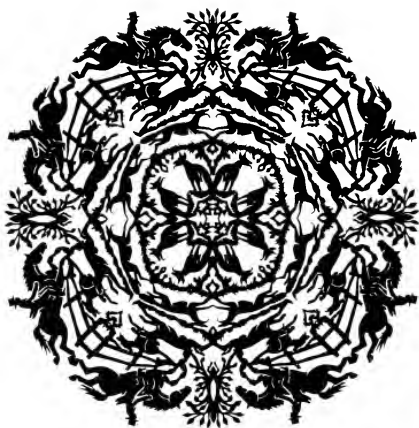


RECOLLECTIONS

BELMONT



JOHN A. SEAVERNS





CHARLES CECIL JOHN, SIXTH DUKE OF RUTLAND.

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

OF THE

BELVOIR HUNT.

BY

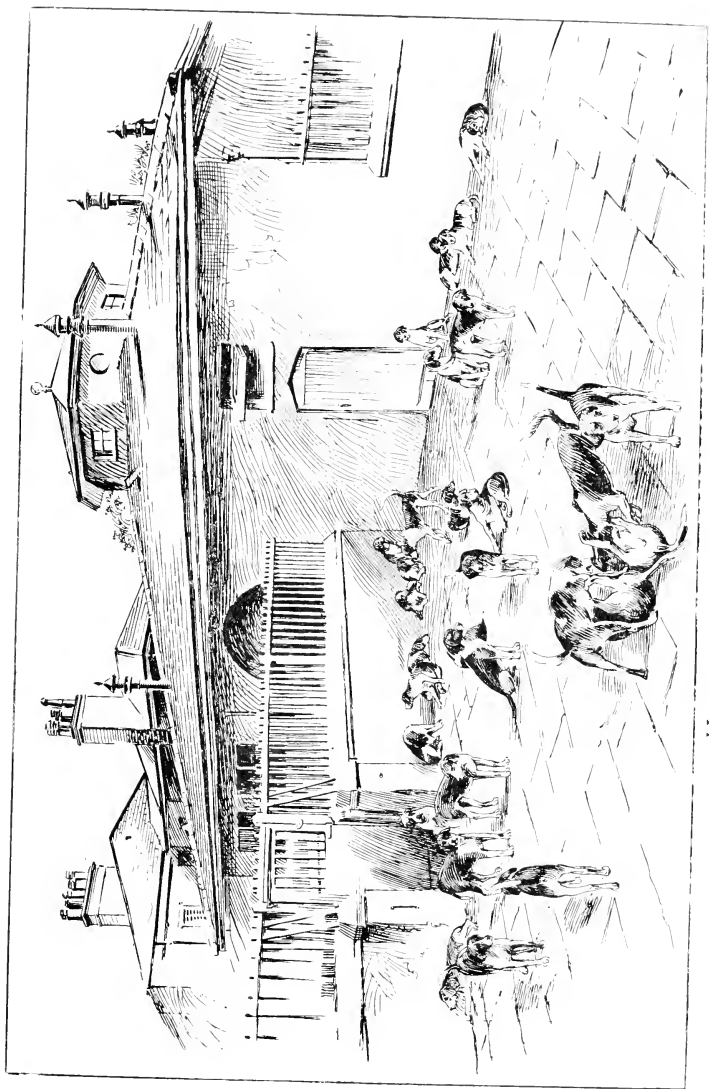
A SPORTSMAN.

LONDON :

SIMPKIN MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT & Co., LIMITED,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

GRANTHAM

LYNE & SON, PRINTERS, 8, WESTGATE



KENNEL YARD, BELVOIR.

P R E F A C E.

It must be borne in mind that this work lays no claim to any high standard of literary merit.

It is simply the outcome of many seasons' enjoyments—kindled by the generosity of the noble Masters—with quaint old customs, incidents, and anecdotes chiefly associated with the celebrated Belvoir Hounds, culled at random; including a number of interesting runs, many of which have either been participated in by the writer, or communicated upon high authority, and are founded on fact.

I would crave the indulgence of those who may do me the honour of skimming over these pages, and remind them that as the frail barque sometimes fares better upon the turbulent billows than the stately vessel, so, I trust, my unpretending work may escape shipwreck on the rugged and inhospitable coasts of criticism.

August 1897.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

No.	PAGE.
1. Charles Cecil John, Sixth Duke of Rutland	FRONTISPIECE
2.—Kennel Yard, Belvoir - - -	—
3.—Run to Ground - - -	5
4.—Peering through the Darkness - -	30
5.—The Huntsmen's Cracking Whips in Chase	30
6.—A Narrow Escape - - -	33
7.—A Joint from the Butcher at Barrowby -	36
8.—Grasped Cub by the Neck - -	38
9.—Took my Vixen to turn down - -	42
10.—Followed Me like a Dog - - -	42
11.—“ Crop ” - - - -	48
12.—Rode a Refuser Blindfold - - -	90
13.—Borrowed a Clergyman's Hat - -	115
14.—Killed with Five-and-a-Half Couples -	119
15.—Its a Certain Cure - - -	139

INDEX.

CHAPTER.

- I. - - - First Impressions about Hunting.
- II. - - - Early Impressions continued.
- III. - - - Breeding of Hunters in the Belvoir
Country. Steeple Chasing.
- IV. - - - Belvoir Sportsmen. Lord Forester,
Will Goodall, and other Celebrities.
- V. - - - Sport with Goodall.
- VI. - - - Latter days of Will Goodall.
- VII. - - - Promotion of James Cooper.
- VIII. - - - Accession of Frank Gillard.
- IX. - - - Testimonial to the Duke of Rutland.
- X. - - - Hunting.
- XI. - - - Hunting continued.
- XII. - - - Habits of Foxes.
- XIII. - - - Old Customs versus New.
- XIV. - - - Conclusion.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS ABOUT HUNTING.

ERRATUM.

Page 39, for council, read counsel.

and so it turned out, and from my boyish days the music of hounds has had a fascination which will only be cancelled when the last long journey has to be taken.

Receiving my *baptême de chasse* at the hands of old Goosey, I well remember riding home with my face about the colour of the

CHAPTER I.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS ABOUT HUNTING.

“ There's only one cure for all maladies sure,
That pierceth the heart to its core,
'Tis the sound of the horn,
On a fine hunting morn,
And what is the heart wishing more? ”

Being descended from a line of ancestors whose proclivities lay chiefly with the chase, it is not singular that the venatorial blood which coursed through their veins should have been transmitted to those of my humble self, and so it turned out, and from my boyish days the music of hounds has had a fascination which will only be cancelled when the last long journey has to be taken.

Receiving my *baptême de chasse* at the hands of old Goosey, I well remember riding home with my face about the colour of the

rising sun owing to the possession of the brush, war paint, excitement, and perspiration. On my arrival I was met by a worthy old domestic, who stood aghast at my gory visage, expressing the greatest solicitude, and earnestly inquiring how the sad accident had happened. I heaved a long drawn sigh, on which she, good soul, proposed sending for the doctor, until I burst into a fit of laughter, when, after staring with astonishment, she exclaimed: "Oh, it's only your gillery," (which, being interpreted from the vernacular, means guile), "you're making game of me, go and get your face washed before the callers come."

My father was a lover of horses, and generally kept a couple of brood mares, the best he could lay his hands upon, and the produce of these, after being bitted and "gentled" at two years old, were broken and ridden the two following summers. For this purpose he had the services of a wiry man, who lived a few miles away, and had been brought up at Newmarket, but getting too heavy for riding on the flat took up the profession of breaking. He was a fine horseman, with beautiful hands, and made his

charges as perfect as time would permit, and as he generally had two on the go from our stables at the same time, I was always anxious to accompany him on one of the youngsters, receiving valuable instruction and advice. Of course I got occasionally "grassed," and his injunction when a horse commenced plunging was, "never take your eyes off his head, and clip well from your knee downwards, but if you look at where you *think* he's going he'll chuck you down." There was another remedy which often succeeded in stopping the colts from bucking, which was by putting a narrow strap round their necks, similar to that of an ordinary martingale, and catching hold tight with one hand as soon as they commenced, which would nearly always have the effect of cutting off inspiration, making them gurgle and sob, and glad to give up the job. At four years old the young ones were turned over to me to give the best education with hounds of which I was capable. In most cases I had a fair amount of success, and, as I had bestowed pains on their schooling by leading over the bar and small places on the farm during the summer, after the youngsters had taken a few turns with hounds, they generally de-

veloped an aptitude for fencing, and I nearly always found young horses jump bigger and bolder than their aged rivals—the former make better efforts in case of a scramble, and do not realise that hard ground shakes them.

Whilst on the subject of young ones, I well recollect one morning during cubbing, whilst exercising a three year old, I thought I heard the music of hounds, and listened for a moment. The atmosphere being hazy it was difficult to discern objects at any distance. A wood lay on a hill side about two miles on the left, and as the fog somewhat lifted I descried hounds leaving covert almost mute, as hard as they could drive, nearly in single file. Losing no time in galloping to the nearest point to cut in, I succeeded in getting on terms as they crossed a turnpike road at a terrific pace to the next wood. In a few minutes they were streaming away again in the direction of Belvoir, with most of the riders tailed off, as reynard in sore straits wheeled round leftward, with hounds coursing him to ground in a turnip field, whence he was without difficulty dislodged and given to the pack, after affording one of the fastest runs on record of thirty minutes. I believe



Tommy's Herd

Run to ground.

the fox was found at Jericho. My young one had acquitted himself pretty well, and, with the advantage of jumping in when the run was about half over, pulled up comparatively fresh.

We were on land in the occupation of a country clergyman who prided himself upon his breed of shorthorns, and, I believe, was a successful competitor in London as well as other places. But they were extraordinary kittle cattle, and on this occasion the hullabaloo sent them flying over fences, with heads and tails erect, careering all over the country. Their extreme shyness—or being so “shan” as the locals termed it—was said to be caused by the cows and heifers bringing up their calves in the fields, and scarcely ever seeing anybody or being interfered with, as the old gentleman would not allow even the herdsman to do more than count their numbers over the gate.

He had in his herd the very remarkable production of a jumart, which was taken, from a cart mare that afterwards died; the extraordinary and almost isolated specimen,

after surviving its birth but a short time, being sent to the British Museum, where it is, I believe, to be found at the present time.

The parson was an eccentric character, and it was related how during the harvest on a Sunday, whilst his primitive choir were in full blast over the Old Hundredth, he might occasionally be seen casting up the measurement of different patches of reaping which his Irishmen had completed the night before.

After the reverend gentleman's death, when the sale took place it was a caution to those who sought to get their purchases home. When they entered the fields to claim their own away went the animals, both ends up, to the four winds, more like the wild herds of Chillingham than sober minded milchers, many of them not being secured for days after, until some quiet old cows had been taken to look them up, and in a few cases they had to be shot.

Amongst other field sports coursing was much in vogue with the well-to-do farmers, several of them keeping a brace or two of greyhounds. They frequently met together,

and although some of the elders did not ride very straight, they taught their cobs to lead over stiles and rails, so they were seldom far away at the kill. And it was astonishing how knowing the animals became; they would be on their hind legs in a moment, follow their masters over, kick up their heels, and seem to enjoy the fun.

An incident which impressed itself upon my memory happened when we went to join a worthy old yeoman who lived in a heath country a few miles away. His help-meet was a buxom dame of comely presence turning the scale at sixteen stones, who generally accompanied us on foot to witness the sport; and on one occasion when we were to beat some walled enclosures volunteered her services at the gateways, whither hares were wont to make the best of their way to escape. We soon found, and puss at once made for the exit in which the old lady had planted her portly person, with the voluminous folds of her garments spread out as a screen to bar the way. The course was short, sharp, and decisive, for the hare with an eye back on her pursuers ran bang into the old lady's

skirts, with dogs close after doing the same, knocking her down in a confused heap of hare, dogs, and petticoats, with the hare getting the worst of the meleé, and the good lady joining heartily in the roars of laughter which followed.

But I never had much sympathy with coursing; it makes such fools of your horses; for no sooner have you ridden over a fence than you may have to pull up and jump back again in consequence of puss having doubled round.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS CONTINUED.

Belonging to a collateral branch of our family was a harum scarum, devil-may-care sort of individual, in make and shape like a pair of tongs—with long legs and short body—who kept a pack of harriers, which he used to hunt himself, and had for his whip a man who was somewhat lame and crippled by one or two bad falls. The former was a hard riding fellow, and hunted almost anything he came across—fox, hare, deer, or what not that might give him a run—and had the impudence of a highwayman's horse. Amongst a variety of escapades he would walk across the floor of a fairly lofty room, and, springing from one leg, kick a hole in the ceiling with the other, to the disgust of his entertainer. He, however, is related to have shown sport and had many followers, for he made

no scruple about drawing anybody's coverts, or crossing anybody's land, and as he was a crack shot with pistols nobody cared to interfere with him. The tax collector seldom got his money the first time of asking, or ventured to appear again, for if he had the temerity to repeat the visit he would be requested to stand still with his back to the wall whilst the debtor showed how near he could send a bullet past his ear without touching him. (We can't escape the duns so readily in these days.) But they once scored the laugh against him whilst out hunting, when he was riding a big narrow horse with deep shoulders, short back rib, and tucked up body. His buckles being rather loose, and having no breastplate, the horse in jumping a rough fence sprang clean out of the girths, leaving the rider sprawling on his saddle amongst the brambles.

One of his followers, a relative named John Dorr, bought a fine looking four year old from a neighbour who could not ride him, and used to declare he never had such a d . . . l in his life, for nobody could either hold or steer him. But in the hands of John, who was a fine horseman, he soon became a tractable

and generous animal with a fine turn of speed and no fence too big for him, and was sold to Mr. Lane Fox, of Bramham, for a large sum, his new owner christening him under the appropriate combination of "Jackdaw." How different from such pseudonyms as "Here I go with my eye Out," "Shocking Mamma," "Tommy-up-a-Pear-Tree," "Fiddle and I," "The Tup," "Lamb's Fry," "Bread and Butter," "To-morrow," "Tom Cat," "The Moon," "No Thank You," "Sheep," and a host of others equally senseless and stupid. Towards the latter part of his time the then Lord Huntingtower offended our amateur huntsman by warning him off, and so the latter, by way of retaliation, made a practice of paying his compliments to Buckminster more frequently than before. But he came to an untimely end at last through the effects of a fall from his horse, which broke his neck.

CHAPTER III.

BREEDING OF HUNTERS IN THE BELVOIR
COUNTRY. STEEPLE-CHASING.

The breed of hunters was by no means neglected in these times, a number of the large farmers generally having one or two brood mares, which had frequently been relegated from the studs of gentlemen on account of accident, and for which their owners had in the first instance paid high prices. These were nearly always good looking, well proportioned animals, mated with thoroughbred horses, so that it was not surprising that the produce should have been sought after by noblemen, gentlemen, and dealers both from town and country. There were periodical shows for hunters held in the historical paddocks at Croxton Park, liberally

patronised by the late and present Duke of Rutland, Lord Forester, Lord Wilton, Mr. Val. Maher, Mr. Sloane Stanley, Lord Rosslyn, Col. Forester, Mr. Maxe, Sir James Musgrave, Mr. Fletcher Norton, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Stirling Crawford, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Gaskill, Sir Richard Sutton, and the chief representatives of the Belvoir and Melton Hunts. The Prizes were valuable, and, if memory serves, amounted to something like twenty-five pounds for the premier four-year-old, fifteen for the best three-year-old, and liberal recognition of those in the next grade in each class, with stipulations that the exhibits were bred and owned by tenant farmers. There were also substantial prizes for brood mares. As a natural result the winners were frequently disposed of to gentlemen of the hunts at satisfactory prices, and, as these shows were usually held during the winter, something was generally found of good account in the Farmers' Race at Croxton Park in the following spring. The race was then for half-bred horses, run in heats, and created no end of interest amongst the locals, who each of course swore by, and had a bet on his neighbour's horse. There was a cunning old

fellow however, a small farmer and a bit of a trainer, living near Oakham, who was too much for the more unsophisticated tillers of the soil, and frequently won the race. But report said that his horses had the advantage of blue blood, and couldn't claim a hair of the tail as fulfilling the stipulations of humbler parentage. They had to jump over wattled hurdles, and accidents were numerous; one horse, I think belonging to Mr. Harrison, of Garthorpe, when holding a long lead into the straight, falling and breaking his neck, the rider escaping with a shaking. Why the wattle should have been more conducive to accident than furze or whin of the present time I am unable to account. There were two days' racing, and on the second the farmers' horses, that had been handicapped by the stewards on the preceding evening, were ridden by gentlemen members of different clubs. The result was often repeated by the same horse winning again, and Lord Wilton, Mr. Osbaldeston, Mr. Erskine, Capt. White, Capt. Percy Williams, Mr. H. S. Thompson, Mr. Scobell, Mr. Sadler, and others would handle their mounts in more artistic fashion than their less experienced yeomen jockeys.

In April, 1874, owing to some questionable proceedings the year before, heats for the Farmers' Race at Croxton Park were abolished, and a Hurdle Race of two miles and a half substituted. This was won by Mr. Allen's "Mayflower," a handsome brown mare, noticeable in the hunting field for her agreeable manners and good temper.

