

SPORTING STORIES

"Thormanby"

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JOHN A. SEAVERNS

SPORTING STORIES





April 6th. Won the City & Suburban Handicap.
 " " Won the Great Metropolitan Stakes.
 April 25th. Won the Great Northern Handicap.
 April 27th. Won the Flying Dutchman's Handicap.
 May 4th. Won the Thousand Guinea Stakes.

WELLS, Rider.

VIRAGO.

Winner of Ten Races in 1854. The Property of Henry Padwick, Esq^{re}.

J. B. DAV, Trainer, W. GOTER, Groom.

July 27th. Won the Goodwood Cup.
 July 28th. Won the Nassau Stakes.
 Aug. 23rd. Won the Yorkshire Oaks.
 Sept. 6th. Won the Warwick Cup.
 Sept. 15th. Won the Doncaster Cup.

Bred by MR. STEPHENSON, of Hartlepool. By PYRRHUS THE FIRST out of VIRGINIA. Trained by JOHN B. DAV. Ridden by WELLS.

SPORTING STORIES

BY

“THORMANBY”

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SPORTING STORIES

CHAPTER I

TURFITES ON THE GRAND SCALE

IT is in the guise of a gossip that I here present myself to the reader, and I claim but the indulgence commonly allowed to such purveyors of amusement. If, haply, I may be so fortunate as to gain the reputation of an "Agreeable Rattle," like the gentleman in *She Stoops to Conquer*, my aspirations will have been attained.

I have gathered together in a "mixed bag" scattered "ana" of sport, culled from the diaries and memories of sporting celebrities and the personal recollection of veteran sportsmen whom I have known; from half-forgotten books; from rare old newspapers and magazines; from all sorts of curious, fugitive, out-of-the-way sketches which I have unearthed in the course of many years' desultory research. Out of this miscellaneous collection I have endeavoured to piece together a mosaic—a picture which will enable sportsmen of to-day to form an idea of the life which their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers led, and the nature of the sports which they enjoyed.

In this anecdotal medley I give first place to the Turf, the most universally popular of our national sports. I have swept all sorts and conditions of racing men into my net—princes and peers; plungers and blacklegs; trainers and jockeys; bookmakers, touts, welshers, card-sellers—and I have collected anecdotes illustrative of the characters and eccentricities of all.

And, first, I shall take the Turf in its gambling phase

as being, on the whole, the most humanly interesting. It has been gravely asserted by an eminent writer on British sports, that "the sole object for which horse-racing was originally established, and has since been supported by the powers that be, is, confessedly, the encouragement of the breed of English horses."

I think the writer must have had his tongue in his cheek when he penned that solemn piece of humbug. If horse-racing had not appealed to the gambling and sporting instincts of mankind, it would have died a natural death ages ago. There was never a time in its history when wagering was not inseparably connected with it. Let old Robert Burton bear witness to the truth of my assertion in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, published in 1621, in which he says: "Riding of great horses, runnings at rings, tilts, and tournaments, horse races, wild goose chases, which are disports for the great, are good in themselves, though many gentlemen by that means gallop quite out of their fortunes." Clearly, then, there were plungers in Burton's day who ruined themselves by betting on horse-races.

In the very same year the Scottish Parliament passed an Act to prevent "excessive wagering on horse-races, the same having caused great scandal in the kingdom." And a hundred years later John Lawrence, the greatest authority of his day on horses and racing, writes:—

"On the connection of games of chance with the horse-course it is perfectly useless to declaim, since they are a natural concomitant, indissolubly blended with a sport which seems destined to interest the passions of a portion of the higher classes. In fact, to take away from the Turf its pecuniary interest, were that possible, would be to deprive it of one of its greatest attractions and most powerful spurs to emulation."

But enough on this point: let me pass to individual instances of old-time gambling on race-horses. The first great plunger of whom I have any record was George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, one of the most remarkable men even in "the spacious times of great Elizabeth." If you look him up in any dictionary of biography you will find him designated "eminent naval commander"; though

in Vincent's well-known work he is styled, with less courtesy but perhaps more truth, "pirate or privateer."

Now sailors, as a rule, are not supposed to have much knowledge of horses, though Admiral Rous was a notable exception. But in the Elizabethan age sailors were amphibious creatures, and my Lord of Cumberland was as passionate a lover of racing as any landsman. His personal appearance was enough to have made him a noteworthy personage in any company. His singularly handsome face, his powerful figure, his haughty carriage, his magnificent dress, must have made him conspicuous even among the host of "tall and proper men" whom the virgin queen loved to gather round her; and he was indeed high in favour with Her Majesty, whose passion for stalwart and good-looking gentlemen was of a nature to create much scandal.

He distinguished himself in the great fight against the Spanish Armada, as commander of the *Bonaventura*, and had the honour of carrying the news of victory to Elizabeth at Tilbury.

He was a born gambler, and when he found that neither plundering Spanish galleons nor the less noble pastimes of dice and cards satisfied his craving for excitement and speculation, he took to horse-racing, and on the Turf he was able to gratify to the full his passion for gambling. One after another his estates were sold to pay his racing debts and the expenses of the enormous stud he maintained. And there would soon have been nothing left for his heirs had not a fatal sickness struck him down and put an end to his plunging. He died, I learn from a contemporary record, "a very penitent man in the duchy house called the Savoy, October 30, 1605, aged 47 years."

Of a very different and far more common type was the next "plunger" of whom I find any record in the annals of the Turf, to wit, Sir Richard Gargrave, Bart., of Nostal and Kinsley in Yorkshire. He succeeded to the title and estates in 1605, the year in which George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, died; and the vastness of his possessions may be gathered from the fact that he could ride from Wakefield to Doncaster without leaving his own land. But the fabled purse of Fortunatus would have failed to meet the demands

of such a spendthrift as Richard Gargrave. When he became Sheriff his extravagance was so wild that I think he must have inherited a taint of madness. In private life he seems to have exhibited eccentricities similar to those of such notorious sporting lunatics as Lord Barrymore, Jack Mytton, and Mad Windham. Even now there linger traditions of his midnight orgies, his insane wagers, his appalling losses at cards and on the Turf. He is described in contemporary records as a "notorious horse-courser," and a horse-courser was the term applied to a man who ran his horses for great sums of money, not without a suspicion of sharp practice. He bred and raced "innumerable running horses of great speed," which apparently were not quite speedy enough, as they soon brought him to ruin.

Roger Dodsworth, the Yorkshire antiquary, writing in 1634, says: "He now lyveth in the Temple (Alsatia) for sanctuary, having consumed his whole estate to the value of £3500 per annum at least, and hath not a penny to maintain himself but what the purchasers of some part of his lands in reversion allow him." It must be remembered that in those days £300 a year was considered a good income for a country gentleman, and a squire with £500 a year was regarded as wealthy. Sir Richard Gargrave's £3500 would therefore have been equivalent to at least £20,000 a year in the present day.

Finally, the gentleman who had owned one of the largest estates in Yorkshire was reduced to be an attendant of a team of pack-horses. Sir Richard Gargrave seems to have followed this occupation for a couple of years. It was the last phase of his chequered career. For, one night, after he had brought his pack-horses safely into London, he got gloriously drunk in an old Southwark hostelry, and the next morning was found lying dead in the stable, with his head pillowed on a pack-saddle. So died the greatest "horse-courser" of his time.

These two plungers were, at any rate, honest sportsmen. They paid their debts and their wagers so long as they had a gold piece left. But there were others less honourable—defaulters of a type familiar to the bookmakers of

to-day. There is, for example, something very suspicious about the following passage from a letter dated 20th March 1634: "The Earl of Southampton, they say, hath lost a great deal of monie latelie at the Horse Races at Newmarket; but true it is, he hath licence to travel for three years, and is gone in all haste to France." I suspect that some of those to whom the Earl of Southampton had lost money were left lamenting when that noble sportsman made his hurried exit.

The eighteenth century is rich in betting "ana," from Royalty downwards. Although the actual occupants of the throne showed little or no interest in racing, the sport had the enthusiastic patronage of some lesser stars of royalty, among them two Princes of Wales and four Royal Dukes.

First and foremost was Frederick, Prince of Wales, eldest son of George the Second, and father of George the Third. Scarcely anyone had a good word to say for "poor Fred" in his lifetime. His father detested him. His mother, Queen Caroline, writing to John, Lord Harvey, thus expressed her opinion of her eldest born:—

"My dear Lord, I will give it to you under my own hand if you are in any fear of my relapsing, that my dear first-born is the greatest ass, and the greatest liar, and the greatest *canaille*, and the greatest beast in the whole world, and I heartily wish he were out of it."

But the King's loathing for the Prince of Wales was something even stronger and more horrible. What had "poor Fred" done to deserve such hatred and loathing from his own parents? Well, he was not a nice young man according to our modern notions, but he was no worse than dozens of others about the Court, whose peccadilloes never provoked such a storm of execration as fell on "poor Fred." He was no worse in his morals than his younger brother, William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, yet the latter was to the last a *persona grata* at his father's Court.

But, whatever else Frederick, Prince of Wales, may have been, he certainly was a keen sportsman, thoroughly English in his sporting tastes. He loved hunting, racing, yachting, angling, cricket, and hawking. He was a very heavy bettor, not only on the Turf, but on every amuse-

ment he indulged in. He was an enthusiastic cricketer, and he and his brother, the Duke of Cumberland, who was equally keen on the game, were perpetually getting up matches against one another, each heavily backing his own eleven. But Fred went further than this : he had a bet on every run, or notch, as it was then termed, that was made.

Now, to be a patron of cricket in those days was considered by respectable persons to be a mark of the most depraved taste. It was in far worse repute as a pastime than even the Prize Ring, which Broughton had just brought into fashion, and it was denounced in far stronger language than the Anti-Gambling League nowadays uses against the Turf. For example, I find the following tirade against "the noble game" in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1743 :—

"The diversion of cricket may be proper in holiday time and in the country, but upon days when men ought to be busy, and in the neighbourhood of a great city, it is not only improper, but mischievous to a high degree. It draws numbers of people from their employment, to the ruin of their families. It brings together crowds of apprentices and servants whose time is not their own. It propagates a spirit of idleness at a juncture when, with the utmost industry, our debts, taxes, and decay of trade will scarcely allow us to get bread. It is the most notorious breach of the laws, as it gives the most open encouragement to gaming, the advertisements most impudently reciting that great sums are laid, so that some people are so little ashamed of breaking the laws which they had a hand in making, that they give public notice of it."

No one blamed either the Prince of Wales or the Duke of Cumberland much for their patronage of the Turf, or even of the Prize Ring, but all the moralists of the age were down upon them for patronising the dreadfully low, demoralising game of cricket! There were even some who went so far as to regard "poor Fred's" death from the results of an accident at cricket as a judgment upon him for engaging in that disreputable and immoral pastime!

On the race-course the Prince of Wales was a plunger of the most pronounced type, and his losses at Newmarket

and Ascot were sometimes appalling. For, unlike his brother of Cumberland, he backed his fancy recklessly, regardless of public form or anything else.

But the "Butcher of Culloden" was not always wise in his wagering, and the "legs" made a good haul out of him before the breath left his burly carcass. A story is told of him which shows that he was totally reckless in his wagers. At one Newmarket meeting he lost his pocket-book on the Heath. Upon discovering his loss he said he would make no more bets, as he had lost enough for one day. When the races were over his pocket-book was brought to him by a half-pay officer who had picked it up. "Keep it, sir," said his Royal Highness; "I am only glad it has fallen into such good hands, for if I had not lost it as I did, its contents would by this time have been scattered among the blacklegs of Newmarket." So the astonished finder of the pocket-book found himself suddenly the possessor of some hundreds of pounds. The story illustrates at once the Duke's careless good-nature and his want of faith in his own judgment.

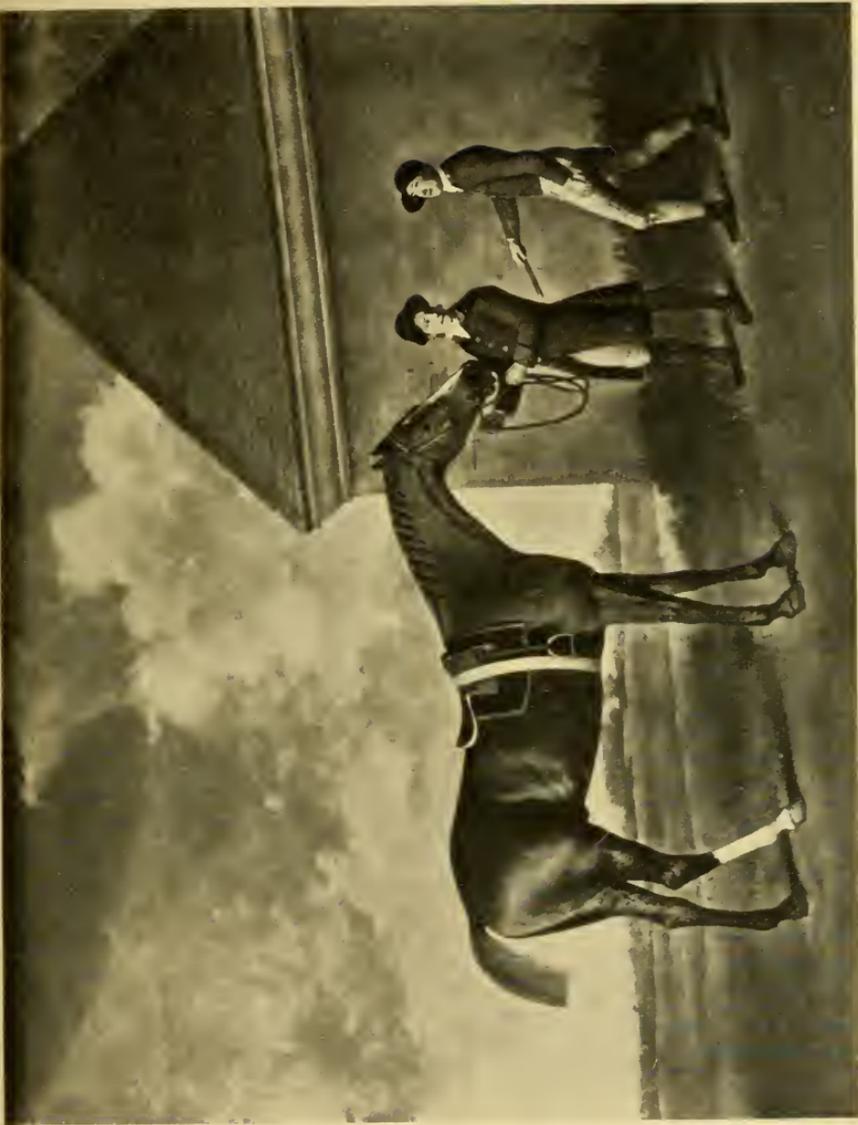
CHAPTER II

THE FATHERS OF BOOKMAKING

EVERYONE who knows anything of the Turf nowadays will admit that the professional bookmakers are a respectable body of men. They are usually of a generous disposition, and liberal donors to charitable institutions. No doubt there are some "wrong uns" among them, but there is no flock without some black sheep, and I should say that there are as few in the fraternity of bookmakers as elsewhere. But it was not always thus. The fathers of the "Betting Ring" were sharpers pure and simple, and the name by which they generally went, "Blacklegs," shortened subsequently into "legs," shows what the sporting world thought of them.

They were proficient at cards and billiards, besides being well posted in Turf matters. Every one of them carried his own loaded dice, and they made more money by plucking pigeons at the gaming-tables than by laying odds on the race-course. Yet many of them came into touch with the best sportsmen of the day. On the Turf, at any rate, the "leg's" money was as good as anyone else's. He was always ready to lay odds, and he always paid up when he lost.

One of the earliest and most successful of these "legs" was the notorious Colonel O'Kelly, owner of the immortal Eclipse. Dennis O'Kelly was an accomplished maker of matches as well as a phenomenally successful breeder; but there was a strong smack of the blackguard about him. Originally a sedan-chair man, his elegant legs and fine figure took a lady's fancy, and she started him in life as a "jontleman." He, to be in harmony with his new position in life, took to gambling, and at first was far from being lucky. He had actually got hold of the lady's last £100,



ECLIPSE.

The Property of Denes O'Kelly, Esq.

(From an old print.)

when fortune smiled upon him, and he not only got back all he had lost, but £3000 in addition. But it was not so much luck as ability that led him on to fortune. He made his calculations so carefully, that bets which were matters of chance with many, with him became certainties.

And yet he was not happy, for with all his money he could neither get into any of the London clubs nor gain election to the Jockey Club. This annoyed him dreadfully, and he never missed having a fling at those members of the aristocracy who, he thought, were the cause of his being blackballed on every occasion he had put up for election. For instance, when he asked Frank Buckle what he wanted yearly for the first call upon his services, the jockey replied "£400"—a large sum at that time, and double what George IV., when Prince of Wales, gave the elder Chiffney. "Agreed," said O'Kelly; "and if you'll promise not to ride at all for any of the blacklegged fraternity I'll double the wages." To the inquiry as to whom he meant, O'Kelly answered: "Who should I mean but the Duke of Cleveland, the Duke of Grafton, Lords Abingdon, Foley, and Derby, and a lot more"; but as Dennis's list included the names of all the foremost men on the Turf, Buckle respectfully declined the offer.

But though Dennis O'Kelly could not get into Society by the front door, he managed to climb up by the backstairs. With his "guardian angel," Charlotte Hayes, whom he first met in the Fleet Prison, and to whom he owed his escape from that debtors' Inferno and his elevation to prosperity, he kept open house at his beautiful "Cottage" at Clay Hill, near Epsom. The Society which the Colonel and Charlotte entertained was certainly mixed, but it included some of the highest personages in the land. The Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of Orleans, Lord Egremont, Lord Grosvenor, and many other noble sportsmen condescended to partake of the magnificent hospitality dispensed so charmingly by their lively and entertaining host and hostess. The wines were superb, the cuisine of the choicest, and the motto of the house was "Do what you please." It was Liberty Hall in the broadest sense; and yet, strange to say, though an inveterate

gambler elsewhere, O'Kelly would allow no gambling at Clay Hill, and when on his death he left his fine estates of Clay Hill and Cannon Park to his nephew, he made it a condition that his heir should forfeit £500 for every bet he made on the Turf. George Fordham, by the way, left a somewhat similar injunction in his will, with a view to checking any disposition to betting in his son.

Another and less pleasing specimen of an early "leg" was Dick, alias "Captain," England, one of the most unmitigated ruffians ever connected with the English Turf. Uneducated, crafty, unscrupulous, and strong, he bullied and cheated dozens of young fellows out of their fortunes. One, the Honourable Mr Damer, he robbed of £40,000, the result being that the poor lad committed suicide rather than face his father. The same unprincipled scoundrel led young Clutterbuck, a Bank of England clerk, to commit forgery to a large amount, for which he was hanged.

Having won 50 guineas from a Major Campbell, that gentleman gave Dick an order on Goslings, the bankers of Fleet Street, for the amount. Calling a coach, the winner went at once to cash it; but as he pronounced the name Go-sling, no one could direct him to the bank. Thinking he had been done, he sat down and penned the following note to Major Campbell:—

"MR MEIJER,—I toke ye for a gentleman, but if you don't take up that damned piece of thick paper which you did give me, by the X of St Pathrick I will dock you closer than I did the French wig-maker. Some gentlemen would have hexposed you by showing the name Go-sling when there is no such name at all, at all. Pay the fifty or take yer fat.—yer injered friend, RICHARD ENGLAND."

To this Major Campbell sent a gentlemanly but sarcastic reply, which Dick got an associate to read; and the latter, finding that the other still fancied that he had been swindled, gave him 45 guineas for the draft for 50, and cashed it himself.

A Mr Stubbs got out of Dick England's clutches as well as anyone. Mr S. had a peculiar habit of keeping one eye shut, but on any occasion of surprise or alarm it as invariably

opened. He made a bet with "Captain" England in the ring at Newmarket, and lost it; but when not thinking about the wager Mr Stubbs was suddenly accosted by the winner, and asked for the money. The sudden shock had the usual effect on the optic. "Eh, what!" said Mr Stubbs, with a look of inquiry. Dick stared him in the face, and observing his perfect vision, replied, "I beg your pardon, sorr, I took ye for somebody else"; muttering to himself as he walked on, "Begorra, the fellow I bet wid was a one-eyed one; that's not the man."

On another occasion England's temper led him into a more tragic encounter. There was Mr Peter Le Roules, a wealthy brewer of Kingston-on-Thames, with whom Dick had some extensive betting transactions. Mr Le Roules gave England a bond as security for large sums borrowed and lost. But when called upon to pay he repudiated the bond, on the ground that he had been robbed and swindled. Meeting Le Roules at Ascot Races, Dick's temper got the better of him, and he roundly abused the brewer in public, denouncing him as a swindler who would neither pay his debts of honour nor refund the money he had borrowed. Le Roules promptly challenged England, and they fought a desperate duel at Cranford Bridge, in Middlesex, on 18th June, 1794. Six shots apiece were exchanged, and with his sixth shot England mortally wounded his antagonist.

Dick fled the country and took refuge in Paris. But there he was mistaken for an aristocrat by the Revolutionists of the Reign of Terror and sentenced to death. He was actually standing beneath the guillotine, waiting his turn for execution, when the reprieve arrived, and he was saved in the nick of time.

He thought it better then to go back to England and give himself up to justice, rather than remain amongst these bloodthirsty French fanatics. So he returned, and was tried for murder; but the jury found him guilty only of manslaughter, and he received the lenient sentence of one shilling fine and twelve months' imprisonment without hard labour. After that, his character was no more called in question, and he pursued his calling as a "leg" until he died peacefully in his bed at the age of 80.

But the first two decades of the nineteenth century produced the real fathers of the Betting Ring and inventors of the art of bookmaking—“Crutch” Robinson, Jem Bland, Jerry Cloves, Myers Richards, Mat Milton, Tommy Swan of Bedale, John Justice, John Gully, and William Crockford.

For the most part the early bookmakers were a low type of horsey men, who had originally been grooms and hangers about racing stables. Many of them could not write their own names or read even the contents of a race-card. But if they could neither read nor write they could “soom” (as a celebrated Yorkshire sportsman used to say) against anyone, and their feats in mental arithmetic were marvellous.

Let us take a glance at some of the most notable among them. First and foremost comes old “Crutch” Robinson—a little, shrewd, wizened-faced man, whose coat hung on his back like a towel on a rail, a queer, uncouth-looking creature, who spoke a dialect which seemed a cross between Lancashire and Yorkshire, but withal a straightforward man and as sharp as they make them. That his origin was of the lowest there could be no doubt, and there was a tradition that he had been a stable-boy somewhere, and that his lameness, which necessitated the use of the crutch from which he gained his nickname, arose from injuries inflicted by the kick of a horse.

It was at Doncaster, perhaps, that old “Crutch” was seen in his glory, though Newmarket too knew him well. In the long room of the Salutation, or sitting at the horse-block, on the St Leger eve, flinging his chaff right and left, but watching the market with the eye of a hawk, “Crutch” Robinson held a unique place among the sporting characters of the first half of the nineteenth century. His antipathy to favourites was notorious. The hotter the favourite the fiercer was “Crutch’s” antagonism. If anyone said that a horse was either dead amiss or fit to run for a man’s life, he never believed it; and he was equally sceptical about the alleged wonderful doings of great cracks in private. “Nar, nar. Thou knawest a great deal about it, I dar say,” was his stereotyped reply when he was told of a

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marvellous trial ; and then came his inevitable proposal, "I'll bet thee five pun ; I may as well have my expenses."

A scarcely less notable "bookie" of that day was Jem Bland, whose origin, like that of Robinson, was "wrop in mistry." He and his brother Joe, who made a fortune of £35,000 by farming the turnpike gates, were, I believe, originally post-boys, and then rose to be livery-stable keepers in Wardour Street. Be this, however, as it may Jem Bland was a well-known betting man as early as the middle of the second decade of the last century.

"His rough expressions," says the "Druid," such as "never coomed a-nigh," and so on, as well as his long nose and white flabby cheeks, made him a man of mark even before he got enough, by laying all round, to set up a mansion in Piccadilly.

Bland was the noisiest and most blatant of the betting men of his time. His strident voice could be heard above any din—he was the Boanerges of the ring. He could neither read nor write, though his second wife educated him enough to sign his name to cheques with a great sprawling scrawl, which was accepted as standing for "j. Bland." Jem could never make a note of a bet ; but when he got home the list was read over to him, and not Cocker himself or the calculating Charles Babbage could have recounted more exactly what he had been doing at the betting-post. The faithful helpmeet already alluded to taught him a kind of hieroglyphic shorthand, in which he took down bets in his later days, and when he got home he and his wife between them puzzled out the cabalistic symbols ; for, as my Yorkshire friend already quoted would have put it, "'e could soom in his 'ead."

Some of Jem Bland's betting exploits have become notorious. For example, it is still remembered how in the long upper room of the Salutation at Doncaster (which was the betting mart until 1826), on the eve of the St Leger of 1822, he delivered his portentous offer of "a hundred to your walking-stick against Theodore," and how Mr Wyville accepted the wager. As everyone knows, the despised Theodore, against whom £500 to £5 had been

laid the previous Saturday, ridden by John Jackson, won the St Leger, to the intense surprise of his owner, Mr Petre, who had paid Mr Wyville a bonus to take his betting-book off his hands.

Another odd wager of Jemmy's, but a more successful one, was his laying Mr Ferguson, the owner of Antonio, £10 even that he couldn't whistle when the St Leger horses came in. Mr Ferguson accordingly commenced when they were at a distance, and right shrill was the note. "Nay," said the crafty layer, "thou must only whistle when I tell thee"; and as they swept past, with Antonio in front and Wrangler at his girths, the signal was given, but the lucky owner could only make a blow of it.

Perhaps Jem Bland's greatest coup was in the St Leger of 1826, when he landed upwards of £30,000 over Lord Scarbrough's Tarrare, on whom George Nelson won his first and only Sellinger. It was a most sensational race. The winner started at 25 to 1, and, with the exception of his noble owner, no one appeared to think he had the ghost of a chance. Sultan, the favourite—"Crocky's white nose," as they called him—had broken down on the Saturday before the race. He could hardly be got into Mr Mawe's stable at Belle Vue, and some who stood heaviest on him raced off in chaises, with bribed drivers, to reach Sheffield and Nottingham before the news, and try to save a little of their money. Of course, the betting ring were suspected of having nobbled the favourite, and Jem Bland had to take his share of the suspicion.

Another great year of Jemmy's was that of the famous Plenipotentiary scandal. "Plenipo," as he was called for short, had won the Derby of 1834 in a canter, and was far away the best horse of his year. He was, of course, made a hot favourite for the Leger, which seemed literally at his mercy. He started at 5 to 4 on, and was nowhere. That the horse had been "got at" no one could doubt. Two days before the race Plenipo was as fit as hands could make him—"light and bounding as Duvernay or Taglioni." At the starting-post he was "gross and helpless as Jack Falstaff or Daniel Lambert." Mr Batson, the owner, was suspected of complicity with Jem Bland on this occasion,

but no proof was ever adduced against either, and the mystery of Plenipo's Leger is still unsolved.

Two years later even the astute Jemmy was caught at last, and it is said that he dropped £80,000 on Shillelagh. The Duke of Cleveland—the Jesuit of the Turf, as his contemporaries dubbed him—was more than a match even for the craftiest “legs.” He vowed he would some day break the ring, and he very nearly did it that year. It was a solemn warning to Jemmy Bland, and he did not trouble the race-course much afterwards. He died a rich man, though nothing like as wealthy as was expected.

An even greater celebrity of the betting ring than either of these was William Crockford, “Old Crocky, the Father of Hell and Hazard,” who began life as a fishmonger under the shadow of Temple Bar, and died proprietor of Crockford's Club in St James's Street, the most magnificent gambling palace in the world. It is probably as a hell-keeper that Old Crocky is now best remembered, but in his day he was as celebrated on the Turf as at the gaming-table.

Of the ring men, Crockford was the first to make himself conspicuous, a head and shoulders above his associates. Indeed, he may be taken as the prototype of all the great Turf speculators since his day—Davis, the first “Leviathan,” Steel, Jackson, Fairfield, and others of the same kidney. Many an envious eye followed “Old Crocky” as he drove on to the course or along the streets in his gorgeous chariot padded with down and silks, with the powdered flunkeys behind; and many an impecunious gentleman, as he looked at Crockford's magnificent town mansion or thought of the hell-keeper's noble country seat at Newmarket, felt that there must be something wrong in a world which could lavish its luxuries upon a low-born seller of fish who had simply his luck to commend him.

Here is a glimpse of him at Tattersalls sketched by a clever hand:—

“His cheeks appeared whitened and flabby through constant night work. His hands were entirely without knuckles, soft as raw veal and as white as paper, whilst his large flexible mouth was stuffed with ‘dead men's bones,’

his teeth being all false, and socketed with his darling metal, as was shown when he indulged in a hideous laugh with his friend Gully over some lucky coup. On settling day 'Old Crocky' sat him down at the seat of custom, with some thousands of Bank of England notes pinned to the table before him, having the heavy figures secured by the thumb, the fifties, twenties, and tens, under his three longer 'prongs,' and a sheaf of fivers under his little finger. 'Old Crocky' loved to coax the tyro with an offer of a 'thousand pounds' to some of the youth's pocket-money against his naming the winner of the three great events, viz. Derby, Oaks, and Leger. Many a thousand he picked up in this way, leaving the simple taker of the odds to gloat over the four grand figures on paper, while the astute layer invariably pocketed the 'reality.'"

Strange to say, the Turf, which was the foundation of "Old Crocky's" fortunes, was also the cause of his death. He retired from the hell-keeping business in 1840, having pretty well cleaned out the fashionable world of its ready money, and then he went in heavily for racing. But the "legs" of the Turf were too many for him, and they fairly killed him over the Ratan business. In the famous Running Rein year "Old Crock" owned one of the finest race-horses ever seen (Ratan), who had won the Criterion Stakes in the previous year with such consummate ease that he was served up a hot favourite for the Derby. From that moment "Crocky" never had a moment's peace. Dark hints and mysterious warnings reached him by every post. The favourite was doomed, he was told, and he had better throw in his fortunes with those who had laid against the horse. But the old man would not swerve from his purpose, and fought stubbornly against the unwearied attempts to break him down. His health gave way under the strain, but he still hoped to circumvent his enemies and land the greatest coup of his life.

The night before the great race the sentries were doubled outside the stable. Sam Rogers, his jockey, was locked up alone with the horse, sleeping in the adjoining stall. Every conceivable precaution was taken, and there seemed no possibility of foul play. When the key was turned on

Ratan he was in glorious health, with a skin like satin and muscles of steel. When he showed on the downs the next morning his coat was standing "like quills upon the fretful porcupine," his eyes were dilated, and he shivered like a man with the ague. The villainous confederacy had struck its blow in the night, and the noble horse was absolutely last among a lot whom he could have distanced had he been well.

The news was brought to "Old Crocky" as he lay desperately ill, and it killed him. Two days later, on the 24th May, just after the Oaks had been run, the rumour spread upon the downs that "Old Crocky" was dead. He had died that morning at his mansion in Carlton House Terrace, within a week of his seventieth year.

The following very sensational story has at any rate the authority of the late Serjeant Ballantine to support it.

Crockford had been very ill for some time, and about one o'clock on the morning of the Epsom Meeting he was seized with a fit, and died within an hour. Of course, death cancels all bets, and the utmost consternation reigned among the satellites about him at this untoward event, by which they might lose thousands. What was to be done? In the grey dawn of that May morning some half-dozen white-faced men took counsel together and came to the desperate resolution of concealing the old man's demise for twenty-four hours; no one, of course, being allowed to approach the chamber of death save those in the secret. How anxiously they waited for the carrier pigeons, which in those pre-telegraph days conveyed the news to anxious backers! They came at last, with the intelligence that Running Rein had won. And now, that no suspicion might attach to them, they clad the corpse in its usual costume, put the well-known white hat upon the head, and carrying it to the first-floor front room facing St James's Street, set it down on a chair at the open window so that people returning from Epsom might see it, and, as it were, establish the alibi. The next morning the news went abroad that the old man had passed away in the night, and it was only some time afterwards that the secret leaked out.

But, in the meantime, a curious nemesis fell upon the

conspirators. There being a suspicion of foul play, the Derby winner became the subject of an investigation by the Jockey Club, the result of which was that Running Rein was disqualified as being a four-year-old, and Orlando, the second, was declared the winner, by which reversal of the verdict these ghouls lost almost as many thousands as they had hoped to win.

Despite the fact that he had squandered something like £700,000 in unprofitable speculations, Crockford left property to the value of more than half a million.

CHAPTER III

SOME LATTER-DAY PENCILLERS

I COME now to the "pencillers" of a time within the recollection of many living veterans of sport. And I give the first place to Harry Hill, who has recently received a high tribute to his memory from Sir Henry Hawkins (Baron Brampton) in his entertaining *Reminiscences*. The famous judge had a great regard for Harry Hill, to whom he refers as "my genial friend," and whom he describes as "deservedly respected by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance." Harry had also an old and much-respected friend in Baron Martin, and it speaks well for his good qualities that two eminent judges should have been proud of his friendship.

Harry Hill had a most remarkable and indeed romantic career. From "boots" at a Manchester hotel he rose to the highest position on the Turf as a commissioner—a man who made his ten-thousand-pound book regularly on every big event during the year. There is a tradition that he made his first appearance on the race-course in the not very honourable role of thimble-rigger, and that he was so clever with the pea and thimble that he soon amassed a little pile which enabled him to start as a bookmaker. But his own story of his first slice of luck was the following.

He attended Doncaster to see the Cup run for one year, and without much trouble got rid of all his cash except about five shillings, which, though not enough to pay his fare by coach back to Manchester, was still enough to take him there by more humble conveyance, namely, the waggon and walking. While on "Shank's pony," by which he meant to go as far as Thurlstone, he missed his road,

and on stopping at a small cottage to inquire his way noticed a window in which a square had been stopped up with the manuscript copy of an old ballad, while the pane next to it had been strengthened by pasting on it a £20 Bank of England note.

The aged couple to whom the cottage belonged did not know the value of the piece of paper—in fact, they could neither read nor write—and so Hill had little difficulty in buying the “picture,” found months before on the high road, for half a crown. Again in funds, he, like Whittington, “turned back on his footsteps,” invested part of his windfall on the next day’s events, and cleared altogether over eighty pounds.

To his credit be it said, he repaid the old folks the twenty pounds.

Lord George Bentinck gave him the first “leg up.” Lord George took a liking to the ex-boots, and, seeing that he possessed exceptional shrewdness, entrusted Hill with his commissions. From that moment Harry’s fortune was made. His first grand coup was when Bloomsbury won the Derby in the historical snow-storm of 1839. Harry made a large sum by that event, and through a dispute over the race attracted the attention of Baron Martin, who afterwards became one of his fastest friends. But Hill, with that shrewd common sense which was the most salient point of his character, always stuck to Lord George, and executed for that dashing speculator some of the largest commissions ever entrusted to an agent. For instance, when Miss Elis won the Goodwood Cup, Lord George Bentinck’s claim was £17,000, every penny of which was collected by Hill, while at the same time he landed a good sum for himself. At Newmarket, when given the Gaper commission for the Derby, within two hours he got on for his lordship £46,000, and this sum before many days were over he increased to £100,000. This brought Gaper to 5 to 1, and so anxious was Lord George to win that he was heard to say, “Egad! I’d feed Gaper on gold from henceforth if that would ensure his victory.” Gaper, however, came in fourth; but his owner’s losses were not heavy, as, by John Scott’s persuasion, he

had hedged his money, and backed Cotherstone, the winner.

Harry Hill was a close confederate of both John Gully and Padwick, and the clique worked many a notable coup together. He would lay, while Gully would back, and so they played beautifully into each other's hands. It was out of the "dead uns"—the chief source of profit to the operator in the days before the telegraph—that the bookmaker got most of his money.

His heaviest loss was on West Australian. He and a clique had squared Frank Butler to lose the Leger on the famous horse; but the plot was discovered, and Colonel Anson and Mr. Bowes summoned Frank to their presence the night before the race, and told him what would happen if he did not win.

He was wise enough to take the hint, and he gave the tip to the conspirators. Hill hedged all he could, but that was very little, and he dropped some £20,000. In his later days he gambled on the Stock Exchange; but the bulls and bears gored and hugged the astute bookmaker out of £40,000 in one year.

Though Hill managed to accumulate a colossal fortune, he never aped the swell. He never desired to be a country gentleman like Gully; a town magnifico, like Padwick or Swindell; who, however, were money-lenders first and bookmakers afterwards. He was rather of the Jem Bland order, especially in his love for low company. No amount of money or intercourse with good class men could wean him from the tastes of his early days—the inn-yard and the tap-room—and he was never so much at home as when, attired in his invariable suit of ill-fitting, rusty black, which looked as if it had been made for his grandfather, he presided at a table surrounded by ostlers, jockeys, and the nondescripts of the Turf, from which he himself had sprung. Here he was king. Everybody roared at his queer stories, which were quite unfit for ears other than those of the men who surrounded him; and the louder they roared the more drinks he stood. Most of his evenings, especially after he had retired from bookmaking, were spent at the Coach and Horses in Dover Street, Piccadilly.

After the West Australian business, the truth about which was known everywhere, Harry Hill did not do much business on the Turf, and lived some years in retirement.

He died—a wretched, blind old man—in 1880, and left no will. The only property he was known to be possessed of was Ackworth Park, which he had purchased from Gully. What became of all the rest of his wealth remains to this day a mystery.

Another famous bookmaker of the highest type was “Leviathan” Davis. Like most other famous betting men, Davis was a self-made man. He began life as a carpenter at Cubitt’s, the well-known contractors. It was as a backer that he made his first great coup. He stood Sir Tatton Sykes for the Two Thousand of 1846, and won such a pot of money that he was able to give up carpentering and set up as a professional betting man. As Davis’s customers became more and more numerous, he was pestered out of his life by endless questions as to the prices of individual horses in the betting market. This interfered with the booking of the bets, and at last the happy thought suggested itself that he would have all the prices written out and hung up where everyone could consult them. This was the origin of the famous betting lists which were in vogue in London until the Act of 1853 suppressed them.

The first of these lists of Davis’s was hung in the Durham Arms, Serle Street, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, and so enormous was the trade which it brought to the house that in a few years the landlady retired in possession of a very handsome fortune. The second list was posted at Barr’s in Long Acre, and there Davis and his clerks stood behind big bankers’ ledgers, entering the bets as fast as their pens could go. So safe was Davis by this time that one of his winning tickets was considered everywhere as negotiable as a Bank of England note.

His first heavy hit is said to have been for £12,000 over The Cur for the Cesarewitch; but, strange to say, Davis was singularly unlucky in his books on the Derby and Oaks, though on the first named he sometimes made one as high as £100,000. He was £50,000 to the bad over The Flying

Dutchman, and he had three terrible years running in 1849, 1850, 1851. A quarter of a million would hardly have covered his losses on the Epsom victories of Voltigeur, Daniel O'Rourke, and Teddington. Perhaps the worst blow of the three was Sir Joseph Hawley's win; it was, as "Argus" said at the time, "a blow between wind and water." But he "took no more notice of it than he was wont to do of his washing bill, although his losses were estimated at £100,000, paying them with as much indifference as the London and Westminster Bank would have done." Amongst others to whom he had lost large sums was Mr Charles Greville, whose posthumous *Memoirs* are the most famous *chronique scandaleuse* of our time; and Mr Greville was somewhat surprised, and perhaps a good deal relieved, to receive on the morning of the Oaks a cheque for £15,000 from Mr Davis. This judicious promptitude at once put an end to all suspense on the part of those who were looking forward with some nervousness to settling-day, and it stamped Davis as "a very mine of Peru."

But he had his revenge in the autumn, when Mrs Taft and Truth amply recouped him for his summer losses; the two of them probably bringing him in £50,000. He was supposed to have entered on his 1852 campaign with £130,000 at the London and Westminster Bank, the heads of which establishment, it is said, "would rise to accommodate him at any hour of the night." That statement, however, must be taken with a grain of salt. At this point of his career Davis fairly deserved his title of "Leviathan," for he conducted his business on a scale never known before. He resembled, in fact, Colonel O'Kelly in his zenith, who, when he was asked, after taking a heavy bet, where his estates lay, responded, "By the powers, I hev the map o' them about me," and produced a perfect roll of bank-notes; or the old miser near Doncaster, who went to a great land sale in his filthy rags with a hay-bag round his waist, and astonished the auctioneer, who wondered where the deposit was to come from, by holding up a £100,000 bank-note (one of the few ever made), and saying, "Here's the cock—I've got the old hen at home!"

Henceforward the tide of ill-luck always flowed steadily against Davis at Epsom. Daniel O'Rourke is said to have cost him £30,000, as he had been only "got" at 100 to 1. Catherine Hayes cost him about the same, and West Australian £48,000, of which £30,000 went in a cheque to Mr Bowes.

On the St Leger and at post betting the "Leviathan" was uniformly lucky. He had a great fancy too for backing jockeys' mounts, and there his good fortune was amazing. Fordham, "the Kid," was Davis's particular favourite, and so highly did he think of both George's luck and horsemanship that he often declined to lay against one of his mounts. Like a good many other bookmakers, Davis was no great judge of a horse; but he had a marvellously keen eye for detecting when they were in trouble, and would keep on betting till they were close to the post, and, if it were a very near thing, after they had passed it.

I never heard of his nerve failing but once, and that was Bon Mot's Liverpool Cup year. He was just beginning to fire heavily into this strange 3000 guinea impostor, when he found himself compelled, in consequence of a nervous headache, to close his book and sit down; and, as luck would have it, he won £3000 instead of losing nearly twice that amount.

He had laid heavily against Essedarius for the Cup, and the anxiety affected his mind: he entirely lost his head, and became so alarmed lest he should be unable to pay that his health broke down, and on the morning of the race he looked the mere wreck of his former self. The victory of the little Irish outsider Bon Mot had the effect of a restorative; but Davis knew that he had had a warning, and that the ceaseless anxieties of his business were beginning to tell upon him. Although he had an iron constitution and the lungs of a Stentor—it was said on his retirement that he left his voice to Steel—his strength was unequal to the tremendous strain which his business threw upon him, and he had the good sense to lay down his pencil for ever at the end of 1857. On the Friday in the Houghton Meeting of that year he retired into private life,

taking with him, not only a handsome fortune, but the esteem and good wishes of all who had ever had any dealings with him.

But the greatest sportsman and "doucest lad o' them a'," to my thinking, was John Jackson.

"Jock o' Fairfield," as he was called, loved a fight of any kind. Everything in the shape of a contest had an irresistible fascination for him—a foot-race, a horse-race, a cock-fight, a bruising match, seemed to send his blood dancing through his veins with excitement and delight. It is, of course, as one of the great magnates of the betting ring—a very Napoleon among "pencilers"—that John Jackson was best known; but he was something far more than this. He was a keen all-round sportsman; a first-rate judge of a race-horse, a greyhound, a shorthorn, or a ram; as acute a judge of cricket as of jockeyship; as much at home in the hunting-field as in the Subscription Rooms; never more in his element than at the ring side cheering on his idol Tom Sayers to victory: a man, take him for all in all, who had had but one equal in his line—John Gully.

Jackson was born in the year 1827, at Tunstall, near Catterick, where his nephew, I believe, still farms the paternal acres; for the father was a small farmer, and young John was bred to the same calling. But from his earliest days nothing could keep him to the plough-tail when there was a race-meeting, a steeple-chase, or a cricket-match anywhere within five-and-twenty miles. In vain his father leathered him soundly. It had not the slightest effect on John.

Presently, to love of sport for its own sake was added the true English craving to back his fancy. He must bet, but, young as he was, his financial instincts were strong; he would do the thing methodically. So Master John borrowed five pounds from a friend, a saddler in Catterick, and having changed it into half-crowns—that coin being the standard of wagering in those parts—John set off to a big cricket match in the neighbourhood and made his first book. It speaks well for his astuteness that he doubled his fiver, repaid the loan, and found himself with an unhampered capital of forty half-crowns. But, Jupiter

Tonans! wasn't his father in a rage when he heard of it, and didn't he just come down upon that saddler, and waled him with the buckle-end of one of his own two-inch straps till the victim was black and blue, for which the old man had to pay ten pounds afterwards to square the matter! But John went on and prospered. He had a genius for figures, in fact, and would have made a splendid Chancellor of the Exchequer.

John Jackson's connection with the Turf dated from Flying Dutchman's year. The Dutchman was a goldmine to him, and at the close of 1849 he found himself with £10,000 to his credit at the bank. He was early entrusted with the commissions of the Middleham and Richmond trainers, and his reputation as a "safe man" was speedily established. It was Jackson's rule always to stand on good horses, and in the long run it paid him. His biggest success was with Ellington for the Derby of 1856, when he cleared upwards of £40,000. His partiality for Lord Glasgow's colours was a hobby for which he sometimes had to pay dearly; but General Peel's victory in the Two Thousand made up for many disappointments, and I suppose no one who saw him on the Derby Day of 1864 will ever forget his ecstasy of delight when he saw Blair Athol and General Peel coming in alone at the finish of the great race. He won £20,000 on Blair Athol, but would have netted double that amount on General Peel. Then he purchased the estate of Fairfield for a large sum from Mr Henry Thomson, and went in as hotly for breeding as for betting.

The worst, perhaps the only serious, "facer" he ever received was in Lord Lyon's year. Up to that lucky season Jackson had had an almost uninterrupted run of luck, and, despite his lavish expenditure, was worth upwards of £70,000. A man of restless energy and excitable temperament, Jackson was never happy unless he was engaged in some kind of a contest—political or sporting, it was all the same to him. With the Bedale and Sir Charles Slingsby's hounds he was a hard rider, and one year a "pounding-match" for £1000 a side was arranged between him and Sir Frederick Johnstone—in other words,

a game of "follow my leader" on horseback, whichever failed to follow to lose the match. It would have been a break-neck race, for Jackson had six hunters up at Barton at the time; among them his celebrated Barney, with whom he had jumped a flight of double posts and rails (16 ft., measured from the inside) with the Bedale. Sir Frederick had just leapt a mill-dam in the Burton country, so the probability is that one at least would have been brought home on a stretcher. George Payne was to be umpire; but somehow the match fell through, to the great relief of the friends of both parties.

Jackson cared far more for sport than for lucre. When he had backed Lord Zetland's Vedette for the Two Thousand of 1857, the son of Voltigeur was so shaky on the pins and so frequently reported lame that he dared not stand the money. A friend laid it all off him, and Jackson stood to win heavily against Vedette. To his surprise, the horse won in a canter; but when he saw the "spots"¹ coming in ahead of everything, the big-hearted Yorkshireman raised a mighty shout and went up and patted the winner as proudly as if he had won a hatful of money instead of being some thousands to the bad.

Of Jackson's generosity no man can speak so well as Steel, the "Sheffield Leviathan," for that bookmaker owed his prosperity to Jock o' Fairfield. The two met at Doncaster. Jackson was walking beside one of his horses just before a race when Steel went up to him and asked if the horse would win. "Yes," said Jackson; "back it." The Sheffielder did so, and presented his benefactor with a handsome case of razors bearing a suitable inscription. Jackson was so pleased with this "delicate attention" that he advised Steel to "give up backing and take to laying," at the same time generously offering him £500 to start with. Steel accepted the offer, and from that moment dates the foundation of his colossal fortune. To the day of Jackson's death the two continued fast friends.

That event took place all too early. Jackson had entered the sporting world with the constitution of a horse, but the pace he went soon wore out his natural vigour. I

¹ The Marquis of Zetland's colours are white, red spots and cap.

think the excitement produced by Lord Lyon's victories really gave him his death-blow. At any rate, the first symptoms of his fatal illness showed themselves towards the close of that year. On the Tuesday before the York Meeting of 1868 his stud of twenty-four yearlings was sold, and he appeared at the sale in a bath-chair, but the change in his appearance was appalling. But something of his old gaiety flashed out when he found that his yearlings had fetched £28,500, which was four thousand more than he had expected.

Three months later he passed quietly away, only forty-one years of age, but he had seen more life in those two score years than most men who live to eighty.

John Jackson won and spent his money like a dashing sportsman; yet he died rich, for after all his debts were paid there was £40,000 left. He had his faults, but he was sound at the core; and a gallant Englishman lies buried under the turf that covers Jock o' Fairfield.

CHAPTER IV

PARTNERS AND PLUNGERS

THE first betting partnership (or confederacy, as it was then termed) on record was that of Charles James Fox and Thomas, Lord Foley, which lasted from 1772 to 1793, and was only terminated by the death of Lord Foley. Everyone knows what a reckless plunger Fox was at every kind of gambling. Gibbon tells of his playing at hazard for twenty-two hours at a sitting and losing £5000 an hour; and in his first three years at the game he got through £140,000.

Indomitable punter that he was, he used to say that the greatest pleasure in his life, after winning, was losing. He commenced his partnership with Lord Foley well, for in the first Spring Meeting of 1772 at Newmarket he won £10,000 by laying against the favourite, who was beaten by a head. Three years later he eclipsed this coup by winning £30,000 over the three days' racing at the headquarters of the Turf. Even the cares of statesmanship could not keep him from constantly visiting Newmarket, where his portly frame was ever to be seen on his hack, tearing wildly past the judge's chair, close up with the leading horses, whipping, spurring, and blowing as if he would have infused his whole soul into the horse he was backing; just as Lord George Bentinck used to do, until the late Mr Clarke defended a disputed decision by the remark that he "ought by rights to have placed a tall gentleman in a white mackintosh first."

Charles James Fox owned some good horses in his time, among them Pyrrhus, with whom he and his partner won upwards of £12,000. But, though he brought off some

good coups, he plunged so recklessly that his losses far exceeded his gains in the long run.

His partner, Lord Foley, however, was even less fortunate. He commenced his racing career with £100,000 in ready money and a clear £18,000 a year. When he died, in 1793, he was absolutely bankrupt.

Like Fox, of whom Edmund Burke said that "he was a man made to be loved," Lord Foley was the most amiable and charming of men, and he left behind him the reputation of being one of the finest sportsmen that the Turf has ever seen. Such qualities, however, do not fit their possessor for success at betting, and it would appear that the gentlemen "legs" of that day were too many for poor Charles Fox and his partner: it was a battle between pigeons and hawks, and the birds of prey had, as they always have, an easy victory.

Another tremendous plunger of that day was Richard, Earl of Barrymore. He began his career on the Turf when he was but nineteen years of age, and he lasted just four seasons, during which period he lost no less than £100,000, although he was reputed the cleverest Turfite of his day, and, with the exception of Charles James Fox, the best handicapper. But, clever though he was, the reckless young nobleman was no match for his trainers and jockeys, who cheated him right and left. In the famous race for the Oatland Stakes at Ascot in 1791, over which upwards of 250,000 guineas changed hands, his horse, Chanticleer, who was favourite at 9 to 2, would certainly have won but for the foul play of his jockey, which cost him £20,000; a large slice of that sum going to the Prince of Wales (afterwards George IV.), whose horse, Baronet, came in first.

It was not the Turf alone, however, that ruined this incorrigible plunger—indeed, he might have held his own there had he given more attention to it; but even when he did pull off a coup he squandered at hazard and faro all that he had won at racing. His many wild eccentricities, his patronage of prize-fighters, notably the celebrated Hooper the Tinman, and his tragic end by the accidental discharge of his fowling-piece, have all been told elsewhere. I need only add that he was in his twenty-fourth year when he

met with his sudden death, and in less than five years had flung away £300,000.

But in those days it was singularly easy for a young man to run through his property, for the sums risked at betting and cards were extraordinarily high. It was no uncommon thing for 3000 guineas to be staked on a single card at faro, and £70,000 was more than once lost in one evening's play. It was an everyday occurrence for the owner of a horse to match him for 1000 guineas after dinner, and back him for five or ten times that amount. Lord Abingdon, who was another of the plunging division of that day, once made a match for 7000 guineas to come off at Newmarket, and was certain that he would win, but found himself so short of funds before the day appointed for the final deposit that he was forced to ask the notorious miser, John Elwes, to lend it to him. The penurious master of Marcham, who, though he would not spend money, had no objection to lending at usury, advanced the needful, and was so interested in the match that he rode from his seat in Suffolk to Newmarket to see it. He was accompanied by a sporting parson, who was so keen for the sport that he started without breakfast. After riding all day, the clerical gentleman ventured to suggest dinner, saying that the sharp air of Newmarket had given him a ravenous appetite. The surly miser, although Lord Abingdon had won, and he was therefore sure of his money, bade the hungry parson dine as he did, pulling from his greatcoat pocket a piece of old, crushed pancake, which he had brought from his house at Marcham two months before, and declaring that "it was as good as new."

So absorbing was the passion for betting in that day that not even Elwes could resist it, though it is only due to the old miser to say that his ride was an economical one, for he dashed through all the turnpikes without paying.

Certainly the young plungers of that period went the pace with a vengeance. Colonel George Hanger, afterwards Baron Coleraine and for some time a bosom friend of the Regent's, tells us that his dress clothes alone for one winter cost him £900, and adds naïvely: "This extravagance is likely to astonish the reader; but what, in my

opinion, should strike him more with wonder is that I absolutely paid the tailor."

Eighty guineas for a morning suit of satin and 180 for a ballroom suit are items which throw into the shade the extravagance of the modern *jeunesse dorée*, always excepting the late Marquis of Anglesey. And when one considers that the young gentleman who thus attired himself was an ensign in the Guards, with four shillings per diem as pay, whose private income from all sources was under £1500 per annum, one can hardly wonder that he made desperate efforts to supplement so inadequate a revenue by reckless betting.

Naturally, Colonel Hanger came to grief in the end. He was for some time an inmate of the King's Bench Prison, where, "being determined to ascertain how cheap a gentleman could live and want for nothing necessary to his maintenance—namely, a hearty breakfast and dinner every day," he contrived to live on a guinea a week.

His friend, Richard Tattersall ("Old Tat"), the founder of the famous house, and Colonel M'Mahon got him out of the Bench, and he managed to shuffle along somehow till death claimed him in 1824.

But the Prince of Plungers was without question Harry Mellish. For five brief years Mellish was the most conspicuous figure in the circles of sport and fashion. He commenced his racing career in 1801, when his Welshman, by Sir Peter Teazle, with that wily jockey Billy Peirce in the saddle, won for him a match of 50 guineas at Durham races. From that time forward he was passionately attached to the Turf, and in matching and handicapping his skill was extraordinary. But on one occasion the Duke of Cleveland, the Jesuit of the Turf, as he was called, was one too many for the accomplished Mellish. The Duke, who was then Lord Darlington, matched his Pavilion, a horse afterwards purchased by the Prince Regent, against Mellish's Sancho for 3000 guineas a-side. The two horses had already met once in the New Claret Stakes over the Lewes course, and Pavilion had won. The second match was run over the same course in the July of 1806. Mellish had backed Sancho to win him

£30,000, and when he drove on to the course in his drag with its superb team of browns he raised his white hat ironically to his friends in the grand stand and said, "If Sancho's beat, I hope some of you will take me as coachman."

It was a splendid race, Sam Chiffney having the mount on Pavilion, and Frank Buckle on Mr Mellish's horse; but just at the finish Sancho's leg gave way when he looked all over a winner, and Pavilion shot first past the judge's box. After the race the Prince met Mellish on the course, and said, "Mellish, I'm sorry for you." "No, you're not, your Royal Highness, for you've won your money," replied the owner of Sancho, turning on his heel as he spoke. It was even a keener cut for the Prince than when he received the round robin from the Jockey Club, in consequence of which he never again appeared at Newmarket. But such trifles did not weigh long on the philosophic mind of Henry Mellish, and, despite his rudeness to the Regent, he lunched at the Star with the Royal party as calmly as if he had been only losing threepenny points at whist.

At that time Mr Mellish had as his betting confederate Lord Foley, the son of Charles James Fox's partner, one of the most miserably lean and meagre men ever seen, nicknamed No. 11, from the resemblance which his extraordinarily long, thin legs bore to that numeral.

The two confederates pulled off some big coups together, and on the whole held their own well against the ring, though perhaps not with such success as the Honourable Richard Vernon, commonly called Dick Vernon, who, if we are to believe his biographer, Thomas Holcroft (ex-jockey, and author of that admired comedy *The Road to Ruin*), was "so adroit in hedging his bets" that he usually made a £10,000 book, by which "he lost nothing, nor could he in any case have lost anything." But Mellish lived at such a rate that the wealth of Rockefeller could not have stood the strain. He had close upon forty horses in training, seventeen carriage horses, a dozen hunters in Leicestershire, five chargers at Brighton (he was a captain in the 10th Hussars), besides hacks innumerable, and a whole brigade of retainers in his pay, whose crimson liveries alone must have cost him a pretty penny. Then he was also an

enthusiastic supporter of the Prize Ring—in fact, the noble army of bruisers looked upon him as their treasurer. Yet not all this expenditure would have ruined Mellish, if he could only have kept aloof from “vile, insinuating hazard.” He once staked £40,000 upon a single throw, and lost. On another occasion he lost £97,000 at one sitting at Brooks’ Club, and was leaving the place when he met the Duke of Sussex, to whom he exclaimed, “I’ve lost everything; I’m ruined.” Thereupon the good-natured Duke, clapping him on the back, said, “Come back; your luck will turn, perhaps.” And it did turn with a vengeance, for he won £100,000 clean off the reel from His Royal Highness. But all he ever got in discharge of the debt was an annuity of £4000 a year, badly paid. The last straw was the St Leger of 1806, over which the betting was terrific. The *Sporting Magazine*, two months before the race was run, stated that there was little doubt that upwards of one million guineas had already been laid. Lord Foley and Mellish were amongst those who were most heavily hit by the victory of Fyldener. The latter, indeed, was ruined by the blow. In the following December his stud was sold, whilst he himself left England and went out as aide-de-camp to Sir Rowland Ferguson in Spain, where the Peninsular War was then raging.

But before he left he had the honour of entertaining the Prince Regent in the mansion at Blythe which he had been compelled to sell to Mr Walker, the great ironfounder of Rotherham, who generously lent him the house in order that he might play the host to his distinguished guest in a manner worthy of his reputation.

During the few days in which Mellish gave his farewell reception to Royalty, he and the Prince used to sit up all night engaged in the fascinating pursuit of hazard, and there is still preserved in Doncaster, I believe, the little table at which the master of Blythe rattled the dice for the last time with the future sovereign of England. On being appointed aide-de-camp to Sir Rowland Ferguson, Mellish received the brevet rank of Colonel, and whilst he was attached to that general’s staff distinguished himself so conspicuously by his gallantry that he was more than once

mentioned in the dispatches of the Duke of Wellington. Unfortunately, however, Mellish could not restrain his passion for gambling, a vice which the Duke viewed with the greatest abhorrence, and consequently the Colonel was advised to throw up his post and return home.

It was whilst he was in the Peninsula that Mellish made one of the maddest bets in the annals of wagering. He appeared one morning on a wretched-looking horse, which made him the subject of unlimited chaff. "Why, the brute wouldn't fetch a fiver," said one of his brother officers. "I'll bet you a couple of ponies that I get forty-five pounds for him," replied Mellish.

The wager was promptly taken by half a dozen officers. Mellish quietly booked all the bets, and then, putting spurs to his charger, galloped straight for the enemy's nearest picket. As soon as he was within range the French sharpshooters began to blaze at him; but, regardless of the bullets, Mellish rode on till his horse was shot under him. Then, waving his hand to the Frenchmen, he walked coolly back to the British lines.

Now the Government then allowed forty-five pounds for every officer's horse killed in action. So Harry Mellish won the wager, for which he had deliberately risked his life.

Out of his splendid property, only one small farm was left. There he lived quietly on his wife's income, forswore betting and gambling, and devoted his attention to scientific farming and the breeding of cattle and greyhounds. He died in 1817 at the early age of 37.

The greatest "plunger" since Harry Mellish's day was the ill-fated Marquis of Hastings, who threw his life and fortune away in fruitless attempts to break the ring. He had the sublimest faith in his own judgment, and boasted that he could make a certain £30,000 a year out of betting. And at one time it looked as if the boast would be justified. During five seasons (1863-7) he netted in stakes alone £62,155. He won £73,000 over Lecturer's Cesarewitch. But his judgment played him false over Hermit, whom he imagined to be as rank an impostor as Kangaroo, the horse that Harry Padwick sold to him for £13,000, and which ended its career in a cab. The Marquis's losses over the

sensational Derby of 1867 were £103,000, and he had to part with his fine Scottish estate of Loudoun to meet them. "Hermit fairly broke my heart," he confessed to a friend a few days before his death.

But that fatal year saw him receive another terrific ficer when Lady Elizabeth failed to win the Middle Park Plate, and he dropped £50,000. Before a twelvemonth had passed, he was a defaulter to the tune of £40,000. The rest of the miserable story, the scandals attaching to Lady Elizabeth and the earl, I pass over in silence. When he was last seen on a race-course at the Newmarket First October 1868, the bookmakers would not trust him even to the extent of a "pony"; and perhaps they were not to be blamed, for when they had been disposed to trust him generously and accept his offer to pay his big creditors 7s. in the £ and his small creditors in full, he had failed to keep his promise. A month later he was dead, in his twenty-seventh year.

Another plunger was Ernest Benzon, commonly known as the "Jubilee Juggins," who got through a fortune of £250,000 in two years, although now and then he had his good times. He won, I believe, £16,000 over Exmoor's victory in the Northumberland Plate; and when Ormonde beat Minting and Bendigo for the Hardcastle Stakes at Ascot, in 1887, he pulled off £20,000. I remember, too, his taking a bet of £100 to a sovereign about Mr John Wingrove Smith's Miss Dollar winning the Duke of York's Stakes at Kempton Park and pulling it off. But a man who could drop thousands at baccarat in a single evening scarcely needed plunging on the Turf to bring him to ruin.

The number of men who have at one time or another won fortunes on the Turf and then let their winnings slip from them is extraordinary. Ridsdale, who, with Gully as a partner, won the Derby twice, died in a garret at Newmarket without the price of a pint of ale to bless himself with; while William Chiffney, the owner of the celebrated Priam, whose establishment at Newmarket rivalled Crockford's in its magnificence, died nearly as badly off as Ridsdale.

At one time Mr Brayley was "tired of winning," but in

his case too, a series of failures combined with a very large stud soon took the gilt off the gingerbread. Mr Bennet, again, by the two victories of Dalby in the Chester Cup (1865-6) won over £80,000; yet a few years later he had not as many farthings.

Poor Carew, who stood to win £180,000 on Old Robert, died almost penniless in Boulogne.

Of the men who have made money on the Turf few have been more successful than Steel, who "never owned a hair in a racehorse's tail."

Charles Snewing, who won the Derby with Caractacus, remembering that the whole art of gambling is knowing when to leave off, after his great coup retired from the ring to a farm at Watford, surrounded in his home by portraits of his famous horse.

A notable example of luck on the Turf is the American, Mr G. E. Smith, better known, perhaps, as "Pittsburg Phil," who recently died intestate (February 1905), and left three millions of dollars which he had won from the bookmakers and—*kept*.

CHAPTER V

TRAINERS AND JOCKEYS

OLD JOHN DAY, the famous patriarch of Danebury, was the hero of more good stories than any other trainer, past or present. He was generally known as "Honest John Day," but at any rate he had none of the simplicity which is sometimes erroneously supposed to be a concomitant of honesty. On the contrary, John was emphatically a smart man. Nevertheless, cute as he was, he occasionally made stupid blunders, and on one occasion was fairly beaten at his own game—taken in and done for in the most delicious manner. The circumstances were as follows:—The Bath Summer Meeting was a favourite fixture with old John, and he was always to be seen there in great force. In the year 183— (it is not necessary to particularise the date) the Bath races were patronised by the veteran trainer as usual, and he brought a fairish string of horses with him to do great things and astonish the "Zummerzetshire volks." Among the events set down for the second day was a very handsome plate given by the Grafton Club, with a sweepstakes of five sovereigns added for horses of all denominations; thoroughbreds 10 lbs. extra; gentlemen riders. John Day had a horse entered for this race, which he knew to be so wretchedly bad that he took the liberty of laying the odds against it to a fifty-pound note at 15 to 1—as safe a bit of speculation as ever the old man had indulged in. This wager was laid on the evening of the first day of the races.

There was in those days in Bath a hostelry named the Golden Lion, long since pulled down, I believe, which was noted as a snug sporting crib, where the better class of sportsmen were in the habit of putting up. It

was a small house, and on this occasion was occupied entirely by some dozen or so of gentlemen riders and their friends. Most of the former were amateurs, but there were two or three of the "gentleman professional" order among them, and they were certainly, without exception, a downy lot all round. On the morning of the second day of the races these gentlemen breakfasted as usual in the coffee-room of their inn, and, there being no strangers present, they proceeded to compare their respective books and to discuss how they stood with regard to the different events yet to come off. When the Grafton Club Plate, in which most of them were engaged to ride, came upon the carpet, John Day's 15 to 1 cropped up, and then the remarkable discovery was made that "all the cream" depended upon Honest John's horse coming in first.

The Grafton Club Plate was the third item on the card, and a field of twelve faced the starter. When the flag fell, the lot went off to a good start at a great pace, but the inevitable tailing process soon began, and John Day saw with satisfaction that the Danebury screw was not in it. After all there is some advantage in having a real bad 'un in your stable that can be trusted not to win in any company, so long as you can keep the fact dark and turn an honest fifty-pound note out of the brute. So probably thought old John as he placidly watched the race. But his complacency was not to last long, for an incident happened which startled him and everybody else. The girths of the leading jockey's saddle gave way, and over he went a cropper on the turf; the horse swerved, and bolted across the course; the three next horses took fright and followed suit, and thus four were out of the race at once owing to this untimely accident. The knocked-out division now had the race to themselves, and, to judge from the slackening pace, they were all so pumped that it would be as much as they could do to struggle to the post. One after another held out signals of distress till the despised Danebury screw was actually leading with the race apparently at his mercy. Old John had pushed his hat to the back of his head in his excitement, and was suddenly heard to exclaim in a tone of consternation:

“Beggar my limbs!” (his favourite and only expletive).
“What’s the meaning of this blessed rig?”

The meaning was soon plain enough when the “self-potted” Danebury nag cantered in alone, the easiest of winners by half a dozen lengths. It was rich to see the expression on John’s face as his friends crowded round him and pressed on him their profuse congratulations on his unexpected success. The members of the Grafton Club who had generously presented the plate were among the heartiest and most effusive with their compliments on the Danebury success; but poor John soon found to his cost that these expressions of congratulation were not wholly disinterested, for the winner was considered bound in honour to stand ten dozen of champagne to the Club and pay the expenses of the police retained to keep order during the meeting! But what was this to the winner of a handsome piece of plate worth a hundred guineas, to say nothing of the sweepstakes and the money which so shrewd a card as John must, so everyone said, have netted in bets with such odds laid against his horse!

The veteran trainer, however, looked like Bret Harte’s “Truthful James”—“far, far from gay”—as the consequence of his victory began gradually to dawn upon him. However, there was no help for it; “Honest John” had to part with the fifteen fifties, present the Club with ten dozen of champagne, and pay the police expenses of the meeting. The sum total came to £850, a pretty stiff price to pay for a hundred-guinea plate and a purse of fifty sovereigns! The gentlemen-jocks stood in about sixty pounds apiece over the business, and it would probably not have improved the temper of the Danebury patriarch could he have heard the facetious manner in which his health was drunk that evening after dinner at the Golden Lion.

Long before this, however, when “Honest John” was a youngster, he and his brother Sam, who thought themselves as sharp a pair of youths as any to be found in England, met more than their match among the yokels whom they despised. Every year, in the month of August, pony races were held in the New Forest, which, in the opinion of the natives, were far superior to the Derby. Most of the

racers were the ponies which ran almost wild in the forest, and were mounted by country lads, who learned to ride as a fish learns to swim. Sometimes a professional jockey turned up, but usually one of the shady sort.

