr. Bullen has been most kind in supplying information about the gypsies to the writers, and no account of them could be in any degree adequate that made no mention of his life and work amongst them.

FOLK-LORE, LOCAL NAMES, ETC.

A LIKENESS has been noticed between the West Saxon and the Celt in those qualities of gentle courtesy which they have in common. Features in which they differ have also been noted, and among these features of unlikeness we must certainly rank the poverty of folk-lore among the children of the Forest as compared with the wealth of imaginative tradition and superstition in the Celt. It is tolerably obvious that the superstitious quality could not have been predominant in the nature of the man who tapped the skull of his late friend hanging in chains "in order to see the tom-tits fly out at his eyeholes."

And yet all natural surroundings in the Forest seem as if they had conspired to make it the very home of fancy and imagination. Down the long sunlit glades the eye goes to lose itself in the mysterious purple of the shade; under the leafy roof one walks in a twilight between the tree stems which seem as if they were the columns of a great temple to Nature. The stillness of a calm night in the Forest is broken only by occasional voices of wild things which help to intensify its silence; and when the wind is raging through the trees the crackling of branches and groaning of great boughs seem eloquent with the cries of suffering souls in torment. Yet the West Saxon stumps along through all this wonderland, and never wonders. The moonlight glancing on the white stem of the birch, or the shadow thrown by an unseen cow or pony across a moonlit spot, would seem enough to make the individual hairs erect themselves on the head even of a psychical researcher, but do not vex the calm of the forest dweller. Even Beaulieu Abbey, that most respectable pile of ruined grandeur, holds not the wraith of a solitary monk disturbed by regretful memories of carp and venison. Mary Dove, the "witch of Beaulieu" lies quietly in her grave, spite of all her witchcraft when she was above the sod.

Nevertheless, scant justice though the Anglo-Saxon has done the opportunities presented to his imagination, the lack of tradition is not absolute. For example: there is a pond, a quarter of a mile or so only from the spot where it is supposed that King Rufus met his fate. At this pond—ominous coincidence!—three roads meet. Still more remarkable is it that at a certain time of year the colour of this pond is a sanguine vermilion. What can be more obvious than that this was the pond at which Sir Walter Tyrrell washed his guilty hands after the murder of his sovereign? Of course, history says that an arrow was the instrument of Rufus' death, and is fond of asserting that the death was accidental; but of what worth is such testimony as this in comparison with the fatal evidence of the colour of this pond? And yet it was left to Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, a stranger to the Forest, to point out its significance; and there are still some people who prefer the explanation given by Sir

John Lubbock, and invite attention to the coincidence that *vermis* (a Latin word meaning "a worm") is the origin of the derivative "vermilion."

Wise has something to say about the belief in fairies among the Forest people. But if any such belief was prevalent in his day it has certainly died out very quickly in the succeeding years. Even such noted imps as Puck and Lawrence no longer live in the Forest, according to the testimony of its denizen. You are but laughed at if you ask for them. Yet where else should they prefer to live? Certain names, it is true, survive in evidence of beliefs now lost. Puck Pits, which Wise refers to, still denotes a large enclosure nearly in the heart of the Forest. The name, of course, bears on its face the evidence of being older than the enclosure, but no doubt it easily survived the planting of the trees. The origin of the name, however, appears to be lost, though no doubt if the spot were associated with an untoward event of any nature, it would suffice as an excuse for introducing the agency of Puck.

But no forester of to-day numbers Puck among his acquaintance, and with his own peculiar accent speaks of the enclosure as "Pug (*sic*) Pits." Other names in the Forest seem to hint at byegone superstitions, but their origin is quite lost behind the fog of modern practical years. The only genuine fairy tale of local association which seems to survive has its scene on the Avon River, which touches the Forest on the north-western side during a mile or two of its course. The tale, in itself, is an ancient one, being a variant of the old forget-me-not story. In this instance it was the lady who took to the water, while her lover contented himself with staying on the bank. The romance, however, has probably no existence outside of story books, and if the forester of to-day were questioned he would be likely to profess himself as ignorant of this matter as of the existence of Puck or Lawrence.

There are two places in the Forest—one of them not far from Brockenhurst—which go by the name of the Bishop's Crawl. It is told on good authority, that two high ecclesiastics found so great favour in the eyes of the king—who clearly was a man of some humour—that he granted to each as much land in the Forest as he could crawl round, on hands and knees, in twenty-four hours. It is a thousand pities that we are not told more of the circumstances and incidents of these famous crawls—as to which Bishop won, whether both crawled fair, and the precise distance traversed. Most disappointing of all—some critics now assert that there was but one Bishop's Crawl, and that the name of the other spot is a misnomer. The only really authentic "Crawl" still remains the property of Winchester College.

Deer-Leap, not far from Lyndhurst, owes its name to an incident recorded by Gilpin. A stag was shot, and in its dying effort made so great a bound, that the distance was deemed worthy of being recorded by two posts planted in the ground—the one at the spot from which the stag took off, the other at the spot on which he landed. The measurement from post to post is eighteen yards.

The name of Lady Cross, a spot not far from the aforesaid Deer-Leap, suggests that a legend should attach to it, but its origin has never been brought to the notice of the writers.

Tyrrell's Ford explains itself. It is the ford through which Tyrrell is supposed to have passed when he was fleeing from the Nemesis of Rufus' death. Beside the ford there is a blacksmithy, and Wise tells us that in his day the smith still paid a yearly toll to the Crown of two-and-sixpence as a penalty for the sin of his predecessor who shod Walter Tyrrell's horse for him on that occasion. Possibly Wise is right about the payment in his day, but certainly it is discontinued now. Avon Tyrrell, a property just beyond the bounds of the Forest, was in the hands of the Tyrrell family so late as the fourteenth century. Mr. Shore, the compiler of the "History of Hampshire," is our authority for this statement; and he also tells us with regard to Mark Ash (now a favourite picnicking spot in the Forest) that the name existed before the afforesting of the district took place. He presumes, therefore, that the name referred to a boundary mark of very ancient standing, as, indeed, its meaning would seem to imply.

Christchurch is now some way without the Forest boundary, but on that side of the Forest there is still current a curious legend—though told and received with little faith—about the building, or rather the re-building, of Christchurch Abbey. The old abbey lay low, and the monks caught rheumatism. They proposed, therefore, to remove it to higher ground, namely, to the top of St. Catherine's Hill. Every night, however, the stones which had been taken to the top of the hill during the day were brought down to the bottom of it again by unseen hands. Moreover, the beams which had been fully long enough in the valley were always found too short on the hill-top. After much backwards and forwards work of this kind—in which it is plain that the supernatural forces had an unfair advantage, seeing that they only brought the materials downhill, whereas the monks had to pull them up, with rheumatic backs to boot—the latter resigned themselves to the obvious intention of Providence, and began to build their new abbey at the hill's foot. As a token that this acquiescence in the Divine purpose was not unrecognised, it is further recorded that on pay-day, when the workers came to claim their wages, their number was always less by one than the number of those that had worked throughout the week. It was piously believed that this supernumerary workman was Christ. Modern chroniclers have discovered that the work ascribed to supernatural agencies was personally conducted by Flambart, with the aid of workmen imported from France. How much smoother a manner of settling a dispute about the abbey's site than our modern manner of writing to the *Times* and bringing lawsuits.

There is always an element of witchcraft in the medicinal remedies of simple folk; an element salutary, no doubt, in inspiring that faith in the remedy's efficacy which goes so far to help the cure. Yet even for their healing the people of the Forest rely more on natural than supernatural functions. As herbalists they have a certain skill. There is a grey lichen that grows on the oak, which they brew up into a kind of tea for medicinal purposes, under the name of "lungs of oak." They have herbal remedies, too, for cold in the head, and use a decoction of a certain kind of grass as a cure for warts. Fits in children used to be cured by passing the sufferers through forked ash trees, but this cure is no longer practised. There is a well with wonderful properties near the Schultze Powder Mills. It is called Iron's Well, obviously from the strong impregnation of iron in the water. Its waters may be of use, but can scarcely be of the universal value that the forester imagines. An old woman, who had spent all her life in the Forest, spoke highly of it, "especially for sore eyes, bad legs, and such like." The remote relationship between sore eyes and bad legs seems to leave room for many complaints to come between; and even all these are specified merely as those in which the water is *especially* curative. What disease can one imagine to which it would not be *generally* applicable? The forester can imagine none. If his dog had the mange, he used to immerse him in it, and give his own eyes a rub over with the water afterwards. It recalls M. Zola's grim picture of Lourdes. It was chiefly in consequence of these practices that the authorities have now closed the well with a small wooden roof. In old days a lazar-house is said to have stood in its neighbourhood, but whether or no on account of the well's proximity one cannot say. It is significant, however, that the well sometimes went by the name of the Leper's Well. The notion of the calm silence of Nature, among the old oaks and beeches, suddenly broken by the awful clang of the leper's bell is very ghastly, and most chroniclers seem to have regarded the lazar-house as an unpleasant topic to dwell on, for the accounts of it are very meagre.

Many provincialisms in language survive, though many seem to have fallen out since Wise wrote. This is a natural result enough of the spread of education, and increased means of communication. The old voluntary schools, however, still hold their own in most of the Forest villages, though here and there the board school has supplanted them. The general accent of the people resembles the Dorset dialect. They wish you "Good mārning," with a broad stress on the misused vowel. The "a" takes the place of "o" universally. They have practically only two genders of pronouns, "he" and "she." "It" is hardly used. It is curious that as you pass from the extreme west of England, eastward, the pronouns increase in their genders. In Devonshire everything, even the cow, is "he." By the time you have reached the New Forest you find "he" and "she." A little further east they have discovered an "it"; and so perhaps you might work them northward, eliminating them again, until you came to the Highlander with his ubiquitous "she." The foresters simplify declension by using one case only, namely, the nominative:—"Listen," they will say, "to she." They make more use of derivatives from the noun substantive "terror," than any other people. In the first place the adjective "terrible" is used as an equivalent to "very." In this sense they pronounce it "ter'ble"; but when they wish to put an extra superlative to the "very" they pronounce the word "terri-able," or, with slight modification of meaning, "terribilish." "Terri-able," however, seems to be the superlative of all. "A terri-able sight of birds" would probably mean a very large flock of starlings. They have also a peculiar use for the verb "to terrify." "My cough do be terrifying me," means that it is teasing, worrying. The pleonastic "be" in the above sentence is very common with them, but its use is not peculiar to the Forest. They use the word "shade" in a very curious sense. With them it means an open sunlit space in the middle of a plain, whether on high ground or low. It must be clear of trees, and generally there is a pond in the middle. This they do not call "shade" but "a shade," and the meaning of the word is, curiously enough, something very near the opposite of its meaning in common English. And, curiously too, the Forest cattle seem to agree in the meaning. As cattle elsewhere seek the shade of trees, so cattle in the Forest seek these open Forest "shades." The explanation is, that the Forest—always a happy hunting-ground of the entomologist—swarms with flies which especially affect the trees; and the motive of the poor cows in standing and stamping and tail-swishing a summer's day long in these "shades," is the hope of finding a spot where the rare breeze may come to blow away the flies. The cows and ponies thus congregated form picturesque groups in the haze of a hot, still day. Beware, however, of approaching too nearly to admire, or the flies will send out a detachment to assail you which you will not shake off all day.

The word "breeze" is used in a peculiar sense by the foresters. "Don't breeze, or you'll break the point," they will say, as you write with a pencil. It means to press or weigh down. Wise notices the use of the word, but spells it "brise" for some reason. "Breeze" is the phonetic spelling.

"Rough" weather in the Forest does not necessarily imply wind so much as rain. They have the expression, common in the

Western counties, of getting in the "loo" or "lew," for getting into shelter, *i.e.*, "under the lee."

An "idle" boy, oddly enough, means a fidgety, restless boy. A "crutch" is a jug or jar, *e.g.*, the "butter-crutch," "lard-crutch," etc., doubtless derived from the French. As a rule we do not find that the Norman language filtered so far down as the kitchens or agricultural fields. It made its mark rather on the banquet hall and the hunting grounds. The animal that the Saxon herded was a "pig"; but when he came to the table of the Conquerors he was "pork." The "calf" was served up as "veal," the "sheep" as "mutton," the "cow" as "beef." In the absence of all these good Norman things, you are still said, in the Forest, to be "lear," *i.e.*, "empty" or "fasting"—a condition which was perhaps more commonly Saxon than Norman.

The high, open parts of the Forest are called the "londes," probably a derivative from the French "*landes*," which also are open, though low-lying and watery, stretches in a forest country. "Tittie" is in common use for "little," and may be a far-off echo of *petit.*

A "scrump of a thing" means a little, worthless creature; and to "scribble" down is to tread down, as cows would tread down bracken. "Your dog has a bush in his foot" means merely that he has a thorn. To be "all in a caddle" means all in a "muddle." "Leasing" is an equivalent for "gleaning." To "heft" a thing means to take it up in your hand with the object of estimating its weight. "Ovesting"—meaning the turning out of pigs in the "pannage" month—has been referred to elsewhere.

Some of the names of birds are peculiar, though not strictly local. The night-jar is called the "night-hawk" appropriately enough. "Spink" or "chinker" for the chaffinch is clearly onomatopœic. "Bobby" is the familiar name of robin redbreast. "Cutty," from its diminutive size, no doubt, is the wren. The white-throat, from its habits, is called the "nettle-creeper"; the tom-tit, from its valiant defence of its nest when assailed, "billy-biter"; and the long-tailed tit, from the shape of its nest, is called the "bottle-tit."

A foal that has been brought up by hand is called a "mud-foal." "Rubble" is sifted gravel. Going "wooding" means going out into the Forest to pick up wood. All these are names brought into use by the local pursuits of the people. The term "hat" is still in use for a little wood crowning a hill. The origin of the name seems simple enough—it sounds self-explanatory—and Wise seems to be disquieting himself rather in vain when he associates the word especially with the high-crowned hats of the Commonwealth. "Motes" and "mores" are still used as names for the roots of trees. "Squoyle" will survive as long as the squirrel-hunting lasts. Straw bee-hives are called "skeps," but this is not peculiar to the Forest. A "shaded" pig is one with a broad band round the middle of the body of different colour from the rest of the creature. It is used, but less commonly, of other animals too.

Wise refers to many proverbs which seem to have died out of use since his writing. "Wood Fidley rain" still denotes a rain coming up from the south-east, and on that account likely to last. "Eat your own side, speckle-back," is an expression which Wise refers to a girl who shared her breakfast with a snake, and apparently found occasion to rebuke him—or had it anything to do with Eve and the apple? One has heard it, but it is scarcely known now.

Why is it that bees, as an article of property, stand so generally outside the pale of common morality? It is considered unlucky to buy your bees. You must either receive them as a gift, or convey them to yourself by that process which the less wise call stealing. It is the custom, in the Forest, as elsewhere in the west, to follow a swarm of bees with a bell, a tin kettle beaten by the tongs, or any hideous metallic discord. This is curiously deemed now to incline the bees to settle. Any other creature would fly in terror. But the original idea probably was to warn the owner of the land on which the bees lighted, that they came from the kettle-drummer's or bell-ringer's hive.

Wise tells us how the old women used to go "gooding" on St. Thomas' Day, and the young folk "shroving" on Ash Wednesday. These customs of excellent antiquity are given up, but the mummers still go about at Christmas-tide, though their profession is degenerating. There is still one band of mummers, worthy of the name, which performs scraps from what were once mystery or morality plays; but it has become the habit for youths to dress up and pose as the real mummers, though they have no ideas beyond a few topical songs. The real old mummers will doubtless soon disappear into the limbo whither other real old things have preceded them. The eternal fitness of things appears not always present to the forester's mind, for lately a boy came to a house in the Forest on Christmas Eve, with blackened face, white-painted mouth, and on his head an old tall hat which had a peacock's feather stuck in it, but no brim. In this singularly appropriate disguise, he began singing, with pious fervour, "Whilst shepherds watched their flocks by night." His was, at all events, no intentional irreverence, and his general cheeriness suited the festal occasion.

The foresters still keep up the good old custom of "Skimmington," or "rough music," played with pots, pans, kettles, tea-trays and all kinds of music outside the house of a man who is supposed to ill-treat, or behave ill to his wife. The serenade is an expression of social opinion, more forcible than harmonious, which no doubt serves a good moral purpose. A villain is seldom so hardened a villain as to be indifferent to the publicity thus given to his villainy. It is but a few months ago that a presumably erring Benedict on the Wiltshire side was treated to the "Skimmington."

THE BARROWS AND OLD POTTERIES

THERE is always a pathetic interest attaching to those great round tumuli or heaps which we call "barrows," under which men of some unknown age before ours have buried, we scarce know what. The word, of Anglo-Saxon origin, means merely a mound or hill. It does not explain itself. It is understood, however, that the barrow was a tumulus raised over the mortal remains of some famous chief or hero, which exists to his honour still, though it carries no record of his name. This very fact, that the mountain heaped with so much labour should survive, and the name of him to whose fame it was raised, his kindred, his deeds, and his very nationality be forgotten, seems to lend to these great shapeless tombs a further element of pathos which more artistic monuments do not possess. Massive and wide they stand, opposing a calm strength to the shock of time and climate, as truly, *ære perennius*, as the most subtle invention of the poet. The sculptured stone and storied column are relics of a more artistic and commemorative age; but they crumble beneath the finger of Time and of the "tripper" of all ages, while the barrows stand, in their simple strength, as solid as the everlasting hills.

It is seldom that even tradition tells us whom they were intended to commemorate. In the New Forest and its vicinity there are many of these barrows, where they bear the local name of "butts," but of all of them one only is ascribed to any particular hero. Bevois is said to rest beneath the large barrow near Southampton, and who is there to contradict it? The others are avowedly without name. Even Boadicea, over whose place of burial the war of words has raged as fiercely as over Homer's place of birth, has never been said to rest in any of the New Forest "butts."

The name barrow (perhaps because it is itself an Anglo-Saxon word; perhaps because our historical imaginations, nurtured on the pages of "Mrs. Markham" and "Little Arthur's History," do not readily go further back) at once suggests a mound erected by the Britons whose clothing was blue woad, and who succumbed with a fighting grace to the Roman Conquest. That is to say, we place the building of the "barrows" about 100 B.C. Mr. Shore, however, in his able and interesting "History of Hampshire," ascribes them on internal evidence (the only available evidence of any value) to the Neolithic, or Later Stone, Age, which puts them back to a date which is quite pre-historic, so far as this part of Europe is concerned. It is generally admitted that they vary in age, and that the long shaped barrows are older than the round. Some of the long shaped ones are raised higher at one end than the other; and these are found to contain bones arranged in such an attitude as to show that the body was originally placed in the sepulchre with the knees drawn up to the chin. This posture for burial is the oldest known. Few of the New Forest barrows are of this long and most ancient shape. Mr. Shore puts their age at from 1400 to 1200 B.C. From the contents of these round barrows in the Forest it is abundantly evident that cremation was in vogue at the time of their erection, for urns and charred remains are almost invariably found in them. The ingenious in such matters may amuse themselves by inferring from this the practice of sun or fire worship. The evidence is not conclusive. Inconclusive, too, is the evidence supplied by the variety in the shape of skulls found in different barrows. It is said that the long barrows contain long narrow skulls, and the round barrows round skulls; as if one should infer that the barrows were made with some regard to the phrenology of those who were buried beneath them. It is argued that this variety of skull shows that the barrows were erected at periods widely remote from each other. This may be the proper inference, but another possible inference is that they were erected merely by and for men of different race, for in the mass of skulls still exhibited at Hythe three very distinct types may be seen—the Classical Roman, the Anglo-Saxon, with what phrenologists nowadays call the bad bumps at the back of the head much developed, and the native Briton with no development to speak of at all. Yet all these are supposed to have belonged to men who fell in one battle; and if that be not actually the case, there is, at all events, no reason to doubt that they were contemporaries.

Much more satisfactory as to the chronology is the evidence afforded by the instruments found in the different barrows and by the modes of burial. The older races of the Neolithic Age obviously buried their dead in the cramped knee to chin attitude, which was practised in other countries also. The later race—that which built the round barrows—was of the Bronze Age and cremated its dead. The earlier would appear to have slightly over-lapped the later, for there are cases in which stone implements have been found in the round barrows, though such cases are most uncommon.

In cremation they did not always use an urn. In some cases burnt bones and masses of charcoal have been found, without a trace of any vessel intended to contain them.

Not the least interesting story which these barrows have to tell us, is of pre-historic man's belief in the life ot the man after death. To speak of it by the modern term ot the "immortality of the soul," would be to go too far. We have no grounds for forming an opinion on pre-historic man's psychology; but it is probable that he conceived of a future state akin to the present one, wherein he would need the weapons and chattels (not excluding his wife and servants from the latter category) of his daily use on earth. Especially he seems to have deemed that he would have need of drinking cups.