It was somewhat before this that Steeplechases were held on the Lincolnshire side near Grantham. The first meeting I recollect comprised only one race, run parallel with the old North-road at the foot of Gonerby Hill. The competitors, about seven in number, ran four miles, starting below Foston, and were told to make the best of their way up to Gonerby. The course was flagged, a real stiff one, with rough wild fences and two natural brooks, and demanded bold and big jumpers. On this occasion "Peter Simple," a grey gelding by "Arbutus," ridden by his owner, Tom Walker, made an example of the field, winning by a quarter of a mile. The horse was bred in Lincolnshire, but did little good till he came into

Walker's hands, under whose fine horsemanship he placed a number of races to his master's credit. At a subsequent meeting there was again only one race, the competitors starting below Barrowby Toll-bar, and running on the right of the Nottingham turnpike nearly to Sedgebrook, where, bearing round to the left they crossed the road, and returned in a parallel line of four miles journey, finishing within a couple of fields of Barrowby Church. This race was won by the well-known Captain Skipworth, a North Lincolnshire man, who had a reputation in the Spanish wars and died a few years ago. He rode a grey mare called "Diana," and had a strong tussle with something else up to the last fence. The last of this class of race was again held below Barrowby, the horses covering four miles, but running the reverse way, leaving Casthorpe Covert to the left on the outward journey, crossing the turnpike near Sedgebrook, and jumping the brook twice, finishing on the right as you looked down from the Toll-bar. This was carried off by a bay mare called "Seaweed," by "The Sea," who I think was hunted by Lord Howth, from Melton. The winner be-

longed to Mr. Smith, of Walcot, a sporting farmer, and was ridden by the late Tom Garner, who had a hunting establishment and occupied a farm on Willoughby Heath. In this race was a random horse belonging to Old Pattinson, of Grantham, who had been manager of the stud to Lord Lonsdale, at Cottesmore, for a number of years. Pattinson, who was an elderly man, would have won had his strength held out, for the horse was pulling hard in front about a quarter of a mile from home, but jumping big at a bullock fence pitched his rider, who was quite exhausted, over his head, breaking his collar bone. The value of these stakes, as far as I can remember, seldom exceeded fifty pounds.

Coming to later times brings us to meetings held over the course east of Grantham. It was here that "Berserker" began to develop his qualities as a steeple-chaser. He had been bought at Epsom, when three years old, by Mr. Hardy, the banker of Grantham, who sold him to Mr. Dawson, the dealer. "Berserker" was a backward and difficult colt to train, but won over this course, and his career, as time went on, in the hands of

Mr. W. R. Brockton was very successful, as he won something like eighteen or twenty cross country races before going to the stud. There was also Captain Handley, who had been in the Scots Greys and served in the Crimea, helping liberally at these meetings; and he had a smart wiry mare called "Nigger Lass," who after winning here did him good service on other occasions. Mr. Hardy won over this course with a grand looking hunter called "Sportsman," who had been purchased from a farmer in the Cottesmore country, and was ridden by Mr. Brockton. Mr. Frank Gordon also was highly distinguished between the flags about this time, and was one of the best men of his day with the Belvoir and Fitzwilliam packs.

Through apathy and want of support these races were allowed to collapse for some years, until revived as the Belvoir Hunt Steeplechases by that excellent sportsman and liberal gentleman, Mr. Burdett Coutts, chiefly in the interests of tenant farmers, and first held at Ingoldsby about the year 1884. Since then the Hunt Meetings have continued to flourish, and are looked forward to with considerable

interest by the farmers and country folk, who enjoy the outing immensely; and although pressing and liberal efforts have been made towards restoring the races to Grantham, the Ingoldsby course maintains its popularity amongst hunting men, under the indefatigable supervision of Mr. T. A. R. Heathcote, and is as attractive and pleasant to ride over as any in England, the only drawback being the difficulty of access and want of accommodation for horses in the vicinity. Whilst writing of this neighbourhood I may mention the name of an old gentleman who held the living of Ingoldsby in by-gone times, the Rev. N. C. Lane. He was a devoted admirer of the thorough-bred, and report had it that whilst an undergraduate at Cambridge of slender means, he was the owner of thirteen brood mares, without having a single acre of land, and consequently obliged to joist them out with farmers at the most convenient places he could find. They were expensive luxuries, and left him often short of coin, but his love for them never abated, and he could not bear the idea of parting. Mr. Lane was delighted to show his youngsters to anyone who could appreciate them, and I remember an ancestor of mine

whilst on a visit making him an offer for a three year old filly by "Rector," which was indignantly refused at the time, but afterwards accepted. The mare was in due time turned over to me for a hunter, and proved a fine fencer, but met with an accident, from the effects of which she never thoroughly recovered, and was sold, for stud purposes, into the hands of Mr. Tom Dawson, of Middleham, for whom she did good service in producing "Red Lion," "Lioness," and "Wallace," all race horses of high class.

CHAPTER IV.

BELVOIR SPORTSMEN.

LORD FORESTER, WILL GOODALL, AND
OTHER CELEBRITIES.

Amongst the welter weights who rode hard to hounds were the late Duke of Rutland, Lord Forester, General Hare Clarges, Mr. Anthony Peacock, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Blackwood, Mr. Stirling Crawford, and half-a-score others. The light brigade comprised Sir Thomas Whichcote, the Rev. H. Housin, the Rev. Banks Wright, Mr. John Earle Welby, the Rev. Thomas Heathcote, Mr. Hardy, the Rev. C. D. Crofts, the Rev. T. Bullen, all men who won for themselves honour and glory in the hunting field.

There were some farmers early in the century who held their own well and were

good sportsmen—John Wing and Joe Ward, of Sedgebrook, were both light men, the former a neat, corky rider, took all the beating the best could give him, and was brother to Doctor Wing, of Melton, whose game cocks were known far and wide when cock fighting was in its zenith. Mr. Hutchinson, of Foston, Mr. Bland, of Flawboro', and the Bemroses, of Caythorpe, were all good men to hounds. Mr. Edward Burbidge, of Thorpe Arnold, and his brother were both devoted to hunting, the former being one of the best men on the Melton side for many years. There was, however, a wonderfully clever farmer over a country, living at Wyville, Harry Sampey, who, in the schooling of a young one or treatment of a wayward beast, had few equals. He frequently bought horses of the latter class at a small figure, who had not been brought up in the way they should go, for some of them would exhibit hostility towards any quarter the rider might desire, whilst others would decline to move at all. Such as these were soon brought into submission, for they couldn't get rid of him, and he was very patient and seldom had recourse to punishment, so that a few months in his

hands generally taught them that rebellion was useless and good behaviour the best policy. In the education of a novice with hounds Sampey was an expert, seldom or never following anyone over a fence, and having a capital eye for country, he was sure to be handy no matter whether a run was fast or slow. Mr. Commissioner Fane was a celebrity who enjoyed the sport immensely, and became the subject of a humorous sketch and poem depicting his dragged appearance on emerging from the Coston Brook, and subsequent restoration at the "Peacock," Croxton, under a vigorous administration of the rubbing remedy at the hands of the compassionate hostess, and copious libations of hot bohea.

Sir Thomas Whichcote, however, held primary honours about this time. Possessing a magnificent stud, comprised mostly of thorough-bred horses, when hounds settled down at their best he soon secured a place which superior speed and fine horsemanship enabled him to maintain to the end, and which few were able to dispute in any part of the run.

This again reminds me of the superiority of high pedigree in the case of one Belatti, who was a jeweller at Grantham, with a partiality for driving something a bit above the common. He had a thorough-bred chesnut mare, with white legs, standing about 15.3, all pinwire, as the hibernian expression has it—"from the top o' the bridle to the tip o' the last shoe." In the prosecution of his business Belatti had occasion to make periodical visits to the metropolis, and instead of taking the coach preferred to drive the mare in a light gig, accomplishing the distance—one hundred and ten miles—within the same day. But this was not all, for after remaining one day in town he constantly drove home again on the third. It will be admitted this was a smart performance, but the mare had legs and feet of iron, and was never known to be any worse for the journeys. I may add that after the jeweller's death the mare came into my possession; but I don't suppose she had been much ridden, and I didn't like her in the saddle, added to which she had a trick of popping down her head when you were thinking about something else, kicking, and whipping round like a

donkey with the view of freeing herself from your society. Her trotting action in harness, however, was surprising, for with the long sweeping stride she would skim over the ground twelve or fourteen miles an hour, and you would not think you were going more than nine.

Co-temporary with the worthies I have named was an eccentric gentleman who lived at Harmston Hall, and amongst the diversities of his amusements horsed and drove a coach, with varied experiences to his passengers, for he sometimes had a team out of which one or two had never before been troubled with a collar. As might be expected the escapes of his travellers were curious and blood curdling to the timid, perhaps the least risky that of being toppled over a fence into an adjoining field when the obstreperous team went in a heap into the roadside ditch. An anecdote, as related to me by an old friend—since gathered to his fathers—after visiting the coaching squire may be worthy of record. It was on this wise: On the morning after my friend's arrival, the squire, who kept harriers, and had some

capital snipe shooting as well, proposed that they should have a day amongst the longbills, and they started accordingly. After firing about fifty shots apiece without effect, the squire, upon whom the well-known "scape" seemed to act as the agitating ensign to a bull, suggested that they should go home and take the harriers out. This commended itself equally to my friend, and the twain started, the master nominally in command of the pack, and his guest fancying he was going to do the duties of whip. Hares were plentiful and hounds soon in full cry, and the huntsman, riding to a few couples and his amateur whip, whom they had never seen in their lives before, attempting to keep the scattered forces together, confusion became worse confounded, and ended in the pack getting squandered all over the country. However, the squire was not a man to be moved by trifles such as this, and assuaged my friend's qualms of conscience about the lost hounds by assuring him that they would be sure to turn up sometime in the night, ignoring the perils of unfortunate members of bewildered flocks which the pangs of hunger might lead them to appropriate. As the sportsmen arrived near home, at dusk,

the cry of hounds again saluted their ears, and concluding that it came from the laggards following them home, their minds were easy and they reckoned on all being secure for the night. As the music came nearer the squire became assured that it was not discoursed by his own pack. No, the notes were surely those of the Belvoir, who in a few minutes concluded a brilliant run out of their own country by killing the fox under the walls of Harmston. Few men could boast of more varied experience in the course of one day's march, and on being asked which he enjoyed the most, my friend would laughingly exclaim, "Oh, the last, only there wasn't enough of it."

It was during the régime of Lord Forester and Will Goodall that I enjoyed many happy days and saw some rare sport in the hunting field, as both were indefatigable sportsmen, and didn't mind how late they drew or how far they were from Belvoir at night. They had no van then, and the distances hounds and the hunt staff had to travel to the meet and home after hunting were very considerable. The kennels at Ropsley helped to ease work in the

eastern district, as hounds were sent thither on the afternoon before hunting, returning there when the day's work was over, excepting the chase ended on the western side of Grantham, when they were taken home. There was a story told of Goodall one evening after hunting when he had left the hounds at Ropsley, which caused considerable amusement at the time: It appeared that one cold night in December, as Will and his whips set out for Belvoir, it came on very dark, and on striking into the Bridge-end road, near Ropsley Rise, they espied a baker with lamps on his cart jogging along in front. Thinking to make use of his lights, they gave two or three sharp cracks with their whips in order to crave companionship, upon which the terrified driver, concluding that shots had been fired by highwaymen secreted in the wood which ran alongside the road, and that it was a demand upon him to "bale up" with his loaves and money, frantically applying his whip drove as hard as the tit could lay legs to the ground into Grantham and told his doleful story to the police. Needless to say the unfortunate wight got unmercifully chaffed by his companions of the craft, nobody enjoying the nocturnal hunt more than Goodall himself.

And I must here tender my obligations to the lady by whose kindness I am enabled to reproduce the following humorous lines and illustrations :—

“ December’s air is keen and sharp,
December’s nights are cold,
And dismal ’tis on moonless nights
To journey o’er the wold.

And very dismal was the night,
The mist was dank and chill,
When sallied forth a baker wight,
From Ropsley by the Mill.

For he was fain that night to gain
His home in Grantham town,
A well *bred* man! he would maintain
Good name and fair renown.

The baker wight, whose bread was light,*
Far lighter than his heart!
Much fearing darkness, had a lamp
On each side of his cart.

He thought of foes so dark and grim,
Of woods with robbers rife,
And felt he had no staff with him,
Except the staff of life.

* Not sad.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 1.

The brush was gained, the hounds were fed,
Two sportsmen homeward hied,
'Twas "Cheery Will," from Belvoir hill,
And Cooper (whip) by his side.

Heavy the road and dark the night,
A light ahead they spied,
They strive to reach that friendly light,
Their steeds through mire to guide.

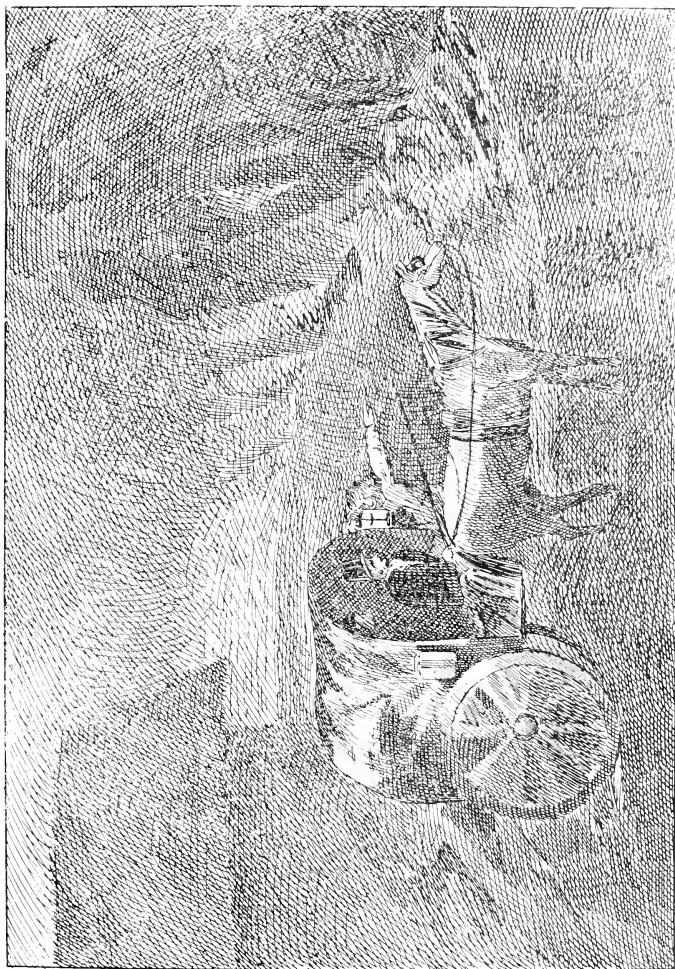
ILLUSTRATION NO. 2.

The trembling baker heard the sound
Of horses' prancing feet,
And peering through the darkness round,
Two forms his glances meet.

Mistaking them for filching foes
That hang upon his rear,
The sound of "Cheery Will's" Yo! Ho's!
Exaggerate his fear.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 3.

Urging his steed to utmost pace,
He looks behind in dread,
The Huntsmen's cracking whips in chase,
Seem pistols at his head.



PEERING THROUGH THE DARKNESS.





THE HUNTSMEN'S CRACKING WHIPS IN CHASE.



And in this fright and piteous case
He drove to Grantham town,
The thorough-breds enjoyed the chase,
And Baker gained renown.

To p'liceman " 8 " he hied him straight,
And breathed his tale of strife,
Of robbers twain, who sought to gain
His money, loaves, and life.

And straight we see in papers three,
A wonderful narration,
Of dire attempt at robbery,
And marvellous preservation.

Meanwhile Will Goodall tells in mirth,
Of timorous muffin maker,
How many a fox he'd run to earth,
But ne'er before a baker."

CHAPTER V.

SPORT WITH GOODALL.

I remember in the earlier days of Will's control hounds finding a fox at Little Ponton Wood, a grey, leary, old customer, who, after stretching his legs by a short spin in covert, went boldly away on the east. The pack needed little notice from Will's horn, for they were well on his line out of the wood, and quickly reached the strong-hold of Boothby, which detained them but a few minutes ere they were speeding away over grass south of the Hall. At a good pace they inclined towards Bitchfield, and, leaving Ingoldsby Wood on the left, went swiftly along past the village, and over what is now the Steeple-chase course, with the brook charged by Goodall and about half-a-dozen others who were on the best terms with hounds, nearly together—most of the field being scattered a long way in the rear. All got over excepting Mr. Hill, a gentleman who



A NARROW ESCAPE.

rented Culverthorpe Hall, whose horse, after scotching, jumped high and short, dropping splash in the middle. In the meantime hounds rattled along through Lenton Pasture without a pause, making straight for Laughton, where this tough old veteran was pulled down in the middle of a seed field, after one of the finest runs in Goodall's time, in an hour and ten minutes. This part of the country reminds me of a story that was told by an old sportsman of the Belvoir, which, incredible as it may appear, was vouched for by no less an authority, and of which he was an eye witness, to the following effect: After a fast burst from one of the neighbouring woods, hounds ran their fox into a shallow drain near Ingoldsby, and it was resolved to collar reynard and give him to the pack. This proved easier said than done, for the fox, after being got out, held aloft amid triumphant shouting, and thrown to the hounds, *actually escaped*. The miraculous preservation was accounted for by several hounds springing simultaneously in the air to catch their intended victim before he reached the ground, and knocking each other over, whilst the fox, in the confusion and struggling which ensued, darted under their

bodies and slipped away scathless. Reynard had earned the immunity which his adroitness secured, for, after hounds had recovered their surprise at having missed their prey, they ran smartly into Ingoldsby Wood, where the fox gained a safer asylum, and was left to enjoy the sweets of victory.