To one of these meetings, when old John Day was young John, he and his brother Sam took a wonderful little Danebury pony, thinking that with their knowledge and science they would carry everything before them. Still, they knew by experience that every country lad is neither so innocent nor so stupid as he looks, and there was no knowing to what tricks the latter might resort. So, when they had put their pony into a stable, John prevailed upon Sam to hide himself in a crate of straw, in order that he might keep close watch upon the animal.

Sam's position was not only uncomfortable but perilous : it was a tight fit to begin with, and the truss of hay which cautious John had piled over him, being in constant demand, became so diminished that he was in danger of having a pitch-fork stuck into him. At length, so cramped that he had almost lost the use of his limbs, Sam was released from this duration vile, and the brothers with the wonderful pony proceeded to the course. In the meantime, it had got buzzed who they were, and presently a loutish-looking country fellow, who wore a blue smock and a butcher's apron, ragged corduroys and high-lows, and who was driving a rickety old cart, accosted them. Taking off his battered hat, and pulling his front hair, he addressed John.

"Ax pardon, sir," he said, in a very humble tone ; "but I hope you won't take it amiss if I were to take this 'ere old pony out o' the cart and run 'im against yourn?"

"And who are you, sir?" demanded John Day, with supercilious condescension, and greatly amused at the yokel's audacity ; "put down your £10 and we'll see about it."

Instead of looking flabbergasted and making off, as John fully expected, the lout produced the amount from the pocket of his ragged breeches with an alacrity that took the Danebury youth rather aback, and suggested the un-

comfortable sensation of "smelling a rat." But there was no retreating now; so, not feeling quite so "cock-a-hoop" as he did a few minutes ago, John mounted his pony and the yokel mounted his, with his butcher's apron twisted round his arm, and off they went; and when John had been beaten by twenty yards, he learned to his mortification that his pony had been matched against Gulliver, one of the most famous of his day, and that his rider, the pretended bumpkin, was a first-class jockey.

Old John Day was a strict observer of the Sabbath, never exercising his horses on that day, and he used to tell a story in support of his principle. One Sunday morning Mr Padwick came down with a party to see his Derby favourite, Belgrade, at exercise. It would make thousands of pounds difference to him, he said, if his friends saw his horse out and his beautiful action when extended, instead of seeing him merely in the stable.

"Belgrade is your horse," replied John, "and so are the rest, and you can do what you like with them; and if you take them out Goater may go with them, but you must excuse me."

Padwick accepted the compromise, and Belgrade and a few more were taken to the Downs. Galloping with an old horse, Belgrade suddenly became frightened at nothing, or at least at nothing that could be seen. Though generally of a most docile disposition, he now grew unmanageable; he dashed off at a furious pace down a steep hill that was almost a precipice; the boy who was riding threw himself off in a fright, and the animal pursued his headlong course. In vain did Goater on a hack and Padwick in his carriage give chase: Belgrade soon out-distanced them, after divesting himself of saddle, bridle, and every particle of clothing. Nothing more was seen or heard of him that night; but the next morning, just as John was about to set out to scour the country, a man called to ask if a horse was missing, as one had been caught in his yard the previous night, and was now at the end of the barn tied up with a halter. A lad was despatched at once; the horse proved to be the missing Belgrade. The truant was brought back in a most terrible

plight, and after that ill-starred Sunday ride he was never good for anything.

Sir Mark Wood was the hero of a somewhat similar anecdote. Sir Mark was a man with a singular and particular regard for the proprieties of life, both spiritual and temporal. On one occasion he wanted a supply of straw for his horses, and, meeting Mr Witt, a gentleman who lived about three miles from his residence at Hare Park, he asked him whether he would oblige him with a waggon-load as soon as possible. Mr Witt, who was always anxious to oblige gentlemen connected with the Turf, ordered the straw to be loaded forthwith, and sent early on the following morning to Hare Park. The next day happened to be Good Friday, and the straw arrived at the Park about eight in the morning. Sir Mark was taking an early stroll, and seeing the waggon, walked up to the waggoner and asked him who sent the straw. On being told, he exclaimed, "Good Heaven! is your master a heathen? Take back the straw at once. I'll not have godlessness bringing bad luck to my stables."

Few public men in his way of life had more marked personal peculiarities than John Day. It was impossible to mistake "Honest John" on his horse. He had a very noticeable hollow in the back, good width of shoulder, and a cast of countenance there was no mistaking. He was altogether a well-made little man; but he was scarcely a great horseman. There are comparatively few brilliant bits of riding associated with his name; but he was a careful, safe man, and seldom made a mistake. It was as a trainer that John Day made his mark. There was no better judge of a young one, and no one knew better what to teach him, if he could only stay the course of instruction. But his preparation was proverbially severe, and not many could stand it.

"Well, John," said Isaac Sadler to him one day, as he was watching three of his two-year-olds at exercise, "well, John, what do you think of them?" "John beggared his limbs," and hinted something not very complimentary.

"Oh, never mind," answered Isaac; "I will tell you what they have got, John; they have got twelve sound

legs amongst them, and that's more than you can count amongst your fifty up there!"

On another occasion John himself asked a friend's opinion of five youngsters of Lord George Bentinck's that had just come up from Doncaster.

"Why, they won't stand your training a fortnight," blurted out the other.

"*My* training! What d'ye mean by that, sir?"

"Well," said his friend, softening down a bit, "I think the Danebury hill will be a *leetle* too much for them."

And sure enough, in a fortnight two of his "velocipedes" had thrown out curbs! But find a horse to face "the Danebury hill," and he was sure to come a "cracker." Despite the fact that a pot now and then boiled over, people knew this, and treated the stable with respect.

Few horses ever created such a sensation as Virago did when she was brought to Epsom to run for the City and Suburban and Metropolitan Stakes of 1854, both races being run on the same afternoon. For the former race young John Day of Danebury had a great favourite in Marc Antony; but his father told him he had a better mare than even Crucifix, and nothing had a chance beside her. Virago won, it will be recollected, in a canter, and "Honest John" repeated that the Metropolitan was an equal certainty. It was in vain that Mr Greville told him he had tried Muscovite, so that no three-year-old alive could beat him. John would not listen to a word he said, but simply met all his arguments by "She is worth your five hundred pounds, sir"; and away went Mr Greville, groaning at the thought of having to meet such an animal. After Virago had won as easily as before the veteran was in great form, and Napoleon was never prouder of the Old Guard than he was of his chestnut.

"How did you manage to get her in so well, John?" inquired Lord Derby, with a sly twinkle in his eye—for no one relished a conversation with old John Day more than his Lordship.

"I will tell you how I did it, my lord," was the reply; "I ran her 'big' at Shrewsbury, and told Wells to pull her up directly she was beaten. Capital, wasn't it?" And away

went Lord Derby, highly amused with the explanation, though he was too prudent to offer any comment upon it.

The glory of Middle Park stud-farm is now ancient Turf history ; yet the remembrance of such a splendid career as that of Mr Blenkiron should not be allowed to fade from the memories of sportsmen. It was he who really made stud history, and yet he began in a very small way. Glance by Venison out of Eyebrow by Whisker, one of Lord George Bentinck's rearing, was the first brood-mare Mr Blenkiron owned. He bought her, with two defeats on her head, from Mr Sait, the steeplechase rider, and sent her to John Osborne's to be trained. She ran three seasons without scoring a win, and after the sixth time of asking she retired from the Turf a maiden, in 1849. Mr Blenkiron determined to breed from her ; and sent the filly at once to Beverley. As the time of foaling drew nigh, a man was hired to sit up with her ; and when a youthful courier arrived one Sunday afternoon with the news that she had foaled, Mr Blenkiron, who was entertaining some friends, deserted his wine, and ran the quarter of a mile to the shed at a wonderful pace, finishing a dozen yards in front of his party, who arrived in straggling order quite blown ; and it was jocularly said by their host, "It would be quite a miracle if they did not all become roarers." On reaching the shed they found the foal on his legs ; and when, in course of time, the little brown colt was weaned, he was brought to the five-acre field at the bottom of his owner's garden, and made quite a pet of.

When quite a baby colt, Mr Blenkiron would lead it about for hours in the paddock, and if city business pressed he did not care how early he rose to fulfil the cherished task. Of course, the yearling was matched, and, with Alfred Day up, was only beaten by a head by Mr Clarke's "Mr Sikes," for £200, h. ft., at the Newmarket July Meeting. The Prince of Wales's Stakes at York was his next engagement, for which he was trained by old John Gill of Richmond, who tried him with Guicowar ; but all John would say about the colt was, "Ye can tell for yourself when ye see Guicowar run, they're yen and same." Guicowar ran badly, and old John thought the colt would

never be started; but started he was, although the stable lad told Mr Blenkiron, "He canna rin, sir, for I've baith fed and watered him myself." Yet run he did, and came in second, and next day saved the stakes by coming in third for the Gimcrack event. This all helped to make the owner very sweet upon the colt; so much so, that when John Gill was asked his price the reply was, "Noa, I'se sure a' Lunnon wadn't buy him."

Next spring, however, he unfortunately got loose to a mare, and from that day would never pass one afterwards in a trace, so he was swapped away for three mares to Jemmy Messer of No-Man's-Land—a spot, by the way, where many a prize-fight came off in the palmy days of the P.R.—and that was the ignominious end of the wonderful first foal of Glance.

Among the Yorkshire trainers of the early Victorian era there was none more amusing than "Billy" Pierse. Billy owed the greater part of his prosperity to his wife. "If ever I saved a shilling, my wife saved sixpence of it," he used to say. Mrs Pierse took an active part in the management of the stable, and it was said she had the quicker eye of the two for discovering anything wrong in a horse. With a walking-stick in her hand and an old crunch bonnet on her head, she would stand at the door of the house every morning and watch each horse as it left the yard; and if she called out, "I say, turn him back, mun; that horse is lame," there was no mistake about it.

Billy's only interference in household matters was to insist upon a roast goose every Sunday during the season, and to buy twice as much meat as was required, the overplus of which his good-hearted helpmate gave to the poor.

In his earlier days Billy was in the front rank of jockeys, and renowned as a powerful finisher and fine judge of pace. He hated quarrelling, and was a wonderful peacemaker. Mr Tomline, the judge at Richmond (Yorks), used to tell how cleverly Pierse stopped a quarrel between two jockeys who had ridden a punishing finish and got to high words about the issue. Trotting back past the chair to weigh-in, he called out, "How far did I win, Mr Tomline?"

“You, Pierse? Why, you were beat three lengths,” was the answer.

“Oh,” said Billy, with a polite bow, “thank ye, sir; that alters the case”; and his manner was so comical that he set both disputants laughing, and so ended the row.

His whole reading was confined to the Bible and Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*. He went through each about thirty times, and in the winter would sit for hours together poring over the abstruse subject of political economy.

Billy certainly knew how to make a bargain. When he wanted new clothes for his stable-boys he would go up to Manchester, give the cord merchants a few tips, and come back with enough corduroy to last the stables a year. He once dined and slept at the house of one of these merchants. After he had gone to bed, the host heard sounds of distress proceeding from his room. On going thither he found Billy pacing up and down the room arrayed in a long nightgown, and evidently in great distress.

“Oh, sir,” he said, “my wife’s forgot to put me in a nightcap, and I can’t sleep without one.” This want was soon supplied.

“These are very high beds of yours, sir,” observed Billy; “I can’t get in; do give me a leg up.” This was done with as much solemnity as if the St Leger bell had been ringing.

After he had been tucked in, he said, in a very confidential tone, “Sir, you’ve been very good to me to-day, and I wish to make you some return, mind”—and placing his fingers against his nose—“it goes no farther, but Borodino is a racehorse—that’s the straight tip. Good-night,” and the next moment his head was buried in the pillow.

Here is another story of Billy Pierse. Many years ago a distinguished military officer was one of the stewards or the Doncaster races, and during his term of office had to decide a dispute against Billy Pierse. “T’owd ’un,” as Billy was generally called, would never admit himself in the wrong, and he was very indignant at the judgment.

“Why, he don’t know the difference between a horse-race

and a charge o' cavalry," he growled to a friend; "and as to a jostle, he don't know the meaning o' the word. Wasn't his father or grandfather hanged?"

"No, certainly not," replied the other; "but his uncle was shot."

"Ah! I thowt it was soomat o' th' sowrt, an' its mooch of a moochness 'tween hangin' an' shootin'. But I tell 'ee he'll niver do for th' Turf: he may be well enough for a general to lead on soldier chaps, but he'll never do for the Turf; he wants it *here*," pointing to his forehead, "he ain't got the brains for *that*."

Among the jockeys of the old school few stood so high in estimation, whether for professional or social qualities, as Bill Scott. In his palmy days, when he had won more St Legers than any other of his craft, besides several Derbys, Oaks, and a host of other races, he had a house flanking the entrance to Knavesmere, where he dispensed hospitality right heartily, and at race times lords, legs, cits, country friends, and brother trainers and jockeys were seen alike at his well-spread board. But it was over a pipe and a glass of grog among his friends that Bill was seen at his best. A certain Captain Frank Taylor of the neighbourhood, a small owner of racehorses, which Scott trained, was frequently to be found with his feet under Bill's mahogany, and the trainer was as often at the Captain's quarters. The two together were a fund of amusement to their intimates. In the early part of the evening Taylor would address the jockey in a bland, half-patronising manner as "William." But as the strong waters began to flow, the little round-shouldered jock in the corner, with his feet on the hob, and the gouty old dragoon officer packed in a huge arm-chair, became wonderfully familiar. William was shortened into Billy, and the Captain curtailed into "Frank." With each succeeding glass the familiarity increased, until Billy would shout:

"I say, Frank, you hairy old devil—do you hear! I'll run a grey hunter I've got in York for a thousand against that damned impostor Anderby of yours. Damme! I'll lay you fifteen hundred to ten, and stake the money now."

At this sally from the chimney-corner the Captain

retired back on the "William," and stood stiffly on his dignity ; but again lapsing into the familiar "Billy," would soften the crusty old jockey by saying he should always ride for him, not against him, whereupon Billy, with a sly, triumphant chuckle, would charge his pipe afresh and replenish his beaker.

Bill was very fond of using long words, or, rather, long phrases, of the meaning of which he had not the least conception, having learned them like a parrot ; and these phrases, coupled with his singular accent, based upon the high-pitched Suffolk crossed by the vowels of the East Riding, had a most comical effect. Though a man of no education he was ambitious, as such men are, that his son should have "learning," and one day, over a glass of grog, requested a sporting friend who was a bit of a schoolmaster to "tout" young Bill in Latin.

"Don't make too strong a running of it," he said, "and take all out of him first trial. Remember, he's only a young 'un ; but give him a fair taste. Give him a mile and a half at four stone or fifty pounds—that's about your cut. And now, William," addressing his son, "try to hang on to the old 'un here without attempting to pass 'im, and if you can live with him till you see White Willy"—so he always termed the distance post—"I think as your father, a man without the advantages of a classical education, though up to a dodge or two, may have reason to be sweet upon your performance, and that in a year or two you'll be able to beat the schoolmaster at even weights."

Bill once suspected that his son, when a mere boy, had been led into drinking spirits by one of his grooms named Bob Britton, and, to be quite certain of the fact, told him to come and kiss his dad before he went to bed. The "old un" instantly "winded the lush," as he expressed it, and having dismissed the boy with a kind but droll homily, he armed himself with a good stout whip and went off to the stables in search of Bob, the tempter. He did not waste much time in talking, but towelled the unfortunate youth for a good ten minutes until he hallooed like a pack of hounds in full cry. "I never did lay into anything with

such a hearty good-will," Bill said, "in all my life as into that chap's bones."

A well-known jockey in Bill Scott's employ was Harry Edwards—"Ed'ards," he was usually called—who, though he had but one eye, was among the finest riders of his time. But he could not go straight, even when it was to his advantage to do so, and he soon had to leave Scott's employ for selling him in the most audacious manner on *Spirus* at Wolverhampton. He would not try to get his horse through, as Bill, who was riding in the race, saw from the rear, although it was heavily backed and intended to win. But Edwards cared nothing for that, and threw over the lot, tempted by some paltry sum from one of the many atrocious legs and ruffians with whom he was in league. He would rather make a pony "on the cross" than get a hundred on the square; so thoroughly did he enjoy doing a bit on the quiet on his own account, and "putting the double edge on the swells," as he called it. Latterly, Edwards became so notorious that no one would give him a mount, so he shook the dust of his native land from off his feet, went over to France, and took up his abode at Nantes, where he trained, rode, and "nobbled" for the mounseers in a small way, until death "nobbled" *him*.

As a rider, the beau-ideal of an out-and-out jockey, none surpassed Samuel Chiffney, the younger, when in his prime: his elegance of seat, perfection of hand, judgment of pace, and power in the saddle were never excelled by any of his contemporaries. He was at the same time the "Artful Dodger" of the race-course; invariably the last to get off, he would presently be seen creeping up to the other horses—or was it that they with the pace telling on them, were coming back to him?—till he would overhaul them, and then, leaning well back on his seat, he would let his horse out on the post, and, with one cut from his whip, would come with the rush of a tornado, frequently stealing a race from animals infinitely superior to his own mount, by his consummate calculations and unequalled impetuosity. When for the Claret Stakes, at the Craven Meeting in 1829, he rode his own horse *Zingaree*, and snatched the race from

two such men as Jem Robinson and Frank Buckle, his riding was the wonder of all who saw it.

Yet Chiffney lacked the courage of Bill Scott: he was rather funky when leading with a large field in his rear—a predicament, I hasten to add, in which he seldom placed himself. But Scott, on the contrary, always shone best in front, when, clapping on all sail, he would try and sap the heart's-blood of the horses following him. He never threw away a chance by waiting till some worse animal had stolen upon him *à la* Chiffney; but “if he had quality,” to quote his own expression, he always made use of it, and choked off the poor devils contending against him in the first half-mile. If, however, he had a slug under him, Bill would, by force of whip, thew, and sinew, lift him, if possible, to the front first past the post. He only won the Derby on Mundig in 1835 by riding him “energetically,” as he put it (Bill was, as I have said, partial to long words), till within the distance, and finally landed him first by sheer hard riding.

To one of the traits of character essential for a finished jockey, as specified by “Nimrod,” namely, an insensibility to provocation bordering on apathy, Bill Scott had no pretensions; strong proof of which appeared when he had won the Oaks in 1838 upon Lord Chesterfield's *Industry*. On that occasion he and Arthur Pavis, who was riding Lord Suffield's *Calypso*, were seen, as they came struggling neck and neck towards the winning-post, to be far more intent on punishing each other than the animals they bestrode. It should, however, be mentioned that Pavis, in his anxiety to win, began the attack; but Scott, having succeeded in getting the rails, had the whip hand of his opponent—an advantage he was not slow in availing himself of, as Arthur's back, and his own well-stuffed pocket-book on the following Tuesday, could amply have testified.

The late James Goater used to tell a most amusing incident that occurred to him on the first occasion of his wearing Lord Portsmouth's colours. Very many years ago, at Oxford races, Lord Portsmouth's trainer went to Goater and asked him if he was engaged for the next race,

as, if not, he would like him to ride one of his Lordship's. Jem, who had not a mount, gladly accepted the offer, weighed out, and ultimately won, after a grand display of jockeyship on his part. Some little time afterwards, whilst Goater was talking to a friend, Lord Portsmouth came up to him and said, "Goater, you rode an excellent race, and I am much pleased."

Jem, who did not know his Lordship by sight, considered it a great impertinence for a most shabbily dressed man (it was one of Lord Portsmouth's peculiarities to wear old and worn-out clothes) to interrupt him, curtly replied, "Oh yes; glad you think so," and resumed his conversation, to the great horror of his friend, who, knowing Lord Portsmouth, was simply dumbfounded, and vainly endeavoured by facial signs to make Goater attend to him.

Continuing, Lord Portsmouth said, "I must make you a present, Goater, for winning." Jem, scarcely turning towards him, answered, "Never mind, old chap; glad you won a bit on it."

His Lordship, who by then had quite grasped the situation, walked away exploding with laughter, whereupon Goater's friend immediately exclaimed, "You damned fool, that's Lord Portsmouth himself!"

Goater, when telling this, always wound up by saying, "I didn't want a Turkish bath to make me sweat then."

How Goater rode for Lord Portsmouth as long as he owned race-horses, and what an attachment existed between master and servant henceforth, until the "grim king" claimed them both, is a matter of history.

Apropos of Goater and Lord Portsmouth, it was on the occasion of riding that nobleman's grand horse Buccaneer for the Royal Hunt Cup in 1861 that "the Admiral" made his maiden bow with the starter's flag; and a nice mess he made of it. There had been a lot of complaints just before this as to the starting, and Admiral Rous, in his characteristic manner, said, "I'll start 'em myself, and make these jockey boys mind their p's and q's." It was scarcely wise to commence on a field of thirty-three runners (the number in Buccaneer's year), but, boiling over with wrath and indignation, down went the gallant old salt, flag in hand,

thinking that his appearance alone in the position of starter would strike terror and dismay into the hearts of the hitherto unruly jockeys. So far from this being the case, however, he absolutely had not the slightest control over them, and such a scene as that which ensued was probably never before witnessed at a starting-post. Goater was determined not to get left, and in answer to the Admiral's gruff remark of, "You at least know better, Goater," said, "Beg pardon, Admiral, but I am afraid of getting too near those boys for fear of getting my horse kicked." This, of course, was Jem's "kid." At last, after an hour's delay, and when, if possible, the competitors were in worse position to be started than they had been at any time previously, Admiral Rous, livid with rage, threw down the flag, shouting at the same time at the top of his naturally strong and rough voice, "*Go, and be damned to you!*" Goater got a flying start, and being on a very speedy horse and quick beginner, was never headed, winning in a canter with the big weight of 8 st. 7 lbs. This was Admiral Rous's first and last attempt at starting.

CHAPTER VI

THE WASTING OF JOCKEYS

AS a rule, jockeys increase in weight when they are not at work, but with medicine and hard labour they can usually pull off a lot of flesh in a very short time. In an emergency more than one has been known to reduce himself 7 lbs. in 24 hours; and in four hours Nat Flatman is credited with getting rid of $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. when he had to ride Vulcan. The old generation of jockeys seems to have been a stronger and hardier breed than those of the present day; and for some of the weights in the great races the wasting process was very severe. It was a piteous spectacle to see Sam Chiffney stepping out with his lop-ears down and a grim visage, the perspiration coming out of every pore as he tore along the Dullingham Road, in order to boil himself down to 8 st. 2 lb. for an Ascot Cup mount.

In their remote country quarters jockeys had little else to think of than reducing their weights, in order, as Sidney Smith remarked, to be in a condition "to take off their flesh and sit down in their bones." Jacques, I think, put himself through the process more severely than most jockeys; for, after leaving off riding for many years and growing corpulent as a licensed victualler, he resumed the sweaters and wasted down to 7 st. 3 lbs. in order to don the white and blue for his old master Colonel Craddock, when Sim Templeman could not ride the weight. Stephenson and Dockeray were specially difficult to deal with, and they took lots of time to get fit, until at last they were obliged to leave the saddle.

Tiny Wells, in 1853, fainted on Malton race-course when getting down to 5 st. 5 lbs.; while Job Marsden, who, like Bill Scott, always would have the rails, after not declaring

so low for more than eleven years, astonished everyone in 1855 by scaling only 7 st. 7 lbs. for his winning mount on Skirmisher at Richmond. Sam Day, again, after a rest of many years and a consequent increase of flesh, got down in 1846 to 8 st. 4 lbs., a wonderful instance of self-denial, suffering much less than his brother John from such "a pigskin revival," though he had been far longer out of practice.

Even the immortal Mark Tapley might have taken a lesson in cheerfulness under misfortunes from Sam Day, or "Uncle Sam," as he was always called. No man ever had such a string of accidents or was so plucky under them, for at different times, while riding for Dick Goodisson, he broke nearly every bone of his body (except his right arm), skull and jaw included: one leg was twice broken—once by jumping out of a carriage at Goodwood, when an omnibus backed into it, and again by slipping down on the marble floor of a hall. Sam's spirits, however, never forsook him. When laid up he would console himself with a tin pipe, upon which he had learned to play with rare skill. Once he was laid upon his back for nine months, and astonished the farmers among whom he was sojourning at the time by the taste and brilliancy with which he performed a variety of pastoral and martial airs.

Sam used to say he could "kill a town wasting"; and this was no idle boast, as he proved more than once. One night he was supping at Hobson's the trainer's, when a letter came from Lord Henry Fitzroy stating that the Duke of Grafton's mare Loo was to run the next day in an A.F.¹ race, and that the money was on. Sam finished his helping, and then went off to a weighing machine, which made him 8 st. 4 lb. without his coat; but he went at it like a Briton, and with physic and a fourteen-mile walk got off 12 lbs. and won.

Sometimes Sam would show his ruddy, steaming face at Wimbledon and depart like a flash before they could make out his mission. Again, he would be found in his woollen

¹ A.F. = across the flat. Newmarket differs from other race-courses in that the races do not all finish at the same winning-post. Races can finish up or down hill or on the level, as desired.

attire on Greenwich Hill during Easter, not only getting "scratched" himself, but running after a large field of girls, who called him "the mysterious stranger," and doing immense execution with his scratcher in return. The "scratcher," I should explain, was something like the peacock-feather "tickler" of Mafeking days, and the girls and lads chased one another armed with "scratchers." After this exciting sport of "scratching," he was not only, according to his own phrase, "fit to fight a windmill," but to win the Derby and Oaks as well. Sam was very fond of holding forth to the young jockeys on wasting. "Drinking," he would say, "inflates you just like a balloon; champagne and light wines are all rubbish—they only blow a fellow's roof off. But no man can work if he can't eat; you can't get light without eating—have a good mutton chop, that's my style." Then he would add, "Depend on't, a man doesn't know the comforts of life if he doesn't know the wastin' part of it."

Another jockey famous in the wasting line was Sam Darling, who gave up riding in 1844. His walks for twenty-five years in the sweaters alone were estimated to have totalled 5000 miles. He quite knocked up young Day, who was considered a good pedestrian, in a strong twelve-mile walk from Newmarket to the Swan at Bottisham and back. John's sweaters got slack, and he was so dead-beat that he had to give in. In 1832 Sam rode 174 races and won 73. One year, after riding in the St Leger, he borrowed a clever hack from a brother jockey, and, catching the coach at Sheffield, won twice at Shrewsbury the next day, and had time to waste as well.

Nat Flatman's real Christian name was Elnathan, and he was a Suffolk lad by birth. It was in 1841 that he performed the astonishing feat of reducing himself in two days from 7 st. 12 lbs. to 7 st. 4 lbs. To realise the wonderful nature of this feat, it must be remembered that there were no Turkish baths in those days—only salts, sweating, and starvation—neither were there "skeleton" or even 2-lb. saddles. But Nat's drastic "wasting" had its reward, for he steered the Irish Vulcan to victory for the Cambridgeshire. His ordinary riding weight was 7 st. 8 lbs., which

gave him an immense advantage over his most formidable rivals in the saddle; for while Frank Butler and Sam Chiffney were tearing their "too solid flesh" to pieces and enduring untold agonies in the process, little Nat, "the Pocket Hercules," was comparatively enjoying himself. Even in the very height of the racing season he always had his pint of beer at breakfast, and there was a comfortable look about him which would have led a casual observer to suppose that it cost him no trouble to get himself down to the lowest weight in a handicap. Fortunately for Nat, he was not naturally inclined to make flesh, and at 50 his ordinary riding weight was only 11 lbs. more than at 29. There is a portrait of him by J. F. Herring, mounted on Voltigeur, sitting square and strong as was his wont, and the painter has cleverly conveyed a suggestion of the jockey's peculiar style of "hustling." There was nothing brilliant, however, in Flatman's horsemanship: his set-to was usually hurried and fussy; he had neither the wonderful power of Bill Scott, the electric dash of Sam Chiffney, nor the elegance of Jem Robinson or Alfred Day (all of whom were his contemporaries), and yet at Newmarket, for many seasons in succession, he rode twice as often and was more than twice as successful as any of his rivals. At one time he was able to reckon his 250 mounts in a season—a prodigious record for those times. "I shall die happy if I can win a hundred races in a season," he used often to say in his earlier days. He attained his ambition in 1848, by scoring 104. That was his high-water mark: 94 was the nearest approach he ever made to it. This looks, at first sight, but a poor record as compared with that of Fred Archer from 1881 to 1885, viz. 220, 210, 232, 241, and 246. But the number of races was much smaller in Nat's time, and his percentage of wins was perhaps greater than Archer's. Nat Flatman won his first Derby in 1844; but it was not a satisfactory victory, for his horse, Orlando, was second to Running Rein, and it was only through the latter being disqualified for fraudulent entry that Orlando was returned the winner. That year Nat made the largest sum he ever realised in one season—£5000. I think I could name more than one jockey of these later days who has

netted as much and more over a single race! But Nat managed to amass a very respectable fortune, though he never betted largely. He won nearly all the great prizes on the Turf except the Oaks.

Before Wells and Fordham came on the scene there was no jockey in such continual request as Nat Flatman, and the following story will show how great was his popularity. At the rooms at Newmarket, one night, a match was made between Mr Jacques and Mr O'Brien to run Semiramis against Queen of the Gipsies. Each of these sportsmen had Nat in mind when the weights were fixed, and the question was which could secure him. Mr Jacques slipped out first, went straight to Nat's lodging, and, finding that he had gone to bed, threw some gravel up at the window. In a minute or two Nat's solemn, night-capped head was seen behind the blind, then he opened the window and asked—

“Who's there?”

“Nat, I want you for a match to-morrow,” was the reply.

“What's the weight?”

“Seven stone nine.”

“Then I can't do it, sir. Good-night.”

And Nat went back to his bed. But he had scarcely pillowed his head when there came another rattle of gravel against the window. This time it was Mr O'Brien, breathless with haste.

“Nat, I want you for a match to-morrow.”

“What's the match?”

“Queen of the Gipsies against Semiramis.”

“Can't do it. I'm engaged already.”

In went Nat's head, down came the window, and Mr O'Brien was left lamenting.

Fred Archer carried “wasting” to a point where it becomes fatal. In his last Cambridgeshire he had to get himself down to 8 st. 7 lbs. to ride St Mirin. After he had won the Criterion Stakes on Caller Herrin' by a masterpiece of jockeyship he went straight home, had a dose of his “wasting mixture,” got into his vapour bath, where he remained over two hours, and then went to bed, in order that he should not be tempted to eat. He did not taste food (I have this information from one of his most intimate

personal friends) from the Saturday morning until he had ridden St Mirin on the following Tuesday afternoon! Every Turfman knows how, after a desperate race, St Mirin was done on the post by Sailor Prince, to whom he was giving three years in age and a stone in weight.

Archer bore his defeat like a stoic, and when, on coming out of the weighing-room, "Hotspur" of the *Daily Telegraph* said to him sympathisingly, "Sorry you were beaten, Fred," Archer, without so much as a muscle on his face moving, replied quietly, "So am I." And the stoicism was the more credible because he stood to win a fortune on St Mirin. "I had," he told the friend I have already mentioned, "£7000 of my own money on; much more than I ever had or ever shall have on a horse again, and if it had not been for Melton I should have won it to a certainty. I thought he was going home by himself at the red post, and I was bound to go after him; but I had no sooner got to his girths than he stopped as if shot. Of course, I dared not pull my horse about, and so in reality I was making running for Sailor Prince, giving him three years and a stone over the most severe course in England."

Melton was ridden by Tom Cannon, and, up to the point at which he suddenly collapsed, seemed to have the race at his mercy. "Melton wins! Melton wins!" was the shout from hundreds of throats, and above the din came the roar of one well-known stentorian voice, "Two hundreds to one on Melton." But before the echo of that shout died away, Melton, to the utter consternation of his backers, had shot his bolt and was done for.

All who are *au courant* with Turf affairs know that Captain Machell at a certain period of his career owed much of his success to the counsels of Fred Archer, with whom he was on such intimate terms that one winter he made the great jockey his travelling companion to Monte Carlo.

The breaking off of this friendship came about in a curious way; it is another case of *cherchez la femme*, though not in the usual sense of the proverb. Every racing man knows what a pest a betting woman is, and how persistently she will tout for a tip. When Archer was going to ride Queen

Bee, one of these gamblers in petticoats ran up to him in the Birdcage and begged him to tell her what was going to win, as she wanted to put on a ten-pound note. Out of mischief more than anything else he gave her Draycot, while just before he had told the Captain to back his own mount, Queen Bee. By one of those peculiar freaks of fortune which the fickle goddess is fond of playing upon her votaries, Draycot won by a head. Immediately afterwards the delighted lady met the Captain, and told him of her good luck; and upon his asking who had given her the tip, she answered, "Archer." Naturally, the Captain was in a rage, and exclaimed, "Save me from my friends," in the jockey's hearing. As Fred had lost £1000 by Draycot's winning, he was equally exasperated by the remark, and from this misunderstanding an ill-feeling sprang up between them, which, however, might have blown over but for Archer's tragic death not long afterwards.

Among the many good stories current about the famous "Tinman," I give the following which may be new to some of my readers. When Fred Archer was savaged by Lord Falmouth's horse, Muley Edris, he was advised to see Sir James Paget. That eminent surgeon, having examined and dressed the wound, Archer requested to know how long it would take to heal.

"Oh," said Sir James, "I think in three or four weeks you will be all right."

"But shall I be fit for the Derby?" asked Archer.

"Ye-es," was the reply, "oh yes; I think you may go to the Derby."

"No, but you don't quite understand me, Sir James," persisted the jockey. "I mean, shall I be fit to ride?"

"Well, I don't know," was the answer. "Better drive; better drive"

Archer, rather taken aback by this innocent and unexpected rejoinder, had to explain. "I'm afraid, sir, you scarcely realise who I am?"

"No," said the surgeon politely, referring to the patient's visiting-card. "I see I have the honour of receiving Mr Archer, but——"

"Well," said Archer, "I suppose I may say that what you

are in your profession, Sir James, I am in mine," and proceeded to tell him what that profession was. The famous surgeon was at once greatly interested, and asked him many questions; among others, what would be his loss supposing he should be unable to fulfil the Derby engagement. To which Archer replied, "About £2000." His average income he stated to be about £8000; upon which Sir James is said to have remarked: "You may well say that what I am in my profession you are in yours. I only wish that my profession were half as profitable as yours." But that was modesty on Sir James's part, for his income at this period must have been not far short of double that sum.

Archer was far more liberal and kind-hearted than most people gave him credit for being. In proof of which we give the following anecdote:—

An old widow, in very poor circumstances, wrote to Archer a short time before his death, and asked him to put five shillings upon some horse for her, saying that she had an old crown piece given to her by her mother, and she wished to make some money with it. She added that she could not afford to lose, and wished Mr Archer to place it on a horse that would be sure to win. Archer was kind enough to answer the epistle, and, what was better, gave the old dame a piece of excellent advice. He advised her to keep her crown piece, and not to dabble in horse-racing. Besides this, he enclosed in his letter a sovereign, as a solatium for the unpalatable advice he was forced to give her. Archer, I happen to know from private sources, was always ready with his money when distress in any shape tugged at his coat-skirts, and this was only one of many generous acts on his part.

His father, as a steeplechase jockey, was only second to Tom Olliver; and Fred scored his first win on Maid of the Mist, belonging to Mrs Willing, in some Welsh pony steeplechases. He could have taken champion rank as the smallest-boned man in creation for his inches; and from his boyhood he was extremely delicate. It was on this account, and also because he thought him a lad of promise, that Matthew Dawson took a great fancy to him.

Until his marriage, in 1883, Archer lived with his old master, and his requirements were so few that two rooms satisfied him. It was in the extreme flexibility of his hands and the delicate manipulation of a horse's mouth that the "Tinman" rose so superior to his fellows. It is not for one of the present generation to compare this later darling of the Turf with such men as Frank Buckle, the Chiffneys, the Arnalls, etc.; but in his own day Archer was unapproachable. He held his life in his hands whenever turning Tattenham corner; and, although so reckless in the saddle, it is said that in his early days he had a dreadful fear of death—not of death pure and simple, but the awful fear that he might be buried in a trance.

Falmouth House, on the Bury road, just under a mile from Newmarket, was built by him for the reception of his bride, the daughter of his old master's brother John Dawson; but she died soon after the birth of her first child, a girl. The widow of a former patrician of the Turf was so infatuated with the popular jockey that she offered to settle £10,000 a year (her income was about £20,000) upon him if he would marry her; but Archer politely, but firmly, refused.

In the last winter of his life, when Archer went to Cheltenham, his native place, to indulge in his favourite pastime of hunting and renew old acquaintanceships, he weighed 10 st. 7 lbs., and if he had let nature take her course he was naturally an 11 st. man. At Falmouth House he had fitted up a most elaborate Turkish bath, as hot as Hades, and in this, when getting down weight, he used literally to parboil himself. Previous to the commencement of the racing season Archer had eighteen Turkish baths in one week, and his self-denial in the matter of food would have given a start and a beating to the most ascetic of anchorites. His prescription for wasting was written by an eminent London physician, and made up by Dr Wright, whose establishment is at the end of the town, near the race-course, and this powder he was continually taking. In order to ride St Mirin he went, as I have already stated, without food for three days, and was for eighteen hours in a Turkish bath, and so much did he

reduce himself that, with all the paraphernalia (excepting the whip) appertaining to riding, he weighed only 8 st. 7 lbs. !

All who are versed in Turf lore are, of course, familiar with the famous finishes of George Fordham. But here is a story of one which will, I think, be new to most of my readers. It took place at the Salisbury races of 1867, on the second day of the meeting, when four two-year-olds started for the Stonehenge Plate of £50: Lady Barbara, with Fordham up; Hue and Cry, ridden by Tom French; whilst Tom Cannon was on Brenda and Saddler on Active. The two latter were soon beaten off, but the other two came on, the jockeys knee and knee together, and finished a dead-heat. Now Lady Barbara belonged to the young Marquis of Hastings, who was not the man to cry a go; and he determined to run it off, which they did. On they came, knee and knee together again. If the horses had been the Siamese Twins they could not have been much closer together, and amidst the most deafening shouts they finished another dead heat. This time everybody said, "Of course they'll divide now"; but not a bit of it. The horses were not distressed, for it was only half a mile, and it is good going on the Wiltshire Downs. So, after half an hour's grace, they came out to do battle the third time, and on each occasion slight odds were betted on Lady Barbara. I will let an old friend of mine who saw the race describe it in his own words. "Well, now you shall hear what that deep old file did. In the two previous heats he rode on the near side, or, in other words, the side next to the grand stand and betting ring, and I noticed that Hue and Cry leaned a good deal against Lady Barbara, who also leaned towards her opponent. So, to make it understood better, they were both propping one another up; and when Tom French used his whip just at the finish of the second heat, I observed that his mare swerved, and, had it not been for the friendly prop of the other, would have gone wide. Master George says to himself, 'All right, Tommy, you are not going to have me for a leaning-post always,' so in the last essay he changed sides at the start. On they came to the commencement of the stand by the box-wood bushes, and

we really thought it was going to be another tie ; but when they both called on their horses, Tommy's whip drove Hue and Cry swerving on to the railing side, as she had no Lady Barbara to lean against, and George, sending her ladyship along, won by three lengths. It was the most remarkable display of judgment I ever saw, and though sorry for Tom's defeat, no one begrudged losing by it, as it was the head of a general that won the battle for Danebury."

A story is told of the connection between Fordham and Mr Bowes which ought to be true if it is not. It is popularly supposed that during the score of years in which Fordham had Mr Bowes for master he only saw him once, and that the meeting came about in this wise. Ascot had attracted its customary team of the Whitehill horses, and Fordham was saddling one of the Northern nags in the paddock. A grey-haired stranger watched the proceedings with what the jockey thought was a greater degree of interest than a casual looker-on was entitled to show, so that by degrees the usually amiable countenance of old George assumed a decidedly morose expression. At length the stranger ventured to ask a question. Would the jockey be so good as to tell him the name of the horse he was saddling? "What the dickens have you to do with it?" burst out the irritated rider; "who the devil are you?" "Well," apologetically replied the grey-haired gentleman, "I think that I am the owner of that animal. My name is John Bowes."

Mat Dawson was the hero of a somewhat similar anecdote. When Mat trained for Lord John Scott, the latter's brother, the Duke of Buccleuch, paid him a visit, and as a matter of course was taken down to see the stud, Mat being in attendance. Lord John led the way from box to box, describing each one as he went along; crying, "Wattie" (this was the Duke), "come and see this one. Wattie, I think this one will win the Derby," and so on, until presently Wattie and Mat fell a little behind. Then Mat taps him on the shoulder. "Now Wattie, when his Lordship goes to bed to-night, slip down and I will give you a glass of toddy"; and Wattie accepted. What transpired deponent

sayeth not; but next morning Wattie let the cat out of the bag with a hearty laugh, and then Matthew Dawson discovered to his horror that he had been hob-nobbing with the Duke of Buccleuch; but "Wattie" gave him a firm shake of the hand, saying he was the right man in the right place, and a jolly good fellow to boot.

And the mention of Mat Dawson reminds me of a curious story of his brother Tom of Tuppill. When Ellington won the Derby in 1856, Tom Dawson of Tuppill, who trained the colt, netted about £25,000. On the Monday after the race he went to Tattersalls to receive his money. The whole of it was paid to him in bank-notes. After the settling, he dined, and took the train for home, first having packed his bank-notes in an old leathern hat-case without any lock, but simply tied with a piece of string. He fell asleep in the train, and when the guard, who knew him well, awoke him at Northallerton and told him he must change carriages, Mr Dawson got out, leaving the old hat-case behind. In those days telegraphy was not quite so simple a matter as now, and Mr Dawson did not recover his hat-case for a whole week, during which time it had travelled to Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and various other places. Ultimately it came back to the rightful owner with the string neither cut nor untied, and with all the bank-notes safe inside. I need hardly say that Mr Dawson, with that astuteness that never forsakes the professional Turfite, took care not to display the slightest anxiety about his hat-case, but merely informed the station-master that he had had it for a good many years, and as there were some papers in it of no use to anyone but himself, he should like to recover it.

I will bring these recollections of jockeys to an end with an amusing adventure of Mornington Cannon and Cordelia on the Cesarewitch day of 1891. As the horses were leaving the Birdcage for the Autumn Handicap, one of the fiercest storms ever known at Newmarket swept over the Heath. The hailstones came down like pistol-bullets, and Cordelia, maddened at the tempest, swerved, made for the rails, and ran through them, getting her head under the second line of posts, and sending Mornington over the

rails and right into a carriage, the door of which was at the moment open. Two ladies were inside, and on the front seat lunch was still uncleared. The popular young jockey pulled himself together a bit, assured his astonished hostesses that he was not hurt, and at once accepted their kindly suggestion of a glass of wine. Mornington had been wasting hard to ride Victorious at 7 st. 12 lbs., and he had not had time since the Cesarewitch to lunch; he therefore took the opportunity of observing that he was very hungry. The ladies, though they had not precisely invited him to come in, were delighted to entertain him; and so, while the other jockeys who had weighed out for the race were being drenched, wind-smitten, and battered by hailstones at the post, Morny Cannon sat dry and comfortable in the carriage, regaling himself with chicken and champagne. As Morny afterwards remarked, it was rather an odd way to call on ladies in a carriage at lunch time, over rails and head first; but all's well that ends well.

CHAPTER VII

QUEER CHARACTERS OF THE TURF

IT is curious to note the odd characters for whom the Turf has at times proved attractive. John Elwes, most famous of misers, loved the sport dearly, and another equally griping disciple of Harpagon, Councillor Lade, was devoted to racing. Bred to the law, Lade abandoned his profession for the more congenial pursuit of the Turf, breeding and training a number of horses at his seat, Canon Park, between Kingsclere and Overton, in Hampshire. His principal ambition was to win country plates, and he never sent a horse to Newmarket until two years before his death, when he won both classes of the Oatlands Stakes with a horse christened Oatlands in honour of the event. As a miser, he extended his saving to his stables as well as to his kitchen and pantry; and so wretched was the condition of his numerous stud when the horses were sold at Tattersalls after his death, that they excited universal pity in the towns and villages through which they passed between Hampshire and London. Lade would drive his curricle and greys the fifty-seven miles between London and Canon Park without taking them out of harness, or giving them more than a handful of hay and a mouthful or two of water. He made the journey unattended, as he considered "servants on the road were more troublesome and expensive than their masters."

A queer character on the Irish Turf was Shawm, the hump-backed jockey, who died some fifty years ago. His employer was a sportsman named Brown, who lived in County Galway, and amassed a considerable fortune by racing, mainly through the prowess of his extraordinary jockey.

When Mr Brown came of age, he had but little property

besides two horses, which were named Friar and Mother Brown. He took for a servant Shawm, who was then about 19 years of age and one of the most impudent, malicious, and ill-formed lads in that part of the kingdom. Civility he could not, or would not, comprehend; doing harm was his delight; his mind and body were equally deformed, for he had an awful hump on his back.

What induced Mr Brown to engage this impish creature was no doubt his horsemanship, which is said to have been of the most desperate kind. At all events, Mr Brown scraped together enough money from his friends to enter his two horses for the forthcoming races at Tuam. Shawm was appointed to ride. Fourteen horses started for the first race, and among them was Friar, a splendid gelding, with Shawm on his back. This was the first race of both the horse and the rider. They looked something out of place on the Turf, especially the ugly hunchback, with his spindle-legs. The whole course was laughing at him as he proceeded from the scales to the starting-post.

But their ridicule was soon turned into applause. When the flag fell, Shawm came away with the lead in a most dashing style, well ahead of his thirteen competitors, and maintained his lead all the way through, winning by five lengths.

This first essay of the Shawm boy and the gallant gelding Friar landed Mr Brown the winner of £3700 and *several carriages*. Had he lost he would have been ruined, and would probably have put a bullet through his head.

On the second day Mother Brown was engaged. She had only run once before, and had been unplaced; but Shawm was not in the saddle on that occasion, and that made all the difference. The fact of her ignominious beating caused her to start at a long price, and Mr Brown took the odds to a large sum. Sixteen horses started. Mother Brown was in the middle of them, and for a while she continued so. But when the field got to the distance she came away, and won in a canter by seven lengths, amid enthusiastic cheers from the crowd, to the further enrichment of her owner.

Henceforth Friar, Mother Brown, and Shawm were all the rage in Galway sporting circles. They swept all

before them at West of Ireland race meetings. Mr Brown never forgot what a debt of gratitude he owed to the gelding, the mare, and the hunchback, who had saved him from ruin. When the horses died, he had their heads splendidly mounted, and placed in the most conspicuous part of his hall. And when Shawm got unfit for riding and unable to move about himself, his grateful master engaged a man to wait on him, and allowed him a bottle of wine every day, with plenty of pocket-money. Shawm could not speak a word of English, but he was a terrible master of the Irish tongue. He was as abusive as he was deformed. He had civility for his horses alone; to them he was kind, and, according to report, the noble animals reciprocated his affection. He was buried in his riding-dress, and had what his neighbours called a very *respectable* funeral, all the sportsmen of the place turning out in his honour. He was drawn to his grave by two racers, both the offspring of his favourite Mother Brown.

Another eccentric figure on the race-course was Mr John Dilly, a once well-known trainer, whose extravagance and recklessness became a byword. After borrowing of any and every one he could, and having tired out all his relations, he hit upon the following successful scheme to raise £25 from his brother. He was then living at Newmarket, and his brother, Mr Montgomery Dilly, at Littleton, in Hampshire. John Dilly wrote to the latter in a disguised hand:—

“DEAR SIR,—I am sorry to inform you your poor brother, Mr John, is no more. He departed this life this morning, almost without a struggle. Feeling sure you would like him to have a decent burial, I have given instructions to the undertaker to see this carried out. I think the expense will be about £30; but if you send your cheque for £25, I will get the accounts, and send them to you as soon as the funeral is over. I hope you will not think I am officious in this matter, but if there is anything else you wish to have done, please let me know, and I will attend to it.—Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM SMALLBODY.”

A cheque was duly forwarded with a letter thanking Mr Smallbody for his kind interposition. It was duly received, and as duly acknowledged by Mr Smallbody. Mr Montgomery Dilly, Mr W. Dilly, and their two sisters all went into mourning; but to the great surprise of the first-named gentleman, on his visiting Newmarket a few days later, who should he come across but his brother John, still in the flesh, alive and hearty. Naturally the one brother upbraided the other for his heartless deceit. To this the other replied: "Ah, Gomery, I knew you wouldn't send me anything to keep me alive, but I thought you might pay up to see me safely underground."

Many years ago there was a well-known man upon the Turf named John Kilburn, who made a living by list-selling. On one occasion, having lost his money betting, he found himself stranded in a Bedfordshire town without the means of getting to Richmond, in Yorkshire, where the race meeting was just coming on, and where he hoped to recoup himself for his losses. Desperate diseases require desperate remedies, and as the only means of performing the journey in time he hit upon the following daring expedient. He made a friend of his, a blacksmith, stamp on a padlock the words "Richmond Gaol," and, fixing with this a broken chain to one of his legs he lay down beside the high road, and when he saw a constable coming pretended to be asleep. As he anticipated, he was arrested, and taken before a magistrate, who, paying no attention to his half-hearted assertions, ordered two constables to convey him to Richmond prison, from which he fully believed Kilburn had made his escape. When the constables arrived at the gaol they asked the turnkey who opened the gates if he knew the prisoner.

"What! Jack Kilburn? I should say I did; I've known him for years. What is the meaning of Jack being in this pickle?"

"Why, he's broken out of here, hasn't he?" said one of the constables. The turnkey burst out laughing.

"He's never been in here, to my knowledge," he said; "I never heard a word against his character before. But what's up, Jack?"

“Well,” said the list-seller, with a sly grin, “these gen’lmen have been kind enough to bring me all the way from Bedfordshire, and I won’t put them to any further trouble. I’ve got the key, and can unlock the padlock myself. I’m very much obliged to them, indeed, for bringing me here just in time for the races.”

The story spread everywhere, and Kilburn was never seen on a course afterwards without somebody calling out, “Hullo, Jack! where’s your padlock and chain? Any more prison-breaking?”

Among the curious characters on the Turf in years gone by was a bookmaker named Richards, or “Short Odds,” as he was nicknamed. He made a queer figure on the course, dressed in brown kerseymere breeches, brown drill gaiters, a brown coat, and an old-fashioned jacket called a spencer, and always with a choice flower in his button-hole. The story of Richards’s life was a singular one. He began as a stocking-maker, and first took up betting at the door of a cockpit. Being shrewd and lucky, he soon advanced to higher things, and made a book on some of the Northern races, progressing until at last he became a “warm man.” But he was exceedingly eccentric in all he did. When going to Newmarket he would drive one horse and lead another behind his gig. One of these was a big brown, 17 hands high; and after going a stage he would change them about, putting them alternately between the shafts. His own corn always went with him in a bag, and a cargo of stockings as well. “Why did he carry a cargo of stockings with him to the race-course?” did you say? Well, he always tried to make his clients take out their money in hosiery!

“Dicky” was always ready for a bet. “There’s old Richards, and if he hasn’t come out hunting with an umbrella!” cried some gentlemen when that worthy put in an appearance at a meet. “And I’ll bet you’ll not hunt with or without an umbrella at my age,” said Dicky, coming up to them. “Who’s to hold the stakes?” asked one. “Oh, there’ll be some of you left when I’m gone, perhaps; we’d leave ’em to him,” was the answer.

Richards was very particular about stale bread; he used

to lock it up in the sideboard until it was a fortnight old, and put back the crust if he could not finish it. These, however, were only fads, for there was nothing of the miser about him. Old "Short Odds" made a pot of money; he lived to fourscore, and only a few weeks before his death was on Newmarket Heath as lively as ever.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST STEEPLECHASE AND ITS SEQUEL

STEEPLECHASING is a sport of considerable antiquity, and those who have searched for its beginnings say that its origin can be traced back as far as the year 1752. Ireland seems to have been the land of its birth. An old MS. in the possession of the O'Briens of Bromoland records a match run in that year over $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles of country, between Mr O'Callaghan and Mr Edmund Blake, the course being from the Church of Buttevant to the spire of St Leger Church. Such matches were probably common enough, but it was not till 1803 that what is spoken of as "the first regular steeplechase" was got up in Ireland. The festivity of a hunt dinner inspired the match-makers, who agreed to ride for a sweepstake—but neither date, course, nor figures are given. The "added money" was a hogshead of claret, a pipe of port, and a quarter cask of rum.

There is a much greater wealth of detail in the record of the first steeplechase ever run in England. We have names, dates, incidents of the race, all "according to Cocker." I subjoin a condensed version of the narratives.

On a certain evening in December 1803, in the mess-room of the cavalry officers then quartered in Ipswich, a young captain named Hansum challenged anyone in the regiment to run against a favourite grey horse of his, 4 miles across country, for a "pony." As the place was very dull at the time, a chorus of voices cried, "Done! done!" "Four miles and a half, from here to Nacton Church, *now*. It's a moonlight night, the weather open, and the country clear."

Ready for anything, the chorus assented, and rushed off to prepare.

Someone suggested they should wear nightshirts over their uniforms, and cotton nightcaps on their heads. The proposition was hailed with acclamation, and eight riders were soon ready to start, with a body of troopers in the background to witness the fun.

Away they went in nightshirts and caps, making strong running, and lying well together. At the first fence one of the racers turned a somersault, and horse and rider were landed in a muddy ditch; while a Major Medley, with his shirt-tail flying in the wind, vainly tugged at his old charger to get him over the same. The remaining six got safely across, and, with some ups and downs, reached Nacton Heath. But the last fence presented a most varied picture of reverses. One jumped smash through the middle of a five-barred gate. Hansum's grey took a strong wattle fence and bank in beautiful style. Two fell, but, whooping like maniacs, the remainder clattered through the quiet village, startling the country-folks out of their beds, and making them believe the French had landed and were upon them; the sight of the white shrouded figures in the cold moonlight, shrieking as if a troop of demons were in pursuit, filling them with terror.

“The steam of their steeds,
Like a mist of the meads,
Veiled the moon in a curtain of cloud,
And the stars so bright
Shuddered in light
As the unhallowed troop in their shadowy shroud,
Galloping, whooping, and yelling aloud,
Fast and unfailing, and furious in flight,
Rattled on like a hailstorm, and vanished in night.”

For many a year afterwards, some of the good wives of Nacton believed it was a troop of devils they had seen.

This, according to the *Sporting Magazine*, was the earliest steeplechase on record, and suggested ideas that developed into a new era in sport. But there are strong suspicions entertained that no such race ever took place, and that the whole story is an invention of some ultra-imaginative journalist.

A more credible story appeared in the *Sporting Magazine* for 1805, under the heading of "An Extraordinary Steeplechase." The account says: "On the last Wednesday in November came on for decision a match which created much interest in the sporting world, and which amongst that community is denominated a steeplechase; the parties undertaking to surmount all obstructions, and to pursue in their progress as straight a line as possible. This contest lay between Mr Bullivant of Shropton, Mr Day of Wymondham, and Mr Frisby of Waltham, and was for a sweepstakes of 100 guineas staked by each. They started from Womack's Lodge at half-past twelve (the riders attired in handsome jockey dresses of orange, crimson, and sky-blue, respectively worn by the gentlemen in the order we have named above) to run round Woodhall Head and back again, a distance somewhat exceeding eight miles. They continued nearly together until they came within a mile and a half of the goal, when Mr Bullivant—on his well-known horse Sentinel—took the lead, and appearances promised a fine race between him and Mr Day; but, unfortunately, on passing through a hand-gate, owing partly to a slip, Mr Day's horse's shoulder came in full contact with the gate-post; the rider was thrown with much violence, and, as well as the horse, was badly hurt. Nevertheless, Mr Day remounted in an instant, and continued his course. Mr Bullivant, however, during the interruption made such progress as enabled him to win the race easily. The contest for the second place now became extremely severe between Mr Day and Mr Frisby, and Mr Day only beat his opponent by a neck. The race was performed in 25 min. 32 sec."

In 1833 Wiltshire had its first steeplechase, and Jem Hills (who was then huntsman to the Vale of White Horse) won it. This event, like many of a similar kind, had its origin in a match made after dinner between Mr Horrocks and Lord Ducie.¹ The former matched himself, on one of his own horses, against the whole stud of his Lordship, one to the post, and Jem, the huntsman, to ride. The conditions were that it was to be "4 miles straight

¹ Lord Ducie was Master of the V.W.H. 1828 to 1843.

ahead, neither to ride more than 100 yards along the road, every gate to be locked, and no fences cut down." The ground selected was from Tadpole Copse to Lyssal Hill (near Eyeworth), over the water, Eaton Vale, with the bullfinches, gates, and two brooks to boot. The only guide-posts were a flag on Lyssal Hill and another in Cold Harbour road, and the riders had to reach the goal as best they could. The pair met in scarlet coats and hunting-caps at Cold Harbour; Jem with five horses to select from, and a goodly allowance of shot to make up the required weight of 13 st. As soon as he had arrived at the brow of the hill and learnt the line, he determined to ride his old chestnut mare. But the history of the run had better be told in Jem's own words.

"The first fence," begins he, "was a double post and rails. We both sat and looked at it. You see, I wanted to find out whether he'd take his own line or follow me. I said, 'This won't do. Come, you have at it first.' He said, 'No; if you can't have it, I can't!' So, as it was no use staying there all day, I turned the old mare's head, and she popped in and popped out again. He followed, and came over very prettily. The next fence was a great bullfinch with a ditch. We got over that very well; then I said, 'Mind your next fence; we shall both fall.' It was a stiffish fence—a post and a rail—with a hedge and bank to clear. He said, as we were coming to it, 'Don't let us kill one another, Jem; I won't ride on you if you won't ride on me.' I said, 'Give me plenty of room, and give him pepper.' My mare cleared nine-and-twenty feet, and his horse twenty-nine and a half, we sent 'em at it with such force. I never saw a man so high in the air before. I could see Mr Horrocks's horse's shoes glittering above my shoulder. Then came the gate to Cold Harbour road. I said, 'Mr Horrocks, which of us shall have it first?' He said, 'You do.' But we went over together, side by side, our boots nearly touching. Same way through the bullfinch; out of the lane like a bullet.

"Then we had some small enclosures with very big fences—what I call creepers. My old mare, she goes the same pace all the way. The country was tremendously

deep. When I found that he intended to wait on me, I knew how to deal with him. Then we came into a dirty lane, with a tremendous fence towards us. I tried the old mare at it; it knocked her backwards into the ditch, but, without getting a fall, she recovered herself. I said, 'Now Mr Horrocks, you have a try.' We were very friendly all the way. He said, 'No, Jem; if your old mare can't bore a hole, my horse can't.' So I put her at it—I couldn't help myself—and I got through well; he attempted, and his horse floundered and he nearly got off, and there he hung. I looked back for my companion when I'd got half a field ahead, and when I saw him in the saddle, and coming full tilt, I eased my mare. We had two miles to go then, up rising ground. I kept pulling, and he kept pressing till he caught me; bullfinches all the way, but not so big. We got very well over them, and came to a barn. Then there was a very large field down to the last brook. Lord Ducie and all the gentlemen were there. I was a hundred yards ahead when I passed the barn. I knew devilish well that neither of our horses could jump the brook (you know they always laugh at me about the brooks). The gentlemen kept hollering at him, 'Now Horrocks, come along—Jem's beat!' and he came down past me at the brook as fast as his horse could go. Believe me, the horse jumped right into the brook, pitched upon his head, and turned with his rump on to the other side, and there he lay.

"I rode quietly down to the brook. Lord Ducie was there on a fresh horse. He said, 'Jem, Jem, jump it; the mare will bring you over—I'll give you a lead'; and over he went, and jumped it beautifully. I pulled up, and sat looking at Mr Horrocks in the brook. It was quite a study. He was standing on the bank, and the bridle came off; he fell backwards bridle and all, and the horse went sideways.

"Lord Ducie was at me all the time: 'Come, come, Jem; he'll get out.' I said, 'No, no, my lord; there's plenty of time.' Then I saw a ditch which led from the brook into the field at the opposite side. I stood as long as I could to let the mare get her wind: the pace had been strong all the way. When I thought she'd had sufficient time, I

let her down very quietly, and waded her across the brook, to go up this ditch. She made a plunge or two, and I went up it twenty yards, and into the field. I had still three fences to jump, and a gate at the finish. My mare was so beat I scrambled her on to them, and then we scrambled out. The gate was locked, so I crammed her round the gate-post between the gate and the hedge. She was just like my old horse Bendigo—jump anywhere she could get her head. So I got to the winning-post, and into the farm-house, and had a glass of brandy and water before he was out of the brook. It was the only steeplechase I ever rode. I was to have ridden another the next week at Cheltenham, only the horse broke down, and very glad I was. I never wish to ride another.”

It was about this time that the sport was introduced into France by M. de Thennberg, who established steeplechasing at Haras du Pen, 300 miles from Paris. A handicap claiming race was set on foot, and ten or twelve English horses entered. The peasants, in their zeal to get a high test, secured and mortised together the stiffest posts and rails so that nothing could break them, the fences were built up with wires, a ditch was dammed back until it swelled into a bog, and Multum in Parvo, a fifteen-one Lincolnshire hunter, and Saucy Boy, with heavily repaired hocks, were the only two that got over the ground at all. Their victory roused the Frenchmen to a frenzy of excitement. Jem Hill (not to be confounded with the Jem Hills already mentioned), who rode Multum in Parvo, was carried to scale on their shoulders. But what Jem considered a greater triumph was when the prefect of the commune insisted on paying him the prize (a good sum) in five-franc pieces. “Only to think, master,” he said, as he literally staggered beneath the weight of coin back to his tent, “that I should go and win more money than I can carry.” Next year Jem won again on Stoker, when there was quite as much excitement and much less to jump.

Poor Jem’s luck, however, was brought to an end by a strange fatality. He was entrusted with the care of some horses intended for the King of Sardinia, which he was to

deliver at Boulogne. When the horses were landed it was discovered for the first time that Jem was missing, that no one had seen him on board, and that not even the lip-strings of the horses were undone. A letter was at once despatched to England to the owner, but from the day Hill had departed with his charges nothing had been seen or heard of him. No clue was found until the very steamer in which he was to have sailed came back from France, when her paddle-wheels actually turned up the poor jock out of the mud close to the London Bridge quay. Going on board in the dark, he had slipped between the two steamers moored together, and had been drowned, or smothered in the slime.

On Monday, 29th February 1836 (leap year), the first Liverpool steeplechase was run near Aintree, twice round a two-mile course, and a commentator says: "A strong recommendation to it was that nearly the whole of the performance could be seen from the grand stand." The conditions were "a sweepstakes of 10 sovereigns each, with 80 added, for horses of all denominations; 12 st. each; gentlemen riders. The winner to be sold for 200 sovereigns if demanded." Captain Beecher (whose name is commemorated in Beecher's Brook) won on a horse called The Duke. And I think it was three years later that Johnny Broome, the famous prize-fighter, who was a daring and clever horseman, rode his own horse Eagle for the same race.

In the autumn of 1866, the Grand National Hunt Committee having been formed, its rules were recognised and enforced, to the infinite advantage of steeplechasing; and from this date *Weatherby's Steeplechase Calendar*, the first volume of which bears date 1866-7, has been issued.

Earlier than this, the first Grand National Hunt Steeplechase had been run. The date of the first contest was 1860, the place Market Harborough, and Mr Burton beat thirty opponents on Mr B. J. Angell's Bridegroom. "The Market Harborough course," a member of the Grand National Committee who has always been an advocate of big jumps confesses, "was really an awful

one." The aboriginal oxer prevailed; the brook—the river Welland—was cleaned out to the width of 18 ft. I have no idea of the depth, but the scenes which occurred here were remarkable. A good many of the provincial riders required a considerable amount of "jumping powder" to induce them to face this brook and other equally formidable fences. A lady well known in the sporting circles of her day, however, cleared the water before the assembled multitude in cold blood! The owner of Bridegroom supplied the winner, Queensferry, who was again steered by Mr Burton, the second year.

The first Grand National Hunt recorded in *Weatherby* is the race at Bedford, in 1867, when the late Captain Coventry rode Emperor III. and won by six lengths. That was as stiff a course as could well be found. There was a double post and rails "improved" with a ditch, which most of the jockeys objected to, and it was consequently decided that one of the rails should be taken down at a particular spot so as to give the riders the option of an easier place. Captain Coventry made no objection to this, as he saw that by going straight over the double he could gain considerably on those who diverged to the gap; and he carried out his plan most successfully.

I shall have some personal anecdotes and reminiscences of famous steeplechasers to set down anon; but for the present I will be content with a glimpse at the grand "Old Squire," George Osbaldeston.

In his day cross-country jockeyship was but little practised, and Grand Nationals and professionals were unknown. No regular courses were laid out; but if a match had to be settled, four miles of the most intricate country in Leicestershire or Northamptonshire was selected, and the riders had to get from one point to the other as best they could. Consequently there were greater opportunities for the display of those qualities which are the essentials of a steeplechase jockey, viz. nerve and knowledge of pace and country, than are afforded in the events of the present day.

Among the most celebrated of the matches which Osbaldeston rode was the one between Clinker and



I. R. & G. Cruikshank.

JACKSON'S ROOMS IN BOND STREET.

(From an old print.)

Clasher for 1000 guineas, made while he and Captain Ross were shooting a match at pigeons at the Red House, Battersea. Clinker had always a first-rate reputation as a fencer, and the Squire was to have ridden him the previous year against Clasher, but the horse falling lame, the match went off, according to the articles. The Captain happening to mention that Clasher was going up at Tattersalls that afternoon, the subject was renewed, and, after a great deal of chaffing, the match was remade, with the condition of the Squire riding—a proceeding he rather objected to, as at the time he was High Sheriff of Yorkshire—but as the stipulation was a *sine qua non*, he consented. The line chosen was from Dalby Windmill to Lipton, in Leicestershire; and Dick Christian, then in his zenith, was put upon Clasher. The attendance was commensurate with the interest the event created, and thousands of pounds depended upon the result. With a view to frightening the Squire, the owner of Clasher told Dick to follow in his track, and to ford the brook for the purpose of saving his horse. These tactics, however, had quite the contrary effect to that anticipated, as the following only made the Squire more determined, while, as he jumped the brook, the wading gave him a good lead and he won by the skin of his teeth.

On another occasion, when Master of the Pytchley, Osbaldeston beat Captain Ross on Polecat with his own horse Pilot. He also won two steeplechases on Grimaldi, who ran second to Moon-raker for the great St Alban's race, which was then looked upon much as the Grand National is now. In the Harrow country he won on Grimaldi, beating Moon-raker; and over a frightfully severe course at Dunchurch he defeated General Charittié on his grey horse Napoleon. On the flat he was hardly as good as he was in a steeplechase; but, take him all round, the Squire was hard to beat, and it is not too much to say that no horseman of the century surpassed him in skill, boldness, and endurance.

CHAPTER IX

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM OLLIVER

"WE have no great steeplechase riders now, sir; the race is extinct." Such was the sweeping statement of a veteran sportsman whom I met at the Queen's Hotel, Birmingham, a week or two before the Grand National of 1904. I demurred to the statement, and had the names of Tom Olliver, Jem Mason, and Captain Beecher flung in my face with the emphatic query, "Where can you show me any steeplechase rider now, sir, who could hold a candle to any one of those? I've seen 'em all three ride, sir, and I know what I'm talking about."

Now, as I never saw any of that celebrated trio in the saddle, for they were long before my time, it was not easy to dispute that assertion. It was no use quoting such names as Ede, the fine horseman known in the saddle as "Mr Edwards," who met his death on the Aintree course, Yates, Coventry, and Beasley: he scoffed at them all. It was like mentioning the name of Henry Irving to some cranky old worshipper of Edmund Kean or Macready. For the jockey, like the actor, leaves nothing behind him by which future generations can judge of his excellence. For my own part, I am ready to allow that the heroes of the past were all that their admirers make them out to have been, but at the same time I decline to admit that we of to-day are in any branch of sport inferior to our fathers and grandfathers. If we are not their superiors, we are at any rate their equals, and the great horsemen of to-day are certainly not unworthy successors to their predecessors.