All this is to be inferred from the fact that these articles are found buried with the chief or hero in his barrow. The cups are found broken: it is surmised that they were broken when put in with the idea that the breaking was the death of the cup, and that, thus broken, its immortal part might accompany the immortal part of its dead master on the mysterious and awful journey. This, to say the least of it, is an ingenious surmise.

It is not to be wondered at that in mediæval days the popular idea of these great barrows was that they were the sepulchres of giants. One may even go further and suspect that the sight of such huge graves may have had much to do with suggesting or fostering the notion that the primeval earth was inhabited by a giant race. A simple folk might be very apt to argue: "If my father, who was a man of six foot high, has a grave of eight foot long, it is evident that a grave of eighty or eight hundred feet long must be the sepulchre of a man sixty or six hundred feet high." These people naturally would not bother themselves about an "undistributed middle." Stories about the giants are still told in some parts of Hampshire, though we cannot find that any of them are still current in the New Forest. The name of the Pixies' Cave—given to a barrow near Beaulieu—seems to speak of a fairy lore which is extinct.

Sir Walter Scott is the first, so far as we know, who investigated the contents of any of the New Forest barrows, and it is greatly to be regretted that he has left no record of his discoveries, for it is obvious that the first explorer is likely to have made the best finds. He was followed by Mr. Warner, Mr. Bartlett, and Mr. Wise, the latter of whom seems to have been the most systematic of all in his excavations. He gives a very full and interesting account of his diggings and discoveries in his book on the Forest. It appears that since his time no excavations worthy the name have been attempted. A scientific and orderly examination might still lead to some increase of our knowledge of the race that built the mounds, but failing such an inquiry it is satisfactory to think that no casual digging has been permitted, such as, at the hands of the irreverent and merely curious, might have resulted in the destruction or disfigurement of many of these singular and impressive monuments. And, after all, so far as the investigations have been pushed, it appears that the contents of each barrow are but a repetition of those of every other of similar shape.

Mr. Wise seems to have commenced his operations with a barrow on Bratley Plain, a wild bare heath between Stoney Cross and Ringwood. In this barrow, which was of an oval shape, twenty-two yards long, by sixteen across, he found a quantity of charcoal and an urn which probably had once held the ashes of the dead, though no trace of them could be found when Mr. Wise opened the barrow. There were also some slinging stones and a flint weapon which appeared to be a knife. The deceased must have been a man of modest needs, his luggage slender enough for so great a journey; and yet, ominously, around this centre barrow lay a circle of lesser mounds. It is surmised, on the analogy of the customs of other early races, that these are the graves of members of the great man's household, slain at his death to accompany him to the spirit-land. Doubtless the custom had its useful side. In unsettled times when those of his own household were apt to be a man's peculiar foes, such a form of life assurance must have been a most valuable safeguard. For the retainers it appears to have been deemed enough that they should be cremated in charcoal—the glory of the funereal urn was for their lord alone.

The obstacle to swift digging which Mr. Wise encountered in the gravelly nature of the soil suggests to him an observation on the importance which the barrow builders must have ascribed to a mode of sepulture which would cost them so much trouble. His second venture was made on a barrow about a quarter of a mile distant from the other. In this, besides the charcoal and burnt earth which he had found in the one previously opened, he discovered undoubted human bones, burnt and calcined. In the centre were three urns, firmly embedded in the clay. When they were first brought to light they were of a bright vermilion colour which at once faded into a dull grey on contact with the light and air. Each urn contained bones. The centre one was put on a higher platform, by four inches, than those on either side. It is to be surmised that the centre urn contained the ashes of the master of the house or chief of the clan, and that the urns on either side held the remains, perhaps, of wives, or at least of those inferior in station and authority. (In those days it is to be presumed that the New Woman did not yet possess the land.) In this barrow Mr. Wise found no weapons or implements except a few slinging stones. He found, however, so immense a quantity of charcoal and burnt earth as to show that the funeral pyre must have been of unusually large dimensions. Many bodies, in all probability, besides those of the head of the house, were consumed on the occasion—maybe members of his household, or maybe prisoners taken by his prowess in war. The charm of all these excavations is that the suggestions they provoke are so far-reaching and so little impeded by any troublesome stumbling-blocks of fact. In the smallest urn in this barrow the bones were of small size, and it was thought probable by the late Professor Owen that they were the remains of a female.

Enough has been said to show the general character of the contents of the barrows. An exhaustive account would be long and wearisome and involve endless repetition of urns and charcoal, burnt earth and calcined bones. The urns in all cases were difficult of removal. They were of coarse-grained, friable material. The clay in which they had been planted had embraced them so closely as almost to have become one substance with them; and through it, and around them, the roots of heather and gorse had intertwined themselves so as to enclose them in a hard close network.

It strikes one as singular that, after the lapse of so many centuries, not only should the old rude burying mound lift its great mass above the plain, but that even the depressions in the soil whence the material for it was dug up should still be plainly visible. It is a homely little detail which seems to bring that far-away pre-historic age more visibly before one than all its bones and urns. Sometimes a pond marks the spot from which the earth was taken—sometimes it is only a depression in the heather.

In a barrow close to Ocknell Plain, which lies in the middle of a "shade" on an open heath, Mr. Wise found the neck of a Roman wine bottle (ampulla) but nothing more, and his inference is that the barrow had been opened and rifled by some earlier treasure-hunters in the middle ages, or, at all events, of such ancient date that no trace remained of their excavations. The notion that these barrows were king's treasuries had not yet been altogether dispelled. A certain barrow —one of two large ones not far from Ashley, just above Pitt's enclosure, as it is called—which the Rev. J. Bartlett examined in 1851, had been previously tunnelled by a labouring man who was afflicted with a recurrent dream of a "crock of gold" to be found in the barrow. The poor son of toil dug and delved, but was rewarded with no more valuable result than abundance of charcoal. Mr. Bartlett, however, found the contents of the barrow to differ somewhat from those of others, for it was full of large flints, encased in clay. In the other adjacent barrow, there was earth only. A small barrow was also opened, near a track leading into the Fordingbridge road, in which the earth formed a nucleus and the flints were arranged round it, to the thickness of two or three feet at the base, but becoming thinner towards the top. Do we see in this the rude attempts at a pre-historic style of masonry, or is it all part of some more secret and sacred rite? Within this barrow were found the remains of bones and a stone hammer with two holes through it.

From the road leading from Stoney Cross to Fritham quite a number of barrows may be seen clustered together in a most sociable manner. Mr. Wise did a good deal of excavation on Fritham Plain, but found nothing in the barrows of different nature from the contents of the Bratley ones. The urns were even more decayed, and it was impossible to preserve more than a few fragments of them. On the east side of Fritham Plain there are still many unopened barrows. One of them, the largest, is crowned by a single fir tree, bent over and shorn by the prevalent wind into a crippled posture, which adds to the weird effect of the group of tumuli. Round the base of this big mound runs a trench, generally full of water ; and all the ground about is marked by depressions, showing where the earth has been taken out.

In an enormous mound near Linwood, of nearly four hundred yards' circumference, a quantity of Roman pottery was found, in addition to the ubiquitous charcoal. Rather to the north of this great mound lies the wild, lonely district, so well worthy of its name of Latchmoor—the " moor of corpses.' Doubtless it was a burial ground—possibly the site of a famous battle between races whose very name has ceased to be spoken. To-day it is a wild stretch of hilly moorland, interspersed with marshes, a favourite haunt of the snipe.

The traces of Roman or British encampments are of no really great importance. Signs of these old military entrenchments are fairly numerous, but in no instance are the remains of large size, or otherwise remarkable. The finest and best preserved is a Roman encampment not far from Lymington, and bears the name of Buckland Rings. In spite of its name, it is of rectangular shape, and appears to have had two ramparts and a double ditch; and a little creek, up which the Romans are supposed to have rowed their boats, runs close beside it. Excavations were made in this old encampment about the middle of the last century, and resulted in the discovery of many relics of the Roman occupation, including some coins and glass vessels, which may now be seen in the Hartley Museum at Southampton.

There are similar though less interesting encampments, or their remains, at Mount Pleasant, about two miles from Buckland Rings; at Eyeworth, near Fritham; at God's Hill, overlooking the Avon; and at Castle Malwood.

There is no evidence that there ever was anything in the nature of a castle on the last site, in spite of its fine feudal name; and, indeed, there are in the Forest many "castles" this or that, of which Mr. Wise shrewdly observes that it would be strange had there been so many castles in the comparatively small radius of the Forest at a time when such buildings were not numerous in the whole length and breadth of England—for their names date back to a remote antiquity. There is no trace in Domesday Book of any castellated towers in the Forest. At Castle Hill, on the Avon, and at the castle near Burley, there are remains of entrenchments; and Lucas Castle, not far from Stoney Cross, appears to be no more than a high round hill of natural formation. It may be inferred, however, with tolerable certainty, that at one time or other the Romans used it as a camp, and that it, as well as the other places which are dignified with the title of "castle," derive their designation from the "*castrum*" or camp which was once pitched upon them.

Many places in the Forest have names into which "Church" enters as a prefix, such as "Churchmoor"—now a bog, and a most unlikely site for a sacred edifice, especially in the Forest, where churches, perhaps to make them conspicuous over the tree tops, were generally built on high places. "Church-green," at Eyeworth, and "Church Place," at Sloden, are other instances of this prefix without any remains or record of a sacred building in their vicinity. The last named is a very beautiful spot, an open glade amongst the trees, with a carpet of the most brilliant and verdant sward. Singularly enough it is dotted with numberless humps which may have suggested the name by their resemblance to graves, though it is probable that they are due to the workings of mediæval moles or ants.

At Sloden there are some interesting relics of an old Roman pottery. Before the coming of the Romans, the native Britons do not seem to have turned the large clay beds which lie in the south of Hampshire to any great account. The Conquerors, however, soon found a use for them, and established brick-making and pottery-turning centres which were not abandoned till the end of the third century. From what Mr. Shore says it would appear that though the Britons made and used earthenware vessels before the coming of the Romans, they were quite unacquainted with the use of the potter's wheel.

The evidence of this is seen in the character of the earthenware remains, which show a much more delicate and artistic workmanship where they are found accompanied by other signs of the Roman. Other conveniences for pottery and brick-making besides the indispensable staple material, the clay, are, of course, abundant in the Forest where charcoal in any quantity could be had for the mere trouble of burning.

When you have learned what to look for the evidences of the pottery works at Sloden are very apparent and extensive. On a first glance at the jungle of chickweed and nettle which has overgrown the spot it is difficult to believe that the foot or hand of man has ever disturbed it; yet we are assured by Mr. Wise that this very abundance of these two weeds is strongest presumptive evidence that the soil that bears them was once under the frequent pressure of the human foot. His excavations have more than confirmed the presumption. He commenced them at a spot from which, as from a centre, five banks radiate off. Within he found iron slag and broken bits of ware and charcoal. Two large mounds hard by show the site of the ancient kilns, and certain trenches in the neighbourhood are thought to mark the situation of the huts in which the potters dwelt.

The richest find of crockery was made by Mr. Bartlett on the spot significantly named Crock Hill. Therein he found evidences of three kilns and earthenware vessels, drinking cups and wine flasks of all kinds, beside the red burnt earth. In the same old pottery Mr. Wise found the charcoal which had been used in the baking still adhering to pieces of the broken earthenware that had been thrown carelessly aside just as the potter had left them. The marks of his fingers are still to be seen on some of the pieces preserved in the Hartley Museum, and might be of interest to Mr. Galton and followers of his lore of "finger-prints." On the ground lay a coin and the tool with which the potter had been working—the account reads almost like the discovery of some long-buried chamber at Pompeii. We have no grounds for supposing that, as in the classic instance, a great cataclysm of nature cut short the artificer's life and his art; but it looks as if, for some cause or other, the work had been abruptly abandoned. Mr. Wise, however, maintains that the pottery industry did not come to a sudden but to a gradual end. The coin left on the floor seems evidence of business scarcely less urgent than a revolution or an earthquake that called the potter from his work. The tool is valueless as evidence, except as showing a relationship in his methods with the British workman of to-day. Other witness, however, of abrupt cessation of work was found in a kiln near Pitt's Enclosure, where the "fawn-coloured clay" lay close by the red earth, ready for the mixing, yet never used.

Some of the patterns are very graceful and artistic. Most delicate of all is a scroll-like device which was in use for the ornamentation of the Roman toga. Those of the pots that bear on them the marks of the potter's thumb are called "thumb-pots" in the Forest. The finest specimens of the crockery that have been discovered are either in private collections or have been sent to the British Museum.

It may be that a familiarity with these barrows and potteries, and their contents of calcined bones and charcoal, have led the forester's mind to run on this matter of cremation, for as a gentleman was chattering lately with an old faggot-gatherer about human nature and the mysteries of life, the latter concluded the discussion with a kick of his bundle of faggots and the melancholy reflection: "But there, we're just like they faggots—all made to be burned."

In so general a condemnation he could scarcely have referred to the purgatorial fires.

DOMESTIC CREATURES, AND SOME OTHERS

ONE of the very commonest objects in the Forest, in the pannage months, is a herd or large family of black piglings following an old black mother. They roam at large through the woods all the day long, seeking acorns and beechmast, but each evening, when the curfew should be tolling the "knell of parting day," find their way homeward to their owner's cottage. It may now and again happen, indeed, that the pigs do not come home. That, however, is mainly the fault of the forester, their owner, who has practised too rigid an economy in not making the contents of the pigs' trough sufficiently attractive to outweigh the delights of acorns and beechmast. Not that it matters much if the pigs do not come home. If they do not come to-day, they will come to-morrow, and there is so much saved for to-morrow's supper. As long as they are not away for several consecutive days, there need be no anxiety on their account, and such prolonged truancy scarcely ever happens. In the case of the cows, however, it is another matter. If they do not come home at milking time, it means that the day's supply of milk is lost, and that is a serious consideration. It then becomes necessary to go out and hunt for them, maybe on the back of a Forest pony.

As a rule, however, the animals come back with wonderful regularity to their homes at night. We have already seen how Gurth, the swineherd of a bygone time, collected his charges and cared for them, leaving them, very largely, to care for themselves. It is, indeed, one of the numerous surprises of the visitor to the Forest to see all these creatures, apparently in a state of little more than semi-domestication, wending their homeward way every evening at the appointed hour. It shows him that he is in not quite so barbarous a country as he had imagined.

The aspect of the domestic creatures themselves does not, in some cases, go so far to re-assure him. In the first place, these black pigs, though they are in a sense semi-wild, are yet in another sense—in the sense of being very bold—very tame. They are so tame and so bold that often—especially if it be a sow with young—they will "go for" the visitor's dog, and occasionally for the visitor's self; though it is to be said that these man-hunting pigs do not distinguish between the visitor and the forester—they "go for" all alike.

It seems that the ancestors of these black pigs of the New Forest were imported by Charles I. from Germany, and the descendants bear signs still of a foreign origin. They are long bristled. In some individuals it is not hard to see a trace of the Tamworth Cross, and altogether, though they are picturesque enough as an addition to the Forest scenery, they are an evil-favoured crew and as fierce at heart as any old boar of the German forests. In Gilpin's time the New Forest pigs actually were wild. They had no owners, or, at all events, if there were owners in name, the owner never owned them. They were for all practical purposes wild pigs. To-day the pigs may be wild, but they are not "wild pigs." They all have owners. Still they look wild and fierce enough when one comes on them of a sudden round the corner of a beech-grove. They suggest visions, at once, of mediæval boar hunts; and real good fun one might have to-day, hunting them with a spear on Forest-pony-back, if only their troublesome owners would not make an objection. A white pig, of which there are a few, looks quite out of place in the Forest. He is better liked, however, in the butcher's shop. As Norman "pork," he is a better animal, but as Saxon "hog" the black is much the nobler. And for all their fierce wildness, the Forest pig will become very tame and attached to its owner. One of the writers has a pig which used, in its youth, to accompany its owner for long walks, just like a dog. If he wanted to leave the pig at home he had to quit the house by stealth, that it might not see him. In older age its figure has assumed an outline unfriendly to pedestrian exercise, and it prefers to stay about the house and pay exclusive attention to the wash-tub. But it still loves having its back scratched.

Early of a summer's morning you will sometimes hear a melodious cry of "Coop, Coop," resounding through the Forest; and may know thereby that some unfortunate one had neglected to make the provender in the home cow-shed tempting enough to bring home the cows for the morning milking. In the summer the cows lie out at nights, going forth again after the evening milking and probably champing away at the tender grass during most of the warm light night. These Forest cows are of a breed peculiar to the district, and cows imported from a distance rarely fare so well in the same conditions. They will return regularly enough at morning and evening with the others, but seem not to learn the art of doing well for themselves when they are turned out during the night. Delicate cows, such as Jerseys, seldom thrive.

In the same way flocks of geese are

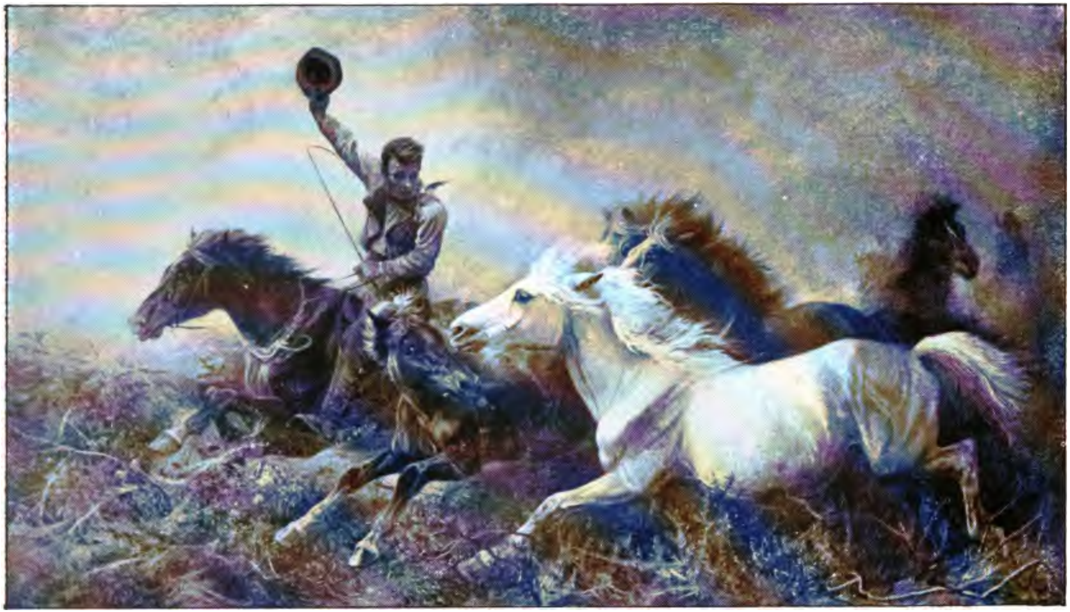
allowed to wander through the Forest all the daylight hours, and at evening come back regularly to the homestead, where, as perhaps they know, is better protection from the numerous foxes, as well as a good supper before going to roost. Of all creatures few are more intelligent than that which we have selected as the emblem of foolishness—the goose.

The breed of Forest ponies is even more peculiarly local than the breed of cows. At one time there used to be quite a large demand for these ponies. It is hard to say why, for though they have considerable staying power they have neither size nor speed. There are large herds of them in the Forest, all, of course, the property of ascertained owners. An interesting theory to account for their origin ascribes them to be descended from horses or ponies landed from the wrecked ships of the Spanish Armada. Unfortunately the theory has no direct confirmation, and if one were to believe all one is told of the things that owe their origin to the Spanish Armada each ship of that ill-fated flotilla must have been packed as tightly as Noah's extremely populous ark. However that may be, they are very wild little beasts. Gilpin gives an account of the breaking-in of one which was quite a terror in the Forest in his day. When first caught it did its very best to "do for" its owner; but afterwards became the best beast in the Forest, both in harness and over a country. He also tells us that it was the custom to catch the ponies with the lasso, and one cannot but regret that its use should have been so utterly abandoned. It would have been a sight to conjure visions of the boundless prairies or pampas to see a band of Forest horsemen come galloping down the glades in pursuit of the wild ponies with the lasso whirring about their heads. A tradition survives of a boy who was noted in the Forest for his proficiency in the use of a noose and a rope. This use of the lasso, as told by Gilpin, lends an incidental support to the theory of the Spanish origin of the ponies; for, of course, lasso is a Spanish word (or Portuguese—*laço*—if one needs to be so exact); and moreover it would appear that the Spaniards must have imported the use of the lasso into America. At least, they imported horses, and without horses it scarcely seems that the lasso would have been of use. And yet we do not hear much about the lasso in old Spain. But, after all, this has not much to do with the New Forest.

Mr. Shore observes that the Romans, when they invaded Britain, brought with them a breed of small horses which seem to have been similar to the Forest ponies. He conjectures, therefore, that the present ponies may be the descendants of these Roman breeds, but puts the conjecture forward in no positive manner. One may take it or one may leave it. But the fact that the remains of these small horses are found in the peat bogs all over Hampshire seems to favour the supposition that they were imported at some early date.

