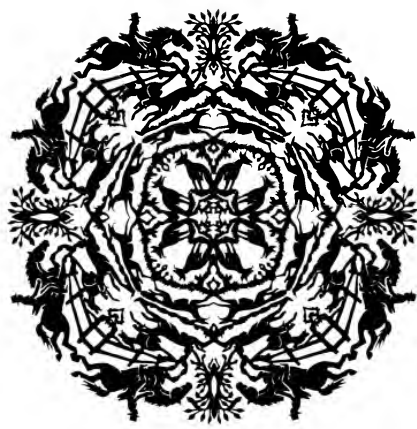


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JOHN A. SEAVERNS

H A R K A W A Y

SKETCHES OF HUNTING, COACHING, FISHING,

ETC., ETC.

BY

FRED. FEILD WHITEHURST

(A VETERAN).

AUTHOR OF "TALLYHO," ETC.

"Be foul or fair, or rain or shine,
The joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine;
Not Jove himself upon the past has power,
What has been—has been—and I have had my hour."

HORACE.

L O N D O N .

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8 CATHERINE STREET, STRAND

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P R E F A C E.



“ Be foul or fair, or rain or shine,
The joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine ;
Not Jove himself upon the past has power,
What has been—has been—and I have had my hour.”

Horace.

THE favourable reception that was accorded to *Tallyho*,* has induced me to again reprint sketches of hunting, shooting, coaching, fishing, etc., which appeared during the seasons 1878-9 in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*, and the oldest of sporting papers, *Bell's Life in London*, by permission of the respective proprietors.

At no time during my recollection has the manliest of all our national sports—hunting—been more popular. The revival of coaching,

* *Tallyho*, Tinsley Brothers, 8 Catherine Street, W.C.

which had for a long period almost entirely succumbed to the iron horse and its hard lines, is now a very noticeable and agreeable fact. Whilst the prophecies of the croakers of the period, that the breed of horses would decline and their value greatly decrease, by the introduction of steam as a motive power, is visibly contradicted, if any one will take the trouble to visit Hyde Park during the season, and observe the brilliant equipages and magnificent horses that draw them; as well as the beautiful nags which riders in the Row exhibit when taking their accustomed exercise in that fashionable resort.

There have been from time to time feeble attempts to decry all field sports; fortunately, without success, and it will be a sorry day for Old England when her sons and daughters cease to take part and interest in them.

The popularity of the amusements alluded to would seem to justify the endeavour to chronicle some of the particulars, so that those who from age or other causes are unable to enjoy their favourite pastimes, may at least, by perusal of these sketches, learn how the world wags now-a-days.

Over half a century's experience must be my justification for speaking to a certain extent judge-matically, to use an American phrase, of sports in which, for that long period, I have taken an active part, and of which I have as keen a sense of enjoyment as at any period of my life ; and though, to use words of Shakespeare,—

“The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left, this vault to brag of,”

I yet hope to hear the cheery note of the huntsman's horn and the welcome cry of “Gone away ; gone away !” on many occasions, when seated on a clever nag at the cover-side, and after a rattling gallop over a good line of country, to be there, or thereabouts, when the cry of “Who-hoop ! who-hoop !” makes the welkin ring.





HARK AWAY.

CHAPTER I.

A GOODLY GATHERING.

AMONGST the numerous meetings which are held in London at this season of the year, there is not one more practical, or more entitled to consideration and respect, than the annual assembly of masters of hounds, huntsmen, and whips that takes place at the Subscription Rooms at Albert Gate, which are kindly placed at the disposal of the committee by Messrs. Tattersall, on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Hunt Servants' Benefit Society. Amidst the bustle and excitement of an eventful week, time is yet found for this benevolent object.

The day between the Derby and Oaks being a comparatively leisure time, the opportunity is seized as an advantageous moment for such a gathering by reason of the great number of M. F. H. and

persons interested in hunting who visit London for the purpose of attending the races. It is only necessary to enumerate some of the many present on this occasion, in order to show the interest that is taken in the welfare of the class of servants for whose benefit this society has been established by their masters and those who ride with the various packs in the kingdom. Amongst the earliest arrivals I observed his Grace the Duke of Grafton, the Marquis of Worcester, Lord Galway, Lord Radnor, Mr. George Lane Fox, Master of the Bramham-moor Fox Hounds; Sir W. W. Wynn, Mr. W. E. Oakley, Master of the Atherstone; Mr. J. Anstruther Thompson, Honorary Secretary of the Society; and Mr. W. N. Heysham, who, though figuring only as Honorary Auditor, is, in fact, the main-spring of this excellent institution. Shortly after the assembly was augmented by the following distinguished members of the society, and staunch supporters of the noble sport:—the Earl of Zetland, the Marquis of Waterford, Lord Willoughby de Broke, Master of the Warwickshire; Viscount Valentia, of the Bicester and Wardenhill Hounds; Sir Reginald Graham, of the N. F. H., or New Forest Hounds; the Hon. Francis Scott, Mr. T. F. Boughey, Master of the Albrighton Hounds, accompanied by Mrs. Boughey, who was present for a few moments, thus evincing the great interest she takes in the society, of which she is one of the principal benefactors; Mr Anthony Hamond, of the West Norfolk; Mr. T. C. Gorst, Mr. C. W. Wicksted, Master of the Ludlow Hounds; Mr. W. W. Tailby, Mr. Walter Long, of the Humbleton; Mr. G. Fenwick, of the Tynedale; Colonel

Calvert, of the Crawley and Horsham Hounds; Mr. P. A. Carnegie, of the Forfarshire; Mr. E. St. John, Major Bethune, Captain Fox, of Girsby; Mr. Frederick Heysham, an octogenarian, who can hold his own across country, notwithstanding he is so heavily handicapped with age; Captain Hammond, Sir Claude de Crespigny, Mr. R. R. Wyndham, Mr. Harry D. Bayly, Mr. W. Mortimer, Colonel Ingram, Mr. H. W. Alfrey, Mr. R. Arkwright, Mr. W. Sumner Smith, etc.; whilst representing the hunt servants are Mr. Frank Goodall, the Royal Huntsman, and one of the executive committee; John Treadwell, huntsman of the Old Berkshire; and John West, of the Vine, and some forty or more huntsmen, whips, and subscribers to the society.

Before the commencement of the business of the day there was time to look around these noble rooms. First to attract my attention was the portrait of a distinguished supporter of the Turf, Lord George Bentinck, and on the opposite side of the doorway that of John Scott, with portraits of the members of the Jockey Club, admirably executed by W. H. Tuck & Co. of Regent Street. These are the sole, but most appropriate ornaments affixed to the walls of the Subscription Room. But, on this occasion, two pictures were specially exhibited, the first being the portrait of John Chaworth Musters, late Master of the South Notts and the Quorn, representing a cub-hunting scene in the Old Deer Park at Annesley, painted by Mr. S. Carter, whose picture of "Little Foxes" is so well known. The portrait of Mr. Musters is strikingly good, whilst that of his favourite horse and eight couples of the most famous

hounds of the pack cannot be spoken of in too high terms of praise. The heads of five of these noble animals are painted in a life-like style that I have never seen surpassed. This picture was, however, rejected by the Royal Academy—a fact that is to me wholly inexplicable. I am ignorant of such matters, and can therefore only suppose that those whose province it is to decide upon the merits of the various pictures submitted for their approval are *not* acquainted with such minor details as horses and hounds. Fortunately it is to be engraved and published by Messrs. Graves & Co., when an opportunity will be afforded to the public of judging of the merits of this work of art, and I shall be strangely surprised if the opinion I have ventured to express is not thoroughly in accordance with that of all persons competent to speak upon such subjects. The second picture to which attention was directed was an admirable portrait of George Castleman, the huntsman of the Atherstone, on Mr. Oakley's well-known horse Carlist,—painted by Mr. Lucas Lucas, of Rugby, a rising artist in his particular line—which is a picture of very great merit, the likeness both of Castleman and the favourite nag he is riding being excellent; and the approval which this picture received at the hands of so many competent judges cannot fail to be a great encouragement to the artist, whose intention, I believe, is to make animals his particular study.

But time advances, so to business. This society, of which his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is patron, was founded so recently as the year 1852. Almost every master of hounds in the kingdom is an

honorary member; whilst out of 430 hunt servants in the United Kingdom over 300 are already enrolled as benefit members. This number would have been still further increased had not many been precluded from joining the society by reason of their age disqualifying them for membership, the line being drawn at fifty-five years. Several ladies are also to be found amongst the list of honorary members, and have lent the most valuable aid to the society in obtaining subscriptions from their friends. The greatest benefactors to the institution are the Dowager - Marchioness of Westminster and her daughter, Lady Theodora Guest, the Marchioness of Drogheda, the Countess of Yarborough, Mrs. Boughey, and Mrs. G. Bowers Edwards, whose sketches in "Punch" are so well known to many. The society is presided over by the Duke of Buccleuch, who always receives a large amount of support. The trustees are the Earl of Macclesfield, Sir Watkin Wynn, and Mr. George Lane Fox, also members of the executive committee, who are very regular in their attendance. It is little wonder, then, that under such auspices so rapid an advance has been made.

Up to the present time no great demands have been urged on the funds of the society beyond payments for sickness and accident, but the time is approaching when some of the benefit members will become entitled to annuities, therefore every opportunity should be seized to increase the funded property, which, though it now reaches £14,000, falls short of the required amount by the sum of £6000. No legacy has as yet been received by the society,

and there are many members of the different hunts who at present have not subscribed to the funds, and who, no doubt, only require their attention to be called to the matter to be found ready and willing to add their names to the numerous list of subscribers to this most meritorious institution, having for its object a provision for a class of men who are more especially liable to accident, and subject to many of the ills that flesh is heir to in consequence of exposure, early and late, to the weather. In the absence of the president, the Duke of Grafton took the chair; and, Mr. J. Anstruther Thompson having read the annual report of the society, it was adopted *nemine contradicente*. The usual routine being followed, and the retiring members of the executive committee, Robert Arkwright, Esq., Wm. Mortimer, Esq., and Mr. Frank Gillard, having been re-elected, the Hon. Francis Scott, in an elaborate speech on the benefits of the institution, took the opportunity of thanking the Press in general for the liberal support it has at all times afforded to the movement; and a vote of thanks having been passed by acclamation to Messrs Tattersall for so kindly allowing the use of the room for the purpose of the meeting—which was responded to by Mr. Edmund Tattersall, on behalf of himself and his partner, Mr. Pain—the meeting was dissolved, but not before a cordial vote of thanks was passed to his Grace the Duke of Grafton for so kindly taking the chair in the absence of the Duke of Buccleuch.

After the meeting was over, the hunt servants dined together, the entertainment being provided by a voluntary subscription on the part of a few

of the honorary members—an event which is looked forward to by those attending with considerable pleasure, affording, as it does, an opportunity for members of the craft of meeting together and having a chat over matters of interest connected with their avocation. It is to be hoped, in the interest of the servants who may be hereafter engaged, that the different masters of hounds will make it a *sine quâ non* that each one shall become a member of the Hunt Servants' Benefit Society, which has for its object a suitable provision against sickness and old age, whilst in case of death, the widows, orphans, or other relations are entitled to an allowance. The society now comprises about 1850 honorary and 300 benefit members, and it is greatly to be desired that every lady or gentleman who is in the habit of riding to hounds will assist so beneficial a project, as some slight return for the sport that is afforded them by the exertions of so excellent a class of servants as the huntsmen and whips belonging to the different packs throughout the kingdom. Already the society is in a flourishing state, and, as nothing succeeds like success, I trust that on the occasion of the next annual meeting there will be a still larger number of subscribers and a great addition to the funds of this excellent society.





CHAPTER II.

THE COACHING CLUB.

AMONGST the many pleasing little diversions that are patronised by the ingenious youths of modern times, there is not one in my humble opinion that affords greater amusement or a better return for money outlayed than that of coaching a well-appointed team. That many hold the same opinion as myself is evident from the fact that, in addition to the old and celebrated Four-in-Hand Club, which has been in existence for at least a century, and which, by the way, at the present time has its full complement of members, the more modern institution known as the Coaching Club boasts of no smaller number than 120, including sundry veterans of the road, as well as a host of younger performers on the bench.

From the admirable picture published by Messrs. W. H. Tuck & Co., which contains the portraits of seventy-three members of this popular assembly, I find amongst the older and distinguished coachmen the Duke of Beaufort, the Earl of Harrington, Mr. Charles Hale, Colonel F. Aikman, Mr. Coupland of the Quorn, Mr. James Foster, Major Stapylton, and Mr. Yate

Hunt. The younger artists are represented by such well-known men as the Marquis of Worcester, who is equally at home on the bench of a well-appointed drag, and as skilful in handling four resolute horses, as he is in playing the *rôle* of huntsman, and going the pace across the big fields, stout fences, and stone walls of Wiltshire, in pursuit of the wily fox, at the tail of one of the finest packs of hounds in the kingdom; Lord Carington, a first-rate performer across country, whose nerve and judgment cause him to be equally clever in handling the ribbons and tooling a team of highly-bred horses, as he is at topping a stiff flight of posts and rails, going a burster at a bullfinch, or having a shy at a brawling brook, when riding in a rattling run with the Quorn or the Cottesmore; Viscount Cole, who performs in artistic style on his well-appointed coach, handling his admirable lot of nags right well; Captain Whitmore, whose handsome, well matched, and bloodlike lot of greys are the admiration of all observers; Sir Henry Tufton, whose equally matched—or I might say matchless—set of very dark brown or black horses, invariably attracts a large share of attention; Captain Wombwell, who not only handles his horses well and looks altogether a workman, but is “all there” when it is necessary to exhibit coolness and determination, without which a man has no business to attempt to drive four horses.

Talking of coolness brings back to mind an old friend, the neatest and most gentlemanly of men, with an amount of self-possession that enabled him to do things that would never have been tolerated in any other man not equally endowed with impu-

dence. Arriving in town on the night of the Caledonian Ball, he rushed off to his tailor and asked for a fancy dress, but was assured with profound regret that the establishment contained no garment fitted for the occasion. "What's that?" he said, pointing to a Hussar uniform; "why, it's exactly the thing." "Oh! no, sir," said the horrified tailor; "I could not possibly let you have another gentleman's uniform; it would never do, sir. I should get into no end of disgrace and trouble." "Nonsense; I am going to take it, and will see you through the business, so hold your tongue, and get out of the way." Arriving at Willis's Rooms, his splendid figure, setting off the handsome dress to the greatest advantage, soon attracted attention. Some officers of the distinguished regiment, whose uniform he had so improperly adopted, hastened to strip this daw of his borrowed plumes. "Pray, sir," said the irate colonel of the 1000th Hussars, "where did you get that uniform from, sir?" "Oh, from Nathan's," was the prompt reply; "where did you get yours?"

Yesterday being fixed for the second meeting of the Club, an opportunity was given to those who took the trouble to put in an appearance at the Magazine at mid-day, to observe for themselves the style of the different coaches and the quality of the steeds, whilst criticising the artists who exhibited their proficiency in handling the ribbons on this occasion.

A well-appointed four-in-hand is always a pleasant sight; but a gathering such as this can only be seen on special occasions, and in no other place in the world save London. It is an easy thing to obtain a

coach; you have nothing to do but to visit Barker, Hollands, or Hooper, and you will quickly be provided with what you require. Not so easy is it to put together a team of handsome, well-matched, temperate, and high-stepping animals. It will take some time, and no small sum of money, to procure four nags such as you will be proud to exhibit at a gathering like that of the Coaching Club. Little, if anything, short of 1200 guineas will be about the figure for an average lot of handsome and useful horses; but if you desire anything superlative, you will have to open your purse-strings still wider. A foreigner of distinction went the other day to a dealer, asking for a pair of steppers, and, wishing to make it understood that he required a perfect match, he threw down a pair of exquisite kid gloves, saying, "you understand me, they must be *comme ça*, and I do not care what money I shall pay for them." "What did you do for that particular customer?" I inquired of the dealer. "Well," he said, "I picked up two very nice-looking horses for £250, and sold them to him for £600." "Not a bad deal," was my remark.

At length the happy medium in regard to weather has been attained, there was enough and yet not too much sun. Not the intense heat which was experienced a few days back at the meeting of the Four-in-Hand Club, when it was simply tropical. Consequent upon the pleasant state of the atmosphere there was a large attendance of spectators, not so numerous as I have seen on former occasions, but yet sufficient both in quantity and quality to make this the gayest assembly of the season. The

Park, owing to the continued rains, was seen to the greatest advantage, the luxuriant foliage, emerald green lawns, and beds of choice flowers were in a state of perfection. As the Magazine was approached it became evident that great interest was felt in the day's proceedings, and nothing could exceed the gaiety of the scene.

First to attract my attention was the admirably-appointed coach of Mr. Arthur Byass, whose four noble chesnuts trotted past me in grand style as I was hastening to the meeting; and adhering to the opinion I expressed when I saw them start from the Orleans Club last season, I say, "as I did then, "that the meed of praise must be awarded to him for quality and style." His wheelers are patterns of coach-horses, and the leaders—especially a young horse with capital action—are equally good, making as complete a team as could be desired. Next I observed Mr. Deichmann's excellent team of bays, admirably matched, in capital condition, with short square-cut tails, which made them look business like and useful. After which I was struck with the turnout of Major Stapylton, which was first-rate in every respect, the horses being handsome, stylish animals, with good action, and driven in capital form.

On arriving at the Magazine I found several coaches had arrived, whilst beneath the shade of a luxuriant elm was Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Teck and her children, and many ladies and gentlemen of distinction. In quick succession the drags arrived and took up their places, Colonel Armytage being busily employed in making arrangements with Inspector Frazer to ensure a good start.

Then trotted up Mr. Coupland with an extremely useful team, notably a bay wheeler on the near side, and shortly after, Lord Carington, by whose side sat his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. Some little delay occurred, it being hoped that her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales would honour the gathering with her presence. Nor was this expectation without warrant, for shortly before the start her Royal Highness, accompanied by her eldest daughter, drew up at a spot which permitted of her seeing the noble procession of coaches, as well as being seen by the larger number of persons attracted by the animated proceedings. With little loss of time and in admirable order, Colonel Armytage started the teams. Lord Carington, accompanied by the Prince of Wales, heading the procession, followed by Sir Thomas Peyton, Mr. T. Wood, of the Grenadier Guards; Mr. Sandeman, Mr. Arthur Flower, Captain Trotter, Major Jary, Mr. J. Mitchell, Colonel Ferguson, Mr. Henry Brassey, Mr. Deichmann, Mr. Arthur Byass, Mr. Coupland, Major Stapylton, Mr. Edward Darell, Captain Foster, Captain Dunbar, Mr. Slingsby Bethell, Mr. Walter H. Long, the coach of the 8th Hussars, Mr. Banbury, Mr. Sidney Hankey, Mr. J. A. Craven, and Captain Ashton—twenty-five in all.

There were many absentees, but nevertheless I do not recollect seeing a better display of coaches. It appears to me that the various teams improve year by year, and greater efforts are made by the members to maintain the reputation of the Club, and, judging from those I saw on this occasion, their endeavours have been thoroughly successful. Witness the turn-out of Sir Thomas Peyton, Captain

Trotter, or Mr. T. Wood. Trotting along at a very moderate pace, ample opportunity was given for a critical examination, as they journeyed along the banks of the Serpentine, turning at the corner and proceeding past the Barracks, and on to the Queen's Gate, where a considerable number fell out, returning through the Park, amongst whom was the Prince of Wales. The rest journeyed onwards to Orleans House, which was the rendezvous of the day, where luncheon was provided for a large number of members of the Coaching Club and their friends, who had an opportunity of wandering through the delightful grounds of this fashionable Club, where

“Half in a blush of clustering roses lost,
Dewdropping coolness to the shade retires ;
There, on the verdant turf or flowery bed,
By gelid founts and careless rills to muse ;
Whilst tyrant heat, disspreading through the sky,
With rapid sway his burning influence darts
On man and beast, and herb and tepid stream.”

Certainly a most desirable spot to spend a sultry afternoon.

Returning through the Park, the appearance was brilliant in the extreme. Equipages of every description were to be seen. Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales in a beautifully appointed Victoria ; and a host of lords and ladies of high degree ; pedestrians innumerable listening to the band, and some few equestrians, amongst the number one who, it is to be hoped, will be prevented by his friends from taking horse exercise for the future, his performance being irregular and, to an extent, original.

as he sat on his horse's neck, and would have come to grief had it not been for the kindly care of Constable XX, who prevailed upon him to retire. Added to which, the liveliness of the scene was greatly enhanced by the presence of a number of the coaches that had retired from the procession, and an opportunity was afforded to the critically inclined of witnessing the skill of the drivers who passed through the crowded thoroughfares without difficulty. Favoured by the weather, this meeting must be considered an entire success, and the excellence of the various turns-out, as well as the good coachmanship of the members of this distinguished Club, admitted by all.





CHAPTER III.

DOWN THE ROAD.

DICCADILLY is, to my mind, the grandest thoroughfare in the universe, not so much by reason of its architectural features, which, to speak truthfully, are somewhat incongruous, as from the fact of its being the highway along which "the world" travels when bent either on business or pleasure. In what city will you see such palatial abodes, such comfortable clubs, such splendid equipages—whither will you bend your steps in order to find so many stalwart men or such numbers of graceful women, "that are lovely, gentle, kind, and full of every hope and every joy," as may be met with during a short walk along this delightful and fashionable promenade, on a bright sunshiny morning in the spring time of the year?

But here we are at the White Horse Cellar, the hour 10 A.M., and there stands the Rocket, a fast and well-appointed four-horse stage coach, about to start for Portsmouth, traversing the distance, some 77 miles, in eight hours, and journeying through a lovely and picturesque part of the country, at a rapid and exhilarating rate. The proprietor of this workmanlike turn-out is Captain Hargreaves, with

whom is associated Mr. Wormald, and having as a professional attendant Edwin Fownes, who is well known to all coaching men as being a good performer on the bench.

Now, if you are desirous of having a ride on the Rocket you must take your place, as punctuality is the order of the day. If you have been thoughtful, and thus have had the good fortune to secure the box-seat, that object of envy to all passengers, you will find yourself in the society of a cheery and agreeable companion, whilst travelling with the gallant Captain at a slapping space through Putney, Kingston-vale; on by Esher, Cobham, Ripley, Guildford, and Godalming; drawing up at the Angel for luncheon, for which purpose thirty minutes are allowed. Then, having passed a highly satisfactory half-hour under the shelter of the wings of the Angel, you are away again, over Hind Head Hill (familarly known as the "Devil's Punchbowl"), stopping for a few minutes at the summit in order to note the beautiful piece of wild scenery that is spread before you, as well as to let the nags have a breather after rising this exceedingly steep ascent. Then off once more, passing through Liphook, Petersfield, Horndean, Waterloo, and Cosham, drawing up at the George at Portsmouth punctual to the moment. Throughout the whole journey the scenery is beautiful, and in parts wild and rugged, and the trip on a fine day is thoroughly enjoyable. The coach is admirably horsed throughout, and driven in first-rate style by Captain Hargreaves, who greatly delights in the amusement which this costly venture affords him. The Rocket leaves the White Horse Cellar on

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, at ten A.M., returning on the alternate days, from the George Hotel at the same hour.

After this, if you feel disposed to try another venture, you will learn on inquiry of Messrs. Banks, who are in charge of the booking office at the Cellars, and from whom you are sure to receive every attention and civility, that at eleven o'clock on each week day the Guildford coach leaves on its downward journey, returning from the Angel at Guildford at four o'clock, and arriving in Piccadilly at seven sharp. This coach traverses part of the road over which the Rocket travels, and those who do not care to go so great a distance as Portsmouth will find it a very satisfactory ride. The proprietors are Sir Henry de Bathe, Mr. Walter Shoolbred, and Mr. Luxmoore, and it will be found, if tried, that it is an admirably-appointed turn-out, capitally horsed, and thoroughly well coached. To-day it is driven by Sir Henry de Bathe, a very workmanlike performer, who lays hold of his reins and starts his team steadily and well, after the manner of an artist. A full load has the Guildford this morning, and there seems every probability that they will have an enjoyable ride. Of the capabilities of Mr. Luxmoore it is unnecessary to speak after his many years' artistic performance on the bench; whilst of Mr. Shoolbred it may be said that he is an excellent coachman, who looks altogether like business. The good-looking horses step and go well together, and travel at a fast speed. No pains or trouble have been spared to ensure the comfort of the passengers, and it is an excellent specimen of the stage-coach of modern times.

By this time the horn of the Rapid is heard in the distance, and in a few minutes it pulls up at the Cellars, having performed its journey from West Wickham, through Beckenham, Penge, Sydenham, Dulwich, and Kennington, arriving in Piccadilly about eleven A.M., returning in the course of the afternoon. The proprietors of the Rapid are Lord Arthur Somerset and Mr. C. A. R. Hoare, with James Selby as professional coachman. This, as might be expected, is an excellent turn-out, capitally horsed, and appears to load well, the route traversed being pleasant throughout.

The Windsor coach is announced to leave the Cellar at half-past ten A.M., passing along Piccadilly, over Kew Green, to the Greyhound at Richmond, thence crossing the Thames, calling at the Orleans Club at Twickenham, thence through Teddington, Bushey Park, Hampton, and Staines, arriving at the Castle Hotel at Windsor at 1.40 P.M. This a lovely ride at this period of the year. The owners of the Windsor coach—which, by-the-bye, is painted the colour of the Royal Mail—are Mr. W. Bailey, Colonel Greenall, and Mr. Spicer, of the 1st Life Guards. Under such auspices, and with such a capital road, the Windsor is bound to be a success.

Viscount Castlereagh has the Dorking coach, which traverses Clapham, Balham, Tooting, Merton, Ewell, Epsom, Leatherhead, and Mickleham. This is also an extremely pretty ride, and, as the Dorking was well patronised during the past season, it doubtless will be this, and must be looked upon as a profitable investment.

The Tantivy, Watford coach, leaves the Cellar

three days a-week, under the management of Mr. Fred. Sedgwick, who, I believe, worked it during last season.

The Orleans Club coach works between the Town House in King Street and Twickenham every day, and is driven by Captain Wombwell, who is in partnership with Sir John Astley and Mr. Boulter. It is naturally the most pleasurable mode of communication between the London and country establishments of this fashionable Club.

On June 1, Captain Carleton Blyth will start the Blenheim, travelling three days a-week to Oxford, returning on alternate days, the route being *viâ* Brentford, Hounslow, Longford, Colnbrook, Slough, and Salt Hill, halting at Skindle's well-known hotel, at Maidenhead, for luncheon, and then proceeding by way of Henley-on-Thames, Nettlebed, Gangsdown-hill, Benson, Stillingford, and Iffley, arriving at the Clarendon Hotel, Oxford, at 6.30, thus performing the journey in six hours and a-half, including stoppages, through a magnificent line of country, going along the valley of the Thames, and passing *en route* through the counties of Middlesex, Bucks, Berks, and Oxon. Captain Blyth has secured an excellent lot of horses, and this coach will be worked in first-rate style, and will doubtless be one of the most popular on the road, during the boating season more especially.

Thus far I have told of the prospects of the stage coaches starting from the Metropolis; but the movement is not confined to London, as Colonel A. P. Somerset will again run the "Hirondelle" from Enfield to Hitchin and back three days every week.

This beautifully appointed coach is turned out like a private carriage, and the horses are stylish, high-bred animals, mostly chesnuts, which is Colonel Somerset's favourite colour, and fit for park work, being high-priced, sound, and valuable. The ride through Hatfield Park, and the quiet country roads, is very pleasant, and a trip on the *Hirondelle* will give any amateur coachman an idea how the thing is done if he watches the way in which the driver handles the ribbons. In Derbyshire, Mr. C. Wright runs a coach between Matlock, Bakewell, and Buxton—a very workmanlike turnout. From Scarborough to Bridlington Quay a coach will be started by Mr. George Lowther, which will commence running in the month of July. From Devizes to Bristol, Mr. Fuller, of Neston Park, will work a fast coach three days in the week, whilst the Earl of Aylesford will run over the ground between Coventry and Birmingham. It is not considered probable that the Brighton coach will be put on the road this season. What the reason of its discontinuance is, I am not aware; but I believe that it was not well supported during last year, which is somewhat surprising, as it was turned out in first-rate style and admirably horsed; whilst the journey was performed with great regularity, and the line of road was pleasant to pass along. On the whole, therefore, the revival of stage coaches seems to maintain its ground, and certainly the spirited individuals who embark in these adventures are fully entitled to the thanks of the public, enabling them at a small cost to visit some of the pleasantest spots in England. It is scarcely to be expected that coaching in these days will lead to profitable results, except in

some special cases, as it is an expensive and risky business at all times; and in these days the price of horses has been so greatly enhanced, owing to the demand for every description, that, upon looking back to the time when "Nimrod" wrote his well-known book, "The Chase, the Turf, and the Road," now exactly fifty years since, I find the price is more than doubled, as I read "that the average price of horses for fast coaches may be £25. Fancy teams and those working out of London may be rated higher—say £30; but taking a hundred miles of ground, well horsed, the former is about the mark." When the Brighton coach horses were sent to the hammer at the close of the season, they realised an average exceeding £80 per horse at that dull period of the year, when the demand for carriage-horses is usually somewhat slack. It would appear that, in respect to coaches, the preference is given to Messrs. Holland & Holland, of Oxford Street, as I find that out of thirteen now on the road, or about to be started, eleven have been supplied by that noted firm; and I must say that I think there is much wisdom on the part of the proprietors in their selection, as there is a style and finish about them, as well as a business-like appearance, that adds greatly to the effect of the turn-out.

A somewhat amusing scene is to be witnessed every morning between the hours of 10.0 and 11.30, at Hatchett's, at one time the starting-point of all the West of England coaches, and now the centre of despatch for those of the present day. Numerous are the lookers-on when the day is fine, and many a veteran of the road may be observed critically

inspecting the different teams, and drawing comparisons with well-remembered coaches of days long past, such as the Quicksilver Mail, that ran to Devonport; the Blenheim, to Oxford, etc. There I observe Colonel Tyrwhitt, a well-known and experienced whip; Dr. Hurman, looking thoroughly "down the road" whilst he watches the start of the different drags; Mr. Boulter, emerging from St. James's Street, a well-blown horn giving note of his approach. Then, as representing the profession, there is Harry Ward, whose fifty years' experience makes him a formidable judge of "what's what" in coaching; and if any tyro in the art of driving can pass with his approval, you may depend upon it he is not far behind the mark. But I miss the man with the many-bladed knives, who was always present in olden times. Why you should have been looked upon as a likely customer for such a weapon, when you were going an ordinary journey, I know not; but certain it is that you invariably had the opportunity, if you desired, to possess one. Neither did I observe the boy with the oranges, who made a point of offering his refreshing wares to the travellers with a considerable amount of pertinacity. No; the class of passengers of the present day do not indulge in such vulgar luxuries; that lady in the well-cut ulster, tightly-fitting gloves, and neat boots—which you cannot fail to observe as she mounts the ladder to take her seat on the box—would be absolutely horrified should such a suggestion be made. However, whilst I am chatting, the last coach has started on its journey.



CHAPTER IV.

THE FOUR-IN-HAND CLUB.

We may roam through the world like a child at a feast,
Who but sips of a sweet and flies off to the rest :
And when pleasure begins to grow dull in the East,
We may order our wings and be off to the West.



NOT a bad suggestion this by any means, and in a measure applicable to the present time, for beyond doubt every one is heartily weary of the East and all things appertaining thereto; and as this is a red-letter day in the calendar of the fashionable world, by all means let us order our wings, or a hansom cab in the absence of those aerial appendages, and straightway be off to the West, in order to witness the grandest exhibition of the season, namely, the gathering of the members of the Four-in-Hand Club, who assembled yesterday at the Magazine in Hyde Park, at the hour of noon. My first recollections of this aristocratic amusement dates back beyond half-a-century: to the time when the "B. D. C."—or Benson Driving Club—used to hold its rendezvous at the Black Dog, at Bedfont, a short distance beyond Hounslow Heath. In its palmyest days this noted Club could never boast of more than forty members.

Then, for a while, a change came o'er the spirit of the times; coaching fell to a discount, and steam rose considerably above par. So matters remained for a number of years, and a well-appointed coach was a rarity, a few only of the old school remaining faithful to their colours, conspicuous amongst whom was Sir Henry Peyton, who never failed to appear in Hyde Park as regularly as the season came round; but even his well-appointed coach and workmanlike team of greys failed to attract much attention. Four-in-hands were considered as belonging to the things of the past, and coaching found no favour with the young "Rapids" of the period. But the good time came again. Drags were no longer rarities, and the fashion of driving a well-appointed team revived; until we find it to-day enjoying a greater amount of favour and exciting far more interest than ever it did during any time in my recollection.

At no period in the history of coaching, which dates back as nearly as possible 100 years, could an exhibition of such splendidly appointed turn-outs have been seen as that which assembles on the banks of the Serpentine at the present time. With the most popular nobleman in England, the Duke of Beaufort, at the head of the movement, it has now reached a point that dims and outshadows the glories of the past. Associated with this first-class whip, most genial of gentlemen, and thorough sportsman, are the Duke of Sutherland, the Marquis of Londonderry, the Earl of Sefton, the Earl of Macclesfield, Lord Londesborough, Lord Wenlock, and Lord Aveland, forming the committee of the

Club; whilst amongst the members, numbering somewhere about fifty in all, the following are staunch supporters of this fashionable pastime. The Marquis of Worcester, who follows closely in the footsteps of his father, being equally good on the bench as he is with the horn; Lord Arthur Somerset, a first-class coachman; the Marquis of Waterford, who, though he does not go the pace like the Marquis of olden times, is an equally good coachman as that celebrated performer, even if he is a little more steady and subdued; Count Münster, who sets an example to all foreigners of distinction by the style in which he coaches his magnificent team of chesnuts; Lord Macduff, who handles the ribbons in good form; Lord Cole, an artist of the first water, who coaches his team right well; Lord Abingdon, Lord Poltimore, the Earl of Bective, Lord Charles Beresford, the Marquis of Blandford, the Earl of Craven, Viscount Helmsley, Lord Muncaster, Lord Tredegar, Sir George Wombwell, Mr. Henry Chaplin, Captain J. Anstruther Thompson, the well-known welter weight and most popular M.F.H.; Colonel Tyrwhitt, one of the most able judges that ever sat on the bench—of a four-in-hand; Colonel Dickson, Sir Henry Tufton. Sir John Lister Kaye, Colonel Ewart, Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson, who is to be seen in the first flight of those hailing from Melton during the hunting season; Colonel Owen Williams, whose turn-out is always of the first order; Colonel Chaplin, Captain Percival, Sir T. Peyton, Captain Whitmore, Mr. A. Hope, Sir Lawrence Palk, Mr. W. E. Oakley, the Hon. L. Agar-Ellis, Colonel Stracey Clitheroe, well known “down

the road ;” Mr. W. G. Craven, Mr. H. R. Hughes, Sir Roger Palmer, Mr. C. Birch-Reynardson, Sir M. Shaw Stewart, Captain H. Wombwell, Mr. J. L. Baldwin, Mr. F. Villiers, and Mr. H. W. Eaton. Arriving in the park half-an-hour before the appointed hour of meeting, the prospect could not be said to be encouraging. Two ladies on horseback braving the elements were to be seen in the ride ; the blooming rhododendrons hung down their heads as if they were thoroughly ashamed of having made their *début* in such weather ; whilst the flock of sheep who are engaged to do the truly rural part of the business in Hyde Park at this season of the year, though somewhat dingy in respect to the condition of their wool, yet looked fully equal to the dismal occasion.

I have seen a good deal of weather in my time ; but a more uncomfortable and unpleasant arrangement of the elements than that existing on this occasion I cannot call to mind. Consequently there was a limited attendance of spectators to witness the sight, and it was not until the time appointed for the meeting was close at hand that matters assumed a more cheerful aspect. First to appear on the scene and to take up his position at the Magazine was the Marquis of Worcester, looking thoroughly business-like ; followed by the Marquis of Waterford with a first-rate team, and succeeded by his Grace the Duke of Beaufort, and Lord Arthur Somerset coaching the drag of the Blues, who took up their positions at the head of the assembled coaches. Then followed in succession the various members of the Club, who, having fallen into line, were ready to

follow their leaders when the signal was given. At 12.25 the start was effected in the following order :—

First, the Duke of Beaufort, heading the procession as president of the Club; followed in rotation by Colonel Ewart, Count Münster, Mr. H. W. Eaton, the Marquis of Worcester, Lord Abingdon, Sir Thomas Peyton, Lord Arthur Somerset; the drag of the 1st Life Guards, the Marquis of Waterford, the Orleans Club coach, driven by Captain Wombwell; Lord Aveland, the secretary of the Club, who was honoured with the company of his Serene Highness the Duke of Teck; General Dickson, Viscount Castlereagh, Captain Whitmore, Lord Tredegar, Mr. Adrian Hope, Lord Sefton, Mr. W. A. Oakley, the Hon. F. Villers, Lord Macduff, Sir Henry Tufton, Lord Londesborough, Lord Bective, Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson, and Captain J. Anstruther Thompson—twenty-five in all.

A grander display of coaches, finer horses or better coachmanship, it has never been my good fortune to witness. To speak in praise of the teams coached by the Duke of Beaufort, the Marquis of Worcester, or Lord Arthur Somerset, is merely to reiterate a remark that is patent to every one who has any knowledge of the art of driving. Not to notice such turn-outs as those of the Marquis of Waterford, Lord Castlereagh, Mr. W. A. Oakley, Lord Macduff, and, notably, the admirably matched and excellent team of dark-brown horses of Sir Henry Tufton, would be to proclaim one's ignorance; not to recollect that Sir Thomas Peyton adheres to the colour which the late Sir Henry invariably chose

in the days of yore, would be to show that your memory was defective; not to notice the skill and perfection of the art of driving of Lord Londesborough, would be evidence of your incapacity to speak upon the subject; whilst the audacity of making individual selections where all are excellent, betokens a hardihood that is only excusable on the score of senility. Of all the twenty-five coaches appearing on the scene this day, no less a number than seventeen have been turned out by Messrs. Holland & Holland; three by the well-known firm of Barker; and the remainder by Peters, Hooper & Ivall. More perfect specimens of coaches, I may safely assert, have never been turned out by any makers than those that were exhibited on this occasion. With regard to the teams, a marked superiority is noticeable, as far more than average excellence was visible when compared with those I have seen in former years. Leaving the Park at 12.25 P.M., the numbers diminished after passing the Marble Arch, only nine in all pursuing their course to Alexandra Park, which was the rendezvous on this occasion. The weather having fortunately cleared up, a pleasant drive of one hour and five minutes landed the members and their visitors at their destination. Those who were not deterred by the unfortunate state of the weather were the Duke of Beaufort, Lord Arthur Somerset, Lord Tredegar, Sir Henry Tufton, Lord Castlereagh, Lord Aveland, Lord Bective, Lord Londesborough, and Captain Anstruther Thompson, who, with their numerous guests, amounting to between fifty and sixty amongst whom were many ladies, sat down to an excellent luncheon, in a handsome and elegantly

decorated tent, supplied with all things suitable for the occasion, by Messrs. Bertram & Roberts; after which the numerous visitors resumed their seats on their respective coaches, to witness the parade of horses, and observe the qualifications of the numerous competitors for the various prizes which were offered for competition.

Looking back on the parade of the coaches belonging to the Four-in-Hand Club, as shown at the gathering on the banks of the Serpentine yesterday, I come to the conclusion that this thoroughly excellent display, which is eminently characteristic of the taste for healthy amusements on the part of the aristocracy of England, is greatly to be commended. It is not simply a selfish enjoyment of a pleasure which is not within the reach of the multitude, for the sight of the magnificent equipages, the wonderful collection of splendid horses, and the skill of the coachmen affords a vast amount of amusement to the assembled spectators. But, beyond this, it has a bearing on the tastes, and inculcates wholesome and manly ideas in the breasts of the rising generation, which is all to the good. Money spent in such a rational amusement is not only productive of pleasure to those who are in the position to indulge in such an expenditure, but it has a tendency to encourage trade and manufactures, as well as affording employment to a vast number of people, who benefit by this sensible expenditure of capital.



CHAPTER V.

THE COACHING CLUB.

“**S**UNT quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum collegisse juvat” was, if I remember rightly, a remark made by Horace when speaking of the athletes of ancient days. I am not conversant myself with the locality in which the youth of the period to which the poet refers were wont to take the dust; but if it in any way resembled Hyde Park, the rendezvous of our modern Jehus when desirous of exhibiting their skill in the guidance of chariots and horses, I am prepared to admit that it must have been a tolerably nice place. This was the idea that flashed across my mind as I made my way towards the Magazine, in order to witness the gathering together of the members of the Coaching Club, who, I was informed, intended to assemble in full force on the banks of the Serpentine. A bright morning gave promise of a fair day, and as I journeyed towards Park Place, in order to take the seat which Major Furnivall had kindly placed at my disposal, it was evident from the number of carriages moving in the direction of the Park that this annual exhibition of coaches had lost none of its interest.

Arriving at Apsley House, I found the road and footways leading to the Magazine lined with spectators; but there was no crowd such as I have seen on former occasions to prevent our driving straight up to the trysting-place. The diminution in the number of spectators was traceable to the fact of there being less publicity given of the gathering, and not to any want of interest on the part of the public.

Some complaints having arisen on former occasions from the overcrowding of the Park caused a certain amount of reticence as to the announcement of the proceedings, in order to obviate the inconvenience complained of. But if there were fewer in numbers, the quality of those present on this occasion fully made up for the deficiency. I never remember to have seen a better display of equipages, or a greater number of well-mounted horsewomen, than were assembled all doubtless relying upon the fair promise of the morning. Fatal delusion!—for, as the appointed hour approached, a heavy storm broke over Hyde Park, and a perfect deluge of rain descended, marring the pleasure of the spectator, and interfering with the success of the meeting.

In order to see the procession of coaches to the greatest advantage, I had taken up a position near Apsley House, which commanded a full view of the road leading from the Magazine. A slight delay, caused doubtless by the untoward state of the weather, took place in the start; but at a quarter to one o'clock the procession, which consisted of thirty admirably-appointed coaches, moved on.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales did not

accompany the members of the Coaching Club to Alexandra Park, which was their destination on this occasion—as, I believe, was his intention. The Crown Prince of Germany, however, took his seat by the side of Count Münster, whose beautifully appointed coach and magnificent team of highly-bred chesnuts were the admiration of all beholders. His Royal Highness the Duke of Teck, seated by the side of Captain H. Wombwell, was tooled along in first-rate style by that excellent performer. Seated by the side of his son, Lord Arthur Somerset, was his Grace the Duke of Beaufort; his well-known team and the excellence of the whole turn-out attracting the usual amount of attention. Then followed Lord Carington who handled his team of browns in a workmanlike form; Sir Talbot Constable, with his four chesnuts; Sir Henry Tufton, with his four admirably matched brown horses; Colonel Murray, with an excellent team of greys; Lord Bective, handling four capital horses in excellent form; Mr. Mitchell, of Belfast, with a team of very useful bays; Captain Trotter, with a good-looking team of browns; Mr. W. Long, with a very smart team; Mr. Carter Wood, with a handsome lot of roans; Mr. Banbury, with four extremely lively thorough-breds; and last, but not least, Colonel Arthur P. Somerset, with his neatly appointed coach and splendid team of chesnuts. These were all that I could take special note of in the limited time which was available, as they followed in quick succession; but it may be said of one and all that they were an exceedingly good lot of coaches, thoroughly well horsed, and driven in capital form; and I could not fail to remark that on

the whole they were superior to those of last year in every respect.

On arriving at the Marble Arch, a large number of carriages were drawn up to witness their exit from the Park. Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, accompanied by the Crown Princess of Germany, honoured the members of the club with their presence. After leaving the Park, no less than twenty coaches quitted the ranks, the remaining ten journeying at a rapid rate in the direction of Alexandra Park, which was reached at a quarter to two o'clock, and where they were drawn up in front of the large tent provided for the accommodation of the members and their guests, numbering in all about eighty; amongst whom there were many ladies, who were not to be baulked of so pleasurable an excursion by such a trifle as a shower of rain.

The lowering clouds and occasional showers interfered again with the comfort of the visitors, and the beautiful grounds of the Palace were not seen to advantage. However, Messrs. Bertram and Roberts were equal to the occasion, and a capital luncheon was laid out in excellent style. At the close of the entertainment, his Grace the Duke of Beaufort proposed the health of the Queen, which was the only toast given, and the company then adjourned to the coaches to witness the show of horses which were being paraded before the judges, this being the opening day of the exhibition of hunters, hacks, carriage-horses, and ponies, of which there were a considerable number. At four o'clock symptoms of departure were shown, and the yellow coach of Captain Hargreave was the first to be drawn out, and

the horses being put to, they moved off in capital style. Next followed Captain Wombwell's team, after which Mr. Long started his good-looking lot, followed by Captain Trotter, who handled his handsome brown horses in a workmanlike style. Next in the order of departure was Lord Bective, whose well-appointed coach was worked on the return journey by Colonel Chaplin, after which Mr. Banbury made a start, but, whether owing to the freshness of the high-spirited animals he was driving, or want of skill on the part of the grooms, the move was not a success, as the steeds danced wildly about, scattering the spectators on all sides; but at length they settled down, and, though sundry persons were frightened, fortunately no one was damaged, and the team trotted away at a rattling pace. Next in the order of departure was the admirably appointed coach of the Guards' Club, driven by Captain Wood, followed by Mr. Mitchell. Then Lord Arthur Somerset mounted the box and moved off his coach with a full load of passengers in grand style, followed by Colonel Arthur P. Somerset, who is a very first-class performer, tooling his team of handsome horses in fine order. Had it not been such disastrous weather, this would, I think, have been one of the most successful gatherings of the Coaching Club; but, notwithstanding all drawbacks, I think the meeting on the whole was highly satisfactory.



CHAPTER VI.

NOW AND THEN.

THEN—youth's gay fancy threw o'er life its glowing hue, in the merry days when we were young, and affected as a matter of course the fashionable quarters of the metropolis in pursuit of a little pleasureable excitement.

Some four decades since, Her Most Gracious Majesty was in her teens, His Royal Highness the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief a stripling, the Prime Minister a rising politician and a successful author, the Lord President of the Council a light-hearted schoolboy, Louis Napoleon a lodger in King Street, Elizabeth Vassal (Lady Holland) the most charming of hostesses, Count D'Orsay the glass of fashion and the mould of form, and the pleasantest of companions to boot, Lord Alvanley the wit of the period, Lord Brudenell the *beau sabreur* of the army, Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence and Sir George Wombwell "the twin inseparables," the Marquis of Waterford the evil spirit of the Haymarket, "Honest Tom Duncombe" the most indebted, and "Handsome Jack Spalding" the most extravagant man in London—at least in the opinion of his stepfather, Lord

Brougham, Madame Vestris the cynosure of every eye, and Mrs. Nesbitt a lovely and fascinating girl. These were some of the well-remembered personages of the period that were recalled to my mind as I strolled along Hyde Park on a brilliant spring morning during the present season; and, as I drew a mental comparison of those frequenting this place of fashionable resort now with the *habitués* who were conspicuous then, I was fain to exclaim with the minstrel of yore, "Old times are changed, old manners gone!" Not only, forsooth, are the times and manners changed, but a wondrous transformation has taken place in the scene itself. In those days it was a dull, dreary, down-trodden piece of common land, with here and there a dismal, stunted, sooty liliac bush, suggestive of cats and back gardens, such as may still be found in some of the dingiest quarters of the metropolis, made gay and cheerful only by the presence of those frequenting it. Now it is a beautiful and trimly-kept demesne, with verdant lawns, luxuriant blossoming shrubs, and rich parterres of choice and lovely flowers, displayed in most excellent taste, around which, in due season, are to be seen assembled the *élite* of the fashionable world, listening to the enchanting strains of the Coldstream band. But, though the Park itself is so greatly changed and so vastly improved, it must not for a moment be supposed that the present frequenters surpass in beauty, elegance, or style those of their predecessors in the world of fashion who have, like well-graced actors, left the stage to the undisputed possession of their successors. No; for does not memory vividly recall the strangely-beau-

tiful form and lovely features of the Lady Mary Blank—a graceful, elegant, and accomplished horse-woman, of whom, at a most respectful distance, I was a humble, though not faint-hearted, admirer? It is said that everything comes to him who waits; and the truth of the proverb was not belied in this instance—for it happened all these years ago that, on a lovely summer's afternoon, when the Park was crowded to excess, in the very acme of the season, a little cloud, at first no bigger than a man's hand, gathered by degrees, and suddenly burst on the heads of the astonished multitude. Then ensued a scene of wild disorder and dismay. The hoods of carriages were hastily closed, and parasols put up in vain; for down came the rain in torrents, with the accompaniment of vivid flashes of lightning and loud and terrific peals of thunder. *Sauve qui peut* was the order of the day, and a veritable stampede ensued.

