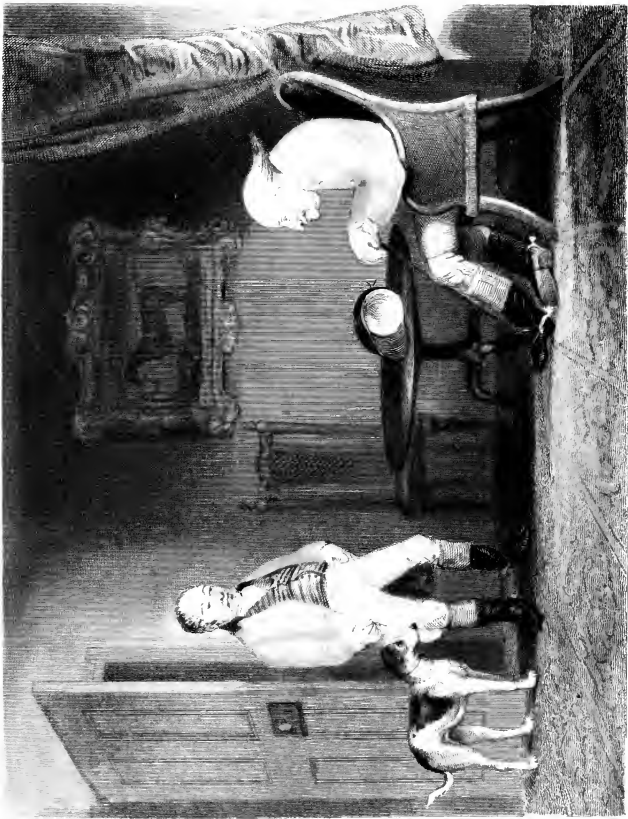


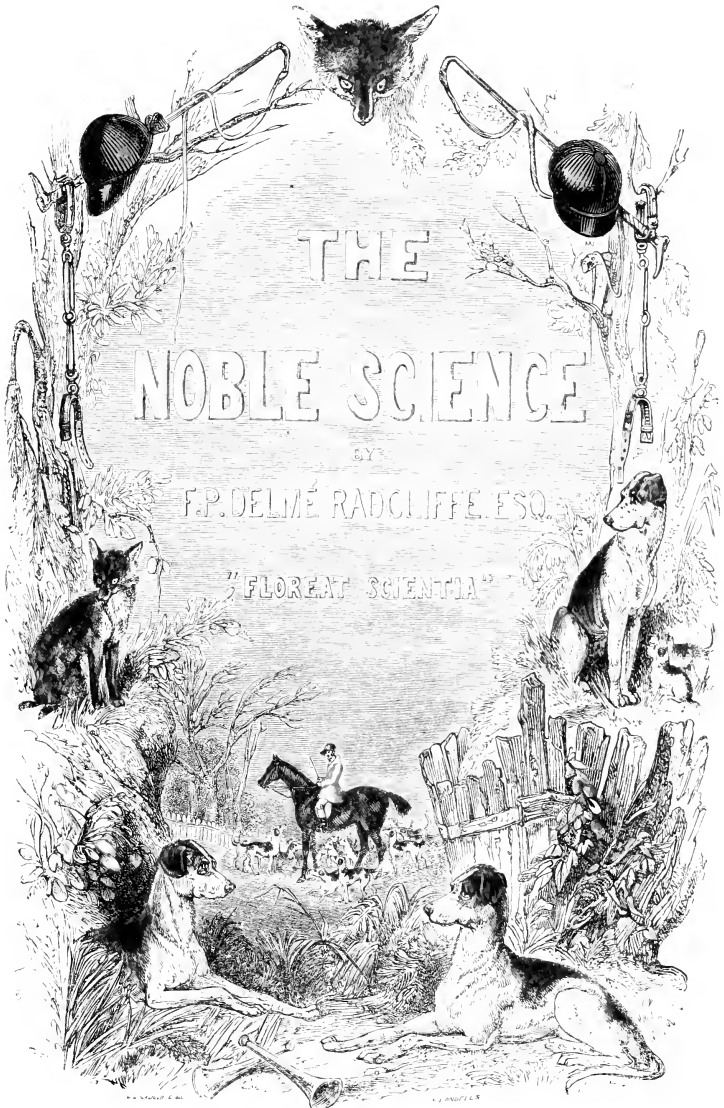


F. L. Pattison.



JOHN A. SEAVERNS





THE
NOBLE SCIENCE

BY
F.P. DELMÉ RADCLIFFE, ESQ.

"FLOREAT SCIENTIA"

THE
NOBLE SCIENCE:

A FEW GENERAL IDEAS

ON

FOX · HUNTING,

FOR THE

USE OF THE RISING GENERATION OF SPORTSMEN.

BY

F. P. DELMÉ RADCLIFFE, ESQ.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM ORIGINAL DESIGNS BY HIS BROTHER.

A New Edition,

WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES BY THE AUTHOR.

LONDON:
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS,
AND L. C. GENT.
1875.

Dedication.

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS,
ALBERT EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES, K.G.,

ETC., ETC., ETC.,

THIS THIRD EDITION OF "THE NOBLE SCIENCE,"

IS, BY HIS GRACIOUS PERMISSION,

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS VERY OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

SOMERVILLE, a thoroughly English squire, who about the middle of the last century gained undying fame by his poem of "The Chase," one of the happiest of English compositions, ever elevated, and frequently approaching sublimity, of whose muse a contemporary observes that

"Her incense, guiltless of the forms of art,
Breathes all the huntsman's honesty of heart,"

the great, the immortal Somerville enjoyed the privilege of dedicating his work to the Prince of Wales of the period, great-uncle of the present heir to the throne.

His opening address to the

"Great Prince,
Whom Cambria's towering hills proclaim their lord,"

is continued in a strain highly poetical, but savouring of that adulation which is the born heritage of princes. Abstinence from all compliment, however due, would, I feel, be most acceptable to him under whose auspices I have the honour to introduce my third edition. But

I feel that I shall not only be acquitted of flattery, but have the world with me when I say that, apart from the prestige attached to his illustrious position, to no one could this work be more aptly dedicated than to one who, in every hunting-field in which he has appeared, has shone pre-eminent, as in all sports and pursuits becoming English gentlemen, and I acknowledge a just pride in the patronage of him who, with the whole Royal Family, has established claims, no less upon our affections than our loyalty.

Being unexpectedly called upon by the most enterprising of publishers, I have revised every page of the volume issued thirty-five years since, chiefly for the benefit of the rising generation of my own locality. I regret that it is not in my power to render it any way more attractive, than by favour of its readers it has hitherto been held.

If I may indulge in one flourish of my own trumpet, I may boast that the practical utility of several *dicta* has been most agreeably recognized. My old friend, Lord George Paget (now Lieut.-General, possibly oblivious of the fact), informed me that the price of the book, expensive as was the first edition, was cheap to him; one page—containing advice as to the length of his boot-heel, preventing pressure from the stirrup on the instep—having more than repaid him. Another made no less recognition of my advice as to the hind shoes of the horse, by which he had, since reading it, escaped overreach. One of the greatest compliments, and most highly ap-

preciated, was paid me by no less renowned a sportsman than that celebrity of the West—the Reverend and revered John Russell. Introducing himself to me on Goodwood Race Course, he declared that he “would have walked there from Dartmoor to shake hands with the Author of ‘The Noble Science.’” I have reason to hope that the maxims of my zenith may yet be found generally, though it cannot be expected, after a lapse of years, that they can be invariably, applicable. Changes in the system of agriculture, the great increase of rural population, and other circumstances have greatly affected scent, as they have altered the habits of foxes. Where one man took the field, when this book was written, there are now fifty. Hence the present fabulous price of horses.

“Customs will alter, men and manners change,”

but the leading features, the main principles of “The Noble Science” are unaltered—I trust unalterable.

The hints which I presumed to offer, were the sound deductions from practical experience. If foxes no longer travel the distances they did of yore; if a run over any extent of country is rather an exception, neither the love nor pursuit of the sport has deteriorated.

A contemporary, who for the last half century has shone, universally admitted, as one of the finest horsemen who ever crossed a country, and who has been no less distinguished as a sportsman, has thus written to me this month :—

“If foxhunting be no longer the sport it was, it remains still a grand, a noble social institution. Of this I have a strong religious conviction. My warmest friendships have been made and cemented in the hunting-field.”

As I can offer no new light on the subject, in humble adhesion to my *data* of 1839, I will conclude this preface with the addition of one more to the many quotations from beloved Horace :—

“Vade, vale, si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti, si non, his utere mecum,”

which for the benefit of the few young ladies of the period, who do not know everything—Latin included—
—I translate literally :—

Farewell, and if with these you disagree
Impart new maxims or use these with me.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

“Eloquar an Sileam?”
OVID.

To those who ask, why I have had the presumption to offer another volume, in addition to all which have already been published upon fox-hunting, my answer is, that, since the time of Beckford, whose maxims are now, for the most part, obsolete, it has been generally remarkable, that nothing (with the exception of that which has flowed from the classic pen of Nimrod) has appeared upon the subject, qualified for a place beyond the saddle-room, or servants' hall. It was not till after the full completion of my task, that I was shown an article upon fox-hunting, in a work entitled, “Sporting by Nimrod.” Had I been sooner aware of the existence of this, I might possibly have omitted some passages in the earlier parts of my pages, with reference to the respectability of “the Noble Science;” seeing that he proves it to have been worthy of all acceptance, not only by crowned, but by mitred heads;

but so far from attempting any such alteration of my text, as might constitute a deviation from his path, I have been proud to find that I have unconsciously trodden in his steps. The mode of treatment cannot be very dissimilar, where both are impressed with the same exalted view of the subject. It is not necessary that a painter should expunge the effect of a rainbow from his landscape, because he finds that the idea had previously been adopted by another artist.

To all other faults of this work will be superadded that of egotism. The third person is more consistent with the labour of composition; like the editorial "we," it may afford some ambush, or may soften the asperity of didactics; but hoping that, while I am above ground, no one will ever draw for me without a certainty of finding, I have preferred egotistically to answer in my own person, for every precept I have ventured to propagate; have adhered throughout, "*currente calamo*," to the epistolary style, and may safely affirm, that from the first to the last line committed to press, I have not made two copies of one single page.

If I am taxed with undue criticism upon *The Diary of a Huntsman*, or with a desire to disparage that production, the manner in which I have spoken of its author, as a sportsman, previous to his appearance as a penman, must acquit me of anything approaching, in the remotest degree, to personal disrespect. To have been silent altogether, would have argued that

I held the writings of a contemporary as utterly unworthy of notice, or that I yielded a tacit assent to the promulgation of doctrines which, not only in my own opinion, but in that of all enlightened authorities to whom I have referred them, are calculated to mislead those whom they are intended to enlighten. In dealing with these, as with public property, I trust it is unnecessary for me to disclaim a spirit of acrimony, or any feeling unworthy the relationship of brother-sportsmen, both aiming at the same end.

I remember once to have heard a celebrated general officer remark, in allusion to the publication of a certain adjutant upon field exercise, "That adjutant is a better man with the drill than with the quill." It is very possible, that a man may shine as a rider, without attaining any degree of eminence as a writer. I may, perhaps, in my own person, offer an instance of failure in both respects; but having, in my first chapter, touched sufficiently upon my own fears, I will only add, in the apologetic sense of one line, and in the supplicatory tone of another, from Ovid,

"Confiteor si quid prodest delicta fateri."

.

"Da placidam fesso lector amice manum."

F. P. D. R.

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 C. LORAINÉ SMITH, Esq., from a Portrait in the possession of the
 REV. L. LORAINÉ SMITH. Engraved by H. B. HALL to face p. 293

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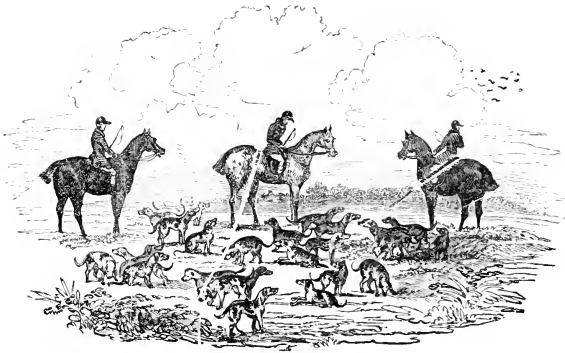
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CHAPTER I.

“Proscrire les arts agreables, et ne vouloir que ceux qui sont absolument utiles, c'est blamer la nature, qui produit les fleurs, les roses, les jasmins, comme elle produit des fruits.”

From the Album of a Parisienne.

INTRODUCTORY.

IT has been generally admitted, that few can have read “The Complete Angler” of old Izaak Walton, without being bitten by the seductive language in which he clothes the communication of his ideas upon his favourite pastime. Many have, indeed, founded their first taste for, and their subsequent proficiency in, the gentle art of angling, upon their acquaintance with his pages; and I do not envy the temperament of that man who can rise from the perusal of Somerville’s “Chase” uninfluenced by a corresponding effect upon his feelings. All, however,

cannot enter into the enthusiasm of the poet,—cannot be, with myself, at once transported into the very heart of that “delightful scene where all around is gay:”—but if less has been written upon “The Noble Science” of Hunting, than upon other subjects of far less importance to the good of man, it is not from any lack of materials for quartos—but, simply, because the practice so far outweighs the theory; because, like good wine that needs no bush, it requires no description to enhance its attractions; and because considerably more than three parts out of four of the number of hunting men, are contented to take their share of the enjoyment, as they find it, without a thought towards the scientific or theoretical part of the pursuit, on the due cultivation of which there is so much more than they are aware of, depending.

Far be it from me to desire that all sons of Nimrod should degenerate, or be at once transformed into scribblers, book-worms, or, as a huntsman of my acquaintance more aptly designated them, bookmen. Heaven forefend, too, that those actively engaged in high and useful calling, should not, in the joys of the chase, find legitimate relaxation from the arduous course of literary avocations!—but, as some apology for committing to paper my “Thoughts upon Hunting,” I would impress upon those friends who may vouchsafe an attempt to read what I have written, the fact, that few, possessing the ability, have found the inclination, either for their own amusement or the benefit of others, to publish matter which must be more or less interesting to every

true votary of the science, if founded only upon the solid basis of experience.

Furthermore, be it remembered, that anything emanating from the mere theorist, is as little worthy of notice as "An Authentic Account of Operations from the Seat of War in Spain," issuing periodically from a garret in Seven Dials; that no one should pretend to write or offer an opinion upon the subject, who cannot of these things say—"Quæque ipse vidi—et quorum pars fui."

Now for myself, in defence of this, my humble essay, I do not pretend to say with Horace, "Dicam insigne, recens adhuc *Indictum ore alio.*" I am bound to state, feeling tremblingly alive to the imputation, on the one hand, of presumption, should I attempt to deviate from, or of plagiarism, should I follow too closely in the track of those who have preceded me, that I am actuated by no hope of bringing to light anything new under that sun which I invoke to shine upon my endeavours, and to dispel the threatening clouds which will gather upon the horizon of an author's morning; by which, in plainer or less poetical phraseology, I would be understood to mean a first attempt at any publication beyond a pamphlet or a song. It is, perhaps, far less incumbent upon me to say one word in anticipation of a charge which never can arise, lest the truism of the French proverb should at once present itself, that "*qui s'excuse s'accuse,*" with regard to my having joined the class of *imitatores*, which, from our school-boy days, we have held as "*servum pecus,*" and it will be too evident, I fear, that

I have never read one line of the several works of a similar tendency and purport which have appeared in my time, with the exception of Beckford, whom "not to know argues oneself unknown."

When I say that, although I have of course heard of, I have never seen Colonel Cooke's work, or even, to my knowledge, an extract from his "Observations upon Hunting," I need not add my conviction that it would be far better for my object if every line of it were committed to my memory; but still I will arrogate for my bantling, with all its imperfections on its head, the merit, if any there be, of originality, if not in conception, at least in arrangement, of idea; and in addressing it more especially to my friends and acquaintance in my own provincial district, I shall hope to secure one portion of favourable, if not of partial, critics.

If I am accused of quoting too freely from Greek, Roman, or British Poets, wherever the aptness of the quotation is admitted, no apology need be made for having endeavoured to convey, in the beauty of language, ideas which could not otherwise be half so well expressed. I hope to escape the imputation of having affected a scholastic pedantry, to which I have no pretension; and that those who may look over (I trust with the intention of overlooking) these and other failings in the following pages, may find them not wholly deficient in a redeeming portion of plainer English.

I have already stated, that much has been written upon subjects far less important to the good of man

than hunting ; but having been in this, my introductory chapter, more than sufficiently prosy, I will not tax the patience of those whom I wish to dip further into this volume, by entering into a consideration of the progress of "The Noble Science" from its origin to its present state of perfection, or of its bearings upon the social character of man ; but I will here briefly record my opinion, that hunting is entitled to all the encouragement which any State may have the power to bestow upon it. The effect of so manly an exercise upon the mind of youth has been well described by abler pens ; its tendency to promote that good fellowship which should be "our being's end and aim" is duly tested by the position of society in those counties where its influence has been most felt. No higher testimony to its practical utility, in a national point of view, can be required than that of as brave a hero as ever drew a sword,—the gallant Lord Lynedoch:—he whom Napoleon characterized as "that daring old man" has often affirmed, that he should not have been the soldier he is, had he not been bred a fox-hunter.

The Roman poet, speaking of Diana, the goddess of hunting, says, "*Deas supereminet omnes.*" From the time of Nimrod to the present, hunting has ever ranked first and foremost of all exercises, whether by man, in an uncivilized state, as the natural means of subsistence, or by the most enlightened and refined, as a soul-inspiring source of pleasure.

Furthermore, I will add that fox-hunting ever has

been, still is, and, I trust, ever will be, enthusiastically upheld by men of the highest endowments,—by men possessed of all the noblest and best attributes of human nature, many of whom have devoted themselves to its objects with an assiduity alone sufficient to prove the worthiness of the cause.

Its operations upon agricultural produce are, also, sufficiently well known, though, I fear, hardly enough appreciated by that class, the “*fortunati nimium, sua si bona nôrint, agricolæ.*” I will, in an appendix, dedicate to the farmers of my own county a letter which I published some years since, in the *Sporting Magazine*, upon the subject of riding over wheat; but I will here hold hard, nor allow myself to be led farther into a repetition of truisms so thoroughly established.

Convinced, myself, that, for the health, the recreation, the general good, there is nothing to bear a moment’s comparison with hunting, taking it relatively, or collectively; taking it as affecting the physical condition of men, or that “noblest animal in the creation” (as he has been styled), the horse, I will only add to the motto, “*Floreat scientia,*” the heartfelt aspiration, “*esto perpetua!*”—May it flourish till time shall be no more! And now, in proceeding with my comments upon the manner in which I would see it conducted (a work commenced originally for my own occupation during the leisure hours of summer), let me say that, if I should be the humble means of awakening the attention of any one individual to the real interests, or tend in the slightest

degree towards the promotion of that sport to which I have been addicted from my cradle, with which I have been for many years most intimately connected, and to which (apart from higher considerations) I must ever remain devoted, I shall have gained my end.





CHAPTER II.

————— “Keen on the scent,
At fault none losing heart!—but all at work!
None leaving his task to another!—answering
The watchful huntsman’s caution, check, or cheer,
As steed his rider’s rein. Away they go!
How close they keep together! What a pack!
Nor turn nor ditch nor stream divides them—as
They move with one intelligence, act, will!”

LOVE CHASE.

Management of Hounds—Doing the thing as it should be done—Knowledge of Country essential in the Master and Huntsmen—Compared with an Army—Business of Hunting—Differences in Country—Leicestershire and Hampshire—Necessity of Hounds being qualified for their particular Country—Mr. Smith and the Hambleton.

THAT “whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well,” is one of those maxims which may be fearlessly asserted, without risk of controversy; and to no undertaking is it more applicable than to the management of a pack of foxhounds. To do the thing well, and as it should be done, ought to be the primary object of

any one aspiring to the office ; but let us consider in what does this well-doing consist. It will not be found alone in the *tout ensemble*, the faultless appearance of the turn out. Too much attention cannot be paid to the due efficiency of all appointments, with regard to “ dogs, horses, and men ;” but an aspirant for fame, as a master of foxhounds, may give an exorbitant sum for a pack of hounds of unquestionable celebrity,—he may give *carte blanche* to Anderson, Bean, and Elmore, to fill his stables:—he may secure the services of the best of huntsmen and whippers-in,—he may bring all these into the best of countries,—still it is no paradox to say, that, with all these means and appliances to boot, the thing may not be done well, or as it should be done. I have heard of men, ambitious, formerly, of emulating the place of Lord Jersey, and such performers over a country, who have, in the purchase of the very horses which they had followed as brilliant lights, considered that they had attained the *summum bonum*, the grand requisite to go and do likewise ; and woful has been their disappointment at finding that, without the presiding genius,—the head-piece which has ruled, the hand which guided them to glory,—the implements were but common tools in hands of ordinary workmen ; and they were little, if any, better than *in statu quo*. With all due allowance for native valour, few, I imagine, will maintain that the flower of a British army would, under the generality of commanders, have achieved the prodigies which have rendered the name and fame of Wellington imperish-

able: and thus it is with an establishment qualified properly to hunt any country. The chief must not only be heart and soul in the cause, but he must endeavour to fortify himself with that thorough knowledge of the *business*, which is essential—I say, indispensable—to complete success. The word, *business*, may grate upon the ear of those conversant only with the pleasure, and brings to my mind the waggery of a story, appertaining, I believe, to Theodore Hook, in which a citizen is driven to exasperation by being told that he could not, by any possibility, have any *business* in his boat,—his own boat,—because, as is ultimately explained to him, it is his *pleasure-boat*. But I contend, that it is a business of no slight importance to cater for the amusement of a whole county; setting aside the hopeless effort to give unqualified satisfaction, it is a business so to conduct all matters as to do justice to those who have confided to him the administration of the policy which rules the destinies of the little empire which is his theatre of action. I have been told, upon the best authority, of that great general, to whom I have before alluded, that, on the eve of battle, not only would he sleep soundly, but say that he had as good a right to sleep, then, as the Lord Mayor had in London, even should they be all killed and eaten by the enemy on the morrow, having made all the dispositions calculated to guard against every contingency, and entitle him to feel that confidence in his own resources which was the forerunner of victory. So, in like manner, *parvis componere magna*—

to compare great affairs with those comparatively of little consequence—should a master of foxhounds, upon joining, at the covert side, a host of followers, all “with souls in arms, and eager for the fray;” when contemplating the responsibility which rests with him,—when reviewing the numbers looking up to him as arbiter of what that day shall bring forth, be enabled to say to himself, “I have done my duty to the best of my judgment; I have fixed to draw the covert, which, of all others, it is most expedient to draw; I have ascertained the more than probability of finding here, or in the neighbourhood; I am not at variance with any farmer or landholder who might have been propitiated; I have brought an effective establishment into the field; in short, I have done, and shall do, all within my power towards the sport, which, all must know, will ever very much depend upon the elements, and a variety of circumstances over which I have no control, and which, whether favourable or otherwise, will affect me, at least as much as, if not more than, any one else.” He will thus be supported through all the trying events of the day, by a consciousness that his field lack none of that zeal and energy which he should supply. He will, under failure of scent, or any of the catalogue of miseries to which he is exposed, even to the heading of a fox, patiently, if not cheerfully, submit to evils which he cannot surmount; and should all go right, and “merry as a marriage bell,” who, in the whole of that well-pleased

field, will have half the excitement, the exultation, the delight, which he will find in this joyous result of all his hopes and endeavours ?

To return to my position, that with the best establishments which money can produce, a man may fail—may fail in showing that sport which will stamp the character of his pack ;—for justice, blind justice, is very blind indeed in this respect, and will take success as the sole criterion of merit. I have said that it is not enough to bring into the field men, hounds, and horses, of the best pretensions ; I repeat, that it is not enough, unless all are pre-eminently qualified for the particular country in which their lot may be cast ; unless the servants possess, in addition to every professional qualification, that intimate knowledge of all localities which is indispensable, and not less so to the master, if he assume, as he should do, the absolute command ; unless much, very much, have been done in the time of preparation which cannot be done during the season, which is as the harvest of the months of promise which have preceded it. As one striking instance, in support of what I have thus advanced, and drawing, as will be my invariable rule, solely upon facts within my own experience, it will be fresh in the memory of all Hampshire gentlemen, that when the great Mr. Osbaldeston—(and great he certainly and deservedly was, and ever must be held, as a master of hounds)—temporarily removed his splendid establishment from Leicestershire into the Hambledon country, with the aid of no less a

man than the renowned Sebright, now with Lord Fitzwilliam, to hunt one of the best packs of hounds ever bred, so great was the transition from the verdant vales of Leicester, to their antipodes in the good county of Southampton, that, although "the Squire" had good-humouredly threatened the utter extinction of the whole race of Hambledon foxes, each day was but a repetition of "confusion worse confounded;" and they very soon abandoned the country, with all the disgust which the proverbial odiousness of comparisons was likely to engender.

No one will imagine that I can entertain the remotest idea of casting any reflection upon an establishment, the merits of which were beyond the reach of detraction. I have recorded the fact as it stands, only as the strongest proof of my assertion, that a thorough knowledge of a country and its peculiarities is indispensable; and I have not the least doubt that if any of the principal actors in the scene to which I have alluded were questioned as to what they did in the Hambledon country, the answer would be "Nothing;" that they found themselves truly dislocated, in a strange locality, and were all abroad. Whether they *would* have done nothing had they remained is quite another question; my belief is that such a pack would have maintained its superiority in any country; though I still hold to my opinion, that a hound which may be perfect in one country, may be utterly useless in an-

other ; that the greatest talents in a huntsman may be equally unavailing, unless backed by an intimate acquaintance with all peculiar circumstances with which he may have to contend.

It may be supposed that I have quoted a strong case for my own purpose, and that the Hambledon country might have been found impracticable for sport ; but my case is confirmed by the sequel, in proof of what may be done by that knowledge of country which I hold so requisite, and by adapting the principles of the noble science of fox-hunting to the hunting of the fox wherever he is to be found. A good run is a good run anywhere, and is, I believe, at the present time, no uncommon occurrence in that same province, although beset by wood and bog on one side, and wood and flint upon the other. But to my point without further digression.

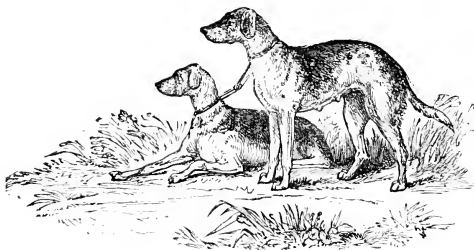
It was not, I think, more than two or three seasons after Mr. Osbaldeston's brief sojourn in Hants, that Mr. Smith, who has since arrived at the height of distinction as a huntsman and master of hounds, but who might then have been styled "a youth to fortune and to fame unknown," suddenly emerged from the retirement of rural avocation, and became somebody of greater importance to the good cause than any light which had yet dawned upon that sphere.

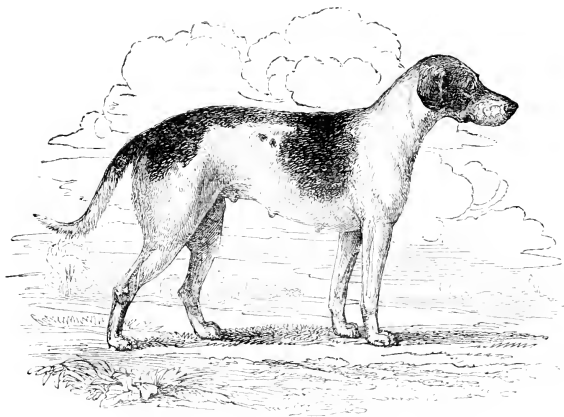
With a very indifferent, and, I believe, so inadequate a subscription, as to call for many demands upon his

purse, and proportionate sacrifices on his own part, he undertook the management of the hounds, receiving them literally at a day's notice from Mr. Nunes. He had, from boyhood, followed the chase wherever it was to be followed, through the country where he was born and bred; not an earth existed, not a woodland or a spinney, with which he was not familiar. As a horseman, he could cross the most difficult country, as a man should go, who attempts to hunt his hounds; and, consequently, with a pack of hounds and a stable of horses, which he would probably himself now term a scratch concern, to say nothing of his assistants in the field, he contrived to kill foxes and show sport, in a way which has had no parallel, either before or since his time, in those parts.

This is only one of many instances which I could quote in support of my doctrine, as to the obvious utility of a due acquaintance with a country, and not less especially with the kind of hound best adapted to the soil, and the character of ground over which he is expected to hold a scent. What I may have to say on the subject of hounds will afford matter for my next chapter. I have, in this, dwelt more particularly on these points, from a consideration of the changes in administration which have taken place around me since last season, and of more which are likely to occur, in the hope that should any one connected with a new management have taken up this book, he may have arrived

thus far before casting it aside, and thereby, possibly, may have his attention more immediately directed to what has, within my own knowledge, caused more failures than a host of all other accountable causes of disappointment.





CHAPTER III.

“For hounds of middle size, active and strong,
Will better answer all thy various ends,
And crown thy pleasing labours with success.”

SOMERVILE.

Description of Hound adapted to Hertfordshire—Good and Bad Luck—
Mr. Meynell's Opinion as to the Size of a Hound—Mr. Barnett and
the Cambridgeshire—Fast Hounds and Quick Hounds—Lord
Segrave's Blood—Draft from his Kennel—Hon. G. Berkeley and his
Hounds—Size of Hounds best for Herts—Arched Loins, or Wheeled
Backs—Purity of Blood to be preferred to any Cross—Mr. Smith's
Cross with the Bloodhound—Shape of Hounds—their Height.

It would be the height of presumption in me, were I
to make any attempt at offering any dogmas upon the
system of kennel. I write, not for the information of
the learned, but for the amusement of the uninitiated
in these mysteries. It is not my purpose to make any
compilation of practical details upon the treatment of

hounds, nor even to retail any of the thousand and one infallible specifics for the cure of distemper, and other diseases, all of which would be borrowed from, or be more or less infringing upon the province of, works already, for the most part, familiar to sportsmen. It is true that I could swell a volume, by recapitulating the daily results of conferences with those possessing sufficient practical lore upon these matters, were such my object; nay, this might, perhaps, constitute the only valuable product of my penmanship, but I question whether I should thus add to the stock of useful maxims which I desire to inculcate, or further my design of offering a cursory view of the general and grand ruling principles of fox-hunting, which it will be my endeavour to make comprehensible and acceptable to those friends for whose amusement or edification alone these pages are intended. I must repeat, that I am drawing solely upon my knowledge and memory for facts, and should, perhaps, state that I am not only unaided and alone, but actually and literally writing, daily, in a room unfurnished with one printed article of any description, and wholly devoid of all access to books from which I might cull rich matter for my own.* With regard to hounds, let us consider what stamp may be, from experience, pronounced to be best calculated for our provincial district, bearing ever in mind that

* More than half the book was written in leisure hours during a summer tour, and a considerable portion on board Mr. Acker's fine schooner yacht, the *Dolphin*.

our Bramingham is, to us, as much or more than the Billesdon Coplow to the Meltonian; that our Gaddesden and Kensworth Gorse are no less estimable in our eyes than those of Segg's Hill, or Catworth, in countries of higher repute; and that if we are more liable to that glorious uncertainty of scent, upon our colder lands, than those blessed with richer pastures, where scent can rarely fail, and where any hound ought to run, we are no less imbued with a love of the pace that kills, and it is, therefore, the more incumbent upon us to consult the cultivation of that *odora canam vis*, and all the essential qualities of the animal upon which we are the more dependant.

There is a certain degree of luck in all things: making a liberal allowance for the judgment which we are all ready enough to take credit for, upon the success of any scheme, it cannot be denied that there is good or ill luck attendant upon their results; and that one man may be fortunate enough to attain in two years what another may not accomplish in twenty.*

Thus, upon taking to fox-hounds, I had the good luck to succeed, in the first draft from a distant kennel which I pitched upon as likely to recruit the pack, and as particularly qualified for the country I had undertaken to hunt. My predecessor, probably at no less

* Mr. Barrett has afforded, in Hants, a practical illustration of this—having succeeded to the command of the old H. H., on the death of his lamented brother-in-law, Mr. Villebois—with everything to provide *de novo*, his sport, last season, exceeded that of many previous, and he has now a pack of hounds, the sight of which will repay the trouble of a visit.

pains and expense, had procured drafts from Cheshire and elsewhere, which, altogether as unluckily, proved otherwise than beneficial to the kennel. The *élite* of the pack, and many there were, bitches especially, well worth preserving as a foundation to the present, were chiefly bred at home, reflecting no little credit upon the judgment of their owner; but the majority of the dogs, though magnificent to the eye, were, to use poor Bob Oldaker's own words, fit only to be cut up into gloves.

Much did their size and action militate against their progress over a country where a hound should be a close hunter. To enable a hound to be a close hunter, he must be near his work; a large *lolloping* animal will, in our country, not only be figuratively as well as literally *above* his business, but he will tire with the effort of bearing his own weight over flints and fallows requiring constant stooping, and a gift of *pressing*, without which a Hertfordshire fox will laugh him to scorn. I must not be supposed, in any strictures upon a draft from the Cheshire, to offer any disparagement to that pack, which is, I believe, what it should be: I mean only to say, that their drafts did not suit the purpose of improving ours. For our country, I hold twenty-three inches as the maximum of height. It is true that, for the strong black-thorn woods of Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, a certain weight of substance is necessary, and with all my admitted partiality for small hounds, there is no greater advocate for bone and

muscle ; but I have never lost sight of the recorded opinion of the father of the science, Mr. Meynell,—that the *height* of a hound had nothing to do with his *size*. The breed of some veteran professors might, perhaps, do for some countries, but defend *us* from lumber in any shape.* We have, near us, a fine sample of a large pack, where a larger hound is absolutely required, in the strong country, and almost impenetrable coverts, encountered by that good sportsman, Mr. Barnett ; but he is unremitting in his attention to *shoulders*, and that clean mould of limb which unites *activity* with *power*. I was forcibly struck by the justice of a remark which he made to me one day last winter, when we were discussing the merits of different packs within our immediate notice, and the importance attached, in the present flying, railroadian era, to the *pace* of hounds. “ Few people,” said he, “ consider sufficiently the difference between a *fast* hound and a *quick* hound.” I was delighted with a remark so entirely coinciding with my own long-cherished opinion, for I have ever held that a hound may be able to *fly*, that is, may be possessed of physical ability to run like a greyhound, and yet prove a slow brute in chase ; but give me a *quick*

* There can be no use in glossing over fact—I may be setting up comparatively new, in opposition to old and well-received opinions, but it is, nevertheless, a fact beyond dispute, that wherever the heavy breed of throaty hound has been *fairly tried*, it has been found wanting ; *wanting*, not in the *pottering* power of holding on the line, or rather of reiterating what has been proclaimed and allowed long before, but wanting in speed, terribly deficient in stoutness, and by no means superior in fineness of nose. Of all this, I might offer high proof, but not without allusions savouring of personality.

hound, a hound instinctively quick in working for and catching a scent, and I will answer for his following his nose fast enough for the best horse ever foaled.

We all know the truth of the proverb that "like will beget like;" and the fact, that certain qualities are hereditary, is illustrated no less in the breed of hounds and horses than in that of the "genus humanum sine caudâ, carnivorum," &c.

"Fortes creantur fortibus, et bonis,
Est in juvenis, est in equis patrum
Virtus : neque imbellem feroces
Progenerant aquilæ columbam."

HOR.

"ἀγαθοὶ ἐγγίροντο καὶ τὸ φῦλον ἐξ ἀγαθῶν."—PLATO.

"Oh worthiness of nature, breed of greatness,
Cowards father cowards, and base things sire the base."

SHAKSPEARE.

In my attempt to establish a pack to my mind's eye, I never lost sight of the *sort* which I considered could not fail to suit, and from my old former ally, George Mountford, then hunting the Quorn under Mr. Errington, I luckily obtained several couples of that blood which I had learned to prize in the palmy days of the old Oakley, when George was huntsman to Lord Tavistock, he having migrated, upon the Marquis resigning the country, with that superior pack, which then became the property of Lord Southampton, into Leicestershire. To prove that blood was my object, and that I did not fear a transfer from the grass countries, I should mention, that I had also not a few choice hounds of Lord Lonsdale's breeding, both young and seasoned,

from Lambert; but to come to the luck, the luck coming at once (which might not, in a series of years, if ever, have occurred, and to which I attribute all the satisfaction that has since accrued to me)—this was a draft of sixteen couples from Lord Segrave's kennel, at Berkeley Castle, whither I despatched Boxall, on a special embassy in quest of them. It was singular that the next pack succeeding to that which I have just mentioned, in the Oakley country, and to which I must ever refer with reverential attachment, should have consisted, at the time they left Bedfordshire, of a lot of hounds approaching, in my humble opinion, as nearly to perfection, in all requisites and capabilities for showing sport in any country, as it is possible to arrive. I need not add, that I allude to those which were the property of the Hon. G. Berkeley. I am not about to enter into the Bedfordshire politics of those days, or to inquire what might have been the reasons inducing that gentleman, on the one hand, to leave a country, and, on the other, allowing a country to part with him and his pack after a series of most brilliant sport: I am upon the subject of hounds, and I write as I talk, with more proneness to say what I think than to think what I say; as I would avoid all cause of offence, so would I scorn to flatter any man breathing; and when I say that the establishment of such a pack as Mr. Berkeley's was the more remarkable, as in immediate succession to that which had been so fully tried and approved under the fostering care of Lord Tavistock (confessedly one

of the highest rank amidst professors of the science), it is but justice to add, that this would be no subject of wonder to those who know Mr. Berkeley's devotion to all appertaining to the breeding and management of hounds. There were many in this pack coming up to my notion of the *beau ideal* of a fox-hound, and it is beyond dispute that, during the last season of Mr. Berkeley's hunting the Oakley country, their performance left nothing to be desired.* *Palmam qui meruit ferat.* I have, perhaps, a natural inclination, when I see a pack well conducted, to give a full share of credit to the master; but I am strengthened in my observation upon Mr. Berkeley's knowledge in these matters, and in attributing the excellence of these hounds to his judgment, by the appearance of some letters upon his "system," published not very long since in the "New Sporting Magazine," under the signature, if I rightly remember, of "Skim," or something of that kind (but of this I am not positive, not having them to refer to). I read them on the supposition that they were published on authority, and can call to mind enough to know, that if I attempted to give any description of my own ideas upon the same points, I should find myself insensibly betrayed into the use of the same language. I shall think that I have reason to be satisfied with any effort of my own pen, should it produce anything

* At the time alluded to, there was no prospect of that which has since taken place, the resumption of the country by its former legitimate possessor. The secession of the Marquis was altogether productive of "wonderful work in the country."

half so well worth reading, or manifesting a similar knowledge of the subject.

During the three years in which I was occupied in getting together twenty couples of dwarf foxhound harriers, with which I hunted hare in my own neighbourhood,—in the course of which I obtained drafts not only from every pack which might be said to be within reach, but also from Wilts, Dorset, Devon, Hampshire, &c., I found none which could, in the aggregate, at all compare with those which I got from the kennel of Mr. Berkeley, then at Harold, in Bedfordshire.

It would be out of place, here, to state my reasons for hunting hare with the kind of hound by which she is generally supposed to be more than over-matched, further than that they were founded upon my own preference for that, over every other dog in the creation, and that I was supported by no less an authority than Lord Tavistock (once himself a master of harriers) in my opinion, that nothing existing in canine shape will hunt a lower scent than a high-bred foxhound. I will, in my appendix, add an extract from a letter of an old sportsman, in reference to this branch of the science, and proceed now to say, that having had, as a matter of course, infinite trouble with the entry of young hounds limited to twenty inches in height, I found that, whilst, in the generality of the drafts, one worth putting forward was an exception to the lot, in those obtained from Harold, it was rarely that any were found which did not immediately exhibit ample promise of a future excellence in

which I was seldom disappointed. How far I succeeded in establishing this pack of harriers it does not become me to say; I leave it to the decision of those judges who may have seen them upon their transmission into Norfolk, having, upon taking the foxhounds, sold them to Sir James Flower, whose energy and zeal are sufficient warrant for the perpetuity of their character;* for my present purpose, it is enough to say, that I at once decided upon a reliance on Lord Segrave's blood for hunting the fox in Hertfordshire, and this is the blood to which, after due trial, I am most anxious to adhere. In the coldest and most adverse state of atmosphere, they are to be seen ploughing the ground with their noses, and recovering any particle of scent which has not been dissipated. In the best of days, when every nerve is strained to maintain the pace at which I have seen them complete six miles in eighteen minutes, they will be found first in the foremost flight. When the whoo-whoop resounds, it is ten to one that the hound first and fast locked in mortal gripe and struggle with the prostrate victim, is one of these my favourites, who are alike to be distinguished on all occasions, as many a deep indenture upon their faces will prove, made by the fangs of many an old dog fox, in memento of an existence which, but for their relentless perseverance, might have been for years prolonged.

* The merits of this crack establishment have been already so well and justly described, in prose and verse, in the pages of the *New Sporting Magazine*, that any eulogy from my pen would be more than superfluous.

I have, at the present time, a bitch called Baneful, by Lord Segrave's Racer, out of his Barmaid, which I hold quite invaluable, not only because she was presented to me by Mr. Berkeley, and that I regard such a present in proportion to the acquisition she has proved, but on account of the intrinsic worth which constitutes, amongst all my pets, the best claim to a favour, which is nothing less than affection. Of all I ever saw, I should select her, had I a wager depending upon killing a fox with one single hound. To see her swimming a river at the head of the pack, throwing her tongue at every stroke, is, indeed, to use a quaint expression of Boxall's, enough to make the dead leap from their graves to look at her. I shall never forget her, with Ritual, by Mr. Osbaldeston's Sailor, out of Mr. Berkeley's Relict, another of the sort, when crossing the canal near Tring, in the middle of that glorious run, with a three-o'clock fox, from Kensworth Gorse to Wendover, having skirted Aylesbury. In an accurate account which appeared from the pen of some friend in "Bell's Life," the pack were well described, and truly, when crossing the canal, as "clustering as though all might have been included in a casting net;" but I will not here dwell even upon this glorious day, though glorious it may well be called, considering that a space of thirty miles over the map, by admeasurement, was accomplished in two hours and twenty-eight minutes, without one hound missing, with a fox found after a severe morning's previous work, and that, taking it

altogether, it has been pronounced by the oldest masters of hounds, and other high authorities, as a run which will scarcely find its parallel in the records of any country. It is a matter of congratulation to myself, and I hope, also, to all interested in the well-being of that pack, which, as long as I have a spark of ambition left within me, shall be *nulli secundus*, that Baneful and Ritual are both of them now only in their fifth year, and that their descendants give fair promise of bearing evidence of their stamp. The former has, at this moment, by her side, a most beautiful litter by the Duke of Beaufort's Rallywood.

I trust that I may be pardoned the semblance of egotistical vanity with which I have thus descanted upon these things affecting my own affairs. All have their hobby, from which, when once bestridden, they do not readily dismount; and any one who can enter into the sort of parental feeling toward a pack of hounds by which I am animated, will excuse a certain degree of pride with which I may reflect upon my endeavours at improvement, especially when I start with the admission of luck beyond all power of judgment, in the draft obtained from Berkeley Castle.

What I have said concerning the excellence of this blood, and the tribute which I have paid to Mr. Berkeley as a master of hounds, requires neither excuse nor apology. I shall ever speak of things as I find them, and am inclined to swear by the bridge which carries me safe over. To proceed now with our consideration of

the sort of hound fit for our country, I need not say that good shoulders are indispensable to one fit for any; but, beyond all other points in shape or make, I would especially direct the attention of any one hunting Herts, to *feet*. Though, perhaps, few, very few, if any, of the provincial countries (and by provincial I mean all which are not principally devoted to grazing and pasture lands), can boast of greater variety than our country, considering that, on the hedge greens of Gaddesden and Flamsted, indeed in the whole country to the west of Redbourn, a fox seldom quits grass; and that further below, beyond the stiff clay of Bramingham and Sundon, we have the fine grass vale of Toddington, equaling the best part of the best of countries, and formerly characterized by Mr. Meynell himself as the “Elysian fields;” still, I have said that a great variety exists; and as, in all give-and-take, with the good will come the bad, so around Kimpton, and a great part of the country between the Welwyn and Harpenden roads, and occasionally in other parts, fields are to be found bestrewed with flints, as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa—very nearly equalling those in Hampshire. To encounter these, a hound must have a foot like that of a cat in closeness, not *exactly* like that of a cat, as I have found that a cat-foot, however beautiful to look at, is liable to get what is termed a toe down sooner than any other. The toes of the foot must be close as possible, the whole foot round, yet flat enough for elasticity and expansion in action. With as little of kennel lame-

ness as any, if not less, I will venture to say that, in no country are more hounds lamed in the course of a day's work. I have drafted hounds which, from slight defects in their feet, have been utterly incapacitated, but which have continued, in other and deeper country, perfectly effective. Some contend that a hound should be perfectly straight from his withers to his stern ; but I am myself fond of what are called arched loins, or *wheel backs*, with an inclination to drooping quarters, with that development in the muscle of both which enables them to fly their fences. I fancy, also, that arched loins are better adapted to hills, and are most in harmony with the symmetrical outline requisite for speed and bottom.

The sketch at the head of this Chapter, however imperfect, may convey, better than any power of description which I possess, my notion of a well-shaped hound. It might seem absurd to record my conviction of the necessity that your hounds should be not only well-shaped but *well-bred*, having already stated that nothing canine will *hunt* like a high-bred foxhound ; and surely none will contend that anything else can *run* with them ; but it is too fresh in my memory, that, in these days of innovation, attempts have been not only suggested, but made, to reform, and thereby, of course, improve, the blood of this old English foxhound. This circumstance is of too recent date to admit of being left to the silence of oblivion.

About two years before Mr. Sebright retired from

Hertfordshire, I was surprised by the appearance, amidst the entry for that season, of a large, leggy, black-and-tanned bitch, called (perhaps in compliment to her pedigree) Wisdom. Without any particular faultiness in shape, she was, in my eyes, and in those of others seeing objects in a similar light, exactly the animal, of all others, to destroy the appearance of a whole pack. Frequently have I heard it inquired, by strangers, whence the creature might have strayed ; nay, I remember, upon one occasion, to have seen some well-meaning and kindly officious of the field actually riding at her, with that cracking of whips, and ratings of, “ Go along *home*,” with which a stray guardian of the sheepfold is usually saluted. She had certainly nearly as much resemblance to a retriever as to any of her associates. Now this Wisdom was the *enfant chérie* of the season—the result of an experiment which was to eclipse the blood of “old Meynell” and to throw such a gleam of intelligence upon the science of breeding as should cast into deep shade the errors of all former ages : she was to be the shining evidence and manifestation of a new light.