The present method of collecting and herding the colts is wild enough. August is the time for this, when Lyndhurst and Britford fairs are on. The colts come thundering along, in a dense, terrified band, pursued by West Saxons, excited for the nonce into the semblance of a Latin race, and resembling, further, the Latin race that has made the American continents its home, in the bright coloured shirts worn by many of the riders, and the broad-brimmed, *sombrero*-like hats which give them shelter from the ardent summer sun. With the cracking of whips and the stampeding of horses, you seem to be at an *al fresco* entertainment arranged by Buffalo Bill. But the riders use neither the lasso nor the corral—herding the ponies into a corner is the nearest approach they make to the latter plan. They use the natural peculiarities of the Forest by way of a kind of corral. When a colt is so wild that no ordinary means of catching him are of any avail they will drive him along a neck of sound land lying between bogs on either side. A Forest pony, even though he be a colt, will no more put his foot into a bog, under ordinary circumstances, than a Californian horse will put his foot into a ground-squirrel's hole. The forester arranges that the circumstances shall not be ordinary by jumping up in front of him, from a *cache*, when he is halfway across the sound neck, whereon he jumps affrightedly aside and is bogged, and bagged.

It is no easy matter for five or six horsemen to drive a herd of the wild ponies across one of the open spaces or heaths in the Forest. They are for ever breaking away, inclining to make a bolt of it in any direction but the desired one. We hear many tales from the prairies of the cunning of the cowboys' horses in turning of their own accord, to head off a steer that breaks away from the herd, but the cunningest of the Americans could not beat, for zeal or science, a noted Forest pony belonging to a carrier of the name of King, in Bramshaw. No polo pony follows the ball with more keenness than this pony showed in heading off its wild fellows and turning after them at every double. The rider scarcely needed his reins, so well did the pony know the game. No doubt this was a pony of exceptional intelligence—it would follow its master about as docilely as a



COLT DRIVING.

[*To face p.* 148.

dog or the writer's pig. Its ordinary walk in life was between the shafts of the carrier's van, but, when it had a day off, liked nothing better than to go pony-driving with no one on its back, for the mere fun of the thing. Mr. Alfred Lyttelton has set the problem, "Is golf a first-class game?"—there is not the slightest doubt that this pony thought pony-driving a first-class game. On off-days, when no pony-driving was going on, it liked to follow the van along the road, as if grudging its friend in the shafts the honourable task of drawing it. "All the way to Salisbury," its master declared it would have followed, "if we hadn't stopped him."

This wonderful art in horse-breaking seems to have descended from father to son, for there is now living in Bramshaw village a William King, son of the above, and also a carrier, who has broken in a pony so that it will turn a runaway colt and head him back to the herd without a press on the bridle, almost as scientifically as the famous pony referred to above.

The immediate object of all this herding is to drive the ponies into a big paddock or enclosure hired for the purpose, where they remain in readiness to be taken to the fairs. They fetch, as yearlings, from eight to ten pounds.

Donkeys abound in the Forest, going about in bands like the ponies, as wild but not so active. The young ones are very jolly little brutes, peculiarly shaggy, so that they look like a bundle of rough-coated mats with two eyes gleaming out of it. In many of these donkeys you can see traces of Spanish blood—again confirming the notion that some of the Forest animals came from the Armada—and some of them grow into fine beasts. At one time the Forest was a great breeding place for mules, which used to be exported to America. To-day there is scarcely a mule to be seen.

Sheep are not commonable creatures. It is curious to the outsider, in whose experience the domestic sheep is perhaps the commonest of animals, to see the astonishment, and even terror, of a child of the New Forest the first time that it is taken beyond the boundaries and is shown a harmless, necessary sheep.

With the exception of the deer the largest of the wild creatures that make their home in the Forest is the badger. In a country that is not very closely preserved, and where such large tracts are covert, it is hard to form any judgment of the numbers of an animal whose habits are so entirely nocturnal. No one seems to molest them, and where roots and nuts and insects are so much more abundant than the eggs and young of game birds or beasts, they cannot do much damage. In agricultural districts they annoy the farmer by rolling in the standing corn, but the amount of harm they are likely to do in this way in the Forest may probably be estimated by sixpences.

Foxes are numerous, in spite of much hunting. There are enough otters to give good sport in the reaches of the Avon which skirt the Forest, and often the otters will wander up the smaller tributaries which run through the Forest itself. Hares and rabbits maintain a struggle for existence with the licensed sportsman with a degree of success that is surprising. Squirrels, in spite of the persecution by "squoyling," are very plentiful. If you stand silent and motionless against a tree trunk in the autumn, it will be very few moments before you will see first one and then another and another of these pretty little beasts appear from you cannot guess where, hunting the ground for acorns or sitting up holding the nuts in their paws and nibbling at them in what appears to be the attitude in which they prefer to be stuffed. Hedgehogs, in spite of our boyish notion that they formed the staple food of the gypsy, abound in great numbers, and even invade the houses. A few years ago a house in Emery Down was quite proud of itself in the possession of a ghost which made a mysterious noise at a certain hour each day beneath the hearthstone. On investigation by some psychical researcher the ghost was found to be a hedgehog which came in every day up a pipe laid for ventilation, and rolled itself in with great warmth and comfort just under the trap door that led from the room to the pipe.

The Forest is a happy hunting-ground for moles, which must have a cheery life of it in the light soil amidst multitudes of all kinds of insects. In a certain part of the Forest there lived at one time quite a family of white moles, one of which—or his outer mole, at all events—can now be seen in the Hartley Museum at Southampton. The martron, or marten cat, has become extinct. For the rest there is abundance of stoats, weasels, snakes, field-mice, and all manner of vermin, such as would naturally thrive in a closely-wooded country where inhabitants are scarce and each keeper has a wide beat.

DEER-HUNTING AND FOX-HUNTING

FEW of man's many inventions have fulfilled their original design so well and faithfully as the New Forest. That design, as we know, was to form a happy hunting-ground; and a happy hunting-ground it has been, as we may suppose, from the days of the Conqueror to the present time. It is true that in the annals of the chase in the Forest there is a gap—an interval of years in which we do not hear much of the hunting—hear little, indeed, of the Forest at all; and that little having reference rather to its commercial and financial uses than its sport and venery. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, kings spent their time in hunting bigger game than fallow deer. Sometimes, indeed, the conditions of the sport became reversed and kings then knew the sensations of being chased. Hunting in the days of the great civil wars was followed in many divers manners, but still history tells us little of the sport of kings in the New Forest.

Nevertheless there can be no doubt that hunting went on. Granted lots of game and an unsettled state of society, the absence of the king on business of the realm would tend to the increase in the number of hunters, but their mode of venery would have been of that modest kind which they would not publish, and which the modern game law calls poaching. As soon, however, as the great wars were over, and even while they were still in progress, the Crown began to cast covetous eyes on the Forest, with the idea of catching those who were offending against the laws, and of getting a fine from them to help the exhausted treasuries, or of working towards the same good end by exacting tolls from merchants who transmitted goods along the royal roads.

There was but one genus of beast of the chase in the Forest, in the opinion of the royal Norman, that was really worth his august attention, namely, the deer. The red deer, according to Shore, were plentiful in the Forest in those days. Horns of the great *Cervus Elephas* have been found in nearly every peat bog, but these would scarcely have been among Rufus' beasts of venery. In process of time the red deer, too, died out. Gilpin tells us that Charles II. re-introduced them from France and put them down in the New Park; but there are grounds for thinking that they were imported by Charles I., rather, for the royal pleasure of Henrietta Maria. In either case, they would have arrived too late to be of mundane interest to the Norman dynasty.

The mode of hunting in these oldest times seems as if it must have had an interest all its own. Coursing your beast through the Forest with your own trained familiar bloodhound—or at most a couple—following their deep bass notes as best you might through an absolutely natural jungle, under the shade of the great trees, or across the sunlit spaces, makes up a scheme of delight such as no modern style of hunting seems quite to vie with. Then, at the last, when your faithful hound had brought the stag to bay you might finish him off with a well-directed missile from bow or arquebuss. It is all very fascinating and poetical in the fancied retrospect, yet perhaps some of these old-time sportsmen, too, had their less glowing experiences—say, like the earlier portion of Mr. Jorrocks' "Cat and Custard" day. But we never picture one of these ancient Nimrods forlorn, unhorsed, bogged, bedraggled—they never lose the hounds or have a blank day.

Now we are democratic in our sport, as in all things. One deer has to serve for many sportsmen and many hounds; we cannot have one apiece like a Norman king. The satisfaction, of course, is to think that if we had lived in their day we should not have had any, but then we do not think of that—we all think of ourselves as kings.

One does not hear of any reliable estimate of the numbers of the fallow deer in the olden time, but certain facts show that their numbers must have been immense. For instance, in the severe winter of 1797, three hundred were picked up, dead of cold or hunger, in Boldrewood Walk alone; but perhaps the vast total which these figures indicate was due to the practical immunity from hunting or harrying which they had enjoyed so long. Of course, with the deer in such numbers as this, it was impossible to hunt them, in the modern sense. It is Hibernian, but it is true, that only the Deer Removal Act has made fallow deer-hunting possible.

It is only the fallow deer, however, that at any time reached such numbers. The Stuart importation of red deer throve well, but in wiser moderation. They were not too numerous for hunting.

In any park or enclosure where red and fallow deer live side by side, it is singular to see the absolute indifference and contempt with which the lordly red deer treats the comparatively ignoble fallow. They do not consort with them, neither do they attack them—they treat them as if they did not exist. There is something analogous to this utter absence of sympathy between two kinds of creatures which at first glance appear closely related, in the perfect indifference to the scent of fallow or roe shown by hounds that are running on the scent of a red deer. They will carry the scent over ground studded with the recent imprints of innumerable fallow deer as if the red deer were the only beast of venery that the Forest held. The fallow are for them—as for the red deer—as if they did not exist.

The gap in the history of deer-hunting in the Forest reaches down to not more than some eighty years ago. An inquiry addressed to the *Field*, elicited the reply that the Royal Buckhounds visited the Forest in the month of August, so far back as 1763, but there seems to be no record of their doings at so early a date. The old keeper, whose remarks we have quoted before, in reference to the stealing of the deer and so on, distinctly remembers the hounds "before this Queen came to the throne," as he put it. The first meet was held on Boldrewood Green in the same year that Bowles, the

Boldrewood keeper, was killed in a poaching affray. The poacher clubbed him on the head with a "squoyle" so badly that he died a day or two later. This Boldrewood Green was a favourite place for a meet for a long while. At that time—*i.e.*, early in the present century—it appears that it was the largest open space of greensward in the Forest. It lay high, commanding a magnificent view of the surrounding country, from Burley on the one side to Stoney Cross on the other. Now, since the enclosing, it has dwindled down to the dimensions of a common goose green.

The Queen's staghounds came every year, for several years, in the month of April, hunting, as has been said, the red deer only. Very large fields used to follow them, both on horse and on foot. A thousand is said to have been no unusual number at a meet. It must have been a grand sight.

The hunting of the fallow deer began, virtually, immediately after the passing of the Deer Removal Act, but it was some years before a pack was formed. In the years immediately following the passing of the Act any one who pleased, practically speaking, might hunt and supply himself with venison. All that was necessary was to catch your deer—a warrant was granted for killing deer by the authorities, but any one could get it. It was easier, however, to get your warrant than your deer, and the help of a good hound or two was found very useful. It was in this unmethodical way that the nucleus of the pack was formed, many individuals doing a little hunting on their own account. It was almost like a reversion to the glorious methods of the old Norman kings. After all, however, according to Mr. Grantley Berkeley, the deer made no such very fine venison. The proverbial "fat buck" was hard to come by. Its ordinary price in the market was fourpence a pound, and dear at the price. Of course, a little knowledge was a useful thing. A "browse" buck was one fed close around the keeper's house, and might have been thought likely to give the fattest venison; but an "enclosure" buck—that is to say, one born and bred in an enclosure—was generally supposed to be the finest and heaviest. Mr. Berkeley, however, gives his verdict in favour of the "heather" buck, which fed on the heaths and wildest places, and thence gained that gamey flavour that we admire so much in a "hill" partridge.

Mr. Buckworth Powell, with the sons of Mr. Morant, of Brockenhurst, as his whips, and after him Mr. Lovell, of Hinchelsea, were among those who kept a few couple of hounds, and hunted the deer for their own amusement. This little nucleus was the origin of a regular pack of deerhounds, which hunted the fallow under the mastership of Mr. Lovell.

No sight can be more picturesque, or in more perfect harmony with the sylvan surroundings, than a meet of deerhounds in the Forest. The Forest was made for deer-hunting, and certainly it looks as if the deer-hunting were made for the Forest. If one of the Norman kings were to be resuscitated from his tomb, he might not deem, at first, that he had been asleep for so many ages. The numbers of the pack might puzzle him, and the business of putting in the "tufters," to separate a good "huntable" deer from the herd, would be a mystery to him; but for the rest, when the deer had broken away, crashing through the edge of the covert, to disappear, by leaps and bounds, into the leafy recesses of the Forest, and the hounds were laid upon his line, then might William Rufus himself well believe that "the king had got his own again," and would follow the chase with the best. It might seem to him a poor expedient to give the *coup de grace* with the knife, instead of with the missile arrow; but reflecting on Wat Tyrrell's feat, he might well deem that even this device had its advantages.

Two years ago, amidst universal regrets, Mr. Lovell resigned the mastership. He was succeeded in the post by Mr. Walker, who in this year of writing—1895—has entered upon a joint mastership with Mr. Kelly. During the months of April and August the buck alone is hunted; the doe only in the winter months. In April the fields are largest, many visitors being attracted at that time, both by the natural sylvan beauties of the spring, and by the fact that except in the driest season both deer and fox are then hunted in the Forest, the fox being commonly hunted a week later here than in any other country.

The red deer are still hunted, but they are scarcer than the fallow. The hunted stag will often make for the Avon, to soil in the river, and may be seen travelling down the course of the stream, to throw the hounds off the scent.

Roe deer occur, but they are rare, and are supposed to have come from Dorsetshire. There was one noted roe that had his headquarters for years in King's Garn Enclosure. Rumour said that he had been hunted by every hound that ran—deerhound, foxhound, and harrier—but none had done more than give him a pleasant day's exercise across country, and he ended his life peacefully of sheer old age.

The favourite meets of the deerhounds are Bushey Bratley, New Park—between Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst—Vinney Ridge, Stoney Cross—overlooking the valley in which Rufus is said to have met his death—and Fritham.

So much, then, for the deer-hunting.

With regard to the hunting of the fox we have seen that Manwood includes it in his list of beasts of the chase, but there is such an ominous silence on the part of mediæval chroniclers about the manner of his hunting that our minds are haunted by all sorts of hideous suspicions. Is it possible that our ancestors can have been a race of men who shot the fox with the bow and arrow or crossbow? The idea is too painful to dwell upon. Deer-hunting with all its glorious surroundings is as old as the oldest oak of the Forest—probably far older—but fox-hunting, in its true sense, is comparatively a thing of yesterday. In truth it has been left to modern days to "discover" the fox, so to say. The Scriptures thought little of him—Samson was no Solomon of cunning, but even the simple strong man seems to have had no trouble whatever about catching the four hundred that he sent with brands on their tails among the corn fields of Philistia. Perhaps that cruel warning served as an object lesson to the other foxes, and taught them a wisdom that they have transmitted to their descendants. Neither had the fox much reputation for wiliness in the mouth of Uncle Remus—Ole Brer Rabbit could fool him every time. The true "discoverer" of the fox is perhaps as modern a man as the immortal Mr. Jorrocks whose lectures did such justice to the merits of the "thief of the world," that they are never again likely to be questioned.

The oldest notice we have of the hunting of the fox in the Forest is given by Gilpin, who tells us that in Charles I.'s time a certain master keeper had a motley pack that hunted buck, fox, otter, and hare indifferently, but with no indifferent success, for the keeper's room was hung with fox-skins.

When once fox-hunting had begun, as a regular institution, the New Forest was not long in following the good lead. The "County Gentleman's Album" names 1781 as the birth date of the first New Forest pack of foxhounds. Mr. Grove and Mr. Poole were the first masters, but it was not till shortly after Mr. Vincent Hawkins Gilbert, of Lambscorner, was made M.F.H., that a regular club was formed at Romsey for the noble purpose of hunting the fox. Mr. Gilbert's kennels were at Northwood, and he was really the first regularly recognised master of hounds in the Forest. He had as huntsmen, Woods, Tull, Fox, and Sebright, successively in the order named. Mr. Gilbert died in 1798.

His successor in office was Mr. John Compton, of Minstead Manor. Mr. Compton retained Tom Sebright as huntsman, and this Sebright was the father of Lord Fitzwilliam's famous Tom. In 1808, John Warde, of glorious memory, assumed the mastership, with Abbey as his huntsman, and Nevard and Zach Goddard as his whips. Mr. Warde showed excellent sport. He had his kennels at first at the King's—now the Queen's—House, the residence of the Deputy-Surveyor, and afterwards at Foxlease, just outside Lyndhurst. Mr. Nicoll took over the mastership from him in 1814, and was his own huntsman, keeping his hounds at Sir George Burrard's house in Lyndhurst. In his day the fields were very large, and according to all accounts made up of very free-handed sportsmen, for the old keeper, who has several times been quoted, avers that Mr. Nicoll's hunt-servants—John and George Grant—would sometimes "cap" more than their wages on a single day. Mr. Nicoll gave up in 1828, selling the pack to Lord Kintore for £1000, and in course of the same year Mr. William Wyndham took over the country, keeping the hounds at Burnford House, Bramshaw, and hunting them himself. He hunted the country for ten years, and was succeeded by Mr. Codrington, who also lived at Burnford House. In 1842 Mr. Codrington died, and Captain Lindsay Sheddon took the mastership and showed fine sport for eleven seasons. It was in Captain Sheddon's consulship that the present kennels were built for the Hunt, with the proviso that should hounds not be kept in them for any two successive years they should revert to the ground owner, Mr. Compton, of Minstead Manor. After Captain Sheddon came Mr. Theobald, who held the mastership for a single year only, and was followed in 1854 by the Rev. Edward Timson, of Tatchbury Mount. When he had held office for five years he was succeeded by Mr. Morant, who hunted the country with great success until 1869, at which date he gave the hounds over to Mr. Standish, of New Park. Sir Reginald Graham followed, and was M.F.H. for four years from 1874, when he resigned in favour of Mr. George Meyrick. Mr. Meyrick lived at Lady Cross and kept the mastership until 1884-5, when a double change took place. For the first time the M.F.H. was a stranger to the Forest—Major Brown by name—and in the same year Mr. Mills, of Bisterne, who for many years had kept a pack of harriers, took over half of the New Forest country in the fox-hunting interest and met twice a week. In the mastership of this second pack Mr. Mills was succeeded by Sir John Thursby.

Meanwhile Major Brown had hunted the hounds for one season only, and in 1886 they were taken over by Mr. Bradburne, of Lyburn, who held the mastership for three years. The latter was succeeded by Mr. Stanley Pearce, of Little Testwood, who resigned in 1894 to Mr. Henry Powell, the present M.F.H.

Such are the chronicles of the kings of the fox-hunting in the New Forest. With regard to the character of the hunting it is a commonly-received maxim that if you hunt to ride there is no worse country than the Forest, but if you ride to hunt there are few better. There is virtually no fencing, and the greatest hazards are deep, overgrown cart-ruts and treacherous quagmires. Experience of the Forest, either on the part of the human or the equine, is very useful. The unwary is apt to be seduced by the pleasant aspect of the greenest patches of the quagmire which are signals to those who know how to read them of the most hopeless bogs. The bogs are bad ; but they are not so bad as those stories seem to indicate which relate the engulfing of horse and rider in a manner that recalls the fate of Korah and his companions. It is not quite so bad as this, though bad enough ; but if the rider's horse be acquainted with the Forest the equine intelligence will save the human ignorance, for no Forest horse will put his foot in a bog. Moreover, the bogs seem to be drying up. Millersford and Raik's Brake, for instance, have become considerably firmer within the memory of men now living. For the rest there is no better country in which to watch hounds at their work in the open. The pedestrian fox-hunter is favoured by the Forest, for often a bog that is dangerous for horses can be traversed in safety by the human being jumping from hag to hag of spongy moss which will support him, though it may sway and give—as it on springs—beneath his weight. It is only the innocent abroad—the stranger to the Forest—that will be caught. To-day as of old the biggest fields are seen in April, when Lyndhurst is thronged with visitors attracted either specially by the hunting or by the general beauty of spring-tide in the Forest.

In the past, as we have shown, Mr. Mills hunted a pack of harriers, but to-day there are no harriers in the Forest.