There was a lot of fun in Lord Forester's time, and his lordship, who enjoyed a joke immensely, was sure to be down upon anybody who happened to over-talk himself, and on one occasion scored quietly over a farmer whose horse had frequently shewn a wayward temper. On the animal appearing more subdued, and Lord Forester remarking upon the improvement, the farmer replied, "Oh yes, my lord, I never ride him with spurs now." "Humph," exclaimed his lordship, tapping his boot with his hunting whip, "What have you got on now?" the spurs being there as usual, but the wearer had overlooked that little fact. One day, in Goodall's time, I don't recollect in what year, hounds had met at Leadenham, and it came on a regular deluge. We drew covert after covert without finding, making in the direction of Belvoir; the atmosphere was black and

forbidding and the prospects of a run equally unpromising. Though the country abounded with foxes we could not find them, and it was surmised, probably with truth, that the inclemency of the weather had driven them to their earths. Murmurings of a blank day, and rain coming down in torrents, drove most of the field home drenched to the skin. However, when we got to Belton Gorse, which lay in a hollow and afforded better shelter, a fox was dislodged, who took a course for Belvoir, but after passing Barrowby Thorns, scent was very bad, and hounds got on the line of a hare. Remarking to Goodall that I thought they were running a hare, "Be quiet," cried Will, not wishing to re-cheat them, "It's about time we ran something." But we did little beyond saving a blank day. A severe and protracted run took place in the late Duke of Rutland's time from Cotham Thorns, which is reported to have occupied four hours. The fox at first went away for the river Trent, and after covering an immense district of country, was eventually killed in Bennington Fen. It was nearly dark at the time, and the duke and Goodall had a tedious ride home on tired horses, not reaching Belvoir till people in the villages through

which they passed had long been in bed. Goodall was well-known to most of the labourers through the country, and on returning from hunting was frequently accosted by them as to the day's sport, each man having something to relate as to his solicitude for a litter of cubs, or the facilities he had afforded by unchaining gates, or other services in the good cause—of course, in view of the shilling or half-a-crown, as the case might be, wherewith to drink Will's health at "the public" in the evening. They generally got something, and declared to their comrades that "this 'untsman was reckoned the best feller as had ever bin at Belvoir." Will, like his master, loved a joke, and one night as he was riding through one of the villages on his way home from hunting after dark, he happened to pass a butcher's shop, on the window-board of which the knight of the cleaver had exposed various appetising cuts. The hungry pack no sooner winded the dainty morsels, than, quick as thought, before the whips could interfere, one of the foremost made a grab at some tempting spareribs that lay handiest. In less time than it takes to write, these were consumed by the struggling hounds, with Will, seeing it would be of little



A JOINT FROM THE BUTCHER AT BARROWBY

use trying to save the meat, quietly allowing them to finish the repast, as the butcher, who was in a back room, rushed out furiously brandishing his knife to the rescue, which, on seeing the state of things, he wisely did not attempt. His wife was a virago, and assailed Will with a torrent of abuse, demanding exorbitant and instant payment. Goodall, not coinciding with her views regarding blackmail, sought a truce, explaining that he didn't usually carry much money in his pockets, and a fair claim would be recognised. But he had a rough time of it on the next and other occasions when the shop lay in his way, for the woman had a sharp tongue, and got almost bellicose in seeking to enforce her demands. This went on for some time, Goodall liking the fun, and having something good-natured and jocose in reply to her insults, and remarking that the "account" was being duly considered. At the end of the season liberal payment was tendered, and not very graciously accepted, with a rebuke from Will: "What a pity such a good-looking woman—we should say bitch of one of the pack—should have such a riotous tongue."

It was during the latter part of Goodall's time,

late in the spring, when hunting was nearly over, that there was a meet at Belvoir in order to disperse foxes from the woods in which they abounded. On this occasion I not only had the satisfaction of witnessing a lot of woodland hunting but catching a fox myself, and conveying it home safe and sound in my pocket. There was no romance about this, and I will relate how it happened: After spending sometime in the woods, hounds commenced baying round the débris of some fallen trees, where, unfortunately as it turned out, a vixen had laid up her cubs. They were supposed to be all sacrificed before the whips got into the thicket to interfere. But, as I happened to be standing alone in one of the rides close by, I espied an affrighted youngster, who had had the good fortune to escape the slaughter, rush across, and hide itself a ditch, which was overgrown with grass and brambles. Being determined to save a vulpine life, in a moment I jumped off my horse, and approaching cautiously, saw the little creature almost hidden in the scrub, and being armed with a stout pair of gloves, I clasped the cub by the neck. There was a lot of struggling and snarling, and every moment was of consequence, as I expected to



GRASPED CUB BY THE NECK.

be beset by the hounds. However, luck was on my side, and I succeeded in bagging my charge in the inner pocket of an old shooting jacket. As I have said, the season had nearly ended, days were hot, and people were dressed in the easy go-as-you-please kind of style, so that my well-worn garment proved most serviceable, as the pockets were stout, and resisted the struggles of my captive to escape from the unwelcome restraint. Keeping my own council, without saying anything to anybody, as evening was advancing, I went home, my prisoner settling down quietly and giving me very little trouble. She—for it proved a vixen—was put into a loose box and served with a small measure of bread and milk for supper, but, as might be expected, had no appetite for the change of diet at so early a stage of confinement. There was a lot of yapping and restlessness for two or three days, but, by degrees, the strange meals began to be appreciated, and, together with chicken bones and other scraps, my captive began to thrive, and was not difficult to rear. Very soon the natural shyness wore off, and when I entered the stable, my little friend would come and snatch food from my hands, jump on my back,

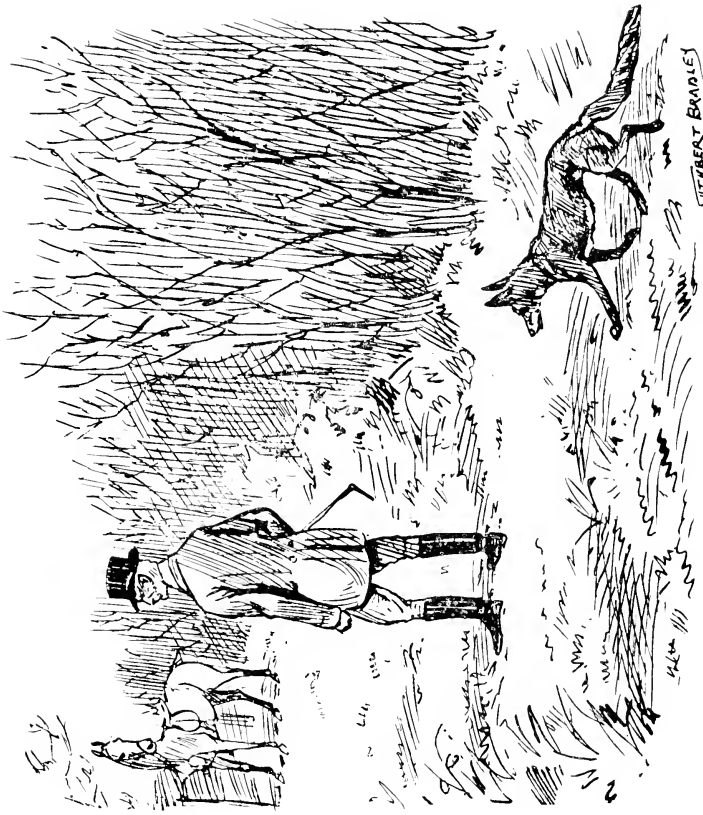
and off into the manger, and play all sorts of pranks. As it grew older, a young lady from school, who was spending her holidays at our house, made a great pet of "Topsy," for that was the name we bestowed upon our vulpine protégè. With "Topsy" across her shoulder, the girl would parade through the garden into the house, and seat herself in an arm-chair, when, on being released, the fox would watch its opportunity, and stealthily stealing underneath, give a tug at her dress, and as she sought to retaliate by making a clutch, "Topsy" would sprint to the other side of the room with a cunning leer, as much as to say "not caught so." By-and-bye, she discovered that her playmate was very fond of sugar. This seemed so unnatural that on first being told I could scarcely believe it, until the young lady convinced me by offering some lumps in her hand, when the effect was most ludicrous. The fox would take them one by one, and half shutting its eyes, suck them slowly with the greatest relish. Nor was this all, for "Topsy" next found out where the sweetmeats were kept, and would gnaw and scratch at the side-board until the door was opened, and then help herself. This must have been a singular taste in a fox, but perhaps,

like ourselves, they are the creatures of circumstances, and can easily change their habits according to the manners and customs incidental to the requirements of the life they have been compelled to adopt. The offer of a hen's egg, and your friendship with "Topsy" appeared to be secured for life. She would take it cautiously in her mouth, and, retiring to some quiet nook, carefully break a hole in the shell little bigger than a shilling, scoop out the contents with her tongue, until every particle had been consumed, and appeared to relish the delicacy with all the gusto of the greatest aldermanic bon vivant that ever lapped turtle, whilst the sly twinkle in her eye would have been enough to provoke laughter in that worthy even when the gout was having a look in. The games with a foxhound puppy were highly amusing, and occasionally ended in a squabble, in which "Topsy" generally succeeded in holding her own. But woe betide any stray hen that happened to cross the lawn. In an instant, whatever fun might be going on was abandoned, and the hapless victim caught up, to be made a meal of under the nearest bush. In the course of a year, "Topsy" had grown into a fine specimen of her race, and became very

mischievous and troublesome, so I determined to set her at liberty in a neighbouring wood. Taking her under my arm, I released her gently at the mouth of some earths, where, I doubted not, she would meet with congenial company. After sniffing for a moment she crept cautiously into the cavernous recesses, and was soon out of sight, and I listened quietly for a few minutes, when all being silent, I thought my object was accomplished and went my way out of the wood. In this, however, I was mistaken, for I had scarcely got more than a hundred yards away before "Topsy" was at my heels, evidently dissatisfied with the lot I had sought to impose upon her, and giving me a look of reproach. The appeal was not in vain, for she was again taken in my arms and brought back to her old quarters, at which she seemed highly delighted, and capered round her box in the greatest glee. I eventually passed "Topsy" over to an old gentleman in our village, who had been an ardent fox hunter, and was devoted to animals, who also made a great pet of her, and under whose tender care she ended her days. By the way, it has been a matter of surprise to me that showmen, animal trainers, and proprietors of "happy



TOOK MY VIXEN TO TURN DOWN.



GILBERT BRADLEY

FOLLOWED ME LIKE A DOG.

families," have so seldom exercised their abilities upon foxes, as I have little doubt they would be found most apt pupils and could be taught almost anything. I know mine could if time had been at disposal.

CHAPTER VI.

LATTER DAYS OF WILL GOODALL.

When Lord Forester used to propose drawing late in the afternoon, a long way from home, Goodall would acquiesce, with a side hint that the horses were having a roughish time of it and getting a bit stale. This was the truth, particularly when the season had been open, and the remark often had the effect of inducing his lordship to re-consider his decision and leave the coverts for another day, which was just what Will wanted. Coston Covert was in those days, as now, nearly always a sure find, and much favoured by Lord Forester, who would make it his first resort after meeting at Croxton Park. Good runs were innumerable, foxes frequently taking a course into the Cottesmore country, and making a call upon Woodwell Head during a journey which was

nearly always prolonged far away from the Belvoir domain. On these occasions there was a sporting farmer from Market Overton, who knew every inch of the ground, and used to go well, but occasionally would turn up at inopportune times, laying himself open to an argument with Lord Forester and Goodall, on the impropriety of confronting reynard at inconvenient places. About this time there came to live at Gonerby a noted breeder of Leicester sheep, who, in addition to this, kept a few brood mares, and was very fond of hunting. His performances in the saddle were not very artistic, for he would occasionally be all over his horse, but had any amount of pluck. One day, when a fox had been found at Boothby Great Wood, and hounds checked a short way from the village, our friend got a little too forward, and Goodall called out to him to come back. As he was doing so, in attempting to open a bridle gate, his horse, who was somewhat excited, put himself on his hind-legs and jumped it at a stand, throwing the rider over his head. There was no harm done, and upon Will complimenting him on the ability of his steed, the rejoinder was: "Oh, it's only a habit he's got into lately." On another

occasion, after landing over a biggish fence on the same animal, there happened to be a plough left carelessly on the head-land, which the horse dexterously avoided by jumping a second time, so that it constituted an in and outer. This also dislodged the rider, who was none the worse, and seemed to make no more of the routine of somersaults than a professional acrobat. The same horse was a fine specimen of a hunter, and afterwards won the Farmers' Handicap at Croxton Park. The owner was a clever, well-read man, an amusing companion, and an eccentric character withal. He lived a few miles from our residence, and, being a capital shot, used to join us in some rough shooting to a brace of pointers and the appetiser of a hard day's walking. He was a little late one morning, and at last turned up on horseback with a "churchwarden" in his mouth, white linen shirt, with only one button in front, and a substantial coat, whose capacious pockets were equal to holding his unstocked gun, or the stowing away of a week's provisions.

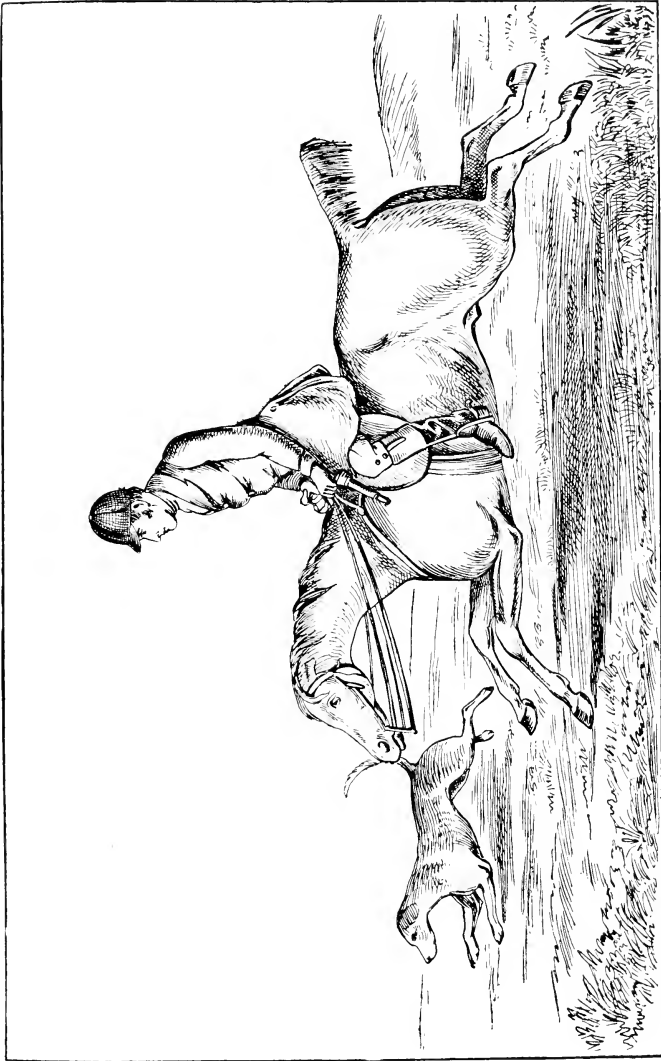
It was one day when hounds had been drawing Harlaxton Wood, towards the latter

part of Will Goodall's reign, that an unusual occurrence was witnessed. Several foxes had been found, and three or four made their way into a patch of gorse sloping north. People were dispersed, and unwittingly headed one of two who sought to break, causing them to run back into hounds' mouths. Lord Forester got very irate and gave the trembling sinners a terrible wiggling, amongst the rest Goodall himself coming in for a share of the rating. Not long after we were chevying about the terraces by the Manor, killing a fox close to the house, when, as hounds were breaking him up, out rushed another from the evergreens, and in his bewilderment made straight for the pack. In less than twenty yards away, suddenly discovering his error, he squatted, almost paralysed with fear, until one of the whips got between the engaged pack and the supposed victim, cracking him into the thicket, where others of the tribe contributed towards his making his escape.

There is dangerous ground about Harlaxton Manor, towards the north, in the shape of a ha-ha, with a road running some twelve feet below the level, and very difficult to discern

until you come close upon it, as the greensward looks level and inviting to let your horse stride along. One day, when hounds went away sharp from the wood, Sir Thomas Whichcote, who, as usual, meant to be in their wake, whilst going very fast, suddenly found himself within a few lengths of the chasm, and without a moment's hesitation went for it, with a successful result, for his gallant steed made a grand effort, clearing the road, and landing all right on the opposite bank. Not so fortunate was the attempt of a groom from Melton on another occasion, of which I was an eyewitness. He also, like Sir Thomas, was sending his horse along unaware of the danger and obliged to make the best of it. Here, again, the animal did his best and cleared the dip, but pecked on landing, and after struggling for two or three lengths, rolled completely over his rider, on which I hastened to render assistance, and it was satisfactory to find that, beyond being a bit bruised, neither of them appeared to be any the worse.