But in regard to steeplechasing I must say this, that the feats of its exponents are thrown into the shade by

those of jockeys on the flat, and the public shows no such interest in great steeplechase riders as it did in the days of which my *laudator temporis acti* at Birmingham is a survival. And there was a savour of romance and adventure about the lives of such men as Jem Mason, Tom Olliver, and Captain Beecher which is lacking in the careers of our modern knights of the pigskin. The biographies of these men teem with interesting and entertaining anecdotes. I will take Tom Olliver first, because I know him personally and have had many a yarn with him after he had settled down as a trainer at Wroughton.

Olliver himself used frankly to admit that he was inferior as a horseman to Jem Mason. I once heard him say: "I have ridden hundreds of miles across country with Jem Mason, not only in steeplechases, but in trials of recent purchases brought into the stable by his father-in-law, Mr Elmore. I can say it without fear of contradiction that he was the finest horseman in England—I have never ridden with him without envying the perfection of his style." Nevertheless, many good judges who saw both men ride at their best were of opinion that, splendid horseman as Mason was when all went well, if they got into difficulties towards the finish the wonderful presence of mind, the iron nerve, and the daring pluck of Olliver would pull him through against Mason or any man living.

Tom's career was a chequered and eventful one, and few men experienced more of Fortune's buffets than he. His father was in a chronic state of insolvency, and Tom was left to run to seed. Yet though the youngster early showed his love of horses and ability to ride them, his father would not hear of him becoming a professional jockey.

Fortunately Tom had an uncle, Mr Page, a well-known trainer at Epsom, who saw that his nephew had the stuff in him of which great horsemen are made.

The boy had a strong will of his own, and, taking advantage of his father's absence at some harvest merry-making, he, one night, tied up his clothes in a pocket-handkerchief, crept out of the house, and, with his wardrobe slung upon the end of an ash sapling, and fourteen and sixpence in his pocket, which he had been for months

accumulating, started off to meet the early coach for Epsom. His uncle, knowing the state of affairs at home, received him kindly, but insisted that one half of each day should be spent in school and the other half on horseback. Tom remained there about two years and a half, when Page got him the light-weight mounts for Lord Mountcharles at the time that old John Day was riding for that nobleman.

Coronet, at the Epsom Spring Meeting, was Tom Olliver's first mount in public ; but he was unsuccessful, and the first victory he secured was on Icarus, the property of General Grosvenor. He was then living with Turner at Inglemere Cottage, Ascot Heath ; the feeding department, however, was so indifferent, and Tom's appetite so good, that he refused a three years' engagement, and went back to his uncle, who found him a place with the famous Captain Lock. But Tom was certainly not born under a lucky star ; for soon afterwards the Captain was drowned abroad, and about the same time Uncle Page failed.

The consequence of the double calamity was that the young jockey was left stranded, with three shillings and a couple of greyhounds. The latter, one would have thought, were encumbrances which the impecunious lad would soon have disposed of ; but Tom knew a trick worth two of that.

He had a knack of training dogs, and he trained his greyhounds to sneak about the butchers' shops, and when the attention of the purveyor of meat was otherwise engaged these artful foragers would snatch up any small joint that was handy and bolt off home with it, where it was cooked and fairly divided between the thieves and the receiver. But this game could not go on for ever, and Tom's dogs became so notorious that he thought it prudent to shift his quarters, and one fine morning started for Brighton with twopence in his pocket. When he got tired, he mounted on a rail behind a gentleman's carriage, until the coachman's whip found him out.

Footsore and hungry, he trudged on a little farther, when a stage-coach overtook him, the driver of which gave him a lift into the town, where he had friends. Soon afterwards Uncle Page pulled through his difficulties, and took the lad back.

Tom stayed with his uncle another two years, and then got an engagement with a Mr Walter Young to train and ride some horses for him in the West of England. Soon afterwards this gentleman proposed that the young jockey should go to Ireland and train for him on his Irish estate, Rosemore Lodge, on the Curragh. Thinking he had fallen into a good thing, Tom thankfully accepted the offer and went off. Upon arriving at Rosemore, however, he found that Mr Young's affairs were far from flourishing: there was no money and very little to eat at the lodge. Butter-milk and oatmeal was the standing dish; and, after a while, whatever edible animal remained about the place disappeared to appease his appetite. At last, when famine stared him in the face, his employer sent him thirty shillings to get to Liverpool and bring two horses with him. Thirty-seven Irish miles did he travel on two-pennyworth of whisky and a dry biscuit. When he reached Queenstown, a hungry creditor pounced down upon the horses and carried them off. The next day Tom arrived in Liverpool penniless.

After a very short stay in Liverpool, Olliver found a situation as foreman to an Irish horse-coper named Farrell, and with a string of screws visited every fair in England. Tom was a rolling stone that never stayed long in one place; and broken vows to a fair damsel, who "loved not wisely but too well," compelled him to make tracks from the great shipping town. Once more his uncle's roof received him, and it was at Egham steeplechases he first caught the idea of adopting that line of life. Mr Bartley, the bootmaker of Oxford Street, got him his first mount for the Finchley steeplechase; but his mare fell into a ditch in the second field from home, and returning in his wet clothes the unfortunate rider caught a severe cold, lay speechless for six weeks, and received the munificent sum of one guinea for his mount. On his next appearance in the pigskin his fee was increased to two guineas—a rise which greatly cheered him.

Olliver's handsome face, well-made figure, firm seat, and manner of handling a horse soon attracted the attention of the owners of steeplechasers, and he quickly obtained

plenty of work. The first performance that brought him into notoriety was riding Harlequin in a hurdle-race at Clifton. Perhaps a finer contest of the kind was never witnessed, since he had for competitors that grand sportsman Captain Beecher on his famous Sir Peter, while the celebrated jockey Powell was on another noted horse of the day, named Pennyweight. It was a tremendous struggle, but, to the surprise of everyone, Olliver won each heat by a head. After this he went over to Leamington, and engaged with Sir Edward Mostyn at £100 a year and expenses for first call ; but no sooner was he in full swing than, with his usual luck, he had a bad fall and broke his collar-bone.

Tom next entered into partnership with Curlewis, for whom he rode Paddy Carey, Bodice, and The Greyling; but the speculation failed, and plunged him head over ears in debt.

He became in immense request among sheriffs' officers in consequence of the number of his autographs that were floating about the country; indeed, so numerous did the writs become at last, that, to save the trouble of writing, it was proposed to lithograph his name. Tom, however, was difficult to catch; he was continually shifting his quarters, and he had a little grey pony which, he averred, could smell a writ a mile off, and always started away at full gallop at the sight of a "bum." He was once asked when he rode best. "Well, you see," he answered, "when you've got the traps in your house, and the 'bums' after you, and you say to yourself, within three fields of home, 'If my nut is screwed on a little better than those other beggars', and I can beat 'em, how pleased my poor wife and kids will be,' that makes me ride."

When Tom Olliver rode his celebrated match on The Greyling against Alan Macdonough on Cigar, the moment he appeared upon the course he was tapped upon the shoulder. It was his last chance. "Let me ride, and I'll stand a couple of quid and surrender myself the moment the race is finished," he said to the Sheriff's officer. The latter was a good-hearted fellow, and consented. These were certainly unpleasant circumstances under which to ride a steeplechase—enough to shake any man's nerve.

Tom, however, rode splendidly, but, agitated and anxious, he was beaten, though only by half a length. He kept his word, however, and was marched off to Northampton Gaol, where he stayed for a month, and the officers of the 19th Lancers stationed in the town softened the severity of the punishment by supplying him with food from their mess. Tom offered his creditors two shillings in the pound; they refused, and got nothing, for Tom spent all the money between the time of the offer and his discharge from the Court of Bankruptcy.

As soon as he was free, Tom took the "Star" at Leamington, upon a capital of seven and sixpence, the whole of which he spent in whitewash and a brush to furbish up his premises; the brewer, baker, and others standing tick. He started riding again, won some big victories, received large presents, and, if he had been a little prudent, might have been comfortable; but he went the pace, and in a little time the good people of Leamington knew him no more, though his memory was cherished by his numerous creditors. The Greyling episode was repeated at Newport Pagnell steeplechases. He was arrested before the race, but allowed to ride; and this time he won, and was able to discharge the myrmidon of the law.

During an examination in the Bankruptcy Court at Bristol, finding things were going against him, he made a sudden bolt, mounted his pony, and never drew bridle till he had crossed the river and found himself in the adjoining county.

Of his exploits in the saddle I have only space to say here that he won three Grand Nationals, of which more anon, and that he was the tutor of that splendid gentleman-rider Captain Little, who rode Chandler to victory, and who was on that famous horse's back when he made his world-renowned record jump of 39 ft. over water at Warwick in 1848.

CHAPTER X

JEM MASON AND LOTTERY

“To mention the Grand National,” says the author of *Steeplechasing* in the Badminton Series, “is at once to suggest the names of Lottery and Jem Mason, who head the list of winners.” ’Tis seventy years ago since that famous pair immortalised themselves at Liverpool, and their memory is still green among sportsmen. I have met veterans within the last decade who saw Jem Mason steer Lottery to victory on that memorable day, and who stoutly maintained that neither horse nor rider has ever had his peer.

Jem’s father was a horse-dealer in a large way at Stilton, in Leicestershire, and the lad was brought up among horses. At the age of 15 he was engaged as rough-rider to Mr Tilbury, of Dove House Farm, near Pinner, one of the best-known dealers in the kingdom, who sometimes had as many as 200 hunters on his hands. Jem had plenty of practice in riding to hounds, and one day, when he was out with the Hertfordshire, Lord Frederic Beauclerk was so struck with his riding that he got the lad to ride The Poet, who had run third in the St Leger, in the St Albans steeplechase, which was then the leading cross-country event of the season. The Poet had to carry 12 st., and as Jem was under 8 st. he had to carry upwards of 4 st. dead-weight; but he won so cleverly as to convince good judges that he had in him the making of a first-rate steeplechase rider.

It was just after this steeplechase that Jem Mason’s connection began with the horse which is as closely associated with his name as Black Bess was with Dick Turpin. Lottery was bought by John Elmore, another

famous dealer, at Horncastle Fair in 1836. He was a mealy brown colour, narrow and short in the quarters, and anything but promising-looking; but being put at a post and rails for a trial, he took them so well that a bystander said, "The — could jump from Hell to Hackney," and thereupon Elmore gave £120 for him. He was at once handed over to Jem Mason, who schooled him daily, but with only moderate success. It was the turning-point of Jem's career; he was firmly established in everybody's opinion as a first-class horseman, and only wanted the proper mounts to lead him to fortune. As luck would have it, Mr Elmore was just then in want of a jockey, and gave him the riding of the best steeplechase horses that money could buy; and from that time he was associated with Beecher, Olliver, and the cream of the cross-country talent.

It was in 1838 that Lottery first faced the starter. St Albans was chosen as the place for his *début*, and, considering that he was amiss at the time, his performance in finishing third was very good. Six weeks later, Lottery took the Metropolitan, winning easily, and the rest of the season was a succession of victories. But his grand coup was at Liverpool the following year. When he came to the five-foot stone wall at the end of the first two miles, very few were in it: Charity, who was leading, refused; Railroad, who was next, went at it beautifully; Lottery and The Nun followed, the former taking a tremendous flying leap, but The Nun nearly unshipped her rider, Alan Macdonough. At the finish, when Mason let his horse go, the race was never in doubt; so fresh, in fact, was Lottery, that over the hurdles placed for the run home he cleared the remarkable distance of 33 feet.

To Jem Mason, Lottery brought a wife. He had quitted Tilbury's service to engage with Elmore, and fell in love with one of the latter's daughters. So delighted was the old trainer with the young fellow's performance, that he gave him the girl, and the marriage was celebrated forthwith. During the remainder of the season Lottery carried everything before him at Maidstone, Cheltenham, Stratford-on-Avon, and elsewhere.

Jem's next notable feat was at Dunchurch in 1840, when The Nun, again ridden by Macdonough (who, next to Tom Ferguson, was esteemed the best horseman in Ireland), made a tremendous fight with him. Some distance from the winning-field the pair were in front, and it was here that Jem gave an instance of that wonderful readiness in availing himself of the advantage of a situation that almost amounted to instinct. As they approached the goal—with deep ridge and furrow before them—his quick eye told him that by jumping some high posts and rails two fields distant he would be able to ride straight up the furrows. This he did, and as Macdonough did not like to follow with The Nun, who was a slovenly fencer, the mare had to come floundering across the ridge and furrow in the last field, and was beaten in a canter.

At Liverpool, the following year, Lottery had his first fall, and, strange to say, he and his old adversary, The Nun, tumbled over the wall together. The latter never recovered the shock, and Lottery was much shaken. Ill-natured people said that Jem's servant was just behind, with his greatcoat, ready to pick his master up; but I believe this to have been a calumny, and that the cause of the accident was the pace, which was so tremendous that the horse was really blown.

During the next two seasons Lottery—always ridden by Jem—won the Metropolitan, Dunchurch, Leamington, Northampton, Stratford, and Cheltenham steeplechases, until Mrs Elmore used to say she was quite ashamed of going about the country and carrying away the money from every place.

Perhaps the greatest feat performed by the pair was at Cheltenham, when Lottery had to carry a heavy amount of penalties, and meet some of the best horses in England. "Now," said Elmore to Jem, when he was ready to start, "you have no chance, but send the old horse along, and gallop him as long as you can."

What happened I will give in the words of an old sportsman who saw the race:—

"I was standing about a mile, or something more, from home, where they had to go in and out of a road, and there

were two gates, one on each side, between the flags. What was my surprise to see Mason, who, I thought, must from the weight have long since been out of it, coming with a strong lead, and making all his own running. Down to the gates he came, and bounded over them, in and out of the road like a football, while the rest, not daring to take the timber, were scrambling at the fences; and he was never caught, but went on, and won as he liked."

Weight had evidently little effect on Lottery when in his best form, and so confident was Jem Mason of the superiority of his horse over all his rivals that when walking round the course at Dunchurch, where the choice lay between a strong bullfinch and a high new gate off a fresh-metalled road, he coolly said: "I am not going to scratch my face, as I am going to the Opera to-night, but I shall go forty miles an hour at the gate, and there is no man in England dare follow me." But the custom of handicapping steeplechase horses, which came in at this time, imposed such penalties upon Lottery that during the two years longer he was in training he only won once—at Newport Pagnel.

The next two horses upon which Jem Mason distinguished himself, were Jerry and Gaylad. He once rode the latter for two miles with the stirrup-iron up his leg, and when he came in to weigh it was with the greatest difficulty he could be got out of the saddle. Gaylad's great match with Crosby over four miles of the Harrow country was one of the most curious things in steeplechasing. During the race both horses were not less than four times reduced to a walk, and when they got to the last fence neither had a jump left in him. The friends of both then began pulling down the fence for them, and Jack Darby boldly shoved Gaylad into the winning-field, and Jem managed to hold him up and walk in, greatly to the chagrin of Macdonough, who was on Crosby.

Jem was always ready to serve a friend in distress, and having received a confidential communication from Tom Olliver, who, as usual, was in "Short Street," to the effect that all he possessed on earth was Trust-me-not, he asked Jem to buy the horse, that he might be able to get rid of

his unwelcome visitor the Sheriff's officer. "Don't you sell your horse," replied Jem; "send him to me, and I'll win the race for you," and the advice was accompanied by a fiver for the railway fare. So Trust-me-not was despatched to Harlesden Green and entered for a small steeplechase, Jem paying the stake. The horse was brought on the ground with a terrific bit, which Jem at once changed for a double-rein snaffle, although Tom protested that he could not hold the horse with anything less formidable than the original bit. "Hold your tongue, and see your horse win," was the reply; and win he did, to the great joy and relief of poor Tom.

There were critics who said that Jem Mason's seat was too far back in the saddle, and others who declared that he was great at fences and ditches, but incapable of making the most of his horse at the finish. I pin my faith, however, to the verdict of his great rival, Tom Olliver, who described Jem Mason as the finest horseman in England.

Out of the pigskin Jem was a bit of a "toff," always well dressed and smart in appearance—looked a gentleman, in fact, and indeed behaved himself as one. His last ride in public was for Lord Strathmore on Abd-el-Kader, and Jem always maintained that if the horse had not been "got at" he must have won. Early in 1866 Jem began to suffer terribly from cancer in the throat, and after some months of suffering he died in the October of that year.

CHAPTER XI

THE HUMOURS OF TOMMY COLEMAN

NO record of steeplechasing would be complete without some mention of the genuine but eccentric sportsman "Tommy" Coleman, Boniface of the Chequers Inn, St Albans, who did more for the sport than any man of his time. There are countless tales told of Tommy, a few of which I propose retailing here.

No one whose memory goes back to the black December of 1871 is ever likely to forget that time of terrible suspense, when the then Prince of Wales, our present King, lay hovering between life and death. In connection with His Royal Highness's illness, Tommy Coleman used to tell the following story, and triumphantly adduced it as a proof that the Prince's recovery was mainly, if not entirely, due to the adoption of his (Coleman's) suggestion. Here is the yarn in Tommy's own words:—

"You mind that sad time when the Prince was so ill, and not expected to live, and the papers every day gave little or no hope of his recovery. I remember the time when a son of mine, about twenty-eight years old, was attacked with a severe fever, and laid up for some time, attended by the family doctor, and at last we had a physician. They both gave him up, and said it was no use attempting anything more. I said, 'Pooh, I'll give him some good sherry'; and I gave him half a tumblerful, which revived him at once, and we continued to give him sherry and home-brewed beer, with Scotch oatmeal gruel. He rallied and got well, and is alive now and over fifty years old. In such cases, where people have been living well and their whole system is full of animal food and tainted with fever, by giving them beef-tea and soups you feed it.

In these cases there is nothing better than good fruity sherry. Well, I felt so anxious about the Prince that I wrote to Dr Jenner at once, and asked him to let the Prince have some good fruity sherry, home-brewed beer, and oatmeal gruel; and here is the answer, which you see is dated from Sandringham:—‘M. M. Hozman has been desired by Sir William Jenner to acknowledge the receipt of Mr Thomas Coleman’s letter, and to inform him that his suggestion, with a large number of those proposed by others, regarding the treatment of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales’ illness, will be laid before all the physicians in attendance.’ Within three days the newspapers said that His Royal Highness had taken some sherry and home-brewed beer, that he had revived, and better symptoms had appeared.”

That is a nut for the teetotallers to crack.

Tommy Coleman was a downy old card; he was up to every move on the board, and never failed to look after number one, as the following story proves. He had bought for a song a vicious brute of a horse with a mouth as hard as flint, but a splendid-looking animal, and a demon to go, for he ran away with everyone who attempted to mount him. A Hunters’ Stakes were to be run at Enfield, and Squire Osbaldeston had signified his intention of riding. Now Tommy wanted a mare named Harriet to win, and mounted the Squire upon the hunter, which had the misnomer of Sober Robin. “How am I to ride?” asked Osbaldeston. “I always ride to orders, then nobody can say I ought to have ridden differently.” “Jump off, set the others going, then pull Sober Robin gently back,” said Tommy, well knowing that to obey the first part of the instruction would be to render the rest impossible. The moment the hunter felt the spurs he was off like mad, scattering everything right and left, and going on the wrong sides of the posts half a dozen times over. The consequence was that, as Tommy had foreseen, Harriet was declared the winner. With the coolest and most brazen effrontery he accosted the Squire, who was foaming with rage, before he could get out a word. “You didn’t ride him as I told you, sir.” “You d——d scoundrel, you

nearly broke my neck," roared the Squire. "I thought you were a horseman," answered Tommy, not a bit abashed. "I've got a little boy at home that can ride him in a snaffle bridle." It is perhaps unnecessary to add that it was many a long day before the Squire was friendly with Mr Coleman again.

Another time, Tommy had backed a rich young fellow—a patron of his—at a pigeon match against Josh Anderson the singer. Josh was a crack shot; the other had scarcely a chance against him. Tommy knew this well enough, and resorted to an artful dodge to give his man the victory. Josh had a terribly irritable temper, and the slightest thing would set him in a blaze. Just before the match commenced Tommy went up and said, "I say, Josh, there's a chap offered to bet me you'll go mad in a year. Shall I take him?" "What the devil does he mean?" cried Josh, getting hot in a moment. "Well, he's a phrenologist, and says he can tell by your bumps; there he is, you go and ask him," and he pointed to a quiet-looking young fellow, a farmer's son. Before Tommy had done speaking, Josh was demanding of the astonished rustic, "What have you to say about my bumps, you d——d sweep?" and stripping off his coat to "bump" *him*. An explanation ensued; but the explosion of temper had spoiled Josh's hand for shooting, and the other won the match.

It was from Tommy Coleman I had the following two stories, which I do not profess, however, to be able to give in his own racy words:—

In the twenties a well-known figure on all the Southern race-courses was a notorious individual named Bill Cauty, who, although he betted with the "nobs," was considered to be the king of the pickpockets. If anyone he knew had his watch stolen, Bill would undertake to get it back for him. On one occasion the famous Samuel George Ford, the great financier before Padwick came out, took £7000 in his pocket-book to Ascot, which sum he had promised to lend Mr Massey Stanley. He offered it to him before the races began; but the other, being much engaged, asked Ford to keep it for him until the race was over. Ford had

a horse called Quo Minus running in the Stakes ; but the crowd was so dense that, after seeing him saddled and bridled, he could not reach the grand stand, and had to take up a position on the rails among the mob. At the finish his horse ran in neck and neck with another. Just then a little boy, seemingly in a great state of excitement, jumped up on his shoulders and shouted, "Quo Minus wins! Quo Minus wins!" "Get down, you young rascal," cried Ford ; but the boy clung round his neck for a moment, saying, "I can't see down there. Hurrah! Quo Minus is winning," then jumped off and disappeared. The next moment Fred missed his pocket-book. It was gone, and the boy too. To complete Ford's discomfiture, Quo Minus lost, though only by a head. While looking about for the thief he met Lord Chesterfield, to whom he related his loss. "Go and find Bill Cauty, hedge with him, and I'll take odds you get your pocket-book back," was my Lord's advice. Ford lost no time in acting upon it, and soon found the man he sought. "You've been had," said this new Jonathan Wild before he could speak. "Yes, and Lord Chesterfield told me to come to you. Can you do anything in it?" inquired Ford. "Well, you must give up the small whitebait fish and give five of the long-tailed ones (meaning five £100 notes), and I will try and collar the remainder for you," was the answer. Ford thought the blackmail rather heavy, but knew it was that or nothing, and struck the bargain. Cauty then told him to go next morning to a certain pile of timber, in a place which he described, and he would find his pocket-book. Ford did as he was told, and there, sure enough, he found it, with all its contents, minus the £500, just as it had been taken from him. The worthy Mr Cauty, not long afterwards, fell into a trap which had been laid for him by a bank in St James's Street, and was caught making off with a small cash-box purposely left within his reach. He was tried and transported, and ended his career in Botany Bay.

The racing parson, as a rule, has not been a favourite with his Bishop, but there have been exceptions. Years ago, one of these jovial clerics, having departed in hot haste immediately after the sermon one Sunday morning,

the clerk gave out that there would be no service that afternoon, the parson having gone to Lewes races. These began on the Monday, and as the parish I am speaking of was in another county and railways were not in existence, he could not wait for afternoon service. Some busybody, being shocked by this, posted off to the Bishop of Winchester, and with a long face complained that the parson had gone to the races. Instead of the burst of indignation he had expected, the Bishop said very quietly, "And what of that?" "But he is going to ride!" said the informer. "Is he? Then I'll bet you two to one he wins," was the quick rejoinder.

And it was whilst I was in Tommy Coleman's company at an election dinner at the famous Peahen at St Albans that I heard the following story of Tom Hills, huntsman of the "Old Surrey":—

One evening Tom was told to ride to Leadenhall Market and buy the finest fox he could find, and to be careful of him, as there were to be many crack riders out next day at a lawn meet handy, and sport of some kind must be a certainty. Tom did not like the job, but he started from the kennels—then at Shirley—rode to London, met with the object of his inglorious pursuit, and having strapped him gingerly so as to be free from harm, deposited him, legs upwards, in the capacious pocket of a large blouse which he used for conveying cubs into any part of the country which happened to be short of foxes. Cantering back at dead of night, a highwayman stopped him on Streatham Common, and seized his horse's head with the familiar greeting, "Your money or your life." "My money? I'm only a servant. I haven't got any," answered Tom; "and you wouldn't care to take my life, surely?" The ruffian paid no heed to this appeal, but presenting a pistol at the huntsman's head said, with an oath, "No lies; look sharp, young fellow, or I shall rattle a bullet through you." Tom's presence of mind did not forsake him. "Well, we won't fall out," he said; "I don't want to lose my life, so I suppose I must pay for it. You'll find whatever of value I've got about me in this pocket," pointing to the one in which the captive fox was reclining. The highway-

man thrust in his hand, and the next moment there was a yell of agony as a set of sharp teeth met in the flesh. The pistol dropped from his grasp, and, with a blow of his heavily loaded riding-whip, Tom sent the bold Turpin spinning off his horse ; after which he cantered on his way rejoicing.

Jem Ward, sometime Champion of England, used to tell a somewhat similar story of a trick played upon a policeman who had been told off to arrest a well-known coloured pugilist named Sambo Sutton (Charles Kingsley's instructor in the noble art), who was under articles to fight Jem Ward's brother Nick. The zealous officer of the law had received information that Sambo was concealed in a bin in an outhouse on a farm. He crept noiselessly to the bin in the dim light, then suddenly flung up the lid, and cried, " I've got you, my lad ; come out peacefully, or I'll give you a wipe with my truncheon." But Sambo made no sign, though the policeman could plainly see him move beneath the sack which covered him. " What ! you won't come out, won't you ? Well, then, I'll lug you out." And with that he plunged his hand into the bin. Then there rang out on the still evening air a blood-curdling cry of agony, followed by a succession of yells which finally brought the farmer and his household on the scene. They found the policeman piteously looking at his maimed and mangled hand dripping with blood. The occupant of the bin was a full-grown badger ! And for a long time afterwards the cry of " Who nabbed the badger ? " was sufficient to goad into fury even the best-tempered member of the police force in those parts.

CHAPTER XII

THE RECORD OF CAPTAIN BEECHER

THE editors of the Badminton volume on *Steeplechasing* lament their inability to give details of the exploits of famous chasers and the riders with whom their names are associated. Limitations of space prevented them from utilising much interesting material which lay ready to their hands. As I am not thus hampered, I propose to give some anecdotes of one or two heroes of this fascinating branch of sport. I have already written of Tom Olliver, and I shall devote this chapter to the famous gentleman rider Captain Beecher, for whom Olliver had the profoundest admiration.

My own recollection of Captain Beecher as I saw him in 1862, a couple of years before his death, is that of a short, thick-set, sturdy man, with bushy beard and thick grey locks—a shrewd, kindly, rugged face, enlivened by small but bright and penetrating grey eyes. There was something very resolute and vigorous about his bearing even then, which was quite in keeping with the stories told of his daring in the saddle.

He had served with Wellington in the Peninsular War—I believe in the Commissariat Department—and was afterwards with the army of occupation in Paris. When the piping times of peace set in he returned to England, but it was not until the year 1823 that he made his first public appearance in cap and jacket. The famous Tommy Coleman of St Albans, who had an eye like a hawk for a good horseman, spotted Beecher, and then commenced the Captain's brilliant career as a cross-country rider.

The first St Albans steeplechase came off in the spring of 1829; sixteen started from Arlington Church to the

Obelisk in Wrest Park. Coleman's idea of a steeplechase was two miles out and two miles in, and keeping the line quite dark ; so he concealed men in the ditches with flags, which they raised at a given signal as soon as the riders were ready. Other managers liked four miles straight, and after erecting two scaffold poles with a couple of sheets to finish between, they left the riders to find their line, with no further directions.

The March of 1831 saw the St Albans steeplechase established in real form, and the carriages and horsemen poured in so fast that there was quite a block in the outskirts of the town. Tommy Coleman, in blue coat and kersey breeches, proclaimed martial law among the riders. They saddled at his bugle call in the paddock of his inn, the Chequers ; came out of the yard three deep, like cavalry ; and marched up the town. If their general caught one of them peeping over the hedges he was down on him at once. Beecher was mounted on Wild Boar, and apparently had the race in hand, when his horse fell close to home, and was so severely injured that he died next day. The winner, Moon-raker, who beat a field of eleven, had been bought out of a water-cart, his sinews quite stiff with work, for £18.

Beecher had had one narrow escape that day, but his dangers were not over. The demand for beds in the town far exceeded the supply, and Beecher and his father had not long retired to a double-bedded room when they were aroused by a furious knocking at the door. "Sir," said an angry voice, "you have my bedroom, and I insist on your vacating it at once." "I don't move out of this to-night," replied Beecher. "Then you are no gentleman, and I shall insist on you giving me satisfaction in the morning." "All right," replied the sleepy steeplechase rider, not giving himself the trouble to pick up the card that was thrust beneath the door. When Beecher rose in the morning he had forgotten all about his visitor, until, in the coffee-room, he was confronted by a round-faced little man, who inquired what he had to say for his conduct last night. The Captain quietly replied that he was ready to give the gentleman—who was a lawyer—the satisfaction of punch-

ing his head, or blowing his brains out. Upon which Six-and-eightpence expressed his intention of seeking a friend, and went hectoring away to Tommy Coleman, at whose inn the scene had taken place. "Well, I'd advise you to let the Cap'n alone," said Tommy, with a grin. "He chucked two men out of winder yesterday, and as for exchanging shots with him, you're a dead man if you try that on; why, bless 'ee, he's killed three men already, and if you go out with him the coffee won't be for *you*." There was a fading of the lawyer's rubicund complexion after that; yet he still expressed his intention of finding a second. He must have gone very far afield in his search, Tommy said, for he never paid his bill.

There were times, however, when the Captain was not over particular about feather-bed comfort. One winter's night he arrived at a country house unexpectedly. "What the devil shall we do?" the host exclaimed. "We're full up; haven't as much as a shake-down to give you." "Have you got an empty stall in your stables?" the Captain asked. "Yes; but my dear fellow——" "All right, I have made myself comfortable under worse conditions." And, with a good truss of straw and plenty of horse-cloths, he said he had a bed fit for a king.

In the famous match between Colonel Charritié's Napoleon, a slow, half-bred horse, but a magnificent jumper, and Squire Osbaldeston's Grimaldi, for £1000 a side, Beecher rode Napoleon and the Squire his own horse. At St. Albans, Napoleon had been nowhere against The Clown; but here was a six-mile course over a stiff country, and the river Lem to swim. The Pytchley, of which the Squire was Master, met at Dunchurch, and a regiment of scarlet coats lined the Lem side, which was the thirty-eighth jump and sixth from the finish. Osbaldeston was not a good swimmer; the Captain was. But when they arrived at the river, both went in headlong and disappeared. So long was the immersion that it was thought Napoleon would come up no more; but at last Beecher's cap was seen, then his horse's ears, and the pair floated down-stream, Napoleon fighting against it with all his might, yet upon landing he got the best of it by a hundred

yards; but he was fairly done up, and a wrangle ensued. A man was sent back to see if the Squire had gone the right side of the flags. "You had better send for the Coroner for me," said Beecher, whose teeth were chattering with cold. Ultimately the stakes were drawn. The two competitors rubbed down and dressed; then they went out hunting and got another ducking in the Lem.

About the time of the match with Squire Osbaldeston, Beecher's connection with the famous horse Vivian commenced. Taken out of an Irish car, this animal originally belonged to Lord Vivian, and from him passed to Captain Lamb, who gave him the name of his former owner. When Osbaldeston challenged all the world with Cannonball, Beecher had never seen Vivian, and came from Market Harborough to ride Vanguard, but in the end he was put on Lamb's horse. The finish was up a steep hill; but Beecher, by jumping a very big fence, contrived to come up the incline on a slant, thus saving his horse at the finish, and won a splendid victory.

A month later the Captain again found himself saddling Vivian to ride against the Marquis of Waterford on Cock Robin over the Harborough country for £1000 a side. Cock Robin was thought one of the finest hunters Ireland ever produced, and fenced so well and went so fast that he got three hundred yards in advance. For once in his life, however, the Marquis had a "prudence fit," and, in trying to avoid two big jumps which Beecher took, got stuck in the dingle. The Captain saw his plight, and, following some wheel-tracks to the left, kept out of difficulties and won. The Marquis was very savage over his defeat, and said he was beaten by the better horse. "Very good," said Beecher; "I'll change horses, and race you the whole distance back." The Marquis, however, did not accept the challenge. This was the first of many trials of skill between these magnificent horsemen; but the Marquis was as good as an annuity to Beecher, who almost invariably came off the winner.

It was in 1839 that Liverpool began its Grand National in earnest. Beecher was on Conrad, and when riding at the fence with double rails and a large ditch dammed up

on the off-side, the horse made a mistake and hit the rails, and in an instant the Captain was over his head. The place is called Beecher's Brook to this day. When riding at Waltham Abbey he was thrown upon his stomach on to some stubble, yet he contrived to catch his horse, remount, and overtake the field at the last fence. Yet such was the severity of the fall, that for hours he lost the power of speech.

There was a good deal of jealousy of "the amateur" among the professional jocks, who were in the habit of pooh-poohing the Captain. "Now we'll see what the gentleman jock can do," said a very confident specimen once, when the two were in the weighing-room. What the gentleman did was to drive Master Jock into a furze bush and leave him there.

Beecher was hale and hearty to the last, and his closing years were spent in affluence and comfort, surrounded by staunch friends, till "the common lot" befell him, in November 1864.

CHAPTER XIII

TIPS FROM STRANGE SOURCES

MY experience of sportsmen has convinced me that most of them, especially racing men, are superstitious. I know a man who, on entering the great Exhibition of 1862 for the first time, had his eyes instantly attracted by the name Caractacus in gilt letters over the statue of that chieftain. "By Jove, that's a tip," said he, and promptly went out and backed Caractacus for the Derby. A former landlady of the Old Bell in Fleet Street used to tell with great unction the story of a wonderful tip which she received in a remarkable fashion. She was a very keen backer of horses, and moreover a good church-woman, and always dragged her reluctant spouse with her on Sunday morning to St Margaret's, close by. One Sunday, on their return from church, she said to her husband, "John, did you pay any attention to the sermon this morning?" "Can't say I did, my dear, any way particular," replied her worse half, on whom the sermon always had a soporific effect. "Don't even remember the text, I suppose?" said she tartly. John was obliged to confess that his memory had failed to retain even that. "Ah!" said his wife in disgust, "you lazy, sleepy stupid, you never have your ears open; if it hadn't been for me you'd have missed the straightest tip for the Chester Cup that ever was given." "What's that?" exclaimed her astonished spouse, now thoroughly awake. "Why, what did the parson say—and repeated it twice—but 'Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity.' Now Vanity's at 10 to 1 for the Chester Cup, and my money goes on him." Well, Vanity won, and the moral is, always keep awake during the sermon, or, if you can't do that, at any rate don't forget the text.

The odd thing is that whilst backers are always impressed by these accidental tips, they often hesitate to accept those which come to them with a hundredfold better credentials. Here is an old sportsman's account of how he suffered from a silly refusal to avail himself of a really good "tip" for the Derby. I give it in his own words:—

"Once, when at the Haymarket Theatre on the eve of the Derby, I left the house and strolled into a bar on the opposite side of the street for my glass of bitter, when I was accosted by Charley Boyce, the jockey, whom I knew very well. After some conversation, he asked me what I thought would win to-morrow. I said, 'Of course, the favourite, Hobbie Noble.' He replied, 'I can give you the greatest certainty possible—your horse can't win. If you take my tip, you will put a fiver on Daniel O'Rourke. You may depend upon it he will be the first past the post.' To this I demurred. He said, 'You might just as well go home with £100 in your pocket as not. You can get 20 or 25 to 1 about him, and if you won't have a fiver, have just one sovereign, as there are plenty of houses near here that will do it.'" (At that period more than half the houses in the district, whether public bars, hairdressers, tobacconists, or confectioners, were betting houses; and it was the existence of these places, which had sprung up all over London, that compelled the legislature to pass the Act for the suppression of list betting.) "I foolishly refused to take Charley's tip, and returned to my friend's house at Roehampton, where I was staying—there were twelve of us—and we agreed to have a sweep, putting down 10s., viz. £5 for the first horse and £1 for the second. Of course I drew Daniel O'Rourke. Such was my prejudice against the horse that I sold him for 10s., the amount I had ventured.

"The race has been so fully described that it is unnecessary to say more than that Daniel won, ridden by Frank Butler; an unknown horse, Barbarian, was second; Chief Baron Nicholson third; and Hobbie Noble fourth. This was indeed a sensational Derby, especially as to the second horse, who, if he had won, would have landed an unparalleled coup. I heard that he arrived on the morning of the

race by rail, was taken out of the horse-box and led on to the course, in all his dust and *déshabillé* after his long journey from Ireland. He was saddled, his jockey mounted, and he was not even recognised except by his owner and friends, and started as an unknown competitor. I saw him after the race, and thought him a splendid colt."

This gentleman had no better luck, however, on another occasion when he trusted to his own judgment in selecting the winner of the Blue Riband. "At one of the meetings of the aristocratic steeplechases over my farm at Aylesbury," he writes, "after the stewards' dinner the conversation turned on the Derby. This was about the middle of March, and I was asked who I thought would win the race. I replied, 'West Australian,' and one of the company offered me £50 to £4 against him, which I accepted, when Captain K——, who was present, said I was foolish, as he would lay me £60 to £4, which I booked. The horse soon began to shorten in price, and about a fortnight before the race had advanced to 5 to 1. As I stood to win £110 to £8, I determined to make myself safe, so with a sporting parson I laid £40 to £8 against him, so that I stood to win £70 to nothing. Needless to say, West Australian won. I was so delighted that on the following Saturday, on seeing the reverend gentleman, I gladly gave him a cheque for £40. But I never from that day to this received my £110, or a single farthing of it, so that my banking account was £40 to the bad. I then determined never again to stake more than £5 on any race, and I have kept to my determination."

It is the fashion amongst certain folks who regard all prophets with the profound contempt which the late Baron Martin entertained for them, to speak disparagingly of the "training intelligence" in the sporting papers as "rot," and of the men who supply that intelligence as worthless humbugs. Some years ago I was sitting one evening in the smoking-room of an hotel in a Midland town, when the conversation turned upon this subject. Nearly everyone was down upon the touts as frauds, except one old gentleman, who told us the following remarkable story:—

"I was at Doncaster," he said, "before the Leger in '38,

and outside the livery stable where I baited my horse I saw a man leaning against a doorway. He had an unmistakably horsey look about him, and was, I suspected, a race-course loiterer. Just out of idle curiosity I spoke to him. 'Well, who's going to win the Leger?' I asked. Without a moment's hesitation he answered, as glibly as if he were announcing a fact that could not be disputed, 'Don John, and Ian will be second.' 'But how about Cobham?' (the first favourite) I asked. 'Cobham,' he answered, in the same matter-of-fact manner, 'Cobham will break down at the end of the white rails opposite the Intake Farm.' 'What makes you so cock-sure about it?' I inquired. 'For these very good reasons,' he replied. 'Cobham is bad in his forelegs: he has not had a real gallop for many a day. Besides, he is as fat as a pig. Now, with his bad forelegs and the weight on his back, he'll never reach home.' 'And what makes you think that Don John is so certain to win?' 'Because I have watched him closely, and I know there's never a horse in Doncaster can go with him. You may put that down as gospel truth.'

"I was struck by his calm assurance, and I went and backed Don John for as much money as I could spare. My prophet was right: Don John did win, and Cobham, sure enough, did break down, though it was not at the end of the white rails, but nearer home. I won £700, and determined to give my prophet a handsome present for his excellent tip. But I could not find him; he had mysteriously disappeared, and I did not see him again for many months. When I did, it was in the last place in the world I should have expected to meet him.

"I was crossing Waterloo Bridge a few days before the Derby of 1839, when I ran up against him. I recognised him at once, and told him that I had to thank him for pocketing £700 over the Leger. As he had no urgent business on hand, I asked him to come with me to a quiet tavern and have some dinner. He consented. When we were seated, I told him of my intention to remunerate him for his tip, and begged him to accept a £20 note. This he absolutely refused for some time, and it was only by insisting on it that I forced him at last to take the money.

“He told me his story over a bottle of wine after dinner, and a very melancholy story it was. I won't, however, trouble you with it now. I will only say that he was a man of good family and had been educated at Cambridge, but through his own misconduct had come to grief. We passed on to the Derby prospects. He had carefully watched the movements of every horse, and he assured me that Bloomsbury must win, giving excellent reasons for his belief. Well, as you know, Bloomsbury did win, and I pulled off a very good thing indeed. And you may be sure I did not forget my faithful tout.

“Once more, and only once, was I tempted to ask his advice and back his selection. That was at the Doncaster Meeting of the same year. He gave me Charles XII. for the Leger with the same positive assurance as before. When the first two horses passed the judge's box the general impression was that Euclid had won, and those who were in a position to see declared that it was so. But, to my gratification, I found that the judge had given it a dead-heat between Euclid and Charles XII. I shall not easily forget the intense excitement with which I watched the running off of that dead-heat. It was a near thing, but Charles XII. just did it, and once more I landed a large stake—so large that I could afford to give my tout a *douceur* of £100.

“After these three coups I decided that it would be rash to tempt Fortune any more. With the money which I won I went into business, and how I prospered some of this company know well. I never saw my tout after Charles XII.'s Leger, though I was several times both at Doncaster and Epsom afterwards; and perhaps had I met him I should have been tempted to back his selection once more. But I have never forgotten, and never shall forget, that I owe my present comfortable position to a tout's tips.

This anecdote reminds me of another which shows that occasionally a man may meet the reward of a kindly action in an unexpected manner. A certain Captain Osborn, having backed Running Rein for all he possessed, and more to boot, found himself after the Derby day a

ruined man if the objection to the winner were upheld. As he was walking down Regent Street a boy thrust a note into his hand and disappeared. It was such a dirty scrawl that the Captain was about to throw it away, when the name attracted his attention, and he read as follows:—

“Honnerd Sur,—You did me and my missus a good turn, and I want to do you the same, Runnin’ Rein is a himposter, and he won’t get the race. I noes all. Buy all the bets you can on Orlando, and you’ll make a fourtin’ but no more at present from your humble servant, A. Simmons, formerly your helper at Crick.”

The Captain recollected that he once had a helper of that name in his stable, and had given him a fiver to get the bailiffs out of his house. Thinking there might be something in the tip, he started for Tattersalls and there bought up all the Orlando bets he could get hold of—people being ready to part with them for a song, and no doubt wondering how any man could be such a fool as to take them at any price. Everybody remembers the story of the Running Rein fraud: how the horse proved to be a four-year-old; and how Orlando, who came in second, was declared the winner. Well, the upshot was that Captain Osborn pocketed £18,000; and you may be sure he did not forget his faithful old servant, whom he made comfortable for life.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ROUT OF THE THIMBLE-MEN

TO the present generation of race-goers the thimble-rigger is only known as an insignificant item among the motley crowd of camp-followers that dog the march of the ever-moving army of the Turf. It is only in odd holes and corners that he ventures to ply his nefarious trade, and he flies at no higher game than the simple bumpkin or the drunken sportsman of Cockaigne. But it was far otherwise at a time which some veteran sportsmen still living can remember. The thimble-men frequented every race-meeting of any importance in large gangs, and were as desperate a set of ruffians as could be found anywhere. Woe betide the inebriated sportsmen who fell into their hands! They stripped him of everything he had, and often maltreated him as well. It was more by artful dodges, however, that they earned their living as a rule, and it seems strange that the race-goers of that day, who were smart enough in other respects, should have allowed themselves to be so openly and flagrantly victimised.

There was a notorious case tried in 1823 in which plenty of evidence was produced to show that gentlemen would often stop their carriages in front of a thimble-rigger's table, get out, and lose twenty or thirty pounds in a few minutes. There was a certain countess who never could resist the temptation to prove her skill in detecting the pea under the thimble, and there used to be a scramble among the thimble-men at Epsom and Ascot to secure her patronage. She would generally continue her guessing until she had lost twenty pounds—then she would give up the fascinating game. And yet she was shrewd enough in other matters. She was never known to make a bad bargain in horse-

dealing, and yet she was infatuated about her ability to spot the pea under the thimble.

Tom Duncombe, the one time Radical Member for Finsbury and *cher ami* of Madame Vestris—"the last of the Radical gentlemen," as James Hannay mournfully called him—was another godsend to the thimble-men, and on the day of Cedric's Derby he risked guinea after guinea at guessing under which thimble the pea was, until he had lost no less than a hundred and fifty. Yet 'Tommy' was no fool; indeed, he was generally reputed to be about the cleverest Member of the House of Commons. The late Serjeant Ballantine tells the following story of him:—

There was a certain individual, a collector of some portion of His Majesty's revenue, who was also the collector of certain "leetle bills" bearing the signature of Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, signed by that gentleman before he was elected for Finsbury. After that occurrence, which exempted him from arrest for debt, it was found very difficult to induce Mr Duncombe to take up these promises. Having exhausted every fair means to get his money back, Mr Taxman, in a fit of resentment, hit upon a foul one. One afternoon, as Tommy was making his way towards the Houses of Parliament, he was encountered by some half-dozen sandwich-men advertising the fact that the possessor of certain documents bearing the signature of Thomas Slingsby Duncombe was willing to dispose of them to the highest bidder. The Honourable Member had too much experience of the ways of angry duns to be much disturbed by this public *exposé*, and, knowing something too of his creditor's private affairs, had a rod in pickle for him besides. So, calmly proceeding to the House of Commons, he took the first opportunity of making a motion, impelled, as he said, by the interest which he took in the disposal of the people's money, for a return of such of the King's taxes as had not yet been paid over by the collectors. The motion was duly seconded, carried, and put into effect. This sudden call proved to be so inconvenient to Tommy's creditor that he had to seek change of air across the ocean. And thus did our patriotic Member fulfil a public duty,

earn the applause of his electorate, and for ever get rid of those troublesome "leetle bills."

Yet this was the man who was fleeced by every thimble-rigger he came across. One can only say with Hudibras,

"Doubtless the pleasure is as great
Of being cheated as to cheat."

But when people who should have known better made such fools of themselves, it was not surprising that the thimble-men became bold and defiant, and that their impudence increased in proportion to their success.

At last, however, things reached such a pass that the Stewards of the Doncaster Meeting resolved to put down the thimble-men with a strong hand, and, if possible, rid the Northern Meetings at any rate of the pest which had so long infested them. Accordingly, the Stewards and the public authorities of the borough entered into an alliance to join their forces for the suppression of the thimble-riggers. By some means or other the thimble-men became aware that mischief was brewing, and they assembled in unusual numbers. So far from being dismayed, they had the audacity to contemplate meeting force with force. There was every prospect of an exciting fight, and those who were "in the know" anticipated some very lively proceedings.

On the Monday of the race week some four or five hundred of the thimble-men took possession of a portion of the Town Field just behind the rubbing-house, set up their tables, and assumed a very menacing attitude. The police force, though doubled, was no match for such a compact array of desperate scoundrels; and, besides, the Stewards and the borough authorities had not quite matured their plans; so the thimble-men were left unmolested for that day. Meanwhile the Magistrates took fresh precautions. A troop of the 3rd Dragoons was ordered up from Sheffield, and directed, on its arrival, to take up a concealed position near the race-course; a company of the 3rd West York Militia were placed under arms; and the Doncaster troop of Yeomanry were ordered to hold themselves in immediate readiness.

On Tuesday, an hour before the races commenced, the first attack was made upon the thimble-men. Lord Wharncliffe, Lord Milton, and several neighbouring Magistrates, accompanied by a strong body of their servants mounted and armed with hunting-whips, made a raid upon the tables. Contrary to expectation, only a feeble resistance was offered; the thimble-men were dispersed without much trouble, but no arrests were made. Early on Wednesday morning, the burghers of Doncaster were roused by the tramp of marching men, and saw the thimble-men, numbering now some seven hundred at least, parading the streets. They had learned overnight that troops had been sent for to disperse them, and they were intensely exasperated. It was clear that they meant fighting, and that the Stewards and the Magistrates would find it no child's play to drive them from the course. Before noon they had occupied their old position on the Town Field; moreover, they had fastened and barricaded the field-gate adjoining the rubbing-house, and collected formidable heaps of stones to serve as missiles against their assailants. Public feeling was roused to an intense pitch of excitement by these deliberate preparations for battle on the part of the thimble-men. The races, the favourites, the state of the odds—all were for the moment forgotten in the stirring prospect of a *mêlée* on a large scale.

The Mayor, the Magistrates, and the Stewards met in solemn conclave to decide upon their operations. The thimble-men were known to be reckless, revengeful, and desperate, and it was therefore necessary to exercise caution in attacking them. It was resolved not to call out the Dragoons or Yeomanry unless it were absolutely necessary to do so. The Mayor marshalled the police—one hundred strong; the Stewards—Lord Wharncliffe, Lord Milton, Lord Downe, the Hon. D. Duncombe, M.P., Mr George Savile Foljambe, Mr Beckett Denison (afterwards Chairman of the Great Northern Railway)—supported by several of the neighbouring gentry, headed their own mounted servants, sixty in number, and the combined forces, horse and foot, advanced upon the field-gate. They found it strongly barricaded, and behind the barricade they could

see the big heaps of stones and the thimble-men arming themselves with the legs of their tables, very handy and effective weapons in a hand-to-hand fight. Hoots and yells began to fill the air. The spectators, clustered upon the Grand Stand and every available coign of vantage, began to get nervous, and a very serious riot seemed impending.

The leaders of the attacking forces consulted together, and it was resolved to try to effect an entrance to the Town Field by a smaller opening opposite the back of the Grand Stand. Simultaneously with this strategic movement of the mounted men, the police made a determined assault upon the field-gate. But whilst the thimble-men were engaged in front they left their rear exposed; a party of mounted men took them in the flank, and another in the rear. The barricade was broken down, and there was a hot fight for a few minutes; sticks and stones were flying in all directions, but a well-timed charge settled the business. The thimble-men broke and fled. Several of the ring-leaders were captured on the spot; the rest made for the open country.

And then came the amusing part of the scene. The horsemen gave chase to the nimble fugitives. Lord Milton and the grooms and hunt servants from Wentworth were conspicuous in the pursuit. They kept well together, took the fences in splendid style, and brought their game to hand in most sportsman-like fashion. The gardens behind the Deaf and Dumb Institution afforded good cover to the hunted thimble-men, but they were hustled out in fine style. In vain they doubled and dodged, hid in ditches, and crawled through fences. No fence or ditch could stop the gallant sportsmen who were chasing them. By this time, too, the spectators, finding the thimble-men were getting the worst of it and that there was not much chance of having their own skins hurt, bravely joined in the fun, and helped to catch the flying thieves. Such a scene of excitement and diversion was never witnessed on a race-course before or since. Finally, when the victors gathered to count up the spoils, they found that they had taken some hundred and fifty prisoners. A big caravan was chartered, and the captives were sent off in relays

under strong escort to the borough gaol. They were brought up two days later before the magistrates, and committed to Wakefield House of Correction for more or less lengthy terms of hard labour.

Such was the rout of the thimble-men, the story of which I have heard from the lips of those who took part in it, among them that famous huntsman of the Fitzwilliam hounds, Tom Sebright. The thimble-men never held up their heads after that. Their ring was completely broken. Isolated gangs, indeed, continued for some time to prowl about the Southern race-courses, but as a regular organisation of audacious robbers they were crushed out.

CHAPTER XV

PRECOCITY IN THE SADDLE

I HAVE heard it stated, on good authority, that Fred Archer rode well to hounds at the age of *seven*, and that he won a long steeplechase at Bangor when he was *thirteen*.

Mr George Thompson too, the noted gentleman rider, from a boy had an almost intuitive knowledge of riding, and at eight years old would follow his father across country on a spirited little pony. While he was still a mere child, his father matched a pony called Maid of Skelgate against a certain gentleman's hack, catch-weights, half a mile, each to ride his own. On going down to the start, Mr Thompson senior discovered that a jockey boy who was in Scott's stables was preparing to ride his opponent's horse. Against this he remonstrated, as he understood the conditions were "owners up." When, however, the articles were looked through, it was discovered that this stipulation had been omitted, and Thompson's opponent openly boasted that he had got the best of the match, as Thompson weighed over 11 st., and the jockey under 7 st. Thompson rode off to his carriage, where his wife and family were seated, and said to her, "Hand me out George; I am too heavy." And the next moment the little fellow was put out and mounted on Maid of Skelgate. As he cantered with his father down to the post, without boots or breeches, showing his little red legs and trousers, he was loudly cheered. "What am I to do, papa?" he asked. "Why, hold your reins tight, and directly they say 'Go' come home as fast as you can." He obeyed these simple instructions to the letter, and won in a canter, after which he was put back in the carriage. At this time

his weight was within a pound of 3 st., so that he was probably the lightest jockey that ever rode in public.

"Little" Kitchener, Lord George Bentinck's famous feather-weight jockey, was, of course, the lightest professional ever known; and, if I remember rightly, he could ride 3 st. 7 lbs. George Fordham in his early days rode, however, nearly as light. He first made his mark by winning the Cambridgeshire of 1852 on Little Daniel for Mr Smith, in a field of thirty-nine, weighing only 3 st. 12 lbs. George's mount stood at 33 to 1 at the start; but he not only won, but Little Daniel ran right away with him into the town before he could be stopped. It was a great triumph for the youngster, but his master thought it was sufficiently rewarded by a present of a Bible and a gold-headed whip. On the whip were engraved the words, "Honesty is the best policy," and to that motto George kept sternly true all through his splendid career as a jockey. Two years later, in 1854, Fordham won the Chester Cup on Captain Douglas Lane's Epiminondas, beating twenty-four others at 4 st. 10 lbs.; and it was his riding on that occasion that drew from the bookmaker "Leviathan" Davis the remark, "That lad is the best light-weight I have ever seen." Frank Buckle is said to have ridden under 4 st. when he commenced his career in the Hon. Richard Vernon's stables; and the elder Sam Chiffney, who could ride 7 st. 12 lbs. to the last day of his life, is said to have ridden under 4 st. when a lad. Fred Archer, on the other hand, never rode lighter than 5 st. 6 lbs., at which weight he won the Cesarewitch of 1872 on Mr J. Radcliff's Salvanos.

For precocity in horsemanship the present Lord Lonsdale would be hard to beat, for he hunted "on his own hook" when he was but five years old. And the famous Captain John White, one of the finest horsemen of his day, either with hounds or on the flat, commenced his career in the saddle about the same age, on a pony so small that, to quote his own words, "with the saddle on him he used to walk under a leaping-bar at home, and he afterwards galloped over it." Charles James Apperley, well known as "Nimrod," tells us that he rode to hounds

in "full hunting rig"—velvet cap and scarlet coat—before he was twelve, and drove a coach and four when he was but a year older.

Scarcely less precocious was the great Thomas Assheton Smith, whom Napoleon introduced to his staff as *le premier chasseur d'Angleterre*. While he was yet a schoolboy the fame of his skill and daring in the saddle had spread pretty far, as the following anecdote will show. One day his father was at his club in London among a party of sportsmen, who were speaking of the splendid horsemanship of Sir Henry Payton and his son. "There isn't another father and son in the kingdom who could beat them!" exclaimed one enthusiast. Whereupon Thomas Assheton Smith the elder quietly remarked, "I will back a father and son against them for £500." "Name! name!" cried half a dozen voices. "I am one, and my son Tom the other," was the reply. No one took the bet.

Sir Richard Sutton, one of the grandest all-round sportsmen of the nineteenth century, whose prowess in the hunting-field was only equalled by his skill in the stubbles and the pheasant coverts, was entered to hounds by "Squire" Osbaldeston at the age of ten, and, mounted on Tom Sebright's grey pony, showed his mettle with the Burton in a way that gladdened his famous mentor.

Tom Sebright himself, by the way, whose name is inseparably associated with the Fitzwilliam hounds, was entered at the age of fifteen as second whip with "Jack" Musters, who at once noted his firm hand and quick eye to hounds. It was early to begin the active duties of the hunting-field, but others have begun even earlier. Jem Hills, for example, afterwards the famous huntsman of the Heythrop, who was only ten when he commenced whipping-in to the Duke of Dorset's harriers, and George Carter, who for more than forty years carried the horn with the Fitzwilliam, was also but ten when he was installed as second whip to Mr Selby Lowndes's hounds. Will Dale, successively huntsman of the Fitzwilliam, the Brocklesby, and the Duke of Beaufort's, made his *début* in the hunting-field at the age of ten, when he helped to turn hounds to his father, who hunted the Surrey Union; and he was

only thirteen when he left home to begin life as whipper-in to Mr Johnson's harriers in Lincolnshire.

On the other hand, some great horsemen have given no promise of future prowess in the saddle in their boyhood. The present Earl Spencer, "one of England's hardest riders," was a timid and nervous child, who dreaded mounting his pony, even with the hand of his governess to cling to, and developed no taste for hunting till he was at Cambridge.

CHAPTER XVI

FOUL RIDING AND FOUL PLAY

THERE were one or two glaring cases of foul riding not long since both on the English and Continental Turf which provoked the parrot cry that racing was going to the dogs—that the morals of the Turf were rotten and so forth. Of course, like everything else, the Turf is not perfect, but it is much better than it used to be. Let me give a few instances of what foul riding was in “the good old days” of which so much rubbish is written.

In the days when the York Summer Meeting was one of the greatest events of the year, Mr Childers’s brown mare Duchess, ridden by Robert Hesselteine, ran a very severe and punishing race for the Gold Cup with Mr Pierson’s brown horse Foxhunter, ridden by Stephen Jefferson. Those were times when jostling and cannoning were regarded as perfectly legitimate means of besting a rival. On this occasion Hesselteine bored Foxhunter nearly into the cords for the greater part of the journey, and Duchess was thus enabled to gain the judge’s verdict by a length. But no sooner had Hesselteine pulled up than Jefferson rode alongside of him and struck him across the face with his whip. Hesselteine returned the compliment, and they cut away at one another amidst the cheers of the bystanders, till the blood was streaming down their faces. When both were exhausted, the owner of Foxhunter claimed the race on the ground that his horse had been deliberately run up against the cords by Duchess’s jockey. A committee of “tryers” was empanelled to consider the objection, and, after mature deliberation, awarded the race to Foxhunter.

Strong words were exchanged between the two owners, which must infallibly have ended in a duel had not the

friends of both parties interfered and suggested that the heat should be run again. It was run, and Duchess won by a clear length. But so far was the result from satisfying either owner that both claimed the prize: the owner of Duchess, on the ground that his mare had won the deciding heat; the owner of Foxhunter, on the ground that Duchess, having once been disqualified by the "tryers," was not entitled to run again. There were mutual charges of foul riding and foul play; the jockeys had another set-to, this time on foot, which ended in the discomfiture of Hesselteine; whilst a challenge passed between the owners, with the result that the next morning Mr Pierson got a pistol-bullet in the thigh, which lamed him for life.

A similar incident happened in the case of the two famous jockeys Sam Chiffney the elder and Dick Goodisson. Each accused the other of deliberate jostling in a race. From words they came to blows, and slashed at one another with their whips. But as nothing but a fight would let out the bad blood between them, they agreed to have it out with fists for a stake of 25 guineas a side, according to the rules of the Prize Ring. Both went into training under the ablest pugilists of the day, and in due course faced one another inside a roped ring before a select aristocratic assembly in a room in the Duke of Queensberry's house at Newmarket. The battle was long and desperate. Both were game to the backbone, and it was only after an hour of fierce and furious fighting that Goodisson's superior stamina gave him the victory. The fight, however, had the desired effect: it let the bad blood out of both men. From that time forward they were good friends, and their rivalry in the saddle was manly and generous.

Even in far later days there was a recklessness and ferocity tolerated in racing which would raise a storm of indignation nowadays. Take, as an example, the great match between Lord Kennedy and Captain Ross. Lord Kennedy backed Captain Douglas on Radical against Captain Ross on Clinker over four miles of Leicestershire hunting country for £1000 a side. "The night before the race," says Captain Ross, "Lord Kennedy wrote me a note, stating that he wished very much to see me about an

important point connected with next day's race. I met him, and he said that, as such an enormous sum was pending on the match, we ought to start with as few openings for a wrangle as possible; that in a flat-race crossing or jostling was not allowed, but that to-morrow he thought it would be best that we should do just as we pleased. 'In short,' I replied, 'I understand that we may ride over each other and kill each other if we can. Is it so?' 'Just so,' was his Lordship's answer. Oddly enough, the first jump was a five-barred gate. I lay with Clinker's head about opposite to Douglas's knee. When within, say, forty or fifty yards of the gate, I saw clearly that Radical meant to refuse, and, recollecting last night's bargain, I held Clinker well in hand. Radical, as I expected, when close to the gate, turned right across Clinker. I stuck the spurs in, knocked Douglas over the gate, and sent Radical heels over head, and lying on this side of it. Douglas did not lose his horse—his reins were fastened to his wrist—and he was soon up again and mounted; but it finished the match effectually. I turned round, jumped the corner of the fence, and gained such a lead that he never got near me again. I suppose in these days killing a man in that way would be brought in 'Wilful Murder.' Not so in 1826: the verdict would have been 'Justifiable Homicide!'

I remember, once, at Bromley Steeplechases seeing a very dastardly outrage perpetrated on Charles Lawrence, the cross-country jockey. He was struck in the face by a brick flung by a ruffian, no doubt paid to do it, and was felled like an ox. When Lawrence recovered consciousness, he said bitterly, "He might have saved himself the trouble. I was the worst of the four that started, and could not have won anyhow, bar accidents." I am sorry to say that the blackguard who flung the brick escaped, and the outrage was never brought home to anyone.

There were some queer scenes in the hunting-field years ago, when the whip occasionally played the part I have described it as playing in the hands of some old-time jockeys. Dick Christian, the famous rough-rider, used to tell a story of how he and Bill Wright got on bad terms

through a misunderstanding; Bill believing that Dick had been finding fault with a horse the other was trying to sell. I will give the anecdote in Dick's own graphic phraseology:—

“Bill Wright, of Uppingham, was a good-hearted chap, but given to very vulgar language. Bill and me were always very partikler intimate—boys together in the racing-stables. We once quarrelled, out hunting with Lord Lonsdale. If we didn't get to horse-whipping each other!—we did, indeed!—for three miles straight across country, cut for cut. It was from Preston Gorse in the Prior's Coppice country. All the gentlemen shouted, ‘Well done, Dick!’ ‘Well done, Bill!’ It pleased them uncommonly. We took our fences reg'lar all the time. If he was first over, he stopped for me. If I'd ha' fell, he'd have jumped on me, and, blame me, if I wouldn't ha' jumped smack on top of him. We fought back hand, or any way we could cut. Dal! I was as strong as an elephant then. We pulled our horses slap bang against each other. He gives me such tinglers on the back and shoulders, but I fetches him a clip with the hock end of my whip on the side of his head—such a settler—and gives him a black eye.

“Then I says, ‘Bill, will you have any more, 'cos I'm ready prepared for you?’ But he'd got his dose for that day. Six weeks after that, Reeves, the landlord of the Falcon, at Uppingham, says to me, ‘What's this between you and Bill? I'll stand a bottle of wine to see you make it up. Let's send for him.’ ‘Well,’ I says, ‘I don't malice him if he don't malice me.’ So he comes, and though we was rather awkward at first, after we'd had a glass we shook hands and cleared up our differences, and after that we was like brothers. Lord bless you, if you want to like a man thorough, there's nothing like fighting him first.”

CHAPTER XVII

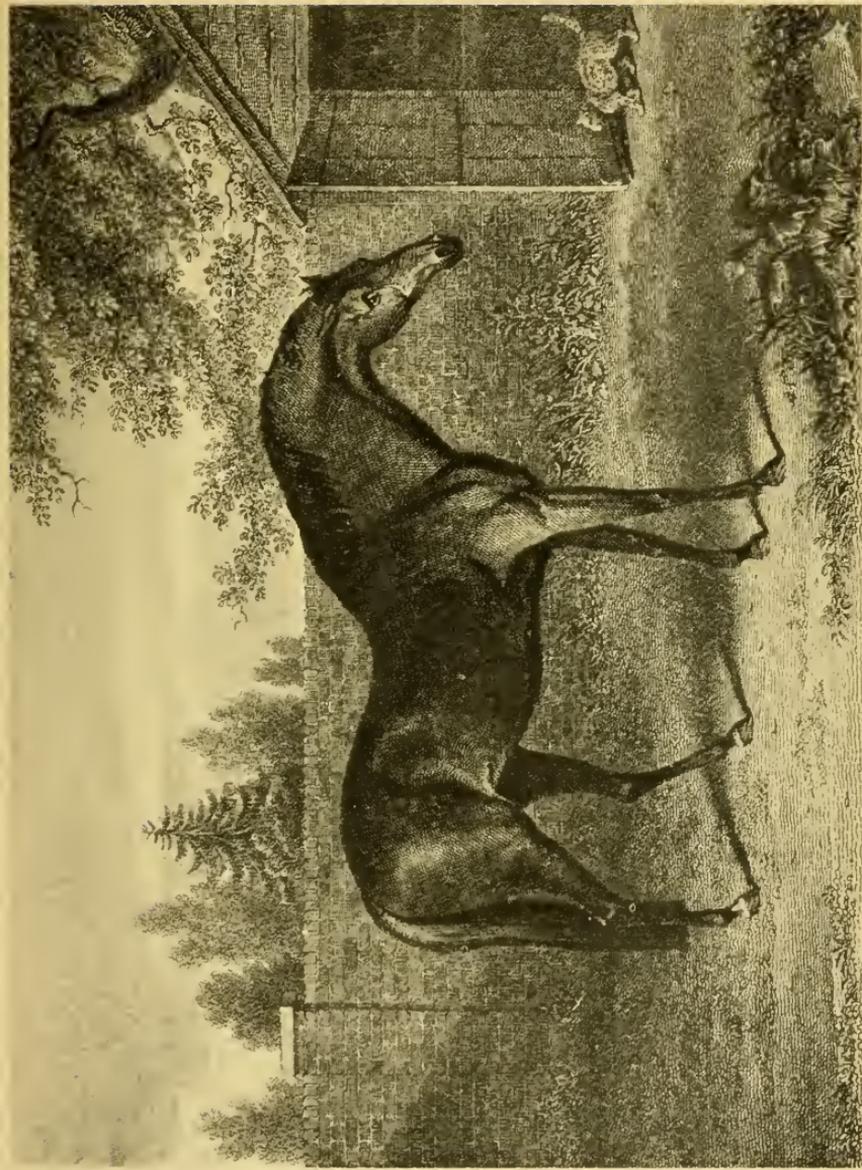
THE ARAB AND THE ENGLISH RACEHORSE

UNUSUAL interest attached to the Newmarket First July Meeting of 1884 by the introduction of a new item into the programme—to wit, a race between pure-bred Arab horses. Mr Wilfred Scawen Blunt, whose enthusiasm for the Arabian horse is well known, was mainly responsible for the race. In the previous month he contributed a long article to the *Nineteenth Century* on the subject, in which he took the opportunity of ventilating his views on the superiority of the Arab over the English thoroughbred in staying power, and the importance of strengthening and improving our breed of racehorses by a fresh strain of pure Arab blood. The race, however, was a somewhat tame affair, and certainly did not convince English breeders that there was anything to be gained by an infusion of that Arab blood which no doubt originally helped very largely indeed to produce our modern racehorse.

There have always been persons who declare that our system of breeding racehorses sacrifices stamina to speed, and who hold up the Arab as the *ne plus ultra* of equine perfection. But the experience of English experts on the Turf has led them to adopt the contrary view.

Some years ago I received a letter from a well-known sportsman in Sydney containing some very interesting particulars of the Arab strain as it has affected the breed of horses in New South Wales. Some of these were new, and therefore I make no apology for quoting them here.