The otter-hunting is not first-rate. The streams are not deep enough nor fast enough to form the succession of long pools and sharp rapids, which give otter and hound their alternate opportunities, and make the sport exciting. Mr. Collier used, for several years, to bring his noted pack from Devonshire for a week or two in the Forest; and his namesake and nephew, the present master, follows in his steps. In exceptionally dry seasons, it is, of course, useless to attempt otter-hunting in the comparatively small streams of the Forest, and the hounds, in such seasons, do not pay their accustomed visit. The stream running through Brockenhurst and Boldre, the Beaulieu River, and the stream that passes through Landford and Plaitford to Totton, are the favourite "draws." On a lovely summer's morning, to rise with the lark, and be at the meet by five o'clock, or half-past, with the fresh dew upon the grass, and all the purest scents and colours of the early day in the Forest, is so delightful an experience, that you reproach yourself that any later hour ever finds you in bed. The walk by the side of the sparkling stream, on the dry turf or springy heather, is invigorating alike to mind and body. If all these influences are inadequate to your perfect invigorating, you may apply to the hospitality of friends in carriages in case of famine or of drought. It is all very charming. It is extremely likely that you will not see an otter; and we all know what Bishop Whately said of the effects of early rising. But you only begin to think of that side of the question when you get home.

What with the otter-hunting and the "cubbing," which begin in August, to fill any little gaps that may be left over, it cannot be said that the Forest fulfils amiss the original purpose of its afforesting. Even blank days lose half their bitterness amid the compensations of such beautiful scenery that a man may be pardoned an occasional glance at it, even when he be engaged in "'untin',' the sport of kings—the image of war without its guilt, and only twenty-five per cent. of its danger."

THE BEAUTIES OF FLORA

UNLESS our previous chapters have been altogether inadequate in their suggestions, they will have put before the reader a general notion of the Forest as a whole, with those manifold sylvan beauties of which the striking features are the lichen-covered oaks and massive-stemmed beeches. Certain noted clumps and individuals of these and other kinds of trees are as well known to the forester (and are certainly as well worthy of being known) as any human dwellings or edifices in the district.

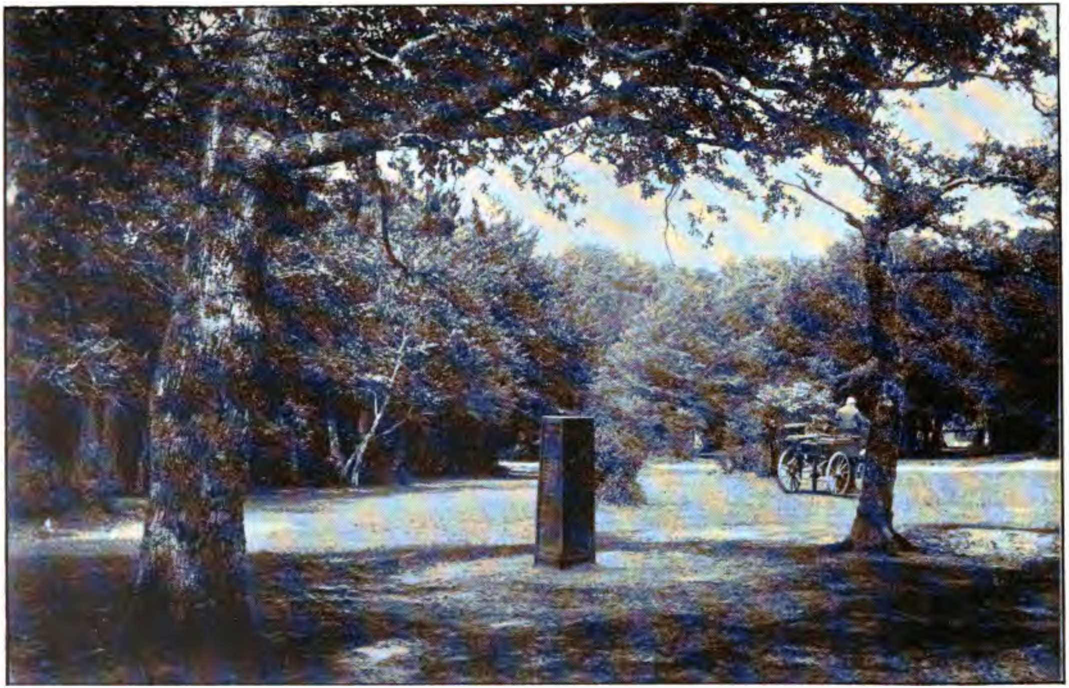
Close to Burley Lodge, on the south-west side of the Forest, stands a clump of oak trees of great size and age which are known as the Twelve Apostles. Doubtless they made up the round dozen at the date at which they were christened. To-day, however, time and weather have dealt so hardly with them that their number is but eight. Gilpin, writing more than a hundred years ago, describes them as being of a venerable aspect even in his day. At that time they stood on the lawn of a master keeper's lodge in the occupation of the Duke of Bolton. The office of Master Keeper was abolished, and the lodge pulled down; but still the old oaks—or what remain of them—survive, only a little more venerable than when Gilpin wrote of them.

At one time there were in the Forest several of these master keepers' lodges. The most charmingly situated of them was at Boldrewood, surrounded by the beautiful oaks and beeches which especially flourish in that part of the Forest. Lord Delawarr inhabited it, as Master Keeper of the Boldrewood Walk, in the last century. Its last occupant was the late Lady Londonderry, and at her death it was demolished.

A fine individual of the oak tribe is the Knightwood Oak, which measures over nineteen feet in girth, and at Boldrewood are two very fine trees known respectively as the

King and Queen Oak. There was a very famous oak at Cadnam, which was said by the natives to throw out buds each Christmas day. In truth there seems but little doubt that it did show signs of young shoots in the winter time, but that it was so exact to a day is scarcely to be credited. The legend goes that the monks, in olden time, forced on buds by artificial heat, and then persuaded a countryman—was it, perchance, by the medium ot small bribes, or only of indulgences?—to stick these forced buds on to the tree. It is always thus—the explainers of miracles suggest explanations far more miraculous than the miracles explained. That a forester should have been deceived by the forced bud is too large a proposition for our credulity. It is much simpler to accept the original miracle without reserve. On the other hand this particular oak was struck down by lightning two or three years ago, which is unfortunate in two respects. In the first place it does not "jump with" the theory that the tree was supernaturally cared for, and in the second it makes it impossible for us to test the miracle by experiment. Botanists, declining to receive the miracle, yet convinced that the tree sprouted in winter, have suggested that its forbears lived in a country whose spring-tide corresponded to our winter-tide, and that the Cadnam tree maintained its inherited instincts in spite of a change of climate. Thus black swans, in this country, sanguinely attempt nursery experiments at the date of the Australian spring. The cold and frost are not tempered to them, however, for all their pious faithfulness to their traditions. The buds of the Cadnam oak were always frost-bitten, like those of the famous Glastonbury thorn, with which nature used to play a similar little practical joke.

Until the early part of last century the oak was standing off which it was said that Walter Tyrrell's arrow glanced into the heart of the Red King. With the fall of the oak the story of the arrow's deflection fell too—historians now affirming that the arrow flew nice and straight, with no deflection from oak trees, from the bow-string to the king's heart. The evidences for this view we have briefly noted before. We may add an additional confirmation drawn from Wise's description of King Rufus. He was—according to Wise—of inelegant figure, with red hair, redder complexion, and eyes of different and inharmonious colours. Obviously this was a man whom anybody would have shot at sight, and we cannot but think that Walter Tyrrell deserved well of the human kind. After all, though, it is unlikely that Wise ever saw King Rufus, and he may not have been as red as he was painted. The tree which for so many years robbed Walter Tyrrell of some of the credit he deserved, stood in the valley of Canterton, at the foot of Stoney Cross Hill. When the tree died Lord Delawarr, in 1745, put up a stone inscribed to its memory. Trippers so set to work to supplement the beauty of the original inscription by adding their initials to it, that it was found necessary, a hundred years later, to put a cage round the stone. This good work was done by William Sturges Bourne, the Warden, and survives still to the annoyance of initial-carvers who *faute de mieux* now hack the trunks of the surrounding trees. Quite near the "Rufus Stone" is a curious little joke of nature—an oak and a beech growing, to all appearance, from one stem. Beside it is the *al fresco* establishment of the Messrs. Peckham Brothers, where cocoanuts are knocked down (or not knocked down, as the case may be) at "a penny a shy." The practised "squoyler" of the Forest is expensive in cocoanuts at a penny a shy, but doubtless the brothers take it out of the ingenuous stranger. They exhibit the beech and oak aforesaid, quite as if it were a prodigy of their own production, with a very proper pride. All the summer and autumn this favoured spot is a heaven—or a pandemonium—of trippers. Its chief rival is Mark Ash, but the latter is not quite so easy of access. The Mark Ash beeches are glorious trees with huge stems and great moss-covered roots crawling out from them far and wide. At Vinney Ridge there is a remarkably fine beech, and Bramshaw Wood is also famed for them. Where in the Forest,



THE "RUFUS STONE." [*To face p.* 180.

however, can one fail to see fine beeches? The shingles of Salisbury Cathedral came from Bramshaw Wood. In the Forest the people sometimes use the dry beech leaves for stuffing mattresses.

Before the enclosure was made at Sloden there was a magnificent show of fine old yew trees. A goodly number still remain at the upper end of the enclosure—a remnant that testifies very amply to what their glory must have been in their prime. Some are splendid specimens, and if you stand underneath and look up at the delicate red berries, with the light shining through them, against the intensely dark green of the foliage, you may believe yourself in a wonderful fairyland surrounded by a host of little fairy lanterns. In the old days the forester can have been at no lack of good yew timber for his bow, for specimens of these splendid trees are to be seen everywhere throughout the Forest. It was specially the boast of the English yeoman that none but he could bend his bow. The phrase has reference to the peculiar English style of archery in which the bow was not *drawn*, as the French drew it, by drawing the bowstring towards the archer, but, *bent* by pushing the bow, with straightening left arm, away from the body.

The Forest is rich, too, in another tree of peculiar but very opposite beauty—the birch, whose graceful feathery foliage and silver stem gleaming whitely throws into such fine contrast the more solid glories of the stouter trees. They grow in especial profusion in the neighbourhood of Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst.

Wise—usually so accurate—falls into a curious error with regard to the chestnut trees in the Forest. He argues, fairly enough, that the chestnut is shown to have existed in bygone years in the Forest, by the fact that old chestnut beams may be seen in several of the churches. His inference is fair, if not inevitable; but when he proceeds to say that now there are no chestnut trees in the Forest, except an occasional one at Boldrewood, one longs to take him by the hand and personally conduct him through Backley Wood, which lies between Bratley and Ridley, and is, practically, a wood of chestnut trees. In autumn the ground beneath them is covered with the fruit, which gypsies and villagers collect in sacks—for sale for human eating, if it be a good year for the fruit's growth, but for the feeding of pigs (and so, less immediately for human service) if the fruit be poor and small. Backley Wood, which is now thrown open, was planted in 1829. It is significant that chestnut trees are apt to grow very "shakey" in the Forest.

The Scottish fir, of which we have spoken before, is so numerous now, and blends its fine colour and outlines so harmoniously with the hues and contours of the indigenous trees, that it is difficult to believe that previous to 1776 there was not in the whole area of the Forest a single conifer (*vide* "Brief History of the Arboriculture of the New Forest," by the Hon. Gerald Lascelles). The firs were first planted by way of an experiment in Ocknell Clump, and have multiplied and replenished the earth so amazingly that they have become as holy a horror to a certain contingent in the New Forest, as the rabbit to the Australian sheep-runner. The Douglas fir has also been introduced and thrives well. Forty years ago the deodar was planted from seed brought home from India (*vide* Mr. Lascelles, as above), but has proved only a partial success. Larch has been planted here and there, chiefly as a protection to seedlings of other species, but experience seems to show that the larch does not make much headway in southern England. The ash and mountain ash are to be seen occasionally, but are not common. Very few elms, to the best of our knowledge, are to be found within the Forest proper.

Of the lowlier growths the blackthorn or wild plum is perhaps the commonest and certainly the most impressive. Its bloom, preceding its foliage, comes forth, under the cherishing of the most cruel winds of spring, in clumps of feathery whiteness thrown out against the purple-black—sloe-black—wood. And the sloes themselves, the fruit of the blackthorn, abound in the autumn, and are plucked by the people to the tune of five

THE GREAT BEECH TREE, MARK ASH. [To face p. 184.

shillings a bushel, wholesale, to be made into sloe-gin, an excellent liqueur. They enter into other drinks. When port wine went out of fashion we were told that it was made of log-wood and old boots. Since it has returned to fashion the demand for sloes has increased proportionately, affording strong grounds for inference that other things besides the log-wood and the boots are of its composition. This blackthorn and its beauty are not without its thorn, both actual and metaphorical—the "blackthorn winter," as the forester calls it, comes "sure as death and taxes" after a snap of biting wind, often with snow upon its wings, in spite of the kindliest promise of some warm spring days.

The "merry" tree, as it is called, the small cherry tree (French *mérise* and *mérisier*) grows abundantly. Till about two years ago an annual fair was held for the sale of its fruit. A part of Bramshaw village is locally known as the Merry Orchard.

The wealth of ivy is a beautiful feature of the Forest. It climbs the trees and then comes hanging in long trails that sway with the breeze. It forms a kindly covering for old and naked trunks, embracing them and clothing them with the beauties of its own cool foliage, ever green.

In spring the hawthorn is luxuriant, and at every turn one sees the sheets of its snow-white blossom. The spindle-berry bush with its gorgeous fruit—gorgeous but poisonous as the nightshade—appears here and there, and now and again we come upon a crab-apple.

The hollies have been mentioned before. They are a large and most pleasant feature of the New Forest. All the year round their rich dark foliage gleams among the tenderer greens of summer or more sombre winter hues, and at the latter season they are decked with such a wealth of scarlet berries as one can scarcely credit who has only known the holly berry as a Christmas decoration. The holly grows to so great a size as to place it outside the list of undergrowths—it takes its place among the Forest trees. Yet, beautiful as it is, one almost grudges its profusion, which often blots out the infinite vista of the tree stems in which there is a more poetic and suggestive beauty than the holly possesses.

The Forest is rich in marsh flowers and most of those productions of flora which are lovers of soft boggy soils ; yet, singularly enough as it may seem at first glance, is wanting in those more universally common wild flowers which we should expect to see carpeting every yard of ground. Virtually there are no primroses. A patch here and there you may see, but of that "carpet," whereof landscapists in pen and ink are so fond of writing, there is no appearance. Occasional bluebells and wood anemones, somewhat more plentiful, occur, but the contrast is singular when one looks over one of the Forest fences (which to the uninitiated eye is but a fence dividing one part of the Forest from another, but which the born forester knows, as if by instinct, to be a boundary between the Forest and some private ground)—it is curious, looking over this slender landmark, to note the sharp difference between the veritable "carpet" of wild flowers on the private ground and the bare stretches of the common floor. The explanation is not far to seek. Private property or common land alike would naturally produce the carpet; but whereas the rights of property are its tolerable protection on the one side of the fence, on the other it is "grouted" up, trampled upon and destroyed by every pig, cow, or pony that has a snout wherewith to grout, or a hoof wherewith to trample.

Foxgloves are fond of growing in the banks of the streams and here and there among the trees, and the tangle is a mixture of blackberry and dog roses. The bramble, however, is not very luxuriant: it is not a good blackberrying country. But the "predominant partner," so to speak of it, is the honeysuckle. It grows in wonderful and wonderfully beautiful profusion. It is predominant in the tangle, but, not satisfied with that, it winds its stealthy way through the midstof the densest hollies, climbs the stems of the barest and unfriendliest trees, and finally justifies its intrusions by thrusting forth, here, there, and everywhere, when least expected, a glorious head and spray of most luscious, beautiful and golden blossom, throwing into all the air around its own sweet intoxicating scent. The stems of the honeysuckle grow to quite a stalwart size, and one of the present writers had a strand of three stems of honeysuckle, intertwined by their natural growth, that had not a less united thickness than an ordinary man's arm.

Of heather there is a great abundance. Though it scarcely grows to the height or bushiness of some of the Scottish heather, still less to that of some of the great clumps of the Irish bogs, it can nowhere in the world be excelled in the brilliant splendour of its bloom. There are three distinct kinds of heather in the Forest—the early "bell," the larger kind of the common heather, and the smaller flowered "ling," which blooms latest and most profusely. All of them are found in that white variety which is supposed to bring so much good luck to the finder. It is disputed which kind of white heather is the most potent in this regard; but in all probability they are much on an equality. From year to year there is a good deal of difference in the beauty and splendour of the heather bloom; and it is to be noted that the years which produce the finest crop of purple heather are also the years in which the white heather is most abundant. It appears, therefore, that the white colour can be in no way regarded as a morbid condition of the other, on the analogy of the albino variety in rabbits, ferrets, and so on.

That curious plant, the carnivorous "sundew," is very common, and there is one spot in the Forest, at the foot of "Old Anstey's Wood," where wild lilies of the valley are abundant. This "Old Anstey's Wood," as it is disrespectfully called, is about a mile and a half from Fritham.

Ferns grow finely in the Forest shade. The royal fern, *Osmunda regalis*, is by no means so plentiful as Wise's description would imply. It is still seen, however, in marshy places, and it is likely enough that it is not so numerous as when he wrote. The maiden-hair is spoken of, both by Wise and others, as growing in the Forest, but it has never happened to the present writers to see it. The lady fern and the sweet-scented fern are common. The hart's tongue occurs, but more rarely, and the poly-pody is fairly plentiful, generally choosing for its home the mossy clefts and forks of the old oaks. Of mosses themselves the Forest produces at least one variety peculiar to the locality.

Toadstools and fungi of every sort, size, and colour abound. There are big brown and yellow ones, scarlet and white ones, and tiny little fellows scarlet all over. In some years mushrooms are fairly plentiful, and in the local opinion no mushrooms are equal in flavour to those that grow in the Forest. Mr. Baring Gould,* who is generally so clever in putting in the right touches to give the local colouring, makes some little mistake about truffles. He has a picturesque account of a pack of truffle dogs kept especially for hunting the truffle in the Forest. They hunt most things in the Forest, it is true, but not truffles, because there are none to hunt. The truffle is a lover of the chalk soil; and though you may find him in Dorsetshire and on the Wiltshire Downs, you will not find him in the New Forest.

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* "The Deserts of Southern France."

Now there is not a shadow of doubt that many corners of the world can show more grand and wilder scenery, but none, we think, can surpass it in delicate woodland beauty or in that soft influence, which has in it something better than beauty, that comes so winningly into the forester's heart, and fills him with so ardent a love of his home. Sylvan scenery, above all others, has such variety of charm with the changing seasons. In springtide the budding leaves of beech and oak tree form a veil of most delicate lace-work, green and translucent, so that the sun-rays passing through it are tinged with the warmth of the same delicate green, and all colours and outlines are made soft beneath it. Through the chequered meshes of this veil the sunbeams steal and fleck the ground with alternate light and shade. The thorns are decked in a bridal garment of snowy blossom, sweeping away like the trains and flounces of a woodland nymph draped for Pan's great wedding feast. The tangle is putting forth green or red-brown buds, and below, again, is the softest carpet of moss or sward laid on the most mysterious passages which lead in and out and down vast avenues of the stalks of the bracken fern. The bracken itself is uncurling on the top of those delicate stems, opening its tender young eyelids on the beautiful world. So it goes on, a forest—a new forest—of delicate stems and uncurling heads—on, on, as far as the eye can reach, until one expects to see the fairies and pixies (whom one *knows* to be there) peeping round the stems, or coming, in glad troupes, down the green passages. In spring the Forest is a fairyland.

In summer it is still beautiful, wonderfully beautiful, but more fly-land than fairy-land. It is of too robust and florid a green for fairy-land. The wealth of greenery is ubiquitous. Ubiquitous, too, is the forest fly, as well as every other sort of fly, so that you have no time to look at scenery or for fairies. The bracken now is no longer a matter of curling heads, but of great broad flat out-spread arms. Here and there it has grown so high as to be on the level of your own head, and so thick that you cannot force your way through its density. The trees now are a mass of foliage which conceals, with its uniform green, the varied detail of trunks and branches, save where the midsummer shoots from the oaks give a spray of relief with their vivid green or "burnt sienna" tints.

In some years (1894 was an instance) the Forest is visited by "the caterpillar innumerable." He feeds on the oak leaves until the trees are denuded as if the season were mid-winter. The bare sticks standing out on a blue June sky have a strangely weird effect, as of a child old before its time, say Dombey *fils*.