There was a wiry, clever, brown horse, with cropped ears, that went by the nickname of "Crop," that Goodall rode for several seasons,



"CROP."

and upon whom he greatly distinguished himself. The partial loss of these gave the horse a somewhat wicked and sullen appearance, although he had a handsome and intelligent head, and was supposed to be thorough-bred. From what I recollect, the reason of the horse's ears being rounded was on account of one of them having been torn by another horse whilst out at grass, but whether the attack was delivered in play or savagely I was unable to learn. After the jagged strips of the lacerated ear had been trimmed off, it gave the animal such a singular appearance, that it was determined to shape the other to match. Notwithstanding this, you could not fail to detect his high breeding, beautiful quality, and light action, which, combined with a great turn of speed, made him one of Goodall's special favourites.

One of the most dreaded and spiteful enemies that Goodall had to contend with was a mule, which belonged to a gentleman over whose land hounds frequently ran, and was used by his shepherd. For crass stupidity and malignant disposition, the animal could give stones to any of the tribe and win in a canter. When

the fox unfortunately happened to cross the farm where he was located, he was sure to turn up and make his evil propensities manifest ; for, when scent was cool and hounds had to pick it up, with one ear cocked and the other laid back he would chase them right and left, biting, striking, kicking, and sending his victims limping and howling in all directions. Will and his whips, of course, were sharp to the rescue, aided by several of the field, who tried to administer punishment and drive away the intruder. But this was no easy matter, for so quick and cunning was the brute that, as they thought they were going for him on one side, he would dodge and let fly as he shot past on the other, and defy all attempts to catch him a stinger. One day I happened to be an eyewitness of this, when hounds took a line over the owner's land, scent being weak and pace slow, the fox running parallel with a line of gates, some of which being open it was impossible to cut him off before he had enjoyed a wicked innings. But as we passed a farmyard, the doors of which had luckily been left open, he turned in, and we quickly took care to close them and leave the demon a prisoner. I don't know that any of the hounds suffered

permanent injury, though several at different times got maimed by him.

The man who had charge of the animal was reported to have had a deal of trouble with him, one of his rebellious tricks, on meeting a team of horses, being to run amuck amongst them, regardless of consequences, and in the *melée* the rider had to jump off and save himself as best he could, leaving the delinquent to run the gauntlet, which not unfrequently ended in a scrimmage with the horses and anathemas from the drivers. His vicious propensities were not confined to escapades of this kind, for when loose in the fields, he would come up in a wheedling and innocent manner, poking out his nose as if to claim friendship, and when he got within measurable distance—and he was an excellent judge—would whip round, let drive with both heels, and follow you up like lightning until he got home, and on one occasion kicked a friend of his owner's very severely, splitting his hand between the fourth and little fingers, and causing excruciating pain, from which he fainted, but, help being at hand, the brute was driven off before he could renew the attack. Although the

injury was serious, and one of those sometimes succeeded by lockjaw, the gentleman—who was not nervous and had no misgivings—had the satisfaction of finding the wound go on well, and soon recovered, with only the souvenir of a scar remaining. The labourers on the farm to which the mule belonged were said to arm themselves with long shafted hand rakes when they were likely to be brought into contact with him, these being found effectual in defending the insidious attacks, and one day, when the demon was found dead with a swollen head, rumour said that a stout club had ended his malevolent career.

It was in the month of May, 1856, three years before his untimely end, that the Hunt presented Will Goodall with a tribute of respect and esteem, at the Town Hall, Grantham. The ball-room was crowded with sportsmen from all sides of the country, and the greatest hilarity prevailed, several capital songs being sung. But, alas, on the 1st of May, 1859, many who had attended those festivities were grieved by the sad intelligence that the light hearted and joyous spirit, which had led them over hill and dale for seventeen

seasons, had been called to another clime. But the inexorable decree had gone forth, and Goodall was severed from his friends in the prime of life, deeply regretted by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance, both in public and private life.

CHAPTER VII.

PROMOTION OF JAMES COOPER.

After the death of the lamented Will Goodall, Jem Cooper, who had been filling the post of second whip with much ability, was appointed his successor, and being a fine horseman, and light weight, his reputation was assured. During Cooper's career there were memorable runs, and on one occasion, after meeting at Denton, in January, 1869, hounds found a fox at the gorse, who took a round by Harston, where there came a short check, and appeared little scent. A judicious cast put matters right, and hounds ran their fox back through the gorse, with scent improving past the Hall and away to Hungerton. From thence, across Wyville Heath the line lay through Stoke Pasture pointing for Buckminster, and bearing west, they skirted Humberstone's Gorse, and

crossed the Croxton road to Hallam's Wood. With hounds close after him the fox ran round by Harston, and holding to the left, succeeded, after many twists and turns in saving his life by going to ground in the wood. This completed a circle, and was very severe for an hour.

It was about the beginning of the year 1870 that Cooper got a bad fall, which necessitated his nursing up for some weeks, during which frost set in, with other misfortunes to the staff, as Morgan, the second whip, had a severe accident, owing to his horse, whilst out at exercise with hounds, having been thrown down by the balling snow, and in the scramble, Morgan's foot getting entangled in the stirrup, he was dragged for some distance in that position, his boot torn off, and his head sustaining severe injuries. Morgan was carried in an insensible condition to Branston Lodge, but was shortly better and able to be conveyed home.

On Saturday, the 12th March, there was a piercing nor'wester, with fair sky, and predictions about sport unfavourable. But the prophets were wrong, in the early part of the

day especially. The noble Duke's appearance in the saddle, after being laid up for some weeks, was welcomed by a large assemblage at Three Queens, comprising most of the celebrities from Melton, and several well-mounted ladies.

The Earl of Scarborough and Lord Forester, although precluded by infirmities from participating in the sport as they were wont, saw a lot of fun upon wheels, and could relate incidents of which first flight men knew nothing. The order for Tippings Gorse having been given, Cooper had no sooner put hounds into covert than a wide-awake fox was off, straight across the heath to Saltby Church. At a good pace, hounds slipped along past the village, bearing to the right, as if for Sproxton Thorns. Keeping along the hollow, they passed Sproxton in the direction of Coston Covert. The fox, however, held to the left, and ran up to Buckminster, where he was quite beaten, and being headed, dodged about some small inclosures near the Park and got to ground, after a capital burst of half-an-hour.

One of the most memorable runs of that year occurred on Saturday, the 21st of March,

when hounds met at Great Gonerby. This is looked upon as the foot-people's meet, and being market day at the neighbouring town of Grantham, the attendance was limited. The farmers, who had sought to transact their business in good time and get a bit of hunting afterwards, were doomed to disappointment on learning that hounds had found at once and gone right out of sight and hearing. The morning was suggestive of spring, with a light north wind as they moved off to Belton Gorse, which was drawn blank. Cooper's reply to querists, as to where we should go next, was "To Jericho"; and although the answer might sound perplexing in the ears of strangers, the sequel explained that no joke was intended. Hounds having been put into the lower wood, found directly, and got away on good terms with their fox through the fir plantations towards Marston. Passing by Hougham Mill, they turned up to the right, and ran through the western outskirts of Barkston Gorse. They then continued a northern course past Carlton Ashes and Gelston to Lovedon Hill, where a little delay was caused by a fresh fox breaking away on the west. The matter was soon righted, and

hounds were in a few minutes streaming along to the left of Hough, where they pointed east, and crossed the road between Hough and Frieston to the Grantham and Lincoln railway near Normanton, where the fox was headed by some workmen. Turning short back, he re-crossed the road by Frieston, and went through Beighton's Gorse, then bore slightly to the right for Col. Packe's, at Caythorpe. Here a hooked nosed pedlar, overcome by excitement, led them astray by frantic gestures and vociferations, as though his brain was reeling, or reynard had interchanged compliments by making a snap at his calves, but as it turned out he had only seen the fox going ahead some distance away. Cooper, however, without according his blessings, helped hounds to work again, and they beautifully hit off the line through Reeve's Covert, steadily hunting on below Fulbeck. The pace increased as the pack led their followers, who were becoming scattered abroad all over the country, very fast across the strong enclosures of Leadenham low fields in the direction of Wellingore. The gallant fox was not beaten yet, and bore down by Broughton to within a short distance of the covert; but the leading

hounds were pressing him sorely as he turned round again towards Leadenham, pulling him down in the middle of a grass field about a mile below Col. Reeve's. Had it not been for the intervention of "Lemalong" (?) Lane and the Broughton road, few would have witnessed the finish of one of the finest hunting runs on record, lasting one hour and forty minutes. At a rough estimate, the distance traversed by hounds may be computed at about 15 miles; and although the pace sometimes was not fast, there was a deal of hard work to be performed, and glad enough were many riders when the finale was sounded. Men and horses had had enough, and Cooper being nearly twenty miles from home, did not, of course, draw again. I believe this run was conceded as best of the season.

The late Duke of Rutland rode hard in both Goodall's time and Cooper's. He liked pulling horses, and when hounds ran, seldom cared to look for the weaker places in the fences, but went banging along, rough or smooth. This entailed some severe falls, which laid him up for a time, but did not deter him from keeping company with hounds when he got out again.

One of the worst of these took place near Great Gonerby, I forget in what year, by his horse striking a stiff fence and pitching the Duke with great force to the ground. At first it was feared his neck was broken, but on those who rushed to his assistance finding that this was happily not the case, he was conveyed in a brougham to "The George," at Grantham, where he remained under medical treatment for several weeks before he could be removed to Belvoir.

Many of the Duke's horses were supplied by the noted Tom Percival, of Wansford; and there was a horse-dealing farmer named Hunter, living at Thorpe Arnold, who contributed towards replenishing the stud. Some good hunters came from these gentlemen, but there was a chestnut with white legs which, if memory serves, was called "White Stockings," perhaps one of the best the Duke ever rode. He was a big well-bred animal of great pace, and used to "lay hold" and gallop with his head down, but he carried his noble master with safety for many seasons and was a great favourite.

A tremendously hard day's sport followed the meet at Scrimshaw's Mill, on Saturday, the 5th of February, 1870. One of a batch of

foxes, disturbed at the Rectory Covert, went away to Elton, and after running a ring, returned to the thicket. He was forced out again, and bore across the vale past Jericho, and thence hounds crossed the Grantham canal near Redmile, racing as hard as they could to Barkston Wood, and killing their fox near Stathern Point in fifty-five minutes. Conspicuous amongst the pioneers were Captain Boyce, some officers of the Guards from Melton, and Whitmore, the *locum tenens* in Cooper's absence from a fall. Next drawing Jericho, there was a severe run over a considerable portion of the vale, mostly lying to the west, hounds finally losing their fox near Whatton. So heavy was the ground that few stayed till the finish, many of the horses being completely pumped out and reduced to a walk.

Cooper possessed wonderfully fine hands and never hurried his horses at their fences, and it was marvellous what big places they would cover, when you might have laid your bottom dollar that the yawning ditch on the far side would have been a halting place for horse and rider. Particularly well do I remember two smallish brown mares who carried

him famously, one of which, with upright shoulders and nothing before you, would go swishing her tail with a suspicion that she meant to whip round. But no, in the hands of so clever a horseman she seldom made a mistake, and nearly always landed safely, though perhaps few men would have been clamorous for the mount. The huntsman greatly distinguished himself on this mare on the occasion of a famous run from Ropsley Rise. Hounds had been sometime in the wood, and we could hardly make out whether there was a fox or no, when I came upon Cooper in one of the rides apparently abstracted or unwell, and not exactly in touch with the pack. Addressing him as to what they were doing, in a few minutes a fox broke covert on the Ropsley side, and Cooper, pulling himself together, galloped along a muddy ride in the direction the sound came from, and on emerging from the wood saw hounds streaming away a mile in front. Taking in the situation at a glance, he went straight as an arrow, and succeeded in getting on terms as there was a pause near Haydor Southings. The run was very severe past Dembleby and Osbournby to Aswarby, were the fox was killed, Sir Thomas

Whichcote and Cooper being the only two anywhere near at the finish, Sir Thomas riding a famous dark chestnut called I think, "King Charming," to such a tune that the "King" did not hold sway again that season.

The influx of visitors to the Belvoir Hunt during the week preceding Croxton Park races is generally considerable; and in April, 1870, there was a distinguished gathering at the Three Queens. The company included the Prince of Teck, the Duke of Rutland, Lord George Manners, the Earl of Wilton, Marquis of Queensberry (Master of the Dumfriesshire Hounds), Lord Forester, Lord Grey de Wilton, Earl of Scarborough, Hon. George and Mrs. Fitzwilliam, Captain Boyce, Mr. James Hall (Holderness), Captain Longstaffe, Sir J. H. Thorold, Colonel Fane, Mr. I. W. L. Gilmour, the Hon. M. Willoughby, Mr. J. E. Welby, Mr. Cecil Thorold, Captain and Mrs. Hall, Mr. Westley Richards, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Wigram, Mr. Broke and Mrs. Turnor, the Rev. C. D. Crofts, Captain Welby, Mr. J. Coupland, Mr. and Mrs. James Hornsby, Captain Cunliffe, Rev. J. Mirehouse, Mr. H. Sherbrook, Col. Lowther, Mr. Fillingham,

Mr. H. Staunton, Mr. Mildmay Willson,
Mr. E. Chaplin, Rev. J. Ebsworth and
Mr. W. Wing.

Here is an array of names, heavy weights and light, many of them hard to beat over any country, but alas, no longer permitted to remain participators in the sport they loved so well.

CHAPTER VIII.

ACCESSION OF FRANK GILLARD.

For the campaign of 1870 we find the late popular controller of the pack, Frank Gillard, after an absence of four years with Mr. Musters, re-entering the Duke's service, and succeeding James Cooper as huntsman, with Will Goodall, the late lamented leader of the Pytchley, installed as first whip, and Jack Carter as second. Cub hunting in September of that year was marred by drought, fissures in the ground being so mapped out that it was dangerous for horses and hounds to travel over, and, I believe, in some parts huntsmen and their attendants went out into the woods on foot. Rain, however, fell by November, when hunting was in full swing, with sport in the

ascendant, and the ranks swelling every day. In the Croxton Park district scent had greatly improved, and good runs were in evidence. The field on Wednesday, November the 23rd, contained some well-known faces, amongst those who joined the Duke being Mr. and Lady Alice Des Vœux, Messrs. Behrens, Mr. George Drummond, Mr. Hardy, Major Claggett, Capt. Coventry, Mr. H. Micklethwaite, Mr. A. Brand, Mr. J. Hardy, Junr., Capt. Riddell, Capt. Singleton, Mr. Worsley, Messrs. Hornsby, Mr. John Bland, Mr. W. Pinder, Mr. Fisher, Mr. James Hutchinson, Messrs. Burbidge, Messrs. T. and F. Vincent, Mr. Brewster, Mr. Smith, Mr. W. Downing, &c. Sport was enjoyed in a smart run over the heath and through Croxton Park, with a ring back in a fast gallop of thirty minutes, the fox going to ground in Tipping's Gorse. On the Saturday following, the hounds met at Croxton Park, when Lord and Lady Grey de Wilton, Lord Coventry, Colonels Forester, Reeve, Markham, Captains Saville and King, with many others, were amongst the party. The trysting place was Sproxton Thorns, where hounds soon notified to the phalanx of horsemen at the south-west corner that their game

was on foot. Reynard was not long in making a dash in front of the field over some ploughed soil on the south. A rush at the first fence levelled several of the foremost, with spreading of eager spirits as hounds rattled along to the right of Coston, crossed the brook, and ran up-hill pointing for Stapleford. The fox, a veteran who had probably travelled that way many a time before, was met by a countryman at the fir plantation, and altered his tactics by changing direction to the right. At the brook, struggles and scrimmages began in earnest—some got over, others in, with the noble Duke amongst those enjoying a ducking. The field was scattered far and wide in hot pursuit, with Gillard and a select party leading the van over the hill between Garthorpe and Saxby. The pace was maintained across grass towards Freeby, an inclination westward bringing them to the wood. Several of the unfortunates joined issue here, but two foxes being disturbed did not contribute to the continuance of what had been a capital thing, as scent became colder, and hounds could only trace a faint line past Brentingby Spinney. Going down the hill from the fir plantation, Lord Coventry came to grief over a nasty fence, which, though

known to Melton men as practicable in places, takes a lot of jumping indiscriminately. But he soon re-mounted, and was with the pack as they crossed the turnpike towards Melton Spinney, where all traces faded, after a very fast gallop of fifty-five minutes, though detailed proceedings carried them a quarter of an hour longer. A short trot led to Thorpe Arnold, where, at the request of the famous sportsman, Mr. Edward Burbidge, a halt was called, and that gentleman's hospitality dispensed to the field. On nearing the covert planted and cherished by that ardent lover of the chase, sometime elapsed before Gillard allowed hounds to enter, in the hope that the noble Master, who had gone to Melton for a change of clothes in lieu of those which had been saturated in the brook, might be able to rejoin the field. There were vixens, however, reported to have nurseries at hand, so the place was left, and Coston Covert furnished a fox who afforded a good hunting run by Wymondham and Stonesby and saved his brush.

On Saturday, March 20th, 1875, after meeting at Goadby, they had a rattling run from

the gorse. Hounds had drawn nearly through when a fox jumped up on the outskirts with the pack flashing after him like lightning. People had mostly congregated on the north, and few were aware of the flight, but a rare opportunity the sequel presented to those who had kept a sharp look out and slipped away on terms with the pack. As if tied to their fox they flew along a south-easterly course to Chadwell, thence passing to the right of it, raced up the hill as if Melton Spinney would be the next point, but turning to the left, reynard was sent along at a terrific pace to Freeby Wood. He crossed the Melton turnpike by a plantation nearer Waltham, hounds still running at their best pace till they got to Stonesby Ashes, where the fox was viewed dead beaten. Gillard held the pack round the further side, and they took up the running of what proved to be a fresh fox, who was hunted slowly by Sproxton Thorns nearly to Buckminster. The fortunes of war had favoured the fugitive of the morning, as it seemed he had gone to ground in the ashes, up to which no one had the least chance with Captain Longstaffe, Frank Gillard, Captain Riddell, and Blakeboro (the first whip).