I am not making this relation sarcastically or impertinently, as a piece of irrelevant gossip, but as matter highly pertinent to a chapter upon hounds ; which, I think, all will allow, when I say that this experiment was made by the Professor of whom I have before spoken as a master of hounds—Mr. Smith, late master of the Craven. It consisted in the cross of a blood-hound with a foxhound bitch. It was nothing extra-

ordinary to imagine, that if the nose of a foxhound were capable of improvement, it would be by no means so well effected as by a cross with the bloodhound—generally allowed to possess the faculty or sense of smell in a degree of pre-eminence beyond its species; and, to the best of my belief, this notion received not only the full approbation and sanction of Mr. Sebright, but also of his father, Sir John, from whose acknowledged discernment and information upon the breeding of animals he inherits his knowledge. I cannot pretend to say whether it was intended to persevere in this cross, though I have reason to doubt whether the trial of two seasons, in which this Wisdom accompanied the pack, afforded room for satisfaction. I have myself observed her at work, and believe that she had as good a nose as might have been expected; but I do not think that any of her admirers, or the warmest advocate for change, would go so far as to say that she in any one point surpassed, admitting that she ever equalled, the performances of those rejoicing in the pure blood of old Bobadil or Cerberus, out of Sprightly or Verity. I did not, at that time, hunt often enough in Herts to speak from personal observation, but find, upon inquiry, that she showed the greatest disposition to act independently, or otherwise became what we should term a rank skirter; but it may not be fair to urge this against one solitary specimen of a fancy, which, for aught I know, may still be upheld by wiser heads than mine. All I mean to say is this, that nothing that I have seen or heard

with regard to a cross with the bloodhound has given me more inclination to that, than to a water-spaniel, as an improvement in fox-hunting; and that in this, as in many more instances where the benefit of change is not duly obvious, I should be for letting "well alone."

Upon my succession to the country, I received a very kind letter from Mr. Smith, inquiring after his protégée, Wisdom, which was then still, and may be now, in Mr. Sebright's possession, and offering to assist me in carrying further the proposed scheme for improving the breed of hounds. I replied, that, till I had reason to believe any animal had been bred to equal a thorough-bred foxhound, I should beg to prefer that description to any mongrel in the scale of creation; and by this faith and opinion shall I still, for the present, abide. I would, therefore, earnestly advise any young gentleman who may succeed me in Hertfordshire, or any man undertaking to hunt any country, to stick to the *best blood*; and, moreover, to spare no pains in obtaining it, wherever it is to be found. He may then, eventually, have the satisfaction of showing a pack which, in shape and make, will prove their high breeding. To sum up my advice, as to the well-bred and well-shaped hound I would have him maintain in our country, I will say—supposing him to have drafts from various kennels, or to have the choice of so many, of his own breeding, that he is unlimited in numbers, requiring not more than fifty or sixty couples for service—draft freely. Never keep a hound with faulty shape, on account of his pedigree; still

less should you be induced to retain a hound of inveterate ill habits, on account of his appearance. Draft, I say, freely, let them be handsome as pictures, or lineally descended from old Trojan. Avoid flat sides, short necks, and throaty, jolt-headed hounds. The proverb, "handsome is that handsome does," may be generally applied, not in the sense in which it is used, but literally to foxhounds. On looking over a pack, if you are struck with the beauty of any one distinguishable particularly for his intelligent countenance, his swan-like neck, his fine shoulders, his well-connected frame, compact, not short, lengthy rather than otherwise, well-rounded loins, with muscular thighs, and sinewy hocks, with a depth of rib and forehand from his withers to his brisket, and proportionate breadth of chest, standing upon bony legs, quite straight, and firmly planted upon perfect feet and ankles, and you inquire his name and pedigree, you will find, in nine cases out of ten, that he has a character according with the praise you cannot withhold from his form. I say, therefore, ever avoid a throaty bull-necked hound, unless you have sufficient reason to give him credit for qualities atoning for external defects, which, as the exception to general rule, will occasionally be found. Reject a flat, open, splay foot, at once; he may distinguish himself in grass countries, but will not go with you till Christmas. Get them as nearly level as you can; you will find that you are not only thus spared the eye-sore of some towering above others, and that unsizable appearance which may be compared to that

of a flock of sheep and lambs, but you will find that they will, in all probability, run better together, the better they are sized; and the carrying a good head is not the least of their capabilities which you will desire to see. I have said, keep to a small sort of hound for our country, never exceeding twenty-three inches, and have already quoted Meynell's opinion that *height* will not affect *size*, and, consequently, power. I had one young hound, this year, below the maximum of height, which measured, at ten months old, seven inches and three-quarters round the arm! The *multum in parvo* is precisely descriptive of the hound you will find answer all purposes; and, supposing you to have established a pack of this stamp, let us now consider how you will conduct their operations.





CHAPTER IV.

“Well bred, polite,
Credit thy calling.”

SOMERVILLE.

Huntsman, as an Intellectual Being—The Power of Mind—“Blood will tell”—Gentlemen against the World—Duke of Wellington and the Army—Best Class of Professional Huntsmen—Advantages of Temper in all Education—Difference in Disposition of Hounds—Peculiarities—Summary of General Duties of Huntsmen in Kennel.

WE will take it for granted that you have a huntsman thoroughly master of his business, in all its various departments; all requiring intellect beyond the common order. It is your own fault if you retain one in your service, after he has exposed his incapacity to an extent which I have witnessed; it is injustice to your hounds, yourself, and all parties concerned. There have been some, and probably will be more to be seen, who would be nearly as much at home as leader of the orchestra at the Opera, as in hunting a pack of hounds; and who have caused a wonder, how they ever came into a situation for which Nature evidently never intended

them. I have been more than once reminded of a London coachman's query to a rustic Jehu, who was striving to waggon his way through the city: "I say, Johnny Raw, who feeds the pigs when you be driving?" And some *would-be* huntsmen, within my memory, would probably have made very good feeders, but certainly should never have left the precincts of the boiling house. We will suppose that you have one brought up to the business:—one who has served an apprenticeship to the service. There are, I believe, few instances of good huntsmen who have not been bred and born, as they call it, to the kennel; and most of them have commenced their career as whippers-in, during which period of probation they acquire an insight into the practical parts of their duty, and, subsequently, if they have the advantages of education, will endeavour to improve their minds, to exercise their powers of reason, to seek information, and dive into the theory of the science. We are told that knowledge is power; and I hold it as a fact beyond dispute, that in any and every occupation or employment in life, from that of the metaphysician and philosopher, to the daily labourer; from the inventor of steam, to the smith who forges the iron for the engine, the power of mind will prevail. The progress of each will be promoted in proportion to the weight of intellect brought to bear upon the principle of action. For this reason, I imagine that men of education, or, in the common acceptation of the term, gentlemen, who *devote* themselves to any of the several

exercises or accomplishments, such as riding or driving, boxing or fencing, shooting, cricket,* &c., are generally found far to excel, in proportion to their number, the rest of the world, who, in inferior station, have adopted any of these walks of life from necessity rather than choice. "In divinity, physic, or law," the highest ornaments have been, with few exceptions, the most finished gentlemen; and I have no doubt that a gentleman farmer would, instead of too often furnishing matter for a joke, prove the best of agriculturists, if he would farm less as an amateur, and bring his own deductions to the assistance of the general rules of practice. I see, myself, no other objection to the gentleman huntsman but this, that he would not, could not, consistently with the maintenance of any society, abandon himself to the labour, if of the field, certainly not of the kennel; and I hold it a *sine quâ non*, that a huntsman should be *perpetually* with his hounds, for reasons which will be apparent in my definition of the essentials in his character. I will maintain, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred,—I might safely say in every case,—where not only mental, but an exertion of physical power is required, that "*blood will tell.*" Take the first clodhopper you may meet, who is inured to hard work upon the railroad; I will take the first gentleman I find within the doors of Almack's. Let the clod pate be equally well fed,—trained, if you please, for a month; and I will back the gentleman to kill him in walking from

* Perhaps the *players* may be able to beat the gentlemen in this game; but it is their fault if such is the case.

London to York, or any other feat of endurance. When I say "blood will tell," it is because from high breeding descends a larger share of what is technically termed "pluck;" because there is a never-yielding spirit, an *animus* infused through the veins, which has given rise to the saying, with regard to horses, that an ounce of blood is worth a pound of bone. This principle may be fairly extended and carried out in reference to human nature. However independent the mind is of the body the mind is the essence of being,—the life, the soul; and will support, in a manner truly wonderful (and admirable, indeed, as the greatest of the great Creator's works), a frame bearing no proportion to the mighty *spirit* by which it is animated. If we have, in the present time, degenerated in outward form from those in the days of our ancestors, whose

"Pillow was buckler, cold and hard,
 Who carved at the meal
 With gloves of steel,
 And drank the red wine through the helmet barred ;

there is still the same chivalrous feeling to nerve the body to deeds of high daring. It may be said by my readers, that I am given to military simile; and I admit my fondness for the analogy,—a pride in the comparison between deeds of heroism and fox-hunting; and I cannot refrain from noticing the well-known opinion of that great chieftain, to whom many, happily, like myself, look up as to a demi-god, and who is, by-the-way, himself devoted to fox-hunting, that, amongst all his officers in

the Peninsula, the best, the bravest, the most reckless of exposure to the enemy, the readiest to seek

“the bubble reputation, even in the cannon’s mouth,”

and the most indifferent to the hardships of a campaign, were amongst the dandies, the most refined and polished of the ladies’ men and beaux of the army. This long digression in favour of gentility, brings me back to the point whence I started, with the assertion that a gentleman huntsman could hardly fail to excel, *if*,—and how much depends upon an *if*!—*if* he could dedicate himself entirely to the work, after the manner in which Peter the Great acquired the art of ship-building. As this is by no means desirable, or called for in any way, it should be your endeavour to select a servant with a turn of mind, a genius, qualifying him for one of the highest grades in his class; such a man as would, in the army, have risen from the ranks to a serjeant-major, and thence to the top of his profession. He should be impressed with a due sense of the responsibility which must be vested in him, and entertain a corresponding idea of his own importance, sufficient to ensure the respect and attention to which he is entitled from those under his command, without any affectation or conceit to render him ridiculous. A low-lived blackguard, who will swear like a trooper, and drink himself into a state of madness, constituting his qualification, and his one redeeming point (probably the only merit he will be found to share, in common with other fools), that of

“*riding like the devil*,” will never keep things straight in the departments subject to his regulation. His mind, being brutalized, will be incapable of appreciating the dignity of his station ; he will be wholly unsusceptible of any but the grosser elements of his vocation ; and he will be utterly destitute of that pure enjoyment and delight in his duty, which may be so truly said to make toil a pleasure, where a huntsman is characterized by the reverse of these degrading attributes, and stands as a pattern of happiness and contentment in the state of life to which he has been called. For the honour of the craft, for our own honour, I am happy to state that I could name many who might say with the poet,

“The labour we delight in physics pain ;”

whose example will, I trust, descend to all ages : but it would, of course, be invidious here to mention them particularly. We will only hope that these laudable characteristics are to be found in the majority of huntsmen throughout merry England : I should say, the whole of Great Britain, or world of chase.

You will be fortunate if, in addition to the advantage of some education, and that of being altogether a rational being, your huntsman be possessed of that rare qualification,—a good temper. A man may be strictly honest, and clever in his business, but may have an infirmity of temper which will destroy all pleasure in the communion and intercourse which should exist between him and the master. He should thank-

fully receive any hints or advice which you may think fit to bestow upon him, either at home or in the field ; and it is your business to take care that he is never, upon any occasion, interfered with *by any one* but yourself : at the same time, he should preserve the most respectful civility of attention to any remarks which may be casually addressed to him by others. But it is far less on your own account (although the pleasure of your field, and your own popularity, may in a great degree depend upon your huntsman's temper), it is less for your own sake than for that of the hounds, that he should be gifted, at least, with patience and forbearance. There are two ways of doing everything : and some things may be, perhaps, equally well done by different plans ; but, without making so wide a distinction as that of the right from the wrong way, I confess that I like to see an alacrity, a cheerfulness in compliance, bespeaking real willingness in a servant. A huntsman's whole life is illustrative of the "pleasure of pleasing ;" and the "love me, love my dog" principle may be easily discovered in his deportment. We know how much, how very much, the temper of young horses and other animals depends upon their mode of treatment. I might carry this further, and advance a few hints to parents and nurses, upon the management of children, which might not be inapplicable ; but keeping at present to the brute creation, and more especially to our subject, the hound, you will find that the temper and disposition of your hounds may be traced to the

manner of your huntsman. Hounds, of course, differ, like all other things in Nature ; and some few, very few, like vicious horses, may have a natural ferocity, indomitable. I have heard Sir John Sebright affirm, that there is no mastiff, or bull-dog, by nature more savage than a foxhound ; and it is by patient gentleness of usage, combined with firmness of command, and a method of enforcing obedience, that a whole pack is rendered not only docile, but that mass of engaging, attractive, *lovable* creatures, that they are generally found to be when a kind huntsman, or master, throws himself amidst a hundred of his darlings. If you see hounds shy at the approach of a huntsman, and difficult to be drafted ; if they evidently obey his voice from compulsion rather than inclination, it is the result either of want of temper, or bad manner with them : probably of both. They should seem to bask in the sunshine of his smiles ; they will get so familiarized with him, that a whistle, a wave of his hand, or the slightest indication, will convey to them his desire : they will thus, in casting, wheel right or left, and move in column, like a squadron of horse on a field-day.

There is, in the human constitution, what is, by medical and learned men, termed *idiosyncrasy*,—a fine long word, meaning a peculiarity ; I should, perhaps, say *individuality*—requiring separate and distinct treatment. The plain English may be found in the old saying, that “ What is one man’s meat, is another man’s poison.” In the discovery of this peculiarity in the

human system, consists the skill of the physician, superior to the common run of ordinary practitioners, upon general principles. There is no less in hounds an *idiosyncrasy*,—a peculiarity in their several dispositions, which requires the skill of a professor to cope with. Some young hounds enter instinctively;—from their first to their last appearance in the field they do no wrong;—they commence with the scent to which they were born, and afford a moral to beings of higher class, in their devotion, through their lives, to the purposes of their creation. Others, equally good, will take no notice of anything; will not stoop to any scent during the first season, and are still slack at entering, even in the second; but ultimately are distinguished at the head of the pack: and such, I have always observed, last some seasons longer than the more precocious of the same litter. Others have an almost inveterate propensity to run anything and everything, by scent or by view, and act altogether upon the voluntary principle as soon as they are emancipated from their couplings. A love of hare will descend, in particular blood, through generations, and will occasionally demonstrate itself, especially on bad scenting days, when a hound that is at any time unsteady must, and will run *something*; but the same hound, when settled to a fox, may be invincible.

In contending with these and many other difficulties of Nature, it is absurd to imagine that one universal system of discipline would be found to answer, any better than it would for school-boys. It has been said of men :

“Oderunt peccare boni virtutis amore,
 Oderunt peccare mali, formidine pœnæ :”

which (as, perhaps, less common, or Latin grammar-like, than some of my classical quotations) I may, for the benefit of country gentlemen, thus freely translate :

“The good, for goodness’ sake, will fear to falter ;
 The bad keep good,—because they fear a halter.”

And thus, with hounds, some will require no inducement to do right ; others will only be restrained by fear of correction, from doing wrong. There is still another class to be added to this catalogue—those determined delinquents, whose errors of omission or commission may be briefly summed up in the conclusion that they are literally good for nothing. This will now and then be the case, even with the best bred and best shaped. These must be at once put away, if only for reasons intelligible to every one conversant with a saying concerning “evil communication.” If they are good (as a friend of mine affirms that they are) to make apple-trees grow, the sooner they are buried in the nearest orchard the better. They may do for transportation to “the *Ingies* ;” but will do you no credit, if included in any draft to another kennel. Now, to cherish all the merit, —to obviate, as far as possible, all the defects ; to study the peculiarities ; and to make himself acquainted with the disposition of every hound in the pack, is the duty of a huntsman, no less than it is that of a training groom, to consider the difference of constitution, and

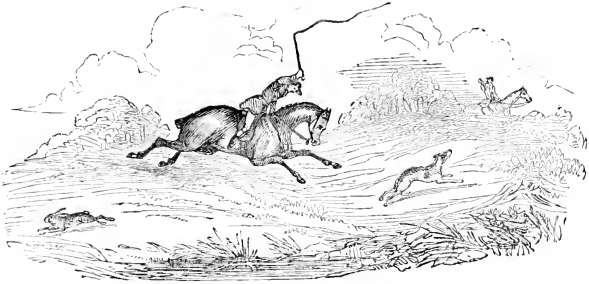
the particular circumstances of every horse under his care, and so to regulate the work of each. We are, at present, still upon the subject of system and general management : we shall, hereafter, arrive at their results, when we come to the display of science in the field. I have endeavoured to show that a huntsman, to afford satisfaction, should be active, well-informed, sober, industrious, and zealous ; that he should delight in his toils, and glory in his success. I take it as a matter of course, that he has his own infallible specific for distemper ; that his methods of physicking, bleeding, and dressing, are all conducted, not only on the best principles, but that, in his own idea, he is, in all his nostrums, superior to his neighbours. To a certain extent, there is nothing objectionable in his “ making swans of all his geese ;” nay, there is something laudable in the vanity with which he will inculcate the doctrine of “ old Tom Grant,” or some such patriarchal authority, and will back the *data* of such and such a school, on which his own practice is founded, against the world. It will be desirable that he should have some knowledge of the anatomy of a dog ; a little knowledge is, perhaps, a dangerous thing : but I do not mean that which would lead him into “ experimental philosophy,” in attempting dangerous and difficult operations ; but something, beyond that of being able to bleed or blister a hound, is highly useful.*

* One instance of this occurred in my own kennel. A valuable hound, called Saladin, had been lame for two seasons before he came into my possession, the cause remaining undiscovered ; he could get through a

Perfection enters not within the scale of human nature ; but if you get a servant possessing all that I have described as indispensable, and more which I have named, and may recommend, as desirable qualifications, you may consider him invaluable ;—that his interests are identified with your own :—you will hold him entitled to your fullest confidence ; you will afford him every facility of improving himself, and you will take care that he has wherewithal to be happy and contented in your service. His comforts, and those of his wife and family, if he has either, or both, should not be overlooked ; and he should have no reasonable grounds of complaint, as to the horses which he is obliged to ride, the subordinates for whose efficiencies he is answerable, or with regard to any of the minor details, constituting the *material* upon which he has to construct the edifice which you desire to rear—and to uphold, as a pattern of something “done well and as it should be done.”

day's work, but was always more or less unsound. My huntsman, applying the knife to a callous tumour on the back sinews of his near fore-leg, laid it open to the joint ; and, from *underneath* the leaders, extracted an enormous piece of blackthorn, which, having worked in, had bedded itself amongst the fibres, and there remained for two years. The dog soon became perfectly sound. I have preserved the thorn, measuring nearly three inches, as a curiosity.





CHAPTER V.

“High o'er thy head wave thy resounding whip.”

SOMERVILLE.

“The huntsman's self relented to a grin,
And rated him, *almost*, a whipper-in.”

DON JUAN.

Whipper-in—Advantages of Practical Explanation—Anecdote of a Miracle—Essentials in Whipper-in—Duties in Kennel, and in the Field—Discrimination—Passive Obedience—Tom Ball.

HAVING now bestowed some time upon the character of a huntsman, let us come to his aides-de-camp, or whippers-in; characters, in their own department, not a whit less important to the well-being of the concern. It will not be amiss for any novice in “the science,” to review it in all its bearings. If I am tedious on the subject of these contingencies, it is because I am anxious to omit as few links as possible in the chain of general observations upon the management of a pack of foxhounds. Had I the pen of Nimrod, I should not expect to improve many servants by the most erudite thesis upon their duties. Their knowledge is, and must be, chiefly

the result of practice, whence they may learn to judge of causes by their effects. One practical lesson is worth all that could be conveyed to them through the eloquence of a Cicero.

The following anecdote may serve to illustrate the benefit of practical explanation in favour of moral argument. I was told it as a true story, but may use the hackneyed quotation :—

“I know not how the truth may be,
I tell it as 'twas told to me.”

A clergyman in a country church had been, in the course of his sermon, expounding on the nature of miracles. No sooner had the service ended than one of his congregation, a bluff farmer, approached him, and begged to thank him for much that he had learned in attending to his discourse, but hoped that his reverence would pardon his asking for some further elucidation of the meaning of a *miracle*; nothing that he had then heard having tended to enlighten his ignorance of the nature of such an occurrence.

The divine immediately assented, requesting the farmer to wait in the porch till the congregation had dispersed. In the porch accordingly did Giles station himself, happy in the hope of a solution of such a mystery, and was sedulously watching the departure of the last loiterers in the churchyard, when he was literally “taken all aback,” by a tremendous salute in the rear from the well-directed and vigorously applied foot of the pastor,

who, in reply to the mingled expressions of pain and wonder, which burst from his disciple, mildly inquired, "whether what he had then received had caused him any pain?" "Hurt me! hurt me most woundily," rejoined the farmer. "Then," said the clergyman, in his most significant manner, "all I can tell you is, that it would have been a *miracle* if it had *not*." We may presume that the querist, in this case, required nothing beyond the fundamental lesson he obtained, and must have been ever after fully sensible of all that a word, which was previously as Hebrew to him, could convey. Send your second whipper-in back some miles after hunting; and insist upon his return in good time, not without some hounds that may be missing; he will be, for the future, more awake to the advantage of minding his business than by repeated lectures upon the expediency of keeping the pack together. Follow this principle up, if you would have *deeds*, rather than *words*, prevail throughout your establishment. Without strict sobriety, honesty, and civility, *no* servant should be tolerated; we will only say, therefore, that they are as essential in a whipper-in as in all others. It is desirable that your first whipper-in should not only be active and intelligent in rating and turning hounds, but he should be always looking forward to the day when he may himself become a huntsman, and endeavour to qualify himself to take the first fiddle when occasion may require. It is a difficult task for a whipper-in to hunt the pack accustomed to his rate; they do not willingly accept the

subsequent apology of his cheer, and they follow him like boys

“Creeping like snail unwillingly to school :”

but it is well if the guard can drive the mail, should the coachman be disabled on the journey ; and, in the event of any accident to the huntsman, the first whipper-in should be capable of hunting them upon scientific principles ; to enable him to do which, he must be born with a head upon his shoulders. His knowledge of all localities, his acquaintance with all earths, coverts, their relative distances, and everything else belonging to knowledge of country, can, perhaps, be, if anything, *less* dispensed with in him than in a huntsman. His place, in line of march, is at the head, the huntsman in the centre, and the second whipper-in in the rear of the pack. He should know the shortest and best way for hounds to every part of the country, from any given spot. Having said that he is, eventually, himself to become a huntsman, it is needless to make any repetition of requisites enumerated as essentials in the last chapter. His temper will be equally called upon. He must never sulk, nor hesitate in obedience to any command received from the huntsman appointed over him, who is answerable for all proceedings, right or wrong. Towards hounds he must temper a firmness of resolution in the vigorous execution of his office, with moderation, remembering that “there is reason in roasting of eggs ;” and he is not to add to the punishment of

a hound, by giving vent to his own irritation at the trouble he may have found in "*getting at him.*" Dogs will not, like Mrs. Bond's ducks in the song, "come and be killed;" they not only know when they are wrong, and have incurred the lash, but are good physiognomists, reading your intentions in your looks; and it is not surprising that a young hound, on hearing, "blessings upon his carcass," accompanied by a fervent promise to "cut him in two" if he is to be got at, with corresponding evidences of determination in performance, should endeavour to take the will for the deed, and lead Mr. Jack or Bill a dance, which generally ends in trebling the castigation in the long run, and not unfrequently in being ridden over and left for dead. This should not be; hounds, if struck, and we all know that struck they must be, and severely too, should be struck, and *then* rated—not rated with a loud warning, like the bell of a watchman, to give thieves notice of his approach—and then hunted or ridden down, as is too commonly the case. I am inclined to think, that if, after one crack of the whip, and a hearty rate, they fly at once cowering to the huntsman's heels, the end is answered, without any occasion for further chastisement. A hound which has felt the lash so as to have reason to remember the voice which *followed* its application, will be more likely to fly from that voice, when rated in the middle of a covert, perhaps, inaccessible; but if it is not sufficiently clear that he might not equally dread the conjunction of both, whichever might have the precedence,

it is obvious that the object of correction may be more easily accomplished by coming upon him unawares, instead of rating him out of reach, and this is alone sufficient reason for the rule I have laid down.

It would be impossible to specify all the dismounted duties of a whipper-in ; they must, of course, vary with the rules and regulations of the respective establishments. Some have to dress their own horses, after hunting ; with others, such is not the case : the work of servants is generally in proportion to the *calibre* of the *ménage* ; and where there are fewest cats, the more mice will there be to be caught. In most, if not in all, kennels, the whippers-in must take their share with the boiler (or *feeder*, as he is called, though he should never feed the hounds unless the huntsman is necessarily absent) in keeping all parts of the premises in the highest state of cleanliness. A well-regulated kennel will, in the appearance of its lodging-houses, yards, boiling-house, &c., shame the abode of many Christians, not cottagers (for it is never so dirty as a cottage), but householders of a high order, who might well take a lesson of cleanliness from it ; not a spot of dirt is seen ; but *every day throughout the year*, every brick and board looks as if washed and scoured for some especial occasion ; not an odour mingles with the pure air, which could offend the olfactory nerves of the most sensitive lady ; everything is in its place ; nothing is in confusion ; all is in keeping with the tone of order and quiet which reigns around.

Whippers-in, like huntsmen, must feel a pride in their places, an interest in the credit and reputation of the pack, and thoroughly enjoy the sport, although their labour is not light, but, on the contrary, very arduous, and often harassing and vexatious. Without being able to ride, a man will, probably, not be placed in such a situation ; but they should be more than mere riders, they should be active and good horsemen, capable of distinguishing between the *use* and *abuse* of the horses intrusted to them ; of this we may take more notice when on the subject of " riding to hounds." In kennel, as in the field, the whippers-in are both under command of the huntsman, and it is his place to take care that they are diligent in the discharge of all required of them.

Throughout the summer months, as soon as

" Night's candles are burned out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops,"

there is a general turn out, and it is not long after dawn before the merry pack are snuffing up the heavy dew, at exercise, attended constantly by both whippers-in, with the huntsman ; three hacks at least being kept for this purpose. It is a good plan to take them to the nearest deer-park, and frequently, also, to places where hares are preserved, to keep up their acquaintance with all kinds of riot, increasing, as much as possible, their indifference, till it will amount to dislike of what they are so schooled to avoid. This schooling will much depend

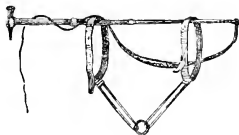
upon the efficiency of the whippers-in. The huntsman is at this time endeavouring to attach every hound to himself, and will encourage all (particularly the young hounds) as they are driven up to him by his assistants. A sensible and intelligent whipper-in will very soon acquire some notion of the peculiar tempers and dispositions of different hounds, so essential in a huntsman ; and will not require to be perpetually cautioned against the *indiscriminate* administration of punishment. For one hound a word may suffice, while others may require as much payment as lawyers before they do anything. With these it must necessarily be not only a word, but “ a word and a blow, and the blow first ;” but nothing annoys me more than to see a cut made at a hound, in the midst of others guiltless of the cause. It is ten to one but the lash, intended for Vagabond or Guilty, will descend upon Manager or Blameless, and render others shy, to no purpose. The difficulty consists in contriving to awe the resolute, without breaking the spirit of the timid. One of the best hounds I ever saw had been so completely cowed in Leicestershire, that he was useless till he had changed his owner and country. I have said enough to prove that the task of a whipper-in is not one that can be achieved by every groom who can ride and crack a whip, but that, like every branch of the science, it is regulated upon certain principles. His part in the campaign may be designated as that of an active and zealous partisan. He must exercise his judgment when left to his own discretion, but to all com-

mands from master or huntsman he must yield blind obedience. Prompt only in execution of orders, he must think as little of stopping hounds, or taking them as it may seem to him, *from* their fox, as a soldier would hesitate to storm a fort, by order of his superior, which he might know to be impregnable. There is a maxim in the army that no one under the rank of a field officer has a right to *think*, much less to express an opinion. This, with some reservations, should be the creed of the whipper-in,* but, at the same time, he may console himself with the reflection that he is no less necessary to the sport than the highest in office; moreover that the success of the day, the getting well away with a fox, and avoiding a change, or the triumphant finish, may very frequently be attributed entirely to his exertions, and that by attaining to excellence in his calling, he has rendered himself one of the most useful and deserving members of the community.

No one could ever have seen old Tom Ball, formerly whipper-in to Lord Tavistock, without feeling that he must have been born a whipper-in. George Mountford would readily admit that, but for Tom, many and many fox might have escaped his skill, which fell a victim to old Ball's sagacity, his knowledge of the animal, and *his line*. Patiently would he sit by a covert side, where, by *his own* line, he had arrived about as soon as the sinking fox; there would he view, perhaps, a brace or

* "Σὸν λέγειν, ἐμὸν τοῦμαῖν"—It is yours to speak, it is mine to bear. Such must be his motto.

more away, without the motion of a muscle, till his practised eye would recognize *the* hunted fox, and then would blythe Echo, and other wood nymphs be startled by the scream which would resound his knell, and, like the war-cry of the ancients, would reanimate his pursuers with certainty of conquest. I am happy to add that Tom has been well taken care of, in a small farm upon the scene of his former exploits. A horse was presented to him by the Oakley club, to enable him to look on occasionally, and since the opening of the campaign, on the revival of the old Oakley, he has given proof that he is not altogether past active service.





CHAPTER VI.

----- "What delight
To back the flying steed—that challenges
The wind for speed! Seems native more of air
Than earth! Whose burden only lends him fire!
Whose soul, in his task, turns labour into sport!
Who makes your pastime his! I sit him now
He takes away my breath! He makes me feel
I touch not earth—I see not, hear not, all
Is ecstacy of motion."

LOVE CHASE.

Riding to Hunt and Hunting to Ride—Horsemanship inseparable from
Enjoyment of the Chase—Going a-Hunting—Price of Horses—
Thorough-bred versus Cock-tails—Blood, again, will tell—A Man
without a Grandfather—The Wendover Run—Nimrod's Letter on
Condition—Physic—Bleeding.

THAT some ride only to hunt, while others only hunt
to ride, is admitted even by the members of the latter
class; and they, indeed, form a very large majority of
the field of fox-hunters; but nothing can be more offen-
sive to the feelings of any one with the slightest pre-

tensions to the character of a *sportsman*, than to number him amongst those who hunt only for the sake of a ride, which they may enjoy at least as well, if not better, after a stag, or a drag. Still, notwithstanding the *esprit de corps*, which would induce me strenuously to advocate the cause of the first class—those “who ride only to hunt”—I must confess that I doubt much whether the Noble Science would not be robbed of one half of its seductive attractions, if it were not so combined with, and inseparable from, the use of the horse,—if what is allowed to be, by both sexes, the most delightful of all exercises, were not necessary to its enjoyment. We have read of following the chase on foot, but it is associated only with the bell-mouthed southern hound, the mountain, and the moor. However devoted a man may be to the breed of dogs, and to the cultivation of that part of the Noble Science which I may term the philosophy of hunting, he might say, with Shakespeare, “what think you of the mustard without the beef,” if you attempt to divest it of the charms of riding to hounds. Indeed, riding to hounds is clearly what was meant by the old song of “*going a-hunting*,” and “*a-hunting we will go*.” How can a man *go* unless he is possessed of an animal—

“All that a horse should be which nought did lack,
Save a proud rider on so proud a back.”

The difference in the manner of *going* depends upon the nerve or ambition of him who follows the hounds for the sake of what is technically termed “*going*,” or of him

who goes for the sake of the hounds. Both may go equally well over a country, in a run ; but the advantage which the sportsman has, is this, that he will very frequently be well amused with what has been, to him, a day's sport, and return well satisfied with having 'g one hunting," when the other will say that there has been nothing to go for.

All, however, who pretend to hunt in any way, are desirous of being well mounted, at least in their own estimation. The acquisition of a stud of good hunters is a matter of the highest importance ; and one, not of the easiest attainment. A good hunter is always to be had for money, and it is easier to get a stable full of hunters than two or three really good hacks ; but a horse which is well able to carry more than twelve stone across a country will always command a price, rendering it difficult for any, but those happily gifted with an abundance of that which will procure anything and everything,* to mount themselves to their satisfaction. A light weight, that is, a man riding from ten to twelve stone, may, with judgment, aided by luck, buy a horse for from fifty to a hundred guineas, which may prove first rate ; but horses equal to higher weight, and possessing any knowledge of their business, are not to be had under three figures.

A difference of opinion still exists, as to the degree of breeding requisite for a hunter ; some still holding to a well-bred, say three-parts blood, in preference to

* Χρυσος ανοίγει πάντα.

thorough-bred ; but I think the taste for the highest bred is daily gaining ground ; and, for my own part, I am thoroughly convinced that a race-horse, with bone and substance sufficient to qualify him for the rough and smooth encounter of crossing a country, is, beyond all comparison, superior to the best cock-tail that can be produced. As for pace, it has been proved, beyond dispute, that the winner of the Derby would not be fast enough to live with hounds at their utmost speed. The great match over the Beacon-course at Newmarket, between foxhounds and race-horses *in training for the purpose*, is fresh in the memory of many. The horses had not a chance with the hounds, although one was ridden blind, and the other completely done up in the attempt.

Speaking only from my own experience, I have always observed, and have also found myself, that a thorough-bred horse could maintain the best pace, which a horse must go to be upon any terms with hounds, or carry his rider anything like what is called "up to them," with far greater ease to himself than those of inferior pedigree. Nimrod most justly remarks, that "wind is strength," and that "when the puff is out of a horse, a mountain or a mole-hill are much the same to him." A race-horse is not only superior in stamina, and the powers of endurance, but is generally clearer winded, and, therefore, not blown by double the exertion which would stop a cock-tail. I am far from wishing to insinuate that there has not been, and I hope still will be,

a very large proportion, perhaps I should say great majority, of excellent hunters which never might have stood a chance of being entered for a royal plate. There are many which, without being like Dibdin's high-mettled racer,

“Alike formed for sports of the field *and the course*,”

may still lay claim to his attributes, and be found

“Always sure to come through, a stanch and fleet horse :”

but if we come to the question, whether thorough-bred horses are not able to beat all others in a long day, and take the evidence of the best performers in all countries, there can be no doubt of a verdict in their favour. We thus hark back upon my maxim concerning hounds, which may, indeed, apply to everything—*Blood will tell*.

If it be asserted that race-horses do not take so readily to fencing, and are more awkward at their business than the old stamp of hunter, I say that, when properly educated, and having once taken to jumping, they are far more clever, because gifted with greater activity. I do not think that they are longer in *making* than other horses, but the fact is, *their* schooling attracts attention, while the bungling of a novice of minor character escapes observation ; and when the former falls (not exactly in the indescribable position of “a thorough-bred one falling at his fence,” depicted by a certain artist), every one says that it is just what he expected, forgetting that “Rome was

not built in a day ;” that the safety-conveyances upon which they are then seated were, probably, oftener upset in their time of tuition, when this horse was otherwise engaged in training for the course, and that, if their equal in age, he is still their junior in practice as a hunter.

I am presuming that we are talking of *quondam* race-horses, because, till blood-horses are bred for the express purpose of hunting, there must be very few which, if likely to make hunters, will not previously have been considered worth the expense of training ; for weeds are not in higher estimation in racing than in hunting stock, and the size of a young horse very materially affects his value. Another advantage which you will find in a thorough-bred one is this, that he does everything in a genteel way : if he falls, he has not only plenty of time, but he *knows how to get up again* ; he does not lie locked in the embraces of mother earth, or as though destined for fructification in the soil, but he is up and ready to make atonement for his mistake, and when others will appear *groggy*, he will not be said to have been *overtaken*.

Ἐοθλῶν ἀπ' ἀνδρῶν ἰσθλα γίγνεσθαι τέκνα
Κακῶν δ' ὅμοια τῇ φύσει τοῦ πατρὸς.

EURIP. APUD STOBEUM.

I am not over fond of quoting “*crack-jaw*” upon sporting subjects, but cannot resist the introduction of this passage as another proof that in ancient, as well as in modern theory, my doctrine with regard to blood held good. It is a common saying with a friend of mine, an

octogenarian divine, one of the most highly polished, and, consequently, one of the most agreeable *gentlemen* to be met with in the hunting-field or elsewhere, when he has occasion to animadvert upon misconduct in any one holding the rank and station of a gentleman, "Rely upon it that fellow never had a *grandfather*." There is a fund of truth and meaning in these few words; for although it has but too frequently happened that some scions of the aristocracy have proved degenerate (as if determined to maintain the existence of black sheep in every flock), it will be found in *ninety-nine cases out of a hundred*, where the harmony of any society is disturbed by an obnoxious individual, that he is a cock-tail; a low, underbred fellow; one, in short, who never could have had a grandfather. Thus it is with horses, the better bred, the more manageable are they generally found; they are seldom fractious or inclined to waste their energies in petty ebullitions: they are not excited by trifles to an exhibition of their might; but, at the covert side, in "the park," or amidst the din of a crowded race-course, preserve a dignified sobriety of deportment, characteristic of their order. If, on the contrary, you see what is called, probably, a very nice, spicy prad, exposing himself from the moment he leaves his stable, with his head in the air, till that of his return to it, with his tail over his back, going backwards, or, as a sailor would say, with stern-way, at his fences, and "kicking up a bobbery" for the sake of making "much ado about nothing," you may write him down as the pro-

duce of the old cart-mare by some country Highflyer, and may be sure, especially if in addition to all this he is a runaway, that no one remembers anything about his grandsire.

In that tremendous run of thirty miles, to which I have before alluded, in which my huntsman killed one very valuable mare, and completely tired two other horses, my first whipper-in was carried well to the end, in a good place, by a little entire thorough-bred chestnut horse, of extraordinary power, measuring barely fifteen hands. The Hon. E. Grimston and Mr. Daniell, *longo intervallo*, did wonders, and kept company with him to the finish ; but this little horse had gone through a morning's work before the finding of an afternoon fox, and I will venture to say that nothing but blood could have gone throughout *the whole* of such a day. Enough, however, of the breeding of our hunters, let us remember, only, that upon their *ability to go* depends all our chance of seeing anything of the sort of run we are all anxious to see, and that to be prepared for any enjoyment of the burst which occurs some fine morning, when least expected, from some covert, the very last "one would have thought of" to hold *such* a fox, our horses *must be in condition*.

For the most useful hints upon this most important point, I would refer every one to Nimrod's letters, which I consider as gospel on the subject : though it is long since I read them, on their first coming out, I remember enough of them to know that they are to be recom-

mended for sound precept, and that it will be well with yourself and your horses if you adhere to the rules they contain. To the publication of these letters are we indebted for the commencement of a new era, a general revolution, in the treatment of horses. Many were the prejudices to be contended with, before the folly of the old régime was sufficiently manifested. Every one is inclined to be, more or less,

——“Laudator temporis acti,
Se puero ;”

and it was some time before the new doctrine of summering a hunter in the stable, in preference to turning him out to grass, was generally accepted and established, but “*magna est veritas et prævalebit ;*” it is now difficult to find any one so bigoted to the ancient usages of his forefathers as to consign a valuable hunter to all the torment of heat and flies,—the lamenesses, the grass coughs, and all the catalogue of ills engendered by what was termed the indulgence of a summer’s run.—A *run*, indeed, well calculated to deprive him of the chance of any run in the winter.—It has been my custom to have them turned out into soft paddocks for two hours about sunrise and sunset, and to keep them through the remainder of the day and night in loose boxes. I have seen very good accommodation afforded in large barns, which, by movable partitions of rails or hurdles, may be divided into several compartments, where they may be served with lucern, tares, or sainfoin. An artificial bed of clay may be

introduced, if required, for the benefit of their *feet*, which will call for constant attention on the part of the head groom, or person in charge of them. I am not presuming to indite any code of rules for attaining the degree of *condition* which, I have stated, is the *sine quâ non*: having already made allusion to what I hold to be the printed laws, I do not wish to appear as a dwarf treading in the footsteps of a giant; but this book would fall far short of its purpose, if I did not, with regard to horses, record what I have found to succeed best in my own practice.

Some contend that spring grass is, of itself, alone sufficient physic for horses at the close of the season, but I conceive that they require more thoroughly cooling with active medicine, as soon as they are thrown out of work. This will prevent the inflammatory tendencies consequent upon the high state in which they have been kept since the autumn. In all cases where firing or blistering is necessary, it is an invariable rule to adopt this plan as a precautionary measure, and I believe that even with the soundest and healthiest, it is better not omitted. I am no advocate for bleeding, except in cases of positive illness, where active inflammation must be subdued by summary measures. I would resort to the lancet with the caution recommended by the poet, as to the use of superhuman agency in a story or a play,

“Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus,
Inciderit.”—

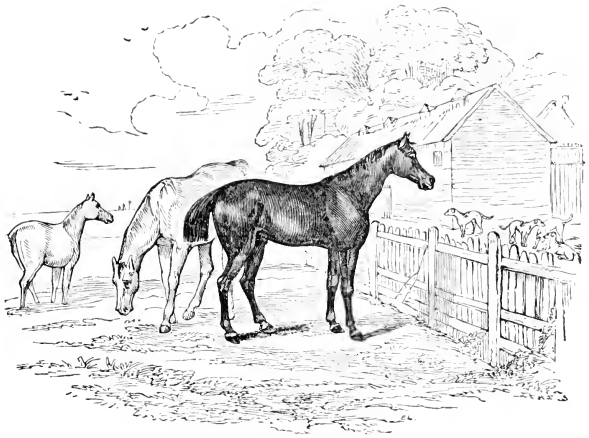
Bleeding, merely as an alternative, must lessen its effect

when required for depletion, and cannot fail to operate injuriously, rather than beneficially, upon the constitution. Many horses, and not only horses but human beings, have been killed by having been incautiously bled, when animation has been all but suspended from exhaustion. The lancet, intended to assist the animal functions, has then extinguished the last spark of vitality remaining. If a hound fall in a fit, or if a horse stop in distress from fulness, and is evidently labouring under the effusion of blood upon his lungs, caused by unwonted exertions, then the abstraction of blood will, of course, prevent its determination to the part affected; but the pulse must be the index upon all occasions, and sufficient time must be allowed to elapse, to admit of reaction in the circulation. You may then safely bleed, and should bleed freely, to obviate the fever which would otherwise supervene.* It is absurd to ridicule what is called the quackery of a stable, and to affect, as I have known some people, to "throw physic to the dogs." What would race-horses be without the discipline, apart from their exercise, known and proved to be indispensable? The whole system, from beginning to end, is artificial, and it is, therefore, nonsense to talk of leaving much, unless all is left, to Nature. A horse in training, or quite up to the mark for hunting, is in a state bordering upon high fever; a state, not of Nature, but one making continual demands upon the *art* which produced it. Constitutions must be studied, all symptoms carefully watched, medi-

* See note to page 116.

cine administered, and changes of diet made, according to circumstances, to keep the machine capable of performing the *extraordinary* services required of it. Not one horse in a thousand can go through a season without the use of any alterative or other drugs ; and those who know the value of the “ stitch in time which saves nine,” will not despise what may savour, to the uninitiated, of quackery.





CHAPTER VII.

“Quantus equis, quantus adest veris
Sudor.”

Hor.

Continuation of Remarks on Condition—Nimrod’s Alterative Balls—Gruel *after* Hunting—Tired Horses, Treatment of—Hints intended for Owners of Short Studs—Shoeing—Lost Shoes—Anecdote of a H. H. Divine and his Bishop—Spare Shoes—Method of Shoeing at Oakley—Grooved Shoes—Over-reaches—Feet and Legs—Foot Lameness—Hot Water as a General Specific—Knee Buckets—Bleeding in the Foot—Use of Physic—Feeding after Hunting—When to use Beans—Preparation or Training of Hunters—Rules for getting them fit—Sweating—Clipping—Grooming and Dressing—Time for Clipping—Precautions—Legs—Firing and Blistering—Salt and Water Bandages—Mercurial Charges—The Late Mr. Villebois—Efficacy of his Application—Ventilation of Stables—Its importance—How easily contrived—Beauty of a Horse’s Coat as an Outward Sign of Health.

HAVING said that Nimrod’s letters upon condition should be the “*vade mecum*” of all sportsmen, or horse masters, it is scarcely necessary to add, that I have for the

last ten years, constantly used his alterative balls. I do not think it right here to print a copy of the prescription which was laid before the public, and thus pirate the means of giving a value to the page which it cannot otherwise possess. Two of the chief ingredients are cinnabar of antimony, famous for its sudorific, and camphor, equally efficacious for its sedative properties. One in ten days, or three in the course of a month, may be given with advantage, and, after hunting, are as much to be preferred to cordial balls, as a cup of tea is to a glass of brandy for a tired man. It is very seldom indeed that a cordial is required, excepting for gripes, wind, colic, and such affections; a bucket of good boiled oatmeal or linseed gruel, given at twice, is the best restorative, and should be given as soon as possible upon a horse's return to his stable. This will satisfy him for the time, and he will undergo, with more composure and patience, the tedious process of dressing, washing of feet and legs, &c. to which he must be subjected before he is done up, and left to the quiet enjoyment of food and rest. If you have any distance home after hunting, never neglect to take the first opportunity of procuring a pint of oatmeal,—or flour, when oatmeal is not to be had,—and a little warm water. When the gruel is not boiled, the meal must be first mixed in cold water: the tea-kettle is generally on the fire, at that time of day, in the meanest cottages; and as instances have been cited in Dorsetshire, of flannel petticoats having been devoted to the covering of horses' loins upon such occasions, there is no doubt that the

good wife will, either with or without hope of the gratuity with which you will gladly recompense her, bestow hot water sufficient to make the gruel of the temperature of new milk ; it should scarcely be warmer, or it may cause a horse to break out on his progress home. The delay of five or ten minutes which this will occasion you, may be well spared, even should you be ever so late, or wet, or cold;—remember that, though you have had your sandwich, or biscuit, to operate as a stay “stomach,” and appease your own natural cravings, your horse has been many hours since he started for the place of meeting in the morning without anything in the shape of nourishment ; all which time he has been subjected to incessant demands upon his strength. Something must supply the vacuum thus created ; and, if you leave him too long with nothing but the bridle between his teeth, he will inhale wind enough to distend his bowels, and occasion all those symptoms of distress (and truly distressing they are to witness) which have not been perceivable till he has regained his stall ; his unrelenting spirit having carried him thus far, you are then wonderfully surprised that, after coming home, as well as ever he was in his life, he is all at once very ill, and, for some time, unfit to come out in his turn ; whereæ, had you thought less of your own trouble and inconvenience, and adopted this very obvious and timely precaution, taking especial care to avoid getting him chilled by standing still, and getting him, if possible, for a few moments on to straw in some stable

or shed, for most important purposes, it would have made just all the difference.