Artists in sylvan effects love the Forest, but it is not in summer that they prefer to visit it. The annual picture show at Lyndhurst, however, though held in July and August, well represents local art; but perhaps the show is the opportunity of the buyer, rather than the producer, whose opportunities, after all, are perennial. They are perennial, but perhaps they are best just after the months of the picture show—in autumn. This show is held in that fine New Forest Hall which Lyndhurst owes, amongst other good things, to the enterprise of Mr. W. Gerrard. Autumn, beyond question, is the "glory of the year" for the Forest, gorgeous in its woodland colouring, tender in the mists of its mornings. The richness of the colouring cannot be imagined by one who has not seen an entirely woodland landscape in autumn. The reds, the browns, the yellows of the foliage are not less striking than the hues of the ubiquitous bracken that shades away from gold to brown, and from brown to red, till it is ripe for the fern-cutter's scythe. The fern-cutter himself, piling on to his cart the red-brown bracken, or at work, knee-deep among the fern, is a picturesque point enough on so beautiful a background.

But though autumn is the crown of the year, you can at no season, in the Forest, escape the beautiful. Drear November itself has its own peculiar beauty. In the early morning the Forest is swathed in a silver mist through which the sun, a weakly yellow thing, pushes its feeble rays so far as to quicken the dead silver of the mist into the soft warmth of the opal's hues. The old oaks stand stretching out appealing limbs clad in a ragged garment of grey lichen. Everywhere lichen-clad oak trees are about you, their hoary heads as they retreat melting into the silvery mist, their dark stems a blur in the haze, nothing catching the light brightly but the dewdrops on the tangle and the big pool of water at foot of one or other of the oaks. The pool will reflect the struggling yellow sun and the scraggy, grey-bearded branches.

There are those who think, after all, that winter is the most beautiful of the seasons, and beautiful the Forest can look at that cruel time, with its every branch and twig silvered with the hoar frost and the indescribable hush and silence of the snow in all the land. The Forest, with its frequent undergrowth, never presents that unbroken stretch of snow-clad surface which becomes so wearisome in a long winter. The evergreen of the hollies and their scarlet berries are ever there to vary the monotony of the effect, and the firs with their dark foliage and russet stems lend bright features of interest.

Even the open spaces provide several wintry points of view which the artist has not scorned as his subject. In the middle of the picture, a stream frozen into a cold yellow gleam of ice that reflects the setting sun, in the foreground the wintry heath, and for background a patch of bare black trees against the sun. To all this scenery in its manifold variety, Mr. Short, a local artist, has done not inconsiderable justice with his brush.

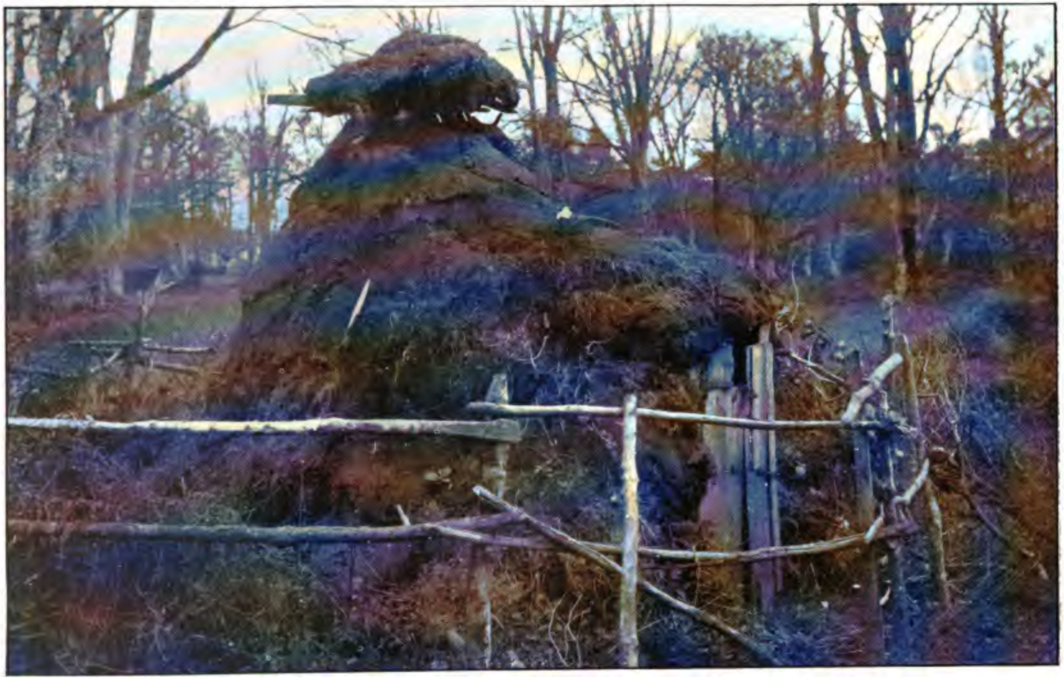
It is hard for the forester to stop, when once he has taken the praise of his Forest for his theme. Let his enthusiasms be forgiven him, for at least they are harmless, and it is always possible—perhaps probable—to skip.

CHARCOAL-BURNERS AND QUEER CHARACTERS

A QUAINT feature of the Forest are the charcoal-burners' huts. You come upon them, now and again, almost hidden beneath the tangle and the greenwood tree, in the midst of a circle of blackened, charcoal-strewn earth, looking like the magic circle within which are enacted very dark rites. The rites are smoky enough in truth, and so are the priests of the ritual. Their temple is a little hut; their altar a mound of wood, for ever smouldering, covered over with turves through which the smoke perpetually is oozing; and all round and about are stacks of oak and beech piled ready for the burning. Oak they will use, but prefer the less obdurate beech. The mysterious little scene is in harmony with its environment of solemn stately trees.

This smoky, grimy *culte* has had its devotees for who can say how many ages. The Romans, coming to the Forest, found ancient Britons burning charcoal. It is, in fact, the most ancient of British industries, and it continues until now. It was about the only industry or art of peace possessed by the Britons, and one may imagine the pleased surprise of the relatively cultured invaders in finding something that an ancient Briton could do. It was an useful something, too, for the Romans—useful for making their earthenware vessels. There is evidence—as we have seen in the barrows—that charcoal was used in cremation by the inhabitants of the Forest as far back as the age of bronze; and it is singular that these old Britons, who were anything rather than scientific, should have hit on the mode of funeral rite which is most approved, on sanitary grounds, by the science of the nineteenth century, confirming the experiments of Löwitz on the properties of charcoal in the eighteenth.

The Romans found the natives making a



Charcoal-Burner's Hut.

[*To face p.* 200.

rough kind of pottery, but they introduced the art of glass-making, in which also charcoal has its functions. Therefore the invasion, far from disturbing the industry of the charcoal-burner, must have fostered and nourished it by creating a larger demand for his produce. Living, as he did, in a densely wooded region, and probably with unlimited license of tree-cutting, he ought to have made the wheels of his life-work go easily.

We lose sight of the charcoal-burner for awhile after this era; and at his next appearance in history he is assisting at the obsequies of the Red King. There was no great pomp or ceremony at these obsequies. It was a case of "*le roi est mort, vive le roi*"; and all the retinue that had accompanied William Rufus on the fatal hunt were now riding hard for Winchester to hail his successor king. Therefore the funeral was what might be called a quiet one. Purkis, a charcoal-burner, took the king's body to his hut, while he made his preparations for setting out with it to Winchester. And there the cottage remains in Canterton, dilapidated and uninhabitable, but jealously protected from injury by the present owner, Mr. John Jeffreys, of Canterton Manor. Likely enough, some patchwork of bricks and mortar has been put in since the days of Rufus, but it is more than probable that the fireplace—to which the fuel rights attach—remains much as it has been. This Purkis would have been in no trouble to find his way to Winchester, for Mr. Shore tells us that the charcoal-burners often went to Winchester to sell their charcoal, which must have been in request for metal-working and many trades before coal so largely took its place.

The race of Purkis, in reward maybe for the loyal piety of this historical one, has flourished exceedingly in the Forest, and burns charcoal to this day. The charcoal-burning trade, however, is not what it used to be. The big manufacturers send down their own men to the Forest nowadays to burn the charcoal they require, and thus interfere sadly with the hereditary trade. About five years ago, near Castle Malwood, a Purkis was burning charcoal, with all the old rites, in a temple and precinct so concealed among the trees, that unless one stumbled on it by chance there was little likelihood of one's finding it. The trade, however, has lately been drifting out of the hands of the Purkis family in favour of the Tinsleys ; but in no case has it its olden glories in consequence of the competition of the charcoal-burners who come from outside the Forest. The old encampment at Mark Ash is still there, but that at Castle Malwood has disappeared, and this caste which formed a living link with the pre-historic past seems likely to die out altogether.

One of the most remarkable men in the Forest is "Brusher." "Mills" is his name, but that is of no importance because no one calls him by it. He acquired his honourable title—so rumour, at least, has it—by the zeal with which his sporting instincts prompted him to sweep the wicket of the New Forest cricket ground between the innings. He is a solitary hermit, this Brusher, dwelling in a little hut much like a charcoal-burner's ; his profession, however, is not burning charcoal but catching snakes. He does not trouble to "charm" his snakes by any cunning sing-song or pan-pipe—though it is said that he has been seen, when things have gone amiss, meditatively gazing at the sweet sunset light on a pond in the Forest, and uttering to the desert air language to which the deaf adder, who had any sense of propriety and parliamentary speech, would have done most rightly in shutting her ears. His snake-catching methods, however, are prompt and drastic—he nips them with finger and thumb behind the head. It is charmingly simple. It is only when you begin to get your fingers down somewhere near the vicious black head and diamond marking of a viper that you begin to think there is some genius, not to say heroism, after all, in Brusher's plan. If you let the viper alone he will not think of attacking you, but there is a chance that you may tread on him unawares as he basks, coiled up in the sun; and then it is only in viperine nature that he should express his objections after his manner. This manner is not quite so lethal as is generally supposed.

No doubt people have often died from a viper's bite, but only when they have been in previous ill-health. Similarly people have died of a fly's bite, but fly bite is not necessarily fatal, for all that. There is no doubt, however, that the bite of a viper has very disagreeable, not to say dangerous, consequences, and the head of a dog which has been bitten by one swells up in a most unhandsome manner. So it is apparent that Brusher is taking, if not his life, at least his health, between his finger and thumb, when he grips the viper behind the neck. Most of his business, however, is with the ringed snakes, which can do no harm to anybody, and are beautiful creatures. Now it might be thought that the demand for live snakes was small, and that for all his heroism Brusher's livelihood would be precarious. But this is not the case. At the Zoological Gardens are certain cannibal snakes—hamadryads—which decline to eat anything but snakes, and it is their demand that Brusher supplies. When Lord Londesborough used to live at Northerwood, just above Lyndhurst, he used to give

Brusher a shilling a head for every snake, ringed or viper (slow worms did not count), to send them up to the cannibals in the Gardens. Since his patron has gone Brusher likely enough does not get such liberal terms, though, we believe, he still supplies the Zoo. A shilling, after all, does not seem exorbitant for catching a viper with your naked hand. Brusher has been snake-catching for fourteen years, and during that time has caught 3,186 adders. He has no dubious answer to the vexed question whether or no adders swallow their young in time of danger. He has seen hundreds do so, and will show the performance to others—to the sceptical Mr. Tegetmeier if he pleases—any time in the months of July and August.

A less eminent man in the same line lives in the north end of the Forest, and may generally be seen with the black neck of a beer bottle sticking from his pocket. He catches snakes, owls, and other queer things which a few queer people have a fancy for. Sometimes he will appear with a trout or two for sale, and a florid explanation that they came out of "a bit of a stream that runs through his sister's garden." One of the present writers bought an owl from "Bob," as this pseudo-Brusher is called, and a day or two later had a visit from Bob, who had for sale a snake which he had tethered, in the meantime, by its head to the bar of the back gate. This Bob was a cunning fellow, beyond question, as a boy; for an old man—his contemporary—related that he often used to go trout poaching with Bob—"but," said he, "I don't know how it was, but I allus got the beatin', while Bob, he was eatin' the trout."

Bob therefore is a great man, but he is not so great as Brusher.

In olden days there was a very great man in the Forest, if greatness can be measured by the magnitude of the schemes he imagined for the Forest's profit. This great man was one Andrew Yarranton by name, and to give some notion of the scale of his imaginative schemes it needs only to name the title of his book—"England's improvement by land and sea, showing the way to outdo the Dutch by sea." All this was to be achieved by making Christchurch into a first-class harbour. His book, which is very quaint reading, was published in 1698. There was nothing of what was wanted—according to this excellent old writer—that Christchurch could not give. Outside the harbour he discovered that there was a great ridge of ironstones; on the shore side these ironstones had also silted up into a dense mass, leaving a fine deep anchorage, defended from every wind, and roomy enough for fifty or sixty fifth or sixth-rate frigates. The ironstones, with the abundance of charcoal in the neighbourhood, were evidently a disposition of providence to enable the king to forge his cannon on the spot. Hengistbury Head, the old Roman encampment close by, could hold 100,000 men, and practically would be impregnable. He proposed, further, that a jetty should be run out to form a dockyard for the construction of ships. The timber for the ships could be brought down the Avon from the Forest at about one-fifth of the cost of taking it to Portsmouth. His scheme was marvellously complete in detail—the ironstones were to be taken up the river to two furnaces at Ringwood, where the guns and ships' ironwork were to be made. He reckoned that there was enough decayed wood in the Forest to supply charcoal for four ironworks for ever. Thus the king would get his guns made cheap, and for the expense of £10,000 might have an impregnable defensive fort covering a fine dockyard in which three ships of war might be in building at a time. Moreover, Christchurch was so convenient to the French coast that ships could easily run over, and that at a time when the wind might not serve from the more easterly ports. Altogether, Yarranton's seems to have been a sound and well-thought-out scheme, though the fervour of his enthusiasm occasionally raises a smile.

Incidentally he mentions a fact of some little interest—namely, that a large proportion of the New Forest charcoal was sent to Cornwall in his day—no doubt in the mining and smelting interest.

But Yarranton's, like many another "best-laid scheme of mice or men," went "agley.' No king's councillors favoured him. He complains that people try to draw everything into their own "drags and nets," by which he meant, no doubt, that the Portsmouth "ring" was too strong for him. What a blessing for us to-day, who love the New Forest, that he found it so.

SHOOTING

A DEAL of gentle and good-natured chaff goes on in the Forest at the expense of those who are known as "licensees." The licensees, some thirty or forty in number, are those who have taken out the twenty pound license, which permits shooting in the Forest under certain restrictions. It is possible to obtain a thirty pound license, which includes the privilege of taking out a friend. It is chiefly friends, thus taken out to shoot, that have come back to raise the laugh against the simple licensee. The laughter is all very good-humoured and friendly, and the licensees themselves are the first to join in it; but there is, beyond doubt, an element of humour in the disproportion between the distances that these brave men tramp, and the lightness of the "bag" with which they return home.

The Forest is the home of the pheasant, the partridge, and the wood-pigeon; the hare and the rabbit, the woodcock and the snipe —both full and jack. It needs not to mention the red deer and the fallow, for there is a special clause in the license forbidding the shooting of these. Black game, of which there remain a few, are in the same category; of pheasants, it is only permitted to shoot the cocks; and the partridge shooting—and shooting generally—does not begin until October 1st. Thus the Forest partridge gets the benefit of an extra "close" month. Your license, however, by no means gives you a free hand, even thus far, after October 1st. It does but give leave for three days' shooting in each week, and on these days only between the hours of 10 A.M. and sunset. It licenses no nocturnal poacher. Neither is it permitted to shoot within any of the enclosures of the Forest. Its restrictions are not done with yet. It permits you to shoot over no more than a single brace of dogs, and to impress into your service but one beater. If two licensees join forces, they may use the services of two beaters, but still are only permitted a single couple of dogs. The dogs may be setters, spaniels, etc., at your pleasure. There is a severe restriction, however, as to the species of your beater. He must be one who has not been convicted of any poaching offence, and this is a provision that narrows down their ranks very finely.

Now there is not the slightest doubt that all these stringent clauses—cutting down the freedom of the licensee—are imperative for the general good. If the restrictive clauses were at all less stringent, game would become so scarce that no one would care to take out a license at all. As it is, we have said that the result is almost laughably inadequate to the labour of the licensed shooter; and if the result were at all less, no one would take the license or the labour. As matters stand, it is quite extraordinary to see the content with which the licensee, who has helped to kill his two or three hundred pheasants the day before at a private "shoot," will sally forth, with his couple of setters or spaniels, in the conviction that a single cock-pheasant, with a jack snipe and a rabbit, will be as much return as he can reasonably expect for a day's hard walking. It might be thought that the provision in the license that forbids shooting before 10 A.M. would at least curtail the hours of work. But this is by no means so, for though shooting may not be commenced before ten, that is by no means to say that no shooter will be astir before that hour, in order to make good—by being first in possession—his claim to the beat he happens to fancy. The licensees appear to show great mutual courtesy. A certain give and take are necessary to make such a condition of things tolerable, and all readily obey the unwritten law that gives to a man without interruption the beat on which he has been the first to enter.

The truth is that in all this kind of shooting, there are infinite compensations that go to make up for the slenderness of the bag. There is the beauty and the wildness of the scene, there is the pleasure of seeing your own dogs working in obedience to your own command, there is the sense that you are hunting a really wild thing—one whose wits have been all sharpened and set on edge by the persecution of previous licensees, and whom it will be a real triumph to slay—it is all much more like the hunting that our ancestors used to do than these modern battues of tame pheasants at the corner of a made covert; and, after all, our inherited tastes are those that give us the greatest joy in their gratification. For all these reasons the licensee can go forth with pleasure on his day of toil, with pleasure of a peculiar quality that the private shoot does not give, albeit that when he comes home in the evening he may be quite ready to join in the laugh at the inadequacy of his "bag."

It is in this hearty, good-humoured spirit that all the New Forest was very willing to laugh, without offence, at the local references in the "Song of the Licensee," given in the course of a comic operetta performed a few years back in the New Forest Hall at Lyndhurst.

SONG.

Some folks won't go a-shooting without a grand "battue,"
A waggon-load of beaters and a first-rate luncheon too;
They imagine they enjoy it as they see the long tails fall,
But I who know much better, I would tell them—not at all.
For, for unadulterated sport there's nothing can compare,
With a free and easy, go-where-you-pleasy
Day in the Forest fair.

Chorus.

And whatever is said to the contrar*ee*,
The contrar*ee*, the contrar*ee*,
There's nothing on earth that pleases me
Like the rollicking life of a Licensee.

Oh! 'Tis jolly of a morning ere the dawn begins to break,
To be up when all are sleeping, and an early start to make.
'Tis true you mustn't shoot till ten, and the waiting is the worst,
But oh! the joy unspeakable to find you're there the first!
For, for glorious excitement there's nothing can compare,
With a happy-go-lucky, snipe-and-wild-ducky
Day in the Forest fair.

Chorus.

And whatever, etc.

There are any amount of pheasants, though I'm told they're always hens.
You may chase the wily rabbit through the woods and o'er the fens.

You may choose between a woodcock or a pigeon in a
tree,
But you mustn't shoot the black game or——a fellow
Licensee!
But for pure unruffled happiness there's nothing can
compare
With a walking, stalking—anything but talking—
Day in the Forest fair.

Chorus.
And whatever, etc.

This is intended for farce, but it expresses the views of the licensee on his life and his license very accurately. He must not shoot his fellow-licensee—indeed, we have said that the licensees treat each other with much mutual courtesy—but this does not extend to showing another a hare in its form or any kindly services of that sort. It is said by scoffers that when a licensee has fired a shot he puts the empty cartridge in his pocket, conveying it far away from the scene of his sport, then sows it on some unlikely spot (as the vendor "salts" a mine) to attract his brother sportsmen, while he may again find a woodcock or a cock-pheasant undisturbed in the warm bit of covert.

Of course, we all know that mistakes sometimes occur, even with the best intentions, when a pheasant gets up between the shooter and the sun—a hen will then look very like her gaudy-plumaged mate. The penalties for such mistakes are not to be inflicted in too Draconian a temper; nevertheless the really sportsmanlike licensee will honestly regret a mistake by which he has broken the law made for his behoof as well as for that of others. For the unsportsmanlike licensee it will perhaps be enough to be careful that he does not make the mistake too often. In the case of a mistake—a most genuinely honest one—of this nature occurring some years back, the beater plucked some feathers off a cock-pheasant which was already in the bag, and threw them down among the scattering of plumage where the hen had fallen. "That's good enough," said he, "for the likes of they"—referring, with scant reverence for their skill in ornithology, to the keepers.

In country of such diversity as the Forest boundaries include, there are opportunities for making a very mixed bag; and there is scarcely less diversity of opinion about the rival merits of setters and spaniels. It depends a little on the kind of bag you wish. Spaniels are perhaps better for brushing about and pushing out to you rabbits and perhaps woodcock, but for pheasants, setters are without doubt the better. Moreover, in this methodless dash of the cheery spaniels, you lose the thrilling excitement of the deliberate drawing on to game of the setter. The spaniel appears to put up game almost as much to its own surprise as to yours; the setter tells you that something is on ahead long before it rises, and draws you on and on until the excitement is almost painful.