A good day was notified on the Lincolnshire side on Tuesday, 15th February, 1876. The meet was Fulbeck, and there were several ladies present ; amongst them Mrs. Franklin, Miss Crofts, Miss Willson, Mrs. James Hornsby, and a good representation from the Blankney. A trot of two miles took them to a withy bed by the Brant, planted by Captain Willson a few years before, a thriving comfortable habitation. Reynard did not wait for ejection, but made off at once to a narrow plantation on the banks of the river. There was a blazing scent, hounds were through in a jiffy, running eastward towards Reeve's Covert. The pace and heavy ground began to tell a tale, and men deprived of their horses, with sorrowful countenances, might be seen plodding wearily along handicapped by pounds of affectionate clay. The fox was no trifler, onward he went to right of Reeve's Covert, over deep soil, which reduced the pace of sobbing horses, and it was here that a lady who had been riding in the first flight came to grief. However, she was soon up and going as well as ever. Hounds had been running as hard as they could, missing every covert till they came to Beighton's Gorse, about four miles from the

start, carrying on the line beautifully through the village of Caythorpe without pausing for more than a minute or two, thence by the Hall over the road south of Fulbeck. Presently the advantage of lighter soil was welcomed by those who had stuck to hounds, and horses could stride along with more freedom and satisfaction, as the fox showed no signs of sinking, and there was a lot to be done before the chapter ended. Sailing away to the Lincoln and Grantham railway brings misgivings as to whether the white gates will be available. But all is well, and hounds go streaming along up-hill to the heath and appear to be making towards Byard's Leap. Inclining south they run like mad, and the best men have to do all they know to keep on anything like terms, whilst the land is sown broadcast with stragglers miles in the rear. After running over Caythorpe Heath it became evident hounds were gaining on their fox as he led them towards Sparrow Gorse, leaving it on the left and passing by Mr. Minta's house on Normanton hill top. Keeping along the brow, when the pack were almost within grasp of the prize they so well deserved, reynard sought refuge

in a rabbit burrow amongst a clump of trees overlooking Carlton, from which all efforts to dislodge him were ineffectual. This was an unfortunate coincidence, as hounds had run the distance, computed at ten or eleven miles, almost without a check in very quick time.

CHAPTER IX.

TESTIMONIAL TO THE DUKE OF RUTLAND.

During the season of 1875 there were whisperings of a strong desire on the part of tenant farmers in the hunt to present the Duke of Rutland with some token of their esteem and appreciation of his grace's courtesy and kindness evinced by the princely liberality with which he had hunted the country for nineteen years, and as some recognition of the honour and privilege they had long enjoyed of hunting with his hounds. Active measures were soon taken, and the first desire—that the proposals should be confined to farmers—took a wider basis. Stronger influences were brought to bear on the advisability of extended co-operation, as county gentlemen, as well as others interested in the hunt, could not allow a movement so popular to be limited to

agriculturists only. This at first did not find favour with the latter, but on looking at the matter in a broader light, they felt that it would be a source of regret if the scheme should be in any way restricted or prevented from reaching its fullest magnitude, that universal expressions of approval could not be disregarded, and the point was conceded. Whilst matters were in a preliminary stage invitations were issued by Earl Brownlow to gentlemen, farmers, and others interested in the hunt, requesting their attendance at a meeting to be held at Belton House, on Tuesday, the 22nd February, 1876. This invitation was eagerly responded to, and by the time appointed for hounds meeting on the lawn, the scene presented a gay and animated appearance.

Assembled in the library were most of the leading gentry and farmers of the hunt, the gay scarlet and sober black offering a by no means unpleasing contrast.

A glance round the room revealed the presence of veterans upon whom the impress of winter sat lightly, and there were some of

the party who could have borne testimony to the feats of Assheton Smith, the vagaries of the Marquis of Waterford, the prowess of Shaw—said to have been the greatest terror to foxes the Belvoir ever had—and endorsed the renown of old Goosey. Amongst the company were Sir Thomas Whichcote, Sir John Thorold, Mr. George Drummond, Colonel Reeve, Captain Longstaffe, Colonel Fane, Mr. Beaumont, Captain Thorold, Mr. J. E. Welby, Captain Carpenter, Captain Willson, Mr. J. Hardy, Mr. Broke Turnor, Major Paynter, Colonel Walter Fane, Captain Glead, Mr. E. Fane, Captain de Burton, Mr. H. Praed, Rev. C. D. Crofts, Rev. W. C. Newcome, Rev. F. Staunton, Mr. George Gordon, Mr W. Pinder, Mr. J. F. Burbidge, Mr. James Hutchinson, Rev. J. B. Younge, Mr. Wm. Downing, Mr. Richard Roberts, Mr. T. Hutchinson, Mr. J. Wilders, Mr. J. Nichols, Mr. W. Sills, Mr. Robert Wyles, Mr. J. H. Fisher, Mr. W. Bedford, Mr. Wm. Parke, Mr. J. E. Bright, Mr. T. Vincent, Mr. J. P. Oliver, and many others.

The Earl Brownlow, in opening the proceedings, said :—“ This meeting, over which I have

the honour to preside to-day, has been called under the following circumstances: I was informed some time ago that there was a widespread feeling amongst gentlemen connected with the Duke of Rutland's hunt that this would be a fitting time to present the Duke with some acknowledgment of the kind and generous manner in which he has hunted the country for us; and I was also informed that this feeling was eagerly shared by all who hunt with his grace's hounds. I was further requested to call a meeting at Belton, this being considered the most convenient place. I had very great pleasure in complying with the request, and if I can in any way conduce to the carrying out of this very desirable object I shall feel much honour and pleasure in doing so."

After a few remarks upon the difficulty of deciding on the best form of testimonial to be presented, his Lordship stated that he had received several letters from gentlemen who were unable to be present, including the Hon. E. G. Finch-Hatton, the Rev. Thos. Heathcote, Mr. Samuda, Captain Molyneux,

Mr. Algernon Turner, Mr. E. S. Burnaby, and others.

Sir Thomas Whichcote next proposed that a testimonial be presented to His Grace the Duke of Rutland, as a slight acknowledgement of the generous manner in which he had hunted the country for nearly nineteen years. Mr. E. M. Burbidge, of Thorpe Arnold, in seconding the proposition said:—"I hardly expected to have been placed in this position to-day, but don't regret it, inasmuch as the way it has been taken up by the farmers proves its popularity. This matter took its rise amongst the tenant farmers who were anxious to do something, but the feeling was, I may as well tell you, that we could not raise a great deal of money amongst ourselves. But I was informed by a friend, who is present to-day, that it would be much more desirable to make this a county matter, and heartily glad am I that it should be so, and, moreover, that I have the honour of seconding the proposition made by Sir Thomas Whichcote, because it will show that the feeling is universal, and that gentlemen and tenant farmers go hand in hand, which I hope we shall continue to do for years to come."

A Committee was next formed, and the bankers at Melton, Grantham, and Sleaford, desired to receive subscriptions.

After the proceedings had terminated the company were kindly reminded by the Countess Brownlow that refreshments were waiting in the banqueting room, and after due attention had been devoted to them, a move was made to the shrubberies close by, where a fox, hunted by both hounds and foot people, proved too cunning for the lot, and cut the chase short by popping into a drain. Pedestrians were in high jinks as another of the ilk, who must have been deaf to the ebullitions which had been vented, was at home in a patch of gorse higher up the park, slipping away amid vehement tally-hoings through the plantations towards Gipple. Bearing round to Belmont, he was sharply pursued through the coverts, and failing to make his point was soon killed. There was a fair run in the afternoon from Peascliff, the fox passing Gonerby and thence crossing a stiff country over the moor to Allington Junction. A short check, which Gillard soon righted, and hounds ran hard

across Barrowby Vale towards Casthorpe Covert, killing their fox in five-and-thirty minutes.

On Saturday, the 6th of January, 1877, after meeting at Goadby, intelligence that a fox had taken up his quarters in the Hall gardens led to an invasion of the sanctuary, and a hurried exit along the Bullimore in a race to Harby Hills. Reynard went by Piper Hole Gorse to Holwell Mouth, where, without delay, the field had plenty of work to pound along with hounds by Little Belvoir to Wartnaby stone pits. The fox, after turning over the vale for a short distance, ascended the hill to the railway near Dalby Wood, but again changed his course towards Over Broughton. After running in that direction for a couple of miles he crossed the railway and went over the hill, leaving Little Dalby on his left, right away to Willoughby, the fugitive being just in front of the pack as they drove him into the middle of the village, killing him in a hovel in one hour and thirty-five minutes. Excitement ran high as the fox entered the precincts, which was shared by a sporting pig, who broke from his sty and joined the pack, and on the owner—

an old woman—seeking to restrain his ardour, piggy made a rush which capsized her and broke her leg. A handful of silver, collected on the spot, proved such a solatium that rumour said the game old lady, when quiet was restored, averred she should soon be better and ready for 'em again. There was a large field out, Lord Grey de Wilton, Lord Wolverton, Sir B. and Lady Florence Dixie (who was presented with the brush), Mr. J. Welby, Major Whyte Melville, Mr. Allcard, Mr. E. Chaplin, Captain Elmhirst, and Captain King witnessing the leading features of this fine run.

However, Tuesday, the 10th of April, 1877, will long be remembered as a red letter day in the annals of the Belvoir Hunt, in commemoration of the testimonial presented by over two hundred gentlemen, farmers, and others whose pleasure it had been to hunt with the hounds. After the arrangements before mentioned at Belton House had been matured, and subscriptions to a considerable amount received, a sub-committee, presided over by Earl Brownlow, was appointed to receive designs for the manufacture of a suitable piece of plate. On its

completion announcements were made in the newspapers that the presentation would take place at Belvoir Castle on the 10th of April, with a request that all subscribers who could make it convenient would attend. Shortly before twelve groups of horsemen might be seen approaching the towering heights from all directions, whilst carriages were setting down large arrivals of ladies and gentlemen in hunting costume at the castle porch. On assembling in the guard room the eye ran over nearly all the members and landed gentry of the hunt, besides outsiders who were prompted by kindred feelings; an immense assembly of farmers, comprising those who hunted to a man, and a considerable proportion of those who didn't, but who expressed their satisfaction, not only in having contributed towards the testimonial, but in the preservation of foxes on their lands. Amongst the company were Sir Thomas Whichcote, Sir John Thorold, Sir H. A. H. Cholmeley, Colonel Reeve, Captain Longstaffe, Major Parker, Mr. J. E. Welby, Captain de Burton, Captain Thorold, Messrs. Geo. Norman, V. Drummoud, J. Hardy, Mr. and Mrs. B. Turnor, F. Stanley, A. Turnor, C. Wigram, Wm. Manners, Frank Gillard (the

huntsman), G. Gillett, Stanley Mott, J. C. L. Calcraft, G. Gordon, G. Fillingham, the Mayor of Grantham, Major Singleton, J. F. Burbidge, James Hutchinson, John Green, Wm. Pinder, I. Fisher, G. C. Downing, W. Sills, F. Vincent, W. Fletcher, W. Downing, Jas. Hornsby, J. Wilders, R. Hornsby, J. Wright, Thos. Hutchinson, W. Bedford, R. Roberts, J. Hand, W. Hind, C. Smith, B. Beeson, W. Colman, J. Shipman, J. Nichols, J. Bailey, and many others to the number of three hundred, whose names did not transpire.

As the noble Duke entered the room, accompanied by Lady A. Norman and other members of the family, a magnificent candelabra was unveiled. This consisted of a large centre piece with branches containing twenty-five lights, supported by four independent and smaller ones containing fifteen lights each, of solid silver, surmounted by figures of Diana, Robin Hood, and Nimrod, but some trifling additions were contemplated before the piece was completed. The subscriptions amounted to £2,500, contributed by 200 subscribers, whose names were registered on

an ornamental scroll lying on the table. Sir William Earle Welby, in the names of the gentlemen, farmers, and other members of the hunt, presented the testimonial, and appropriately conveyed the sentiments of the subscribers when he described the feelings of respect and esteem with which the Duke of Rutland as master of the magnificent pack of hounds which had so long contributed to the enjoyment of his friends was regarded, and added the hearty wish that health and strength might long enable him to enjoy the high position which he so eminently filled. The noble Duke, in an eloquent and powerful speech, during which he was much affected, alluded to the feelings which prompted the testimonial as affording him greater gratification than the intrinsic value of the magnificent gift. He regarded the hunting field as common ground, on which all are welcome and meet as equals, from peer to the peasant; he attached high importance to the chase as a national sport, and reminded his hearers of the great commander who loved to get his officers from the ranks of fox hunters. Amidst loud cheers he observed that hounds had been kept at Belvoir for one hundred and

fifty years—himself at their head for the last twenty—and that the high state of perfection with which they were regarded was due in a great measure to the scientific attainments, as well in the kennel as the field, of the huntsmen—of such men as Newman, Shaw, Goosey, Goodall, Cooper and Gillard. He expressed the gratification it afforded him to provide sport for the community, and acknowledged the liberality of non-hunting farmers in preserving foxes, and caring nothing about damages to crops or fences, and sat down amidst tremendous cheering with the company echoing his sentiments, that “Long may hunting flourish, and the woods of Belvoir resound with the music of fox hounds.” The formal part of the proceedings over, the company sat down to a sumptuous luncheon provided for over three hundred, to which, as many had had a twenty miles ride, it will be rightly inferred that ample justice was accorded.

By two o'clock Frank Gillard, the huntsman, mounted on a grey steeplechase horse, “The Sluggard,” surrounded by the hounds and his

whips, drew up on the western slopes below the castle, the field assembling by the stables, the whole offering a picture not to be found in any country but our own. Many ladies joined the hunt, including Mrs. Broke Turnor, Miss Willson, Mrs. James Hornsby, Mrs. Wigram, Mrs. Hall, Miss Turnor, etc. A heavy rain had fallen during the preceding night, but the clouds lifted, and it was fair by ten o'clock, so that those who attended were not inconvenienced by wet clothes. But the land was in many places under water, and a learned gentleman from the Vale was heard to remark that the ditches had overflowed to such an extent that attempting to ride to hounds would be about as risky as the fate of those who had the hardihood to patronise gentlemen of the profession which he followed, for he appeared to be either a solicitor, an attorney, or a lawyer, and I suppose the difference would be in similar ratio to that between Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-de. In a short time the cavalcade moved off to Barkston Wood, where hounds disturbed a brace of foxes, and had a short gallop towards Plungar, thence bearing away to Stathern, where reynard got the best of it. Afterwards a

fox was found at Salt Becks, who seemed to have understood and was desirous of contributing his share towards the day's rejoicing, for he went boldly away to the castle walls with the pack close to his brush, and they hustled him along at such a pace that he sought safety in an earth near Knipton.

CHAPTER X.

HUNTING.

It was during the latter part of 1877 that death removed, at the ripe age of eighty, a sportsman who formed a connecting link between the past and present generations—Michael Ashwell, a farmer and land owner of Barrowby. In the days when Goosey had control of the Belvoir pack Mr. Ashwell used to ride a gigantic black horse, who, it was said, would top a gate or walk over a hurdle with equal facility, and he had many a tussle with the renowned Assheton Smith, to the disgust of the latter, whose over-bearing jealousy at that time could scarcely brook any man in the same field with him. Mr. Ashwell was at one time associated with Tom Walker, when “Peter Simple” and “The Kicker” were in

their glory. The latter was a good-looking horse, and said to be Peter's superior when he would go, which was not very often. He had not his name for nothing, and it was told how Walker was never backward in offering to mount a friend, the unsuspecting victim being now and again deposited on his back before he got out of the stable yard.

On Wednesday, the 14th March, in the same year, there was a meet at Croxton Park, at which, amongst the notabilites who joined the Duke, were Earl Granville, Sir Francis Grant, Major Whyte Melville, Col. and Miss Markham, Lord Dupplin, Capt. Turner Farley, Mr. H. Behrens. They went to Newman's Gorse, but there were vixens in the neighbourhood and not much sport.

Sometime about the commencement of the regular season of the same year, I think it was, Mr. Micklethwaite, a gentleman who had been in the navy, took up his quarters at Grantham. He was a wonderfully hard man and never missed a day's hunting—rain, hail, blow, or snow—no matter what as long as frost kept off. Mr. Micklethwaite rode fast at

his fences, and had a great partiality for timber, over which he had some fearful falls, and often when people thought he must have been well-nigh killed would scramble up, stagger about a bit, straighten out a concertina'd hat, and look for his horse, who was probably careering some distance away by himself. A bold and somewhat reckless rider, Mr. Micklethwaite seldom altered his course when hounds ran, but rattled along as hard as he could, caring little for the hunting part of the business, but rather for the helter-skelter scrimmage which a sharp burst affords. In the catalogue of tumbles he seldom sustained much damage, an iron frame, with wonderful nerves and constitution, enabling him to set at defiance the vicissitudes of weather, bruised limbs, and other contingencies which beset the career of a determined and ardent sportsman.