Having been one of the first to take flight, I was rapidly making my way in the direction of Park Lane, when my attention was arrested by the sound of a horse galloping at full speed; whilst, through the blinding rain and hurly-burly of the storm, I beheld the object of my distant adoration at the mercy of her terrified steed, which she was utterly powerless to control. At the moment the excited animal overtook me, a more than usually vivid flash of lightning caused him to pause for an instant in his wild career, and laying a firm hold of the reins, I was enabled to rescue the ladye faire from her perilous position, and convey her in safety to the friendly shelter of the adjacent lodge.

But enough of olden times, for the Park to-day is crowded, the hour one P.M., and there are many of the *élite* of the fashionable world assembled, both on foot and horseback, to enjoy the soft breezes and pleasant sunshine of this brilliant May morning. Observe, for an instant, that lovely young girl on the noble brown horse, resting for a while after a brisk gallop up and down the Row. Note her beautiful complexion, somewhat heightened by the exhilarating exercise, her elegant figure shown to the greatest advantage by a well-cut and closely-fitting dark blue habit, adorned with a "buttonhole" of the choicest description, as she bends gracefully over the neck of the favoured steed, patting him gently with her delicate and neatly-gloved hand, in order to mark approval of his behaviour. It may be fancy only, yet I cannot but think that a feeling somewhat akin to jealousy is passing through the mind of the young cavalier who has reined up his good-looking bright bay horse, and taken his place by her side, as he watches the tender caresses she so prodigally bestows on her high-mettled favourite. Well, faint heart, be it remembered, never won fair lady; so courage, *mon ami*, your turn may come some day, if you are as docile and tractable as that noble animal. This, be it observed, is only a specimen of one of the many who may be seen taking their daily exercise in Hyde Park, admirably equipped, and superbly mounted on horses, the cost of which may be estimated at from £150 to £400 each, according to the style and manners they exhibit.

Then see the lady of a riper age, mounted on a clever hunter-like animal, taking a constitutional,

followed by a steady-looking and well-mounted groom, whose vocation when he is at home evidently is to act as second horseman to his master, the member for Mudlandshire, who is attending to the duties of the day in a committee room of the House of Commons. Cantering along on a clever-looking dark chesnut horse, in brilliant condition, having superb action, is the neatest and best-appointed horsewoman in London, who would be dangerous—in more senses than one—should you attempt to follow her, especially in a forty minutes' burst over the open, across a stiff country, when the hounds are going the pace, and there is a yawner in the way.

But whilst critically observing the throng of riders in the Row, the long line of spectators comfortably seated in arm chairs, a fashion copied of later years from our friends in the Champs Elysées, must claim attention for a while.

Where else in your wanderings through the world have you ever seen so many handsome, beautifully dressed, and fashionable people assembled together as you see to-day, adding, by their presence, to the brilliant aspect of the unrivalled gathering in this noble promenade of Hyde Park?

Nor must the array of elegant equipages drawn up, on the opposite side, be passed over without a word. There the occupants may be seen leisurely bowing graceful recognitions to their many friends and acquaintances passing in order of review before them, a somewhat severe ordeal, I should imagine, to undergo at their hands. Then, until the appointed hour dedicated to luncheon arrives, an ever-varying

stream of more or less well-mounted people flows uninterruptedly up and down the ride, the Houses of Lords and Commons and the liberal professions being adequately represented. Now it is a group of well-appointed ladies, followed at a proper distance by their natty grooms, chatting together in pleasant converse as to things in general and fashion in particular, that arrests attention. Next two well-known members of the Lower House, who, taking their daily allowance of exercise, are evidently endeavouring to solve some knotty question of the day. And a good-looking and exceedingly popular M. F. H. pulls up his grand stepping hack, and chats over the rails with a heavy dragoon well known in Northamptonshire—an exceedingly good man across country, and very prominent in the charge of the 300, which takes place whenever the meet of the Pytchley is fixed at that popular cover, “Crick” by name. An officer of the Blues in uniform adds by his presence to the colouring of the picture, relieving the tedium inseparable from the arduous duties of the day by joining the fashionable throng for awhile and enjoying the lively society of two or three evidently agreeable companions.

Last, but not least, amongst the later arrivals is a tall, well-dressed, aristocratic youth, as perfect in respect to dress as Poole or Smalpage can make him, mounted on a very light bay horse, with exceedingly high and good action, such an animal as Sheward would provide for you in consideration of some six or seven hundred guineas; and as he glances around the assembled equestrians, it is perfectly evident that he is quite conscious of being “all there.”

And thus the time passes pleasantly away until the neighbouring clocks strike the hour of two, when the multitude disperse for a while, in order to take rest and refreshment to fit them for the remaining pleasures of the day. During an experience extending over half a century, I have never witnessed a larger attendance at this fashionable resort. Doubtless society has undergone a considerable change, and is no longer so aristocratic or exclusive as it was in days of yore. But, nevertheless, there is abundant evidence of there being no decrease in the wealth of the country, or signs of degeneracy amongst the many who make up the total of the fashionable world of the present day. After some hours of refreshment and repose, I once more bend my steps in the direction of Apsley House, and, re-entering the Park, the hour being somewhere about five o'clock, I find that an unusual state of excitement exists.

Whichever way the eye turns, whether in the direction of the Marble Arch, the banks of the Serpentine, or the road passing the Knightsbridge Barracks, the pathways are crowded with pedestrians, and the roadways thronged with carriages of every shape and kind. The aristocratic barouche, filled with the youthful members of a noble family; the country-built heavy landau, dating many years back, containing two elderly ladies, once as pretty and as much admired as that handsome girl seated by the side of her father in the well-appointed phaeton; or that smiling face that may be observed within the shelter of a brougham, drawn by two compact, clever, short-tailed brown horses, who is

listening to the account which her mother is giving of how people used to flock to this particular spot when she was a girl—such a gathering as this evidently denotes some event of more than ordinary import; and, after policeman A 1 has considerably placed a youthful bride and bridegroom—beyond doubt fresh from the provinces—in an advantageous position, he has time to answer my inquiry as to the cause of the gathering together of so great a number of eager but decorous and quietly disposed spectators. He courteously informs me that they are awaiting the advent of Her Majesty, who will pass through the Park shortly *en route* for Windsor *via* the Great Western Railway. Then, whilst awaiting the arrival of Royalty, I have time to look around, and I notice an admirably turned-out drag, drawn by four clipping dark-brown horses, a well-matched and excellent team, handled in proper style as it is worked through the crowd, going in the direction of Knightsbridge. Next, my particular attention is riveted on a Victoria, drawn by an exceedingly neat little bay horse in splendid condition, the whole turn-out being perfect in every respect, with servants of a class that are only found attending on persons of distinction and fashion, and you know at a glance that the faultlessly-dressed occupant of that stylish turn-out is one of the leaders of society of the first order.

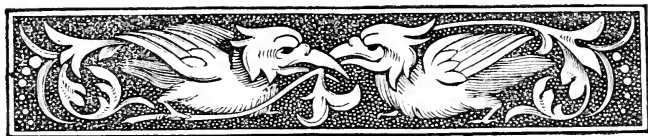
Amidst the different vehicles assembled here I fail to observe either the cab, with its diminutive “tiger,” or the Tilbury, with its upstanding, hogmaned, high-actioned horse. Now a cab by Barker, with an animal such as Lord Cardigan used to drive, or a Tilbury resembling that with which Jack Spalding

once dazzled the eyes of all beholders, though no longer fashionable, must not be looked upon simply as "one-horse affairs," to use an American phrase, being, in my opinion, infinitely preferable to a brougham, a style of vehicle which so many of the young men of the present day delight in. But if you do aspire to own either of these carriages, you must remember that there is no medium; it must be a turn-out perfect in every respect, put together regardless of cost. Above all your horse must be handsome in appearance, handy but resolute in harness, going well up to the bit, but not pulling an ounce, and stepping in unmistakable style. It must be understood in driving such an animal that he must not be used indiscreetly, lest you come to grief, as I did on one occasion, by taking liberties with a new purchase, which, after half-an-hour's sharp going, began to click his shoes together and show evident signs of "shutting up." Complaining to the dealer of whom I had purchased him, he explained that he thought I wanted a horse for the park, not for work. I took the rebuke in good spirit, and did not do it again; but it recalled to mind the story of Hoby, the celebrated bootmaker, who, in answer to the complaint of a customer, who said that the last pair of Wellingtons that were made for him did not wear satisfactorily, replied, after inspecting them carefully, "Good heavens! sir, you have been walking in them."

At length an omnibus, loaded with luggage and servants in the Royal livery, followed shortly after by two of the Royal carriages, containing members of the household, betokened the speedy approach of


the Sovereign. A few minutes only elapsed before the Queen, accompanied by the Crown Princess of Germany and the Princess Beatrice, preceded by two equerries, and escorted by some half-dozen only of the 2d Life Guards, passed quietly along in an open carriage, without the slightest noise or confusion, amidst the respectful salutations of this large gathering of her subjects—a far more imposing acknowledgment of the estimation in which this Royal lady is held than ever could be evinced by the noisiest plaudits of the fickle mob who are usually attendants on the movement of crowned heads.





CHAPTER VII.

SOCIETY IN THE SADDLE.

“OW walks the sun and broadens by degrees, just o'er the verge of day,” as I ride into Hyde Park in order to view the aristocratic assemblage which is to be seen in the Row—weather permitting—at this period of the season. The effect of the continued downpour of rain has been to bring the foliage of the fine old elms to a state of great perfection; whilst the emerald green of the closely-shaven lawns, the luxuriant shrubs, and tastefully-arranged beds of rare and lovely flowers, just raising their drooping heads after the tropical storms that have prevailed of late, make up a brilliant picture when seen on a summer evening at sunset.

Then it is that the cream of London society takes its pleasure in the Park, differing essentially from the set which frequents it during the noontide heat. There goes the Prince of Wales on his well-known brown horse, chatting pleasantly with Lord Carington, and gracefully acknowledging the numerous, but not intrusive, salutations of those who are honoured with his acquaintance as he rides leisurely up and down the Row. Next I see the Marquis of

Hartington taking a gentle canter, doubtless endeavouring to dispel the *ennui* attendant on his absorbing political duties. Then there is Mr. Robert Lowe, who has discarded his perambulator and mounted the high horse instead, not a matchless steed by any means, seeming, in my opinion, somewhat dull and depressed, the result, possibly, of the storms and tempests which have so filled "the Liberal air" during the last few months. Here is Lord Calthorpe on his beautiful black-brown cob, allowed to be the very handsomest in London. Mr. Henry Chaplin, mounted on his big and handsome grey, appears to me as he canters along quietly by himself to be meditating on matters political, possibly turning over in his mind the proceedings in Parliament, with a view before the close of the session of delivering one of those trenchant speeches that delight the sturdy farmers of Lincolnshire and Rutlandshire, who like to hear this popular and respected member speak of spades as spades, when he gives a vigorous and telling dig into the Radical substratum of Westminster. Sir George Wombwell rides quietly by on Sunbeam, the winner of sundry prizes, a clever hack and handsome animal. Next comes that graceful rider Mrs. Sloane Stanley, at all times the neatest and best appointed horsewoman to be found in the Row, or at the meet of any of the crack packs in the kingdom, riding her handsome and blooming chesnut, a fitting steed to carry so faultless a performer. Colonel Farquharson is on his eccentric-coloured cob—Colonel Learmonth on his marvellously neat bay horse, considered by a very good judge to be as fine as a specimen of a park hack as is to be met with

throughout the metropolis. Lady Charles Kerr rides her dark-brown pony, which it is said her ladyship alone can manage, being thoroughly able to control his wicked, wilful ways, and having both hands and heart, as you may see, when she drives her clever-looking ponies. Yonder goes Lord Alington, accompanied by his children mounted upon marvellously good ponies, the boy, apparently eight or nine years of age, thoroughly at home in the saddle, showing abundant promise of good horsemanship in the future. Canterng by us now is Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild on his handsome and clever-stepping chesnut, accompanied by Miss Alice de Rothschild, equally well mounted. Then appears a distinguished foreigner, whose handsome horse impatiently champs the bit, pawing the ambient air, and caracolng in a fashion highly suggestive of sawdust and the *haute école* rather than a comfortable evening's ride in Rotten Row: Mr. Cyril Flower, one of the most genial men in society, rides a very handsome nag, which, if I mistake not, is a mare called Emerald, once the property of Lord Spencer. And now, there pass us Captain Digby Wingfield, riding a magnificent dark-bay horse, a style of animal not very readily picked up; and Captain and the Hon. Mrs. Candy, as familiar to us in the Row as in the hunting-field, where, at a respectful distance, I have frequently followed them over the pleasant pastures of Leicestershire, not without fear of coming to grief through such a piece of presumption, as they are hard, very hard, when riding to the Quorn in a twenty-five minutes' burst at a racing pace.

Then, attended by several cavaliers, comes Mrs. Langtry, the cynosure of every eye, mounted on a very handsome chesnut, the well-cut habit showing her graceful figure to the greatest advantage; and it is evident from the style she exhibits and the management of her steed that she is to the manner born a horsewoman of no mean pretensions. By her side rides Colonel Vivian, on a superb golden chesnut of unequalled symmetry, in brilliant condition, with beautiful action—the most perfect specimen of a park horse I have seen for many a long day; and the conclusion I come to is that the horse and his rider are thoroughly well matched, and will take a deal of beating. Messrs. Murietta, on their well-known and excellent polo ponies, are followed by Mr. Arthur Byass, with Mrs. Byass, mounted on her extremely good-looking dark-brown nag, which she sits gracefully and rides with judgment; by Mr. Coupland, whose quiet manner and unpretending style of horsemanship would be likely to bring to grief any tyro who might select him as a pilot across the big fields and tall fences of his “country,” as he would find him a difficult and deceitful man to follow in a splitting burst with his noble pack of hounds; by Mr. Leopold de Rothschild, on a good-looking nag; Lord Charles Kerr, Lady Gladys Herbert, and two men riding long-tailed horses, each the counterpart of the other—Corsican brothers, in fact—who take their pleasure somewhat sadly during their solemn and silent evening ride. Here is the well-known form of Mr. Mackenzie Gieves, admirably mounted, exchanging the pleasures of Paris for the more sober delights of London life for a while. Then, moving

steadily along, come the Earl of Cork, the once popular Master of the Buckhounds; Mr. Dresden, riding his neat white-legged bay horse, an admirable stepper; Mr. George Rice, for so many years known as one of the neatest horsemen in the world; Lord Worcester, taking a steady constitutional in the Park, in order to keep in condition for his arduous work in the ensuing hunting season; Earl Granville accompanied by his youthful daughter, Colonel Chaplin, the Earl of March, Mr. Adrian Hope, Mr. Roger Eykyn, Lord Rocksavage, and Mr. Quallitt, all passing in quick succession. Mr. George Cox rides his beautiful dark chesnut mare specked with silver hairs, a perfect hack with grand action and wonderful temper, for which any amount of money has been vainly offered. Mr. Behrens's handsome chesnut is, if I mistake not, one of the many forming the large stud which visits Melton every season; and I remember Mr. Lubbock at the best meets of the Quorn, the Cottessmore, or the Belvoir, going in the first flight on one of the handsome nags in his excellent stud.

The preponderance of chesnut horses over others is somewhat remarkable, nearly all the handsomest and best that appear in the Row being of that colour. What more delightful place than Hyde Park for a quiet evening ride? especially for those who do not care to frequent the more fashionable and crowded parts, and prefer the quiet ride by Kensington Gardens, where they can indulge in a pleasant canter, away from the throng of equestrians who affect the Row. Observe that aristocratic, middle-aged man on the compact, high-stepping, snaffle-

bridle, bay horse, worth any amount of money to a welter weight, quietly enjoying an evening ride with his daughter, a lovely specimen of a fair English girl, who has seen but eighteen summers at most; note her graceful and elegant figure, her smiling face, bright blue eyes, and neatly-braided light-brown hair, then tell me in what other clime you can match—

“The faultless form, shaped by the hand of Harmony :
The cheek, where the live crimson through the native
white soft shooting,
O'er the face diffuses bloom, and every nameless grace ;
The parted lip, like the red rose-bud moist with morn-
ing dew, breathing delight !”

The evening wanes, and many are on the move ; but who is this fresh comer, this fair woman, accompanied by a child on a small pony, mounted upon a superb chesnut horse in brilliant condition, who handles her high-spirited and impetuous steed in so masterly a manner ? Surely here we have the graceful form, elegant seat, light hand, and brave heart that witched the world with her horsemanship in the merry days when I used to visit “The Haycock” at Wansford, and go the pace with the Fitzwilliam ? If so, then Time has dealt gently with her, and no one, even now, can surpass her in style, or hope to rival her faultless taste in dress or equipage.





CHAPTER VIII.

A PLEASANT TIME AT PENZANCE.

WHEN whitebait attain the proportions of sprats, and cucumbers are bawled through the streets two for three-halfpence, it may be fairly concluded that the London season has drawn to a close. When one's bosom friend has thrown up his well-chosen teams of bays and greys and has ceased those pleasant little journeys which terminated at the Orleans Club or the Star and Garter, as the case might be; when she who adores thee has left for Homburg, in order to recruit her health after the campaign of the year—in order to prepare for a state that may be better or worse, according to circumstances—it behoves a man to seek for fresh fields of relaxation, and to add to his experience by entering into any novel pursuits that present themselves.

In some such wise it came to pass that I spent an extremely pleasant time in the vicinity of Penzance. Now Treneglos, where I sojourned for a while, is situate on high ground, within easy distance of the shore, commanding a lovely view of St. Michael's Mount, a group of grey granite rocks, on the summit of which is placed the weather-stained castle, the

abode of Sir John St. Aubyn. Unapproachable at times, by reason of the heavy waves that roll in from the Atlantic, is this island home. On the other side the town of Penzance is seen, nearly surrounded by the steep hills that form the background. Just beneath me is the village church of Gulval, almost buried amidst a group of tall trees, with its beautifully-kept churchyard, full of blossoming shrubs, around which are the few cottages whereof this little village consists, some half-hidden by the clustering roses, giant geraniums, blue hydrangeas, luxuriant passion flowers, or tall, blossoming myrtles, and hedged in with fuchsias, the growth of years.

Seated beneath the porch, on the morning following my arrival, I am aroused by the tramp of horses and the baying of hounds. It is the huntsman of the Western Foxhounds, accompanied by his whip and twenty-two couples of foxhounds, who, hearing of my arrival, desired to pay me a complimentary visit. A pretty sight at all times is a pack of hounds, and, seen on the village green, with Thompson and his assistants in their scarlet coats pointing out the favourites, and bidding them step forth to show their perfections, it is indeed a pleasing picture that attracts the special admiration of a sportsman.

It is proposed that I should drive to Prussia Cove, and we start on a lovely morning, going by way of Marazion, a little village close to the shore, where "just a trace of silver sand marks where the water meets the land," and after a pleasant hour's ride we reach that rocky inlet. There we sit lazily watching the fishermen collecting their lobster pots, or catching wrass from the rocks, and listening to the music,

monotonous it may be, of the waves, as they break upon the rugged shore.

The following day I am induced to venture on a voyage on board the good ship "Don Quixote," a yawl of repute, being of a burden of eight tons, and warranted a seaworthy craft, that could go the pace before the wind. I admit that no sooner was the anchor weighed than I wished I had not been so venturesome, and began to feel certain qualms—not of conscience—as we bounded over the white-topped waves, and scudded along with "a flowing sheet"—*vide* Dibdin. Soon, however, these discomforting symptoms vanish by the aid of a flask of cognac, which the filial solicitude of him who has assumed the command of this little craft has provided against possible contingencies. Then I begin—albeit no sailor—to take a delight in going at a big wave, and surmounting it, in much the same fashion as I should go at a tall fence, or a stiff flight of post and rails, in the Shires. There is always a certain amount of pleasure, by the way, in getting over a difficulty.

A suggestion is next morning made that I should go deep-sea fishing. I like the fancy, and am soon borne over the bosom of the deep blue sea to a spot where we anchor in thirteen fathoms, and cast our baits upon the waters. Scarcely can our lines have touched the ground, ere a tug is felt, and up comes a sea bream of four pounds weight, followed by another and another of the same description, occasionally two at a time. Next we pull up two or three horse-mackerel, and then follows an exciting incident. The line being taut, it is evident that we have hold of one of the monsters of the deep, at

least so we imagine by his struggles, and finally we haul in a handsome specimen of the whiting-pollack, weighing some six or seven pounds. Having filled a large-sized basket with many denizens of the deep, we heave up our anchor and scud swiftly to the harbour of Penzance. After this it was suggested that I should embark on board one of the Newlyn fishing boats, and pass the night in attempting to ensnare the pilchard. Now, touching this fish, which greatly resembles the herring, I had read in some musty old tome which spoke of Cornish folk, "They make likewise a gainful trade of those little fishes they call pilchards, which are seen upon the coast in great swarms from July to November. These they catch, garbage, salt, smoak, barrel, press, and so send them in great numbers to France, Spain, and Italy, where they are a welcome commodity, and are named 'Fumados.'"

As in those ancient days, so at the present time is this important trade carried on by Messrs. Bolitho, the bankers, merchants, seine owners, tanners, land-owners, farmers, tin smelters, and I know not what beside, of Penzance. By all means let me for once "go catch the pilchard." Leaving Penzance at four o'clock, the yawl, of which I have spoken before, bears me over the rippling waves to the fleet of boats preparing for the night's work. After a few tacks we make the harbour of Newlyn, one of the greatest fishing villages in Cornwall, and I am put alongside the craft on which I am to gain my experience. Soon our complement of men is complete. Four sturdy fishermen form the crew, who earn a hard wage, often at the risk of their lives, on this rugged

and rock-bound coast, who would be well content did their average earnings amount to the modest sum of £1 a-week.

A hearty welcome is given me when I step on board the 14-ton boat, in which they pursue their calling. One by one the boats slip their moorings, the red sail is hoisted, and we move over the rolling surface of the sea, and select a spot in which to cast our nets. The place chosen is within a mile or two of St. Michael's Mount, and there we await the propitious moment for casting the drift net over—an hour dependent on the state of the tide.

The lovely day is followed by a still more lovely and tranquil eve. Tea and bread and butter are offered to and accepted by me gratefully. Strange did it appear to me that these hardy fishermen, who spend weeks on the wild and dangerous shores of Ireland or Scotland when fishing for herrings, should be content with such plain fare.

During the whole of the long night not a pipe was smoked, not a drop—except that beverage which it is said will cheer and not inebriate—was drunk. Not an angry word, not a coarse expression, not an oath was uttered. We conversed of Brunel and the Albert Bridge, and of the ways of John Wesley, until it was time to shoot the net, which extended 780 yards, and was of the depth of ten yards. This done, a sail was hoisted to steady the boat, and we drifted, not idly, as it proved, on the bosom of the deep. Then the galley fire is lighted, and alternately the men take rest.

To me it is a novel position, and though “rock'd in the cradle of the deep” I knew not sleep. The

full moon is beaming, the boat rises and falls with the incoming tide, the austere rocks of St. Michael's Mount frown upon us, and "screams the wild sea mew" as it hovers o'er us, an anxious watcher of our success, hoping, no doubt, to clutch some of the silvery fish that may escape from our net. Then ever and anon the porpoises rise and blow as they reach the surface—a not unlucky omen; for where the carcase is the vulture will be, and the fact of their presence denotes the movement of a shoal of pilchards.

At length the hour arrives for proving the net, and we haul in a few fathoms. The result is highly satisfactory, many pilchards are entangled in the net, and the size is pronounced good. The simple way in which the fishes are caught surprises me. They straightway run their heads into the meshes of the net, and the more they struggle the faster they are held, and they cannot move backwards by reason of their gills being held fast. Then we let go the net again, and patiently bide our time.

The moon sinks behind the hill, and the bay is seen studded with the lights of the large fleet of boats occupied in the same way as ourselves. At this hour the night was beautiful, the stars shone brilliantly, the lights of the town of Penzance twinkled in the far-off distance. When a heavy bank of clouds rose from beyond the high hills and moved seawards, darkness spread over us. Weird-looking birds hovered close over our boat, doubtless scenting the pilchards which were lying on the deck. From one boat lying about half-a-mile beyond us voices are heard—the occupants of that craft were

singing a hymn. It is always a hymn that is heard in Cornwall. Children when playing sing hymns, servants go about the house singing hymns, even the revellers in the public-house roar out hymns. Not a note of secular music is to be heard, for though the lower orders of Cornish folk are very musical, yet they seldom rise beyond Wesley, though Moody and Sankey's productions hold now-a-days a conspicuous place in their *répertoire*—"Hold the Fort" and "Safe in the arms of Jesus" being the most popular.

Now the boat which has been lying beyond us has hauled in her net, and moves slowly on towards Newlyn. "What luck?" we ask. "About one thousand five hundred," is the reply. Our captain trims the lamp, awakens the sleepers, and we commence hauling in the net. At every foot we find a pilchard. In they come by the hundred, and are released from the net and thrown into the well, glittering like diamonds as they flounder at the bottom of the boat. For three-quarters of an hour we continue to haul in the net. The men are up to their knees in fish. We can no longer afford time to extract the pilchards, so we haul in the net, delaying that operation until we are sailing homewards.

At length our task is over, the sail is hoisted, and we glide along in the darkness. The stars have paled, and the morning is lowering. It is necessary to keep a sharp look-out, for many other boats are returning; but our captain is accustomed to the work, and it is not long before we are safely moored at Newlyn. Lights begin to twinkle in the fishermen's houses, and business will begin at daylight. Our catch was considered very good, we had hauled

in between four thousand and five thousand fine pilchards. These, I was surprised to hear, would only fetch 10s. per thousand, and eventually I heard them cried in the village of Gulval, "Seven a penny, fresh pilchards."

Then I step into the dingy, to me a somewhat difficult operation, for the night as it advanced had become darker still. This done, I was pulled towards the shore, and the captain suggested that I should get on his back, that he might carry me through the water and place me on dry land. To this proposition I dissented. This fine old man was verging on seventy years of age, and I refused for a while, saying that I weighed fifteen stone. "I can carry ye, man," was the reply. So I played the part, for once, of the Old Man of the Sea, whilst Sinbad trudged through the water until the shore was reached. Now, to get up on his back was a not too easy task for a man who is, to say the least, past his *première jeunesse*; in fact, not to put too fine a point upon it, there was not much difference between Sinbad and the Old Man in respect to age. But to get off was an equally difficult operation, and I was within an ace of pulling him backwards into the sea. Fortunately that misfortune did not occur, and we shook hands and parted, mutually pleased with the result of our night's pilchard fishing.

There is an old song which says, "It is always the darkest the hour before day," and so I found it, as I blundered amongst the big boulders in my endeavour to reach the high road. Then day began to break, and by degrees I found my way, and, after an hour's walk, reached Gulval as the clock struck

six. From what I gathered in conversation with my companions, it appears that some one makes a large profit by the sale of fish, and it is not the fisherman. He risks his life, the owner, the boat and nets, and the result of the sale of mackerel, for instance is, that they realise one halfpenny each on an average. Who makes the extra profit of sixpence or eightpence is not very clear, but I have been told that a system exists of withholding fish and feeding the market, which leads to the loss of hundreds of tons, which are allowed to spoil rather than the price should be lowered. I believe I should have little difficulty in proving this fact, and I think that those who wantonly waste the food of their fellow-creatures should smart for it.

On the following day I am offered a ride to Helston by a gentleman who attends the market in this quiet and secluded borough, which is situated ten miles from any railway. As we pass along, following for many miles the coast-line, the view is lovely. I observe as we go that nearly all the mines are, to use the expression of the country, "knocked"—that is to say, abandoned; and I am told that there are very few indeed at work throughout West Cornwall, and that 10,000 of the sturdy miners have migrated or emigrated within the last two or three years, and that it no longer pays to raise tin. Oh, what a falling off is here since "Michael," a Cornish poet, writing of his countrymen many long years ago, said—

“ 'Twere needless to recount their wondrous store,
Vast wealth, and fair provision for the poor ;
In fish and tin they know no rival shore.”

Alas! it is said that Messrs. Bolitho can now purchase ore from Australia, delivered at their smelting works in Penzance, at a lower price than it can be raised and sold at a profit from the mines hard by.

I roam through the town, and find it in a state of excitement. No fewer than ten omnibuses are standing in a row, just arrived from Camborne, Ruan, Redruth, and other towns lying a few miles distant, bringing many passengers, some to sell butter, eggs, and poultry, others to buy the different commodities that are exhibited for sale in the stalls in the street and the market house, amongst which I noticed carrots and crockery-ware, highlow boots, sticks of tripe, gigantic gone-to-seed cucumbers, sturdy sticks of rhubarb, colossal vegetable marrows, lollypops, limpets, periwinkles, pilchards, conger eels, butter, cheese, and meat. After which I dine at the Star, where an excellent dinner is provided by the clever hostess of this capital inn, and I am supposed to be visiting the borough with a view to represent it in the next Parliament. I may—but we shall see; at any rate, I allowed the inference to remain uncontradicted. It gives one an idea of the solvency of one's appearance to be supposed to be in a condition to contest a Cornish borough.

Of Penzance, as a place of residence for invalids during the winter months, I think there is much to be said. It is a clean, well-built town; it has excellent hotels—the Queen for one; lodgings of superior description are obtainable at an extremely moderate cost. There are excellent shops of all descriptions; a clever medical man, possibly more, but I can speak

with certainty of one; delightful drives, capital carriages, civil drivers, first-rate sailing boats, with skilful and trustworthy boatmen; and, above all, there is an extremely mild climate. In Regent Terrace I saw a house covered closely, up as far as the first-floor windows, with a magnificent heliotrope of many years' growth—a tree, in fact—whilst throughout the town giant geraniums, from 15 feet to 20 feet high, splendid myrtles, marguerites, lilies, magnolias, passion flowers, ferns, blue hydrangeas, eunonyma live all the winter through, in a condition that I have never seen equalled in any part of England. A strong competition now exists between the Great Western Railway and the South-Western, and Penzance has already felt the difference, as the journey has been shortened considerably, and there is no doubt that the time occupied in travelling between Paddington and Penzance will be still further reduced, the one thing wanted in the case of invalid travellers.





CHAPTER IX.

WITH THE DEVON AND SOMERSET STAGHOUNDS.

“**A**PROUSE ye, then, my merry, merry men ; this is our opening day,” were the words of a popular chorus that came across my mind as I jumped from my bed at the call of the “neat-handed Phillis” who I had desired to awaken me at the ghastly hour of six, that I might, by rising at that early period of the morning, be in readiness for a sixteen-mile ride to cover, the occasion being the first meet of the season of the celebrated pack of staghounds that hunt the wild red deer over the heather-clad hills in the vicinity of Exmoor, and across the tracks of wild uncultivated land which are still happily to be found in the most beautiful of all counties in England, viz., Devon and Somerset.

Tired with the pleasures of London, I determined to make my way to Dulverton, and to commence the season with a few days’ hunting in this lovely “country,” the only place in England where the red deer is to be found in its wild and natural state, and which affords an opportunity of seeing these noble and majestic animals amidst the wild and beautiful scenery where they delight to roam. Having pleasant recollections of my former visit, and of the

comforts experienced when residing at the Lion Hotel, I wrote to Mr. King, the proprietor of this pleasant hostelry, to secure rooms, and to engage horses for a few days at the commencement of the season, that I might enjoy to the fullest extent that which is to me the grandest sport it has ever been my good fortune to fall in with during a somewhat lengthened experience of hunting in many of the best counties in England. Differing entirely from fox-hunting, yet it has a pleasure peculiarly its own, and to me nothing is more enjoyable than riding full tilt through the purple heather, startling the black game from their lairs as I gallop, as near as circumstances will permit to the tail of the hounds when pursuing a "warrantable stag" over hill and dale, across rippling rills, along emerald green valleys and densely wooded "combes," at a rattling pace, on a brilliant morning in the month of August—a somewhat early period for the enjoyment of the noble and unique pastime of hunting the wild red deer, it would appear to the uninitiated, when the corn is still standing, whilst the thermometer marks a high degree of summer heat, the heather in full bloom, and the foliage in its fullest luxuriance. But when mounting the Quantock Hills, and revelling in the fresh breezes that come across the waters of the Bristol Channel, you come to the conclusion that it is one of the most enjoyable pleasures you have ever experienced, supposing you to have a taste for picturesque scenery, combined with an ardent love of the pleasures of the chase.

The pleasantest route from the metropolis is that traversed by the trains of the South-Western Rail-

way, which runs through Gillingham, Sherborne, Temple Combe, Yeovil, and Taunton, changing at the latter place, and journeying by the Devon and Somerset line to Dulverton, which is reached somewhere about six hours after leaving Waterloo. Arriving at seven o'clock on the 12th August, I find every one preparing for the pleasures of the annual gathering of the inhabitants of Devon and Somerset, who make the opening day of the popular sport of these counties an occasion for enjoying a view of the lovely country, witnessing the hunting of the stag, and pic-nicing amidst the furze and heather after the style which is in vogue on the Derby Day at Epsom, or the more fashionable meeting at Goodwood.

Awaking in the morning, the outlook is gloomy, heavy clouds are moving rapidly and in close proximity to the tops of the steep hills that surround the snug and retired hamlet of Dulverton, through which the swiftly-flowing Barle babbles noisily as its waters flow near to those of the river Exe, passing through Pixton Park, the property of the Earl of Carnarvon, a spot highly suggestive of sport to the disciples of the gentler art of which Izaak Walton was the high priest, whose many followers may here indulge in their pleasant occupation, as, in addition to fishing in the free waters, permission is readily obtainable from the noble earl and the other landlords of the district to pursue their endeavours to ensnare the spotted trout which abound in the sparkling streams of this pleasant locality.

After a substantial breakfast, and having specially provided against the threatening appearance of the morning, by causing a flask to be filled with Irish

whisky, a precaution the wisdom of which was proved ere the close of the day, I mounted my nag and journeyed in the direction of Exford. Scarcely had we entered upon the outskirts of Exmoor, when my companion and myself came to the conclusion that we should have a rough time of it, and a heavy rain fell at intervals as we trotted along over this wild part of the country.

A little while elapses, and we come upon a gipsy encampment at Coomber Gate, a well-known meet of the Devon and Somerset, then up and down the steep hills, along the shady lanes, where the foxglove flourishes amidst the countless beautiful ferns, the sprays of wild honeysuckle hanging in graceful festoons from the tall hedgerows, and we approach the extremely quiet little village of Exford, and pull up at the White Horse, of which Mr. King is also the proprietor, and from him we learn that the hounds have just started for Cloutsham.

Then we trot sharply away, and speedily overtake the Master, Mordaunt Frederick Bisset, Esq., mounted on a noble grey horse,—and noble he need be to carry this welter weight and hard-riding sportsman, who stands somewhere about 6 feet 3 inches in height, and who cannot ride less than twenty-two stone at a moderate computation. Riding at the head of his splendid pack of hounds, numbering this day twenty-seven couples, followed by Arthur Heal the huntsman, and George Southwell his whip, this fine sportsman seems in every way the right man in the right place, and the way in which he bounds along over the blooming heather and gallops up and down the tremendously steep hills, must be seen to be believed, and would put to

shame many a feather weight, so admirably mounted and so iron-nerved is this fine specimen of our English squires; men who are not to be matched in any quarter of the world for their love of sport and their liberality in providing for the pleasures of others less fortunate in the possession of worldly goods, who are enabled to indulge in the manliest of all sports, which is so readily provided for them at great cost and trouble by our masters of hounds.

On arriving at Cloutsham Ball we find a large assemblage of country folks in carriages, farmers in their waggons, and ladies and gentlemen on horseback, all bent upon enjoying a pleasurable outing, but whose comfort is considerably diminished on this occasion by the frequent heavy storms of rain that blur the landscape, and destroy the beauty of the scene. Nevertheless, we pic-nic heartily, champagne corks fly, pigeon pies are devoured, cherry brandy is freely taken as an antidote to cold, and thus we bid defiance to the elements. Then, whilst we are revelling in the good things so abundantly provided, and so freely dispensed by our friends, "Arthur," with five couples of hounds—tufters as they are called—accompanied by Miles, "the Harbourn," whose vocation it is to track the deer, and be ready to point out to the huntsmen where he will find "a runable stag," is drawing the cover. A considerable time elapses before there is a find, and an opportunity is afforded of observing some of the notabilities of the Devon and Somerset Hunt, and the visitors of distinction who flock from all parts to enjoy the first day's sport.

Conspicuous amongst the crowd is the celebrated

sportsman, the Rev. J. Russel, now past eighty years of age, mounted upon a compact and clever grey horse, which he still can steer across the difficult country in a way that would astonish many younger performers. Of this rare specimen of the hunting parson, Bishop Temple is said to have observed, "There was not a parish in his diocese where the sick and the poor were better looked after, or the young people better prepared for confirmation," and certainly there is no straight-laced incumbent of any parish in the country that is more popular, or, in fact, half as much esteemed as is this worthy specimen of old times, who yet, at such an advanced age, is able to indulge in an amusement which many, if not all of the clergy of the period, would consider sacrilegious, but which was a custom followed generally by the clergy in rural districts in days gone by.

Then there is Mr. Collyns of Dulverton, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Collyns, and two fair young ladies, and his nephew, who, following the traditions of his family, has ridden from London to be present on the occasion of the opening day, for the name of Collyns is well-known throughout the counties of Devon and Somerset, the head of the house, "Charles Palk Collyns" having published in his time *Notes on the Chase of the Wild Red Deer*, being the result of the experience of forty-six years gained when in pursuit of the stag; and I would call the attention of anyone desirous of studying the habits and customs of the red deer, and learning how to pursue them with skill, to the pages of this clever but now rather rare work.

Then, well mounted, and looking all over the

sportsman he is, comes riding leisurely along Colonel Anstruther Thomson, Master of the Fife Hounds, and past Master of the Pytchley and Atherstone, who has come on a visit to the Rev. J. Russel, in order to join in the sport. Then a well-known and hard-riding man from the shires is seen in the person of Captain Elmhirst, who subsequently is to be seen in a good place during the short spin we had from Cloutsham. Several deer are found and hunted for a considerable time by the tufters, but they were unable to drive one away from the dense cover of the lovely Combe that lies at our feet; and "Arthur" blows his horn and calls them off to try his chance elsewhere.

During the whole morning rain fell, with but few minutes' intermission, and it was only between the storms that a view from this lovely spot was obtainable. Before us is Porlock Bay; across the British Channel the Welsh coast is discernible; to the right the steep Holms of Weston-super-Mare, and inland the noble range of the Quantock Hills. Then we descend a precipitous pathway, ride along a lovely lane, and gallop up a tremendously steep hill, and find ourselves close to the huntsman.

A short time only elapses, when a view halloo is heard, and a deer breaks cover and goes away in the direction of Dunkerry Beacon, followed by five couples of tufters; but doubling back he runs a racing pace over the heather, making for the road leading to Exford, after crossing which the tufters are stopped, in order that the body of the pack may be brought up and laid on. This being done, we gallop along in a blinding rain, and finally

lose the deer near Stoke, after a short run, and the hounds are trotted home. Brief as this run was, it was long enough to give one an idea of the difficulty which besets the stranger in this land. He should be endowed with good nerve who would ride with the Devon and Somerset. He must not be afraid to go the pace, though his horse is galloping up to his hocks in the blooming heather, rattling down the steep hills, greasy with the heavy rain that has fallen throughout the day, or clattering over the stony land, as he does his best to keep within a fair distance of these noble hounds. No, Devon and Somerset are counties that are unsuitable for any but hard-riding men, if they would live to hounds. Then we turn our heads homewards and make for Exford, where we halt for a while to give our nags gruel, before starting for Dulverton, a distance of ten miles.

As soon as we start, the rain descends in torrents, and as we cross Exmoor it sweeps over the wide expanse of heather-clad land, causing a thick mist, and drenching us to the very skin. There is no shelter available, if we desire to avail ourselves of it, and we trot swiftly along, following the same route we traversed in the morning, arriving tired and dripping in time for an excellent dinner, which we did ample justice to.

Thus ended my first day with the Devon and Somerset. Of the sport, little can be said; but on the next occasion, the meet being in a beautiful country, I hope to be able to record a run which will illustrate the kind of sport which is usual when the season is more advanced. Owing to hydrophobia

having attacked these hounds, by which five couples were lost, and the efficiency of the pack seriously diminished, so much so as at one time to have endangered the prospects of the present season, Mr. Bissett had to seek amongst the crack packs of the country for drafts of full-sized hounds to recruit his. How well he has succeeded may be seen by inspection of the twenty-seven couples, all young hounds, which appeared at Cloutsham on the first day of the season. Of the old hounds, which are kept and will be hunted separately, I shall have an opportunity of speaking in my next letter, as I intend to ride with them, and hope subsequently to visit the kennels, and to give fuller particulars of their present condition, as well as some details of the baleful malady which for a while threatened to interfere seriously with the sport of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds.





CHAPTER X.

HUNTING THE WILD STAG IN DEVON AND SOMERSET.

“**B**IRD of the wilderness, blithesome and cumberless, sweet be thy matins o’er moorland and lee,” were the apologetic words I addressed to the lark, “shrill messenger of morn,” for having disturbed him from his repose in the purple heather, as I galloped at a racing pace across Winsford Hill *en route* to a “meet” of the Devon and Somerset hounds, on a lovely morning during a recent visit to Dulverton. I would have said something equally pretty to the blackcock which I roused from the cover and sent whirring away over the wide expanse of common, had he not startled me and my nag by the suddenness of his uprising, which disturbed my usually well-balanced mind, but served, nevertheless, as a caution against careless riding, and proving the necessity of taking a firm grip of the saddle when riding full speed up to one’s horse’s knees in heather.

Notwithstanding that I had eighteen miles to ride to cover, I could not resist the temptation of losing a few minutes, whilst I paused at the top of an ex-

ceedingly steep hill to gaze with admiration on the varied scene around. On the right I saw a large district of cultivated land, the hillsides covered with the dense foliage of wide-spreading beeches that flourish so greatly in Somersetshire, interspersed with meadows of the brightest emerald green, where, up to their knees in the herbage, the red, gazelle-eyed Devon cattle feed and fatten. Before me a wide expanse of moorland, densely covered with purple heather in the fullest bloom, dotted here and there with tufts of the brightest green gorse I have ever seen, covered with golden blossoms; beds of tall ferns and straggling bushes of blossoming broom, amidst which the snow-white sheep snugly repose, while a number of the celebrated Exmoor ponies—some with foals at their feet, look up for a moment to see who it is that comes to disturb their wonted tranquillity. On the left an extent of beautiful country is discernible, stretching far away beyond Dartmoor, with hill and dale, meadow and moorland, densely wooded combes, and a vast range of heather-clad hills, the hues of which were marvellously beautiful, seen on a day when sunshine and shadow followed in rapid succession, making the face of the country to resemble the ever-changing views in a kaleidoscope. Then I jog on again, and reach Comber's Gate, a well-known "fixture" of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, and pull up for a minute to observe a camp of gipsies, who, I learn, have travelled thus far from Havering, a village in Essex. Farewell to romance, I said, if these are the gipsies merry and free of whom poets used to sing. No, no; I would not be a gipsy cer-

tainly if I had to herd with such companions. Half Romany, half tramp, and wholly hawkers; dealing in brooms and tin ware. Gipsies indeed! I too came from Havering-at-ye-Bower, but it is many, many long years since—in my hot days, when George IV. was king. Did I not know the Lees and the Coopers, who were accustomed to set up their tents in the leafy glades of Hainhault and Epping forests in those days? Does that dirty, ragged, unkempt, pedlar-like young woman, bear the slightest resemblance to the olive-complexioned, dark-eyed, beautiful daughter of Gipsy Lee, with whom I used to wander beneath the greenwood shade? (It is many years ago, remember.) Should I have wooed so dirty a damsel? Faugh! The age of chivalry is past; the days of romance are over, and we are, in my opinion, too practical by half now-a-days; but I do not know if we are any happier or better for it, for the matter of that. At any rate, the gipsy girl of whom the poets raved, and whose features were immortalised by the painters of the period, is like the Dodo, a thing of the past, and is no longer to be found in the haunts where she once loved to dwell, casting a glamour over the mind of ardent and susceptible youth, and foretelling wonderful fortunes to the maids of merry England in days gone by.

Then, throwing a few halfpence to the ragged urchin, who dismounts from the gate on which he has been swinging to let me through, I journey along one of the interminable Devonshire lanes, wide enough for one vehicle only to pass along at a time, with tall, luxuriant, uncut hedges from fifteen to twenty feet in height; the banks clothed with

beautiful ferns of many kinds; from the midst of which peep forth innumerable foxgloves, while the wild honeysuckle hangs in graceful festoons; and here and there a mountain ash, with its crimson berries, adds to the beauty of the picture.

Then I cross the river Exe at Exford, and, riding up a steep hill, come to a large tract of heather-clad land, over which I ride until Cloutsham Ball is reached. A lovely spot, the trysting place of the Devon and Somerset Hounds, on the opening day of the season, when persons from all parts of the two counties assemble after the fashion of those attending race meetings, and dispense their large hospitality to all comers. Owing to the dismal state of the weather, this festival was greatly interfered with, and the pleasure of the numbers visiting the lovely spot spoiled by the heavy and almost unceasing downpour that prevailed.

In a sloping meadow, beneath which is a lovely combe, we assemble on the present occasion to watch, whilst Arthur the Huntsman, and Miles the Harbourer, with three couples of tried hounds—tufters, to speak properly—are drawing the cover for a “stag of ten,” which is known to be harboured there. This is a work of time, and gives an opportunity for a glimpse at the gorgeous scenery. Over yon densely wooded valley is Porlock Bay, in the Bristol Channel, on the other side of which the Welsh coast is plainly visible. Far away in the distance the Quantock Hills trend down to the sea-shore, whilst to the right, and close at hand, is the steep, densely heather-clad hill of Dunkerry, 800 feet above the level of the sea—as glorious and glowing a

panorama as ever I have had the good luck to behold. Still we hear no view halloo! and there is time to observe some of the notabilities belonging to the Hunt.

First there is Mr. Samuel H. Warren, the secretary, who knows and is known to every one—one of those genial and hospitable men who are frequently met with in the counties of Devon and Somerset—respected, and deservedly so, by all. Then there is the veteran sportsman who has hunted over this country for very many years—the Rev. John Russell, now in his eighty-fourth year, to whom I had the good fortune to be introduced a few days previous. Time has dealt graciously with this fine old man; and you have only to note his seat in the saddle to be aware that a horseman of no ordinary qualifications is before you. This morning he has ridden twenty-five miles to cover, and, after hunting all day, will ride as great, if not a greater distance, to his home at Swimford.

On the occasion of a long run on the Quantock Hills during last season the stag ran through St. Audries, and swam away into the muddy waters of the Bristol Channel, on which occasion he told me he had to ride fifty-two miles before he reached his home. I had only twenty-two miles to return; but night set in before I reached the Lion at Dulverton, where I had fixed my quarters, and I should not have cared particularly to have travelled on with a tired horse thirty miles further. Awaiting the finding of the stag, this now rare specimen of the hunting parson, who, nevertheless, is beloved and respected throughout the length and breadth of Devon and

Somerset, chats gaily with the group of ladies and gentlemen assembled in front of the farm-house, and is full of anecdote, and never tired of talking of the gracious reception he met with, when on a visit at Sandringham, from the Prince and Princess of Wales, who fully appreciated the kind-hearted, courteous, and genial old sportsman. It is said of him that when one of the chiefs of a tribe of gipsies—when there were gipsies in Devon—died, his last request was that he might be buried by “Parson Russell,” which desire was fulfilled, his reverence riding forty or fifty miles to perform the ceremony.

Then there is Earl Fortescue, a good sportsman and a staunch supporter of the hounds, to whom I am introduced, and chat pleasantly for a while.

Next I have the honour of making the acquaintance of Mrs. Froude Bellew, of Rhyl, whose husband is Master of the Dulverton Foxhounds. An elegant horsewoman, and a bold and graceful rider is Mrs. Bellew. By her side is her sister, Mrs. Rowcliffe. These are fair specimens of Devonshire ladies, who, my experience teaches me, are as a rule elegant, graceful, and pleasing, as anyone would expect who has read Kingsley’s descriptions of the Devonians. Then there are Mrs. Bouverie, Miss Jekyl, and Miss Leslie, who ride well and regularly with these hounds. Colonel and Mrs. Festing, accompanied by their two lively sons, all well mounted, who have ridden over from Dunster or Minehead, Lord Rock-savage, Mr. Bolden, from Rugby, Captain and Mrs. Elmhirst, from the Shires; Mr. Nicholas Snow, the Master of the Stars of the West, a celebrated pack of foxhounds hunting in this locality; Mr. Chorley,

the Master of the Quarm Harriers, a thorough sportsman, said to possess one of the best packs in the kingdom; Mr. Collyns and his nephew, and Mr. Myles, from Dulverton; Dr. Budd and his brother, who have come from London and Bath to enjoy the noble amusement of hunting the wild red deer.