Patience, gentle reader, do not cry, "Hold hard; we all know enough, and you have said more than enough, about this gruelling system." Truly you do all know enough about gruelling your horses, in one common acceptance of the phrase; but, if you do know enough, you do not practise enough of the care which extends beyond the day,—that day fraught with exhilaration and excitement sufficient to quell thought for the future. You may find, however, that not only sufficient for that day, but for the rest of the season, may be the evil thereof. You are too apt, especially if you have had your own mouthful, and lit your cigar, to arm yourself with the sophistry that the sooner you get your horse to his own stable—(videlicet, yourself to your own fireside)—the better; and if you do take a glass of cherry bounce, in passing some friendly domicile, it is useless delay to dismount. Commend me to the man who, on being offered refreshment for himself, accepts it only in favour of his horse, and snatches his own crust and "go down" in the intervals of five minutes' attendance upon the animal which has borne him, and will repay his attention by bearing him again well through the toils and pleasures of many a day. He who would betake himself to the road-side public, or farm-house, and there regale within, while his horse is shivering without, deserves never to hunt again; but there are few, very few, and none deserving the name of generous sportsmen, capable of such insensibility towards

the noble beast, in every way superior to the brute who misuses him. Our errors, in this respect, are more of omission than commission. We omit certain precautions, not because they are not duly suggested by prudence, but because they happen, at the moment, to be incompatible with our convenience. It is certainly the reverse of what is agreeable, to be planted at some rural hostel without any very ostensible means of reaching the mahogany, where, possibly, your presence may be required before "the glasses sparkle on the board," and "the feast of reason and the flow of soul" will resume dominion o'er the close of night! You may have some time to cool yourself before a hack or any conveyance can be procured, but, if your horse is thoroughly tired, you must not remove him from the first comfortable asylum you can find. It is not necessary that it should be particularly warm; if you can obtain plenty of clothing he will be better for plenty of air; tranquil repose is what he requires; and, till you can send your own groom to his assistance, you must leave him in charge of a veterinary surgeon, a class of which there is now a respectable sprinkling dotted here and there about most countries.* A man must be either a fool or a brute who kills his

* I had a fine mare, a valuable hunter, tired in a long run, having been brought out, not in condition. She was taken to the nearest stable, and, in the course of an hour or two, appeared so far recovered that she was supposed fit to return home, and was travelled fifteen miles that evening to her own stable; returning, as they described her, in their ignorance, fresh as a kitten. She was stone dead before morning. I have not the slightest doubt that, had she remained undisturbed for twenty-four hours when she first began to rally, she would have suffered no ill effects from fatigue or over exertion.

horse in the field ; I do not, of course, mean to say, that horses, like all other animals, are not liable to sudden dissolution, and that, from a variety of causes for which the rider is not responsible, a good hunter may not fall a sacrifice to his ardour ; but a man must be a fool who perseveres, in ignorance, to goad a willing horse to death, long after exhausted Nature has cried, “ Hold, enough :” —and, on the other hand, must be devoid of humanity, ergo a brute, if he persists in making a bad fight, instead of a decorous retreat, after he is sensible of any failing in the powers of progress.

To your Leicestershire heroes, and others of that school—to your pinkes of the first water—all this may sound as twaddle, and may entail upon me and the progeny of my pen the fate of being damned beyond redemption ; but—*doucement, doucement*—remember none of this is addressed to grandees, or to those enjoying a change of horses upon every hill. These hints are intended for those who, instead of having three or four horses out on one day, have, perhaps, not that number in their stable ; who will, upon one horse, lead the van through the whole of a day, and bring him out, to take the same place in another, within a week ;—for those younger brothers and other good fellows who follow the chase for the pure love of the thing ; who would rather ride their hunters on to covert themselves in the morning, than miss the day, and who are, generally speaking, far better sportsmen, and have ten times more fun for their money than the more favourite sons of fortune.

By all these, no wrinkle, tending to the better management of their horses, will be despised. I shall proceed, therefore, to offer them another in the shape of shoeing.

“The Leicestershire creed this old practice outworms,
Lost shoes and dead beat are synonymous terms.”

In the poem of Billesdon Coplow, written by a Divine* of no little celebrity in “the days of old Meynell,” there are many lines which have become immortal, but none have found such general acceptance as the above two, which have become proverbial as touching the suspicion attached to the excuse of a lost shoe. However well prepared you may be to brave and scorn the doubts which will arise, and the surmises which will be made, as to the cause of being thrown out, whenever a case of “non est inventus” is made out against you, the loss of a shoe is, of itself, a most mortifying occurrence to any man unprovided with a second horse. In a soft grass country you may not be brought to an anchor, especially if you are minus only a hind-shoe, but in a plough country, varied with flints, and intersected by lanes, to be told by some kind friend in your rear (and some fellows seem to have eyes made for these discoveries), that

* If the following anecdote, relative to this reverend sportsman, has before appeared in print, it is good enough, as a true story, to bear repetition. Some of his brethren of the cloth were showing him up, on account of his sporting propensities, to his Diocesan, who was inclined to wink at a few failings which “leaned to virtue’s side,” and was satisfied with the merits of his otherwise irreproachable character. Amongst other enormities, they represented that Mr. —— was actually going to ride a match at the county races. “Is he, indeed!” said the amiable and good-humoured old Bishop—“is he, indeed! then I will bet half-a-crown he wins.”

your fore-shoe is gone, must cause your heart to sink within you,—it is the next bad hearing to “a terrible over-reach;” it carries with it your sentence of excommunication, and renders you *hors de combat* till you can be clumsily refitted at the nearest smithy.

It is a common practice to carry a spare shoe and nails; and a jointed shoe which may, *on a pinch*, be fitted to any horse’s foot, is as much a part of the appendages to the saddles of the *hunts-people*, as a horn-case or couples; but not more than one in ten, if half as many, of the field have this advantage, which, after all, will not save you the delay of finding a blacksmith, and of an operation always too delicate to be hurried.

Prevention is better than remedy. You must take care that your horses are so shod, that the loss of a shoe is less probable than breaking down, or horse or man becoming otherwise disabled, by any of the other casualties within the chapter of accidents. That they may be so shod, I will fearlessly aver, and again cry, “*Experto crede.*” There is no deeper or more holding soil than that of Bedfordshire; yet such mishaps were almost unknown in Lord Tavistock’s establishment, during four seasons, from 1826 to 1830, when I hunted regularly with the Oakley, and they are probably as rare in the present day, if the shoeing is conducted upon the same principle. At that time, these misfortunes to me were rather out of proportion to the number of angels’ visits;

and my attention was, consequently, directed to the method by which exemption was attainable.

The Vulcan presiding then over the forge at Oakley was pre-eminent in his craft, and one of his horse-shoes, like everything else to be acquired in that school, which, in relation to hunting matters, I regarded as

“Mearum
Grande decus columenque rerum,”

was worthy of being treasured as a pattern. It is not only in the driving of the nails, but in the shape and structure of the shoe itself, that its security depends. Where so much difference exists, as will be found in the feet of different horses, no general rule can be laid down as to the depth, breadth, or weight of metal which each may require ; but I believe it is established, upon the best and oldest authorities, that the fore-shoes need not be turned up, and that no corking is necessary, especially if the shoe be made sufficiently *concave*, and have a deep groove extending along the middle. This, upon the principle of a fluted skate, will be found, in a great measure, to prevent slipping ; if any one doubt the fact, upon the supposition that this groove must become filled with earth, and, consequently, useless, let him try which will slip farthest upon landing over a fence on greasy ground,—a horse with or without these grooves in his fore-shoes. Some do not consider it safe to omit the turning up or corking, but the evils arising from this method would outweigh any that could result from slipping, admitting that

it affords firmer footing. I am not presuming to offer any treatise upon this scientific branch of farriery :—but to return to the “lost shoe,” and the best means of guarding against such an event,—I will briefly state my belief that everything depends upon the hind-shoes—upon their fabric and position. Where one shoe is pulled off by the retentive power of the ground, twenty are torn off by the over-reach of the hind-shoe. The wound called an over-reach, so disastrous in its effects, is made not by the outside, but by the *inside* edge of the hind-shoe, which is commonly left sharp, and well adapted to gripe the heel of the fore-shoe, or to inflict a cut in the flesh above it; all horses, from their natural action, in deep ground, being more or less liable to over-reach in their gallop. The inside, as well as outside edge, should be well bevelled off, so that the toe of the hind-shoe should present only a blunt *convex* surface. Previously to rendering hind-shoes thus harmless, I had frequent over-reaches. In the last seven years I have not had one; nor, in the course of the two last seasons, hunting on the average four days a week, can I call to mind having more than once lost a shoe.

I am borne out, therefore, by experience, in my assertion that proper care and attention to shoeing will obviate the inconvenience of “lost shoes,” to say nothing of the preservation from broken feet; many a hoof being pretty considerably broken before the loss of the shoe has been discovered.

FEET AND LEGS.

On the subject of feet it is not my intention to dwell, supposing that none of you are disposed to consider good and sound feet of less importance to a hunter than a hack, and taking it for granted that, even in the smallest studs of hunters, your head groom is capable of counteracting thrushes (for which there is no excuse, want of care and cleanliness being the prevailing causes), and also of dealing with corns, wounds from stubs, and all the minor diseases and injuries to which feet are liable. It would be easy enough for me here to make extracts, and fill many pages with matter not irrelevant upon the treatment of lamenesses, by gleanings from professional lore; but it will be far easier for you, in any case requiring more than common attention, to send for the veterinarian professor of your district, and you will profit far more by his timely assistance than by the practical use of the most that could be written for your learning. As a simple rule, in the observance of which you cannot err, whenever you have reason to suspect that the foot is the seat of lameness, off with the shoe in the first instance, and place the foot in a poultice; or, which is still better, let the horse stand up to his knee in hot water. Your stable should be provided with buckets made for this especial purpose. The benefits of hot water, as applied externally to the animal frame of man or beast, are incalculable. I say *externally*, not wishing to be mistaken either for a disciple of Sangrado, or for a tee-

totalter. The effects of constant fomentation are perfectly incredible to those who have not been eye-witnesses of the almost miraculous way in which inflammations and swellings have been reduced, by this very simple remedy. The power of hot water might seem to bear some affinity to that of its own condensed vapour—the mighty steam—considering that, amidst all the arcana of a racing stable, nothing has rendered more effectual service, upon an emergency. It is not long since a great favourite for the Derby was disabled, the day before running, by an untoward encounter which took place between his hock and the door-posts. The swelling was enormous, but, by a fomentation—I fear to say of *how many* hours' continuance—it was completely reduced; the horse was able to run, and ran his best, far better than he ever ran again, being second in the race. We have not all, however, unlimited relays of boys; and the due supply of hands, necessary for the use of the sponges in such cases, might not accord with the convenience of many hunting stables. The knee-buckets, therefore, will be found invaluable. I do not mean to say that they are entirely to supersede the local application of poultice to a wound; but where there is lameness, proceeding from a blow upon the leg, a thorn, or, in short, from any kind of injury to leg or foot, and producing pain, arising from inflammatory action, hot water is your resource. It will either prove in itself a remedy, or will be the best preparation for more active measures. A tub may be made of such dimensions as

to be capable of admitting both fore-legs at the same time. I have known no instances of horses showing any refractory dislike to this process, but, on the contrary, they have appeared to enjoy it thoroughly; standing quiet for several hours, during which the heat must, of course, be renewed by occasional supplies from the copper, with which every saddle-room should be furnished. If you find a decided tendency to fever or inflammation in the foot itself, which you will ascertain by the feel of the hoof in your hand, by opening a vein just above the coronet, and immersing the foot immediately in warm water, you may effect a local abstraction of blood, which will afford material relief. Many farriers urge, as an objection to bleeding in the foot, that you can rarely obtain the removal of blood enough to be of any service; but, when the operation is skilfully performed, it is followed by the flow of blood in no inconsiderable quantity. Whenever a lameness is such as to demand rest beyond a horse's proper turn for coming out again, you will do well to give a gentle dose of physic. It is always useful, if only as a precautionary measure, upon the slightest ailing of an animal in a high and forced state of condition. You will gain instead of losing time: by cooling his body you greatly accelerate the recovery from any local affection, and one ball of three, four, five, or six drachms, according to the constitution of the horse, cannot in any degree impair his stamina. There can be no greater mistake than the anxiety which is felt by ignorant grooms as to the appetite of a hunter, after

a hard day. It may be an indisputable proof of hardiness that a horse is *able* to feed well, on his return ; but I much question whether any man is better for a beef-steak and bottle of port, if able to discuss them, after severe exercise. A feed of oats, mixed in a good warm bran-mash, is the best diet for a horse after hunting ; to which, should circumstances require it, a little nitre, as a febrifuge and mild diuretic, will be a good addition. If he finish this, and his coat be dry, his ears warm, and if he show no signs of uneasiness, you may leave him to rest, and remain, yourself, well satisfied, though he should have rejected the quartern of dry oats and double handful of beans, to which he will return with redoubled relish on the morrow. This habit of mashing will prepare him for physic, should it be subsequently required. I would not be understood to hold too lightly the necessity of the best food, and plenty of it, being well aware that the strength goes in at the mouth ; but you must remember the state of the system, and be wary of adding fuel to fire.

While on the subject of food, I would remind you that the time when horses are shedding their summer coats is their period of depression and debility, and that the time, when good old beans are of the greatest consequence, is at the end of autumn, just at the commencement of the hunting season. Beans, though, perhaps, necessary throughout the season, are less needed in spring, when the juices of the whole animal and vegetable world are on the ascendant, than at the fall of

the leaf, when all nature has a downward tendency. It is at the close of autumn, after a horse has gone well through his course of physic, that you must endeavour to endow him with firmness and strength to support him through the winter. When you consider what a hunter is called upon to perform, it is not extraordinary that so many fail, but that so few are killed, considering how little attention is bestowed, in comparison with what is required, to *prepare* them properly for their work. Nothing but the glorious uncertainty of sport, the accidental circumstance of being out several times before there is anything to be done, saves half the horses in a provincial country from suffering the penalty of neglect in training. I use the term *training*, because nothing less than training will suffice. We all know that a race-horse cannot be brought up to his form, or expected to be fit to run, with less than three months of active preparation. He is expected only to gallop his best over a certain space, for the most part, of level turf. We know the difficulty of preparing him properly for this, yet we suddenly require a hunter to do ten times more, with one-tenth part of the rehearsals in the part he has to perform. Some people, it is true, indulge their horses with a look at the beagles in October; ride them a gallop, perhaps, once in the week round the park; and, in describing a favourite to be still fat as a pig, and to have blown like a porpoise, they will speak of his having plenty of flesh to come off, and talk of his good case as of a matter of congratulation to themselves. So it might have been

about the first week in August, for it is well to see hunters improve in flesh, upon green meat, and good summering; but they forget that, within a month of the time when they are beginning to get their pigs and porpoises into trim, they will want them to fly like the wind, and be sorely disappointed if, like Icarus, they are dissolved in the attempt.

The ground is generally so hard, in September and October, as to furnish some excuse for shortness of work, though none for attempting to ride horses to hounds, if they have been subjected to this disadvantage. It is, literally, hard indeed if you cannot find some place for regular exercise, without fear of knocking their legs to pieces; and the degrees of exercise must be gradual and progressive, till you arrive at something in your drills and sham fights resembling the realities of the ensuing campaign. Commencing with plenty of walking exercise, for, at least, three or four hours (either three at once in the morning, or going out twice a day for two hours), during the first six weeks, from the beginning of August till the middle of September, by which time they will have got through their physic, even if three doses are given (and I think two generally sufficient), they may then proceed to trot and canter daily, and, by the first week in October, they will be fit for a smart gallop; they should not be hurried, or, at any time, extended to their utmost speed, but must go a long, steady gallop, at about three-quarters speed, to accustom them to stay a distance, and acquire that *sine quâ non* of power which we

term wind. In the course of the next three weeks, supposing that it is your object to have them fit to go by the first week in November, they should have three regular sweats. Put your lightest lad, who can ride well and hold a horse well together, upon the one you intend to sweat. Let him carry plenty of clothing, according to the temperature of the weather and his state as to flesh, and go, at least, four miles, upon the best ground you can find—turf is, of course, the best, and a gentle hill is desirable. He should go little beyond half-speed. The nearer to his stable that this gallop can be contrived, the better; if you have no ground near your own stable, it must be done near to some shed. The horse must be brought within doors, as soon as possible after pulling up from his gallop. Trot him to the door of the place most convenient for scraping him, and do not pull off his clothes immediately. Let him stand, if in a warm place, about five minutes, or rather more, to encourage the perspiration; then strip him by degrees, having two hands busy at scraping off the lather, till no more moisture can be pressed from his skin; then, hand-rub him heartily with leather rubber, till he is dry; put on his ordinary suit of dry clothing; give him half a pail of water, with the chill off; take him out, and give him a canter of a mile, to keep up the circulation, and walk him briskly for the remainder of the time of his usual exercise.

It is inconvenient, on account of the assistance requisite, to sweat more than two horses, perhaps more than

one, at a time; and, moreover, if you have plenty of hands, they are not likely to keep so steady a pace in company as alone. By taking some at different hours, on favourable mornings, you may, without difficulty sweat six or seven horses in a week; and, with good luck, may preserve an evenness of condition in the stud, to compare with that which is the pride of the kennel. In proportion to the decrease of superfluous flesh, will be the increase of muscle; and it is by this means alone that you can get rid of that terrible obstacle to exertion, that great cause of death and destruction in the field—the *inside fat*, which, during a period of temporary inactivity, will accumulate—which is beyond the reach of drugs, and can only be thus dissipated, through the pores of the skin.

If more were thought of the preparation of horses—of the training necessary to qualify them for a burst of forty minutes, across a country in which they must gallop nearly at their utmost speed, though fetlock deep in holding soil, and, after a breather over some acres, probably against a hill, must be enabled to spring over their fences, to

——“Lead the field, top the barred gate,
O'er the deep ditch exulting bound, and brush
The thorny twining hedge—”

if, I say, the qualifications for such exertions were properly estimated, we should hear less of horses not being fit to go till Christmas.

It is not many years since I had occasion to remark to a brother-sportsman, and master of hounds, who was

out with me upon his best hunter, in the first week of regular hunting, that his horse's breast-plate appeared most uncomfortably tight across his chest, of course to the confinement of his shoulders. Immediately dismounting, he endeavoured to relieve the animal from an inconvenience so manifest, but, finding the buckle either rusted in its wonted station, or at its extremity, he remounted, coolly observing, with a laugh, that the breast-plate had not been touched since the last day of the previous season, when it was easy enough, and that the horse would gradually work down within its dimensions! Now this was in the month of November, when the horse either should have been fit to go, or should not have been where he was. I forget if we had any sport on that day, but, if we had, I am sure this fat horse must have had reason to remember it. At Melton the thing is, I believe, better understood, and, in many other hunting quarters, the *desiderata* of condition have been more attended to of late years; but these remarks may not, I trust, be thrown away upon some of my young friends in the provinces, for whom they are intended.

CLIPPING.

The advantages of another most important branch of our artificial system, I mean that of clipping, have been so long thoroughly established that it is needless here to argue the point, as to the utility or inexpediency of the practice. It is not very often that thorough-bred horses will require it; but I may safely venture to say that,

at least, nineteen out of twenty hunters are the better for it. It must not be made an excuse for idleness in grooms. A horse, well groomed and properly dressed, ought to carry a fine and bright coat, at all events till he is exposed to the winds and storms, and the varieties of heat and cold which he encounters in his vocation as a hunter. But, when the coat is thick and long, it must not only increase perspiration, but operate as a wet blanket, in preventing the skin from becoming dry and warm. The benefit of good, strong strapping at a horse, is not only in the cleansing of his coat, and thereby rendering the pores of his skin more healthy, but it is (according to the general principles of irritation upon the surface of the body) in the promotion of the circulation which it occasions. There must, therefore, be no lack of what, in the vulgar parlance of the stable fraternity, is expressively termed elbow-grease, because a clipped horse may appear to require less than another. Good strapping will have a double effect upon him, and make his coat look like that of a race-horse in the highest condition. The grand object, however, of clipping, and the principal benefit derived from it, is this, that a horse, on his return from hunting, will get comfortably dry in about fifteen minutes, instead of remaining, for several hours, saturated in sweat, which is not to be absorbed by manual labour. There are many men, amongst which number I may honestly include myself, who would infinitely prefer going without dinner, rather than forego the luxury of the toilet which precedes it; and, if a horse could be

questioned, there is no doubt that he would rather be with, than without, the dressing which relieves him from the incrustations of sweat and dirt, which he finds so disagreeable, that you will observe him taking every opportunity of rubbing his head, eyes, nose, and ears, against any object within his reach, after severe exercise. But if this dressing is necessarily protracted till midnight, because, on account of his great coat, he is constantly breaking out afresh, it must be a source of no little annoyance to him, and, moreover, materially interfere with his hours of repose.

The best time for clipping is as soon as the winter coat is set, which is commonly about the beginning of November. A proceeding causing what I may term, without intending a pun, so great and unnatural a change of *habit*, must not be undertaken without due caution, in guarding against the ill effects which might arise from so sudden a transition. Instances are not wanting of lock-jaw, and other fatal consequences of the chill which it may produce. I have, happily, never met with any but the best results, having never neglected a method which I consider as a security against the cold, to which a horse, turned, as it were, at once naked into the world, must be liable. Common sense will tell you that you must put on additional clothing in the stable; but this is not enough to prevent a horse from catching cold the first time he is stripped in the face of a north-easter. The preventive consists in taking care that he *sweats*, the first time he leaves his stable, after clipping.

It is well to contrive that the operation be finished at a time of day when you can immediately give him a good gallop in clothes ; but his remaining a night in his box will not signify, if, instead of walking him out, as usual, and letting him feel the loss of his coat, you warn him at once, on his first going out. You thus guard against any check to that *insensible perspiration* so essential to man or beast. The surface of the new coat is broken ; it, at once, adapts itself to the skin, assuming a natural complexion : and the horse will never after seem to regret his loss, if a little more care be taken, than otherwise might have been, to avoid standing still too long in a current of cold air, for the first two or three times that he is out, after being lightened of his burthen. I have been always in the habit of having my horses well sponged over with tobacco-water—an infusion of tobacco made about the strength of that which makes a good wash to kill fleas in dogs. This used, as soon as the clipping is finished, will cause the coat to lie smooth, if it have no other effect ; but, I am inclined to think, it is a preservative, also, from cold. Having had from ten to twenty horses clipped, annually, according to this mode of treatment, without one instance of mischief ensuing, I can confidently recommend the custom, especially to those with short studs ; as the clipped horse, having less taken out of him, either in work or subsequent protracted dressing, will come out at least a day sooner in his turn than the rough-coated one. Singeing, with spirits of wine lighted on tow, has the same effect, and has a very neat

appearance, when well done ; but I do not know that it is to be preferred to the use of the scissors. In neither case should the hair be removed below the knee, which forms a natural protection from thorns and cuts.

FORE-LEGS.

The mention of legs, reminds me that I must not altogether omit a word or two with regard to the best means of preserving these delicate parts of the machinery, upon which all the rest depend. With the best frame, the best constitution, and the best feet, a horse without good legs is useless. Always choose a flat, sinewy leg, avoiding those which are round and fleshy. Keep clear also, of round joints, which seldom stand. Fore-legs should be nearly, or quite, straight, according to perfect symmetry ; but an inclination to bow forwards is much better than the reverse : there is much less strain, in action, on the back sinew. Some horses, foaled with legs as crooked as those produced by hard work in a post-horse, have stood training longer than any others. Few, very few, hunters, rode to hounds, are gifted with such fore-legs that there is not a screw loose by the end of their third season. I am an advocate for firing, as a preventive, rather than a remedy. It is too late to fire a broken-down horse, although, as long as the contraction remains in force, he may be sustained, as it were, by a perpetual bandage, for a time ; but if fired as soon as there are any indications of its being ultimately neces-

sary, you will meet, half way, and obviate the occurrence of, an evil which may be incurable. I have found such incalculable advantages from salt-water bandages, that I would strongly urge the use of them in every stable. Soak linen or woollen bandages in salt and water, strong enough to float an egg; let every horse stand in them, and keep them constantly moist by frequent application of the liquid, as it is in evaporation that the benefit consists. They will preserve good legs cool, and will freshen those that are stale, in a manner not to be expected from means so simple.* They should be removed at night, or they will become dry and hot, thereby destroying their effect, if kept on too many hours without being renewed. I have said salt and water, because it is within immediate reach of every one, and may be prepared, *ad libitum*, by the boys who apply it. Vinegar and saltpetre are more active in their effect; but without touching upon the goulards or washes of the farrier, I have wished to mention only those plain precepts within the practice of every master of a horse. More may be done by the proper use of hot and cold water, than by any other two prescriptions to be found in the book of knowledge. If, at the close of the season, you think a horse's legs, without calling for the iron, or for the punishment of blister, might still be better for something more than rest, nothing is more likely to renovate him thoroughly than mercurial charges. A common charge, made of

* Two ounces of sugar of lead, mixed with half a pint of vinegar, form a lotion which has proved an admirable specific.

pitch, and a variety of compounds, was a favourite summer appendage to the hunter of the old school, and was not without its uses ; but there is, I believe, no known absorbent equal to mercury, and wonders have been performed upon horses' legs by *charges* in which the potent quicksilver is the main ingredient. Something of the kind is prepared by most veterinary surgeons, but I imagine that the best recipe (because the most miraculous in effect of any I ever witnessed), was in possession of that most excellent old English gentleman and thoroughly good old sportsman, the late Mr. Villebois, a master of foxhounds in Hampshire, at his own expense, for more than a quarter of a century. It has been said that

“The evil that men do lives after them—
The good is oft interred with their bones ;”

but if any one would read his epitaph, it is to be found in the bosoms of all who knew him, in the records of nought but good through the whole of a long, and, let us hope, a well-spent life. It is not for me to pronounce his eulogy, or rob the H. H. of a tribute justly theirs ; I will leave them honouring the memory of him they have lost, and happy in a master well qualified, and in every way worthy, to tread in his steps. The charge I allude to is prepared from this recipe, which was presented by Mr. Villebois to a chemist at Alresford. It is also to be had at Winchester. It must be made hot, then spread upon a piece of linen, or Russia-duck, cut exactly to the size of the horse's leg, to fit him like

a laced boot. Apply it hot, and immediately sew up the linen bandage, there to leave it till the stitches of themselves wear out. It will generally last a month, sometimes longer; it may be renewed in the course of the summer, but must not be kept on too late, or after you have begun to get the horse into condition; as its adhesive properties will cause an unsightly appearance for some time after the linen has been removed; but this will all disappear with his change of coat. I have seen battered legs become as fine as those of a colt by this process.

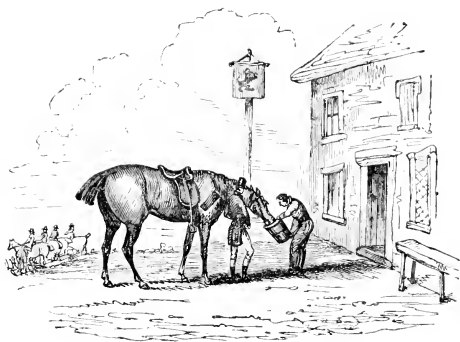
I have already dwelt, longer than I originally intended, upon condition. Upon the management of the animals, which are of equal consequence, either to the man who holds them only as vehicles to the contemplation of the noble science, or to him who regards them as its sole enjoyment, I will only add the caution to take especial care that the stables are properly ventilated. The health of all animals depends greatly upon the kind of air which they are constantly inhaling as their breath of life. The different qualities of atmospheric gas have each their respective effect upon the animal system. The human blood is purified by the proportions of oxygen contained in the fresh breeze as it is received into the lungs; elevation of spirit, and increase of vigour, are the consequences of its healthful influence. In a close, hot stable, a horse is living on impurity, added to which, the ammonia, arising to a degree of pungency, of which we are ourselves sensible upon entering such a stable

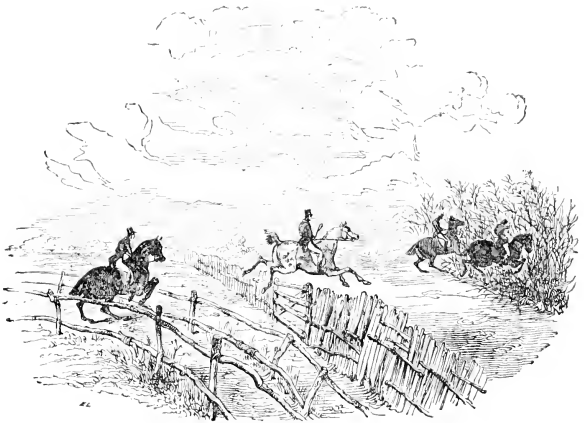
from the open air, has a most injurious effect upon the eyes. It is far better that they should stand in too much clothing, than that the temperature of the stable should be too high. The thermometer must be the guide of your groom; he should not allow it to stand beyond sixty degrees, Fahrenheit. A very little labour and expense of carpentering will render any stable capable of being thus regulated. Have apertures made through the walls near the ceiling, about the size of pigeon-holes, with movable sliding boards. They can be entirely or partially opened, and, with the aid of the windows, cause a thorough circulation of air. Loose boxes, without windows, may be equally ventilated by the same opening near the roof, and a corresponding one near the bottom of the door. Ignorant grooms, dealers, and others, studying only the outward semblance of condition, all keep their stables like hot-beds, thinking that heat promotes a gloss upon the coat, as it probably does; but not equally, or to be compared with that which indicates the highest health. This forcing heat is not to be found at Newmarket, where the rational system has superseded the follies and absurdities of former ages; and can the pride of a peacock, can any association of colours, exceed in richness of beauty the golden hues, the lights and shades, which form a banquet for the painter's eye? when

.. With neck *like a rainbow*, erecting his crest,
Pamper'd, prancing, and pleas'd, his head touching his breast,
Scarcely snuffing the air, he's so proud and clate,
The high-mettled racer first starts for the plate."

You must endeavour to bring out your hunter, in the pride of his strength, to equal this beautiful description of a race-horse, and take it once, and for all, as certain, that, if you are resolved upon "doing the trick," your horse must be quite as much "up to the mark" as though he were about to "start for the plate." A volume would not contain rules sufficient for the attainment of such a pitch of excellence: experience will be your best instructor. If you have been long enough with me in the stable, I have only to wish you an effective *monture*, and beg that you will follow me

"To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new."





CHAPTER VIII.

“Then the leap!
 To see the saucy barrier, and know
 The mettle that can clear it! Then your time
 To prove you master of the manége. Now
 You keep him well together for a space,
 Both horse and rider braced, as you were one,
 Scanning the distance—then you give him rein,
 And let him fly at it.”

LOVE CHASE.

Riding to Hounds—Difference of Countries—Of Horses—Expense—Economy—Equipment of a Hunter—Riders—Long or Short Stirrups—Hand—Temper—Horsemen—Accidents—Crossing Ruts—Cramped Places—Blind Ditches—Timber and Bull-finchers—Falling on the Right Side—Useful Horses—Favourites—Colour—Size—Sex—Railroads the Curse of the Country—Impending Evils of Fox-hunting “a thousand years hence”—Conclusion of Advice on Treatment of Hunter—Dress of a Gentleman Sportsman—Mrs. Trollope on Male Attire—L’Air Noble—Change in Costume—Black Cravats—Jack-boots—Continuations—Best Dress for Hunting—Origin of wearing Scarlet; Royal Rule for ditto—Hats—Caps—Whips—Spurs—Characteristics of a real Gentleman Fox-hunter in contrast with the mere Vermin-killer.

HAVING said some little concerning the management of horses in the stable, I must offer a few remarks upon

their use when mounted. It would be absurd to attempt any thesis upon riding to hounds, beyond the general principles of the art, in a work dedicated especially to one country, and that a provincial, considering that the style of crossing one country differs most materially from the mode of riding over another. The best horse over Leicestershire might be quite out of his element in Essex ; and the rules for negotiating properly the ox-fences, raspers, and brooks of the pastures, might be wholly inapplicable to the hog-backed stiles, the cramped corners, blind ditches, up-bank, down-lane drop, leaps of a plough country. I have said before, that there is, in Hertfordshire, and those parts of Bedfordshire belonging to our hunt, every variety of ground, and, consequently, are there every description of fences, from the flying-leap to the creep. You may see a hack go well enough in one half-hour, and, in the next, nothing but a real hunter has a chance. Depend upon one thing, that you cannot have too good a horse :—one that cannot go well in the best countries cannot go properly in any, notwithstanding Mr. Louth's asseveration, in the poem from which I have before quoted, of the run from Billesdon Coplow :—

“ All descriptions of country, all horses won't suit,
What's a good country hunter may here prove a brute.”

There is more taken out of a horse in covert, and in the length of runs, than in flying countries. I do not mean to say that a man may not make a fight

through gaps, and, with the aid of lanes, *may* make one at the end of a run, in the provincials, upon a horse on which he would have been pounded and lost in the Harborough country ; but he will have *seen* just as little of the hounds during the run. Far be it from me to discourage any adept at “oiling a screw,” from “darning away” merrily, and beating more than half of the better mounted ; but I shall be borne out by those who are in the habit of riding as much from Melton as from Markyate-street, in my assertion, that to be *with* hounds in Herts, you cannot be too well mounted—*videlicet*, you must have a hunter. The size and shape of horses best calculated for cramped countries may differ, perhaps, in some respects ; and the small, short-legged, are preferable to the very large and overgrown, when quickness in turning and constant activity are more important than great stride and power of extension. Moreover, where there is limited space, it may be necessary to have a better command over horses than where there is plenty of sea-room for sailing a-head : but, in nine cases out of ten, I should like to take my chance of being mounted upon the horse most distinguished in Northamptonshire—in the part which I hold to be the stiffest—to follow hounds in any other country. There is one great consolation to those who cannot afford to purchase hunters at their price, that, with a good hand, seat, and plenty of nerve, they may *make* raw horses, and increase the value of them, according to their scale of education,

by purchasing them young, at a remunerating price to the breeder.

All pleasures, that is to say, all pastimes and amusements, are, more or less, expensive; in no diversion can money be better spent than in hunting, if half so well. Let any young man save one hundred pounds out of his allowance, or, what may be still better, let his governor allow him that sum for the especial purpose, and he may be well mounted by Tilbury, with two good hunters at his service throughout the season, supposing that he is not a horse-master all the year round. What will such a sum avail him for two months' dissipation in London? If he be an idler, one of the "*fruges consumere nati*," he will, in the hunting field, find, at least, innocent occupation for the mind, with the best exercise for the body; spending his time and money in society fitting his station:—if he be a man of business, he will be the better qualified to perform the duties of his profession, for occasional indulgence.

"*Dulce est desipere in loco*," quoth the poet, and where is the *locus* like the place of meeting? With regard to economy, carefully eschew that penny wisdom, pound folly, which inclines people to hold anything good, at the money, because it is cheap. That is cheapest, in the end, which is best at the beginning. You need not be imposed upon, or led into extravagant prices; but you will find the wear and tear in one good article, equal to that of three or four of the inferior. Whether in a master of hounds, purchasing hay, corn, saddlery, and

equipments for some twenty or thirty horses, and food for hounds, or whether in the smallest possible establishment of a younger brother, this principle should be adhered to ; not only as a matter of luxury and comfort, but as the plan which will answer best in the long run. Have your saddles, bridles, &c., from the best makers, and prefer to give a hundred guineas for a sound horse, rather than two fifties for a couple of screws. With good management, and the luck of escaping lamenesses, each horse will come out three days a fortnight at least. With two effective horses a man is safe for three days a week, and will find himself far better carried than those who, having more than they require, bring each out less frequently. All this must, of course, depend, in no slight degree, upon the constitution of horses ; but we are taking the case of the smallest sufficiency of effectives. If the fixture do not exceed twelve miles, send your hunter on in the morning, rather than to strange stabling over night. Upon dismounting from your hack, or whatever may be your conveyance to the rendezvous, be it your first care to look your horse over, and see that he appears all right ; that he has not broken out into unaccountable sweat, that his shoes are fast, &c., &c. The genus, *groom*, has, like that of *farrier*, materially improved in the last few years. It would scarcely be now credited, were it not known for a fact, that it is only thirty years since it would have been considered most injurious to the legs of a race-horse to *wash* them. Never, at Newmarket, in those days, was water suffered to

approach their legs or feet, for fear of cold. Such barbarisms have vanished before the light of common sense ; but it is now very common to see horses with their bridles so put on, that they would be nearly as useful appendages to their tails as to their mouths. Much depends upon suiting a bridle to the horse's mouth. The patent Segundo is generally approved for pullers ; but what is delight to one is madness to another. I had once a horse absolutely frantic, almost ungovernable, because he had taken a dislike to a plain smooth Pelham, without a joint—a bridle much used in Hants. The horse was so violent during a run with the Oakley, that I was compelled to ask one of those excellent fellows, a Bedfordshire yeoman, to change bridles with me. We had to twitch his ear before we could touch his mouth ; but, as soon as the exchange was effected, he became as perfectly temperate as he always was on all other occasions.

One half of the horses, at the covert side, have the throat-lash buckled so tight, that by no possibility can the animal, without choking, carry his head in a desirable position. The groom is less to blame than yourself for suffering it. Rider (I will not say horseman) and horse are at variance all the day, both are sufficiently uneasy, and when the latter is condemned as a pig-headed brute, how might the observation reflect upon the former ? See that your girths, without being too loose, are not too tight. With a breast-plate, a saddle remains in its place with slacker girths than without, and there

are very few horses that do not require a breast-plate, especially where there are any hills.

Ride easily to yourself, and you will sit easiest to your horse. There is no rule for short or long stirrups, for riding quite home, up to the instep, or on the ball, or even at the toe of the foot. There have been, and are, riders of equal distinction, differing, in these respects, as to their seats. Whether you sit firmly by gripe or by balance does not signify ; but the latter is the most graceful, and a combination of both the most desirable. A jockey-seat, with the foot well home in the stirrup, is most commonly adopted, and appears the best for work across country ; but, if I am to mention the most perfect and accomplished horseman of the day, and may be pardoned the use of any name, I must quote that of Colonel G. Greenwood, without fear of one dissentient voice. With a military seat, I have seen him conduct young and unmade horses over a country in a manner which, to my thinking, and not according to my opinion only, has no parallel. Sir F. Burdett, Colonel Standen, Lord Clanricarde, and other eminent performers, ride also with long stirrups. Some others, whom I could mention, would, probably, ride better without any, than many could with the assistance of either short or long ; and some huntsmen, &c., have a habit of releasing their feet, and throwing their stirrups over the withers of their horse at any large leap, particularly at brooks ; in this respect, therefore, we may say, "*sua cuique voluntas.*"

A very indifferent and infirm seat, may, by practice,

become firm and good ; but a hand, the delicate sympathy of finger with the mouth of the horse, is less easily acquired. So rarely is it seen, that it may be doubted whether it is to be attained, or if it be not altogether a gift of nature. Old Chifney's rule was to "hold your rein as a silken thread which you fear to break," and the circumstance of so many horses becoming temperate under the control of ladies, which are violent in the hands of their lords, is proof positive of the advantages of gentleness ; unless, indeed, the effect is attributable to the *pull* which they have always over us, and the horses are conscious of the kind of dominion, or rule, of woman-kind to which they have submitted. Not one horse in a hundred has a mouth for a snaffle-bridle only, and, perhaps, one in a thousand is nearer the proportion of those which can go with a loose rein. We know that, in a race, to abandon a horse's head is to stop him at once, and it is no less indispensably necessary to hold him well together, across country. He cannot move well over smooth ground, still less over ridge, and furrow, or plough, unless he is perfectly collected. In this consists the horsemanship of riding to hounds, no less than in the selection of the firmest ground, the time and place for increase or decrease of speed, the manner and rate of putting horses at their fences, and the like distinguishing features, in the performance of a first-rate workman. We read at school,

"Hic moderatur equos qui non moderabitur iram,"

and I fear that good riding will not be found so infallible

a test of good temper, as to serve for a guide to any young lady in the choice of a husband, if she be not satisfied that a fox-hunter is better worth having than the “nice young man” who keeps tame rabbits, shoots foxes, &c., &c. But I must say, that temper and patience have no slight influence in the management of a horse; that if a man can ride well in an irritable mood, he will ride still better in good humour; and that all the most brilliant amongst the hard riders of my acquaintance, are alike characterized by the most estimable deportment in all relations of life. I am aware that, in making this assertion, I am summoning up a fearful array of what are termed, in Paddyland, “right wicked riders,” men of the dare-devil school, who stick at nothing—men who would be in the first flight, for a time, at least, with any pack in the United Kingdom, without being conspicuous in any way for amiable qualities, or possessing one redeeming virtue but that of bravery. I say bravery, not courage; for there is, between these two, a wide distinction. I take leave, however, to doubt much whether these men of nerve are more than mere riders, without pretension to the name of horsemen. They cannot make the most of a good horse, or the best of a bad one. A little jealousy is inseparable from the emulation which the character of the sport engenders. A generous rivalry is only an essence of the spirit of the chase; but that spirit is the offspring of mirth; it is nourished by the milk of human kindness, and is pregnant with all the best feelings of human nature, which she annually brings forth,

in the shape of good fellowship, and social harmony. The art of riding well to hounds is one of those in which the "*suaviter in modo*" may be so happily blended with the "*fortiter in re.*" A degree of physical power is requisite, and this is the only way in which we can account for the fact, that men of twelve, and fourteen stone weight, have always "held their own" with the light weights; but muscular strength is not absolutely indispensable. Any one who wishes for an apt illustration of the *knack* of holding a horse, as compared with power, has only to look at some urchins, amongst the stable children at Newmarket, riding the gallops. In an old triplet, older than the hills, these words are supposed to be addressed by a horse to his rider:—

" Up the hill, spare me ;
Down the hill, bear me ;
On the flat, never fear me !"

A man may lay worse counsel to heart than is contained in this doggerel maxim. The necessity for easing a horse in an ascent, by sparing to urge, by raising one's self over the withers, and by a timely pull on gaining the summit,—the assistance which one may afford by bearing him, instead of abandoning him, on the descent, are sufficiently obvious. The conclusion is rather more comprehensive: "*On the flat, never fear me.*" This conveys not only a willingness to exert his utmost speed, a desire to do his best, if fairly dealt with, but a hint that he may be trusted. You must have

confidence in your horse, not pulling him here and there, to steer clear of this or that, which he sees as well, or better, and quicker than yourself. "Never fear him," and send him at his fences in earnest, as though your heart preceded him in his progress. By sending him at his fences, I mean to say, let him know that you intend *going*, and nothing less. For myself, I am an advocate for putting a horse slowly at most fences, and not more than half speed at any; but, as I have no claim to professorship in this department, without presuming to deny a contrary practice, I will only say that such is the method of those whose style I most admire, and that, in my humble opinion, the expedience of collecting a horse, and slackening, instead of accelerating, his speed, when charging a fence, under a notion (which I take to be erroneous) of providing him with sufficient impetus, is founded upon the following rational principles:—Look at deer, cats, greyhounds, any good jumpers you choose to take for an example: watch their voluntary action in taking a leap. They invariably shorten their pace—the deer altogether into a trot, and all others to that degree which enables them to concentrate their powers; they cannot spring from an extended posture. If it be supposed that time will be lost; that hounds must gain, irretrievably, upon you; in short, if all this sounds dead slow, it will be found that the most haste is not always conducive to the greatest speed. A horse hurried, *ventre à terre*, at a fence, cannot so well measure his stride, and is apt to make a mistake in the

most essential point, the taking off; and again, in landing, if his footing be not sound, or exactly what is desirable, he can make no effort to recover himself—over he purls—beyond power of salvation. If he have less impetus, he can take off to the best advantage; and, if landed in difficulties, may escape with a scramble—a slight disturbance,—and a miss is as good as a mile—nothing causing more delay than a rattling fall, especially if attended with the usual dissolution of partnership between man and horse, to say nothing of other trifling inconveniences, not unfrequently the result of such a game at logger-heads.

“Is he down? No; well saved, though 'twas just *'omne sed,*
All *but* a Dinorben,* or—heels over head.”

There is no doubt that all quadrupeds can jump height as well standing as with a run at it. Many maintain that a horse can clear the widest brook with the same ease. I am by no means prepared to deny this position, having seen wonderful instances of standing jumpers; but, for water, or a wide ditch, on the other side of a staken-bound, I am inclined for a little extra powder. Common sense will avoid extremes, and the happy medium is, probably, that which will carry you best over. Some horses have an inveterate habit of rushing at their fences, and make wonderfully few mistakes in their velocity. With these, there is nothing

* I am given to understand that the literal signification of this Welch word answers to the English of topsy-turvy.

left but to give them their heads, any interference being more likely to produce mischief; but they cannot be classed among perfect hunters, and the habit is to be imputed to defect in their education—a want of hand, and, probably, of nerve, in the man who made them—for it has been well observed, by good judges, that nothing betrays a want of nerve more than a kind of desperation in charging every sort of fence in a reckless, neck-or-nothing style, the effect of anything but coolness and confidence. He who excels in anything is never in a hurry. The beauty of riding over a country is in doing it quietly. It should appear as the pleasure which it is, rather than as a laborious effort to man and horse. It is only young Hair-brain—Messrs. Harum Scarum and Co.—that are tearing up the ground, here; making the splinters fly, there; dashing, splashing, crashing: now, well on the back of one unfortunate hound, then over another, slamming a gate in the face of one man, begging pardon of the next, bruising their own knees, losing their hats (their heads have been long gone), and ending their sport with a regular “*grasser*,” which disposes of them less to their own satisfaction than to that of their dearest friends, for the remainder of the day. Observe the Rev. Mr. Mallard, who does honour to his cloth alike in the field as in his parish. He is never out of his place with the hounds, but you can hardly tell how:—he is never in a fuss. Look at Mr. B.;—he seems calmer than still water; but who can beat him? Who are going better than Lord C. R. and Mr. G., if half so well?