The Marquis of Queensberry was hunting from Barrowby Rectory about this time. He not only rode close to hounds but enjoyed slipping on silk, either on the flat or across country, and educated most of his own horses. It was told of him upon one occasion when he

had an obstinate pupil, who declined on any terms to jump at water, how he blindfolded the animal, and with a short canter charged a brooklet, with the natural result that the horse went bang in ; whereupon some labourers who had been watching the fun rushed promptly to the rescue, and extricated both horse and rider from a somewhat perilous position. It never transpired what effect a leap in the dark had upon the obdurate animal ; but the rescuers got rewarded with a golden coin where-with his lordship's health would be received with acclamation at the village " Pub " in the evening. The noble Marquis was very popular in the district for many acts of kindness, consideration, and liberality in providing entertainments for the working classes.

Mr. George Drummond hunted from Grantham with a magnificent stud of sixteen to eighteen powerful well-bred horses. He rode over big fences, and was nearly always near to hounds. Being frequently away the fortunes of his hunters were entrusted to the hands of Capt. Longstaffe, who had some famous mounts and did ample justice to his charges, for it was seldom that the gallant Captain was not



RODE A REFUSER BLINDFOLD.

amongst the chief pilots, no matter whether pitted against the flower of Melton or the sturdy men of Lincoln.

There was a good deal of frost during the months of January and February, 1880, and a curious coincidence showing the pluck of reynard was related. It appeared that as an owner of greyhounds, accompanied by two of them, was crossing a turnip field, up jumped a large fox and made off, with one of the dogs, which his master could not restrain, giving chase. The fox went over a low wall into the next field, and had not gone many yards before the dog caught him, and was immediately seized in his turn by the throat and pinned with a firm grip. All the dog's efforts to shake off his pugnacious opponent were useless, and in a few minutes the dog, after giving two or three convulsive gasps, lay stone dead, and on his astonished master getting up reynard jumped on the wall, and with a triumphant whisk of his brush and look of defiance bade him adieu.

A red letter day was notified on Saturday, 19th February, 1881. The meet at Piper Hole

was a notable one, including the Duke of Rutland, the Duke of Portland, Lord John Manners, Sir H. Des Voeux, Lord Cloncurry, Mr. J. W. L. Gilmour, Mrs. Sloane Stanley, Major Longstaffe, Hon. Captain and Mrs. Molyneux, Mr. H. Micklethwaite, Mr. F. Stanley, Captain Tennant, Mr. and Mrs. Adair, Mr. Younger, Captain Smith, Mr. A. Cross, and the veteran Parson Bullen, of Eastwell, looking as much like going as he did twenty years before, though the united ages of himself and horse represented the mellow total of one hundred and three years. Old Hills was the first draw, and a fox away in a twink up the opposite hill, paying no heed to indiscreet horsemen moving about in front. After going a mile men's minds were exercised about an awkward place in a hollow, which provoked strong language as they swerved right and left; several scrambled over and others got in, whilst reynard favored the field by a two miles' circuit back to covert. As people came galloping up a glance revealed a gentleman of high degree to have sustained an imperial crouner, and a brave soldier exhibits signs of a sanguinary struggle. Hounds snapped up their fox in covert, and got away quickly in the wake of

another, going beautifully along by a plantation on the south nearly to Melton Spinney. Approaching the railway the fox was headed and passed the outskirts of Melton, with brilliant running over a long stretch of grass on the left of Holwell to Kettleby, where was a short check, but they were soon away past Wartnaby and Cant's Thorns straight into Grimston Gorse, where the fox went to ground. A hardy terrier ejected him, but he found a safer asylum near a farm house and had to be left. Amongst the half-score who had the best of this superlative run of an hour and thirty-five minutes, was a lady on a brown horse, who rode admirably, the most awkward fences being negotiated without the slightest mistake. There was a good deal more to be done yet, for in the afternoon they found a tough old customer at Clawson Thorns. After breaking away by Holwell Mouth and Little Belvoir, he led them a merry dance past Cant's Thorns to Welby Church, turning by Pen Hill to Wartnaby Stone Pits. Here the fox made up his mind for the Vale, hounds rattling along past Nether Broughton and Dalby Grange, and catching him up beautifully on the hillside a few fields from Dalby Wood. This also was

a fine sporting run of one hour and thirty minutes, with hounds working admirably, and out of a large field Lord Cloncurry, Captain Smith, Mr. George Drummond, Captain Boyce, Mr. Praed, and Mr. W. Chaplin were the only representatives to witness the end of a magnificent day's sport.

During the summer of 1883 two well-known followers of the Belvoir hounds passed away—The Rev. T. Heathcote, of Lenton, and Mr. Hardy, of Grantham. Mr. Heathcote, during the time his cousin Arthur had the Surrey Stag hounds, frequently hunted with him from the Durdans at Epsom. He used to ride uncommonly hard, and it was related that a terrible cropper, whilst staying there, over a hog-backed stile one frosty morning, would have killed nine men out of ten, though he fortunately escaped with cuts and bruises. A covert planted by him near Folkingham has afforded some fine runs on the borders of the Fens. Mr. Hardy was a constant attendant at the covert side for many years, no distance being too far or day too long. He had many tussles with Sir Thomas Whichcote, the pair frequently cutting out the work, especially in the

woodlands and over the Lincolnshire district. Possessing fine hands, clever horses, and an accurate knowledge of the country, when hounds ran Mr. Hardy was sure to be near, and being a shrewd observer and keen critic, few men were able to relate incidents of the chase more sententiously than he.

On the 2nd March, 1887, interest was manifested in the assembly at Buckminster, the seat of Earl Dysart, and a new meet. The Duke of Rutland, the Duke of Portland, Earl and Countess Brownlow, the Countess of Wilton and Mr. Pryor, Col. Willson, Major and Mrs. Amcotts, Col. Forester, Major Longstaffe, Mr. Chaplin, Sir H. Cholmeley, and many others present. When the cavalcade moved out of the court yard the sight was as enlivening as varied, for you saw a large contingent of the best men in England, on the finest specimens of hunters that money could procure, in contradistinction to the nondescript rider, who, on a half cart horse, enjoys his outing with the biggest of them, if you may judge by the way his hob-nailed boots punch the sides of the impassive animal he bestrides. The trap tit, too, steps gaily along in front of

the caparisoned pair in the stylish wagonette, jarvey, with pipe topsy-turvy on one side of his mouth, utterly ignoring jolts and jars over rough ground which threaten to deposit him and his beery companions upon mother earth. A fox broke from Coston Covert across dry soil on the east, and there wasn't much scent. But when hounds had crossed Sewstern lane and got upon grass they ran along nicely to the village. "Look out! Ware wire," is the cry, as a veteran frantically gesticulates. Too late the warning, the horse of a hard riding farmer is hung in its clutches. With a struggle and scramble the victim regains his legs, the rider none the worse, but it was a marvel his horse escaped so leniently. By slow degrees the fox was hunted past Stainby to Skillington where he went to ground. The best part of the run was in its early stages, with work cleverly performed by hounds for upwards of an hour. A patch of gorse adjoining the park at Buckminster was the abode of a fox who hustled away as soon as he heard the noise, with a batch of hard riders hurrying down to the drain that runs below, and the usual bogging at water which is sure to make some victims. Mr. T. Heathcote slipped over in exceptionless style,

holding a lead as hounds ran along the plantations, whilst a gentleman following got a nasty fall at the next fence, being dragged in the stirrup for some distance. The day ended with a fast burst from Lawn Hollow across the Melton road, whence bearing north hounds ran the fox to the village of Denton, where, as daylight was waning, Gillard had to give up a prolonged and enjoyable day's hunting.

There was a capital run from Hough Gorse on Tuesday, the 25th February, 1890. The meet, at Barkston-le-Willows, was attended by several gentlemen from the sporting metropolis, who brought their horses by train to Grantham, including Count Zbrowsky, Capt. Hill Trevor, Mr. Wallace, Mr. De Winton, Mr. Akers, Mr. Morris, and also contained representatives of the Blankney Hunt. The first fox from Barkston Gorse got headed near the railway, and twisted along the banks of the river Witham, whence little could be done with him. White Hills had been tried a fortnight before and a rattling burst ensued, though on this occasion it was void. But there was the right

ring at Hough Gorse, the pack disturbing a fox who did not mean to be caught napping. He stole stealthily out on the south, close by a band of sportsmen drawn up in shelter from a stinging north easter. Not a word was breathed, and the conduct of this section merited kudos. Reynard appreciated this as he calmly surveyed the party, but his mind was not quite made up. Presently he goes bravely away on the east. There is no delay as hounds indicate a comfortable scent as they cross ploughed land and incline towards the Brandon road. Most of the horsemen steer for Macadam—inestimable boon to so many—but a gentleman in black spurns the idea and rides close to the pack. Highwaymen discover their error as hounds turn away across large pastures west of the village of Hough. The pace waxes hot, with no signs of slackening, there is a long tail and those cutting out the work in no danger of having their wings clipped. Without semblance of a check hounds cross the road between Hough and Gelston and go tearing away to Carlton Ashes. Onward they sweep to Honington beck, in proximity with a crossing of the Lincoln and Grantham railway near Barkston.

Frank Gillard and two or three others got well over the stream, but there were panting steeds shuddering at its gurgling waters, their riders seeking to condone the offence by the compromise of riding in and out. In this they are disappointed, for the treacherous banks refuse foot-hold, and they slide calmly down into the cooling element. Whilst this was going on hounds were racing for their fox, who just saved his life by gaining refuge in a sand earth about a mile north of Honington Station, after a headlong stampede without a check for twenty-five minutes. The pace from first to last was tremendous, combining the characteristics of a steeple-chase. Frank Gillard, who was riding an exceptionally fast horse, held the lead most of the way, with Major Longstaffe, Mr. C. Clarke (junior), Mr. Fisher, and a few others in the best places.

A splitting run took place from Mr. Welby's plantations at Allington early in November, 1891. Hounds met at Belvoir; the noble Duke, Lady Victoria Manners, and a large field being present. Not much was done round the castle in the morning; but later on a fox from Allington

went away with hounds in his wake, and it was evident there was a much improved scent as they passed within hail of Debdale, with Frank Gillard and Mr. James Hutchinson nearest the pack. Mr. Hemery, Mr. Lubbock, and Major Amcotts electing a lower line of country, rode to the musical strains in front of them over Sewston lane, scarcely able to discern the spotted beauties on the other side of blackthorn enclosures in the glittering sheen of a setting sun. When the lane was crossed hounds swung to the right, and the three gentlemen so favoured had the best of it, the huntsman and Mr. Hutchinson having sharp work to get near them pointing for Normanton Covert. This lay on the right, the pack running west to the river Devon, with odds on their crossing the Newark and Bottesford Railway. But as an expert is exercising his skill as a locksmith with a stirrup iron upon the crossing gates, Mr. Hemery detects the pack bearing towards Staunton, and the little band race over grass in that direction, with fences big enough to baffle a bull and equally blind. They reached Staunton in twenty-six minutes, and unfortunately getting on the line of a fresh fox as

the shades of night were falling Gillard had to stop them, otherwise the fugitive could hardly have escaped.

Much regret was manifested at the death of that fine sportsman Sir Thomas Whichcote, of Aswarby Park, which took place at Bournemouth, on the 18th of January, 1892, after a long and painful illness. The deceased, as has been before alluded to, was for many years a prominent leader with the Belvoir hounds, and possessing a famous stud, mostly thoroughbred horses, it was seldom that he found an equal in the hardest of runs. When failing health compelled his retirement from the field, his interest in the chase remained unabated, his coverts a sanctuary for foxes, with a hearty welcome to all who attended the Aswarby meets, or the vicissitudes of the chase might bring within hail of his hospitable mansion. Sir Thomas was an excellent landlord, possessing the esteem and affection of a long line of tenantry, who were sure of advice and assistance in the hour of need, and died regretted and honoured by all who knew him.

It was during a run from Coston Covert the same season that Mr. Pidcock, a gentleman

hunting from Grantham, got an awkward fall near Sewstern. His horse, making a mistake at a fence, fell into the ditch, where the rider was in imminent danger of having his head battered in by the horse's kicks, when that excellent sportsman, Lord Lonsdale, taking the situation in at a glance, immediately jumped from his own horse and pulled off the saddle, placing it as a shield round the hatless gentleman, and probably saved him from being killed. This was a novel expedient, and one which few of the experienced would have dreamt of, and hunting men owe a debt of gratitude to the noble earl for the useful lesson which he taught.

They hunted late in the spring of 1892, and on the 14th April, we find the field entertained to a *recherché* luncheon by Earl and Countess Brownlow, at Belton House. A glance at the company included Sir George and Lady Dallas, Mr. H. Cust, M.P., Lady Augusta Faue, Major Longstaffe, Lady Hylda MacNeil, Hon. Mr. Petre, Mr. E. Lubbock, Sir John and Miss Thorold, Capt. Rennie, Major Hutchinson, Mrs. Franklin, Mr. Montague and Mrs. Thorold, the Misses Heathcote, Mr. C. Bradley,

Col. Fane, M. Roy, &c. There was not much sport during the day, hounds finding a brace of foxes at Haydor Southings, and getting divided in a short run by Oasby Mill to Abney Wood. Towards evening Gillard went to Harrowby Gorse, and tried to make out the line of a fox who had decamped early, when, as night came on, the inky clouds overhead began to discharge their contents in a blinding fall of snow, sending the field home more like a band of millers than members of the chase.

By the death of another well-known figure in the Belvoir country, Col. Francis A. Fane, of Fulbeck Hall, which took place at Malta, on the 31st January, 1893, followers of the Belvoir and Blankney packs were deprived of the fellowship of a genial sportsman and country gentleman, whose welcome when hounds met at his residence was most cordial. The gallant officer, until illness prevented, was a frequent attendant with those packs, and especially respected by the farmers and members of the hunt. He took great interest in agricultural pursuits and the breeding of hunters, and was chosen as one of the British

delegates to visit Canada, and report upon its suitability as a field of emigration; and the reports of those gentlemen were of great value and interest. Col. Fane in early life had a distinguished military career, having raised and commanded the Peshawur Light Horse during the Indian Mutiny. He also commanded the 25th regiment, and saw considerable service in Canada in connection with the Red River Expedition. The deceased, who was in his 68th year, was one of a younger branch of the Fanes, Earls of Westmorland.

About the beginning of the next month—February—there was a meet at Newton Bar one terribly rough morning, when nobody thought hounds could run a yard. In the afternoon, however, they found a fox at Boothby Little Wood, and going away down wind close to his brush, raced at a terrific pace across a beautiful stretch of grass to within a few fields of Lenton, with Mr. Jas. Hutchinson leading the field all the way. The burst, although lasting only about sixteen minutes, was a brilliant affair, and the pack would assuredly have ended the career of their fox

had he not baulked them by going to earth in a pit. So strong was the gale that the time of many was employed in the undignified employment of hat hunting, the conventional chimney-pot performing fantastic evolutions before coming to anchor in the nearest ditch. This reminds me of a novel remedy adopted by the Marquis of Tweeddale, who used to hunt with the Belvoir hounds some years ago, and was a very resolute man across country. He pursued the simple expedient of securing his head-gear by strings of broad ribbon tied in a bow under the chin, somewhat after the style of elderly ladies of that period when bonnets were of more capacious dimensions than the bewitching excuses of the present day. Of course this subjected him to good natured badinage, for which he cared not a jot.

CHAPTER XI.

HUNTING CONTINUED.

On Boxing Day, Tuesday, 26th December, 1893, the town of Grantham was on the *qui vive* in consequence of the Field Master, Lord Edward Manners, having arranged a meet at the Guildhall, out of compliment to the Mayor, Capt. Arthur Hutchinson, an excellent sportsman and follower of hounds. As it was said to have been over forty years since a similar event took place—and that during the régime of Lord Forester, when Will Goodall had command of the pack—great excitement was manifested, a large and orderly crowd, numbering from five to six thousand, filling the approaches to the hall as the hour of meeting drew nigh. Capt. Hutchinson had issued invitations to the hunt, and especially farmers, to partake of a *recherché* breakfast in

the Reading Room, which was responded to by numbers of ladies and gentlemen who gathered in honour of the occasion, Mrs. Hutchinson and her friends offering a hearty greeting to the guests on the steps of the official mansion. Amongst such a crowd it would be difficult to enumerate the component parts, but the following may be mentioned: Lord Edward Manners (the Field Master), Lady Victoria Manners, Lord Robert Manners, Sir John and Miss Thorold, Mr. F. S. Stanley, Major Longstaffe, Col. Theobald, Mr. V. Hemery, Major Sandys, Mr. E. Lubbock, Mr. Marsland, Col. Willson, Mr. and Mrs. Montague Thorold, Major James Hutchinson, Mr. Walter Willson, Mr. Peacock, Col., Mrs. and Miss Parker, Mr. Couturie, Major Downing, Mr. H. Smith, the Misses Heathcote, Mr. C. Bradley, Mr. W. Pinder, and Messrs. Joseph Wilders, J. Hinde, Jos. Hutchinson, J. Brewster, J. Tomlinson, Thomas Hutchinson, Mr. and Mrs. Earl, R. Burrows, R. Wyles, I. Hoyes, Rudkin, Bellamy, Pick, J. A. Rudkin, Stockdale, Grummitt, Dowse, Rastal, and a host of others.

The Master selected a capital place to “fling off” at Harrowby Gorse, which lies on the

slope of a commanding eminence east of the town, and Frank Gillard no sooner signalled the pack to "break bulk" than mottled sterns were popping up and down in an excited manner, and whimpers confirmed suspicions that a fox was on foot.