But I must close the list of sportsmen who usually ride with these hounds, as Arthur has ridden up with the intelligence that though a stag has not gone away in the right direction, there is a hind that has, making for Dunkerry. Then Mr. Mordaunt, Fenwick Bissett, the Master of the Stag-hounds, gives the order for the hounds being laid on, and we descend into a lovely valley, cross a sparkling stream that runs through it, and the hounds, speaking to the scent, go away at a rattling pace, ascending the high hill of Dunkerry, followed by some one hundred and fifty horsemen; then we clatter along over the stony ground, through the heather which reaches above the hocks of the horses, on and on until the summit is reached, and a glorious view meets the sight.

The Bristol Channel, whose waters are usually muddy as to appearance, sparkles in the bright sunshine. Innumerable vessels spread their white bosoms to the breeze, whilst the horn of the hunter is heard on the hill, and we are riding at full speed on a splendid autumn afternoon in pursuit of one of the graceful animals who roam at will through these lovely counties. Then we swing round the hill, and go away with speed, skirting the Beacon—a landmark for vessels passing up and down the Channel—and away in the direction of Exmoor

Forest. At this point I came to grief. Thinking I could get closer to the hounds if I took a line of my own, I soon found my fleet career was checked. Suddenly myself and horse were floundering in one of the bogs—traps for the unwary—which are not unfrequently met with in a gallop across Exmoor. No sooner in than the clever little mare was out again ; but only to fall into another deeper still. Dismounting promptly, she struggled hard and slipped out on her side, panting with the exertion. A few minutes' rest and she was right as the mail, and I rode off, cautiously ; for I found I had got into a part of the moor that was full of suspicious-looking places ; and remembering that wherever there are rushes growing, there danger exists, but that as long as there is heather to ride on you may safely gallop along, I got over the tract of boggy land, and sailed away once more at a rattling pace, following the hounds up the hill above Kitsford. Here we changed on to the line of a stag, which we ran to Shillets, then changed again on to the line of another fresh stag, which we followed to Park Wood, where the hounds were whipped off. A lovely ride over the moorland finally led me back to Exford.

It is all very well to be wandering about these heather-clad hills on a lovely summer's evening in the month of September ; but, supposing it was a November evening at the same hour, how about the ride home then ? These lovely blue hills and vales are not always so smiling ; for during the month of April last one landowner in the district lost five hundred and twelve sheep in a snow drift, and a farmer, who lost many sheep and a pony at the same

time, told me that the drift was 25 feet deep on his farm. When the snow melted he found a hind buried in the same place with his pony and sheep.

A quiet little town is Dulverton, and the population, if small in numbers, is prone to hospitality—genial, and jovial beyond all doubt. The river Barle flows between the high hills that surround this tranquil place, wandering and babbling on, until it joins with the river Exe. Looking down upon the town is Pixton Park, the seat of the Earl of Carnarvon, from whence a lovely view of the surrounding country is obtained. The house has no pretensions to beauty, but has every appearance of comfort, and is being largely added to. A herd of fallow deer wander amongst the tall fern, or rest beneath the shade of the lovely limes, beeches, and chestnuts that exceed in beauty, shape, and growth any I have ever seen elsewhere. On the following morning I rode over to the kennels at Exford, in order to look over the old and new packs of hounds; or, I should have said, in reference to the old pack, what remains of them, for an outbreak of rabies during the past summer made sad havoc with these valuable animals. Twelve couples in all were lost through this attack of hydrophobia, and every precaution is yet taken against a return of the disorder. In a paddock, each hound being chained up to an ordinary dog kennel, we found sixteen and a half couples of fine animals. These are kept separate from the twenty-seven couple of young hounds that Mr. Bissett has obtained from all the most noted kennels in England. These hounds naturally require time to become handy and accustomed to

their new vocation; but Arthur Heal, who has hunted the Devon and Somerset for the long period of twenty-two years, is rapidly making them as perfect as the old hounds were.

The Devon and Somerset are maintained in part by subscription, the amount received from the subscribers during the past year being £1148. The list comprises the names of nearly every person of distinction in the two counties. The Earl of Carnarvon, who, though not a hunting man himself, is a liberal subscriber and strict preserver of the red deer which abound in Haddon Wood, and, in fact, all over his large estates. Earl Fortescue is also a staunch supporter of this noble pack, as are the following gentlemen:—The Hon. Mark Rolle (who heads the list of subscriptions), Sir Alexander Acland Hood, Lord Poltimore, Viscount Ebrington, the Hon. Robert Trollope, Sir W. A. Lethbridge, Captain J. Luttrell, Captain Karslake, Captain Marshall, Messrs. Granville Somerset, S. Lucas, T. C. Daniel, P. P. Bouverie, T. Carew, T. M. Dodington, W. W. Karslake, J. B. Collyns, W. M. Foster Melliar, C. Williams, J. C. Moore Stevens, W. A. Sandford, Sir J. H. Amory, Major Wynch, Colonel Davie, etc.

Nor do the ladies fail to support this popular hunt; for I see the names of Lady Lovelace and Mrs. Rowcliffe amongst the list of subscribers. The season for hunting the wild stag commences on August 12, by which time the velvet is nearly off the new horns, and the stags are in fine condition, remaining so until the beginning of October. The season finishes on the 12th of that month, and the stags rapidly fall out of condition. Then the hind

is hunted during the remainder of the year, terminating at Christmas. Greater sport is, as a rule, shown when the hind is hunted, and runs of five and six hours' duration are not unfrequent.

Taken on the whole, I consider hunting the wild red deer the most magnificent sport that Great Britain produces. To ride over this country requires both nerve and judgment, and it is one of the privileges that the dwellers in Devon and Somerset enjoy, of being able to indulge in this enjoyable pastime during the months of August and September, a period during which it would be impossible to hunt in any other county in England.

The season is now at its height; the best sport is all to come. Hitherto the young hounds have only been trying their 'prentice hands; now, under the able tuition of their clever and hard-riding huntsman, and his excellent and persevering whip, George Southwell, they are becoming proficient in the art of chasing the wild deer and following the hind across the wide tracts of moorland, over the heather-clad hills, along the emerald glades, amidst the densely-wooded combes, through the babbling brooks and rippling rivers, and not unfrequently along the sea-shore. Twice during the early part of the season the hunted hart, having vainly striven to outstrip his pursuers, has taken a wild headlong leap from the tall cliff in order to escape, and "resigned to his fate o'er the waters he's borne, and dies on the wild wave that breaks on Glenthorne."

Any person desiring to try his skill in riding with the Devon and Somerset will find excellent accommodation at the Lion at Dulverton, or if he prefers

solitude he can seek it at Exford, in the very heart of the country, and he can obtain comfortable quarters and good stabling if he should take his own stud. If he prefers to hire, Mr. King, who is also the proprietor of the White Horse Inn, will mount him; and if he is as fortunate as I have been, he will be certain to obtain horses that are used to the country, and will carry him right well—animals for whom the day is never too long or the hills too steep, and that the longest run will not tire—at least that has been my experience.

Those ardent spirits, who consider a burst of twenty-five minutes at a racing pace over the pastures of Leicestershire is the correct thing, will probably, unless they are thoroughbred sportsmen, as well as hard riders, dissent from my views as regards hunting the wild red deer. But every man to his taste. I have ridden to hounds in nearly every crack county in England, but I never felt the same amount of excitement at seeing a fox break cover, as I have when witnessing a noble stag start up from amidst the purple heather, and go “a clinker” across the beautiful country which is hunted by the Devon and Somerset Staghounds.





CHAPTER XI.

WITH THE DEVON AND SOMERSET STAGHOUNDS.

MAKING the opportunity of a leisure day to visit the kennels of the Devon and Somerset, I drove over to Exford, where I found Arthur Heal established in a new range of buildings, admirably adapted for the health of his pack, every attention having been given to the necessary details for insuring comfort to the animals as well as the huntsman, who has a house adjoining the kennels, where we found him ready and willing to show both the old and new packs that are placed under his charge. First we are shown the remains of the old pack, sixteen couples and a-half having been saved from the ravages of the outbreaks of rabies from which they have suffered, no less than twelve couples of these valuable animals having fallen victims to the attack of hydrophobia, which at one time threatened destruction to the whole pack. These we found in a range of ordinary dog kennels, every hound being tied up and isolated from the fresh hounds that have been secured to recruit the strength of the pack, and replace those who have been lost through this cruel malady.

The origin of the outbreak was traceable to two of the hounds which had wandered from the pack being shut up with a sheep-dog that was suffering from hydrophobia, who bit them, and thus introduced the destructive complaint into the kennels. The possibility of a fresh outbreak having to be guarded against, though, in my opinion, such a misfortune is rendered highly improbable, owing to the great precautions that have been taken to stamp out the disease, the two packs are kept separate, not only in the kennels, but in the field as well. Amongst these old hounds some notable animals are to be found, and those who should visit them will find Forager, Claret, and Dreadnought, as well as Wellington, Blandford, and Warrior, the latter my choice, as fine specimens of staghounds as can be desired.

After examining the seniors, we entered the kennels, and found twenty-seven couples of fine young hounds, drafts from some of the most celebrated packs in the kingdom, which have to learn how to follow the wild red deer instead of chasing the wily fox, for which they have been bred. Some time necessarily will elapse before they take to their new pursuit. Hence the difficulty which Arthur has experienced in showing the usual amount of sport during the few days of the present season on which they have been out. For more than twenty years Arthur Heal has hunted this country, and it will be strange if he does not teach them their business in a very brief space of time.

Amongst the most striking of the twenty-seven couples which were shown, a high-coloured hound,

from, I believe, the kennel of Lord Portman, struck me as a fine specimen; Albert, from the Blackmoor Vale, being another fine-looking animal; as was also Shiner, from the pack of staghounds the property of Mr. Richardson Gardner, who hunts in the vicinity of Cheltenham. Altogether Mr. Bissett is to be congratulated on having secured such a number of recruits, which in time will prove equal to the demands which hunting the wild stag over this severe but beautiful country makes on the pack, if they would pull down these noble deer, who not unfrequently lead them a dance over hill and dale, moorland and meadow, for three or five hours, as the case may be.

On Friday the fixture was Hawkcombe Head, the most lovely spot in this most lovely locality. Overlooking the Bristol Channel is Bossington Beacon, 801 feet above the level of the sea, a landmark to vessels passing. It was over the range of hills on the summit of which this beacon is placed that I on another occasion galloped, which will give an idea of the country hunted by the Devon and Somerset Staghounds. Hunting the wild red deer is no child's play, but it is an amusement requiring both pluck and judgment on the part of those who ride up and down these noble heather-clad hill when chasing the stag over the large tracts of moorlands, which at this period of the year look grand and beautiful in the extreme, recalling the words written by Kingsley, who described the appearance of the country as resembling "huge mile-long waves of a vast heather sea." Beautiful as the heather looks, it sometimes allures the venturesome horsemen, if not

to his destruction, yet to considerable inconvenience, as I found to my cost when taking a line of my own, which led me into one of the bogs, which are not unfrequently met with by the stranger in the land when following his own devices. Going at full speed on the clever little mare that had been furnished by Mr. King, I suddenly found my steed floundering in the black bog land, extricating herself from one only to fall into another of these traps for strangers, but quickly dismounting, the mare, lightened of her burthen, was on her legs, and we were off again.

But, to return to the business of this particular day. We found ourselves, after a beautiful ride of eighteen miles at the meet, where a large "field" was assembled, many being well-mounted, others in carriages, and not a few on foot.

I have long had a desire to become acquainted with the Rev. John Russell, but thinking this celebrated sportsman must have, during his long career, been awfully bored by those desirous of narrating facts concerning his career, I abstained on a former occasion from making use of an introduction to him. Having had the good fortune to accompany Mr. S. H. Warren to cover, who fills the post of secretary to the Devon and Somerset Staghounds in a manner that causes him to be a most popular man with all classes, I availed myself of his kindness, and was introduced to this venerable patriarch of the chase—a man in whose society princes and princesses delight; who is an example to his profession, beloved by his friends and neighbours, and the admiration of all who are judges of geniality and tenderhearted-

ness, combined with the manliness of character that is not unfrequently found in a true English sportsman.

Amongst the many who were attracted to this beautiful spot was Mrs. Froude Bellew, of Rhyll, whose husband is the Master of the Dulverton Foxhounds, an elegant horsewoman, and a grand performer across country, not mounted this day, but hunting on wheels, accompanied by her sister, Mrs. Rowcliffe, Colonel and Mrs. Festing, accompanied by their two youthful sons, mounted upon capital ponies; Lord Rocksavage, Captain Marshall, an extremely cheerful companion, as I subsequently found; Mr. Nicholas Snow, Master of the Stars of the West, an excellent sportsman; Captain Doddington, of Coombe; Miss Jeykell, Mr. Chorley, Master of the Quarm Harriers; the Rev. Mr. Anderson, of Winsford, and a host more well-known riders with his popular pack.

Looking down upon this beautiful scenery, I observe no less than thirty vessels in the bay, the hounds busy drawing the cover that runs down to Porlock, the wide expanse of moorland that was visible in whatever direction the eye turned; and I thought there was nothing wanted to make it thoroughly enjoyable, excepting a find. I therefore left my pleasant companions and the society of the sociable Devon and Somerset squires and dames of high degree, and wandered by the cover side, where I was speedily rewarded by the sight of a noble stag, which went away from Whitestone Park, and over Hawkcombe. Then Mr. Blissett rode up, and the words of a well-known song came across my

mind as I looked upon the stalwart form of this noble sportsman:—

“Right boldly he rides like a good man and true,
With his hounds on ahead, and the stag in full view,
And the broad valleys ring with his loud houp halloo,
And the sound of his horn in the morning—”

for a short time only elapsed before the hounds were laid on, and we were away at a rattling pace, crossing the boundary wall that encircles Mr. Knight's vast tract of moorland, crossing an arm of the river Lynn, leaving Larkborough on the left, swinging round towards Oare, and finally losing at Chalkwater, in the direction of Badgworthy, after a clipping little spin over the heather, up and down the steep hills, and through the densely-wooded combes, in pursuit of this warrantable stag, who, however, left us in the lurch, after which the hounds went home to Exford.

Riding homewards, we experienced the delights of this variable climate; drenching showers came in rapid succession, and long ere we reached Exford we were wetted to the skin, for when it rains in Devonshire or Somersetshire there is no mistake about it. So grand is the sport, however, and so enjoyable the life that is spent in these lovely counties, that a little more or less of water is a thing of no import, the natives being extremely hospitable, with a tendency to offer cherry brandy, dry sherry, or the whiskies of Scotland and Ireland on the slightest provocation, either of which I found a preventive of cold and an antagonist of rheumatism.



CHAPTER XII.

THE ROYAL BUCKHOUNDS.

ONCE again the year has revolved, and the first meet of the season being announced, I determined to do what I have done any time this forty years, namely, to journey to Salthill in order to be present on the opening day of the Queen's Hounds.

Forty years since is a long time to look back, and I am fain to exclaim, "Companions of my youth, where are ye?" Where is Captain Howard Vyse of Stoke, a clinker across country? where are the Coxes of Hillingdon, as they were familiarly called; right good men all of them over the grass; Captain, or as he was better known in days past, Johnny Best, good at everything, and riding in particular; Haig, the impetuous, on Shillalah, looking out for the most impracticable place, that he might have a shy at it; Philpot, who was a nailer over the Harrow country; Montgomery, on Tam Bouff, a noted grey, who specially negotiated timber; Holligan, on the Creeper, the pick of Tollit's stud—a rum one to look at, but a good one to go; Tom Edwards, on Tom Tug, a persevering party over a stiff line of country; Jack Stevens, on Cock of the Heath, a much-talked-

of horse (by his owner), and a real good animal nevertheless; Staniforth on his favourite chesnut; Jem Mason, the most elegant of horsemen, and grandest of performers in a steeplechase; Alan M'Donough, with many besides? and echo answers, "Where?"

Where, especially, is Alfred Count D'Orsay, poet, sculptor, dandy, sportsman? Well do I remember seeing him arrive at the meet at the Red Lion at Southall, when the Earl of Chesterfield was Master of the Buckhounds, in the Earl of Pembroke's chariot, drawn by four magnificent horses ridden by post-boys in livery, after the fashion of the good old days when we were young. Then, mounted on a remarkable horse, the property of Lord Pembroke, faultlessly dressed, he was the cynosure of every eye. A fop he might have been, but a good horseman and pleasant companion beyond all doubt. Whilst chatting with him, General Grant of Hayes Park rode up, mounted on a pony, the outside value of which was £5, looking like a gone-to-seed gamekeeper, in his old brown coat and battered hat: "— it, D'Orsay, how are you? how — well you are looking, — it" (the General was in the habit of using strong expletives). It was a curious meeting, cordial on both sides, and I said to myself, "Sure such a pair were never seen."

But this is talking of the merry days when we were young, when youth's gay fancy threw o'er life its glowing hue, and has nothing to do with the business of the day; therefore I must be practical, so "that listening ears may catch the sound of man expectant, eager horse, and hound." Fresh from

Devonshire, where I have been hunting the wild deer and following the roe—coming home, in fact, in order to be present on the first day of the season of the Queen's—I am able to judge of the comparative merits of the two styles of stag hunting. I can truly say that, failing one, I can readily enjoy the other; and though it is delightful to see “the antlered monarch of the waste spring from his heathery couch in haste.” and go a clinker across the trackless wastes of Exmoor, yet I do not disregard the fact that a gallop of an hour and a-half with the Royal Buckhounds over the Harrow country, from Polehill to Pinner, Finchley, and Hendon, is good enough to satisfy the most eager of sportsmen.

It was not a southerly wind and cloudy sky—in fact it was a bright, cold morning, with a keen north-east wind blowing—as I stepped into the South-Western Railway—*en route* to the White Hart Hotel at Windsor. It is nearly half-a-century since I first visited that best-conducted of all hotels. I like old associations (also old port), and when I look back—but that is running heel, and won't do to-day. Having ordered a grey horse which had carried me well on former occasions to be in readiness, and also a substantial breakfast, which, by the way, was better served than I have seen one for some time, I started in a proper frame of mind to enjoy a day with the Royal Buckhounds.

Starting from the White Hart at ten o'clock, I rode through Eton to Slough station in order to meet a friend who was coming down by the special from Paddington, which arrived to its time, bringing no less than twenty-four horse-boxes, containing

seventy-two horses, and a trainful—a bumper, in fact—of sportsmen. An animated scene was this, and at any rate showed that the popularity of the Queen's is not on the wane.

First I recognise Mr. Edmund Tattersall, looking hale and hearty; Mr. F. Spiers, who is a good man to hounds; Mr. Pierce, whom I see occasionally going the pace across the Devonshire hills and dales; Mr. Bowen-May; Mr. Willis, a veteran rider with these hounds, whom I remember a constant attendant on them forty years since. Then it is time to move on to Salt Hill; the road is lined with carriages and horsemen, numbering many more than I have seen for some years past. At half-past eleven o'clock, or thereabouts, Goodall rode up with fifteen couple of hounds, in magnificent condition, and I was glad to see the Royal huntsman in the saddle again, looking fit as a fiddle, which I know his numerous friends will consider welcome tidings. Now, I see Frank Sherborne, a rattling good man across country; Mr. Douglas, of Hounslow, who has ridden for many years with the pack; Mr. Nevill, Mr. Lever, Mr. Briant, and—is it possible? Mr. Edwin James, Mrs. Herbert of Muckcross, Miss Johns, and several other ladies, and a host of men, many extremely well mounted—better, in fact, than I have seen for some years.

The usual mob waited upon the deer cart, and accompanied it to Bayliss Court Farm, where the deer, Honesty by name, was uncartered *coram populi*, and the many-headed received him with the usual courtesies. Fortunately it was a stout-hearted animal, and was not bewildered by the cordial, if some.


what discordant, reception that was accorded him, and speedily took to his heels. After the customary law had been allowed him, Goodall threaded his way through the dense crowd of horsemen, carriages, and pedestrians in his usual easy, clever way, and laid the hounds on. Quickly they picked up the scent, and went away a screamer, leaving Stoke Park on the right, in the direction of Farnham Royal. At the first fence several good men went wrong; loose horses galloped along, and I noticed a hat trampled well into the mud. My horse was as fresh as paint, and jumped the first fence in so light-hearted a manner that had I not had a good grip of the saddle, I might have gone wrong too. If I did ride too close to hounds once or twice, it wasn't my fault, for the grey would not be denied; his motto was "Forrard on! forrard on!" Then leaving Stoke Park on the right, we ran away to Burnham Beeches, skirting the woods and going in the direction of Beaconsfield, running up to Wilton Park; then away through a difficult country past Gold Hill, on by a dilapidated windmill in Outfield, near Chalfont St. Giles; away like steam in the direction of Amersham; and then on at a racing pace to Cheneys, near Rickmansworth, in Hertfordshire, where Honesty was run into and taken, after a slapping run of two hours and three-quarters over a difficult line of country.





CHAPTER XIII.

HUNTING IN DEVON AND SOMERSET.

“EE winter comes to rule the varied year,” for the moors and hill tops are covered with snow. The time for hunting the wild stag is past. Cub hunting is finished, the serious business of the season has commenced, and lovers of the noble pastime may rest assured that the prospects of sport are excellent; that foxes, hares, and hinds abound; and they may depend, if they will travel thus far, taking up their quarters either at the Lion Hotel in Dulverton, or the White Horse at Exford, on finding capital quarters, can be excellently mounted, hunt every day either hind, hare, or fox, and mix with the most genial, pleasant, and hospitable people that can be imagined. It is not your feather-bed sportsman, who is afraid to scratch his leathers and boots and desires merely a twenty-five minutes’ spin across the grass that I address. No, it is the man who loves the science of hunting, desires to see hounds work, and is not afraid to ride over hill and dale, moorland and meadow, and brawling brooks, through dense woods, or lovely combes, which are the features of the beautiful counties of Devon and Somerset,

whose attention I desire to attract. Hunting the wild red deer I have always considered the finest sport that can be found in Great Britain, and not to see it is to lose a grand treat. The period of hunting the stag has just finished, and hind hunting is in full swing.

Having enjoyed a few days during the month of August at the commencement of the time for hunting the stag, and being enchanted with the scenery, the excellence of the sport, and the hospitality of the inhabitants, I determined to have a ride or two with the Devon and Somerset, when in pursuit of a hind. Leaving the fogs of London, I travel to Dulverton, going as far as Chard by the London and South-Western Railway, travelling through a beautiful line of country—a far preferable route, in my opinion, to that of the Great Western. I arrived to find the fixture for the following day was Haddon Hill, on the estate of Lord Carnarvon, whose woods, extending some eight or nine miles, abound with red deer. Mounted by Mr. King on a sturdy little horse, I was off at an early hour to try my luck at hunting the hind, singing the following words suggested by the occasion, as I canter quickly along—

“ Then urge on your steed, for he never must lag
 Who through the wild heather goes hunting the stag ;
 Hunting the stag,
 Hunting the stag,
 Who through the wild heather goes hunting the stag.
 ‘ Tallyho ! Gone away ! ’ are the sounds that I hear,
 For the tufters have started a noble red deer.
 Then forward, hark forward ! o’er moorland and hill,
 Through the verdure-clad woodlands and swift-flowing rill ;
 O’er the emerald glades and the wild trackless waste,
 Knee deep in the bracken we ride in hot haste.

Hark, hark ! From yon valley come musical sounds :
'Tis the horn of the huntsman, the cry of the hounds.
He rises yon steep hill ; he bends to the west,
And hides in a leafy combe, panting for rest.
But his foes are upon him, close, close on his track,
And vainly he flies from the bloodthirsty pack.
Hard pressed is our quarry—for dear life he flies ;
The hounds gain upon him ; he lists to their cries.
Then the headland is reached, from the tall cliff he bounds,
And in the wild ocean escapes from the hounds.
Resigned to his fate, o'er the waters he's borne,
And dies on the wild waves that break on Glenthorne.
So urge on your steeds, for he never must lag
Who through the wild heather goes hunting the stag."

Soon Haddon Hill is reached, and I see Arthur with his pack, and a numerous party of well-known riders with these hounds. First and foremost is the popular and respected sportsman, Mordaunt Fenwick Bissett, the Master ; Mrs. J. Froude Bellew, admirably mounted, riding with nerve and judgment, being to the manner born a huntress, having been trained up in the way she should go from her earliest childhood ; Captain and Mrs. Bernard, the latter mounted on a well-bred sporting-looking grey ; Miss Jekyll, the Honourable Robert Trollope, Messrs. Gore Langton, Marshall, B. M. Collyns, and sundry of the dwellers of Dulverton ; Mr. King, of the Lion ; and Mr. Tarre, of the Lamb, riding amicably together. But time is up, and Arthur Heal brings out three couples of hounds, tufters, and accompanied by Miles, the clever, intelligent harbourer, and George Southwell, his able whip, proceeds to draw for a hind in the lovely cover that lies at our feet. Sheltered behind a group of trees I wait expectantly the sound of "Tallyho !

tallyho! yoi! have at him there!" but some considerable time elapsed ere we came across a hind; at length a view-halloo is heard on the hill, and I saw what I thought was a hind going well away from the end of the combe, mounting a tremendously steep hill, running through a small cover, pointing for a capital line of country. Now, I thought, we are in for a good thing; over the gate goes the beautiful animal, hotly pursued by the tufters; when suddenly a cracking of whips and rating of hounds is heard, for we find it is a young stag we are pursuing, and stags are out of season. So the hounds are stopped, and Arthur proceeds to draw for another. The afternoon was wet, cold, and windy; there was not a particle of scent, and though we found again we did not succeed in driving out a hind; and thus ended my first day.

Our next meet was at Hele Bridge, a lovely spot close to Dulverton. This day I was mounted on a clever grey, whose performances subsequently astonished my weak mind; climbing up, and what is more, coming down hills which are nearly perpendicular as cleverly as a cat in a dairy, picking his way through heather hock deep, travelling over rolling stones and fallen trees, never once putting his foot wrong. I subsequently rode him down one of the steepest hills on the road home with the reins on his neck, feeling perfectly certain that he knew how to do it better than I; and my confidence in his safety was not misplaced, for he carefully picked his way amongst the rolling stones, as we came at a sling trot down the steepest part. Starting in good time, I overtake Mr. S. H. Warren, the honorary secretary of

the Devon and Somerset Hounds, a post which he has ably and pleasantly filled for a period of nearly thirty years; himself a thorough sportsman, a bold and good rider, a jovial and genial man, he has contributed greatly to the pleasures of those hunting with this pack. Acknowledging this fact, some of the most ardent supporters of stag hunting proposed that a testimonial should be presented to Mr. Warren as an acknowledgment of his long and gratuitous services. With a committee such as the one proposed, viz., Messrs. Chorley, Joyce, and Halse, there is no doubt that the movement will result in a success, especially as upwards of £100 was subscribed on the occasion of the first meeting which was called to consider the question.

It is owing to the good feeling and liberality that pervades all classes in Devon and Somerset, in respect to these matters, that so much sport is shown. Every dweller in these parts is interested. When returning from hunting, the parson, the clerk, the sexton, the school children, all invariably put the one question, "Have you killed?" Arriving at the meet, I find most of the usual attendants, including Mrs. Froude Bellew, Miss Jekyll, Captain and Mrs. Barnard, the Hon. Robert Trollope, Messrs. Gore, Langton, Rendall, etc. The time being up, the office is given by Mr. Warren, in the absence of Squire Bissett, who, not arriving until after twelve o'clock, was out of the hunt altogether. Then Arthur proceeds to draw a lovely combe adjacent to Hele Bridge. Short time elapses ere we find, and a hind goes away, accompanied, unfortunately, by her calf, which is pulled down by the hounds in a turnip field

close to the Dulverton Road. The hind went back into cover, but being rattled about by the tufters, breaks again, crossing the Dulverton Road, going for Haddon. Then I gallop through the farm-yard, see her going into the cover, and await Arthur, who speedily comes with the pack, which is laid on to her track; but the scent being indifferent, the young hounds were rather slow in picking it up; at last they got on good terms with the hind, and rattled her about through the dense woods, driving her first in the direction of the open tract of land lying around King's Brompton. Then she suddenly doubles back, and descends into the valley of the Exe, running down stream at a tremendous bat, trying to baffle her pursuers by taking to the water, but the hounds are not to be baffled, and dash at her, knocking her over. Then, recovering her legs, she goes away at a racing pace over Leigh Barron, going in the direction of Morebath; then, taking again to the water, it is soon made too hot to hold her, and she makes for a small cover, where she is killed, after running from first to last for three hours and a-half. When the hind doubled back and made for the valley, I was at the top of the cover, and thinking to be clever, I followed a farmer, who proposed very kindly to show me the way; and he did so, and a strange way, in fact I may say a tall way, it was. Straight down the slope of the almost perpendicular hill he rode, occasionally going by a side path, but certainly for half, or more than half the distance, as straight as a die. Now, I estimate that the height of the hill down which he was kind enough

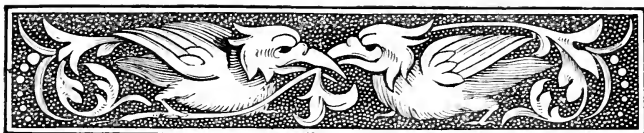
to precede me, was not less than 500 feet. The ground was exceedingly deep in parts, and slippery. Down, down, down, through dense brushwood, sturdy briars, rolling stones, rushy places, suggestive of boggy pits, over fallen trees, I followed that heedless horseman in his, what I should have thought, reckless career, but which, in reality, was his ordinary style of going across country. For the greater part of the distance I remained on my horse, who never stumbled or tripped; occasionally slipping, but never discomposed; always ready to crop a green hazel bough, or snatch at a more than ordinarily tempting piece of grass, with the rein hanging loosely on his neck. But when I saw that heedless horseman dismount, I followed his example; a hundred feet below, flowed the picturesque river Exe; extremely pretty is this swift-flowing river when seen from a level point of observation; viewed from the precipitous path, by no means tempting. Passing the whip through my nag's reins, I walked, stumbling and jostling against him, regretting that I had not kept on his back, where I was far more at home than I found myself *au pied*. It must be a steep hill, indeed, that has not a termination, and at last I found myself on all fours with the Exe, for I lost not a moment in remounting, and galloped along the green valley as hard as I could, finding that the hounds had slipped away whilst we were coming down from our high places.

Crossing the bridge, I hear a view-halloo; a cottager informs me that the hind has just gone across the turnip field. Three couple of hounds emerge from the cover, hunting the animal steadily,

and I pull up, taking these for the leading hounds, awaiting the coming of the pack. But, though the quarry was a hind, it was not *the* hind which was going away like steam far over hill, dale, and woodland, consequently, with several others, I also was from this time out of the hunt entirely. I stuck, however, to the three couples of hounds, who were trying to puzzle out the line of the hind, in the vain hope that they might run into her, but, after doing their best, they threw up their heads and followed me back to Dulverton.

After some time, Arthur appears on the scene, in high spirits with the success he has met with, for this has been a trying time for the huntsmen. The outbreak of hydrophobia destroyed some fourteen couples of the old pack, and a great part of the work of the present season has been done by the young hounds, who have only been freshly entered to the stag. Notwithstanding this great disadvantage, the sport, whilst not coming up to the usual standard, has been fairly good; sixteen stags have been killed, whilst the hind hunting, as far as it has gone at present, has been satisfactory, several having been killed after good runs.

How I met the Tiverton on the opening day, galloped for an hour with the Q.H., or Quorm Harriers, with Mr. Chorley in pursuit of a hare, killing her in first-rate style; how I dined with the yeomanry, made the acquaintance of the Master of the Dulverton Foxhounds, riding with his beautiful pack, and seeing him kill his foxes, and was entertained at his hospitable home—are they not written in my journal, ready for publication when opportunity offers?



CHAPTER XIV.

HUNTING IN DEVON AND SOMERSET.

DURING a fortnight spent in Dulverton and the neighbourhood, fortune favoured me greatly. I know of no two counties in which there is such a decided tendency to hospitality and good fellowship as in Devon and Somerset, and consequently, when I received an invitation from the Master of the Dulverton Foxhounds to spend a day or two with him at Rhyll, a short distance from Dulverton, I right gladly availed myself of the hospitable offer.

Leaving the Lion at five o'clock, I drove in a dog-cart up as steep a hill as one usually meets with in any Highland district, and arrived at Rhyll in time for dinner. The Master of the Dulverton Foxhounds is Squire Froud Bellew, a member of one of the oldest Devonshire families, and a type of the true English squire, one of the olden time. Since the establishment of the railway system, country life has been revolutionised; and fashion and formality are too often found in the place of the hearty hospitality of

bygone times. Not so in Devon : for there I fully realised the words of Felicia Hemans :—

“The stately homes of England,
How beautiful they stand,
Amidst the tall, ancestral trees,
O'er all the pleasant land,”

when I was asked to accompany the Squire and Mrs. Bellew to Holcombe Court, to be present at the breakfast on the opening day of the Tiverton Foxhounds—a drive through a beautiful line of country, passing through Bampton, celebrated for its fair, at which the Exmoor ponies are sold in vast numbers, brought us to Holcombe Court, the residence of Mr. Rayer, the Master of the Tiverton Hounds.

This beautiful place has a history which, as yet, I have not had time to master. That it is of ancient date may be judged by the fact of the library having been the room in which King John was entertained some seven hundred years since. The massive carved oak doors and ceiling at once proclaimed its antiquity. An elegant breakfast was laid in the panelled dining-room, the table tastefully ornamented with lovely flowers and rare ferns, around which the guests in hunting costume were seated. The men in scarlet coats and ladies in habits made an exceedingly pleasant picture. On the lawn the hounds, which, by the way, are hunted by Mr. Collier, whose pack of otter hounds is one of the celebrities of the county, were duly paraded ; groups of hunters in clothing, farmers on sturdy-looking nags, ladies' horses, with their saddles carefully covered up, were to be seen ; and the morning being fair, it was a more than

usually pleasant inauguration of the season. A fox was soon found in the cover adjacent, and went straight away, affording a merry little spin, which seemed to give great satisfaction to the large "field" which attended on this occasion. A second run was considerably longer, and, for an opening day, the sport shown was decidedly satisfactory.

Enjoyable as this pleasant day was, I had still greater pleasure in store, and went cub hunting with Squire Bellew on Hawkridge Common. The country through which I rode was simply lovely. "The morn, in russet mantle clad, walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill," and the country seen at this period of the year is far grander to the view, when the frost has touched the heather and brackens, even if not as beautiful as when the purple heather is in full bloom. That the Master of the Dulverton Foxhounds, now in the prime of life, is a man of experience, may be judged from the circumstance of his having had a pack of hounds of his own at the early age of fourteen. No wonder, then, when I looked at his pack I found them a very crack lot, all in blooming condition, and fit to do the hard work before them.

"I like hounds," said the master, "to be long, low, and lusty," which I think is as concise a criticism as I have ever heard. Soon I see them at work, and find ample proof of their excellence. Quickly a fox is found in a patch of gorse on a steep hill side, and they very shortly make the place too hot to hold him, and he breaks away within a few yards of me, — a fine fellow he was, and we went away at a rattling pace over hill, dale, and moorland, until

finally we ran him to ground after a capital run. Then he was dug out, and speedily broken up by the eager pack. After this we found another fox, and ran him hard over an extremely difficult country, the hounds hunting the fox themselves, at times when no one could get to them, in a fashion that I have rarely seen equalled. Heavy showers fell at intervals, but they did not stop Mrs. Bellew, who gave myself and friend—we forming the field—a lead down a steep hill into the beautiful village of Withypool, at a pace which was simply astonishing; but this bold and clever horsewoman is invariably well-mounted, and upon animals, too, that are accustomed to the country. After a capital run, we ran the second fox to ground, who met the same fate as his predecessors. The services of Spot were called into requisition, and this beautiful specimen of a fox terrier, whose muzzle was scored and scarred in a wonderful way, betokened many a fight with an old dog fox when endeavouring to force him from his stronghold.

On Sunday afternoon, I paid a visit to “Jack Babbage,” and Jean, his auld wife; a veteran huntsman is he indeed, now in his 78th year, whose fame has so often been proclaimed in connection with the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, and whose portrait appears in the well-known presentation picture of Mr. Bissett and his pack. Now beyond work, he lives quietly and contentedly at Rhyll, and was pleased to have a chat about the sport he loved so well and followed so long. The following morning Mr. Bellew mounted me on a remarkably clever horse, and again we went cub hunting, riding up to our girths in

brown heather, straight down a tremendously steep hill, at the bottom of which flows the Barle; then, crossing that swift-flowing stream, the Squire stopping to take up Spot, who was nothing loth to ride on the pommel of his master's saddle, we mounted the steep hill side, and drew for a fox. As we rode along we startled a quantity of black game, many partridges, and sundry snipes. Presently a hound speaks, and a fox is found in a thick gorse cover. There is scarcely a particle of scent, and they have hard work to make him go away. But the Squire cheers and encourages them, and the adjacent hills re-echo the sound of his cheery cry and the mellow tone of his horn, and I say to myself this is true hunting. Sport in every sense of the word it is to see hounds working so steadily. At length the fox is forced to fly, they are too close to his brush for his comfort, and "Gone away, gone away, gone away!" echoes and re-echoes through the woods. Following the Squire we come to a fence, which I should not have thought any horse would have faced. "Jump off, and get over as quick as you can," said the Master, and I did so in a manner by no means graceful, to say the least, and turning the clever animals loose, they jumped on the bank, forced their way through the interlacing branches, and landed safely alongside of me. Up and away we go again, and we rattle that fox through the covers, up the hills, through the combes and over the heather until we lose him; and then we return to Rhyll, after a most delightful day's sport.

I was much struck with the Dulverton Foxhounds, and the blooming condition they are in; but as the

master looks after them himself, as well as hunting them, it is not surprising that they should be in good fettle. An inspection of the kennels showed the practical way in which they are managed, cleanliness, drainage, and ventilation being duly considered, and from the care and forethought shown, many a master of hounds might learn a useful lesson if he paid a visit to Rhyll.

Taking leave of my hospitable friends, I returned to the Lion, and learning from my host that the Quarm Harriers were to meet the following morning at Winsford Hill, I determined to see Mr. Chorley hunt the hare over the heather. I was told I should see as perfect a pack of harriers as could be found in any country. Having a special liking for a little horse called Charley, Mr. King promised that I should ride him; and I started in good time, being eager to try my hand at hare hunting, having succeeded so well when going on in pursuit of the stag, the hind, and the fox. The morning was not propitious, and long before I reached Winsford Hill I was drenched to the skin. Prompt to time, up rode Mr. Chorley, and, after the usual pleasant greetings, we proceeded to draw for a hare. The wind howled, the rain fell in torrents, and Mr. Chorley said, "Well, I think we had better go home." I replied that I thought it would be the wisest thing we could do. "But," said he, "you would like to see one run, would you not?" "I should, certainly," was my reply, "and I will come another day." However, this staunch sportsman did not like turning tail, and, after stopping to present "Court," the keeper in charge of Sir Thomas Dyke Acland's pro-


perty, with a purse of £21 odd, subscribed by gentlemen hunting with the Devon and Somerset, as an acknowledgment of his services in harbouring deer in this locality, we proceeded to draw for a hare in the brown heather. A short time only elapses before puss jumps up and goes away merrily; the scent is bad, but we hunt her across the turnip field, through the meadows, back to the heather clad hill where we found her, and ran into her after about fifteen minutes' sharp going. Then the weather clears up, and the bright sun dries my saturated garments, and up jumps a good hare and goes away a clinker. Charlie is my darling on this occasion, and carries me at a rattling pace after these clever hounds. For upwards of an hour we raced after this game hare, and finally ran into her in a turnip field, and "Who-whoop!" was the cry. Then being invited by Mr. Lovelace, upon whose farm we killed the hare, to have some luncheon, I again experienced the hospitality which is one of the prevailing features of Devon and Somerset.





CHAPTER XV.

BEFORE THE FROST.

“ SHALL have very great pleasure in joining you on Thursday. With very many thanks for your kindness, yours,” etc., was the reply I made to the pleasant invitation of Mr. Edward Durrant, the popular secretary of the Tunbridge Wells district of the West Kent Hunt, to attend the first meet of the season at Lullingstone Castle, the beautiful seat of Sir William Hart Dyke. Starting from Victoria Station by the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway, a short journey landed me, punctual to a minute, at the Eynesford station. It was evident that it was a more than ordinary occurrence that caused such bustle, but not confusion, at this usually tranquil station. Thanks to Mr. Vincent Hill, the fifty horses arriving by the up and down trains were speedily unloaded, and the ladies, being mounted, escorted by men in pink, formed a gay cavalcade as they wended their way to the castle.

Not only was I invited to attend this large gathering, but also to ride Grey Friar, a sporting-looking horse, whose performances fully carried out the promise his appearance betokened. A ride of a

mile or so, journeying through the fine old park, brought me to the seat of the Dyke family, and, passing under the venerable ivy-clad archway, I saw for the first time the old-fashioned house, with the ancient parish church of St. Botolph, in which are beautifully-stained windows, on one side of the lawn, and on the other the waterfall and winding stream, the home of many wild fowl; whilst on the lawn were the huntsman and his hounds, and a large assemblage of the magnates of the county. Men in scarlet, ladies in habits, sturdy yeomen, and lads and lasses of the neighbouring villages were mingling freely together; whilst Sir W. Hart Dyke was pressing every comer to partake of the magnificent repast that was spread in the beautifully-decorated hall. Nor were the visitors slack in availing themselves of the hospitable invitation, nor averse to try the inviting bottles containing the hunt breakfast champagne, a dry wine decorated with an especially sporting label, which attracted universal attention, and which induced the visitors again and again to try, as Mr. Pickwick did the punch, in order to ascertain to a certainty whether it was *really* dry champagne; and these trials probably were productive, at a later period, of the determination on the part of certain eager sportsmen to have a go at the sheep hurdles whilst the hounds were drawing an adjacent cover.

It was a bright day and a beautiful scene. Among the many present I noticed the Marquis and Marchioness of Abergavenny, the Ladies Violet, Rose, and Idina Nevill, Lord Henry Nevill, Lord George Nevill, Viscount Hardinge, Viscount Sydney, Earl

Amherst, Earl Mostyn, Sir Charles H. Mills and Lady Louisa Mills, the Hon. Ralph Pelham Nevill and Mrs. Nevill, Sir Walter Stirling, the Ladies Pratt, Lady Caroline Nevill, Lady Isabel and Miss Bligh, Colonel Streatfield, Mr. H. Lubbock, Colonel Lennard, the Hon. Captain Amherst, Colonel M'Lean, Colonels Risley, Evelyn, and Fitzroy, Mr. G. H. Field and Mr. Barclay Field of Ashurst Park, Mr. J. G. Leveson-Gower, Captain Masters (late Master of the H.F.H.), Mr. A. Brassey, Mr. W. Dickinson of Eridge, Mr. Leny (Master of the Mid-Kent Staghounds), Mr. E. Durrant, Mr. Bates, Mr. H. Cramp, Miss Russell, Mrs. Tuck, Mr. Quallett, Mr. Richard Russell of Otford Castle, the secretary of the West Kent Hunt, a thorough-going sportsman, with whom I have had a pleasant acquaintance for many a day; Captain Churchill, Captain W. H. Roberts, Mr. Fitch Kemp of Foxbush, Mr. Waring, Mr. John Camden Hayward, etc.

On this occasion the opportunity was taken to present the Hon. Ralph Pelham Nevill with a service of plate of the value of 1000 guineas, in recognition of many years' valued services as Master of the West Kent Foxhounds. The magnificent testimonial was presented by Sir W. Hart Dyke in an appropriate and cheery manner, and the happy allusions, and the hearty and feeling style of address, elicited much and loud applause from the assembled sportsmen. The master having returned thanks in an equally happy style, not only for the testimonial itself, but also for the silver horn presented by the ladies of the West Kent Hunt, George Bollen and his whips mounted their horses and moved off to draw an

adjacent cover. "Halloa in there! Yoi! have at him there!" and this quick and clever huntsman was soon on the line of a fox, whilst a view-halloo soon proclaimed that he had gone away.

Letting Grey Friar have his head, I found it would be my fault if I did not live close to the hounds, and after a pleasant gallop of fifteen or twenty minutes, the hounds came to a check in a patch of bracken in the park. A halloo back was heard, and the hounds were lifted and laid on to what I believe was a fresh fox, which gave us a spin of fifteen minutes, when we ran him into a stiff cover, which he was unwilling to quit, but George Bollen soon made the place too hot to hold him, and we ran him back into a cover, where we lost him, the scent being bad throughout the day. After this we drew for some little while, finding another fox, without being able to do any good with him, and the hounds, which had some distance to go to their kennels, were taken home. Then a pleasant ride with Sir W. Hart Dyke through the old park brought me back to the castle, where, after partaking of further hospitality at the hands of the very popular and courteous owner of this beautiful residence, for centuries the home of the Harts and Dykes—a fit dwelling for an English country gentleman—I took my leave, and trotted back by starlight to Eynesford.

On the following Thursday, the meet of the West Kent was at Eridge Castle, and having been invited by the Marquis of Abergavenny to be present on the occasion, and being promised another equally good mount, I drove from Tunbridge Wells over Broadwater Down, and entered the lovely domain of

Eridge, passing through beautifully-timbered picturesque woods until the castle was reached. In the 12th of Henry IV. (1411) the manor passed into the hands of the family of Beauchamp, Earls of Warwick, and Lords Bergavenny. Sir Edward Nevill, the direct ancestor of the present Marquis of Abergavenny, in the 14th of Henry IV., did homage for the land of his wife's inheritance—I should think without doing any great violence to his feelings, for a fairer domain is not to be found, were you to search England throughout.

The deer park, the oldest in England, is of the extent of 2000 acres, through which a stream passes feeding the mere, which is seen from the castle gardens, and is the abiding place of countless wild ducks; whilst herds of fallow as well as noble red deer roam at will through the lovely glades, or rest beneath the widely spreading trees that shelter them in their favourite haunts.

Arriving at the castle, the scene was animated beyond measure. George Bollen and his hounds, surrounded by a large number of well-mounted men and many ladies, were to be seen in readiness to proceed to business. On entering the castle, I passed through the entrance hall into the dining-room, where a sumptuous breakfast was laid, and though the "King-maker" seemed to look down upon me somewhat austere from the walls of this noble apartment. I did not feel disconcerted, or in the least disinclined to partake of the hospitality of my noble host.

Then, being handed over to the care of Mr. Smith, the house steward, I was shown through the mag-

nificent suites of rooms ; admiring the rare elegance of the decorations and furniture, the splendid array of historical family portraits, the innumerable costly ornaments, ancient oak carving, fine pictures, rare prints, especially noting some original sporting pictures in his lordship's study, as well as two drawings, said to be the last executed by the late Sir Francis Grant ; and, finally, passing through the beautiful drawing-room, in which the Marchioness was receiving visitors, to the state bedroom, the elegance of which especially attracted my attention, the furniture and fittings showing the most perfect taste, even to the minutest details. Compelled to hurry through the castle, the hounds having been thrown into a cover close by, I could only cursorily examine the beauties of this stately and yet comfortable home, and mounting my horse got to the warren at the moment a fox was viewed, and a cheery halloo given, betokening that he had gone away. Through the beautiful woods we galloped ; and, passing the wonderful Eridge rocks, which there was not time to examine, we ran our fox at a rattling pace in the direction of Frant, from thence through the woods, finally driving him across the open for a short while, when he went to ground in a stronghold, from which there was no ejecting him, called "Harrison's Rocks." Then we drew for a second fox and soon found, running him for a while, but there was no scent, and we finally lost him. Present on this occasion were Lords Henry and George Nevill, the Hon. Ralph Nevill, Lady Alice Nevill, Lady Idina Nevill, Lady Rose Nevill, and Lady Violet Nevill (who were admirably mounted,

and rode gallantly to hounds), Viscount Hardinge, Mr. Field, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Fitch Kemp, the treasurer of the West Kent Hunt; Mr. Edward Durrant, Mr. Cramp, Miss Russell, Mrs. Tuck, Mr. Bates, on the well-known old "Doctor," etc.

The hounds next crossed the park, in order to draw some extensive covers, and as they were likely to be engaged for some time in their endeavours to drive another fox from the thick woodlands, I returned to the castle to luncheon, and had a further opportunity of looking at the innumerable objects of interest.

A large party was assembled, and a hearty welcome accorded to the numerous visitors by the noble host and hostess. After a short halt I remounted, and accompanied Lord Abergavenny through the park, stopping to observe the stations by the side of the mere, from which no fewer than eighty couples of wild ducks were brought down by the Ministerial party assembled at the castle a short while since.

Through a herd of fallow deer, stopping to observe two noble stags and sundry hinds, the kennels are reached, and a splendid lot of deerhounds are let out. A noble animal is the deerhound, and these were exceedingly fine specimens. Hunting the deer in Eridge Park is a sport worthy of the descendants of a renowned and historic family, and, as I rode through the beautiful glades, some lines from Shakespeare's *Henry VI.* flashed across my mind: "Under this thick-grown brake we'll shroud ourselves; for through this launde anon the deer will come, and in this covert will we make our stand, culling the principal of all the deer."