But they are never at their wits' end, and, consequently, never lost. Nothing will turn their heads, and they will turn from nothing ; they have been going brilliantly, straight as arrows, rather wide, than otherwise, of the hounds ; they have been nearly in a line with the head of the pack. They must have gone the pace, but they have pulled up on the first indication of a check ; and, behold, their horses are not blown, not covered with blood and foam, like some which have been doing wonders. They know well what they are about, for they ride well to hunt, and they have learned to know when hounds are running with or without a scent. They have a pretty shrewd idea how far hounds carried, and where they overshot it ; they know the points, and can render a good account of all the incidents in the run.-- These are sportsmen. A novice in the art of riding to hounds should learn early to depend entirely upon his own eye and judgment—to follow no one—to become acquainted, as soon as possible, with the country ; to take his own line, and keep it. Take most heed to the state of the ground from which a horse takes off at a fence ; it is the *fulcrum* on which the accomplishment of the leap depends. Prefer taking it higher, or wider, with a good take off, than riding for a gap where the ground is false. Remember, that the man who hesitates is lost ; and, when your mind is made up, do not vacillate ; above all, do not leave your own line, to follow that of another man, for a better. You have no right to follow close in his wake over a fence which dozens may take

in a line ; if he falls, you must be upon him. "For heaven's sake, give me room to fall," is an exclamation which I have often heard from a celebrated artist, who, from the acknowledged excellence of his performance, was generally followed by all aspirants, in a most unjustifiable manner. Had Mr. Osbaldiston been allowed room to fall, he would not have met with so terrible an accident as that of being ridden over by the man behind him, and experiencing a compound fracture of the leg. Independently of his sufferings, there was his season spoiled, with the chances much against ever enjoying another. What can atone for the folly which occasions such disasters ? Accidents will happen ; and it is fair to suppose that the distress felt by the man who had been the cause of such an occurrence, would have led him to change places with the sufferer, if in his power ; but, if a man choose to break his own neck, he has no right to render others liable to injury by his own carelessness, any more than he is justified in coming into a crowd, or near the hounds, with a horse notorious as a kicker. At banks, and brooks, the first horse has the best of it ; and any fresh place is preferable to one which has been used. If one man has succeeded in fording a river, or getting out of boggy ground, the chances are more in favour of the next, a few yards right or left, than where there has been a struggle. In short, wherever there is space for two, it is most unadvisable to follow, like sheep, in the track of one. Whether hounds are running or not, never be led into the fatal error of leading

or turning over anything practicable *secundúm artem*. It is ten to one that, by dismounting, you find that you get off badly, in every sense. You lose your horse, and invite a worse predicament than would, in all probability, have befallen you had you taken the chance of a fall, on the right side, together; not to mention the danger of being trodden upon in footing it, either with, or before him. Some persons have acquired great facility in these proceedings; and it is all very well for corpulent, or elderly gentlemen, who do not pretend to a place. It may, also, save a horse's knees, or, certainly, the jarring of his fore-legs, in dropping into a road, when there is time to do it; but, generally speaking, it is inexcusable, unless where boughs of trees, or some such impediments, render a place not otherwise negotiable. When hounds are at fault, or at any such opportunities, it must, of course, ease a horse materially to jump off his back, and let him stand still, with his face to the wind. I should have mentioned, at starting, after recommending a careful survey of equipment, &c., that, where you expect a quick find, and to be speedily engaged, you should not omit a good canter, and a pull up, to open the pipes. If a horse choke, either from being short of work, or from any accidental cause of sudden and temporary distress, by patience, for a few moments, you may very possibly effect his restoration, so that he may carry you well through the rest of the day. Slacken his girths, give him all the air you can, and do not move him during the crisis, while his flanks and nostrils beat

the time which he requires. If you apprehend that he is shaken by a fall, or the cry of bellows to mend is more importunate, he must be bled at once; and, unless you have a second horse out, you must turn homeward. It is bad policy to run the risk of losing many days for the sake of one. "We cannot have our cake, and eat it too:" but I have said enough on this subject in my last chapter. To proceed with my advice to young riders to hounds. Considering that without falls, and plenty of them, it is not likely that many will attain any degree of proficiency—it will be well to bear in mind that, although they must entertain a thorough contempt for the fear of a fall, a total disregard of the chances of such accidents—it does not follow that they are to be utterly careless of the consequences when they do occur. It is all right and proper, to be "up, on, and at it again," if no bones are broken, as soon as possible; they should be hard as nails, and, so far from giving in to disasters, should never say *done*, or yield to ill-luck while they can grapple with it.* But all this heroism may be strained too far. A man need not close his ears to the voice of prudence, and, if seriously shaken or disabled, should make decorous

* One of the most gallant instances of this resolution superior to misfortune, is that feat of Mr. Osbaldiston's, which will not easily be surpassed. I do not allude to his match against time, but to something far more to our purpose. Both girths having broken in the beginning of a good run, rather than lose his place, he threw the saddle from him, and rode, in his usual form, to the end, upon the bare back. To any but a perfect centaur, such a ride is not so feasible as may be supposed by those who have not *tried* it.—"Experto crede."

submission to the chance of war, and not, in obstinate bravado, contend with Fate. If a collar-bone be broken, which is one of the simplest and most common of fractures, the sooner you are in a surgeon's hands the better. It will add nothing to your credit, and less to your recovery, if you persevere to the end of a run which you can no longer enjoy. If a shoulder be dislocated (another occurrence by no means uncommon), it should be reduced, on the spot, by the help of any who are at hand. The patient should be placed on one side of a paling, or gate, and by the strong pull of one man from the other, it may be instantly replaced. If there be nothing nearer to act as a lever, the body of the horse will answer the purpose as well as the gate; but, if time be allowed for swelling to ensue, the force of ten men will, perhaps, be necessary for the operation. The system sustains a very severe shock from a bad fall, and any affected indifference to its effects is as absurd as the cowardice which dreads the encounter. There is an idea that a draught of vinegar is a specific, upon the principle of creating a diversion from the head to the stomach, as no two maladies are co-existent. I have not found any of the faculty subscribing to its efficacy, and my own experience has not strengthened my faith in this remedy. It is, perhaps, better than spirits; but anything calculated to promote circulation may equally avail. The best course any one can adopt in such a case, is that of remaining perfectly quiet, in a recumbent posture, as soon as he reaches the means. There is no question

that he should be bled, but not in the field, or before he has rallied from the shock. When fairly housed, let him not only be bled, but take physic.* He will thus counteract the ill effects (and there is no saying how terrible have been the consequences of a neglected fall), and, probably, be all the fitter, with the interval of one day's rest, to endure another, if it be his destiny. Nimrod, who has written to the purpose on this, as on all other points which he has touched, says,

“There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft”

to keep watch for the life of a sportsman, as well as of “poor Jack;” and it is with a feeling as far as possible removed from levity, or irreverence, that a fox-hunter's creed may be said to comprehend the profession of a very lively faith in Providence. Of all kinds of falls, the worst are those which happen either from a horse getting his foot into a hole, when at speed, or slipping up sideways. Most others may be more or less affected by horsemanship; but for these there is no help. In Hampshire, and in the western counties, where there are downs, over which hounds run well, the number of cart-ruts is most annoying, and many are the purls which they occasion. A horse must needs roll over his rider; as it rarely occurs, in this sudden circumvolution, that a man is pitched clear of him. The best way of crossing

* Since the above was written, great changes have occurred alike in human and veterinary practice. In the former the lance is, I believe, nearly discarded, and phlebotomy confined to leeches or occasional cupping. In both, prevention of making blood, rather than taking it, is the rule.

ruts is to take them invariably on the oblique : if you go straight across, both fore-feet get at once entangled in the rut, and the consequence is inevitable ; but, in slanting them, your horse will have one leg to spare, and, probably, escape with that sort of *pick*, two of which would go to a fall. There are very few good active horses, fit for hunters, that are not naturally good jumpers. Most of them will take a large leap. The benefit of their tuition consists in their knowledge of their business at cramped places ; at double, and at blind ditches. Much of their safety, in fencing, may depend upon the hand of the rider. They may be either lifted out of a ditch, or pulled into it ; but a perfect hunter should not constantly stand in need of the office. A horse that has plumbed the depth of two or three blind ditches, will keep a good look out, and jump with all due suspicion and care. It is a good plan to lead young horses across country, with a long rein and a whip, teaching them to leap on and off banks, and over or into the ditches, after the method practised so successfully in Ireland, where the horses are far better and earlier schooled than in any other country ;—for this reason they are all good jumpers ;—it is far better than all the practice they can have at the leaping-bar. Gates, stiles, palings, rails, &c., coming under the denomination of timber, are the safest and easiest of all leaps, standing generally fair, clear on both sides, and lower than the stiff fences, which are thought nothing of in comparison, and always preferred to the still

stronger temptation, the "*noli me tangere*" timber. Avoid a gate that opens from you, unless you are sure that it is fast; you cannot have a much worse fall than that occasioned by the opening of a gate, upon a horse's striking it either with fore or hind-legs; if it open from you, ride always near the hinge; the take off is generally better, though the bars are stiffer close to the post. Gates opening towards you are the best to jump, they offer a resistance, and generally break with the weight and force of a horse, if he be inclined to feel them. According to the theory of ancient philosophers, one half of danger consisted in the view of it: this may account for the preference of a blind thrust through a bull-finch, with as little idea of what is beyond, as the man of Thessaly had in the quickset, to an upstanding leap, fair and above *board*. It is possible also that the certainty of a bad fall, should your horse, either by being blown, slipping at taking off, or by any other accident, attempt to go through, instead of clean over the top of such obstacles, may have something to do with the choice; but this has been matter of recommendation to some men. That first-rater, Mr. Peyton, would, upon principle, put a beaten horse at timber, because, if he attempted it, he would be sure *to fall on the right side!* although he might altogether fail in getting anyhow over other fences. Any one who can reason thus, and act accordingly, must be of the right sort, must be composed of those materials which

"Give the world assurance of a *man*."

Having now touched upon earth, air, wood, and water, with enough of fire to warm me on the subject, I have little more to offer in shape of advice to rising sportsmen, with regard to their horses, on the use or abuse of them. I would, however, add this memento—Do not keep a horse which you dislike, and never part with one that really suits you. The filthy lucre of a great premium on your bargain, will not replace that which is neither “*gemmis venale, nec auro;*” and, on the other hand, a useless horse eats as much as one that is invaluable. He may be undeniable, but if he be not exactly your sort, follow the old maxim concerning white legs, and

“If he don't suit you sell him to your friend,
But if you like him, keep him to life's end.”

Cherish him, spare no pains to preserve him; he will get no less used to you, than you to him; and he will repay all your cares fourfold;—as he cannot endure for ever, he will serve as a model for your future choice as to shape, &c. Never think of colour; foreigners have a prejudice against a speck of white, and are guided by similar nonsense in their selection, though, truly, they have expatriated some of our best blood; but the possessors of large studs will tell you that they have had equally good horses of all colours; little ones are said to beat big ones, and it cannot be doubted that there are more real good ones below the height of fifteen hands, three inches (which is high enough), than above it; but there is, probably, something in the

fact, that, as is the case with men, and all things in animal creation, there are few of large growth perfect in other respects. A horse of sixteen hands, with symmetry as faultless, and power proportionate, must be better calculated for a hunter than one of fifteen, neither having exceeded, or fallen short of, his natural growth. I say this upon conviction, still taking leave to retain my own predilection for little ones, till I see their inferiority manifested. With regard to entire horses, there is a notion, that, if once stopped, or tired, they never forget it, and are liable to shut up early, in a fit of the sulks: there may have been such cases, but not enough to form a rule. If an entire horse be good-tempered, and not inclined to be troublesome in company, there can be no doubt as to his superior powers of endurance. During the severest campaigns in the Peninsular war, according to the highest and best authority, mares were found most serviceable throughout the whole of our cavalry force; and, from the number of mares to be found in coaches, &c., it would seem that mares should have the call. It is sufficient, however, for us to know, that there is no objection to them, that there is no need to regard them as the weaker vessel, that sex is as immaterial as colour, and that whether "black, white, or gray;" masculine, feminine, or neuter; anything of the equine genus, possessing sufficiency of blood and bone—wind, speed, and bottom—may be a hunter.

How far, or in what manner, this trebly accursed

revolution of railroads may affect the breed of horses, and fox-hunting generally, it is impossible to say. The speculation on the subject is of too painful a nature; we cannot enter fully into it, without verging upon a disquisition on political economy beyond the province of a treatise on the Noble Science. It must be sufficiently obvious to the most narrow-spirited, that, unless they are the objects of fresh legislation, these railroads must become the most oppressive monopoly ever inflicted upon a free country. When all the inns and road-side houses shall be tenantless, and gone to decay, their present occupants being lost in the abyss of inevitable ruin which is now opened for them; when not only posting, and post-horses, but the roads on which they travelled, shall be, with the Turnpike Acts themselves, matter of history—the means of locomotion will be at the mercy of the most merciless of all human beings—a class actuated by cupidity, and beyond the reach of that salutary correction, that only security for the public against the abuse of private privilege—a competition. To us, as sportsmen, the intersection of any country by canal, or railroad, furnishes food enough in itself for lamentation; we bewail the beauty of the district spoiled, and, as an obstacle to our amusement, we denounce the barrier hostile to our sport. It is not, however, in such a light only that we view the case. We willingly admit, that the diversions of one class in society are but as a feather in the balance, when weighed against the practical utility of any work,

tending to the advancement of the general good ; that it is the duty of a Government to promote, to the utmost, all feasible enterprise and undertaking, proved to be conducive to the interests of the State ; and we reconcile ourselves to any changes which the condition of the community to which we belong may demand. But when we consider the magnitude of the convulsion which this mighty railroad delusion will effect, the fearful extent of its operation, the thousands of human beings thrown out of employ, the incalculable diminution in the number of horses, and the consequent deficiency in demand for agricultural produce—not to mention the enormous deduction from the revenue, consequent upon the abolition of the post-horse duties ; when we think of its varied and multitudinous bearings upon the present state of society ; and add to all this the fact, that in no quarter of the globe were the means of travelling established on so admirable a basis as hitherto in this country,—that, like the dog and the shadow, we are about to cast away the substance of good for the sake of catching at a change of problematical good, in the opinion of some, and fraught with positive evil in the estimation of many ;—when we reflect on these things, we cannot but wonder at the blindness which has countenanced the growth of a monster, which will rend the vitals of those by whom it has been fostered. But let us turn from the contemplation of a gloomy prospect ; let us hope that Heaven may avert from old England—and

Heaven alone can save her from sharing the fate of empires since the world began,—the downfall which the refinement of luxury, and its train, entailed on Rome; the too certain consequences of that restless spirit, that proneness to discontent, inherent in the human breast, which causes men, for the sake of “keeping moving,” to catch at any idea of improvement, however chimerical—to disregard the timidity of the wary, and, like

“Fools, rush on where angels fear'd to tread.”

We have little or nothing to do with politics, but when we utter the heartfelt sentiment, “May fox-hunting flourish a thousand years hence,”—convinced that it is intimately connected with the internal welfare and happiness of our once merry, still happy, and prosperous country,—we cannot but shudder at the view of any measures calculated to drain to the source the very springs of its existence, to dry up the fountains by which it is supported, to change our habits and pursuits, transform the rural soil into one vast gridiron, and render us literally, what Napoleon termed us, a “mere nation of shopkeepers.”—Our maxim must be that of my old favourite Horace—

“Dona præsentis cape lætus horæ, et
Linque severa.”

Let us be thankful that fox-hunting is such as it is in our time. We will not inquire whether it ever was better, but trust that it will remain as good.

In conclusion of my prose in behalf of a good and deservedly valued hunter, let me recommend, at the close of his career, that he be not subjected to those vicissitudes which have been so affectingly depicted by Dibdin, in the poem from which I have more than once found occasion to make quotations ; inasmuch as it is unhappily far less in accordance with the poetical licence of fiction, than with sad reality.—When he will carry you no longer well with hounds, do not make him a drudge ; send him to the kennel, save him a world of woe by having him shot, and devoting his carcass to the boiling-house. There can be no objection to giving him a few years run in park or paddock, if you have them convenient, provided that his life is not protracted beyond the power of enjoying it ; and a mare may, perhaps, breed clever stock long after she has retired from service : but if you consign them to the work of the farm, or road, and should lose sight of them,—the pride of your stable, the horse that has borne you faithfully, that has gained glory, as well for his master as himself—the favoured of all favourites—may end his days in the manner thus too justly described :—

“ Till at length having labour'd, drudged early and late,
Bow'd down by degrees, he bends on to his fate—
Blind, old, lean, and feeble, he tugs round a mill,
Or draws sand till the sand of his hour-glass stands still—
And now, cold and lifeless, exposed to the view,
In the very same cart which he yesterday drew,
While a pitying crowd his sad relics surrounds,
The high-mettled racer is sold for the hounds.”

Although last, and, perhaps, least to be considered, in the review of all essentials in the appointments of a young fox-hunter—his own personal equipment is a matter of too much importance to admit of my neglecting, altogether, the subject of his dress. One of the most agreeable, amusing, and clever of all writers in the present day, Mrs. Trollope, has, with great truth and justice, remarked, concerning “the lords of creation,” that our “present style of dress is at once the least becoming, and the least calculated to mark the distinctions of society, that ever a spiteful democratic tailor invented.” The same talented lady, speaking of the Hungarian gentlemen in full dress, says, that they formed “such an assembly as gave one the comfortable conviction, that notwithstanding all the labour and pains taken in many parts of the world to destroy it—the genus *gentleman* does still exist in great perfection.” I fear that should these pages ever meet the eye of a radical, the tone and sentiment will be condemned as *rococó*, to an intolerable degree; but in upholding the genus *gentleman*, above all others, I should be very sorry to be mistaken, or supposed capable of casting a reflection upon, or of undervaluing the sterling worth of the middling classes, constituting, in fact, the great body of the people of England. So far from entertaining any such unworthy feeling, I would infinitely prefer to shake hands with honest and albeit vulgar tradesmen, either in the hunting field, or at their counters, than with many of their most refined cus-

tomers; though I cannot go the length of some writers upon the state of society, who, taking exception for rule, and forgetting the vast disproportion which the aristocracy bears in numbers,—are disposed to arrogate to the middling classes an undue share of the whole moral worth and honour of the nation. I am writing upon a sport, a noble science exclusively appertaining to gentlemen, not to rich men who can afford to keep hounds and horses, but to English *gentlemen*, in the most literal sense and meaning of the term; and next to maintaining the character, I would have a man assume, at all times, the appearance of a *gentleman*. A young man is less likely to err in attention to dress, than in slovenliness—the former will wear off, the latter will grow upon him. The demi-rep roué style, adopted by too many leaders of fashion in the present generation, as fully evinces the very *acme* of *mauvais ton*, as that of the past was characteristic of high breeding. It is true that a man possessing *l'air noble*, cannot thoroughly disguise himself, aided by all the ingenuity of his tailor to that effect; nor could the most unexceptionable attire impart that same “*air*” to the *parvenu*; but now, that black and coloured neckcloths have superseded the unsullied white, redolent of the labours of the laundry;—now, that trousers have entirely taken place of those leather continuations which formerly manifested, with the rest of the wardrobe, the careful offices of valet and attendants—there is not the same outward distinction between the peer and the apprentice.

A blue, or coloured neckcloth, is all well enough for a morning dress, with a scarlet coat ; but if one greater atrocity can be committed than another, in shape of a *mésalliance* in dress, it is that of a black cravat, with top boots—no one, with the remotest pretensions to taste, could thus commit himself ; but, as such things have been, I mention them only as a warning to any not aware of the snobbish effect of such a contrast ; knowing that this opinion is beyond the reach of controversy. With regard to boots, our ancestors thought with the poet—

“ Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little *long* ;”

but now, the neat top-boot must give way to the cumbersome jack of the French postilion.

The skill of Hammond, and of Anderson, is now a cipher—“their occupation’s gone.” Leslie may continue his useful labours on the Poor-law ; but the matchless, I should say the inexpressible, fitting of the knee no longer claims his care. Indolence, and the rage for dispensing with manual labour, have supplied the long black boot, approaching to the hip ; this may be very convenient, as it undoubtedly is to the horse-dealers, who pull them over their dirty fustians ; one pair may furnish the itinerant sportsman, who carries his wardrobe on his person, for the week—nay, beyond this, they are, I believe, in favour and in use with some, of such standing that I must not presume to abuse

them ; but I am free to express an opinion as to their appearance, and their improvement of hunting costume, and to question any advantage over the old top-boot, when the knees are fortified from thorns by good buckskin.—I can better reconcile them with the resemblance of a foreign *chasseur*, than with the figure of Lord Jersey on horseback, or the *beau idéal* of an English fox-hunter. Those who ride with their feet full, or quite home, in the stirrup, will find great protection from the bruises and callous swellings, so commonly caused by the contact of the instep with the top of the stirrup, by having the heel of the boot made so long, that the stirrup cannot come far enough on the foot to admit of such pressure. While on the subject of stirrups, it is as well to say, that the spring bars affixed to the saddles are not sufficiently to be depended upon, as a precaution against so horrible an accident as that of hanging in, and being dragged by, the stirrup. I have seen an instance of a man falling over the left side of his horse, with his right foot hanging still in the right stirrup. No saddle should be without spring bars, as they will probably act in most cases ; but it is throwing a chance away to omit the additional security of having the stirrup irons made to open with a spring, when the foot is displaced. The advantage is obvious, and, if the springs are properly tempered, no inconvenience can ever arise. There is, probably, a saving of expense and labour, which may form a recommendation to the jack-boot, but it does not cost more now than

it did formerly, to dress like a gentleman ; and as it is not absolutely necessary that port wine and black-currant jelly should be the chief ingredients of proper blacking, or that the boot-top liquid should actually be composed of champagne and apricot-jam, according to the most approved University prescriptions, it is to be hoped that such boots as those worn by his Grace of Dorset may long retain their supremacy, not only as the most becoming, but the most appropriate. It would be difficult, perhaps presumptuous, to offer any rules for hunting-apparel, unless possessed of the ability with which Colonel Hawker has given instructions for the dress of the shooter,—as the colour of the upper garment is almost universally the same, and the cut of it must, of course, be regulated by the taste of the wearer,—but to the precaution against wet and cold which would suggest lamb's-wool stockings and thick soles for the feet, I would venture to add that of a lining of flannel to the coat, as a measure of no little comfort and utility. It is said, that Mr. Brummel's orders to his tailor were, to “keep continually sending leather breeches ;” but I venture to recommend leather in preference to all others, because they are almost everlasting, and, therefore, though double the price at first, are cheapest and best in the end. It is a common error to suppose that they are attended with any inconvenience in wet weather ; this might have been the case once, when they were made to fit like the tightest pantaloons ; but, as they are now made, they

will be found the best wear in the heaviest rain, and they will resist trifling wet from boughs, &c., being impregnable to a shower, which would saturate the cords so generally adopted during the temporary disuse of leather. The custom of wearing scarlet in fox-hunting is supposed to have had its origin in the circumstance of its being a royal sport, confirmed by the mandate of one king Henry, who organized and equipped, in the royal livery of scarlet, a corps for the destruction of foxes, not after the manner which we should recognize as legitimate in the present day. This is, at least, a plausible and, at all events, right royal way of accounting for a habit, rather of martial, than of sylvan import, were it not otherwise sufficiently recommended by the cheerfulness which it imparts to the aspect of the field. The round hat has long been preferred to the old cap, which now serves as a distinction of office. The only advantage in a cap to any one who cannot endure weight on his head, is, that it can be made lighter than a hat, and either should be substantial enough to resist a fall. One word upon a whip must be superfluous; the less I offer of the lash the better, after the incontestible evidence adduced by Mr. Smith in favour of such an appendage as "the thong." Spurs have been pronounced by some very "learned Thebans," to be far more devoted to ornament than use, to be more important to the cavalier in Hyde Park, who

"With the left heel assiduously aside,
Provokes the caper he pretends to chide,"

than to the sportsman; and I believe that, as far as they are supposed to be the means of persuasion, as many races have been lost as won by their stimulus.—Spurs, however, if not indispensable, are unquestionably useful when properly applied: if a horse require them to quicken his progress, he may be as well without them; but they may very much aid the hand, if used in concert, in keeping a horse straight, preventing him swerving from his fences, and are important upon any sudden occasion of rousing his energies. They must, therefore, be numbered in the inventory of hunting requisites. The vocation of the sportsman leads him constantly amidst “the war of elements;”—experience will best direct him, as to the efficacy of his equipment from head to foot. He should ever be mindful of the precept of old Parr, and “keep his feet warm by exercise, and his head cool by temperance.” My only object in writing an article upon, or, rather, of writing a word upon an article of dress, is that of noticing the fact, that inasmuch as the demeanour of the “courtly Chesterfield”—(although he did, after riding “beyond all price,” presume to “wonder how men ever hunted twice”),—is that which is far more consistent with the character of a real fox-hunter, than the drinking, swaggering, rough-and-ready picture of the mere vermin killer, so constantly misrepresented as the squire of former days; so, also, is the most correct mode of habiliment (the total absence of all which, born of bad taste, is, in slang parlance, designated as “swell,”—or

“knowing,”)—that which, without one studied effort, sits naturally on the outward man,—that which alone accords with the personal appearance of a true votary of this most gentlemanlike, most “Noble Science.”





Ancient Geologists.

CHAPTER IX.

“ All earth’s astir, rous’d with the revelry
 Of vigour, health, and joy ! Cheer awakes cheer,
 While Echo’s mimic tongue that never tires
 Keeps up the hearty din :—Each face is then
 Its neighbour’s glass—where gladness sees itself,
 And at the bright reflection grows more glad !
 Breaks into tenfold mirth !—laughs like a child,
 Would make a gift of its own heart, it is so free !
 Would scarce accept a kingdom, ’tis so rich !
 Shakes hands with all, and vows it never knew
 That life was life before.”

LOVE CHASE.

A Hunting Morning ; Mood for Enjoyment of ; Different Sentiments upon—Place of Meeting—Forcing a Fox—Where is the Will, is the Way—View Halloos—Noise—Silence—The Human Voice Divine—Field Language—“ Tally-ho” versus “ Tally-O”—Mr. Smith’s Glossary—Drawing Coverts—Up or down Wind—Instance of an Up-wind Draw in a Spinney—Getting away with a Fox—The Burst—Pressing him—Advantage of a Start to the Fox—Mr. Smith’s Idea of a Fox’s Knowledge of Scent—Covert side—“ Coffee-housing”—The Number of Hounds for an Effective Pack—Number in the Field—The Great

Mr. Meynell, with a Hundred Couples out—Success of such a Pack—Killing above Ground, and Digging—Drawing over Foxes—Getting settled to *one*—“Ware Riot”—Mischief of Interference—Hare and Fox on the Same Line—Lawful Assistance, when admissible and advantageous—A Quick Find—Liability to Riot in a long draw Blank—Punishment of Hounds—A Day in Herts—Average Sport—The Find—“Gone away”—The First Ten Minutes—A Huntsman in his Proper Place; how to keep it—Varieties of Soil—A Check—Eye to Hounds, and Last Recovery—Forward again—Racing for the Lead—Over-riding Hounds—Settling to Business—Hunting and Running—Hunting a Fox, not riding him down—A View in Chase—The Thick of the Thing—A Second Check at the Plough Teams—Headed or not?—Huntsman’s Head required—Forward again and again—The Field in High Feather—A Sinking Fox—“Hang those Footmen, how they holloa!”—A Fair Finish—Whoo whoop! This Run compared with a better—Double Casts with Divided Pack—The Forward Principle, the Rule of Fox-hunting—Drains—Going Home—The Time for all Things—Return to Kennel—Efficacy of Hounds—Mr. Smith’s Breed of Foxes that can beat any Pack—Condition everything, and everything depending on “System of Kennel.”

LET us fancy ourselves prepared to take the field on some fine day in November—we will not invoke the aid of “a southerly wind and a cloudy sky,” which no longer “proclaim a hunting morning;”—they might have done of yore, but are now out of date. Light clouds, just enough to intercept the “garish eye of day,” without betokening rain or storms, such as veil the vaulted canopy above us in one tint of sober gray, and impart to the earth beneath them a mellow and subdued tone of light, varied only by the impulse of a northern breeze, which, in itself, is but just sufficient to shake the dew-drop from the thorn,—these are the welcome materials constituting the prospect of a hunting morning. Rightly to enjoy such a morning, you must be in a frame of mind to exclaim with Romeo :—

“My bosom’s lord sits lightly on its throne,
 And all this day an unaccustomed spirit
 Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.”

If the half of earthly joys consist in anticipation, the sportsman is half way towards his seventh heaven, when, bounding on his covert hack, time and space appear annihilated, by the rapidity of his progress towards the scene in which his very soul is centred :— I speak of sportsmen ;—nothing can be further from my thoughts, than the presumption that such trash as this can meet with anything but the most unqualified contempt from the man who hunts, for fashion, or relief from *ennui*. What has he to do with the beauty of Nature ?

“What’s Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba ?”

The different sentiments with which men may wend their way, each ostensibly intent upon the same object—the different sensations which the being out upon a hunting day may create in different breasts, always remind me, most forcibly, of Lord Byron’s exhibition of a true seaman’s feelings upon his element, contrasted with those of one incapable of sharing them :—

“Say, who can tell—not thou luxurious slave,
 Whose soul would sicken o’er the heaving wave ;
 Not thou, vain lord of indolence and ease,
 Whom slumber soothes not, pleasure cannot please :
 Say, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
 And danc’d in triumph o’er the waters wide,
The exulting sense, the pulse’s madd’ning play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way.”

Thus it is with hunting.—On the mere steeple-chaser,

or on the man who rises discontented from a feverish bed, to curse the custom which prevents the more protracted indulgence of sloth ; and still more, on him who inwardly laments that no interposition of a friendly frost had spared him the necessity of "doing as others do at Rome," would any word upon the details of the science, and what thereto appertains, be other than utterly wasted. It is by the real sportsman, by the true admirer of Nature and of Nature's God, by the man fraught with a lively sense of the boon of existence, of thankfulness for the health and happiness he is permitted to enjoy, by the man at peace with himself, and in charity with all men, that the exhilarating inspirations of a hunting morning will be felt and appreciated.

But we are at the place of meeting ; we have no business to inquire into the motives of any one ; all have a right to hunt to please themselves, and as long as they do no mischief, may take the country as it comes, or the road as it goes, according to their own pleasure. —Out of a hundred merry faces, you will probably find many who have ridden long distances, and are constantly at great trouble and expense, out of pure love of the sport. The whole field wears, at least, the appearance of happiness, and, taking them all in all, they are probably a better set of fellows than you could find congregated together upon any other occasion.

The place of meeting should never be too near the covert intended to be drawn. No one should ride by the side of it before the hounds are thrown off, as a



PL. I.

“With silence, lead thy many-coloured hounds,
In all their party: I ride.”—
SCOTLAND.

very old fox is easily disturbed ; and, when they are drawing, in taking up a station, which will, of course, be down wind, remember that it would have been too much for the patience of Job to have had a fox headed at his point of breaking. If hounds are drawing a wood furnished with rides, it is highly desirable that all should be within covert, excepting those placed officially to view a fox away, which otherwise might steal off unseen. If you are in a gorse, there is less occasion to depend on your ears ; you can see all that is going on, with little change of position ; and one side, that on which a fox is most likely to break, should be left entirely open to him. It is a farce to think of forcing a fox to take any particular line of country by compelling him to break in that direction.

“ If he will go, he will—you may depend on't ;
And if he won't, he won't—and there's an end on't.”

He is almost certain to make good his first intention—he heads back,—the cream of the thing is curdled—hounds lose their first advantage ; they turn, probably, from a burning scent up wind, to a moderate one down wind,—the fox multiplies his start tenfold, and a good run is spoiled. Any man who has ever hunted more than twice, must know that nothing will sooner head a fox than a halloo. The veriest tyro must have heard of, if he have not witnessed, the effect of a tally-ho as soon as a fox puts his nose out of covert ; and, with all due allowance for exuberance of delight, he has no business

out hunting if he have not learned to view *the* animal in respectful silence till he is quite clean "gone away." A view halloo given then, to the full extent of the utmost capability of lungs, can do no harm, but will be thankfully acknowledged by the huntsman. If hounds should be running, and settled to another fox, they will not be disturbed by it; if they are not, the sooner the huntsman is aware that one (and probably the good one) is gone, the better. A clear, good, musical view halloo, either in or out of covert, is one of the most inspiring accompaniments of the chase; and, as a sequel to the cheering encouragement given to the hounds by the huntsman, in a tone of voice harmonizing with the floating melody which has arisen from the breath of the first challenge which proclaimed a find, it creates a moment of excitement and pleasure indescribable. You knew before that it *was* all right; you could swear by "old Medler, who never spoke false;"

"You would lay ten to one 'twas a find;"

but now you have the evidence to *prove* the fact, by ocular demonstration. He has not stolen away, leaving a steaming trail behind; there he is, and you see nothing to hinder a continuance, upon fair terms, with him. Grateful, however, as is—welcome as must be—this tocsin to the ear, it is far better altogether dispensed with, than used incautiously or out of place. I would not divest the sport of one particle of its animation and cheeriness; but fox-hunters do not, generally, err in

silence. Too much noise must create confusion, and render hounds wild. A noisy, over-vociferous huntsman* sets a fatal example to his field, and is only preferable to one who, in the other extreme, may be silent and sulky to a degree of slackness. He must neither attempt to find a fox with his horn, and frighten him to death with his tongue; nor must he talk to his hounds with apathy and indifference. When I say that fox-hunters do not err in silence, I mean that the proportion of mischief far exceeds the benefit resulting from halloos. The human eye is supposed to have a wonderful effect upon the brute creation.

“It is said that a lion will turn and flee
From a maid in the pride of her purity.”

But I doubt whether the “human voice divine” is not far more powerful in its operation. How often does the partridge shooter inwardly consign the tongues of his attendants to * * *, where they might want cooling? How many instances could I recount of foxes having been rescued from the jaws of death, from the very middle of the pack, by the tally-ho, here,—halloo, there, which gets their heads up, and prevents their running, infallibly, from a burning scent, into view of the devoted carcass, within a very short distance of their noses.

The view halloo (a something approaching to a screaming intonation of “waugh,” nearer than anything

* Virgil, in his *Georgics* says, “*Ingentem clamore premes ad retia cervum,*” speaking of stag-hunting—but this clamour was only to drive the stag to the nets.

I can write), cannot, I believe, be committed to paper ; but the “tally-ho!” the visible sign, or intelligence, of the sight of a fox, has been the subject of ingenious speculation as to the *unde derivatur?* Whether it has its origin in the Norman *taillis haut*, “high coppice:” or whether, as some assert with equal confidence, *au taillis*, “to the coppice;” or whether it is derived from the plain English *tail ho!* as a salute to that conspicuous and distinguished part of the animal called the brush, is a matter of no moment to the sportsman, whatever it may be to the etymologist. My only object, in this digressive allusion to the word, is to express my hope and belief that I have not mis-spelt it. I conceive that nothing but a misprint, and a repetition of the same diabolical error of the press, can have given us so much of tally-O, as I find in Mr. Smith’s valuable Diary of a Huntsman, which I have seen since the previous chapter went to press. We hear tye-ho! for the deer; so-ho! for the hare; to-ho! to the pointer, &c., &c. Sail-ho! is the cry from the mast head when a vessel is in sight. The interjection “ho!” being, as I take it, an exclamation indicative of surprise, and, at the same time, signifying the presence of an object. In Mr. Smith’s glossary of hunting terms, we are told that “*Hooi*” is “*the view halloo, when tally-O is not heard, or when hounds are at a check, and it is desirable to get them on;*” and, in explanation of tally-O itself, that, “if desirable to halloo it loudly, it should be pronounced, ta, a-le, o,” meaning, beyond doubt, ta, a, le-ho! for we must expect

to hear of *'ounds*, and *'orses*, in the dialect of the cockney, *who 'ammers an 'ack along an 'ard road to 'unt at Hepping*, from a man who would thus clip the Queen's English, and rob the dear old tally-ho of the expressive aspirate which was familiar to our infancy. To return to halloos in general, your first view halloo having led me a long way since I left you with hounds, drawing for a fox, on a fine hunting morning. On the *use* of your voice in the field, or covert, I should say, remember never to halloo far from the spot where the fox is viewed. You may be of real use if you enable a huntsman to lay his hounds on the last space which you saw occupied by the fox ; taking care, of course, to turn your horse's head, and wave your hand in the direction he is gone, to prevent their taking heel way. Nothing is more annoying than, after lifting hounds to a halloo, to find that your informant has viewed the fox a quarter of a mile off, nearer, very likely, to the place whence you started, than to him ; you have then to retrace your steps, with a very material loss of time, to say nothing of having disappointed or made fools of the hounds.

With respect to drawing a covert, I believe that, although unquestionably best, to take a woodland up wind, it is of little importance which way hounds are thrown into a gorse, the chances of chopping a fox being more alarming than those of his getting too good a start. In small woods, or spinnies, it is not only a mistake to think that it is necessary to give hounds the wind, but it is positively wrong to draw otherwise than

down wind. You incur a terrible risk of catching a fox napping, which is an easier thing to do than “to catch a weasel asleep;” and, moreover, it is ten to one that you force a fox, if not chopped, to break against his inclination.* I saw a beautiful find completely spoiled by this circumstance alone, towards the end of last year with a celebrated pack. With the idea of forcing a fox into a particular line of country, the hounds were thrown up wind, into a spinney: a certain find. By dint of noise, the fox was unkennelled without accident; and finding it impossible to face the pack and field in his rear, was compelled to make a feint forward, in the eye of an equinoctial gale; but, after half a mile of this fun, he, of course, took the first opportunity of making a retrograde movement, leading a gallant chase for miles down wind. The impulse of a pack, however, when enjoying a burst up wind, close to their fox, is that of “*Vestigia nulla retrorsum.*” On this occasion, they never recovered the first check; and, although they had a good run, the fox found security in the distant woodland of the adjoining country, and the day was wanting that satisfactory account of him, which must have been the result, had a contrary course been pursued in drawing. In this, as in many other things, “*Ce n’est que le premier pas qui coute.*”

We are all, of course, anxious enough to get away on

* It has been before remarked, that “if he will go, he will”—it is difficult to change the predetermined line of a fox, but easy enough to force him to break at a different point to that which he would spontaneously have chosen.

the best possible terms with a fox : and it is only fair towards hounds to get them away close at his brush ; but I doubt whether this is the best way to ensure a good run, or that a fox is so likely to face an extent of country, as he is when he has had a few minutes to make up his mind. There are numberless instances of foxes having taken very unusual lines, owing, as may be justly supposed, to having been thus pressed at first ; but, on such occasions, it generally happens that some kind of check occurs in the first five minutes, giving a fox some ground for venturing to make a bold *coup* for his life. He will then set his head straight, and make his point good for some known haunt, twelve, thirteen, or more miles distant, as the crow flies. I do not mean to say that I would give him a moment's law beyond a fair start from covert. Your object is to find, and fairly hunt, or run him down. To kill a good fox, he must be *pressed* all through the chase ; and his fate is most frequently decided by the pace of the first twenty minutes, most appropriately designated as " the burst ;" but it is ten to one that he heads back, if the chances are obviously much against him, and winds up his career in a ring. I have heard great complaints, of late seasons ; of short running foxes in Leicestershire. I conceive that this is not because foxes are worse, though enclosures and other causes may be taken into account, but that hounds are better :—they are bred to run faster. Whatever may have been the pace of former days, I feel confident that it was not equal to the speed of the

present. Hounds, in such countries, burst their fox, and drive him to his shifts, before he has time to avail himself of his geography. They get well away with him from gorse, or small covert, and are never off his line. This is not generally the case from a larger covert; hence the reputation of woodland foxes, which are said to be always the best. I have been told by some of the oldest and best sportsmen, that all the finest runs they can remember, have been when a fox has got a good start, and the scent has chanced to be good enough to allow hounds, in nautical phrase, to overhaul him, coming up with him, hand over hand, when he little expected them. It is then too late to return, or the gallant "varmint" has been too far committed to retract, and is compelled to do, or die, at once. A good scent may be truly said to make a good fox.

As to Mr. Smith's idea, that a fox must be a good judge of scent because he lives by hunting, and that he regulates his movements accordingly, it certainly might puzzle ingenuity to say too much of the wiliness or sagacity of the animal, whose cunning is proverbial; but the supposition of their knowledge of a good scent is not, in my humble opinion, quite borne out by fact. It is true that they will take to a lane, or hard road, as will also the hare, and play other vagaries, seemingly with a notion of diminishing the scent; but I am inclined to think, that the surface for their footing, the difference of travelling over light or heavy ground, is their consideration; or else why does a fox invariably



PL. II.

“Hark! on the drag I hear
Their doubtful notes, precluding to a cry.”

SOMERVILLE.

leave ploughed land, and take to grass, which, if he be anything of a philosopher, he must know will betray his steps in a tenfold degree? I shall, hereafter, presume to offer an opinion upon the nature of scent. We must, for the present, return to the covert side, where I left you—not as, I hope, “coffee-housing” amidst a group of idlers, who are, probably, conspicuous ornaments of another certain spot, known by the name of Fool’s Corner—but on the tiptoe of expectation, intent upon observing the working of eighteen or twenty couples of effective foxhounds, and big with hope as to the success of their operations. Here the mention of the number of hounds requisite to constitute an effective pack, betrays me into what may seem like another brief digression, but which will not, I trust, appear out of place, as connected with the science in the field. The number kept in kennel must, of course, depend upon the country, and the number of hunting days per week. From fifty to sixty couples are, I believe, found sufficient for four days a week, in most countries, although the kennel establishments in Leicestershire far exceed this number. Taking one of the most complete, if not the most perfect, in the whole world, for an example of what is right, you will find that it is oftener with less, than with more than eighteen couples that Lord Forester and Mr. Goosey thread the vale of Belvoir. When the Father of the Science, the great Meynell, first went into Leicestershire, he never took out fewer than *one hundred couples* of hounds,—a fact which I have ascertained from one who

was in his prime, as a fox-hunter, long before the close of the last century : who well knew the practice of those days, and was well acquainted with the circumstances. *One hundred couples* were drawn for the hunting pack (leaving, I should imagine, but a small residue for the solace of the feeder, at home) ; and when the fixture was at Segg's Hill, six miles from Mr. Meynell's residence, it was thought necessary to despatch them there over night, not only that they might be in time for the rendezvous with the first rays of light, but in order to avoid the fatigue of the journey ! Well may we expect to "live and learn," or learn while we live, when we find that, within the memory of many now being, and I trust, long to be, the science was thus still in its infancy. That Mr. Meynell lived to discover, and reform, the errors of this primitive state is well known ; the order of things, in the present day, being chiefly the result of his experience : but it is no less fact, that, for several seasons, he never fairly killed one brace of foxes above ground. Digging was then a common resource ; the spade and pickaxe were powerful auxiliaries of those days. The chase, which had comprehended unlimited extent, generally terminated in the bowels of the earth ; and whether the jaded object of many an hour's pursuit had sought sanctuary in a rabbit-burrow, or in a more legitimate refuge ; whether the process of extraction was of brief or of indefinite duration,—that man was held a recreant who would desert his post, or think about his "*domus et placens uxor*," till he could render a posthu-

mous account of the fox which had afforded "the hunting of that day."

Some amusing stories are on record, of the supply of refreshments, and of the scenes which such occasions furnished. It must be remembered, that this "beginning of their end" was not later, probably, than the hour of our own commencement; but a party of our forefathers, in the act of besieging a main earth, must have formed a humorous subject for the pencil of an artist.

The practice of taking into the field a number of hounds, such as Somerville, in his day, censures as

"That numerous pack, that crowd of state,
With which the vain profusion of the great
Covers the lawn, and shakes the trembling copse,"—

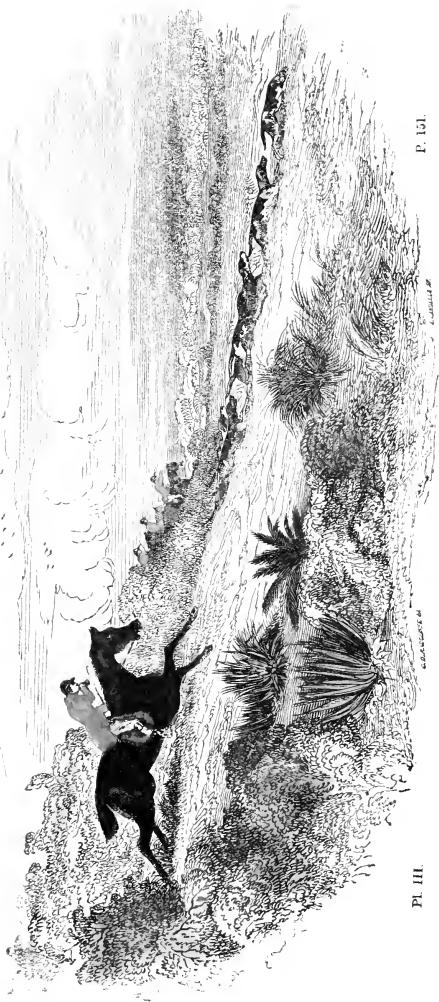
has long been discontinued, for the very reasons described by the same poet.* Hounds should work in concert; eighteen or twenty couples are enough for any but very large woodlands; they should spread well, so as to draw closely every quarter, but it is useless to think of hurrying over, or, as it is termed, letting them run through more than a certain portion at once. Nothing is more disheartening to fox preservers, and gamekeepers, than drawing over their foxes; there are some days when a

* "Pompous encumbrance! a magnificence
Useless, vexatious! for the wily fox,
Safe in the increasing number of his foes,
Kens well the great advantage: shrinks behind,
And slyly creeps through the same beaten track,
And hunts them, step by step; then views escaped
With inward ecstasy, the panting throng
In their own footsteps puzzled, foiled, and lost."

fox will find himself, but there are as many others on which he will wait to be almost whipped out of his kennel. It is the huntsman's duty to draw every covert, to the full satisfaction of the proprietor ; and it is better, also, to take instructions quietly communicated by the parties authorized to offer them, as to the way in which it should be drawn. Thus, no plausible pretext will be left to account for a blank. When the huntsman is drawing one half, or division, of the covert, it is the duty of the whippers-in to stop all stragglers from the main body, and keep them, if possible, within the prescribed boundary ; more especially where foxes are numerous, as it is most important to get the whole pack settled, at first, to one scent : but this exercise of authority requires judgment, and any interference, on the part of a novice, or any one unacquainted with the hounds, might be, as in most cases, highly impolitic. A couple or two, or a single hound, may have come across and struck upon the scent of a fox which has shifted, unseen, across a ride. The scent in the stuff is too stale for them freely to own, and speak to it ; the ride is redolent only of the stean of horses, mingled, perhaps, with that of the Indian weed. They cast themselves, with wonted sagacity, at once across. They may be young hounds, in which the owner, or huntsman, has not implicit confidence enough to elicit a cheer ; but any injudicious " hark back," or premature cry of " ware riot," may stop the consummation most devoutly to be wished, delaying, or altogether preventing, a pretty find. It is a terrible mistake, that

of raising a shout of "ware hare," and riding after the culprit, however good the motive. The pack hear only a "hollabaloo;" they can scarcely distinguish the intended raving from cheering; those which would have remained neutral, join the row; and, "save me from my friends," mentally ejaculates the huntsman. If a man be disposed to be useful with his whip, or his voice (and a good sportsman may be, occasionally, of much assistance with both), he must be under the guidance of one or two practical rules. When he sees young or old hounds persevering upon a scent, which others, notoriously of good character, refuse altogether to acknowledge, he will hardly err in stopping them. He is welcome to ride over any hound of mine actually chasing a hare in view and I will thank him for his pains, whatever he may have inflicted on the hound: but I had rather judgment was suspended upon a hound running the line of a hare; it is a "*non sequitur*" that he may not be on the scent of a fox. We had a laughable instance of this about the end of last season: when drawing Batch Wood, with little or no reasonable hope of finding (having recently disturbed this good preserve for foxes), one hound challenged near the outside of the northernmost quarter, where there was scarcely covering enough for an earwig; I chanced to have placed myself there; while the pack were drawing the opposite side. With one cheer to an old favourite, and one signal from the horn to his comrades, we had instantly a crash which shook the few remaining leaves from off the oaks. While I was in full

enjoyment of the chorus of the whole body close at a fox in hollow covert, not caring to look for a view within, a farmer, one of the most knowing of those who *do know*, who had protested in the first instance against the reality of the find, rode up to me, almost breathless with haste, exclaiming, "Stop them, for heaven's sake! and if I was in your place, sir, I would hang the whole pack. They are running hare, and nothing else; I have seen her close before them these three rings that they have brought her round." Quietly expressing my full belief that his eyes had not deceived him as to the hare, I promised him, if he would remain a moment with me, to show him something else; however improbable he might think it, that a fox should be, where nothing but a hare or rabbit was visible. I had scarcely spoken, before the gallant fellow broke over the open, with the pack at his brush, as I did not *think*, but *knew*, they had been for the preceding five minutes. The farmer good humouredly remarked, that "seeing was *not* believing," and he probably read a lesson that day, which may avail him, as a fox-hunter, for the rest of his time. If you see hounds, which you know are to be depended upon, running out of sight or hearing of others, and have not time or opportunity of giving notice to huntsman or whippers in, you cannot do wrong in endeavouring to lift those which are upon no scent, with a "go hark cry, hark forward, forward hark!" capping them on, at the same time, to those that are on the line; and, again, after viewing a fox away, you will never do otherwise than good in stopping,



PL. III.

“He breaks away!
Shrill horns proclaim his flight.” —
SOMERVILLE.

or doing your best to stop, a single hound, or even two couples, which may get a start too far in advance of the body. The pack will never relish a scent while there is anything between them and their fox upon the line, which is the reason for the irreparable mischief caused by sheep dogs, greyhounds, or any stray cur that may have coursed a fox during a run, causing a sudden variation of scent, which is often irrecoverable. As there are exceptions to every general rule, so are these cases instances of distinction from the general and ruling principle of non-intervention, on the part of the field. All are equally ready to admit, that "too many cooks must spoil the broth;" but I am all for encouraging, on the part of those who wish thoroughly to participate in the sport, a desire to know what hounds are about, to learn, as there is, or should be, a reason for doing everything, the reason why everything is done.