Sir John Lackey, one of the greatest authorities on horse-breeding in Australia, in the course of a paper read before



Painted by Geo. Stubbs.

GODOLPHIN ARABIAN.

To the RIGHT HONBLE. LORD FRANCIS GODOLPHIN OSBORNE, this Plate is Respectfully Inscribed by the PROPRIETORS.

(From an old print.)

Engraved by John Scott.

the Agricultural Society of New South Wales in August 1873 made the following remarks:—

“Though the best judges regard the English blood-horse as the most perfect of its kind, it must be admitted that in this Colony the Arabs have produced some of the most useful animals we have had on the Turf. However, both here and elsewhere, the English blood has always occupied the premier position. Some years ago, Recruit, an English horse of moderate reputation, easily beat Pyramis, the best Arabian on the Bengal side of India. It will be admitted, also, that the Walers have held a very successful place on the Turf in India and China: most of the horses sent from here have held the first places on the Turf in Madras, Calcutta, and Hong-Kong.”

My correspondent's letter recalled an incident in the career of Admiral Rous, which I daresay is unknown to most Englishmen. In Australia “The Admiral” is still mentioned with affection as one of the founders of the Australian Turf. “It may be,” says Sir John Lackey, “that there are some who have only a slight knowledge of the fact that before he became the court from whose judgment on sporting questions there was no appeal, he was doing his best to show us, in the infancy of sporting life here, how to make our field sports the pursuits of gentlemen and men of honour and the great entertainments of the public. He came to this country as a young man. He only obtained his command in the Navy a few years before he anchored in Sydney Harbour, and in those seas he remained for several years. He came here as commander of the frigate *Rainbow*, in 1825, when he must have been less than thirty years of age, and he made use of His Majesty's ship, even in those distant days, for the purpose of introducing an accession to the blood stock of the country. From the time of his arrival he took an active part in all sports which he could support, as if he had been sent out, not to command a war-ship, but to give the benefit of his peculiar knowledge to the formation of a very important feature of our national character.”

Admiral Rous's interest in Australian sport took a more practical form than personal sympathy and encouragement.

He imported two first-rate thoroughbreds, Emigrant and Rainbow, of which my correspondent in Sydney gives me these particulars:—"Rainbow did nothing here worthy of note, but Emigrant has left his mark on our thoroughbreds to an extent that stamps him as the greatest horse ever imported into New South Wales. Emigrant is a household word with breeders here; and one of his descendants, Yattendon, was the sire of perhaps a greater number of celebrated horses than any horse we have ever had."

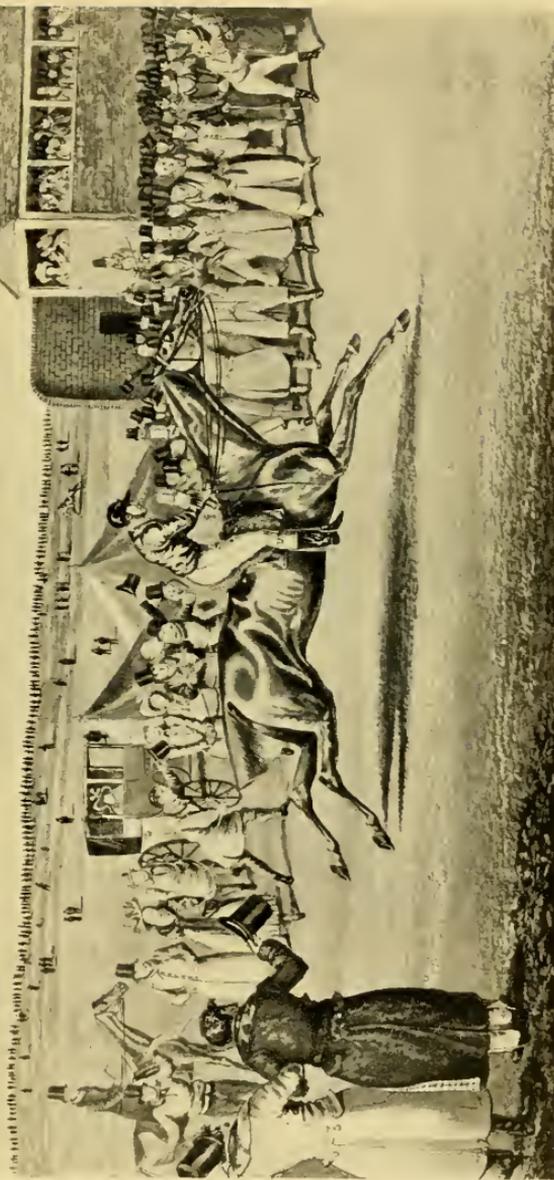
Of the superiority of the English thoroughbred over the Arab in the matter of speed there is no doubt whatever; but those who believe in the Arabian horse still maintain that in staying power he is not to be surpassed, and I am not aware that the English thoroughbred has ever proved his superiority in any real test of stamina. There was a match at Cairo on the 25th September 1853, for £350 a side, between an Arab and a thoroughbred English mare over a distance of $9\frac{3}{4}$ miles—4 miles 7 furlongs out and in—which resulted in the victory of the Arab, who did the run out in $15\frac{3}{4}$ minutes and the run home in $11\frac{1}{2}$ minutes: $27\frac{1}{4}$ minutes for the $9\frac{3}{4}$ miles—at least, so it is said. But there was a general impression among the Englishmen present that the mare would have won if she had not swerved about a mile from home, and her jockey in trying to turn her was upset into a cane fence. However, the fact remains that the Arab did win.

At the time of George Osbaldeston's death, when the subject of his great 200 miles ride at Newmarket cropped up in the newspapers, a colonel on the Bengal retired list gave some remarkable particulars of combined human and equine endurance, in which the Arab figured prominently.

"I believe," writes the colonel, "that Captain Horne of the Madras Horse Artillery rode 200 miles on Arab horses in less than ten hours on the road between Madras and Bangalore. If so, considering the slower speed of Arabs, the climate of India, and the ride along a high road instead of round a good race-course upon some of the best English horses, I think you will allow Captain Horne's performance to have been fully equal to the Squire's."

This Match was performed on Saturday, Nov, 5th, 1831, on the Newmarket round course for a Bet of a Thousand Guineas Col. Charité betting Mr. Osbaldeston, that he did not perform the distance on Horseback of 200 Miles in 10 hours, the number of horses being unlimited. Various bye Bets to a great amount were also made, one party betting Ten hundred to One that Mr. Osbaldeston did not accomplish the task in 9 hours. The distance was performed in gallant style in 8 hours & 42 minutes, including the time for Mounting, Dismounting & Refreshments. The greater part of the day was very unfavourable being very stormy & attended with heavy showers. The following is a correct List of the horses with the time which each took to do the 4 miles. Mr. O's weight including Saddle & Bridle 11st 3lbs.

1. Emma-	-	-	-	9m.-s.	18.	Cannon Ball, 2nd time	-	9m.45s.	34.	Coventry	-	-	9m.-s.
2. Paradox	-	-	-	9 20	19.	Utemar, and time	-	9 -	35.	Ringleader	-	-	8 42
3. Liberty	-	-	-	9 25	20.	Tranby	-	8 10	36.	Tranby, 3rd time	-	-	8 15
4. Coroner	-	-	-	9 15	21.	Fairy, 2nd time	-	8 8	37.	Ipsala	-	-	8 20
5. Obberton	-	-	-	9 40	22.	Morgan Rattler, 2nd time	9 28		38.	Skirmisher, 2nd time	-	-	8 15
6. Don Juan	-	-	-	9 -	23.	Colt <i>by</i> Tramp	-	8 58	39.	Guilford, 2nd time	-	-	9 10
7. Morgan Rattler-	-	-	-	9 13	24.	Dolly	-	8 58	40.	Streamlet	-	-	8 50
8. Paradox, 2nd time	-	-	-	9 6	25.	Acorn	-	9 2	41.	Donegani	-	-	9 12
9. Cannon Ball	-	-	-	9 23	26.	A Horse <i>by</i> Smolensko	-	8 52	42.	Hassan	-	-	9 -
10. Clasher	-	-	-	9 25	27.	Tranby, 2nd time	-	8 -	43.	Surprise (Filly)	-	-	9 10
11. Utemar	-	-	-	9 10	28.	Skirmisher	-	8 -	44.	Ringleader, 2nd time-	-	-	9 30
12. Fairy	-	-	-	9 5	29.	Guilford	-	9 25	45.	Tranby, 4th time	-	-	8 50
13. Coroner, 2nd time	-	-	-	8 40	30.	Dolly, 2nd time	-	8 45	46.	Coventry, 2nd time	-	-	9 30
14. Liberty, 2nd time	-	-	-	9 30	31.	Ikkey Solomons	-	12 -	47.	Ipsala, 2nd time-	-	-	9 -
15. Emma, 2nd time	-	-	-	9 21	32.	Tam O'Shanter	-	9 40	48.	Donegani, 2nd time	-	-	10 15
16. Don Juan, 2nd time	-	-	-	9 8	33.	Eldorado	-	9 20	49.	Streamlet, 2nd time	-	-	9 -
17. Obberton, 2nd time	-	-	-	8 20			-		50.	Skirmisher, 3rd time	-	-	9 40



Printed by H. Alken.

Engraved by Geo. Hunt.

EXTRAORDINARY MATCH BY GEO. OSBALDESTON, Esq^{RE}.

“I had but a casual acquaintance with Captain Horne, from meeting him on some of our Bengal race-courses, but I have always admired his great courage and endurance. I believe he died of dysentery after winning a £500 p.p. bet that he would ride a horse named Jumping Jemmy 100 miles a day for eight successive days. He started on 5th July, after the rainy season had set in, when the heat was excessive. The horse was none the worse for his performance, but Captain Horne’s death was the unfortunate result.

“Some time between 1831 and 1835 the late Mr Bacon, of the Bombay Civil Service, rode one camel from Bombay to Allyghur (about 800 miles) in eight days. The camel was a little blood-looking animal, almost black; and I saw the late Mr Vigne make a sketch of his head, which is reproduced in one of his books.

“About the year 1830, Lord Exmouth, then the Hon. Mr Pellew, of the Bengal Civil Service, rode an old English horse named Cheroot Box 100 miles in twenty-four hours—easily. I could draw upon recollection for many such feats, though the above are the most prominent in my memory. One more I will give, which I should think is recorded in the *Bengal Sporting Magazine*. It took place about 1838, and I knew the performer, a very light, wiry man, one Lieutenant Lowry, of the 21st Bengal Native Infantry. In consequence of missing the horses that should have awaited him (our only mode of fast travelling in those days), he rode a little mare, nearly or quite thoroughbred, though bred in India, 110 miles in eleven hours. I have never heard the truth of this feat doubted, though, like many others, it may not have been recorded.”

In a letter to the editor of *Bailey’s Magazine*, Sir Charles W. A. Oakeley called attention to the performance of his Arab horse, The Buffer, in India in 1852, which surpassed those I have alluded to. The Buffer covered 10 miles 520 yards in 25 minutes and 35 seconds with 10 st. 6 lbs. up, and “without the horse being the least pressed.” Sir Charles adds that “there could not be a better example of the wonderful endurance of the Arab horse.”

As to the comparison of Arab and English racehorses, Sir Charles says: "My own experience, derived from having trained and raced both breeds, as well as Colonial horses, for several years, is that a first-class English thoroughbred could give the best Arab almost any weight for any distance up to 4 miles. For instance, in the handicap for the Trade Plate at Calcutta, 2 miles, seven horses ran, and the winner was an English thoroughbred, Penthesilea, carrying 11 st. 10 lbs. There were two good Arabs among the field: Harold, carrying 7 st. 12 lbs., and Rift-Royal (winner of the Calcutta Derby for Arabs only), with only a feather-weight on his back—yet these two Arabs, with all these handicap advantages, came in absolutely last." This is certainly a very convincing illustration of the immense superiority of the English thoroughbred over a 2-mile course.

CHAPTER XVIII

FEATS OF EQUINE ENDURANCE

LIEUTENANT LOWRY'S feat, described in the preceding chapter, sinks into insignificance by comparison with the alleged performances of some Arabs and their horses. Among many extraordinary tales of the powers of endurance possessed by these biped and quadruped children of the desert, there is one related of an Arab who did eighty leagues in twenty-four hours on his horse. During that time the animal had no food except the leaves of a dwarf palm, which it nibbled during its one rest of an hour. It was watered but once, and that in the middle of the journey; and the man who narrated the story to a French officer swore by the beard of the Prophet—the most solemn oath a Mussulman can take—that, had his safety required it, he could, on the following night, have slept at a town forty-five leagues farther on!

In considering these stories, one must bear in mind the fact that the finest Arab horses never come into the market—they are absolutely unpurchasable, and it is not safe, therefore, to judge of the powers of the Arab horse by the performances of those with which Europeans are familiar. How reluctant the Arab is to part with his horse, and what priceless value it possesses in his eyes, is illustrated by the following:—The whole estate of an Arab of the desert consisted of a mare. The French Consul offered to purchase her to send to the Emperor. The Arab would have rejected the proposal with indignation, but he was miserably poor; he had no means of procuring the barest necessities of life. Still he hesitated. He had scarcely a rag to cover him, and his wife and children were starving. The sum offered was great: it would provide him and his family with

food for life. At length he most reluctantly consented to the terms offered. He brought the mare to the dwelling of the Consul ; he dismounted, and stood leaning against her ; he looked now at the gold and then at his favourite ; he sighed, and exclaimed, " To whom am I going to yield thee up ? To Europeans, who will tie thee close, who will beat thee, who will render thee miserable. Return with me, my beauty, my jewel, and rejoice the hearts of my children ! " and, springing upon her back, he was out of sight in a moment.

Here is another anecdote illustrative of the same trait in the Arab, given by Sir John Malcolm. When encamped near Bagdad, an Arab rode a splendid bright bay mare before his tent until he attracted his attention. On being asked if he would sell her, " What will you give me ? " was the reply. " That depends upon her age : I suppose she is over five. " " Look at her mouth, " said the Arab, with a smile. On examination she was found to be rising three. This, from her size and symmetry, greatly enhanced her value. The envoy said, " I will give you fifty tomans " (a coin nearly the value of a sovereign). " A little more, if you please, " said the Arab, apparently entertained. " Eighty, a hundred. " He shook his head, and smiled. The offer at last reached two hundred tomans ! " Well, " said the Arab, " you need not tempt me further. You are rich, you have fine horses, camels, and mules, and I am told you have loads of silver and gold. Now you want my mare, but you shall not have her for all you possess. "

Yet another anecdote. An Arab sheikh who lived within fifty miles of Bussorah had a favourite breed of horses. He lost one of his best mares, and could not discover whether she was stolen or had strayed. Some time after, a young man of a different tribe, who had long wished to marry his daughter, but had always been rejected by the sheikh, eloped with the girl. The sheikh and his followers pursued, but the lover and his mistress, mounted on one horse, outdistanced them and escaped. The old chief swore that the fellow was mounted either on a devil or on his favourite mare ; and he found it was the latter. The lover was the thief of his mare as well as of his daughter,

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and had stolen the one to carry off the other. The chief was quite gratified to think that he had not been beaten by a mare of another breed; he was easily reconciled to the young man in order that he might recover the mare, about which he was far more solicitous than the fate of his daughter.

There is a superstition among the Arabs that if the true Arab horse ever treads over ploughed land he deteriorates, and a story was told to a French traveller by the renowned chief Abd-el-Kader to illustrate this belief. A man was riding upon a horse of pure blood when he was met by his enemy, also splendidly mounted. One pursued the other, and he who gave chase was distanced by him who fled. Despairing of reaching him, the pursuer shouted out, "I ask, in the name of God, has your horse ever worked upon land?" "He has, for four days," was the response. "By the beard of the Prophet, I shall catch you!" shouted the other. "Mine never has." Towards the close of the day, sure enough, the horse that had never worked was the victor, and as the rider of the degraded horse sank under the blows of his enemy the conquerer said: "There has been no blessing on our country since we changed our coursers into beasts of burden and of tillage. Has not God made the ox for the plough, the camel to transport merchandise, and the horse alone for the race? There is nothing gained by changing the ways of God."

But let us come down from these heights of Oriental romance to our own prosaic England.

An extraordinary match was run at Northampton Races in 1791, between a bay mare and a black pony, in two 4-mile heats. The black was 13 hands $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, the bay mare barely 13 hands. They ran the first 4 miles carrying 14 st. each in 12 minutes, and the second in $13\frac{1}{2}$. The odds were 6 to 1 on the black, who won by about half a length.

A curious match was made at Epsom in 1795 for 100 guineas, between Mr Grisewood's horse Crop and Mr Harris's roan. Crop was to go 100 miles before the roan went 80. Crop ran his first 20 miles in one hour and a minute, but going round the eleventh time was nearly

knocked up. The other was also so tired that he could not even trot. After this they walked round the course with their riders on their backs, people going before them with bowls of oats and wisps of hay to entice them on. By the time the roan had done his 80 miles Crop had only accomplished 94, and consequently lost.

A Yorkshire clothier once, for a bet, rode his pony, which was well stricken in years and under 13 hands high, 80 miles in 11 hours and 55 minutes on the Morpeth road. The time allowed was 13 hours. The man weighed 14 st. 8 lbs. The pony was only of the common cart-horse breed, which renders the feat the more remarkable; and when it was over he seemed none the worse for his exertions.

A still more astonishing feat was performed many years ago by a horse which had never been bred to the business. A coachman weighing 14 st. was sent post-haste from Arlington to Exeter for a physician, his master being dangerously ill. The distance is 47 miles: the road was then a bad one; the horse did it in just under 3 hours.

Mr Cooper Thornhill, of the Bell Inn, Stilton, made a match for a large sum to ride three times between Stilton and London, 213 miles, in 15 hours, no limit being placed on the number of horses he might use. The following shows the result:—

From Stilton to London (Shore-ditch)	3 h. 52 m. 59 s.
From London to Stilton	3 h. 50 m. 57 s.
From Stilton to London	3 h. 49 m. 56 s.

This was 3 hours 26 minutes and 8 seconds under the time allowed.

In 1790 a gentleman drove a single-horse chaise 50 miles on the Hertford road in 4 hours 55 minutes, the time allowed being 5 hours. In the same year a man rode from the fourth milestone on the Essex road to Chelmsford twice and back again, 100 miles, in 15½ hours, though he had 16 hours to do it in. Soon afterwards Mr Samuel Bendall, of Dursley, Gloucestershire, *at the age of seventy-six*, rode 1000 miles in 1000 consecutive hours on the same horse.

A man has been known, more than once, to beat a horse

in speed. In 1751 a noted pedestrian named Pinwire, for a bet of 50 guineas, walked against a horse for 12 hours and beat it easily. This was not the only time his two legs came off victorious against four: in several successive years he beat some of the best roadsters in England.

The late Mr Edward Hayward Budd, one of the finest all-round athletes of his day, and an especially good sprint-runner, tells the following story of how he was once matched to run against a horse. "One day, after dinner, a son of General Archdale offered to back his horse to do 100 yards against me for £10. I entirely forgot to make it 50 yards *out and back*. As I expected, I was beaten; but, notwithstanding my mistake, he did not get away from me till we had run 80 yards, and then he splashed the mud in my face, as the ground was very soft. It was in Hyde Park, and, not much to my credit, on a Sunday morning."

Races between pedestrians and equestrians have, of course, been a familiar spectacle in the great circus-shows; but then, these are probably "arranged affairs," and the horses are not flyers.

A singular story of equine sagacity and emulation, perhaps almost without parallel in sporting annals, is the following:—

In September 1793, at a race at Ennis in Ireland, Atalanta, a mare belonging to Mr Eyre, took the lead of three other horses running in the race. She had, however, scarcely gone half a mile when she fell and threw her rider. Recovering herself immediately, she dashed forward riderless, and preserved the lead to the end of the heat, during which she passed her stable and the winning-post twice; nor did she stop till the flag was dropped to the winner; then, after trotting a few paces, she wheeled round and came up to the scales to weigh. During the race she frequently looked behind and quickened her pace as she saw the other horses gaining on her!!!

To hark back for a moment to the East, here is a remarkable story of the power of controlling intractable horses possessed by Orientals, though the scene of the exploit is laid in England. In 1803 a grand entertain-

ment was given to the Turkish Ambassador, Elfi Bey, at which the Prince Regent was present. The conversation turned upon horse-taming, and His Excellency was relating stories of his countrymen's gifts in that direction. "I have now in my stables," said the Prince, "an Egyptian horse so ungovernable that I will stake any amount that not one of your followers can mount him." "I will take your Royal Highness's challenge," replied the Bey, "and it shall be decided to-morrow." An appointment was made for two o'clock on the following day at the Prince's Riding House, Pall Mall, and at that hour His Excellency, accompanied by his interpreter and Mahomet Aga, his principal officer, a young man of great agility, arrived at the appointed place, where the Prince and the Duke of York, with several noblemen in attendance, were already awaiting his arrival.

The greatest curiosity was manifested as to the result, as no one had ever been able to keep his seat for a minute on the savage brute. One of the Mameluke's saddles being fixed by the grooms, the animal was led into the riding-house in so rampant and unmanageable a state that it seemed madness for any one to attempt to mount him. The creature was a model of beauty; he was spotted like a leopard, and his magnificent eyes seemed to glow like living coals. Yet, as coolly as though he had been the most docile of animals, the young Mahomet Aga, as he was led round, seized the reins, and, quick as lightning, vaulted on to his back. The horse, maddened by the pressure of the Egyptian saddle, reared and plunged in the most furious manner, but all to no purpose; the Mameluke, to the astonishment of all present, kept his seat as firmly as though he was glued to the saddle, until at length, exhausted by his efforts and finding he had met his master, the horse tamely yielded to the control of his rider.

CHAPTER XIX

SPORT AT THE 'VARSITIES

NOWHERE have the changed conditions of sport since the early Victorian era been more marked than at the Universities. There must be many old 'Varsity men who can remember the time when badger-drawing, rat-killing, dog-fighting, surreptitious excursions to prize-fights, and the like were the staple amusements of our academic youth. Cricket was then a game only played by a few enthusiasts ; football was but a pastime for schoolboys, athletics were unknown, and not one man in ten cared for rowing. Those who could afford it hunted ; but to the great bulk of undergraduates such amusement was beyond their means, and if their tastes were sporting, they could only gratify them by those recreations of the "Fancy" which I have named. Billiards were taboo. It is not long since I met an old Devonshire parson who told me that in his day at Cambridge anyone who yearned for a game of billiards had to sneak over to Chesterton for it, at the risk of being proctorised.

If there are any Dons nowadays who read *Peter Priggins* or *The Adventures of Mr Verdant Green*, they must shudder to think that such coarse amusements as are there described formed part of the life of the academic youth of England. But the coarseness was not apparent to those who indulged in them, and there were diversions which were harmless enough, though they would hardly commend themselves to the Dons or the undergraduates of the present day.

For example, a Cambridge friend of Charles Kingsley, after describing their fishing excursions and occasional rides to hounds, proceeds :—

“ Besides these expeditions, we made others on horseback,

and at times we followed Professor Sedgwick (the famous geologist) in his rides, which the livery-stable keepers called 'jollygizing.' The old Professor was generally mounted on a bony giant, whose trot kept most of us at a hand-gallop. Gaunt and grim, the old man seemed to enjoy the fun as much as we did—his was not a hunting-seat—neither his hands nor his feet ever seemed exactly in the right place. But when we surrounded him at the trysting-place, even the dullest among us acknowledged that his lectures were glorious. It is true that our method of reaching those places was not legitimate, the greater number preferring the field to the road, so that the unhappy owners of the horses found it necessary to charge more for a day's 'jollygizing' than they did for a day's hunting. There was another professor whose lectures we attended together, but he was of a different type and character—one who taught the gentle art of self-defence—a pure-blooded negro, who appeared to have more joints in his back than are usually allotted to humanity. In carrying out the science which he taught, we occasionally discoloured each other's countenances, but we thought that we benefited by those lectures in more senses than one. We had our tempers braced, for instance, when we learnt to feel as we ought for those who had just punished us."

The dusky professor here alluded to was Sambo Sutton, who fought several successful battles in the Prize Ring, and, besides being a fine boxer, was "a fellow of infinite jest." He had the true *vis comica* characteristic of the negro race, and as a humorist had no superior among his contemporaries. One of his feats was to stand on his head and sing a patter song with a clattering accompaniment of his huge feet.

That things were much the same at Oxford I gather from Tom Hughes' memoir of the late Bishop Fraser of Manchester. After referring to various phases of life at Oriel, his biographer adds: "But, above all, the College was the home of the noble science of self-defence in the University. It almost supported a retired prize-fighter, who had been known in the ring as the 'Flying Tailor,' and cordially welcomed any stray pugilist who might be

training in the neighbourhood and was in need of a pound or two. There were regular meetings in some of the largest rooms two or three times a week, at which men of all weights, from eight stone upwards, might find suitable matches; and occasional public gatherings at the 'Weirs' or 'Wheatsheaf' promoted by Oriel men for the benefit of one or other of these professionals. In short, athletics were accepted as the main object of residence at the University, and the other branches of a polite education looked upon as subordinate and inferior."

Now James Fraser, when he became a Fellow and tutor, was at first unpopular among the Oriel men, and would possibly have remained so to the end but for an unexpected display of physical prowess. Amongst the Oriel athletes at this time was a Scotsman, a scholar of the College, James Mackie by name (afterwards M.P. for Kirkcudbrightshire), a man of great strength and stature. He had brought with him from Rugby the name of "the Bear," from the closeness of his hug in wrestling, in which it was believed he had never been worsted. "He was one of a party at a particularly festive supper (to celebrate the bringing home of the London and Henley Challenge Cups to Oriel) which had adjourned to the grass plot, when the usual warning signal was seen at the Provost's window. Mackie made off at once for his rooms, and, the night being dark, at the entrance to the passage between the two quadrangles ran up against someone whom he took for the under porter. Which of the two grappled the other was never accurately known, but the collision resulted in a spirited wrestling bout between them; and 'the Bear' admitted it was all he could do to get rid of his opponent, who, after all, was only left on hand and knee, no fair fall having been scored on either side. But the tussle had lasted long enough for Mackie to recognise his antagonist, and no doubt the recognition was mutual; and grave were the fears of those in the secret for some days whether an untimely end might not be put to the career of the scholar, and so a vacancy, hard to fill, be created at number four in the College boat. But nothing happened; and so Fraser, who had been peaceably on his way to the library for a book, got the

credit, not only of having held his own with the best wrestler in the College, but of having kept the affair to himself, knowing that the collision was an accident. From this time he was spoken of as 'Jemmy,' and attained to the equivalent of 'the most favoured nation' clause in the undergraduate's tutorial code."

Fraser was a keen sportsman, but sternly denied himself the pleasures he most loved whilst he was an undergraduate, from motives of economy. He was a good horseman, passionately fond of hunting, and one of the first things he did on attaining his fellowship was to gratify his taste for riding to hounds, now that he was in a position to afford it. But on taking orders he abandoned sport for ever. Before he actually entered the ministry, however, he resolved to have one farewell burst with hounds. He therefore took a couple of horses down to Atherstone, put up at the noted sporting hotel there, and had three weeks of glorious sport in the Shire of Shires, a full and minute account of which is preserved among his correspondence. He was also extremely fond of tandem-driving, and was an excellent whip. One last long tandem tour he took with a friend before his ordination, and then bade farewell to that recreation too for ever.

In my time at Cambridge there was an eccentric but good-hearted Fellow of Trinity who was an enthusiastic admirer of athletics, and scandalised his fellow Dons by bringing one Sunday to the high table in Hall, Deerfoot, the famous Indian runner. When remonstrated with, he maintained that he had a perfect right to invite his strange guest as "a distinguished person," there being nothing in the College rules to define the nature of the distinction which qualified a stranger to be the guest of a Fellow. There is a legend to the effect that a Dean of St John's once invited the well-known pugilist Peter Crawley to breakfast at his rooms, under the impression that he was a member of the University. Peter, in cap and gown, had rescued the Dean from a nasty *mêlée* in the Town and Gown row on the previous evening, and the grateful Don, struck with admiration at the way he used his fists, asked him his name and college. Peter had been duly coached,

and promptly replied, "Magdalene." "You are a very fine, powerful young man," said the Dean, "and your skill in boxing is extraordinary. I should like to know where you learned it, and shall be glad if you will breakfast with me to-morrow." But when the morning came Peter was back in his own crib, The Queen's Head and French Horn, in Smithfield, and the Dean was left to ponder on the deplorable fact that such efficiency in pugilism should be accompanied by such deplorable manners. It was on this incident, I believe, that Cuthbert Bode founded his episode of the Putney Pet's Oxford experiences in *Verdant Green*.

A more famous pugilist than Peter Crawley, however, was once an honoured guest at Cambridge. This was Daniel Mendoza, the celebrated Jew, whose name for years was a household word wherever British sportsmen congregated. Dan was at one time under the patronage of a member of Jesus College—a Mr Honeywood, who afterwards represented Kent in Parliament—and was invited to spend a few days with him at the 'Varsity. His arrival made a great sensation in Cambridge. Town and Gown vied with each other in doing him honour, and he made a rich harvest by giving lectures, accompanied by practical illustrations of the science he professed. Even the Master of Trinity recommended the undergraduates to profit by the famous champion's instruction.

While passing through the hall of Jesus College one day, Dan stopped before a map of Egypt and the Holy Land, and in choice English gave his opinion of Moses (not a complimentary one), the miracles, and especially the passing of the Red Sea, with a vigour of language and a lack of reverence that greatly astonished some of the graver Dons. "I remember," says Dr Richardson of Magdalene, "being invited to meet the 'illustrious stranger' at a supper party at St John's College. The party was a small one, consisting of the gentleman who 'kept' in the rooms, myself, Mr Honeywood (all members of the University), Mendoza, Mr Harry Browning, a retired cavalry quartermaster and horse-dealer, 'Dick Vaughan,' the landlord of the Bell, and Mr Snow, eminent as a

Brighton coachman. This individual was a typical specimen of his trade. Continuously sitting on the box, and free indulgence in all good things of life, had swollen his body to such a size that walking was almost impossible to him. In hot or cold weather he was encased in waist-coats, coats, and greatcoats. In addition to top-boots, he was protected, from the lower parts of his calves to his thighs, with knee-caps of knitted wool, whilst a silk handkerchief of Belcher pattern, tied round his neck in a peculiar knot, gave a professional finish to the toilette.

“Bishop was the tippie—a compound of scalding hot port, with sugar, lemons and Seville oranges stuffed full of spices, roasted on a gridiron, and thrown piping hot into the bubbling flood. Tokeley, the college porter, a burly man of considerable strength and long accustomed to the business, had some difficulty in carrying the huge cup and placing it on the table. It is true he was accustomed, in his progress from the buttery to the supper-room, to assert his right to what he called his ‘reg-lars,’ and it was very apparent that his claims had been enforced. As supplements to this bowl, smaller cups, brimming with milk punch, were placed on the table, and were all emptied during the evening.

“As the evening advanced the conversation became unusually animated. Differences of opinion were expressed in language not parliamentary; order was proclaimed by the president, and the conflict of words was for a time allayed by soothing potations of Bishop. The remedy, being taken too frequently, aggravated the complaint, and Mr Snow and Mr Browning arose simultaneously from their chairs to refer their claims to veracity to ‘trial by battle.’ Messrs Mendoza and Vaughan constituted themselves the judges, and the rest of the party formed the ‘suite’ of the combatants. It was a sight to see the ponderous Snow set-to; but what he lacked in agility he made up in weight and size, and so long as he could protect his expansive bread-basket he was all right; it may be supposed the scene was not carried on with the silence the sanctity of the place and the lateness of the

hour required. The steps of some one descending the staircase from the apartments of old Dr Cravan, the master of the college, were heard by the quick ear of the giver of the revel. 'For heaven's sake, gentlemen, get out of my rooms, or I shall be sent down!' he cried. The combatants were with some difficulty torn asunder, the head of the ex-quartermaster being rescued from beneath the left arm of the Brighton coachman, who had succeeded in getting it into 'chancery,' and the whole party effected a retreat through the courtyard to the porter's lodge, and gained the street. Here the combat was renewed, and might have lasted some time had it not been announced by certain flying parties, who had probably been celebrating similar orgies elsewhere, that the proctors were on the alert, upon which warning there was a general 'skedaddle.'"

This Mr Vaughan was, for five-and-forty years, one of the lions of the University of Cambridge, and became so popular at the Bell with the undergraduates that the authorities prevented his licence being renewed; after which he drove the Cambridge "Up-Telegraph" every morning from the Sun in Trumpington Street, half-way to London, and drove the "Down-Telegraph" from the half-way point to Cambridge every afternoon. Dick Vaughan was a great cocker, and one day invited the writer I have quoted to visit his cockpit. "I proceeded," says the latter, "to mount a ladder which was lowered from the reception-room for the admission of those who had the *entrée*, and was pulled up again to prevent the intrusion of the uninvited. Mr Vaughan was in his shirt-sleeves, which were rolled up, disclosing a pair of long, bony arms, smeared with blood. In his hands he held a favourite 'black-breasted red,' which he was preparing to launch in mortal combat against a 'duck-wing,' for which another individual known as 'Scotch George' acted as second. Around the pit, which was formed of newly cut turf, was assembled a mixed company, Town and Gown, all eager for the fray, and busy at backing the bird they fancied. The contest terminated in the death of 'the duck-wing,' followed by a yell of exultation from

Vaughan, who was a considerable gainer by the evening's diversions."

About this time a curious character, named Jemmy Gordon, was a well-known personage in Cambridge and on Newmarket Heath. A noisy, drunken, witty, impudent blackguard, who would hold a horse, sell the "c'reckt card," or do any other loafing business to get a drink. Nobody knew where he lived or slept. He wore satin breeches, open at the knees, no stockings, boots half-way up his legs, and a huge cocked hat on his head. Yet the fellow was a good Latin scholar, and earned many a half-guinea by writing exercises for idle undergraduates. He was no respecter of persons, and, when under the influence of beer or gin, would call at the rooms of the undergraduates, and even of the Dons.

One day he entered the rooms of Dr Mansell, Bishop of Bristol, and with drunken effrontery requested the loan of half a crown. The prelate, highly indignant, told him to begone. But Jemmy held his ground until the Bishop, rising in great wrath, exclaimed, "Be off, vagabond! return here when you can bring a greater scoundrel than yourself, and then I will give you five shillings." And he pushed him out, slamming the door behind him.

As Jemmy descended into the courtyard of Trinity College, he encountered the Esquire Bedell, Beverly. "Mr Beverly," he said, taking off his cocked hat and bowing; "you're the very gentleman I was looking for. The Bishop of Bristol has just sent me in search of you; he is most anxious to see you at once, and I am to accompany you to his lordship's presence." Mr Beverly was no great favourite of Dr Mansell's, so he was surprised at the message, although he lost no time in attending. Jemmy opened the door of the room from which he had just been expelled, and almost thrust his victim into it. "Your lordship," he said, "you promised me five shillings when I should bring here a greater scoundrel than myself; allow me to present Mr Beverly to your lordship." The Bishop and his visitor stared at each other for a moment, and then the latter bolted. Jemmy remained, and his lordship, either to get rid of him, or from a conviction

that he had earned his reward, handed him over the five shillings.

Amongst the odd sporting characters in Cambridge in my time was old Callaby, who kept a "fancy establishment" in Ram Yard. There was always a badger on the premises for "gents' dogs" to display their prowess in "drawing"; rats, too, were always in stock for those who enjoyed the noble sport of watching a terrier slaughter the terrified rodents; there was a raven who was a perfect marvel of cunning and wickedness, and whom Callaby would back to kill rats against most dogs. But the most pitiable and remarkable object in this strange menagerie was a forlorn and dilapidated eagle, whose melancholy fate it was to afford sport to foolish human fledglings by slaying rats. I think I have never seen a more pathetic sight than that eagle as he looked round with an air of shame and humiliation on the thoughtless boys who had come to witness his degradation. So must blind Samson have looked when he made sport for the Philistines.

I shall never forget old Callaby's rage when one morning a band of us, filled with the spirit of mischief, raided his den and set loose the whole menagerie in the yard. Dogs, cats, rats, ferrets, weasels, gamecocks, the badger, the raven, and the eagle all suddenly found themselves mixed up, and there was a general *mêlée*, the din of which speedily brought old Callaby on the scene in a state bordering upon frenzy. I thought he would have shot some of us in his rage, for he picked up a loaded rifle—there was a shooting-gallery attached to the den—and for a moment he looked as if he seriously meant homicide. However, he was eventually pacified and his ruffled feelings soothed by coin of the realm. But it "arrides me" now, as Elia would have said, to call up the picture of that motley crowd of birds and beasts, hereditary foes, all suddenly and without warning thrown face to face. The eagle alone preserved his dignity, and stood in the centre of the screaming mass in disdainful silence.

Another noted character, too, was the ostler of the Blue Boar—Hills, I think his name was—who, though very stout, was an extraordinary sprinter. He used to tuck his

stomach in with his hands in a most comical manner when he ran. Many a match he won against 'Varsity men who fancied themselves, and would give him ten yards start in a hundred.

Newmarket and its races have, of course, always had irresistible attractions for the sporting undergraduate of Cambridge, and not long since I came across a curious illustration of this as far back as the reign of George II. It is a letter from a Fellow-Commoner of King's College, Cambridge, to a friend in London, and I give it in full as a racy revelation of the character of the sporting undergraduate of that time.

"DEAR JACK,—I was in hopes I should have met you at Newmarket Races, but, if your luck had turned out so bad as mine, you did better to stay away. Dick Riot,¹ Tom Lowngeit, and I went together to Newmarket the first day of the meeting. I rode my little bay mare, that cost me thirty guineas in the North. I never crossed a better tit in my life. She is as fleet as the wind. I raced with Dick and Tom all the way from Cambridge to Newmarket. Dick rode his roan gelding, and Tom his chestnut mare, both of which, as you know, have speed, but I beat them hollow.

"I cannot help telling you that I was dressed in my blue riding-frock with plate buttons, with a leather belt round my waist, my jemmy turn-down boots made by Tull, my brown scratch bob, and my hat with the narrow silver lace, cocked in the true sporting taste; so that altogether I don't believe there was a more knowing figure on the course. I was very flush too, Jack, for, Michaelmas Day happening damned luckily just about the time of the races, I had received fifty guineas for my quarterage.

"As soon as I came upon the course, I met with some jolly bucks from London. I never saw them before. However, we were soon acquainted, and I took up the odds; but I was damnably let in, for I lost thirty guineas slap the first day. The day after I had no remarkable luck one way or the other; but at last I laid all the cash I

¹ The names have been altered.

had left upon Lord March's Smart, who lost, you know ; but, between you and me, I have a great notion that Tom Marshall rode booty. However, I had a mind to push my luck as far as I could, so I sold my poor little mare for twelve pieces, went to the coffee-house, and left them all behind me at the gaming-table, and I should not have been able to get back to Cambridge that night if Bob Whip, of Trinity, had not taken me up into his phaeton. We have had a round of dinners at our rooms ever since, and I have been drunk every day to drive away care. However, I hope to recruit again soon. Frank Classic, of Pembroke, has promised to make me out a long list of Greek books ; so I will write directly to old Square Toes and enclose the list, tell him I have taken them up, and draw on him for money to pay the bookseller's bill. Then I shall be rich again, Jack ; and perhaps you may see me at the Shakespeare by the middle of next week. Till then I am, dear Jack, yours,

T. FLAREIT."

And that reminds me, by the way, that an undergraduate put rather a poser a few years back to his tutor. "Why," asked this ingenuous youth, "may I not visit Newmarket Heath when the highest dignitary of the University—the Chancellor himself (the Duke of Devonshire¹)—will not only be present but will be running horses in many of the races?" Now in my day, and I suppose from time immemorial, Newmarket at race time was tabooed to the undergraduates. Every man had to show in Hall each evening during the meeting, and this was supposed to be proof positive that he had not been to the races. To "show in Hall" did not mean necessarily to dine there—all you had to do was to appear at the door of the college dining-hall in academicals before 6 o'clock, and hold up your cap in order that the marker might prick your name down. Now I need hardly point out that nothing could be easier than to see the last race on the Heath and reach the college, fourteen miles away, before 6 P.M. It is true there was often some reckless driving in order to get to college in time, and I have witnessed and shared in scenes

¹ This was written before the death of the late Duke.

before the Swan at Bottisham which I shudder now to think of. But there is a moral even here, for no one who has seen a half-drunken Cantab driving a pair through Bottisham, and clearing the crowd of vehicles without a smash, could doubt the existence of a Providence.

CHAPTER XX

'VARSITY STEEPLECHASE

I REMEMBER very well the excitement among us sporting undergraduates of Cambridge over the revival of steeplechasing at Cottenham, mainly due to the exertions of the Hon. Henry Wentworth Fitzwilliam and his friend, Mr Nathan de Rothschild, who presented the 'Varsity with a handsome challenge cup, to be run for annually over three miles of fair hunting country. I remember, too, the great Inter-'Varsity Steeplechase at Aylesbury in 1863, when the Light Blues scored a brilliant triumph, securing first, second, and third places. J. M. Richardson of Magdalene, who was also in the Eleven, Charley Wilder of Caius, Homer Page of Trinity, and other good light-weights whom I knew well, are all now, alas! gone over to the majority.

Touching the old 'Varsity Steeplechases and their first establishment, an amusing story is told of Professor Neate, Professor of Political Economy at Oxford, and at one time M.P. for that city. The Dons and heads of colleges were determined to put down steeplechasing; but old Neate stood up for the undergraduates, and, to show his contempt for their rulers, entered his own horse for one of the principal races, and named him "Vice-Chancellor." The day of the race came, and great doubts were raised as to who would be the jockey to steer the noted quadruped, when, to the astonishment of everybody, the Professor himself appeared in a top-hat, and in his shirt-sleeves and black trousers. Amidst shouts of laughter, he took several fences well, till they came to the famous water-jump, which his horse first refused, and then fell into the middle of it with his rider. The Professor went no farther, but

consoled himself by saying he had made his protest, and vindicated the rights of the students to enjoy a manly sport.

There was a very severe race at Aylesbury between Messrs J. Allgood (Captain Barlow) and Burton, now of Daventry, who rode two well-known chasers, Zanga and Spangle. Approaching the last fence together, they rose simultaneously and cannoned in the air. The pace they were going upset both horses, and the riders were thrown in opposite directions. Both were picked up insensible; but the Captain recovered after a few minutes, remounted his horse, and struggled on, just managing to hang on until past the post.

A dangerous fence was thought to be absolutely necessary in those days on a good steeplechase course. There was generally but one race, or at the most two, in the day, and those who selected the line arranged that the farmers' race should start from a hill at Pitchott, about six miles from the town, and should finish in a small enclosure about two miles from Aylesbury. The last fence was absolutely unjumpable at any time; but after a horse had been hustled along for four miles, it need not be wondered at that this fence should be designated "a corker." The race was for £100, given by Baron Rothschild for farmers over whose lands the hounds ran. The course was only marked out by an occasional flag placed in a hedge, and the riders had to find their way as best they could; there was no showing them over the course beforehand. It is difficult to believe what a *natural* course was in those days, accustomed as we are to the well-formed and neatly trimmed fences of Kempton, Lingfield, and Sandown; but this last fence should be seen to enable men of the present day to comprehend what a cross-country horse and his rider had to *negotiate*—which is a very expressive and proper term. After the brook, they crossed a macadamised country road (which had just enough ditch on each side to throw a horse down), going over about two hundred yards of rough grass, and arriving at the big double into the last field. First, a wide ditch with a stiff fence into a wide landing-place, with rotten stumps, and big elm trees growing at intervals,

making it more like a spinney than a hedge ; then another fence, with a big yawning ditch beyond.

I saw this so-called race won by Vanish, a useful, racer-looking, well-bred nag, belonging to a farmer named Harris, living at Hampdon, on the Chiltern Hills. The winner was so distressed that, although he managed to jump the first hedge and land on the bank, he could scarcely stand, and some bystanders assisted in getting him into the second ditch, where the rider dismounted, then remounted, and slowly cantered between the flags. The second horse then appeared on the scene, was pushed into the first ditch, and fell, utterly beaten, on the landing-side ; after a few minutes he rose, and, riderless, got into the second ditch. With great difficulty he was pulled out, his jockey mounted, while three men on each side propped him up, and the poor brute crawled feebly between the flags, and obtained the second money. After waiting some time, no one else appearing although twelve had started, the judge with his friends left the field, proceeding homewards in a fly. The crowd were returning along the road, which adjoins the last three fields, amongst them the veteran John Brown of Tring, who has since died at the age of ninety-three, when somebody said, "Muster Brown, there ain't been anybody claiming the £10 for the third horse?" The old man rode back with some friends about half a mile, where he had left off beaten, and, as his horse had somewhat recovered his wind, he set him going, came up to the terrible double, got safely over, calling upon several people to witness that he had fairly finished the course, and claimed the £10 for third money, which, in the end, was awarded to him.

At the Aylesbury Steeplechases of 1848 a match was decided between a mare called Clementina and a horse called Sailor. Approaching the dreaded brook, Clementina's jockey fairly funked, and in the middle of the grass field threw himself off his mount, and left the mare to herself. An undergraduate named Burlton, in a most plucky manner, rushed forward, caught the mare, vaulted into the vacant saddle, sent her at a rattling pace at the brook, and, clearing the water, challenged Sailor close home, and

passed the winning-post first. Although Burlton drew the weight, the decision was given against his winning, and Sailor was awarded the race.

It was at Aylesbury that the Marquis of Waterford, "the mad Marquis," indulged in one of his freaks. On this occasion he brought his horse upstairs into the dining-room. The horse was led up the garden steps, which were very steep, and taken into the dining-room, where some apples and biscuits were given him. It was useless to attempt his descent by the same stairs, so steep were they, so he was led by the corridor to the front staircase. The floor of the passage was polished oak, and, although carpeted in the middle, the horse slipped badly, and at the head of the stairs refused to move. At last he began kicking, and smashed the passage windows, soon clearing a ring behind him. Eventually, when a little quieted, he was blindfolded, and, once he began to descend he could not stop, and blundered down into the entrance-hall, having done himself no injury, and—excepting to a few balusters and some windows—but little to the house. This was the first attempt that had been made at bringing a horse upstairs.

A similar feat, however, was carried out with more success a few years later in the very same room. The conversation turning to the feat recorded above, an Oxford man, a very fine horseman, turned to old Charlie Symonds and said, "I believe, Charlie, the little grey would come up these, or any other stairs." It was asked if they might try, and, permission being granted, a lumbering noise was soon heard on the stairs, and in walked the gallant grey. After being walked round the table, the horse, led by a halter, was induced to jump over the backs of a couple of chairs. Then J. Leech Manning, a sporting farmer of the neighbourhood, said he would undertake to ride him over the dinner-table (it should be mentioned that dinner was still in progress), and, jumping on to the bare-backed horse, he rode him up into the corner of the room, which was about forty feet long by twenty-two wide. The table having been slightly slued round, Manning struck the horse with his heel and sent him flying over; then he turned him and sent him back again.

The man who first suggested the feat, a well-known North Country clergyman, then attempted it. The horse just cleared the table, but caught one of his heels on the edge, and, pulling the cloth over, smashed some plates and glasses. Of course, a dozen others wished to try, but enough had been done, and the veto was put on any more displays of circus-riding. How was the horse to be got down? The corridor already mentioned was traversed; but, on coming to the top of the stairs, nothing would induce the horse to put a foot on to the first step, although he was as quiet as a lamb. A learned Q.C., staying in the house, suggested the original solution of the difficulty, viz. to blindfold him, and then to take him to the end of the corridor, and lead him steadily along without stopping a moment. This advice was immediately acted upon, and, the horse coming along freely enough, began to go down the stairs, but, getting frightened, stumbled and fell on his knees, but did not cease to scramble on. The two men who held him by the head, soothed him, and in the end he landed safe in the entrance-hall, breaking, however, three or four of the carved oak balusters in the course of his descent.

CHAPTER XXI

OLD-TIME ECCENTRICS OF SPORT

I WAS talking the other day to an old sportsman whom I had not seen for many years, comparing notes of our recollections of the sport and sportsmen of the past. "I'll tell you," he said, "one thing I note particularly about the men of the present day; there's little or none of the eccentricity, or individuality, if you prefer it, which was such a pleasing relief to the monotonous groove into which humanity in the lump is so apt to run." And with that he began recalling memories of the peculiarities of these eccentric sportsmen of the past.

At Harrow, more than half a century ago, a Mr William Bean was as great a terror to the farmers as the Wild Huntsman to the inhabitants of the Hartz Mountains. Though he kept a pack of hounds, his ruthless trespasses raised every hand against him. In vain did farmers lock their gates and pile hurdles against them and lie in ambush with pitchforks. One farmer watched till nearly dusk, and then heard the hounds go by as he sat at tea. He was so astonished that he afterwards asked Bill Bean in confidence how he managed to hunt in the dark. "Didn't you see me?" was the reply; "we ride with a bull's-eye on each stirrup and one on our breast-plates, so we can go as well by night as by day." Well might the farmers say after that, "There goes Bull's-eye Bill; it's no use trying to stop him."

Sometimes Mr Bean would hunt with a red nose of enormous dimensions, a fiery red moustache, and with red wafers stuck on his cheeks to conceal his identity. Notices not to trespass were sent him by every post; indignation meetings were held, and it was resolved that Bull's-eye Bill

must and should be put down. So one day when that gentleman was at home at Willesden, some nine or ten farmers, each bearing a notice in his hand, presented themselves before him. He received each with courtesy, took the notices as they were presented, and marked them severally with a pencil. When these had all been served, a paper containing a *précis* of their united contents and the names of the deputation was handed to him. "This shall receive my very best attention, gentlemen," said he, very gravely; and, thinking they had at last nailed the demon huntsman, the deputation went away rejoicing.

Very short-lived indeed was their satisfaction. No sooner had they departed than Mr Bean, with his lieutenant, planned a drag-hunt for the morrow, which went through the heart of every farm named in the round robin, and he carried it out with an audacity he had never before displayed. "What business have I to be here?" he cried to the first farmer who tried to bar his way. "I have come on purpose to be pulled up. You thought yourselves precious clever, and that you had got me fast, but I have got you instead. I've got all your signatures; you don't know what you've signed, but I do. I've had counsel's opinion, and I can indict you all for a conspiracy, and, if you attempt to interfere with me, I'll do it." After that he worked his own sweet will for the remainder of the season.

A Cheshire parson of the old school at the beginning of the present century was Griff Lloyd, rector of Christleton, near Chester. Liverpool Races Griff seldom missed, and he always made one at the annual race banquet given by a sporting man known from his great size as the "Double Dandy," for he was so enormous that when he travelled he had to take two places in the mail. In this connection a good story was told against him. A new servant having received instructions to take the customary two seats, and not understanding that it was his master who required double accommodation, took one place inside and one out.

Parson Griff's powers of endurance were wonderful. He would think nothing of riding thirty miles out, thirty miles back, and then going out to dinner. More than once his

parishioners were disappointed (?) of the evening service by a notice on the church doors that the parson had been obliged to start that afternoon in order to be in time for a distant "meet."

Another sporting cleric was Parson Harvey, who was wont to hang about Tattersalls on sale days. Tattersall would never have him awakened as he sat there snoring, with the butt-end of a pound of mutton chops sticking out of his pocket. "Let him sleep, poor fellow," he would say; "it's a sweeter place for him than his garret in Pimlico." Harvey had formerly held a living in the gift of the celebrated racing and hunting man, Mr Vernon. Long sermons were Vernon's abhorrence. He had presented the church with a hollow sounding-board, which was placed immediately above the pulpit, and could be raised or lowered by a secret spring fixed in his pew, which was just beneath; and directly he found the homily growing tedious he would press the spring, down would come the board like an extinguisher, and beneath it the preacher would disappear like a harlequin.

Vernon it was who, finding that poachers were not deterred by the usual notices, set up boards upon which, in large letters, were the words, "Anyone found trespassing on these grounds will be immediately spifficated." The unknown word, suggesting unimaginable tortures, struck more terror into the hearts of the poachers than all the steel traps and spring-guns that had before menaced them, and for a long time the birds remained undisturbed. Parson Harvey was just the spiritual adviser for such a squire—one who could with equal facility follow a fox, crack a bottle, or preach a sermon. But unfortunately the bishop had not the same appreciation of these varied qualities as had the patron; and thus it was that the poor parson, still orthodox to his tastes, became a waif and a loiterer at "the Corner."

Even the racecourse oddities have almost disappeared, and such a personage as Matthias Elderton (better known as "Jerry"), the list-seller, would now be an impossibility. He was the king of the card-sellers, and a sort of Jack Pudding, who made fun for the lookers-on during the intervals

of racing. With a wig and cocked hat on his head, and an old ragged uniform, sometimes naval, sometimes military, his fingers covered with brass rings, the neck of a bottle picked up from some luncheon-party stuck in his eye, he would strut up to some grandee, tap him on the shoulder, and with the affectation of an aristocratic drawl, say, "How de do, my lord, how's her ladyship, and the little honourables?" or he would request him to take his arm, with "Let me show your lordship a little life!" and my lord would laugh and humour the joke. Jerry made no bones even of accosting the Prince Regent and holding out his hand to him, which the Prince did not disdain to shake; and Jerry used to talk, like Brummel, about "his fat friend."

Jerry made a good bit of money during the season, which he invested in jewellery, watches, chains, etc., and hawked about on the courses and elsewhere. On one occasion this traffic got poor Jerry into trouble. A jeweller's shop had been plundered at Manchester, and the suspicions of the police fell upon the card-seller as being connected with it; so he was arrested, and such a number of valuables were found upon his vagabond person that he was locked up.

And now Jerry's popularity came to his aid. Squire Osbaldeston, as soon as he heard of it, vowed he would have Jerry out of gaol within twenty-four hours. The next morning, when he was brought up before the magistrate, the squire, with many of his racing friends, was in the court to speak for the poor fellow's honesty, and they gave him such a character that he was at once released. Among his own class he was equally popular. They had already started a subscription for his defence; and when he came out, a free man, he was lifted upon the shoulders of his friends and carried through the streets in triumph. Jerry died in harness as he had lived. During the Goodwood Meeting of 1848 he was standing on a coach, offering his cards, and exchanging his usual chaff, when the horses shied and upset the vehicle. The poor card-seller was beneath it; he was picked up in a fearfully crushed condition, and conveyed to the Chichester Infirmary, where he

expired a few hours afterwards. Before the meeting broke up seventy pounds were collected among Jerry's friends for his widow.

Another Turf character was "Snuffling" or "Donkey Jemmy"; he used to wear a huge yellow wig, and made a living braying like a donkey. Sixpence a bray was his charge; but he would not exercise his accomplishment for any but "carriage folk." "I does the donkey for the haristocracy, and not the common people," he would contemptuously say, when any unknown pedestrian bid for a taste of his quality. But if the "haristocracy" did not dub up the sixpence fast enough, Jemmy would pursue the carriages with the most horrible "hee-haws" until, to save the drums of their ears, the occupants threw him the coins.

Many old Turfites will also remember a thin, middle-aged man who used to appear in woman's attire with ribbons in his hair, a faded yellow fan in one hand, and a green and pink parasol in the other, who began a dialogue commencing with, "Well, Lady Jane, how are the flowers to-day? I've seen the gardener," etc., followed up by the song of *The Hold Harm Cheer*, each stanza being illustrated by a mock fandango.

Scotland has produced its fair share of eccentric sportsmen—Lord Kennedy and the Earl of Glasgow, for instance. Of them, however, I have written elsewhere, so will take as an example Captain Wemyss, sometime Master of the Fife Foxhounds. He was one of those rough sea-dogs that Smollett loved to depict, and notorious for his fondness for the cat-o'-nine-tails. "But," said one of his sailors once, "the Captain's got such a winning way with him that you can't help liking him. I was loitering on the *Hard* one day after I had been paid off, when I saw him, and, as he had often made my back smart, I tried to give him a wide berth; but he crowded on all sail after me, and bawled out, 'Here, Jack Smith, you d——d ill-looking, blear-eyed, squinting ——, ain't you going to enter on board my ship?' Well, arter that, I couldn't help myself."

When Wemyss retired from the Navy, he went to reside in Scotland, and gave himself up to field sports. In the

hunting-field he was remarkable for stentorian lungs and fondness for laying on the whip—a memento of the old cat-o'-nine-tails days. Then he was seized with a desire for Parliamentary distinction, and was nominated for the Borough of Cupar. But he talked to the electors very much in the same winning way as he had to his sailors.

“I say, Cap'n,” shouted one of the crowd he was addressing from the hustings, “how do you mean to vote about the Bishops?”

“Hold your tongue, you —— idiot; what do you know about Bishops?”

“I say, Cap'n,” another bawled, “are you for annual elections?”

“No, you d——d fool, nor would you if you had to pay for them.”

However, his electors were as incapable of withstanding his winning ways as the sailors, for they returned him. He expressed his opinions freely even in church, and when the parson, a friend of his, made a good point in the sermon, would call out, “Well done, Harry,” and remark under his breath to his next neighbour, “D——d good.” When out hunting one day, the fox having been killed in a turnpike road, he saw a farmer, who had been beaten by the pace come sailing away over a cornfield.

“What the devil do you mean by riding over that wheat?” he roared.

“Weel, I ken I can come as I like, as it's my ain.”

“Then, if it's your own, d——n your eyes, you ought to set a better example.”

Of Henry Egerton, Earl of Bridgwater, a Parisian journal of 1826 gives the following picture: “Those who have once seen this meagre personage drag himself along, supported by two huge lackeys, with his sugar-loaf hat slouched down over his eyes, cannot fail to recognise him. An immense fortune enables him to gratify his most extravagant caprices. If he be lent a book, he carries his politeness so far as to have it conveyed home in a carriage. Two of his finest horses are harnessed to one of his chariots, and the volume, reclining at ease in my

lord's landau, attended by footmen in costly livery, arrives at the door of its astounded owner."

In his younger days, the Earl of Bridgewater had been a keen sportsman, and in his old age his love of dogs led him into extraordinary eccentricities. In the words of the writer before quoted, "His carriage is frequently seen filled with dogs. He bestows great care on their feet, and orders them boots, for which he pays as dearly as for his own. He puts on a pair of new boots every day; carefully preserving those he has once worn, and, ranging them in order, takes great pleasure in observing each day how much of the year has passed by the number of pairs. His table, though he scarcely ever entertains any company, is constantly set out with a dozen covers for his dogs, who daily partake of my lord's dinner seated in arm-chairs, each with a napkin round his neck and a servant to attend to his wants."

No wonder that Frenchmen thought all Englishmen mad when there were settled in Paris such strange specimens as this erratic earl, Colonel Thornton, Lord Henry Seymour, and others of the like kidney; however, the feeling was returned in full by the humbler order of Briton. Lord William Lennox's story being apropos:—

"Whilst," said he, "I was an attaché to the Duke of Wellington, then Ambassador to Louis XVIII., his Grace was invited to shoot at Fontainebleau, and kindly permitted me to accompany him. After breakfast at the palace we proceeded to the rendezvous. The party consisted of the Ducs de Berry, d'Angoulême, and de Grammont, the Duke of Wellington, and myself. The 'Iron Duke' was attended by an English gamekeeper, who seemed delighted at his master's prowess, and who looked with disdain at the royal sportsman. 'That 'ere Dam-goulan knows as much about shooting as my old missus,' he said, addressing a groom who was carrying Wellington's ammunition. 'He's only killed four brace of pheasants, and he would have doubled the quantity if he had attended to his head keeper's orders and *pulled* whenever he was told to pull.'

'What d'ye mean by *pull*?' said the other, who had

picked up a smattering of French; 'when he cried *pull* he doesn't mean pull—pull (*poule*) in their outlandish gibberish means hen, and he mentioned it as a caution.' At this point the first speaker became incoherent, and, muttering something about parleyvooving frogs, he subsided for the rest of the day."

CHAPTER XXII

SOME HUMOURS OF THE HUNTING-FIELD

I HAVE no doubt that some of my readers know the story which the late Bernal Osborne used to the tell.

“A blacksmith, very early one morning, was going through a plantation leading to a gentleman’s house to shoe some horses, and in the roadway a fox was sitting with one fore-paw held up, his ears laid back, and his brush dragged. He did not move, but looked up beseechingly at the blacksmith, who stooped down, looked at his foot, and found a gathering; so he took a horse-nail from his box, pricked the part, and let the matter out. It gave the fox immediate relief, and he nodded his head and trotted off into the wood. The next morning when the blacksmith opened his door he found a couple of fine fat fowls laid there. He took them inside, and the next morning there was a couple of good fat ducks, and this, begorra, sor, went on for some weeks, and one day there was a fine young goose. Well, sor, the last winter there was a farmer out with the hounds, and when the fox broke covert, it was this same fellow, and the farmer viewed him away, and gave the ‘Tally ho!’ and it was this man’s hen-roost that the fox went to each night till he had cleared out most of the poultry; and this was how the fox got upsides with his enemy, and repaid his friend.”

This reminds me of one told by Mrs S. C. Hall, who, when visiting a certain Tim Flanigan, was told that one night a fox entered his cabin and coolly sat down by the embers, lighted his pipe, and began smoking as naturally as a man. The listener expressed her doubts as to its truth; and when Tim said, “The fox took up the newspaper

and began reading it," she could stand it no longer, and said, "What should the fox want to read the paper for?" Tim replied, "How the devil was he to know where the hounds met if he didn't?"

Apropos of hunting, I hope I may be excused for running a good old chestnut to earth here, and giving the true version of a story which has been told with many variations, all more or less divergent from the truth. The real hero of the tale was a well-known sporting parson, the Rev. Christopher Erle, Rector of Hardwich, and brother of Lord Chief Justice Erle. Sir Thomas Digby Aubray, who lived at Oving, a parish adjoining that of Mr Erle, had invited the Bishop of Oxford (Dr Wilberforce) to dinner, and several of the neighbouring gentry and clergy to meet him, amongst others the Reverend Christopher. Now the reverend gentleman was very fond of going to see the hounds meet, and, pottering along through a line of gates, he generally managed to see a good deal of them. The Bishop, hearing of this, thought it would be a good opportunity to get a rise out of Mr Erle, and leading the conversation to that topic, said he had a great objection to his clergy riding to hounds, and, with a merry twinkle of his eye, alluded pointedly to the worthy Rector of Hardwich. Mr Erle, in reply, said that he saw no harm in it, and that people who indulged in the carnal enjoyment of dancing were equally reprehensible, and that he deemed it his duty to allude to a statement in the *Court Circular* of the past week, that amongst the guests at Her Majesty's State Ball at Buckingham Palace was the Bishop of Oxford! A laugh ensued, and his lordship replied, "Yes, Mr Erle, but I make it a rule never to go into the room where the dancers are." "Exactly my case, my lord," said the parson; "for I make it a rule never to be in the same field as the hounds."

One of the grandest sportsmen of his time was the Rev. John Russell, of Devon, better known as "Jack Russell," who, unlike many of his cloth who have been devoted to sport, was an equally good parson.

On one occasion, when riding Cottager, and hunting with a new draft from the Hambleton Hounds, he found

a fox near Beauford Moor and pressed him in covert so sharply that he turned short and broke away, unknown to Russell, down wind. Losing sight of the pack, and fancying he viewed a tail-hound at the extreme end of the moor, he rode there and found an Irish packman, Peter Dougan by name, standing on a bank, and blown by the chase, but still staring after it with bated breath and longing eyes.

"Have you seen the hounds, my man?" Russell inquired.

"Iss, your honour; they're just ahead, running like a peal of bells."

"Then jump up behind me, pack and all," said Russell, charmed with the man's enthusiasm for hunting. "Jump up, and you shall see a bit more of the sport."

"Bedad then," said Peter, "that I'll do"; and as Russell pulled Cottager up to the bank, Peter and his pack took their place behind the cantle, notwithstanding the broad hints of displeasure displayed by the horse, which kicked furiously, never stopping till he had fairly floored Peter and his pack.

Not long after, when Russell was riding his horse Monkey, Peter again met him, and said he had a great favour to ask, and that was, that he would allow him to ride that horse over a five-barred gate, with his hands tied behind his back, his face to the horse's tail, and without saddle or bridle. "And," said Peter entreatingly, "I'll give ye my pack, sir, if ye'll let me do it; and, by me sowl, 'tis worth five pounds."

Russell inquired why he was so anxious to do this, pointing out to him the danger.

"Faix, your honour," replied Peter, "I should like to tell 'em what I've done in England when I get back to the Ould Country."

Monkey with hounds, and in a good temper, would jump any ordinary five-barred gate, but otherwise wouldn't rise at a fender. "Had I granted his request," said Russell, "the horse would have broken Peter's neck for a certainty."

Once, when he brought his hounds into Cornwall for his annual fortnight there, whilst racing their fox to the boundary fence of the moor above Trebartha, the hounds

viewed, and instantly, as if by magic, they and the fox vanished from sight. It seemed to the foremost riders—Mr Charles Trelawney, Mr Phillips, Mr Harris, Mr Coryton, and Mr Tom Hext (who was the first to view him)—that the earth had swallowed them up. And such was the case. The shaft of an old mine lay open, and they had fallen into it.

The fox, indeed, with the activity of a wild beast, had clambered on to a broken beam; but three of the leading hounds were swimming about in the dark water at the bottom of the mine, some seven fathoms deep; while the rest of the pack had stopped short of the abyss.

“Gone to ground with a vengeance!” exclaimed Phillips, with bitter emphasis, dreading the loss of his hounds.

In a few minutes some miners appeared on the scene, but not a man of them dared go down. Not so, however, Jack Russell, who, with a knotted rope in one hand and his hunting-whip in the other, lowered himself to the beam on which the fox was crouching. Then running the thong through the keeper of his whip and fixing the noose round the animal’s neck, he shouted to those above to haul him up.

“Save him, Phillips; he deserves his life,” said Russell, when he and the fox had safely arrived above ground; but Phillips firmly said “No,” and tossed him to the hounds.

Then, to save the three brave brutes now struggling in the pit, Russell again prepared to descend; but Colonel (afterwards Sir Walter) Gilbert persuaded a miner, by the bribe of a capful of silver, to go down with a rope round his waist to bring the hounds, one by one, safely “to bank.”

Russell was once having a day with Sir Walter Carew’s hounds, when, as they were running their fox sharply near Romansleigh village, he saw the fox catch up a large yellow cat in his mouth and carry him on as far as he could view him. The fox was killed, but what became of the poor cat I am unable to say.

CHAPTER XXIII
THE PERILS AND PENALTIES OF
HUNTING

EVERY season the hunting-field claims its victims. Still, "those who play at bowls must expect rubbers," and those who follow hounds must count upon falls. But, after all, a fall in the hunting-field is not necessarily serious. Assheton Smith had falls without end, yet he never broke a bone. Another famous fox-hunter, Captain John White, was less fortunate, and broke nearly every bone in his body; yet these accidents only made him ride the harder, and, as he hunted until he was 77, they can hardly be said to have shortened his days.

The odd thing is that most of the fatal accidents in the hunting-field have not occurred during fast runs or under circumstances in which there was peril to life and limb. Whyte-Melville met his death when quietly trotting from one covert to another. The Earl of Cardigan, leader of the charge of the Six Hundred, was thrown from a restive colt in a country lane, when hounds were nowhere near, and broke his neck. And if space permitted I could quote many similar instances.

But the cry against the danger of hunting is no new thing. Nearly a hundred years ago Peter Beckford thus scornfully discussed the objection to his favourite sport on the ground of the alleged dangers attending it:—

"To those who think the danger which attends upon hunting a great objection to the pursuit of it I must beg leave to observe that the accidents which are occasioned by it are very few. I will venture to say that more bad accidents happen to shooters in one year than to those who follow the hounds in seven. The most famous huntsman

of his time, after having hunted a pack of hounds unhurt for several years, lost his life at last by a fall from his horse as he was returning home. A surgeon of my acquaintance has assured me that in thirty years' practice in a sporting country he had not once an opportunity of setting a bone for a sportsman, although ten packs of hounds were kept in the neighbourhood. This gentleman, surely, must have been much out of luck, or hunting cannot be so dangerous as it is thought."