The wily and muscular cock-pheasant of the Forest is so cunning and athletic a bird that he sorely tries the patience of a setter, and often a dog that is a little apt to rush in is better than too steady a goer. Before a potterer of the old school, a Forest cock-pheasant would run from Winchester to Christchurch, which is a little far even for a licensee. But part of the Forest is very pretty setter country, where the pheasants come out into the tangle of heather and bracken and gorse-bushes fringing an oak wood. The pheasants love the acorns as much as the pigs love them. But the annoying part of the business is that no setter, however sapient, can distinguish between a cock-pheasant and a hen, and after leading the gun at a hard trot half across Hampshire will sometimes—five times out of six, perhaps—flush the humble hen, and leave the licensee short both of breath and temper. Thus shooting in the Forest becomes somewhat a question of stamina. At any time after the third week in October one cock-pheasant in the bag will send the licensee home contented, and a brace will make him a happy man. Of course, this is supposing a few "various" besides. Five brace of cocks is the best bag of pheasants we have heard of in the Forest, though this record has been reached more than once. Two or two and a half brace is a very good bag all through the first month of the season. Eighty-seven is the biggest bag ever, to our knowledge, killed in any one year by a single gun. Towards the end of December, and in January, the New Forest pheasant becomes so wise and wary that he is almost impossible of approach, and if he be at all able to transmit his qualities, a few generations may find his intelligence very nearly on a level with that of the licensee himself.

Pheasants, we are told, on the authority of T. W. Shore's "History of Hampshire," were introduced into the Forest by the Romans.

It is said that the hunted hare is the finest eating, and certainly it is true that the pheasant of the Forest, whether by reason of the frequency of its hunting, or the wildness of its life and habits, is better eating than the corn-fed birds we ordinarily buy. So, too, the partridges, doubtless because they feed much on the heather and wild things of the moors, and so acquire the flavour of the "hill partridge" of Scotland, are higher flavoured than the birds that are killed in the roots or stubbles. Unfortunately they are not numerous. They are very wild, and a covey may engage a shooter's pursuit during the greater part of an autumnal day without yielding any heavy bag. The French partridges are in about equal numbers with the English. It was not so in Wise's day. He tells us that many years before the date of his writing the red-legged birds were introduced by Mr. Baring of Somerley. Why he should have introduced them into a country where "driving" is obviously impossible one cannot conceive, but, according to Wise, they had almost died out when he wrote. One regrets their subsequent increase. Unless shot at the first rise they will seldom let themselves be flushed again and lead you on—a leg-weary chase—indefinitely.

It is sad that the black game are dying out. As has been stated, one is not allowed to shoot them. In spite of that, they have become scarcer and scarcer until now there is hardly one to be seen. Gilpin says that even in his day they were decreasing, though they must have been, comparatively speaking, very plentiful then. They were regarded as "Royal" birds, being kept for the king's table, and no one, even then, was allowed to shoot them. Early in this century it was the duty of the master keepers to see that sufficient black game was sent to supply the king's larder. The old keeper, whom we have quoted before, says that he has often seen the black game coming down in great numbers to feed on "Burnt Fuzzen," near Brook. For some years after this they were included in the shooting license, and made a welcome addition to the bag. Yet two and a half brace is the biggest head of black game that we have heard of to a single gun in a day. It ought not to account for their annihilation.

Mr. Cumberbatch, the late Deputy-Surveyor, tried grouse in the Forest, putting their eggs into the nests of the black game; but though they made a good "hatch-out," not a single one lived to come to the gun. Capercailzie have also been tried, but without success.

Of course, we all know that the ways of birds are seemingly very capricious, and perhaps the black game are doomed, but it does seem possible that the spread of the Scottish fir tree in the New Forest, which fills some people with such dismay, may prove their salvation, and might also warrant a second trial of the capercailzie; for both these birds and the black game seem very much at home in the fir woods of Scotland.

If birds in general are capricious, surely the most capricious of their race is the woodcock. In some years they are very abundant in the Forest, but of late their numbers have seemed to be on the decrease. In appearance, much of the country seems perfect woodcock ground, and in point of fact the little warm streams sheltered by overhanging thorn tangle and alder scrub will often hold them when they are driven out of their ordinary haunts. In the homely language of the forest-beater, these make a "noble gutter" for a woodcock. Seventy-eight is the best individual bag in the season that we have heard of. In the winter of 1879-80 twenty were shot in four days by one licensee (they used to shoot four days a week in those happier times). It was foggy, frosty weather, and the cock had probably been caught here while migrating, and were afraid to move on. It happens, now and again, that you come on a cock in a bit of open, heathy ground, and in such cases they seem strangely unwilling to rise, and you may watch them for some seconds before they fly.

Scarcely less capricious is the snipe, and no one who has not some special local knowledge is likely to have a successful day with those little long-bills. One marsh looks the very replica of another, and yet, for reasons humanly inscrutable, the one will generally hold a snipe or two—the other never. Certain little patches, even a yard or two of roadside streamlet, will be drawn by the experienced licensee with a certainty of flushing a snipe, which a stranger to the Forest would pass without a second glance. We know one little damp patch, the least alluring in appearance, which will invariably hold a jack-snipe—never a full. Possibly it all has something to do with the temperature of the particular springs.

In olden days the Forest used to give glorious snipe-shooting. Mr. Powell, of Lambscorner, once made his bag for the year up to five hundred snipe. It is to be observed, however, that in that year he got no more than four and a half brace of pheasants, so it is fair to conclude that he paid rather exclusive attention to the snipe. Gilpin speaks of the snipe as very abundant in his day. So lately as 1885 we know of a licensee who got two hundred and fifty snipe during the season—his best day being eleven and a half couple. Lately, however, they seem to have been rather on the decrease. Has it, perchance, anything to do with the exhaustion of moisture by those thirsty Scottish firs? Certainly the snipe were specially scarce after the dry summer of 1893.

After heavy rain the snipe will move from their usual haunts in the marshy lands and bottoms, and may be flushed in the most unlikely places on the high ground, or from pools among the heather. At such times they will often lie very close, especially the jacks; and it has happened several times to one of the present writers to see an unwounded jack-snipe actually caught by the naked hand. This sounds like a fairy tale, but is absolute fact. Many have been killed with a stick, and we know of a licensee who has seriously discussed the advisability of adding to his shooting gear a butterfly net for the capture of the close-lying jacks. This condition is only one of their occasional freaks, however, and normally the snipe—whether jack or full—takes as straight shooting in the Forest as elsewhere. A cream-coloured variety of the full-snipe has been shot in the Forest, and may now be seen—stuffed—in the Hartley Museum at Southampton.

The best of the wild fowling, such as it is, is along the Ipley river, and between Lyndhurst and Beaulieu. Duck, teal, and occasionally widgeon, reward the enterprising sportsman. In the north side of the Forest a duck may now and again be flushed from the larger pools and streams, but the wonder is rather, that they do not more often hold wild fowl.

The hare is almost an extinct quadruped. Half a dozen are not a bad bag for a whole season. In the old days they used to be very plentiful, so much so that a complaint to the master keepers was made that they took too large a place in the royal hampers sent up from the Forest. They would not overload them to-day. On the other hand, rabbits, as often happens, have proportionately increased. 1894-5, especially in the early months, was a wonderfully good year for rabbits. Later on the abnormal rains affected them in the Forest as everywhere else. Two licensees, shooting together, have shot over a hundred in a day quite lately, and some years ago these same sportsmen shot over sixteen hundred head in the season, of which bag rabbits were by far the largest factor. The rabbits vary a good deal in size and quality. Those in Broomy Walk are as fine as anywhere in England; but one cannot challenge comparison with an Ashley rabbit, say, nor with some from other parts of the Forest.

About Burley, again, there are fine bunnies. The New Forest beater has inherited or developed a wonderful eye for detecting a rabbit in its form, and a wonderful skill in dealing with them, when detected, either by clubbing them with his stick or pancaking them by throwing himself flat on top of them, face downwards. To perform this feat without knocking all the breath out of your body it needs to be born a forester.

An occasional wood-pigeon makes a pleasant variety to the bag, but what wary fellows they are, and how shot-proof their plumage. Sometimes, lunching quietly, with your gun within handy reach, beneath a beech tree, a pigeon may come down confidingly within shot. Or, again, when the snow is on the ground some fun may be had stalking them with a white night-gown over your shooting gear.

It is very rarely that the season's bag, even of any two, reaches the total of sixteen hundred head quoted above. From four to six hundred is a good season's bag, and oftener than not the numbers fall short of this.

A total bag of four hundred and seventy-three head in 1885—a good snipe year—consisted of thirty-five pheasants, sixteen partridges, one hare, a hundred and thirty-six rabbits, sixteen woodcock, two hundred and fifty snipe, eleven wild fowl, and eight "various" —no bad result for the modest outlay of twenty pounds. It is true that this was at the time that the license gave permission for four days' shooting in the week. It is but two or three years back that it was changed to the three days a week. It does not seem, however, that the change has made much difference to the aggregate bags. The Forest shooting has always been considered as a pastime, and in no sense as a business. The licensee is expressly forbidden to sell the game he has killed.

The twenty pound license is of no very old standing. In Gilpin's day warrants for shooting in the Forest were issued *gratis* to any persons of respectable position who cared to apply for them. Warrants were also presented, unsolicited, to certain personages, who, in many instances, would no doubt have been very much puzzled to know what to do with them—to the Lord Mayor of London, for example, *honoris causâ*. In those happy times the rabbits were the perquisite of the keepers.

Later it became customary for each of the warrant holders to pay the sum of one pound annually as a subscription to the benefit fund for the widows and orphans of the keepers. From this custom there has grown up the practice of speaking of the warrant holders of those days as "one pound licensees"; but this is a phrase that conveys a wrong idea, for the one pound was entirely a voluntary subscription, and its payment was not a condition of the granting of the license. It grew, no doubt, to be an understood thing that the payment should be made, and very likely there might have been a difficulty in the renewal of the license of any shooter who declined to pay the subscription, but technically it was in no sense a payment for the license. Nowadays the licenses are not merely renewed, but a new one is issued each year. One of the present writers has an old license dated 1815, and issued by Frederick Duke of York as Lord Warden of the Forest. It sets forth that the holder has license to shoot in the Forest, "for his recreation only, and not for the destruction and spoil of the game." The privilege, it further affirms, was "to be used with a moderation that was fitting"—a phrase that seems to appeal with courteous delicacy to the finer feelings of the licensee. It is about thirty years ago that the present charge of twenty pounds was put on the licenses.

In the foregoing account we have indicated, on the whole, the brighter side of the licensee's privileges. He is by no means altogether undisturbed in his exercise of them. It is trying, for instance, on a fine scenting day in October, to find a group of fern-cutters established at work in the middle of your favourite beat. Later in the year you may be afflicted by the ubiquity of the holly-cutters, and constantly you may be startled by the picturesque but not always welcome appearance of the fox-hounds or deer-hounds working through your best prospective covert. We have omitted, too, the rather negative records of those not quite exceptional days on which a solitary jack-snipe or rabbit is the sum total of the bag. We have even heard of a hard day's work with dog and gun which resulted in a simple vegetarian bag of mushrooms and chestnuts. Such is the gloomier side of the sport of the licensee in the Forest which the operetta, from which we quoted above, expresses in the following lament of a sportsman who has sadly changed his tune since his previous outburst of song.

Curtain rises and discovers LICENSEE *leaning against* RUFUS' *stone, his bag beside him. No dogs.*

SONG.

LICENSEE (*dismally*).

I have wandered out to Matley, and I've been to Picket Post,
And I really, if you ask me, can't say which I loathe the most,
I've been out to leafy Boldrewood, and home by Stony Cross,
And all my clothes were torn, and all the cocks were hens *of course*.

And I warn unwary sportsmen who don't wish my fate to share,
From this dreary, weary, never-to-be-a-re—prieve from a life of care.

And on thinking it over it seems to me,
That the life of a regular Licensee,
Is too hard to be done without salar*ee.*

I've worked all day, I've worked all night (but that's 'tween you and me),
And I haven't seen a single thing but a screech owl up a tree.
I've lost my dogs—they're hunting deer—'tis a losing day all round,
For I've lost my temper, lost my way, and lost my twenty pound.
And if ever you want a gruesome day, and a day to make you swear,
Try a wet-and-cold-breezy, freezy (*working himself up*), uneasy, sneezy, greasy, utterly beastly, day in the Forest fair!

And on thinking it over, etc.

The few words that are to be said on fishing in the Forest may as well be written here as elsewhere. In truth the reference might well be made as brief as the famous chapter on snakes in Ireland. Practically speaking, there is no fishing in the Forest. Yet it lies in the country of those noted streams the

Avon and the Test, and there is no doubt that with a certain judicious damming the rivers in the Forest might be made to hold good trout. Always, however, the abundance of trees and undergrowth would be a hindrance to the fly-fisher. A few trout, it is true, are caught in the Brockenhurst stream, in the river at Beaulieu and in the Ipley river. In the Avon, on the northern boundary, trout of four-pound weight have been caught with worm, and two-pound trout have been taken in the stream that goes by the keeper's cottage in the Broomy Walk. Very large fish —both trout and grilse—have been seen in the stream by Rowe Wood, where, no doubt, they have come up to spawn. Virtually, however, the fishing in the Forest, as it is at present, may be said to be *nil.*

DEER-POACHING AND SMUGGLING

"*NON est inquirendum unde venit venison*" ("No one asks who killed the deer") is a charming old maxim of the Forest, quoted by Mr. Gilpin, which, according to certain *contes scandaleuses*, might have made part of the last song and testament of the Swan of the other Avon—the Stratford one. It appears, on the whole, unlikely that Shakespeare ever stole that particular deer; but it is almost certain that he would have stolen deer had he lived in the New Forest. Every one did. A man could scarcely be a self-respecting forester without adding a little gentlemanly deer-stealing to his other means of support. It would have been most unnatural and most un-English if he had not deer-stolen.

The sporting instinct is very deeply ingrained in the solidly-beating heart of the

West Saxon. Deer-killing is an attractive pursuit enough, of itself, as those who have stalked the Scottish red deer will affirm; but when to the deer-killing pure and simple is added the fascinating knowledge that it is illegal—that if taken in the act six months in Winchester Gaol for the first offence, and a year and a day for the second, with heaven knows what ascending scale of pains and penalties for subsequent offences is the outcome—it seems as if scarcely any other pursuit, short of housebreaking, could possess so many delightful elements of excitement. Even over housebreaking it had one feature of superiority, for it had to be followed in the midst of the most charming surroundings —it was to housebreaking as cricket is to racquets, an out-of-door game.

Nowadays the penalty for stealing a deer is twenty pounds. It appears that nobody ever pays it; it is therefore to be presumed that nobody ever steals a deer.

In the old days it is remarkable that nobody, in a broad way of speaking, was ever found guilty of a second offence.

Certainly the proportion of first to second offenders was extraordinarily large. One may suggest many suggestions to account for this; but on the whole the pleasantest is the supposition that even the keepers themselves did not look on the stealing with a very grave eye, and were willing to accept a scapegoat, in the shape of a first offender, in place of the actual culprit. The latter would no doubt find means of making the honourable amend—very likely in the way of haunches of fat buck—to the scapegoat when he came back from Winchester. As for the rest of the people, of course they were all in sympathy with the deer-stealer. Who would not be? Every one has a lurking sympathy for the poacher—except the game-preserver; and where the preserver, as in the case of the New Forest, is merely a vague abstraction, like the Crown, one is scarcely ashamed of the sympathy. It becomes almost as meritorious as cheating a railway company—say, the South-Eastern. As a matter of fact among the old foresters—the seventy-year-olds and upwards—it is rather the exception to find one who has not spent at least three months, as an accessory to the offence, in Winchester Gaol and come out unashamed, and to all intents and purposes (fallow deer always excepted) a perfectly honest man. Every cart or waggon in the Forest had a false bottom for the conjuring away of the carcases of deer. Venison was regarded as fair game by all.

The deer were no man's friend. The commoner hated them because they ate the grass that might have fattened his cows, and the farmer hated them for the damage they wrought to his crops. The Romans are said to have brought the fallow deer; and no doubt in their native home the deer had plenty of people—such as wolves and panthers—to keep them in their proper place. In England, however, after the last wolf had died the death, there was no natural foe to check their increase.

The following extract from a London daily paper of February, 1895—a time of unusually severe and prolonged frost—bears corroborative and quite impartial witness to the truth of the commoners' statement about damage done by fallow deer :—" Despite the unremitting efforts of Mr. M'Kenzie, the Chief Forester of Epping Forest, to supply forage and fodder for the herds of wild deer, which, since the Corporation of the City of London has taken over its custody, have considerably increased in numbers, the severity of the weather has rendered his plans only partially successful. Although the supplies are placed daily at points of rendezvous well known to the Forest keepers, the keenness of hunger has driven the herds into the farmers' stack-yards, and all through Loughton, Theydon Bois, Chingford, and Woodford they approach the hay ricks and corn stacks not only at night, but also in the daytime."

To keep down such plaguesome creatures as these, therefore, must have seemed to the forester—all other considerations apart—a highly meritorious act, and, so far as regarded the Crown, the most loyal servant could scarcely be expected to realise that a deer or two out of so many could be a great loss to the king's majesty. And finally, venison is excellent good eating, and the forester, very likely, had many mouths to fill. A woman, now the mother of a family on the Wiltshire side, says that she and her brothers and sisters were brought up almost entirely on venison, and throve well.

Probably, however, those who made anything of a profession of the deer-stealing, sold most of their venison. It is in regard to this practice that the maxim quoted at the head of the chapter especially applies. Within the Forest bounds themselves, every one could be trusted to ask no inconvenient questions, and if a fallow deer were brought in at night to a dealer's shop in Winchester, it would clearly be the height both of impertinence and of short-sightedness to ask who killed the deer, so long as his venison was fat and cheap.

When we were boys we used to tie young wood-pigeon squabs into the nest so that the old birds should go on feeding them until they were grown to a good useful size for a pie. The foresters did the same, practically, for the deer. They pared the fawn's hoof so as to keep mother and child from straying out of reach until both were good venison. So, too, we would sometimes shoot the old wood-pigeons when we thought they had fattened their young ones sufficiently for us. Another Satanic contrivance of the forester was the hanging of an apple, by a string and a hook, to a stout bough of a tree. This lure was generally as attractive to the deer as to our first mother. But, after all, perhaps the simplest method was to shoot them with a gun.

Mr. Gilpin speaks of a noted deer-stealer of his day who made open boast of being in the habit of killing a hundred bucks a year. Oh, if only this dear man had kept a diary or even an anecdotal game-book! Probably, however, he could not write. He had a gun which could be unscrewed into three parts, which he could thus carry in his pockets or stow away on his person. With these fragments of his gun about him he would often sit and chat and drink with the keepers—standing them drinks, we may imagine, that their weather eye might not be too bright and active—and then, when they were safely out of range, forth he would go and bring down his buck at pleasure. No doubt he was a cheery soul and the best of company. When he had killed his buck, he would carry his carcase away from the scene of death—then, laying it down, would conceal himself in a tree to see if he were followed, and there await the fall of night before taking the venison home. In his cottage he had a larder so cunningly contrived with dummy nails in its door planks, that though the keepers—who knew him well—often came and searched his cottage, they never could find the venison, and he appears to have been one of the few who never saw the inside of Winchester Gaol—unless on a visit to a friend.

But the crowning glory of this great man's life was its conclusion. He had the strength of will to break through all his habits—he gave up the deer-stealing altogether, from prudential rather than ethical motives—and passed his latter years in the odour of honesty if not of sanctity.

A fine fight between keepers and deer-stealers in the Forest is described by Mr. Grantley Berkeley in his "Reminiscences of a Huntsman." The combatants were very fairly matched, two on each side. Finally, the keepers—Hall and Toomer by name—got the best of it, and the poachers were sent to the hulks. It was a glorious victory, but very nearly cost the keepers their lives.

The deer-stealers must have had a grand opportunity after the Act of 1851, when the deer were being shot down as quickly as possible. The Forest resounded with rifle shots, and a poacher's rifle was not distinguishable in its report from a keeper's. The keepers had orders to shoot every deer they could. Amongst them were some fine shots, as they had good need to be, for in supplying venison for the Crown authorities the order was that the deer must be shot either through head or neck.

"And what if you made a mistake?" one of the writers inquired of an old keeper.

"We weren't allowed to make mistakes," was the laconic answer—he would not "give himself away."

One of them did make a mistake, however, though there was no error in his aim—more's the pity. He had been sent to kill a deer on the high ground above Nomansland, on the Wiltshire side. He stalked a white-faced deer, as he deemed it—the face was all he saw. He fired, and the bullet went true. It was the white face of a woman that he had seen and mistaken for a deer's, and he had shot her stone dead. That place is still called "the place where the old woman was killed."