A quick find is essential to the spirit of the day, and, although it will not add to the steadiness of hounds to clap them at once upon a fox, without giving them the trouble of drawing for him, it is very desirable to find early, before hounds get so disgusted with drawing through a line of coverts, without a touch of the right scent, that loss of patience inclines them to the wrong, and they get into a humour to run anything. In Herts, and other countries where game preserves are neither few nor far between, and where there are often more hares than hounds in a spinney, the wonder is, not that any hounds should occasionally riot, but that any code

of discipline should have so thoroughly counteracted their natural propensities, as to render them so generally indifferent to the sight, or scent, of anything but that of fox to which they were entered. This, under the old system, was still more surprising, as it was the common custom, even in the best schools, to enter young hounds, in the first instance, to the scent of hare, with the idea of teaching them to stoop to a scent, no matter what. Upon the same principle would gamekeepers encourage young pointers to stand at lark. The correction which must follow, in order to eradicate the seeds which we have ourselves taken pains to implant, appears, to say the least of it, a most unreasonable tax upon instinct. If a hound never notices the scent of hare in chase, you cannot blame him if he chops one, or even pauses to share a dainty meal, quickly despatched, with a comrade or two. For

“Reason raise o’er instinct as we can,
In this ’tis God that works, in that ’tis man.”

He would be a fool if he did not “take the good the gods provide” him, under his nose; but the whipper-in must be quick in the detection of such occurrences, must be active in forcing his way instantly to the rescue of the victim, which rescue, with whip and rating voice, he must effect, making the hound feel conscious that he cannot, with impunity, perpetrate any act of which he is ashamed. The best and steadiest of packs cannot be free entirely from hounds which will occasionally run riot, such hounds being

frequently most invaluable when once upon a fox. Any hound that does not instantly desist from running riot, when properly rated, should be caught up, if there be time (and it is seldom that this occurs during real business), and chastised on the spot. If it be expedient to punish a hound, it is folly to do it by halves. Couple his fore-legs under his neck, let him lie writhing in futile efforts to follow the pack, while the whipper-in remains to administer the lash behind. He is in no danger of bruises from the double thong, but he cannot escape a stroke of the lash that "bites to the quick." It must have been a curious sight to have seen Mr. Smith's twenty-five couples, "fifty in a row," tied to park palings (*lashings* must have been at a premium), to be flogged "till all hands were tired." Dr. Kate's feat of birching some fifty pairs of rebellious Etonians, one fine morning, was a joke to this; they had it one by one. Pity that there is no omni-flagellatory steam-engine. It might be worth erecting such an apparatus, "for six weeks' " practice, "from daybreak till the afternoon."* On bad scenting days, when there is confusion of scent on ground stained with varieties of game, the best hounds may flash a little at hare; but we are supposing nothing adverse—we are drawing upon a good hunting day; not a pretty patch of gorse, though we have several; but, as they are not the most common of our coverts, say Westbury, or any other moderate sized wood which may suggest itself to your fancy. See that old bitch how she feathers—how

* Vide Diary of a Huntsman, page 41.

her stern vibrates with the quickened action of her pulses ; for a moment she ploughs the earth with her nostrils, she whimpers out a half-suppressed emotion, dashes a few yards forward, stoops again, and traverses around her. “ Yoi, wind him ! have at him, old darling ! Yoi, touch on him ! Hey, wind him, old Governess ! Yoi, *push* him up !” A fox for a million. Onward she strikes, throws back her graceful neck, rears high her head, and, with a note of confidence, proclaims the joyful tidings of a find. Like hosts that rally round their standard, at the trumpet’s call, come bounding through the brake the merry throng ; the huntsman’s cheer is responded to by a rapid succession of

——— “ throats,
“ With a whole gamut filled with heavenly notes.”

It is a moment of intense, I had almost written, of painful interest ; so nearly do extremes meet, so close is the conjunction between the most pleasurable sensations and those of an opposite character. While hope is mounting almost to delight, anxiety is bordering upon fear. The action has commenced, the huntsman’s heart and soul are thrown amidst the pack, he has neither eyes nor ears for aught beside, all is right at present ; but any one of a hundred probable mischances may mar the tide of fortune. A few short, sharp, and shrill notes of the horn, alternating with a cheery “ hoic ! hoic ! hoic, together, hoic !” fill up the pauses in this grand overture to the approaching opera. The huntsman is, as he always should be, literally with his hounds ; the second

whipper-in is in active attendance upon him, at certain distance in his rear, ready to put on any stragglers as they join, with a "go hark cry, go hark!" in a tone of encouragement (not of reproach, for they cannot all be *en masse* at once in strong covert); there are twenty couples thundering through the stuff. Hark to yon piercing scream across the ride. The first whipper-in has viewed him over, and, waving his hand in the direction of the fox's head, he is galloping, stealthily, to the corner by the gate-post, whence he can rely upon a view away. Heaven grant that no blundering idiot be outside. Here come the pack, they have cleared the high wood; look at them flying through the stubs; see how they fling, how quick they turn, and how maintain the cry—now one, and then another, like a chime of bells; and helter-skelter, down the muddy ride, come floundering on "the field."

"Cigars are thrown down in a hurry,
 And bridle-reins gather'd up tight,
 See each is prepar'd for a scurry,
 And all are resolv'd to be right.
 Tally-ho! erics a clod from a tree—
 Now I'll give you all leave to come on,
 And a terrible burst it will be,
 For right o'er a fine country he's gone."

HUNTING SONG.

The fox has not hung an instant, he has threaded only the quarter of the covert where he was found, where he was well found, and so well pressed, that it is too hot to hold him. Like a gallant fellow he has faced the open; without a turn he has resolved upon a run for his life;

the field have behaved well, and like sportsmen, as they always will, with a little tact and management ; he has not been headed ; he has broken between the gateway, to which the whipper-in has ridden, and the opposite corner, where the horn of the master gives assurance that he is fairly away. It is a signal as well known to the hounds as to the huntsman ; they fly to a note never heard but for especial purposes ; one by which they never were deceived or disappointed. The second whipper-in and huntsman cheer them on to the edge of the covert, with, "forward, hark ! forward, hark ! forward, away, away !" (I cannot attempt to decipher the intonation of different huntsmen, for to me there is nothing so unintelligible or difficult of construction as bad English, whether in phrases or whole sentences) ; but there is no useless repetition of view halloos without ; both whipper-in and master saw him break at the same instant ; in neither did a muscle move till he had almost cleared the field between his home and the lane which he has crossed beyond : then, hearing the echoing thunder of his enemies, as quickly as follows the peal upon the lightning's flash, a sign of intelligence passes between them, after one flourish of the horn, as much as to say, "That will do, they cannot be coming better or quicker after him."* And now, indeed, they come ; what a

* I have commended silence upon such an occasion, but not as an invariable rule. If hounds had been heard to dwell upon a doubtful scent, or turn, the whipper-in would have been instantly back in covert to carry them on ; but when they are coming on as well as they can, it is notoriously best to check impatience ; leave them alone—do not get their heads up ; they will bring it out, take it up, and carry it with them, twice as well, and quicker, by themselves.

phalanx of spangled beauty! with a simultaneous rush they top the fence, pour, like an avalanche, upon the plain, and settle to the scent. They are away!—

“————— now my brave youths,
Stripp'd for the chase, give all your souls to joy.”

Thanks for your courtesy and patience. Look at the pack; see how they are racing for the lead: the young ones have it for pace, yet what a head they carry. How they skim across the pasture lands—there is a burning scent—ride over them who can! But here, in our provincial, the man who hunts only to ride, must and will be chafed and disappointed, though he may have abundance of fencing, and plenty of riding to hunt. It will now and then happen, that we cross parts of our country in a manner satisfactory to the hardest Meltonian, or steeple-chaser; but I am now attempting to describe a run, as it usually occurs, with neither more nor less than the average proportion of disadvantages. Ride as hard as you please; ride well and boldly, ride like men; but try to ride like sportsmen. Above all, do not attempt to race with, or take the lead from, the huntsman in his own line. He ought, in himself, to possess the ability, and it is unpardonable in the master if he is not furnished with the means, of keeping as near to his hounds as he ought to be. I have known it the fashion to *ride at* more than one huntsman who had acquired such celebrity as a crack rider, that it soon became the only remnant of his reputation, all the requisites of his calling being merged in the comparatively superficial

accomplishment of "cutting down" all who come near him. A huntsman should have nerve and decision enough to act the part of leader upon every occasion. He is not to take liberties with his horse, or take unnecessary leaps in rivalry with others, whose presence may not be necessary, or their absence deplored, a moment after they have cried, Enough; but he must resolutely charge, without flinching, all practicable impediments. If men observe a huntsman hesitating at the most difficult and doubtful places, and willing to yield the precedence to others inclined to ascertain whether or not they are negotiable, they will soon take it for granted that he does not aspire to be first; that he does not mind having the shine taken out of him; and will make no scruple of getting between him and his hounds, at most critical moments. His personal determination should not be less than that for which our commanders, in both services, have been so conspicuous.* His eye

* Some of my old friends in the army will remember an often repeated story of the difference between "*go along*" and "*come along*." A fire-eating hero, in the late war, who was very fond of calling out "*Go along, my fine fellows, go along!*" had been more than once repulsed in a certain attack. The assault being taken up by another officer of a different mould, he, throwing himself first into the breach, cried, "*Come along, my lads, come along!*" setting an example of vigour and determination which ensured success, and afforded a fine practical illustration of the distinction between following and leading.—Another instance, of a similar nature, I cannot refrain from quoting, as related to me by a very distinguished naval officer, an eye-witness of the occurrence. During a gale of wind, which had lasted so long that all hands on board were dead beat, it became necessary to shorten sail, and Captain, now Sir T. Hardy, gave the order for hands aloft to reef topsails. Worn out by previous exertions, not a man was found who would obey; when the Captain, instantly doffing his hat, and unbuttoning the knees of the *shorts* worn in those days, himself ascended, and in the face of the roaring tempest, laid out along the yard, and ran out the earring. I hardly need



PL. IV

P. 159.

“But, faithful to the track, the unerring hounds,
With peals of echoing vengeance, close pursue.”

SOMERVILLE.

to country should prevent his getting pounded, for many a fox is lost, in the time consumed in effecting an exit from some particularly unaccommodating, perhaps impracticable, corner. But to return to the chase just commenced :—the huntsman is lying well with his hounds, his eye intent upon their every movement, taking everything as it comes in his line. We have cleared the few pastures interspersed in a plough country, like the green oasis of the desert, here and there just enough to make hounds more sensible of the transition to new sown arable. The pace is suddenly diminished; the sterns, which have been drooping low, are raised: the heads, which have been exalted, are lowered. They will be at check in a moment :—now do not seize this opportunity of making up your lee-way; do not repair the distance they have gained upon you by spurring up to them on their line. It is pretty theory, that of keeping your eye upon the leading hounds; but it is not every one who knows what hounds are leading, even if they are near enough to distinguish; for it is not always that the first couple are at all times leading, as, in the present instance, they have overshot the scent—they have thrown up—they are at fault. It has been twenty minutes' trimming pace; those leading hounds have flashed towards the pond in the corner, and, having laved their sides, and lapped, stand, like other youngsters, doubting how to recover the effect of having gone

add, that he was followed by as many of his crew as the duty could require.—The records of these daring deeds do not argue much against my assumption as to the pre-eminence of the “blood which will tell.”

too fast; the body is casting itself, and spreading round the field. The huntsman prudently leaves them to themselves. He well knows what has happened; but he allows them to make their own cast first forward, till they, of their own accord, turn, when he will incline then quietly back to where they had overran the scent two hundred yards behind. See how old Sprightly and Flourish are working on the line; they have almost puzzled it out amidst the horses, for it is there he went. One hundred and ninety-nine of the best fellows in England, of course utterly unconsciously, have come streaming on without a thought of pulling up, till they have fully attained their object of catching the hounds. They are charmed at being with them once more; are talking and laughing, attributing their ever having been further behind, at any moment, to an infernal start, and that confounded, quiet way, in which some persons get them out of covert to ensure a start for themselves, while they were merely discussing the yeomanry races on the up-wind side, and must have heard if there had been half horn and halloo enough away. Vowing never to leave them an instant again, they kept moving as hounds move, or are moved, and as it is hopeless attempting to pick out a scent amongst the steam of cavalry, to say nothing of their trampling over it, the huntsman lifts them in a semicircular direction towards the point to which the fox was leaning, and towards which the old hounds

have been inclining. Look up the hedge green,—“hoic ! hoic ! to Handmaid.” She has hit him off, with Ritual and Baneful ; she is running mute ; they are all at him again, as though he were just fresh found.

And now is the scurry for the second heat. Hold hard, gentlemen, one moment ; let them get together—let them settle again ; but this is too much to expect. When a burst has lasted beyond ten minutes, the field become very orderly and select ; they sober down wonderfully if the scent be really good, and make a merit of what is akin to necessity, in the room which they allow the hounds ; but with second wind, gained just in the beginning of a really good thing, with a fair chance of distancing the second flight, who have only just come up, without any hope of a pull, where is the use of crying, “Hold hard” ? “*Dum vivimus, vivamus,*” we must live with them while we can. Onward they push—some level with the leading hound, and the others clattering straight after them, in a manner which might drive them on to Highgate, where they not too steady to be capable of running far without a scent ; but there is no harm done as yet ; the majority of this first flight are as anxious to avoid mischief as the master or huntsman can be ; if it were hunting upon a cold scent they would be more manageable—allowance must be made for the intoxication of the burst. The hounds are flying up a hedge green, half a mile in length ; horses are again extended ; when, lo ! there is again a pause, not a check, it does not amount to that, nor does it last as long as

it takes to mention the circumstance ; but on that stile over which they have dashed, with half a dozen horses almost on their backs, a boy was seated when the fox approached it ; he, leaving the green, as soon as he saw the boy, instead of keeping straight on by the stile, jumped over to the right, still holding on a parallel course to that which he was steering. Hounds were pressed upon by horses, they had hardly room to turn, they have been ridden on beyond the line, but they are still scarcely twenty yards to the left of it ; and see, some couple and a half of tail hounds, which have never been off it, are carrying it on merrily, obliquely to the right. No whip is required to put them right ; they wheel, like pigeons, to the cry ; there is a general protest, on the part of the riders, against the folly just committed ; even those who consider hounds as borcs, always in the way, allow them to get a little farther out of it ; they are once more fixed to the business before them—they run the line of these as though they were tied to the fox, and they soon defy the speed of an Eclipse to interfere with them.

“ Now the fences made skirterers look blue,
 There was no time to crane or to creep,
 O'er the pastures like pigeons they flew,
 And the ground rode infernally deep.
 Oh ! my eyes, what a fall ! Are you hurt ?
 No, no, sir, I thank you, are you ?
 But who, to enjoy such a spirt,
 Would be grudging an odd rib or two.”

HUNTING SONG.

Thus they continue for ten minutes ; the succeeding

thirty are, if possible, still more enjoyable, though, perhaps, less in accordance with *ultra* notions of pace than the burst, being a combination of running and hunting with a holding scent. It is very, very rarely, in the provincials (excepting, of course, particular parts which may equal the best hunting countries), that a scent, however good, will serve equally over every variety of land, intersected by lanes, with here and there a village, or, at least, a colony, whence emanate a tide of such screams as afford the most incontestible proofs of a thorough non-acquiescence in the doctrines of Malthus. But there has been nothing like a check; through good or ill report, the fox has held his way, has kept his head straight; his line has laid through the centre of large fields, to the detriment of seeds, save where the surrounding hedge greens afford him preferable footing. By taking to these, he occasionally makes closer work for the gallant pack, which turn at undiminished speed, winding with his every shift, true as the needle to the Pole. Who, in the ardour of the chase, can stop to examine the nature of grain? "How the devil," said the cockney, "could I tell turnips, unless they had boiled mutton in the middle of them?" "Ware wheat" is all well enough at any other time, and no one, truly interested in the sport, will wantonly commit an injury; but now the farmers themselves are the first to charge pell mell "over wheat or what not." "Forward!" is the cry—forward is the ruling impulse. The noses of the hounds seem supe-

rior to all difficulties ; they do not dash and fling with the impetuosity evinced on breaking covert ; but what a head they carry—how they *press* ! they are evidently gaining rapidly on the sinking fox ; he has not improved his advantage. He has been more than once viewed by sportsmen during the run ; but one cheer, one half-suppressed “Tally-ho ! forward, yonder he goes,” has been the only token of recognition. There has been no attempt to cut him off, to lift the pack from scent to view, nor to lessen the distance between them, or in any way interfere with the sport. The huntsman will take every fair advantage of his fox ; but his business is not only to kill, but to *hunt* and kill him fairly. The idea of killing anything *fairly* or *unfairly*, may excite a smile ; may be unintelligible to those who view what we term sport, as only the variety of certain means to the same end ; but there is as much difference, in this respect, in hunting, as there is between the family shot of the pot-hunter, into the brown of the covey, and the skilful selection of the marksman in the objects of his unerring aim. It may be a pretty boast to talk of having killed ninety-nine out of a hundred foxes ; but the question is, *how* they are killed—blood is essential to the courage of the pack ; but the mischief done by unfair attempts to attain it, far outweighs any benefit to be derived from the acquisition. It is no very difficult matter to ride down a half-hunted fox, or even one that has never been pressed, if a man set about it as earnestly as I have seen some miscalled huntsmen. By the aid of a

few telegraphic signals, at different points, added to a knowledge of country ; by riding alongside leading hounds, lifting them on, without suffering them to feel a scent, leaving the body to follow as they best can, with the help of the whippers-in, and as many of the field as may consider their utility established by the acknowledged importance of their hunting whips ; by clapping round to the opposite side of a covert through which a fox has gone, in time to view him out, or perhaps meet him, the sanguinary object may be fully accomplished, and the scale of merit regulated by the show of noses on the kennel door. But can any animals, possessing one tithe of the sagacity of foxhounds, be expected to make an effort to do for themselves what is always done for them ?—" *Finis coronat opus,*"—and it is true, that there is no finish comparable to a good kill ; but the loss of a fox is infinitely preferable to his murder, which forms no part of " the Noble Science." Our fox, however, is worth a million of dead ones—forward again to the chase. He was viewed on yon hill amongst the haulm-cocks, toiling leisurely along, not as yet " with faltering steps and slow," but with a measured gait, as though husbanding his resources for the way before him. For one moment he paused, and sate, with ears erect, listening to ascertain the proximity of his foes ; one sidelong glance behind, and onward, like a guilty thing, he moves—

—————" Hah ! yet he flies,
Nor yields to black despair."

With redoubled energy he flies—he feels the press, the persevering stanchness, which galls more than the fleetness of the burst distressed him. He seems to know that every instant is of vital consequence.

We are now streaming on, across the fallows and old clover lay, in a manner which elicits exclamations of delight. “What care we for grass, if we can run thus over plough?” “What a beautiful thing!” exclaims another.—“*The* run of the season,” cries a third.—“They deserve him, any how,” says the huntsman, “for they are all doing their best for him.” “We will kill him, as sure as he has a brush,” shouts the master, in ecstasy of confidence; “only pray give them room, gentlemen; don’t crowd upon them, if they slacken.” “Luton Park is his point, depend on’t,” adds one who knows the line of every fox (and would be credited if he did not almost invariably predict the reverse of the one taken); “but, no, confound the ploughs! he must have been headed by those infernal plough-teams.” “What business have they to plough on hunting days?” exclaims young Rapid, with a blessing upon the causes of a check, just as he had got a lead, and had determined to keep it: sure enough, they have thrown up under the noses of the clod-breaking cattle. It is a moment of doubt, of no little confusion, for people will talk; the ploughboys can scarcely manage their excited Dobbins; the hounds are all sixes and sevens, and, amidst the general cry of “headed back to a certainty,” and the unrestrained opinion as to the exact direction in which each man thinks he has infal-

libly gone, the huntsman has enough to do to maintain his composure and presence of mind. Now for his head-piece ; now for a moment's thought. The field is ten or fifteen acres in extent ; the furrow, five hundred yards in length. Here are the plough-teams, *now* causing confusion enough ; but where were they when the fox was at this point ? A moment's consideration will tell that they must have been on the other side of the field, "Did you see the fox ?" "No, I never zeed un." "No, because he was barely within your sight." Three ploughs, and their accompaniments, sufficiently account for a check on the line ; but do not hold back at once ; do not too readily take for granted that he has headed or changed his point—cast forward in the line we were running beyond the ploughs—the hounds have made good their own cast, to the right, and are flashing to the left, striving in vain for a particle of the scent so lately enjoyed—so suddenly dissipated. "Put 'em on, Jem." Now quietly cast them o'er the brow. They have it :—

"Yoick forward again, and again,
Have at him, have at him, across the green plain."

The check has scarcely occupied two minutes, affording a moment of relief to the horses, and of merry interchange of "chaff," to the men. "What a proper purl Lord Would-be has had, with Mr. Hasty almost upon him ! Are they either of them hurt ?—Not at all. Would-be was shook ; but he was up again, and soon in

his place, like a well-bred one ;—Hasty has had another. What, two ! with Nonpareil ? his best horse—ay—but he pumped all the puff out of him, racing with Charley, and riding at Burnam, in the first ten minutes. He will be up directly on his second horse, Marvellous ; would he were here now, to see this hit ;” and here he is, answering our “ would he were present,” like Banquo’s ghost, all over blood ; chuckling with delight, that this check has let him in for the rest of the fun. Some others will be indebted to the ploughs for their *share*. Oh ! oh ! such a pun deserves to be smothered in the next ditch ; but there is no time for a laugh, if we could get one up for it ; for there they go again, as if the devil was in ’em. Don’t cross me ; I’m for the stile, and my horse rushes so, I can’t hold him.—Ha ! ha ! he don’t want much holding now, but fire away, there’s lots of room at the fence ; only you can’t quite see what’s on the other side, where I mean to be in a moment, please the Picts and old Pantaloon. Yoi ! over we go ; all on the best horses that ever were crossed ; none of them in the least distressed ; pity that they should some of them differ in their own view of the case. Good heavens ! what a pace ! no fox can stand this ten minutes longer ; die he must, if he stays above ground :—he has lately passed those sheep, see how they remain all huddled in the corner. Into the park, by Jove. Yoi ! over the palings ; ride, Jem, and pull one down, to let some of them through, if you can ; they are topping them by sections, and will be all over without help. Some two

or three horses get over with a scramble ; but there is a lodge, not a hundred yards below : now look at 'em, all through the herd of deer ; confound your halloos ; hold your tongues, for heaven's sake, hold your tongues ; “they have seen him from the house.” “Well, never mind.” I never want to see him again, or have him seen till he is in hand. If he is not headed, or lies down in one of the clumps, so that he can dodge back, and protract the finish ; they will run into him handsomely, to a moral certainty ; no horses will be too near them—just now across the grass. Look at the old hounds, how they press forward for the lead ; look at their bristles, how they are pointed ; they are running for him ; he will not face the country over the opposite paling ; he threads the belt alongside : hark, what a crash is echoed by the fir-trees ; not a hound is mute ; those notes, shriller than the piercing octave of the fife, bespeak the breathless energy of the leading hounds ; they are running him in view. He makes one last effort, exerts the remnant of his strength in speed, and, for a moment seems to gain upon the pack ;—but no, his race is run ; he doubles and avoids the leading couples as they fling at him ; misses their jaws, and breaks, in open view, across the plain, with dozens frantic for his blood ; in a moment they are up with him—another turn ; in the next instant he is met—he is surrounded ; it is all up with him.—Whoo-whoop ! he dies. Now gently, sir, gently ; do not be in too great haste to rescue his carcass ; let them kill him, and then let all who are coming up have

a chance of doing honour to, and having a share in, his obsequies. Not all the *men*; they will be here soon enough, as many as can come at all, and we are not in the habit of capping for field money; but let every hound have a full view of the object of his pursuit. Let the huntsman, or any of the officials who chance to be first at the death, as soon as the fox is killed, place his foot firmly on his body, and with his voice, and the lash of his whip, save him from being broken up: there let him lie upon the ground, or throw him across the branch of some adjacent tree, while the whipper-in is cutting off his mask, brush, and pads. If the kill take place in a wheat-field, pleasure-ground, or on any spot likely to suffer from the influx of spectators, and trampling of horses, always remove the ceremony to the fittest place convenient. After a sharp, short, and decisive thing, in a muggy warm day, it is lucky if a pond be contiguous; the hounds will do greater justice to the banquet after freely lapping, and it does not look well to be long in breaking up a fox. A pack that have finished the run properly, generally make clean work of the whole affair. Do not keep them too long tantalized. There is a method, even in this part of the day's business. I have seen them in Ireland run into their fox, and finish him at once, as they would have done a rabbit they had pounced upon, without any one offering to dismount, even to ascertain the age or sex of the animal; but this is a miserable finale; the hounds which have fought hardest through the day, may have the least share in,



Pl. V.

" 'Tis triumph all, and joy."

SOMERVILLE.

or be ignorant of, the conquest. On the other hand, if there be too much of funeral parade, or, rather, of triumph of victory, hounds may get weary of excitement, and indifferent to the prize. The loud baying of an anxious circle, restrained only by discipline from falling upon and rending him to atoms; the flourish of whips, the sounding of horns, the screams of the huntsman, as he rears above his head the mangled remnant of their lawful spoil, all form a scene which must be witnessed to be understood and appreciated. With a Tally-ho—Tally-ho—Tally——ho! he is thrown into the midst of their gaping jaws, and torn asunder well-nigh ere he reaches earth. “Hey! worry, worry; hey! tear him;” and in one minute nothing is left of him, but some tougher morsel, which, borne about by some powerful and wary hounds, affords matter of contention and fierce debate. This is of short duration; men turn towards each other with looks and sentiments of satisfaction; all unite in praise of the pack, admitting that they have well found, well hunted, and well killed the fox of this day; hoping that they may, and feeling sure that they will, do as well with the next.

“Now the stragglers come in, one by one,
 Holla! where, my dear fellow, were you?
 Bad luck, in the midst of the run,
 My poor little mare threw her shoe.
 But where was that gemman in pink,
 Who swore at his tail we should look,
 Not in the next parish, I think,
 For he never got over the brook.”

HUNTING SONG.

This attempt at the description of a run, is intended

to convey an idea of the average sport which may be obtained with a good pack of hounds in a provincial country, straight, from nine to twelve miles in distance ; time, from fifty-five minutes to an hour and ten minutes, supposing the scene of action to differ as widely as possible from the metropolitan districts. Had it been laid in the most favourable parts, we must have given the hounds credit for completely beating off all but a very chosen few, in the burst ; and also for having had time to make their own cast, should they overrun or lose the scent by casualty—before the huntsman could come up to interfere with them. I am supposing, of course, a really good scent, when hounds will beat the best horse that ever was foaled. In this case, the huntsman (having been, if he has kept his proper place, as forward as any one could be, if not quite first) will be able to see how far they carry the scent ; and, in rendering his assistance, will not be tied down to precisely the same line of conduct which he was bound to pursue over a country where patience is his best auxiliary. There hounds may be working on the line, over soil which will not carry a scent, serving for a continuation of the pace which they have gone over the intervening patches of grass and hedge greens ; it would be the height of folly to lift them as often as they come to stooping ; *there* the whole chase consists in hunting and running by turns, varying according to the luck of the fox's line ; but, in the deeper vale, such as that between Bramingham and Woburn, Hexton and Pullox Hill, Wrest Park, or any

of the line of country bounding Hertfordshire on the north, there are not the same reasons to account for the sudden loss of a good scent. A huntsman must be more alive to contingencies, and although there, I would far rather inculcate the principle of leaving them alone, than that of meddling with them too much; he must be quicker in resolve, and may venture more in the part which he has himself to play. Hounds may throw up entirely upon fallow, or new-sown land; they may not run a yard; but when gently lifted over it, they set-to again, without the recurrence of another such mischance, till they are on better terms with their fox; but if they throw up in the middle of a large grass field, when they have been running breast high, unless some large flock of sheep, or herd of cattle, have foiled the ground, it can very rarely happen that the fox is forward; he cannot have vanished into air; if his line is there, and they cannot own it, they cannot run him anywhere; he is irrecoverably gone; there is no reason to suppose that a burning scent has in a moment changed to no scent whatever; although wonderful changes do occur, in this essential, within very short space of time: he must have turned so short, right or left, that the whole body have completely overrun him. This is more probable when they are carrying a perfect head, than if, on a more moderate scent, some stragglers had been dwelling independently on the line; and hounds, on such occasions, appear more at a nonplus—more in consternation at their failure. The huntsman

may make a brisk swinging cast, down-wind, unless the more likely points of country for a fox to make, present an obvious reason for the reverse. If he casts quickly, in a half circle forward, and completes the whole round, it is a hundred to one against hounds crossing the line without acknowledging it, if they are not too much hurried ; presuming that there is not any road, or great variety of ground, creating the difficulties to which we have supposed them liable in the upper country, where they might cross the line a dozen times ineffectually. It saves much time, where every moment is an object, if the pack can be divided ; one half casting in a contrary direction, with the master, or first whip, and meeting the huntsman to the rear, if neither should have succeeded in hitting him forward : but always make the first cast sufficiently forward ; there is plenty of time to hold back, when it is certain that the fox has not held on, when fairly committed to a country. This observation does not, of course, apply to a check, up-wind, in the first ten minutes, or to the reasonable supposition, that the fox has been headed ; but if you cast back, in the first instance (according to a rule in beagling after a hare), should you fail, you are too late to make good anything forward, without lifting them, at a hand gallop, back again, in a manner conveying to the whole field the knowledge of your admission of a positive error. Should you then hit him forward, you will yourself feel, and have your pains rewarded by hearing, that if this had been done at once, it would have made all the dif-

ference to the run; whereas, if you get upon him ever so late, should he have headed back, no one can blame you for any time lost; nor is it, indeed, of the same consequence; as he generally makes his point back whence he came, or is viewed by dozens of people, when he would have been unseen by any one, had he not returned. Moreover, when a fox does head completely back, the cream of the thing is broken: men do not ride with the same zest, the last may be first, and *vice versa*; the sharpness, the edge of the affair, is blunted; and although you may have very good sport, and kill in a way satisfactory enough to a master of hounds—“*surgit amari aliquid*”—in the description even of a good ring, it is a sort of reflection upon the business, and men forgive themselves more easily for missing any part of it. If, on the contrary, the fox is reported to have been viewed, holding on his course, as straight as could have been desired, there will be no end to the talk of the wonders which might have been enacted; nor can you forgive yourself, or even be forgiven, for doubting the bravery and stoutness of the fox. You have no right to suppose a fox beaten, unless the pace, and the time you have been running him, warrant the conclusion. If you fancy that he has taken refuge under ground, or in some outhouse, or rick yard, it will be time enough to search, and determine this point, after you have ascertained that he is not still showing his heels to you. He may have gone to the very mouth of a drain, may have passed under a barn, over a house,

to which points the hounds will run, and no further; but it does not absolutely follow that he is not progressing; he may not have taken sanctuary, you may have a whipper-in to see that he does not steal away, but still you should make a cast all round the premises before commencing a search. Hounds will bay, as a matter of course, at a drain, especially if they are in the habit of running to ground, and the fox has tried it; but many a recovery has ultimately been made forward, after a most useless waste of time and labour, in the upturning of faggots, routing the gardens, poking under the laurels, &c., &c., every one swearing he can be nowhere else but there, because they remember a similar finish to some particular run; probably, under totally different circumstances. It is laying a flattering unction to one's soul to account for a fox in any way, but that of being beaten by him, and we readily snatch at the idea of having done the next thing to killing; but a huntsman must not only avoid deception towards others, he must guard against deceiving himself. I knew an instance last year, where the master and huntsman were at issue, as to the fact of a fox having gone to ground. The former, with not more than six couples, recovered and killed him, some way beyond the spot where the latter, with the majority of the field, were pottering at a rabbit-hole;—the master, of course, having waived absolute opinion on the subject, leaving the huntsman to his discretion; indulging, at the same time, the exercise of his own. If, by the evidence of a terrier, in addition to that of the

hounds, there is no doubt of having run to ground, and you have decided upon digging, the sooner operations are commenced the better; if you want blood, your hounds are entitled to him. If you think the earth too strong, it is best to move off at once, as recommended by Mr. Smith, leaving some one in pay to watch him out; as is, I believe, invariably the custom. When he has been viewed safely out, it is desirable to do away, if possible, with such a retreat: foxes seldom betake themselves to one with which they were previously unacquainted. It is astonishing how exactly generations will tread in the steps of their forefathers. A receptacle of this kind, which has baulked you once, will as surely prove a future source of annoyance. This, with the exception of main earths, which may occasionally be neglected, can generally be provided for. We have in the vale of Hexton, and Shillington, many very large drains in the chalky lands, extending the whole length of the field, for the purpose of carrying off the torrents from the hills, which otherwise might alluviate the soil. Mr. Smith, in his glossary, calls a drain "Under ground, where foxes often run to." The word has much the same acceptation in our country; and a terrible nuisance it has occasionally proved, marring the promise of the finest runs, shortly after a fox has betaken himself to the bottoms. It is next to impossible to dig out, unless a corps of sappers and miners were on the spot to excavate the land from one extremity to the other. These drains should each

be faced with an iron grating ; or, should this be considered too troublesome or expensive, they may, at least, be guarded against the ingress of anything approaching to the size of a fox, by stakes driven perpendicularly in front of the entrance. To this proceeding it is not likely that the proprietor will raise any tenable objection.

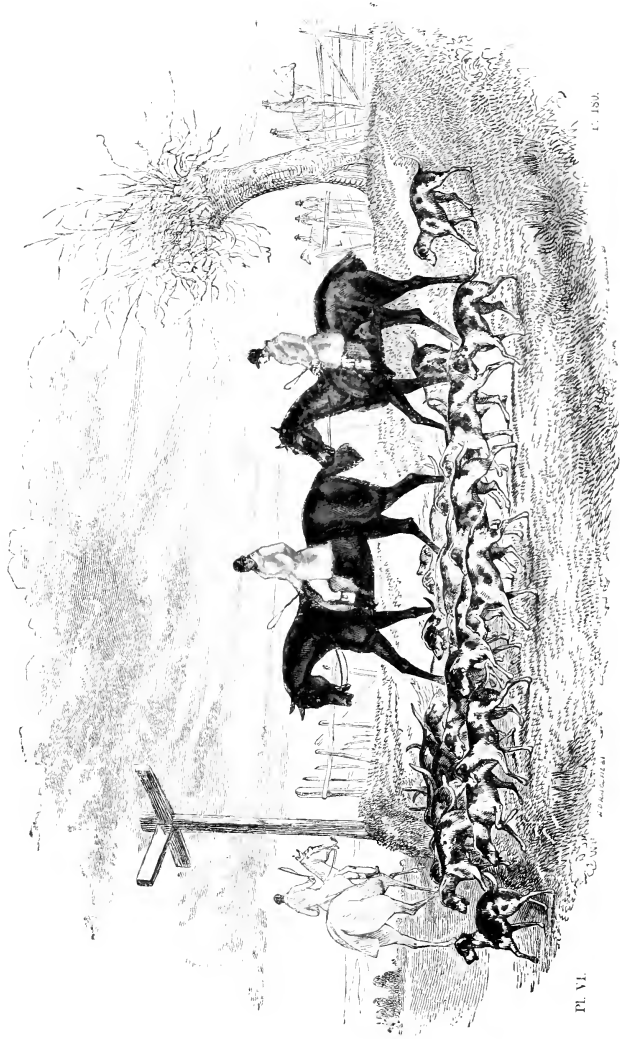
Having in this chapter endeavoured to render an account of one fox, I shall not draw for a second ; preferring to risk the imputation of being slow, of giving a short day, and going home too early. It never was my misfortune to witness a sham draw, for the sake of spinning out the day, with no desire to find ; nor can I conceive how any man can hunt twice with any establishment, liable to the suspicion of such a practice, which is as unsportsmanlike as prejudicial to hounds, and the general interests of the concern. There are some people, it is true, who think it right to make out the day, till dark ;* who cannot trust themselves to their own resources, should their work be over long before their dinner-time, and who would think it a sin to have returned to kennel by two or three o'clock, whatever may have been the sport since throwing off at eleven. Some people, by the same rule, will consider a ball but ill kept up should dancing cease before daylight ;

* I was talking, not long since, to a very clever huntsman—one as keen as any of his fellows in enjoyment of the sport—on the subject of drawing for a second fox, after a good run and satisfactory kill. “That is,” said he, “just what I call *putting the beggar over the gentleman.*” The phrase struck me as having a degree of force fully atoning for any want of elegance in expression.

others will, regardless of temperature, keep to certain days for the dispensing with, or commencement of, the enjoyment of a fire; but I never yet could understand the merit of being regulated by anything but natural inclination, upon rational principles, in these particulars. If all are merry, and none weary, or wishing to be gone, why mind the clock? I can see no reason for curtailing the pleasures of the dance, though they should reach the meridian of the following day; nor, by the same token, should it be protracted one instant for the sake of being, what is called, kept up, though it had not endured an hour. The thermometer is a better guide than the almanac, as to fire and clothing; you may be lounging *al fresco* at Christmas, and stirring up the sea-coal at midsummer. There is no rule for these things; and when hounds have wound up their fox properly, in a run exceeding forty minutes, unless they are very short of work indeed, under any circumstances, I question the propriety of drawing again. It is far better to take them home satisfied, to leave off well, flushed with success; or you may undo all that has been done. With regard to short days, I hold it far more advisable, on a day which has proved so decidedly adverse as to preclude all chance of sport, to retire at once, appointing an extra day in the same week, than to persevere without hope of any amendment in weather or scent, for want of which, hounds are getting every moment more disgusted. On the other hand, should the day be favourable, I

would draw as long as light lasted, rather than miss a chance of sport, should it not have been met with as early as is desirable.

Let our huntsman now seek home, "with all his blushing honours thick upon him." He has counted his hounds ; if any are missing, which the sound of the horn has not reclaimed, the second whipper-in must find them ; but they are all right, and have returned to their kennel, not jaded, drooping, and spiritless. Steadily as they have followed at the horses' heels, they have that condition which would have enabled them, had they been required, to perform exactly as well with an afternoon fox, as they have done with the hero of this morning ; not having been cowed, or unnecessarily overworked, they acquire those lasting powers of endurance which will enable them to go through the longest day, and beat the stoutest fox that ever wore a brush. Mr. Smith, more than once, asserts his opinion, that "there are foxes which, when fit to go, can beat any hounds." This may be correct ; but, I think, some few huntsmen of my acquaintance will share my desire to meet with them—to let the mettle of each be fairly tried on a good scenting day. I have seen many packs of hounds which have not been a match for any good fox, when they have left their kennel in the morning, much less after an hour's work in covert. You may bring out twenty couples of well-bred, well-shaped, and, perhaps, if in good condition, good foxhounds : but they may be no more like a pack of foxhounds than Plenipo



PL. VI.

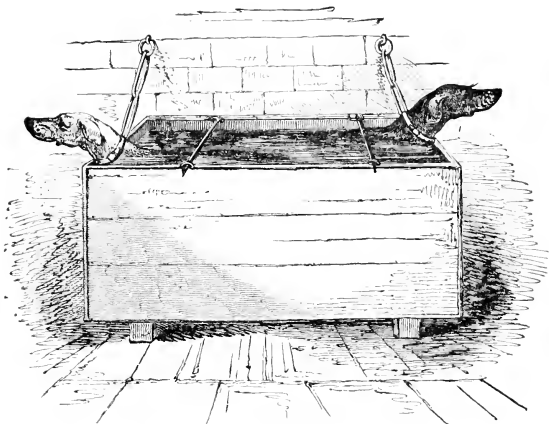
Tempus adire domum.

Hor.

L. 182.

was to a race-horse, when he started for the St. Leger —because they are not fit to go. The condition of hounds is everything ; the art of attaining it is no less difficult than that of training a horse. You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, nor can you, by the best condition, make bad hounds essentially better ; but, without the best condition, good hounds may be essentially bad, though their want of success will be attributed to any but the real and prevailing cause ; many bring out hounds in bad order, simply because they do not know how to get them into better ; others, from ill-judged economy, and want of proper method in the internal regulation of the kennel department. Some fail for want of work, others from the excess of it. In short, there is no end to the arguments bearing upon the state of the *matériel* upon which all sport depends ; but, as it may be incorrect to sum up a chapter devoted to a run, with an essay upon the condition which we supposed to be perfect at its commencement, we will leave the pack at their entrance to the kennel, and hereafter consider what the huntsman and his people have to do upon their return.





[Hounds in Bath.]

CHAPTER X.

“De rebus cunctis et quibusdam aliis.”

System of Kennel—Baths—Feeding—Warmth—Diet—Ventilation—Oatmeal—Vegetables—Mangel-wurzel—Sago—Biscuit—Milk—Breeding—Walks—Sires and Dams—Generative Economy—Choice of Whelps—Naming—Rounding—Dividing Pack—Drafting—Cub-hunting—Going out in the Evening, an Old Practice—Entering Young Hounds—Killing Cubs—General Responsibility of Masters of Hounds.

ON approaching within earshot of the kennel, “the huntsman winds his horn,” to sound the note of preparation. The signal is answered by the clamour of the pack within; the division destined for the next day’s hunting, which have been fed in the morning, and have not long returned from an airing, in charge of the feeder and helpers. Buckets of gruel are now trans-

ferred from the saddle-room cauldron, and all made ready in the stable department for the reception of, and immediate attendance upon, the horses; while the feeder, with his ponderous ladle, is stirring up the broth, and busily providing for the ravenous appetites to which he has to administer. It was the invariable custom of the illustrious Meynell, to see himself to the feeding of the hounds, nor leave the kennel till all were comfortably reposing on their beds of clean wheat straw. This practice has been followed up by the Duke of Cleveland, and other votaries of the science, who, by their personal attention to the system, have set most laudable examples for imitation; but it was with Mr. Meynell that the "system of kennel" originated; and this attention on his part is worthy of all admiration, considering that, in his day, it was much oftener after dark than with daylight that he returned from a chase of extent unknown in these days; very frequently killing a Quorn fox in the neighbourhood of Belvoir Castle—a run which would now be considered a most extraordinary occurrence—foxes being, as I understand, unacquainted with the line. Whether, however, it was by the last rays of the setting sun, or by "the lanthorn dimly burning," in wet or drought, heat or cold, he did not rejoin the gay circle which enjoyed his hospitality, till, in the kennel, all was settled to his heart's content. Wherever the master has the opportunity of doing likewise no little benefit must result from the practice, even if it be unfair to suppose any actual disadvantage

arising from its omission. It must serve to keep up a thorough acquaintance with his hounds, and with the whole practical part of his system, the theory of which should emanate from himself; but all this is not to be recommended as a matter of duty, and performed as a penance; it must depend entirely upon a man's motives for keeping hounds, his interest in all that concerns them, and his degree of enjoyment in the office. If "all beauty goes in at the mouth," so, may it be said, does all power. The feeding of hounds, as regards their condition, is one of the most essential proofs of a huntsman's skill in kennel. To preserve that even state of condition throughout the pack, so desirable, he must be well acquainted with the appetite of every hound. While some will feed with a voracity not exceeded by animal kind, others will require enticing to their food. Mr. Meynell found the use of dry unboiled oatmeal succeed better than any other plan he had tried, with delicate hounds. He found that when once induced to take to it, they would eat it greedily, and that it was far more heartening than any other kind of aliment. Delicate hounds may generally be tempted with a little additional flesh, and with the thickest and best of the trough; but they require to be watched—must not be fed all at once, but allowed to decline or return to their food according to inclination. As soon as the pack is in kennel, on returning from hunting, previously to being fed, every hound should be immersed in a warm bath of pot liquor; the temperature should be kept up

by continual supplies from the boiling-house. One or two large tubs will serve for the purpose. The whippers-in, provided with muzzles for such as are refractory, should plunge them in up to their necks, and detain them at least a minute or two, while the huntsman is summoning to the feeding-trough such as have undergone the process of ablution. The advantage of pot liquor over hot water, is, that it induces them to lick themselves, and each other, all over; and the healing properties of a dog's tongue are far superior to any other application, for wounds and sores. The relaxation of the warm bath, and the steaming evaporation which proceeds from their bodies, prevent stiffness, relieve pain from blows, and produce a state of enjoyable refreshment. Some hounds appear so to relish the proceeding that they wait with apparent anxiety for their turn. Two large scrubbing-brushes may be well employed at the same time, in cleansing them from the accumulated mud and dirt, as it is not till they are thoroughly clean that cuts, bruises, wounds, thorns, &c., &c., can be properly attended to. Friar's balsam is useful enough as a healing application to a green wound, which it may be necessary to bind up; but, for all cuts or strains of more than ordinary severity, the sovereign remedy, hot water, will be found to answer, beyond all others, in allaying inflammation; not only preventing the increase of evil, but, in many instances, serving in itself for a cure. In mentioning its wonderful effect upon lameness in horses, I should have added the fact, that if broken knees are

diligently fomented till a whitish film, or *slough*,* supervenes, it is rarely that they are blemished. For hounds shaken in the shoulders, or otherwise injured in work, there is nothing to equal a warm bath on the simple plan which I give at the head of this chapter, not as an original invention, or as being very uncommon; but because, in my visits to different kennels this summer, I have found none so provided. It consists of a wooden contrivance, in shape such as represented in the preceding sketch, in breadth capable of admitting a couple of hounds abreast, with two slight movable bars of iron crossing the top, to prevent an exit or change of position. Hounds may stand thus, on the day after hunting, or, if necessary, before their rest on their return, for any given time; and unless too suddenly exposed improperly to cold air, are not more liable afterwards to cold or rheumatism. It is absurd to suppose that hounds will be more hardy, and less liable to the effects of bad weather, if kept cold in their kennel. The warmer and more comfortable they are kept within doors, the better can they battle with the elements without. It is, beyond doubt, a great principle freely to admit

“The nitrous air and purifying breeze,”

whether in a kennel or a palace; but there are proper times for such a circulation, in both. We open the

* “Slough—The part that separates from a foul sore.”—JOHNSON.
“At the next dressing, I found a *slough* come away with the dressings, which was the sordes.”—WISEMAN.

windows and doors of our chambers, but not during the period of their occupation, in the hunting season ; nor should the zephyrs of the northern blast be playing uncontrolled over the slumbering bodies of hounds, worn out with the toil and heat of chase. They huddle all together on their litter, courting, by every means in their power, the warmth by which all nature is revived and nourished. No kennel is perfect without the means of warm ventilation, which may easily be supplied by flues, where the copper of the boiling-house is contiguous, as it generally is, to the lodging-houses. As soon as the hounds emerge reeking from their baths, they should be fed. Some have been of opinion, that they should first be made comfortable on their beds ; but I am inclined to think, that the sooner they are supplied with the support which exhaustion from fatigue so much demands, the better ; they are then turned, for a brief space, into their airing yard, and then consigned to their dormitory for the night, to be disturbed only by once being driven off their beds to stretch themselves. Their food, though warm, should not be hot, or it may have a prejudicial effect upon their noses ; as it is reasonable to suppose that the delicate sense of smell may be affected by the act of constantly inhaling the steaming fumes, so grateful when in less immediate contact with their olfactory nerves. The idea of barleymeal, or, indeed, of any substitute for the best old oatmeal that can be procured at any price, has long been exploded in kennels of any pretension ; nor will

greaves, or any other nastiness, be found admissible in place of good horse or cow-flesh. Good old meal, such as may be bought at Cork, at an average of £15 per ton, will boil into a consistency very much resembling good rice pudding. This, broken up and thinned with broth, to which is added flesh which has been boiled to shreds, in quantities varying, of course, with the system of respective kennels, and the exigencies of the pack at the time being, forms the best and most nutritious diet for hounds in work which has yet been discovered. During summer months, some variety, and divers experiments, may be made with impunity; but, in the season, it is not safe materially to alter the regimen which experience has proved to answer. Wheat flour may be sparingly mixed with oatmeal, as a measure of economy, being generally cheaper; but wheat, although furnishing the "staff of life" for man, will not afford the nutriment to hounds which they derive from the best old oatmeal. The better it is in quality, the more it increases in boiling, and the farther it goes. The best time for laying in a stock is a little before harvest, when none but old meal can be had in the market. Instead of being thrown loose, as is frequently the case, like a heap of ashes in a dust-hole, it should be packed in large bins, secured, by tin or iron bindings, from attacks of rats and mice, and trodden down into a solid mass, in which its qualities will be preserved during the whole of its consumption. If oat meal could be managed like that of wheat, barley, or other grain, there would be

little difficulty in obtaining it in perfection; but, as particular grinding stones are necessary, in the first instance, and the meal has then to be submitted to a delicate process of kiln-drying, there are few places in England to be depended upon for a supply. The Scotch is said to be excellent; and I can speak, not only from my own experience of the last seven years, but from the report of at least a dozen different kennels, as to the merits of the Irish. The great difference which diet will effect, in the appearance and condition of hounds, renders this point worthy of consideration. The Roman gladiators imagined themselves injured by the slightest deviation, in one meal, from the regimen prescribed; feeders of fighting cocks are no less strict in their notions of the qualities of food; and let any man, who fancies that a good bellyful of victuals is all that can be needed for hounds, try, for one fortnight, the effect of a change from oatmeal to barleymeal of the best kind, or from good oatmeal to inferior; he will need no further illustration of the proverb, that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," as far as can be judged by effects, which, in dumb animals, are the only attestations of its excellence. When you see that, in addition to the fulness of muscle, and general appearance of health and condition in a hound,

" His *glossy* skin,
In lights or shades by Nature's pencil drawn,
Reflects the various tints—"

you may judge that there is nothing amiss in the home

department; but, if you see him scratching a staring coat which is nearly threadbare, if not quite out at elbows, eagerly dashing, on his way to covert, at every pool to take a drink, which, by hounds of a better regulated *ménage*, would be disclaimed at such an hour of the morning, rely upon it, that

“There’s something rotten in the state of Denmark.”