Another objection to hunting is the damage done to the crops. The late Mr Delmé Radcliffe, however, stoutly maintained that this was a popular fallacy, and gave the following among other instances of the benefits which farmers derived from the trampling of their fields by the followers of hounds.

"I was expressing," he says, "my opinion upon this topic very lately to Lord Gage, and was rejoiced to find one so competent to judge of agricultural matters thoroughly agreeing with me. He assured me that on his estate in Sussex he had a field last season sown with a peculiar sort of wheat remarkable for its tenderness, and on that account he had endeavoured to preserve it, but found this impossible. The hounds frequently ran over it, and upon one occasion killed their fox in the centre, followed, of course, by every horse within reach of the scene. To his surprise, the crop very much exceeded his utmost expectations, and was thicker and finer on and around the spot where, by the death of the fox, it had been more trampled upon than in any other part." I wish that all farmers would see the thing in the same light.

Delmé Radcliffe died comparatively recently, and yet when one comes across such a passage as this in his well-known book *The Noble Science*, he seems removed from the present generation by a century. Writing of the introduction of railways, he says:—

"But when we consider the magnitude of the convulsion which this mighty railway delusion will effect; the thousands of human beings thrown out of employ; the incalculable diminution in the number of horses, and the consequent deficiency in demand for agricultural produce—not to men-

tion the enormous deduction from the revenue consequent upon the abolition of the post-horse duties—when we think of its varied and multitudinous bearings upon the present state of society; and add to all this the fact that in no quarter of the globe were the means of travelling established on so admirable a basis as hitherto in this country; that, like the dog and the shadow, we are about to cast away the substance of good for the sake of catching at a chance of problematical good, in the opinion of some, and fraught with positive evil in the estimation of many: when we reflect on these things we cannot but wonder at the blindness which has countenanced the growth of a monster which will rend the vitals of those by whom it has been fostered.”¹

Alas, poor prophet, how ludicrously events falsified his predictions in his own lifetime! If railways have interfered with fox-hunting, it is in a very different fashion from what the “Country Squire” imagined.

I have heard the scarcity of foxes attributed to the scale on which pheasants are now preserved for big shoots. But I am bound to say that, at any rate in the county in which I reside, the proprietors of the shootings deal very fairly with the hunting-men.

If this decrease in foxes continues, hunting-men will have to fall back upon the much-despised “bag-man,” which I would remind them can be pursued with both economy and enthusiasm. The Rev. Jack Russell brought the hunting of bag-foxes to a science, on the same principle as the hunting of carted deer adopted by the Masters of the Royal Buckhounds. This is the way he and his friend Mr Templer used to manage with their bag-foxes.

When a “bag-man” was to be turned out, it was always done in view of the hounds, Templer standing among them with his hunting-watch open in his hand; nor was a hound permitted to stir till fair law had been allowed.

The business, then, was to save the fox alive; and whether he were a wild fox or a “bag-man,” such was the hard riding, and such the obedience of the hounds to a

¹ Much the same sort of wild talk is heard at present with regard to motors.

“rate,” that, nine times out of ten, the animal was picked up before them without injury. Blood was a finale to which, at home, they were never treated, and yet a harder-driving lot never entered a covert. But as “Nimrod” after his visit to Stover tells us, to show that Mr Templer’s hounds can kill foxes when suffered to do so, whilst they were at North Molton, hunting alternate days with Mr Fellowes’s or Sir Arthur Chichester’s hounds, they killed three brace of foxes in four days.

And excellent sport these bag-foxes afforded. A favourite “bag-man,” who gave them many a good run, was named the “Bold Dragoon.” He had been turned out in the Vale of Teigngrace, and crossing the river Teign, then flooded by heavy rains, was leading the pack at a rattling pace in the direction of Ugbrook Park, when the field was brought to a sudden check at sight of a brimming river. The ford, known to a few, was invisible, and the only bridge was more than a mile away. The fate of the “Bold Dragoon” was a certainty if there were no one up to rate the hounds; and his Colossus mare was scarcely more valued by Templer than that fox.

“Go for Jew’s Bridge,” shouted a cautious member of the hunt; “that’s our only chance of catching the hounds.” And away went the field helter-skelter in that direction—every man of them except Templer.

Seeing a flight of rails close to the river bank, and concluding they were placed there to prevent cattle from crossing the ford, Templer rode the mare straight at them, thinking to land perhaps up to his girths in the stream. But the spot proved to be one of the deepest pools in the Teign. Horse and rider disappeared; but the latter, having been an expert swimmer at Eton, soon came to the surface, and, striking out vigorously, gained the opposite bank. But great was his dismay on looking round to find that his mare was nowhere to be seen; and, for some seconds, Templer felt assured that the horse had been stunned, and had gone to the bottom like a stone.

Happily, the hoofs first, and then the legs of the animal, gradually appeared above water; and then, as the body grounded on the gravelly ford twenty yards below, which

Templer had failed to hit, he discovered that his mare's forelegs had been caught by the reins, and that every time she struck out she jerked her head under water. To plunge into the stream and cut the reins was the work of a second, when the brave beast jumped on her legs. Templer vaulted into the saddle and rode off in pursuit of the hounds.

A fever he had caught at Eton had destroyed his hair, and he always wore a sand-coloured wig. Wig and hat, however, were carried away to sea, and he was discovered scudding away under bare poles; nor, like the moss-trooper of old, did he "slacken his rein or stint to ride" till he had picked up the fox and bagged him alive.

The spirit of the fox-hunting enthusiast nothing can quell, and it has never been better exemplified than in the case of Joe Maiden, the famous huntsmen of the Cheshire Hounds. One day, while giving some directions to his boiler-man about the hounds' food, Joe slipped with both legs into the copper where the mess was seething: he was out again in an instant, and apparently little injured; but when the stocking of his right leg came to be removed part of the calf literally came away with it, leaving the bone exposed. The torture he endured after that was excruciating. The leg was broken once, if not twice, when he was out with his hounds. Pieces of the bone were continually coming away, until the limb seemed only kept together by ligaments and diachylon plaster. And yet, under all this martyrdom, riding with one stirrup shorter than the other, Joe Maiden often hunted six days a week and did not close an eye all night. Each year that followed he had to add an inch to the heel of his boot, until, catching a chill one wet morning, mortification set in and Joe had to part with his leg to save his life. This was in November 1855, and by Christmas he was so wasted that his wife could carry him from room to room. However, he furnished himself with two artificial legs, one for walking, the other for riding; for he found that he could not ride with the walking leg, and could not walk with the riding leg. At last he got the "Patent American Leg," which weighed only $3\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. (without its appurtenances),

and after that he was able to hunt the hounds almost as well as ever. On his famous horse Peverott few could equal Joe at jumping. Once, when he had slipped all the rest of the field, finding that one persistent rider was catching him, he dashed up a lane, and cleared five big gates in close succession. After which Lord Delamere offered to back Joe and Peverott for 1000 guineas against any man and horse in England to negotiate the stiffest part of the Cheshire country; but the challenge was never accepted.

Most fox-hunters have been long-lived, and many have attained patriarchal age: preserving their vigour, too, in a marvellous manner. John Warde, "the father of fox-hunting," hunted the Craven when he was seventy-six. Thomas Assheton Smith rode hard to hounds till he was past eighty, and only a few months before he completed his eightieth year had three heavy falls in one day when out with the Tedworth, yet seemed as little shaken as if he had been a hard-riding undergraduate from Oxford or Cambridge. The then Lord Wilton rode straight and well long after he had passed the Psalmist's span. "The other Tom Smith," of Hambledon, could hold his own with the best, and take bad falls with nonchalance, when he was nearer eighty than seventy. Colonel Anstruther Thomson rode to hounds when an octogenarian. My old friend Colonel Bethune hunted three days a week when he was eighty. But even these vigorous veterans were not equal to "Jack" Russell, of Devon, who led the field in a fine run with the Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds when he was within three months of his eighty-sixth birthday!

As to those dangers of the hunting-field to which I have referred, it is comforting to the fox-hunter to reflect that there are more perils lurking in the streets of London than in the worst hunting-country in the three kingdoms. Anthony Trollope used to calculate that there were more fatal accidents in the streets of London in a year than there were in the hunting-field in a century. He declared that he always felt safer when riding to hounds than when crossing the Strand or Regent Street. And if ever there

were a reckless rider it was the author of *Barchester Towers*. He tells us in his *Autobiography* that, being short-sighted, "I have either to follow someone or ride at a fence with the full conviction that I may be either going into a horse-pond or a gravel-pit. I have jumped into both the one and the other." And he adds: "Few have investigated more closely than I have done the depth and breadth and water-holding capacities of an Essex ditch. It will, I think, be accorded to me by Essex men that I have ridden hard; I am very heavy, and have never ridden expensive horses. I am also getting old now for such work, being so stiff that I cannot get upon my horse without the aid of a block or bank. Yet I ride after the same fashion, determined to be ahead, hating the roads and with a feeling that life cannot with all its riches have given me anything better than when I have gone through a long run to the finish."

That is a fine, breezy tribute to the invigorating effects of fox-hunting; and let it be borne in mind that Anthony Trollope hunted in that reckless style for thirty years and never had a bone in his body broken.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY JUMP ON RECORD

THE other day I met an old gentleman in Northamptonshire who, in his youth, had jumped into a quarry when out with hounds—as the present Lord Coventry has also done—and, though his horse was killed on the spot, he escaped with a broken leg.

The following adventure of General Moore's, however, the veracity of which is attested by the word of a British officer, will, I think, stand for a good many more years as a record, although, as will be seen, it was not connected with hunting in any shape or form. Here is the statement :—

“UNITED SERVICE CLUB,
“18th March 1860.

“In June 1848, at the island of Dominica, in the West Indies, I fell over a precipice of two hundred and thirty-seven feet, perpendicular height, upon the rocks by the seaside. This occurred about a quarter past seven o'clock p.m., then quite dark, as no twilight exists in the tropics. Every bone of my horse was broken, and I conceive my escape from instant death the most miraculous that ever occurred. My recovery from the shock I sustained was also as miraculous as my escape with life. I sent an artist to take a drawing of the spot, and also had the place surveyed by an engineer. I have often thought of putting down all the circumstances of that extraordinary accident, but the fear of being taken for a Baron Munchausen has restrained me. I do not expect that anyone will believe it, although there are many living witnesses. Nor do I expect any sympathy ; for, as soon as I could hold a pen, I detailed

the catastrophe to my mother to account for my long silence. I received in reply in due course a long letter detailing family news, without any allusion to my unfortunate case except in a postscript, in which she merely said, '*Oh William, I wish you would give up riding after dinner!*'

“WM. YORK MOORE, Major-Gen.

“*P.S.*—During the fall I stuck to my horse.”

The fall, or leap, or whatever you like to call it, took place, however, *before* dinner, so that the old lady's suspicions were ill-founded. The details of this extraordinary adventure were as follows: Colonel William York Moore, while commanding the troops in Dominica, lost his way one evening after sunset. In complete darkness he endeavoured to make his way home. Two or three times he had considerable difficulty in making his horse cross obstacles on the way, but at last they came to something which the horse would not face. Colonel Moore was a fearless rider, and time after time he turned his horse and rode him at full speed against the unknown obstacle, but in vain. At last, urged fiercely by whip and spur, the terrified animal, with a snort of terror, cleared the low hedge—for such it proved to be—in front, and went over the awful precipice. Colonel Moore says that, during his flight on horseback through the air, almost every event of his life flashed across his mind as distinctly and vividly as if they were being actually re-enacted. The faces of all his relatives and friends rose up before him—his whole life seemed mapped out in a luminous panorama before him—when suddenly there came a terrific concussion, which deprived him of his senses and left him with his legs in the sea and his body on the rock, apparently dead.

He must have lain there stunned for some hours, for when at last the lapping water and cool breeze restored him to his senses the moon was shining brightly in mid-heaven, and its beams fell on the upturned, glittering shoes of his gallant horse, which lay dead and mangled beside him.

As soon as he had collected his scattered wits, Colonel Moore coolly began to examine himself to ascertain what injuries he had sustained. The result of his investigation

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was the pleasing discovery that he was severely cut about the body and head, that his right ankle was dislocated, and that his back was benumbed or paralysed by the concussion of his fall. When, however, the long-wished-for sun arose, it shone upon his bare, bleeding head with such intolerable heat that, as a protection from its rays, he transferred his cotton handkerchief to his scalp and forehead, leaving sticking up above them the two ends, which, like the remainder, were stained crimson with his blood.

After lying in horrible pain for several hours, to his great joy he spied a boat full of natives rowing towards the spot where he lay. As they came near, he hailed them in a faint voice; but the moment their eyes fell on the ghastly figure of the Colonel, with his strange head-dress, they set up a yell, and rowed away as if twenty thousand devils were after them, and never paused till a projecting tongue of land hid them from view. After some time a single black man came clambering over the rocks, intent only on catching fish. He was within a few yards of the Colonel, when the latter hailed him. But the moment the nigger caught sight of the bleeding head and blood-stained bandages, he uttered a yell as wild as his comrades had done, flung down his rod and line, and made tracks over the rocks as fast as his feet and hands could carry him.

The Colonel began to despair of ever receiving assistance, and resigned himself to the prospect of a lingering death. But, fortunately, his English servant, alarmed at his master's absence, went in search of him, and, after tracking the horse's hoofs for hours, at last came to the edge of the precipice. This, taken in conjunction with the sudden cessation of the hoof-prints and the signs of trampling near the low fence, convinced him that an accident had happened. He therefore ran to the barracks; a boat was procured and manned by eager soldiers, who pulled lustily towards the foot of the cliff. Very tenderly and carefully they lifted their Colonel into the boat, and rowed him back to the barracks. He was borne to his quarters on a stretcher, and for some months he lay in great pain and danger. But in due course the paralysed muscles of his back recovered, and eventually he was restored to

complete health, and not even the slightest touch of lameness remained to remind him of his fall.

The story of this marvellous feat spread like wildfire through the West Indies, and for some months afterwards the negroes drove quite a brisk trade in the sale of portions of the saddle, strips of the horse's hide, and shreds of the Colonel's dress which had been torn off by projecting trees in the terrible descent. The horse was literally smashed to pulp. That, I think, is the most marvellous leap on horseback ever made by any man who lived to tell the tale. I had some slight knowledge of Colonel, afterwards General Moore, who was a familiar figure at the Carlton Club more than thirty years ago; and, from the high character he bore, I have no doubt that his story is, in every particular, strictly true.

There have been some remarkable jumps of a less sensational character than that of General Moore, but taken in cold blood and with intention. Of these, Chandler's famous leap at Warwick, when he took 39 ft. in his stride, is generally accepted as the biggest on record. But there have been others scarcely less notable. Turnip, a son of Pot8os, cleared the height of 5 ft. 10 in. in Phoenix Park, but afterwards far surpassed that feat by leaping over Hyde Park wall at Grosvenor Gate, a height of 6 ft. 6 in., with a drop of 8 ft. on the other side. Cecil Forester, who weighed 14 st., once made an extraordinary jump on his splendid hunter Bernardo; the horse, carrying that welter-weight, cleared a stream 32 ft. across, and landed cleanly on the opposite bank. How fine a horseman Forester was may be gathered from the following:—"When at about half a field's distance from him," writes an eye-witness, "I saw him take each fence as it came. 'That's nothing, at all events,' I repeatedly said to myself. But I was as often deceived on coming up to them and finding them very big. And neither Forester nor his horse seemed to exert themselves any more to get over these strong bullock-fences than they would in clearing a small ditch. But I was told it was all the effect of hand, and not allowing the horse to leap a foot higher or farther than necessary."

Jack Mytton's feats of jumping on horseback also

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reached the marvellous at times. Coming home from a day with hounds once, he leapt a brook 27 ft. wide, and followed that with a flying jump over a deer-park hurdle 8 ft. high, finishing up with a third leap over a drive gate 7 ft. in height.

One of the most extraordinary high leaps ever taken was that by a hack belonging to the late Earl of Wemyss. A groom was riding this horse to the post-office for letters one day, and on the road took up behind him a travelling glazier whom he knew. No sooner, however, had the latter mounted, than the hack, frightened at the rattling of the squares of glass slung on the glazier's back, got beyond control, dashed wildly along the road, and, coming up to a toll-bar 5 ft. 6 in. high, with spikes on the top, the horse—although never known to jump before—cleared it at a stride, without injury to himself, his riders, or any breakage of glass!

An old friend and journalistic colleague of mine, whose veracity I have no reason to doubt, in an article contributed to a newspaper of which I was the editor, said:—

“About sixty years since an Arabian horse, when being led through the streets of Greenock, broke loose from his groom, and, galloping with such headlong speed towards the dry dock there that he was unable to stop himself when he came to the brink, boldly leaped down, and alighted safely on the flagged bottom, 34 ft. below. After trotting about some time in search of an exit, apparently none the worse for the big jump he had involuntarily taken, he espied the narrow, steep steps used by the shipwrights, and by these soon mounted again to the top, not having even sprained a sinew in either effort. That was a *steep* jump! But an equally remarkable long leap was taken by a nag belonging to Mr Cunningham, of Craigend, who, with his owner up, cleared the canal between Glasgow and Paisley, a width of 33 ft., the horse covering in the jump about 2 yards more, or 39 ft. altogether.”

Of course, our American cousins whenever we make a record are bound to “go one better.” Consequently, I was not surprised to find the following paragraph in a New York journal:—

“Mr Meneller, of Dickel's Riding Academy, the other day,

in Central Park, lost control of the young mare he was driving, and she bolted wildly towards the Eighth Avenue exit. Alive to the danger, Mr Meneller headed the mare towards a stone wall that separates the park from Fifty-ninth Street, thinking that the mere sight of the obstacle would stop the animal. But, instead of coming to a stop, she 'took off' and cleared the ditch and wall, landing on the side-walk of Fifty-ninth Street, her hind feet on the 'balustrade,' and the dogcart in a perpendicular position against the wall, the measurement of which is 7 ft. 11 in. She 'took' from a bank 10 in. high, the length of the leap being 11 ft."

Comment upon that phenomenal feat is unnecessary. One can only exclaim with Dominic Sampson, "Prodigious!"

CHAPTER XXV

DRIVING AND TROTTING

AS I was reading the diary of Colonel Peter Hawker I was struck with the constant reference to the sport he enjoyed whilst travelling by stage-coach. For example, descriptive of a journey by mail-coach to Exeter:—"We were a delightfully jolly party, and, not being post day, the mail stopped whenever we saw game, and during the journey I killed four brace of partridges. When it was too dark to shoot, our party mounted the roof and sang choruses, in which the guard and coachman took a very able part."

There were fast coaches and slow coaches in the old days. The Edinburgh mail ran 400 miles in 40 hours, stoppages included. The Exeter day coach did 173 miles in 17 hours, and the Devonport mail 227 miles in 22 hours; but the Shrewsbury and Chester "Highflyer" usually took from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to do its 40 miles over a good road. It was a free and easy, no-hurry sort of coach. If a commercial traveller wanted to do a little business on the road, or a gentleman wanted to call upon a friend, the coachman was always willing to pull up and bide their time. There were houses of call where half an hour soon slipped away with a pleasant landlord or pretty barmaid. Then there was the dinner at Wrexham, for which two hours were allowed; and at the end of that time coachie would thrust his jolly face in at the door and say, "The coach is ready, gen'l'men; but if yer wish for another bottle, don't let me disturb yer."

The costume of the celebrated Driving Club, when it met in Hyde Park in 1811, would very much surprise the coaching clubmen of the present day. A light, drab-

coloured cloth coat made full and single-breasted, with three tiers of pockets, the skirts reaching to the ankles, and mother-of-pearl buttons the size of a crown piece ; a blue-and-yellow striped waistcoat, each stripe an inch wide ; cord silk and plush breeches made to button over the calf of each leg, with sixteen strings and rosettes to each knee ; the boots were short, and finished with very broad straps that hung over the tops and down to the ankle ; a hat three and a half inches deep in the crown only, and the same depth in the brim ; and each driver with a large bouquet at his breast.

Sir John Lade, who was one of the best whips of his day, for a wager drove a four-in-hand into the old yard at Tattersalls and out again without touching either wall or grass plot. This was thought a great feat then, as the entrance was through a narrow passage and down an inclined drive, at the bottom of which was a sharp turn by the "Turf Tap." Another covered gateway then led into the auction yard, round which Sir John drove and got out again without brushing against brick or blade of grass on either side, and won.

But quite as difficult an achievement was accomplished by Sam Page, the driver of the Winchester mail, on 16th September 1795. Mr Lackington the bookseller had a dispute with Mr Willan the horse-dealer about the size of his (Mr Lackington's) shop, the Temple of the Muses, Finsbury Square, which the proprietor said was large enough to allow a coach and four to drive round it. As each was positive the other was wrong, a bet of 500 guineas was made, and Sam Page was selected by the bookseller to decide it. On the day named the Winchester mail-coach, full of passengers, was driven in, round, and out of Lackington's shop without doing the least damage, the proprietor in his own carriage following the mail. Sam Page was presented with 20 guineas by the winner of the wager for having accomplished the feat. Mr Willan, the loser, owed his success in life to having, when ostler at the Rutland Arms, Newmarket, recommended the Duke of Cumberland to buy a mare who was afterwards the dam of Marske, the sire of the celebrated

Eclipse. As Willan had previously got him a capital mount, the Duke started him in business in London as a dealer, and subsequently got the ex-ostler the contract for supplying the British cavalry and artillery with horses.

A favourite pastime in those days was trotting—not the highly elaborated sport now practised in America, but a much less ambitious test of a horse's speed at that pace—and matches were frequently made to trot against the crack express coaches. Burke, of trotting celebrity, laid a wager that his pony would trot from Bedford to London and back—a distance of 52 miles—in less time than the "Times" coach, which did the distance at the rate of $10\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, without a pause between the down journey and the up. When within 9 miles of Bedford on the return, the pony broke down and had to be shot. On another occasion he trotted two ponies from London—the Bolt-in-Tun Inn, Fleet Street—to Hereford, a distance of 137 miles, against the "Mazeppa," and arrived at his destination 12 minutes before the coach, doing the journey in 14 hours and 11 minutes.

Burke, by the way, was one of the principals in an amateur prize-fight for £100 a side, which created great excitement in the sporting world. His antagonist was a gentleman jockey named Chilcott. They fought for two hours and a quarter under the rules of the Prize Ring, at Grays in Essex, on the 4th of October 1842, and Chilcott won.

In 1791 a trotting match took place upon the Romford road, between Mr Bishop's brown mare, eighteen years old, and Mr Green's chestnut gelding, six years old, 12 st. each, for 50 guineas a side; they were to trot 16 miles, which the mare did with ease in 66 min. 10 sec. The same year a trotting match took place from Lynn Gates, 7 miles on the Downham road, and back to the gates (14 miles), by a noted horse called Shuffler, the property of Mr Kent of Unwell, in Norfolk, against time, for 200 guineas. The horse carried 18 st., and was allowed an hour, but performed it in $56\frac{1}{2}$ min. In 1793 a Mr Shipway, of Hoxton, trotted his pony Jack, ten hands high, 12 miles on the Kingsland road. He took 10 guineas to 5 that he

did not cover the distance in less than an hour, and Jack did it in $41\frac{1}{2}$ min.

In 1796 the Honourable Mr Cavendish betted another gentleman 200 guineas that he would trot his English mare 15 miles over the Curragh in one hour, and accomplished the feat in $51\frac{1}{2}$ min. A brown gelding once trotted a mile on the Denham and Norwich road in 2 min. 49 sec. One of the best trotting matches on record was that for 100 guineas between Charles Herbert and Richard Wilson. The bet was that Mr Herbert's horse could not trot 17 miles an hour on the Highgate road (which, as everybody knows, is the hilliest outside of London), to start from St. Giles's Church. Six o'clock in the morning was the time chosen, as the road was then free, and the task was actually accomplished in 1 min. 20 sec. under time.

In the year 1797 a gelding belonging to a pork-butcher in the Blackfriars Road, whose daily employment was to run in a cart, was matched against time to trot on the Romford road, 12 miles an hour, for 5 guineas. The appearance of the poor animal was so miserable that considerable odds at starting were laid against it—20 guineas to 5. Yet, notwithstanding his meagre appearance, the gelding did the distance in 58 min. 57 sec.

But these sink into insignificance in comparison with the wonderful achievements of trained trotting horses in America, where the time for a mile has been reduced to 2 min. 2 sec. The present holder of the record, Crescens, is credited with 2 min. $2\frac{3}{4}$ sec., and possibly I may live to see the mile trotted in even time. Indeed, the pacing mile has already been done in 1 min. $50\frac{1}{4}$ sec., by Star Pointer, in 1897.

Lady Suffolk's record of 2 min. 28 sec. in 1849 was thought nothing short of miraculous, and it was generally prophesied that this time for the mile would never be beaten. How utterly wide of the mark that prophecy was I have already shown. Of Maud S. the same was prophesied. This mare belonged to Mr Vanderbilt, who gave 20,000 dollars for her, and was afterwards offered 25,000 dollars by a patent pill vendor if he would change her name to that of the medicine he was advertising.

Maud S. lowered the time from 2 min. 12 sec. to 2 min. 8½ sec., and from 1880 to 1885 held the record.

I suppose there are few things in which Cousin Jonathan does not think that he can give John Bull a wrinkle or two. He certainly opened our British eyes, and wiped them too, when he sent the *America* over to show her heels to the fastest yachts our played-out old country could produce. Then Captain Bogardus came, and beat all our crack pigeon-shots; and, lastly, Tod Sloan came to teach our jockeys how to ride. Under these circumstances it is soothing to our wounded vanity to realise the fact that time was when John Bull could teach Jonathan a lesson or two in the matter of running horses at any rate.

Talking about American racehorses reminds me of Diomed, the winner of the first Derby. In the year following that event he started in the principal race at Nottingham with long odds on him, and was beaten by Lord Grosvenor's Fortitude, a far inferior horse. Some nasty remarks were made by the losers on the occasion, and Sir Charles Bunbury quarrelled with and dismissed his jockey. In the same year, however, Diomed was beaten at Newmarket by Colonel O'Kelly's Boudrow, who had come in second to him in the first Derby, and in disgust Sir Charles refused to let him run in 1782. Next year Diomed started seven times, but only won once, and, falling lame, was turned out of training and sent to the stud, where he was the sire of many illustrious horses. In 1793 he was sold for 50 guineas to an American, who shortly after landing him in the States sold him for 1000. And Diomed, who lived to the age of 40, became the father of the American Turf; for there is scarcely a famous trotter or racer, from Florida to Maine, that does not trace its descent from the winner of the first Derby. As an instance, Foxhall, who in 1881 won the Grand Prix de Paris, the Cesarewitch, and the Cambridgeshire, was a descendant of the mighty Lexington, one of the progeny of Diomed.

CHAPTER XXVI

SOME NOTABLE HORSE-BREAKERS

ONE of the most famous horse-breakers and trainers of the last generation was Seffart, Master of the Horse to the Margrave of Anspach. Once, when Lord Rivers was staying with the Marquis of Bute, the former remarked upon a splendid-looking thoroughbred being led by a groom. "Oh, that brute," said the Marquis; "he's going to the kennel for the hounds to eat. There is no managing him; he has killed one groom, and maimed several."

"Send him to my friend Seffart," answered Lord Rivers; "if he had killed forty men he'd tame him." Accordingly, the horse was sent to Seffart, at Bath, and after a while the trainer made him one of the most perfect-mannered horses in England. "I remember," said his son, when telling the story, "seeing him lie down with my father in the road. He only said, 'My poor fellow, it's a pity you give yourself so much trouble. You'll have to get up with me again.' And so he did. He never hit him, but just waited, and the horse got up with him at last."

"My father," adds his son, "was very patient in breaking horses—though that is a wrong term: they don't want to be broken, but to be taught what you want them to do. At the same time, my father was determined that they should do what was required of them, and, when they had done it, always rewarded them with a piece of sugar, carrot, or something that they liked, and he never made them repeat anything so as to sicken them of it. When he was certain they knew what was wanted of them and would not do it, he would give them one smart blow across the neck with a cane. He said, 'If you do hit them, make them feel it'; and he thought a blow round the neck had more effect than any-

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where else, as it startled them more. Whips and spurs are bad things: they do more harm than good. There are as many touches on a horse's mouth as there are notes on a pianoforte; but it's no use if you haven't the head to use them at the right time, and don't know how to apply them."

In consequence of a young lady having eloped from his riding-school with one of those heiress-hunters with whom Bath used to abound, Seffart made it a rule to receive gentlemen from ten to twelve, ladies from twelve to two.

Among the Irish adventurers at Bath on the look-out for impressionable heiresses was a certain Captain O'Flanagan, who followed with great assiduity the daughter of a rich soap-boiler who was taking lessons of Seffart. As the above-mentioned elopement had already got Seffart into hot water, he now kept a sharp look-out and abided strictly by his rule of separating the sexes during exercise hours. One day Captain O'Flanagan, who had purchased a ticket for the season, strolled in at a quarter to twelve.

"You can only ride fifteen minutes, sir," said Seffart.

"All right," was his reply.

Doubting his sincerity, however, Seffart put him upon a tricky horse called Fortunatus. As the clock struck twelve the trainer said, "Time's up, Captain."

"I shall not go. I pay for two hours, and two hours I shall have," was the cool reply.

"But you agreed to go at twelve."

"Then I've changed my mind."

"But I haven't," said Seffart quietly. "Now am I to treat you as a gentleman or a blackguard?"

"What do you mean, you scoundrel?" roared the Milesian.

"The ladies are waiting," pursued the trainer; "will you go?"

"I'll see you d——d first," was the response.

Seffart said no more to the Captain, but called, "Hi! Fortunatus; up lad," and made a sign with his whip. In an instant Fortunatus reared bolt upright, and the next moment was on all fours again and striking out with his hind legs. The most perfect equitation could not stand

such a trial, and the Captain alighted on the tan on his head.

"Now, take that fellow out," said Seffart, and before O'Flanagan knew where he was, two grooms caught him up in their arms like a bundle of straw, and, carrying him thus through the waiting ladies, dropped him into the road. When he picked himself out of the mud, he had the mortification of seeing Miss Soapboiler laughing heartily at his discomfiture.

But the king of horse-tamers was, without doubt, the famous J. S. Rarey, who made his first appearance in England in the year 1858. His story is a curious one.

He was a farmer in Ohio, U.S.A., and from the time he was a lad had devoted himself to breaking and taming colts, and, after some years, was so successful in subjugating even the most vicious horses that he published a book describing in full his method of dealing with horses in a humane and effective way. His work, however, in a part of the world where everyone is, or was, supposed to know how to manage the greatest "cuss" on four legs that ever was foaled, did not pay for publishing; but, by a fortunate accident for him, a copy of the book fell into the hands of Mr Goodenough, a horse-dealer in Toronto, who, with the cuteness of a New Englander, saw there was money in the notion were it worked properly.

Mr Goodenough therefore wrote to the Ohio farmer, saying he would run the affair and give half profits, if Mr Rarey would go to England and show his power of horse-taming; to which the latter, anxious to set his foot upon English soil, agreed.

Wisely concluding that a copy of a Far-West American book could never have reached this part of the world, the guide, philosopher, and friend of Mr Rarey obtained an interview with General Eyre, then commanding in Canada; and, as the Toronto dealer was a man who could talk a milestone into the belief that all he said was gospel, the General, after witnessing one of Rarey's exhibitions, gave him a letter of introduction to the highest personages here. Some years afterwards Mr Goodenough said to a friend of mine: "The reason I succeeded so well in my Rarey

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speculation was that I went first to Buckingham Palace, and then slid down upon the aristocracy and all below them."

Mr Goodenough made friends, after that, with Mr Joseph Henderson, of Piccadilly; and with his general-in-chief, Mr George Rice, he, through Rarey, established a reputation by taming a black thoroughbred horse, which had been returned on the dealer's hands by Sir Matthew White Ridley as a brute that could neither be ridden, driven, nor groomed, through "pure cussedness." Having thus secured a foothold, Mr Goodenough, for self and partner, managed to get the Messrs Tattersall on his side, who, seeing there was a good deal in the system, especially as it might do away with much cruelty and unnecessary severity in the breaking-in of well-bred, high-spirited animals, gave Mr Rarey their full support. A subscription list was opened, terms 10 guineas per member, the members to number 500 at least, and agree not to divulge the secret to outsiders under the penalty of £500. Of this fund Messrs Tattersall became the treasurers.

But, despite this distinguished patronage, the Rarey scheme was a failure, and the subscription list did not half fill until the sensational triumph over Cruiser, which came about in the following way.

In the *Morning Post* of 2nd March 1858 there appeared the following challenge:—

"Mr Rarey is a public man, and of course exposed to criticism. Some of his experiments have been successful, but there has not been time enough to develop whether the docility of those horses upon which he has operated is as durable as he alleges. If, however, he would 'walk over the course' and set criticism at defiance, let him go down one morning to Marrels Green, with a few of his aristocratic friends, and try Cruiser, and if he can ride him as a hack I guarantee him immortality and an amount of money that would make a British Bank director's mouth water. The initiated will not be surprised at my selecting Cruiser; but, as the public may be ignorant of him, I will append some particulars of his history. Cruiser was the property of Lord Dorchester, and was a favourite for the Derby in Wild Dayrell's year, but broke down about a month before

the race. Like all horses of Venison's blood, his temper was not of the mildest kind, and his owner was glad to get rid of him. When started for Rawcliffe the man who had him in charge was told on no account to put him in a stable as he would never get him out. Of course, the injunction was disregarded; for, when the man wanted some refreshment he put Cruiser in the public stable and left him, and to get him out the roof had to be ripped off. At Rawcliffe, Cruiser was always exhibited by a groom with a ticket-of-leave bludgeon in his hand, and few were bold enough to venture into the animal's enclosure," etc.

This, however, was but a poor description of the doings of this amiable animal. For months he had been tormented by a huge bit, his head encased in a complication of iron bars and plates, and his body loaded with chains; he once broke an iron bar an inch in diameter in two with his teeth, smashed the heavy planks of his stall to splinters, and would kick and scream and yell for ten minutes together as though possessed by a demon.

Knowing all this, and without a moment's hesitation, Rarey accepted the challenge, and, accompanied only by Lord Dorchester, proceeded to the encounter. "Whatever happens, my lord," he said, "don't you speak or interfere. At least, not till you see me down under his feet and him worrying me."

This compact made, he resolutely walked into the arena, which consisted of a loose box divided by a half-door of some four feet or more in height. Stepping quietly up to it, he leaned his arm upon this barrier, so that it was just covered by the iron bar that ran along the top, and looked fixedly at the savage he intended to tame. Cruiser, from whom muzzle, headstall, and all such impedimenta had been removed by some mechanical arrangements—for none dared go near enough to touch him—made his usual dash to pounce on the intrepid stranger. Rarey stood perfectly motionless, neither altering his attitude or expression in the slightest degree.

Thinking he had his enemy by the arm, the horse seized and worried the bar as if he would have bitten it through. Again and again, retiring for an impetus to the farther

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corner, he rushed at the mysterious stranger, actually screaming in the uncontrollable violence of his rage. Rarey sustained these successive charges with the same sang-froid that he had shown at the commencement of the engagement. At length, after more than an hour of this wild scene, with frantic fury on one side and science on the other, the redoubtable Cruiser, exhausted, dripping with sweat, and completely puzzled in his equine mind as to this figure, which he could no longer believe to be human, came quietly close to it, and touched it with his nose; then Rarey threw open the half-door and walked boldly up to him. Perfectly quiet, the animal made no further attempt to molest him, and the conquest was complete. Three hours afterwards Lord Dorchester was on Cruiser's back, where he had not been for three years previously, and Rarey rode him as a hack; after that he *did* "walk over the course."

After the wonderful cure of Cruiser, the five-hundred list not only filled, but overflowed, Messrs Rarey and Good-enough clearing over £20,000. But not a minute too soon, as an enterprising firm of publishers, having procured a copy of Rarey's book from America, issued a cheap edition of it here. That put a stopper on the ten-guinea payments.

Rarey's great hit, as I have said, was with Cruiser; but he had some much worse subjects than that to deal with, one of which took hours to snare. His straps were all broken, and he had to extemporise some. Still, it was not taming savages, but finding them, that seemed his greatest difficulty. When he heard of the Cretingham Hero, he rushed at once to Ipswich, and discovered after he had borrowed the horse that the Great Eastern Railway Company, on the pretext that he was a "lion rampant," would only bring him by special train. However, it paid Rarey to agree to their terms, as he made something like £500 out of him at the Alhambra.

King of Oude, a big, lop-eared subject who had won three Queen's Plates, was also a paying "spec," as Rarey gave only £30 for him and netted about £300, after putting him on double corn allowance for four days to mettle him up. It was money well laid out, as he fought like a tiger.

"The King" was a rare trumpeter as he stood in his stall near the wings, and it was these loud defiancees that worked up the audience so well before Rarey led him in.

When he had King of Oude or any other savage before the public, Rarey always took care to pile up the agony a little by judicious stimulants, and then the shouts of "Bravo, Rarey!" rang through the house. Mr Rice's box at one time had three stallions and a zebra in it, braying and neighing against each other in their desire for a general engagement. When the King of Oude had fairly capitulated, and would give a leg for the asking, Rarey offered to give him to several people; but as the animal was lame it was difficult to find a new owner, and I do not know what became of him.

An attack of paralysis seized Rarey in 1865; but he lingered on for twelve months, and he had practically recovered from it when another sudden seizure killed him.

Another and earlier horse-tamer hailed from the Emerald Isle, and made his reputation through a horse called King Pippin which was brought to the Curragh for the Spring Meeting of 1864—a most savage brute. He would worry any person within his reach; and, if he had an opportunity, would seize his rider by the leg with his teeth and drag him from his back. For this reason he was always ridden in what is called a "sword"—a strong flat stick, having one end attached to the cheek of the bridle and the other to the girth of the saddle. On this particular occasion, nobody could get near enough to him to put the bridle upon his head. It being Easter Monday, a large crowd had assembled at the Curragh, and one countryman volunteered to bridle the horse; but no sooner had he attempted to do so than King Pippin seized him by the shoulder and shook him as a terrier will a rat. Fortunately, on such occasions an Irishman of this class is fond of displaying his wardrobe, and if he has three coats at all in the world he will put them all on. This circumstance saved the man's life, and he escaped with little injury beyond the total ruin of his holiday clothes.

At this time there was living near Dublin a man from County Cork, known as Con Sullivan, "The Whisperer,"

and many were the tales told of his success in taming unmanageable horses. That evening he was accordingly sent for ; and having arrived, and being requested to try his skill upon King Pippin, he fearlessly walked into the stable, closed the door, and remained shut up with him all night. In the morning the hitherto "savager" followed him like a dog. He was brought out the same evening and won a race, and he continued docile for three years, when his vice returned, and then he killed a man, for which he was destroyed. A year or two later Colonel Westenra (afterwards Lord Rossmore) had a splendid racehorse named Rainbow, whom he wished to run at the Curragh ; but the horse was so vicious that he could not pull him out. Lord Doneraile said he knew a fellow who would cure the brute. This the Colonel utterly refused to believe, and betted him a thousand pounds he did not. On this Lord Doneraile sent for Con Sullivan, whose cognomen of "The Whisperer" was due to the supposition that he whispered into the horses' ears. When he was told the state of the Colonel's horse, he asked if he might go into his stable. "Wait till his head is tied up," said the groom. "No occasion," said Con ; "he won't bite *me*." So in he went, after ordering no one to follow him until he signalled, then shut the door. In a quarter of an hour the signal was given. Those outside then rushed in ; and found the horse on his back, playing like a kitten with the Whisperer, who was sitting by him. Both appeared exhausted, particularly the man, to whom it was necessary to administer brandy. The horse was perfectly tame and gentle from that day.

The latest professor of the art of horse-taming was Mr Loffler, who reduced to absolute gentleness the notorious man-eating Barcaldine, who savaged every groom and stable-boy that came within his reach.

Mr Loffler's plan was to give Barcaldine a boxing-glove to shake. He then gradually got hold of the horse's ears, and in a short time soothed him. Asked if he were not afraid of the man-eater, Mr Loffler replied : "Afraid of Barcaldine ! tut, tut—I would drive him in a cab at this moment."

When Mr Walton brought the American mare Giroflée

over to this country she was perfectly docile, but before long her temper became so violent that no one could approach her in her loose box. Under these circumstances, Mr Walton handed her over to Professor Loffler at Newmarket, the result being that she carried off several events at subsequent meetings.

The following story may be said to be an example of "Rarey" made easy. A noted coachman (it was in the days of stage-coaches) had been taken off one coach and put upon another. On the day before he mounted his new box he was told by the former whip that he would never get along with the team he was to start with.

"I'll bet you a quid," said the new man, "that they'll go with me as quiet as lambs."

"Done," said the other; "I'm on."

Next morning the new coachman contrived to gain admittance to the stables at a very early hour, locked himself in with the team, and, taking up a broomstick, welted into them with a will, shouting all the while, until they were ready to dash through the walls. When he took the reins a few hours later he was greeted with a volley of jokes from men about the yard, no one being sharper in his witticisms than the late driver. Just before starting, the horses became a little restive; but a roar from the coachman such as he had given in the stable started them off at a tearing pace, so that the difficulty was to hold them in, and, greatly to the mortification of the loser of the bet, the least sound of their driver's voice kept them in order.

CHAPTER XXVII

HORSE-DEALERS AND HORSE-STEALERS

I THINK it was Charles Dickens who remarked how strange it is that the horse exercises a deteriorating influence on the men that are brought into contact with him. I fear the morals of horse-dealers, amateur or professional, have not improved, and some men will show no mercy to their dearest friends when selling a horse.

A good many years ago there used to hunt with the New Forest Hounds a notorious character, Dicky Wise by name. Dicky once had a deal with a sporting butcher of Southampton, Jack Hewitt, who horsed one or two coaches. Wise's horse was a rank roarer, and the butcher's had a bad spavin, but they agreed to exchange without examining each other's horses. The next day Hewitt went out with the hounds, and soon discovered the roarer—but said nothing about it. The following day Wise rode his horse with the hounds, and on his return he passed Hewitt standing at the door of his shop. The horse was going on three legs, and Wise shouted out, "No friendship in horse-dealing, Hewitt; there is no friendship in horse-dealing."

A lie told in the course of a horse deal is considered the most venial of white ones. But sometimes a *double entendre* will do as well. For example, a Scotch laird sold a horse to an Englishman with the remark, "You buy the horse as you see him; but he's *an honest beast*." The purchaser took him home, and on the way the horse stumbled and fell, to the detriment of his knees and the rider's head. On this the angry purchaser went to the laird, and remonstrated with him warmly. "I supposed, sir, I was dealing with a gentleman and a man of his word." I only told you he

was an honest beast," said the laird; "and he is that, for he has often threatened to come down with me, and I kenned he would keep his word soon."

An Irishman, you may go bail, would have had quite as witty an excuse. Not long ago an Irishman told me this yarn:—

A Cockney sportsman who was amongst us had bought "a norse" two days before the local meet. There was as bad a "spec" on the animal's eye as there was in the purchaser's bargain; and he had a trifling thickness of breath which the Irish dealer said was only a "cowl," and a bit of a blemish on one knee which was only a mark on his coat. In short, the horse was a rip, and at the first stiff fence he shot his rider over his head and broke the other knee. The Cockney threatened the seller with a lawsuit, at the same time appealing to his conscience how he could sell such a horse as sound, or praise him as he did. "Upon my word," says Pat, "and that's as good as my bond, he's as sound as a bell, for he'll go when you touch him; and as for his character, all I said was, that he would run against any horse or mare that you could bring into the field; and as for jumping, *let him alone for that.*"

It is now only fair to give a specimen of English trickery to supplement these illustrations of Scotch and Irish artfulness. Lord Chief Justice Alvanley told this story, of which he was himself the hero—or victim:—

"Some years ago, an action was brought against a gentleman respecting a horse he had bought to go the circuit upon (in those days, barristers went on circuit on horseback). The horse was taken home; the barrister mounted, but he would not stir a step. 'How came you to sell me a horse that would not go?' demanded the barrister. 'I sold a horse warranted sound,' replied the dealer, 'and sound he is; but as for going, I never thought he would go.'"

A gentleman (we will call him Mr Smith) well known in sporting circles, being in Dublin, was persuaded to go to a dealer's stables to look at a horse that was highly recommended to him. Mr Smith at once saw that it was not the kind he wanted. The dealer made no attempt to persuade

him, but proposed, with "true Irish hospitality," that he should come and have a bit of dinner with him and his wife, as it was just ready. After some demur, Smith consented. Dinner over, whisky punch came on. The dealer was a very amusing fellow, and time slipped away; so did the punch, and ultimately the guest's memory with it.

Next morning he awoke at his hotel with no idea as to how he got there, and with a splitting headache. While he was trying to collect his thoughts, there was a knock at the door, and at the cry of "Come in!" a shock-headed individual entered. "Please, yer honour, I've brought the horse, and master says I'm to take a cheque for £150 back with me." "Cheque! What the devil do you mean?" demanded the astonished Saxon. "Sure, sir, its the baste you bought last night." "But I refused the horse." "So you did at first—ah, whist now! but I thought your honour had had a drop of the cratur when you saw me ride him over the wall at the back of the pratie patch; for ye couldn't stand but for the master's arm, and was for putting the wrong end of the cigar in your mouth. But ye bought it fair and square, and it was meself that heard it, and saw ye clasp hands on the bargain. And, sure, as I carried you to the car the master said, 'Take the horse early in the mornin', Mike, and the gentleman will give ye the cheque, and a thrifle for yourself.' So I'll take the cheque, and be getting back home again." Finding he was fairly in for it, and not caring for the story to get abroad, he took the horse, which, though not a beauty to look at, proved a good one to go.

It is never safe for an amateur to dabble in horse-dealing; even the late Sir George Stephens, shrewd lawyer though he was, and well versed in horse-lore too, as he showed in his racy book, *Adventures of a Gentleman in Search of a Horse*, was nevertheless a victim to the tricks of the dealers.

One morning Sir George's eye was caught by an advertisement in the *Times*, that a chestnut horse was for sale at a livery-stable of high respectability. He went to the place, and found a handsome animal, with good action, and not a fault or a blemish that he could discover. He

mounted him, rode him for an hour, found him perfectly quiet, and purchased him there and then, with a warranty. For two whole days he justified the seller's encomiums. On the third, as Sir George was going to mount him, he raised his near hind leg and kicked the stirrup-iron away; he repeated this performance again and again, whichever side his owner tried to mount. Sir George tried him without the saddle, and then he crouched like a camel. That day the horse kicked an ostler and laid him up; the next morning he kicked another. He was sent to the hammer; but before he was sold he kicked a third of Sir George's servants, and within a month killed the horse-dealer who bought him. Curious to know the reason for its being so docile for the first three days, Sir George tipped one of the men at the livery-stables where he had purchased the horse. It had been tied up to the rack day and night for a week before, and never allowed to sleep except standing. This was discipline enough to tame a tiger.

Sir Francis Doyle tells an amusing story of horse-dealing in which the late Sir William Harcourt figured. Sir William had bought a hunter for 100 guineas, which, after using for a season, he put out to livery. He was at this time a barrister with a large practice, and, immersed in his briefs, he forgot all about the horse. At last, when going to Scotland for the shooting season, he wrote to the livery-stable keeper and offered it to him for £70. The offer was accepted; but when he applied for the money, instead of a cheque, a bill for £71, 10s. was forwarded to him for keep, shoeing, physicking, and all kinds of other expenses. "But," added the creditor, "I will not insist on the odd thirty shillings, and if you like to send me a receipt for £70 we will cry quits." And the victim had no alternative but to comply.

One of the wise sayings of old John Warde was, "Never believe a word any man says about a horse he wishes to sell—no, not even a bishop"; and that he was justified in not even exempting "the cloth" from suspicion the following anecdote proves:—

Many years ago a French gentleman named Lafane

lodged a complaint before the Bath magistrates against a clergyman who was also a bit of a horse-coper. The Frenchman's version of the transaction was as follows:—

"I go to buy a horse of him, and he ask me 40 guineas. I say 'No, by gar, I will not give that!' 'Well,' says the clergyman, 'you shall have him for 35 guineas, but d——n my eye you shall have him no less.'"

Here the magistrate interrupted with, "You could not surely think of dealing with a clergyman who was so ready to swear?" To which the Frenchman replied:—

"I thought a clergyman would not swear to anything but truth, so I paid him the money. Vell, I got the horse, and he so beautiful. Then I put him in Bell's stables, and I ride him next day, but he go upon three legs; and then I give him a doctor. But then he valk upon his knee, and I say, 'By gar, if you valk upon your knee, I do not valk upon your back!'"

"You mean the horse was unsound," suggested the Bench.

"*Oui, oui*; he got the gout."

"The gout! Horses do not have the gout."

"But he was a clergyman's horse, and they both have gout: the horse's leg was so swelled, and so was the clergyman's."

"Well, I suppose you sent back the horse?"

"No; the clergyman said, 'D——n his eye if he would have him back'; so I asked Mr Bell to buy him for 35 guineas; but he said, 'No, he would not give more than £5'; so I keep him in the stable for twelve weeks, and then I sent him to be sold, and how much do you think I got?"

"Perhaps £5? Well, I think you received more than you might have expected."

"*Receive!* I receive *nothing*. I got £15 to *pay* for de dinner."

"Dinner?"

"For my horse's dinner for twelve weeks in Mr Bell's stable!"

Roars of laughter greeted the unfortunate Frenchman. The magistrate declared that he could not help him,

though no doubt he had been very badly used, and the victim of clerical craft left the Court a sadder and a wiser man.

The Marquis of Hastings, sharp as he fancied himself, was once "had" by a dealer, though not to the extent the dealer intended or expected. The latter had a very showy-looking horse named Glenduck that had won a sprint race at one of the Newmarket meetings, and Lord Hastings, without consulting John Day, his trainer, agreed to give £2700 for it. This was on the eve of departure from the meeting. Without a moment's delay, the dealer sent the horse to Day's stables, and returned to London. The sight of the animal was the first intimation Day had of its purchase. Suspecting that something was wrong, John struck the animal sharply across the belly with his walking-stick, which made him cough violently, revealing what John had suspected, that the horse was broken-winded. Early next morning, Day interviewed the Marquis at his town house, and the result was that the bargain was to be cancelled on the best terms possible. John was not too soon, for at ten o'clock the dealer called for his cheque. After some blustering, he had to cave in, and take £200 as an offset. You may be sure that John Day got his blessings.

I remember hearing another story in which the tables were turned on the horse-dealer. The purchaser had bought a good-looking horse for £30, and thought he had made a rare bargain. He paid the money on the spot, and had the horse led to his stables at once, lest the vendor should repent of his short-sightedness in selling the horse so cheap. Meeting a friend on his way home, he asked him to come and inspect the new purchase. The friend, who was an expert in horse-flesh, examined the horse closely, and then exclaimed, "Why, my dear fellow, you've been swindled: the horse is blind." At first the purchaser refused to believe this statement, but it was proved to be beyond doubt. Thereupon he at once rushed out in search of the vendor. He found him, and going up to him said, "Look here, I find I paid you a pound too much. I've given you £31 instead of £30." "I don't think you have," replied the unsuspecting dealer; "but here

are the notes; you can count them for yourself." So saying, he handed the roll of £1 notes over to the innocent-looking purchaser, who counted them carefully, then calmly pocketed them, and said, "Thanks! they're all right; and now you may send to my stable for that old blind crock of yours. Good day."

Time was when horse-stealing was punished with death in England, and there are still parts of America where it is safer to kill a man than to steal a horse.

One summer afternoon a man in a Western mining camp, having tracked his two mules and one horse for half a mile and discovered that a man's tracks with spur-marks followed them, came back to "town" and told the "boys" who were loitering about the saloon that some Mexican had stolen the animals. Such news naturally demanded drinks all round. "Do you know, gentlemen," said one who assumed the leadership, "that just to shoot these Greasers ain't the best way; give 'em a fair jury trial, and rope 'em up with all the majesty of the law. That's the cure!"

There was a smack of judicial moderation about this proposal which commended itself to the "boys." To shoot a man at sight was a process which had become monotonous. They were glad of a novelty: something, too, which would have a legal air about it. As they returned to the veranda a Mexican walked over the hill brow, jingling his long spurs as an accompaniment to the waltz he was whistling. The advocate of law, pointing to the stranger, said in an undertone, "That's him!" The unsuspecting Mexican strolled towards the saloon; a rush, a struggle, and, bound hand and foot, he lay on his back in the bar-room. "String him up!" shouted a score of voices. But the advocate of law and justice bade them remember their recent resolution, and give the prisoner a fair trial. The fact that the Mexican did not understand a word they were saying did not, in their eyes, prejudice the case in the least.

A jury was quickly gathered in the street, and hurried behind the bar. The man who had suggested a fair trial briefly stated the case to the jury, who were then shoved

into the "poker-room" to consider their verdict. Presently the noise in the bar-room died away to complete silence, but from down the cañon came confused sounds as of disorderly cheering. Then the tramping of many feet, the ring of voices, and the clinking glasses announced that the bar was full again. There was a knock at the jury-room door, and a dozen voices asked what the verdict was.

"Not guilty," was the prompt reply of the foreman.

A volley of oaths burst from the "boys." Pistols were pointed ominously towards the jury. "You'll have to do better than that," said the leader of the loafers; "we'll give you half an hour to consider."

At the expiration of the half-hour the door was opened again, and, "What is your verdict, gentlemen?" asked the spokesman of the "boys."

"Guilty."

"Correct. You can come out. We hung him an hour ago."

The jury came out, and the "boys" stood them drinks; and when, after a time, the town resumed its tranquillity, it was allowed at more than one saloon that "Mexicans'll know enough to let white men's stock alone after this," and the "boys" exchanged the belief that this sort of thing was better and more sensible than "nipping 'em at sight."

Toward sunset the bar-tender concluded to sweep some dust out of the poker-room back door. He was surprised to find the missing horse dozing under the shadow of an oak, and the two lost mules masticating playing-cards, of which some bushels lay in a dusty pile. Then he suddenly remembered that the animals had been there all day; but, as the Mexican was dangling in mid-air half a mile away, it was too late to repair his little aberration of memory, so, like a wise man, he held his peace.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE ISLE OF MAN AND THE FIRST DERBY, AND GOODWOOD

VISITORS to the Isle of Man nowadays find the place very different from what it was when I knew it fifty odd years ago. It was then hardly known to most Englishmen, and there was a general impression that it was a mere haunt of smugglers, absconding debtors, and remittance men. Bishop Bowstead, when he went over to take possession of the See of Sodor and Man in the year 1838, looked upon his diocese as a savage one, and, writing home to his friends after his arrival, quoted the words of the Apostle Paul, "The barbarous people showed us no small kindness." Time was, indeed, when it was reputed to be the snipe-shooter's paradise; and John Mytton, the mad Squire of Halston, used frequently to go there to shoot.

It has no such reputation now. I have killed a good many snipe and woodcock there in days gone by, but even then game was scarce. A man might think himself lucky indeed if he picked up half a dozen snipe and a couple of woodcock, with perhaps an odd hare and a brace or two of partridges, in a twelve-hours' tramp. I have been out all day and bagged but a couple of snipe and a hare. But more than once I have put up a "wisp" of 50 or 60 snipe in one little marshy four-acre meadow. They had evidently just landed from a long sea journey; they lay close, and when scattered afforded capital sport.

Unlicensed gunners swarmed; for old flint muskets, transformed at the cost of a few shillings into percussion-locks, were in the hands of every loafer in the place.

These had been pillaged from wrecks, for the Manxmen were inveterate wreckers.

After the brig *Lily* and forty men were blown into fragments on the 4th of December 1854 in the sound between the Calf of Man and the mainland, I saw kegs of powder drying before a turf fire in more than one cottage! With this powder and their percussion-guns, all the riff-raff of the coast used to go gunning.

They would lie about for ducks—track hares to their formes in the snow and butcher them—mark down coveys of partridges and massacre them sitting, with volleys. Ground-game and partridges were almost annihilated. The late Speaker of the House of Keys, however,—Sir John Goldie Taubman,—at one time preserved Douglas Head for coursing, and hares were pretty numerous there for a while. But the poachers soon destroyed them, and I do not remember that any other landowners attempted to preserve game, probably because they felt that the poachers were too strong for them.

I have never seen larger hares than in the Isle of Man. It was not uncommon to find them weighing 12 lbs., and I once killed one which pulled the beam at over 13 lbs. That hare is still talked about as “the big Bellamona hare.”

But to racing men there is a peculiar interest attaching to the Isle of Man, for it was there that the Derby Stakes were first run for. The narrow strip of turf which separates the bays of Castletown and Derby-haven was the scene, and is still known as the “Race-course,” though no races have been held there for a hundred years, and the ground is now converted into golf-links. It was in 1621, when the Earls of Derby were still lords of Man, that these races were established; and the Derby Plate, to which the Earl contributed handsomely, was to be competed for every year at Easter on the race-course at Castletown. The present Derby Stakes, as everyone, I suppose, knows, were founded by Edward Stanley, twelfth Earl of Derby, in 1780.

The noble Earl who founded the Derby Stakes only won them once, namely in 1787, with Sir Peter Teazle, named

in honour of his second wife, Miss Farren, the famous actress, with whom he had fallen in love while she was playing Lady Teazle.

Up to four years old Sir Peter Teazle won all his races; but he broke down at Newmarket, and was put to the stud. His success there was extraordinary: he sired more winners than any other horse on the Turf.

In 1794 his stock began to show its excellence, and the American Consul offered the Earl 7000 guineas for the horse—an unheard-of price in those days. But his lordship declined the offer, saying that he had already been offered 10,000 guineas for him.

Lord Derby was more fortunate in his efforts to win the Oaks, of which he was also the founder; for his fillies Bridget and Heroine twice placed the ladies' race to his credit.

Sir Peter lived to be thirty years old. Lord Derby was sixty years on the Turf; he attended the big meetings in a coach and six with a retinue of servants. Many mementoes of him are still preserved. The picture of his huntsman, Jonathan Griffin, on his grey horse Spanker may be seen in many a roadside inn in Surrey, while the likeness of his groom Story hangs at Knowsley. Of this worthy it is told that one day, while he was dining, somebody came running in to tell him that the Prince of Wales was in his stable. "Then he may wait till I have done my dinner," was the answer. And the old curmudgeon did not hurry himself either.

The thirteenth Earl did not care for racing; but the next of the race inherited all his grandfather's love of the Turf, and was fortunate in his ventures. During the twenty-one years that John Scott ruled his stud he owned in all 243 horses, 54 of which were winners; their winnings amounting in all to £94,000—a total which covered all his racing expenses. He never won a Derby or a St Leger, however, and the Oaks only once, in 1851, with Iris.

In the spring of 1801 the following announcement appeared:—"The new race-course on the Harroway, near Goodwood, is now completely formed for sport, and

much admired by the acknowledged amateurs of the Turf."

Such was the commencement of the famous Goodwood Races, the first meeting being held in 1802. The then Duke of Richmond was in his sixty-sixth year when he instituted them, and died five years afterwards. It was his grand-nephew who raised the races to something like their present importance in the Racing Calendar.

Goodwood early in the nineteenth century was almost purely local, and as such was looked forward to by all the South Country folks as the great event of the year. Houses were filled with guests from all parts of the kingdom, and there was hardly a cottar who had not a relative down for a few days.

The Grand Stand, a small wooden erection with a thatched roof, was occupied by the principal families of the neighbourhood; while the farmers, trades-people, and labourers took up their station in every kind of vehicle, or on horseback, opposite the winning-post.

A race ordinary, which was furnished with venison by some patrons of the Turf, was opened on the first and second days of the meeting, when a considerable quantity of strong beer, sherry, port, and punch was drunk. Matches were made for the following day, stewards named for the ensuing year, and the healths of the retiring and succeeding stewards drunk. A ball was given at the Chichester Town Hall on the second day, into which rolled many a top-heavy gentleman from the ordinary. There was a supper, with more toasts and much cheering, and no doubt many headaches the next morning.

What would a jockey of the present day say to such a costume as this:—A black velvet cap with a long French peak, and a bow of black riband behind; long hair falling to his shoulders; a white cambric neckcloth of ample folds tied at the back; a long body-coat with flaps, wide skirt, three buttons at the sides, where it opened as well in front and behind; knee-breeches strapped just below the knee; white cotton stockings; and black leather Oxford shoes with long tongues and silver buckles. Yet such was the dress worn by the winners of the first Derbys. The incon-

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venience of riding a close finish in these tails with a high wind blowing naturally led to a compromise; and some early jockey hit upon a happy idea, and tucked his skirts inside his breeches. The next step was to curtail these appendages; and after that the transition was easy to the racing rig with which we are now familiar.

CHAPTER XXIX

HEROES OF THE LEASH

THIRTY years ago I accidentally made the acquaintance of the most sensible betting man I have ever met, the proprietor of an hotel in Manchester. Portraits of famous greyhounds were a conspicuous feature both of the coffee-room and the parlour; whilst in the garden was a tombstone which commemorated the exploits of the famous bitch Bab-at-the-Bowster, who lay beneath. My host, I found, had made his pile by two lucky coups. He backed Master M'Grath for the Waterloo Cup in 1868 and 1869, and having won upwards of £10,000 sensibly resolved that he would bet no more, and invested his money in the prosperous hotel of which I believe he is still proprietor. It was a risky thing to do to back the same dog two years in succession for the Waterloo Cup, but in this case the bold venture was justified by the result.

Coursing is a sport in which the general public take but a faint interest, because there are technicalities about it which are not easily understood by the casual spectator. To a certain extent it is as unsatisfactory to the uninitiated onlooker as yachting, where the only point of which the spectator can be certain is that the yacht which comes in first is *not* the winner. In like manner the greyhound which kills the hare is not necessarily the victor in the course—indeed, in many cases it is the worse dog of the two that kills. It is needless to enter into details of the points which score in coursing. Suffice it to say that whilst speed holds a very important place, cleverness also counts for much; the dog which makes “the turn,” or causes the hare to double, counting a point every time it does so. As a rule, therefore, the fastest dog out of the

slips scores the first turn in addition to the points for speed. My object here is simply to give a few interesting anecdotal data of the sport.

Of its antiquity there can be no doubt, though when and whence greyhounds were introduced, how they were bred, or what the origin of the name is, are questions to which no satisfactory answer has yet been given. The first association of coursers of which there is any record was Swaffham Club in Norfolk, founded by Lord Orford in 1776, and thereby hangs a tragic tale. His lordship was the owner of the famous bitch Czarina, the progenitrix of all the great greyhounds since her time, who ran 47 matches and was never once beaten. In the last and most exciting of her matches she was so hard pressed that when the verdict was given in her favour, Lord Orford, who had worked himself up to an intense pitch of excitement, fell from his pony in a fit and was picked up dead.

Czarina's grandson, Snowball, was the "Eclipse" of the Leash. Like his grand-dam, he was never beaten; and Sir Walter Scott, himself an enthusiastic courser, has paid him and his progeny this tribute:—

"Who knows not Snowball? He who's race renowned
Is still victorious on each coursing ground.
Swaffham, Newmarket, and the Roman Camp
Have seen them victors o'er each meaner stamp."

Major Topham, a Yorkshire sportsman, owned Snowball, and after winning many matches with him issued a challenge to the world for any sum from £1000 to £5000 a side. But Snowball's prowess was too well known, and no owner of greyhounds cared to take up the glove.

Sir Walter Scott, as I have said, was an enthusiastic lover of coursing, and in Lockhart's *Life* there is a racy description of a match on Newark Hill, in which the novelist, with Sir Humphrey Davy, Dr Mackenzie, and others took part. "Coursing on such a mountain as Newark," writes Lockhart, "is not like the same sport over a set of firm English pastures. There were gulfs to be avoided, and bogs to be threaded; many a nag stuck fast; and another stranger to the ground besides Davy plunged neck-deep into a treacherous well-head which bore the

appearance of a piece of green turf. When Sir Humphrey emerged from his involuntary bath, covered with mud, slime, and mangled water-cresses, Sir Walter received him with a triumphant *encore!* But the philosopher had his revenge, for joining soon afterwards in a brisk gallop, Scott put Sibyl Grey at a leap beyond her powers, and lay humbled in the ditch, while Davy, who was better mounted, cleared it and him at a bound."

Scott himself used to tell the following story:—"There was a coursing club once upon a time at Balchristy's in the Province, or, as it is popularly called, the Kingdom of Fife. The members were elderly, sociable men, to whom a very moderate allowance of sport served as an introduction to a hearty dinner and a jolly evening. Now a certain stout hare had her seat on the ground where they usually met, who usually gave the amusement of three or four turns when she was put up—a sure sign of a strong hare when practised by any beyond the age of a leveret—then stretched out in great style, and after affording the gentlemen an easy canter of a mile or two, threw out the dogs by passing through a particular gap in an enclosure. This sport the same hare gave to the same party for one or two seasons, and it was just enough to afford the worthy members of the club a sufficient reason to be alleged to their wives or others whom it might concern for passing the day in the public-house. At length, a fellow who attended the hunt nefariously thrust his plaid into the gap I mentioned, and poor puss, her retreat being thus cut off, was, in the language of the dying Desdemona, 'Basely, basely murdered.'

"The sport of the Balchristy Club seemed to end with this famous hare. They either found no more hares, or such as only afforded a hulloo and a squeak, or gave them longer runs than they had any pleasure in following. The spirit of the meeting died away, and it was at length given up altogether. The publican was, of course, the party most affected by this, and, as may be supposed, regarded with no complacency the person who had prevented the hare from escaping. One day a gentleman asked what had become of the obnoxious individual. 'He's dead, sir,'

answered mine host, with an angry scowl; 'and his soul kens this day whether the hare of Balchrity got fair play or not.'

North of the Tweed, too, the late Mr Campbell, an Ayrshire laird, famous for a breed of greyhounds by his dog Scotland Yet, was as great an enthusiast as Lord Orford. He had a mania for giving his dogs out-of-the-way names, fearing similar ones would accidentally be bestowed on inferior animals in England. This feeling first began when a red dog of Mr Campbell's named Cromwell, the winner of the Biggar (Open) Cup of 64 dogs in 1853, afterwards got mixed in the entries with an English dog of the same name, and became more intensified on his finding that his favourite puppy, Scotland Yet, was often mistaken for Mr Sharpe's Scotland Yet that ran for the Ridgway Club Cup. After that he would have no more "common names for his dows," hence Coomerango, of which Boomerang was the natural sequence. And so he continued until he reached Canaradzo, Carabradzo, and Cohooxardo, which he considered his masterpieces of nomenclature; and he used to declare his dogs had no luck unless he named them. It was, however, his son—known to the coursing world as "Jock o' Dalgig"—who first introduced the sport to the family in 1841, when Mr M'Turk gave him a puppy. But the Laird o' Dalgig never took any notice of the bitch till six years afterwards, when he took a violent fancy to her, and so learnt to love coursing as no one else in his day did. His maiden win was a farmers' stake at Closeburn—five shillings entrance, and thirty runners. This Dido won, and repeated her victory at a Closeburn public meeting next year. Of all the greyhounds he ever bred, Coodareena was his favourite; yet, much as he loved her, he would sometimes make her run trials in one day against the whole team, being "deaf as Ailsa Craig" to all his son Jock's expostulations. He evidently thought her a sort of steam-engine, "cast at Hawke's and fitted at Stephenson's"—as the Newcastle "hinnies" used to say of the great oarsman Bob Chambers—or he would never have tried her so hard.

The Laird of Dalgig was famed through Nithsdale and

the Borders as much for his hospitality as for his love of sport, and consequently every Edie Ochiltree and Madge Wildfire who wandered among those moors knew where a night's lodgings and plenty of porridge and milk could be had. It was well known that he asked every tramp his name, and all invariably answered "Campbell"; and although the clan of Argyle must have seemed to him to be ever increasing in numbers, he put no more questions. "Campbell" was the key to his heart, and they repaid his kindness by never stealing from him. One of the oldest and worst "Johnnie Fa'as" either in Nithsdale or Teviotdale was heard to say to his little son behind a hedge, "Nab (steal) a' ye can, laddie, but no' at Dalgig for yer life."