Without hesitation he sailed gallantly away over the old race course towards Londonthorpe. With such a motley crowd no wonder that the fun began at once with some stiff rails which a gentleman on a chestnut sought to compass. Not of the same mind, the horse whips round, to be charged by a reckless sportsman who came tilting along and knocked both horse and rider clean over the obstacle, tumbling on the top of them in the next field. They were a bit "tousled" in the scrimmage, but got righted in time to follow in the rear of the company now getting scattered abroad. Hounds went at a rattling pace as they ascended the hill east, with loose horses in wild career amongst riderless ponies, whose youthful jockeys were plucky little chaps, caring no more about turning somersaults over "Taffy's" head than tumbling from the family rocking horse. The pace continued to

the High-dyke, where was the first check of any account, and as Gillard was assisting hounds the country presented a spectacle of rampaging steeds and discomfited riders, the "shilling" men reaping a rich harvest, the number of falls up to this point estimated on good authority to have been over twenty. Cooler hunting followed, with the line foiled by hares as hounds kept working on past Abney Wood to the precincts of Ropsley, where the fox became more difficult to trace, and eventually ran them out of scent. The first part of the run was very fast, with slower hunting to the end of an hour, and a further addition to the list of casualties, which, though the country was not over stiff, must have been reckoned at between thirty and forty, a number appearing almost incredible, excepting it be attributable to the varied characteristics of the steeds that had been requisitioned for the day, for there was scarcely any description of the noble animal from three hundred guineas to the £5 screw that was not represented.

The presence of royalty at Belvoir on Friday, the 3rd of March, attracted a brilliant assembly under the battlements of the castle,

several visitors from the Quorn and Cottesmore being present. The company included the Empress Frederick of Germany, Prince and Princess Henry of Battenburg, the Duke and Duchess of Rutland, Lord Edward Manners, Lady Victoria and Lord William Manners, the Marchioness of Granby, Hon. H. and Lady A. Scott, Sir H. Cholmeley, Mr. F. C. Stanley, etc. By noon Lord Edward Manners gave orders for the Salt Becks, where, almost as soon as hounds entered, a holloa on the north took them quickly away. No sooner had the pack recognised the evidence than other foxes attracted attention, and their pursuers divided in a scrambling scamper by Muston and back to Belvoir. The spectators who lined the turreted walls enjoyed a capital view of the chase, though the run had been short and fencing not of much account. Trotting away to Normanton Thorns a brace of foxes were roused, hounds settling nicely on the line of one who set his head straight for Long Bennington. A blustering sheep dog appeared on the scene, with the effect of turning reynard back across the Normanton road. The interruption caused Gillard to reheat the hounds and retrace his steps in a westerly course past

Staunton to the Newark Railway, parallel with the river Devon to Staunton Grange, where scent became cool, and the fences loomed black and forbidding. A gentleman of the neighbourhood, with an eye to the future, slips off to the right with half-a-dozen followers to secure first passage over the Smite, to find that hounds have not crossed and are pursuing an opposite course from the speculative band. The few who stuck to the pack had an excellent pilot in a quiet looking gentleman in "bags," who showed the way over some frowning fences back to Staunton, where the fox got the best of it close by the village. Towards evening evidence of a traveller near Bottesford was carried on nearly to Debdale. Checking at a mere road, hounds in a few minutes catch up the line with renewed vigour, and rattle smartly along a blind country pointing for Bennington Grange. One of the leading light-weights—Mr. Hemery—slips cleverly over a trappy fence, and a few others reach the opposite side by various degrees of scrambling. Hounds race away across some clover fields and appear to be enjoying a grateful scent, but on stiffer soils it weakened, and they worked slowly on to Sewstern lane,

approaching night obliging Gillard to give it up.

The season, ending April, 1893, closed with a meet at Leadenham House, in honour of the coming of age of Mr. John Sherrard Reeve, son and heir of Lieut. Col. John Reeve. Under a cloudless sky the young gentleman received the congratulations of his friends, toasted in a famous brew of nut-brown October of the same age as himself. The assembly was graced by the presence of several ladies, including Mrs. Longstaffe, Mrs. Montague Thorold, Miss Crofts, Miss L. Willson, Mrs. Long, Mrs. Earl, etc. After killing an outlying fox on Mr. Earl's farm, hounds found at Byard's Leap, and ran, with dust flying, towards Lord Bristol's plantation, but did not persevere with a vixen. At the latter place there was a fox, who went to ground in a shallow recess, which the pack quickly demolished and appropriated its contents. In the evening, from Sparrow Gorse, hounds ran prettily past Sudbrook House and Ancaster Station to the plantations by Willoughby Hall, winding up a pretty five-and-twenty minutes by rolling their fox over in Capt Rennie's grounds.

On the 26th of January, 1894, and during the week, the sporting metropolis was the scene of a Hunt carnival. There had been an aristocratic gathering at a Primrose Ball on the evening before, the Earl of Lonsdale holding a meet of the Quorn hounds at Egerton Lodge on the following morning. On Saturday, numbers of people again assembled at "The House" to witness Lord Edward Manners hold a leveé with the Belvoir beauties. Great was the excitement manifested as Frank Gillard and his staff drove along the streets with three horses in the van, the unboxing of hounds exciting lively interest among the foot folk, their comments upon the appearance of the pack being pithy and amusing, showing many of them to be no mean judges of the points of a fox-hound. There was a westerly gale raging as Gillard moved off to Burbidge's Covert, whence a fox went away to Burton Lazars, but his heart failed and he slipped into a drain. Returning to the covert, where another fox had been left, he made off by the railway, and horsemen gathered on the wrong side of the river were quickly spluttering and splashing their way through the ford. They were, however, sold, for reynard, not caring for

the congratulations of two hundred foot people, turned sharply back. Re-crossing the stream (how small you feel when this happens, particularly if there's about three feet of sludge in the place) hounds held a shadowy line towards Berry Gorse, when Gillard made a capital cast and the pack pushed on vigorously over the Leesthorpe road near Wild's Lodge, where a forward rider got an ugly purler, but was up in a trice and didn't loose much ground. The pack ran at a good pace across the road near Stapleford, and thence rattled along the happy hunting grounds that lay in the way to Whissendine. Before reaching the village there was a check, a countryman with his hat aloft on a hill, and those who knew the country cried "Ranksboro', for a hundred." Their prediction was verified, as hounds traced the line into covert. In the thicket were other foxes, eight couples of hounds getting away with a fresh one and hunting him by Cold Overton to Somerby. The second whip had a hard task to get them in hand, for they were right in the heart of the Cottesmore country, and Gillard was in covert with the other moiety. But stolen fruits are sweet, there were riders who enjoyed the clandestine gallop



BORROWED A CLERGYMAN'S HAT.

and were sorry to go back. Many of the Lincolnshire men had wandered from their territory, and the locale of some friendly chief where entertainment for man and beast might be counted on was eagerly sought. But they had no difficulty in finding the good Samaritan in a capital sportsman, Mr. James Hornsby, of Stapleford Park, whose hospitality was liberally dispensed, and equally opportune and acceptable. This was a real sporting day's hunting, out of unpromising material, for there was a tempest raging all day, and it was wonderful how hounds could trace the windings of foxes. One gentleman who went well cared not a pin for the loss of his hat, but continued the chase in the absence of that appendage, though rumour said he borrowed one of clerical pattern to ride home to Melton in at night.

Again, after a Croxton Park meet on the 14th February, with a large company, it was elected to take Coston Covert. A few blasts on the horn sent reynard away speedily, with lamentations from victims who had taken their stand on the north and never heard the warning. They had compensation in catching

the pack at Garthorpe, but a reverend gentleman who was one of the first away unfortunately had a bad fall at starting, and was a good deal shaken. Gillard got up to the fugitive at Freeby Wood, but he made a faint effort before being disposed of by the pack. Better sport from Brentingby Spinney, whence hounds drove a fox away as if for Waltham. He doubled back by Freeby, then bore to the right past Thorpe Arnold, and crossing the Melton road, hounds ran charmingly over the valley towards Melton Spinney, which reynard disdained to enter. The pace was exceedingly good without a check as leaving the covert on the left hounds bore along the hollow to Scalford. The ranks were destined to be weakened as some of the leading horsemen approached a chasm of the Melton brook, Mr. Hemery on a steeple-chaser clearing it in gallant style, Mr. Brewster landing over with a scramble, Major Thorold saving a fall by a clever piece of horsemanship, and the rest seeking an easier transit. Still on the pack went nearly to Waltham, where the fox turned right-handed and completed a circle back to the covert whence he had started, and managed to save his brush, after affording a brilliant burst of forty minutes.

One Tuesday, towards the end of November, 1894, after meeting at the hospitable mansion of Mr. and Mrs. Montague Thorold, Honington Hall, there was interesting sport. A morning gallop from Carlton Osiers along the Sleaford railway makes people hurry on with hearts in their mouths, devoutly thankful when the fox turned up hill and made for Sparrow Gorse. He seemed to have squatted in some turnips, for hounds, after rushing about in a frantic manner, raced sharp back to Willoughby, with reynard saving his jacket by getting to ground. A gentleman of the neighbourhood proposes that some turnip fields should be attended to near Honington, where up jumps a bewildered fox, and has a narrow escape as two or three of the pack make a simultaneous rush for him. Like an arrow he skims through some rails into the road, and there is an exciting chase along the macadam. Slipping into some fields on the left reynard was pursued at a rattling pace through Carlton Ashes, whence a shrill holloa took the pack joyously along past the village of Gelston. Passing its precincts hounds continued at a good pace below Houghon-the-Hill, and bore down west, with a slight check on the Brandon road. There is heavy

country before reaching Shield's Gorse, and from this there was clever hunting as hounds pointed for Col. Willson's covert, which, however, turned out not to be the point the tod was seeking. Leaving Brandon on the left, scent became fickle and the fox got the best of it at Stubton Plantations, after an exciting run of forty-five minutes. But the hunt was not confined to this, there was a duplicate going on all the time: It turned out that Gillard was leaving the turnip field at Honington with the body of the pack at the same moment that another fox jumped up, with five or six couples close to his brush. A light-weight in a cap appeared to be the only person handy, or to have known of the brace of foxes, and as this section set to work swiftly in an opposite direction he couldn't resist the temptation, and, being joined by another hard rider, the two, without hesitation, gleefully assumed the duties of huntsman and whip, sticking to their little band bravely as they ran hard across to the Grantham and Leadenham road. Soon after doubling round by Carlton Ashes and passing Mr. Cartwright's, these hounds picked up their quarry in grand style, the amateur huntsman and his assistant duly decapitating



KILLED WITH FIVE-AND-A-HALF COUPLES.

brushing and padding their prize before throwing the merited morceaux to the gallant little pack. Our amateurs, however, did not shirk the responsibilities which the escapade entailed, for in a short time they came jogging along with their charges, and the trophies on their saddles, to re-unite with the main body at Stubton.

With the advent of 1895 frost made its unwelcome appearance, retaining a pertinacious grip for two months. But there was a slight break about the 21st January, when Lord Edward Manners appointed to meet at Belvoir at 12 o'clock. Deciding upon a journey into the vale it was agreeable, after late experiences, to feel horses splashing through the wet and the frost mostly gone. Gillard waves his pack into the Rectory Covert, where startled hares scuttle about in all directions, and some say there's no fox. Wait a bit. In a few minutes reynard goes sailing away in face of a batch of horsemen on the north, whose resolutions lead them off in the wake of hounds across flooded fields to the Bottesford and Melton railway. Trains luckily happened to be scarce at the time, and the line was crossed without hindrance, the pack running

at a great pace over the Redmile road to the Nottingham canal. The half-score leaders included some who always get away at the right time, slip over two or three fences clear of the crowd, and secure the advantages of an open field and no favour. Of such are those first over the road, and amongst them a young lady on a smart four-year old, who skims over the fences like a swallow, and enables his mistress to hold her place with the best of them. Now comes the canal. There is dismay—no bridge, and if you prefer a cold bath it is ready. Memories of a hard rider of the Vale, who hunted with the Belvoir hounds some years ago, crop up, when under similar circumstances he attempted to ride slantwise over some rails on to the towing path, with the result of the horse jumping bigger than he expected and landing bang in the middle. And it was curious that one of the whips should have taken a header during the same run. When the water was reached to-day, as hounds splashed through, there was nothing better than galloping round by Scrimshaw's Mill. Those who went straight for the bridge at first did best, for hounds were streaming away for the heights of Belvoir. Pursuing their fox by

the Salt Becks they reached the castle in fifteen minutes, and pushed on to Woolsthorpe, where reynard dodged about the outskirts, and was slowly hunted by Barrowby Stainwith to Muston Gorse. Without dwelling hounds worked on a weakening scent over the Redmile road, as if for Stathern. The effect of an altered course was for the worse, as the pack could scarcely drag on below Barkston Woods, and had to be content with deferring their hopes till the next merry meeting. There had been a capital spell of diversified hunting for an hour and a half, the first part at racing pace, succeeded by interesting hound work to the finish.

Up to the setting in of frost the season ending April, 1896, had been very successful, capital sport having generally been obtained. It was, however, disastrous to the hunt staff, Frank Gillard having experienced four severe falls, which necessitated his withdrawal from the field for some time. In his absence Harry Maiden, the first whip, fulfilled the duties of his office with tact and ability. But he, too, had some nasty falls; whilst Fred. South and Bob Knott did not escape misfortunes.

CHAPTER XII.

HABITS OF FOXES.

Whilst it is probable that mountain foxes, or those bred in wild inaccessible regions, may occasionally satisfy their appetites by the confiscation of isolated weaklings, it is seldom that those brought up in more inland and cultivated districts are minded to seek food amongst our sheepfolds. Now and again it may be that some wastrel, who has the mishap to get capsized in a furrow, falls a victim, and occasionally a lamb of tender age may be appropriated for the benefit of a litter of cubs as they become troublesome to the maternal parent, but beyond this damage is seldom committed. As far as foxes strolling about amongst sheep is concerned, the latter are in no way disconcerted and pay very little attention. Many a time have I witnessed cubs

frolicing amongst sheep on a summer's evening, jumping on their backs when lying down, and playing all sorts of pranks without exciting the slightest alarm, or even causing the sheep to get on their legs. This was specially the case with some old rams, who appeared to rather relish the tickling—probably being a bit itchy—which the young vulps treated them to in their gambols on and off their broad backs. My experience is that foxes, whilst very fond of rats, have a like partiality for both fur and feather, and if they can gain access to poultry yards in the breeding season may be very destructive. One of the most effectual ways of protection, when not secured by wire runs, is to hang tin vessels either at the corners of buildings, or any place where the wind can make them jangle together. Foxes don't know what to make of the discordant concert, and generally think it the best policy to sheer off. Flags stuck about the pens are also useful. I have on different occasions, and at certain places, found it pay to feed the cubs; always after a ratting excursion having the "bag" emptied about the vicinity of their earths. Likewise on the demise of a sheep; it was quartered and a portion allowed them at

intervals. Each of these menus seemed to be equally relished, and scarcely anything remained of the meal the next day. So many instances of the natural cunning of foxes have been adduced that there seems to be hardly any device they won't resort to at a pinch. One of the most artful that fell to my notice happened some years ago, when a crippled fox took up his abode on my land. He, or she, had by some means lost part of a foreleg, by what means I could not tell, but suspected the trap. All that remained of the limb was a short stump, and when suddenly roused the fox would go off with a bad limp, so much so that some Irishmen who worked on the farm, and were familiar with the cripple, would utter a Donnybrook yell and give chase, and there did not seem to be much difference in speed between pursuers and pursued till Pat had nearly got up, when the "hipocrite," as they called him, would put on steam and leave them in the lurch. But one day as I was quietly walking round my farm I disturbed a fox in a stubble field, who, after turning round to stare at me, went through a fence, and running forty or fifty yards across a piece of fallows, suddenly stopped and roused up

another of the ilk, which, on looking over the hedge, I discovered to be my old friend the cripple, who went limping away, whilst the first returned and stood looking defiantly at me with the fence between us, and after a short inspection of what I was like, appeared satisfied that no harm was meant and trotted leisurely away. Could it have been that this fox had slipped into the fallows and given his maimed friend a warning of danger? I have before alluded to the ability, cleverness, and amusing tricks of "Topsy."

Faddists go to great lengths in condemnation of the chase, and Miss Taylor sought to magnify the few evils connected with it in the "Fortnightly Review"; I think it was somewhere about the year 1870. But the statements were exaggerated, and the outcome of an overwrought imagination on the part of that lady, who seemed to have little knowledge of the subject. The quaint Christopher North quite upsets Miss Taylor's theories when he says:—"Much evil is done the cause of humanity by indiscriminate and illogical abuse of pursuits and recreations totally dissimilar. I doubt if any person can be really humane in heart

unless really sound in head. Is it cruel to dogs to feed fifty or sixty o' them on crackers, etc., in a kennel like a christian house, with a clear burn flowing through it? Is't cruel to horses to buy a hundred of them, feed them on five or six feeds of corn per diem, gie them coats sleek as satin—to gallop them like devils in a hurricane?" But the fox? He imagines the delight of the fox when he escapes, getting into an undigable earth just when the leading hound was at his haunches;—"Ae sic a moment is enough to repay half-an-hour's draggle through dirt, and he can lick himself at his leisure, far away in the cranny of the rocks, and come out all tosh and tidy by the first dawn. Huntin' him prevents him fa'in into ennui, and growing ower fat on how towadies (fowls). He's no killed every time he's hunted."