Most huntsmen prefer feeding hounds precisely the same all the year round, to making any change, varying only the quantity; but, during the heat of summer, less of flesh and more of vegetable diet must tend to cool the blood. Potatoes, and any greens coming under the denomination of garden stuff, may be boiled with the meal; but potatoes are less to be recommended, as being the most difficult of digestion. They have been used to great extent in some kennels, and would prove a great saving of meal, could they be pronounced unobjectionable. Cabbage and lettuce may act as alteratives; but the best of all vegetable matter of that kind which I ever tried, was mangel-wurzel. This root will boil down to a thick jelly, and form a very agreeable and wholesome addition to the broth. I have no doubt that it would answer as well also for hounds in work. By an application from a most respectable mealman, Mr. Crampern, of Jermyn Street, I was induced to make a trial of sago, which he imagined, and I believe still considers, a most important discovery as an article of food for hounds. Its cheapness would be a great recom-

mentation ; but, instead of the nutritious properties we expected to find in the jelly which it will produce, it disagreed with hounds, and the experiment proved altogether a failure. From the said Mr. Crampert, to whom I was recommended by Mr. H. Combe, I have had great quantities of superior Dantzic biscuit, for summer use ; not as being less expensive than oatmeal, for the price is about the same, but for the sake of variety, and some saving in the stock of old meal. Well soaked in water, and then broken up with equal quantities of meal, it will be found highly useful, even to the end of cub-hunting. Milk is an invaluable article of kennel consumption, and one or two cows are greatly advantageous, if not necessary, to the establishment. In the spring, when there are dozens of litters of puppies at the same time,—all of which should be well kept, indeed forced, like young foals, with abundant sustenance,—milk will avail, when nothing else would serve the purpose. No bitch should be allowed to suckle more than four puppies. If you are strong in numbers, and can afford to lose the services of two for one of bitches whelping early, it is easy so to arrange as to have wet-nurses ready for the progeny of those which you are most anxious to rear ; and this plan is far preferable to the attempt of bringing up by hand, or introducing mongrels as foster-mothers. In selecting walks, it is certainly a great point to get puppies out, where they will be well fed ; but it is of still greater consequence to ensure their having liberty. What cruel instances occur, of hounds coming in from

walk, with feet like the brood of ducks with which they had been inclined to gambol, and therefore tied up, or, at least, confined in some narrow space, to keep them out of mischief. This confinement is utterly ruinous to their shape; by bearing perpetually on the foot, it becomes elongated; legs, which would have been faultless, grow crooked; and the whole symmetry of a fine young hound is destroyed by contraction of the scope which he requires for the development of his daily increasing faculties. Mr. Meynell was so particular with regard to walks, that he would not hesitate to send his young hounds some hundred miles from Quorn, and quarter several couples upon friends in Sussex, or in any other counties where they would be sure of meeting with the treatment upon which their maturity depended. It is a fortunate circumstance in any country, where gentlemen are disposed to receive such *protégés* at their seats. The disadvantages of a walk in a town, are more than proportionate to the advantage of making them familiar with all those objects of which hounds, on first entering upon the world, are apt to be shy. By being exercised in couples, after their return to kennel, along the public roads and through streets, they will soon conquer any fear of carriages, droves, &c., and lose altogether that *mauvaise honte* which is a defect rather than an appertainment of their nature. Unless your reliance is upon drafts from other kennels, nothing is more essential to having a good pack of hounds, than a proper care of the whelps, and the parents from which they

are bred. The bitches should be carefully chosen, and should not only be such as are most distinguished in the field, but such as are strongest and best proportioned, with large ribs and flanks. Never breed from a faulty hound, be his performance ever so good; nor from the best shaped hound, addicted to any incorrigible propensities, which are hereditary. The best time for coupling hounds is in January or February, and not later than March; they will then litter in a good time in spring;—if bitches litter in winter, it is very difficult to bring up the whelps, the cold being adverse to their thriving and well doing. In selecting dogs to breed from, the ancient and generally received opinion was, that the descendants of an old dog would prove dull and heavy. I know not whether this is borne out by fact, as I have seen most promising stock of seven-year-old stallions; but it is, perhaps, better that the sires should not be above five years old. It is affirmed by many who profess to have experience in generative economy, that in any number of successive litters bred from one bitch, there will be at least one puppy bearing some resemblance to the sire of her first. If this be true, how careful should we be in the choice of the dogs by which we seek to perpetuate the excellences of our best bitches; and there is no room to doubt the credibility of such theory, when we know that dumb-madness, and many other evils, will descend through generations. The strongest proof, however, which I can call to mind, in support of the opinion that the

female, when once, is for ever impregnated with a likeness of whatever may have “stamped an image of himself,” is the case of the cross between a quagga, or zebra, and a mare. The first produce was exactly what might have been expected, a striped kind of mule. The experiment was not repeated ; but the mare was, in the next season, put to a well-bred horse. I am stating nothing beyond a fact with which I am well acquainted, in saying that this next, and all succeeding foals by different horses, were all, more or less, affected by the stripes of the quagga. Here was no fancied peculiarity—no indistinct resemblance of action or manner, but ocular demonstration of certain plain and indelible signs, of stripes peculiar to one animal, affording incontestible evidence of his blood. Were it not foreign to our purpose to pursue the subject, I could adduce some curiously interesting accounts of similar *traits*, beyond the canine species. It is, perhaps, very fortunate that such indisputable marks as the spots of a leopard, or the stripes of a zebra, are not more common to animal kind, whereby the revelation of some genealogical novelties might be apprehended. The first litter of puppies which a bitch brings, are supposed to be inferior to her second or third ; but there is no rule for this. As soon as she has littered, those whelps intended to be kept should be immediately selected, and the rest put out of the way (or to wet-nurse, if desirable to preserve them all). There is some difficulty in choosing at such a time ; the general opinion is in favour of the lightest, that they will grow up the

best. It was an old custom to take all the whelps away, having determined what number to keep, and settle the choice on those which the bitch carried first back to the place where she had littered. Another plan was to take those which were last pupped ; but all this must be matter of chance. As soon as they can see, they should have milk given them to lap ; and, at two months old, they should be weaned, keeping them wholly from the bitch. At three months old, they are fit to go to walk ; and, at ten months old, they should return, to commence their education in the kennel. If they are named before going to walk, it saves trouble on their return, and prevents their adoption of any ridiculous names, which the fanciful, rather than sporting taste of their guardians, may accord to them. The operation of rounding their ears should be performed early in the spring, that they may be thoroughly healed before being subjected to the annoyance of heat or flies. After a short period of exercise, like an awkward squad of recruits by themselves, they will be fit to join the main body, and very shortly, after the end of hunting, should accompany the pack in couples. By the time for entering them, they should be as handy as old hounds in obedience ; this can only be effected by constantly practising them abroad, accustoming them to horses, to the voice of the huntsman, and gradually initiating them in the discipline essential to steadiness, which tempers their gaiety, without destroying the force of their animal spirits. Whether the pack is divided into dogs and bitches, separate, or not,

must depend upon the caprice of their owner. A mixed pack is now generally supposed to answer best. The largest of each may be sized, so as to form two complete packs, suitable to all parts of the country. Dogs are apt to be less flashy, and will add to the steadiness of the bitches, and the lively little ladies will contribute to the dash of the dogs. Such division of the young hounds need not, at all events, be made before the commencement of regular hunting. But we have, as yet, only just got all the young hounds for the year's entry into kennel. The master has now to determine which are to be put forward, and make his first draft. If he can afford to be fastidious, there will, in all probability, be not more than one hound out of every five submitted to inspection, on coming in from walk, that he will wish to put forward, even supposing the breeding to have been successful. The distemper will make sad havoc with the litters. A huntsman should attend to any that are within his reach; but the majority must take their chance. No specific has yet been discovered, and the treatment must be adapted to the different stages of the disorder. Vaccination was, at one time, pronounced infallible, and was tried, I believe, with great success, one year, by Sir John Cope; but after-experiments served only to prove its fallacy. Like other epidemics, its ravages are more generally felt in some seasons than in others. In one spring, out of thirty-five couples of puppies sent to walk, I had only thirteen returned to kennel, and this fatality was almost universal. In

the next, the loss was altogether as trifling. The most promising young hounds, and the strongest (much as depends upon strength of constitution), will not thoroughly recover the effects of distemper, if subjected to its most virulent attack, without the greatest care. Younger, that is, late or backward hounds, which have got over it, under better circumstances, will be more precocious. If ten couples are required for the entry, at least sixteen couples may be put forward after the first draft. It will then be good luck if ten couples stand the test. Although the average may not exceed one in five, certainly not more than one in four, it not unfrequently occurs, that one whole litter may have claims to the highest consideration.* Upon the real merits of an entry, it is, of course, impossible, or, at least, premature, to pass any opinion beyond that which can be determined by the eye, with regard to appearance, till their qualifications have been fairly submitted to the ordeal of

CUB-HUNTING.

Some countries have the advantage of great tracts of woodland, independently of corn lands, in which hunting might be pursued all the year round. In Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire it is necessary only to suspend operations till the cubs are somewhat bigger

* An extraordinary instance of such luck occurred in the Oakley pack. Five couples of one litter, the produce of a bitch called Rosalind (presented by me to Lord Tavistock on account of her blood), by his Grasper, all proved unexceptionable, and were all most effective through the season.

than rabbits, instead of waiting, as is our fate, in Hert's, for the progress of harvest. Such woodlands are immensely in favour of a huntsman, affording him abundant opportunity for making young hounds ; indeed, leaving no excuse for unsteadiness.

Mr. Smith, in recommending cub-hunting, of an evening, instead of at dawn of day, says, that he is "not aware that this plan has ever been adopted by any other person ;" still he is "bold enough to assert that it is a good one." I can make bold to recommend it to those who prefer sunset to sunrise, as having been successfully practised, from time immemorial, in the establishments at Wakefield and Brocklesby, by the present Lord Yarborough, for the number of years he has been master of hounds ; by his father, and grandfather before him ; by the Dukes of Grafton, and others innumerable. I mention these names (as it would be unfair to adopt any suggestions from the pages of a contemporary writer, without due acknowledgement of the source whence they are derived), merely to prove that I am indebted only to such high authorities for this, with other valuable hints ; and in addressing myself to embryo masters of hounds, some of whom may not be physically equal to the fatigue, or in any respect *up* to the trouble of courting the first blush of Aurora, I should have advised such a proceeding, as a custom more consonant with their habits, and by no means uncommon. As the practice, however, cannot be called general, it is no matter of surprise that many should

be unacquainted with the circumstance. I started with confessing my inability to advance "anything new under the sun;" and, certainly, had I not postponed my own publication, with the deferential view of ascertaining what might be forthcoming in Mr. Smith's, I should not have propounded as a novelty, what, like most other information now to be gleaned on the subject, turns out to be as old as the hills. Professing to date all my own hints on the improvement in the science from the time of Mr. Meynell, up to the present; to ground them upon the long experience of others, added to such slight stock of my own, as enables me to adventure a few ideas upon the best mode of hunting the country to which I have the honour to belong; if I am not to be deterred from my task by the consciousness of my own insufficiency, I am not to be scared from my purpose, by the conviction that all which is worth knowing has long been known. Contented if the reflected lustre of a borrowed light should shed its influence over my humble efforts, I have persevered in the arrangement of that collection of facts which forms the basis of the theory I would promulgate. To return from the lack of any new light, to cub-hunting in the dark, or in those hours of shade consecrated to love-sick poets, and to "maids that love the moon," I conceive that one reason why it has not been common to take the pack out on an evening, is, that in most countries, where cub-hunting is necessarily delayed till September, it would be dark an hour after there could be sufficient

dew. If it be cool, rainy weather, any hour in the day will answer the purpose equally. There is little dew, or moisture, on the surface of the earth before sun-set, which, on the first of September, takes place about a quarter before seven. It is true, that if you find your fox at five o'clock, every half-hour becomes more favourable, instead of the reverse, which is generally the case in the morning; but you have no drag up to a fox; you will probably be longer in finding, and may have to whip off, for fear of being actually benighted, and losing your hounds; whereas, in the morning, you care not how many hours they run, so long as they can stick to him, being often in covert from daybreak till long after noon; and it is thus that you will be able to arrive at an opinion as to the *stoutness* of your entry. It must be very agreeable when woodlands are handy to the kennel, as it need not in any way discompose the order of things. Lord Yarborough assures me that, so far from finding inconvenience in the practice, he has himself, for the last fifteen years, preferred it to morning work. It will be, occasionally, delightful amusement as a change from partridge-shooting in Herts; and it will be far better that any master of hounds, who intends to govern supreme, should attend on such occasions, than that he should altogether neglect the cub-hunting; but, for my own part,

“Hail! gentle dawn—mild blushing goddess, hail!
————— the pack awak'd,
Their matins chant:—nor brook my long delay.”

I have before alluded to what appears to me the obvious absurdity of ancient usage, that of entering foxhounds to hare. I have since deeply considered the point in all its bearings, as something which could not have found acceptance in the mind of Mr. Meynell, unless grounded upon some rational principle. He discontinued it, but he must have had reason for ever having once inclined to it; and the only defence I can find of such a doctrine, the only argument in its favour, is, that young hounds were first to be shown what they were *not* to hunt. It seems to me, that when hounds are not only shown their game, but cheered on, and encouraged to follow it, their nature will be stronger than the reasoning instinct, which must tell them to eschew forbidden fruit, once tasted and enjoyed. High-bred foxhounds, beyond all doubt, prefer the scent of fox to any other. When I had dwarf foxhounds as harriers, they would, when settled to a fox, run through any number of hares without noticing the scent or sight of them, and, on the same day, would afterwards hunt hare like beagles. It is quite evident that you may trust very much to the reasoning instinct of the animal hound, and that upon throwing young hounds into a covert full of riot, it is far better to leave them entirely alone, to let them dash off with whatever scent they may, than to commence rating them in a manner which may well make them wonder what you brought them there for. "Never mind them, let them find it out," were the words of one of the best sportsmen of the day; "they will soon learn that they are

wrong." The old hounds, it is to be hoped, will not join them ; but this allowance to the young ones—this letting them have their fling, is very different from cheering them on to the scent you would have them disregard. It is well to let them find out the difference between the scent upon which they can, without difficulty, strike, and that for which they have to hunt ; between that to which their nature and instinct will direct them, and that to which they should be encouraged, by all possible means, even to the mobbing of a cub, for the sake of blooding them. Whippers-in cannot be too cautious in rating young hounds, on first entering ; if a young hound be seen taking a scent by himself, throwing his tongue, and following it eagerly, in a different direction from the rest of the pack, it does not follow that he is running riot. You must ascertain that he is not running fox, before correcting him. Too often, as soon as he is seen skirting from the main body, as it seems to the whipper-in, off he dashes through the stuff to cut the culprit in two, with a "Garraway, would yer ? *hey ! would ye ?*" enough to frighten him out of his skin. All the while the hound has been on the scent of a fox, and says to himself—"Oh, ho ! very well, if this is the fun, hang me if ever I try for another." Do not condemn a hound too soon, if he be slack at entering ; many very good hounds are, what is called, very backward in coming forward, and are very tardy in exhibiting any signs of the future excellence they are destined ultimately to display. I remember one particularly good bitch, in Mr. Sebright's pack, Whisper (by the War-

wickshire Champion, out of their Welcome), that never left the huntsman's heels for the whole of one season, and part of the next. Mr. Sebright properly forebore to draft her, on account of her blood; her errors being solely of omission; and she proved one of the best of her year. A young hound that cannot run up with the pack at first, will not improve in pace: unless you have reason to suppose that his condition can be amended, let him go to those who do not mind being troubled with the slows. Determined skirthers, and those over-free with their tongues, termed babblers, are irreclaimable. Draft freely for all vices which cannot be palliated. A hound may improve in beauty, and you cannot always afford to draft for colour, or for any very trifling imperfections in shape; he may *come off* some bad habits, but he will never *come on*, if naturally slow;—he may learn to speak, if he has a detestable habit of running mute (an evil so well described by Mr. Smith), or to keep silence when he has nothing to say. If you are fearful of diminishing your numbers, remember that such drafting is only weeding your garden; it does not impair your strength, but adds to your efficiency. It is far better to have sixteen couples of effective hounds in the field than two-and-twenty, with six couples detracting from the merits, and spoiling the appearance of the rest. Two heads may be better than one; you may consult your huntsman on such occasions: his interest ought to be the same as your own; and he should be, to a certain extent, an executive party; but when once you have

determined upon any particular measure,—for instance, have issued your *fiat* for the drafting of a hound ;—if you take a real pride in, and mean to be answerable for, birth, parentage, and education of the pack, let no remonstrance, no entreaties, cause you to revoke. If your order be sufficient it should suffice that you have so ordered. You may be cautious, but you must be inflexible. The line so often quoted, as to have been almost Anglicized, must be your ruling principle :—

“ Sic volo, sic jubeo—Stet pro ratione, voluntas.”

In cub-hunting, when you have the power of stopping hounds, never suffer them to go away with an old fox. If you do have a good run, and kill him, it is unfair towards your supporters to anticipate sport which they cannot be expected to share ; and, if you have no run, you only make a useless attempt, militating against the purpose of the day, which is devoted to the education and improvement of young hounds. After brushing about in thick covert (one of the chief objects in this woodland work being to teach hounds to face the stuff, and draw for a fox through the thickest underwood), should a young fox break, there can be no objection to a scurry in the open ; it is, indeed, necessary, before regular hunting, to enable you to judge of the pace of young hounds, and how they run together. Some little fun in the open is also as needful as the work in covert, to practise hounds in getting away quick to horn and halloo. It is a magnificent sight to see from thirty to

forty couples, all together; and the turning up of a full-grown young fox, after a merry brush across the country, on some fine morning early in October, makes a desirable sensation upon the pack, of which you will find they have retained a lively impression, when next required to "come away, away." Where you have not the advantage of large woodland, cub-hunting is often as completely stopped by drought as the regular hunting is, subsequently, by frost. A good ground-rain in September and October, makes all the difference. It is folly to put hounds on scent when the ground is hard as iron, as it only serves long enough to send them home lamed and shaken all over. In the season of 1828-29, if I remember right, so long did we lack moisture that no hounds could take the field for regular hunting till the 17th of November. The Oakley Club met, as was the custom, in the first week of that month, at the Cock, at Eaton Socon; but the most agreeable sequel to those dinners was, on the following morning, necessarily adjourned, *sine die*; the deep holding clay of the capital country about Roxton spinneys being of a consistency too hard for the finest of young English gentlemen of that day, however well inclined they might have been, with those of the present, for "going it like bricks."* Such times and seasons try the patience of masters of hounds, anxious for their credit; but as old Wise, of Southampton, was wont to observe, "There's a deal of luck in all these things." If you are balked

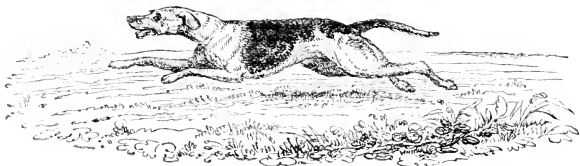
* Vide song—"The fine young English gentleman,"—last verse.

of your cub-hunting you must not be dispirited, but endeavour to make up for it as soon as you can. We cannot command success, but may all try to deserve it. It is too common, in many countries, for the sake of the noses, which all count in the return of killed upon the kennel door, to make wanton waste of cubs, where circumstances are favourable to "getting hold of them." There is, afterwards, a cry of scarcity of foxes. If you kill one of a litter, it suffices to disperse the rest; they want no further notice to quit; but, when first disturbed, they ring the changes so frequently, that, by the time it is whoo-whoop with the first of the family, the rest are half beaten, and it is easy enough to take advantage of them. Very frequently a detachment of the pack is at the same moment disposing of another in a similar manner. Your county must be very full of foxes to afford such prodigality. The best plan is to visit every part of the county (excepting some particular pet places) before November; you may then be able to render an account of every litter. I may, hereafter, offer some remarks upon the nature of foxes, their preservation, &c., with opinions on the management of country, which does not necessarily form a part of the duties devolving entirely upon a master of hounds. With the end of cub-hunting he is prepared for public service, and must remember that, for better or worse, he is responsible for all appertaining to the establishment. If he is to have any of the merit, to enjoy any share of credit for what is well done, he is

equally liable to blame for any and for all defects. It is very certain that, whatever may be a man's own qualifications for the office of a master of hounds, to that level will he bring his establishment. If he commence with an indifferent pack of hounds, and possess, in himself, the elements of the science essential to their well-being, he will *raise* them till they arrive at his own standard of perfection.* If, on the contrary, he has less capacity for the undertaking, he will *reduce* things to his own calibre. Wealth and station may pre-eminently qualify one individual in a county, in these respects, for such office, and he may, with proper public spirit, consent to assume the government, without the slightest practical knowledge of his duties. Still, upon him will depend the efficiency of the whole concern. It will be no excuse to say, that want of sport is not *his* fault, that it is in his hounds or servants. It *is* his fault, and *his* only, if they are not what they should be. It has been most truly said, that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." A man may commit a fatal error in unlimited exercise of absolute authority, if he presume too much upon an undue estimate of his own judgment; but as, according to the military regulation for the use of discretionary power, we are told to act "according to conscience, the best of our understanding, and the custom of war in the like cases," so will no man err

* Having, however, thus raised them, he must never relax—never think he has finished a good work, or be tempted to exclaim "*opus exegi*"—of that which is never entirely *exactum*. Many have retrograded, from too firm a reliance on their own footing.

if he take for his guide the leading theory, and act according to the most approved practice of those whose rule has passed into a law, applying each principle, as he best may, to the circumstances of his own peculiar case.





CHAPTER XI.

“I pedes quo te rapiunt et auræ.”

HOR.

“Thus on the *air* depend the hunter’s hopes.”

SOMERVILLE.

Uncertainty of Scent—Signs and Indications—Mr. Smith’s Theory disputed—Arguments in Proof of Scent coming from Body and Breath of the Animal, and *not* from Touch of Pad alone—Exemplified by Case in Point—Old Wells and the Oakley—Effect of Dew upon Scent—Ascent of Dew *versus* Descent—Experimental Philosophy—Dr. Dufay and M. Muschenbrock—Results of Experiments—Mr. Smith upon “*Metal*.”

OF all glorious uncertainties none is greater than that of scent—the one great thing needful in hunting, next to the animal to be hunted. Without scent there can be no sport with dogs, except for those who can

substitute the amusement of coursing for sport. There are as many signs and indications of good or bad scent as there are prognostics as to changes of weather, and they are about as much to be depended upon. By many certain symptoms we form well-founded expectations of a downfall, which are often realized; but anticipations of rain are not unfrequently as unsubstantial as the clouds which had a share in their creation. Thus it is with scent, which may be termed "constant only in inconstancy." When hounds roll upon the grass; when, in drawing covert, they whip their sterns so that each appears crimson-pointed; when the dew hangs on the thorn;* when gossamer is floating on the surface of the ground; when there are harsh, drying winds, or frequent storms;—under any of these, or a hundred other adverse circumstances, we do not hesitate to pronounce the impossibility of any chance of scent, and it is not often that we find ourselves agreeably deceived; but still, the exceptions are so numerous as to set at nought anything like invariable rule. Even in gossamer—even in storms (which I take to be more certainly fatal to scent than any other state of weather), under a burning sun, or amidst flakes of falling snow, instances are not wanting of scent lying breast high. Philosophy is at fault in any attempt to define the causes; it is useless to speculate on probabilities, or

* "When the dew hangs on the thorn,
The huntsman may put up his horn."

OLD PROVERB.

take anything for granted, when we know that scent may vary with the fleeting moments—that it changes with the soil, and that no one can speak positively to the point till a fox is found, and hounds have had a fair chance of settling to a scent, if it exist. It is to be remarked, that when hounds go soberly to covert, with their mouths fast closed, instead of staring about them, and showing disposition to frolic—when, in the place of boisterous winds and lowering storms, we have high clouds with cool and gentle zepthers—when no white frost has rendered the surface of the earth treacherous and adhesive—above all, when the quicksilver in the barometer is on the ascendant, we may fairly hope for scent; but we must not be too confident—not unduly elated by such auspices, or dejected by the reverse. The *sine quâ non* of scent must be considered, more or less, a matter of chance; but it may not be uninteresting to consider how, and in what manner, it is yielded by the fox in chase. I have been led into a notice of this subject by the propagation of such an idea, as that the scent is derived, not from the body or breath, but from the pad alone. Mr Smith has industriously endeavoured to prove such assertion by the very means which, in my humble opinion, afford the strongest confirmation of the contrary. There is, perhaps, no greater mistake throughout the whole “Diary of a Huntsman.” In expressing my most unqualified rejection of such hypothesis, it will be necessary to follow closely the line of argument adduced in its support. Mr. Smith com-

mences his observations on scent, after the account of a famous run which he attributes to the circumstance of a fox having *luckily* found the earth stopped that he had tried at starting. He proceeds to say, "It will, probably, be noticed, that, in the above run, the scent was good, which, *of course*, a fox must be aware of, as he lives by hunting; and this was, *probably*, the cause of his trying to go to ground." I have before alluded to what appears to me another most mistaken notion, or, at all events, one which is not so supported as to have a claim to general credence. I then stated some reasons for believing a fox (in choice of ground, &c.) to be totally unconscious of the scent which he leaves. I think it nothing extraordinary that a fox, disturbed by a "roar in his kennel," should seek the sanctuary of his earth, without pausing to consider whether the scent was bad enough to admit of his trusting his precious carcass to the open air. Possibly, while taking his *siesta*, he might have dreamed of a good scent—might have had a night-mare, from visions of former cub-hunting in darkness; but if he were so wonderful a product of his species, that upon his conquest the huntsman could exclaim, "*Veni, vidi, vici*"—"Now, I don't care if I never kill another fox!"—it is surely matter of surprise that, with his information concerning the state of the scent, he had not also acquired a hint as touching any obstructions to his free entrance at the front door of his family mansion, during his temporary absence at his suburban villa. "Yet this one would have gone to

ground, five minutes after being found, if he could." Why, if he would not, where is the use of an earth-stopper? It would have been far more remarkable, had he attempted to go to ground at the end of *fifty* minutes, as a fox, when thus heated, will frequently refuse an open earth; but, when first found, his point is almost invariably to the head of earths, which, of course, are stopped. It *may*, very probably, be imagined, if not noticed, that the scent was good; for it is no improbable conclusion, relating to a run of sixteen miles; but that a fox must, *of course*, be aware of this circumstance, is to say, that, "Who drives fat oxen, must himself be fat."

It may be fact within the experience of Mr. Smith, "that on many days, when hounds cannot find, *and* on which days the scent has been proved to be capital, that foxes are under ground;" though I am at a loss to guess how he reconciles this opinion with that given in his chapter on Earth-stopping, wherein he says, that "most foxes almost always *lay* under ground, in *bad weather particularly*;" and I must say, that, according to all I have ever heard or seen, blank days have been only to be apprehended in the worst weather; after blustering nights, succeeded by bad mornings, when there has been little chance of a fox having encountered the roughness of the night, and as little prospect of sport, if found. The idea of his being above ground, in bad scenting weather, and out of the way, in good, is truly laughable to us, because, in our country,

the result is diametrically opposite. With us, it is, "better day, better deed," and we never make so sure of finding as upon a day most propitious for the purpose. Moreover, such an assertion is, at best, most illogical, as it goes to prove, that what we have supposed a *good* hunting day, is, in plain English, a bad one. If a fox be wanting upon a good scenting day, it is far more probable that the weather was favourable for his nocturnal rambles, and that the earth-stopper, instead of being in bed, did his duty in barring him out before his return home, and did not, in sea phrase, batten him down under hatches. A fox, which has been more than once hunted, need not wind anything, to fancy something in the wind, on finding no admittance, even on business, in his own threshold. His knowledge of scent, like that of Hudibras, enables him to "smell a rat," and he may frequently show that he is "up to snuff," by making himself scarce; may leave his lodging in the scrubs, to lie in clover, or on beds of down. But to come to the question of body scent—Mr. Smith says, that a fox "will *lay*" (*lie*, I suppose the printer means, unless he thinks the fox is *laying* again in a mare's nest) till hounds "almost tread on him," "which is *one proof*, that the scent does not come from the body or breath of the animal, but from the touch; and, by his *laying* quiet in his kennel, the scent does not exude from under him, that is, from the ground he *lays* upon, &c." Why—leave a ferret, a pole-cat, or any other animal of the kind, in a state of quiescence, he emits no scent;

excite him, but for an instant, it is then "*non redolet sed olet,*" then that his smell may be designated by a harsher term. It is precisely the same with a fox reposing in unconfined space. The air around him is then not impregnated with the effluvia from his body, which betray the proximity of some luckless captive, doomed in chains to waste his sweetness on an out-house. It is not till he is roused, that his fuming vapours rise,

"And with the ambient air entangling mix."

Now, as to "the most convincing and satisfactory proof" of this most extraordinary doctrine, I must have recourse to the Diary itself, page 192:—"But the most convincing and satisfactory proof that the scent does come from the touch of the animal, is, that when the ground carries, after a frost, and there is even a burning scent on turf, and sound hard ground, *until* the hounds get on a fallow, or ploughed ground, when they will feel the scent for a *few paces* only, and it will entirely go until they are held across the plough-field; *and* when they are again on turf, or sound ground, or going through the fence, they will hit off the scent immediately, as the foot is clean and touches the ground, which is accounted for by the foxes' feet gathering earth, as soon as they tread on the ploughed ground, which, on being pressed, adheres to the bottom of the feet (which is called carrying), consequently prevents the feet from touching the ground, until this,

which forms a clog, and is sticking to the feet, is worn off by a few steps on the sound ground, after leaving the ploughed land."

I have been compelled to quote the whole of this long-winded sentence, pausing only at its first round period, that I may not, according to a prevailing fashion of the day, by halving of the text, appear guilty of a wilful perversion of its meaning. Having sifted it, and measured it by inches, feet, and paces,

"Till one, with moderate haste, might count an hundred,"

the only inference at which the limited powers of my comprehension have been enabled to arrive, is this—that it is a *sentence* of excommunication—a total ejection of the body of the fox from communion with the air. But how is this supported? We are reminded of the fact, which all must admit, that when the ground is in such a state that a pedestrian might carry off nearly enough land upon his shoes, to entitle him to a vote for the county, that the feet of a fox, or hounds, are in like manner encumbered. It is also evident (for I do not, by any means, deny that there is, in proportion, as much scent in the pad as in any other part) that when a fox takes with him, instead of leaving behind, those portions of the earth immediately subjected to contact with that matter which he,

"Through the network of his skin, perspires;"

there must be far *less* scent than when there is the effect of contagion from the earth, to *add* to the in-

fection of the air; but because many hounds require to be lifted over ground that carries, does it prove that there is no scent, “from the body or breath of the animal, but from the touch?” On the contrary, unless it is pretended that every particle of scent is lost on such occasions, it goes to prove, that the only scent with which many other hounds can, and do, persevere (hounds, I mean, which are not constantly lifted), notwithstanding the clogs which prevent the feet of the fox from touching the ground, must be in the air.

Mr. Smith proceeds to say, that “another *proof*, that the scent by which the fox is hunted, does not come from the body but from the *touch*, is, that when hounds are running across an open country, downs, and such like, in very windy weather, it cannot be supposed that the scent would remain stationary, but that it would be scattered by the wind, and *that it arises from the touch, that is, the pad of the fox touching the ground.*” This, again, to my erring judgment, seems to prove the reverse of his own proposition. If the scent depended *only* upon those parts of the soil, or herbage, which had been touched, is it likely that it would be carried so far from these particular substances, as to serve twenty yards wide of the line, which is frequently the case? Who has not seen, if he be an observer, hounds running harder upon the other side of a hedge-row, *not* the side on which the fox passed, than those which are actually on the line? Does not this prove, that the particles of scent which have emanated from the body of the ani-

mal, have been floating on the air—that if long grass, or bushes, appear to yield strengthening evidence of the *touch*, it is because

“To every shrub the warm *effluvia* cling,
Hang on the grass, impregnate earth and *skies*.”

My firm belief is, that there is always a pad scent—always a certain degree of scent from the pad, retained by all ground, more or less susceptible of the impression—that the duration of this scent depends upon the kind of soil, and its evaporations. Were it not for this scent, there would often be none whatever, which is actually the case when the ground is foiled by a flock of sheep. But this is only the scent to which hounds are reduced when there is no other—when that which they seek to find floating in the air, is “dispersed, or rarified, by the meridian sun’s intenser heat;”—it is the scent which serves them to hunt, but not to run. They can plough the ground with their noses, and potter on the line, and on the line *only*, with the scent of the pad. The scent with which they run, breast high, with heads erect, is that which pervades the air some eighteen inches above the surface of the earth;—the scent which improves while “the panting chase grows warmer as he flies;”—it is the same which floats above the bodies of the birds, and enables the pointer, instead of stooping for his game, to stand in a more exalted attitude, with his head and stern at right angles. Should any one, for the sake of argument, inquire, why, if the scent be chiefly in the air, it does not serve equally along a hard road? I should

attribute the difficulties occasioned by Mac Adam, quite as much to the loss of impending vapour, as to the want of retaining power in the surface, and consequent diminution of pad scent. Moreover, hounds will very often fly along a road, and, in the month of March, when the whole country has been in a pulverized condition, they have held the ultra pace, enveloped in clouds of dust. Any one who has observed stag-hounds following the deer cart, which has preceded them some ten minutes, will have little doubt of a scent from a body which has never been nearer in contact with the earth upon which they tread, than the bottom of the vehicle ; and I should be sorry to find myself in the skin of a fox, which might be conveyed in a wheelbarrow over a country, if a good pack of hounds had to make the most of any scent they might find unconnected with *the touch*. It is very commonly, and justly, remarked, that when all the field (and probably the horses themselves also) are sensible of the smell of a fox, little scent can be expected for hounds : the fact is, that there is then not sufficient weight of atmosphere to condense the volatile particles exuded from his body ; instead of remaining motionless, they are too quickly refined, and soar aloft. If all this be not absolutely *logical proof* that the scent borne upon the breezes does not owe its existence entirely and *solely* to “*the touch, that is, the pad of the fox touching the ground*,” it must, I think, go far to upset the theory of any one who will maintain, that if the fox had touched nothing,

and could have been suspended in mid-air, he would have left no other than visible signs of his identity. But to come now to "the most convincing and satisfactory proofs" on my side of the question:—Is it only that eagerness of excitement, which will occasionally elicit a whimper from young hounds?—Is it the confident anticipation of what is awaiting them on the other side of a river, which causes the oldest hounds in the pack to throw their tongues with joy, when stemming the current of some rapid stream? or is it that they greedily inhale the scent, nowhere more strong than where the

"fuming vapours rise,
And *lung* upon the gently purling brook?"

Surely, there must be little enough of touch, or pad scent, in the middle of the water; yet with what avidity will terriers and spaniels follow upon the scent of a rat, or water-bird, across a river. I have been dwelling, like an old southern hound, upon the subject; have been minute, perhaps, even to prolixity in detail; but I shall be excused by all who bear in mind, that if

—————"brevis esse laboro,
Obscurus fio;"

and that it is not enough to say, that, amongst all highest extant authorities,* I have found none dissenting

* Mr. Bell, Professor of Zoology at King's College, says, "The fox has a subcaudal gland, which secretes an extremely fetid substance."—Cloquet, in the *French Encyclopædia*, says, "In the vicinity of the posterior parts of the dog [tribe, to which foxes belong], are two small pear-shaped receptacles, from the inside of which a thick unctuous matter exudes, of a fetid odour, which escapes through an opening in their margin, by the assistance of several clusters of muscular fibres, in which these receptacles are enveloped." The same author, in speaking of the fat of these animals, says, "In general it is nearly fluid, and, like the rest of the animal's body, possesses an almost insupportable fetid odour."

from my view of the case, unless I also adduce something, in shape of fact, to serve for the groundwork of my own argument, and the foundation of such support. I will, however, inflict only one more instance upon the reader, in proof that the touch has neither more nor less to do with the scent than I have already represented, and that scent *does*, instead of "does not, come from the body." One instance, such as the following, is alone sufficiently suitable to my purpose; it was related to me, very recently, by Lord Tavistock himself:—

It not unfrequently happens, in parts of the Oakley country, that the meadows are completely inundated by the irrigations of old Ouse, when that winding river, swollen by winter torrents, pays small deference to the banks which form the prescribed boundaries of its course.

It is not in depth, but in extent, that these floods offer any impediments to those who like to see where they ride, however indifferent they may be to the number of fathoms deep over which they are *rowed*. This coverlid, although it may comprise some acres on each side of the stream, is nothing more than a flowing *sheet* of water, thrown loosely off the *bed* of the river, for the benefit of the alluvial soil within its precincts. It never has been, and, I trust, never will be, any impediment to fox-hunting in that country, which, *taking it all in all*, is inferior to none in Great Britain, according to the opinion of those well qualified to pass sentence upon its merits; but be this as it may, upon

the occasion to which I allude, the fox having run down towards the river, instead of crossing, held on in a continuous line along the meadows, for a space of two miles at the very least, being all the way mid-deep in water. He was never obliged to swim, but was able to maintain a wonderful pace for any animal half-seas over; and well might such an event have been literally termed an aquatic *expedition*, at the instigation, and in honour of the name of such a huntsman as old *Wells*. Never was he nearer being *pumped out* than in this splashing chase; such was the pace of hounds, and such the head they carried, that, as he went o'er water like the wind, he had barely enough within himself for *spouting*; but, turning half round in his saddle, he was just capable of giving vent to an exclamation, indicative of his opinion, as touching that scent of which he had not known the touch. "It's in the l'air, my lord, it's all in the l'air." Now, under the circumstances, and considering that by no possibility could any ideas of currant-jelly, at that moment, have been running riot within his brain, the aspiration of the element was very pardonable, a "trifle light as air," to which it gave the emphasis—and, badinage apart, that simple speech is, to my mind ("jealous" of the truth of doctrine), a

"confirmation strong,
As proof of holy writ."

If, after this, any one will pretend to say that such a scent, of which there are every-day instances, arises

from "the pad of the fox touching the ground," I have done; with him I resign all contest, and shall be contented to leave him "alone in his glory."

I would willingly forbear any further notice of the axioms contained in Mr. Smith's *Diary*; but as my attention, and that of the sporting world, has been evoked by their publication, I cannot allow to pass for gospel, stated opinions upon most interesting questions, hitherto treated hypothetically, even by the most scientific inquirers, more especially when Mr. Smith's dictum happens to be at variance with the best established and generally received opinions. It is necessary to make extract, *literatim et verbatim*, of one other half of a sentence:—"It is thought, by some, that the reason why foxes are not oftener killed late in the day, after a hard and long run when it is nearly dark, that it is owing to their strength recovering as their natural time for exercise comes on; but the more probable cause for hounds not killing their fox oftener than they do at this time is, that as night comes on in the winter, the wind gets much colder, and the damp air, or rather the dew, which *falls* (and does not rise, as some suppose, on any flat surface; for instance, the top of a gate will be covered with water by the dew, when the under side is perfectly dry), and it would depress the scent, and prevent its expansion."—Now, I am not going to break a lance with the genius who can advance so very self-evident a proposition, as that a fox, after a hard and long run, recovers his strength about his natural time for exer-

cise, like the appetite of an alderman at the sound of the dinner-bell! Mr. Smith, himself, does not lean to such an opinion. I will not ask, whether it may, or may not, be probable that some packs are, at such a time, so much more tired than the fox, that they are inclining towards their natural rest; neither will I split straws in considering whether the “*it*” conjoined to the parenthesis, has reference to the dew, or the gate top; for the present, my purpose, like that of the Rosicrucian, is principally with the dew.

The *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which is, I believe, generally taken as tolerable authority on such matters, after relating the most remarkable experiments of professors of the Royal Academy of Science, at Paris—Doctor Dufay and M. Muschenbrock, the former of whom vigorously maintained the ascent, and the latter offered some show of contention for the descent of the dew—concludes, that “it must still remain *dubious*, whether the dew rises or falls.” How unlucky for the *Encyclopædia*, that it should have been published in a day when no Mr. Smith existed, who could for ever have determined the question; then would it have had no need of committing itself to the theories of these “learned Thebans.” The *Diary* would have afforded a ready and concise solution of the difficulty. Considering, however, that I am one of the great majority of those who do certainly “suppose” that the dew rises; moreover, remaining firmly convinced that such is the fact; the only apology I can offer for not yielding

implicitly to Mr. Smith's positive assertion, that it falls, will be found in the work to which I have alluded ; and as every one who condescends to read this, may not be fortified with such a volume at his elbow, I will make brief extracts of that which bears immediately upon the point.

Dr. Dufay "supposed, that, if the dew *ascended*, it must wet a body placed low down, sooner than one placed in a higher situation ; and if a number of bodies were placed in this manner, the lowermost would be wetted first ; and the rest, in like manner, up to the top." No very unnatural supposition this, for any Frenchman or Englishman to have made ; but let us see how sets the Doctor about the work of proving his hypothesis. He probably knew little enough of a five-barred gate ; at all events, it did not occur to him ; perhaps he might not have satisfied himself with it if it had ; so, "to determine this, he placed two ladders against one another, meeting at their tops, spreading wide asunder at the bottom, and so tall as to reach thirty-two feet high. To the several steps of these he fastened large squares of glass, like the panes of windows, placing them in such a manner that they should not overshadow one another. On the trial, it appeared exactly as Dr. Dufay had apprehended. The lowest surface of the lowest piece of glass was first wetted ; then the upper, then the lower surface of the pane next above it, and so on till all the pieces were wetted to the top. Hence it appeared plain to him, that the dew

consisted of the vapours *ascending* from the earth during the night-time, which, being condensed by the coldness of the atmosphere, are prevented from being dissipated, as in the day-time, by the sun's heat."

We are told of other experiments, the result of which "was quite conformable to his expectations."

On the other hand, we find that "M. Mushenbrock, who embraced the contrary opinion, *thought* he had invalidated all Dr. Dufay's proofs, by repeating his experiments, with the same success, on a plane covered with sheet lead. But to this Dr. Dufay replied, that there was no occasion for supposing the vapour to rise through the lead, nor from that very spot; but that, as it arose from the adjoining open ground, the continual fluctuation of the air could not but spread it abroad, and carry it thither in its ascent."

"Who shall decide, when doctors disagree?"

From the combination of all circumstances, which it would be tedious to enumerate, not a doubt is left upon my own mind, that the dew is an exhalation from the earth, occasioned by the warmth of the sun. We see little, if any, dew in cloudy weather; but always the most after the hottest days; and, as a matter of course, in the mornings preceding the hottest days, from the accumulation through the night. The first appearance, and the greatest collection of dew, is, invariably, observable upon water-meadows, and on the surface of damp ground most liable to such exhalation; if it *descended*,

why should it not fall equally upon the most arid soil? But I am willing to admit that there are instances of the total absence of dew after the hottest days; in short, I do not pretend to the proof of my position, or offer more than my own inference from observation upon a point which has puzzled philosophers. All I mean to say is, that the top of a gate may be wet with dew, and the under side dry, without any proof that some under-current of air did not assist the rapid ascent of the dew, till, after attaining a certain elevation, it could make a deposit upon the gate-top.

At all events, I will take upon myself to say, that dew, whether it rises or falls, can have no prejudicial effect upon scent. If dew is to be taken as an excuse for the loss of an afternoon fox, there can be little use in cub-hunting of an evening, or in turning out in the middle of the night solely with the hope of availing ourselves of its moisture.

I must not be supposed, in these comments upon *The Diary of a Huntsman*, to be actuated by any desire of detracting from its manifold merits. In the notice which I must necessarily take of a contemporary authority, it would be misplaced courtesy towards the writer, injustice to my own work, and to the purpose to which it is devoted, if I shrank from contesting opinions to which I could not conscientiously subscribe.

Totally divested of any invidious and unworthy feeling, utterly regardless of the channel through which any new ideas might flow, looking to the interests of "the

Noble Science," and to the practical utility of any information upon the subject, I halted in the course of my own task, and scanned the *Diary*, in the hope of finding that supply of novelty already before the public, which I felt myself unable to communicate. Of a verity, that novelty have I found in divers shapes; but such novelty is useless if it be past man's understanding. I say this in a general sense, because I cannot impute to myself a more than common share of isolated stupidity, in being unable to discover the meaning of phrases, which I find equally unintelligible to others.

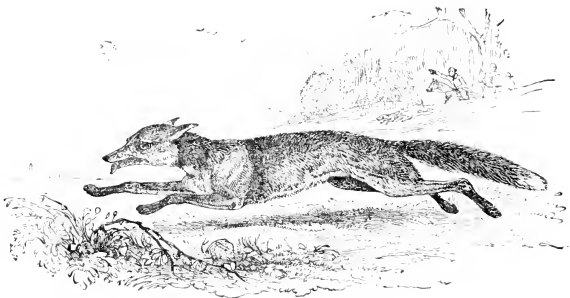
It is not my intention to make allusion to any discrepancies unconnected with the immediate subject of my own consideration; but having had occasion to differ, most materially, from the *Diary* upon the nature of scent, which forms the burden of this chapter, I cannot conclude the disquisition without reference to one of those novelties which I have pronounced to be utterly beyond comprehension.