Once, two couples who had enjoyed the Laird's hospitality from Saturday till Monday occupied their leisure in the barn by effecting an exchange of wives—a proceeding bad enough in the Laird's eyes at any time, but when introduced as a Sabbath ceremony an unpardonable offence. In fact, Dalgig was so incensed that for a long time he refused to harbour any beggars except those belonging to that part of the country.

Previous to taking to coursing, curling and draughts had been his chief amusements, and he kept up the ice game for fully fifty years, driving to Sanquhar (17 miles) to enjoy the pastime; and although he never won "the picture," he held the New Cumnock Challenge Medal for years.

A lady, too, who deserves to be immortalised in the annals of the leash, was Miss Richards, of Compton Beauchamp, Berkshire. She possessed considerable personal charms and a large property, but so strong-minded was she that she choked off all intending suitors with the curt announcement that she meant to live and die a maid. Her enthusiasm for coursing was extraordinary. Every day during the coursing season this indefatigable sportswoman was driven in her coach to the downs, where, springing out on her native turf, she coursed on foot for the rest of the morning, sometimes walking a distance of 25 miles ere, to use the words of an irreverent scribe, "she re-embarked on board of the tub of state steered by

an old body-coachman, aided by assistant snobbers in full costume."

Miss Richards's only rival sportswoman, Miss Diana Draper, the daughter of Squire Draper of Berwick Hall, in the East Riding, acted as whipper-in to her father, and cheered on the hounds as lustily as any male whip. Like Miss Richards, she lived and died in single blessedness, having a healthy scorn for the tender passion. Few cared to follow her across country, for she was a straight and fearless rider, and it was a marvel that she should have escaped the dangers of the hunting-field and died with whole bones in her bed.

Coursing, as I have said, is a sport of great antiquity. Xenophon loved it, and Arrian, five centuries later, wrote a "Badminton" masterpiece on greyhounds. King John patronised it, and was always ready to take greyhounds in lieu of money for the renewal of royal grants, fines, and forfeitures. Edward III. coursed both hares and deer, and kept a big kennel of greyhounds at the Isle of Dogs. The Duke of Norfolk, in Elizabeth's reign, organised the sport, and drew up a code of laws to regulate it, to which all the coursers of the kingdom gave their assent.

But it was not till the latter part of the eighteenth century that coursing became really popular in England, and that clubs for its encouragement were formed all over the country. The first of these was founded, as I have already mentioned, at Swaffham by the Earl of Orford in 1776.

The number of members was confined to twenty-six, the number of letters in the alphabet. Each member's greyhounds were named, the name beginning with the initial letter that he bore in the club. When a member died, or wished to retire, his place was filled by ballot. The Marchioness of Townsend was the lady patroness, and the Countess Cholmondeley and Mrs Coke of Holkham vice-patronesses. The Earl of Monteath was the honorary president, and was entitled to use any letter that he liked.

As time went on, other clubs were formed. That at Ashdown was instituted in 1811, and the Countess of Sefton was amongst the patronesses. Clubs were formed at Altcar, East Ilsley, Newbury, and Louth. The former very soon

became the prominent body, and the Altcar Cup was early in the nineteenth century a much-coveted trophy. This event was generally the principal one of the season all through the thirties.

In 1836 the Waterloo Cup, which has now grown into the blue riband of the Leash, was instituted. It was of very humble origin, for there were at the start only eight nominators, at £2 each, with a trophy added in the shape of a snuff-box. It was won by a greyhound called Melanie, nominated by Mr Lynn, but really the property of Lord Molyneux, at that time a great supporter of coursing, and grandfather of the present Lord Sefton.

Next year the Waterloo Cup was made a sixteen-dog stake, at £5 each; and there was a smaller event called the Altcar Plate, which occupied the position of the present Waterloo Plate, for greyhounds that were beaten in the first round. Next season, that is, in 1838, the Waterloo Cup was a great advance, as it was for thirty-two greyhounds, at £25 each. The Cup was won by Mr Ball's Bugle, whilst the Altcar Stakes fell to Lord Stradbroke's Madman. In 1839 there was another change, and the Altcar Stakes was then called the Waterloo Purse for the first time. Curiously enough, it fell to Lord Stradbroke for the second year in succession, his Little Minx winning. Mr Easterby was the first owner to have the best two dogs in the stake; in 1840 his dogs Earwig and Emperor ran off, the former winning.

Certio was the first greyhound that won the Waterloo Cup more than once. This dog won first in 1850 as a puppy, and then, after missing a year, won again in '52 and '53. This performance, however, was nothing to what Master M'Grath and Fullerton accomplished later. In 1857 a great change was made in the stake, for the nominations were then increased to sixty-four dogs, and the conditions became somewhat the same as at the present time. They now read as follows:—"The Waterloo Cup, for 64 subscribers, at £25 each; winner £500, second £200, two dogs £50 each, four dogs £30 each, eight dogs £20 each, sixteen dogs £10 each." So that every one of the thirty-two dogs engaged in the second round of the Cup



THE WATERLOO COURSING MEETING.

(From an old print.)

receives a prize. Then there are the Waterloo Purse and the Waterloo Plate, which between them supply £360 in consolation prizes, bringing up the total to £1600.

Among the great greyhounds that have figured in the competitions for the Waterloo Cup since its institution, four stand out pre-eminently—Master M'Grath, Bab-at-the-Bowster, Coomassie, and Fullerton. Master M'Grath came out as a puppy in 1868, and at his first attempt carried off the Cup. In the following year he repeated his triumph—a feat up to that time unprecedented in the annals of Altcar. The final course for that year's Cup, when Master M'Grath met Bab-at-the-Bowster, will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. In common with many others, I believe that on that day at any rate the bitch was the better of the two, and it was by sheer bad luck that she failed to win the deciding course. The following year was productive of a sensation. Master M'Grath was beaten by Lady Lyons, and, unable to stop himself at the edge of the river Alt, ran on to the rotten ice (there had been a hard frost the previous week), which gave way under his weight, and the dog, utterly exhausted as he was, would undoubtedly have been drowned but for the pluck of the slipper who went in and rescued him. Lord Lurgan was in a towering rage at the defeat of his famous greyhound, which he attributed to the stupidity or favouritism of the judge, and swore that Master M'Grath should never run again.

But, fortunately, Lord Lurgan repented of his hasty decision, and in 1870 Master M'Grath immortalised himself by winning the Waterloo Cup in brilliant style for the third time. The enthusiasm over that victory was extraordinary. Master M'Grath was the hero of the hour. The Queen herself commanded his appearance at Windsor, and it was a proud moment for Lord Lurgan when he presented his famous greyhound to Her Majesty, and received her gracious expression of admiration and congratulation. Master M'Grath never ran again in public, and did not long survive his triple triumph, for two years later he died of heart disease.

Bab-at-the-Bowster, though she never won a Waterloo

Cup, is still considered by some good judges to have been a better greyhound than Master M'Grath. Her record is certainly a grand one, for she only lost 5 out of 67 courses she ran, and won £1540 in stakes. Master M'Grath won 36 out of the 37 courses he ran, and £1750 in stakes. This makes his record better than Bab's; but he was only drawn against her once, and then she undoubtedly proved herself the better greyhound, though she had the ill-luck to lose.

Coomassie's triumph in 1877 and 1878 forms the next great sensation in the history of the Waterloo Cup. She was the smallest greyhound that ever won that trophy, and weighed only 42 lbs.—12 lbs. less than Master M'Grath. She was purchased, after she had won the All-Aged Stakes at Newmarket, by Mr T. Lay, for £250, from Mr R. Gittens, of Buckenden, Norfolk.

Her first Waterloo Cup was the only one at which Sir John Astley was ever present. He had a £1000 to £300 on the nomination, and afterwards presented Mr Gittens with a gold watch. The following year Coomassie won again. It is possible that she might have placed a third consecutive Waterloo Cup to her credit in 1879, and thus have beaten Master M'Grath's record, but for an unfortunate accident in training for the event. She fractured a small bone in one of her forelegs, and was never able to run again.

Then came the memorable Fullerton era, when Colonel North's splendid greyhound eclipsed all previous records and made himself an everlasting name. Fullerton came out in 1889, and in the deciding course for the Waterloo Cup was left in with his kennel companion Troughend; as both dogs belonged to Colonel North, though Troughend was nominated by Mr Badger, he elected to let them divide the stakes, albeit Fullerton could, bar accidents, have beaten the other easily. In the three following years, 1890, 1891, 1892, Fullerton carried all before him, and threw into the shade even the triumphs of Master M'Grath by winning the Cup outright in three consecutive years, besides dividing for it in the fourth year. Not even the deciding course between Master M'Grath and Bab-at-the-Bowster was as sensational as the final between Fullerton

and Fitz-Fife in 1892. They ran a dead-heat in the first course ; and in the decider almost to the last it looked as if the younger dog would win ; but the elder pulled himself together at the finish and won brilliantly, amid a scene of tremendous excitement. How Fullerton mysteriously disappeared, how Colonel North offered a reward of £1000 for his recovery, and how finally the priceless greyhound was found wandering about the country half-starved, are romantic incidents in Fullerton's career which must still be comparatively fresh in public memory.

Patrons of the Leash have claimed for their favourite sport the distinction of being the fairest in the world, and there would seem to be no reason why coursing matches should not be absolutely free from foul play. But they have not always been above suspicion. Stewards have been known to shift the beating on to ploughed land when a dangerous stranger had to be knocked out of time. Partisans have artfully managed to "steady" the hare by getting between her and a plantation, so as to make the course a long one. Ground where it was almost impossible to kill a hare has been selected before now to run a bye on ; and once the beaters were actually sent back a mile in order that "a very dangerous stranger" might run over flints. Like other sports, coursing, therefore, cannot show a clean sheet, though most of the roguery perpetrated has been done more for fame than with any view to make money. It was to keep the trophy in the shire or county where it was run for that local patriotism condescended to methods unsportsmanlike and dishonest.

An old devotee of the Leash used to tell with much gusto how he had managed years before to trick the judge. His dog had run into the final for a big stake, and was then matched against a dog of great local renown, which he felt, but for some merciful interposition of Providence, would be sure to win. Not liking the thought of being vanquished, he said to his trainer :—

"Now Joe, I have been this year at great expense, yet we have won nothing all the season, *and you and I part unless* our dog wins this match. I don't want you to injure the other dog, *but we must win*. Can't you manage

it? The judge is old, and as deaf as a post, and will certainly not dream of jumping anything, but will go a long way round. The hare is sure to make for yonder coppice; you go off there, and, mind you, *we must win.*"

A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse. So the trainer, disguised as a chaw-bacon, took his post at the spot indicated by his master. As they expected, the hare and dogs came rushing to the covert, and some time afterwards the judge came toiling up. To his question, "Did you see the dogs?" the disguised trainer replied, "Ees, that I did; and gin the black 'un were mine, I'd hang 'un, for he's good for nawt." The judge went back at once, and called out "Red!" to the great glee of the trainer and his master.

CHAPTER XXX

THE COCKPIT

IF the much-talked-of "Open Door" to British trade becomes an accomplished fact in the Philippines under their new American masters it is just possible that the British poultry-breeder may find a market for at least one class of fowl.

The favourite pastime of the Filipinos is cock-fighting, and to the Filipino his favourite fighting cock is what his pet bull-pup is to the northern pitman. Its proud master takes it under his arm to church on Sundays and festivals, and its ailments are attended to by medical specialists.

Now, surely, our poultry-breeders might make a pretty penny by exporting the grand old British breeds of game-cock to the Philippines.

Cock-fighting is now a discredited and illegal sport in England, and I suppose that our advanced civilisation is right enough in demanding its suppression. But not so *very* long ago, "cocking" held a high place amongst aristocratic sports. I remember well the eloquent letter in defence of cock-fighting which the late Admiral Rous addressed to the *Times* in the early seventies, in which he contended that there was nothing cruel or degrading about cock-fighting. Cocks, he urged, naturally love fighting, they revel in it; where, then, is the brutality—the cruelty—of encouraging them to carry out their natural bent scientifically? But, whatever we may think of the Admiral's arguments, the fact remains that many high-minded and genuine sportsmen, like himself, were passionate votaries of the sport, and a few anecdotes of some of them may not be

out of place, in view of the fact that Cousin Jonathan will have to take cock-fighting into serious consideration now that he has elected to annex the Philippines.

During the closing ten or fifteen years of the eighteenth century and the first thirty of the nineteenth there was no greater authority on the sport of cocking than the celebrated Doctor Bellyse of Audlem, a Cheshire village between Nantwich and Stoke. A remarkable man was this worthy doctor; eminent in his own profession, he was a walking polyglot on racing pedigrees from the Godolphin Arabian to Memnon, and no keener critic of coursing ever rode behind the slipper at Altcar or Amesbury. But it was as a cocker that he was especially famous. In that respect he was like his neighbour and rival, the twelfth Earl of Derby, who, if possible, loved a gamecock even better than a racehorse, and was justly termed "the greatest cocker that ever lived."

But to return to our Doctor. His professional duties forbade his going far afield in search of sport, and, keen as he was upon horse-racing, he never in his life saw either a Derby or St Leger run. But nothing could have induced him to forego his annual week on the Roodee. On the Saturday previous to the races, his yellow gig with his fourteen-one Brown Tommy turned up as regularly as the seasons themselves at the Hop Pole Inn; and on the Monday he sallied forth to the hotel-row, and received a hearty welcome from all the lovers of "the Turf and the Sod." Every one knew the blue coat with brass buttons, the light-coloured kerseys and gaiters, the buff waistcoat, the golden greyhound (gift of his friend, Lord Combermore), which lent a tasteful finish to his snowy frill, and the pig-tail just peeping from beneath a conical, low-crowned hat which completed the attire from which he never varied. The cockpit began at eleven, and the "go-in" ended soon after one. Then, before a grand stand was known, the Doctor was always to be seen on Tommy, armed with a gigantic umbrella, in the middle of the Roodee, to watch what the horses were doing all round. He held a belief that there were "always so many fools on racecourses," and hence he kept this huge "gamp," to shoot it in

self-defence across the faces of the young blades as they galloped recklessly across him, from the cords to the river-rails.

After dinner on the day of his arrival there was a long audience with Joe Gilliver, his feeder, to sound him as to the condition of his cocks, and to learn his opinion of the coming main. This worthy was also a remarkable personage, and was certainly one of the most celebrated cock-feeders England ever produced. But he had one rival in his own day, who was not far behind him—one Potter, who fed for Lord Derby. It was Joe's boast that he had fought for the largest sums of money ever staked on a main—namely, a thousand guineas a battle and five thousand on the main. This was fought at Lincoln, and won by Gilliver, who was fortunate enough to get five out of the seven battles. "Setting" was quite a distinct profession from feeding, and from fifteen to thirty guineas was the regular fee for a great main. Gilliver tried both departments; but it was said that he held cocks clumsily in his great hands, and that Owen Probyn of Birmingham was in this respect greatly superior. The latter was described as an "asthmatic, death-like man, with a long thumb and nail which he could use so deftly that he was esteemed three battles in the main better than any of his compeers."

Well, Joe Gilliver was for a time feeder to the Doctor as well as to Mr Legh of Lyme, who was as famous for his breed of cocks as for his breed of mastiffs. And long and earnest were his confabs with the Doctor, who would slip away from the sporting company to watch his brown-red champions busy in their pen, scratching at a fresh-cut sod or a spadeful of gravel from the bottom of the Dee. In some seasons he would send out a thousand chickens to the walks which were placed at his service on the Combermere, Stanington, Adderley, Toddington, Peckforton, Beeston, Oulton, and other estates in Cheshire, Shropshire, and Wales. He had always, therefore, an immense stock of birds to choose from, and he would have a hundred cocks taken up from their walks for Chester, in order that his feeder might select the best and put them in

training from the Thursday week till the Monday, when the smaller birds led off in the five days' main. Two years old was the favourite age, as they became "greasy" at three, and far beyond the 4 lbs. 10 oz. standard. Eggs, sugar-candy water, hot bread and milk, barley, rue, butter, and rhubarb formed the chief part of that dainty diet which few were fated to taste more than once in their lives.

The Doctor's passion for the sport dated back to the days of his youth—before he was well out of his teens, in fact—and he inaugurated his career with the original "white piles" which carried such a wonderful spur that the Cheshire Drop, which would occasionally appear in a long battle, was considered as fatal as the Chiffney Rush on the Turf. These were the cocks with which the Cholmondeleys, the Egertons, the Warburtons, the Cottons and the Roylances fought all the great country mains, sometimes against each other, but more frequently against the Mexborough and Meynell families. The Doctor, however, convinced himself that their constitutions would not stand the discipline of modern feeders, and at last, by judicious crossing, made his brown and black-reds carry as good a spur and bear the most punishing preparations to boot. These cocks were mostly bred from the Doctor's old "cut-combed" hen, whose descendants were crossed with his brown Crowally, two of Gilliver's black-reds, and the Westgarth cock. Six pullets to one cock, and the eggs as closely bred in as he could get them, were two of his leading tenets. He used the same stud birds for three seasons.

Chester and Preston were the two great centres of cock-fighting in the North. Lord Sefton, Mr Price of Brynprys, Captain White, Mr Bold Haughton, and Doctor Bellyse all fought at Chester. Lord Derby and Mr Legh of Lyme reserved their cocks for Preston. His lordship had built there at his own expense the best-appointed cockpit in the kingdom, which has—such is the irony of fate—been converted into a temperance hall. Five shillings was the price of admission to the pit when the Derby mains were being fought, and the "main bag," generally a canvas

affair, was on those occasions needlework, having the arms of the Derby family wrought in gold. Ten guineas a battle and two hundred the main were the usual stakes; but they were doubled when Lord Derby and Mr Bold Haughton or Mr Legh fought their great contests.

It was generally one of the articles that cocks were to fight in "fair reputed silver spurs"; but these were little more than steel thinly washed over, and a crashing stroke through the skull from one of them administered the death-blow as instantaneously as a pistol bullet.

It was fortunate for Doctor Bellyse that he did not live to see the sport he loved so well put an end to by Act of Parliament, and branded as brutal, degrading, and barbarous. He was spared this indignity, for he died suddenly in January 1829, when he was but one day short of 70. Five years later Lord Derby died at Knowsley, at the age of 82; while in the previous year (1833) Joe Gilliver died at his native village, Polesworth, Warwickshire, aged 74. The same year saw the end of Potter, Gilliver's rival, and thus died the greatest group of cockers that England has ever seen.

Two descriptions of scenes in the famous old Westminster Pit in Tufton Street may not be amiss:—

"It was a great day, 'a Derby Day,' in cocking, since a main was to be fought between Lord Derby's highly bred, black-breasted reds and Mr Whitaker's new strain of duckwings. There were enormous bets on both sides; it was quite a select meeting, and everyone was there by invitation. The best places were already occupied by early comers when we entered; there were Sir William Wynn, Ralph Benyon, Sir Bellingham Graham, Doctor Bellyse, Colonel Mellish, Dick Thornton, and several dukes and lords of Turf celebrity. In modest retirement in the background were the solid faces of Jem Belcher, Tom Cribb, Molyneux, Bill Richmond, Tom Oliver (the Commissary of the Prize Ring), Gentleman Jackson, and other 'pugs,' whose bravery and honesty earned them the patronage of the Corinthians.

“Presently a bustle outside gave notice that someone particular had arrived, and in came Tommy Hughes, the gentlest of roughs, and the proprietor of the ‘drum,’ bowing and scraping, and ushering in the ‘First Gentleman in Europe,’ accompanied by his brother, the Duke of York, and supported by his friends, foremost amongst whom was Beau Brummel, then in the zenith of his power.

“And now the sport began. ‘The backers,’ the seconds, the umpires, and referee took their places, and the first two feathered heroes were tenderly delivered at the scratch. It was a strange scene; the place, with its vaulted roof and stone pillars, was but dimly lit by the flickering candles, and these were chiefly focussed upon the stage, and the crowd in the background was shadowy and indistinct. The babel of tongues soon became uproarious; bets were shouted from each side of the pit; the Prince, who had thrown off all restraint on entering and had been shaking hands and betting with everyone, entered into the fun with an energy second to none. It would be impossible to recount the individual battles of this mighty main, or to describe how a gallant Redbreast with a broken thigh made his dying effort, and with a fortunate flutter slew his unscathed antagonist; or how another, blinded in the fight, with peculiar instinct, knocked over his unsuspecting foe. But in the end the Duckwings won, and the Derbyites were badly beaten, and the Prince who had backed the latter lost a large sum. After which the company turned out and had to push their way through the crowd of tatterdemalions that filled the streets.”

But the most graphic account of a well-fought main is from the pen of a journalist who in 1826, in company with Tom Owen, a famous pugilist and the inventor of the dumbbells, paid his first visit to the Westminster cockpit. After describing the interior of the building (“round, with seats rising row above row like an amphitheatre, with a stage of about 18 ft. or 20 ft. in diameter in the centre, covered by a mat on which an inner and an outer circle were chalked; and illumined by a ring of tallow candles that hung from the ceiling”), he proceeds to sketch the most conspicuous



L. R. & G. Cruikshank.

THE WESTMINSTER COCKPIT IN TUFTON STREET.

(From an old print.)

members of the company there assembled: "the country clergyman, with his broad-brimmed hat and white cravat, the grave, respectable tradesman, who never patronises any other form of amusement; the dandy, dressed in the height of the fashion, fraternising with Bill Smith of 'The Dials'; old men that looked as if they had gone without food to scrape together a few shillings to back the main." After having hit off the audience, he goes on to describe the *dramatis personæ* of the bloody drama that is about to be enacted.

"First in order is old Nash, the feeder. His colourless eye twinkled a cold satisfaction when a bird did good work on the mat; and sometimes, though seldom, he was elevated into the proffer of a moderate bet; but generally he leaned over the rails of a small gallery, and watched the progress of the battle. He had been cooped up so long with the birds, that his beaked nose, his red forehead and gills, round body, and thin legs, and silver-grey feathery hair lying like plumage over his head, gave him a cocklike appearance. Amidst a babel of shouting, the setters-to, Fleming and Nash junior, issued from opposite entrances, each carrying a white bag; from the recesses of which issued stifled cries of defiance.

"Fleming first lifted his bird out of the bag, yellow-bodied and black-winged. He was restless at the sight of his antagonist, but quite silent; and old Nash compared him most carefully with the description handed in with him, delivering him up to Fleming on finding that he perfectly answered to it. The setters-to then smoothed their birds, moistened their bandaged legs where the silver spurs, an inch and a half in length, were fastened; held them up opposite each other, and thus aroused their courage and prepared them for the combat. The opponent bird was a splendid red and black, whose feathers positively glittered; his black eyes took in all around him, and shone so brilliantly that they looked like jewels. His comb was cut close, his neck trimmed, his wings partially clipped, the back feathers, however, being left untouched, but the tail was docked triangularly like a hunter's.

“The mat was cleared of all persons save the setters-to. The betting went on vociferously. The setters-to taunted each of the birds with the other’s presence, allowed them to strike at each other at a distance, put them on the mat facing each other, encouraged their crowing and mantling until they were nearly dangerous to hold, then loosed them against one another for the fatal fight. The first dart into attitude was indeed strikingly grand and beautiful, and the wary sparring for the first cut was extremely curious. They were beak-point to beak-point until they dashed up in one tremendous flirt—mingling their powerful wings and nervous heels in one furious mass. I can only compare the sound of the first flight to that of a wet umbrella forced suddenly open. The separation was death-like. The yellow bird staggered out drooping, dismantled, bleeding. He was struck. Fleming and Nash severally took their birds, examined them for a moment, then again set them opposite each other.

“The handling of the cocks was as delicate as though they had been of foam or froth, or anything else that would melt in the grasp. Fleming’s bird staggered towards his opponent; but he was hit dreadfully, and ran like a drunken man, tottering on his breast, sinking back on his tail, while Nash’s, full of fire, gave him a final stroke, and the brave bird lay a draggled, motionless object upon the mat.

“The victor cock was carried away slightly scarred, but rendered doubly fierce by the short encounter he had been engaged in. He seemed to have grown double the size. When the bets had all been settled, the two Nashes descended with another cock. Sometimes the first blow was fatal; at others the battle was long and doubtful, and the cocks showed all the obstinate courage, distress, and breathlessness which mark the conflict of pugilists. I saw the beak open, the tongue palpitate, the wing drag on the mat, and even the sweat break out on the feathers. When the battle lasted long, and the cocks lay helpless near or upon each other, one of the feeders counted ten, and then the birds were separated and set to at the inner circle. If one bird did not fight while forty was counted, and the

other pecked or showed signs of fight, the former was considered conquered."

Nor were the Provinces behind London in their keenness for the sport. In no part of England was cock-fighting more enthusiastically followed than at Newcastle-on-Tyne. The *Newcastle Chronicle* of a century ago was full of advertisements of this favourite sport, and in one issue six mains are announced, the aggregate prizes of which amounted to £720. Nearly all the principal inns had covered pits attached to them, those of more ancient times being open. At first the sports were carried on at short intervals during the season, but by degrees the principal fights were concentrated in the race week, the gentlemen of Northumberland appearing as the antagonists of the gentlemen of Durham, Cumberland, or Yorkshire. Among the competitors in Newcastle cockpits were the Duke of Hamilton, Sir Henry Liddel, General Beckwith, Mr Fenwick of Bywell, etc. After the death of that great cocker Sir Harry Vane, however, the sport was little patronised by the gentry. The pit in Newcastle was usually the centre of a large room round which the seats were ranged, and with an inner circle railed off for bookmakers. Amongst these, about seventy years ago, was one named Sinclair, noted for his extraordinary memory; he never used pen or pencil, never entered a bet, yet would give or take the odds thirty or forty times without making a mistake. The pitmen were passionately fond of cocking; on pay Saturdays a regular tournament was got up for their delectation, and although the price of admission was as high as half a crown the place would be crowded.

Long after the sport was put down by Act of Parliament, mains continued to be fought in spite of law, police, and fines, even among the influential people of the town. A well-known magistrate who died only a few years ago kept gamecocks, and, the back part of his house being well screened from public view, frequently had a fight for his own entertainment and that of a select number of friends; among the latter being a learned judge who was delighted to assist in breaking the law—at least when on the Northern Circuit. Cocking, however, is dead and gone, although I

was taken not so very long ago to an underground establishment in London where a large number of gamecocks were kept, and I was told that there were Members of Parliament who sometimes came to these vaults to witness a main *sub rosa*.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE PRIZE RING

IN the eighteenth century the Prize Ring was one of the most popular of national sports among all classes. And for that popularity one man was mainly responsible, to wit, John Broughton, the "Father of British Boxing." There were so-called champions before him who included boxing among their displays of sword-play and single-stick, cudgel and quarter-staff; but Broughton was the first to reduce fist-fighting to a science. He was a waterman by trade—a big man, standing over 5 ft. 11 ins. and weighing between 14 and 15 st. His fine, athletic figure, his keen eyes and intelligent face, won him general admiration. His patron was the Duke of Cumberland, son of George II., afterwards execrated as the "Butcher of Culloden," but then a handsome young soldier, whose gracious manners made him universally popular. Under this distinguished patronage Broughton beat every man that was matched against him and the Duke won thousands of pounds by backing his protégé. For ten years Broughton held the Championship unchallenged. He set up a big amphitheatre in Hanway Street, off Oxford Street, where the public was entertained by combats between picked bruisers.

In addition to his public performances, Broughton opened a house in the Haymarket for private pupils, to encourage whom he invented the gloves, or mufflers. The first advertisement of the use of boxing-gloves appeared in the *Daily Advertiser* in February 1747:—

"Mr Broughton proposes, with proper assistance, to open an academy at his house in the Haymarket, for the instruction of those who are willing to be instructed in the

mystery of boxing, when the whole theory and practice of that British art, with all the various stops, blows, cross-buttocks, etc., incident to combatants, will be fully taught and explained; and that persons of quality and distinction may not be debarred from entering into a course of these lectures they will be given with the utmost tenderness and regard to the delicacy of the frame and constitution of the pupil, for which reason mufflers are provided that will effectually secure them from the inconveniencing of black eyes, broken jaws, and bloody noses."

This announcement caused as much derision among old stagers as the introduction of pads did amongst the cricketers who had stood up in their "ducks" to the lightning underhand expresses of Brown and Beldham and Osbaldeston. But the gloves soon became fashionable, and gave an immense impetus to the popularity of boxing. From an old print, however, I gather that the pupil when boxing with his tutor was allowed to use his bare fists, while the gloves protected him from injury at the hands of the professional.

John Broughton was famous and prosperous when, in an evil hour, he made a private quarrel an excuse for once more fighting on the stage. His opponent was a strapping young butcher from Norwich, named John Slack. The battle took place at Broughton's amphitheatre on the 10th of April 1750. The place was crowded, and the combatants set-to in the presence of the most distinguished gathering that ever assembled to witness a prize-fight. Two Royal Dukes and half the nobility of England were among the spectators.

Slack was a finely made man, about thirty years old, standing 5 ft. 8½ ins., and scaling 12½ st. Broughton stood 5 ft. 11 ins., and weighed over 14 st. He was in his forty-seventh year, and therefore had a great disadvantage in age, but from constant practice he was active for his years. So confident was he of victory, however, that he had made no attempt to get himself into condition.

Yet, when he began to fight, he showed all his old skill, and Slack never once in the first five rounds got past his guard. Broughton did all the fighting, gave his

man no rest, and rattled his blows in like a shower of hailstones.

In the sixth round, with the betting still 10 to 1 on Broughton, Slack made a sudden spring and planted right and left in quick succession full and fair between Broughton's eyes. The effect was magical: in an instant the Champion's puffy flesh swelled up, and his eyes were closed. He seemed suddenly struck blind, and groped his way about the ring in such a feeble way that the Duke of Cumberland, who had laid £10,000 upon him, cried out anxiously, "Why, Broughton, what's the matter with you? Why, take a rest, man!"

But though the veteran went to his corner and rested, it did him no good. He was worse than ever when he stood up again; he didn't seem to know where his adversary was, and let Slack strike him twice without making any attempt to return the blows.

"Why, damme, Broughton," yelled the Duke of Cumberland; "you're beat, man! What are you about, man? Don't lose the fight." To which Broughton shouted back, "I'm not beat, your Royal Highness; but I can't see my man! I'm blind, but I'm not beat! Only let me see my man, and I'll win yet!"

It was a vain wish. The veteran's eyes were hopelessly closed, and for the first time in his life he tasted defeat. He was led away helpless, and John Slack was proclaimed Champion of England.

Broughton never fought again. His patron, the Duke of Cumberland, was so exasperated at losing his £10,000 that for a long while he would not forgive Broughton or have anything to do with him. The patrons who had pampered him while he was successful deserted him, and he had to give up his Amphitheatre and retire into private life. But in the end the Duke relented, obtained an appointment for his old protégé, and left him an annuity. George III., too, had a great respect for the old gladiator, and never passed him without raising his hand and shouting out a genial "How d'ye do, Master Jack?"

In his latter days Broughton became a connoisseur in articles of vertu and a dabbler in stocks. His speculations

must have been successful, for when he died, in his eighty-fifth year, on the 8th January 1789, it was found that he was worth £7000.

The best monument to his fame is the Code of Rules which he drew up to regulate prize-fighting. For one hundred years they governed the practice of the Prize Ring, till superseded by the New Rules, which came into force in 1838. I subjoin the more important of Broughton's Rules:—

1. That a square yard be chalked in the middle of the stage, and every fresh set-to each second is to bring his man to the side of the square and place him opposite to the other, and till they are fairly set-to at the lines it shall not be lawful for the one to strike the other.

2. That in order to prevent any disputes as to the time a man lies after a fall, if the second does not bring his man to the side of the square within half a minute he shall be deemed a beaten man.

3. That in every main battle no person whatever shall be upon the stage except the principals and the seconds.

4. That no champion be deemed beaten unless he fails coming up to the line in the limited time, or that his own second declares him beaten. No second is allowed to ask his man's adversary any question, or advise him to give out.

6. That, to prevent disputes, in every main battle the principals shall, on the coming on the stage, choose from among the gentlemen present two umpires, who shall absolutely decide all disputes; and, if the two umpires cannot agree, the said umpires to choose a third, who is to determine it.

7. That no person is to hit his adversary when he is down or seize him by the ham, the breeches, or any part below the waist: a man on his knees to be reckoned down.

An even more potent factor in the popularity of the Prize Ring was the personality of John Jackson—"The Emperor of Pugilism," as his friend and pupil Lord Byron called him. For years his word was law in the pugilistic world. The aristocracy, from the Prince of Wales down-

wards, were hand in glove with him. Born in 1769, of respectable middle-class parentage, Jackson had the advantages of a good education and a magnificent physique; Byron says he was "the finest-formed man in Europe." He was a splendid all-round athlete, and could lift $10\frac{1}{4}$ hundredweight from the ground without straps, and write his name on a wall, above his head, with 84 lbs. suspended from his little finger.

Jackson was admitted to be the most formidable fighter and the most accomplished boxer that had been seen up to that time in the Ring. Yet he only fought three battles, one of which he lost, owing to his accidentally breaking the small bone of his leg. The great triumph which secured him his position was his victory over Dan Mendoza, who for years had held the Championship of England and was deemed invincible.

All the sporting world was agog with excitement over the match, and the betting was 2 to 1 on the Jew, whose beautiful science, especially in stopping, was thought far to outweigh Jackson's superiority in height and strength. The fight took place in a private park at Hornchurch in Essex, on the 15th of April 1795. A huge wooden amphitheatre had been erected, capable of seating 3000 spectators, with a raised and railed stage for the men to fight on. The place was crowded, and in the front seats were dukes, marquises, earls, and Royalty itself in the persons of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV.). The last time Jackson had peeled to fight he was but a stripling; he was now a full-grown man of magnificent proportions. He stood 5 ft. 11 ins., and weighed 14 st.

Mendoza, the smallest man that ever held the Championship of England, looked a mere shrimp beside him, for Dan was 4 ins. shorter and $2\frac{1}{2}$ st. lighter. Yet so great was the confidence of his backers that even now they laid 6 to 4 on him.

For the first three rounds the Jew apparently had the best of the fight. His wonderful quickness on his legs and the extraordinary rapidity with which, after catching a blow on his arm, he returned with the same arm a chop-

ping blow from the elbow seemed to puzzle Jackson. His mighty shoulder-hits didn't come off; he couldn't get past Dan's guard, and at the close of the third round the betting was 2 to 1 on Mendoza.

But then a change came over the scene, and the form he showed in the fourth round fairly electrified the spectators. He knocked the Jew like a shuttlecock all round the ring. His crashing blows from the shoulder broke through Mendoza's guard time after time, and sent him reeling against the rails. At last one fearful smack laid open the whole of Dan's cheek and sent him sprawling on the boards. This was a new style of fighting altogether. No one there had ever seen anything like it before. Mendoza's science seemed to be nowhere against it, and there was silence among his backers when his downfall came.

Never before had the Jew met with such unceremonious treatment, and there was a smile on Jackson's face which made the punishment all the more galling to the Champion, who had been used to profound respect from his antagonists. Shaken and dazed, but full of pluck, Mendoza once more faced his formidable foe. Jackson regarded him for a moment, and then strode suddenly forward, and as Dan fell back shot out his open left, clutched the Jew by his long, curly black hair (which Mendoza was too proud of to have cut), forced his head down, upper-cut him savagely in the face till the blood ran in streams from nose and mouth, and flung the Jew from him like an empty sack, full length upon the boards. Mendoza's backers were furious; "Foul! Foul!" they shouted. But there was no rule then against holding by the hair, and the referee decided that Jackson was perfectly within his right to act as he did; though Dan always maintained that Jackson had taken an unfair advantage of him, and I think the Jew had some grounds for his charge. Such an exhibition had the "Gentleman" made of the Jew in these last two rounds that 2 to 1 on Jackson found no takers.

For the next three rounds the Jew kept entirely on the defensive; but, do what he would, he could not get away from Jackson's resolute attack. Smash through his guard came those sledge-hammer blows, and sent him spinning

against the rails. Once again Jackson caught him by the hair, this time with the right hand, lifted him clean off his feet, and, with a thundering smack from his left, sent Dan on his back.

It was evident that Mendoza had no idea how to meet this novel form of attack, so utterly opposed to all his theories of the art of fighting. In the ninth round Jackson walked up to him and simply did what he pleased with him. So fiercely did he punish the unfortunate Jew that the spectators thought Jackson meant killing his man. How Mendoza managed to keep his feet under the storm of blows was a mystery. Twice Jackson lifted him by the hair and contemptuously struck him with the palm of his open hand, as one would box the ears of an impudent urchin, then, with one smashing hit on the face knocked poor Dan out of time and shattered his reputation for ever. The fight only lasted twelve minutes, and in that brief space Mendoza and the school of boxing he had founded were wiped out, and the once popular gladiator dropped into obscurity and ended his days in poverty.

From that time forward Jackson was supreme in the pugilistic world. He founded a new style, which he from time to time improved till it became recognised as the only true method of scientific boxing. His rooms at 13 Bond Street became one of the most fashionable lounges for the men about town, and Jackson for many years made an income of considerably over a thousand a year, and this in days when professional incomes of a thousand a year were rare.

Jackson was, as I have said, a remarkably fine-looking man, and he dressed extremely well. His manners, too, were perfect; and, in illustration of the quality which earned him the title of "Gentleman," I give the following anecdote, for which I am indebted to Captain Horatio Ross, the famous rifle-shot:

"I knew Jackson," writes Captain Ross, "and can vouch for the truth of this story. A man who only recently died—a great politician in his younger days—was a patron of the Ring, as, indeed, we all were then, and he was a first-rate man, either with or without gloves. His wife did not

approve of this, and sometimes expressed surprise that a really great man, as her husband was, could have any pleasure in the society of 'such ruffians as prize-fighters.' He resolved to play his wife a harmless little trick. He invited Jackson to dinner, and told him:—

"Remember you are Colonel Jackson, and have been in most of the battles of the Peninsula, Waterloo, etc., etc.'

"Colonel Jackson was announced, made himself most agreeable, and played the part of Colonel to perfection. After he had left, the lady remarked that Colonel Jackson was one of the most agreeable and interesting men she had ever met. 'You must ask him to dine with us again!' said she.

"'With pleasure,' was the reply; 'but when he dines with us again you must receive him as John Jackson the pugilist, not Colonel Jackson the Peninsula hero!'"

Mr Edward Hayward Budd, the greatest all-round athlete of his time—cricketer, boxer, wrestler, runner, game-shot—has also told some good stories of Jackson, of whom he was a contemporary.

"Jackson," says Mr Budd, "used to teach the children sparring in the drawing-rooms of the nobility, it being a fashionable and indeed an essential accomplishment. There was a certain duchess who was always present while her sons were taking their lessons, Jackson being on his knees to be more on a level with his pupils.

"Jackson used to tell a laughable anecdote of himself. A former pupil, a colonel in the Indian army, had, after many years' absence in the East, returned to London. Jackson called at the time the colonel was advertising a lost *pug* dog. The colonel was from home, and on his return the maid-servant told him that Mr Jackson the *pugilist* had called, adding, 'I dare say, sir, he has called about the dog.'"

For more than thirty years Jackson was a conspicuous figure in London life. Men of letters and fashion courted his society. Lord Byron always spoke of him affectionately as "my corporeal pastor and master," and there was hardly a person of celebrity whom John Jackson did not number among his acquaintances or patrons.

He amassed a considerable fortune, which enabled him to retire and enjoy an old age of leisure and comfort, till his last summons came on the 17th of October 1845, when he had just completed his seventy-seventh year. The elaborate monument erected to his memory by his numerous admirers testifies to the respect in which he was held by sportsmen of all classes, and is still one of the sights of Brompton Cemetery.

So long as John Broughton was Champion of England, prize-fighting enjoyed the patronage of the best sportsmen in the kingdom. In those days big battles were usually fought on a stage erected at one of the London amphitheatres, and people crowded to see them as they would nowadays to a pantomime at Drury Lane. Women and even children were among the spectators, and a varied entertainment preceded the great event of the day. Doors were opened as early as nine o'clock in the morning, though the fight, which was the *pièce de résistance*, did not usually commence till twelve or one o'clock.

But directly after Broughton's defeat by Slack, prize-fighting began to fall into disrepute. Slack himself was a "wrong 'un," and his half-dozen successors to the Championship were "wrong 'uns," who sold their fights, played cross, and did any and every blackguardly trick which their rascally patrons ordered them to do.

English pugilism had reached its nadir, and was patronised only by the lowest of the low, when a champion arose who not only raised the character of the Ring, but gave it a prestige greater than it had ever enjoyed before. This hero was Thomas Jackling, of Derby, better known by his *nom de guerre* of Tom Johnson.

Johnson was succeeded by Big Ben Brain, the favourite hero of George Borrow, a fine fighter and an honest man. Then came Mendoza, and for nearly forty years—from Dan's great fight with Gentleman Humphries to Tom Spring's last fight with Jack Langan—prize-fighting was the most popular sport in England. Those were the days of the two Belchers, the Game Chicken (Hen Pearce), Gully, Cribb, Gregson, Molineux the Black, Dutch Sam, Jack Randall, Tom Hickman (the terrible "Gas"), Ned Painter

of Norwich, Bill Neate (the "Bristol Bull"), Gentleman Jackson, George Cooper, Ned Turner, and many others. Among the patrons of pugilism were numbered the best men in every class of society—noblemen and gentlemen, county magnates and City aldermen. Twenty or thirty thousand eager spectators would gather round a ring, and the money that changed hands over the event was seldom reckoned under six figures.

Those palmy days lasted until 1824, when Spring and Langan fought their two great battles—the first at Worcester, the second at Chichester. Thirty thousand spectators witnessed the first of these combats on the Pitchcroft. How many were present at the second I have no idea, but never in its history has Chichester seen such an influx of visitors.

After his victory that day Spring resigned the Championship, and from his retirement dates the downfall of the Ring. For Spring, like Cribb and his predecessors back to Tom Johnson, was a man of stainless honour who was respected and admired by everyone, but the same could not be said of his successor, Jem Ward. Jem's conduct in the Ring was not always above suspicion. Twice he yielded to temptation, and once he was publicly expelled from the Ring by the Pugilistic Club. That he redeemed these errors by some brilliant victories is true; but he alienated some of the best patrons of the Prize Ring by his early misdeeds, and they would never again countenance a sport of which the Champion was a man whose honour was stained.

So the best supporters of the Ring turned away in disgust, and from the advent of Jem Ward prize-fighting declined as a national sport. The battles of Bendigo and Ben Caunt, accompanied as they were by scenes of the most outrageous ruffianism, still further alienated the sympathies of those who loved to see a fair stand-up fight with fists. And so the Ring went from bad to worse, till its name stank in the nostrils of respectable sportsmen. One last flicker of popularity, however, it enjoyed, for which it was indebted to Tom Sayers, who by his courage and honesty gave the old sport a new lease of life—not a

very long lease, certainly, but enough to enable the venerable Prize Ring to die decently, with something even of splendour about its final exit.

But low as the Ring had fallen in England at the time when Sayers first sprang into fame, it was never in such an utterly barbarous state as in America. Ruffianism and blackguardism were unfortunately too often the accompaniments of pugilism in this country, but even our ruffians and blackguards were of a more civilised type than those on the other side of the Atlantic.

In one of the fights of John Morrissey, the notorious ruffian who rose to be a member of the Legislative Assembly, his opponent was a saloon rowdy named Bill Poole. In order that I may not be accused of giving a garbled account of the affair, I will quote the words of the American reporter :—

“ There was no ring, but by general consent the throng had kept a space open for the combat. Poole, in his undershirt, was ready when his rival appeared.

“ Morrissey threw off his coat and shirt, and stood in his red flannel undershirt, as brawny a young bruiser as the most enthusiastic admirer of muscle could desire to see. Poole was a model of powerful physique, and one of the handsomest men of the day, carrying himself at the same time most gracefully.

“ The fight began with some light sparring, Poole on the defensive, and his opponent laying out for a chance to close. Then Morrissey made a rush. But Poole was too quick for him. As Morrissey struck at him, Poole ducked and seized him by the ankles. In a second more he had thrown him clean over his head, and, still gripping him by the ankles, had turned and fallen on top of him. The scene which followed was indescribable. The fighters, clutching one another with grips of steel, gouged, bit, butted, and pounded each other without cessation. They never changed their positions, because they could not; for the moment they fell down the crowd closed in on them till its feet touched their bodies, and the first row on each side had its hands on the shoulders of those opposite, keeping them far enough back for the combatants to have

room to fight at all. The wonder was, not that they did not kill each other, but that they were not trampled to death. But not a hand was raised to interfere with or favour either contestant. If Morrissey ever had a square deal he had it then. Still, he was doomed. With Poole on him as irremovably as if he had been frozen there, Morrissey did his best for a few minutes. Then his voice was heard, suffocated with blood. 'I'm satisfied,' it said. The crowd opened of its own accord, and Poole got on his feet. Morrissey got up without assistance. He was frightfully punished. He had to wipe the blood from his eyes with his white shirt, which somebody handed to him, before he could see to walk. Poole had got a terrible mauling too. His worst hurt was *a great gash in his cheek where Morrissey had bitten him*. Morrissey had to keep his bed for weeks after the fight."

On another occasion, when fighting a man named M'Cann, Morrissey was thrown heavily. As he fell a stove was overturned, a bushel of red-hot coals rolled out, and Morrissey was forced on them. *M'Cann held him there until the smell of burning flesh filled the room*. The bystanders threw water on the coals, and the gas and steam rose in M'Cann's face and choked him. Morrissey then had his own way, and pounded M'Cann into insensibility.

Now such brutal fights as those in which Morrissey distinguished himself would never have been tolerated in England. The Prize Ring with its rules of fair play had at any rate had so much influence on Englishmen that it had produced an abhorrence of weapons like the revolver and the bowie-knife, and of unmanly and treacherous assaults. The leading prize-fighters of America were rowdies who kept gambling-hells and night-houses in which robbery and murder were common occurrences. Now I do not pretend that there were not in London some dens of iniquity where fools with more money than sense were hounded and robbed, and occasionally put out of the way altogether, nor that professional pugilists were sometimes the proprietors. But such men were the scum of the profession—not its leading lights, as in New York. In

London, Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, and Liverpool there were public-houses kept by well-known pugilists which were noted for their respectability—houses which decent sportsmen could frequent without fear of losing either their characters or their money. Tom Spring, Peter Crawley, Jem Burn, Owen Swift, Nat Langham, Dan Dismore, and many other prize-fighters were landlords of some of the best-conducted hostelries in the kingdom. In New York there was nothing of the kind.

And then, in estimating the difference between the Prize Ring in America and in England, there must not be forgotten the influence exercised by *Bell's Life*. That journal, under its two famous editors Vincent Dowling and his son Frank, had a wonderful effect in keeping the Ring true to its traditions of manliness and fair play. Both those journalists threw themselves heart and soul into the work of elevating British sport in every phase, but especially did they strive to raise the Prize Ring and counteract the evil influences that were sapping its foundations. They were not always successful, but they undoubtedly saved it from sinking into utter degradation and so long as *Bell's Life* was a power in the world of sport there was some hope that prize-fighting might hold its own as a manly and honourable British institution. At any rate, in the two Dowlings it had fearless critics and honest counsellors, whose pens were always wielded in the cause of manliness, integrity, and fair play.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE NOBLE ART OF SELF-DEFENCE

IN reading *Digby Grand* again I was struck with the change that has come over the sports of the man about town since that book was written. Even ten years after it was published, when I first knew my London, there was something sordid and degrading about what was commonly known as Sport. It was thought the correct thing to patronise sparring matches at the saloons attached to public-houses kept by retired prize-fighters, or rattling matches run by such celebrities in the canine world as Jemmy Shaw. Now and then the ardent lover of "The Fancy" was privileged to assist at a "little mill with the 'raw 'uns'" in some secluded stable in the slums, or a main of cocks in some evil-smelling cellar. When I look back, I realise how disreputable were the places we frequented and the people with whom we consorted. And yet there was a fascination about these unconventional sports. We youngsters thought that we were "seeing life" when we hob-nobbed with bruisers and dog-fanciers in low-ceilinged tavern parlours, and sat cheek by jowl with Bohemian blackguards of all sorts. But what a change has come over the sports of the man-about-town! As I sit in the well-lighted, airy hall of the National Sporting Club, and watch boxing as clever as any one could wish to see, I think of nights with the Rum-pum-pas at old Nat Langham's, and I admit unhesitatingly that the London sportsman of to-day is far better catered for than his predecessor of fifty years ago. And he is not so villainously swindled as we were; we never got our money's worth or anything like it. We paid preposterous prices for execrable liquors. We put down our sovereigns for a rattling good

set-to, not suspecting at the time that "old Nat" deducted fifteen shillings in the pound before rewarding the performers.

But in the early years of the nineteenth century things were better ordered. In the days of the Regency sparring exhibitions between members of the Upper Ten were almost as common as they are now between gentlemen of the gutter. Lord Mexborough and the Hon. Fletcher Norton were at one time Gentleman Jackson's favourite pupils, and so evenly matched that a challenge was given and accepted between the two to try which was the better man. Such a sensation was created by this event, that on the afternoon on which it came off Rotten Row was deserted by the male sex, and Jackson's rooms in Bond Street were crammed like Dury Lane gallery on Boxing-night. It was regarded as a match between the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Both the combatants were light-weights and splendid boxers, and for a long time victory hung in the balance; for, while Mexborough was the quicker at out-fighting, Norton was stronger in the rally; but strength prevailed at last, and Lord Mexborough was knocked clean over the benches, amidst tremendous cheering. Grantly Berkeley tells us in his memoirs that after dinner at Crockford's the tables would be frequently put aside and the room converted into an arena, and Tom Spring and Owen Swift and other boxers would amuse the company with a display of their science. At other times the room would be turned into a cockpit, and a main fought by candle-light.

In those hot days when George III. was King every gentleman could use his fists. The Prince of Wales was particularly proud of his skill, and firmly believed that had he not been Prince of Wales he would have run Jackson and Cribb close for the Championship of England. When discussing boxing with a lady one day, he said: "I was out with my harriers last year, when we found a hare, but the scent was catching, so that we could get no continuous pace at all. There was a butcher—damme, madam, a big fellow, 15 stone, standing 6 feet 2—the bully of all Brighton. He over-rode my hounds several times, and I

asked him to hold hard in vain. At last, damme, madam, he rode over my favourite bitch Ruby. I could stand it no longer, but, jumping off my horse, said, 'Get down, you rascal, and pull off your coat.' We fought for about an hour and twenty minutes, the field forming a ring round us, and at the end of it the big bully butcher of Brighton was carried away senseless, while I had scarcely a scratch." Scarcely the sort of story to amuse a lady at the present day. As to its veracity, perhaps the less said the better. George was given to romancing.

Captain Millbank, R.N., was a first-rate fighter. The crew of his barge had quarrelled with that of H.M.S. *Berwick* and got soundly drubbed. Captain Millbank, hearing of this, called his men a lot of cowardly lubbers, dressed himself as a sailor next day, and in his barge overtook the *Berwick's* barge, which he purposely fouled. High words, of course, ensued, ending in the Captain offering to fight their best man, which he did, not only defeating him, but the whole boat's crew, one after another.

The famous John Mytton of Halston had numerous fights, although he never received any instruction in boxing; and old Captain Taylor of York used to relate with much gusto how, when *he* was young, he and Jack Mytton thrashed a cellarful of blacklegs in Chester, for which both were locked up for the night. On another occasion, when the Squire of Halston, then but nineteen, was coursing, a burly miner would not desist from halloaing after the hare, though several times requested to do so. A fight, and a hard one, between Mytton and the miner ensued, the latter at last giving in, when the Squire not only gave the man the hare and half a sovereign, but told him to go up to the Hall and have a bellyful of meat and drink as well.

Another good man with his hands was Hope Johnstone, who, in 1843, having quarrelled with the landlord of the Black Bull at Northallerton, first thrashed him, then took on Tom Dawson, Bob Haseltine, the guard of the mail, and a recruiting officer one after another, and disposed of them all. He was always ready for a "fecht"; and, having really an innate relish for the pastime, was as often seen with a black eye as without. On one occasion at Doncaster a

London leg tried to draw from him twice, the bet having been paid on the course, when Hope Johnstone gave the ruffian a hiding which he remembered for a month of Sundays.

Johnstone's best Turf spec was buying Era out of Scotts' stables for a mere trifle, and afterwards winning the Northumberland Plate, the Liverpool Cup, and other first-class races with him, though the Scotts were never able to make the horse gallop at all. He also had a good animal in William le Gros, on which he himself beat British Yeoman at Doncaster, in a match for 1000 guineas. It was said of him in 1849 that, "with the air of a raw heather laird and the accent of a drover this Northern Turfite combined naturally acute wits that made him more than a match for the cleverest legs about town; whilst his infernal knuckles and readiness to use them were not without their influence in the pandemonia of the metropolis."

That most earnest philanthropist, the late Earl of Shaftesbury, was a famous boxer in his younger days; and when he opened the Exeter Hall Gymnasium he gave some reminiscences of his youthful fights, in which he evidently revelled, much to the horror of some of the audience. The Earl's elder brother, the Hon. Francis Ashley Cooper, was killed in a fight at Eton by a school-fellow named Fred Wood. They fought for more than two hours, and Cooper died the same evening.

Few people who were familiar with the slight frame and ascetic face of Cardinal Manning would imagine that in his youth he was a cricketer of no mean proficiency, and, like Lord Shaftesbury, a particularly clever boxer. He could hold his own with his gloves in very good company, and a priest who was trained under him told a friend of mine that when he grew demonstrative in the pulpit, he had a knack of throwing his body into the correct pugilistic attitude. And this reminds me that one of the highest tributes ever paid to British boxing came from another Cardinal, an Italian.

In a sermon which he preached in Rome at the end of the last century on the cowardice of using the stiletto, the Cardinal said, "Why do you not fight like the brave

Englishmen—with Nature's weapons?" Then he gave them a stirring account of the fight between Humphries and Mendoza, which he had witnessed, dwelling on the manliness and fair play which characterised the combat, and urging them to settle their quarrels in the like manner. That was how British prize-fighting struck a foreigner, and an ecclesiastic of cultured and refined tastes, and he, at any rate, did not regard the spectacle of a prize-fight as brutalising or demoralising.

One of the most enthusiastic lovers of the noble art I ever met was the late George Borrow, author of *The Bible in Spain* and *Lavengro*. I have often listened to him as he told in his dramatic way thrilling stories of prize-fighters, for many of whom he had the highest admiration. He was himself a fine boxer, and his great height, strength, and fearlessness made him a most formidable opponent—as rogues and bullies at country fairs found to their cost. His description of the fight between Tom Oliver and Phil Sampson in *Lavengro* and his own combat with "The Flaming Tinman," are two of the most striking episodes in that wonderful book.

Of the usefulness of boxing as a healthy exercise, I might give countless instances. Mr Rufus Choate, the recently retired American Ambassador, is now over seventy, yet he still indulges in an occasional set-to with the gloves and attributes his remarkable vigour to the constant practice of boxing all through his life.

Of the value of boxing as a means of self-defence a remarkable illustration was once given by the Right Honourable William Windham, whom Macaulay describes as "the finest gentleman of the age." Windham, then Colonial Secretary in the Grenville administration, was defending the Prize Ring in the House of Commons, and to illustrate the usefulness of boxing told the following anecdote:—

"One night I was bidding adieu to a young lady at the Opera, when her brother pressed me to take a sandwich with them in St James's Street. On our way there two men rushed out of an entry and tried to seize the lady, who at that moment was unguarded on the right hand, her brother being a few paces in the rear. On hearing his

sister scream he bounded forward, and with one blow laid the foremost of her assailants in the gutter. He was barely over five feet, while these fellows were tall, raw-boned coal-heavers; and although one was *hors de combat*, I was alarmed about the other, and shouted lustily for the watch. My companion was not in the least daunted, however. 'You take care of my sister,' he said, 'and if I cannot manage a pair of rascals like these I ought to be d——d!' The second ruffian aimed a blow at me, but I avoided it, and saved my fair partner from harm, while our little champion rushed forward, received a blow on his arm, and returned it with one in the pit of the stomach, which tumbled the fellow headlong into an area at least three yards deep. This was all the work of an instant, and our skilful champion seizing hold of his sister's arm, we arrived safely at his house. This will, I think, establish the usefulness of pugilism. Had my friend known as little of the science as the coal-heavers, the consequences might have been serious unless he had had his sword, when indeed he might have killed them in a *gentlemanly* manner. The next day I put myself under a master of the art of self-defence, and I consider a knowledge of boxing to be as necessary to the education of a gentleman as Greek and Latin."

And even in these days a knowledge of boxing may be a very useful accomplishment. I had this fact brought home to me not so very long since, when I was a spectator of a presentation to a popular clergyman in a suburb of London. The police of the district publicly presented the parson with a very handsome pipe, and his wife with a valuable bracelet, in recognition of his plucky conduct in rescuing a constable who was being brutally assaulted by a mob of roughs. The policeman was down, and his assailants were kicking him in a most savage fashion, when the parson—a little, thick-set man—dashed in among them, sent them flying right and left with hits straight from the shoulder, and assisted the fallen man to his feet. Then the two of them, back to back, fought the crowd till reinforcements arrived and the currish crew incontinently fled.

This same parson was in the habit of holding open-air

services at the street corners. When first he started these services the roughs used to gather round and jeer at him, using the foulest language. He saw that this must be stopped at once, so one evening, after the service was over, he singled out the biggest fellow among them, who had made himself conspicuous in annoying the little band of worshippers, went up to him, and said: "Now look here, my man. You have been behaving yourself like a filthy beast, and I mean to teach you a lesson. Put up your hands if you're a man." The hulking lout grinned as he looked down upon the little parson, and prepared to demolish him before the eyes of his admiring pals. The fight was very short. Twice the parson knocked the man clean off his legs. Then the hooligan gave in; and never again were the parson's out-door services disturbed.

I think the most enthusiastic lover of boxing I ever came across was the late Honourable Robert Grimston, familiarly known as "Bob" Grimston. He was a contemporary of John Ruskin at Oxford. "I remember when I was at Christ Church," writes the great art critic, "Grimston attended the same lectures as myself. He was a man of herculean strength, whose love of dogs and horses, and especially of boxing, was stupendous." As a boy he had taken lessons from the famous John Jackson, and as a young man he was a pupil both of Tom Spring and Jem Ward. I have often heard Jem relate anecdotes of "The Honorable Bob's" contempt for hard knocks. If Jem were a little slack in hitting, Grimston would cry out: "Look here, Ward, none of your gammon; come at me as if you were fighting for the Championship; I like being hit." An undergraduate who was once having a spar with him remarked: "It's all very well for you, Bob, for your head is like a rhinoceros's." "Of course it is," was the reply, "because I have boxed from boyhood; and if you go on long enough *your* head will be like a rhinoceros's, which will be a comfort to you for life." Another time, when doubled up by a body blow which rendered him speechless for some minutes, there was a roar among the spectators, his partisans declaring it was a foul. Up rose Grimston as soon as he could get back his breath, and spluttered out :

“What infernal nonsense you are talking! It was a perfectly fair hit—all my own fault for not having stopped it.” He was a generous patron of the Prize Ring. “I think,” he once said in public, “that boxing is a noble and manly sport, and I believe in the Ring as a necessary evil, as it is horrible to see a man tried for murder for sticking a knife into another in a quarrel which should have ended in a couple of black eyes and a shake of the hand. I used to like to see a fight between a couple of clever light-weights who could spar well and who would not be asked to go on when one was evidently beaten; for it was cruel to let two game fellows hammer one another to pieces for the bets.” Those are sensible and weighty words from one of the finest and manliest characters of his time. He was the very soul of honour and chivalry in public and in private life, and no truer sportsman than “Bob” Grimston ever threw leg over saddle, handled a cricket-bat, or donned a boxing-glove.

CHAPTER XXXIII

CHAMPIONS I HAVE KNOWN

THE portrait of the Game Chicken which Dickens has given in *Dombey and Son*—"a stoical gentleman in a shaggy white greatcoat and flat-brimmed hat, with very short hair, a broken nose, and a considerable tract of bare and sterile country behind each ear"—has probably been accepted by thousands as a true presentment of the typical "pug." No doubt such a type existed, but that all prize-fighters have been of that type I unhesitatingly deny. Young Reid, for example, who taught half the aristocracy and at least two future archbishops to spar in the mid-Victorian era, was a good-looking, trimly built man, always dressed in perfect taste, who might have passed for a professional man. And many celebrated pugilists were really handsome men, with pleasant faces and good manners—the very antipodes of Dickens's Game Chicken. Some of them, too, were excellent company: Jem Burn, Owen Swift, and Peter Crawley were of this stamp.

Johnny Broome was a particularly clever and well-informed man, with remarkable talents as a mechanic, though his moral character was not quite that of "a plaster saint." Tom Spring was one of Nature's gentlemen in every respect, and I particularly resented Hall Caine's gratuitous and stupid slander on his character in *The Manxman*, where he is alluded to as having fought "a cross." Mr Hall Caine knows as much about the Prize Ring as he does about the Turf—that is to say, absolutely nothing. I should like to have seen George Borrow's face if the novelist had dared to make such an insinuation against "the unvanquishable and incorruptible" in his

presence. He would have taken Mr Hall Caine up with one hand and shaken him as a terrier shakes a rat.

Bendigo, before the revivalists got hold of him, and even after that during his periodical lapses from grace, was capital company, full of quaint lore, an enthusiastic gardener, too, and one of the best fishermen that even Nottingham, famed for its anglers since Izaak Walton's days, ever produced.

Jem Ward, whom I was proud to call a friend, was an artist and musician as well as pugilist, and could make himself at home in the society of ladies, which is more than I can say for any other prize-fighter I have known.

Tom King, the conqueror of Heenan, was in his later days a model of respectability. Roses were his hobby. He would yarn about them by the hour—not even Dean Hole himself was a greater enthusiast. I used to meet him frequently at the Crystal Palace Rose Show, and it was hard to imagine that the tall, grey-bearded gentleman in silk hat, frock-coat, and straw-coloured gloves was the magnificent athlete whom I saw stripped to fight the gigantic and herculean Heenan. Tom would talk freely about roses, but if you attempted to draw him on the Prize Ring he dried up at once. And yet it was his victory over the Benicia Boy and the winning of that £2000 prize that gave him the means of starting as a bookmaker and making the handsome fortune which he subsequently amassed. He died worth upwards of £50,000.

Tom Sayers, outside his profession, was not a very interesting person. He could neither read nor write, and his information about things in general was ludicrously defective. Yet no one who studied Tom's face, as I have done, whilst one of his pals was reading to him an account of a prize-fight from *Bell's Life*, could doubt that he had plenty of intelligence. To see him in the ring was to realise that the man was a genius in his line. His coolness, the quickness with which he seized an opportunity, his instinctive knowledge of the right thing to do at the right moment, his strategy, his perfect control—all these qualities showed a brain directing the motions of the body.

The only pugilist whose popularity can compare with that of Tom Sayers is Tom Cribb, who twice beat Molineux the Black for the Championship of England. But then Cribb won his fame in the days when the Prize Ring was a national institution, openly supported, not only by the nobility and gentry, but by Royalty itself. Sayers, on the other hand, gained his celebrity and popularity at a time when the Prize Ring was a discredited and disreputable institution, which the law suppressed whenever it could, and from which decent folks mostly kept aloof, disgusted at the blackguardism with which it was associated. Yet wherever you went there was no topic discussed with such interest as the great fight between Sayers and Heenan. And I think the fact that a professional prize-fighter, in the then state of public opinion, should have attracted such attention and won such universal popularity is an extraordinary tribute to the character of Thomas Sayers.

The scenes in London on the eve of that memorable battle have seldom been paralleled. Every sporting house was packed with crowds of people eager to obtain the "office" for the morrow's rendezvous. All night the streets were seething with excitement. Thousands of persons never went to bed, and London Bridge Station at dawn on the morning of 17th April 1860 presented a spectacle such as one sees nowadays at Waterloo on Derby day.

Heenan, the Benicia Boy, was in the prime of his early manhood. His deep chest, his powerful shoulders, his broad back and extraordinarily long arms, were points that impressed themselves upon one at the first glance. A closer scrutiny showed that he was trained to the hour. You could count the ribs, which stood out like those of a greyhound at Altcar, and beneath the clear white satiny skin you could see the bands of sinew and the knots of muscle moving like strips of ivory. His height was 6 ft. 2 ins., his weight 13 st. 8 lbs. His age was 27 all but a fortnight.

Against this colossal mass of muscle was pitted a man who looked like a pigmy by comparison ; for Tom Sayers stood but 5 ft. 8½ ins. and scaled only 10 st. 9 lbs. In age,

too, the Englishman was at a disadvantage, for he was 34 (within five weeks)—a time of life when prize-fighters have usually been considered stale and past their prime. But there was no sign of staleness about Tom Sayers as he stood up that morning, confident and smiling, on the turf at Farnborough.

He was as brown as a gipsy, and looked all the darker by contrast with Heenan's white skin. His arms, though well shaped, had very little show of muscle, and his chest was not remarkable; but his neck was massive as a bull's, and the exceptionally broad shoulders were very firmly knit where they joined the collar-bone. It was in his lower extremities, however, that Tom showed superiority over his huge antagonist. His loins and legs were more compact than those of the towering Yankee, and suggested far greater spring and activity.

But Sayers had one great advantage in the confidence begotten of a long series of victories. He had fought and beaten men almost as big and formidable as Heenan, whilst the Benicia Boy was but a novice, who had fought only one regular ring-fight, and had been beaten in that. He was now called upon to fight the most celebrated pugilist in the world before a crowd of strangers, three-fourths of whom were prejudiced against him as a foreigner. The combatants, therefore, were not so ill-matched as the difference in their physique would indicate—indeed, I am disposed to think that the advantage lay with Sayers. He was the hero of fifteen public battles, all but one of which he had won, and he was a far cleverer and more resourceful fighter than Heenan; he had every trick at his fingers' ends; and above all, he was the popular favourite, and he knew it.

Surely these points more than compensated for the Benicia Boy's superior size and strength. With both hands available, Sayers ought to have licked the Yankee without much difficulty, and probably would have done so. For my part, I should not have classed his victory under such circumstances as by any means the most brilliant or creditable in his career. But what no one can help admiring was Tom's dogged pluck in fighting round after

round with his right arm disabled and causing him the acutest pain.

It was in stopping a tremendous blow of Heenan's in the sixth round that his right arm—"the auctioneer," as he always called it—was so seriously injured as to be of very little further use to him. That was the critical moment of the battle. Sayers, with an ugly bruise on his cheek-bone and a ragged cut over his right eyebrow, came up to fight one of the most sensational rounds ever seen in the Ring. Tom was very wily: he skipped away from Heenan's futile lunges, and danced about him, reminding many of the antics by which he bewildered the Tipton Slasher. The Benicia Boy lost his temper, and let drive his left at Tom's head—an awful hit, had it gone home—but Sayers guarded, sprang in before the American could recover himself, and gave him a terrific smash in the eye, splitting the cheek and sending his huge antagonist reeling back into his corner.

Heenan, when he recovered his balance, stood like a man dazed, and in a few seconds could hardly be recognised as the same man, so swollen and disfigured were his features. He never quite recovered from that astonishing blow. If Tom could hit thus with his left, he doubtless wondered what "the auctioneer" was like. For the "Boy" was not at all sure that he had disabled Tom's dexter fin, and was in momentary expectation of having it driven like a sledge-hammer into his contused and lacerated visage.