I hope on a future occasion to witness the coursing of the deer, and to watch the resolute hounds capture a "stag of ten," after a gallant run of a few minutes, in order to contrast this performance with the slower process as followed in Devon and Somerset. Trotting along, we came up with the pack, and drew the covers for some time without any success, and finally returned to the castle; where, according to a good old custom, the lord of this noble demesne handed me a stirrup-cup, bidding me to remember that a hearty welcome would always greet me when I visited Eridge Castle. Then a short ride brought me to the Calverley Hotel, at Tunbridge Wells, where some of the hospitable inhabitants of this charming place entertained me at dinner, in a style which was fully in accordance with the previous proceedings of the day—rendering doubly delightful my second ride with the West Kent.

The Earl of Abergavenny is deservedly popular with all classes throughout the county. A staunch supporter of fox-hunting, a liberal friend to every useful institution and a good landlord, he upholds the traditions of his ancient family, setting a bright example to his order. Seen in the hunting-field, accompanied by his stalwart sons and graceful daughters, the words of Henry VI. revert to memory:—

“My crown is in my heart, not on my head,
Not decked with diamonds or Indian stones,
Nor to be seen; my crown is called content;
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.”

During my stay at Tunbridge Wells, I was shown

all the wonders of the place. The Calverley Hotel, where I took up my abode, is beautifully situated; the gardens are well laid out, and command very extensive views far away to the Crowborough Beacon and the heights of Ashdown Forest; and from the fact of the site upon which it is built having been the spot upon which stood Lushington House, once the favourite summer residence of the late Duchess of Kent and her illustrious daughter, now Queen of Great Britain, it is unnecessary to expatiate on the merits of the situation, though it may be remarked that the arrangements of the establishment are in harmony with the site. A walk over Mount Ephraim enables you to see the Wells to the greatest advantage. The view across the common in the direction of Broadwater Down is beautiful; and the air—the day being bright and clear—came fresh and invigorating from the Kentish hills. Of course I was shown the celebrated Tunbridge ware manufactory, where Mr. Barton turns out innumerable specimens of inlaid woodwork, an art peculiar to Tunbridge Wells, and very beautiful is some of this manufacture; then I dropped into the studio of Mr. Robinson, whose photograph, “After the Day’s Work is done,” took the prize at the Paris Exhibition, and is one of the finest pieces of photography I have ever seen. Next I visited the newly-erected pump-rooms, just approaching completion—a large and commodious building, tastefully decorated. Reading and billiard rooms are provided, and accommodation is secured for the Nevill Club.

The analysis of the chalybeate water leads me to

conclude that it is not necessary to travel to distant parts, in order to drink the various kinds of health-restoring water to be found in German watering-places, whilst we have one like that of the Wells close at hand, containing such ingredients as potash, soda, lime, magnesia, and ferric oxide especially. There is a great similarity in the component parts of the various waters of this class, but the fact of the large proportion of iron in combination with the other ingredients of the water of Tunbridge Wells strikes me as a peculiarly happy feature. If I wanted, or when I want, to recuperate, to use an American phrase, not during the hunting season—because I consider there is no such tonic as a gallop of an hour and a quarter at the tail of a good pack of hounds—but when exhausted nature calls for rest and fresh air, then I would try the dry, bracing climate of this part of Kent. The soil is sandstone, therefore the rain when it falls is quickly absorbed, consequently there is a welcome absence of damp, mist, and fog. It is forty years and upwards since I visited Tunbridge Wells.

The town has, of course, vastly increased, but there are many old and well-remembered landmarks remaining. The Pantiles are what they were when I first remember the place, and it seemed but a little while ago that I was passing down them *en route* to Cramp's riding establishment, in order to obtain a mount, that I might join a party of ladies bound for a ride to Penshurst. There stands the well-known establishment unchanged, with as good a lot of animals as ever. I doubt, however, if I should mount one with the agility of former years; but I

think, after a week or two's residence in this bright, cheerful, healthy town, mingling with the hospitable, agreeable, and sociable inhabitants, it would go far towards the restoration of the powers of youth. Doubtless under the fortuitous chain of circumstances which surrounded me during my visit, everything seemed *couleur de rose*; but, nevertheless, I think I may truthfully say that Tunbridge Wells is one of the nicest places of its class, and that if the tide of fashion was to ebb from foreign countries, and flow into an English channel such as this, every advantage for those seeking health would be found at home, instead of being sought for—often with much toil and vexation of spirit—in foreign climes. Very pleasant are my recollections of my rides with the West Kent Foxhounds, and it would be strange if I should not return to scenes of past delights, especially as I have several cordial invitations to visit their jovial inhabitants.





CHAPTER XVI.

BEFORE THE FROST.

WHEN I awoke in the morning to find London enveloped in a dismal fog, and observed on my breakfast table the bi-annual invitation to a banquet from the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers, of which honourable guild I am more or less a worthy member, I instantly recognised the signs of the season, saw the impending winter weather, and forthwith resolved to seek safety in flight from the evils attendant on the murky atmosphere of the metropolis: escaping also the inevitable indigestion that follows on undue indulgence in the pleasures of the table, and avoiding the headache that is the reward of those who dine not wisely but too well. Remembering the cordial invitations to revisit scenes of past delights in the lovely counties of Devon and Somerset, I determine to be off without a minute's unnecessary delay, so as to try my hand again at the glorious pastime of hunting the hind over the trackless wastes of Exmoor, across which I have ridden many a time and oft, when in pursuit of a "stag of ten."

Making known my purpose, I am met with objections. A candid friend suggests that I have

arrived at a time of life when people usually relinquish such sports, and are content to sit in their easy chairs and “fight o’er in prattle all their former wars;” talks an immense amount of twaddle about falling into “the sere and yellow leaf,” and winds up by directing my attention to a line in one of Johnson’s works, suggesting that it was highly applicable to my case: “Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage.” True it is that I have indulged in this manliest of all amusements for more than half-a-century; but I laugh to scorn such maudlin remarks, and evince a stronger determination than before to prove “that there is life in the old dog yet.” Hence my visit to Dulverton, which is reached by a delightful run through a lovely line of country, at a rapid speed, with the utmost punctuality and despatch.

Travelling over the South-Western Railway, *viâ* Basingstoke and Salisbury, where the beauty of the journey commences, watching the flocks of plovers, —following their eccentric course as they wheel around ere they settle on the barren down; away by Tisbury, noting as I pass the beautiful seat of Mr. Fane Bennett; through Semley, Gillingham, Temple Combe, Yeovil Junction, and Chard—quitting the line at this point, the train proceeding *viâ* the Vale of Honiton to Exeter, then on to Dulverton station; there I find a carriage in readiness, which rapidly whirls me to the Lion, where a pleasant welcome awaits me, and I learn that the Devon and Somerset Hounds will meet three times during the week in the immediate vicinity of Dulverton, that Squire Froude Bellew’s foxhounds will be within easy reach, and

that the Quarm Harriers—said to be one of the most perfect packs in the country, showing marvellous sport—will hunt in the neighbourhood. The fixture on the following morning was Haddon Hill, a lovely spot adjacent to Pixton Park, the seat of the Earl of Carnarvon; and it was at this favourite meet that I was to see once more the Devon and Somerset hounds pursuing the hind over hill and dale, amidst the glorious scenery of this grand country, which has always a fresh charm, whether seen when the wild and extensive ranges of hills are clad in purple heather, or at the present sad and sombre season. At all times beautiful is this lovely part of England; and the landscape, seen as I viewed it, at the close of autumn, was, if possible, grander at this period of the year than it was when I rode up the hill of Dunkerry and over the trackless waste of Exmoor in pursuit of the stag in the middle of August.

A very short acquaintance with the little horse which Mr. King had selected for me, sufficed to prove that he knew his way about, and satisfied me that the best thing I could do would be to let him follow his own devices; and it was not long before I found that my confidence had not been misplaced. Marvellous was the style in which he descended the hills, picking his way between rolling stones and lifting his legs over fallen trees that lay across our path—for the wind had recently shown its power, and the riven oaks proved that it is not always sunshine and fair weather in these parts.

By this time the place of meeting was reached, and I found Arthur Heal and the pack in the yard beyond the harbourer's house. The order to move

on being given, Arthur, with three couples of hounds—tufters, as they are technically called—accompanied by George Southwell, the whip, and Miles, the harbourer, whose business it is to track the deer, proceeds to the lovely cover to draw for a hind. Riding along through the heather, I startle the black game, sending them winging away; interfere with many rabbits who go scuttling to their holes, scare the snipes, and “see from the brake the whirring pheasant spring.”

Whilst the hounds are drawing, I recognise many well-known performers with the Devon and Somerset, though the field is not so numerous at this time as during the earlier part of the season. First, I observe Mr. Bissett, the master, a stalwart man truly, riding not less than twenty-two stone, always grandly mounted, as he need be, in order to get over this difficult country; Mrs. Froude Bellew, on a clever nag; Mrs. Jekyll, on a sturdy, if not handsome animal; Captain and Mrs. Barnard, the latter being mounted on a well-bred, sporting-looking grey, which seemed like going the pace; the Hon. Robert Trollope, on a neat bay cob; Mr. Gore Langton, Mr. Connack Marshall, a jovial companion; sundry of the dwellers in Dulverton, including Messrs. King and Yandle, of Hele Bridge; Mr. Tarr, and many an ardent sportsman who never willingly misses an opportunity of riding with these noble hounds.

The weather is variable; but what matter? The wind will blow, the storms must have their course, and do; for they sweep over the wide expanse of country with marvellous rapidity, sunshine following

shade in quick succession. Then the welcome cry of "Tallyho, tallyho!" is heard. "Have at him there!" cries Arthur; "yoi, have at him there, lads!" and we know that a deer has been roused, and we hear the deep-mouthed baying of the hounds and the horn of the huntsman, who is hard pressing the hind in order to make her break cover and take to the open. Then hark, a view-halloo, "Gone away, gone away!" and the deer went away, rising the steep hill, entering a small cover; but the hounds are close upon her quarters, and I conclude that we are going to have a burster, and fully determine to harden my heart, hustle my horse, and go away at full tilt. Suddenly the cracking of whips and rating of hounds are heard, and they are stopped, as it is a hornless stag we are running, instead of a hind as we thought.

After this we draw the cover again, but with little success, as we are unable to drive another hind away; and the afternoon having become wet and gusty, the hounds were taken home. Arriving at the Lion, I find a gallant son of Mars, and a thorough good fellow to boot, whose acquaintance I made on a former occasion when visiting Dulverton, and we "judicious drink, and greatly daring, dine," to use the words of Pope. The leg of Exmoor mutton was superb; the stewed steak, which could not be surpassed by the *chef* either at White's or Boodle's; the apple pie and Devonshire cream left nothing to be desired, save a bottle or three of 1847 port, over which we discussed many matters connected with the art of venery, and hunting the hind in particular.

The day but one following, the Devon and Somerset met at Hele Bridge, about two miles from Dulverton, a lovely spot, through which the Exe flows swiftly on its course, and on arriving at the appointed place, I found many sportsmen assembled, as well as several ladies, who usually are to be seen at the best "fixtures"—amongst them Mrs. Froude Bellew, Miss Jekyll, and Mrs. Barnard; also Mr. S. H. Warren, Captain Barnard, the Hon. Robert Trollope, Mr. Gore Langton, Mr. Connack Marshall, Mr. Lovelace from Winsford, and Mr. Westcote from Hawkridge. Punctual to the minute, Arthur receives the order to move on from Mr. Warren, who acts in the absence of Squire Bissett, and the huntsman is not in the adjacent cover many minutes ere a view-halloo is heard. After rattling the covers for a while, a hind breaks away—unfortunately accompanied by her calf, a yearling, which is pulled down in a turnip field adjoining the Dulverton road. Then she retreats into cover, from which she shortly goes away, across the Dulverton road, in the direction of Haddon Wood. Promptly the pack are brought out and laid on her track; but the scent is cold, and the young hounds do not readily pick it up. But at length they get on the line and drive her through the wood, which rings with the music of the hounds. It soon appears as if we should get a gallop across a beautiful line of country, lying in the direction of King's Brompton; but she changes her mind, doubles back, and makes for the valley, going down stream in the direction of Hele Bridge. But the hounds are close upon her track and in order to baffle them she takes to the water, and ensconces herself in a deep pool, from

which, however, she is speedily driven, going away at a slapping pace across Leigh Barron, and on towards Morebath. Again she takes to the water, but it is soon made too hot for her, and she once more flies from her relentless pursuers, and running into a small cover at Shillingford is killed. A less fortunate fate than that of Dryden's milk-white hind, which was often "forced to fly and doomed to death, though fated not to die."

During this capital chase, I chanced to follow a sturdy farmer, who was kind enough to offer me a lead down the steepest hill it was ever my fortune to venture. From the top of the hill to the waters of the Exe, to which point we were trending, it was not less than five hundred feet. The hill itself may be described as being a little out of the perpendicular. For the greater portion of the distance, we rode straight down; thence following narrow side-pathways, through dense brushwood, tangled briars, over fallen trees, boulder stones and stumps, through coarse grass and rushy pathways, down, down, down; but there was a lower depth still, which we had to fathom by dismounting and leading our horses. Never once did the game little horse I was riding put his foot wrong, making light of my weight, sixteen stone, as he descended this not bad imitation of a precipice. Then, mounting again, I galloped at full speed along the valley of the Exe; but the hounds had gone away whilst we were engaged in descending from Haddon heights, and I could not get up with the body of the pack.

A hind was viewed across a turnip field, and three

couples were running her, and I, believing they were the leading hounds, went with them; but it was not the hunted hind; and, after trying to puzzle out the line, they threw it up, and I found myself out of the hunt altogether. I was not the only one by a good many, who were not in at the death, including the master, who, arriving late, never saw the hounds at all. Accompanied by the three couples of hounds, I made my way back to the Lion.

Shortly, I hear a horn, and find Arthur and his hounds at the door, the huntsman being in great glee at having had so good a run, lasting from find to finish, about three hours and a-half. The sport during the present season has been fair, sixteen stags in all being killed, some crack runs extending over twenty miles; one in particular lasting for six hours,—the hounds running through eleven parishes. Naturally, the pace must have been slow, and, had it been the old instead of the new hounds, the business would have been transacted in two hours' less time. It has been a difficult time for the huntsman, who has had to do the greater part of his work with hounds that have only been entered this season. The outbreak of hydrophobia which occurred in the kennels of the Devon and Somerset having played sad havoc with the old pack, about fourteen couples in all being lost, Mr. Bissett is to be congratulated on so good a result, considering the difficult circumstances he was placed in. Still precautions are taken, lest there should be a recurrence of this frightful, and, at present, incurable malady; and the hounds were kept and

hunted separately, so that no chance might be lost.

During my stay amongst the hospitable inhabitants of Devon and Somerset, I have on many occasions heard expressions of regret that these lovely counties have never been visited by the Prince and Princess of Wales. Had I the ear of these illustrious personages, I would tell them that, until they visit these parts, they will not have seen the loveliest portion of their dominions.

Grandeur scenery there may be, more beautiful it would be impossible to find. If any one doubts me, let him ride in the middle of August from Dulverton, following the course of the swiftly-flowing river Barle, pausing at Castle Bridge, where the waters of Danes Brook mingle with it; there, seated beneath the magnificent and widely-spreading beech tree, which drips into two counties and three parishes, let him tell me if he has ever seen so lovely a piece of sylvan scenery. Let him stand for a while on the bridge and watch the trout leap, or mayhap a salmon rise on its journey up stream to Withypool. Note the remarkable variety of ferns, the luxuriant foliage; listen to the babbling of the stream, the music of the birds, the chattering of the jays; observe the kingfisher flitting over the stream, the white-breasted ousel winging its way along the waters, the rabbits scuttling across the pathways, and the timid hare stopping to observe who it is that intrudes on her haunts. Then let him cross the stream, at the curious and beautiful Torr Steps—druidical remains, I imagine—and wend his way to Hawkridge Common, and, whichever way his eye travels, he will see vast tracts

of undulating heather land, interspersed with tall hills, verdant valleys, and sparkling streams.

Again let him travel in another direction from Dulverton, going by way of Hele Bridge, following the course of the Exe, as it runs through the glorious woods of Haddon and its vicinity, observing the dense, many-coloured woods as he journeys on towards King's Brompton. Should, however, he prefer to visit these parts later on in the year, let him choose October, when the heather and brackens have donned their russet mantles, and the foliage has assumed such varied tints as to be more beautiful even in its decay than when exhibiting all the newborn glories of the spring. After this, I shall be surprised if he does not say that in truth it is a kingly country, and that no fairer women or finer men are to be found than the dwellers in Devon and Somerset.

Having gained experience in the art of hunting the stag and the hind, I determined during my stay to try a day with Mr. Chorley's harriers. The fixture was Winsford Hill, to which place I rode through a heavy downpour of rain that soon drenched me to the skin.

On my arrival at the appointed place, I saw the Quarm Harriers approaching, accompanied by the master, who hunts them himself, his whip, and Mr. Lovelace, a tenant farmer, over whose land we subsequently rode. So utterly dismal was the day, that Mr. Chorley would have taken the pack home had it not been that I should have thereby lost the chance of seeing the working of this clever lot of harriers, and he was anxious not to disappoint me.

Very soon a hare jumped up on the heather, and

we ran her for a quarter of an hour and killed her. Suddenly, as is often the case in this part of the world, the clouds parted, the sun shone, and the face of the country became entirely changed. A second hare was quickly found, and gave us a rattler over the heather, being finally killed in a turnip-field after a capital run of an hour. The "Quarm" have the reputation of being a very crack pack, and this clinking good run, the pace being tremendously fast throughout, fully satisfied me that they deserved the high character I had heard of them.

I was invited to attend the meet of the Tiverton Foxhounds at Holcombe Court, the residence of Mr. Rayer, the master, and I availed myself of the opportunity of seeing the pack, and also this beautiful old baronial hall. Vainly have I searched "Camden," and other historical authorities, for particulars of this ancient place. Its claim to antiquity may, however, be judged from the fact of the oak-panelled room into which I was ushered, having been the apartment in which, in very far-off times, King John had been entertained. A splendid breakfast was laid in the dining-room, which was entirely panelled with carved oak; and the guests—the gentlemen in their scarlet coats, and ladies in blue or grey habits—enlivened the scene with their presence. On the lawn, the hounds were paraded, and a large concourse of visitors assembled. A fox was quickly found in a plantation near the house, which gave us a short run, after which many of the visitors returned to luncheon, and subsequently examined the wonders of this beautiful place.

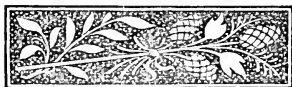
An invitation being received from Mr. J. Froude

Bellew to spend a day or two at Rhyl, I had the opportunity of seeing the home of a Devonshire squire; and, installed in these hospitable quarters, I passed a most pleasant and enjoyable time. Within a short distance of the house are the kennels of the Dulverton Foxhounds, of which my host is master and huntsman. Asked if I would like to ride with the hounds, and being offered a mount on a first-class animal, I found myself careering to cover with the squire, Mrs. Froude Bellew (one of the boldest, best, and most graceful riders I have ever seen), and Captain Marshall, the three forming the "field." "Halloo, in there!" is the cry of our huntsman, as we approach a patch of gorse on the hillside, at the bottom of which flows the Barle through the lovely valley at our feet. In an instant a whimper is heard.

"Have at him, there!" cries the squire. Then a musical chorus, and away goes a fine old fox over the heather-clad hills with this clever pack at his brush. Then we race him away until he crosses the Barle, mounts the hill on the opposite side, the hounds hunting him by themselves until the master can get to them. Away we go, and finally run him down to ground in a cover, digging him out, and breaking him up. After this merry spin, we draw the gorse on the banks of the river, where, in a very short space of time, we drive a fox away, who leads us a lively dance over the moorland, across the hills, down the dales, through the woods, and over the brawling brooks, going in the direction of Withypool. When approaching this lovely little village he doubles back, and is run to ground, dug out, and

broken up. Then we bend our steps homeward, crossing the river Barle at Torr Steps, and after a short ride we find ourselves back at Rhyl. During my stay I had the opportunity of looking over the kennels, and noting the care and forethought which has rendered them perfect as respects every needful detail. Rarely have I seen a pack of hounds in finer condition; a state of things due solely to the long experience, judgment, and attention of the fine sportsman, whose delight it is to show a pack of working hounds that will bear comparison with any in the kingdom. The scenery of the country over which the Dulverton hunt is indescribably lovely, and when riding at full gallop, following Mrs. Bellew down the tremendous hill leading into Withypool, I had yet time to observe this tranquil little village, as inviting a spot as can well be imagined, more especially for those who delight in trout or salmon fishing.

Having followed the wild red deer, hunted the hind, chased the wily fox, and pursued the nut-brown hare, I reluctantly took my leave of the hospitable inhabitants of Devon and Somerset.





CHAPTER XVII.

HUNTING AT BRIGHTON.

“Ever charming, ever new,
When will the prospect tire the view?”

WHAT more appropriate description could I give of this beautiful city by the sea? After an acquaintance with this fashionable resort extending over half a century, I can only say, the longer I know it the better I like it. Pleasant society, bountiful hospitality, fair women, joyous men, capital clubs, an excellent theatre, an aquarium, where there are real live fishes, good hotels, and three or four first-rate packs of hounds within easy distance; surely sufficient reasons for visiting Brighton.

Finding that the Brighton Harriers were to meet the morning following my arrival at Hangleton, near Portslade, I determined to have a ride with Mr. Dewè and his racing hounds. The next step was to visit the West Brighton Riding School, in Waterloo Street, in order to secure a good mount. “You shall ride Albert to-morrow,” said Mr. Dupont, and as I had ridden that clever and untiring little chesnut horse on former occasions, I knew I should

be there or thereabouts on the morrow. Starting in good time, I arrived at Hangleton as Sherwood and the hounds came into the paddock, and I had abundant time to look over the pack. All foxhounds draft from some of the best kennels in England, they can go the pace, and no mistake; in blooming condition, they do the greatest credit to the master, who hunts them himself, as well as to his kennel huntsman, Sherwood.

A "field" of not less than 100, with many carriages, had assembled, amongst whom I noticed Captain Kenyon Stow, Adjutant of the Middlesex Yeomanry, and the Brothers Peat, the well-known polo performers; Mr. Cohen, Mr. Gregson, Mr. and Miss Archer, Mr. Maple, Mr. T. Smith, on a raw five-year-old; and Master Jay, on a remarkably clever pony, formerly the property of Mr. Dupont; Mr. Vincent Weston, Mr. Fred Frith, and Mr. F. Whitehurst, jun., etc. Within a very few minutes, a hare jumped up on a piece of fallow, and went away a screamer, making for a patch of furze at Toads Hole, and then crossing the Dyke road the hounds came to a check; then up she jumped again in a field of rape, and on at a rattling pace to Dead Holt furze, thence to the foot of Portslade Hill, where the hounds checked again. There was scarcely any scent, the day being stormy and cold, but nevertheless the hounds puzzled out the line, and puss jumped up from the rape, and made for Water Hall, along Seddlescombe Valley, through Pond Brow furzes, up to Seddlescombe Hill, and into a piece of furze, where we had to leave her, as a party of gentlemen with some beagles were shooting rabbits

in the gorse. This run lasted for nearly two hours; occasionally the hounds went a good pace, but there was at times literally no scent at all. Patience and perseverance, however, was the order of the day, and an enjoyable gallop the result. A second hare was soon found, but from the same cause the run is not worth recording.

The Brighton Harriers have had capital sport up to the present time, and are well worthy of a visit from any one who is fond of hunting the hare over these fine open downs. It will be an unusual occurrence if he does not have a rattling spin, and when there is a burning scent it will take a good man all his time to live with them.

New kennels have recently been erected at Patcham, at a cost exceeding £2000. The pack consists of twenty-three couples, nineteen and a-half being out at Hangleton, and they may be pronounced a clipping good lot of animals, exactly suited for a country where "fields" are very large, and the riders not unfrequently—in fact very often—pressing far too close to their heels, consequently if they had not a turn of speed they could not show the good runs that they do. Mr. Dewè is a thorough sportsman, and a master of the craft in every sense of the word. If the Brighton townfolk and tradespeople were wise in their generation they would give a far larger amount of support to the harriers. They are a great attraction, and the master should be placed in a position to hunt the country three days a-week. The farmers are most liberal, as shown by the fact of no claims for compensation having been made for ever so long. Hares are abundant, and large

“fields” attend nearly every meet, and it should be the pride of the town to let nothing be wanting to maintain the efficiency of the crack pack which the master has got together, so as to draw strangers from all parts to enjoy a gallop over their breezy and health-restoring downs.

On Monday last the Brookside met at a farm a short distance from Rottingdean and the kennels. The morning was stormy, and the air charged with rain clouds. On presenting myself at Mr. Dupont's establishment, I found he had selected “Emperor,” a five-year-old Yorkshire horse, 16h. lin., fit to go for a man's life, and I trotted off, well content with my mount. As we approached the meet, a wild storm cloud burst over us; but no matter, Mr. Steyning Beard, without a moment's delay, proceeded to draw for a hare. In an instant puss was up and off at racing speed. Going swiftly over these tremendous hills, making straight for Lewes, then crossing the railway, and going along the race course, she leads us a merry spin over the ploughed and turnip fields; here the scent died away, and Mr. Beard, leaving the hounds to puzzle out the line by themselves, they hunted the hare slowly to Falmer village, within a short distance of Stanmer Park, the seat of the Earl of Chichester, where they lost her.

This was a clinking good run of an hour and a-half, for three-parts of the distance at racing pace, and those who did not jump off with the hounds had to follow a stern chase, as they never had a chance of overtaking them. Then we trotted back in the direction of Telscombe Tye, where a shepherd had a hare ready for us. Drawing the steep hill sides,

and riding through the russet-brown tufted grass, in an instant a good hare jumped up close to the hounds, and we race her away for some distance, part of the time in view, running for fifteen minutes over these beautiful downs. Beyond us is Newhaven, and the sea glitters in the bright sunlight between the storms, which pass rapidly over us, the bold headland standing out grandly, with a dark background of heavy clouds, lighted up by occasional gleams of sunshine.

By no means sorry that we had come to a check was I, as my steed had gone a rattler up hill and down dale, evidently desirous of occupying a front place, resenting any undue interference, consequently I was fain to let him have his own way, and he carried me safely down the steep hills, which, if I had interfered with his going, might not have been the case. I observed several men who are in the habit of riding over the downs dismounting, and leading their horses, and I felt disposed to follow their example, but having recently had some practice in climbing steep places in Devon, I stuck to my horse, and rode him straight down from the top to the bottom, the proper way to descend steep hills, though it requires some small amount of nerve when the descent is equivalent to the side of a house, or thereabouts. But we had not done with our second hare yet; whilst I was noting the beautiful scenery, the hounds picked up the scent, and went away again for ten minutes at a fair hunting pace, then, coming to a check in a patch of gorse, they puzzled the line out inch by inch. A wild storm cloud passed over us, which appeared to destroy

every atom of scent; then feathering their sterns and speaking to every inch, as they traced the line, the hounds picked their way across the open, and ran into the hare in a patch of gorse, after one of the most beautiful runs I have ever seen.

There was then time to observe some of the ladies and gentlemen present on this occasion, who rode well to hounds. First, Mrs. Morrell, a capital horsewoman, mounted on a clever chesnut, for which she gave a hatful of money; Admiral Randolph, Mr. Maule, Mr. Gassiot, Mr. White, brother to the Master of the Essex Union; Mr. Morris of Bedgrove, exchanging for a while the stiffly enclosed Vale of Aylesbury for the Downs of Sussex; Mr. Dupont, on a clever dark brown or black horse, which looked like carrying fourteen stone across any country, ridden moreover in a snaffle bridle—a far too rare occurrence, as, in my opinion, half the horses are spoilt by being pulled about by severe bits.

The Brookside Harriers I once heard pronounced as the best pack of true harriers in the world. The authority for this judgment was Mr. John Darby, of Rugby—no bad judge of such matters—and, when I looked them over on Monday last, I saw no reason to challenge his verdict. In beautiful condition, regular in size, of an even colour, all having a strong family resemblance; very fast when the scent is good; patient, diligent, and musical, when they have to hunt inch by inch, I can safely affirm I never saw a more beautiful lot, or witnessed better sport than on the occasion. Then a pleasant ride over the downs brought us to Rottingdean. I felt then that nature, exhausted by some hours' active exer-

cise, required support. So I drew Rottingdean, and found quickly—what I required, namely, a comfortable inn, wherein I might take my ease for a while, and satisfy the cravings of an appetite engendered by the fresh air of the open country through which I had been careering for some hours.

Riding up to the White Horse, I saw at the door a beautiful puppy—Dainty by name—belonging to the Brookside, being at walk at this house of entertainment. It augurs well. I said; the landlord, being a sportsman, naturally knows what is good, and when I cast my eye up to the signboard and read, “The White Horse. By T. Welfare,” I thought, this is the place to fare well, and my anticipations were not doomed to disappointment. I may be wrong in going into details of that luncheon, but it may interest some to know that the cold roast beef, the boiled pork, the baked potatoes (I had arrived at the exact moment when the landlord’s dinner was ready), the pickled walnuts, the crusty white loaves, and the real original fresh butter and amber ale, are to be found by the weary traveller should he be belated or benighted, at this halting place on the road to Brighton.

But whilst discoursing so freely and unreservedly anent the hunting of the hare, I must not forget that the South Down Foxhounds are deserving of notice. On Friday week the fixture was Pyecombe. Notwithstanding it was one of the wettest days of this dreary November, a fair “field” assembled at the meet, including Mr. Streatfield, the Master, and Mr. Donnelly, a former Master of the South Downs, to whom the credit is

due, in a great measure, of having laid the foundation of this fine pack of foxhounds; Miss Kennedy, who goes a clinker across country, having a light heart, and being equally light-weighted; Mr. Ingram of Chailey, Mr. Champion Denny, Mr. Curry, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Alexander, the Messrs. Wynams, Mr. Philcox, Mr. Keen of Patcham, a thorough good sportsman; Mr. Alexander, Mr. Dupont, a gentleman from Yorkshire on the prize-taker, May Flower; Captains Scott, Paley, and several officers of the 5th Lancers. As soon as the master arrived, Champion trotted off with the hounds to Newtimber Holt, which for once in a way was drawn blank.

Proceeding to Cowdown Hill, a brace of foxes were seen on foot, and the hounds settling quickly down, they rattled one away in capital style down the hill in the direction of Newtimber; but not caring to face the boisterous wind he turned to the left, crossing the Seddlescombe Road into Punchbowl Valley, near which place they came to a check. Then Champion, making a successful cast, was quickly on his line again, running back through the Gylee furze to Newtimber Holt, and finally losing him, the scent fairly failing altogether. A second fox was found in a piece of rape at the foot of Seddlescombe Hill, and those who had the pluck to weather the storm were rewarded by a merry, if short spin, finally losing their fox through the inclemency of the weather. As I hope very shortly to ride again with these hounds, I will reserve further comment, fearing I may trespass too far on the available space in the columns of *Bell's*

Life, simply stating that Henry Parker, the first whip, a very good man, fell and broke his arm a short time since, but is progressing favourably.

A brilliant day was Tuesday last, and Brighton was seen to the greatest advantage; all the fine birds wore their best plumage, and though many of the fair visitors were clothed in the skins of seals and divers other animals, they were by no means repulsive—in fact rather attractive than otherwise; the carriageways were thronged, strings of pedestrians reached from the Old Pier to Hove, and many equestrians exhibited their proficiency in the King's Road.

An amusing scene was to be witnessed at the West Brighton Riding School. The fineness of the day caused every one who was in the habit of riding to hasten there to secure a nag, testing the resources of the establishment to the utmost, and out of the seventy or eighty useful, and some very clever animals, scarcely one was to be found in the stalls at noon. Having occasion to visit the photographic establishment of Messrs. Hennah & Kent, in the King's Road, I saw a crayon drawing, taken from a *carte-de-visite* of the late Mr. George Payne, executed for, and by the special desire of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, being a companion picture to that of Admiral Rous, to which I called attention, I remember, last year in the columns of *Bell's Life* as being an admirably executed portrait, which is now equalled, if not eclipsed, by this last effort to perpetuate the memory of a distinguished sportsman, which, doubtless, will be much sought after and appreciated by those who knew him.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SOUTHDOWN FOXHOUNDS.

“**W**ITH hey ho the wind and the rain, for the rain it raineth every day,” I muttered discontentedly to myself, as I splashed through the mud and slush on a fearfully foggy morning, on my way to London Bridge to take the train to Brighton, so as to have a look at the far-famed Southdown Foxhounds, which hunt the country contiguous to that pleasant place. It is said that there is a silver lining to every cloud, and the proverb was not belied on this occasion.

Leaving the elements to war with one another, and bidding dull care begone for a while, I entered the portals of the celebrated Old Ship Hotel, and soon found myself in congenial society. Having been invited by Mr. Dewè, the Master of the Brighton Harriers, to attend the sumptuous banquet given to the owners and occupiers of the land over which they hunt, by the subscribers and gentlemen riding with this clever pack, I found a brilliantly lighted room, an excellent dinner, first-rate wines, and some forty agreeable companions, sportsmen, and friends to the manliest of all amusements, hunting. As a proof of the liberality of the tenant farmers of the locality

suffice to say that claims for compensation for damage done by the large "fields" which attend the Brighton Harriers are things unknown.

At no time have I found hunting more popular than it is at the present moment. True it is that a cantankerous farmer in a distant county has recently sought the aid of the law to prevent his neighbours from riding over his land, but I am glad to say that it is a solitary case, and not likely to form a precedent. Larger numbers I find attending every meet than at any previous time, and every class is represented. The army, navy, clergy, members of both Houses of Parliament, and Cabinet Ministers, all do it. I am reminded of an appropriate anecdote of a late Archbishop, who of course never for an instant thought of riding to hounds, because that would be unbecoming to one of his sacred calling, yet somehow or other it often happened that the hounds *would* come across him as he took his constitutional ride. On one occasion the Archbishop viewed a fox breaking cover, and gave a rattling view-halloo, that quickly attracted the attention of the huntsman of the York and Ainsty, who exclaimed, "That's Gospel truth, if ever I heard it!"

Amongst the number of good men and true attending this social gathering was that thorough sportsman Mr. Steyning Beard, the Master of the Brookside, whose country adjoins that of the Brighton Harriers, showing the good feeling existing between himself and Mr. Dewè, and a desire to mark his sense of the liberality shown by the farmers on all occasions. It is by such considerate acts that a cordial feeling is maintained, and I

venture to suggest that every opportunity should be taken by those riding with the various packs throughout the country of showing courtesy and consideration to the owners and occupiers of the land over which they are ungrudgingly allowed to go.

On the following morning the Southdown met at Portslade, a pretty village close to Shoreham, and as I passed the vicarage, snugly sheltered by flowering laurestinus, evergreen oaks, and other handsome shrubs, I paused for a moment, suggesting to a companion riding by my side, that such a benefice would exactly have suited me—£800 a-year, a population limited in numbers, healthy and happy in their smiling homes, few deaths, numerous weddings, and many christenings, combined with the opportunity of hunting three days a-week. What more could man want? Had fate placed me in that happy position, I know I should have been popular with my parishioners, as I would have been to their virtues very kind, and to their faults a little—in fact not a little—blind—consequently we should have got on well together. As it was, however, I sighed and rode on. Arriving at Portslade, I found a large number of well-mounted men and many ladies on horseback and in carriages, assembled in a meadow adjoining Mr. Doudney's farm house.

Amongst the many regular attendants on the Southdown I noticed Mr. Streatfield, the Master; Mr. and Mrs. Morrell (from Oxfordshire), the latter riding Major, a remarkably fine five-year-old chestnut horse, recently purchased at the long figure of four hundred guineas; Mr. Dewè, Mr. Lake (from

Suffolk), Mr. Donovan, Sir Charles and Miss Smith, Miss Hunt, the Misses Phillips, Capt. Jay, his son, and grandson, who is being trained up in the way he should go, and no mistake; this youthful performer already knows his way about, and should with such tuition make a first-rate horseman when he arrives at man's estate; Mr. Crossman, Mr. Rodwell, Mr. Dupont, Miss Nicholls, a young lady who rides gracefully and well to hounds, and is invariably mounted upon a horse that is, indeed, fit to carry a lady; and many others, numbering in all one hundred and twenty at the very least. The ground, after the recent rains, rode very heavy, but as I was mounted on one of Mr. Dupont's weight carriers, Hark-away, a clever and temperate animal, I rose superior to such matters as a little more or less of mud and dirt.

After drawing several pieces of rape, and sundry patches of furze, we at length found a fox, which gave us a smart gallop over the Downs at a rattling pace for about half-an-hour, when he ran into an enclosure, where there was a piece of exceedingly thick gorse, and he was speedily run into and broken up. Miss Bonner, on Polo, a smart-looking little cob, receiving the head, and Mr. Jay the brush; the young lady deserving the compliment, being a bold and graceful rider, having a nice seat and light hands.

After this we drew for a while, and at last I viewed a fine old fox going away a clinker, running up to Edburton National Schools, where he was headed, probably by the youthful scholars attending that educational establishment, and taking a line

over the steep Downs, he went away a burster over the open, until he reached the banks of the river that flows into the sea at Shoreham. The waters were out, and there was no possibility of his crossing this deep and swift-flowing stream, so he ran for two or three miles along the bank, the hounds having it all to themselves, and hunting him prettily until he changed his mind and went again for the Downs. Then I viewed him going away in earnest, having ten minutes' start, which was all in his favour, as the scent had died away, and we had to hunt him slowly, step by step, running back in the direction of the spot where he was found, where we lost him, after giving us an excellent hunting run of somewhere about two hours.

A good opportunity was afforded of seeing how the Southdown perform. Champion may well be proud of his handsome and hardworking pack, which do the greatest credit to his management, and the best proof of their excellence is that shown by the clinking good runs they have had during the last few weeks. The number of men riding with the Southdown is invariably very large, and on the open Downs the temptation to ride close to hounds is great; and it is consequently very trying at times to both master and huntsman to see the sport jeopardised by over-eager and injudicious riders. However, this drawback does not prevent the Southdown showing grand sport as a rule, and the remarkable run they had from Edburton a few days since deserves a prominent place in the columns of *Bell's Life*. A "field" of not less than eighty were present on that occasion, amongst whom were

many of the best performers with the Southdown. First and foremost on the list was Mr. Streatfield, the popular Master; Capt. Kenyon Stowe, of the 5th Dragoon Guards; the Messrs. Peat, Messrs. Donovan, Currie, and Bell; Mr. and Miss Kennedy, the Misses Nichols and Phillips, Mr. and Mrs. Sassoon, Mr. Bell, Mr. Molineux, Capt. Paley and several officers of the 5th Dragoons, Mr. Rodmell on *May Flower*, Messrs. Tamplin, Stamp, Hodgson, Philcox, Ward, Judge, and Simpson, and a distinguished foreigner on wheels, delighting in the euphonious cognomen of "Mahomed de la Rogy." In the first instance Perching Wood was drawn, but Reynard the fox was not at home to receive his visitors.

On arriving at Truby Sands, a fine and stout old fox went away at a merry pace, going in the direction of Toddington Wood, where he was not allowed to remain very long. Then, being driven from his shelter, he bore to the west, going through Horton Rough, away by Small Dole and New Hall, skirting Parkwood and the Henfield road, on through Cuckold's Green to Woodmancote, and across Horeham Common to Hoe Wood, where they gave him but little time to recruit himself, running him up and down the wood for a considerable length of time. Then, being driven from his stronghold, he retraced his steps to Toddington Wood and Horton Rough, passing Brookside, by the windmills, to Woodmancote, and on to Henfield.

But the hounds had not done with our fox yet, and he went away again in the direction of Sayers Common, back to Henfield, through Poyning's Wood, and was finally run into and killed, a little before five

o'clock, just as the shades of evening were closing over the tired huntsmen, after a run of five hours, covering, it is estimated, not less than forty miles.

The pace was necessarily slow, and it was the opinion of some that, after running their fox for two hours and a-half, the hounds got on to a fresh one at Toddington Wood. The fact of the fox running over the same ground in his backward journey is rather against that theory; anyhow, it was a grand run over a stiff country, which after the heavy rains rode very deep. Three brooks were crossed, in which several ardent sportsmen took a bath. Mrs. Sassoon went in first-rate form, until her groom stopped in the brook, thereby disconcerting his mistress considerably.

There were innumerable falls, and at the finish only some eight or ten were to be seen. Those who lived through this tremendous run were Mr. and Miss Kennedy, Mr. Streatfield, Messrs. Renton, Stamp, Dupont, Molineux, Mocatta, and Sheridan. Toddington Brook for the last time deterred some, who thought it wiser to pull up than have a final shy at this yawner. Mr. Rodmell on May Flower went right well throughout, negotiating the brook at the finish in first-rate style.

At the moment of closing this communication, I hear with the profoundest regret of the death of Major Whyte-Melville, who broke his neck when hunting on Thursday last with the Vale of White Horse Hounds. Whilst galloping across a ploughed field at full speed, his horse fell, throwing his rider heavily to the ground, and causing instant death. So perished one of the finest sportsmen and

greatest lovers of the noble pursuit that I have ever had the good fortune to know. Greatly will his loss be deplored by many, as a more genial and amusing companion could not be found—his society being eagerly sought for, and his popularity universal. No writer on sporting subjects has ever, to my mind, equalled him in elegance of style and practical knowledge of hunting, and his death will cause a gap in the field of this class of literature which will not easily be filled. Born in 1821, he had consequently attained his fifty-seventh year, and when last I was out with him with the Duke of Rutland's Hounds, he rode as forward, and with as much nerve and judgment, as did the youngest of the brilliant performers that go across the Shires. Great as his loss is to his many friends and admirers, how far heavier the calamity falls on his aged father, who has to mourn the loss of a kindly-hearted and accomplished son. If sympathy in his sorrow will alleviate his distress, there will be no lack of it amidst the large circle of acquaintance to whom his son was always a welcome companion and a cheery friend.





CHAPTER XIX.

A ROUGH TIME AT RUGBY.

DISAPPOINTMENT is the lot of man, and I experienced it to the fullest extent on my arrival at Rugby, whither I had wandered in hopes of seeing the Atherstone, North Warwickshire, and the Pytchley. On my arrival at that central place for enjoying the noble sport, I found, though London was enveloped in fog, and the pavement was ankle deep in slush, that a clear atmosphere and sharp frost prevailed at Rugby; consequently the odds were against my having a gallop in the following morning.

Awaking in good time, I peered through the windows of the George, and found the earth fast bound in the icy grip of "Jack Frost," and saw at a glance that there was no chance of hunting that day. "It might be worse," I said to myself—far worse in fact—when I found a roaring fire and a capital breakfast awaiting me, on descending to my room in that excellent hotel, denominated the George, or the Royal George, to speak more respectfully; for did not the Prince Imperial rest beneath the roof of that cheerful and well-managed hostelry, when returning from hunting the other day; and I will ven-

ture to lay 5 to 4 that he appreciated a cutlet, *a la Soubise*, and a bottle of Ernest Irroy's driest and very best champagne, as much as I do on similar occasions, when exhausted nature cries out for support; for they have a knack of doing things nicely at Rugby.

Inquiring of mine host as to his visitors during so much of the season as has yet passed, I find, amongst the other gentlemen taking up their residence under his roof-tree, Mr. W. N. Heysham, whose exertions in aid of that most excellent and flourishing institution, the Hunt Servants' Benefit Society, are well known to every M.F.H. in the United Kingdom; and that Mr. Sheil and Capt. Osborne have also made it their resting place. And I learn that Mr. Shoolbred has a good lot of horses, and goes as well as ever; that the sport has hitherto been fair, but that there have been no extraordinary runs to chronicle as yet; that the scent has been indifferent, which has been the case in the various counties I have visited; that the "fields" have been large, and fox-hunting more popular than ever.

In some insignificant journals, opposed more especially to the amusements of the upper classes, an attempt has been recently made to run down our national sport. The inclination of the writers of these idle diatribes is, no doubt, very strong; but, fortunately, their information is as false as their power of damaging our favourite amusement is weak. Take, for instance, Melton, the headquarters of hunting; every house and stable in that delightful place is occupied; and, as I have remarked before, the numbers to be found at every fixture, as far as my experience goes, have exceeded the usual bounds, at

any rate, in the counties of Devon, Somerset, Kent, Essex, Berks, and Sussex, where I have had the good fortune to see the various packs of stag, foxhounds, and harriers in those localities.

As it was impossible to go out hunting, I took the opportunity of visiting Mr. Darby, who, with his usual liberality, had offered to mount me during my stay, and obtained permission to look over his stables, and inspect the one hundred or more first-class animals that are collected together from all parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland. There is no such establishment in my memory to be found elsewhere for excellence of construction, style, neatness, and the good order observable throughout the whole range of premises. The stables themselves were executed from the design of Mr. Darby, whose lengthened experience and great practical knowledge enabled him to adopt everything in connection with ventilation, drainage, and light and air that an acute perception had taught him were necessary in such erections. Whilst thus securing all these advantages, the self-made architect never for an instant lost sight of the important item, economy; and I have no hesitation in saying that, as regards cost of construction, and the evident durability of the materials used, these extensive and convenient buildings should be an example for those outlaying capital. Box after box was opened, each containing an animal of more than average quality. Horses up to any weight were to be seen, in prime condition, fit for immediate work; not simply made up for show. Then a customer has one or two nags suitable for carrying 12st. brought out for inspection, and it is a treat to see the horseman-

ship of "Raymond," who shows the looker-on how the thing is done by riding a nag as fresh as paint over a well-furzed bar in the straw-laid yard, with his hands in his pockets. Next I am shown the nag that had been selected to carry the Prince Imperial on the occasion of his visit to these parts, and a very good-looking and useful animal I found him; and I was informed that this royal sportsman rode him well, and is a very pleasant and agreeable personage. It is to be hoped that when the French nation is weary of Republicanism, and recalls this scion of a royal race back to rule over them, he will set an example to his subjects by encouraging a taste for hunting throughout his dominions.

Having minutely examined the stud, a brisk walk to the farm was the next thing to be done, and, as I crossed the grass, it was evident, to my mind, that there was no chance of any hunting for some days, the cold being intense, and the ground as hard as the heart of a poor-law guardian. My attention was at once attracted to a prime lot of Canadian bullocks, grazing in a meadow adjacent to the farm house. Having some three or four years since been interested in the importation of cattle from America, I at last find the subject is attracting much attention, though at the period alluded to no one would join in the enterprise. Now I learn that steps have been taken to ship large numbers of beasts from Galveston, a small town in Texas, and that a similar movement is going on in Colorado. The importance of this trade to our farmers is obvious. With wheat at the low average at which it is quoted, and maize at the small price that is now offered on the London and

Liverpool markets, it is a rough time for our agriculturists, and I would suggest for their consideration the question of importing store stock from America, and grazing them, as likely to lead to profitable results. Enormous supplies could be obtained from Texas at exceedingly low rates—say for fine two-year-olds, from £1, 10s. to £1, 15s. per head, and the risk being confined to such small amounts per head of animals to be imported, would leave a large margin for loss in transit, which, however, experience has shown need not be considerable, if the necessary steps are taken to provide vessels suitable for the traffic. I have dwelt upon the matter somewhat at length, as I find it is a subject attracting the attention of several gentlemen well known in hunting circles, and anything that can be done for the benefit of that important body, the farmers of Great Britain, cannot fail to react favourably in the direction of hunting, a sport so much depending on the support of the tenant farmers, whose success all true sportsmen should have closely at heart.

Resuming my account of the stock and farmstead of Mr. Darby, I may say that it is well worthy a visit from any one interested in agricultural pursuits, for there he will see what judgment and proper organisation can do. The minutest details are attended to, and the result is evident in the thriving condition of the fine lot of animals now being fattened for sale at the commencement of the new year. There is one feature in the present aspect of agricultural matters that looks well for the future of hunting, and that is the circumstance of a large quantity of land being laid down in grass. The breeding and feeding of

stock being, in the judgment of many landlords of practical experience, the direction in which to look for favourable results, in the face of the constantly increasing import of corn at such exceedingly low prices, and the high price of meat of every description.

Finding no chance of change of weather, and that my journey to Rugby in search of sport was a failure, I determined to return from my bootless errand, promising to come again with the open weather, to ride with the different packs which are to be reached from thence. There is one great inducement offered in this central position for taking up one's quarters there, namely, the admirable service of trains, which do the journey to and from Euston in two hours. Hunting tickets are issued, the number of trains is considerable, and stabling good enough for the most fastidious is to be obtained in convenient parts of the town.

The early appearance of frost and snow gives premature and unnecessary rest to the studs, which, as a rule, have not been called upon to do much thus far to necessitate it, and the advent of such inclement weather would have been more convenient to the sportsman had it been delayed until after Christmas; but as we cannot control the season, it is no use grumbling, and all that we can do is to wait patiently for the good time coming. When that happy state of things is arrived at, I hope to visit Melton, and to see the working of the Cottesmore under the new management of Lord Carington, to observe Tom Firr perform across the grass with his racing pack, Frank Gillard and his Belvoir beauties, and generally to enjoy the opportunities for sport, and enter into the jovialities of that cheery and celebrated place,

designated by "Nimrod" the metropolis of hunting, a visit to which always results in an increased admiration of the sport as seen in the shires.