The fifth chapter of this *Diary of a Huntsman*, professes to be a Glossary of "Hunting Terms;" the preceding chapter having offered an explanation of "Huntsman's Language." Casting my eye over these valuable elucidations, being attracted to the article of "Moving Scent" (page 125), I was struck by the appearance of a word, which, as pertaining to the vocabulary of a sportsman, or being applicable to hounds, "showed strangely to my sight."—"Metal."—"When hounds are very fresh, and fly for a short distance on a wrong scent,

or without one, it is called all *metal*." Now what kind of *metal* is here meant, the writer alone can explain. To call a hound as good as gold, is no uncommon expression ; but neither to this precious commodity, nor to silver, platina, tin, iron, lead, or copper, can this flying on a wrong scent, have either direct, or indirect affinity, unless in connection with the fact, that metals of all kinds are almost impervious to the effect of *dew*. Can it be that they have too much *brass*, or, after all, is this metal the predominant material, and is the composition of the article I am now remarking on—a mixture of Mr. Smith's own *composition*? Nimrod addressed a letter to the Editor of *Bell's Life*, complaining bitterly of the manner in which his writings have been distorted, in consequence of his not having the opportunity of correcting the errors of the press.

It is possible that this Glossary may have been subjected to a similar disadvantage ; I did not hesitate upon the *prima facie* evidence of the robbery and murder committed upon the body of the word, Tally-ho ! to give a verdict against some poor devil of a printer ; and well knowing that these functionaries are not always particular to a T, I had no doubt that the word *cover*, which occurs so frequently (a word which I had never seen in sporting sense, unless with regard to a certain description of horses), was intended to be read, *covert*. This idea is borne out by the Glossary, which, instead of Dr. Johnson's definition of the word, *cover*, "anything that is laid over another," describes a *cover*, as "any

wood, &c., which will hold a fox." It is merely doubling the extension of such an allowance, to lead us to the supposition, that, amidst the dross of the printing-house, this "*metal*" may have been confounded with the *mettle* which may occasion hounds, when very fresh, to "fly for a short distance on a wrong scent." The substitution of a T, for an A, and the addition of an E, might seem of little moment to any one not conversant with the laws of scent or *accent*; but with regard to a Glossary, purporting to be an explanation of hunting terms, it is rather too much to expect that all will readily accord to an opaque *body* that which is ascribable only to the *spirit*.





CHAPTER XII.

————— “Nihil est ab omni,
Parte beatum.”
HOR.

“Ille terrarum mihi *propter omnes*,
Angulus ridet.”
ID.

Hunting from Home—M. F. H. in his own Country—Presents—The Late Mr. Hanbury—Popularity—Satisfaction—Rights of Country—Support of Hunting—Errors of Custom—Remedies—Difficulty of Reformation—Earth-Stopping—Mr. Smith’s Plan—Game-keepers—Habits of Foxes—Importance of Rural Amusement—Decline of Shooting—New Game Bill—Fox-hunting the only Resource—Estimate of Expenses.

It is highly important to the interests of the Noble Science, that every man, blessed with the means of promoting the sport of fox-hunting, should endeavour so to do, to the utmost of his power, *in his own country*.

Happy is it for him who is located in the provincials, if his domestic comforts are such, that he considers nothing could compensate for the loss of them; still happier, if he thinks that hunting from home is everything—that fox-hunting, all over the world, must be, and is, fox-hunting all the world over—that there is no country so bad that it may not be made better, by a proper direction of energy towards the amelioration of any defects capable of improvement. A bad country may be made worse, by a bad establishment of hounds, &c., or better, by a good one. If farmers, or landowners, are hostile, they may be propitiated. You cannot gather up all the flints, level the lanes, or alter the nature of the soil, as to its scenting capabilities; but you may labour advantageously in devoting some pains to the organization and well-being of the Hunting Club; may be instrumental in directing the use of its funds to the general benefit, and in promoting that social intercourse under which it will assuredly flourish,—without which it will as certainly decay. If all men, possessing more or less influence in the county, will but pull together—if each will consider the common cause identified with his own—if they will remember that a benefit or an injury to one part of the country, has its corresponding effect upon another—if each will contribute his quota towards the advancement of all the good, and the reconciliation of any bad feeling existing in his neighbourhood, there can, in no part of England,

be any serious difficulty in the prosecution of a diversion, the taste for which is born and bred with the occupants; a sport to which those are by nature inclined, upon whose countenance it very materially depends.

But all this *esprit de corps* is still more, if possible, incumbent upon the master of the hounds in the country, for the time being. It is always desirable that he should be able to found some claim to support upon his property and influence in the county; for an itinerant professor will never (however he may entitle himself to the good-will of those amongst whom he may be naturalized) command the respect which is generally so freely accorded to him who has, as it were, a birth-right in the cause.

The feeling with which a master of hounds should regard the country he has undertaken to hunt, should partake largely of the character, and be scarcely inferior to that, which constitutes the love of our country in a more comprehensive sense. It should be a modification of the purest patriotism; the good of the country should be the mainspring of all his actions, the focus in which all that he does should centre. He should do his utmost to promote the breed of horses and the growth of crops, and cherish every friendly relation with the agricultural part of the community. By thus ingratiating himself with his neighbours, he will add a zest to the interest which they are disposed to feel in the prosperity of the whole concern. Not only his friends, in

his own station of life, but the respectable yeomen, inn-keepers, and tradesmen, all take delight in rearing a young hound, and returning him in condition to do credit to his walk. The farmer will say, that he has lost some scores of fowls by the foxes; but he will add, in the same breath, that foxes have kept down his enemies, the rabbits, and that he does not grudge the value of fowls, averaging about eighteen pence a piece, considering all that there is to set against such losses to the score of the hunting. When farmers are satisfied that there is every desire to avoid wilful damage, they are seldom so churlish as to grumble at that which is accidental, I may say incidental, to the sport in which they may largely participate. If you once commence a system of regular compensation, however desirable it may be in individual cases, the yearly accumulation of such demands would ultimately balance the account of the national debt. It would, perhaps, require as much as would maintain the hunting establishment, to satisfy claims for damage, supported by sufficient evidence, against the foxes; but as it is well known that the fox is held responsible for everything less than a jackass, which may be "lost, stolen, or strayed," the depredations of dogs and vermin, and also of still more systematic thieves, might be committed with impunity, under the shelter of the indemnifying fund provided by the Hunt. It is, indeed, hard, that Widow Thrifty should sustain the loss of a whole brood of turkeys, or that the pains

or gains of industry should be, in the remotest degree, deteriorated, when they are not improved by

——— “ those pleasures, for the weak too strong,
Too costly for the poor ;”

but where there is good management, these things will not be. The surplus funds of a Hunt Club, increased by the casual donations of the sojourners of a season, wherever such exist, cannot be better applied than in redressing, in a quiet way, such actual grievances.* The late Mr. Hanbury, whose name will ever be respected, as a master of hounds for many years in the Puckeridge country, handed down the custom of making occasional presents to farmers, or their wives, which has since been followed up with good effect. It is not that the value of your gifts may bear proportion to the loss, real or imaginary, set down to your account ; but they are duly flattered by a token of your consideration. Mr. Hanbury's business, as head of a great brewery, enabled him, at no great sacrifice, to keep many in *entire* good-humour, by acceptable *cadeaux* of brown stout. Having omitted, upon some occasion, the transmission of one of these, with his wonted regularity, to a certain quarter,

* It is not very often that a Hunt Club has the means, if it have the inclination, to attend to these points ; but still, as it is “ Nunkey pays for all,” pay he must. It will not do to turn a deaf ear to just grounds of complaint. I think that my predecessor had once a sum, amounting to three figures, to pay for injury done to ewes in the lambing time ; and I have constantly had fines of from £10 to £20 at the same season. I was glad, last spring, to compound, for £18, with one farmer, for the frolic of one couple of young hounds, just leaving their walk.

he received an anonymous reminder to the following effect :—

“ How can you expect that the foxes will thrive,
If they have no porter to keep them alive ?”*

If popularity be not invariably the consequence attendant upon a just, a wise, and good government, it is absolutely necessary to the ruler of that microcosm of which we are treating. A master of hounds can have no durable prospect of success, unless he carries with him the voice of the whole country confided to him. In the earlier part of this work, I endeavoured to point out some essentials in his conduct, and some few particulars relative to his government in the field. In thus attempting to describe, according to the result of observation, some of the principal features of his character as the leader of a hunt, which should afford no show of reason for being denounced by any, but should boast the strongest claim to the right of being upheld by all, I am impelled by the conviction, that many evils and difficulties have arisen solely from a neglect of duties, apparently trivial in themselves, but which are, in reality, component parts of the machinery by which the whole system is regulated. If a man's devotion to everything connected directly, or indirectly, with the office, proceed originally from a sense of duty to the

* Of late years, in Hertfordshire, the establishment of a Poultry Fund, chiefly maintained by contributions from visitors and non-subscribers who hunt, has been highly effective, the fund being under the management of the secretary of the Hunt, who is at the pains to investigate all claims and make due compensation for losses.

particular country to which he has dedicated his services, it will soon resolve itself into a matter of choice and preference. It must be, indeed, a very bad country with which a man is not more than satisfied, if his general success in affording satisfaction to others, and the average of the sport, have been such as to exceed his expectations. If things go well—if he have had runs from all quarters—if the retrospect of the past, the aspect of the present, and the prospect of the future, are encouraging—if, in short, where all cannot, in the nature of things, wear one perpetual tint of *couleur de rose*, the blue devils have been effectually scared by the squadron of scarlet;—instead of envying the supposititious advantages of other countries, he may be well inclined to run his race, if not with the complacency, with the contentment of the happy pastor, who

“Ne'er had changed, nor wished to change his place.”

It behoves every master of hounds to regard, with a jealous eye, everything approaching to an infraction upon the rights of his country—rights which he is bound to hand down, inviolate, to his successor. It would be well, were there in existence some code of laws, in which the rights of country, and all appertaining to their tenure (taking the “*mos pro lege*”), were more clearly defined, considering that, notwithstanding the apparent simplicity of their adjustment, more disputes have arisen, and more occasion for discord has been allowed to exist, than is altogether consonant with

that spirit of harmony which should prevail, and ever be maintained, between two neighbouring Hunts. It appeared that, upon a great controversy which occupied so much of the attention of the sporting world last season, public opinion was very much, almost entirely, on one side, in favour of the retention of country by the party to whom it had been conceded, without reservation ; but upon the "*audi alteram partem*" principle, and taking into account the quarter from whence the attempt at recovery proceeded, it is only justice to suppose, that such claims, however difficult to establish, were founded on the fairest grounds. A similar difference, but of less notoriety, has, since then, occurred in another district. In this case, again, the right, according to the opinion of competent judges, seems to have been easily determined ; but if once such questions are agitated—if doubts are once admitted within the range of argument, it is no easy matter, "*tantas componere lites.*" However amicably such disputes may have commenced, bad blood is rapidly engendered, and open rupture too soon succeeds to the coolness occasioned by protracted litigation, which must terminate to the dissatisfaction of one competitor, if not of both. Something after the manner of racing rules, as matter of reference, might be advantageous to those called upon to arbitrate in such cases. Possession is said to comprise nine points of the law ; but this will not hold good in fox-hunting, unless a better title to the occupation of the country is sufficiently manifest. Our Hertfordshire country is, in all

conscience, large enough, and as much as any hounds could hunt fairly, in four days per week ; but till the year 1835, it had, for upwards of twenty years, been enriched by a considerable slice of Bedfordshire, of which we had remained during the whole of that period in undisturbed possession, and of which we should naturally have been most tenacious. As soon, however, as this portion became needful to the Oakley Hunt, it was reclaimed by them upon the due advance of proof, that our right had been never otherwise established than as a right on sufferance ; the grant having been originally made under cover of a distinct stipulation, that it might, at any time, be resumed at pleasure. The validity of this claim was beyond dispute ; and much that is disagreeable would probably be spared, if all concessions were guarded by such restrictions, or formally and finally consigned by a deed of gift, wherever there is the remotest possibility of any misunderstanding of the wide distinction between "*meum et tuum.*" There can be no harm, but, on the contrary, much good, in the feeling of give and take, which may enable the master of one country to offer, as an accommodation, or concede to the request of another, the permission to draw any particular covert upon certain occasions, attended with advantage to the one, and devoid of prejudice to the other ; but from such circumstances as these it will not do to found a precedent. It is highly necessary that the nature of such grant should be highly understood at the time, or the lapse of a very few years may

convert such parts of territory into debateable ground ; those which are *de jure*, will not be found *de facto* the possessors ;—the memory of the oldest sportsman, who remembers perfectly that such coverts were drawn by such a pack (without any knowledge on his part of the contingencies), is cited as authority ; and they are compelled either to abandon their claim, or, at best, compound for a neutrality. All this might easily be obviated, by a proper understanding of the rights of country upon its first establishment, and by the preservation of written testimony to this effect, amidst the archives of the Hunt.

I have said, that the master of hounds should be held deeply responsible for the preservation of the rights committed to him ; but more than that it is unfair to expect. It is too generally the case, that in addition to all the *matériel* for hunting a country, he has also to find the country to be hunted. The whole management and keeping up of the country is suffered to devolve upon him.

“Horses sound, hounds healthy,
Earths well stopp'd, and foxes plenty,”

are indispensable requisites, “*which* nobody can deny ;” but after finding effective horses, and hounds, &c., the master has also, literally, to *find* every fox, in the most comprehensive sense of the word ; and why is this ? Why, because, simply because, “what is everybody’s business, is nobody’s ;” because every one likes to know that the country is kept up, and no one cares how this

is brought to pass. A liberal subscription to the hounds is thought to include everything that can be required, from the body of the country, towards the maintenance of fox-hunting; more particularly, when the rights of country are firmly established upon such foundations, as the hearty concurrence of the landed proprietors, and their expressed resolution to preserve foxes, according to their ability. And, pray, will some one ask, is *not* that enough? Does not such a system work well, and what more would you have? Granting that the system does work well—with all my desire to leave well alone, with all my anti-revolutionary principles, I would be reformer enough to wish a total change in the fundamental parts of the constitution of many hunting countries. If such a jubilee could be accorded to some provincials, as was most prudently given for three years to Leicestershire, when, finding, from the scarcity of foxes, that the country was almost worn out, Mr. Meynell removed the whole of his establishment, *pro tempore*, to the borders of Huntingdonshire and Bedfordshire—hunting the countries in occupation of Lord Fitzwilliam, and the Cambridgeshire—then might such reformatations be securely effected; but under no other than such circumstances, would it be prudent to venture upon anything of the kind, or attempt to disturb the existing stability of things, wholly dependent upon the sufferance of so many conflicting interests. Though last of the requisites enumerated in the doggerel distich I have quoted,—the “foxes plenty,” is by no

means the least of the bargain. No one, who had enjoyed that plenty, would like to brave any alterations which might be calculated to affect (however temporarily), the existence of such an essential.

"Tis better far to bear the ills we have,
Than fly to others which we know not of ;"

and, perhaps, it is as immaterial to the master of the hounds, as to any one of his constituents, that he should "hold a candle to the devil ;" or, to use another vulgarism, "pay through the nose" for everything. These demands come within calculation of the expenses of the country ; they are nothing new, nor can they be matters with which any one can be unacquainted, on taking office. It is less, therefore, on behalf of masters of hounds, than as a matter worthy the consideration of any hunt, about to commence *de novo*, or having the power of improving the usual order of things, that I have alluded to defects in the management of countries, and have expressed a desire for change of system. In offering a show of reason for such a wish, it will be right to point out a few of the present evils, which appear to me chiefly to require new enactments, and for such a task I may not be perhaps, altogether, unqualified, considering that in Hertfordshire they have been allowed to increase, and arrive at an extent, which has, I believe, no parallel in any other country. In so doing, inasmuch as I cannot contemplate the prospect of any change in my own time (nor could I countenance

the hazard of such an undertaking, were it more feasible than it is), I must be acquitted of any other motive than that of arousing the attention of those whom it may concern, to the importance of the subject. It is money which forms the sinews of war—it is the “money makes the mare to go.” Without money, hunting must fail; and if there be in all countries more or less difficulty in the provision of adequate funds for its support, it is so much the more necessary to guard against the entail of any unnecessary expenditure. Of the two principal evils of the present system, to which I allude, the one is the natural consequence of the other. In the first place, I condemn the fixed price set upon each day’s amusement, the extravagance of the terms upon which hounds leave their kennel, as likely to operate, at some time or other, seriously against bye days; and as an increase of contingent expense, which might well be spared. Secondly, I assert that, with all the good-will and support of the nobility, squirearchy, and yeomanry, which is nowhere more liberally bestowed than in Herts,* the master of hounds in this, or any other country similarly circumstanced, is virtually at the mercy of gamekeepers and earth-stoppers. For every fox that is found, from one end of the country to the other, the sum of one sovereign is booked,

* The Marquis of Salisbury, who never hunts, munificently gives £200; and Lord Verulam, who is also content to leave the representation of his former prowess in the field to his sons, £100 to the hounds; besides the utmost exertion of all the patronage and support which their extensive possessions afford.

allowed, and regularly paid. The fees of earth-stoppers, from half-a-crown, to ten or fifteen shillings, according to the number of stops within the province of each, amount, on the average, to four pounds per diem. Thus, supposing that the sport is limited to the finding of one fox, we start with an expense of five pounds, as the smallest tax upon the day—independent of all the inevitable wear and tear. So long as these subordinates have as much interest in foxes, as farmers have in their stock or any kind of property, it is not to be wondered that the animal abounds; and it is equally clear that it would be better that they should cost two sovereigns each, than that the stock should be diminished, seeing that there is no medium; that they either are or are not; that they are altogether preserved, or utterly destroyed; as there is no such thing as modification in the forms of vulpecide.

But, at the same time, in face of the fact, that most of the great game-preservers have as much, or far more pleasure in the possession of foxes, than of game in their coverts, it appears somewhat absurd that they should be compelled to become parties to the purchase of them, from the very servants whose duty it is to protect them. The master stipulates with his keeper no less for the protection of the fox, than of the pheasant, and yet allows an extraordinary premium to be paid; a prize to be directly awarded to him for the fulfilment of that, in default of which he should, and generally would, be discharged. In countries where so unsportsmanlike a

practice is permitted, as that of capping for the death of a fox, it is notorious, that a kill is not unfrequently accomplished by a little more mobbing than might otherwise be held defensible. In like manner, where there is a proportionate interest in his life, an earth will be accidentally left open, or drawn, after it has been stopped by the keeper, whose next fee may depend upon his rescue.* This has been the case, where the earth-stopping is not performed by the gamekeeper; as the stopper, who would, for such an occurrence, forfeit his ticket, would be the only loser; but without entering, at the present moment, into the separate consideration of matters connected with the earth stopping, and viewing only the reprehensible parts in the effects of the anomalies I have described, it is evident that they are the result of a want of foresight; an absence of due consideration in those with whom they originated, rather than of any organization of wrong principles. Reflection upon the policy of these regulations, brings

* The view halloos of this fraternity must be regarded with caution, at the time when a fox is sinking within the precincts of their range; more especially if the run has been a ring, and the fox has led the chase back to the domain whence he was routed, and where he will repay the trouble of a keeper in doing his utmost to mislead the hounds, that he may live to fight another day. At the same time that the said keeper is venting curses upon his depredations, and invoking his destruction by all the powers of earth or air. It is a new feature in the records of fox-hunting—this accusing gamekeepers of an over tenderness towards the wily animal; but did not a shower of gold procure for Jupiter free access to the brazen towers of the secluded Danae? One fox may live to be worth his weight to his guardians. Once, and only once, within my memory, the experiment of a bagman was hazarded in a place of unenviable notoriety for blanks; but the trick was, as usual, too palpable; hounds disdained the alien carcass easily subdued, and the speculation failed.

us back to the homely proverb with which I commenced my notice of them. "What is everybody's business, is nobody's." The master of the hounds is left precisely in the situation of a county member, who is fain to receive some votes, as favours yielded to his personal influence. He has to propitiate and allay the hastily imbibed prejudices of one man; to conciliate and soothe the wounded dignity of another; to admit, without reference to the realities of the case, that he was too much on the north, and too little on the south side of the country, in the preceding season; to promise hecatombs of heads and brushes, as trophies in revenge for peafowls, and all other birds, wild or domestic, taken from house or tree-tops; to grant to Mr. Boreham the privilege of coursing; and to Mr. Doubtful, that of shooting, *ad libitum*, over his property, in consideration of their zeal for *his peculiar sport*, towards the furtherance of which no private sacrifices, on his part, must be spared. To a certain extent, this is all very well. The manager of the hounds must be, ostensibly, the manager of the country. He alone must be responsible for all errors of omission or commission; for the whole conduct and proceedings of the hunt; but still his attention should be as little as possible distracted from the multitude of concerns which necessarily fall to his share, by being called to the constant consideration of affairs which should require no regulation on his part. There is quite enough of by-play, quite enough of work behind the

scenes, little dreamed of by those who, upon the close of one season, await only its results in the next. If a master of hounds had nothing whatever to do with the sport, further than that of providing what belongs to him, of the means necessary to its enjoyment, the country might still be sufficiently indebted to him. If he properly performs his duty to the utmost that can reasonably be expected of him—if all in his department be “done well, and as it should be done,” he may, with the truth and modesty, and in the words of Othello, say—

“I have done the State some service, and they know it ;
No more of that.”

The remedies which I would suggest, for all that is objectionable in the administration of general affairs, affecting the commonwealth of the hunt, may be comprehended in a few words ;—I would not entirely abolish rewards to keepers, by way of encouragement, in shape of *douceurs* at Christmas, or at the end of the season ; but I would have no regular charge for finds, nor even regular charges for earth-stopping, excepting in coverts expressly hired for the purposes of the hunt. There, such payments might be a part of the wages of those employed ; but I would have the preservation of the foxes, and the stopping of the earths for hunting, matters entirely dependent upon their respective proprietors. I would have every lord of a domain, make a point of enforcing his determination to contribute, gratuitously, all in his power to the noble sport. In-

stead of any regular bill, amounting to from ten to fifteen pounds, to be presented by a keeper, as the price of his forbearance, in permitting the existence of animals considered obnoxious to game, and, in reality, destructive to the rabbits, which are his perquisites, I would have five pounds the maximum of remuneration. Such a sum might be adequate compensation to any good servant, for the trouble of doing his duty, and would be received merely as a token of approbation of the manner in which he had discharged it, when the success of his endeavours entitled him to such consideration. There can be no reason why under-keepers, or other labourers, might not as well undertake the earth-stopping, on account of their regular employer, as on that of recompense from a separate body. The feasts might still be continued, for it is a good custom, that of assembling together all who are in any way subservient to the interests of fox-hunting, and affording them a jollification, from which they will not separate without having imbibed a larger flow of those kindly feelings towards the common cause which it is intended to promote. It has been always the custom in Herts, to hold two of these revels, one on each side of the county; the huntsman presiding: they are attended by all the gamekeepers, earth-stoppers, *et hoc genus omne*, of the districts; the annual expense of both seldom exceeds thirty pounds; and they tend to implant, and keep alive, sentiments most desirable to cherish. But this is not all; according to the present "custom of the

country," the object of these meetings is, a regular audit, a systematic settlement of accounts. The only difference between these, and the generality of such meetings on business, is this, that here each guest, instead of disbursing, is prepared with a stated demand for certain dues, to be then and there received, previous to participation in the cheer provided for him by his debtor. After a rigid scrutiny of all claims, by the huntsman, who is the chancellor of exchequer on these occasions, two hundred and fifty pounds is the least which can be set down, in round numbers, as the sum which passes through his hands in distribution; and it is well, then, if he succeeds in giving satisfaction to the majority. Here is a distinct charge upon the country, averaging from two hundred and seventy, to three hundred pounds per annum, for the finding of foxes only; not one shilling for the hire of an acre; not one sixpence towards compensation for damages; but every farthing as a bonus upon the mere preservation of animals, which would otherwise be destroyed as vermin. Although I have heard of no other country where a fox is better worth his weight in gold, I find that, in some others, it is customary to give as much as half a sovereign for each find. This, though not altogether a sovereign remedy, is meeting the evil half way, and the reduction in the sum total would, of course, be commensurate. But in how many more countries, ay, and in the midst of game preserves, do foxes swarm, where nothing in shape of a reward is given; where

fees, or feasts, are unheard of; and blank days equally unknown? Nothing is so difficult to uproot, or set aside, as long-standing abuse. Nothing more incontrovertible than the answer, that such always has been the case. There is an old and true story of some fine old English gentleman, who, having long borne with the caprice and misbehaviour of an old and long-favoured domestic, on finding his patience quite exhausted (the good servant being transformed into a hard master), informed him that the time had arrived when it was desirable to part. "Part!" cried the knight of the napkin, "and pray where may your honour be going then?" Such would be the feeling of our out-of-door ministers, upon any hint as to the abolition of rights sanctified, in their eyes, by custom. "Where then," would they say, "where then might we be going to hunt?" Rash, indeed, would be the attempt of any man to stem the tide of long-indulged venality; to pull a hornet's nest about his ears; and bitterly might he feel the stings which vindictive malice might inflict upon him. Nothing but the combined energy of the whole county,—a determined resolution to shake off the incubus of such a thralldom,—could place a hunt in a proper position, in relation to its dependencies; and, even then, some time might be required for a reaction from the staggering effects of a suspension of the stipendiary system. Where such rules have been established, all that remains for a master of hounds, subjected to their dominion, is to guard against their increase; to consider

the sacrifice of the requisite sum as a necessary evil ; in short, to make the best of a bad bargain. Having cited Hertfordshire, as eminently under the influence of an extravagance in expenditure, I am bound to state, that in no other country can the subscription be better conducted. Not only is a liberal sum subscribed on paper, but (what is not always the same thing) it is most regularly paid. The payment is guaranteed by a few spirited members of the club, and by the indefatigable exertions of another, who kindly undertakes the office of secretary to this committee, the funds are forthcoming when due. In addition to a subscription of £1450 towards the hounds (the actual expenses of which I will hereafter transcribe), £100 are given by the club towards the expenses of the country ; and all casual contributions are applied to the same purpose. It is especially incumbent upon me to avow, that in no quarter of the globe can a master of hounds be more generously supported than in this our provincial. It is not against effects so much as causes, therefore, that I inveigh, in denouncing the principle of high payment for that which should, and might, have been obtained gratis, at the origin of the hunt. And when we consider that the same money might be better diverted into other channels ; that two or three hundred pounds are no trifle in the calculation of expenses ; it is well to warn the novice, anxious only for the end, and reckless as to the means, against sowing the seed which, when once rooted, cannot easily be exterminated.

“Principiis obsta, sero medicina paratur.”

With regard to earth-stopping, in the abstract, as nothing is more mortifying than running constantly to ground, it is obvious that where earths exist as numerous as in Herts, and many other countries, no expense can be spared in the labour of stopping them, till the arrival of that Utopian æra, when all such matters shall be undertaken by the owner or occupier of the soil; but setting aside any difficulties, as to the proper attention to these earths, I am satisfied that they are evils even when efficiently attended to. I have considered Mr. Smith's plan of doing away with them entirely by stopping them for the season, in all its bearings, since he was good enough, verbally, to communicate the notion to me, and since I have seen the same in print; I believe that he is entitled to all the merit of the idea, and I am convinced that it must answer beyond all other methods yet proposed or practised. I have listened to diversities of opinion upon this subject, for even in this all are not unanimous. Some contend, that the foxes, accustomed to lie under ground, would, in severe weather, find exposure to the cold too much for them, and would altogether shift their quarters, if they did not fall victims to the want of shelter; but why should they be more sensible of cold than their brethren, which are, what is called, stub-bred—strangers to subterranean enjoyment,

“For that delight they never knew,
And, therefore, never missed?”

If they are left tolerably quiet, that is, not routed out

of their turn (for no covert likely to show sport should be drawn too often), I should not fear their changing quarters because they are obliged permanently to put up with some snug warm kennel above ground. Foxes have a feline attachment to their homes ; and, with that wonderful instinct which directs the return of dogs, in a manner wholly unaccountable, any given distances to the places whence they have been removed, foxes are known regularly to retrace their steps ; like other *feræ naturâ*, they become naturalized on the spots where they are bred, and are generally to be found within the scope of their native regions. In the spring, when anxious to pay their *devoirs* to the fair, dog-foxes do not consider the absence of a railroad as any impediment to their nocturnal visits ; but, Leander like, they will dare the space of flood or field, in their travels towards the object of their affections. It is then that runs occur unheard of at any other time ; and it is fortunate that bold Reynard does not invariably pay the forfeit of his life for his gallantry, for seasoned foxes are no less necessary to sport than seasoned hounds. The cubs of the year, however vigorous, have not sufficient knowledge of the world to face any extent of country. For this reason, the plan of closing the earths in October, and keeping them fast till the breeding season (when they must be opened, as you cannot change the nature or propensities of the animal), is also to be recommended, as foxes would acquire a greater habit of locomotion, be more frequently disturbed, and,

therefore, necessarily more acquainted with country. This plan would also obviate the risk of an occurrence which, it is to be feared, is only too frequent, that of stopping foxes under ground, by the laziness of the earth-stopper—who, upon a dark winter's morning, will not quit his bed—till the fox has returned to ground with his breakfast. Moreover, foxes are notoriously indolent, if not forced by hunger to exertion; they are not nice as to the freshness of their viands, rather approving, like some other foul feeders, of the high *goût*, or odour, of decomposition; and when the pantry below is well stored, they are (especially in blustering weather) in no haste to emerge into the blessings of daylight. If compelled to the practice of that which was a military offence in garrison, the constant “lying out o’ nights,” they must be perpetually on the *qui vive*. In short, I can discover, amongst the many advantages, not one single objection to the obligations thus imposed upon foxes, to adapt their habits in accordance to our wishes, excepting the difficulty of carrying the project into execution. After obtaining the consent of all proprietors, and making some composition with the earth-stoppers for the loss of their vocation, the process of smoking out, and then securing the earths, must occupy no inconsiderable portion of time and labour; nor could these operations be safely committed to any but most responsible persons, if, indeed, they could be at all effected without the personal superintendance of huntsman or whipper-in, at the time when they are busily engaged



PL. VII.

“They hover round,
And claim him as their own.”

SOMERVILLE.

in cub-hunting, &c. Where a great end is to be gained, the trouble attending the means of accomplishment must not be considered; the stopping of a whole country is proved to be practicable beyond a question, Mr. Smith being himself evidence of the fact, and as I have before said, it is an example, doubtless, worthy of imitation. I must, however, take leave to differ from him once more, when he says, "that if every earth in the country was done away with, it would be a benefit to fox-hunting, even as respects the breeding of foxes; for the vixens would breed above ground in furze, or would find drains which no one knows of," &c. Admitting the possibility, which I am much disposed to question, that the whole vulpine race would so far forego their nature as to breed entirely above ground, instead of drawing out every rabbit-burrow, or hole of any kind, or setting themselves again to the work of excavation on their own account; the alternative of "*finding drains which no one knows of*," would be ten times more prejudicial to sport, than all the evils which could possibly result from the regular earths. Foxes would constantly *lie there*; the drains to which I have before alluded, as requiring gratings, or stakes, to oppose the ingress of foxes, are objectionable enough, when they are known, and "a drain *which no one knows of*," &c., must prove an inconceivable nuisance. It is certainly to be regretted that, where earths are known, every vulpecide may know, to a certainty, when to trap a fox; but it is no less true, that the main earths are the salvation of the many who

are too *deep* for their enemies. Unless coverts are well guarded, a litter of cubs is, probably, nowhere so safe from molestation as within the bowels of the earth, where even those bred above ground are often removed, by the vixen, when she may flee thither for sanctuary. We must, therefore, weigh well the pros and cons, before deciding upon the demolition of such places of refuge. I had serious thoughts of attaching to the hunting establishment, an earth-stopper for a whole district, independent entirely of the local professors in this department ; but here, again, the difficulty presented itself of reforming (even when that term is synonymous with the improvement of) things that have been. By dispensing with the services, it would unadvisedly provoke the hostility, of a whole body, too well acquainted with the power of working mischief ; but where the expense of an extra servant is no object, it would be very desirable to have an active supervisor, responsible for the proper performance of their duties.

With regard to gamekeepers, and the manner in which they are supposed to be concerned in the destruction of foxes, I have already shown the interest which they have in their preservation ; nor do I believe that this interest would be decreased, were they moderately rewarded, instead of immoderately overpaid for their pains. Many of the cleverest and most successful in their calling, have a spice of the true spirit within them, a lurking passion for the cry of hounds, a feeling of enjoyment in the sight of them, which is evinced by the

desperate fight they will make over the country upon their rough hobbies, whenever they have opportunity. Still, an aversion to foxes is born with the majority of the craft, notwithstanding the now well-established and indisputable fact, that pheasants and foxes will flourish abundantly together.

“Lupis et agnis quanta sortito obtigit,*
Tecum mihi discordia est.”

This is exactly descriptive of the sort of innate feeling with which a thorough-bred gamekeeper regards a fox ; and it cannot be denied, that there are times and seasons when “Mr. Reynolds” tries his patience. Some affirm that the cunning rogue will watch the incubation of hen pheasants, deferring the slaughter of the old bird till the repast is enriched, not only by *poached* eggs, but by the callow brood, just ready to break the bondage of the shell. No fox-hunter—I may say, no sportsman—will grudge the little loss which they may occasion, of a few birds, which might have served for the diversion of some one man. The direction of one doubly-perforated piece of iron, cannot stand in competition with the sport of hundreds on horseback ; but this is not to the point, or, as the keeper himself would say, “neither here nor there ;” —“*de gustibus non est disputandum ;*”—we must not quarrel with a man’s taste, if he be determined to protect every head of his game from all invaders. I would

* “οὐδέ λίκου τε καὶ ἄρνες ὁμόφρονα θημὸν ἔχουσιν,
ἀλλὰ κακὰ φρονέουσι διαμπερές ἀλλήλοισιν.”

HOMER’S IL.

merely suggest, for the benefit of our precious friend fox, that every chance should be given him of avoiding condemnation ; a few rabbits thrown about in different parts of the covert, during the breeding season, which is the only time when pheasants suffer from their attacks, will occupy their attention. A little sulphur sprinkled round a nest, the least smearing of tar on the grass or plants contiguous, or even a sheet of white paper, will prove a security almost, if not quite, infallible. Some of the farm-yards on my own property, situated near the harbour of several litters of foxes, have sustained some considerable losses in poultry. The tenant of one, who had complained of the greatest havoc last year, has, during the whole of this summer, entirely escaped their visits ; the out-houses having been under repair, and newly coated with coal-tar : as all around have suffered in a greater degree, it is fair to impute his exemption to this simple circumstance. If a little more care were taken of fowls, by shutting them all up at night in the hen-house, it might prove still more effectual.

In summing up the catalogue of offences where-withal the foxes may be chargeable, it is well to observe, that if they are no better since the Reform Bill, neither are they, in any degree, worse in their habits than formerly. It is, therefore, to be hoped, that there is no less disposition on the part of all, in any way subjected to the effects of their marauding propensities, to tolerate their peccadilloes, in consideration of the preponderating benefits that their existence confers upon

the country. There is, happily, enough of British spirit left in all rural districts with which I am acquainted, to ensure that desirable result of "foxes plenty," for the present; there is no reason to despair of their continuance for the future. In closing my exhortation in behalf of foxes, I shall not, therefore, make any hackneyed appeal to the feelings of the community, as sportsmen; but I will entreat all, in any way interested in the concerns of rural life, to remember, that fox-hunting is the very last link of the chain of amusement which has bound country gentlemen to their homes. This has been lately deemed so unimportant a branch of statistics, that the mere mention of anything bearing upon the recreative privileges of the country, in the august assembly of St. Stephen's, would draw down a shower of most unqualified derision upon their hardy advocate; but it is for those who live more remote from cities, whose lot it is to pass their lives farther apart from the "busy hum of men," to consider how, and in what manner, the residence of the owners upon their respective estates affects the interest of the rural population. If ever this was worthy of a thought, it is doubly so in the present generation. I say, far more so now than when land was at its best—when the high war-prices of all agricultural produce maintained the farmer in a state of affluence, which was communicated to the tradesmen, and all the middling classes of the surrounding towns and villages. Now, that the power of the railroads threatens to sweep off all that has hitherto

caused the life, the bustle, and traffic of provincial towns, what have they to depend upon, but the support of the resident nobility and gentry belonging to them? It is a melancholy fact, that times are not what they were in this respect. From a variety of causes, irrelevant to our present subject, where, formerly, there were ten, there is not now one, of all the country-seats between Islington and Edinburgh, and as far south, east, or west, which is kept up in the style of our ancestral hospitality. Silence too generally prevails in the halls of our forefathers :—

“Oh! 'twas merry in the hall,
When beards wagged all ;
We shall ne'er see the like of it again.”

It is obvious, that the facilities of locomotion, the consequent influx of all wealth to one focus of dissipation, that of the metropolis, are partly causes to which such changes are attributable ; but we have nothing to do with causes, we are looking at effects—at matters as they now stand. How many families, after a season in London, spend the remainder of their incomes on foreign shores. The evil of absenteeism, so fatal to the sister country, is already shedding its sickening hues over the fading, but not yet departed glory of old England. And is it not the duty of every man to put his shoulder to the wheel, to do his utmost to render his own land a land of happiness, to promote the amusement and innocent pastimes of all classes of society? But to return to the way in which all this is particularly

connected with the maintenance of fox-hunting, which, I have asserted, is, so far as concerns general relaxation from farming, and all other occupations, fraught, more or less, with the cares of business—the last tie, the last firm hold upon the country gentleman.—

From the increase of population, and for some other reasons, the resources of amusement have been, of late years, drawn into a much narrower compass than heretofore ; without amusement in the country, it is not surprising that many leave their homes either for the varieties of touring, the diversions of the capital, or the watering places. Shooting, which, in the interval of the chase, was wont

“To solace many a neighbouring squire,”

is now a dead letter, excepting in the domains of grandees, protected by an army of keepers and watchers. The last new Game Bill put the finishing stroke to the preservation of game, on petty principalities. The sheltering roof of one “licensed dealer in game,” covers the whole multitude of crime committed by all the gangs of poachers in the vicinity. Previous to this enactment, some show of concealment was necessary ; some little delicacy was requisite in the disposal of the booty ; but now all obstacles are removed, by a safe and sure asylum for the spoil ; a premium is offered to successful theft ; the perpetrator has only to escape detection in actual commission. It is well known that these dealers consider game, which is shot, scarcely worth their purchase ;

consequently the art of snaring is assiduously cultivated; children, from their infancy, are instructed in its rudiments; and, long before they arrive at the wiring of a hare, these embryo heroes of a "shiny night, in the season of the year," are able, with horsehair nooses, dexterously to effect the capture of any number of partridges and pheasants, where there are any such objects for the employment of their skill. During the breeding season, in order to keep their hands well in (the occupation of picking and stealing) the trade which thrives best with them, they industriously gain possession of all the eggs within the range of a Sunday's ramble, over any ground unguarded by a host of sentinels. For these, also, they obtain a ready sale. Under such circumstances it would be, indeed, something extraordinary, if the diversion of shooting were to be enjoyed as before. In many places where, within my memory, game abounded, there would now be as reasonable expectation of finding a five pound note as one head of any description. The pastimes of winter, "*sub Jove frigido*," are not so numerous as those of the summer's day; then cricket, bowls, quoits, or a hundred other exercises, not to mention the race-course, the gentle art of angling, or the exciting pleasures of sailing, may occupy the leisure hours; but all these vanish with September's sun. Partridge-shooting, which has deteriorated less than any other *chasse au fusil*, may endure for its brief season; but there is a monotony in the pursuit, militating against the permanence of its charms.

The time is then at hand so well described by one unconscious of all the beauties he depicted :—

“Nor yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed ;
Nor Autumn yet had dash'd from every spray,
With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away :
But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack,
Now, therefore, issued forth the spotted pack.”

COWPER.

The racing campaign has terminated with the Newmarket Houghton Meeting, and then is the time when all the chivalry of England find their minds attuned to the sport not elsewhere so to be enjoyed in all the kingdoms of the earth. The desire of the one sport leaves St. James's tenantless; the bow-windows of White's and Boodle's are deserted; their occupants are then, as they have been humorously delineated by Mr. Paul, “candidates for *Brookes's*.” Happily, that one sport still remains uninjured by the march of innovation. The Noble Science flourishes, not only in pristine purity, but in maturity of excellence. The breed of hounds has arrived, if not at absolute perfection, at such a degree as may content its votaries; nor is there any lack of goodly steeds; and tell it not in Gath, cry it not in Askelon, that there ever can be lack of foxes; that any paltry considerations can effect the destruction of a race of animals, possessing attractions alone sufficient to induce a tide of wealth into the country. Those who duly consider what the country would be without

fox-hunting, will scout a vulpecide as a common enemy. It is needless to dilate upon the advantages to be derived from this pursuit; they are, and I trust ever will be, so well understood, that whenever it has happened that any efficient establishment has had cause to complain of the want of foxes in one season, its legitimate supporters have generally found means to redeem their character in the next.

Finally, in recommendation of a country life, and of the expediency of encouraging all that tends to the enjoyment of rural occupations, be it remembered that they are far more dependent upon natural, than artificial circumstances; that any attempt at the destruction, or neglect of the improvement, of the sources of rational and innocent diversion is at variance with the grand precept of "doing as we would be done by," and an abuse of the gifts of Providence.

"God made the country, and man made the town."

Each season has its own peculiar charm, it is the work of our own hands that occasions any mixture of gall and wormwood with the milk and honey so bounteously bestowed upon us.

To the true votaries of the chase, there is much in this chapter which may seem a work of supererogation, but they must remember that it is addressed to all classes of readers, in the humble hope that its circulation may not be entirely limited to the descendants

of Nimrod (Diana, it is supposed, left no progeny), and that—

“Those may hunt, who ne’er did hunt before,
And those who always hunted—hunt the more.”

There is nothing speculative in my statements, as to the financial regulations, or general policy ; all are strictly matters of fact. I shall never forget the concluding advice of Lord Petre, to whom, some years since, I applied for hints on these subjects ; he having, for a very long period, maintained a pack of foxhounds in an unvarying style of excellence in all departments. Having, one morning, at Arthur’s Club, in St. James’s Street, kindly and patiently assisted me in committing to paper the details of all evident and probable contingencies, he wound up our conference by this remark : “Remember, however, that after all this, you will never have your hand out of your pocket, and must always have a guinea in it.” It is immaterial to the world, how far I have found this memento borne out by my own experience. My only motive for offering any estimate of the funds requisite for carrying on the war in our provincial, is the hope that it may not, at some future day, be found wholly useless to my successors, long after the rest of my lucubrations may have been forgotten. Any account of expenses actually incurred, must be far preferable to the best estimate of those which may be (however reasonably) anticipated ; at the same time, a faithful extract from my own accounts, for

one year, would be but fallible, unless I could arrogate a discretion in their disposition to which I have no claim. The rule must not be taken, either from a want of capacity for economy on the one hand, or from (that which is far from my case) the affluence which causes indifference to items on the other. It is a duty which we owe, not only to ourselves, and to the proper use of means with which we are entrusted, but to the cause, to steer a middle course, avoiding equally parsimony and profusion. "Waste not, want not," should be the ruling principle. If I have not been able to bring down my own expenditure within the compass of the following schedule, I can vouch for its accuracy, as a calculation of all expense absolutely requisite, and inevitably contingent upon an effective establishment, for three days per week, or seven days per fortnight, in Herts; of course, entirely exclusive of the personal concerns of a master of hounds, with regard to his own hunting.

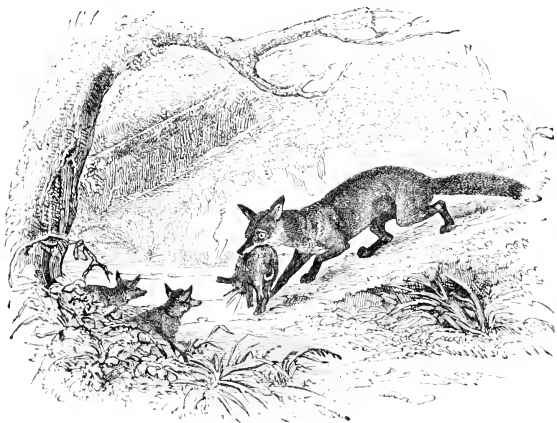
Expenses from January 1st, 183—, to January 1st, 183—, for an establishment of twelve horses, and fifty couples of hounds.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Huntsman	105	0	0			
First whipper-in £55, second £45	100	0	0			
				205	0	0
Bills for clothes, boots, &c.				55	0	0
HORSES.						
Four helpers, at 12s. per week, for thirty-six weeks	86	8	0			
Two ditto for sixteen ditto	19	4	0			
Twenty loads of hay, at £5	100	0	0			
One hundred and twenty-five quarters of oats, at 30s.	187	10	0			
Straw, by contract	20	0	0			
Blacksmith	50	0	0			
Saddler	25	0	0			
Farrier	25	0	0			
Fourteen quarters of beans, at 5s. per bushel	28	0	0			
				541	2	0
HOUNDS.						
Fifteen tons of meal, at £14	210	0	0			
Flesh	100	0	0			
Feeder, 12s. per week, for 52 weeks	31	4	0			
Forty tons of coals, at 35s.	70	0	0			
Druggist	20	0	0			
				431	4	0
Taxes for hounds and horses				72	5	0
Huntsman's book for carriage of goods and sundries	80	0	0			
Feasts for keepers, &c.	32	2	0			
Repairs of kennel and stables	18	18	0			
				131	0	0
				1435	11	0
Earth-stopping, and fees to keepers for finds				250	0	0
Annual allowance for purchase of horses				200	0	0
				1885	11	0
*Total				1885	11	0

The foregoing estimate includes, with the exception of hacks, all that I can set down, as comprehended in the actual and necessary cost of horses and hounds,

* This analysis of expenses refers to the period in which it was written—1839.

wholly independent of the master, whose expenses must vary so materially with circumstances, that it would be useless to say more, with regard to his own hunting, than that four good horses, with good luck, will keep him well mounted; and that less than that number must be insufficient, even in the absence of those casualties which are so rarely escaped. There are a variety of trifles which cannot be taken into account, fully justifying the remark which I have given, as the result of Lord Petre's experience; but, at the same time, I should say, that, with any notion of the business, and with common prudence in the management, a provincial, such as Hertfordshire, may be well hunted for the sum of two thousand pounds per annum. Whether the outlay upon this or other countries, has or has not been yet brought within such compass, is not to the point.





(Earth-stopper.)

CHAPTER XIII.

“Singula quid referam? Nil non laudabile vidi.”

OVID.

Of Provincial Countries—Fox-hunting in Hampshire—Mr. Assheton Smith—His career in Leicestershire—Character as a Sportsman and Horseman—Removal to Hampshire—Tedworth and its *Agréments*—Visit to the Kennel—Reception there—Description of the Kennel and Premises—Stables, &c., &c.—Appearance—Local Advantages—Huntsman—Entry—Stamp of Hounds—*Radical* good—Success of the Pack—Horses—Summary of this Sketch—Plans of the Building.