Everyone knows that the great battle of Farnborough ended in a draw, after two hours and twenty minutes of most determined fighting, and to this day it is a disputed question which man had the best of it at the finish. What really happened at the end I suppose no one knew for certain. All that anybody could swear to was that Heenan, almost blind, caught Sayers round the neck, dragged him to the ropes, and deliberately tried to strangle him there. The ropes were cut, and several so-called rounds were scrambled through somehow in the midst of a howling horde of ruffians, with no umpire or referee to see fair play. One thing, however, may be positively asserted, and that is that Heenan did not win the fight. Whether

he would have won had the battle been fought to a finish is a matter of pure speculation. Tom was very tired, his right arm was giving him great pain, and it is possible that Heenan might have knocked him out. On the other hand, Sayers was perfectly cool, could see clearly with both eyes, knew how to get safely down when necessary, and was well aware that another tap or two would leave Heenan as hopelessly blind as Tom himself was in his fight with Langham. Sayers's admirers point to Heenan's defeat by Tom King, and say that there you have proof how grossly the Benicia Boy was overrated. But I do not think that the King-Heenan fight throws any light on the probable issue of the Sayers-Heenan had it been fought to a finish. The Heenan of Wadhurst and the Heenan of Farnborough were two very different men, otherwise King would not have had much chance.

Jem Mace, the last of the old prize-fighters, was my tutor in the noble art five-and-forty years ago, and in his prime was the most finished boxer I ever saw in the Prize Ring. Indeed, among the Champions of England, of whom he was the last, there was not his superior in science and ring-craft. Like Tom Sayers he was good-tempered and averse from quarrels, and I never heard of his abusing his fighting skill by assaulting anyone, even under gross provocation. I remember once travelling from Leicester with the late Rector of Ashby-de-la-Zouche, Canon Denton, when Jem Mace, remarkably well dressed and smart, entered our carriage. It was just after the 'Varsity boat-race, and the conversation turned on the training of the crews. Jem delivered himself of some very sensible remarks on that and kindred topics, and talked most agreeably. When the Canon and I left the train at Ashby, he turned to me and said:

"Your friend is a most sensible and well-informed man. May I ask who he is?"

"He is Jem Mace, the Champion of England," I replied.

"What!" he exclaimed, in astonishment. "A prize-fighter! Nonsense! Why, he might pass for a gentleman anywhere."

"That is so," said I. "Nevertheless, he is one of what

George Borrow calls 'the people opprobriously called prize-fighters.'

"He must be a remarkably good specimen of his class, then; he is a man whom I should be pleased to meet anywhere."

And with the opinion of my reverend friend I cordially concur.

CHAPTER XXXIV

GUN STORIES

A FEW years since a well-known daily paper commenced a furious crusade against "the senseless slaughter of game which characterised the modern battue and drive." Unfortunately, the editor's zeal outran his discretion, and, being lamentably ignorant of the subject, he fell into a trap, only to come out covered with ridicule. A correspondent sent him what purported to be an account of a great grouse shoot by electric light. The moors were lit up, and the bewildered birds, only half awake, flew almost into the muzzles of the guns and many were even knocked down with sticks. The editor published the extraordinary statement without inquiry, with some scathing comments on "this so-called sport." Then came the inevitable exposure. He was compelled to own that he had been made the victim of a humiliating hoax; his ignorance of everything connected with shooting was exposed, and from that moment his diatribes ceased.

In one of his novels (*Harry Lorrequer*, I think) Charles Lever introduces a verdant Englishman who has crossed St George's Channel to make himself acquainted with the manners and customs of the wild Irish. Landing at night, he is taken charge of by one of the hospitable Burkes or Blakes of County Clare, and when his mission has been ascertained is told more about the Paddies than could be found in any guide-book. By the help of powerful doses of potheen he is kept asleep all day, and, being up all night, is easily made to believe that the sun is only seen for an hour or two about Christmas each year. Among the sports arranged for his benefit, pheasant shooting entered largely, at which, although he could not see an inch in

front of his nose, the Saxon was assured he was wonderfully proficient. But a fortnight of darkness and whisky unlimited was enough for the stranger, who, although pressed to remain, departed saying that "though Ireland was a lovely country, it would be all the better for a little more light."

Midnight shooting was not entirely confined to Ireland, for at the beginning of the nineteenth century the twelfth Lord Saye and Sele provided that amusement for his guests on most evenings at Belvedere in Kent. After supper, Croker, his head keeper, would come and say, "My lord, the game be *hall* ready." "All right, Croker; come and have a glass of wine," his lordship would reply, handing him a tumbler of port. "Have you got many rabbits for us, Croker?" "Vy, my lord, hi netted honly two dozen, thinkin' has 'ow it vos has much as your lordship and the other gemmen would care habout. The moon's hall right, and the sooner we're hat work the better."

The plan adopted was to fasten white paper collars round the rabbits' necks and let them out, one at a time, from a trap. The guns stood round in a semicircle, and blazed away at each bunny as it appeared; yet the hits were few. On the occasion I refer to only six rabbits were killed out of the two dozen; but how near the sportsmen were to shooting one another may be gathered from what Croker said in the morning. One of the guests was congratulating the keeper on the sport, when the latter broke in with, "Vell, I vos never so thankful to see his lordship's friends goin' hall right to their beds as I vos last night, for some of you gemmen—I means no offence—voud better 'a gone there afore you shot."

As a rule, the old sportsmen were very careless with their guns, and the wonder is that the casualties were so few. Sir James Graham of Netherby escaped an accident by mere chance. The conversation one day turned upon guns, when he said, "Well, I have used my Joe Manton regularly for thirty years, and it carries as well now as the day I got it." "I wonder," said the Duke of Abercorn, "it has not carried your arm off before now; let me see the wonderful gun." The Joe Manton was produced, and the muzzle

was as thin as a wafer. "If ever you put an extra half-charge of powder into that, Netherby," the Duke remarked, "the gun will burst." This Sir James would not admit, so a bet was made between them to decide the question. The gun was carefully loaded with a charge and a half of powder, placed on the ground, and discharged by the aid of a string. It burst.

The elder Sir James was a very little man, while his son was a splendid fellow, 6 ft. 2 ins. in his stockings, and muscular in proportion. One day the two were together in Pall Mall, and an old friend accosted the baronet, when Sir James introduced his son to him. "Why, Netherby," the friend said, "your son could put you in his pocket." "That may be," the father replied; "but I can tell you he is never out of mine." The tall young man afterwards became First Lord of the Admiralty.

Sir James was travelling one Sunday with George, sixth Duke of Marlborough, then Marquis of Blandford, from Glasgow to Lord Galloway's seat in Wigtownshire, when their servants, as the carriage was passing over a moor, let two pointers down. The dogs put up some partridges, and the Marquis, forgetting he was in Scotland, seized his gun, jumped out, and bagged a brace. The affair got wind, and an outcry was made in the papers of how the son-in-law of an exemplary Scotch peer (Lord Galloway) had not only been shooting on the Sabbath, but had trespassed as well. At Galloway House a consultation was held as to what was best to be done, when a gentleman said, "Partridges are more plentiful than marquises here, so I should advise you to drive over to Kerrachtree, see Lady Maxwell, and apologise." The Marquis took the advice, receiving not only complete absolution, but *carte blanche* to shoot over the estate whenever he chose.

Some parsons, however, were not ashamed to indulge in their favourite sport on the Sabbath, and were unscrupulous poachers too. The Rev. William Butler, Rector of Frampton in Dorsetshire, known to everyone as "Billy Butler," was a divine of the port-wine school, *plus* an inordinate love of sport, which he gratified without scruple, in and out of season, utterly regardless of the responsibilities of his

cloth. He was fond of telling stories of his defiance of conventional rules. One of these was to the effect that he had been out cub-hunting one Sunday morning, and was only able, by dint of hard riding, to reach the church just as the bell had stopped ringing for service. He made no secret, either, of the fact that Sunday cocking parties were in vogue at Frampton. A few choice spirits would meet at the rectory after service, and enjoy a quiet main without fear of interruption. With equal zest, too, did Parson Billy tell yarns of his poaching experiences. For instance, one afternoon, as he was returning from hunting, he spied a lot of pheasants which had strayed outside their owner's woods and were feeding in front of a long hedgerow on a property which was not preserved. Butler here saw too good a chance to be missed. He woke up his nag with the spur, and on reaching home ran into the house, got his gun and a steady-going old retriever, and rode back as fast as his hunter would carry him. Getting between the pheasants and their coverts, he drove them into the hedgerow and killed some five or six brace, which he hung on each side of his horse, and rode coolly home again.

Re accidents in the shooting-field, the father of the late Marquis of Queensberry was said to have accidentally shot himself when out rabbit shooting in 1858; and Captain Speke, the African explorer, was the victim of a gun accident the day before he was to have confronted Captain Richard Burton in public to explain his conduct in appropriating to himself the credit which Burton alleged to be due to him. Frederic Gye, the well-known manager of the Italian Opera at Covent Garden, was shot dead by accident whilst pheasant shooting with Lord Dillon at Dytchley on the same day on which Major Whyte-Melville was killed out hunting. The late Professor Fawcett was shot by his father when partridge shooting. Only two pellets struck him, but they penetrated both eyeballs, and left him stone-blind for life. Mr F. P. Delmé Radcliffe was also shot. When out with a shooting party on his own estate he got somewhat out of the line, and received the contents of one of his guest's guns in the face. He fell senseless, but in a few minutes recovered consciousness and exclaimed

earnestly: "I call you to witness it was my own fault." The sight of his left eye was completely destroyed, but his other injuries were not serious. Even after the loss of his eye, Joe Manton the famous gun-maker said he would not advise anyone to offer Mr Delmé Radcliffe many dead birds in a pigeon match.

A remarkable recovery from a terrible gun accident was that of Mr Thomas Smith, of Hambledon, a Master of Hounds like his celebrated namesake, Thomas Assheton Smith. When a boy, his head got in the way of a sportsman aiming at a rabbit, and down went Tom, apparently dead. He recovered, however, but his escape was marvellous; for a full charge of shot was taken out of his head, and afterwards shown to him in a wine-glass.

The man who loses his temper when shooting is a person to be avoided, but he sometimes causes amusement. A noble lord of an excitable nature was once rather put out because he had so little sport, and sternly asked his head keeper if they would find more birds in the next covert. "I hope so, my lord," said the dependent. "Hope so!" roared the peer; "do you think I give you a hundred a year to hope? Go and beat that wood this way and I'll post the guns." "Your lordship means this wood," said the functionary, pointing in an opposite direction. "No, I don't." "But, my lord——" "Not a word more, sir. Obey my orders." The wood was beaten, but without the least result, and his lordship's wrath was terrible until the keeper managed to get out: "This is not your wood at all, my lord; it belongs to your neighbour, who shot it last Friday!"

There are times, however, when it is difficult for a man to keep his temper when shooting, and even so true a sportsman as George Osbaldeston could not always preserve his equanimity. He and Captain Horatio Ross were admitted to be two of the best shots of their day, but they both, on one occasion, gave a display of rascally bad shooting which was particularly mortifying under the circumstances. "During one of my visits to Ebberston (Osbaldeston's Yorkshire estate)," says Captain Ross, who tells the story, "we were shooting the covert of Hutton Bushell, 'the Squire's' best beat for pheasants. A stranger

joined us, and, addressing 'the Squire,' said that he had heard that the two greatest shots in England were present, and that he had come some distance in the hope of being allowed to walk a short time with us and see 'the cracks shoot.' 'The Squire' was most civil, and begged he would take a spare gun he had out and shoot with us ; but this he declined. Well, a minute or two afterwards a cock-pheasant rose between 'the Squire' and myself, not four yards from either of us. Quick as lightning, 'bang' went 'the Squire'—MISSED!—and 'bang' I went—MISSED! Bang again, 'the Squire'—MISSED!! 'Bang' again, myself—MISSED!!! And away went the pheasant—chuck, chuck, chuck! The gentleman took off his hat, made us a bow, and said, 'Thank you; I am much obliged and quite satisfied,' and away he went. I burst out laughing, but 'the Squire' was extremely angry, and expressed his feelings very forcibly."

I think the severest test of a man's sportsmanship is wild-fowl shooting. To succeed in that difficult sport requires an amount of endurance, patience, and hardihood, and a capacity for standing exposure and fatigue, which you will find in none but a genuine enthusiast. But to those who can stand the hardships it entails, wild-fowl shooting is the finest sport these islands afford. Colonel Peter Hawker is generally credited with being the Father of Wild-fowling, but next to him I should place Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey. Sir Ralph's bag of 1500 duck and geese in the hard winter of 1880-81 has never been approached, and I do not suppose it ever will be, now that wild-fowl shooting is becoming harder to obtain every year.

Some of the feats performed by both these men were stupendous. Colonel Hawker once bagged 100 brent-geese in one discharge of his double-barrelled swivel-gun in the Solent; and Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey has frequently killed 50 widgeon at a shot, and sometimes 60 or 70. This, of course, was with a duck-gun carrying a charge of 2 lbs. of shot. The biggest bag of widgeon that ever fell to one shot was, I believe, 127. But at least 300 geese have fallen to a single *volley* fired by signal off the mouth of the Blackwater in Essex.

Time was when wild-fowl shooting was a lucrative occupation along the southern and eastern coasts of England, and was a steady source of income to the professional shooter. I have heard of one professional punter—that is, a shooter from a punt—not what the term implies in racing or rowing circles—who cleared £100 in a season, selling the wild-fowl he shot at an average price of two shillings per brace, so that he must have shot something like 3000 head in five months. But the ubiquitous amateur gunner who goes popping and blazing everywhere with no other result than frightening the birds, and the encroachments of civilisation, have rendered the birds so shy and scarce that the poor professional wild-fowler finds his occupation gone. I suppose he would consider himself in most cases lucky now if he cleared £20 in a season.

Colonel Hawker, to whom I have already referred, was a sportsman, and not a mere slaughterer of game. He kept a diary of every day's shooting during the fifty seasons of his career. His sum total for the whole period was 17,753 head of all kinds—including 7035 partridges, 575 pheasants, 2116 snipe, 4488 swans, ducks, and geese, 1831 river-side and seashore birds, and the rest various. He was content with small bags, and found his own game in places where it was by no means plentiful. How deadly a shot he was may be gathered from the fact that he frequently killed 14 or 15 snipe in succession without a miss, and seldom failed to account for 18 out of every 20 partridges he fired at. There are not many sportsmen nowadays who can compare with him either in moderation or skill—indeed, notwithstanding the increased superiority of modern fowling-pieces, I do not see that the shooting of to-day is superior to that of old. I don't think I could point out any gunner whom it would be safe to back to beat Captain Horatio Ross, who was as great with the gun as with the rifle. In the month of July 1828, Captain Ross was on his way back from the Red House, Battersea—where the Duke of Wellington and the Earl of Winchelsea fought their duel—in company with General Anson and Lord de Ros, and Lord de Ros remarked, "No one has a chance with Captain Ross at pigeons, but I wonder if he would be as

good with partridges?" Captain Ross said he was as good at partridges as at pigeons, and as Lord de Ros expressed his doubts on that point, a match was made.

Lord de Ros's terms were that Captain Ross should present himself on the first day of the following November at Mildenhall in Suffolk, ready to shoot partridges against anyone he produced. The competitors were to start at sunrise, no dogs were to be used, while the two antagonists were to keep in line about fifty yards apart. Each was to use a single-barrelled gun, that they should load themselves, the birds need not be picked up, but if a partridge was seen by the umpires to fall it was to be considered a dead bird. The stakes were £200 a side, and bets to a large amount were laid by the friends of Captain Ross and the Unknown.

Captain Ross, when he arrived at Mildenhall, found that his opponent was to be Colonel Anson. The two breakfasted by candle-light with Lord de Ros; and before day-break both were waiting in the fields for the signal to start. The morning was foggy, but, taking Greenwich time for the sun's appearance, they started without him, just as if he had been a traveller late for a train. Colonel Anson, then in his thirty-second year and a fast walker, went off at a rapid pace, hoping to break Ross down by out-walking him; but the Captain was rather glad to see his opponent forcing the running, as he was himself in splendid condition, and well able to keep going at his best speed for fourteen or sixteen hours.

For some time after the start Colonel Anson had much the best of it, and at two o'clock was seven birds ahead. Shortly afterwards Squire Osbaldeston, who had guessed that Ross was playing a waiting game, and had backed him heavily, rode up and said, "Now go along, Ross, as hard as you can—he will lie down"; and, acting upon this advice, Ross at once put on steam, and a quarter of an hour before sunset Mr Charles Greville rode up to him to propose that the match should be drawn, for although Colonel Anson was one bird ahead, he was so done up that he could not walk any farther.

"I had about a thousand pounds depending upon the

issue," says the Captain, "and had not had a shot for ten minutes, so I came to the conclusion that at that late hour when the birds were all out of the turnips and feeding on the stubble, it was too much to risk on the chance of getting a brace of birds in a quarter of an hour, therefore I agreed to the proposition. I was as fresh as when I started, and offered to walk to London there and then against anyone for £500"—an offer no one present cared to accept.

Well, then, there was the immortal "Old Squire," who excelled in every sport in which he took part. Sir Richard Sutton told my old friend Henry Marshall, of the *Morning Post*, that he had seen the Squire kill 98 pheasants out of 100 shots; and in one day, at Ebberston, his own place, he bagged 95 brace of partridges, 9 brace of hares, and 5 couples of rabbits—all to his own gun, with only an attendant carrying a second gun.

Mr Budd once backed the "Old Squire" to kill 80 brace of partridges in one day. "I handed him the gun," says Mr Budd, "for every shot. He killed 97½ brace, and 5½ brace were picked up next day, so that he really killed 103 brace of partridges, 9 hares, and a rabbit in the day.

I have already told one story of Captain Ross. Here is another. There was a certain squire who was noted in the mid-Victorian days for his stinginess and the strictness with which he preserved his game, seldom inviting even his most intimate friends for a day's shooting. This niggardly pheasant-breeder was dining at a neighbour's one evening, and was introduced to a stranger who made himself exceedingly agreeable and, though he had an effeminate and dandified air, contrived to ingratiate himself with the crusty old squire. Presently the talk turned upon shooting. "By Jove!" drawled the young swell, with the affected lisp of the period, "I am very fond of a day with the gun, though, by Jove, I hardly ever hit anything. Don't think I ever killed anything I aimed at in my life, you know."

The squire was rather amused with the stranger, and, thinking it a good opportunity to be generous on the cheap, invited him to have a day's sport. So it was agreed that "Mr Pelham"—such was his name—should visit the squire

the next morning, and accompany his host to the coverts. The morning came, and with it the guest, not in the customary garb, but in a sort of dress suit, with shoes and silk stockings. The squire eyed him with contempt, summed him up as being no sportsman, and, feeling sure that his pheasants were quite safe, made some excuse for not accompanying him. So off went "Mr Pelham" with the keeper, whilst the squire, shaking with merriment, watched them from a window. About an hour later, a keeper rushed in out of breath.

"Beg pardon sir,—but that gentleman in the dancing-shoes and——"

"It's all right, William," interrupted his master complacently. "He will only frighten the birds; he never shot anything in his life."

"Then he's begun with a vengeance, sir."

"What do you mean?" asked the squire, starting up.

"Why, he's bringin' of 'em down right and left, never misses, and he's killed Lord knows how many already!"

"What!" screamed the squire. "The devil he has. I must see to this."

And, waiting to hear no more, he flew hatless to the coverts, directed by the incessant report of the gun. When he came up he found that the dandy who "never hit anything, by Jove," had already bagged five hares and thirty pheasants.

"What's the meaning of this, sir?" demanded the squire, white with passion. "I thought you told me you never killed anything."

"Did I?" said the dandy coolly, bringing down a cock as he spoke.

"Stop, sir, this is not sport; it's murder!" cried the agonised preserver. But the other calmly dropped another bird with his second barrel.

"Stop, I say. Who and what the devil are you, sir?"

"Captain Ross, at your service," answered the dandy, with a low bow. "Don't be annoyed, my dear sir: it is only to decide a little bet that I would get a day's shooting out of you. There is no harm done. Keep your game; you can sell it to the poulterer. Good morning."

And, taking off his hat, "Mr Pelham" turned upon his heel, leaving the stingy old squire speechless with rage and mortification.

Of Captain Ross's skill as a marksman, both with rifle and pistol, there are many extraordinary stories, but perhaps none more notable than the following, related by an eye-witness in the year 1835:—

"I saw him," he says, "hit a black wafer fixed on the back of a card 150 times; he only missed the card twice out of 300 shots at 14 yards. Calling on Captain Ross one morning, I found him practising. He then presented his pistol out of the drawing-room window and said, 'Now you shall see me take the head off the figure on Barry Smith's house.' This was a small gilt figure of Hope, about five inches in length, placed between the windows to show that the house was insured in the Hope Insurance Office. He lodged the ball in the left breast. 'That won't do,' said he; 'I must have the head off.' He fired again, and shot off the head. The distance across the street was certainly not less than 15 yards, and Barry Smith and a friend were sitting about three yards from the figure. They showed no alarm on ascertaining whence the shots proceeded, but took their seats again quietly after the first one.

CHAPTER XXXV

DOG STORIES

THERE are still some sportsmen who will agree with me, that shooting over well-broken dogs is the most enjoyable form of the sport. In a letter of the late Mr John Tharp Phillipson, a very fine shot, he says: 'I can take out a brace and a half of my white setters, which I break myself, with a retriever; they find, and I kill—not a dog moves till ordered. I tell one to fetch the bird, and the others remain down. The advantage of the white setters over the dark-coloured dogs is that you rarely lose them: you can see the white at any distance.'

George Osbaldeston had a brace of pointers, Mark and Flirt, for which he refused £200—a big price in those days. They were so good that the squire offered to back himself and the brace of dogs for £10,000 against any man and brace of dogs in the kingdom. He used to tell a story of Mark's staunchness:—"One day he made a point. I watched him for ten minutes or more, and could see a fly on his nose, but though his foot was up and near the fly he never offered to brush it off. On walking up and flushing the game, I found the fly had stung the dog, leaving a lump of congealed blood on his nose."

Not content with orthodox shooting-dogs, "the Squire" trained a bull-dog to retrieve so well that his only fault was that, from the shortness of his legs, he used to tread the pheasants' tails out as he carried them in his mouth. Sir John Sebright trained a pig to point, and a Newfoundland to play cards. But Sir John's pig had a rival; for Mr Toomer, a New Forest gamekeeper, had a pig which would not only beat for game, but stand and back as staunchly as the best-bred pointer dog.

There is a story, too, of a pony who would point; but there was a trick about this. A horse-dealer had a pony which he was anxious to sell to a sporting squire. He said that the pony would find a hare and stand it as staunchly as any pointer in the squire's kennels. Riding to a place where hares abounded, the dealer soon spied one. Knowing that a dig of the spur would instantly bring his pony to a dead stop, a sharp dig was given and an equally sharp pull-up resulted. "A hare somewhere," said the dealer, and a moment later up got puss. The simple-minded squire at once agreed to buy the pony, and mounted his new purchase. In crossing a bridge he applied his spur, as the pony hung a bit at a little rise. Instantly the pony stopped and "pointed." "Here, I say, what does this mean?" exclaimed the squire testily. "Why, by Jove! he's stood a trout," cried the dealer; "if I'd knowed he'd stand trout I wouldn't ha' sold him for double the money."

An old sportsman named John Parsons, having lost the use of his legs and being passionately fond of shooting, drove about the fields in a light gig drawn by a donkey, which he declared would find a hare and stand like a pointer. And I believe the late Mr E. H. Budd, the cricketer, was one of those who tested his declaration and found it true.

Some thirty years ago I saw a wonderful feat of retrieving performed by a spaniel bitch at Rugby on a pitch-dark night. A penny piece was thrown well into a field of standing corn; the spaniel was ordered to fetch it, and fetch it she did in an extraordinary short time. In order to bother her, her owner would pretend to throw the penny in one direction, and, directly the bitch darted forward, would send it flying in the other. But she was too sharp for that, and always brought back the penny. She would fetch her master's slippers from the cupboard at night, and in order to save a second journey used to push one slipper into the other.

A man named Douglas had a bitch who, when her master was out shooting one day, to his great surprise brought his watch and laid it at his feet. He had no idea that he

had lost the watch, but imagined that it must have been pulled from his pocket in getting through a hedge some distance back.

Mr Budd tells the following anecdote:—"When the Regent's Park was pasture-land and had on it but one house, Willan, the occupant, kept his thousand cows there. I was in the hay-field with a friend named Powell, son of the equerry to the Duke of Sussex, who said I might hide his glove anywhere in the field and the retriever he had with him would find it. The owner held the dog's head pointed away from the direction I took. I pushed the glove right under a large summer-rick; but the dog quickly found it."

Many years ago there was in England a French Count named Peltier, who was one of the most amusing of companions, and naturally was well received everywhere among sportsman. The late Lord Seagrave met the Count in the High Street, Cheltenham, just by the Plough Hotel, with a splendid setter at his heels, and, with a view perhaps to purchase, inquired if he was well broken to game. "Ah!" was the Count's reply, "superb! When he do hear the raport of de gun he fairly runs quite mad!" The Earl expressed no wish to buy that dog.

"Nimrod" (C. J. Apperley) speaks of a favourite setter over whom six shots were fired in a field of potatoes, and he never stirred from his point, which proved to be a single bird. Mr Britton, of Oldbury Hall, Atherstone, at once offered 25 guineas for the dog, which was refused; and "Nimrod" shot over him for seven years more. This setter's one failing was a partiality for butter, and when passing a house about breakfast time he would sneak in and snatch the butter off the table.

One of the most ludicrous and at the same time fearsome dog stories was told me by an old friend who held a position at the dynamite works in Ayrshire. A local sportsman was out rabbit shooting in the neighbourhood of these works when a party of scientific experts were experimenting with the explosive by casting charges, enclosed in water-tight cases with time-fuses attached, into the stream immortalised by Robbie Burns. Forgetting all about the

rabbits in his curiosity, the sportsman drew near to watch the proceedings.

"You had better keep your dog away, sir," suggested a stout little gentleman in spectacles.

"Oh, Snap's all right; never mind about him," replied the sportsman.

But Snap evidently thought that the whole affair was got up for his amusement, and no sooner was the case thrown into the water than he dived for it, came to the surface with the deadly thing in his mouth, and made straight for the bank with the obvious intention of laying it at the feet of his master. Then was seen a strange and comical sight: the eminent scientists, none of them remarkable for youth or agility, bolting panic-stricken in every direction from the innocently murderous dog.

The sportsman showed as clean a pair of heels as any. Snap, however, taking this to be part of the performance, joined in the race, naturally sticking to his master, who at last, exhausted and perspiring, flung himself down behind a sand-hillock, shrieking out curses and shaking his fist fiercely at the dog.

But Snap came on with wagging tail, proud of his cleverness, and anxious to drop what he had retrieved beside his master. All this time the fuse was burning lower and lower. With a yell of terror the sportsman sprang to his feet again and fled after the stampeding scientists, the dog and the dynamite close at his heels.

The experimentalists, whose breath was nearly spent, screamed out imprecations against the approaching horror. "Keep away! Keep away! You fool! it must go off in a few minutes. Don't let that infernal dog come near us; it means certain death. For God's sake, drive the brute away, or we shall all be killed." But Snap, like avenging Fate, trotted stolidly on in the track of his terror-smitten master. Finally, the latter rushed to cover under another small hillock, from behind which he bombarded the too faithful Snap with stones and gravel so furiously that the dog paused in amazement at this hostile reception. That pause brought his doom. There was a terrific explosion; the sportsman was blown on his back by the shock. When,

dazed but unhurt, he picked himself up and cleared the sand out of his eyes, he looked around for Snap. *The dog had vanished!* A scrap of tail—that was all that poor Snap left behind him.

I recall two remarkable instances of dogs entering into sporting partnerships.

In the first of these the confederates were a greyhound and a pointer, the property of a Mr Wood of Southhall, who were in the habit of going off together and having a quiet day's sport on their own account. The pointer found the hare and stood to it, then the greyhound killed it, sometimes springing on it in its forme, sometimes giving it a course for its life. The nefarious confederacy was discovered, and, to prevent any more such poaching in partnership, a large ring was fastened to the pointer's collar, almost reaching to his feet. It was thought that this would effectually check his progress through the fields and coverts. As the pair of confederates, however, kept up their programme and were apparently as keen as ever on their sport, a strict watch was set over their movements. It was then discovered that when well away from home the greyhound took the ring, in his mouth, and in that way enabled his friend to clear any hedge or obstruction they came across. As soon as the pointer winded a hare, his confederate dropped the ring, and when puss was found on her forme the greyhound quickly played his part in the game.

In the second case the confederates were a collie and a fox-terrier belonging to a friend of mine living at Erdington, a suburb of Birmingham. My friend and his wife frequently noticed when they came down to breakfast that the collie and the fox-terrier were lying on the mat in the porch, panting and exhausted as if they had been running for their lives. My friend's curiosity was roused, and he determined to keep a watch on the dogs. The servants used to loose the collie and the fox-terrier about six in the morning, and the pair instantly started off together; but my friend for a long while could not discover what they did on their morning expeditions.

He was eventually enlightened by a keeper who came up to him one day and said: "Mister P., them dogs o'

yourn will get ye into trouble afore long if you don't chain 'em up." "Why? What have they been doing?" "I'll tell 'ee, sir, what 'appens. That ere collie and tARRIER o' yourn hunts reg'lar together. The tARRIER he finds the 'are, and the collie he runs her down, then they 'ides their kill in a bush or hedge. I've seen 'em a doin' of it a dozen times and more, till I was sure and sartin, and then I thought I'd better give you warnin', sir, for o' course I can't 'ave 'em goin' on killin' our 'ares like that."

My friend was not quite convinced, but at the keeper's suggestion he stole out early one morning, joined his informant in a copse, and sure enough it fell out just as the keeper had described. The confederates were caught, and their poaching expeditions suppressed.

CHAPTER XXXVI

RECOLLECTIONS OF RIFLE-SHOOTING

I WAS a practical rifle-shot before Wimbledon meetings and the National Rifle Association came into existence. Hanging on the wall in front of me as I write are two old muzzle-loading rifles—the one a four-grooved, the other a two-grooved—which were manufactured, I suppose, seventy or eighty years ago, and have seen service all over the world. These venerable weapons would excite the derision of the twentieth-century crack shot, accustomed to his beautifully accurate match rifle. They were fitted with a ponderous steel ramrod with a round top, and you had to hammer the bullet down with a mallet. Yet they were accurate enough up to 200 yards. I have seen some good shooting done with the old Brown Bess up to the same range; and with an old Spanish smooth-bore gun, of about 18-gauge, converted from a flint into a percussion, I have frequently beaten rifles at 150 yards.

I remember watching a detachment of the 23rd Welsh Fusiliers practising with the Minie rifle just before the Crimean War, and hearing military men go into ecstasies over its precision.

In those days the Yankees were supposed to be the crack shots of the universe, and marvellous tales were told of the riflemen of Kentucky, with their six-foot rifles carrying a $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz. bullet. Readers of Fenimore Cooper's novels will remember that the target for a Christmas prize shooting was the head of a turkey at 100 yards. The body was buried in the snow, leaving only the head and an inch of the neck visible. Yet the immortal Leather Stocking never failed to cut the head clean off at the first shot. This, after all, was a trifle compared with hammer-

ing in a nail with a single bullet at 100 yards. Even to see the head of the nail at that distance requires remarkably good eyes—what Sam Weller called “a pair o’ patent double million magnifyin’ gas microscopes of extry power.”

One of the best rifle-shots before the modern Express and match rifles were known was a Mr Smith, of Stone, in Staffordshire, a miller, and a keen sportsman. In a match for £20 he hit five penny pieces in succession at 50 yards; and in the year 1860, when he was an old man, obliged to wear spectacles, I saw him smash seven oyster-shells in succession at 100 yards. And he was just as good with a fowling-piece. He shot partridges with a double-barrel of 18-bore, and seldom failed to drop his right and left stone-dead.

But I suppose the late Captain Horatio Ross was the best all-round shot we have ever seen in this country. He had no superior as a pigeon and game shot, and no equal as a pistol or rifle shot. Take two instances. In 1820 he won the Red House Club Cup by killing 76 birds out of 80, 30 yards rise, 5 traps; three more hit the top of the palings and counted as misses, but fell within the grounds. One got over the palings owing to his right barrel missing fire, but was feathered with the left. Shooting against Lord Macdonald, in 1841, he killed 52 pigeons in 53 shots at 35 yards rise. In a pistol match against a Spanish gentleman, the Captain hit the small bull’s-eye, which was exactly the size of a sixpence, 23 times out of 25 shots, at 12 yards, the then favourite duelling distance.

When rifle-shooting came into vogue, Ross was upwards of sixty years of age, and, although he had had plenty of deer-stalking, had not shot at targets for more than five-and-twenty years. Yet at Wimbledon he carried off the three great small-bore prizes at long ranges—the Association Cup, the Any Rifle Wimbledon Cup, and the Duke of Cambridge’s—for which all the crack shots of the day competed. When he was in his sixty-sixth year he wrote to a friend: “I have begun my training for the rifle season; I am shooting wonderfully well, all things considered. Last week I tried the very long distance of 1100 yards, and made a better score than is often made at that

great range—seven bull's-eyes, three centres, and five outers in fifteen shots.”¹

In June 1867 I saw this wonderful veteran win the Cambridge University Long Range Club's Cup against all the best shots of the day, including his own son Edward, the first winner of the Queen's Prize. The Captain wound up, on that occasion, with seven consecutive bull's-eyes at 1000 yards. Cambridge at that time was a great centre of rifle-shooting; and with such splendid shots as Edward Ross and J. H. Doe of Trinity, and Peterkin of Emmanuel, in the University corps, they never failed to carry off the Chancellor's Plate from Oxford. Edward Ross, though a wonderfully steady and accurate marksman, was never equal to his father. He and his father were the joint heroes of one memorable feat. At the Highland Rifle Association Meeting in, I think, 1867 there were thirteen open prizes to be competed for, and Captain Ross and his son Edward won *eleven* of them!

Another member of the family, Hercules Ross, was a remarkable shot. He won the Indian Championship three years in succession, and the last year made nine bull's-eyes out of ten shots at 1000 yards. Hercules Ross was one of the heroes of the Indian Mutiny, and did signal service with his deadly rifle during that terrible struggle. On one occasion he performed a feat of skill and valour which has seldom been surpassed. He rode nearly a hundred miles to a ford on the River Gogra, where it was expected that a large force of mutineers intended to cross. It was of vital importance to keep them at bay till the women and children and the sick and wounded could be removed to an English station close by. Hercules Ross undertook the task. A pit was dug on the bank of the river commanding the ford, where he took his post with a dozen good rifles, and four attendants to load for him. Heavy rains had swollen the river, and the ford was impassable; but the enemy began to cross in boats. Ross, from his pit, picked off the rowers one by one. Time after time the boats put back; time after time they came on again, but the quick and deadly fire which that single rifleman kept up prevented

¹ There were no “magpies” at that time.

them from ever getting more than a third of the way across. For three hours, with unflinching skill and nerve, Ross shot down the rebel oarsmen whenever they attempted to cross, till at last a body of English troops with three guns came up, and the Sepoys retired.

By his courage and skill Ross undoubtedly saved the lives of those English women and their wounded companions.

Another feat of practical rifle-shooting was at Lucknow during the long and terrible siege. It surpassed Ross's achievement, as it was a sustained effort, kept up for many days, under a fearful strain upon the watchfulness and endurance of the solitary marksman. The hero of this exploit was Sergeant Holwell, of the 32nd Foot. The Sepoys had hauled a couple of guns on to the flat roof of one of the palaces which surrounded the Residency. If they had mounted those guns the Residency would have been untenable, and the English would have been compelled to surrender. Holwell, being a crack shot, was supplied with the best rifles the place possessed, and was posted in an angle of the Residency, to prevent the mounting of the guns. The part of the building in which Holwell took up his position had already been battered into a heap of ruins, and behind the shattered masonry he lay at full length—there was just cover enough to protect him in that posture. For days he remained there, never once rising to his feet, or even to his knees, for that would have been to court instant death from the swarm of rebel marksmen. The only change of posture in which he could indulge was by rolling over from his back to his stomach, and *vice versa*. The Sepoys never succeeded in mounting those guns. Whenever they attempted it Holwell picked them off, till they dared no longer expose themselves to his deadly aim. In the dead of night provisions were conveyed to him by men crawling on their hands and knees, to avoid the shots of their foes. For this service Holwell was rewarded with the Victoria Cross; and never did any man more richly deserve it.

Some years ago I saw a tall, soldierly-looking man, in a peculiar costume, outside a shop in New Oxford Street.

He had medals on his breast, and amongst them the little gun-metal cross which bears the simple inscription, "For Valour." I got into conversation with the man, and found that he was Sergeant Holwell, the hero of Lucknow, who was acting as outside attendant at the shop. I had more than one conversation with him afterwards, and then lost sight of him. I believe he has been dead many years. I wonder how many of the ladies whose carriage doors he opened guessed what a valiant soldier was rendering them his humble services.

I was a constant attendant at the old Wimbledon meetings, and have seen rifle-shooting make wonderful strides since Edward Ross won the Queen's Prize with a score of 24 out of a possible 30 at 800, 900, and 1000 yards. But there were no centres at the long ranges in those days. A bull's-eye counted two, and an outer one, so that to make even an average of outers was no mean performance. The most remarkable sight I ever saw at Wimbledon was the shooting for the Queen's Prize in 1873. Sergeant Menzies, of the 1st Edinburgh, had made 65; Private Pullman, of a Somerset corps, was only one point behind, and had three shots to fire. He had only to hit the target once in three shots, and the prize was his. Some rash friend acquainted him with this fact. The excitement was too much for him; he missed every shot, and lost the coveted prize just when it seemed within his grasp. But three years later Pullman, then a sergeant in the 2nd Middlesex, wiped out the memory of that failure by winning the blue riband of Wimbledon in gallant style.

Angus Cameron, of the 6th Inverness, a jeweller by trade, was up to the year 1900—when Ward of Devon, a coach-builder, rivalled his great feat—the only man who had won the Queen's Prize twice; and each time he was credited with a higher score than had previously been made in the competition. But the remarkable point about this feat was that between his first and second triumph he lost the sight of his right eye, and had to shoot from the left shoulder instead of the right as before. Subsequently, the sight of the left eye became so defective that his shooting days came to an untimely end. Cameron was a teetotaller,

and I shall not forget the look of disgust on the faces of the hospitable "Victorias," who claimed the prescriptive right of handing their splendid regimental loving cup, foaming with champagne, to the winner, when that little Highland jeweller refused the proffered goblet, and asked for—a bottle of ginger beer! What a contrast to his countryman, M'Vittie, of Dumfries, who used to fortify himself with a stiff dram of "mountain dew" before shooting at each of the long ranges.

Of the exploits of M'Vittie and all the other notable marksmen of the old Wimbledon days I have written fully in another work (*Kings of the Rod, Rifle, and Gun*).

I will wind up with a couple of instances of "tall shooting," which the reader is at liberty to believe or not as he chooses.

John Mytton, the notorious mad Squire of Halston, was one of the finest game and rifle shots of his day. It is told of him that he could split a bullet on the edge of a razor at thirty yards, and at double that distance send a ball time after time through the peg-hole of a trimmer used for pike-fishing, the said hole being an inch and a half in diameter.

After that the following Yankee yarn may not seem wholly incredible. The hero is Dr Frank Powell of Lacrosse, Wisconsin, U.S., a popular and successful surgeon and M.D., but more famous for his marvellous skill with the rifle. Among the Indians, who have the greatest respect for him, he is known as "The White Beaver." According to "the very reliable authority" quoted in an American journal, some gentlemen called upon Dr Powell one day to witness his powers as a marksman. They found him with Mr Richardson, and the Doctor, as a pleasing preliminary, observing that his friend Richardson's lips embraced a cigar about an inch long, picked up his rifle, and knocked away the cigar stub.

"Richardson, in order to show his friend's steadiness of aim, then placed a cork on the top of his own head, and asked the other to shoot it off, which the Doctor did at once with a revolver shot. Then, stooping backwards, Richardson balanced a pea-nut on his nose, which must

have been wide as well as large—the nose, not the pea-nut—and that at once shared the fate of the cork.”

But listen to the closing feat of this miraculous display :—

“Taking a knife-blade, Dr Powell fastened it to a target, and at each side of the knife he fixed a tiny bell. Then calling in his office-boy, he placed between the youth’s fingers his Masonic ring covered with white tissue paper. Between the boy and the target Richardson stood, cigar in mouth. Stepping back fully fifty feet”—so the conscientious reporter relates—“‘White Beaver’ raised his rifle. ‘Now both of you stand steady!’ he said, and fired, and simultaneously came two sharp rings from the bells. The ball had passed through the finger ring, snuffed the ashes from Richardson’s cigar, and splitting upon the knife-blade, had glanced off on each side and, rang both bells!”

How is that for high?

CHAPTER XXXVII

FISHING YARNS

SIR SAMUEL MONTAGU, M.P., when presiding at the annual dinner of the Fly-fishers Club, laid it down as an axiom that in estimating the veracity of anglers' tales as to the weight and size of fish landed or lost, one-third of both size and weight should be deducted. No dissent was offered by any angler present, probably for the very good reason that everyone felt that the deduction was a moderate one. If Sir Samuel had said two-thirds, I am sure that there are plenty of anglers who could have supplied him with evidence to prove that even that allowance was not too great. A Scotch fisherman, residing on the shores of a certain loch, when asked why the fish in a neighbouring loch ran so much bigger than his own, replied, "It's no the fish that's bigger, but they're bigger leears up there." He did not, you will note, attempt to deny that he was a "leear," he only contended that his brethren on the other loch were "*bigger* leears."

Now, why is it that anglers are notoriously greater liars than other sportsmen? It is, I believe, an undisputed fact that no man can be trusted to tell the truth when he is trying to sell a horse. That famous Father of Foxhunting, John Warde, used to say, "Never believe a word any man says about a horse he wishes to sell—*not even a bishop.*" And no man was more qualified to speak from experience than the old foxhunter. Horses and fish appear to demoralise all who are brought into contact with them. I do not attempt to explain this peculiar propensity of human nature. I merely state the fact and leave the explanation to professors of ethics.

But this is a harmless failing. It injures no one; it

deceives no one; for who was ever known to accept without a liberal grain of salt the angling stories of even his dearest friend? Just as discount booksellers take off three pence in the shilling from the advertised price of books, every angler discounts the statements of his brother anglers, and thinks none the worse of them because such discount is necessary to arrive at an approximate estimate of the truth. For, like the Scotchman in the familiar story, each angler secretly confesses, "I'm a bit of a leear myself."

I hope I shall not offend my brother anglers by these candid remarks any more than Sir Samuel Montagu did. For I love the sport and sympathise with all who follow it, though fly-fishing is the particular branch which has most charm for me. Old Robert Burton mentioned angling among the cures for melancholy; and many anglers will be interested in the following passage from that monumental collection of out-of-the-way learning and quaint philosophy, *The Anatomie of Melancholy*.

"Fishing," said the Oxford Don, "is a kind of hunting by water, be it with nets, weeles, baites, *angling*, or otherwise, and yields all out as much pleasure to some men as dogs or hawkes when they draw the fish upon the bank. *T. Dubranius de piscibus* telleth how, travelling in Silesia, he found a nobleman booted up to the groines, wading himself, pulling the nets, and labouring as much as any fisherman of them all; and when some belike objected to him the baseness of his office, he excused himself, that if other men might hunt hares, why should he not hunt carps? Many gentlemen in like sort with us will wade up to their armholes on like occasions and voluntarie undertake that, to satisfie their pleasure, which poore men for a good stipend would scarce be hired to undergo. But he that shall consider the variety of baits for all seasons, and pretty devices which our anglers have invented, peculiar lines, false flies, several sleights, etc., etc., will say that it deserves commendation, requires as much study as the rest, and it is to be preferred before many of them. But this is still and quiet; and if so be the angler catch no fish, yet he hath a wholesome walk to the brook's side, pleasant shade by the sweet silver streams; he hath good aire, and sweete

smells of fine fresh meadow flowers ; he hears the melody of birds, and sees the water-fowles with their brood, which he thinketh better than the noise of hounds and hornes, and all the sport they can make.”

I suppose the pike is the fish which has more than any other exercised the romancing powers of anglers. Some five-and-twenty years ago it was reported that there was an immense pike frequenting the river near Staines, which the local fishermen estimated as weighing 30 or 40 lbs. at the very least. The fame of this pike spread far and wide, and anglers crowded from the city to have a try for him. I had more than one try myself, but soon abandoned the task. Others, however, tried for that pike week after week with a persistency and a devout belief in its existence, which were really touching to behold. I had my suspicions that the pike was a finny relative of Sairey Gamp's "Mrs Harris," and years afterwards I learned from an old fisherman, who had often been my guide, philosopher, and friend, that my suspicions were well founded—the great pike was a pure creation of the imagination.

Colonel Thornton, the greatest all-round sportsman of the latter half of the eighteenth century, in the narrative of his *Tour in the Highlands*, gives an account of the capture of two immense pike—one taken in Loch Alvie, the other in Loch Petullich ; the former weighing 47 lbs. and the latter about 36 lbs. Strange to say—although the Colonel was in his own day considered rather a tall shooter with the long-bow—modern writers on angling give him credit for veracity in his statements, and do not make even Sir Samuel Montagu's reduction either in these cases or in that of the 7½-lb. perch which he caught in Loch Lomond.

But, after all, Colonel Thornton's 47-lb. pike was a mere infant compared with the celebrated Kenmure pike taken in Loch Ken, Galloway, the weight of which was 72 lbs. This, again, takes a back seat by comparison with two captured in Ireland—one on the Broad Wood Lake, Killaloe, weighing 96 lbs., the other in the Shannon, weighing 90 lbs. Beyond that limit one would have thought that no pike of romance could have passed. Yet

Sir John Hawkins, a credible person, and, as the author of *The General History of Music*, entitled to respect, gravely tells us, in his introduction to Izaak Walton's *Compleat Angler*, of a pike taken in 1765 in a pool at Lilleshall Lime Works that weighed 170 lbs., and had to be drawn out by several men with stout ropes fastened round its gills. I am thankful to say that no one has yet attempted to go one better than *that*.

One wonders what a monster like this could have fed upon. Why, he might have dragged a calf into the water and devoured it! To show the voracity of even pike of not a fifth the size, take the following: An enormous pike, caught at Chillington Pool in Brewood, Staffordshire, the seat of C. F. Gifford, Esq., weighed 46 lbs. and measured from head to tail 4 ft. 3 ins. In its belly was found a trout weighing $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., and a mole, which it was devouring when caught. My authority for that incident is the *County Chronicle*, June 1822.

Here is another pike story, which I give on the authority of the *Derby Reporter* of September 1833: "Two gentlemen were lately perch fishing in a pond belonging to Sir G. Crewe, when a pike, apparently about 2 lbs., was hooked. The assistance of the angler's friend was required to land the fish, but before this gentleman could reach the place, the feel of the rod suddenly indicated an additional weight or resistance. When they were able to show the fish he was found seized across the back by a much larger—about 10 lbs. weight. A large treble hook was attached to a stick, and with this the heavier fish was struck—the hook being introduced into the side of the mouth. By a sudden strong lift the fish were landed, the parties being highly delighted with their success."

But let me pass on to what Sir Walter Scott calls that noble branch of the art, which excels all other use of the angling rod as much as fox-hunting excels hare-hunting. I am not going to enter upon a rhapsody of fly-fishing; but I will frankly admit that Charles Cotton, as one of the fathers of fly-fishing, seems to me a greater man than his more renowned friend Izaak Walton, who was for the most part a bottom-fisher. The man who has never hooked

and landed a 20-lb. salmon does not know what the real joy of fishing is. Whilst personally I consider a single lb. trout, taken fairly with the fly, worth a dozen lbs. of bream or barbal or roach, Heaven forbid that I should claim for votaries of the fly a superiority over those who worship the worm—though it is not without a quiet chuckle of satisfaction that I feel my withers unwrung by the great Lexicographer's definition of angling as "a rod with a worm at one end and a fool at the other."

The fly-fisher's noblest quarry is, of course, the salmon; and I believe the record salmon taken with the rod in these islands is $54\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., though Sir Hyde Parker eclipsed that in Sweden with a fish of 60 lbs., and the Earl of Home landed one of 70 lbs. in Norway. But to few mortals have such catches been granted, and the man who can boast (veraciously) of having taken a 25-lb. salmon with the rod is a person to be envied. Even so successful a fisherman as Mr Cholmondeley-Pennell has never had the good fortune to take one of more than 23 lbs. The largest salmon ever taken in the nets weighed 83 lbs., and was exhibited in a London fishmonger's shop in the summer of the year 1821.

The Thames can boast of the largest trout, though they are rare. Fish of $23\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., 21 lbs., and $16\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., have been taken in the "silver streaming Temmes" within the last ten years. Other rivers, though unable to show anything like such an average of large trout as the Thames, have beaten it in individual instances. For example, in 1889, a trout weighing 27 lbs. was taken in the Hampshire Avon, and another of 25 lbs. two years previously. A 21-lb. trout was taken twenty years ago from the Trent; and in the preserves of Sir Home Popham, near Hungerford, where the trout are artificially fed on chopped liver, fish of 23 lbs. 7 ozs. and 18 lbs. respectively have been taken.

Colonel Peter Hawker, the famous wild-fowl shooter, killed some 30,000 trout in a score of seasons, but I daresay that record has been beaten by others. The *New Sporting Magazine* for July 1834 says that Dr R. Robertson, one of the best fishers in the county, took in one day, in August 1833 at Ballater, 36 dozen of trout, and a friend killed

on the same day, 25 dozen ; these were all about the size of a herring ; the trout seldom exceed this size in the small mountain streams.

Among the curiosities of salmon-fishing I submit the following from the *Sporting Magazine* of July 1835. The Rev. Mr Waring of Isleworth, having tired and brought to the top of the water a fine salmon, and being on the point of taking it into the punt, another large fish was observed to be following close after it ; but so intent upon the pursuit of the hooked one was he that the landing-hook was inverted under his gill and he was taken without any resistance. Upon examination it was found the first was a female, and the second a male, and doubtless, as this happened during the spawning season, the female was about to deposit her eggs, and the male was following to ensure the propagation of the species.

In illustration of the queer things which salmon will bolt, and particularly their love for anything bright, the following anecdote is told. A gentleman of Uleaborg, going by sea to Stockholm, dropped a silver spoon into the water, which was swallowed by a salmon and carried in his belly to Uleaborg, where the fish was accidentally bought by the gentleman's wife, who immediately concluded, on seeing the spoon, that her husband was shipwrecked ; he returned, however, in time to prevent any ill consequences. A somewhat similar incident occurred in England not long ago. A large pike weighing 28 lbs. was taken in the Ouse, and sold to a gentleman in Littleport. When the cook cleaned the fish she found inside a watch with black riband and keys, which had belonged to the same gentleman's valet, who had been drowned in the river some months before.

Human sportsmen do not, however, have all the fun of fishing to themselves. Mr Maxwell, in his *Wild Sports of the West*, says that eagles are constantly discovered watching the fords in the spawning time, and are seen to seize and carry off the fish. Some years ago a herdsman observed an eagle posted on a bank which overhung a pool. Presently the bird stooped and seized a salmon, and a violent struggle ensued ; the eagle being pulled under

water by the salmon, and his plumage so drenched that he was unable to free himself. The peasant broke the pinion of the eagle with a stone, and actually secured the spoiler and his victim, for he found the salmon dying in his grasp.

But far more remarkable was the case of a duck which hooked a trout under the following extraordinary circumstances, as related in vol. *xlvi*. of the *Sporting Magazine*. A gentleman angling in the mill dam below Winchester accidentally threw his line across a strong white duck, which, suddenly turning round, twisted the gut about her own neck and fixed the hook of the dropper fly in her own breast. Thus entangled and hooked, she soon broke off the gut above the dropper, and sailed down the stream with the end of the other fly trailing behind her. She had not proceeded far before a trout of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. took the fly effectually. Then commenced an extraordinary struggle. When the trout exerted itself the duck became frightened and dragged the fish along. When the trout was more quiet the duck suffered herself to be drawn under some bushes, where her head was frequently pulled under water. Presently, however, the gut got across a branch, and the duck, taking advantage of the purchase which this gave her, dragged her opponent out, and obliged him to show his head above water. Then it became a contest of life and death. The trout was in its last agonies, and the duck evidently in a very weak state, when the gut broke and set them both free.

A farmer living near Lochmaben, Dumfriesshire, kept a gander who delighted in leading his cackling harem to circumnavigate their native lake, or to stray amidst the fields on the opposite shore. Wishing to check this habit, the farmer tied a large fish-hook baited with dead frog to the gander's leg. This bait soon caught the eye of a greedy pike, which, swallowing the deadly hook, not only arrested the progress of the astonished gander, but forced him to perform half a dozen somersaults on the surface of the water! For some time the struggle was most amusing—the fish pulling, and the bird struggling with all its might; the one attempting to fly, the other to swim, from the invisible enemy, while the fleet of geese and goslings

cackled out their sympathy for their afflicted commodore. At length victory declared in favour of the feathered angler, who, bearing away for the nearest shore, landed one of the largest pike ever caught in the Castle loch. The adventure is said to have cured the gander of his propensity for wandering.

In the reservoir near Glasgow the country people were reported to be in the habit of employing ducks in this novel mode of fishing. Thomas Barker, author of the *Art of Angling*, published in 1651, gravely assures us that "the principal way to take a pike in Shropshire is to procure a goose, take one of the pike lines, bait it, tie the line under the left wing and over the right wing of the goose, turn it into a pond where pike are, and you are sure to have some sport."

But, after all, that is not so remarkable as the method which a Mr Darcy, of Oxford, adopted for taking barbel. "Darcy," says a writer in the *New Monthly Magazine*, "kept a music shop at Oxford, and was an excellent swimmer. He used to dive into a deep hole near the Four Streams, a bathing-place well known to the Oxonians, and having remained under water a minute he returned with a brace of barbel, one in each hand. Darcy said that the fish lay with their heads against the bank, in parallel lines, like horses in their stalls. They were not disturbed at his approach, but allowed him to come quite close to them and select the finest."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

CRICKET PAST AND PRESENT

MR BRODRICK, Secretary of State for India, at a cricket club dinner in 1904 suggested a revision of the rules of cricket which would prevent batsmen having it all their own way, and strongly advocated raising the stumps an inch.

Whenever the bat appears to have gained an ascendancy over the ball, someone advocates drastic measures of reform. Then comes a wet season, with low scoring and triumphs for the bowler, and the reformers are silenced. The notion of heightening or widening the stumps is no new one. It was seriously put forward a few years ago, and there was a hot controversy over it. But the common sense of the majority prevailed.

In the year 1836, when Alfred Mynn made his first appearance for the Gentlemen against the Players, the superiority of the latter was so great that, to make the match equal, it was arranged that the Gentlemen should defend wickets 22 inches by 6 inches, and the Players wickets 27 inches by 7 inches. But the Gentlemen only scored 57 and 60 in their two innings, against the 151 of the Players in their single innings. Then it was decided that this alteration of the fundamental rules of the game was as useless as it was distasteful, and the plan was never tried again.

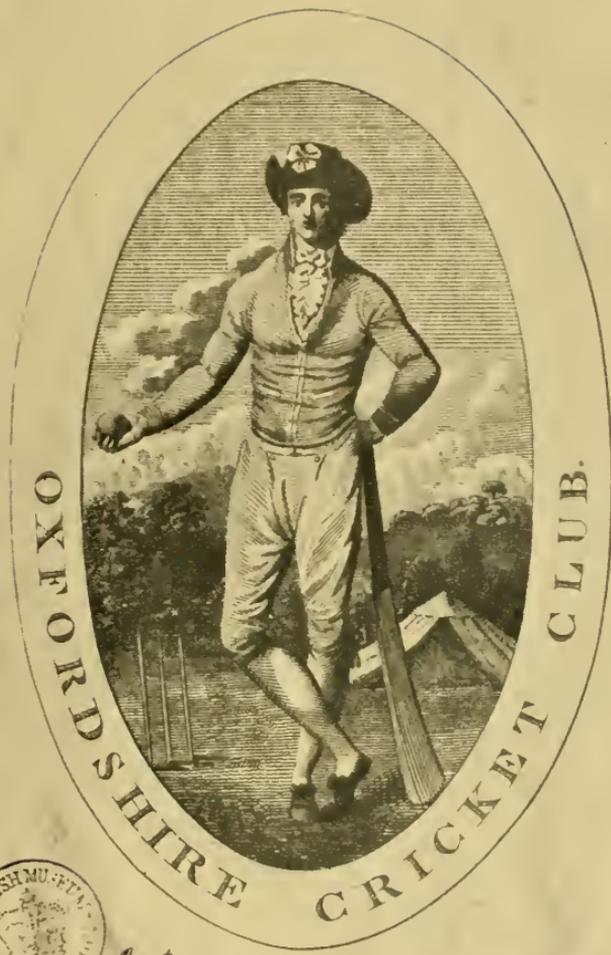
No doubt the perfection to which cricket-pitches have now attained makes the bowler's task harder; but, taking one season with another, the trundler still holds his own. Admirers of the round-arm bowling, of which Mynn, Redgate, Lillywhite, Tarrant, Jackson, and Freeman were such brilliant exponents, declare that it was far deadlier

and more difficult to play than the modern overhand style ; but the ground helped the bowler then far more than it does now. " W. G.," whose experience is greater than that of any other living cricketer, says that the fast bowling of to-day is inferior to that of thirty years ago.

I can remember the storm of controversy provoked by Edgar Willsher's style when, seven-and-forty years ago, he introduced in a modified form the overhand action which is now universal. I was at the Oval during the match between England and Surrey in 1862. England had gone in first and scored 503. When Surrey went in Willsher opened the bowling. He bowled two overs without any protest. But when he started the third, Lillywhite promptly no-balled his first delivery and each of the succeeding five, though none could detect any difference between Willsher's action in this over and in the two preceding ones. Lillywhite, however, insisted that Willsher's bowling was in direct contravention of the rule that forbade the bowler's hand to be raised above his shoulder in the act of delivering the ball. Willsher, in indignation, flung down the ball and left the field, followed by the whole of the England eleven. As Lillywhite stuck to his point (and, mind you, he was perfectly right in doing so), the committee of the Surrey Club held a consultation, the issue of which was that Lillywhite was superseded by Street, and the fairness of Willsher's bowling was challenged no more.

Edgar Willsher was one of the finest bowlers I ever saw. I do not think that at his best he has ever had a superior—not even Spofforth. One great feat of his was in the match between Sixteen of Kent and Eleven of England at Canterbury in 1863, when Willsher had the extraordinary analysis of 41 overs: 31 maidens, 17 runs, 8 wickets!—and this was against a side which comprised such splendid cricketers as C. G. Lane, R. Marsham, W. Nicholson, Caffyn, Carpenter, Grundy, Hayward, Jackson, J. Lillywhite, Lockyer, and George Parr.

I wonder what the objectors to cautious play would have said to the rate of scoring fifty years ago. Talk of your Scottons and Barlows: they were rapid run-getters compared with most of the batsmen of that day. At the first



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A TICKET FOR A CRICKET MATCH, 1787.

(From an old print in the British Museum.)

Canterbury Week, in 1841, Lillywhite was an hour and a half scoring *seven* runs, and the total score for that time was only 15; but 30 runs an hour was then, and for long afterwards, considered *fast* scoring. One hundred balls were bowled on that occasion at Canterbury before a run was scored. That eclipses old William Clarke's famous feat, when he bowled sixty balls to Fuller Pilch without a run, and took his wicket with the sixty-first.

Clarke, like George Giffen, had an unconquerable aversion to taking himself off. Once he kept himself on against a famous amateur, though he was knocked all over the field. At last he got the batsman caught off his bowling, and said in great triumph, "There! I knew I should get 'un; I knew I should get 'un." To which the retiring batsman retorted, "Yes, Mr Clarke, you have got me, *but I've made eighty runs.*"

I think the slowest scoring I ever saw was in one of the England *v.* Australia matches at the Oval. W. G. and Scotton went in first, and at the end of an hour only 20 runs were up, of which Scotton had made 3. He did not add to his score, though he was in another half-hour or more. After lunch W. G. let out gaily and knocked up a big three-figure score. Without doubt such slow and cautious play has not increased the popularity of cricket. The general public gets wearied of such dull methods. And, personally, I must say it has often made me mad to see a man with such magnificent hitting powers as William Gunn poking and pottering away as if he didn't know how to open those broad shoulders of his.

Some players think that cricket would be rendered less tedious by *shortening* the boundaries. But as a rule, I think, the boundaries are short enough—too short in the opinion of many good cricketers, who grumble because the batsmen have not to run out every hit as they used to do in those "good old days" so dear to the memory of your *laudator temporis acti*.

If grounds were big enough to allow of this, the spectators would hardly be within sight of the wickets; and how many men could stand the wear and tear of running out every hit in a long innings? When I was up at Cambridge,

Mr Roupell, of Trinity Hall, in a match at Parker's Piece hit a 7, a 9, and a 10 in one and the same innings, and ran them all out. I have seen many a boundary hit at Lord's and the Oval which would have kept rolling along the vast expanse of Parker's Piece till eight or ten runs had been scored, for it would have taken three men to throw the ball up.

The mention of throwing leads me to express my satisfaction at the proposed restoration of throwing the cricket-ball to its old place in the 'Varsity Sports. It was both an attractive and a useful feature in these games. But if it is restored, I hope strict provision will be made that the throws be *straight*. I write feelingly on this point; for I was a cricket-ball thrower myself, and I can recall my disgust when, after a fair and straight throw of just over 100 yards, I was placed second to a man who, though he could sling the leather a great distance, could not, to save his life, have shot a ball in from long-leg within 20 yards either side of the wicket-keeper. Two stumps should be placed at a distance of, say, 6 yards from one another, and 90 or 100 yards from the thrower; and unless the ball is thrown *between* them it should not count.

I wonder how far the present generation could throw. W. H. Game, sometime Captain of the Oxford Eleven, was one of the best throwers I ever saw. I believe he threw over 120 yards. W. G. Grace, at an athletic sports meeting at the Oval made three consecutive throws of 110, 117, 118 yards. Bonnor, the Australian giant, whose magnificent proportions elicited the admiration of Mr Ruskin, is credited with 136 yards; but how far that record is authentic I cannot say. A good story, by the way, is told of Spofforth, the "demon bowler." When he was in the West Country in 1878 or 1880 a Plymouth man was backed to throw the cricket-ball against another for £5 a side. The backer of the winner, who threw well over 100 yards, a burly gentleman farmer, turned to Spofforth as the winning throw was measured, and said, "What d'ye think of *that* for a throw?" "It's not a bad throw," replied Spofforth carelessly. "Not bad!" exclaimed the other indignantly; "I should think not, indeed." "No," said Spofforth

quietly; "its not a bad throw—but nothing to make a fuss about." "Eh! what! Well, damme, I'll lay £50 *you* couldn't equal it." "Done," says the "Demon" tranquilly; "I'll take that bet." And, without taking off his jacket, the Australian took the ball and sent it 3 yards farther than the Plymouth man. The face of the burly farmer as he paid the £50 was a sight not to be forgotten.

CHAPTER XXXIX

ARE CRICKETERS SHORT-LIVED?

ARE cricketers short-lived? This question has exercised my mind for a long while, and I have satisfied myself that cricketers *are* short-lived. Let anyone make a list of the well-known players of, say, thirty years ago, and he will be astonished to find how few are living and how many died in their prime.

It is very rarely that a professional cricketer, or an amateur who has played as regularly as a professional, reaches the age of 60, and the majority die under 50. From the long list of cricketers I have known during the last five-and-thirty years I take a few names at random. Hayward, Tarrant, Jupp, the two Humphreys, J. G. Shaw, Morley, Wild, Pilling, Ullyet, C. J. Ottaway, G. F. Grace, C. J. Brune, the Rev. C. G. Lane, I. D. Walker, Percy M'Donnel, have all died comparatively young. I think I. D. Walker was the only one who exceeded 50, and he was but 53. George Ullyet, who looked strong and healthy enough to last till fourscore, did not complete his forty-ninth year.

Of course, in some cases there has been hereditary or inherent disease, and in others hard drinking has accelerated death. But I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the average cricketer's life is not a long one. Cricketers are peculiarly liable to pulmonary complaints. George Lohmann and Arthur Shrewsbury suffered in this way, and William Gunn has not been exempt from throat and chest troubles. Our villainously treacherous climate has much to answer for.

The fielder must be a very Hercules, like "W. G.," if he

does not experience some ill effects from cold and exposure ; fielding searches out the weak points in a man's constitution. When the bowler has finished his over, the bitter wind (and how often the wind is bitter) has a fine opportunity of chilling his heated frame. Considering the extraordinary and rapid changes of climate which the lightly clad cricketer has to face, it is no wonder that his spell of life is short.

The stupid custom of playing a match on Easter Monday, no matter how early in the year that festival may fall, is simply courting illness, and is cruel to the players. May is bad enough, *but* to think of beginning before May is simply folly.

In the days of the old Prize Ring it was not the punishment they received in battle which played havoc with the professional bruisers, but the exposure to inclement weather. Fancy men stripping to the waist with the snow on the ground, and fighting for two or three hours. It says little for the humanity of sportsmen of the old school that they should have sanctioned fights in the depth of winter. I would have no matches before the middle of May, and if cricketers consulted their own health they would make a stand against an earlier date.

The old-time cricketers were long-lived ; but they clad themselves differently, and they didn't play anything like so many matches in a season. I remember, some thirty years ago, interviewing John Bowes, who was then in his ninety-first year, and had been one of the famous "B" eleven which Lord Frederick Beauclerck mustered to contend against England. He would have laughed to scorn the idea that cricketers were short-lived, and with good reason. So would that all-round athlete Edward Hayward Budd, whom I saw knocking the balls about with amazing vigour when he had passed his eightieth year. Fuller Pilch, too, with whom I have had many a chat during Canterbury week at the old Saracen's Head, had got well past his three-score and ten when he shuffled off this mortal coil. And "Mr Felix," one of the greatest batsmen of the day, lived till past fourscore.

A veteran cricketer who retained his vigour to a great

age was Mr Charles Absolom, a master butcher of North London (not to be confounded with my old friend and comrade, C. A. Absolom, the famous Kentish amateur and Cambridge "Blue"). Mr Absolom was an active and vigorous player up to the age of 75. He played and won a single-wicket match against an opponent half his age when he was within a few months of his eightieth year. Mr Absolom died at the age of 90 in January 1908.

Cricketers now do not take the same care of themselves as the old race used to do. Mr Budd, for example, took constant and regular exercise, and kept himself perpetually in good condition. Never did he let a day pass without at least a good six-mile walk at a swinging pace. He kept his weight scrupulously to 12 st., the weight at which experience taught him that his athletic powers were at their best. He was very temperate in his diet, and utterly eschewed smoking. Now, when everyone smokes, Budd's abstention from the soothing weed may be laughed at as an old-fashioned fad; but some of the best sportsmen England has ever seen—Hugo Meynell, Jack Musters, Admiral Rous, George Payne, and the Rev. Jack Russell—never smoked. I am inclined to think that smoking, except in great moderation, is detrimental to prolonged athletic exertion, and that the man who would keep his eye and nerve at the highest pitch should smoke as little as possible. I have known, and still know, great cricketers who are great smokers. When they begin to fall off in their play, and become unaccountably out of form, the last cause to which they would attribute their decadence would be smoking. Yet I have a shrewd suspicion that tobacco has far more to do with the falling-off than they would admit.

Our greatest cricketer, Dr W. G. Grace, keeps himself in condition by constant exercise all the year round. But then he has the constitution of an elephant, and *he never smokes!* It was thought a marvellous feat of endurance that Mr Budd should have played in one season in five consecutive weeks! But that is "small potatoes" compared with the cricketers of to-day, who play from May to the

end of August. Budd's average over twenty years was 28, and, considering what the wickets were like in his days, that must be regarded as a very fine performance. Even now, it would place a man in the front rank of batsman over a similar number of years.