During this enforced vacation I propose to visit the Royal kennels at Ascot, and to make inquiries of Mr. Goodall as to the condition of the Buckhounds, and ascertaining the prospect of their resuming hunting. I have heard considerable interest expressed in respect to this outbreak amongst the Queen's hounds of the little understood disease, and it is hoped by many that much information may be obtained of the symptoms and progress of the malady, as it is supposed that every opportunity will be taken of noting the features of so destructive a complaint.

I see in the columns of a contemporary some remarks as to the way in which the late Major Whyte-Melville was in the habit of riding to hounds, which makes me exclaim, "Save me from my friends!" as my observation of the style of that excellent and much-lamented, I may say universally regretted sportsman, is entirely at variance with the statements therein made, my recollection of him being that, so far from "lashing" about, which I presume is a misprint for "larking," he was as quiet and undemonstrative a horseman as ever I rode alongside of. Quick to get away to hounds, with a good eye for the country over which he was going, and showing remarkable consideration for the animal he was bestriding, thus he was always in a good place,—riding with nerve, judgment, and discretion. It is a matter of little moment now, but still I think it well to give my version of the matter, otherwise the fatal occurrence may be set down to imprudence instead of an unlucky accident.



CHAPTER XX.

THE ROYAL BUCKHOUNDS.

GXAGGERATED rumours and vague statements having been afloat in regard to the outbreak of hydrophobia amongst the Royal buckhounds, I determined to visit the kennels at Ascot Heath, and make myself acquainted with the true state of the case. With this view I communicated with Mr. Goodall, Her Majesty's huntsman, expressing my desire to look over the establishment, and was immediately and courteously informed that my presence would be agreeable.

A short journey by the South-Western landed me at the Ascot station, and a brisk walk brought me in a few minutes to my destination. As I approached the kennels, the deep-mouthed baying of the hounds broke pleasantly on my ear, causing me to quicken my steps in order to judge of the condition of the noble pack after the serious visitation that has befallen them at the height of the season. After receiving a cordial welcome from Goodall, I was taken straight to the kennels to examine for myself their present state, and to hear particulars of the course that had been adopted on the breaking out of this terrible malady.

That undoubted cases of hydrophobia had occurred Mr. Goodall fully satisfied himself before calling in the aid of a learned professor of the veterinary art so as to relieve himself from some of the serious responsibility of dealing decisively with so sad a disorder. When the matter was laid before Lord Hardwicke, the Master of the Buckhounds, he at once asked the Royal huntsman what his views were as to the course which should be pursued. Mr. Goodall's reply was that there were three courses that might be adopted. First, to destroy the whole of the pack; secondly, to isolate the hounds; and thirdly, to keep them under the closest supervision, watching them from hour to hour, and dealing with them as the state of circumstances might require. Lord Hardwicke very wisely, in my opinion, adopted the latter course, which was strongly recommended by Goodall, whose practical experience of this terrible disease entitled him to rank as an authority on the subject. That it is a serious and embarrassing calamity to happen to a master of hounds there can be no doubt; but, at the same time, it is advisable to reflect, before taking so destructive a step as sacrificing the whole pack in a scare. By trusting to the practical knowledge of his huntsman, the noble Master has preserved the pack, and when I looked upon them a short time since, I felt perfectly satisfied that, whatever latent evil might exist, no hounds in the kingdom could look more healthy, more contented, or more blooming in condition, than the Royal buckhounds as seen by me on that occasion. How, then, do I account for the origin of the complaint? Simply

by saying that it had been imported, and never could possibly have originated from any condition of soil, defect of drainage, want of ventilation, deficiency of cleanliness, or faultiness in construction of the buildings.

In no kennels that I have ever visited have I seen greater care and attention paid to the necessary conditions for ensuring the health of a pack of hounds. To have destroyed wholesale this beautiful lot of animals would have been more than a crime; it would have been a stupid blunder, which might have been committed by persons who feared to take upon themselves a certain amount—not a small amount by any means—of responsibility.

A wiser determination was arrived at by Lord Hardwicke, and the result of his sound judgment has been the salvation of the hounds, which, under less thoughtful supervision, might have been sacrificed in a moment of timidity. One glance at their sagacious faces, and a close observation of the eyes of these suspected animals, convinced me that, as far as ordinary observation went, there was as little fear of a further outbreak of hydrophobia as it was possible to imagine. Judging, of course, from present appearances. Should any other cases unfortunately occur, it must be borne in mind that the huntsman under whose vigilant care these hounds are placed cannot fail to observe the premonitory symptoms of this fell disease. That there is sufficient time to isolate any animal before dangerous symptoms show themselves is certain. A close observer, especially so experienced a person as Goodall, could not fail to notice in the earliest stages the downcast look, the heavy eye, the

wearied demeanour, the restless movements, and the desire for solitude, that mark the early stage of the disease, on the part of any one of his favourite charges. I venture to say of Goodall that his love of the animals under his care, and his desire for their comfort, might compare not unfavourably with that of the custodians of some portion of our poorer compatriots, even in these exceedingly enlightened days. Those who have never seen or been mixed up with persons having charge of hounds, can imagine the attachment that is felt by a true sportsman for the noble animals that are placed under his care, nor can they be aware of the intelligence and fidelity of the canine race, unless their attention has been especially directed thereto.

“Surely,” said a cautious friend, “you will not go amongst these hounds when you visit the kennels?” Yet when Goodall bidding Gallant, Ganymede, General, Garland, Wizard, Whitebait, and Welfare, come forth to show their perfections, I should as soon have thought of shrinking from the presence of a mouse as from those healthy and magnificent specimens of staghounds, whose appearance would have assured the most timid of observers, even if they did jump up upon him in the exuberance and delight of their temporary freedom.

That the subject of hydrophobia is a matter of exceeding great interest to every master of foxhounds there cannot be the slightest doubt, and I would venture to call attention to one or two matters which have a bearing upon the case. Were I a master of foxhounds, I should give strict orders that whenever a hound had strayed away from his

fellows, and been absent for a day or two—as is often the case—from the kennels, that he should be isolated for a time, and only restored to the society of his *confrères* after he had been under a certain amount of supervision.

In the case of the outbreak of hydrophobia in the kennels of the Devon and Somerset during last summer, I believe there is not the slightest doubt that the disease was brought into them by a hound that straggled from the pack, being, as it was proved, I believe, beyond doubt, locked up for a night with a sheep-dog suffering from the malady, which bit him, and thus introduced hydrophobia into the well-cared-for establishment of Mr. Bissett.

The second point to which I would draw attention is to the state of health of puppies coming in from the different “walks.” I would suggest that young hounds, whose habits and wandering life render them liable under these circumstances to contract so fatal a disease, should, before being allowed to mingle with the pack, pass through a time of quarantine.

Previous to the setting in of the severe frost that has put so effectual a stop upon all hunting, Goodall had given daily exercise to his hounds, by leading them a canter over the race-course. This, owing to the hardness of the ground, has been discontinued for the time, but will doubtless be resumed as soon as the frost ends.

Giving as my reason for putting trust in Goodall's practical experience in preference to theories of mere students of this direful and destructive disease, which at present no practitioner has been able to prescribe

for with effect, I would cite the fact of the opportunity which was afforded him, when in the service of Lord Portsmouth some years since, of witnessing the progress of the direful outbreak, which occurred when his lordship had collected together some two hundred couples of hounds for the purpose of forming a pack of the very best animals that could be found. This opportunity, combined with the interest he took in his calling and his natural aptitude for the charge of hounds, has rendered him, in my opinion, a more trustworthy judge of the symptoms and progress of this little understood disorder than those studious persons whose knowledge is simply theoretical.

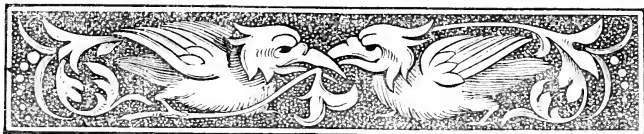
The number of hounds in the Ascot kennels at the present time is a little over forty couples, and an examination of the list shows that they owe their superiority to the judicious selection of strains of blood from the very best packs in the country, such as Sir W. Wynn's, the Tedworth, Mr. Lane Fox's, Lord Middleton's, Mr. Portman's, Mr. Garth's, Lord Coventry's, Lord Fitzhardinge's, the Belvoir, the Heythrop, etc. It would indeed have been a misfortune had Goodall feared to undertake the responsibility of watching and caring for his hounds when so frightful a complaint first showed itself, and when it was impossible to say to what extent it might have ravaged the pack, and it would have been an easy way of getting over the difficulty had he recommended the destruction of the lot. Now the loss has been minimised by patient care and observation; and the result is that some four distinct cases of hydrophobia have occurred with fatal

results, and, as far as I could form an opinion from careful observation, I should have little fear of further outbreak. Of course, some of the hounds may have been bitten by those who have fallen victims to the disease, and, as it appears to be the opinion of the learned that seeds of this malady may lie dormant for months—or, as some assert, for years—there can be no absolute certainty of immunity; but, as I have before observed, the premonitory symptoms cannot fail at to once arrest the attention of the huntsmen in time to prevent serious consequences. Were I in charge of these animals, and had the opportunity of watching the cases that occurred at Ascot, I should have no fear that the approach of the complaint would escape my observation. The symptoms are so marked, and the changed condition of the animal so apparent to those under whose eyes they constantly are, that, with the knowledge that such a contingency was impending over them, suspicion would at once be roused.

Up to the time of the outbreak the Royal hounds had been doing good work, showing some capital runs, notably one on the first public day of the season, when they had a clinker from Salt Hill, by way of Burnham Beeches, Beaconsfield, Chalfont, and on to Chenies. Having ridden with them on that occasion, and having specially noted their condition, and the way they did their work, I am perfectly certain that the disaster is to be attributed to an accidental introduction of disease, and not to any inherent ailment attributable to locality, or to any defect in food, dwelling, or drainage. I think there is little doubt that as soon as the frost brea

up, and the country is once again fit to ride across, that the Royal buckhounds will be at their post, and that Goodall will be able to show as fine sport as ever, notwithstanding the inroad of a malady that might have caused their destruction, but which, fortunately, by judgment and discretion, has been so far limited to a slight loss, and a temporary suspension of hunting.





CHAPTER XXI.

THE ESSEX FOXHOUNDS.

“The melancholy days are come
The saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods,
And meadows brown and sere.”



SUCH were the reflections that crossed my mind when I started at the ghastly hour of six in the morning, in order to travel by train to attend the meet of the Essex Foxhounds at Pirgo Park Lodge, near Havering-at-ye-Bower, a few miles from Romford. I had several reasons for desiring to revisit these parts, and as I rode to cover, I thought of the words of an old song, as being peculiarly apposite to the time—“Scenes of my youth, once more I behold you; home of my childhood from thee I have roamed,” for it is now close upon half a century since first I hunted the identical cover which the Essex were to draw on Monday last.

The pack I hunted in those days was not an imposing one, certainly, though useful. Two couples and a half of harriers, drafts from the pack of Sir James Urmstone, one beagle, a fox terrier, and a spaniel. To a boy of ten years of age such a lot

was as valuable in his eyes as that of the Belvoir in those of his Grace of Rutland, and I doubt if the noble Duke, with all his magnificent hounds and horses, enjoys the sport as much as I did that with my scratch pack.

Revisiting a well-remembered locality after a lapse of forty years, one expects to find changes. The ruthless hand of improvement I found on arrival at Havering Bower had destroyed the old church, substituting an elaborate and highly ornamented building. Time was when the reverend doctor who officiated arrived clad in breeches and boots, and having turned his old grey horse into the churchyard to graze on the rank grass in that sacred spot, would walk up the aisle, putting on a dingy white surplice, and after going through the service, would mount his Rosinante and trot off to Navestock to do the afternoon performance. Times are changed now, and I doubt whether the bishop of the diocese would altogether approve of the costume; and yet with all the innovations and alterations of the present day the world does not seem to greatly improve; things go on much in the same way as they ever did, and there is evidently still a great deal of human nature in man.

Then I look for the furze-grown gravel pits and the cosy old farmhouse, and think of the times when a day's ferreting was the height of my ambition. Now a stately mansion, the residence of Mr. Macintosh, occupies the site of the old house, and a well-planted, undulating park, extending over a large tract of land, stands in the place of the rough rabbit covers.

In those far-off times there existed Hainault Forest, of large extent, in the glades of which were herds of fallow deer, and many red deer as well. This wild and beautiful place has long since been disforested and improved into very inferior agricultural land, to the infinite loss of the citizens of London, who were wont to take their pleasure beneath the celebrated Fairlop Oak, as well as those who used to enjoy the hunting of the red deer along the pleasant shady rides.

The same ruthless hand would have destroyed its neighbour, Epping Forest, but fortunately the enclosure has been stopped, though not before a great amount of tree felling and turf cutting had been permitted. Many a time and oft, with the aforesaid scratch pack, have I hunted a fallow buck in the vicinity of Chigwell Row.

The manner of proceeding was this:—The “field,” which consisted of several lads of my own age—nearly all of whom I have outlived, by-the-bye, such being the penalty one pays for the title of a veteran—would enter the forest by divers well-known gaps, each accompanied by a single hound. Then the loud notes of the horn collected the pack at the trysting place, and we would hunt the fallow deer to our hearts’ content.

But where were the keepers? will be asked. Well, it was in the days when Long Pole Tynley Wellesley Pole was ranger, but not a resident in the locality; and the custodians of the forest did not too curiously scan the proceedings of the squire’s sons; winking, in fact, at our boyish indulgence in the manly sport, and tacitly allowing us to enjoy to the fullest our

favourite amusement. Then diverging from the road to cover, I have a look at the "old house at home," or what was once home, regarding it with mingled feelings of pleasure and sorrow, and trot away again until Pirgo Park lodge is reached.

After waiting a few minutes, I rode in the direction of Harlow, in order to meet the hounds, and soon came up with the pack, which was taken into Pirgo Park, where I had an opportunity of observing them. Seventeen and a-half couples were out on this occasion, and a strong, useful lot of hounds they are, fit for the severe country they have to hunt. In capital condition is this pack, doing credit to their huntsman, S. Dobson, who is a sporting-looking and business-like man, well-mounted, as were his whips, R. Yeo and E. Firr, and a third, whose name I did not learn. The master, Mr. L. W. Arkwright, was not present, but Mrs. Arkwright well fulfilled the duties in his absence. When I first remember this lady, she was the boldest and best horsewoman of her day, riding quietly, but with rare courage, discretion, and determination; and memory recalls a run with the Fitzwilliam from Catworth Gorse, in the days of poor old Tom Sebright, when she cut down the field at a terrific bullfinch, causing George Carter, then first whip, and now successor of old Tom, to exclaim, "Well, I am blessed!" or some such word, expressive of his astonishment at seeing a young lady do what he dare not even try to accomplish, hard as he was across country.

It was a tremendous run, at racing pace, and being mounted on a favourite horse, Timber Merchant by name, so called from his habits of negotiating gates,

park palings, and flights of posts and rails, wholesale or retail, and who was spoken of by a well-known dealer of Piccadilly as being perfection, I in turn mowed down the lot over a double, and, like a servant girl in a strict family, had not any followers—not even the hard-riding lady alluded to.

A “field” of about fifty well-mounted men were present at Pirgo, the seat of General Fytch, and several ladies. Amongst the nags, I noticed two or three first-class animals, if appearances go for anything. One, a thoroughbred, evidently a race horse from his style, looked remarkably fit to go, and a clever-looking chesnut, who was as fresh as need be, if not a little too much so.

Then, the order to move being given by Mrs. Arkwright, the hounds were speedily thrown into cover, and the cheery cry of the huntsman was heard, “Halloo, in there! Halloo in! Yoi, have at him!” But in vain, for this exceedingly likely-looking place for a fox was drawn blank, and the hounds were trotted off to the plantations adjacent to the house. Here my troubles commenced. The horse, an entire stranger to me, who had gone quietly to cover, suddenly became wild with excitement, and kicked, squeaked, jumped, backed, and did everything in his power to unseat me. If another horse passed him it was the signal for a fresh attempt, and when giving him one on the shoulder with my hunting crop he reared straight on end, and warned me he could be dangerous.

I have no objection to any reasonable amount of light-heartedness on the part of the steed who has to

carry me, but rearing is *the* thing I object to. Time was I could jump of and pull back the recalcitrant animal, but the day for those acrobatic performances is over, so I dismounted and attempted to lead that unruly beast, at a respectful distance from the rest of the "field," fearing he might lash out and injure some man or horse. The brute was then, if possible, more troublesome than ever, and vividly recalled to mind the scene in *Pickwick* of the drive to Dingley Dell, where that distinguished personage came to grief with "that immense horse, displaying great symmetry of bone, warranted quiet, and which an infant in arms might drive," as Mr. Pickwick was assured; a quiet animal that would not shy, "even if he met a vaggin load of monkeys with their tails burnt off." I, too, try to coax this wretched beast, and then, losing all patience, I give him a double thonger, which caused him to retaliate by striking at me with his foreleg. "It is like a dream," ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, "a hideous dream; the idea of a man's walking about all day with a dreadful horse which he can't get rid of." That was exactly my position; my pleasure was entirely spoilt by the vagaries of that brute; I toiled after the hounds from cover to cover, through the wet grass and muddy gateways, thinking when the hounds went away I might venture to remount and give him a burster, but no such luck was mine.

I believe a fox was found, and run for a short time in Havering Park. If so I was entirely out of the hunt, though I toiled after them, vainly as it proved; and when I found that Dobson was going to trot away to Cuttlemass Common, some considerable dis-

tance, I determined to chuck it up for the nonce, reserving opinion as to the working of this good-looking pack until a more favourable time.

Finding myself in the vicinity of Navestock, I availed myself of the opportunity of visiting some old friends, whom I had not seen for the last forty-five years, and after receiving a vast amount of hospitality, and the heartiest of welcomes from Mr. and Mrs. Hall, who are well-known and greatly respected inhabitants of that quiet locality, I mounted the objectionable grey, and had my revenge. When homeward bound the wretch was manageable, and before I reached Romford, it was a case of bellows to mend with that fiend, who utterly spoiled my contemplated day's pleasure with the Essex Foxhounds; but *le bon temps viendra*, I hope, and I will then, under more favourable circumstances, endeavour to faithfully chronicle their doings.





CHAPTER XXII.

THE SURREY STAGHOUNDS.



AFTER experiencing a frost of more than ordinary severity, a sudden transformation has been effected by the most thorough and rapid a thaw that ever remember. So sudden was the change, that there was no time to go far a-field for a day's hunting, and chance leading me to Epsom, I determined to have a ride with the Surrey Staghounds, in order to witness the way in which the thing is done in that part of the world. The fixture on Tuesday was Effingham, and a pleasant ride of eight miles, on a clever hack, passing through Leatherhead and Great Bookham, brought me to the appointed place, where I found a considerable number of workmanlike performers in readiness, after their enforced abstention from the noble sport, for a clinker with this clipping pack of staghounds.

Prominent amongst the number was the new and popular master, Mr. T. Nicholls of Nutfield, who succeeded Mr. Robinson; Mr. J. Bovill, a first-rate performer, and a very regular and old attendant on the Surrey, accompanied by his son; Mr. Fred. Gregory, Mr. J. Page, of Epsom, Mr. Norris (the

secretary of the hunt), and a host of gentlemen, well mounted, and looking as if they meant business. Shortly after my arrival, the cart containing "Young Epsom," the stag who was to show us the way on this occasion, appeared on the scene, and a move was shortly made towards a large open field where the sporting-looking animal was uncarted. Looking around him for a minute, and having made up his mind as to the line he should take, he went away at a rattling pace across several big fields, and, jumping into the road, disappeared from my view. Whilst the usual law was being allowed him, I had time to notice the hounds, which came up with their huntsmen, that experienced and thorough sportsman, J. Bently, who, moreover, is a capital rider to hounds as well as a pleasant and cheery fellow. No pack could possibly be in a better or more racing condition, and I am told their performances this season have excelled all they have done before; and at any rate, if appearances go for anything, I should say it was not improbable.

Time being up, Bently laid his hounds on to the line of the stag, and scarcely a moment elapsed before they picked up the scent and went away at a tremendous pace, over the big fields, and bending to the right, made for Great Bookham; but, fearing to face the open country in the direction of Leatherhead, "Young Epsom" doubled back and braved the boisterous wind, running for upwards of an hour across the difficult line of country in the direction of Burford Bridge, being finally taken in the vicinity of Dorking, after a sharp gallop of an hour and a-half from first to last. The pace the Surrey Staghounds

go is tremendous; there is no time for shirking or craning, and he who would live with them must sit down on his horse and go with a will, remembering in such case that he who hesitates is left behind, and far behind, too, in no time. Of this fact the riders with this sporting pack seem to be quite aware; for the instant the hounds stooped to the scent and settled down to the line of the stag, they were away like a flash of lightning, and I saw no shirking or hesitation amongst the sixty or seventy forming the "field," every one seeming to have come with the determination of riding across country, not simply following the line of road, as is the case of some stag hunters who I see Macadamising along the highways, getting ahead of the stag, ignoring the hounds, and spoiling the sport.

The meets of the Surrey Staghounds are not advertised, consequently the "field" is kept within reasonable bounds, which would not be the case if too much publicity was given; therefore, as a rule, there is a welcome absence of strangers, whose room is pleasanter than their company, especially when they come determined to ride over anything and everybody; or, what is worse, when they are unable, from incapacity, to manage their horses, coming to grief themselves, and being the cause of much sorrow to others. It is said that on one occasion the present Duke of Rutland was nearly knocked over by a rash youth, when riding with his own hounds. The culprit, who unluckily cannoned against his Grace, was profuse, nay, even abject in his apologies, offering as an excuse the fact of his being unable to manage his horse. The Duke, who is one of the least

demonstrative of the many M. F. H.'s that I have seen, said, in his quiet way,—“Then, sir, I should think the best thing you can do under those circumstances is to go home”—the retort courteous, even if slightly humiliating, to the rash young man in question.

It is only a short while since that I saw a youth of this class, whose get-up was a sight to behold, mounted upon a bang-tailed, weedy thorough-bred; he appeared at the meet of a certain pack of harriers, evidently nuts upon himself, thinking that he had done the trick this time, and no mistake. Artless youth! in vain you attempted the “*rôle*” of a genuine sportsman. I admit that your white neck-cloth, horse-shoe pin, green coat, and corduroy breeches were beyond reproach, but why, my ingenuous friend, did you button your gaiters down the inside, instead of the outside of your leg? for it entirely spoilt the effect of the whole proceeding; reminding one that Shakespeare has placed it on record, “that the apparel oft proclaims the man.” Certainly it did so on this occasion, and though I felt for you every time the iron of those buttons entered into the calf of your leg, I dared not, for the life of me, suggest that you had put your garments on without thinking of the fitness of things. No, no, I was too clever for that; fancy suggesting to an ardent and susceptible young sportsman, who evidently did not think small beer of himself, that things were in fact, “t’other side upwards.” Doubtless he would have dropped into me actively and verbally, and I should not have liked it.

The kennels of the Surrey Staghounds are at

Smitham Bottom, near Coulsdon, and I hope to have a look over them shortly, and to obtain a list of the hounds and their pedigrees, as they struck me as being a first-rate lot of animals, well matched, and keeping in a compact body, notwithstanding the clinking pace they went; and as for their powers of endurance, the fact of my having heard of them taking the deer on more than one occasion during the last season in the vicinity of Tunbridge Wells, they must certainly be good stayers beyond all doubt. The "country" over which they hunt is extensive, varied, and in some parts very difficult to get across; but, nevertheless, they have as a rule exceedingly good sport, and any one wishing for a good gallop over a wild country may, by selecting a fit time and place, make sure of a rattler if the deer goes straight.

I remarked on this occasion the fitness of "Young Epsom," as I did that of the stag which I saw uncarted last spring at Ewell, and it is evident that great pains are taken with them, and therefore it is not much to be wondered at that, having an energetic and agreeable master, a first-rate huntsman, a blooming lot of speedy hounds, and well-conditioned deer, the Surrey Staghounds should rank among the first packs in the kingdom.

Exception may be taken by some critical people in respect to stag hunting, but in my opinion there is very much to be said in its favour. There are many gentlemen riding with the pack whose avocations compel them to live in London or the vicinity, and who cannot spare time to travel far a-field for their amusement, and who are enabled to enjoy a

clinking good galop with a rattling pack of hounds without travelling far for their sport.

During my stay at Epsom, I learned that a dog in a rabid state had bitten no less than five people in the village of Ewell on Monday last. The fact of his having bitten his master, and been forthwith dispatched, leaves little doubt of his condition. With this fact in view, I cannot too strongly urge masters of hounds and huntsmen to follow the unasked-for advice I ventured to give in a recent number of *Bell's Life in London*, in respect to admitting stray hounds or puppies from their walks into the kennels without their first passing through a stage of quarantine.

As I cantered along the road from Leatherhead to Effingham, I was accompanied for two or three miles by a foxhound puppy, who, after travelling that distance with me turned on his heel and went home. This illustrates an easy method, in my opinion, of introducing so fatal a malady as hydrophobia into a kennel; for it might easily happen that this puppy should meet with a stray cur such as did this amount of mischief at Ewell, and have been inoculated with the disease, subsequently introducing it to wherever his destination eventually might be. The more I hear of this disastrous complaint, the more convinced am I that it is very little understood indeed; and before admitting the truth of the many statements and so-called facts in respect to the length of time which the seeds of this disorder are alleged to lie dormant, I should require to investigate very closely the evidence in support thereof. There must be a cause for every effect, but at present I have heard nothing that would guide me in forming an opinion.

It appears to occur at all times and seasons, and under various conditions, and so important is the subject to masters of hounds, that I think it would be well worth while to institute an inquiry, with the view of ascertaining the origin of hydrophobia. With its disastrous effects we are well acquainted, not so with the initial of the disease or the mode of treatment that should be adopted. The importance of the question must be my apology for reiterating my views; but, moving about as I do, I hear so many and such varied opinions expressed, I think it highly advisable that a searching investigation should be made.

Returning to the subject of the Surrey Staghounds, I have no hesitation in saying that a visit to them will repay the trouble to any real sportsman who wishes to go the pace over a stiff country at the tail of a flying pack, and in the society of a pleasant and hard-riding lot of gentlemanly men; and if he is a man of mettle, not afraid of a tall fence, a steep hill, a big brook, an occasional piece of stiff timber, and now and then a flight of park palings, I know of no place where he will be so accommodated as in this metropolitan county.





CHAPTER XXIII.

FROST-BOUND.

“**S**TORY? God bless you, I have none to tell,” was the oft-quoted reply of Canning’s needy knife-grinder; and I feel very much in the same plight as that wandering and little-informed tinker. With the thermometer below zero, and the Yorkshire moors and other places covered with snow to the depth of two feet, there can be little to say about hunting, that’s clear, and one is forced to exclaim with Pope, “Dogs, ye have had your day,” at any rate for a while. Well, if one cannot talk of hounds, there is no reason for refraining from looking at horses, and speaking of them, for a matter of that.

Having arrived at this conclusion, I wended my way along Piccadilly, *en route* for Tattersall’s, and was not long before I fell in with some acquaintances. First was a frozen-out Melton man, who is always in the first flight, and he tells me that the Cottesmore have had good sport, under the new and popular management of Lord Carington, and we part with the hope of meeting before many days have elapsed at Melton Spinneys, Gartree Hill, Ashby pastures, Ranksborough Gorse, or some

other capital cover in the cream of the shires. Next I come across that spirited coach proprietor, Captain Hargreaves, who, I believe, intends to run to Portsmouth again during the ensuing season, though he does not mean to put an up and down coach at their road, as has been stated. Then I meet Mr. Seager Hunt, whose intention of starting a coach to Box Hill has been announced, causing an amount of excitement amongst the proprietors of the coach that ran last year to Box Hill and Dorking, *vide* advertisement in the columns of *Bell's Life in London* of the 21st December, and who signify their intention of again running from Hatchett's at an early period of the season.

By this time Tattersall's was reached, and I entered within the portals of that well-arranged and admirably-conducted establishment; there I find business proceeding as usual, and hear Mr. Edmund Tattersall exclaiming, "What shall I say for the bay mare? Four hundred, three hundred and fifty, three hundred, two hundred and fifty guineas is bid for the mare; a capital fencer, well known with the Quorn, the Cottesmore, and the Belvoir—run her down." Convenient and extensive as the present premises are, they do not harmonise with the recollections of old times at the "Corner;" better suited, no doubt, for the largely-increased business, but not so cosy-looking as the old yard; but, of course, old-fashioned people do not like modern improvements, and it is their privilege to compare invidiously the present with the past. "Old times are changed, old manners gone;" ah, and old friends and acquaintances

too; and I see but few of the *habitués* of that well-known haunt that I used to know in olden times as regular attendants at the "Corner." Well, it is the nature of things to change, and as it is considerably past fifty years since I was a school-fellow of the late Richard Tattersall, at Richardson's establishment for young gentlemen, in company with two of the Kembles, Liston, jun., Terry, and others who have passed away, it is not very surprising to find alterations after so long a lapse of time, and it is excusable, in the teeth of such old recollections, if one should exclaim,—

"Oh! for the touch of a vanished hand,
The sound of a voice that is still."

But this is dwelling on a cold scent, running to heel in fact, and your readers, no doubt, will exclaim, "Enough of the past! Hark forward, hark forward, 'old un.'"

There is no better mode for a man who knows his way about, and is a good judge of horse flesh, to obtain a stud at a moderate cost than by taking his chance at the fall of the hammer, running the risk of occasionally picking up a screw, or meeting with a clinker by a piece of good luck, as I did,—purchasing a grand hunter for forty-five guineas. I well remember on one occasion noticing amongst the stud which Lord Cardigan had sent up to the hammer, an exceptionally handsome bay horse, with a very badly scarred knee, which I thought would so far detract from his value as to bring him within my reach, and I thought for such a good-looking animal, with the reputation that

always attached to any of his lordship's nags, I might venture—broken knee notwithstanding—to go as far as £60 or £70. “Going to buy one of my horses?” said his lordship, as I met him when coming out from the stable. “Yes, I think so, my lord,” was my reply; “the horse with the broken knee looks like carrying me, and will go at my figure, I expect.” “Hope you'll get him,” said the noble earl; but I did not, nevertheless. “What does any one say for Leicester?” was scarcely out of the mouth of Richard Tattersall the elder, when some one who knew the horse well bid 350 guineas, dispelling my fond illusion of possessing the animal, followed by rapid bids of 375, 400, 450, and 475 guineas, at which long figure he was knocked down. “Well,” said his lordship, “did you buy my horse?” “No,” was my reply, “he went for four hundred more than my price.” “Not a bad judge,” said his lordship, “for he was the best horse I ever had in my life.” Determined not to go home without effecting a purchase, I looked around me, and my eye alighted on a sporting-like mare then up at the hammer, and I heard the Mr. Edmund Tattersall of that day exclaim, “Will no one make a bid for the mare?” “Well,” said a seedy-looking “coper,” who was on the look-out either for a “plant” or a cab horse, and whose capital, judging from his appearance, was limited, “I'll give you five guineas for her.” “Run her down,” said Mr. Tattersall, and I noticed that the lookers-on retired to a respectful distance whilst she was being trotted up and down. Well, I thought to myself, here's a hunter-like animal that goes sound, and is not broken-winded, for I

heard her cough, and saw her hustled about by big men with thick sticks, clad in greasy corduroys, who were bent on discovering her imperfections, if she had any; but though she was neither lame, blind, nor a bull, she hung on hand, until I nobly stepped forward, careful not to over-do it, bidding half-a-guinea. A spirited competition in half guineas then went on between myself and the seedy-looking "coper" who "put her in," and she was finally knocked down to me for the large sum of seven guineas. Considerable was the chaff that I experienced, and going up to Harry, for years the runner at the sales, I said, "Well, what's the matter with the mare?" "Well, sir, I should be very careful if I was you, sir, how I went near her." "Oh! she's vicious is she?" "Yes, dangerous, and no mistake." was his not altogether satisfactory reply.

However, I had bought her, and home she went, and there are still some who remember the "Kicking Mare," and how she carried me for two or three seasons with the "Queen's," jumping gates and timber like a deer, knowing full well she would hurt herself if she did not go at such places with a will, though, when her temper was a little put out, she would give me a burster now and then, just to prove that she could be nasty when in her tantrums.

Then, having exhausted the wonders of Tattersall's, I crossed over the road, and looked in at the well-known stables of Messrs. Blackman, and having expressed a desire to look over this noted establishment, I was very pleasantly received, and shown over the admirably-arranged premises. Conspicuous for the neatness, order, and quiet that prevailed is

this business-like-looking place, and a fine lot of animals it contained. Standing in stalls and boxes splendidly ventilated, capitably constructed, and excellently drained, it was not surprising to find the horses in brilliant condition, and I was much struck with the quiet and gentle way in which they were handled when shown in the covered ride. No noise or bustle to frighten the animals; but, on the contrary, everything done to give them confidence and quiet them when coming out of their warm stalls on a cold, frosty morning, as fresh as paint. First, a pair of bay carriage horses were exhibited, going together in rare form, matching admirably, and representing barouche horses of very superior quality, worth from 400 to 450 guineas, I should say. Next, a brown mare, a beautiful hack, with wonderful action, suited to carry a man of sixteen or eighteen stone in proper style, which will be met with in due course in the Row, carrying some welter weight when taking his constitutional in Hyde Park at the height of the season. After this, I was shown a team of first-class roans, admirably matched, and grand goers. These fine animals are in price to a distinguished foreigner well known in the banking world, and there is little doubt, I think, that they will cross the water instead of being seen at the Magazine on the first day of the coaching or four-in-hand clubs. After seeing these clinkers, several first-class steppers were exhibited. One, a brown mare, a remarkable goer, attracting my attention, and winning my warmest approbation. An animal that will command a very long figure beyond all doubt, such fashion, figure, and form of going, not being met with every day.

One of the Messrs. Blackman has been established for many years at York, and having great experience, as well as being a capital judge, the opportunity is afforded of picking up first-class animals, which, after being prepared to a certain extent there, are sent up to London to be perfected. Hence the valuable lot of first-class horses that are offered to buyers who require high-priced, superior harness horses, hacks, etc., to gather together which no little trouble has to be taken and risk run before they are fit to show. A pair of well-bred, clever-stepping phaeton horses won my admiration, exactly the style of animals I should like to drive in one of Holland's build during the ensuing spring, though I fear, according to present prospects, it will not run to it. In no place but London can you find such a collection of valuable horses as you meet with here and at other similar first-class stables, and it is to our old-established and well-known dealers that the grandees of every court in Europe come with confidence in order to pick up nags of fashion, style, and quality.

Messrs. Blackman have, I believe, an extensive connection amongst foreign notabilities, and from their style of doing business, pleasant manners, and the fitness of things in general, it is evident that nothing is neglected that will induce customers to come, and come again. "Sirree," said a Yankee to me on one occasion, "when I go out of a house I never pull the door close to. I leave it a bit open, case I should want to go in again." This is the course adopted by this firm, I should say, who take care that their customers are offered every inducement to return to Knightsbridge when bent

on securing a pair of first-class high-stepping draught or saddle horses, with which they propose to astonish the natives of Paris, Berlin, or St. Petersburg.

After this my next visit was to the old and well-known establishment in Stamford Street, now conducted by Mr. George Cox. The first recollection I have of a deal was when accompanying my grandfather to look at a bay horse, which he finally bought at the then rather high price for a buggy horse, with good action—85 guineas. Now-a-days such a sum represents the value of one leg of a tip-topper such as Mr. Cox provides for his customers, or would offer to the Prince of Wales, Baron Rothschild, or other of his distinguished clients. The day was so cold and foggy, that it was impossible to show the nags even in the straw-laid yard, and I had on this occasion to content myself with a sight of them by gaslight, as they stood in their roomy, well-ventilated stalls and boxes. A pair of black chesnuts at once attracted my attention, and I was informed that they were as good as they looked, and I had no reason to doubt it, judging from appearances. Clever hacks, phaeton horses, and pairs of carriage horses were to be seen, all of a style and quality that would command high prices, it was evident.

Business taking me to Brixton, I availed myself of the opportunity, and visited Mr. Cox's establishment there; formerly this was the property of Mr. Theobald, and the box in which Stockwell stood is shown as an historical fact. This is an admirable place for the standing, training, and showing of a stud of hunters. A long ride, available in any weather; a large field, round which a capital gallop can be obtained, with

facilities for testing the jumping powers of the animals, are the features of the Stockwell premises. Here I found from thirty to forty high-class animals, notably Wonderland, by Blair Athol, a remarkably neat chesnut horse, as clever as a cat, looking all over a hunter, to carry 12 stone to the fastest hounds, and over the biggest fences in England.

It is necessary to follow strictly, in case of a visit to Stamford Street or Stockwell, the advice of Shakespeare, "Put money in thy purse." If you do so, and are not afraid to pull it out, there is little doubt that you can provide yourself with a stud that will carry you at the tail of the Quorn, a team that you will not be ashamed to be seen with on the banks of the Serpentine in due season, or a hack that will make you the cynosure of every eye when taking a quiet canter along the Row on a brilliant June morning. Of course, if you do not follow our national poet's recommendation, and unless you are a good parter as well, you cannot expect to fill your stables with first-class animals, as you will ascertain from Mr. Cox or Messrs. Blackman that they do not find them without difficulty, or without paying a good round sum for every clinker they add to their stud.

In the event of the frost holding, it is my intention to visit some other of the most noble yards in the metropolis, and to discourse of their merits, if space should be allowed me for the ventilation of my opinions in the columns of *Bell's Life in London*, which has seen many and many a Christmas-tide, and will, I hope, continue for many years to maintain its position as the oldest and best of sporting papers.



CHAPTER XXIV.

FROST-BOUND STILL.

ANOTHER transformation scene, and here we are again, shivering in the bitter, biting wind, with horses eating their heads off, and no chance of hunting for ever so long, judging from appearances; in fact, we are in for a spell of winter weather, such as has not been experienced since what was known as "Murphy's" year, dating back, if I recollect rightly, some forty years. I had fully determined to have ridden with the Royal Buckhounds at Ascot on Tuesday last, at which place they were advertised to meet after their seclusion. Bitter blew the blast, however, and a white frost and a cloudy sky proclaimed beyond all doubt that it was not a hunting morning, consequently I lost the opportunity of seeing the "Queen's," and witnessing their performances after the necessary suspension of hunting, under the unfortunate circumstances which have recently befallen them. I was glad, however, to hear the report which I made of them some ten days since fully confirmed, having been informed that no hounds could possibly look better; and as I take a hopeful view of the case, I shall be greatly

surprised if anything further is heard of hydrophobia in the Royal kennels.

I was sorry to see in the columns of *Bell's Life* of Saturday last, a statement with regard to Goodall, signed "C. C. H.," which, having no foundation whatever, as I have the very best authority for declaring, leads me to conclude that some ill-natured person had palmed off a cock-and-bull tale upon your correspondent. Any one who knows anything at all of the Royal huntsman would discredit and ridicule such a report as that to which "C. C. H." has given currency. The idle words to the effect that this thorough-going and earnest sportsman had remarked that he could not hunt the hounds himself, "because he had a pain in his back," remind me of a remark made by that clever and ready-witted actress, who made "Jo" a celebrity, when a person was trying to impose upon her with some pleasant little fiction: "No, thank you; it's too thin for Jo," and the impostor shut up like a patent rat-trap. Just so in this case, the idea of the hounds being kept idling in the kennels for such a reason was too thin for me; I had so recently been behind the scenes at Ascot Heath that I saw through the transparency at once. In my humble opinion, the very greatest credit is due to Goodall for his sound judgment in very trying circumstances. Your correspondent is not aware that the advice given by one of the best sportsmen in the United Kingdom was that the whole pack should be immediately destroyed, promising that he would supply hounds from his own kennels, and expressing his opinion that every one of his brother M. F. H.'s would do the same. Had this course

been pursued, "C. C. H." would have found that the remainder of the season would have been occupied in entering and teaching the new pack their business.

The difference between what remained of the old Devon and Somerset staghounds and the twenty-seven couples that were sent from all quarters to Mr. Bissett when his pack was partly destroyed by an outbreak of hydrophobia, which occurred during the past summer, was visible when I rode with them even at the end of the season, notwithstanding the pains that were taken by their clever and persevering huntsman, Arthur Heal. By acting with courage and discretion, Goodall saved the forty-four and a-half couples of blooming hounds, that will be as fit as fiddles when the frost breaks up, unless I am very much mistaken indeed.

During the break in the weather that occurred a few days since, I determined to have a look at Sir Robert Harvey's harriers. Fondly believing that the frost was gone for good, I travelled as far as Twickenham Common in search of a nag that should carry me discreetly with that clipping pack. I had noticed an advertisement in the columns of *Bell's Life*, stating that W. Sherley had a lot of horses for sale or hire, so I determined to visit an old acquaintance, of whom my recollections were pleasant, and with whom my last transaction resulted in a most satisfactory purchase. On my arrival at Twickenham, I found a lot of useful horses; several fit to carry heavy men, one especially, a clever-looking roan, up to eighteen stone, and as nimble as a goat. A good-looking young bay horse, standing in the first stall,

would have suited my book exactly had I been a purchaser. Any one wanting to make up a stud when the frost breaks up will do well to visit Mr. Sherley, for though, no doubt, those horses that I saw for sale will have gone, being a style of animal that would not be likely to hang on hand long, they will be replaced by animals of similar quality, and any one wanting to hire will be able to get a mount on a useful horse in good condition, that will carry him well to hounds if he means business. In vain was my visit; the weather changed again, and the result is that I am frost-bound still, and likely so to be.

It is no use, however, grumbling; so I determined to pay a long-promised visit to Cricklewood, in order to look over the stud of the Andover and Weyhill Horse Company, who have retained the services of Messrs. Newman and Lansley to conduct the sales at Andover and Cricklewood. Conveniently placed is this neatly and cleverly arranged establishment, being directly opposite the the Childs Hill Station of the Midland Railway, and though not more than three miles from Hyde Park Corner, it possesses no less than 200 acres of grass land, over which the horses are shown to intending purchasers. An advantage that can be readily appreciated is that of having natural fences for the nags to jump, and several big fields to gallop across, enabling a buyer to have a real trial of any animal he may fix his mind on.

A row of well-constructed, roomy boxes, containing a lot of first-class hunters, was the first part visited, and as each horse was stripped I had an

opportunity of observing the rare condition of every animal that was exhibited; all as hard as nails, and having coats like satin. A handsome chesnut horse, Tenant Right by name, an appellation highly suggestive of Ould Oirland, was the first to attract my attention. A fine, well-bred horse, with remarkably good shoulders, well ribbed up, with muscular hind-quarters and powerful hocks, looking all over a flyer, fit to carry fourteen stone in the front rank of the Quorn. Next to call for special remark was a handsome, bloodlike mare. Rebecca, said to be a perfect lady's horse, suitable for Leicestershire, and well worthy the attention of any fair *equestrienne* in search of a clinker. A style of animal that is very likely to find her way to Melton when the frost breaks up, for I hear that up to the time of the hunting from that cheerful place being stopped, it was full of visitors, amongst whom I recognised the names of several well-known and hard-riding horsewomen, though I regretted to hear of the disappearance of one star of the first magnitude, whom I have followed, at a respectful distance by the way, on many occasions when riding with the Quorn, the Belvoir, and the Cottesmore.

Then Safeguard being stripped, I saw a clever chesnut horse which Mr. Newman rides, and I am of the opinion that he has not chosen the worst of the stud for his own use. A good specimen of a hunter, with capital shoulders, plenty of propelling power behind, if he cannot jump a big brook, go in and out of a double, such as you meet with in the Vale of Aylesbury, when having a gallop with the Baron, top a high flight of rails, and get through a bullfinch

in good form, then his looks belie him, and I am no judge of a hunter.

Another clinking, good-looking horse was styled Harkforward, and I think it would take a man and a horse, too, to get before him over a stiff line of country. The same remark as to the goodness of shoulders is applicable to nearly every horse I saw. Without a sloping shoulder, and good girth place, there never was, or will be, good action, and that fact seems to be duly recognised by the buyer for the Andover Company.

Although the day was piercingly cold, requiring the outward man to be well covered, and the inward man, adequately lined—by-the-by, I find Grant's Morella cherry brandy most excellently adapted for the latter purpose. I don't know who Grant is, but if a man deserves well of his country, who makes two blades of grass grow in the place which only produced one, how much more should that person be valued who invents such an undeniable *vade mecum* for a hunting man!

Mr. Newman had horse after horse trotted out, that I might judge of their movements as well as their appearance. A pair of good-looking harness horses first appeared on the scene, Knight of Kerry and Sultan, admirably suited for the post of "wheelers" in a well-appointed coach, and both clever hunters, quiet to ride, and suitable to go across Essex or any other close and stiff country. After which Don Juan, by Lothario, quiet in harness, sixteen hands one inch high, was trotted out; and a regular nailer was the Don, suitable for the brougham of the most howling of London swells. Such an animal as

I should choose, were I one of the *jeunesse dorée*, to dash up to the door of the object of my adoration, when desirous of winning her approval. I have always found, or rather should say, have been told, that nothing so much advances the prospects of a suitor as the possession of a well-appointed turn-out. The man who goes on foot "to tell his tale of love," simply isn't in it. Then I saw a weight-carrying cob, described as able to jump anything in reason, good looking, with muscular limbs, *multum in parvo*. in fact; by the way, I offer it as a suggestion, that he could not be more fitly named, being a great horse in a small compass.

However, I must not give the details of every good-looking horse I saw, or I shall trespass too far upon the available space in *Bell's Life*, and be rated as a babbler, therefore I will merely say that the horses at Cricklewood are a remarkably level lot, not too highly priced by any means, but showing an amount of quality sufficient to stamp those who have the management of the stud as men of judgment and ability.

Messrs. Newman and Lansley had, long before they joined the Andover Company, earned the reputation of clever and straightforward men of business, and I think the shareholders in the venture may congratulate themselves on having secured the services of such able and well-qualified men. The very essence of success in such a difficult and hazardous trade as horse-dealing is good management, and the most careless observer could not fail to see evident traces of it throughout the whole of the arrangements at Cricklewood.

About fifty horses are on show there, and nearly three times as many at Andover. There is every facility, therefore, for doing an extensive business; and, from the fact of moderate prices only being asked for serviceable animals, there should be no difficulty in establishing a larger trade. I hope on another occasion to have the opportunity of visiting the premises at Andover, and giving my opinion, for what it is worth, of the remainder of the stock of the Andover and Weyhill Company.





CHAPTER XXV.

THAWING.

WHILST the frost is giving, the earth being released from the stern grip of Jack Frost, that enemy to hunting, until horses are fit to go after their enforced spell of idleness, it is necessary to find something to while away the tedious hours. Fully impressed with the fact that idleness is the root of much evil, I wandered in search of adventure.

The road and footways were covered with ice and snow, and I speedily found myself sprawling on the ground, amidst a group of sympathising spectators, shoe-blacks who wanted to brush me, old women who said it might have been worse, and benevolent individuals who were anxious to uphold me. And after all, what is a fall? True it is, that an elderly party of sixteen stone lying on the broad of his back is placed in a somewhat humiliating position. But what of that? bigger men than I have fallen. "Great Cæsar fell. Oh what a fall was there, my countrymen!" says Shakespeare; but he doesn't say whether he was much bruised; I was, all over.

But let this pass, for my wandering thoughts were recalled in an instant on beholding a man on horse-

back, clothed in full hunting costume, black cap, scarlet coat, white leathers, neat top-boots, spurs, and whip; the steed he was bestriding being a useful-looking chesnut, fit to carry fourteen stone across a stiff country. My first impression was that the little intellect I have had been deranged by accidental contact with Mother Earth.

Quickly realising the fact that this was no heated vision of a distorted brain, but a living and moving reality, I came to the conclusion that he it was that was mad. What sort of insanity could induce a man to put on his hunting toggery and ride deliberately through the streets on such a bitter day as this? However, on a closer approach, the illusion was promptly dispelled, for I found he was the latest idea in advertising, probably the suggestion of some "Willing" mind, for imprinted on a smart saddle cloth I read that Disher's ale was to be had in perfection at the Horseshoe Restaurant. A novel idea truly!

Then I wended my way to Aldridge's, and looked in at that old-established "Repository," as it used to be called, which has been in existence for a period of upwards of a century. Many a good horse have I bought at the fall of the hammer at this well-managed mart. The class of animals to be met with are useful harness horses, hacks, and hunters, and after that a lower grade, namely, those suitable for omnibus and cab work. Any one well up in horse flesh may lay out his money here to advantage. Most of the nags are sold without warranty. I remember once seeing a horse at the hammer, one of a lot of Joshua East's, that had been sent to be sold for what they would

fetch. Bidders were shy; he was young, very handsome, and a good mover, so I thought I would have a bid, and he was at once knocked down to me for 20 guineas. When I got him home, I felt satisfied that there must be something very much amiss, or he would not have been drafted from such a stable. I had him carefully tried, minutely examined by a clever vet, and finding nothing wrong, I put him in my cab, and drove him to Curzon Street, where I learnt that he had been purchased for 120 guineas, and being returned time after time when sent on job, in consequence of his casting his shoes, he was condemned, and thus became my property, and I drove him for years and never knew him to throw one. Another harness horse, purchased for 27 guineas, could have been sold over and over again for £100, and I cannot call to mind, out of the many I have purchased in St. Martin's Lane, ever being "picked up," though I did buy a "flatcatcher" once, but he was so good-looking that I got out of him without loss.