The conditions of hunting have undergone many changes during the years that have been skimmed over by the exigencies under which we live. During the early part of this century fewer labourers were engaged in the fields than now, corn was mostly thrashed by hand in field barns in the winter months—no steam

cultivating machines—and you might ride miles after hounds of an afternoon in the depth of winter without danger of the fox being headed, or meeting with a soul, save and except a solitary workman engaged in cutting a hedge or scouring a ditch, who, from the nature of that employment was seldom visible till you were close upon him. Indeed, it has been related how a fox, pursued by hounds, rushed suddenly through a fence, sprang upon the ditcher's back and off again, taking him for the stump of an old tree. Certain it is that cattle will chase a draggled fox, and I remember Lord Forester (then Master of the Belvoir pack) calling attention, during a good run, to some bullocks scampering along a hill side. "That's were he's gone," quoth he—and surely enough in a few minutes hounds were pushing along the line which the boves had taken up in wild confusion to the end of the field. Then again, foxes frequently get headed in turnip fields by persons engaged in clamping or cutting for the flocks. These considerations were not so much attended to until comparatively recent times; and the fewer people employed on the land, and the wilder it was, the better the sport of hunting and shooting.

In earlier days mange amongst foxes was practically unknown, and when hounds happened to kill a diseased animal—which was rarely—the disorder could, in nearly every instance, be traced to a beaten fox in a heated condition having taken refuge in a wet or foul drain, which produced surfeit of the skin, and was not true mange. How the increase of the insidious malady of which many hunts complain has been brought about is difficult to explain. In cases where cubs have to be imported, and are brought up in a semi-domesticated state, it is probable that they can't stand the weather, and occasionally succumb to adverse influences, whilst putrid flesh of any description is sure to have baneful effects. But why a transference of foxes from either mountain or lowland to artificial coverts in other districts should be the means of inducing mange—as alleged by some—I am at a loss to understand.

Perhaps the worst and most direful scourge to fox hunting of the present day lies in the adoption of wire. It cannot be denied by those who observe signs of the times that twenty-five

years of increasing depression have altered the views taken by farmers on the subject of hunting. Though nineteen out of twenty of them remain sportsmen at heart, and delight in the music of hounds, bad prices, unfavourable seasons, local taxation, preferential rates, and foreign competition have done incalculable injury to the chief industry of our country; and it is no wonder that occupiers of land, many of whom used to breed a few hunters, enjoy a bit of sport in the education of their young ones, and realise a little profit on the sale, should desire compensation for injuries to fences and crops, and the loss of poultry. But the introduction of barbed wire is the greatest and most dangerous evil of all. Though it may be a cheap and useful barrier against cattle, so long as they don't get entangled in it, the fearful injuries which have been inflicted upon hounds, horses, and men, upon which "The Field" and other sporting newspapers have constantly made valuable suggestions, lead to the conclusion that arrangements will, in most cases, have to be made with the occupiers of land for its removal in the winter months and re-erection after the season is over at the expense of different hunts where this is desired.

Before dismissing the unpalatable theme I cannot refrain from comment on the generous conduct of a gentleman, who, I believe, resides at Waltham, and purchased six closes of land at Stonesby about the year 1891, letting them under the following conditions :—“The tenants to use no wire in the fences, and all damage done by hunters to be made good by the owner.” It is needless to add that, if it be true that this gentleman neither hunts, except on foot, nor patronizes shooting, this sterling and generous consideration was highly appreciated by members of the hunt.

CHAPTER XIII.

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OLD CUSTOMS VERSUS NEW.
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What changes many whose devoted craniums are tinged with frost may have observed between the fashionable assembly of to-day and that of fifty years ago. Youthful progeny have sprung into manhood, but one may recognise the seat, hands, and bearing of many a sterling man now gathered to his fathers, reproduced in the promising young fellow who is destined to do honour to public service or the associations connected with the life of a country gentleman. *Tempora mutantur, etnos mutamur in illis*—the hunting field is no exception—the slogging four hours' run has been superseded by the brilliant five-and-thirty minutes' race. Costumes have followed suit ; you look in vain for the roomy mahogany top, wherein the wearer could stick his stout crop whilst

munching a substantial sandwich. Where is the aristocratic double-breasted swallow tail, or the twice round bird's eye? Modern artists have wrought comfort, elegance, and utility in the garments of the fair daughters of Diana; the navy blue, or olive green, stand aside for russet and grey; whilst shortened skirts, infinitely more becoming than elongated folds reaching nearly to the ground, immensely lessen the danger of getting hung in the saddle. The safety skirt, recently introduced by one of the most accomplished devotees of the chase, Mrs. Cuthbert Bradley, appears to have given infinite satisfaction. The skirt is short, comfortable, and becoming, whilst the risk of accident is reduced to a minimum. The wife of the talented gentleman who is such an ardent lover of hounds, and whose inimitable sketches bring home so forcibly the escapades, pains, penalties, and vicissitudes of which all who love the chase must be daily witnesses, is eminently qualified as an exponent of the art of safely and expeditiously crossing the country. Mrs. Bradley and her sisters have put the safety skirt to all kinds of tests, those ladies going straight as arrows to hounds

What a difference there was half a century ago in the mode of going to the meet. The thorough-bred hack, after having been put through the mill and found wanting in his youthful days, bore his rider at a hand canter ten or twelve miles comfortably within the hour. The iron horse now conveys the man from town little short of a mile in a minute to his destination. An elegant trap and hog-maned cob, mostly driven by a lady scrupulously attired for the chase, brings her sterner companion, a marvel of the skill of his valet, in the most spotless of garments, his faultless leathers protected by an apron which can be utilised on horseback in case of rain. This is out of the pale of Doctor Johnson's ideas of travelling, as he somewhere observes that one of the finest things is to be rattled in a coach; and, without denying that the doctor's opinion, as far as it went, might have been good in his day, no one will deny that however useful in its way, there is something stiff and formal in the mode of progression, to say nothing about the inconvenience of either being frozen to death in the snow-bound vehicle, or compelled to solicit food and shelter at the nearest farm house, which might happen to be miles away.

But, after the break up of a frost, just throw your leg over a generous horse, and I'll go bail you'll feel a percolation through your system of the most exhilarating kind; a counterpoise to the depression which hangs about a man when he sees a lot of horses jogging monotonously round the tan, with mischievous shots which buoyant spirits lead to excess. One ought not to grumble, however, at a jolly old-fashioned Christmas. Morals of the people have changed. The old village toppers, whose creed was to get drunk every Saturday night in harvest time, and once or twice a week besides, have been removed from our midst. Poor Pilgarlic of the stocks—subject of gibes and jeers of jobbernowls no better than himself—has been improved out of existence. Amongst some curious old village documents, relating to the sporting proclivities of our predecessors one hundred and fifty years ago, the following extracts, said to have been taken from the constable's book at one of the villages on the Cliffrow, in Lincolnshire, may be interesting:—" 1745, To William Nixon, of Nocton, with badger, 6d. 1748, Paid to a fox killing, 1s. 1749, Spent when we dressed the bull's foot, 1s. 1749,

Paid to a badger killing, 6d. 1750, Given to Ed. Wollas for catching a badger, 1s. 1753, Paid to a fox catching at Carlton, 6d. Paid to a fox catching at Nocton, 6d. 1756, Paid to Sam. Rollison for ale, spent by the fox hunters, 8s. 1757, Spent when ye mobb came to Bassingham, 10s. 1762, Gave an otter killing, 6d. ; Gave to a man for killing a bitch fox and seven cubs, 2s. 6d ; Spent at the death of the fox, 5s. 1764, Paid to Elizabeth Marshall for ale when we went a fox hunting, 5s. ; Paid for two otters killing at Carlton, 1s. 6d. 1765, Paid to Ion Kirk, to an old fox, 1s. 1766, Paid to Tom Taylor for 2 quarts o' rum when we were a fox hunting, 6s. 1768, Spent of the window peeper, 4d. ; Paid for 1 dozen and 2 magpies, 8 ravens, 4 dozen and 3 crows, 6s. 9d. 1782, To ropes for tieing the bull's legs, 1s. 6d. ; Spent when we cut the bull's eyes out, 2s. 6d."

The presentation of such bills nowadays would make Parish Councils stare, and exercise the mind of Mr. Colam ; and though fox-hunters in a higher sphere of life have been humorously depicted on the floor in a chimney corner after dinner, the fox and badger catchers must have regarded a carousal over the ale and

rum as an indispensable recuperative after their labours. But about the hapless bull? There's no record as to what offence he had committed.

The ancients had much to say about hard drinking, and the dire effects of polyposium, and the manner of preventing them. Pliny, in particular, contributes to our information :—
“ If colewort be taken fasting, it preventeth a man from drunkennesse; and eaten after meate, when a man is drunken indeede, it riddeth away the fumosity of the brain, and bringeth him to be sober. The soupe a l'oignon, onions boiled in water and poured upon bred, is reckoned in France as a specific against headache and nausea which attend upon a bibaster from the effects *ab histerno vino*.”
Again: “ Is a man disposed to drink freely and sit square at it, let him before he beginne take a draught of the decoction of rue leaves, he shall bear his drinke well, and withstand the fumes that might trouble his brains.” But Horus, King of Assyrians, seems to have arrived at the acme of inebriate research when he devised the following :—“ Mark this experiment: A barble drowned in wine, or the fish

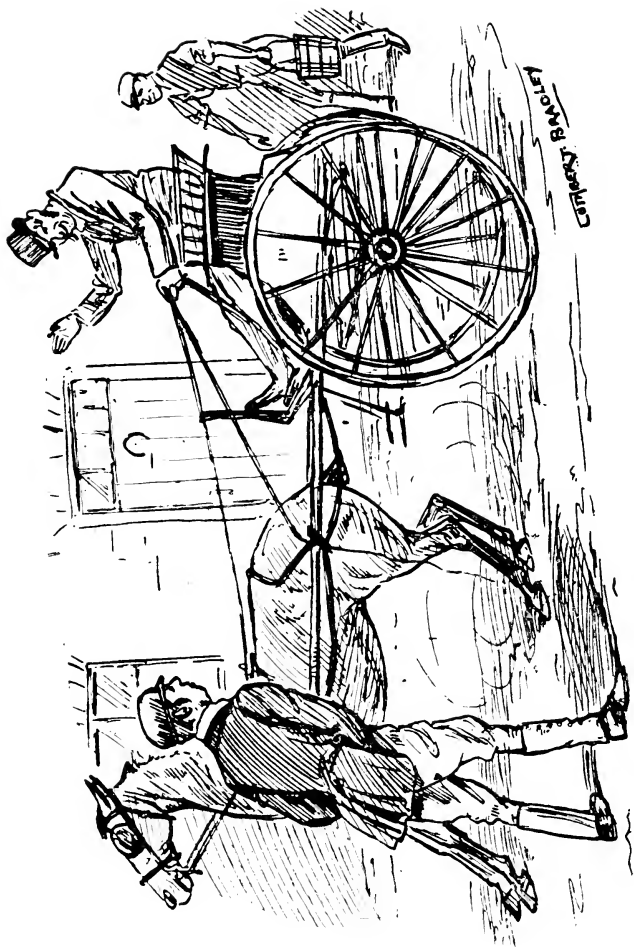
called a rochet (roach), or, also two eels putrified in wine (*what a delicious potation it must have been*) do infuse this virtue into the 'foresaid wine, that whosoever drinketh of, shall have no mind afterwards to any wine besides, but fall into a loathing thereof." It was wonderful, however, that with so many preventives at command, the streets of Rome should so often have been infested with drunkards."

What pristine remedies the farriers must have employed in former times. Here is the "account" of one of these ancient practitioners:—"I present you with my bill for horse-doctering and will particularize all my trouble, I have had with them—with Blucher I had much trouble in rowelling him in two places gave him drinks, took his shoes off bled him at Toe bled him in the inside of thigh ran up and down the fields in getting herbs which I boiled and made them into baths for to bath him took him and led him to Brown Edge near Mossley, after that I gave him many bawls—the horse I have on hand at present to cure I have had fifteen days and the drugs which I use for him are in particular dear as

the plaster on his leg at present cost me 8d. I cured Bangups mouth; theirs Joe's horse which was Harry Lee's I took his shoe off examined his foot and then set it on again,—drew it in two places examined it and put a poultice on it. To drugs and nails 15-0, To loss of time and trouble 1-0-0, Total £1-15-0. N.B. Gibson did not do so much for Jack Ogden's horse for 10 pounds."

After the various services rendered, the owner of the horses must have been a churl indeed if he grumbled at the bill. Professional gentlemen of the present day would scarcely care to employ their talents for such moderate remuneration.

It is in the recollection of elderly people how farriers used to ride about the country with their wallets, containing operative instruments of primitive manufacture and a diversified supply of nostrums. They would call upon the farmers, and, according to their own estimates, could cure all the disorders that four-footed animals were troubled with. Nor was this the limit of their abilities, for they included the human subject as well, and would



IT'S A CERTAIN CURE.

draw teeth, cut corns, and perform a variety of operations which would scarcely pass muster in the present times.

Many years ago a farrier's bill was sent to a friend of mine which, though the practitioner had only attended two horses, showed that he had not been by any means sparing of his curatives. Amongst the items were one hundred and twenty tonics, and gallons of stimulating drinks, besides several bottles of brandy, which, of course, were supplied by the owner and mostly consumed by the professional. I forget whether the horses survived the treatment, but it was said the farrier used to drive away from the premises with rubicund phiz and rollicking gait, bearing token of good fellowship with himself especially, his employers, and the world in general.

CHAPTER XIV.

PRESENTATION TO FRANK GILLARD.

CONCLUSION.

It will be remembered that on the Duke of Rutland's decision to discontinue hunting the Belvoir country at the termination of the season ending April, 1896, the announcement that Frank Gillard would also tender his resignation was received with much regret, as it was thought by many that he would continue to hold office under a new régime, for a few years at least, until the newly appointed Master had had an opportunity of acquiring topographical knowledge of the extensive territory so long presided over by the noble owners of the house of Belvoir. But such arrangements were, however, not accomplished, and Gillard severed his connection with the pack.

In 1870 we find Frank Gillard, after an absence of four years with Mr. Musters, re-entering the Duke of Rutland's service, and succeeding James Cooper as huntsman, with the late Will Goodall, of the Pytchley, as first whip, and Jack Carter second. Gillard's experience as huntsman has been an exceptional and varied one, as it is well-known that for many years before his death the late Duke of Rutland was in a precarious state of health, and saw little of his hounds in the field, the arduous and delicate duties of master and huntsman being delegated to Gillard. Perhaps, under similar circumstances, few men would have fulfilled the trust with the ability, discretion, and success that were universally accorded him. When it is borne in mind that large Meltonian fields at the Wednesday's meets on bad scenting days are apt to run riot, and be carried away by exuberance of spirits to the extent of careering all over the country, the difficulties of keeping these under control when a check occurs are none of the lightest, and require a large amount of tact, judgment, and forbearance. And under such circumstances Frank Gillard, whose temper and patience must often have been sorely exercised,

by dexterous management of the pack and quick grasping of the situation was nearly sure to find his efforts crowned with success.

When the subject of presenting Gillard with a testimonial was first mooted it met with such ready acquiescence that Mr. James Hutchinson, of Manthorpe Lodge, was induced to undertake the responsibilities of honorary secretary, and subscriptions came freely in, the sum total showing how popular the movement was, and with what hearty response that gentleman's appeals had been supported. The presentation was made by Sir William E. Welby Gregory at luncheon in a tent on the ground of the annual horse show, held at Grantham, on the 24th of September, 1896, a large company being present, including Mr. William Hornsby (chairman of the show), Sir Gilbert Grenall (master of the Belvoir hounds), Major Longstaffe, Sir J. H. Thorold, Mr. L. Trower, Mr. and Mrs. Montague Thorold, Col. Parker, Mr. James Hutchinson, Mr. E. Lubbock, Hon. H. R. Scott, Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Welby, Mr. and Mrs. James Hornsby, Mr. Seabrook, Mr. V. Hemery, Major Pearson, Mr. Stephens,

Mr. Knowles, Mr. Beasley, Mr. Wilders, and many others.

The testimonial included a cheque for nearly £1,300, and also a handsome writing table, raised by the subscriptions of three hundred gentlemen members and others interested in the hunt, and was presented to Frank Gillard after an able and appropriate speech by Sir William E. Welby Gregory, and feelingly responded to by Gillard, who spoke of his connection with the Belvoir hounds as a labour of love, and the interest he should continue to take in their welfare. But beyond this, Gillard, on his retirement, was presented with a beautiful massive silver inkstand, of the old English style, by ladies hunting on the Lincolnshire side, and was also the recipient of many interesting souvenirs from ladies and gentlemen residing in different parts of the country.

The election of 1895 will remain memorable in the annals of our constitution, and, without wandering into the mazes of the political arena, one could not help noticing the overthrow of many enemies of field sports. Those gentlemen,

after having allowed their hobbies to run away with them, found themselves off the line, deserted by their packs, and constrained to seek fresh woods and pastures new.

Surely it would be a bad day for Old England that should help to bring about the disestablishment of fox-hunting—

*“ Aye, perish the thought, may the day never come,
When the gorse is uprooted, the foxhound is dumb.”*

What would happen to the flower of our youth? We should lapse into lethargy and obscurity, become an effete people, and a by-word among the nations.