It was often the custom of the deer-stealers to go about their work in gangs, some watching and some securing the deer; and this practice was suggested to them, maybe, by another contraband trade in which the population of the Forest engaged very largely—namely, the smuggling of spirits. In this pleasant pastime, again, as in the deer-stealing, the hand of every man worked in aid of the law breaker and in hindrance of the law preserver or preventive man. The Forest was full of hiding places—it was also full of ponies. Illicit cargoes could be run close and landed; it seemed as if every circumstance had been planned by a special providence for the smuggler's behoof. Often, when the preventive officer had been marked down as well out of the way, the smugglers would bring up their tubs without a semblance of concealment. Warner speaks of having seen a procession of several waggons loaded with the illicit goods winding round Hengistbury Head towards the Forest. He describes the smugglers' boat as "one hundred and twenty feet from the top of her bowsprit to the end of her out-rigger, that was manned by forty rowers." This fine vessel eventually came to an evil end at Havre.

About the end ot the last century a certain gang of smugglers at Lymington developed into an extremely promising band of robbers. They became the terror of the neighbourhood, hiding their booty in a *cache* called Ambrose Cave. The military were called out against them, and their captain confessed to the murder of no less than thirty people, whose bodies were found in a neighbouring well. Later degenerate days have no such stirring record as this to tell; but with this tradition as their heritage, and the conveniences afforded by the Forest for illicit work, it is little wonder that until the last fifty years every forester was either a smuggler and a poacher of his own hand, or at all events in close communication and sympathy with both. The New Forest was in fact a sort of La Vendèe, according to Victor Hugo's description of the latter in *Quatre-Vingt Treize*, on a small scale. The very gamekeepers were in league with the smugglers, deeming that they had fulfilled all their duty to the king's majesty in looking after his deer, and many is the tale that the old keepers can tell—if they choose—of how they have kept the preventive officer in conversation while a rumbling waggon load of tubs was led off the rattling road and so on to the greensward of the Forest where it might slink out of sight in silence. "Ah," said a shameless old fellow of eighty-three years of age, smacking his lips and laughing at the recollection of outwitting the "Preventer," "nothing now tastes half as good as that stuff did." They are charmingly frank about it all.

Wise says that a man would sometimes carry as much as two or three kegs of four gallons apiece; but this old fellow declared that he had seen them, time and again, with six — three slung on in front and three behind. He admitted, however, that this was a burden that a man would only undertake on a pinch. He narrated, moreover, how that he had once chanced on a lucky find of a lot of tubs in a marl pit, with a dusting of dry leaves tossed over them like the babes in the wood. He thought this a fine joke against the hider, and did not fail to take toll of him, in kind. The cottage that he now occupies has hidden many a gallon of good spirits that have paid no duty, and has a fine dry cellar excellently adapted for their storage. The law had nothing to say against wine or spirits, in any quantities, in a man's house. The tubs were the damning testimony; so it is well to be believed that the tubs were emptied and burnt without any needless delay.

A few years ago a cottage at the edge of the Forest, which was known to have been a regular storehouse of the smugglers, was accidentally burnt down, and in the chimney, above the mantelpiece, was found a chamber big enough to conceal four or five men. No doubt it had often been occupied. On an adjacent property the Squire once found a large consignment of tubs hidden in some leaves in his wood. In the kindness of his heart he turned a blind eye to the discovery, and so proved that, whatever the smugglers' sins, ingratitude was not to be named among them, for a few mornings later a tub was found—as the reward of his kindly silence—on his doorstep.

All this happened on the Wiltshire side, whither it was the common practice to carry the contraband and to hide it in ponds. The reader has heard, maybe, of the Wiltshire "moon-rakers," and, maybe also, without understanding the original significance of the name. When the smugglers deemed it safe or expedient, they or their allies would come along to these ponds with long rakes, and proceed therewith to rake out the hidden tubs. Naturally, they generally went on these expeditions at night, and when any asked what they were doing would reply with a simple humour that they were going to rake the moon out of the pond. Later, by people who were at least as simple as the moon-rakers, the name came to be applied to any who were wanting in intellect—idiots, and the like. Who but an idiot would try to rake the moon out of a pond? or who but an idiot would believe a sane man who said he was trying to do so?

The idea of sinking the tubs in ponds was no doubt suggested by the frequent practice on the coast of sinking them in the sea with a line from them made fast to a lobster pot. Many were the schemes and dodges for outwitting the common enemy, the preventive officer. He was the common butt, as well as the common enemy, and many an excellent practical joke was played at his expense. A well-known smuggler was once caught, *flagrante delicto*, as the preventive man deemed, walking along the high road with a keg on his shoulder. The officer, in high glee at the capture, seized the keg from the man's back, transferred it to his own, and so marched him off—with the evidence of his crime—to the nearest town. When they came to their destination, the smuggler produced from his pocket a license, which he had obviously taken out for the very purpose of hoaxing the "Preventer," thanked him for his goodness in carrying the keg for him a good six miles of his road, and left him in a frame of mind which words have scarcely been invented to describe. But, alas for the West Saxon, this charming comedy had for its scene the north coast of Ireland, where the Celt smuggled as successfully as any forester, but with a brighter sense of humour and dramatic effect.

Comedy, after all, however, was not always the dominant note in the smuggling drama—some very tragic business was mixed up in it too. They were smugglers of the Forest, and no Celts, who lured from his home one evening by a specious tale, a peculiarly zealous officer of the Excise, and dashed out his brains with a single blow as he crossed his own threshold. On the whole, in spite of the roseate hues of romance and adventure which blind us sometimes to its hateful details of wrong and violence, we have every cause to be thankful that the augmentation of the Coast-guard service has practically stamped out smuggling all round our coasts, and, no less than elsewhere, in the New Forest. The last cargo, so far as such news has been made public, was run, some fifty years ago, under Redbridge and landed at Testwood. Thence the tubs were taken to Cadnam, a Forest village, and stowed away in a barn. At that time the Old White Hart Inn had not yet been rebuilt, and spirits in Cadnam were hard to come by. The news of the cargo got abroad among the villagers—the temptation was too strong to be resisted—the sanctuary of the barn was violated, more than half the population drank themselves very much more than half crazy, and that was the inglorious end of the last contraband cargo that the Forest ever harboured.

BIRDS IN THE FOREST

IF Mr. Courthope had wished for his blessed birds an earthly paradise it is not likely that he would have sought it anywhere but in the New Forest. It is complete, even to the serpent. And the birds seem fully to realise the fact, and resort to the trees and thickets of the Forest in great numbers, making the whole air thrill with their melody. In Gilpin's history he celebrates the multitudes of the song birds that frequented the banks of the Beaulieu river—thrushes, blackbirds, nightingales, and all the rest of the choir.

Of three hundred and fifty-four species of birds commonly recognised as natives of Great Britain, we believe we are right in saying that as many as two hundred and fifty are, or were, to be found in the New Forest. The march of civilisation does not always mean a decrease in bird life. It means rather that certain kinds, especially the wilder kinds, and above all the birds of prey, diminish, but their decrease is commonly accompanied by a proportionate increase in the number of those smaller birds whom they were wont to harry. It is probable enough that events have followed this course in the Forest. We know, for instance, that the kite, the honey and common buzzards, the marsh and hen harriers, were common birds in the Forest a while ago. Now we may say that they are virtually extinct, and the small birds have no doubt increased accordingly in boldness and numbers. It happened to one of the present writers to be talking with a clergyman who had been one of the earliest settlers in Vancouver Island, and his account of the ornithological "history of our own times" in that country was very interesting. When he first made the island's acquaintance hawks and eagles were very common objects, hovering in the empyrean. As a consequence the small birds were so timorous that they were absolutely mute. No voice dared raise itself in song—perhaps, song being an expression of thanksgiving, the small birds saw little occasion for gratitude with so many enemies about. But, after a while, near the homesteads, which the birds of prey avoided, the small birds found themselves with something to be thankful for, and therewith found a voice for praise. At first the song was immature and unpractised—a tentative half bar would be sung and left unfinished. They were still diffident—afflicted, maybe, with stage fright. But in a short time they had mastered the full song that was the heritage of their kind, and sang as if no hawk or eagle existed.

In the New Forest the kite, no doubt, is quite extinct; though common, according to Gilpin, in his day. But he disposes one to distrust him, careful as he is in most things, in matters ornithological. For one thing he makes no mention of the honey buzzard, a bird which, though rare enough in most parts, frequented the Forest in some numbers Their extinction was helped by the value of their eggs. Three pounds a pair was not an unusual price for a collector to give, and with such a price set on his head in embryo, it is no wonder that the honey buzzard found the struggle for life too much for him. The three pound incentive spurred the forester not only to feats of bird-nesting and tree-climbing, but to efforts of inventive genius; for when the natural eggs of the honey buzzard failed he used to stain the simple hen's eggs with the dark blotches on a ruddy ground of the natural honey buzzard's egg—and no doubt it did quite as well for the collector.

With the honey buzzard, its cousin the common buzzard has gone too.

Some of their cognates remain. The "night hawk," as the forester calls him, perpetually "jars" the evening silence with his discordant cry. At its nesting time this bird has a strange way of "waiting on" you —hovering about your head and leading you on away from the scene of its nest. This is a different manner of fooling you from that of the lapwing or "peewit," who lays the plover's eggs of the market. The latter steals from her nest like a thief in the night, and begins to lure you with her distressed cry and crippled, hypocritical wing, when she is about a hundred yards from her nest. This lapwing is a wonderful bird, abounding astonishingly in most parts of Great Britain in spite of the perpetual raid on its eggs—it is true that many of the "plover's eggs" are laid by rooks—but in the Forest it has not withstood its persecutors quite so well as elsewhere. Ten years ago lapwings were numerous on Brook Common. Now they are rarely there, though they still haunt the wilder plains. It is a pity they should diminish, so graceful as they are in their motley plumage and tumbling flight. Moreover, they are a good friend to the farmer.

The hen harriers, common in Wise's day, have nearly gone. A few years ago we used occasionally to see them hovering, but for the last year or two we hear nothing of them.

Owls abound. We have spoken elsewhere of the weird effect of their cries coming across the silent forest glades. There are four varieties in the New Forest, and of these the tawny owl appears the commonest. Now and then, as you go through the woods, you may surprise from its roost a ghost-like white screech owl, which will flit uneasily before you in the blinding glare of the sun. The hoot of an owl "carries" astonishingly far on a quiet night, and often you may hear three or four calling to one another, as if in conversation.

We have already seen reason for thinking that Gilpin, in matters ornithological, is not utterly above suspicion; but it is possible he may have been correct in speaking of the frequency of the golden eagles in the Forest. Especially, he says, when the stress of weather made food hard to come by in their usual haunts, they would resort to the Forest and do much damage among the fawns. It is likely that this would occur rather when the hungry maws of their young ones made especial demands on their foraging powers. In any case the Deer Removal Act would have operated in removing at the same time the eagles' temptations to resort to the Forest. Wise, on the other hand, —writing many years later, of course—speaks of the eagle as extinct. Nevertheless, it is certain that now and again the sea eagle visits the Forest, though it is true that his only recorded appearance for some time occurred in the terrible winter of 1894-5, in which everything that is exceptional became the rule. This eagle was seen by several persons, some of them so well qualified to judge that there can have been no mistake about his identity, flying over Roe Wood. By some merciful chance he was not shot. That fate, however, did befall a sea eagle which paid a rash visit to the Forest some years before the date of Wise's writing. He does not refer to it, however. This eagle was seen near the old Christchurch toll gate by Mr. W. Gerrard and several others who were with him. It was shot by Toomer, a Forest keeper (there were several of the name), and stood, in stuffed majesty, in the hall at Rhinefield when it was in Admiral Dashwood's occupation.

We have heard traditions of the visits of ospreys, but they are no more than traditions to-day.

Mr. Gerrard, who formerly had the fortune to see the great sea eagle, saw, within a year or two, two little merlins hovering over some fields near Lyndhurst, but they are very seldom seen now, and the raptorial birds of the Forest are practically confined to the common species of sparrow hawk and kestrel, with occasional visits of the peregrine. Of other species, Wise records the killing of a Kildeer plover. A few years ago Mr. W. Bryan shot a Temminck's stint, and has it stuffed; and about the same time Mr. R. G. Hargreaves shot a summer duck, an extremely rare bird in England, a native of Carolina—so rare that we are almost tempted to allow ourselves a suspicion that it may have flown from some ornamental waters to which it had been imported.

In this same exceptional winter of 1894-5, two little auks — a normally rare species which the severity of the weather drove in multitudes to the English coasts — were found in the Forest; and one of them a boy caught in his hand. It does not follow that the bird was either extraordinarily exhausted or extraordinarily tame. Unless the wind were very strong, it is not likely that any bird of this tribe would be able to raise itself for flight from level ground.

Herons are numerous, and form a feature that is in very harmonious keeping with the wilder landscapes of the Forest. Lately it happened to one of the present writers to be pointing out to a visitor the beauties of the view from the foot of Raik's Brake— an expanse of wild scrub, of heather and bracken, and of snipe marsh yellow with the moss-patches and pale glints from the standing water here and there. Down the middle of the picture a stream came winding, and ever broadening as it came, from the tiny rivulet scarcely seen among the heather and bracken on the top of the long hill on the right. On the left a clump of firs threw a dark shadow across the stream, and the scene melted away in undulating distances to the blue hills of Dorsetshire. As we looked on this scene, which was absolutely without life or motion, a heron came heavily flapping over our heads and settled, on long legs, in the middle of the marsh. It was the completing touch that made the picture perfect, and a touch that is often present to complete the wilder landscapes in the Forest.

Occasionally one will come quite close on a heron which has been fishing in the King's Garn Gutter, or in one or other of those deep sunk streams which traverse the heaths.

The green woodpecker, so common in parts of England, and so scarce in others, abounds in the Forest, and his vivid green back and crimson head, flashing and dipping between the trees, are a bright feature in the woodland scenery. Likely enough, you will hear him tap-tapping on the old trunks before you see him, and when you scare him from his trunk, he will fly off with his discordant "ya-ha-ha" to another, and begin his tapping as before. The country folk say he is a weather prophet, and that the inflexions of his laugh foretell coming changes; but the kind of weather that would make the green woodpecker prophesy harmoniously has yet to be experienced.

The great black woodpecker, a much rarer species of the genus, has also been known to make its home in Pignell Wood.

The golden-crested wren is a pretty little bird that often escapes notice because it is so very tiny, but there are numbers in the Forest, and Mr. R. G. Hargreaves once found one caught in a web of one of the big spiders. An enumeration of all the birds that visit the district would become very wearisome by the time that the list had reached its full length of two hundred and fifty. All the commoner kinds, that are common elsewhere, abound, and abound in wonderful numbers when one considers that although the law is strictly enforced which protects their full-grown lives, there is but little protection given their eggs and nestlings. The bird-nesting boy abounds ubiquitously, and his offences are impossible to overtake.

INSECT LIFE

THE New Forest is a district perhaps more precious to the entomologist than any other in Great Britain. The variety of insect life that finds its home and its food in the abounding and various flora is legion. Several species of *lepidoptera*, *coleoptera*, and *hymenoptera*—butterflies, beetles, and flies—are found in the Forest that have not been found elsewhere, and few of the varieties better known to English entomology are wanting.

There are two ways of looking at this pursuit of entomology. There is the point of view of the man of science, who takes himself seriously, and styles himself "entomologist"; and there is the point of view of the forester, who takes the man with the butterfly net compassionately, and styles him, with a felicity of phrase that is almost American, a "bug-hunter." A very common object of the Forest in the insecty time is also the common schoolboy, with his omnivorous net; but to him entomology has scarcely become a science. He is apt to rate his bag by the head of game like a covert-shooter.

It is singular enough that of all the British butterflies but one species has never been taken in the Forest—namely, the Camberwell Beauty. It is, of course, a very rare species; but it has been taken in the county of Hampshire, and it seems remarkable that having come so close it should not have wandered to the Forest. That it should have done so, of recent years, at least, and have escaped notice, is scarcely to be conceived when one knows the multitudes of men equipped with nets and with science who are roaming in the Forest all the summer through in search of its rare moths and butterflies. We say expressly of recent years, for it is only of comparatively late years that the study of entomology in England has been recognised as the possible pursuit of a self-respecting or even a sane man. Two centuries ago there was a question of the sanity of a certain Lady Glanville of that date, and the sole testimony adduced by those who strove to prove the poor lady insane was that she had a fondness for collecting insects! Now we live in an age of societies; and the Entomological Society of London was founded as long ago as 1833.

Probably a satisfactory explanation for the absence of the Camberwell Beauty from the list of the Forest butterflies may be found in the virtual absence of the willow—on which the caterpillars of this species feed—from the list of the Forest trees.

Possibly the greatest "find" ever made in the Forest was the *Niobe* fritillary, taken in 1869 by Mr. Gerrard, of Lyndhurst. There is considerable variety in different specimens of the commoner species of fritillary; and at a cursory glance Mr. Gerrard ascribed his prize to one of these commoner kinds, and allowed it to pass out of his possession before he was at all aware of its full value. A more thorough inspection proved it without doubt to be the *Niobe*, which, up to that time, had not been taken in England.

Fritillaries of the commoner sorts are among the most numerous of the butterfly kind in the Forest, and among the most beautiful—beautiful as they sail on level wings of sheeny bronze, and yet more beautiful when they settle and show, with erected wings, the pale greens and yellows of the underparts. Wood Arguses flit across the sunlit glades and patches, and out on the open heath are the Blues of every variety moving and settling, like living gems of turquoise. Hair-streaks and Skippers dart to and fro with their startling suddenness of flight. Peacocks, Painted Ladies, and Tortoise-shells are ubiquitous with their brave hues.

But, from the days of school-boyhood, we have ever dreamt of the New Forest as a country haunted by two beautiful creatures *par excellence*, the Purple Emperor and the White Admiral. We have dreamt of these creatures, because, though the latter are numerous in the Forest, and the Red Admiral is familiar everywhere, yet it has seldom happened to a school boy elsewhere to see these two species, except in dreamland or in some one else's collection. To see them in the flesh and on the wing, to chase them, butterfly-net in hand, is a vision which seems too precious to be realised in this mundane life.

The White Admirals, so plentiful here, but so local, may be seen flitting down all the Forest glades with their own peculiar grace of movement, settling on the leaves of the oak trees, then off again for another flight. But though the mature insect appears to affect the oak of preference, the caterpillar feeds on the honeysuckle whose luxuriance may well account for the abundance of the butterfly in the Forest. Nowhere else in England is this butterfly to be found in anything like the same numbers, and nowhere else is the profusion of honeysuckle so remarkable.

Far less common here than the White Admiral, and far more difficult of capture, the Purple Emperor is yet more numerous in the New Forest than in any other locality. It is an oak-loving butterfly, loving especially to sail over the topmost branches of the oak trees, whence it can laugh down in imperial scorn on the green nets of the collectors below. Many are the dodges that are tried for its capture, such as rigging a light net at the end of a long fishing rod arrangement, to reach up to its lofty throne. It is better to make the mountain come to Mahomet—to lure the emperor down. It is not impossible, for its tastes scarcely are worthy of its imperial pride and beauty. It loves carrion. A piece of very extra-high meat will attract the emperor by its alluring smell to come and feast on it, and with caution he may be caught while feasting on his garbage. The female is even harder to catch than the male, for she is seldom seen on the wing, and seems content to spend her days in the modest retirement of the oak shade. Yet even she is not superior to the temptations of high game ; for it happened to one of the present writers to see a pair of these insects engaged in discussing, gastronomically, the vermin nailed against a keeper's barn door at Canterton. The ubiquitous collector was on the spot, and managed to secure the emperor, but the shier empress took flight and escaped—for the nonce, at least—the net and the chloroform bottle. In Epping Forest, where also there are many oak trees, the Purple Emperor is not uncommon; but the specimens from the Epping Forest are less fine than those taken in the New Forest. Food and environment seem to affect in some subtle way the aspect both of moths and butterflies; for it is said that specimens of several species in the Forest differ slightly from specimens of the same species taken elsewhere.

Certain seasons seem peculiarly favourable—though the reason is not, humanly speaking, obvious—to certain species of butterflies. The Clouded Yellow is one that is singularly capricious in its appearances. In 1893 they were extraordinarily numerous in the Forest. There is a common tradition that they appear in their legions every seventh year, but we have the excellent authority of Mr. Coleman for deeming this to be a fable. Many have been the theories advanced by way of explanation, some deeming that the eggs lie dormant, and hatch out only under specially favourable conditions, others that the butterflies are blown over from the continent, like a cloud of locusts. None of the explanations are satisfactory, but the fact of the capricious appearances of the creatures remains.

Some of the collectors whom one meets in the Forest have no scientific knowledge at all. Men are sent down by the London dealers to collect for them, and it is a sad testimony to the infirmity and natural depravity of human nature that they select, by choice, men who have no entomological skill. Thus the *employé* brings to his master all his bag, and the latter takes his chance of the contents. Had the *employé* but that little knowledge which is dangerous, he would be tempted to dispose for his own profit of such specimens as were of value, handing to his master a fine mixed bag of Meadow Browns and Small Blues.