Something like 250 horses pass through the hands of Mr. Freeman weekly, as well as many carriages, and studs of greyhounds, and it is an amusing sight to observe the motley group that assemble in the yard on sale days, and to witness the rapid disposal of the number of useful animals that are knocked down to the highest bidder at this excellent institution for the sale and purchase of every description of draught or saddle horse. From thence I travelled to King's Mews, Gray's Inn Lane, in order to see an old acquaintance, Mr. Banks, who for the last twenty-four years has carried on this well-known commission business on his own account, assisted by his sons. It

will be only repeating a fact known to a vast number of gentlemen, if I say that no one in the trade has a higher reputation for judgment and straightforward dealing than Mr. Banks. The number of years he has retained the custom of many gentlemen well known in the mercantile and professional world, as well as of the nobility and hunting men, is the best proof of his standing in a trade which requires much care and discretion, if both buyer and seller are to be satisfied. In this he has beyond all doubt succeeded to the fullest extent, as no establishment of the kind in London stands higher, if so high, as this, which, dating back for a period of nearly seventy years, has stood the test of time and change, and still maintains its high reputation at the present date. Here may be seen harness horses, hacks, hunters, and cobs of different styles and value.

First you see a hunter of sixteen hands, fit to carry any reasonable weight across Leicestershire; a prize taker, a good-looking horse, that will not hang long on hand, I should opine. Next a chesnut horse, the property of a nobleman, formerly Master of the Buckhounds, fit to carry a sexagenarian, or an octogenarian for a matter of that, safely and pleasantly. After this a good-looking animal just arrived from Scotland, his owner doubtless knowing that it was worth while to send his nag this distance in order to realise his full value, the fact of his being found in "Banks' Commission Stable" being a sufficient warranty that it is a genuine article that is offered for sale.

The stabling consists of some eighty stalls and boxes, and the natty way in which the plaited

straw is arranged, and the neatness, cleanliness, and order that prevails through the premises, show that every care and attention is paid to the horses sent here for sale. This business was established by Mr. Osborn, and on his decease it lapsed to Mr. Banks, who, I was glad to hear, has obtained a renewal of the lease of the premises; and his sons, chips of the old block, having the same urbanity of manner and business-like qualities as their father, will, doubtless, long maintain the high character that has been earned by probity and industry. Where next to go was then the question, and remembered that there was another old establishment, one of the institutions of London, namely, "Newman's" of Regent Street, who, by the way, have been instrumental in dragging more people to the altar, I mean the altar of Hymen, than any other people in the whole universe.

What manner of man is he that does not know the style of turn-out that is to be seen standing at the various churches of the West End, in readiness to bear away the blushing bride to her new home; or on the Epsom and Ascot Cup days are visible at the doors of every club in London, equally ready to convey the guileless youth, who is willing to drop his money; or the more experienced "Turfite" who is equally prepared to pick it up? Having made my wish known to Mr. Cutbush, the yard manager of this extensive business, he kindly gave up his time to show me over the large range of stabling, tenanted by the first-class lot of animals that are to be seen, ready for hire or job, as well as the celebrated post-horses above mentioned. The number in all, located in Regent Street and Oxford Street, amounts to

about three hundred. Carriages of various descriptions, to the extent of one hundred or thereabouts, are also in readiness for the numerous customers who patronise "Newman's," flocking into this noted place during the height of the season to an extent that exhausts even the great resources of the establishment.

A new feature in the arrangements of this business is, as I see advertised weekly in the columns of *Bell's Life*, that persons hiring horses on job have the option of purchase. An advantage which, no doubt, many of their customers will readily avail themselves of, as among the number that I saw on the occasion of my visit, there were many high-class horses, suitable for double and single harness; animals showing symmetry, and having action suitable for town work as well as appearance, without which they would not command the class of customers who go to Regent Street to supply their wants. Well, when I looked over this noted establishment, what a host of recollections flashed across my mind. What an important part in the drama of life Messrs. Newman have played in their time. If the gamester losing his money at Crockford's, and quarrelling with his boon companion over the hazard of the die, called out his friend, or was asked to give satisfaction, for some idle words spoken over the green cloth, according to a fashion in vogue, when I was young, what did he do? Why ordered four horses at Newman's to be at the door of his lodgings in St. James's, and went to his fate; or gave satisfaction to his opponent by shooting him through the head, as the case might be, on Wimbledon Common,

in the grey dawn of the morning. Then see the lover, pale with care, forbidden by a stern parent to plead love's young dream to the object of his devotion. What did he do? Why hired four of those well-known greys, with postboys in their blue jackets, white cords, top boots, and water-brushed hats, placed them at the corner of the lane, "when the clock struck nine," and bore off, literally in post haste, the blushing fair one to Gretna Green. Such was the way in which little difficulties of this class were overcome in the good old times.

Now-a-days railways have almost done away with post horses; save and except at Newman's, you rarely find a genuine animal of this description. Fancy running away with a lovely girl by rail, and, after partaking of a piece of pork pie, a glass of pale ale, or a basin of scalding nondescript soup at the terminus, putting her into a *one-horse fly*, and taking her before a registrar to complete a civil contract.

But these are prosaic times truly; there is no romance now-a-days, no knight-errantry, no belief in ancient customs, or faith in local traditions. The old original blacksmith of Gretna Green has retired from business, bankrupt, I believe, a victim to circumstances and the march of intellect. Then—I am speaking of years since—any young lady whom you proposed to transport to the orthodox place for the registration of your solemn vows, would have held your affections in very light esteem, if you did not provide the customary greys, that is to say, if she was a girl of any spirit at all. Yet Newman's best selected nags, and most civil and sober of "Boys," did not always conduct the fond pair to permanent bliss,

Do I not remember seeing the "belle" of many balls, the best dressed and most fascinating of partners, going off in style with the inevitable four from St. George's, Hanover Square, leaving scores of broken hearts—temporarily broken—to mourn her departure? And did I not, a few nights since, in the cold, sullen winter's evening, see this once elegant and graceful girl reduced to selling a halfpenny evening paper in order to obtain a crust? Cast adrift, her money spent, and herself brought to misery by her worthless husband. This was not a fortunate termination to a journey commenced with such *éclat*; but remember, I do not lay the charge of that mishap at the door of 121 Regent Street. Romance! why, I could furnish "Tinsley" with the materials for half-a-dozen novels, in three volumes, and blue and gold binding, such as cannot be equalled out of Catherine Street, by simply recalling my recollections of "Newman's," "The Adventures of a Chariot," "The Post Boy of St. James's," "Flight," "The only Girl I ever Loved," "Where is She?" and many a similar old, old story founded on fact. Was I not concerned in one case, where the lovely and accomplished daughter of a county magnate disappeared from the parental home, leaving not a trace behind? Gone was she, whither and with whom no one could tell. Did I not pick up the missing link in the chain of circumstances, through the agency of a celebrated French milliner, with whom I had a passing acquaintance, tracing the lost one by means of Newman's greys to her hiding-place, restoring her to the loving arms of her distracted father, only to hear a few months afterwards that

she had terminated her career as a wife by a distressing act of suicide. Well, well, these are the dark pages in the annals of this noted place.

There is a brighter side to the picture, and if asked to give a statistical account of the number of happy couples who have been conveyed by this important agency to scenes of unalterable love, immeasurable happiness, and inexpressible delight, I must ask permission of Messrs. Newman to investigate their books, for their name is legion.

P.S.—I am glad to be able to give a satisfactory report of the Royal Buckhounds. Goodall took them out on Wednesday last. The fixture was Ascot, and a very small field assembled to witness the first run after the frost, which has for so long detained them in their kennels. The deer was turned out close at hand, and gave the hounds a breather; going through the forest and across Easthampstead Park, being finally run into after a smart and satisfactory gallop of thirty-five minutes. The Royal huntsman's report of his hounds is entirely satisfactory, and thus far my predictions as to their condition have been verified.





CHAPTER XXVI.

FROZEN OUT STILL.

HAVING been invited by Mr. Richard Russell, of Otford Castle, to be present at the coursing meeting at Sevenoaks, which was fixed for Friday the 18th inst., and being offered a good mount with the West Kent Foxhounds on the following morning, I awoke at an early hour to feel the pulse of the weather. The patient was very cold at the extremities, a break-up seemed imminent, but a dense fog and dreary state of the atmosphere gave cause to dread an early renewal and long continuance of this spell of winter and cold weather, which has so effectually put a stop to hunting for the last seven or eight weeks. Being in a state of perplexity, I telegraphed to the Bat and Ball station asking if it was probable that the coursing would take place, and the reply from the station master being unsatisfactory, to the effect that there was a dense fog and coursing uncertain, I resolved, under the circumstances, to remain at home. Consequently I missed the opportunity of seeing the sport, which I found recorded the next day in the columns of *Bell's Life*, and lost the certainty of a good time of it at Otford. Complaining to a friend

that it was a miserable day, he replied, "Well, it is, but it would make a deuced good night; so let us shut the shutters, call for some cards, order up some of Irroy's *brut* champagne, and go in for a good nap."

Well, being frozen out still, I wandered westward on Monday, in order to have a final look at the late Major Whyte-Melville's stud, which was advertised by Messrs. Tattersall to be sold on that day. By the way, it has long struck me that it would be a capital thing if a club were established, to be entitled the M. F. H., which would be a pleasant place of resort in a time like this; the members to be masters of hounds, subscribers, and riders with the different packs of the United Kingdom. Information could be disseminated, matters respecting hunting discussed, disputes adjusted, etc., and I beg to offer a motto for the proposed club, new, appropriate, and suggestive, viz., "*Fox et præterea nihil*;" at present it is not entered at Stationers' Hall, but it will be immediately.

Arriving at Albert Gate, I was just in time to see the lamented sportsman's horses brought to the hammer. Lot 88, Punch, a remarkably neat little horse, and a clever hunter, was quickly knocked down for a trifle above 20 guineas; whilst Gossip, said to have been the Major's favourite hunter, was secured by a friend of mine for less than £30, the rest realising but moderate amounts. No doubt the stopper that has been put upon hunting, and the prospect and prophecies of the continuance of the frost, influenced the sale, as, though the nags showed signs of having done work, yet they had all been

hunted up to the time of the lamentable accident occurring, and looked fit to go.

The Shah, which was the horse that fell and caused the disaster, had, I am told, on a former occasion, given his master a fall, from the same cause, viz., by crossing his legs and rolling over. Once would have sufficed for me, but probably the Major had a fancy for him, and so overlooked this fatal fault, always showing an amount of fondness for his nags that would make him look leniently on a mistake.

Feeling sure that I should have no hunting to record this week in the columns of *Bell's Life*, I decided upon trying a new line—visiting Old Oak Farm, in order to inspect Mr. Tattersall's stud, which he was kind enough to say he should be pleased to show me. Journeying to Shepherd's Bush, a neighbourhood I had not visited for some years, I was astounded at the alteration in the locality.

Forty years ago this was a rural district; now it is a suburb of this, on all sides, vastly-increasing metropolis, and in lieu of the verdant meadows which Thomson must have had in his eye when he wrote, "Now from the town, buried in smoke, and sleep, and noisome damp, oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields, where freshness breathes, and dash the trembling drops from the bent bush, as through the verdant maze of sweetbriar hedges I pursue my walk." I found an array of semi-detached villas, groves—not of flowering shrubs, redolent with the perfume of mingled blossoms, but highly suggestive of inferior bricks, concealing compo, indifferent drainage, and damp delights, such

as would entitle this Wormwood-Scrubby place to call itself Stuccoville. However, Mr. Tattersall has been fortunate enough to secure a lease for a considerable term of years of some hundred and twenty acres of meadow land, thereby offering a bold front to the speculative and unromantic lord of the soil, and for a while baffling the builder, whose wicked will would, if he could have his way, rapidly convert these flowering meads into squares, crescents, roads, and streets. Thus, fortunately, are "Old Acres" sometimes preserved from "New Men."

Alighting at the entrance to the farm, I had to pursue my course along a slippery way, and I felt very like that versatile and clever actor Colette, when describing his feelings after travelling on a line of railway upon which there had been a fearful accident the day previous. "Afraid, my dear madam! I thought every moment would be my next." Accompanied by Mr. Tattersall, I inspected the occupants in every box in his extensive establishment.

The gem of the collection is Knight of St. Patrick (sire of Knight of the Crescent, Moslem, Orangeman, Tenedos, Queen of the Bees, and many other winners, who have in all scored the receipt of £40,000 in stakes), by Knight of St. George out of Pocahontas (the dam of Stockwell, Rataplan, King Tom). The blood speaks for itself, and is very blue indeed; the horse is a pattern of symmetry, beauty, and quality, which, were I a breeder of thorough-breds, would attract my attention at once; and I cannot fancy a more suitable sire for any one wishing to secure not only so good a

strain of blood, but to perpetuate a style and description of animal whose form and fashion must be seen to the duly appreciated. Then Vedette (sire of Galopin and Speculum, sire of Sefton, winner of the Derby), by Voltigeur, dam by Birdcatcher, out of Dan Dayrell, by Inheritor out of Nell, by Blacklock out of Madame Vestris, by Comus out of Lisette, by Hambletonian, claims to be noticed, not only on account of his pedigree, but from his appearance. This horse has had a chequered career, and was bought at a low figure by Mr. Tattersall, whose judgment was never better displayed than when securing such a specimen of a thorough-bred horse for his stud—that is to say, if my opinion is worth anything, after examining thoroughly his shape and make, which, notwithstanding his age, if I was a breeder, would not be passed over very readily.

Following these fine specimens of sires, I was shown a remarkably good-looking horse, Clanronald, by Blair Athol, the only horse save Kisber that ever beat Springfield (in the Criterion). Clanronald, if I remember rightly, is not the property of Mr. Tattersall, but is for sale, and should not be overlooked by any one desirous of having a handsome, well-shaped sire, suitable especially for half-bred mares. Next on the list was Cecrops, by Newcourt (by Sir Hercules), and then I saw some eighteen or twenty mares of a high class, from which I select a specimen—Satin (foaled 1869), by Sydmonton out of Becky Sharpe (sister to Buccaneer), by Wild Dayrel out of Little Red Rover mare—Eclat, by Edmund; or, if she is not to your taste, what say you to Bittern

(foaled 1861), by Fisherman out of Village Lass, by Pyrrhus the First? If not satisfied, then look at Water Cure, by King Tom out of Waterwitch, by Flying Dutchman; and Indian Butterfly, by Saudeelah out of Butterfly (Bonbon's dam), by Bantam out of Lœlia, by Sheet Anchor out of Cotillon, by Partisan. If you have not pleased your fancy, notice next Prinette (foaled 1870), by Robin Hood or Wild Dayrel out of Christina, by Nutwith, Lady Sale, by Muley Moloch. After this just cast your eye over the four last existing Touchstone mares, whose career is nearly ended—Bessie Bell (foaled 1855), dam of Buckland, by Touchstone out of Marian, by St. Martin out of Rebecca—Lottery; Louise Leclercq (1858), by Touchstone out of Terpsichore, by Epirus out of Celeste, by Camel. Moula and Barley Bree make up the quartette.

First to attract my attention amongst the youngsters was a bay colt by Knight of St. Patrick out of Prinette, a colt of good form and fashion, giving promise of attaining notoriety in the future, if all goes well with him. Sabletail, a bay filly, by Kaiser out of Satin, a very superior animal, which I shall not be far wrong in predicting as likely to be a prominent performer, if shape and make go for anything. Then followed a bay filly, by Tichbourne out of Butterfly, and sundry others of a similar description, making up in all a valuable stud, worthy of the attention of any one interested in the breeding of thorough-bred stock, and doing credit to the judgment of Mr. Tattersall in selecting such high-class strains of blood and such form and fashion as he has collected together at Old Oak Farm. But I had not

exhausted all the wonders of the place, for I was shown a herd of valuable first-class pure Jerseys, comprising a magnificent bull, three years old, a yearling, and some thirteen or fourteen cows and heifers, and six calves. Very fine specimens of these beautiful animals are those which Mr. Tattersall has got together, forming an unusually good herd, of a quality which will take a deal of beating.

One man in his time plays many parts, we learn from a perusal of Shakespeare. To an extent this was applicable to my day's work, for, after seeing the valuable stud at Old Oak Farm, I journey to the Agricultural Hall at Islington in order to look over a lot of horses of a very different class, viz., those belonging to "Myers's Grand American Circus." I had heard much of this widely-known equestrian performance, especially in respect to the wonderfully plucky and skilful riding of Mrs. Rose Myers. Reports, like rumours, are liable to gross exaggerations; but not so in this instance, as the feats which were performed by this courageous lady were pronounced by one or two veteran sportsmen who I met with to be unrivalled by any rider that has ever exhibited her skill in this class of entertainment. Further than this, these self-elected judges gave it as their opinion that the form in which Mrs. Myers put her high-couraged and wonderful jumper at the five-barred gates and furze-covered bars of more than ordinary height would challenge comparison with any of the well-known horsewomen who ride to hounds at the present time. The riding of Mr. John Watson was extremely clever in his jockey act, and his marvellous leap from the ground on to the back

of a horse going at speed, landing on his feet without using his hands, is a sight to see, an act of horsemanship such as I have never seen attempted before.

After this I was introduced to Miss Ida Myers, who, under the tutelage of her clever mother, will doubtless attain the same celebrity as she has done whilst playing her difficult and dangerous parts in this great show. The Roman Chariot Race pleased me greatly, ending in a piece of excitement that added piquancy to the entertainment, for one of the fair charioteers, in her frantic endeavours to be first at the winning-post, upset the apple cart, falling close to the wheels of the following chariot, which had fortunately given her a wide berth. With little delay they were up and at it again without further mishap. Goldsmith says, "The sports of children satisfy the child," and it would be a very unreasonable child, indeed, who went away from this rich banquet of sports and pastimes unsatisfied, after seeing the lions, elephants, camels, and the crowning effort of the coachman who tooted his forty in hand, followed by others driving twenty in hand, which they guided in a wonderful manner. In this part of the performance not less than two hundred horses and ponies appeared at one time in this mammoth circus.

P.S.—My excellent friend, Mr. Durrant, of Tunbridge Wells, gives me an account of the proceedings of the clever huntsman, George Bollen, and the West Kent Hounds, which is well worthy of note. Imagine my astonishment, he says, on Monday last, at seeing the hounds, which had travelled all the way from the kennels at Wrotham, by rail and road, in order to

keep their appointment, the fixture for the day being Eridge station. It appears from the particulars so kindly forwarded, that, after a consultation with the Marquis of Abergavenny, permission was accorded to Bollen to try his luck on this extraordinary morning. My correspondent graphically likens the appearance of the hounds during the consideration of the question whether or not they should be allowed to try their skill amidst the ice and snow, to the well-known picture, "Waiting for the Verdict," so eager and anxious did they appear. The field consisted of that eager sportsman, Lord Henry Nevill, Mr. Durrant, on foot, deeming it more prudent to go *au pied* than to mount one of his clever nags on an occasion when the snow was lying an inch and a-half thick on the ground, and the earth was thoroughly frost-bound. In addition to these staunch sportsmen there were a few idle labourers, who were on strike, and a poacher or two on the look-out for any trifle that might come in their way. A short time only elapsed before a tough old fox was on foot, who went away at a racing pace over the snow-clad fields, making for the Warren Farm,—a locality of which I have a lively remembrance; for, mounted on a clever hunter, the property of Mr. Camp, I was within an ace of biting the dust, or rather taking a mouthful of mud, when jumping what is called in Sussex "a heave gate," the noble animal clearing it in such style as to cause me to lose my stirrups, nearly bringing me to grief. Thence he ran across the Brighton road, taking refuge in Eridge Park; but Bollen was not to be denied, and he was driven away over Chase Farm to Whitehill, Frant, round

by Broadwater Church, on to Broadwater Forest, being run to ground near the Rifle Butts, after a gallant and unexampled run of two hours and a-half. Lord Henry Nevill rode Auctioneer, a clever and favourite cob, purchased from the Ashurst Lodge Company, on this extraordinary day. George Bollen says that his old horse, Tommy, ought to be patented, as he can give Plimpton the outside edge, and then lick him in a canter across ice and snow. Verily these men of West Kent are enterprising, as well as pleasant, and it will not be long before I am with them again, weather permitting.





CHAPTER XXVII.

STILL FROZEN OUT.

HOPE told a flattering tale that joy would soon return when Sunday morning dawned, and the snow and ice began to dissolve. Disappointment is the lot of men in general, but this year to huntsmen more especially; and the return of frost, with the accompaniment of a bitter east wind, has destroyed all chance of hunting for the next few days.

Going down St. Swithin's Lane on Saturday last, I met one whom I have frequently seen under very different circumstances, namely, in the heart of the shires, going straight across country like a bird, and never certainly to be found in a lane. Now frozen out still, the popular Master of the Quorn is driven to the Metropolis, and from the direction he was pointing, for I should imagine he was going to the Bank, to see how the account of that distinguished hunt stands. I hope it is a bumper, as I know Mr. Coupland likes bumpers when they come in the shape of brooks.

Condoling with him on the unfortunate state of affairs, he said he had never experienced anything like it, and that it would be necessary, after so long

a lock-out to begin cub hunting, which, with a "field" of five hundred, he thinks will be a difficult task. It is not only a bad time for the sportsman, but also for the large dealers, whose stables are filled with hunters; literally eating themselves up, not simply eating their heads off, as the saying goes. One of our large men in the trade told me his expenses per week amounted to £180, and that he had not so much as shown a horse for a fortnight; a lively state of things certainly? For my part, I think a deputation of foxhunters should wait upon the clerk of the weather, handing in an invocation in the words of Thomson,—

"Come, gentle Spring, ethereal mildness come;
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veiled in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend."

I don't know or care much about roses at present. I think they may be dispensed with for a while, but I am all for a little "ethereal mildness," but desire beyond everything a "dropping cloud," that shall wash away the snow, dissolve the ice, and let us all go a-hunting once more. In the meantime, it is necessary to find some amusement; and, having heard Mr. Toynbee's establishment very highly spoken of, I resolved to journey to East Acton to see the stud farm, and have a look at the hunters, as the next best thing to riding to them.

Arriving at the village, I found signs of the speculative builders on all sides, and this once rural district will, I fear, speedily form a portion of the Metropolis. In the meantime, Mr. Toynbee has secured a most charming residence, a splendid range

of stabling, and upwards of one hundred acres of land adjoining. Being a stranger, I had written asking permission to visit the stud, mentioning the name of a well-known Lincolnshire sportsman, whom I meet occasionally with the Quorn and the Cottesmore, who told me I should see as fine a lot of hunters as could be shown by any one. My Lincolnshire friend's judgment was fully confirmed, as I have rarely seen a finer string, amounting to close upon eighty high-class horses, all fit to go the moment the weather permits hunting and customers present themselves. Having experienced a very cordial reception from Mr. Toynbee, he was good enough to have nearly every horse in the stable stripped for my inspection.

The construction of the boxes, and the general arrangements of this extensive range of premises, are most convenient and suitable for the business, covered yards for exercise, and a circus, with furze-covered bars and padded fences being provided; here the hunters are exercised daily, being turned loose to take the jumps in their own fashion—an admirable plan, in my opinion, combining, as it does, education with exercise.

After passing through nearly every box, and finding a noble lot of animals installed in them, a magnificent young chesnut horse, by Wild Oats, was stripped and turned loose in the circus, in order that he might show his quality and powers of jumping and galloping. Of the whole lot, this animal appeared to me to be the choicest. Very handsome and muscular was the fine specimen, well up to fourteen stone, good tempered, a beautiful jumper, going over the artificial fences like a deer. I came to the

conclusion that I had not seen a more perfect animal during the whole of the season than this high-bred and well-shaped hunter.

After minutely inspecting this crack chesnut by Wild Oats, a very handsome young horse,—Sir George, by Theobald, was led into the arena, to take the place of his competitor for fame, his owner considering the latter to be the pick of the basket. A dark bay, approaching brown, beautiful temper, a lovely head and neck, very powerful and muscular fore-arms and hocks, a splendid sloping shoulder, deep girth-place, well-ribbed up, with a remarkably intelligent countenance. led me to remark that it appeared to me, from his make, shape, and form of going that he was as near perfection as need be, though I gave the preference, on the whole, to the chesnut.

After this, I was shown a thorough-bred by Shifnal, out of Susan, a remarkably well-made, muscular animal, suitable for any one wishing to sail to the front with the Pytchley, or the Quorn; and whoever is fortunate enough to secure so powerful and well-made a thorough-bred, should have no difficulty in cutting down the "field," always provided that his heart is in the right place, and he is prepared to go the pace. All over a Leicestershire nag was this, and the same might be said, though to a more qualified extent, of several others of this fine stud. It is always a treat to me to see a well-shaped and perfectly-mannered horse, and I would travel some distance with pleasure to visit such a stud as Mr. Tonybee has collected together. His reputation as a first-rate judge of a horse, and his

qualifications as a rider, I have heard highly extolled by competent judges, and whilst this weather lasts, to the utter exclusion of all hunting, steeple-chasing, and coursing, time, in my opinion, could not be better employed than by visiting the stud farm at East Acton, and I will engage that any one following my advice will be pleasantly received, and will know, when the frost goes, where to obtain some clinkers, should he be desirous of going the pace across the big fields and over the tall fences in the shires. I omitted mention of a horse, by Compromise, and would recommend any one following my "advice, gratis," to have him pulled out, and I feel certain that if he is one of the sort who "parts freely," he will cause that good-looking hunter to change stables without loss of time.

After seeing this fine lot of animals, so suggestive of past delights, a host of recollections were recalled. Visions of old friends and acquaintances, and memories of other days, flitted through my mind, and, lest by writing prose always I might be voted prosy, I thought I would try my hand at verse, hence—

MELTON.—A DREAM.

Frost-bound and weary
 Of weather so dreary,
 Wond'ring how long this hard winter will last,
 Soundly I'm dozing,
 Whilst evening is closing,
 Wand'ring in dreamland, through scenes of the past.

The sun shining brightly,
 With heart beating lightly,
 From Melton I gallop to hunt with the Quorn.

Arrived at the meeting,
I've many a greeting
From friends and old sportsmen I see on the lawn.

Earls Wilton and Wicklow,
Both good men—who can go,
A peer* who rides hard, and whose heart never fails;
Scarcely deigning to look,
At bullfinch or brook,
He goes like a bird at a tall flight of rails.

A once well-known "whip,"†
Letting politics slip,
Who cheers on his bloodhounds when hunting the stag.
And smart Captain Candy,
So cheerful and handy,
A nailer to hounds, when he's on a good nag.

As courteous and pleasant,
To peer as to peasant,
See the author, and poet, beloved by us all.
(Ah, well I remember,
That day in December,
When I first met Whyte-Melville at Wartnaby Hall.)

Then observe Lady Dixie,
On a horse that is tricksie,
Who knows how to handle a troublesome steed;
And I bid him beware,
To take very great care,
Who fancies to follow her ladyship's lead.

Handsome—bewitching,
"Most awfully fetching,"
"On Stanley, on!" it is vain to declare;
For if—losing his cunning,
The fox shows straight running,
That ‡ handsome lady is sure to be *there*.

* Lord Carington. † Lord Wolverton. ‡ Mrs. Sloane Stanley.

Up to every lark,*
 From daylight to dark,
 See "the Chicken," a *big-un*, both stalwart and tall;
 Never craning, he'll race,
 Till he's in a good place,
 Whilst he's not to be baulked by a stile or stone wall.

On his gallant old grey,
 "Little Gilmour" to-day,
 As fresh as when "Nimrod" first marked him for fame;
 After forty long years,
 Much the same yet appears,
 As when first that grand writer selected his name.

But see, there's the Master! †
 Ah! who will go faster,
 Should hounds run a clinker from Gartree to-day?
 Though so quiet he looks,
 He's a glutton for brooks,
 As you'll find if the Whissendine come in his way.

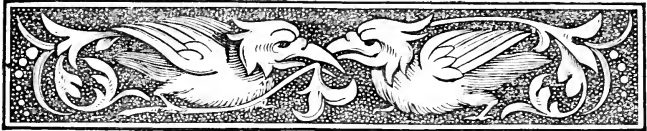
Now Tom Furr is going,
 For I hear his horn blowing,
 So jump in your saddle and stick to the hounds;
 For he has a queer knack,
 Slipping off with the pack,
 When the "field" can't be held within moderate bounds.

Then suddenly waking,
 The magic spell breaking,
 Away fly these visions, too pleasant to last;
 Yet so vividly clear,
 Did these old scenes appear,
 That it's hard to believe they belong to the past.

Jan. 1879.

* Captain Hartopp.

† Mr. Coupland.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

NIL DESPERANDUM.

QUONE day's hunting in nine weeks, the earth frost-bound still, a bitter north-easter blowing, and apparently no chance of a change. Such was the state of things on Friday evening, the last of January, and I was very much in the condition of a friend of whom I once made inquiries as to the state of his health: "I feel," he said, "like the wretched remains of an ill-spent existence, and a long course of profligacy deservedly punished. I no longer take pleasure in life. Beauty does not excite my admiration, wit falls unheeded on my ear, and wine does not exhilarate me." In other words, I was hipped—*unde derivatur*, by-the-bye, it cannot be from *hippos*, because my disordered state is due to the fact of my not being able to make use of a horse. An evil state of things was this, beyond doubt.

"Letters, sir," said the servant, as she handed in the results of the last postal delivery. First wondering from whom they come, as people generally do, I at length proceeded to open them, and immediately a change came o'er the spirit of my dream as I read, "Come down to Otford Castle by the early

morning train," and I felt assured that my correspondent, Richard Russell, the Secretary of the West Kent Hunt, a veteran of the chase, as well known in the county as the White Horse of Kent itself, had something good in store. "Away with these slops, and bring me immediately the cold beef, some whisky, hot water, and a lemon. Take care I am called early, as I am going on a visit." Such were my hasty injunctions. "I wonder what's up at Otford?" I said to myself. "Ah, to-morrow's the final day of the shooting season, and I suppose they are going to floor the last of the pheasants." Then I retired to rest, perchance to dream, and was not long before I did so. Visions of hot corners arose before my eyes; "rocketters" were falling at every moment from my unerring aim (in reality I don't hit one in ten, but no matter).

Awaking at an early hour, I was quickly *en route* through the dull grey disheartening atmosphere, making for the Victoria Station, and stepping into a fast train, was speedily conveyed to the Bat and Ball Station at Sevenoaks. On arrival, I found my friend awaiting me in a well-appointed dog-cart, drawn by a sporting-looking mare, with a hog-mane. "How are you? Have you got plenty of coats? Jump in; sharp," were the inquiries and injunction rapidly delivered. "What's your little game?" I said. "Why, the hounds are to meet about twelve miles off, and I thought you would like to try your hand at a novelty, 'Foxhunting on foot.'" "Henceforward my motto shall be, '*Nil desperandum*,'" I said; for at the very moment I was at my wits' end for something to say, up starts an opportunity,

which I shall not be slow to avail myself of. Then away we trotted along the slippery roads at a slapping pace, passing through Ightham and Wrotham, arriving at Leybourne Grange, formerly the residence of the late Sir Joseph Hawley, as George Bollen and his whips, with twenty-three couples and a-half of hounds, emerged from a plantation near the entrance to the Grange. Here was assembled the "field," which included the Hon. Ralph Nevill, the Master of the West Kent, and his daughters, Lady Mostyn, Lady Caroline Nevill, Miss Bligh (an elegant and graceful performer with hounds), Mr. Mostyn, and several gentlemen, all on foot, as were also George Bollen and his men.

Notwithstanding the long stoppage of work, these hounds looked as fit to go as possible; this, no doubt, is due to the fact of their huntsmen never losing an opportunity of taking them out, even though the ground was as hard as a rock—even the day previous, they ran a fox to ground, after pursuing him for a considerable time amongst the frost and snow. Of course there is a risk of laming some of the pack by following this unusual practice of hunting during such a severe time; but the result seems entirely to justify the proceeding, as shown by the condition of the hounds on this occasion.

After drawing two or three plantations without finding, the hounds were taken in the direction of the paddock, but, ere they had gone very far, a halloo back was heard, and, returning to the park, they were laid upon a line of an erratic fox, and, picking up the scent after a few minutes, went

streaming away over the hard ground, running up to the cross roads, where they came to a check. Bollen then made a cast forward, but it was evident they had overrun the fox, and a halloo from the master brought them back to a small cover from which he was viewed, going in the direction of the Grange; crossing the road, he then made for the park, and the hounds racing for some ten or twelve minutes over the grass, finally ran into him close to the house, and speedily broke him up before the field indeed could arrive at the finish.

Certainly, this was a novelty; for it is the first time in my life that I have seen a pack of foxhounds hunting in the extraordinary condition that the country was in on this day: neither did I ever behold the master, the men, and the "field," toiling on foot after the pack; or ever witness the breaking up of a fox within a few yards of a pool upon which were assembled several ladies and gentlemen, busily engaged in skating upon ice, which looked as clear as crystal. One, amongst the fair performers, at once attracted my attention, recalling the words of Byron:—

"She was a form of life and light,
That soon became a part of sight,
And rose where'er I turned my eye,
The morning star of memory."

Such a day's sport has no precedent as far as my recollection extends, and I think the popular and sporting master is entitled to great credit for allowing his huntsmen, even at the risk of some injury to the feet of the hounds, to give them such exercise during so unexampled and long-continued a winter,

the equal to which, for severity and protracted extent, is not to be found in the annals of the meteorological reports.

Being very kindly invited to join the party at luncheon by Mr. Mostyn, I availed myself of the proffered hospitality, and, being introduced to Lady Mostyn, who now occupies the Grange, took my place at the table, beneath the roof which was so long the home of that staunch supporter and patron of the turf, Sir Joseph Hawley. Over the mantelpiece was the picture of Rosicrucian, with his trainer, Mr. Tweed; and, after the repast was concluded, I had the opportunity of seeing the distinguished and lamented sportsman's study, the works of which were ornamented by pictures of his favourite and most fortunate horses, viz., Teddington, Beadsman, Blue Gown, and Musjid.

After this we proceeded across the park to the stables, calling upon Mr. Tweed, who resides near them, and who now farms the land; the paddocks no longer being tenanted by a string of thoroughbreds as in days of yore, and the stables without occupants, now that the owner of the once large stud, which was to be seen at Leybourne Grange, is laid beneath the turf. Then we retraced our steps, pulling up for a few minutes at the kennels at Wrotham. Alighting from the dog-cart, George Bollen met and showed us the remainder of his hounds, the condition of which do him infinite credit. No pack in the country can look better, and I may safely prophesy that when the frost really goes, and the ground is fit to ride over once more, they will be found in right good form. The

pad of the fox which we had rolled over on this wintry day having been presented to me *in memoriam* of the event, was in my greatcoat pocket, which being winded by the hounds, I soon found myself the centre of attraction; the hounds pressing round me, anxious evidently to make friends with a person possessing such a relic, recalling many a merry chase, and suggesting future sport when the winter is over.

There is no prettier sight than that of a lot of handsome foxhounds, some sitting on the benches, some strolling over the flags, and others sleeping after their work; and whilst looking at these noble animals the thought came across my mind that I had recently seen a picture by "Carter" of some hounds in pursuit of a stag at the residence of Mr. Tattersall, which surpasses in drawing and finish any work of a similar character than I have ever seen, placing the clever artist quite at the top of the tree as a painter of animals.

After taking leave of Bollen and his pack, we trotted briskly away along the ice-bound roads, the wind blowing savagely the while, until Otford Castle was reached, and I soon found myself beneath that hospitable roof, with my legs well beneath the mahogany. The following morning, notwithstanding the state of the land and roads, I accompanied my host for a ride. Our nags being well roughed, we got along pleasantly enough, but the gloomy state of the atmosphere prevented my obtaining anything more than a limited view of the country.

One of the singular facts of this season has been the total absence for lengthened periods of a single

ray of sunshine. However, I was enabled to see the ruins of Otford Castle, which are amply sufficient to prove that it must have been a grand pile of buildings once upon a time. A pleasant streamlet babbles musically along, and sundry snow-white swans glide over the piece of water in front of the residence of Mr. Russell. Modest snowdrops are trying to force their way into the world, but, in my opinion, they are premature; we have not done with winter yet, I am sadly afraid.

In the afternoon a drive through Farningham, passing that well-known—to all trout fishermen, at anyrate—hostelry, the Lion, now, I am told, more comfortable and better conducted even than it was and has been for many years. I learn that the prospects for the fly-fisher are more favourable than ever. Then Horton Kirby is reached, and we pay a passing visit to Mr. Power at his beautiful residence “The Franks,” formerly the property of the Russell family. This old Elizabethan mansion is placed on the banks of the Darent, which flows swiftly through these beautifully laid-out grounds. Seen in spring time, when the venerable avenue is in verdure clad, and the rook, rejoicing at the advent of seed-time, ceaseless caws, this must be a delightful spot; and when entering the stately rooms, furnished with everything that wealth and taste can suggest, statues, armour, pictures, and costly furniture, I thought it as delightful a residence for a country gentleman as could possibly be found, especially for one such as the owner, who has the means and inclination for indulging in the sports of the field. Then trotting

on again, we visit the head of the Russell family, and pass an hour or two in pleasant converse anent old times and matters relating to sport; and, after receiving a cordial invitation to visit Horton Kirby in the spring, and try my hand at trout-fishing, we trot back again to Otford Castle. Compelled to return to London the following morning, after a sharp run in one of the well-appointed trains of the Chatham and Dover Railway, I found myself in the City, up to my neck in mud and dirt, hardly able to grope my way in the fog and mist attendant upon a temporary thaw, an uncomfortable state of things, contrasting unfavourably with the pleasant time I had passed at Otford.

“ But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, the bloom is shed ;
Or like the snowfall on the river,
A moment white, then melts for ever.”





CHAPTER XXIX.

A TEASER WITH THE TEDWORTH.

NOW is the time for hunting. “When Spring unlocks the flowers to paint the laughing soil,” I said to myself, when galloping through the covers, remorselessly trampling under foot the modest snowdrops and the pale yellow aconites as I endeavoured to keep within a respectable distance of that celebrated pack, “The Tedworth,” on Monday last, when they met at Everley.

Wonderful are the changes of temperature in this variable clime, for on that day a mild gentle rain was falling, the ground was unlocked from the grip of Jack Frost, and instead of the iron-hard roads, snow-drifts, and cruel cold winds, we had the country softer than I ever remember to have seen it—fetlock deep even on the light lands of Hampshire and Wiltshire, in both of which counties, during the day, I found myself endeavouring to follow

“The stirring chase,
Of hounds and foxes striving in the race.”

After some two months’ forced abstention from the noble sport, I took advantage of the change of

weather to pay a visit to Mr. Lansley at Glanville, near Andover, who had kindly promised not only to put me on a good nag, that I might have a ride with hounds, but also to show me on the following day the large stud of the Andover and Weyhill Horse Company, of which he is one of the joint managers.

As we started to ride to cover, a distance of some seven or eight miles, a heavy mist blurred the landscape, and prevented my obtaining a good view of the country; and a soaking rain soon took the bloom off boots and breeches, marring the pleasure, to some extent, of the sport. But, contrasted with the hard time we have been so long suffering from, it would have been wrong to grumble, and I made up my mind to disregard the ungenial atmospheric arrangements, and enjoy myself to the fullest extent. Soon such trifling matters, as a little, more or less, of wind and water ceased to trouble my mind, and a smart canter on a clever nag quickly put the blood in circulation, and caused me to feel well satisfied with myself and things in general.

Then, as we rode along, we overtook Sir William Humphery of Penton Lodge, a capital sportsman, and chairman of the Andover and Weyhill Company, in which he takes considerable interest, accompanied by his nephew, Mr. George C. Humphery, and being introduced to these gentlemen, we found time beguiled, whilst riding to the fixture, by pleasant and agreeable chat.

Then Everley was reached, the residence of Mr. Curtis, and in a meadow in front of the house were J. Fricker, his whips, George Bevins and G. Vincent, and the pack of blooming hounds, the condition of

which was remarkable. The Belvoir, for bloom and beauty, has always been my motto, but not a jot behind them were the Tedworth, as seen on that day. Following the usual hospitable course adopted at most meets of hounds, servants were in waiting to offer wine, cherry brandy, curaçoa, or ale, to all comers. Time being up, Lord Algernon St. Maur, the acting master, gave the word; and we moved on to draw a cover in the rear of the house. Then a slapping chesnut horse, Student, was brought up for me, and I found myself careering along on a spirited and clever hunter, well up to my heavy weight, with capital action, and as fresh as paint, though at the same time temperate and well-mannered.

Having formed an opinion of my steed, I was quite satisfied that if I did not shirk, I should never be out of the hunt, and went on my way rejoicing. "Halloo in there!" cries Fricker, and the eager hounds spread themselves over the cover, which, however, they drew blank. Then we proceed to draw some patches of gorse on the hill side of an extensive range of common, and it was not very long before a view-halloo proclaimed the fact that Reynard was at home, but apparently not inclined to receive company, as, after dodging about amongst the gorse for five or ten minutes, he took to the open, and went away at a rattling pace, making for a plantation near at hand, but the scent being very indifferent, we lost him, only running him up to this cover after a short gallop. When leaving the grass and going over the ploughed land, the rottenness of the ground after the long frost soon told a tale, and there would have been plenty of sighing and sob-

bing if you had gone with slack rein over ridge and furrow.

Whilst the hounds were drawing again there was time to take a look at the "field," which consisted of some sixty or seventy well-mounted men and several ladies, conspicuous amongst whom was Miss Antrobus, a daughter of Sir Edmund Antrobus, who accompanied her. A very neat rider is the lady, who goes well to hounds, and is not wanting in perseverance; for I noted her, at the close of a long day, undaunted by weather and unmindful of distance. Miss Curtis of Everley and Mrs. Awdrey, also well-known riders, and Mrs. Brewer made up the list of fair *equestriennes* on this occasion, whilst amongst the gentlemen, in addition to Lord St. Maur and his three sons, were Sir Claude de Crespigny, Captain Easton, Captain Tysen (a capital sportsman), Mr. Fowle, Mr. Brewer, the secretary of the Tedworth Hunt, etc.

Whilst we were endeavouring to drive a fox out of the dense gorse, I was introduced to the Master, and chatted for a while of bygone days at Melton. At length a view-halloo from one of the whips gave notice that a fox was on foot, and Fricker, cramming his horse through the prickly gorse, was soon in attendance upon what turned out to be a sturdy customer. The time when he was viewed going away was, according to my calculation, about half-past twelve, and the hour when he was broken up was half-past four, during which period he traversed a very extensive range of country, going in the direction of Ludgershall, and then over the downs, making his way along the steepest part, and

then getting into the lowlands he went straight away at a rattling pace.

A check then took place in the road, but Fricker making a very wide and clever cast was soon on the line of his fox again, persevering, though the scent was very cold and bad, and running him up to the extensive range of cover known as West Woods. Here, however, he was not allowed to remain long, and going away bravely, he ran to Savernake Forest, through part of which he travelled; and then taking to the open once more, the hounds ran into him in the middle of a field, in the vicinity of Marlborough, after a capital and most sporting run of nearly four hours, over a stiff line of country in some parts, and in others up and over the steep downs, at a fair hunting pace, with many checks, though finishing satisfactorily, these crack hounds eating up the fox in the open. Fricker struck me as being a very clever and determined huntsman, bent on killing his fox, never throwing a chance away, but showing marvellous skill in casting his hounds and recovering the scent, when it appeared hopeless. The hounds proved themselves as good as they looked, and the day's sport was all that could be desired, though the pleasure would have been greater had the weather been finer. A long ride home was before us, the distance being computed at eighteen miles; pulling up at Pewsey, and being regaled with bread and cheese, we started again, riding homewards with Sir William Humphery and his nephew to Weyhill, making in all a long day's work, the hour being seven when we arrived at Glanville House.

During this long run, I changed horses three times, my first horse being the crack chesnut before alluded to, after which I got on to Lucy Glitters, a weight carrier, a capital bay mare, very temperate, and an excellent fencer; finally finishing the day on Knight of Kerry, another clinker, perfectly quiet, but all there when he was wanted, and a clever fencer to boot. These horses were all of them the property of the Andover and Weyhill Company, and were fair specimens of the noble lot of horses I subsequently saw at the stables in Andover, and those formerly the property of Mr. Barnes at Weyhill. I mentally valued these animals, and the conclusion I came to in respect to their value, was that there would be small change out of £900 for an intending purchaser, of an equal weight and size of myself, standing as I do fifteen stone in my shoes, and exceeding six feet in height. It must be no ordinary horse that can carry such a length and weight to the tail of a pack such as the Tedworth.

Though never feeling for a moment any fatigue, long as the day's work was, my subsequent condition, consequent on my only having ridden once for nine weeks, has been, to say the least, feeble—every muscle aching with the unusual amount of exercise; but, as I have stepped considerably over the meridian of life, and my state bearing a considerable resemblance to the condition described by Shakespeare as that of the sere and yellow leaf period, I cannot expect to take the same amount of exertion as I did in former days without paying the penalty consequent upon living so long.

On the following morning, a short drive brought us to the quiet old town of Andover, where I proceeded

to inspect the string of nags collected together. The number of this large and valuable stud approaches two hundred in all at Andover, Weyhill, and Cricklewood. They consist of harness horses, hacks, ladies' horses, and hunters, all of a superior quality, doing the greatest credit to Mr. Barnes, showing his knowledge and judgment in the selection of horses, the whole of the stock being selected by him as buyer for the company.

The same thing is seen over and over again, as horse after horse is stripped for inspection. Short backs, long sloping shoulders, good girth places, strong and muscular hindquarters, are apparently the qualifications sought for by Mr. Barnes; and I could not but remark upon the evenness of quality in respect to these requirements that are to be seen throughout this establishment. A very clever little harness horse was being shown at the time of my arrival, very handsome, and a capital goer—fit if he can be matched to make one of a pair of handsome phaeton horses suitable to perform in Hyde Park during the ensuing season. A remarkably clever chesnut horse, with superb action, a perfect cab horse, was then trotted out, and should soon be found in the Row, and will be, if I mistake not.

After viewing the Andover stables, we trotted off to Penton Lodge, where I had been invited by Sir William Humphery, in order to see the handsome range of well-built and thoroughly ventilated stables, which were designed by him, and constructed under his direction. Each box was tenanted by a good-looking animal—Odd Trick, and, in fact, all of them being handsome, well-shaped horses. Attached to

the stables is a washing-house, into which every horse is taken after hunting and thoroughly washed from head to foot, hot and cold water being laid on; and Sir William Humphery's experience leads him to the conclusion that it is a practice most conducive to the health and condition of a hunter. Opinions differ on this point, I am aware, but I should certainly advocate the following of this course after seeing the results following the practice.

After seeing the well-appointed and neatly-kept stables, and passing judgment on the good-looking nags, luncheon was announced, and an opportunity was afforded of looking over Penton Lodge, a model hunting-box, having every requirement for comfort—handsome suites of rooms, noble conservatory, elegant furniture, family portraits, valuable pictures; placed amidst well-kept gardens and extensive grounds is this charming residence. After being hospitably entertained, we adjourned to Weyhill, in order to examine the remainder of the stud.

Accompanied by Mr. Lansley and Mr. Graves, his clever and painstaking assistant, I saw a grand lot of horses, the condition of which for health, blooming appearance, and fitness, could not be excelled in any stables in the kingdom. Without the greatest care and attention such a result could not be attained, and I should say that the particular polish used to bring horses into the form which is exhibited is that sometimes known as "elbow grease." My attention was promptly arrested by the sight of an exceedingly clever first-class hunter, denominated Spring, a big but compact horse, with great limbs, neat head and neck, a clever mover and neat jumper, as was proved

by the exhibition of his powers in the riding-school.

It is difficult to discriminate where all are good; but, in selecting such a lot as Bravo, Volcano, Home Rule, Criterion, and very specially the Monk, a wonderfully neat horse and fine jumper, whose pedigree is in part traceable back to one of the celebrated Exmoor ponies, I think anyone following my footsteps and looking over the stud, will say that my opinion is justified by evident facts. I had the advantage of riding several of these selected animals in the school, and feeling how they moved, and I came to the conclusion that the Andover and Weyhill Company have a superior class of horses, which are to be purchased at fair and reasonable prices, the amount to be asked for each horse being entered in a book, which is placed at the disposal of a purchaser, who therein finds the amount to be charged for every animal, and he can take him or leave him, at his option; the sums quoted representing a fair value for each horse—a mode of dealing that appears to me both fair and reasonable.