AT the commencement of these my observations upon the maintenance of the Noble Science, and upon the management of a pack of foxhounds, I have laid some stress upon the art of attaining the grand desideratum of “doing the thing well, and as it should be done.” The kennels of the Belvoir and the Quorn, the

usual establishments of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, not omitting those of Sir R. Sutton, Lords Yarborough and Fitzwilliam, in adjoining counties, might either of them serve as examples. They stand, with regard to capabilities and advantages of country, in the position which Newmarket occupies in the racing world. The temptations which such entries offer to the enterprise of a master of hounds—the support which is naturally afforded to hunting, where men most do congregate for this especial purpose—leave no room to question that these things are as they should be. It is taken for granted, that, in these districts, nothing is wanting that judgment or liberality can supply; and the supposition, generally speaking, is warranted by the experience of those who have had opportunity of obtaining evidence of the fact. In directing the humble efforts of my pen towards the encouragement of hunting in every country capable of raising “a cry of dogs,” I have not dwelt upon those localities where its due support should ever be considered as a matter of course. I have studied rather for the benefit of those who are strangers to Melton, to whom the Coplow is a *terra incognita*, who are, and should be, contented with hunting as they find it, whose duty it is to make the best even of a bad country; to bring out in bold relief the bright instances of less favoured provinces, where the return of sport has not only equalled, but far exceeded, the utmost exhibited in those countries where Nature has been most profusely lavish of her gifts.

Such has been and will be the case ; but it must be the result of that combination of skill and energy which can adapt itself to the peculiar exigencies of a locality ; thus compensating for deficiencies, and rising superior to obstacles, which, to an inferior genius, might have appeared and proved insurmountable. With this view, I have been desirous of laying before my readers the diagram of a kennel and stables, connected with an establishment, which, in all that constitutes perfection in every department, may challenge comparison with any in the world—situated in a county of no greater pretension, as a hunting country, than that of Hampshire. It is true that this unpretending shire, or county of Southampton, can boast no fewer than five packs of foxhounds ; a circumstance which redounds highly to the honour of its inhabitants, considering that there is scarcely a quarter which does not abound in difficulties, rather than in the advantages conducive to success. The *ménage*, which I cite as well worthy the notice of every votary of the Science, appertains to one of no less renown as a sportsman than Thomas Assheton Smith, Esq., of Tedworth. It might savour of fulsome adulation to invest any man with imaginary endowments ; to claim for him the credit of all that partial prejudice might be disposed to accord to him, by placing him only in the reflection of that glass wherein we were ourselves accustomed to behold him. But the incense of flattery will not arise through a plain and simple record of facts. We cannot—

“Gild refined gold, or paint the lily,
Or add fresh perfume to the violet.”

In speaking of the great captain of the age, it would be difficult to overstrain the voice of eulogy. There would be nothing beyond the licence of plain speaking, in affirming, that James Robinson is seven pounds better than any rider on the turf; neither is it necessary to approach in the remotest degree to flattery, in adverting to certain points in any man's character, for which he has been so pre-eminently conspicuous, that the fame consequent upon excellence of any kind has become inseparable from his name. I could not find a better accompaniment for this work, and might, perhaps, be fully justified in giving, as public property, an historical sketch of the life and adventures of Mr. Assheton Smith, seeing that I could nowhere find a fitter model for the rising generation of sportsmen; but it is not for me to *attempt the life* of one who “still lives,” as I hope he long may, “a prosperous gentleman.” It is, indeed, almost superfluous to add, that the individual to whom I allude, is the identical “Tom Smith,” so distinguished during his career in Leicestershire, that his renown had reached even to the ears of Napoleon, by whom, on reception at the French court, he was saluted as “*Le premier chasseur d'Angleterre.*” All are familiar with a series of prints from the pencil of Mr. “Smith of Lorraine,” descriptive of a celebrated run, where Dick Knight, the huntsman of the old Pychley, is represented accomplishing, in most enviable style,

a very difficult egress from a park, over a paling beneath the boughs of a tree ; with which print appear the following lines :—

“Now, Egmont, says *Assheton*—now Contract, says Dick,
By Jove, we will shew these damned Quornites the trick.”

The Assheton here mentioned refers to the father of my present subject, also a great professor in his day, and a distinguished member of the old Pytchley Club, which is all that need be here stated, as to the genealogy of his son and heir, the present Squire of Tedworth, and which is noticed only as another instance of hereditary qualities. About the period that Lord Althorp reigned at Pytchley, Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith was in the zenith of his glory at Quorn, hunting his own hounds with the highest possible satisfaction to all parties. Possessed of adamantine nerves, encased in a frame of iron, he would, with dauntless courage, “ride at anything ;” and although, in speaking of Leicestershire, he has himself since remarked, that he had a fall in every field of it, he would always contrive to be, by some means, on the right side of the most impracticable fences, and foremost with his hounds. The well-known story of his charging the river, together with anything like a narrative of his feats by flood and field, would alone fill a volume ; it is more to my purpose to remark what I have learned from his contemporaries, that even in the hey-day of his youth—

“In his hot blood, when George the Third was king,”

he was an instance of the very rare union of coolness and consummate skill as a huntsman, combined with the impetuosity of so desperate a rider; and not only was he the most determined of all riders, but equally remarkable as a horseman.* His practice as a huntsman was, that which is best to be followed in any, but more especially in a good country, that of leaving hounds very much to themselves, although ever on the spot to render assistance if required; but I shall be running riot, or taking heel-way too far back from Tedworth, if I do not hold hard and pull up altogether in this retrospective digression. I can add nothing to the fame of him of whom it has been remarked by a far abler pen, that "amidst the multitude of Smiths, there has been *only one Assheton Smith;*" and well, indeed, and in no common way, has he supported the character of this common, but truly English name. After having hunted not only the Quorn country, but that part of Lincolnshire now occupied by Sir R. Sutton, with equal credit, he arrived at that period of his life which constitutes my plea for adducing his conduct as an example worthy of all imitation. On succeeding to his paternal property in Hampshire, he immediately removed with his establishment to the halls of his forefathers, and commenced the good work of foxhunting,

* I can never forget a remark which I heard in my boyhood, addressed by a veteran to a youthful *débutant*, who was advocating the use of head gear, in the shape of caresson, &c., for the control of a fractious horse, "Keep your hands down. *Tom Smith would show you, that the left hand is the best martingal.*"

under circumstances of such novelty to him, with all the ardour that characterized his *début* at Quorn. Change of country made no change in his ideas. Truly was it sung by the ancient bard—

“*Cœlum non animus mutant qui trans mare currunt.*”

The *animus* with him was still the same; and well did it serve for the infusion of new life and spirit into the country which was destined to be the scene of his future enterprise. The erection of kennel and stables was considered no less necessary than the rebuilding of the family mansion, and both were completed with as much magnificence as could be blended with utility. There is a tone of harmony, throughout the whole, ever visible in works which may be technically called, “in perfect keeping.” Having heard much of the place, and still more of the pack, I gladly availed myself, in the course of my tour this summer, of an opportunity of joining a classical party, upon a visit to both. Being in company with Mr. Barrett, the master of the H. H., Mr. J. T. Waddington, secretary of the H. H., and Mr. Parry, the master of the Puckeridge, we started together, finding the distance within twenty-five miles of our place of rendezvous, upon an expedition congenial to all of us, including an occupant of the rumble of our vehicle, no less a personage than Richard Foster, formerly in the service of Lord Foley, and for the last quarter of a century, the respected and most respectable

huntsman of the H. H., or Hampshire Hounds.—It was said by a Spaniard of Seville,

*“Qui no ha vista Sevilla
No ha vista maravilla,”*

that he who had not seen that famous city, had not seen a wonder. Some such idea was that which occurred to us, in contemplation of all that surrounded us on our arrival at Tedworth. House, garden,* stud, stable, and—though last, not least—the kennel; all affording an admirable specimen of what wealth may effect, when regulated by the taste of an English gentleman. There was but one drawback to the pleasures of the day—the absence of the owner, who was then at his seat in Wales;—but we were, on this account, perhaps, the better able to appreciate the regularity of his system, by the notice of a circumstance which would otherwise have been the less remarkable. I allude to the perfect order which prevailed around, and the extreme attention and civility on the part of all, by whom we, a party of unknown and unexpected visitors, were received. In the time of George the Fourth, “the first gentleman of the age,” it was observable, that no domestics were so obsequiously attentive, or correct in their deportment, as those of the court. Respectful demeanour to all comers is ever the attribute of *gentlemen’s* ser-

* I cannot travel so far beyond the limits of my purpose, as to notice those matters which might well serve for a separate work. The garden alone might afford a treatise on horticulture. There is an extent of glass rarely to be seen in private forcing-houses, providing an abundant succession of grapes for every day throughout the year.

vants. Impertinence, or insolent indifference, is seldom met with, but in the tinselled lacquey of the purse-proud *parvenu*; but it is not always that things will show such evidence of the master's eye, when he is some hundred miles removed, as those which must attract the notice of any observant stranger at Tedworth. Here, from the huntsman to the helper—from the stud-groom to the stable-boy—from servants within to those without doors, all bespoke the retinue of a man maintaining that elevated position in society, which I would hold as one (and that not amongst the least) of the qualifications of a master of foxhounds. To Mr. Northeast, the gentleman officiating as agent for Mr. A. Smith, to whom I am so much indebted for the following plans of building, and the requisite information therewith connected, it would be difficult to express my own acknowledgments, or our sense of the manner in which he, in courtesy, endeavoured to act as the representative of his principal. I cannot forbear the mention of one *trait*, as being in unison with the features of this place:—On returning our thanks to Mr. Northeast, for all the civility we had experienced, and more which had been proffered, conveying, at the same time, our obligations to him for his personal attendance, he assured us, that he should ill have executed the intentions of Mr. A. Smith, if he had done less for any gentleman engaged on a similar errand. I felt prouder than ever of my country, and of the characteristic of fox-hunters.

When, in admiration of the kennel and stables, I

requested to be indulged with a plan of the structure, I learned that at the time Mr. Assheton Smith fixed on the site for the building, he gave a design with his pen on half a sheet of paper, which was put to a scale, and executed by his own carpenter and bricklayer, unaided by any architect or surveyor; consequently, no general plans were in existence; but on being acquainted with my desire, he most kindly gave orders for the preparation of these, for the purpose to which I have assigned them. The Tedworth kennel is built on high ground, falling on two sides; an advantage precluding the necessity of under-drains. Gutter-bricks are laid round each yard, emptying into a gutter on the outside. A pail or two of water, followed by a broom, will sluice the gutter to the cesspool, which (as will appear by the plan) is some distance from the lodging-houses. The bricks in all the yards being laid highest in the middle, the water thrown down falls each way to the gutters. The bricks are dry in a few minutes—a consideration of no slight importance, as all will admit who are acquainted with kennel lameness, and its causes. From having no underground drains, a rat has never been seen upon the premises. Water is laid on by pipes in the walls, and a tap in each yard. The lodging-houses are thatched with reeds, which form the most desirable roofing, with regard to coolness in summer, and warmth in winter. Each lodging-house will contain thirty couples of hounds. The huntsman's and feeder's windows look immediately

into the yards, so that they are both within earshot of the slightest riot.

————— “And with a voice,
Fierce, menacing, o’errule the stern debate,
And quench their kindling rage.”

The boiling-house and flesh-house are sixty-three yards distant from the feeding-house, through a plantation, so that no smell can at any time affect the kennel. On the east side of the huntsman’s house, and kennel, are a whole row of commodious leans-to for bitches with puppies, with a green-yard fenced off. The principal green-yard, in front of the kennels, is one of the most beautiful spots imaginable, as a space for airing the hounds, and for the purpose of inspecting a pack at leisure. Here numerous trees afford the shade for which they were destined; beneath which, benches are placed for the accommodation of the amateur, who, with such a sight as that which is presented at the time from which I date my description, might pass some hours;

“Nec partem solido demere de die,
Spernit—nunc viridi membra sub arbuto
Stratus,”—

while engaged in contemplation of all the beauties before him.

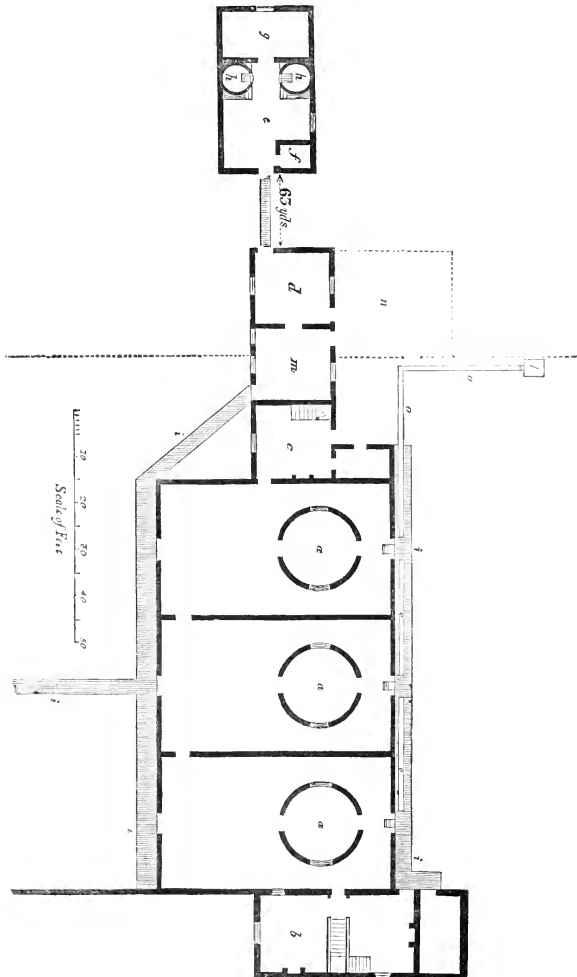
REFERENCE TO THE PLAN OF THE KENNEL.

- a a a* Lodging houses.
b Huntsman's house.
c Feeder's house.
d Feeding-room; straw loft over.
e Boiling-house.
f Meal-room.
g Coal-shed.
h h Boilers.
i i i i Flagging.
l Tank, or cesspool.
m Drawing-room, bedroom over.
n Drawing Court.
o Water-course.
-

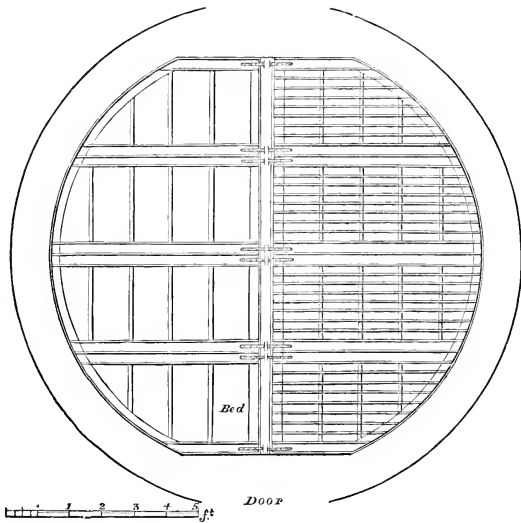
REFERENCE TO THE PLAN OF THE STABLES.

- a* Principal entrance.
b Pilaster.
c Fourteen stalls for hunters.
d Five boxes for hunters.
e Hack stable. Five stalls.
f Stables for race-horses. Five stalls; two boxes.
g Hospital.
h Coach-house; oatmeal bins over.
i i i Pumps.
k k k k Rain-water tanks.
l Eight stalls for coach-horses.
m Harness-room.
n Four-stall stable for post-horses, &c.
o Blacksmith's shop.
p House for coachman; bedrooms over; wash-house adjoining.
q Saddle-room; bedrooms over.
r Mess-room for helpers; bedrooms over.
s s House for groom.
t House for boiling water.
v v v Cellar, pantry, wash-house.
u Bakehouse.
w w w w w Iron grates and drains.
x Cesspool.
y y y Ladders.
z z z z z Drains leading to cesspools outside.

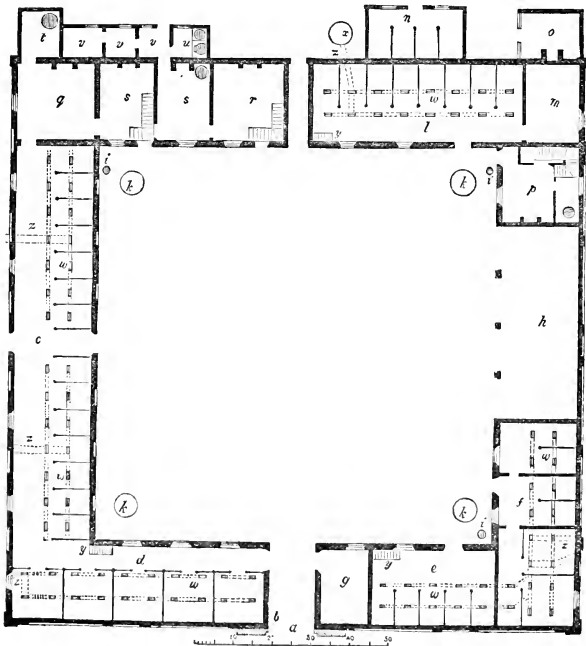
GROUND PLAN OF THE KENNEL AT TEDWORTH.



PLAN OF BEDSTEAD IN THE KENNEL AT TEDWORTH.



PLAN OF THE STABLES AT TEDWORTH.



The stables are built wholly of brick, with a slated roof, from which water is conveyed to four tanks, one in each corner of the stable-yard ; but, as the south east tank is at an inconvenient place for use, a drain conveys water thence to the south-west tank. The stall-boards are deal ; the hind-posts, oak ; the sills, mangers, manger-posts, and all the fittings in front are of slate, not one particle of which has been chipped or broken, since they were constructed in 1829. All the lofts are close boarded ; that over the hunting-stables is used for straw and hay, one place, at the angle, for letting down straw, and two boxes, with side-boards, for hay : this loft will hold forty tons of straw, and a sufficient quantity of hay. Over the racing-stable are corn-bins, capable of containing upwards of three hundred quarters of oats. Over the coach-house is the oatmeal-room, fitted up with five bins that will hold eighty tons of meal. The loft over the coach-house stable is used for stores belonging to the buildings, as it is not required for the use of the stables. The bedroom for the helpers, over the mess-room, is large and airy, and adapted for nine beds. Water is laid on in the centre of the hunting-stable, from a reservoir, and hot water from the copper in the boiling-house, next to the saddle-room. The hunting-stable affords accommodation for nineteen horses ; the coach-stable for eight ; the racing-stable for seven ; the hack stable for five ; the hospital for two ; and the back yard for four post-horses.

I have offered this brief matter-of-fact description of

kennel and stables, merely in explanation of the preceding plans, the merits of which will speak for themselves. The elevation has the appearance of a princely edifice, worthy of the purpose to which it is devoted, that of containing a stud of hunters and a pack of hounds qualified to take the field, in first-rate style, in any country, with every suitable accommodation for the servants; but, as the kennel is the most unique in itself, and that which I should especially recommend for imitation, it will be some satisfaction to those inclined to adopt such a plan, to know that the whole cost of the building, including materials, is estimated at a sum not exceeding £1000. To make a successful imitation, local advantages must, of course, be consulted; air, water, and shade, should be duly considered; and it must be a place very peculiarly qualified for the purpose, that would not fall far short of the original of which I am speaking. I have not attempted details, or to give more than the outline of replies obligingly returned to my inquiries upon main points: but I must not omit to mention the second green airing-yard, at the back of the kennels;—this extends from the doors of the kennel-yards to the verge of a ha-ha, or sunk fence, forming the boundary of the beautiful pleasure-ground beyond. Here the pack may be, in a moment, ushered from their lodging-houses, as in the front space of green sward; and here, by any party proceeding from the mansion through the shrubbery, they may be seen to the highest possible advantage, at the point of sight which, of all

others, is most desirable for such an exhibition, being raised nearly to a level with the eye that approaches them. The *coup d'œil* embraces, at once, the whole anatomy of the hound—legs, feet, ankles,—the whole form appears in a different light from that in which it is generally beheld. For the same reason that, in such a position, faulty shape could not escape detection, the beauties of symmetry are more prominently conspicuous. It would be difficult to conceive anything more complete than all the arrangements:—to my companions, each of whom had been engaged in the formation of a new establishment, and to myself, then in the course of a round of such inspections, some of which might, in the recital, offer a fearful contrast, they were of striking interest. I should utterly fail in the description of that which, to be appreciated, must be seen; I fall back, therefore, upon a repetition of the motto, with which I headed this chapter—

“*Singula quid referam? Nil non laudabile vidi.*”

When I say that, upon being told that the route which we followed to the stud, the stable, and the kennel, was the one by which the fairest of the creation paid their constant visits to the same objects;—when I thought of the feet which had sanctified the ground upon which we trod, of the eyes which were wont to beam with pleasure upon all that was to us most pleasing, and could still hold it to be, in any degree, worthy of such admiration, I felt that it was beyond the power of language to pay to any scene a higher tribute.

We found the huntsman, Burton, slowly recovering from a severe fall, experienced at the end of last season, from the effects of which, I fear, he has since suffered relapse. The condition of his hounds offered ample testimony of the excellence of his system of kennel; and he seemed fully to partake of the relish with which we separately examined the whole of seventeen couples of a most promising lot, put forward as the entry of the present season. Having heard much of the gigantic size of this pack, I was prepared to find them in character more resembling the sort of hound considered best adapted to the chase of the stag, than to fox-hunting; I was, therefore, most agreeably surprised at finding the average height not exceeding that of any other lot of fine well-bred hounds; and still more so, at hearing that the standard had been gradually reduced within the last few years. There are, in Mr. Assheton Smith's country, vast tracts of down, over which a scent will lie so well that the tallest hounds may fly without the trouble of lowering their noses; but there are also many parts where they must stoop—where they must hunt before they run. Having, in my own kennel, a very great favourite, by Mr. A. Smith's Radical, out of his Benefit, I was anxious to see the sire, and could not conceal my delight at finding that, when I had been led to expect Brobdignagian proportions, the hound which, on account of his own merits and those of his blood, was of the highest repute, would scarcely measure two and twenty inches. Inferior only in height to any—superior in performance to most—this Radical had been a chosen

patriarch of his tribe. I should have considered his appellation as a sad misnomer, seeing that

“A rose, by any other name, would smell as sweet,”

had I not remembered, that it is possible to be radically excellent, as well as execrable.

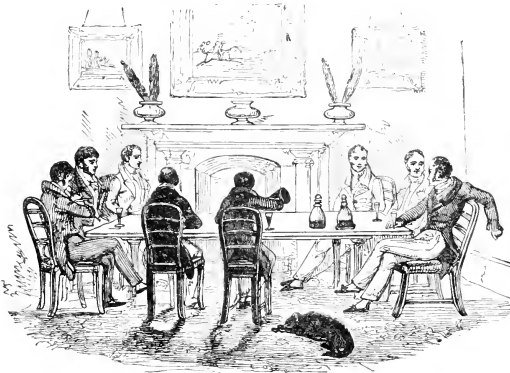
Some of the old dogs are tall, and they may generally be called large hounds; but none of them are overgrown, and they are altogether a most splendid pack. The bitches, and the whole of the entry for this year, do not average above a moderate height. It is not likely that such a sportsman as Mr. Assheton Smith would have been long in any country, without discovering exactly the kind of hound required for it. It is evident that, during the last ten years' residence in Hampshire, he has succeeded in hitting the mark. Be it recorded, in honour of the provinces, that Mr. Assheton Smith has been able to affirm, as an incontrovertible fact, divested of prejudice or partiality, that his sport has not only equalled, but far exceeded that which he had enjoyed in Leicestershire.

Concerning the stables, it will suffice to say, that we found stalls and boxes occupied by that stamp of hunters which might be expected to be found in the possession of one who never knew any other place than that of First in the first flight, and whose means of administering to his will had never been fettered by considerations of the “*res angusta domi*.” The servants' horses are also consistent with the general appointments. Were I to pursue the course common in descriptions of this kind, I might have refreshed this

chapter with the usual gossip—by the relation of what the stud-groom thought, as to the chances of Derby or Oaks, according to the future promise of the Tedworth paddocks—of all that the huntsman said upon the strength of his own ideas on the subjects of our conference, with many other trifles, of individual rather than of general interest; but, in this cursory view of Tedworth, I have carefully avoided entering into details to which I am incapable of doing justice, desirous only to give an outline of an establishment which is, in every respect, an honour to the cause which I am advocating. I consider the manner in which fox-hunting is conducted on this side of a county where it is well carried on in every quarter, a fine specimen of the thing “done well, and as it should be done.” I have only to add, that Mr. Assheton Smith has thus provided for the sport of his own neighbourhood, hunting four days a week, solely at his own expense; to repeat, that the successful result of his endeavours has left him no cause to repent of change of country; and (as my only excuse for any unwarrantable liberty taken with his name), to quote him as a bright example of the satisfaction to be derived from the performance of such a duty as that of residence upon his own property.

In an author's task, according to Lord Byron, there is nothing so difficult as the beginning; “except, perhaps, the end.” The noble poet might have written less doubtingly. “*Finis coronat opus*,” is one of those wise saws, fully supported by modern instances. It is that which makes the lover pause, “ere he set his seal

upon his sheet ;” the orator linger, before he pronounce the last deduction from his premises. Though less vividly influenced, I am free to say, that it is not without solicitude I part with this volume, to me, in every sense, a work of affection. I commenced it solely from an interest in the subject of which it treats : every line I traced, while it was in progress, seemed to bring me nearer the goal I sought ; and now, that my pen is upon its final paragraph, I confess it is with almost a painful anxiety I feel it is about to enter upon its office. I know it has many faults—I trust it may not be entirely without merit : if I part with it in any confidence, it is because I am assured that, can an entire and earnest wish to promote the noblest of our National Sports entitle it to favour, it is not without claims on the sympathy and good-will of the Sportsman.



“ Come on, then, do honour to the jovial place,
And enjoy the sweet pleasures that spring from the chase.”

A P P E N D I X .

LETTER,

ADDRESSED TO THE EDITOR OF THE "OLD SPORTING MAGAZINE,"

ON THE SUBJECT OF

IMAGINARY DAMAGE DONE BY RIDING OVER WHEAT,

And referred to at Page 6.

"SIR,—I take the liberty of offering a few observations upon trespass, a subject affecting the sportsman and the farmer—two parties naturally so dependent upon each other, that, setting aside the good-will which every man is, or ought to be, desirous of maintaining amongst his neighbours, a variance between the sportsmen and farmers of any country must prove equally injurious to the interests of both. *Wilful* trespass is not, nor ever will be, the attribute of a true sportsman; and I must confess, that it is with astonishment I perceive so many farmers in profound ignorance as to this important point. Many there are, it is true, in Leicestershire and in some of the provincials, of the more enlightened: but will it be believed, that no later than November last, while hunting in the Hambleton country, I had what was termed 'a row' with a purse-proud curmudgeon*—a disgrace to the name of agriculturist—who abused me in no measured terms, merely upon the supposition of my having ridden across his wheat? It so happened that, to my certain knowledge, as I could also prove, I had not been upon his or any other man's wheat: hounds were not running; and had I at such a time, by riding over his wheat, given him cause, in his ignorance, to imagine an injury, which would have haunted him till next harvest, in the vision of so many ears less to market, it would, in my mind, have amounted to trespass.

"But, trusting that there are but few of his class in the kingdom, permit me to quote, for the benefit of sporting farmers at large (as also for that of my pugnacious old friend, *if he can read*), two striking instances relative to the imaginary injury of riding over wheat. My apology for trespassing upon your

* Dr. Johnson was at much pains to find the derivation of this word, "Curmudgeon"—it is from the French, "*Cœur-méchant*."

columns is, that I flatter myself they apply to the subject, and are what the lawyers would call 'cases in point.'

"I am informed upon the indisputable authority of an intimate friend, who was well acquainted with the late Lord Y—b—h, that his Lordship was in the constant habit of making compensation to all the farmers of the country over which he hunted, who could lay claim for any injury done to their crops. After a very wet season, he sent for one farmer in particular, the proprietor of a field by the side of a favourite covert, to which, owing to the scarcity of foxes in other parts of the hunt, they had been obliged to have constant recourse. At the end of the season this field was literally destroyed, to all appearance—not a vestige of a blade of wheat being visible, and the soil in every part resembling that of a muddy lane.—'I have sent for you,' said Lord Y—b—h to the farmer, 'to offer you the fair value of the wheat field, which was so trampled upon last season, that I fear you must have been wholly disappointed of your harvest.'—'On no account, my lord (replied this true specimen of an English farmer),—upon no account can I consent to take a farthing of remuneration. So far from the disappointment, for which I was prepared, never in any previous year have I had so good a crop as has been reaped this harvest in that very field, which, at the close of hunting, looked truly unpromising enough.'

"To this I shall add but one more, from the numberless instances which I could quote from my own observation. I was expressing my opinion upon this topic very lately to Lord G—e, and was rejoiced to find one so competent to judge of agricultural matters thoroughly agreeing with me. He assured me that, on his estate in Sussex, he had a field, last season, sown with a peculiar sort of wheat, remarkable for its tenderness, and on that account he had endeavoured to preserve it. Owing, however, to chance, he found this impossible. The hounds ran frequently over it, and, upon one occasion, killed their fox in the centre (near a bush which enabled him to mark the spot), followed, of course, by every horse within reach of the scene. To his surprise, the crop very much exceeded his utmost expectations, and was thicker and finer on and around the spot where, by the death of the fox, it had been more trampled upon than in any other part.

“This and the preceding anecdote I call ‘confirmation strong as proof of holy writ;’ and, with all this before me, I cannot but call querulous farmers in general an infatuated race, blind alike to common sense and their own interests.

“I should not have been thus prolix upon the subject—all that I have said tending only further to establish a fact already notorious—but that I am quite sick of the cry, ‘Ware wheat!’ which is dinned into the ears of all who have not the good fortune to hunt in a grazing county. I am too apt, upon these occasions, to exclaim with the favourite poet of the most classical of your correspondents—

‘O fortunati nimium, sua si bona nôrint,
Agricolæ.’

“I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
“A SPORTSMAN.”

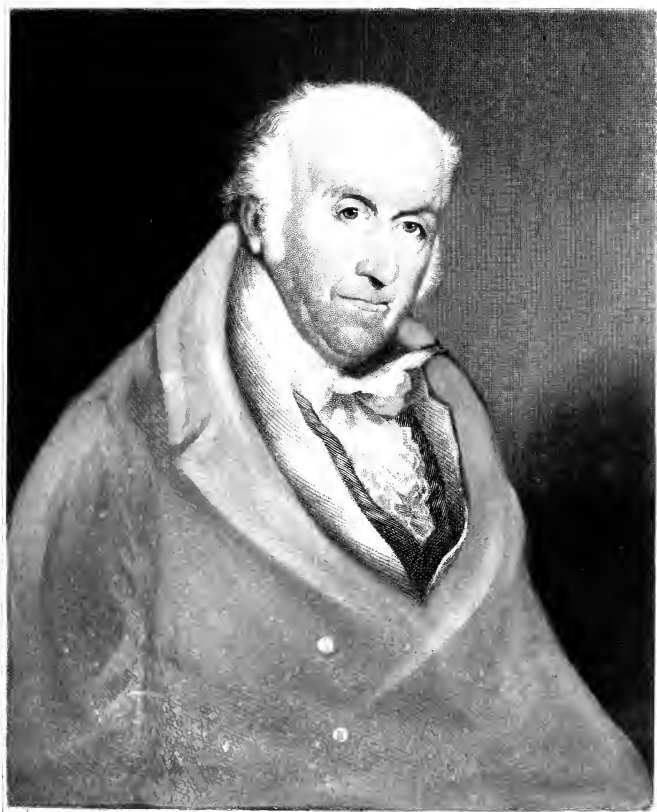
EXTRACT FROM A LETTER

(*Referred to at page 24*)

Which was received, in 1832, from a gentleman who, under the signature of “Thistle Whipper,” has given abundant proof to the readers of the “Sporting Magazine,” of the value of that opinion which I had sought, in confirmation of my own, as to the best of hunting dogs:—

“If, after forty years’ experience, I may offer an opinion upon the kind of hound you have selected, I should say, most decidedly, you are right. I have hunted hare with every description of hound, from the lap-dog beagle to the twenty-six inch southern hound, and have no hesitation in saying,—that no hound living will hunt lower scent than a foxhound, if let alone.”

[Lord Tavistock, himself originally a master of harriers, expressed himself to the same effect; but this, from the veteran to whom I allude, was still stronger; considering that, at the same time, he was endeavouring to procure beagles or southern hounds, having, as he proceeds in the same letter to say, “had riding enough, requiring less pace, and being desirous of gratifying the ear as well as the eye.”]



C. Lorraine Smith

A SLIGHT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
TWO SPORTSMEN OF THE LAST CENTURY.

“Souls attract souls when they're of kindred vein.”

LOVE CHASE.

WITH reference to the nobleness of that which has aptly been termed a “Noble Science,” I have been most anxious to offer some sketch of the great Father of Fox-hunting as a gentleman-like pursuit—of the first of all masters of hounds—of him who has bequeathed to posterity an undying name—the great Hugo Meynell.

“Talk of horses, and hounds, and of *system of kennel!*

Give me Leicestershire nags, and the *hounds of old Meynell!*”

Such was the song and creed of one who wrote in the days when the veteran still flourished; and such is the feeling with which his memory is regarded in the present. But it is less for his excellence as a sportsman, than on account of his pre-eminence as a polished gentleman, that I have been desirous of adducing his example, in contra-position to that of the mere vermin-killers of previous days, whose habits of life had thrown a stain upon the very name of that which they were incapable either of treating or appreciating as a science.

The great Mr. Meynell was designated, by his admiring friends, as "The King of Sportsmen;"—"The Hunting Jupiter." He had earned those titles by the success of his practice,—by the sport which he had shown; but, without an acre of land of his own in Leicestershire (the whole of his extensive estates being situated in remoter counties), he could not have carried on the war, as a stranger, in the very heart of the best hunting country in the world, had not his conduct, from the commencement to the close of his career, been characterized by the deportment which distinguishes a thorough-bred English gentleman. He was, indeed, as much the *répandu* of the *élite* of Grosvenor Square—as much at home at St. James's—as he was at Quorndon, or at Ashby pastures.

"The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones"—

but with reference to this great professor of the science which he adorned, it has been universally allowed by all who knew him, that he was one of the most agreeable and accomplished of men, and that he was most justly estimable in all the relations of social life.

It is much to be regretted, that none of his contemporaries should have thought fit to compile and publish the memoirs of one, who

"Lived not for an age, but for all time"—

seeing that they could not have failed in exciting that interest which they must possess for all sportsmen.

At such a distance of time, it is difficult to ascertain the precise date of Mr. Meynell's first appearance in Leicestershire, and other facts, of minor importance to my purpose, yet highly essential to any one undertaking the task of his biographer; although, from the members of his family, and from his grandson and present representative, Hugo Charles Meynell, Esq., residing and keeping foxhounds upon his property at Hoar Cross Hall, Rugeley, Staffordshire, I have experienced all the courtesy and attention to inquiries, which might have been ex-

pected at the hands of his descendants. My intimacy with the son of one of this great man's most intimate and valued friends, C. Loraine Smith, Esq.—himself of no little celebrity in his day—has enabled me, through that assistance, to lay before my readers some few points connected with his history, which, not having yet been published, may be interesting to those who are disposed, with myself, to regard with reverence all associations of the times to which they refer.

It is to the present Mr. Loraine Smith that I am indebted for the sketch of the chief, which has supplied the frontispiece to this volume, in the act of a colloquy with his huntsman, Jack Raven, upon the merits of a hound called Glider (also introduced in the picture), in the year 1794, by the pencil of his father, of whom he has also afforded me a likeness. The name of Loraine Smith has been so blended, in the course of my researches, with all that I have been able to collect of Meynell, that I have thought it advisable to offer the presentment of both these heroes of the olden time, conjointly, as brethren of the same school, with the following particulars.*

Mr. Meynell had, at no time, more than three or four subscribers to his hounds, and at first only two—Lord R. Cavendish and Mr. Boothby. With Prince Boothby he lived for some time at Langton Hall, and the hounds in those days were kept at Great Bowden Inn, a most convenient place for the Langton and Harborough countries. Mr. Meynell considered horses merely as vehicles to the hounds—in which his heart and soul were centred—in the field; but he well knew the necessity of having beneath him the means of being with them upon all occasions; and, even in those days, when three hundred guineas were considered as an ultra price for a hunter, he did not hesitate to possess himself of South,† a little horse, barely exceed-

* These remarks were written in 1839.

† Mr. Meynell sold this famous horse, South, for 500 guineas, to Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh, who subsequently exchanged him with Lord Maynard for the celebrated race-horse, Surprise—another instance of the value of some hunters of those days. Surprise, a gray horse, by Gimmercrack out of Snapdragon, when the property of Lord Grosvenor, won the

ing fifteen hands in height. There are different opinions as to his proficiency as an elegant horseman ; but it is never disputed, that his progress over a country was, like the whole course of his life, straightforward.

Some of his best horses, in 1792, were known by the following names :—

Miller.

Tom-Tit.

Harry Punt—died after a hard day at Widmerpool, March 21st, 1795.

Leveller Joe.

Chestnut mare.

Mr. Fitzherbert's horse.

He had also a particularly clever hack mare, which he rode to covert, and which was ridden also by the late Marchioness of Salisbury.—This mare was the occasion of the invention of the spring-bar. The groom boy, who rode her upon one occasion having placed his feet in the stirrup-leathers, and been kicked off, was dragged by the leg, and killed. Debrew, Mr. Meynell's valet and *maitre d'hôtel* (probably, as his name would indicate, butler also), a very ingenious and clever man, set his wits to work to prevent the recurrence of a like catastrophe. The present spring-bar was the fruit of his invention. To him also was to be imputed the merit of a spring in a wooden leg, worn by Tom Jones, the second whipper-in. This Tom Jones, if of less notoriety than his namesake, the hero of Fielding, was probably more distinguished and distinguishable in the field. He was a capital horseman, and very active in the saddle. The wooden leg, so far from being of any inconvenience to him, appeared rather useful than otherwise, in creeping by trees,

largest stakes ever run for at Newmarket, or anywhere else—viz., five thousand six hundred guineas. He was named Surprise, having been started with no other view than that of making play for the favourite, another horse of Lord Grosvenor's, ridden by Pratt, who, on discovering the distance which the boy riding the gray had been allowed to gain, exclaimed, laughingly, to those waiting upon *him*—"Now, catch that gray horse,—Who can?"

gate-posts, &c., whenever he could contrive to keep this succedaneum nearest to the obstruction.

Jack Raven was huntsman ; Skinner and Jones whipped in, and, subsequently, Joe Harrison.

Mr. Meynell was somewhat particular in his diet, as every one should be who cares for the preservation of those capabilities for bodily exercise,

——— “ whose use
Depends so much upon the gastric juice.”

He endeavoured to take the greatest amount of nourishment in the smallest possible compass. His usual hunting breakfast consisted of as much as a small tea-cup would contain of a pound of veal, condensed to that quantity. His pocket was always fortified with a small bottle of stimulus, similar to that commonly carried in the present day ; but instead of eau-de-vie, curaçoa, or cherry-bounce, it contained a far better stomachic, in the shape of veritable tincture of rhubarb, to the use of which he was constantly addicted.

The following are extracts from the memoranda of Mr. Loraine Smith, who, during Mr. Meynell's absence, had the command of the Quorn hounds :—

In the year 1792 the Quorn hounds killed 34 brace of foxes.

1793	.	.	.	.	41
1794	.	.	.	.	46
1795	.	.	.	.	26
1796	.	.	.	.	34
1797	.	.	.	.	32
1798	.	.	.	.	38
1799	.	.	.	.	37
1800	.	.	.	.	27

It must be borne in mind, that they then hunted only three days per week, throughout the season ; and that it was very rarely that masters or servants, in those days, were provided with more than one horse per day.

To the curious in such records, the following list of some of

the best horses ridden by Mr. Meynell himself, during the last four years of his hunting, may not be unacceptable :—

1796.	Ben
Hackman	Clunsky
Leveller	Miss Henson
Sheva	Pywell
Hack mare	Mirror
Adamant	Joe Hinchley's bay horse
Entire horse	Loadstone
Valiant	1798.
1797.	Scarificator
Snap	Shark
Magoy	Active
Denmark	Drone
Melon	1800.
Warrior	Newbeth
George	Harrio
Leicester	Hotspur
Mercury	Thereabout

Many of these were thorough-bred, and all of them first-rate hunters, of established repute.

On the 9th of November, 1793, the Quorn hounds killed a fox at Red Hill, with a white ring round his neck, and three white pads.

On the 12th of September, 1796, from Stockerton Park Wood, Pillager, Seaman, and Concord went away, alone, with a fox. These three hounds ran him by themselves to Peas Brook, and killed him.

Of Mr. Loraine Smith, as a sportsman, it is unnecessary to speak. We may gather his character, in some part, from the verses of several songs. The following lines will go to prove that he was not, in his own estimation, a good horseman. They occur in a very old song, composed by himself, called "A burst from Breedon clouds :"—

" Now, smack at a yawner goes Winchelsea's peer,
So sure to be thrown upon Pyramid's ear ;

And at the same place, jumps Smith of Loraine :
He's off!—No! he's not!—he hangs by the mane!"

In the Billesdon Coplow run, Feb. 24th, 1800, he is thus described by Mr. Bethell Cox:—

"*Lorraine* and Lord Maynard were there, and can tell,
Who in Justice's scale hold the balance so well
As very good judges and justices too,
The state of each horse, and what each man did do :
But if any one thinks he is quizzed in the song,
And fancies his case stated legally wrong,
To Enderby Hall let him go and complain—
But he'll not mend his case, if he meets with *Lorraine*."

In Mr. South's celebrated poem upon the same run, we find him thus noticed:—

"*Lorraine*, than whom no one his game plays more safe ;
Who, the *last* than the first prefers seeing, by half ;
What with nicking, and keeping a constant look out,
Every turn of the scent surely turned to account.
The wonderful pluck of his horse surprised some,
But he knew they were making point blank for his home ;
'Short home' to be brought, we all might desire,
Could we manage the trick like the Enderby squire."

The horse he rode on that day was purchased of Mr. Cave Brown: he was a brilliant hunter, got by Mercury; he was sold to Mr. Fox Lane's father, at Bramham.

In those days, as I have before said, second horses were rarely to be seen. The one horse devoted to the day, was an animal possessing as much blood as could be obtained with great power. Large flat legs that could break a rail, and measuring eight or nine inches round below the knee. The horse ridden throughout the above-mentioned day, must have been of lasting powers—Mr. Loraine Smith's weight being upwards of fourteen stone. He was a skilful master of his pencil; and beneath a painting, descriptive of the chase, appears the following faithful record of this run:—

"A view of Mr. Meynell's hounds, carrying a head with their second fox, at the end of a chase from Billesdon Coplow, Leicestershire; passed Tilton Woods, Sheffington Earths, crossing the

River Soar below Whitstone, to Enderby Warren, making a distance of twenty-eight miles; which was run in two hours and fifteen minutes; on Monday, Feb. 24th, 1800."

Mr. Loraine Smith possessed some very superior horses. He bought a mare, known as the Highwayman's mare, which was often sold, but always returned on account of the many tricks she had acquired in her service upon the road with her first master. She bred several hunters, of great note;—Bagshot, Felon, Hawke, Shop-lifter, Botany Bay, and Pickpocket. The two first were sold for 200 guineas each, to Lord Spencer; they are buried in the park, and their pictures are still retained in the house at Althorp. Hawke was trained, but would not run when stripped; he would run well in clothes. Lord Stair bought Pickpocket. Mr. Loraine Smith had also a celebrated horse, called Harry, sold at the hammer for 300 guineas, to Mr. Dickenson, the proprietor of an article termed Gowland's Lotion. The purchaser, on riding him out of Tattersall's yard, was proceeding down the Haymarket, when the horse fell down and broke both knees. The accident did not affect the validity of the sale, and, in the true spirit of honour, of course the money was paid.

It would be tedious to enumerate more of the stud, belonging either to Mr. Meynell or his friend, as the names of hunters, unless accompanied by their pedigrees, are interesting only to those in whom they may awaken reminiscences connected with their performances. One more, an Irish horse, Ringtail, may be mentioned, as it appears that he was distinguished for most extraordinary faculty of wind. He could go after a hard frost, without a gallop. He was thought a very rare horse, and carried the Marquis of Anglesea, in extraordinary style, in a famous run with Mr. Meynell, from Whitstone Gorse. When this horse died, he was opened, and his heart and lungs were found to be most marvellously small. Does this circumstance throw any light upon the requisites for good wind?

I conclude this memoir with a laughable epitaph upon the

Enderby Squire, written some years previous to his death, by a Mr. MONRO; with a rejoinder by another talented friend, Mr. HEYRICK.

“ Here lies the tall Squire of Enderby Hall,
 With his bridles, boots, fiddle, brush, colours, and all.
 Some liked his scraping, though none of the best ;
 And all liked the welcome he gave to his guest.
 His taste was, in horses and hounds, orthodox ;
 And no man can say he e'er headed the fox.
 In the dog days, or frost, when the kennel was mute,
 Each turn with the turn of his humour to suit ;
 As the weather still changed, still his plans he would change :
 Now be-rhyming some Stella—now curing the mange—
 Now the state he'd reform—now mend an old door—
 Now scrawl a lampoon—now a caricature.
 Ever last down at dinner, and first at a snore,
 Sure enough he had faults, but his faults are now o'er.
 Lackaday ! that our Enderby Squire should be lost !
 Can't you guess what he died of ?—a bitter hard frost.”

The Squire's Resurrection, by — HEYRICK, Esq.

“ Oh ! how could you bury our neighbour so soon !
 Why, his boots were just black'd, and his fiddle in tune.
 As a staunch, steady sportsman, and quite orthodox,
 He'd been taking a glass to the hounds and the fox ;
 In his moments of mirth, he would sometimes drink deep ;
 When you thought he was dead—he was only asleep !”

The following account of the death of the companion and friend of Mr. Meynell is extracted from the county paper.

“ *A brief and hasty sketch of the life and death of CHARLES LORAIN SMITH, Esq.*—The earthly career of this excellent patriarch terminated on Sunday, 23rd inst. at six o'clock P.M., in the 85th year of his age. ‘ He comes to his grave in a full age, like a shock of corn cometh in his season.’ (Job, ch. v.) His death was as remarkable as his life. His favourite theme was to bless God for having vouchsafed to him health and competence, during a life protracted beyond the usual term allotted to man. ‘ The days of our age are threescore years and ten.’ (Ps. xc.) And his death was attended with little or no apparent pain ; indeed, he died, like his prototype Cornaro, in

his arm-chair, and without a struggle. He, moreover, retained his faculties to the last moment of his existence; and a few moments, we had almost said (certainly not an hour), before his departure, transacted business of some consequence with a friend, giving his directions with extraordinary accuracy.

“His loss will be severely felt by his friends, neighbours, companions, domestics, and the public, and, we ought not to omit, in the field. He was a sincere friend, a kind and hospitable neighbour, and condescending, affable, and bountiful to the poor; a most cheerful companion, and full of anecdote—an indulgent and generous master—an active and efficient magistrate; and, lastly, in the field, he was equalled by few, and surpassed by none.

“Thus lived and died the Squire—a fine specimen of the good old English gentleman. He lived beloved by all around him, and died lamented.

‘Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
Tam cari capitis!’

HOR. OD. xxiv.”

Leicester Journal, August 28th, 1835.



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