Not only are many butterflies and moths local to the Forest, as one may say, but the collector will now and again be struck by the restricted range within the Forest itself of several species. Mr. Gerrard has most kindly communicated one or two instances to the writers. One year he chanced on five specimens of the scarce New Forest Burnet (*Zygæna Milliloti*) in a railway cutting, but the keenest search did not reveal any more in the neighbourhood. Again, he was sugaring the trees, some years ago, in an enclosure near the Southampton Road. The trees which he had made his own for immediate entomological purposes, by the indisputable title of sugaring them, stood at the side of a "ride." To left and right ran other parallel "rides," each at a distance of about a hundred yards from that in which Mr. Gerrard was occupied. Each of these rides was also tenanted by a sugaring party. Mr. Gerrard, in the middle ride, captured in the course of the season no less than a hundred and twenty-five specimens of the rather scarce *Tryphæna Subsequa*, while his neighbours on either side caught no more than four with their united efforts, although the conditions of their rides and their sugaring appeared identical with those of Mr. Gerrard's. Plainly, too, the difference in the bag was not altogether a result of relative difference in the quality of the methods employed; for one evening, in his absence and by his permission, one of his neighbours sugared his trees and caught eleven or twelve specimens of the scarce moth. There was no peculiar magic in Mr. Gerrard's sugar. Since that year, though he took only the finest specimens for his collection, and left a good breeding stock behind, Mr. Gerrard has not seen another specimen of the moth.

A moth, on the contrary, that has greatly increased in number during later years is the Crimson Underwing, which now is very fairly numerous, though once considered scarce. A rare moth called the Reddish Buff (*Acosmetia Caligmosa*) occurs in the Forest, where for a long while it escaped notice on account of its likeness to some of the grass moths.

There are still foresters who believe that the Death's Head moth first made its appearance in England in the year of Charles I.'s execution. More likely, however, if it was an importation, it was of some years' earlier date and introduced about the time that the potato was brought over.

Almost every forester is a bee-keeper, but in addition to the domesticated bees, wild bees are very numerous. Burley old enclosure is perhaps the spot they favour most. We are told that in Elizabeth's reign the keepers made quite a business of collecting and selling the honey of the wild bees; and this in the days when the honey buzzard was a common bird! The earliest honey that the bees in the Forest make is the worst, according, at least, to the judgment of the human palate. The bees collect it from the oak bloom, and it is of a bad green colour. In later months they have to pick up their nectar here and there—in cottage gardens or from an occasional field of clover. This produces the ordinary yellow honey. Later still the purple heather-bloom is everywhere, and from it the bees cull that rich dark honey that is most valued in the market.

It is scarcely necessary to say that there are common wasps, common flies, common everythings of the hymenopterous family everywhere. Less common and more interesting than most are the carpenter wasps, which in dry summers construct their *papier-mâché*-like nests—miracles of art—in numbers in the holly bushes. In the summer of 1893 they were singularly abundant.

In the year 1858 a Mr. Farren captured in the Forest a fly of the *Cicada* family, which had never before been taken in England, and was deemed so exclusively a native of warmer latitudes, that the account of its capture was at first received with some scepticism. In 1881, however, Mr. Tait, of Lyndhurst, was fortunate enough to find another, a female. He sent the larvæ to Mr. Pifford, of Hemel Hempstead, who reared from them several good specimens of the mature insect. It is said that, once heard, the sound which this fly makes in flight is so peculiar that never again can it be mistaken. It has a sharp zigzag flight, and the remarkable sound is said to be something between a hissing and a humming; but it is obvious that written words cannot hope to do much justice to a sound so unique as this.

This Cicada (*Cicada hæmatoides*) is the only true species of Cicada ever found in England.

No account of the Forest insects—not even so brief a sketch as this, which aims only at noting the most obtrusive features or the most unusual incidents connected with the entomology of the district—could be at all complete which did not make prominent mention of the famous, or infamous, "Forest fly." It is a creature apparently quite local to the Forest—though this is a general negative statement of the kind that is most open to contradiction. To Indian readers much may be expressed by saying that he is very like the "bullock fly." Gilpin's description hits him off well. "In form," he writes, "it is not unlike the common black fly, and about its size; but its colour is different. It is a bright-coated brown insect, well cased, strong, and very tenacious of life. It has a side-long crawling motion, like a crab." It has! It crawls, side-ways, over you till it makes your flesh creep and shudder. Yet it never bites nor does any damage—it only, and for ever, crawls. The forester has learnt to realise that its crawl is worse than its bite, and lets it continue to crawl, callously; but to the less accustomed it is maddening. Horses that are not used to it are nearly driven wild by its harmless necessary crawl; the Forest ponies have learnt more philosophy. Gilpin says it is "very tenacious of life." It is! No squashing, or finger flipping, has the slightest effect on it. You might break it, perhaps, on an anvil, or you may pull it to pieces. On the whole it is better to let it crawl. It is a most singular thing that in all the pages of Wise we are able to find no notice of this most notorious insect.

Ants are very plentiful. All the open spaces of the Forest are tumular with their mounds, whether in active occupation, or as grass-grown "buried cities." At certain times they take to them wings and invade every secret place and make themselves a general nuisance. They appear to have a subtle preference for settling on *silk* clothing; but it is possible that this may be merely the writer's fancy. In the forester's language the "ant" is an "emmet."

The beetle tribe is, likely enough, even more fully represented in the Forest than the clans of butterflies and moths and flies in general; but, of course, its members are less in evidence than the lepidopterous and hymenopterous kinds. An old collector, Mr. Charles Turner, who used to spend nine months out of every year in the Forest, discovered several species of the *Coleoptera* new not only to Great Britain but to entomology. One of the beetles of his discovering is called after his own name.

GEOLOGICAL FORMATION

THE New Forest shared, of course, in the geological fortunes of Hampshire and the rest of the South of England, being at one time covered by the sea and at another divided from the neighbouring continent by merely a small river where the waters of the English Channel flow. It is even conjectured that in the Middle Eocene period we were connected with the American continent also—a conjecture, for it can be little more, that is based on an identity of the animal forms disclosed by a comparative study of the fossils in the Old World and the New.

Wise has it that an inland sea once washed over the district that we know as the New Forest, and that the chalk cliffs that stretch from Ballard Head to the Needles were the result of a volcanic cataclysm. We are not aware whether this theory finds general acceptance in all its details, but it is very certain that the southern part of Hampshire was covered by the sea in some form or other, and equally certain that the mainland and the Isle of Wight were once in solid connection.

The tradition of the wonderful Sir Bevois wading from the island to the mainland is familiar enough. Wise speaks of stones being brought across, long ago, in carts from the island, and of an old road used in ancient times for the transport of tin. The continuation of this road on the island side is even now to be seen, and Mr. Wise actually gives us the names of the villages and various localities which the road passed.

Mr. Shore considers that England was joined to the continent as late, or at all events very nearly as late, as the Palæolithic or Early Stone Age. The River Drift men who made the implements from which the Early Stone Age takes its name, existed in all probability previously to England's last and final emergence from the sea, or from the icy conditions of the Glacial Period. The reconstruction of the boundaries of sea and land, which was one of the results of this emergence, was followed by the occupation of Neolithic man (man of the Later Stone Age) which brings us to the relatively modern time of the construction of the barrows. After this date it appears that the general outlines of the country did not alter to any very great extent, though it is obvious that the so-called Isle of Wight must have been a peninsula (if not more solidly connected with the mainland) at the date of the carriage road for tin.

The best storehouses of fossils in the Forest are the Barton Clay and the Bracklesham beds. This stratum, extending over all the northern part of the Forest, belongs to the Upper Eocene period, and furnishes the latest examples of the *nummulites*, which abound in the strata below. Two principal excavations have been made in this stratum—in the neighbourhood of the King's Garn Gutter—by Mr. Keeping, who kindly presented one of the writers with a box of labelled species. The first excavation, prior to 1863, was made by Mr. Keeping in conjunction with Mr. Wise, who gives an account of it in his book. They began to dig at a distance of some twenty feet from the stream and immediately came on a bed rich in fossils. When they had got down to a depth of some eight feet, the water began to drain through from the brook. By dint of much bailing they kept the excavation fairly clear, and succeeded in reaching a yet lower bed of clay in which, among other treasures, they found sharks' teeth of the *Lamna Elegans* species. Yet lower they struck the *Voluta Horrida* bed, where their efforts were rewarded by fossilised fish scales, fruit, and driftwood. Eventually the water rushed in on them in something like a torrent, and they beat a hasty retreat—none too soon, for immediately afterwards masses of clay fell in from the sides of the excavation which they estimated to weigh two or three tons. But they had done well, having secured in all about two hundred and fifty specimens.

In 1885 Mr. Keeping, who is associated with the Cambridge Geological Museum, entered on a new excavation on behalf of the Hartley Institute of Southampton, at the request of Mr. J. W. Elwes and Mr. Shore. This time he got down about ten feet, and was rewarded by a fine "catch" of fossils which are to be seen in the Hartley Museum, but found nothing distinctly new.

On the same occasion Mr. Keeping explored the Hunting Bridge beds, higher up the stream. Here the water, oozing through, made itself even more objectionable than elsewhere, but by rigging up a pump, and keeping a man constantly at work at it, the geologists were able to enjoy themselves after their manner—knee deep in a soup of mud and water, but obtaining fossils as fast as they could pick them out, by way of compensation. The hole was roughly filled in again when the water won the mastery, and shells and sharks' teeth could be easily found by kicking over the clods of loose-lying blue clay. The depression made by this digging can still be seen, and doubtless numbers of fossils could be picked up if the upper layer of clay were turned over.

In the Shepherd's Gutter, just below Bramble Hill, you may amuse yourself indefinitely by poking out fossils with your stick, or grubbing for them with your fingers. No digging is needed—the stream has done that for you. Here and there it has so worn away its bed that the blue fossiliferous clay may be seen on either side. This amusement is apparently never to fail, for each year the stream wears away the outer surfaces of the clay and discovers new treasures that were hidden before.

Of the Barton and Hordle cliffs it is scarcely necessary to speak, so well are they known to all who are interested in geology. Even in Gilpin's day they were famous, though at that date man had not realised that the history book of his race and planet was to be seen by the instructed eye in fossils and geological formations. He mentions as a curious fact, of which he does not grasp the significance that many of the fossils found in these cliffs differ from the shells and so forth that are found on any European coasts. He remarks that the fossiliferous stratum runs in a northerly direction right through the New Forest, in which he is perfectly correct. Gilpin also refers to a house belonging to the Lord Bute of that date (1791) on this Hordle cliff, about three miles from Lymington, and speaks of the constant struggle then in progress between the owner, who fought to keep his house on its foundations, and the constant landslips on the cliff, which perpetually threatened and shook them. The springs running from the land disintegrated the substance of the cliff, and made it an easy prey to the shocks of the sea waves that battered at its feet. Lord Bute maintained the struggle, with considerable outlay of money in shoring up and facing the cliff. Gilpin says that the scientific wiseacres of the district gave the house thirty years to stand; and in this forecast Wisdom was better justified of her prophetic sons than often happens, for just about that space of time elapsed before the house slid in graceful ruin down the face of the cliff.

Burley Rocks, not far from Burley, are of a gravelly conglomerate formation, not fossiliferous, but useful for certain purposes. The foundations of Brockenhurst and Minstead churches, and of some other old churches in the Forest, are laid with this conglomerate.

The surface geological character of the New Forest consists of a layer of gravel, intersected by water-worn valleys, which the native styles "bottoms." This general character supports the presumption that the district was at one time a high plain, with gentle slope towards the south, and to the sea, and that the gravel is the alluvial deposit of large rivers. The valleys were emphatically excavations; the hills were not upheavals. It is in this gravel that we find the flint implements which are the only relics that Palæolithic man has left in the Forest. The soil must have been rather too obdurate for him to dig in it those caves which are evidences, in other parts of the country, of the burrowing propensities of our unfortunate forefathers.

When they were excavating the docks at Southampton they found in the gravel remains of the *Elephas Antiquus* and of *Elephas Primogenius.* You may see specimens of their great teeth in the Hartley Museum. On top of the gravel they also found remains of reindeer. These animals were the contemporaries of Palæolithic man, and though their remains were not actually found in the Forest, the presumption is justified that they frequented it. Remains of *Bos Primogenius* were found, in course of the excavations, embedded in the peat; and also some bones of a small horse, about the size of the present New Forest pony.

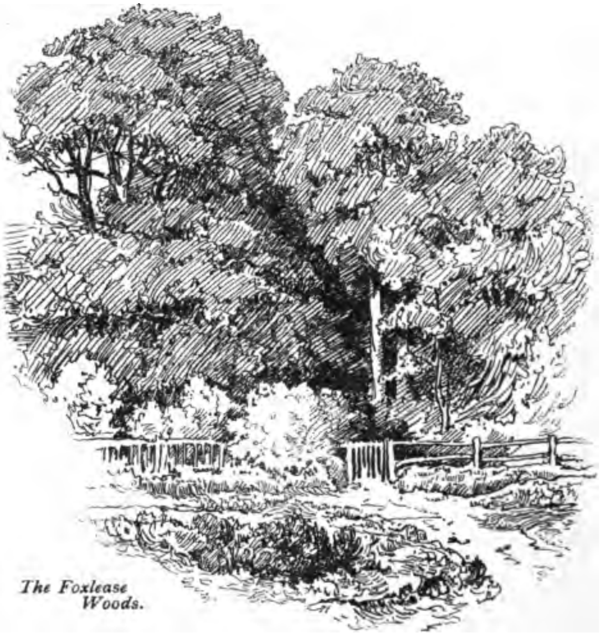
In 1884 Mr. Hunt found a very remarkable jade implement of the Neolithic Age in the Hordle cliff. It is remarkable both by reason of its workmanship, for it is beautifully smoothed and polished, and also on account of the rarity of jade itself. It is a stone that is hardly ever found in Europe, and there is every probability that this implement was brought from a great distance by a migrating race. It is evidently of great age. There is a fracture across it, at about three quarters of its entire length, and the worn edges show that even the fracture itself must have been made very many ages ago. It was bought by Mr. Shore for the Hartley Museum, where it may now be seen. We believe that at the present time jade cannot be procured nearer England than Burmah.

Mr. Shore, discussing the formation of the peat bogs in his "Hampshire Mudlands and other Alluviums," expresses the view that they were formed by the action of water washing down the peats from the surrounding hills. The peat has a sponge-like capacity for drawing up water, which makes these bogs a source of serious danger after heavy rains. In Mr. Shore's opinion most of the animals whose remains are now found in the peat must have perished through being "bogged" in it. *Elephas Antiquus* would sink nicely.

Mr. Wise sets before us a picture, such as those that are familiar to us from Figuier's "World before the Deluge," of the New Forest in the Eocene Period—the dawn of life upon the globe—long before man, even the earliest Palæolithic, came upon the stage. Crocodiles and alligators dwelt in the Forest in company with such extinct creatures as the Palæotherium, the Xiphodon and the Anoplotherium — that strange being, so like a child's picture of a horse. Crabs were making their first appearance on the earth. Of the kingdom of Flora there were such familiar members as walnut trees, elms, alders, and even oaks; but amongst these familiar presences were palms of glorious height and dimensions and much noble vegetation that we cannot see, even in the tropics, to-day.

Some indulge in a fond hope of one day or other finding coal in the Forest. With the greatest reluctance one has to admit that there is reasonable ground for the hope. There is reason to think that a connection existed between the coalfields of Somersetshire and those of Belgium, and, further, that the connecting line ran through the New Forest district. Such a notion takes fancy on a bolder retrospective flight, back through the ages of the Pterodactyl, the Plesiosaurus, and the Megatherium, that mighty sloth, to a time when the earth was bathed in a humid atmosphere generated by her own internal heat, in which no forms of animal life but a few insects and primitive creatures had an existence. Instead, gigantic "mares-tails" covered the face of the globe, tree-ferns of vast dimensions and lepidodendrons with leaves twenty inches long. It has been reckoned that it takes one hundred and twenty-two thousand years to form sixty feet of coal, and there are coal fields three thousand feet deep! But though the retrospect is alluring as one carries one's mental vision back to the Carboniferous Period and the laying down of these great vegetable beds that are coal to-day, the prospect of the period in which those beds may be disturbed and used is less alluring—black smoke, black miners, trollies, cranes and railways, these are only some of the abominations of our latter-day carboniferous period. Therefore it is that we may say the hope is fond and foolish which anticipates the turning into another "black country" a district which is now perhaps the most beautiful of the many various beauties that Great Britain has to show.

From such a melancholy fate, may the powers that be deliver, for a while, at least, our beautiful Forest.



The Foxlease Woods.

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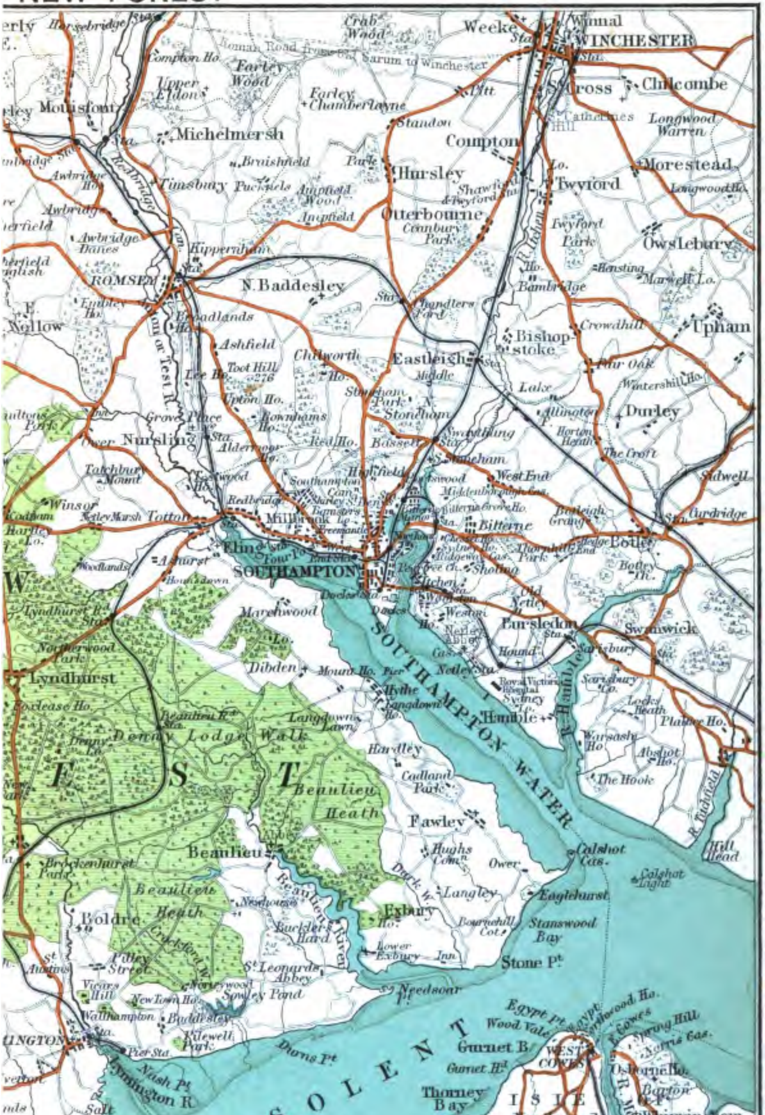
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West End
Botley
Curdridge
Sidwell
Millbrook
Redbridge
Totton
Eling
SOUTHAMPTON
Woolston
Sholing
Netley
Bursledon
Swanwick
Sarisbury
Hamble
Warsash
The Hook
Titchfield
Hill Head
SOUTHAMPTON WATER
Marchwood
Dibden
Hythe
Hardley
Cadland Park
Fawley
Calshot Cas.
Calshot Light
Eaglehurst
Langley
Stanswood Bay
Stone Pt.
Exbury
Lyndhurst
Lyndhurst Rd. Sta.
Denny Lodge Walk
FOREST
Beaulieu
Beaulieu Heath
Beaulieu River
Bucklers Hard
Brockenhurst
Boldre
Pilley Street
Walhampton
Baddesley
LYMINGTON
Lymington R.
Key Haven
Hurst Cas.
Needsoar Pt.
THE SOLENT
Newtown R.
Newtown
Hempstead Pt.
YARMOUTH
Thorley
Shalfleet
Porchfield
Thorney Bay
Gurnet B.
Egypt Pt.
WEST COWES
E. Cowes
Norris Cas.
Osborne Ho.
Whippingham
Wootton
R. Medina
ISLE OF WIGHT
Northwood
Parkhurst Forest
NEWPORT
J. Bartholomew, Edinr

ray, Albemarle Street.

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