Before examining and admiring the entire number of horses, and specially noting the neatness and good construction of this extensive range of premises, evening had arrived; but, prior to leaving the following morning for London, Mr. Lansley drove me to Weyhill, in order that I might throw my leg over a beautiful weight-carrying hack, perfectly quiet, having grand action, and fit to carry eighteen stone in the Park, and I will warrant that if any timid, elderly party, who wishes, albeit not a particularly fine horseman, to exhibit himself in the vicinity of Apsley

House, and to take a constitutional ride between the interval of business in either the Lords or Commons, he will benefit his health, mature his judgment, and render himself fit to encounter any amount of opposition if he will wire to Weyhill, and desire the manager to send him the handsome grey mare known as Valeria, a descendant of Gladiator.





CHAPTER XXX.

A WEEK WITH THE SOUTHDOWN.

“Now all amid the rigours of the year,
In the wild depth of winter, while without
The ceaseless winds blow ice, be my retreat
Between the groaning forest and the shore
Beat by the boundless multitude of waves ;
A rural, sheltered, solitary scene ;
Where ruddy fire and beaming tapers join
To cheer the gloom. There studious let
Me sit,”

AND endeavour to give an account of a capital week's sport with the Southdown Foxhounds, over the breezy downs and across the deep-riding lowlands, in pursuit of the wild and stout-running foxes which are so abundant in the district hunted by this clever pack. Between these spells of Arctic weather some capital sport has been shown, notwithstanding the extremely heavy state of the country, which has brought many good men to grief, and caused several severe accidents to well-known riders. There may be different ideas as to the country over which the Southdown perform, but there can be no two opinions in respect to the excellence of this crack pack, or the

ability of their clever and long-experienced huntsman and I know no hounds in the kingdom that show more invariable good sport; and it appears to be the earnest endeavour of the master (Mr. Streatfield) on all occasions to satisfy the requirements of the large fields that ride with them; and he must be a very difficult man to satisfy who, after a week's sport such as this which I am about to narrate, does not at the termination cry, "Hold. enough!"

Beginning on the Monday, the meet was Longford Bridge, where a good field was assembled, eager, after their long-enforced leisure, to make the most of the opportunity. After receiving the order to move off, Champion proceeded to draw Mr. Shenstone's cover, from which a stout fox speedily went away at a clinking pace, running for an hour and forty minutes over the open, and finally being rolled over, after a splitting run, the country being desperately heavy throughout the whole distance. This was an excellent beginning of the week's sport. but it was fated to be equalled, if not eclipsed, by subsequent runs, as will be shown by the details of the remainder of the week's work. Not satisfied, however, with this gallop, Champion proceeded to Gipp's Wood, where another stout running fox was soon on foot, and a cheery "Tallyho!" proclaimed that he, disdaining to lurk in the shelter of the covert, had gone away over the open. For two hours did these gallant hounds pursue their second fox; but evening drawing on apace, Champion unwillingly was compelled to whip them off.

The following day (Tuesday) the fixture was Framfield village, and, as usual, little time elapsed before a view-halloo gave notice that a fox was

away. The scent being indifferent, the hounds were unable to get on good terms with him, and he led them a dance for two hours and forty minutes over a very rough and heavy country, beating them at last. The pace throughout was slow, but it was an excellent hunting run, exhibiting the skill and perseverance of the huntsman, and the steadiness of the hounds.

On Thursday, the meet was at Abbot's Wood; the weather was stormy, and little good could be done with the first fox, owing to the disturbed state of the atmosphere. Better fortune attended the huntsman's endeavours when a second fox was found, for he went away at a rattling pace; but, being unable to outstrip his pursuers, he was compelled to succumb, and was rolled over in the open by the eager hounds, after an exciting race of one hour. This was an exceedingly severe day for both horses and hounds, the ground being frightfully heavy, the brooks assuming the proportions of rivers, and the ditches swelling to the dignity of rippling rills; whilst the going across the plough was terrific, necessitating those who wished to live throughout the run to take their nags well by the head, and even then it was no easy task to keep with hounds during this severe day's work.

On Friday the fixture was arranged for "the Dyke," but in consequence of the wind, rain, and fog, the hounds had to be trotted off from the high ground, and were taken to New Timber Park Wood, a sure place for a fox, one I have never known to fail. With but little loss of time a view-halloo was heard, and a fox went away, running a ring for an hour, when he was run into and killed.

After this preliminary canter an adjacent cover was drawn, and a second stout, determined fox went away a rattler. Running a ring he made for the Clayton Woods, but not daring to remain there very long he was speedily away again, making for Clayton Holt ; but his foes were close upon his track, and he was bound to break away at once. The hounds not dwelling a moment in the cover, slipped through, and raced him away along the side of the hills in a dense fog, which rendered the riding difficult, and to an extent dangerous to those unaccustomed to this severe country. Only two or three of the field were able to live with the pack in this darkness visible that enshrouded the downs ; but conspicuous and foremost among them was the master, Mr. Streatfield, who managed somehow to keep with them, followed by Mr. Ingram of Chailey, who managed accidentally to fall in with them ; whilst Captain Paley, of the 5th Royal Lancers, as if by instinct, galloped alone along the foot of the hill, falling in with the hounds, and, being unable to see the master, supposed he had got the hounds all to himself ; whilst Mr. Streatfield and Mr. Ingram, riding at the top of the hill, enjoyed the same opinion, such was the state of the atmosphere on this occasion. Gallantly this noble pack, undaunted by the difficulties that surrounded them, pursued the fox over hill and dale by themselves, as it was impossible for any one to keep close enough to assist them ; running, after quitting Clayton Holt, to Offham, leaving the Offham chalk pits to the right, and making for Connesbury Park, where the huntsman, Mr. Dupont, and several of the field, contrived to

get up with them, after a long and severe stern chase; and, as night was drawing on apace, the hour being 5.15, Champion was compelled to whip off his hounds whilst running in full cry, being in dangerous proximity to the line of railway, after so gallantly pursuing the sturdy fox, who managed this time to escape them.

This was another very severe day for hounds and horses, which, however, acquitted themselves very well, for I was told that every hound but one was up at the finish, which speaks volumes for their condition, and tells plainly how capital a head they carry. Doubtless, the master would, under the circumstances, have greatly enjoyed running into his fox, and breaking him up in the absence of his huntsman, an opportunity which is very rarely afforded him, and as from circumstances he let the opportunity slip, it will be some time probably before he gets another chance, as it is not very often that Champion is out of the hunt. Considering the state of the weather, this must be considered a rare good day's sport, and when, after a terrific burst, the hounds disappeared in the fog, or I may say clouds, it might be considered a case of hunting under difficulties. No better test of the quality of this crack pack can be shown than is evidenced by the fact of their running their fox so great a distance without the aid of their huntsman. It, however, does not surprise me, when I remember how diligently they have picked out the scent step by step when hunting their fox over the downs on a stormy day, gradually working up to him until they got on good terms, when he had no alternative but to do or die.

On the following day (Saturday) the fixture was the kennels, where again a good "field" assembled, and followed un their run of luck; for, after running a fox for three hours, the hounds went away again at a racing pace, leaving off when night was coming on, sixteen miles from home. Only five or six out of the large number who assembled in the morning, estimated at one hundred, were found with the hounds at the end of the day, amongst whom were the Master, Mr. Ingersoll, Mr. Whitfield, and Mr. Dupont, with Champion and his whips. The going was tremendously heavy, the ground being thoroughly broken up by the long and severe frost. During this protracted run, the hounds crossed part of the Burston country, going through a portion of the Crawley and Horsham, as well as the West Kent territories. That it was a punishing day's work is evident, for it cost Mr. Dupont his old favourite, flea-bitten grey, which succumbed at the finish, after carrying him right well the whole day; such, however, is the fortune of war, and a penalty must be sometimes paid by those who ride hard, when horses who have so long been out of work are tried to their utmost.

I have before given my opinion respecting the South Down Foxhounds in the columns of *Bell's Life in London*, and such a week's sport as this which I have recorded will go far to substantiate it, and I have no hesitation in pronouncing them to be as fine a lot of animals as are to be met with; in every way suitable for the severe country over which they hunt, invariably showing good sport, killing a large number of foxes, after such runs as those described, and

reflecting the greatest credit on their huntsman, whose heart is in his business. The riders with the Southdown are also fortunate in having so pleasant and painstaking a master, as my experience of his management is that he spares neither trouble nor exertion, and the day is never too long or the weather too heavy for so good a sportsman as Mr. Streatfield.





CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BRIGHTON HARRIERS.

FINDING that all the fixtures of the Warwickshire, Atherstone, and Pytchley were so wide of Rugby this week, and being warned that the country was fearfully heavy, I determined to try my luck on the lighter lands of the Sussex Downs, and have a day with the Brighton Harriers. The "meet" on Wednesday last was Ovingdean, on the borders of the country hunted by Mr. Steyning Beard with the Brookside Harriers. The morning was anything but promising, and dirty weather to windward was the description given by a nautical companion. The elements certainly have not favoured hunting this season, and having met with rain, snow, and hail in my visits to different packs, I was doomed on this occasion to fall in with a sea fog. A brisk canter by way of Kemp Town, following the Lewes road for two or three miles, brought us to the meet, where a field of some sixty or seventy sportsmen had assembled in order to have a gallop over the breezy downs. There was Mr. Dewè and seventeen couples of hounds, looking as blooming and fit to go as it is possible for a pack to be. Mr. Steyning Beard, who

maintains the most friendly relations with the Master of the Brighton Harriers, was amongst the number attending on this gloomy morning, as were also Lord Kilmaine, Captain Kingcaide Smith, and Miss Kingcaide Smith, well mounted on a useful grey, which she rode with courage and judgment over hill and dale, notwithstanding the fog which enveloped the downs, and prevented those who did not keep close to the tails of the hounds from seeing anything of the sport. Mr. George Beard, Mr. Johnstone, jun.; the Messrs. Wyman, Mr. Davenport, Mr. Keane of Patcham, Mr. Gassiot, Mr. Gregson, Mr. Crowther, Mr. Tamplin, Mr. Johnstone, sen.; Mr. Pearse, Mr. A. Dupont, and many others who are in the habit of hunting regularly with the Brighton Harriers.

A very few minutes elapsed before a hare jumped up and went away at a rattling pace over the plough, which rode fairly well; the scent, however, was so bad that, after running puss for some ten minutes through the mist and rain, the wind blowing fitfully the while, we lost her in a patch of furze at the foot of a tremendously steep hill. Mr. Dewè patiently tried to pick up the scent; but, though his clever hounds did their best, they failed to get on her line, and we moved off in search of another. Soon "So-ho!" is heard, and Mr. Dupont rides up, and points out the place where puss is snugly ensconced, and the hounds being brought to the spot, she started from her form, and scuttled away at a racing pace, with the pack close to her heels, running her in view for several minutes. No easy matter was it to ride to hounds at the pace they were going up and down these steep hills,

when you were unable to see fifty yards ahead; but the varmint-looking chesnut upon which I was mounted seemed to know his way about, and though I did not feel quite content at the idea of his going the pace through the gloom, I came to the conclusion, before many minutes had elapsed, that it was no use attempting to curb his impetuosity; and so, like a wilful man, he had his way, and carried me pleasantly and safely when I ceased pulling him about, evidently, from his style of going, being thoroughly acquainted with the ups and downs of the Brighton country.

Reaching the top of a hill, after running for ten minutes, the scent failed, and the hounds came to a check. However, patience and perseverance being the order of the day, Mr. Dewè got on to the line of the hunted hare, and away we went a rattler, and no mistake, for another twelve or fifteen minutes, when the hounds came to a check on the plough; but, by diligently puzzling out the line, we contrived to get on better terms with her, every hound in the pack trying his utmost, showing that as well as being able to go at a racing pace when the scent serves them, they can stoop their heads when it fails, and hunt their hare inch by inch. After this we had some slow hunting, which tended to confirm my opinion of the good qualities of this pack, as they persistently tried to puzzle out the devious tracks of the crafty animal, which eventually gave us the slip, a result due to the state of the weather which so effectually put a stop to our sport. Notwithstanding this drawback, I thoroughly enjoyed the two or three smart spins which we had, and

was delighted at the slow hunting, which to any one really fond of the sport is a treat, affording an opportunity of judging of the merits of the hounds—a far more important matter than merely being able to go at a racing pace. After this, the master tried and tried again; but, at last, fairly baffled by the elements, he was compelled to give in, dismissing us, whilst expressing his hope of showing better sport on the next occasion.

This was a trying day for a master of hounds, as the riders pressed far too close on the pack; but, under the circumstances, it was, I think, excusable, for, unless you did keep pretty near them, you were altogether out of the hunt; whilst at other times the fog was so dense that you were in the middle of them before you knew where you were. Thus was our day's amusement abruptly brought to a conclusion, but not before I had seen enough of the Brighton to be able to class them as one of the best packs of harriers, considering the nature of the country over which they hunt, that I have ever ridden with. Mr. Dewè is not only a capital huntsman, but he is also a first-rate judge of a hound, and spares no trouble to gather a good lot around him. At the close of the season, it is his intention to draft ten couples, replacing them by others selected from several of the best packs in the kingdom. I was glad to hear that the national pastime is more popular than ever in Sussex, and that increased subscriptions will allow of Mr. Dewè hunting next year three days a-week instead of two, as at present.

If the Brighton tradesmen were alive to their own

interests they would contribute largely to the subscription list, instead of doling out the small pittance which they now give, as it is one of the greatest attractions of Brighton, in the eyes of many ladies and gentlemen who select it as a place of residence ; for the reason that they can enjoy a spin over the beautiful downs in the vicinity, at the tail of a clever pack of harriers, instead of hammering along the hard high roads in a listless and humdrum fashion. A word to the wise is said to be sufficient. I have made the suggestion ; it remains for the consideration of those interested in the prosperity of the constantly-increasing town whether they will adopt it. A capital range of kennels and stables has recently been erected at a cost of somewhere about £2000, and with increased funds and popular support, Mr. Dewè will be enabled to show even more sport in the future, though certainly there has been nothing to complain of hitherto.

One of the advantages appertaining to this part of Sussex is the liberality of the owners and occupiers of the soil, who are content to allow the large " fields " which attend the meets of the foxhounds and harriers to ride over their land without ever asking for compensation, or complaining of their wheat being trampled down, or their fields of rape or turnips galloped across. This arises from the fact that most of the farmers of the district are in the habit of hunting themselves, and know practically that the real amount of damage done is small, as proved when the crops are harvested ; though it is an eyesore for the holder of the farm, when he looks at the marks of the ruthless horsemen who have careered across

country during a wet season, whilst availing themselves of the privilege of following the hounds over the cultivated portions of the Downs.

Mr. Dewè is fortunate in having so good a kennel huntsman as Sherwood. A sporting-looking man is his assistant, a capital horseman, and thoroughly good at the duties appertaining to his post. No hounds can be brought into the field in a more healthy condition, and it is evident from their appearance that the greatest attention is paid to them, and a fact greatly tending to this state of things is the position of the new kennels.

Formerly the hounds were located in a neighbourhood redolent of dust-heaps, and surrounded by small tenements, the rapid extension of the town having overtaken them; now they are occupying a place in the open, which cannot fail to be advantageous.

During so much of the season as has been available, these hounds have invariably shown good sport when the weather has permitted hunting. The Jack-hares are now strong, and for the next week or two anyone paying a visit to Brighton will yet have an opportunity of judging whether I have given a too favourable report. I admit to having a great partiality to Brighton, and though I have heard people speak contemptuously of a locality where there is so little fencing, and merely open downs to gallop across, yet I have set them down as belonging to the class who would sooner follow a red herring or an aniseeded rag across country (provided they could race and jump) than they would ride through the prettiest of hunting runs.

At last, winter seems to have gone for good, and

now whilst I write the "ethereal mildness" of a spring day enlivens one after the stolid gloom, the murky atmosphere, and general ungeniality of the last few weeks, and there will yet remain sufficient time for a visit to Melton, Rugby, the Vale of Aylesbury, etc.; and this reminds me that I have a cordial invitation to see the Duke of Grafton's country, and observe how Frank Beers can pull down a fox with his fine pack of hounds in that celebrated country.

Prior to this, however, I have a day's sport in view, during which I anticipate a great amount of enjoyment, having had the good fortune to be invited by the Marquess of Abergavenny to be present at some buck-catching in Eridge Park on this present Saturday. His lordship owns some of the handsomest deerhounds I have ever seen, and as the extent of the park is at least 2000 acres, there will be plenty of room for some fine sport, as doubtless the bucks will be in good condition for a contest with their fleet competitors. All that will be wanting to render this a most enjoyable day's amusement is fine weather, and should I be favoured once in a way with a bright and cheery day, I shall be able to furnish an account in *Bell's Life in London* of the luck that I met with during my visit to that pleasant part of West Kent.





CHAPTER XXXII.

RUNNING RED DEER.

“**T**AKEN, lords and ladies gay, The mist has left the mountain, grey; Springlets in the dawn are streaming, Diamonds in the brake are gleaming, And foresters have busy been, To track the buck in forest green,” were the words (which, if I remember rightly, are to be found in “Waverley”) that crossed my mind as I journeyed on my way to Eridge Castle, the seat of the Marquess of Abergavenny.

Congratulating myself on my good fortune, in being able to join in the exciting pastime of running the red deer, I was off at an early hour *en route* for Tunbridge Wells, the nearest station to Eridge. A dense fog enshrouded London and the suburbs, trains were behind time, fog signals exploding, passengers becoming irritable, and porters less than polite to those not encumbered with luggage, probably promising that there was in such case little chance of exacting fees—a custom, by the way, more honoured in the breach than the observance. At length the train emerges from the gloom, and comes whistling hoarsely, as befits the morning, into the station.

The bell rings, and we move off cautiously, feeling our way through the mist until we reach Chiselhurst; then we pass in an instant from the densest atmosphere into bright and cloudless sunshine, which lasts throughout the entire day. Thus vanished, as speedily as did the gloom, all fear of the day's sport being spoilt by the weather—a matter of so frequent occurrence this unparalleled winter as to give sufficient warranty for such foreboding—and, henceforth, all went merry as the proverbial marriage bell.

Arriving at Tunbridge Wells—a most delightful place—I find Mr. Edward Durrant, the popular Secretary of the Tunbridge Wells district of the West Kent Hunt, awaiting my arrival. He welcomes me with so much cordiality, that I feel that this time, at any rate, I am in for a real good thing.

A clever weight-carrying mare, the property of Mr. Cramp, I was told, was kindly placed at my disposal—a nag, I was assured, that would go the pace if I only let her have her head. Subsequent events abundantly proved the accuracy of the statement. Further, I was informed that the meet was fixed for 2.30 o'clock, previous to which we were expected to partake of luncheon at the castle. Here, truly, was a pleasant programme, and, as we had some considerable time to spare, we strolled through this prosperous-looking town, noted for the beauty of the surrounding scenery, its health-restoring properties, chalybeate waters, breezy downs, and lovely rides and drives.

Always of an inquiring turn of mind, I had formed a strong resolve on this occasion to drink deeply of

the waters of the wells, so that I might be able to speak of their chemical properties. Being to an extent infirm of purpose, and consequently easily led, I was induced by my specious friend to try a tumbler of "brut" champagne instead, being assured that if I intended to ride to hounds throughout the runs, it was necessary that my nerves should be well strung, as the going over the park would be found to be exceedingly rough, the ground full of rabbit burrows, grips, and ant-hills, and the pace terrific, should we succeed in driving out some good stags from the herd. I yielded to the voice of the tempter.

Thus easily are our good resolves scattered to the winds, and yet one more good intention was added to the already large heap of materials with which another place, to use a Parliamentary expression, is said to be paved. The opportunity was lost, and I left the town a second time without quaffing the flowing bowl in the commodious and newly-erected Pump Room. Nevertheless, the advice given me was sound, for the time came during the afternoon's amusement when I found that running red deer was no child's play, and wholly unsuited for those of a timid temperament.

Time being up, we mount and ride by way of Broadwater Down, noting the handsome houses and well-planted gardens on either side of the road, which command a splendid view of this beautiful portion of the county of Kent, justly denominated the Garden of England. After a short ride we pass through the lodge gates and enter the well-timbered approaches which lead to the castle ;

and, having stabled our steeds, we find the Marquess on the lawn cordially welcoming his numerous visitors as they arrive. As we passed through one of the portals of this lordly edifice I took note of the coat-of-arms of this very ancient and noble family, in order to describe which I will adopt the language of heraldry: "In a ducal coronet *or*, a bull's head *argent*, pied sable, armed of the 1st, and charged on the neck with a rose *gules*. Supporters, two bulls *argent*, pied sable, armed, unguled, collared and chained *or*." Motto, "*Ne, vile, velis.*"

Doubtless, it is by adhering strictly to the letter of this ancestral motto that his lordship and family have secured the esteem and respect of their friends, neighbours, tenants, and retainers—a fact clearly visible, even to the eyes of a stranger within their gates. Then I pause for a moment to observe this beautiful pile of buildings, noting the many ivy-clad towers, from the topmost of which the standard flutters in the breeze. In vain I look for stagnant moats, donjon keeps, massive nailed doors, closely-barred windows, and creaking drawbridges. No warder bids me stand; on the contrary, I am invited to enter, and as I do so I feel assured that this is the stately home of an English noble—not one of those dismal castles of which I have so frequently read in the pages of romance. Passing through the elegant and beautifully-furnished suites of rooms, we find a large party assembled.

The Marchioness being absent from home, the family is represented by the Earl of Lewes, Lords Henry, George, and the Ladies Idina, Rose, and Violet Nevill. The dining-room, in which luncheon

is laid, is a noble apartment, commanding fine views of the park, the walls being hung with many portraits of the ancestors of this illustrious family, which history tells us comprise many Royal and noble personages, amongst others Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster, crowned by the name of Henry IV.; Edward Duke of York, who married the daughter of Ralph Nevil, first Earl of Westmoreland, and became Edward IV.; Lionel Duke of Clarence, brother of "Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster;" Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, commonly called the King-maker, and others.

After partaking of the hospitality so bountifully provided, we mount and ride off to the kennels, where we find a goodly gathering, amongst whom, in addition to the members of the family before enumerated, I noticed the Honourable Ralph Pelham Nevill, Master of the West Kent Foxhounds, who resides at Birling Manor, the ancient seat of the family, which they occupied previously to taking possession of Eridge Castle; the Honourable Nevill Lloyd-Mostyn of Leybourne Grange; Lord George Pratt, General Kerr Baillie-Hamilton, K.C.B.; Capt. Stanley Williams and Miss Williams; Miss Bligh, a bold and graceful rider to hounds; Mr. Stanley Puckle and Miss Puckle; Mr. Barclay Field, of Ashurst Park; Mr. Edward Durrant, Mr. F. W. Elers, Mr. W. Cripps, jun.; Miss Russell, who rides regularly, showing much courage and discretion, with the West Kent; Mrs. Tuck, mounted on a fiery and impetuous steed, which had to succumb to the skill of the clever and experienced horsewoman,

Mr. W. Dickinson, of Eridge; Messrs. Henry and Arthur Cramp, both first-rate horsemen; Mr. Wilmot, Mr. Bates, who contrived to give his gallant but somewhat out-of-condition grey a good bucketing before the day was over; and Mr. Harris, of Tunbridge Wells.

The scene was novel and exciting; groups of well-mounted men were gathered together beneath the moss-covered hawthorns and leafless oaks; keepers awaiting their masters' orders, holding the hounds in leashes, each of these noble and intelligent animals being fit to pull down singly the tallest red deer. Surely, unless my vision is playing me false, that is Davie Gellatley, immortalised by Sir Walter Scott, with difficulty holding Ban and Buscar in a leash; the faithful, if somewhat eccentric, servitor of Cosmo Comyne Bradwardine of Tully-Veolan, who is riding the weight-carrying bay horse; whilst that fair and graceful girl on the clever-looking hunter, chatting so pleasantly with Waverley—the Laird of Balmawhapple looking scowlingly on the while—is Rose Bradwardine. But yet it cannot be, for those were personages of whom the great "Unknown" wrote more than "sixty years since." There is the Marquess giving instructions and making inquiries of the keepers, mounted ready to single out the stag that is to be pursued, and I hear them say (or imagine I do)—"We can show you where he lies, Fleet of foot and tall of size; We can show the marks he made, When 'gainst the oak his antlers frayed. You shall see him brought to bay. Hasten lords and ladies gay."

Then we move off in search of our game; here one of the horsemen meets with a disaster; the high-spirited cob on which General Hamilton is mounted rears and falls backwards, giving the gallant rider a nasty fall, fortunately without doing any serious damage, though it was a severe shake.

Soon we came upon a group of red deer browsing on a knoll adjacent to the kennels, and the keeper, selecting a fine stag, proceeds, accompanied by several horsemen, conspicuous amongst whom were the Earl of Lewes and Lords Henry and George Nevill, to ride him out from his companions. This is a somewhat difficult task, occupying a considerable time; but at length the animal breaks away from the herd, and goes at a screaming pace across the park, where there is ample space for a good gallop, the area extending over 2000 acres. The instant he starts, a deerhound is slipped from the leash, dashing after him at a tremendous pace. "Loo, loo, loo!" cry the hunters, who follow at a racing pace over the rugged, uneven ground. At first it appears that the stag is making for the water, but suddenly turning back he faces his pursuers. Then another hound is slipped and goes in eager pursuit, amidst loud cries of "Hold him! hold him! hold him!" and after a gallant struggle for freedom, our first stag is taken uninjured, the bounds having been whipped off by those who had kept close to them—no easy matter, considering the pace they went. With but little delay the second stag is selected, and in a short time is driven out from the herd, and goes away a rattler over the brown heather, closely followed by a splendid hound, that

has been instantly slipped from the leash. Away go the pursued and pursuer, and after them ride the eager horsemen, regardless of rabbit-holes, ruts, watercourses, and ant-hills. The stag appears literally to fly over the park, so severe is the pace, whilst the hound twists, turns, and stretches himself "*ventre à terre*," striving with every muscle to overtake the quarry. There goes Lord Henry Nevill as hard as he can gallop, utterly regardless of what comes in his way, until his horse, putting his feet into a piece of boggy ground, turns a complete somersault, landing on his back, and throwing his rider heavily to the ground. Soon both are up again, and the bold and daring horseman remounts his nag, but finds that he must relinquish the chase. Subsequently, it was found that his collar-bone and one rib were broken; but such was the pluck of this courageous hunter, that he told me, when bidding me good-bye, that he should be out on the following Monday with the West Kent. In pursuance of this resolution, he mounted his horse at the meet, but was compelled reluctantly to give up. So much for nerve and pluck, without which qualifications for the sport you must not go running after red deer. In the meanwhile the stag has gone his course, and unable to shake off his pursuers, makes straight for a small pool of water, in which he stands at bay. Then I see a picture that Landseer loved to portray; surrounded by the eager huntsmen, who with difficulty restrain the panting hounds, the stag bears himself majestically, bidding defiance to all comers. It is, indeed, a beautiful picture; but alas! his treacherous foes, with the aid of a rope, speedily secure him, and

I look with a feeling of regret upon the fallen fortunes of the sometime monarch of the glen.

After this we go again in quest of another animal. Quickly a noble fellow is selected, and promptly isolated from his companions, and goes away a clinker, and no mistake. A hound is at once slipped, and "Loo, loo, loo!" is again the sound that makes the welkin ring. This time we have a stouter and longer-enduring beast to deal with, and he leads us a right merrie dance over the hills and down the dales, through the brakes, along the glades, and over the brown heather at a tremendous speed. Now those who wish to go the pace can indulge their fancy to the fullest extent—there is no fear of overriding the hounds, the only difficulty is to keep on terms with them.

For a brief time I restrained the impetuosity of my steed, but when Miss Russell went by me like a flash of lightning, whilst galloping down a steep descent, it was in vain that I tried to check the speed of my excited nag. I, whether I liked it or not, was compelled to follow suit, going at full speed over the uneven ground, beneath overhanging boughs and through stony water-courses, never being able to halt for a moment in my Mazeppa-like career until the stag reached a wide pool, and in it sought to evade his pursuers. Pressed hard by the hounds who dashed in after him, determined to follow him to the bitter end, he quits the water and goes away again; but his heart failing, he doubles back and takes to the water once more, and the hounds being whipped off, he was finally secured.

In no case was any injury done to these noble animals, three of which we had now taken up, all having full heads. Then, the afternoon being young and the weather lovely, the Marquess resolved to give us another run. This time it was a hind that was selected, and some time elapsed before she could be induced to leave her calf, a yearling. At length she goes away, a hound is slipped, once more the cry of "Loo, loo, loo!" is heard, and away we race for a short distance, taking her in a small brooklet after a merry little spin. It is not often that a hind is so quickly taken; very often they show more sport and go greater distances than stags; and on a recent occasion the chase lasted for half-an-hour, and the distance traversed was estimated at eight miles. This closed a brilliant day's sport, and, judging from appearances, one or two of the horses had had quite enough of it. Then the large cavalcade wends its way to the castle, every one being pressed to partake of refreshments after the exertions of the day.

Chasing the stag is a royal sport in every sense of the word. Did not "William the Red" meet his fate when running wild deer in the sylvan glades of the New Forest? Do we not read in Shakespeare that Edward IV. delighted in the sport, and was well versed in the art of venery? What reply does he make to the huntsman, who says, "This way, my lord, for this way lies the game." "Nay, this way, man; see where the huntsmen stand!" Proving that the king was more master of the craft than the keeper. Occasionally a feeble wail, a mere whimper, is raised by a small section of the public against our

national sports. Fortunately, these feeble attempts to decry hunting and such like manly amusements meet with but slight response; and, in my opinion, it will be a sorry day for Old England when the youth and manhood of the country relinquish such pleasant and inspiriting pastimes.

The pleasures of Tunbridge Wells, however, were not yet exhausted, for I received an invitation to attend a meet of the Eridge Harriers, which is a recently established pack, the joint owners of which are the Earl of Lewes and Lord George Nevill. A good mount was offered at the same time, and their lordships having arranged that it should take place opposite the Nevill Club, I journeyed to the appointed spot, finding all the beauty and fashion of Tunbridge Wells assembled to witness the gathering of the sportsmen, and to look at the hounds, which were disporting themselves on the common opposite the club, which is under the same roof as the new Pump Room, occupying a site at the end of the Pantiles.

The Earl of Lewes, Lord George Nevill, and the Ladies Rose and Violet Nevill were present, as well as Mrs. Durrant, who appeared on horseback for the first time for several months; Mrs. Tuck on her old favourite, and Miss Russell on her clever thoroughbred, Mr. H. Cramp on Grey Friar, Mr. A. Cramp on a chesnut mare, which I subsequently saw perform over a hog-backed style, in a corner of a cover, in a style which did credit to horse and rider; Mr. Bates on the old Doctor, Mr. Hoskins, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Durrant, Mr. Harris, and many others I have seen out with the West Kent.

Lord George Nevill hunts the hounds himself,

wearing the customary green coat, looking quite at home in his new vocation. Then we move off across the common, and go in the direction of the railway, where a halloo was heard, and we were somehow or other quickly on to the scent of a fox, which had gone away, and the hounds getting on his line, we ran him through the covers, finally losing him in a drain. After this we proceeded to the legitimate business of the day, and a hare jumping up before the hounds, they went away with a musical chorus which it was delightful to hear.

The day was cold and stormy, and there was not an atom of scent, but our huntsman spared no exertion to give us a gallop, and the hounds, which were steady and diligent, did their best to puzzle out the line of the hare. Not being able to press her, puss ran a series of rings, during which there were some very pretty fencing, the Earl of Lewes, who is a very bold and clever rider, showing us the way in good style, and, as I subsequently found, when following him over a big fence, an awkward man to select as a pilot. Consequently, I came to grief, and, like "vaulting ambition," I o'erleaped myself and fell on the other side, a cropper, and no mistake. No damage being done, though I carried the marks of my downfall in the shape of a well-mudded coat, I was more cautious the remainder of the day, though I am bound to say my mishap was purely accidental, arising from the clever horse I was riding, who did not like being kept waiting, clearing, when I let him go at it, the topmost twig of the hedge, landing in a drain, coming down on his knees, and laying me on the broad of my back. The position, though not painful, was, to say

the least, humiliating; for, having one of my sons out, who I am training up in the way he should go, he sarcastically remarked, using some cant phrase that the youth of the period are so fond of adopting, "Oh! that's the way it's done, is it?"

After running the first hare for a length of time, we lost her, and quickly found a fresh one, running her well when on the grass, but the instant we crossed the plough there was no scent, and we finally gave up the pursuit, and ended the day's sport. Considering the short time Lord George has had these hounds, their performance was very satisfactory, and the foundation is laid for a capital pack, of which much may be expected next season.





CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ROYAL BUCKHOUNDS.

ACCORDING to a long-established custom, the Royal Buckhounds concluded their season on Easter Monday. The meet yesterday was Maidenhead Thicket, where sufficient space is available to afford the immense concourse of spectators who flock from all quarters a view of the proceedings. "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas le sport," may be said of the day's amusement.

The populace on these occasions usually hunt the stag themselves, dispensing with the services of Frank Goodall and the hounds, and for a while have it all to themselves. Great is the anxiety of the assembled multitude to witness the uncarting of the noble animal, and when he emerges from the van the welkin is made to ring with an uproarious shout sufficient to frighten from his propriety the most gallant deer that ever roamed through woodland wild. Should he succeed in making his way through the crowd who encompass him on every side and get away into the open, he soon shows them a clean pair of heels, and it is a case of catch him who can.

Prior to this last appearance in public, an opportunity was afforded me of looking over the Royal Kennels at Ascot Heath, and observing the healthy state and splendid condition of the Queen's Hounds. The season has been an especially trying one, from the fact of rabies breaking out and causing the loss of several of the pack. At once the hounds were stopped from hunting, and every precaution taken under these trying circumstances. Goodall was strongly advised to have the entire pack destroyed; but the noble Master, Lord Hardwicke, having the fullest confidence in the judgment and experience of his huntsman, allowed him to follow his own course, the result being so far satisfactory that, on the occasion of my visit, no hounds could be seen in a healthier state, and, judging from appearances, I should say there is every reason to believe that, by the care and attention that was paid, the disease was thoroughly stamped out. It would, indeed, have been a signal disaster, if so fine a lot of animals had been sacrificed in a scare. Fortunately, Lord Hardwicke gave them a chance, and saved from destruction a pack of matchless hounds.

I doubt whether any master in the United Kingdom could produce a finer lot than those paraded on the flags for my inspection—notably, General, Ganymede, Reveller, Scorpion, Wizard, Whitebait, Baronet, Marplot, Boreas, Captor, Flora, Fair Maid, Governess, and Folly. The season has been so interfered with by frost and snow that the sport has been greatly curtailed, though some capital runs have been shown, especially one from Brick Bridge, the deer being uncarted at Westley Mill, in a snow-

storm, running through Binfield Park, by Bill Hill, leaving Wokingham on the left, and on to Bearwood Park, then crossing the Loddon to Shinfield, where he was taken, after a capital gallop of two hours and ten minutes. A good judge who was out on this occasion remarked, "I never saw a better run either with fox or stag." This was a very handsome, untried animal, named Festivity, in consequence of his making his *début* the day following the Duke of Connaught's wedding.

Another crack run was shown from the Warren House, Lord Hardwicke and Baron Ferdinand Rothschild being present. The deer was uncarted in Mr. Benning's field, going away at a rattling pace, leaving Buckhurst Park on the right, making for Wokingham, then bearing for Reading, over Bearwood Park, finally being taken at Arborfield, after a capital chase of three hours. Goodall met with a fall on the occasion, and Lord Hardwicke hunted the hounds during the rest of the day. When I mounted my horse at Windsor, the morning was not promising, and I soon felt "the icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter's wind" as I trotted sharply away through Slough, past Salt Hill, reaching Maidenhead Thicket at the moment the deer-cart appeared on the scene. An immense concourse of people had already assembled—a motley crew—but all bent on having a jolly day, and seeing, for once in a way, the meet of the Royal Buckhounds. In addition to the vast number of foot people, the roads were lined with carts, gigs, wagonettes, and one four-in-hand, which had been tooled over from Slough.

Of the horsemen, it might be said that they

resembled a regiment of very irregular cavalry—numbers careering about on sorry-looking steeds in a strange and erratic manner; but these were the many—the few well-known sportsmen being Lord Carington and Mr. Frank King, representing the Melton division; Mr. Shoolbred, the Rugby; and Mr. Willis, the regular riders with the Royal pack, whose ardour for the sport is not diminished, though for forty long years he has followed the fortune of the Queen's to my certain knowledge; Mr. Willis, jun., seeking a little relaxation after his college studies, which, however, did not appear to have injured his constitution; Mr. Douglas, of Hounslow, from whom I was sorry to receive a not very satisfactory report of the condition of Lord Hardwicke, the injuries received in the fall he met with a few days since having been serious; Mr. Frank Sherborne, of Bedford, as well as several ladies, who were not to be daunted by a crowd, including Miss Parsons, Mrs. Brock, and several others, with whose names I am unacquainted, and one fair, smiling girl, on a light bay horse, who seemed to thoroughly enjoy the sport, and who will be best described in the lines of Wordsworth,—

“A creature not too bright or good,
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrow's simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.”

Little time was lost in uncarting the deer, which was an untried animal, good enough for the occasion, as the crowd surrounded and mobbed him, boys on the topmost trees yelled at him, and men on horseback, families in four-wheeled chaises, and

youths on bicycles pursued him relentlessly, until he got into the open; then Goodall, having contrived to give the multitude the slip, laid on the hounds, and they went away at a racing speed for about fifteen minutes, when the deer, which had met with an injury, having spiked himself in the shoulder, was run into and taken at the vicarage adjacent to Knowle Hill. This was sufficient to amuse the holiday folks, and it is well that the custom should be kept up, as it tends to popularise the sport by allowing the public once or twice in the year to join in hunting the stag. Of course there were many spills, several ardent sportsmen, whose experience evidently was limited, coming to grief. Fortunately they were more frightened than hurt, though one adventurous youth, on a long-tailed, out-of-condition brute, had a narrow escape, the animal rearing in a lane, and falling back with his rider into a ditch, fortunately without injuring him. The presence of bicyclists on such occasions is not to be eagerly desired, as riding a very fine fresh young horse upon which Mr. Sherley had mounted me, I found that he arched his neck, eyeing them suspiciously, rendering caution necessary, and I was not sorry when I had passed safely by them. Of course all the dwellers in the adjacent villages were in a state of excitement. One youngster, a four-year-old, having eluded its mother's watchful care, ran straight across the road in front of my nag, then arose the "Hurried question of despair, 'Where is my child?' and echo answers 'Where?'" However, in this case the fears of the alarmed parent were promptly allayed, as I pulled up sharp, and the youngster escaped. Having

shaken off a portion of the crowd, Goodall turned out a second deer. This time "Maid of the Mist," a hind that has frequently shown good sport, was uncarted at Shottesbrooke Park, which he crossed, and then made for Lawrence Waltham, ringing about, running into Round Wood, and on to White Waltham, with frequent checks, whilst the enormous number of horsemen pressing on the hounds gave them but a poor chance. A check taking place in the road leading to Maidenhead, and having followed the hounds for an hour and a-quarter, I pulled up and trotted back to Windsor.

Thus terminated the season of the Royal Buckhounds, and it is greatly to be regretted that the noble Master should have been prevented by the unfortunate accident that has happened to him from attending this annual festival. It is not expected that on such an occasion much sport can possibly be shown; and it is simply a parade, resulting in much amusement to the lookers-on. The eccentricity of costume is delightful. One gallant hunter, though booted and spurred in orthodox style, had crowned the edifice with a rink cap made of fur; whilst an enthusiast had mounted a venerable grey cart-mare, which he belaboured most lustily, shouting all the way he went, evidently believing that the correct thing was to halloo like mad when going a-hunting. Turning away from the hounds, I trotted back to Windsor, encountering rain, hail, and sleet, the wind blowing bitterly cold the while. Disconsolate pleasure seekers were compelled to bend their steps homewards; youths in flannels, bearing bats and bags, had been compelled to relinquish cricket; jolly

young watermen were to be seen returning in a melancholy frame of mind; and mothers of families, having tied their handkerchiefs over the Easter bonnet, dragged the hapless-looking youngsters through the heavy falling rain to the nearest railway station.





CHAPTER XXXIV.

OUR MODERN STAGE-COACHES.

OF the many pleasing diversions that are provided for the British public at this period of the year, there is not one more popular or deserving of success than that of coaching. Fine weather is the one thing to be desired, and when

“From brightening fields of ether fair disclosed,
Child of the sun, refulgent summer comes,
In pride of youth, and felt through Nature’s depth,”

there is no more delightful pastime or better mode of beguiling the tedious hours than taking your seat on one of our modern stage-coaches, and, with an artist on the bench, being tooled along at the rate of ten miles an hour. The clatter of the hoofs of four high-stepping steeds, the mellow winding of the horn, and the cheery companionship of your fellow-passengers, cannot fail, unless you are of a morose turn of mind, to quicken the pulsations of your heart and enliven your spirits, whilst spanking along one of the pleasant routes that are offered for your selection by the spirited proprietors of these well-appointed vehicles.

The enterprise of our modern Jehus, however, is not confined to the sultry hours of summer-tide, for the St. Albans coach has performed its journeys through frost and snow; and that capital coachman, Major Dixon, was to be seen handling the ribbons throughout the whole of this unparalleled winter; whilst the energetic Captain Hargreaves did the journey to and from Uxbridge, though bitter blew the blast. Now that

“Surely winter passes off,
Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts,”

any lover of the amusement may indulge his fancy to the fullest extent by journeying to the White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly, where he will find the Messrs. Banks at their post, who will put him up to the time of day, and in the pleasantest manner point out the different journeys, giving the names of the coachmen and all necessary particulars. Already he will have a choice of several first-rate coaches. If he desires only to take a short trip, he can jump up on the Dorking and sit by the side of that well-known performer, Sir Henry de Bathe, or that clever whip, Lord Arthur Somerset; and he need not fear to entrust himself to a tyro such as Mr. Hunt, who, though new to coaching, has yet had plenty of experience with his own teams, having been perfected in the art, if I mistake not, by Ben Hubble, one of the smartest whips in creation—to use a Yankee term for a proficient. If he selects this journey he will pass through the prettiest parts of the county of Surrey, going *via* Clapham, Mitcham, Morden, Epsom, Leatherhead, and Mickleham. As the season advances

the country in this direction, especially in the immediate vicinity of Box Hill and Dorking, will be found to be lovely.

If he desires merely a short afternoon's ride, then the Thames Ditton coach, the proprietor of which is Mr. Peter Robinson, ought to suit him, travelling as it does through Kew, Richmond, Twickenham, Bushey Park, Hampton Court, and East Moulsey, reaching Thames Ditton after a journey of an hour and fifty minutes; or if he prefers to journey in the direction of Hertfordshire, he will find Selby's coach—the Tantivy—ready to convey him to St. Albans, in first-rate style, with promptitude and despatch worthy of the old coaching days. Should, however, he be a thorough-going lover of the art of driving, and desire to go on for a regular downright old-fashioned piece of road work, then he must mount the Defiance, and trust himself to that skilled coachman, Mr. Carleton Blyth, who has entered on a big thing, having provided no less than 125 first-class coach-horses and two coaches, built by Hollands, in their very best style—which is not to be excelled by any builder in London—in order to perform the now-a-days extraordinary journey between the two Universities, the distance between Oxford and Cambridge being certainly not less than 112 miles, the coach being timed to do the distance in twelve hours, including stoppages and a halt of twenty minutes at the White Horse Cellar for luncheon.

Such a venture is enough to take one's breath away. The capital embarked is no small sum, and the return must be to an extent uncertain; but Mr. Blyth is a true lover of driving, and, in my opinion, should he

drop a thousand or two over his amusement, it is a far more sensible way of spending money than backing Windgall, by Spavin out of Splint, at a gate-meeting, and being picked up by the Ring, or shaking your elbow at the Hawks, or punting and playing whist at the Roysterers' Club. At any rate, he will have some fun for his money, which will not be the case if he indulges in the before-named pleasing little ways of getting rid of spare time—at least, not to any great extent, for the pace is usually very fast, and the result, my experience teaches me, unsatisfactory.

Starting from the Mitre at Oxford, the Defiance, passing through Wheatley, Tetsworth, Stokenchurch, High Wycombe, Gerrard's Cross, Uxbridge, Hayes, Southall, Acton, Shepherd's Bush, reaches the White Horse Cellar at 2:50; then, after halting twenty minutes for refreshment, it starts again, going by way of Tottenham, Edmonton, Waltham Cross, Hoddesdon, Wadernill, Bustingford, Royston, and Harlston, arriving at the Bull, Cambridge, at 9 o'clock P.M., doing the distance, after deducting sixty minutes for stoppages, in eleven hours, being at the rate of ten miles an hour.

This is a great undertaking, and everything has been done to make the arrangements perfect, while no expense has been spared to ensure a thorough success. Prior to the starting of these coaches, an opportunity was afforded of looking over them whilst in the manufactory of Messrs. Holland; and it is not saying too much to describe them as the perfection of stage-coaches for style, execution, finish, and good taste. The majority of those which will be put on the road this year are to be supplied by the same

well-known firm, at whose establishment in Oxford Street may be seen other private coaches, two of which attracted my attention, namely, one built for the Duke of Hamilton, and the other for Mr. Gordon Bennett. If the horses selected by Mr. Blyth are to be judged from one team that I saw at the Cellar, they will leave nothing to be desired.

On the 12th of this month, Mr. Walter Shoolbred's extremely well-appointed coach will run as usual to Guildford and back, and will be an excellent opportunity for anyone riding through this pleasant journey of witnessing the excellent coachmanship and style in which the thing is done by this spirited proprietor. The teams working between London and Guildford will, I may venture to predict, be well chosen, even-stepping and good-looking, and will do the distance punctually to the moment, as was the case last year, when the way in which time was kept throughout the distance was very remarkable.

Colonel Stacey Clitherow and Mr. Freeman will put their coach on the Brighton road in due course, affording an opportunity for those tired with the monotony of the journey by rail of varying the mode of travelling to the far-famed City by the Sea. Lord Helmsley and Baron Schroeder will work the road between London and Sevenoaks, affording an excellent opportunity of viewing the scenery of the most beautiful part of the lovely county of Kent. Mr. Bailey will reappear with his well-appointed mail-coach, and do the distance between Piccadilly and Windsor in the same excellent style as it was done last year. This will be found a most delightful trip, the coach passing through Richmond, Twickenham,

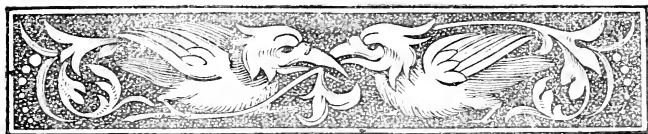
Bushey Park, Hampton, and Staines. Another coach is announced to start from the Horse Shoe, in Tottenham Court Road, to Virginia Water, and may now be seen at Messrs. Hollands'.

The Hironnelle, from Enfield to Hitchin, which has proved so great a success for the last two or three years, it is expected will reappear again this season. To the lover of the art of driving, another opportunity will be offered of seeing a thoroughly well-appointed turn-out, admirably horsed, and beautifully tooled; no better coachman or more business-like stage-coach is to be found on any road than that so admirably worked by Colonel A. P. Somerset, of Enfield Court. The horses selected to work the Hironnelle are invariably, or with only one or two exceptions, chesnuts, showing blood, stepping well together, and performing their journey at a slapping good speed. From the buckle of the reins to the point of his whip everything is perfect. What Colonel Somerset does, or desires to be done, must be thoroughly up to the mark or he will not be pleased.

The ride through Hatfield Park is most enjoyable, and is a privilege especially accorded to the proprietor of the Hironnelle, making a pleasant change from the dusty road to the shady avenue of Lord Salisbury's extensive domain. When the limes are in full leaf and the fern fully grown, to trot gently through the park is delightful; large herds of fallow deer lift up their heads, wondering who it is that intrudes on their privacy, and innumerable rabbits scuttle away to their burrows, whilst fine old cock pheasants may be seen sunning themselves in the

noontide rays, or pluming themselves after a summer shower in this fine old ancestral demesne. Nor must the good cheer which awaits you on arrival at the Sun at Hitchin be omitted to be noticed; for, after such a pleasant drive, nature will demand support, and the pigeon pies, roast ducks and green pease, roast beef of Old England, and gooseberry tarts vividly recall the good old coaching days that were believed to have been entirely things of the past; but now by the exertions of the proprietors of the modern stage-coach are revived with spirit, affording much pleasure to the traveller, if not realising extravagant profits for the owners.

On the whole, therefore, the prospects of coaching for the ensuing season may be considered in the ascendant. Doubtless such good examples will be followed by other enterprising spirits. In such case, the man ambitious of emulating such whips as are at present in the field should put money in his purse and not be afraid to spend it, as it is no use doing things in a half-hearted way; and then he should go to Hollands' for his coach; to George Cox, of Stamford Street; Blackman's, of Knightsbridge; or the Andover and Weyhill Company's establishment at Cricklewood for his nags, and he will find everything to his mind; and, further, if he wants the aid of a professional to show him how the thing should be done, he should engage the veteran whip, Harry Ward, who will speedily teach him how to handle the ribbons in a style becoming a coachman of one of our modern stage coaches.



CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CLOSE OF THE HUNTING SEASON.

AFTER a winter of unexampled severity, which greatly curtailed the amount of sport, the season closed with some capital runs, notably with the Duke of Beaufort, the Duke of Grafton, and the North Warwickshire Hounds. Notwithstanding that the opportunity of seeing many of the principal packs was so greatly reduced by the long-continued frost, I contrived to ride with fifteen different lots of first-class hounds, finishing up the year with the Duke of Grafton, the North Warwickshire, and the West Kent. Having been invited to visit Newport Pagnell, I embraced the opportunity, and soon found myself in comfortable quarters at the very hospitable residence of Mr. Hives, with the prospect of a first-rate mount, and the chance of a good day's sport; the fixture for the ensuing day being Astwell Mill, some six or seven miles from Towcester. The morning was such as we have now nearly got accustomed to—dull and dreary, with a cold north-east wind blowing freshly. The suggestion that I should go to cover in a brougham exactly

fitted in with my inclination, and as the distance from Newport Pagnell to Towcester was fully twelve miles, abundant opportunity was afforded for discussing an excellent cigar, as well as many good things in the hunting line that I and my companion, Mr. Willis, had dropped in for, during the forty years we have met in the hunting field. No wonder that the time sped fleetly and pleasantly, as we travelled along at a rattling pace, by way of Stony Stratford, to Towcester, where our horses awaited us.

It is always a matter of speculation when I see a strange horse brought out, as to what are his peculiarities or pleasant little ways of disporting himself. This time, however, I rode a brown horse with a character, "The Veteran," recently purchased from that good judge "Wise," of Eton—a name familiar to hundreds of sportsmen—and well he maintained his reputation, carrying me in right good form as close to the tail of the Duke of Grafton's clipping pack as the pace would permit. A pleasant trot brought us to the meet, where a large "field" was in waiting. First and foremost was His Grace the Duke of Grafton, who had passed us on our way as he drove to cover in a phaeton drawn by two clever steppers. Next I recognised Lord Valentia and Lord Ellesmere, the Hon. Percy Barrington, the Hon. Captain Grosvenor, Mr. Arthur Byass and Mrs. Byass, an elegant horsewoman, who rides fearlessly and well to hounds, mounted upon a clever chesnut that looked all over a hunter; Captain Oliver, who though too lame from a fall to be able to mount a horse, yet attends every meet

on wheels, and sees more sport than many who ride to hounds; Mr. and Mrs. Bull, Mr. Morgan of Billesdon Park, Mr. Poole Ward, Mr. Tolley, Captain Fitzroy, the Hon. Mr. Pennant, Colonel Pennant, Mr. John Foy, Mr. W. Freeman, Mr. Blencowe, of Brackley, who though a welter-weight truly, riding eighteen stone, yet goes as straight as a bird; the Rev. R. Knightley, Mrs. Pilgrim, Mrs. Ball, Mr. Higgins, Captain Higgins, Mr. Fred. Willis, and Mr. Hives, but the distance from Newport Pagnell being so great, Mrs. Hives did not put in an appearance, and I lost the opportunity of witnessing her way of going across this stiff country on the clever little grey mare, late the property of the ex-Queen of Naples, which she pilots with great courage and discretion when hounds go the pace.

It was a pleasing picture that met the sight, as I rode up to the piece of rising-ground, where Frank Beers had taken up his place, with his celebrated pack around him, looking as blooming and fit to go as hounds could be wished, accompanied by his two able whips, T. Smith and George Cole, all being exceedingly well mounted. A very fine lot of hounds are those of his Grace, maintaining to the fullest extent the historical reputation that this pack has so long and deservedly attained; and one thing is quite clear, which is the fact of their going, when on good terms with their fox, at a speed which I do not remember ever seeing surpassed.

The first cover, "Hallithorne," was drawn blank, as also was the "Colonel's" cover, but Gommery's Holt held a fox, and "Gone away! gone away!" was the cheery sound that quickly was heard from the

woodland side, and we galloped away for thirty minutes, running a ring, and finally pulling down our fox in Plumpton wood, when the cry of "Who-hoop, who-hoop!" made the welkin ring. One good man went wrong, getting into a brook, but as he seemed quite content with his position, and time pressing, he was left alone in his glory to get out as best he could. After this we trotted off for Weedon Bushes, not neglecting, however, to stop by the way at Oakley Bank, to accept the hospitable offer of refreshments, which Mr. Aris delights to proffer whenever he has an opportunity. Neither this cover, however, nor Braddon Spinnies, nor even Kingthorn wood, held a fox this day; however, better luck was in store for us.

When we reached Ascot Thorns, soon the cheery note of the horn, and the cry of "Gone away! gone away!" was heard, for a resolute fox was quickly on foot, and went away at a clinking pace in the direction of Bugbrooke; doubling back sharp when he came to the railway, where I viewed him in the same field with the hounds; running back eventually to Ascot Thorns, where he went to ground. There was scarcely any scent; but when the hounds got on good terms with their fox, they ran him for twenty minutes in first-rate form, giving us a sharp gallop across a stiff line of country, which would infallibly have ended in a kill, had we had a more auspicious day. Being carried in first-rate style, my horse taking his fences in grand form, I enjoyed the day's sport greatly. The country though stiff is always practicable, and the hounds are handsome, clever, handy, and persevering; whilst Frank Beers does

his best to show sport, and generally succeeds in his endeavours.

A fall of snow prevented my riding with them a second time, and I shall have to wait until next season to confirm the impression that they made upon me. However, I saw enough to enable me to say that no smarter or better-looking lot of hounds are to be met with than those of the Duke of Grafton.

The fixture on the occasion of my riding with the North Warwickshire was Hillmorton, three miles from Rugby—the cream of the country hunted by these fine hounds being separated by the Watling Street Road only from those of the Pytchley. Many have been the crack runs that have been witnessed from this favourite cover over the big grass fields in the vicinity. On my arrival at Rugby I made my way at once to that most comfortable of hotels, the Royal George, to give it its full title, where I found, as usual, the house crowded with a distinguished party of eager and expectant sportsmen, including, amongst others, Baron and Baroness Briedback, Count Batthyany, Mr. W. N. Heysham, Mr. James Sheil, Mr. E. Dalglish, Mr. Haig, who travelled with his horses from Scotland, arriving at four in the morning, when he at once prepared for the day's work, neither man nor horse taking any rest.

As usual, when I visit this sporting locality, I paid a visit to Mr. Darby, who, before I had time to sit down, proffered me a mount on one of his tip-top nags, which I accepted promptly, knowing that I was certain to find myself on the back of a clipper; nor were my anticipations doomed to disappoint-

ment, for when I mounted "Regalia," a bay mare, well up to my weight, I felt satisfied that I was bound to be in a good place, if my heart did not fail me when I came to a yawner. Trotting up to Hillmorton village, I found a great number of well-known men and many ladies assembled, with Wheatley, the clever huntsman of the North Warwickshire, and his grand pack of hounds, on the village green, and Jack Press and Walter Dale, his two good whips, in attendance. Amongst the many well-known performers with these hounds, I found Mr. Lant of Nailcote Hall, the Master of the North Warwickshire; Captain Myddleton, who on the previous day was hunting in Ireland, crossing over and travelling all night in order to be present at this crack meet; Lord Mountgarret, the Honourable Gilbert Leigh, Count Almasy, Sir John Rae Reid, Mr. John Arkwright, Mr. Bromley Davenport, General Cureton, General Bloomfield, Colonel Saarsfield-Greene, Colonel Ruck-Keene, Mr. J. A. Craven, Mr. Muntz, Mr. J. Y. Robins, Mr. H. Everard, Colonel and Miss Fitzroy, Messrs. W. Selby and Wedge, Captains Woodrop, Walker, Garrett, and Vere Close, Mr. Sidney Hobson, Mr. Greaves, Captains Radford and Atkinson, Mr. Shoolbred, Mr. Edward Petre, Mr. Scott Murray, etc., with a large contingent of ladies, including Baroness Briedback, Mrs. Pritchard Rayner, an excellent performer; Mrs. Jones, Miss Lancaster, Miss Tempest, Miss Pennington, etc.; whilst Will. Goodall, the huntsman of the Pytchley, not satisfied with the four days a-week with his own hounds, had a holiday outing at Hillmorton, and being devoid of the cares of office,

expressed himself at the close of the day as having thoroughly enjoyed the day's sport.

Scarcely had the hounds been thrown into Hillmorton covert, when a rattling view-halloo was heard, and we were away at a stinging pace; crossing the brook, in which several of the eager sportsmen took a bath, away over the old steeplechase course, turning to the right, and making for Mr. Churnside's cover, where the hounds threw up their heads, and were unable to do anything more with their fox. Returning to Hillmorton, little time elapsed ere we were on the line of a second fox, which broke away, taking the same line as the first, and crossing the brook; then changing his mind, he turned to the left, crossed the old course, running nearly up to Clifton; then passing Cook's cover, he made his way at a racing pace nearly to Barby, where he ran to ground in a friendly drain, where we left him.

Next we drew Cook's cover, finding and chopping a fox in a very brief space of time. Then away to Bilton Grange; once more we hear the cheery cry of "Tally-ho! tally-ho!" then "Gone away, lads! gone away!" and we raced away very fast, indeed, up to Bunker's Hill, then on to Lester's piece, over the large grass fields up to Thurlaston, running across the avenue, and finally losing our fox in Cawston. This was a rattling good run; the ground rode light; the fences were fair; the pace severe. "Regalia" was fully equal to the occasion, carrying me delightfully, no matter what the fence was that presented itself; finally taking some ugly-looking rails, with a deepish drop on the other side, in a style that convinced me that I was riding a clipper,

such as I have rarely, if ever, met the equal of amongst the many first-class nags I have had the good fortune to lay my leg across during the last two or three seasons.

Returning to the George, I found congenial companions and the best of everything, and I am more convinced than ever that there are no better hunting quarters, or a more accessible and cheery place to enjoy sport than the pleasant town of Rugby.

Having received a pressing invitation to be present at one of the last meets for the season of the West Kent Hounds, I journeyed to Eynesford, where my trusty friend, Richard Russell, the secretary of the hunt, was in waiting, in order to drive me to "The Franks" at Horton Kirby, a fine old Elizabethan mansion, the residence of Mr. Power. The morning, fortunately, was fine—a foretaste of spring, in fact—and the river Darent, which meanders through the beautiful grounds, sparkled in the merry, merry sunshine. Groups of men in scarlet, ladies in habits, and lookers-on were dotted all over the extensive and beautifully kept lawns; whilst George Bollen, the clever and persevering huntsman of this sporting pack, sat on his horse on the farther side of the rapidly flowing stream, whilst his hounds disported themselves on the grass, or crossed the water and mingled with the company, making up an exceedingly pretty picture. An elegant breakfast was prepared in the beautiful suite of rooms of this magnificently furnished and venerable mansion, to which the numerous visitors were bidden by Mr. and Mrs. Power, who entertained their many guests with profuse hospitality. Amongst the company I

found the Honourable Ralph Nevill, the Master of the West Kent; Mr. Barclay Field of Ashurst Park, Mr. Fitch Kemp, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Walter Jackson, Messrs. Russell, Greig, etc.

The hounds were then thrown into an adjacent cover, and promptly a view-halloo was heard, with a musical chorus from the eager hounds, as they rattled their fox through the extensive covers. Reynard, however, declined to leave his favourite haunts in the woodland wild, and finally went to ground; but his cunning availed him not, for a spade was employed to dig him out from his hiding-place, and he was soon transferred to a sack, to be turned down in due time before the pack. Then we moved away to another cover hard by, and again the cry of "Tally-ho! tally-ho!" was heard, and after a little while a fine old fox broke away, running across three or four large fields, entering a deep railway cutting, and then making his way into the station yard, where he was headed and hustled about; but at last succeeded in getting up the slopes of the line, and went away for about fifteen minutes at a rattling pace over the grass fields, following the course of the river, the fences being stiff, with sundry tall flights of rails, that took some negotiating. Finally, we killed our fox in the cover at the back of "The Franks." This was a merry spin whilst it lasted, and had the fox not been badgered and bothered at the railway station, he would not have succumbed so easily. Then we trotted away to Lullingstone Park, the seat of Sir William Hart Dyke, who had joined us, where the fox that had been dug out was turned down; and

he led us a merry dance across this beautiful domain, being finally run into and killed, after a sharp burst. After this another fox was found, and we ran him for a considerable time, finally losing him in a cover in the vicinity of Otford.

Then comes the last scene of all, the final meet of the Surrey Staghounds at Penshurt Station.

Being on a visit to one of the cheery inhabitants of Tunbridge Wells, I required but little inducement to attend at the uncarting of the deer at this pretty village. Many well-known men attended on this occasion to witness the performances of this first-rate pack of staghounds, amongst whom I noticed the Earl of Lewes, Lord George Nevill, Mr. Nicholls, the master; Mr. Tamplin, of Brighton, the Honble. C. Fitzwilliam, Mr. Fitch Kemp, Mr. Spiers, Messrs. Cramp, Bradshaw, etc. Amongst the ladies was Miss Russell, who rode gallantly through the run, charging the deep brook, her clever nag skimming the surface like a bird; Mrs. Nye Chart, etc.

“Whittlebury;” being uncartered, the hounds, after the usual amount of law had been given, were laid on and run for forty minutes, over a splendid line of country, nearly all grass, with plenty of big fences.

On arriving at Colonel Streatfield's, the hounds were whipped off. After this, the pace was slower, and the deer made for “Blackham,” then, turning to the left, he crossed Lord Hardinge's park, passed the Chafford Paper Mills, where those who were able to live with the hounds had their work cut out. Some stiff stiles and a couple of brooks had to be negotiated, Miss Russell being the only lady who

got over them. Then away they galloped in the direction of "Bedboro," by "Ashover" cover, through Mabledon on to Tunbridge, the deer finally being taken in a stream near Hildenboro'.

Miss Kennedy, whom I have frequently seen going in grand form with the South Down Hounds, went extremely well, but gave up before the deer was taken. Mr. Willie Bradshaw rode well for a beginner, as did many of the "field," who made the most of their last day's sport, thus ending the season with a clinking good run little short of three hours.

Looking back on the year's sport, abbreviated as it has been by so protracted and severe a winter, yet there have been plenty of good things, with most packs.

Short and sweet is my description of the season; and I can never remember seeing larger fields, finer hounds, better horses, or harder riders, during my experience, which extends over half a century; nor do I ever remember hunting to be more popular, or foxes more plentiful, or owners and occupiers of the land better disposed towards the grandest and manliest of our national amusements. In my opinion, no sport equals it; and though the vigour of youth has long since waned, yet "still in our ashes live the wonted fires," and I cannot see a hare jump from her form, a fox break from cover, or a wild stag rise from his heathery couch, without experiencing a thrill of excitement and a joyous sensation throughout my whole frame. Long, therefore, may fox-hunting flourish, promoting, as it does, good fellowship amongst sportsmen, encouraging the breeding of horses, and causing a yearly ex-

penditure of at least two millions, whilst affording infinite delight to those whose taste leads them to indulge in manly pastimes. Farewell then, for a while, to the neighing steed, the baying hound, and the cheery cry of the huntsman; for, though it is to be hoped that the returning season will show increased prosperity to the chase, it is now time to cry—"WHO-HOOP."





CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE MEET OF THE FOUR-IN-HAND.



ESTERDAY witnessed the first meeting of the Four-in-Hand Club, at the usual trysting-place, the Magazine, in Hyde Park, hard by that turgid pool known as the Serpentine. A lovely morning gave promise of a genial day—a promise that was, in truth, loyally and royally performed, for the weather was all that could be desired; while the presence of Royalty added an additional charm to a most enjoyable gathering of the *élite* of the fashionable world.

Hyde Park on this occasion was seen to the greatest possible advantage; for, after an unparalleled and apparently interminable winter, we have, while standing upon the very threshold of summer, at length received a long overdue instalment of spring. The venerable elms, which are the glory of the park, hesitatingly, and by slow degrees, are unfolding their leaves; a forward rhododendron, anxious to anticipate its many companions, is seen blooming alone. The emerald green of the lawns, the trimly-kept borders, and the cheery but limited allowance of sunshine, gave an inviting aspect to this pleasant resort; and it was no wonder, there-

fore, that the banks of the Serpentine were thronged with visitors on horseback, in carriages, and on foot. Greater numbers I have seen assembled to witness this fine exhibition of coaches and horses, which is not to be equalled in any city in the world, but I have never seen so orderly and staid an assemblage as this which was present to witness the performances of the members of the F.H.D.C. on their opening day.

The first to appear upon the scene was Lord Poltimore, by whose side was seated that capital sportsman and pleasant companion, Major Paynter. The team, consisting of two smart-looking browns, and a grey and a bay horse, came up in good form, and took up their prominent position in a style that was unexceptionable. Succeeding Lord Poltimore, came Sir Thomas Peyton, whose admirable team of coaching-looking greys attracted the usual amount of attention which invariably greets their appearance. Next to arrive was Count Münster, tooling his grand team of handsome chesnuts in first-rate style, as became a coachman who had so many fair passengers entrusted to his charge.

Soon after, Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson drove up with his good-looking team—three dark browns and a black mare—which, if I recollect rightly, were, as regards the leaders, bought of Mr. George Rice. This team and turn-out rank amongst the very best of the club, and being closely followed by that of Sir Henry Tufton, there was little to choose between them, though, taken on the whole, for symmetry, style of going, handiness, and handsome appearance, I must award, before all, the first prize

to the latter gentleman, as representing the F.H.D.C. on this occasion.

Whilst the different coaches were arriving, and were being marshalled into position by Inspectors Bradley and Frazer, who performed their duties most skilfully, and with the greatest good temper and tact, three carriages containing the Royal visitors and suite, who honoured the meeting with their presence, drove up to the spot where the coaches were assembled. In the first carriage were their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, by the side of the latter was seated the Empress of Germany, and *vis-à-vis* to her Majesty the Crown Prince of Denmark. Standing by the side of the Royal carriage, containing these illustrious personages, I could not fail to notice the appearance of her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales; and I cannot call to mind any period, from the time of her first entry into London, when she has looked in such good health, and seemed to take so much interest in any proceeding as she did on this occasion. It must have appeared strange, I should imagine, to the illustrious lady seated by her side, that there should be no escort, no police officers, nor any retinue, accompanying the Prince and Princess at so great a gathering as this. Attended only by their equerries, and the ladies and gentlemen in waiting, their presence was acknowledged simply by the respectful salutations of the numbers surrounding the *courtége*, not a cheer being given, not the slightest disorder occurring, or the least confusion visible amongst the throng who attended to witness the exhibition that is annually provided by the

members of this long-established club, which affords so vast an amount of pleasure to the numberless admirers of coaching who attend these festive gatherings. Nor were these the only members of the Royal family who were present; for their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh drove up in an open carriage, drawn by four clever ponies, ridden by postillions, with outriders preceding.

The coaches being marshalled into position, were started in the following order:—First, the Treasurer of the Club, Lord Aveland, who, in the absence of his Grace the Duke of Beaufort, the President, headed the procession, followed in succession by Sir Henry Tufton, General Dickson, Count Munster, Lord Poltimore, Mr. H. W. Eaton, Colonel Stacey Clitheroe, Sir Thomas Peyton, Colonel Williams, Major Percival—who drove Colonel Ewart's drag; Viscount Castlereagh, Captain Needham—tooling the coach of the 1st Life Guards; Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson, Captain Bastard—a thorough good coachman, who performed on the coach of Mr. Villiers, handling four handsome, young, and rather raw bay nags in a very workmanlike form; Lord Londesborough—with a coach-load of distinguished passengers, handling his handsome, well-appointed team in his customary scientific manner; Lord Charles Beresford, and last, and certainly not least, Lord Carington, whose blood-like and good-looking team, though in the rear this day, are usually found as they should be, in the front rank. The number attending was small—seventeen in all; but I never remember seeing a meeting more successfully carried

out. Many were the absentees, who, it is to be hoped, will be present at future meetings. Lord Macclesfield, the Earl of Sefton, the Marquis of Waterford, Captain Whitmore, the Marquis of Worcester, Lord Arthur Somerset, Viscount Macduff, Mr. Anstruther Thompson, the Earl of Bective, Colonel Chaplin, Viscount Cole, Mr. K. Wombwell, and others, being conspicuous by their absence. The journey this day was limited to a drive round the park, in order to give the Royal visitors an opportunity of seeing to the best advantage the handsome coaches, magnificent teams, and good coachmanship of the different members of the Four-in-Hand Club.





CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE COACHING CLUB.

“As yet the trembling year is unconfirmed,
And Winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightless.”

DAINTFULLY alive to the foregoing views of Thomson, who, in his “Ode to Spring,” was yet constrained to admit that it was not always a season of ethereal mildness, I drew my “auld cloak” round me as I journeyed towards Hyde Park, in order to be present on the occasion of the first meeting of the Coaching Club, which was fixed for Wednesday last, at the accustomed trysting place, the Magazine, on the banks of the somewhat muddy-seeming and treacherous pool, known as the Serpentine. A dull, heavy morning was this; frequent and heavy storms of rain and hail, culminating in a terrific downpour, with an accompaniment of thunder and lightning, effectually spoilt the pleasure of the day’s proceedings, and turned that which is usually a gala day into a miserable *fiasco*. Instead of throngs of gaily-dressed ladies hastening towards the appointed place of

meeting, a limited number of winter-clad, fur-bedecked females, whose charms were hidden beneath waterproofs and ulsters, were to be seen plashing along the oozy footpaths; whilst those who appeared in carriages were muffled up as though they were going to face a Siberian winter, and the fair damsels who were mounted on their steeds wended their way through mud and dirt, looking as if they had been riding across a heavy country at the tail of a pack of foxhounds. This was the state of things when I reached the Magazine, where I found only two coaches in position, the occupants being closely muffled up, so that scarce a glimpse of the fair faces or a glint from the sparkling eyes of the hooded beauties could be discerned. In fact, it was as dismal a look-out as could well be imagined for the opening day of a meeting which usually attracts so many lookers-on. By degrees the nineteen members, who were bold enough to face the ruffian blasts of the most deplorable of May days, appeared on the scene, and in due course were formed into line, and at the signa to move on, started in the following order:—First, the noble Vice-President of the Coaching Club, Lord Carington, driving his four blood-like, quick-stepping nags in his accustomed form; his well-appointed blue and red coach, by Peters, being thoroughly up to the mark. Next followed Colonel Ferguson, tooling his blue and yellow coach, one of Holland's make, steadily along; succeeded by Captain Foster on a similar drag as regards make and colour. Then came Mr. Deichmann, with his well-appointed coach of Holland's build, and like colour as the two pre-

ceding, handling in quiet fashion the four first-class compact and handsome coach-horses, which trotted along in excellent style. Then appeared Sir T. Peyton handling his four well-matched greys in a style worthy of his time-honoured name as a member of the coaching world, recalling old days, during which the veteran whip, Sir Henry, was to be seen, when coaching was at its lowest point, still true to his colours, though the times were sadly out of joint, owing to the introduction of the steam-engine as a motive power; followed by Sir Clifford Constable in his lake and red coach, by Peters; Mr. F. C. Banbury in his neat brown and yellow drag, by Holland; and the Honourable G. Paulet in his blue and red, also by the same well-known maker—a very neat, or, I may say more properly, handsome turn-out; closely followed by Mr. W. E. Oakeley, Mr. Walter Long, and Mr. Henry Brassey, who, as usual, exhibited a stylish and well-appointed coach, and a useful and handsome team. These were succeeded by Colonel Thursby and the Earl of Onslow, both having Holland's coaches, colours blue and red,—in my opinion the neatest combination for this class of vehicle. Major Stapylton, in a green and red by the well-known clever builders, "Barkers." Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson, with a blue and red by Holland, and an excellent team; and Sir Henry Tufton, whose well-appointed turn out, and very first-class team of handsome horses, invariably attract a large share of attention on such occasions; Lord Charles Beresford, Mr. H. J. Trotter, and Mr. Carter Wood, with his team of clever looking roans, making up the number of good men and true who were not to be deterred

from joining in the exhibition by a trifle of bad weather.

Consequent partly upon the disastrous state of the weather, the attendance was reduced to this low ebb. In vain we watched for the advent of his Grace the Duke of Beaufort, the President of the Coaching Club, and the staunch supporter of the art of whipcraft. Many were the regrets expressed at his absence from the gathering, as well as that of his son, that first-rate coachman, Lord Arthur Somerset. Not a scion of this noble family put in an appearance; not even that good workman, Colonel Arthur P. Somerset, whose clipping team of chesnuts always attracts the greatest amount of attention, and whose mode of handling four horses is a treat to behold. Wanting on this occasion, also, was Mr. Arthur Byass, whose topping team of handsome chesnuts is usually to the fore; Captain Whitmore, whose beautifully-matched and clever-stepping greys invariably command the admiration of the bystanders and judges of coachmanship; Mr. Murietta, with his handsome, carefully-selected lot; and sundry other well-known artists, who, in the teeth of such a discouraging condition of the elements, did not care to join in the meeting. Some of the members of the Coaching Club, no doubt, were pursuing the duties of their calling, by attending to the comfort of the as yet limited number of passengers, for whose accommodation the various stage coaches start daily on their different journeys; but the falling off of artists on the bench, idle spectators, curious critics, admirers of the horse, and saunterers about town, resulted from the unspring-like policy of the clerk of the

weather, instigated by a Tory Government (at least, so it is believed by a certain class of old women), who, having successfully baffled the enemies of their country, are now stirring up an elemental strife as a means of distracting attention from more serious matters. It is an Englishman's privilege to grumble; and, even if it were not, an excuse might be offered at the present crisis of the season. After seven months of severe, even savage weather, we seem as far from sunshine as ever, our belief in the traditional glories of springtide is utterly destroyed, and fear of the gloomy predictions that such a state of things will continue until Midsummer, terrifies even strong men. But how about the trade of London? What is to become of milliners, mantua-makers, tailors (the hatters must be having a good time of it), drapers, and all the various businesses that depend upon fashion? How can the fair one exhibit her perfections at a cricket match, play at lawn-tennis, attend a garden party, pose herself gracefully in a croquet encounter, watch the exertions of her many admirers in a struggle for superiority in a polo match, or visit those pleasant places, those rural retreats, the Orleans Club, Hurlingham, or its rival, the Ranelagh, in such tempestuous times as these! Fancy seeing the object of your adoration walking on the verdant lawns at these delightful places? It absolutely makes one shiver at the idea of possible cough or cold in the head (colds have an unbecoming effect on noses, be it remarked), and other ills that flesh is heir to. Ah! it is a bad time indeed for the young beauty who has made her *début* in the fashionable

world, a miserable disappointment; for the time has arrived which should find her—

“ Flushed by the spirit of the genial year,
Whilst from her virgin cheeks a fresher bloom
Shoots, less and less the live carnation round ;
Her lips blush deeper sweets, she breathes of youth ;
The shining moisture swells into her eyes
In brighter flow ; her wishing bosom heaves
With palpitations wild, and all her yielding soul is love,”

but not in such weather as this.





CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A RECOLLECTION OF THE ORLEANS CLUB.

WHITHERSOEVER the Australian Cricketers may wander in their travels in pursuit of the pleasant task they have set to themselves, at no place will they meet with a warmer or more gracious reception than that which was accorded to them by the members of the Orleans Club.

A fairer and brighter scene than that which presented itself at the match between the Antipodean Team and the members of this distinguished club, it would be impossible to imagine. It is said that, driven to despair by the long-continued rains, the biting east winds, the tropical storms, and the miserable weather which prevailed throughout the entire spring, Captain Wombwell, the presiding genius of the place, was overheard appealing to the spirit of the storm in the following words:—

“Ye fostering breezes blow!

Ye softening dews, ye tender showers, descend!

And temper all, thou world-reviving sun, into the perfect year!”

The effect of such an impressive invocation was palpable to all who roamed through the pleasant

grounds on this memorable occasion; for a more perfect summer's day has never been experienced.

Calmly reposing under the shade of a noble chestnut tree, whose drooping branches swept the ground, you surveyed contentedly the pleasant scene. Punctual to the appointed time, the Australian competitors appeared on the ground, having been tooled down to Orleans House by Captain Wombwell; and the business of the day commenced with but little delay. A considerable number of spectators had already assembled, to be added to, hour by hour, until there was gathered a vast assemblage, who applauded a hard hit or a clever piece of fielding, to the echo, whilst ever and anon the music of the splinter-bars and the tramp of horses announced the arrival of a well-known drag.

Among the early arrivals, I observed Major Jary, driving his neatly-appointed coach and four useful nags, accompanied by a full load of ladies and gentlemen; followed by Captain Whitmore, whose handsome team of beautifully-matched and clever-stepping greys attracted the usual amount of attention, as they trotted up to the space set aside for the members of the Coaching Club. Next to appear was the Duke of Beaufort, accompanied by the Countess of Westmoreland (who sat by his Grace's side), Lord Arthur Somerset, and a party of well-known visitors; his Grace handling the excellent team of three bays and a light-brown in a style worthy of the President of the Four-in-Hand and Coaching Clubs. Then came Sir Thomas Peyton, driving four well-matched business-like animals—greys, as a matter of course; followed by the Earl

of Sefton, coaching his neat team in good form, and taking up position in the space provided for members of the Four-in-Hand Club; whilst that allotted to the drags of members of the Orleans Club was occupied by one only—namely that of Mr. Boulter. From time to time the number was increased, until there were some thirteen or fourteen in all, each having a full load of passengers, who, seated on the coaches, or descending from their lofty eminence, placed themselves beneath the shade of the splendid trees in the vicinity of the cricket-ground.

At two o'clock the luncheon-bell dispersed the company for a while, and the resources of the club were taxed to the utmost, yet I heard of no one being sent empty away. After this pleasant refection, play was resumed, the admirable "fielding" of the Australians eliciting great and deserved applause. By this time, a large number of the great world had collected around the ground, witnessing the endeavours of the strangers from afar to show how the thing is done in their distant home. Others stroll through the lovely grounds, resting beneath the grand old cedars, which afford "a deep immensity of shade" for the wearied pleasure-seeker; whilst many are indulging in a game of lawn-tennis, or roaming through the noble suite of elegantly-furnished and comfortable rooms; whilst carriage after carriage arrives to swell the numbers attending this pleasant gathering. Now it is the Countess of Cardigan, in her barouche drawn by four clever-looking bays, ridden by postillions in livery, that stops the way; then Mr. Arthur Byass,

driving his excellently-appointed coach and four first-class chesnuts, draws up to the portico of the club, bringing a large party to dine, and afterwards to attend the ball, given in honour of the Australian visitors. Mrs. Arabin, in her open carriage, drawn by two of the most stylish and best-stepping bay horses in London, is to be seen watching with interest the exertions of the club eleven to maintain their ground; whilst Major Paynter and Capt. Mydleton appear as contented with the present state of things as they are with the pleasures of Melton in due season. And thus we pass the pleasant time, whilst the excited cricketers bowl and bat, toiling hard to beat one another, until at length the first innings is over, the Australians being somewhere about fifty a-head of their opponents. Then the visitors disperse, some taking tea in the shady parts of the gardens, others playing at the various games provided for their amusement, or, ascending the bridge that crosses the road running between the garden and the river, to look on the swiftly flowing Thames; whilst the sound of music o'er the waters borne gives notice of the coming of the old City Barge, bearing a goodly freight of pleasant-looking folks towards Richmond. Now you may observe the elegant toilettes of many handsome women, who are seen to the greatest advantage as they stroll over the close-shaven lawns, or rest within the shadow of the bower, "Where wood-bines flaunt and roses shed a couch, whilst Evening draws her crimson curtains round."

Tuesday.—Again the weather is all that could be desired, the glare of the sun being tempered by

passing clouds and a south-westerly wind. Again there is a large gathering of Society as well as of the public, who avail themselves of the rare opportunity of having a peep at the matchless grounds of the Orleans Club, and witness the generous rivalry of the first-rate players contesting for the honour of victory. The band of the 8th Hussars adds greatly to our pleasure, whilst the brilliant play of the Orleans Eleven, especially the wondrous "slogging" of Mr. Thornton, who sends the balls flying at a more exalted height and to a greater distance than any player I have seen before, causes the close of the day's work to be the most exciting of all. Had time permitted, the Orleans Eleven would probably have been the victors; but, in consequence of the engagement of the Australians to play elsewhere on the morrow, the wickets were drawn at six o'clock. Thus ended two days' thorough enjoyment, as was evinced by the expression of satisfaction, not only on the part of the Australian visitors, but of everyone who was present at this successful endeavour of Capt. Wombwell to provide an entertainment worthy of the Club. The result was a complete success, due principally, I am willing to believe, to the exertions of the popular manager and his amiable and zealous lieutenant, Mr. Knowles.





CHAPTER XXXIX.

RIDERS IN THE ROW.

AFTER a winter of unparalleled severity and protracted duration, spring has passed away and midsummer arrived, without our experiencing one thoroughly genial day. No wonder that an entire stop has been put to the enjoyment of every description of out-door amusement. Instead of ethereal mildness, the once boasted accompaniment of spring, spring, beautiful spring—read hail, rain, snow, frost, fog, thunder, lightning; and in lieu of mirth and Maypoles—Macintoshes and melancholy. The meetings of Epsom and Ascot were held under a cloud, and a dense and dropping cloud too. Cricket, coaching, lawn-tennis, polo matches, garden parties, picnics, visits to Richmond, Hurlingham, the Ranelagh, and Orleans Clubs have been effectually put a stop to by the disastrous behaviour of the elements. Only let there be a gathering of those on pleasure bent, and “Then comes the Father of the Tempest forth, wrapt in black glooms,” and the multitude is dispersed by the persistent downpour that quickly puts an end to all enjoyment.

Consequent upon this stormy state of things, but

few opportunities have been afforded of enjoying a ride in the Row. Once or twice there has been a prospect of fair weather, but even then the attendance of those accustomed to take their evening exercise in Hyde Park, has been sadly short of its usual proportions. All we have to depend upon now is hope, and we may be happy yet—at least for the brief remainder of the London season. Should anyone have chafed under the trials and tribulations of these tempestuous times, remember that some allowance should be made for that unlucky wight—who having, regardless of expense, sought the combined talent and aid of Smalpage, Tautz, and Lincoln and Bennett, in order to render himself worthy of the occasion—a friend having placed at his disposal a chesnut hack, by “*Make Haste,*” with perfect manners, high courage and elastic action, and being aware that he will at any rate be the observed of one observer—one bright particular star amongst the many luminaries that shed a lustre over the gatherings in the Row—remember, I say, that some allowance should be made for his feelings, when an envious shower drives the frequenters of that fashionable resort to their firesides, and sends him homewards mud-bespattered and woe-begone, dripping and disconsolate. Such has been the hapless condition of some I have known, and as a fellow-feeling makes one wondrous kind, I have sympathised with these sufferers. The only things that are grateful for the daily downpour are the trees and shrubs, which flourish with the utmost luxuriance, whilst the somewhat dingy sheep, who do the pastoral in the Park, are literally living in clover, revelling in the abund-

ance of herbage which the copious showers have caused to crop up.

Once or twice whilst riding in the Row I have met with a brief spell of fair weather, sufficient to have induced a tolerable sprinkling of the habitués of Hyde Park to dare the treacherous and deceitful elements. First, I observe Lord Calthorpe riding his splendid chesnut horse, one of a thousand; and I opine that his lordship is no indifferent judge of horse-flesh, when I observe the movements of this grand animal, and remember that I have on several occasions seen him driving in his well-appointed cab a handsome bay, an extremely good mover, exactly suited to his work. Of all the vehicles for London work, give me a cab, by a first-rate maker, and a horse such as I saw Lord Calthorpe driving on the morning alluded to. Next I see the well-remembered form of Mr. Mackenzie Grieves, on his showy blood horse, and my mind reverts to bygone times, and the Bois de Boulogne. Then Lady Parker canters by, giving a sunny smile and pleasant recognition to the friend riding at my side, and I call to mind several clinking runs with the Royal Buckhounds, when I've seen her ladyship go the pace, with courage, skill, and discretion. Next, passing at a walking pace, I note Lord and Lady Breadalbane; greatly admiring the magnificent bay horse that is ridden with such ease and grace by her ladyship. Then comes Colonel Cecil Forester, riding a steady cob, and visions of far-off days come across me, when Richard Howard Vyse was captain, and Sir Charles Sligsby and Sir Robert Sheffield were lieutenants in the Blues, and I was a not unfrequent visitor at the mess.

Next to attract my attention was Lord Cork, accompanied by his daughter on a thorough-bred bay of high courage, requiring considerable nerve on the part of the youthful equestrienne, who, however, seemed quite at home on her somewhat impetuous steed. Coming along at a rapid rate is Miss Kingscote, riding an eager little horse which she managed with nerve, curbing, but not without difficulty, the somewhat fiery nag. Accompanying her daughter is Lady Emily Kingscote, with Lord Rocksavage in attendance; a noble young sportsman, who many a time and oft I have seen going the pace over the heather-clad hills, the verdant vales, and leafy combes of Devon and Somerset, or traversing the vast expanse of heather-clad moorland when hunting the wild red deer across Exmoor, in the autumn of the year. Then passes an excellent horseman, one I have seen chasing the wily fox with the West Kent, pursuing the timid hare with his freshly acquired pack of harriers, or coursing the red deer along the glades of Eridge Park. Ah! a dangerous man to follow is Lord George Nevill across a stiff country; quiet as he looks when cantering along the Row with a party of ladies, he will in all probability bring you to grief if you choose him for a pilot, and I speak from experience. Then there passes another good man, Captain Mydleton, who at times may be seen giving an Empress a lead across the big fields of Leicestershire at the tail of the Pytchley. Following the string of riders in the Row is Sir Watkin Wynn on a sedate weight carrier, a good walker and doubtless pleasant hack, or he would not be carrying that good judge.

Colonel Harford on a hunter-like grey moves quietly along; and then I observe another neat rider, Mr. B. W. Lubbock, who I have seen when hunting from Melton riding in right good form with the Quorn, the Belvoir, and the Cottesmore. Then Lord Algeron Lennox riding a little horse goes steadily by; and Mr. Harvie Farquhar, Mr. Villiers, and the Messrs. Dresden are seen taking their customary exercise in the Row. But now appears upon the scene a graceful rider, mounted upon a tall, well-mannered horse, which she handles with skill; of commanding stature, elegant and beautiful, is this lady—only to be adequately described in the language of the poet—‘Her form is fresher than the morning rose, when the dew wets its leaves; unstained and pure as is the lily or the mountain snow.’ and I recognise, if I mistake not, the youthful Countess of Lonsdale. Conspicuous amongst the best mounted men in the Row is Colonel Farquharson, riding a very handsome little horse, which, if I remember rightly, was purchased recently at a very high figure.

Then as I draw up beneath the shade of one of the overhanging trees—not by any means in order to be out of the sun, for it did not deign to make itself visible on this occasion, but for the purpose of observation—I note a lady and gentleman riding together. Extremely handsome is the former, faultlessly dressed, beautifully mounted on an extremely good-looking chesnut; whilst the cavalier, evidently, a *beau sabreur* of the first water, handles his superb bright chesnut horse in a way that shows him to be a horseman of no ordinary qualifications. Sure such a pair were never seen, so justly formed to meet by

nature—"Hers the mild lustre of the blooming morn, and his the radiance of the risen day." I say to myself—wondering who this distinguished couple can possibly be.

Owing to the recent loss of the head of the Rothschild family, the different members who are usually to be found riding in the Row have been conspicuous by their absence. Lord Granville has on several occasions been found taking a constitutional ride, as also Mr. Bass, who may be seen pursuing the even tenor of his way. Whilst many other *habitués* of the Row take their pleasure anything but sadly; indulging in fact in swinging good gallops, to the evident embarrassment of the mounted police officer, who is detailed for the duty of restraining the ardour of the too impetuous riders, who occasionally exceed in a moment of excitement the bounds of moderation. But there are one or two more regular frequenters of the Row, conspicuous by the quality of the horses they bestride, notably Mr. Sheward on Aristocrat, a perfect chesnut hack, who, having retired from business, now enjoys his *otium cum dignitate*, and takes his pleasure in the Park; whilst Mr. George Cox exhibits the perfections of the favourite chesnut mare which carries him in such perfect form.

Of the attendance in the morning in the Row, though vast numbers of pedestrians and many equipages have, on some occasions, been seen, the riders have been more remarkable for quantity than quality. The impossible weather deterring many from taking their customary exercise; whilst, on several occasions, when a goodly gathering has

assembled, an outrageous down-pour has dispersed the congregation of fashionable and well-dressed folks *sans ceremonie*. Notably this has been the case at the last meetings of the Four-in-Hand and Coaching Clubs. The astounding storm of hail, rain, thunder, and lightning, which effectually damped the pleasure of the latter meeting, put to flight numbers of riders who would otherwise have been seen in the Row, after the departure of the coaches.

The number of teams that were tooled to the Alexandra Park was greatly diminished, and an opportunity was afforded of seeing several of the drags to advantage when they left the line and drove through the Park; especially the beautifully matched team of greys, wonderfully well turned out, and admirably driven by Captain Whitmore; the blood-like quick-stepping nags of Sir William Eden; and the powerful team of chesnuts driven by Mr. Arthur Byass, by whose side sits Mrs. Byass, who I have seen riding right well over the big fences, when going with the Duke of Grafton's crack pack. Well mounted, good nerve, graceful figure, light weight, courage, and discretion are qualifications that make this lady a dangerous person to follow over a stiff line of country when the pace is severe; and I recall an occasion when I saw the heels of her clever chesnut in the air, going over a rasper, and landing cleverly on the other side; it being my turn next, and having such an example before me, I could not turn aside. Fortune favours the brave, and, notwithstanding the disadvantages of much difference in weight, and a total absence

of grace in respect to figure, I yet managed to follow my leader safely.

In such large gatherings as those which are to be seen in Hyde Park, when the day is propitious, there are of course oddities, and people who out-herod fashion itself. I cannot say I admire one of the features of the day, which, when carried to excess, savours of the ridiculous. Very long men, with very long spurs, riding very little ponies, with very short tails; nor do I like to see a lady and her husband riding long-tailed skewbalds, without shape, action, or manners, having only an eccentricity of colouring as a recommendation, for I say to myself—“*Ducrow redivivus*,” and pass on. Again, I do not like to see two or three young ladies going at a racing pace when the Row is crowded; it disturbs the equanimity of elderly people, and excites their horses to inconvenient action.

Certainly when the day is fine, and the Park crowded, there is nothing more delightful than to ride in the Row; an opportunity is then afforded of seeing the notable ones of the world of fashion at the fullest advantage; enabling the attentive observer to admire the number of beautiful women, and take note of the stalwart men, splendid equipages, and grand horses, nowhere to be equalled. Drawn up by the side of the Row, on one occasion, was an admirably appointed barouche, containing a lady and her daughters. The elder, a girl of eighteen years, “Beauteous as vision seen in dreamy sleep,” quietly but elegantly dressed, representing a perfect specimen of our English maidens of high degree, whom I will back for elegance, and

beauty, against the damsels of any land in the world, and at long odds too.

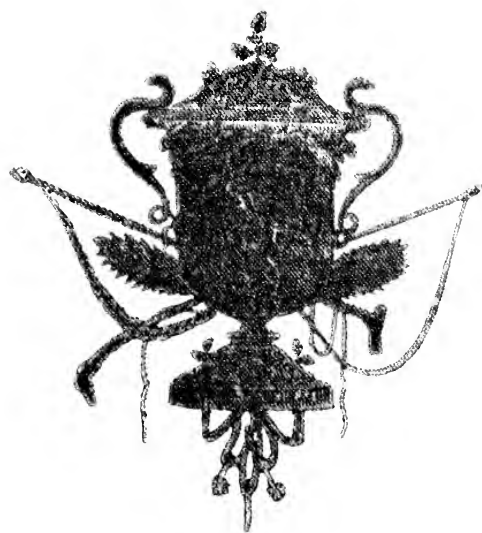
At length "the evening shades prevail," and the riders in the Row disperse, and as I wend my way through Eaton Square, I see Lord Macduff tooling his handsome team in a workmanlike style; and I carefully observe the turn-out, having heard that it was considered by a first-rate judge to be very nearly, if not quite, the best of the season, and I see little reason to disagree with that opinion. But who is this I suddenly come upon? Surely it is the Rev. John Russell, the best known and most respected man in Devonshire. A fine horseman still, though he has numbered more than fourscore years, and one of the best and most ardent sportsmen that ever lived. Inquiring of me respecting a certain horse he is thinking of purchasing, I said he is a charming little horse, exactly suited in every way to carry you, only it is fair to say that if any one attempts to pass him whilst galloping to hounds, he will lay hold of you and pull pretty hard. "Ah!" was his reply, "I have a capital remedy for that, which is riding to cover some thirty miles on an average, which steadies them a little." Pretty well for an octogenarian! This most popular, and, I may say, venerated clergyman has many calls on his time. If any one is ill or in trouble, he is always ready to leave his home at Swimbridge to attend to their wants.

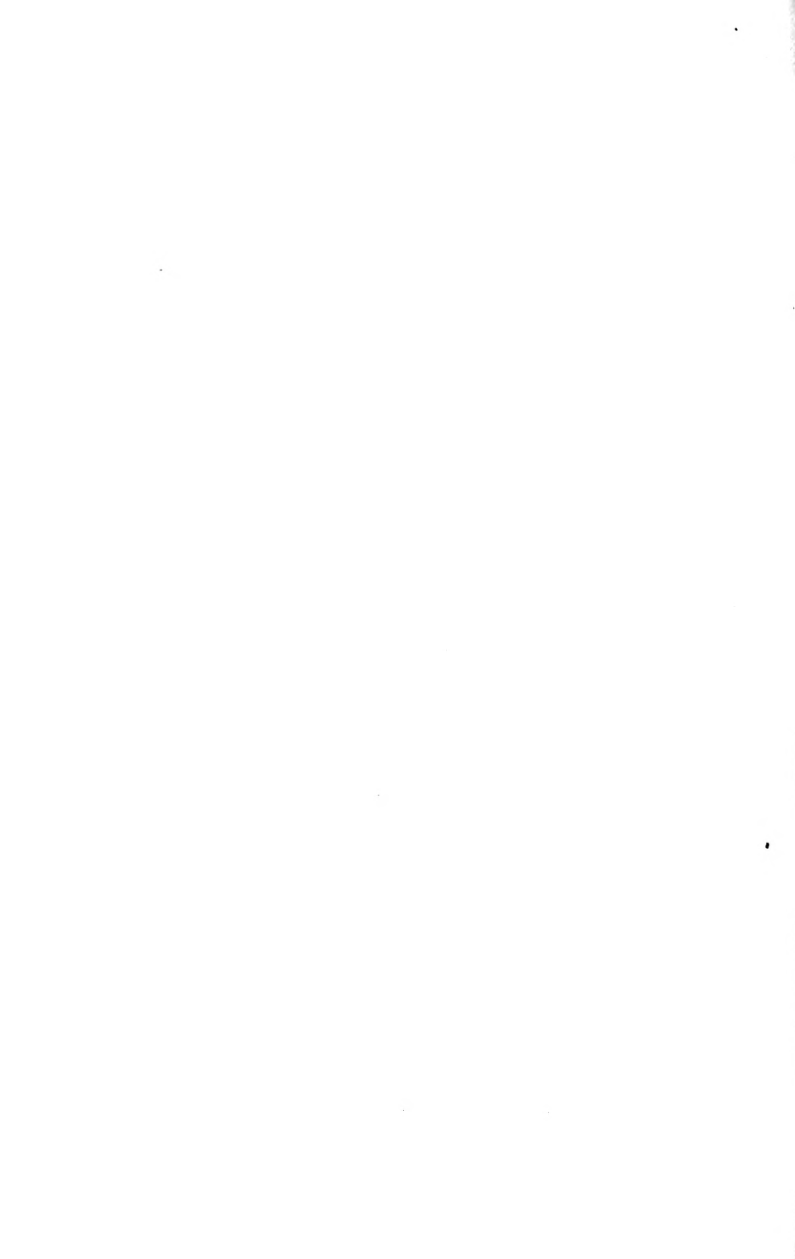
On this occasion, however, he had travelled to London on a far pleasanter errand, namely, to join in the holy bonds of matrimony a thorough sportsman and light-hearted companion, with whom I have

often ridden with the Devon and Somerset, who, having lost his heart, when following the stag, to a most delightful Devonshire lady, thus wisely secures the object of his affections. A fortnight hence his reverence, I am told, will have to return to London to unite a certain noble lord, also well known with the Devon and Somerset, to a fair young girl of rank and fashion. I have in my mind's eye one or two more, who, I think, will require the assistance of Mr. Russell, for I noticed several hunting "in couples" when I was chasing the wild deer over hill, dale, and moor in the lovely counties of Devon and Somerset.











HARK
AWAY

WHITEHURST