I remember the sensation created when E. M. Grace appeared in first-class cricket. His average was 30 odd in his first season. But old cricketers said that his play, though dashing, was not cricket. I heard two old members of the M.C.C. make that remark during a match at Lord's, when E. M. ran out and drove a ball clean over the bowler's head into the pavilion.

W. G. has so completely overshadowed the feats of his elder brother that people forget that E. M. was regarded as a prodigy. He had a wonderful eye, and it was a treat to see him knock the bowling all over the shop, though his style may not have been scientific. His fielding was superb; I have never seen a finer point. And there was a time when, with his slow bowling, he could stick up the best batsman in England. He took all ten wickets in the first innings of Kent against M.C.C. and Ground, to say nothing of scoring 196 not out. And the best of the joke was that he had not been actually elected a member of the M.C.C., and it was by the courtesy of the Chairman of the Kent County Club that he was permitted to play as a substitute. I don't know whether it was on this occasion or another that a confident appeal for l.b.w. was made by the bowler; but old Fuller Pilch, who was umpiring, to the amazement of all, gave him "not out." When remonstrated with afterwards, Fuller scratched his head and said, "Well, you see, I had never seen the young gentleman play, and I'd heard such a lot about his batting."

Dr. W. G. Grace says that there is no truth in the story. But I have heard old Fuller taxed with it in the bar-parlour of his own house, the Saracen's Head, at Canterbury, and he certainly did not deny the soft impeachment, but shook his head with a cunning smile, which, of course, everyone present considered to be "confirmation strong as proof of Holy Writ."

I once heard an old cricketer say of E. M. Grace : “ He is an all-round master of cricket. He’s as clever as a conjurer ; I believe that man can do anything and everything in the whole range of the game, except keep wicket to his own bowling.”

CHAPTER XL

FOOTBALL AND ITS TRADITIONS

IT is a curious feature in the latter-day recrudescence of games that the oldest games known in the records of Great Britain are the two which have gained the greatest and the most rapid popularity—golf and football. Football not long ago was unknown outside the public schools of England. But, being a fighting game—a veritable image of war—it was bound to come to the front. And it has done so with a vengeance. It is now, of course, a scientific game; but the essential features have not been lost, as one may learn by glancing at the old traditions of football.

The rough old Shrove-tide game was pursued with great energy at Scone in Perthshire. The sides, married and single, assembled at the village cross, at two in the afternoon of "Fastern's E'en," as Shrove Tuesday is called in Scotland, and the game by immemorial custom had to last till sunset. It is thus described in Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*: "The player who got the ball ran with it till overtaken by the opposite party; then, if he could not shake himself free, he threw the ball from him, unless it was wrested from him by some of the other party; but no one was allowed to kick it!" Here you have the Rugby game in embryo. The object of the married men was to "hang it"—that is, put it three times into a small hole on the moor, which was the *dool*, or limit, on the one hand; that of the bachelors was to "drown" the ball, or to dip it three times into a deep place in the river. If neither side succeeded in winning a goal, the ball was cut into two equal parts at sunset. The roughness of the game gave rise to a proverb, "All is fair at Ball of Scone." Tradition said that the match was instituted

centuries ago, and every man in the district, gentle or simple, had to turn out to support his side under penalty of a fine. In 1796 the match had been discontinued for a few years, and it has never been revived.

Up to about sixty years ago a famous match took place at Derby on Shrove Tuesday. Ladies filled the windows overlooking the market-place, where, at 2 p.m., the men of St Peter's met to do battle with all comers from the other parishes. The ball was of very strong leather—a foot in diameter and stuffed hard with cork shavings. At the appointed hour this ball was tossed into the air, and the mass of about a thousand players made a rush at it; the one side, whose rallying cry was "St Peter's," trying to drive the ball towards the gate of a nursery ground about a mile from town, while the "All Saints" party strove to goal the ball against a distant water-mill wheel. So great was the press of players that goals were generally won by stratagem, and very seldom by direct and open kicking.

Many stories are told of how wily players brought victory to their side. Sometimes the shavings were taken out, and the cover smuggled in under a smock frock or a woman's shawl. In the middle of a big scrimmage a cunning fellow on the outside threw his hat in the air, and the players broke after it, while he picked up the ball, hid it under his coat, and, sauntering to the brook, dropped in the ball, which he did not follow closely, but merely kept in view. The goal-keepers saw the mass of players far off, and suspected nothing until he slipped past them, jumped into the water, and pushed the ball in triumph against the wheel.

The following day, Ash Wednesday, was the "Boys' Day," when the men of both sides attended to see fair play, and to decide whether claimants were small men or big boys. Disputes were far more frequent on this day, and if a cause of quarrel cropped up on Shrove Tuesday it was put off for decision on "Boys' Day." This game was put down as "tending to foment quarrels and endanger life."

The ladies of Derby graced the contest with their presence, and even in some cases with more active assistance; but the fair sex in Inverness went far beyond this, and had an annual match of their own. The married

ladies played the spinsters at football every year, and it is said that the matrons were always victorious.

For centuries the streets of London were infested with the players at what Stubbes calls "a bloody and murdering practice rather than a fellowly sport or pastime." In Elizabeth's time we find complaints about this. Davenant's Frenchman writes, immediately after the Restoration:—

"I would now make a safe retreat, but that methinks I am stopped by one of your heroic games called football, which I conceive (under your favour) not very conveniently civil in the streets, especially on such irregular and narrow roads as Crooked Lane." Pepys tells us he went "to my Lord Brouncker's, in the Piazza, Covent Garden; the streets full of footballs, it being a great frost"; while as late as a century and a half ago, along Cheapside and Covent Garden, or by the Maypole in the Strand, the footballers rushed in disorderly mobs, to the terror of the peaceful pedestrians.

North of the Border, football was a favourite sport; and the facilities it gave for making a raid across the Border, or taking some hostile clan by surprise, added a charm to the game in the moss-troopers' eyes. In Border records are found many bloody endings to meetings ostensibly for playing football, as when in 1600 Sir John Carmichael, the Warden of the Middle Marches, was killed by a band of Armstrongs returning from a football match. Sir Robert Carey, in the *Memories of Border Transactions*, speaks of a great meeting of the Scottish riders to be held at Kelso, for the purpose of playing football, which terminated, however, in an incursion into England.

The most notable event in the history of Border football was the famous match played on the plain of Carterhaugh, on 4th December 1815. The opponents were those old rivals, the "Souters (*anglice*, shoemakers) o' Selkirk" and the Earl of Home with his retainers in the Forest of Yarrow. Lord Home, while at Buccleuch's lodge at Bowhill, challenged Sir Walter Scott, then "Shirra" of Selkirk, to fight out at football the ancient feud alluded to in the old ballad beginning—

"'Tis up wi' the Souters o' Selkirk,
An' 'tis down wi' the Earl o' Home."

When the eventful Monday arrived, players and spectators poured from all sides into the Carterhaugh. "The appearance of the various parties," says Scott, "marching from the different glens to the place of rendezvous, with pipes playing and loud acclamations, carried back the imagination to the old times." Lady Anne Scott handed the old banner of the Buccleuch family to Master Walter Scott, the younger, of Abbotsford, then a boy of thirteen, who rode over the field appropriately dressed, and his horse caparisoned with the old Border housings, bearing aloft the banner. The Duke of Buccleuch threw in the ball, and the game began.

So numerous were the players that for long the only indication of play was a heaving of the dense mass, until two stalwart "Flowers of the Forest" got the ball out. One "passed" to the other, who at once ran off towards the woods of Bowhill, intending to make a long circuit and carry it to the Yarrow goal; and he would probably have succeeded had he not been ridden down by a man on horseback. So excited were the players, that Lord Home swore that if he had had a gun he would have shot the horseman. The tide now turned against the men of the Forest, and after an hour and a half's play a mason of Selkirk gained a goal for his side. After three hours more of fierce struggle, however, a goal was won for Yarrow.

Honours being now equal, and the feelings of the players up to the fighting-point, it was thought advisable not to play a deciding game. As it was, in the heat of their passion many came to blows, and, as an eye-witness says, "the ba' had nearly ended in a battle." Scott, before leaving the ground, in Lord Dalkeith's name and his own, challenged the Yarrow men to a match with a hundred picked men on each side. But this match never took place; and it was just as well, for, as Scott told Washington Irving afterwards, the "old feuds, rivalries, and animosities of the Scotch still slept in their ashes, and might easily be aroused: the old clannish spirit was too apt to break out."

The Yarrow men also had their poet. The Etrick Shepherd (James Hogg) acted as aide-de-camp to Lord Home, and both he and Scott wrote verses specially for

the occasion. "The Lifting of the Banner" was Scott's contribution, from which I quote the following spirited stanzas:—

"From the brown crest of Newark its summons extending,
Our signal is waving in smoke and in flame ;
And each forester blithe from his mountain descending
Bounds light o'er the heather to join in the game.

Then up with the Banner, let forest winds fan her,
She has blazed over Etrick eight ages and more ;
In sport we'll attend her, in battle defend her,
With heart and with hand, like our fathers before.

A stripling's weak hand to our revel has borne her,
No mail-glove has grasp'd her, no spearmen surround ;
But ere a bold foeman should scathe or should scorn her,
A thousand true hearts would be cold on the ground.

Then strip, lads, and to it, though sharp be the weather,
And if, by mischance, you should happen to fall,
There are worse things in life than a tumble on heather,
And life is itself but a game at football.

And when it is over, we'll drink a blithe measure
To each Laird and each Lady that witness'd our fun,
And to every blithe heart that took part in our pleasure,
To the lads that have lost and the lads that have won.

Then up with the Banner, let forest winds fan her,
She has blazed over Etrick eight ages and more ;
In sport we'll attend her, in battle defend her,
With heart and with hand, like our fathers before."

James Hogg's contribution was what Lockhart calls that excellent ditty entitled "The Etrick Garland to the Ancient Banner of the House of Buccleuch":—

"And hast thou here, like hermit grey,
Thy mystic character unrolled,
O'er peaceful revelles to play,
Thou emblem of the days of old ?

All hail ! memorial of the brave,
The liegeman's pride, the Border's awe ;
May thy grey pennon never wave
O'er sterner field than Carterhaugh !"

Cricket has found its *vates sacer* in Mr Norman Gale, who has dedicated a pretty little volume of songs to the game ; but the only bard who has ever made reference to football is he who brought such a storm of execration on his head by writing of "flannelled fools and muddied oafs." And

indeed there is not much in the exhibitions of professional football to fire the imagination. The football of the old time, as described in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, was far more healthy and exciting than the spectacle of one band of hired professionals contending against another band of hireling experts. The spirit of professionalism in modern football seems to me utterly inimical to the interests of true sport. But I have hopes of better things in the future, for I remember that cricket was once blighted by the same mildew, and yet has come out cleansed and wholesome. Cricket has risen superior to such shows as a match between two teams of professionals. Amateurs and professionals have become amalgamated in county cricket, and the game is all the better and purer for the amalgamation: it is not, as it once was, associated with betting and bribery, and there is no longer among professional cricketers that sordid mercenary spirit which degrades professional football. Until amateur and professional footballers are similarly amalgamated and bound by restrictions as to residence and qualifications resembling those imposed upon county cricketers, I see no hope of football becoming a really healthy and popular sport.

CHAPTER XLI

A GOSSIP ON GOLF

MANY Englishmen have found in the great Scottish game a delightful mode of combining exercise and amusement without the expenditure of much violent exertion, yet it seems but yesterday that a golf-club was a rare sight in England. Thirty years ago I remember an old friend of mine, a famous Cambridge cricketer, telling me he had joined the Liverpool Golf Club, and found the game far more fascinating than cricket. I smiled sceptically. I had never seen the outlandish pastime, but I could not believe that any sane Englishman could prefer it to cricket. I know better now. And, though I cannot admit that golf stands on the same level as the grand English game, I have found its fascination by experience.

Few persons nowadays are unfamiliar with the weird nomenclature which used to puzzle and even horrify the uninitiated, as the following anecdote will prove:—

An English lady travelling from Edinburgh to the North *via* “the Ferries” (it was before the days of the Forth and Tay Bridges) wrote to a friend describing the journey: “It was pleasant enough till I got to a station called Leuchars, where two strange-looking men got into the carriage. Their clothes were shabby, their whole appearance wild and unkempt, and though they spoke good English with little accent, it was mixed with many strange words which I did not understand. Niblick, cleek, stimmie, were some which I remember, and they talked in a horrid way about clearing somebody’s nose, and running over somebody’s grave; but the worst of all was when one told the other that he had been in Hell that morning, but his partner had got him out with a spoon. They seemed

to be gentlemen, but must have been mad; and I was very glad when we got to the next station."

Even now, perhaps, it may be necessary to explain that "The Principal's Nose," "Walkinshaw's Grave," and "Hell" are three well-known bunkers at St Andrews.

It is odd that the two oldest pastimes known in these islands should have come to the front again and distanced all rivals in popularity. I refer to golf and football. All our other sports with the single exception of polo, and that is an exotic, are mere things of yesterday compared with the antiquity of these two.

Horse-racing, as a popular sport, dates no further back than the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Cricket will not celebrate its bi-centenary for another fifty years, but golf and football were flourishing six hundred years ago.

Indeed, they were so enthusiastically patronised that it was deemed necessary to restrict the indulgence in them by Act of Parliament both in Scotland and England, because people were neglecting archery in their passion for these two fascinating games.

Charles I. was an enthusiastic golf player, and it is alleged that he was playing on Leith Links when a letter was put into his hand announcing the first news of the rebellion in Ireland. He did not, however, display on this occasion the *sang-froid* which heroes in like circumstances have evinced when engaged in a favourite recreation.

He did not deliberately finish the round or even allow the first hole to be decided, but in great agitation rode off to Holyrood, from whence he next day set off for London.

The Duke of York, afterwards James II., was also a keen golfer, and when visiting Scotland in 1681-82, in the capacity of Commissioner to the Scotch Parliament, was often on the Leith Links.

Two noblemen in the Duke's suite insisted that the game was as much English as Scotch, and it was agreed to decide the question by a trial of skill. The two noblemen were to be on one side, and the Duke was allowed to select an Edinburgh player as his partner. Inquiry was made for the champion golfer in Edina, and universal suffrage pointed to one Paterson, a poor shoemaker, whose

ancestors had been equally famous on the links. With some difficulty Paterson was induced to play, and the Duke and his humble coadjutor gained the day.

For what stakes the match was played is not stated, but they must have been heavy, for Paterson's share was so large as to enable him to build a house in the Canongate, to which the Duke contributed a stone, bearing the arms of the Paterson family, surmounted by a crest and motto appropriate to the distinction which its owner had acquired as a golfer. The crest is a dexter hand grasping a golf-club with the motto "Far and Sure." The house is, I believe, still standing.

It has been a severe blow to the *amour propre* of the patriotic Scot to find his own national game gaining a popularity among the Southerner greater even than that which it enjoys in the land of its birth. What must have been the feelings of Scotsmen when they saw their best golfers, both amateur and professional, beaten on their own links by Mr John Ball and Mr Hilton—who are not only Englishmen, but amateurs?

It is still more galling to the Scotsmen to remind them of the fact that the oldest golf club in existence is to be found in England; for the Royal Blackheath Golf Club, founded by James I., is more than a hundred years older than "The Royal and Ancient" of St Andrews. Another point with your Scottish golfer is the true pronunciation of the name of the game—it is "goff," the "l" is not sounded. In this connection I recall rather a good story. Some years ago a friend of mine was advised to supplement his practice by studying a handbook of the game. He accordingly ordered from his English bookseller a "Handbook on Goff," and in due course received *The Hand of Providence exemplified in the Life of J. B. Gough*. I need hardly remind my reader that at that time the name of J. B. Gough, the great temperance orator, was very familiar.

A significant tribute to the popularity of golf in England was paid by a billiard-marker at Wimbledon, who, on being asked by a visitor why there were so few players at the table, replied, "Oh, it's that confounded Scotch

croquet that they have introduced here. It's taking everyone to the green nowadays. They won't play billiards, sir, as long as they can get that confounded Scotch croquet."

There is a story told of a golf enthusiast who, when too old and feeble to enjoy his favourite pastime out of doors, converted his billiard-table into a miniature links, and in that form satisfied his craving for the game.

A gallant general, who had never handled a golf-club till he was well on in years, was a regular attendant at the parish church, where he occupied a prominent position in the front of the gallery. During one of those long prayers—not now so common as formerly, and when standing and not kneeling was the orthodox posture—the minister observed the eyes of many of the congregation turned in the direction of the gallery. Looking up, he saw the general—always a pattern of strict decorum—grasping a large psalm-book tightly with his left hand, and guiding it with the right; now lifting it slowly above his head, then bringing it rapidly down, and just grazing the desk in front with a smile of satisfaction on his face. Fortunately the pause which the minister made brought the general to "attention," and the prayer was resumed.

When the subject of golf enthusiasm, however, is brought on the *tapis*, old stagers will assure you that the "cake" is taken by the "Cock o' the Green," Alexander M'Kellar, the hero of one of *Kay's Portraits*.

He spent the whole day playing on Bruntsfield Links; even when night fell he could not tear himself away, but played the "short holes" by lamplight. As M'Kellar could not play on Sundays, he acted as door-keeper to a church in Edinburgh. One day Mr Douglas Gourlay, a well-known club- and ball-maker, jocularly placed a golf-ball in the plate instead of his usual donation; as he anticipated, this prize was at once secured by M'Kellar, who was not more astonished than gratified by the novelty of the deposit.

Propos of playing by lamplight, there is a still more remarkable instance of nocturnal golf.

A match was got up at the race ordinary at Montrose,

by Mr Cruickshank of Langley Park and that madcap Lord Kennedy—both good players. The match was three holes, for £500 each hole, to be played out then and there. It was about ten or half-past, and quite dark. No lights were allowed except one lantern placed on the hole, and another carried by the attendants, that they might ascertain to whom the ball struck belonged. Boys were placed along the course to listen to the flight of the balls, and run to the spot where a ball stopped. But the extraordinary part of the match was that they did the holes in about the same number of strokes as they usually took in daylight. On an average, five or six strokes in daylight, and in the dark six or seven.

They were, however, in the constant habit of playing over the Montrose course, and their familiarity with it helped them greatly.

I have already referred to the old Act of the Scots Parliament prohibiting golf, and enjoining the practice of archery that the Scots might be better able to fight the English bowmen with their own weapons. The penalties for default and the time of practice were not such as would have recommended themselves to Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Sir Andrew Agnew. Every man who did not attend had to pay twopence, which was spent in liquor for those present, while the day and hour were Sunday afternoon, after service!

Archery and golf were brought into antagonism in another way on Luffness Links, on 15th October 1874. The Rev. Mr Tait, Chaplain to the Royal Company of Archers, played a match with bow and arrow against the club and ball of "Old Tom" Morris over the Luffness course. The bow beat the club completely, Mr Tait doing the round in seventy-six, while "Old Tom" took eighty-two. A similar match has been recently played near Birmingham with a similar result.

Of the dexterity of golfers there are numberless stories. The Rev. Mr Carlyle of Inveresk astonished Garrick and some others at Windsor by the nicety of his play in driving a ball from a good distance through a narrow gateway.

The late "Young Tom" Morris could, it is said, drive a

ball off a watch as a "tee" without doing any harm to the watch.

On one occasion at the Antipodes skill at golf was of great service. The rains had so swollen an Australian river that the mail could not cross. Guns, slings, arrows, were tried, but all failed to get a line across. At last a Scot, a keen golfer, volunteered to try what he could do with the clubs and ball he had carried with him to his new home. A long string was attached to the ball, which was carefully "tee'd"; then, with a long, steady drive, the Scot sent the ball flying through the air till it reached the opposite bank and re-established communications.

The genuine Scotch "caddie" is a shrewd observer of men and things, and frequently gifted with a racy humour of his own.

"Lang Willie" was a well-known figure on the St Andrews Links. It was generally believed that his origin—at any rate on one side of the family—was higher than his position. On the occasion of Louis Kossuth's visit to St Andrews a public dinner was to be given in his honour, and Willie applied for a ticket to the Bailie who was in charge of the arrangements. The worthy man curtly refused the application, saying to Willie that it was no for the likes of him to be at the dinner. "No for the likes of me!" was Willie's indignant rejoinder. "I've been in the company of gentlemen from eleven to four o'clock maist days for the last thirty year, and that's mair than *you* can say!"

A well-known St Andrews Professor was being taught the game by a "caddie." He was lamenting his want of skill, and wondering at his apparent inability to learn an art which to the uninitiated seems so simple. He asked his "caddie" for an explanation. The reply was, "Oh, sir, ye see, onybody can teach thae laddies" (meaning the students of the University), "onybody can teach thae laddies Latin and Greek; but gowf, ye see, sir, gowf requires a *heid*."

But more surprising, and perhaps even less gratifying to the player, was the following unfortunate phrase in which a French "caddie" expressed his admiration. The Golf Club at Pau is the oldest south of the Tweed, with the sole

exception of the venerable Blackheath institution. A young player wintering at Pau, and ignorant of the language, had for his "caddie" a French boy who knew no English. They managed to get on by the language of signs. At last the player made a remarkably good approach shot, and, his ball lying dead, he turned round with an air of intense satisfaction and triumph to his "caddie," who instantly exclaimed, "Beastly fluke!" It was all the English that he knew, and it was meant as a compliment. But it must be admitted that he could scarcely have found a phrase less calculated to flatter the vanity of the player.

Of the great heroes of golf—Allan Robertson, Hugh Kirkaldy, "Old Tom" Morris, and a host of others—there is much to tell, but it should be told in a less frivolous spirit, and must therefore be reserved for another chapter; for there is nothing more annoying to the true golfer than to have his absorbing pursuit treated lightly. It is to him what whist was to Sarah Battle. When he wants to "unbend his mind," he takes up a volume on metaphysics, or solves abstruse mathematical problems, or, in the case of a few flightier and more juvenile players, indulges in a *game* of chess. But for Heaven's sake don't speak of golf in his hearing as a *game*—he might brain you with his "driver," and in any case his language would probably lift the hair from your head.

CHAPTER XLII

GIANTS OF THE LINKS

I CAN remember when, as a small lower-school fag, I used to be dispatched to the butcher's on the morning of a football match for a couple of bullock's bladders—one to be held in reserve, the other to be inflated to fill the leather ball-covering for the afternoon's play. The inflation of that bladder was not a savoury task. Sometimes the bladder collapsed in the middle of a game, and then the reserve bladder had to be inflated by some poor devil of a fag, whose lungs and olfactory nerves were sorely tried.

I have never heard that the butchers found themselves serious losers by the substitution of other substances for the inflation of footballs; but the makers of the old-fashioned golf-balls were in a great state of consternation when the new gutta-percha ball first came into vogue. For centuries golf-balls were only made in one way—a stout leather case stuffed hard with boiled feathers. The balls were expensive, but that tended to keep the game select and aristocratic. In the year 1848, Campbell of Saddell, whose hunting songs have made him famous, first introduced gutta-percha balls at St Andrews. Very soon the cheapness of the new ball began to appeal to the canny Scot, and the manufacturers of the old feather balls raised a fierce protest against the gutta-percha innovation.

Foremost among them was Allan Robertson, of whom old golfers speak with bated breath as the greatest golfer that ever lived, just as veteran cricketers used to speak of Fuller Pilch and Alfred Mynn in the days before "W. G." and "Ranji." Allan, like his father and grandfather before him, was not only a great player but a famous maker of balls. He was turning out upwards of 2500 balls

per annum from his shop when this "accursed gutta-percha" rival made its appearance. At first Robertson only laughed derisively at the innovation. Finally, like a sensible man, he took to manufacturing gutta-percha balls himself, though he never would admit that they were better than the old feather balls.

Mr Messieux's famous drive of 308 yards on St Andrews Links with the old-fashioned ball remained unbeaten until Lieutenant F. G. Tait made his record drive, the exact distance of which I forget (I fancy it was 340 yards), but at any rate it was a long way in front of Mr Messieux's. Tait's record has been beaten by Horne's drive of 381 yards at North Berwick in July 1909, and Braid is said to have driven 395 yards at Walton Heath on frozen ground.

Among some of the big things done with the old balls and clubs were the following:—

A bet was taken in 1798 that two members of the Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh could not send balls over the spire of St Giles' Church. The champions were allowed to use six balls each, and the question was decided early in the morning, to prevent accident and interruption. The balls were struck from the south-east corner of Parliament Square, and the height, including base distance, is 161 feet. The balls passed considerably higher than the required elevation, and, in point of fact, the undertaking was not beyond the average powers of first-rate players.

The next match of the kind was to drive a ball over the Melville Monument in the New Town of Edinburgh. The monument is only 150 feet high; but the parties in the second match, which took place many years after the other, may have thought that golfing had so much degenerated that the prowess of the last century could not be maintained. The wager, however, was duly won by a Writer to the Signet.

These feats seem "small pertaters" to the modern golfer. At St Andrews, 20 strokes in a round is the difference between the form of the golfer of to-day and the golfer of ninety years ago. Take the Gold Medal of the Royal and Ancient. From 1806 to 1834 the course

was never done in less than 100 strokes. In the last-named year Mr Oliphant performed what was then thought the extraordinary feat of holing out in 97. Up to 1855 that score was only once beaten, by a 90, and there were only three others under 100. Mr MacGlennis won the Medal with 88 in 1858—a score which remained unbeaten till Mr Horace Hutchinson made another record in 1884 with 87, which, in its turn, was wiped out by Mr S. Mure Ferguson in 1893 with 79.

But Allan Robertson's feats are even now spoken of with awe, and his admirers will not admit that he has ever had his equal. If his records have been eclipsed, it is because the Links are easier and the clubs and balls better, not because the skill of the players is greater than his—for that could not be. Allan was wont to be up and on the Links before the sun had risen, like the hero of Gray's "Elegy"—

"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn."

There, with the Links all to himself, he went conscientiously over the course, picking up fresh wrinkles in every round, till none could compare with him in his easy style and his deadly "putting."

Allan Robertson was never beaten. He and Old Tom Morris played in a foursome for £400 against the two Dunns at Musselburgh, St Andrews, and North Berwick. The Dunns won in a canter at Musselburgh by 13 holes and 12 to play. At St Andrews, Robertson and Morris retrieved 2 or 3 holes. When the last round began at North Berwick the Dunns were 4 up and 8 to play. Allan and Tom, however, by magnificent play, won the first and second, and halved the third hole, won the fourth, halved the fifth, and won the sixth. This made them all square with 2 to play. Allan and Tom won these 2 holes and the match by one of the most extraordinary exhibitions of cool, determined play ever seen. Allan was renowned for his coolness and nerve, and his play was never deadlier and surer than when a crisis was desperate. It was said of him, as "keeper of the green," that "he arranged

everything on the golf-links with the politeness of a Brummell and the policy of a Talleyrand." He died on 1st September 1859, and it was a surprise to many to learn that he was but five-and-forty.

At the age of 16 Young Tom Morris burst like a meteor on the golf world, beating all comers in a professional tournament at Carnoustie in 1867. He followed up that triumph by defeating Willie Park for the Championship, and was victorious on every green on which he appeared. For three years in succession he won the Challenge Belt at Prestwick, and when, in 1871, a handsome Cup was substituted for the Belt, he won that too. His score of 77 for the 18 holes round at St Andrews remained till quite lately the record. Old Tom died full of years and honours on 24th May 1908. He was 87. How vigorous he was in his old age may be gathered from the fact that on his eighty-fourth birthday he went over the St Andrews course in the same number of strokes as the years of his life.

But Young Tom was one of those whom the gods love, and his brilliant career was suddenly cut short when he was but four-and-twenty. On Thursday, 2nd September 1874, father and son went together to North Berwick to play a match. Tommy left his wife perfectly well. She was a remarkably handsome and healthy young woman, most lovable in every way. But on Saturday that fine girl had her first child and died. A telegram was sent to Tom, who told his son they must leave at once. A fine yacht was put at their disposal, and without the weary journey to Edinburgh they were brought across the Firth of Forth. Tom did not tell his son that all was over till they were walking up from the harbour. Poor Tommy went about for a little while, but his heart was broken. On the morning of Christmas Day they found him dead in his bed; and so Tommy and his poor young wife were not long divided.

It has been objected that golf is trying to the temper of even veteran players and sorely provocative of profane language. Dr Boyd of St Andrews tells the following story illustrative of this peculiarity of golfers:—

"On a day in April I walked round the Links with a

'foursome.' My brother Alexander and Lord Colin Campbell played against Tulloch and another, and it was extraordinary how peppery they became. Tulloch and his partner were being badly beaten, and when Tulloch made some suggestion to his partner, the latter brandished his club in the air and literally yelled out, 'No directions! I'll take no directions!' Tulloch used to complain that an old story had come to be told of him. 'How is the Principal getting on?' was asked of one of the caddies. 'Ah!' said the caddie, with an awe-stricken face, 'he's tappin' his ba's, and damnin' awfu'.'

But perhaps even more painful to the onlooker is the suppressed swear when the player is debarred by his profession from the relief so welcome to the profane layman.

A well-known Anglican divine, golfing at St Andrews, got into trouble in a bunker. Stroke followed stroke, but he couldn't get out. At length his lips moving with extreme irritation and the effect of continued muscular effort, his caddie interposed, and coming up to the Rev. Canon exclaimed, "Wull I say it for ye, sir?"

It is said of a fair golfer who has been more than once Ladies' Champion that a caddie advised her, whenever she "felt bad," just to slip behind a furze-bush or a hillock and write "the words" on the sand with her club.

Mr Balfour relieves *his* feelings by such mild expletives as "Dear me!" "Botheration!" and the like, but the emphasis he puts into his tone quite serves the purpose.

The Hon. and Rev. Canon Edward Lyttelton, Head Master of Eton, was one of the finest cricketers that Eton and Cambridge ever turned out, and was a member of the eleven which in 1878 lowered the colours of the hitherto invincible Australian team. I cannot recall any University eleven that could compare with that which included Edward and Alfred Lyttelton, C. T. Studd, A. G. Steel, A. P. Lucas, F. J. Ford, and P. H. Horton. It is not to be expected, therefore, that he should feel much enthusiasm or admiration for the game of golf. In an address on the "Use and Abuse of Athletics" he said:—

"As people got on in life, they took to golf. He had come to the conclusion that golf was good for elderly men,

but not for boys, and he hoped it would never be extended to girls' schools. It was lacking in co-operation." I agree with him to a certain extent. I don't think golf is a good game for boys. What is wanted in boys' games is something to promote a spirit of fellowship, to foster *esprit de corps* and not to encourage individual prowess and the natural conceit which it engenders. The same argument would apply to girls' schools, but if Canon Lyttelton means to imply that it is not a fit game for ladies—I beg to differ from him. A naturally graceful woman playing golf in good style is a most attractive sight, though the athletic girl graduate of Girton and Newnham might resent that point of view as an insult. But the introduction of ladies into the game robs of its point the story of an enthusiastic old golfer who, on hearing that there had been an addition to the family of an intimate friend, asked anxiously, "Is it a gowffer?"

CHAPTER XLIII
THE ORIGIN OF POLO

WHAT is the oldest game extant? Golfers point with pride to an antiquity of at least six centuries. Footballers claim an equal, if not greater, antiquity for *their* game. But they are things of yesterday compared with polo, which can trace its origin back over six and twenty centuries. When you once get groping back after the origins of games there is no telling where to stop. Still, there can be no doubt that a game of ball, played on horse-back with sticks, was in vogue as far back as the days of Alexander the Great, who saw it played in Persia when he invaded and conquered that empire three centuries and a half before the Christian era.

Persia was the cradle of polo. There, among a race unequalled for horsemanship, the nursling first saw the light and was nurtured into adolescence. The Persian name for polo is "changan," which I believe signifies "four-sided." Polo is derived from the Tibetan word *pulu*, which means a ball made from a knot of *willow*—a wood as sacred to that game as it is to cricket. The Persian poet, Firdusi, frequently mentions the game. Now, Firdusi wrote his *Schah Nameh* (Book of Kings) about the time that Canute the Dane became King of England and addressed his memorable rebuke to his flattering courtiers when the sea showed itself no respecter of his royal person. That alone gives the game a reputable and authentic antiquity of 900 years, and Firdusi speaks of the pastime then as of great antiquity. There is an illuminated MS. of Firdusi's poems in the British Museum which contains an elaborate illustration of changan as it was then played. The sticks which the players are represented as using are

almost exactly similar to those in use at the present day, and the horses, though not precisely ponies, are Arabs under 15 hands with small heads and tapering muzzles.

The works of another great Persian poet, Hafiz, a contemporary of our own Chaucer, teem with allusions to the game. "May the heads of your enemies be your chaugan balls," is the grim wish with which the poet flatters his imperial patron. And the favourite national pastime supplied him with metaphors of a less blood-thirsty sort. "Man," he writes, "is a ball tossed into the field of existence, driven hither and thither by the chaugan stick of destiny wielded by the hand of Providence." But chaugan supplied the Persian poet with an image descriptive of the tenderest of human emotions: "The heart of the lover is the ball, while the curling lovelock of his charmer is as the curved club that impels it."

In its early days, however, polo or chaugan was not regarded as a very reputable pastime. There it resembles cricket and football. In the middle of the eighteenth century to be a cricketer or the associate of cricketers was looked upon as the sure mark of a "rake-hell," a man of loose character and abandoned habits; whilst football and golf have been denounced as demoralising pastimes in more than one old Act of Parliament. But we have changed all that, and society is proud of its famous cricketers, golfers, poloists, and footballers.

In the fifteenth century polo, to give it its modern name, was popular all over Central Asia, and particularly in Tibet, from which country it permeated to India and thence to Great Britain. In a quaint old book, entitled *The Adventures of the Three Sherleys*, written by one George Mainwaring and descriptive of a voyage undertaken by Sir Anthony Sherley and his brother to the court of Shah Abbas, King of Persia, in 1509, the following description of the game is given:—

"Before the house there was a very fair place, to the quantity of some ten acres of ground, made very plain; so the King went down, and when he had taken his horse, the drums and trumpets sounded. There were twelve horsemen in all, with the King; so they divided themselves,

six on the one side, and six on the other, having in their hands long rods of wood about the bigness of a man's finger, and at one end of the rod a piece of wood nailed on like a hammer. After they were divided, and turned face to face there came one in the middle and threw a ball between both the companies, and having goals made at either end of the plain, they began their sport, striking the ball with their rods from one to the other, in the fashion of our football play here in England; and ever when the King had gotten the ball before him the drums and trumpets would play one alarum, and many times the King would come to Sir Anthony and ask him how he did like the sport."

Major-General Sherer is said to have been the Father of European Polo in India, and his first introduction to the game was in Assam, whilst he was stationed at Cachar. Thence he brought it to India in 1854. But, though it was played by British officers in the North-Western Provinces under the auspices of General Sherer in the early fifties, it does not appear to have been generally known in British India till at least eight years later. And General Stewart, C.B., brother of Colonel Robert Stewart, Superintendent of Cachar, claims to have introduced it to his brother officers in India, as I gather from the following account given by himself:—

"I visited my brother in September 1862 and saw the game played at Cachar; and, returning with sticks and balls in October to Barrackpore, I formed a club there, where we practiced for some months, when the game was taken up by some Calcutta men, who also got up a club. The first match was played between Barrackpore and Calcutta, on the Calcutta Maidan, early in 1863. The only members of the Barrackpore Club whose names I remember were, besides myself, Colonel Arthur Broome, Bengal Cavalry; the late Colonel J. Broome, Punjab Cavalry; the Hon. R. Napier (Lord Napier); Colonel Apperley, late 15th Bengal Cavalry; a veterinary surgeon of the name of Farrell; and a Captain King, since deceased. The Calcutta players were chiefly merchants, one of whom went by the name of 'Bobbie Hills'—a little fellow—I

think a relation of the General Hills who was in Cabul with Roberts. On my way up to Peshawar, in May 1863, I stayed a few days with my brother at Cawnpore and Mian Mir, and at each of those places I started the game, having brought up sticks and balls for the purpose. Again, in Peshawar, during 1863-64, polo or 'kangai,' as it was then called, was played regularly after I had started it. 'Polo' is the Tibetan name of the game. I have played at Skardo with the Tibetans; they use a different stick or club. The stick now used in India is the original 'kangai' stick. Bamboo balls were always used. As many as seven played on a side, two generally keeping goal. The ponies were 12-2, and the game was by no means fast."

The game as at first played in India differed greatly from what is now known as polo. The rules of the game were determined at a meeting of the Cachar Kangjai Club (that is the Tibetan name of the game) held at Silchar on 1st January 1863. Rule 9 is as follows: "Any player may interpose his horse before his antagonist's so as to prevent his antagonist from reaching the ball, whether in full career or at the slow pace, and this despite the immediate neighbourhood of the ball. Spurs and whips may be freely used, *but only on the rider's own horse: to beat an adversary's horse is foul play.*" Rule 22 provides against what to our notions seems a startling contingency: "It is to be understood that no player shall be under the influence of bhang-gouja or spirituous liquors."

To anyone who has seen the present "galloping game" played, the infringement of these rules would seem to entail consequences too appalling to contemplate. Imagine a wild Irishman, half-drunk with "bhang" or whisky, dashing his pony in front of an opponent at full gallop, or lashing his opponent's pony with his whip, to say nothing of driving his spurs into the said pony. Polo under such circumstances would be indeed a "dangerous game," a free fight, and the result would be something like that which ensued on a memorable occasion in Devonshire.

During a sham fight a Captain Prettyjohn of the Devonshire Yeomanry was ordered to retreat before a charge

of the enemy. "Retrait!" said the Captain. "Retrait mean'th rinning away, I zim; then it shall never be told up to Dodbrook Market that Captain Prid'gen and his brave troop rinned away."

Accordingly, as the enemy came on, he shouted to his troop, "Charge, my brave boys, charge; us baint voxes, and they baint hounds; us'll face 'em like men."

The collision was awful—men, horses, and accoutrements strewing the ground on every side; several troopers being more or less injured, while one positively refused to mount again, saying, "I've brok'd my breeches already, Cap'n, and I won't mount no more."

These rules were revised in 1887 to meet the requirements of the new game, the greater increase in the size of the ground and the height of the ponies, and the subordination of individual play to combination. The ground was increased from 200 yards by 120 yards to 300 yards by 200 yards; the height of the ponies from 12-2 to 13-3. Each game to consist of six periods of eight minutes each, exclusive of stoppages. Time not to be called while the ball is in play, unless the game shall have lasted forty-eight minutes, when time shall be called irrespective of the ball being in play. Polo has developed from the slow, pottering, dribbling game of thirty years ago into one of the most fascinating and exciting of sports both to the players and to the spectators. Of the introduction of polo into England and the prowess of individual players I shall discourse in my next chapter.

CHAPTER XLIV

HOW POLO CAME TO ENGLAND

ONE day in the spring of the year 1869 three young subalterns of the 10th Hussars at Aldershot found time hanging heavily on their hands when one of them stumbled upon an article in the *Field* which interested him. It was the account of a game played among the Manipuris, a hill-tribe on the borders of Tibet, then unknown to the bulk of Englishmen, though the name is familiar enough now by reason of the massacre of 1891, when Colonel Skene and Messrs Quinton, Grimwood, Cossins, and Melville were treacherously murdered. There can be few who do not remember the romantic escape and heroic courage of Mrs Grimwood, the wife of the murdered Resident, and the splendid gallantry of Lieutenant Grant and his handful of Gurkhas, fitly rewarded by the Victoria Cross. The description of this game moved the languid interest of the subalterns. "By Jove! it must be a goodish game. I vote we try it," said the biggest of the three, "Chicken" Hartopp, whose fame as a devil-may-care rider is still green in both the Quorn and Meath countries. So three chargers were saddled, and, with crooked sticks and a billiard-ball, they made the first attempt to play polo in England. It could scarcely be called a success, but all three saw that there were possibilities in the game if played on ponies such as the Manipuris used. The next step was the purchase of seventeen ponies of all sizes and shapes. And then the game caught on like fire among the officers of the 10th, who speedily inoculated their brothers of the 9th Lancers with their enthusiasm for the new game. The first regular match played in this country was between teams of those regiments, eight a side. The fame of this "hockey on

horseback" rapidly spread. The Blues and the Life Guards were the next to take it up. Then Captain F. Herbert, on quitting the 9th Lancers, started the first County Club in Monmouthshire. Other shires followed suit, and the game became popular with civilians, and especially with hunting men.

I made my first acquaintance with polo in 1874. I was then editing a journal of sport, in which some disparaging remarks on the game had appeared, and I was courteously invited by the Secretary of the Polo Club to come down to Hurlingham and judge for myself whether the game deserved the criticism which one of my contributors had passed upon it. I accepted the invitation, and was quite satisfied that polo was a fine, manly game, offering grand opportunities for the display of skill in horsemanship. But, compared with what it has since become, the polo of five-and-twenty years ago was a very slow game. The dribbling of that day has given place to clean, hard hitting and clever passing; there is fierce and exciting galloping where there was little more than cantering. The ponies are bigger, the players have ten times the dash and skill, and the reduction in the number of players from eight to four gives far more scope for quickness and scientific combination. Polo, as it is now played, is a splendid game to watch—far more stirring than football or hockey; and, for my part, next to a cricket match, I would rather see a polo match than anything else of the kind. Perhaps if I were not a cricket enthusiast I should place polo first of all games.

In those remote days of the seventies the Duke of Connaught was a polo-player. A pair of conspicuous players, too, were the Murriettas, who were always mounted to perfection. "Chicken" Hartopp was, despite his great weight and size, an excellent poloist, and threw himself into it with characteristic energy whilst the fit lasted. But the "Chicken" was too many-sided a man to concentrate his mind on one pastime for any length of time.

Another noted poloist of that day was the late Horace Rochford of Colgrennan, County Carlow, who, though he was 60 when he took up the game, proved himself as good on the polo-ground as he was in the hunting-field. He was

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one of the famous County Carlow team, comprising, besides himself, the well-known M.F.H. Robert Watson, his son John (the Master of the Meath), Stewart Ducket, and James Butler, who astonished the polo world by beating the crack team of the 8th Hussars by seven goals to none.

“Bill” Beresford was a capital player in his day, and so were three brother officers of his in the 9th Lancers—Dick Clayton, Chisholm, and “Tim” Butson, now, alas! all gone over to the majority. Clayton was killed at Delhi in 1877 whilst playing the game he loved so well, whilst Chisholm and Butson both died soldiers’ deaths in the Afghanistan campaign.

The finest team of poloists of the new school was the Sussex quartette, Frank Mildmay, M.P. for Totnes, and the three brothers Peat. Mildmay, considering his apparently slight physique, was as hard a hitter as one could wish to see, and his mounts were always A1. Never was there a lovelier pony than his Picquet, which he sold to Mr Whitney of New York for £450. The three brothers Peat are generally admitted to have been the most brilliant exponents of the game ever seen in England; and with their stud of ponies, trained to perfection by themselves, they would have been hard to match or to beat the wide world over. There was no “forward” who could dodge and twist through his horsemen like “Johnnie” Peat, and when he got a fair drive at the ball it “went.” His elder brother, Arthur, was as quick and clever a “back” as the other a “forward,” and Alfred “the Boy,” as good as either at “half-back.” All three had wonderful eyes for the ball, and were dead on it no matter how terrific the pace. This famous team was never beaten, and won the County Challenge Cup five years in succession.

Ireland could show the equal of any player in the three kingdoms in John Watson, the popular master of the Meath Hounds. There is no better judge of a horse or a pony, and his skill in training is equal to his judgment in buying. As captain he has led the famous “Freebooters” to victory in many a hard-fought fight in both hemispheres—for the States knew his prowess as well as the old country.

Long-limbed and muscular, he was an ideal player, and when he has had such a marvel in ponies as "Fritz" under him, the feats he performed were astounding.

T. S. Kennedy's famous exploit at Hurlingham in the *Civilians v. Military* match some years ago must not be forgotten. He was riding his celebrated pony, Mickey Free. "Charging for the ball" was then the fashion. Kennedy got first to the ball in mid-ground, and, with one drive, sent it right up to the "mouth" of the goal—a distance of 160 yards,—passed all his opponents, and gently tipped it through. That was a great achievement, but he repeated the performance the moment they changed ends—thus scoring two goals inside five minutes with practically two strokes. The redoubtable Mickey Free, by the way, was bought out of a Brighton tradesman's cart.

The cavalry have not by any means monopolised the honours of polo. Infantry regiments like the 5th Fusiliers, the 60th Rifles, the 23rd Welsh Fusiliers, the 25th King's Own Borderers, and the 33rd, have turned out excellent teams. Captain de Lisle of the Durham Light Infantry, when he was not actually playing the game on pony-back is said to have sat on a wooden horse for hours, hitting balls as they were thrown at him, and practising every kind of stroke.

For the following I am indebted to Mr J. Moray Brown:—

In a match in which the 17th Lancers took part, during a scrimmage close to goal, no one could find the ball. Some one said a goal had been hit, but search for the ball beyond the goal-line proved unavailing. Then the secret came out. The ball was found attached to the tail of Lord Ava's pony, an Arab. The hairs of his long tail had become entangled in a splinter of the ball, and so held it tightly—a somewhat complex case for an umpire to decide. I have heard of a ball being hit right up under a pony's tail, and being held there for a moment by the animal suddenly tucking his tail down. I have also heard of a player getting a fall and sitting on the ball, but the case of a pony carrying the ball about with him unobserved is exceptionally quaint.

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I have been told, however, of a pony in the Argentine stepping on a ball, which stuck to his hoof, and was so carried over the goal-line and between the posts. The incident gave rise to much discussion as to whether a goal could be claimed, the final decision being that it could not.

CHAPTER XLV

THE BOARD OF GREEN CLOTH

SIXTY or seventy years ago the best billiard player in the Army was a gallant officer, whom I will call Colonel Morice. This distinguished amateur had so long been an object of admiration in garrison towns at home and abroad that he fondly imagined his fame to be world-wide. One day he walked into a billiard-room in the Quadrant, and found a gentleman of Transatlantic origin knocking the balls about. "Sir," said the Colonel in a patronising tone of voice, "I like your style." "Wal," said the Yankee, in an off-hand sort of way, "you're not the first man who has said that." "Suppose," added the Colonel, "we have a game. What points shall I give you?" "Guess I'll play you for anything you like without points." "Sir," said the Colonel stiffly, "perhaps you are not aware that my name is Morice—Colonel Morice of the 45th." He was rather taken aback when the American coolly replied, "Wal, Colonel, that name presents no idea to me of your play." "Very good, sir," said the Colonel, with a pitying smile, "then I will play you even." But before ten strokes had been played the Colonel found, to his utter astonishment, that he had met a man who was more than his match; and when the Yankee's score was 100, and the marker called "Game," the Colonel had only made 17. Turning round as he made the winning stroke, the stranger said, "You had the goodness, sir, to tell me that your name was Morice, which I said presented no idea to me; my name is *Jonathan Kentfield*, which I guess will present some idea to you."

Alas for the transitoriness of human fame! I fear that the august name of Jonathan Kentfield will not "present"

any striking idea to the billiard players of this generation. In no game of skill has professional proficiency made such tremendous strides during the last half-century as in billiards. There is as wide a gap between the best break of Jonathan Kentfield on the old wooden, list-cushioned tables, as between the best pace of the crack Shrewsbury mail-coach in 1824 and the "Flying Scotchman" express of the present year.

Kentfield came over to England about the year 1818, and soon took his place in the front rank, till he surpassed all his rivals and stood absolutely alone. His rooms at Brighton were the most popular in the Kingdom. The following, written in 1848, reads curiously after some of our modern billiard feats:—"When playing the winning game 21 up, Kentfield gave his opponent 18 points, and won 16 games following. In playing the winning and losing game 24 up, he won 10 games, his adversary never scoring. Kentfield doubled the red ball over one of the corner baulk pockets, leaving his own ball under the side cushion. His opponent played to drop the red into the corner pocket; failed, and left a cannon, and the games were all made off the balls. In playing the non-cushion game, 16 up, he screwed into the corner pocket off the red, and won in that manner 16 games, his opponent not having a stroke. He and another player of considerable eminence completed 30 games of 24 up within the hour. Forty-seven games of 100 up were also played in eight hours and a half. The biggest break made by Kentfield was 196."

The leather-tipped cue was only introduced in 1807, and "side" was in its infancy when Jonathan Kentfield appeared upon the scene. The credit of this latter discovery belongs to a marker, named Carr, engaged at the rooms of Mr Bartley of Bath. Carr declared that the wonderful strokes he made were due to a peculiar "twisting chalk" which he had compounded, and he actually sold hundreds of little pill-boxes full of powdered chalk, to credulous customers at five shillings a box. The celebrated "Dutch Baron" was really a marker from Hamburg and was a "dab" at the spot-stroke when seven consecutive winning hazards were considered a marvellous feat. As the ordinary game

was 16 to 24 up, the man who could make seven consecutive spot-strokes was a dangerous antagonist. Imagine, then, the general astonishment when Kentfield made 57 such strokes in succession.

From 1824 to 1845 Jonathan Kentfield was as far ahead of his contemporaries as any billiard player has ever been. It was in 1825 that Pea-Green Hayne made his foolish match between Kentfield and a clever adventurer named Carney or Kearney. The Pea-Green Squire, with his satellites—the fighting men, Tom Cannon and White-headed Bob—had come down to Brighton; and one morning when Mr Hayne was breakfasting at Niven's, after a long night of cards and liquor, this plausible Irish adventurer entrapped the verdant Squire into making two absurd matches. The first was that Mr Hayne would not find a player who could give Mr Carney 70 points out of 100 at billiards. The second was that he could not find a man who would beat Mr C. at fair "collar and elbow wrestling." In each case the stakes were to be £100, with a bet of 100 guineas, play or pay. The Squire chose Kentfield to represent him in the billiard match, and Tom Cannon in the wrestling. Jonathan chose his own table, and did his level best; but it was a forlorn hope, for every one but the Pea-Green victim knew that Carney was the best amateur billiard player in the three kingdoms. Jonathan crept up to 67, but his opponent won by 33 points in 18 minutes. And Squire Hayne lost the other match; for Cannon, powerful as he was, could not compete with Mr Carney at the very peculiar mode of wrestling which the latter had artfully selected. So the Pea-Green one had to part with £400.

Up to 1846 Jonathan Kentfield reigned supreme without a rival. Then faint rumours arose of a young phenomenon in the North, John Roberts by name. Billiard players told how the new wonder had scored 208 at a single break! How, when playing against a well-known performer, the latter, being 96 to love, ran a coup, Roberts being in hand, and the red spotted. How this marvellous youth screwed into the top corner pocket, made 102 off the red, and won the game. For a time these wondrous tales did not shake

the belief of the Brighton folks in *their* champion. Jonathan was regarded, and had come to regard himself, as king in the world of billiards, and smiled with contempt at the fabulous tales of this young North-countryman's prowess with the cue. But the fame of the new star spread, and even Brighton people began to hint that Kentfield must look to his laurels.

At last Roberts resolved to go down to Brighton to see his veteran rival, and tells the story himself:—

“My first meeting with Kentfield was in 1849, at Brighton, where John Pook was at that time his manager. I told Kentfield I was admitted to be the best player in Lancashire, and had come to find out if he could show me anything. He inquired if I wanted a lesson. I told him I did not, and asked how many in 100 would be a fair allowance from a player on his own table to a stranger of equal skill. He replied 15. I told him I thought 20 would be nearer the mark, but I was content to try at evens. He said, ‘If you play me it must be for money.’ On which I pulled out a £100 note, and told him I would play him 10 games of 100 up, for £10 a game. He laughed and said I was rather hasty, and eventually we commenced a friendly 100 game on level terms. He had the best of the breaks, and won by 40. In the second game I pulled out a few North-country shots, and won by 30; but he secured the third game. Then he put down his cue and asked if I was satisfied he could beat me. I said, ‘No; on the contrary, if you can't play better than that, I can give you 20 in 100 easily.’ He replied, ‘Well, if you want to play me you must put down a big stake.’ I asked how much, and he answered £1000. I said, ‘Do you mean £1000 a side?’ Upon which he told me he thought I was a straightforward fellow, and he would see what could be done. He then sent Pook back to me, and I explained to him how things stood. He replied, ‘You may as well go back to Lancashire; you won't get a match on with the governor.’ I tried afterwards to arrange terms, but he would never meet me. He played a very artistic game, but possessed little power of cue. He depended on slow twists and fancy screws, and rarely attempted a forcing

hazard. He gave misses whenever they were practicable, and never departed from the strict game."

Jonathan was wise not to risk his reputation by a match with Roberts, for he had passed his prime; though he would have been very indignant had any one suggested that he was not as good as ever. There was much spilling of ink over the merits of the two great masters of the cue; but, after a while, Kentfield's records were so completely wiped out that he retired from the scene, eclipsed by the new luminary. I do not remember the year of his death; but he had fallen into obscurity for a long time before he shuffled off this mortal coil.

I remember the sensation created by old John Roberts's break of 246 at Saville House, and I little dreamed that I should live to see the day when *ten times* that amount would be made off the balls. I recall, too, the consternation which his defeat by young William Cook caused among admirers of old John Roberts. For four years the new wonder held his own, beating young John Roberts and Joe Bennett—the former three times in succession. Then at last in 1875 young John turned the tables on his conqueror and amply avenged the defeats of himself and his father. For nearly twenty years John Roberts the younger was far above all his contemporaries and was recognised as the finest exponent of the game ever seen. The gap between him and the next in merit was so great that at one time there was no one to whom he could not concede half the game.

Among the lesser lights of bygone days I recall "Billy" Dufton, whose long "jennies" into the top pockets used to excite my admiration. He had the honour of being tutor to our present Sovereign, who still plays a very good game.

Dufton was a great friend of Harry Grimshaw the jockey, and I have often seen them together in the billiard room of the "Birdbolt" at Cambridge, in my time a favourite haunt of the undergraduate. It was from the "Birdbolt" that Harry Grimshaw started on his fatal drive to Newmarket, when he was thrown out of his dog-cart and killed on the spot. I saw him playing billiards with Dufton an hour before his tragic death.

Pool was in great vogue in my 'Varsity days. An Australian at Trinity told me that he made from £150 to £200 a year at pool; and there was a Johnian who was known as the "tizzy Sweeper." I always thought public pool "low form," and the men who played regularly had something of the stamp of the billiard sharper.

A good many men have been ruined by their infatuation for billiards, and no one can deny its dangerous fascination. The most extraordinary instance I ever heard of was that of an amateur who some eighty years ago devoted himself entirely to the game. His name was Andrews. He was a gentleman of ample private means, but he lived only for billiards; his mind was a blank for any other idea. The sums for which Andrews played were very large, but, though his winnings were immense, he really cared little for the filthy lucre—love of the game was paramount with him, and he was never guilty of sharp practice.

One night he won upwards of £1000 off a colonel in the Guards who fancied himself very much with the cue. The loser made an appointment to go with him next day to the City to sell out stock for the amount due. They took a hackney-coach, and at starting tossed which should pay the fare. Andrews lost; then offered to toss for a sovereign, lost again, grew excited, tossed for ten, then twenty, then fifty, then double or quits, till he had lost every penny he had won at billiards the night before. Then the colonel put his head out and told the cabman to drive them back to the West End. This was not by any means an isolated instance of Andrews' bad luck. What he won at billiards he invariably lost at dice or cards, until he was stripped of every shilling he possessed, except a small annuity which just sufficed to save him from beggary.

Peall's record "all in" break of 3304 was made in 1890; John Roberts' spot-barred record of 1892, in 1894; but as far back as 1858 there were "tall" exploits with the cue in America which threw all British records into the shade. In 1858 John W. Hester, in a match with Henry Prieto, ran out with an unfinished break of two thousand one hundred and fifty-seven, including seven hundred and nineteen consecutive cannons. The American game,

of course, differs from the English ; and I believe that a cannon counted three points if made without touching the cushion, and two if made off the cushion. If this be so, those 719 cannons of Mr Hester must have been all "nursery" cannons.

Rather a large order that ! But, bless you ! that score was not long allowed to remain unbeaten in such a go-ahead country as the States. In the *New York Spirit of the Times* for 22nd May 1858 I find the following from the pen of the editor, George Wilkes, whom I knew personally :—

"A week or two ago Mr John W. Hester's great break was beaten 147 points by Mr W. M. Ormsby, of Brooklyn, Long Island. He nursed the balls so skilfully that he marked two thousand three hundred and four points by seven hundred and sixty-eight consecutive caroms (cannons) without touching a cushion ! The time occupied was nearly two hours. This might well be doubted were its correctness not attested by thirteen spectators, all of whom are prominent citizens of Brooklyn."

After that I will not attempt to give any more billiard records—I have no further use for them.

CHAPTER XLVI

BLIND SPORTSMEN

WHEN Lord Kitchener arrived in England after his successful campaign against the Mahdi there was a report, which happily proved to be untrue, that he was threatened with total blindness; and it is said that he received a remarkable letter from a blind clergyman bidding him be of good cheer, and enumerating the various occupations in which he (the writer) was able to take an active part despite his entire loss of sight. This story brought to my mind some extraordinary cases of blind sportsmen, who, notwithstanding their affliction, were able to indulge freely in their favourite sports.

I once heard the late Professor Fawcett, who, as a young man, had the sight of both eyes destroyed by shots from his father's gun, say that he knew certain parts of the river Itchen so well that, if told where he was, he could throw a fly with unerring accuracy into a pool where he knew a trout lay. And so quick was his ear that when a fish rose he could tell by the splash exactly where to throw his fly. I have often seen him at Cambridge rowing in the "Ancient Mariners Eight" with brother Dons of aquatic tastes, and keeping time with the best of them. I have seen him skating too, but then he always had a companion to pilot him.

Probably most Yorkshiremen are familiar with the name of John Metcalf—"Blind Jack of Knaresborough." Metcalf was attacked by smallpox at the age of six and lost his eyesight. Yet he was an enthusiastic lover of coursing, steeplechasing, and hunting. He rode wonderfully straight to hounds, guided by his acute sense of hearing and the occasional warnings of a friend who kept near him. But

his greatest feat in the saddle was his match with another Yorkshire sportsman, three miles on the flat, owners up, for 100 guineas a side. Metcalf had a small stud of his own at this time. The betting was 20 to 1 against him, because it was thought the shape of the course,—a circular one—destroyed his chance. There were posts at intervals, and at each post Metcalf stationed a man with a bell. The sound of the bells guided him and enabled him to keep the course, and he rode in an easy winner.

Blind Jack was also a remarkable runner, as the following anecdote will prove. The week before the York Spring Meeting, Colonel Mellish, who was staying at the Dragon Hotel, Harrogate, met a Captain Stancliffe, whose groom was a celebrated runner. Metcalf happening to be at the Dragon tap, and hearing some talk about the groom's powers as a pedestrian, said he would run him to Knaresborough Churchyard gate. Mellish (who had often heard of Blind Jack) there and then backed Metcalf for £50 against Captain Stancliffe's groom. The men soon got ready, the groom in running costume; but Metcalf made no preparations. A tall, heavily-built man, with a slouching walk, it looked as though the odds were 100 to 1 against him, even if he had not been blind. They started, Eyes taking the lead, No Eyes keeping close behind. All at once Metcalf was seen to deviate to the right, and most of the people, thinking that it was all over, turned back. The groom kept on straight for the bridge over the Swale, while Metcalf made for the river, into which he plunged clothes and all, and, swimming across, reached the goal long before his opponent. The way he had taken was three-quarters of a mile shorter.

Jack Metcalf was also a capital hand at bowls. He managed in this way. A friend and confederate was stationed close to the jack, and another midway. They kept up a constant conversation, and from the sound of their voices he guessed the distance. His dexterity at cards, too, was wonderful. But perhaps his most extraordinary achievements were as a boxer. He was a man of magnificent physique, 6 ft. 2 ins. in height, and very finely made. His want of sight might well have been

thought a fatal bar to his ever attaining pugilistic laurels. Yet it was not so, and among other feats with his fists, he fairly thrashed in six hard-fought rounds, a man as big as himself, and reckoned the champion of the neighbourhood.

Metcalf was a soldier too, and served all through the campaign of 1745 against the Jacobite Pretender, playing the fiddle at the head of his company after the fashion of the Highland pipers. On his return from the wars he became a trader. In 1751 he started the first stage-coach or "stage-wagon," as they called it then, between York and Knaresborough, driving it himself, twice a week in summer and once in winter. Eventually he became a contractor for road-making, and made his fame and fortune, for his engineering skill was remarkable. He died at Spofforth, near Wetherby, on 27th April 1810, in the ninety-fourth year of his age.

Jack Metcalf's exploits, however, were rivalled by a Scotsman named M'Gilvray, who, despite his blindness, was a first-rate jockey and an excellent judge of horses. When examining a horse he was guided entirely by feeling, but so well did he know the points of a horse that he never made a mistake.

Mr Birnie, an owner of racehorses and a coach proprietor in the south of Scotland, picked up a fine bargain at Edinburgh Hallow Fair. On his way home he put up at the Blackshiels Inn, Fala, kept by M'Gilvray's father. Mr Birnie, while sitting at his dinner, asked Willie M'Gilvray to examine his purchase. In half an hour or so young M'Gilvray returned, and said the horse was everything that could be wished for had he been able to see with both eyes. "How do you know he does not see with both eyes?" the owner asked. "I have passed my hand over and over the right side of his head," was the reply, "and his eyelids never flinch, but when I do so on the other side they close instantly." The horse was really blind on the right side, and the blind jockey had discovered an imperfection which the purchaser, a first-rate judge, had failed to detect.

As a jockey, M'Gilvray was guided, when he rode a race, by his knowledge of two or three race-courses, and, as

he never went upon unknown ground, his lack of sight did not appear to be much detriment. The blind man naturally trusted much to his acute sense of hearing, which frequently informed him when his opponent's horse had shot his bolt by the tune his pipes were playing.

A less known but scarcely less remarkable man used to sell race-cards at Stamford Races. His name was Andrews, and he was generally known as "Blind Tommy." On the 18th of February 1850 he rode a *blind* horse from Stamford at 8 a.m., arrived at the White Horse, Spalding, at 12.30, started for his return journey at 2.30 p.m., and reached Stamford at 7.30 p.m.—the whole journey being accomplished without a guide.

On the 12th of March 1856 he rode a blind horse from the Royal Hotel, Peterborough, to the White Hart, Wisbech. He started from Peterborough at 10 a.m., went through Thorney, and reached Wisbech at 4.10 p.m., left Wisbech next day at 1.30 p.m., and arrived at Peterborough at 6 p.m.—as before, without a guide.

Six years later, in May 1862, this blind man rode a donkey from Wisbech through Thorney and Thurlby, a distance of 30 miles, all through the Fen country, with dykes on either side of the road, in twelve hours, without a guide. Andrews was a crack sprint-runner too, and beat the well-known professional George Maxey in a hundred yards race on the Thorpe and Peterborough road for a stake of £25 a side on the 13th of August 1850.

Lieutenant James Holman, the blind traveller who lost his sight at the age of five-and-twenty, was a keen sportsman with both rod and gun. It is said that his hearing was so exact and acute that when a covey of partridges or a pheasant got up he would three times out of five down his bird. This is the only instance I know of a blind man attempting to shoot. Lieutenant Holman travelled twice round the world, and published the narrative of these expeditions, besides a graphic account of his travels through Russia and Siberia. It is related that on one occasion he was attacked by a polar bear, which he shot, though he had nothing but his ear to guide his aim. But this can only be regarded as a piece of sheer luck. The mere fact,

however, of a blind man having the nerve to carry a gun is remarkable. Most, if not all, of his journeys were exploring expeditions in regions little known, and consequently he had to rough it in a fashion which might well have tested the powers and resources of a man with perfect sight. His skill as a fisherman I do not take much account of, because it was not like Professor Fawcett's fly-fishing; but his shooting feats, I must confess, move me to unbounded astonishment.

The late Mr Kavanagh, long a well-known member of the House of Commons, though not blind, suffered from physical disabilities which might have been thought more fatal to the enjoyment of sport than the loss of sight. He had neither arms nor legs, yet he hunted and shot and drove, and in all these was an adept. He was fastened on horse-back in a kind of basket arrangement, and guided his horse partly with his teeth and partly by hooks attached to the stumps which reached some six inches from each shoulder. In shooting, a wooden arm was attached to the left stump, which gave him a rest for his gun.

Sir William Maxwell of Monreith, the owner of Filho da Puta, winner of the St Leger of 1815, who lost his arm in the Peninsular War, was one of the best game-shots of his day, and was another instance of a plucky sportsman's determination not to be deterred by physical disability from pursuing his favourite sport.

CHAPTER XLVII

SPORTSMEN OF THE BENCH AND BAR

BARON BRAMPTON, better known as Sir Henry Hawkins, was almost as familiar a figure at Newmarket as in the Law Courts, and no end of stories were told of his efforts to combine the duties of a judge with the pleasures of a sportsman. Many of these stories, no doubt, were apocryphal, but the publication of Sir Henry's racy *Reminiscences* proves how keen a lover of sport he was, and how varied were his experiences. The Prize Ring shared with the Turf his early patronage, and he has many a good story of great fights he had seen—indeed, he was once mistaken for an eminent pugilist, and by his bold “bluff” in assuming the character extricated himself from a very tight place. But it was on the race-course that he was most at home. In his love of the Turf he had one sympathetic brother on the Bench in the person of the late Lord Chief Justice—Lord Russell of Killowen, who, as Sir Charles Russell, was the foremost advocate of his day. His knowledge of racing stood him in good stead in the *cause célèbre* of Wood *v.* Cox, when, by his masterly conduct of the case, he secured a moral victory for the eccentric proprietor of the *Licensed Victuallers' Gazette*.

But neither Lord Brampton nor Lord Russell could hold a candle to Baron Martin, who, in his later days, openly expressed his regret that he had not abandoned the Bar for the Turf.

Baron Martin was the only judge who owned racehorses. It is true that his name was never registered as an owner, but it was well known that the Baron had a half-share in several horses which ran under the name and colours of Harry Hill, the famous bookmaker. Rogerthorpe was the

best horse in which Baron Martin had an interest. He was a favourite for the Derby, but was not placed. He, however, won the Goodwood Cup of 1856, and that trophy ornamented the Baron's sideboard and was one of his most treasured possessions.

The Turf of to-day is far less interesting than that with which Baron Martin made acquaintance when William IV. was still on the throne. Such characters as Sir Charles Monk, Parson Harvey, James Hirst, Michael Brunton, Mark Plews, Dick Stockdale, Bill Scott, and many more have vanished, and the world of sport is the poorer by their loss, for they infused into it that individual variety which is the spice of life.

From 1832 to 1850, when he was appointed a Baron of the Exchequer, Mr Martin had many opportunities of attending races, though, like many other lovers of the sport, he was fonder of watching horses at exercise and of seeing them stripped in the stable than of frequenting race-meetings.

On Sundays during the assize week in York he had a post-chaise ready at daybreak, in which, often accompanied by his old friend Mr James Stuart Wortley, he drove off to Malton, to visit John Scott's stables at Whitewall. His inquiries about every detail of racing descended to the minutest particulars, and few facts once committed to memory ever escaped him. The time when all this racing knowledge was to be turned to account by Mr Martin (who took silk in 1843) was rapidly approaching.

The first case which brought him into prominence was the famous Bloomsbury Protest in 1839. Mr Ridsdale's slashing colt had won the Ascot Derby Stakes in the previous season, but Lord Lichfield had protested against the payment of the stakes on the ground that the horse had been misdescribed. Cresswell (afterwards Sir Cresswell Cresswell, the first President of the Divorce Court) and Martin were counsel for Mr Ridsdale, the plaintiff, but the conduct of the case was left entirely in Martin's hands, and he secured a brilliantly won verdict for his client.

Running Rein came in first for the Derby of 1844, but was objected to on the ground that he was really a four-year-

old named Maccabeus. Martin was one of the counsel for Colonel Peel who, as owner of the second horse Orlando, claimed the stakes. His leader was Page-Wood (afterwards Lord Hatherley), a gentle, high-minded man, and a skilful advocate, but with no more knowledge of the Turf and its surroundings than a cow has of the differential calculus. He wisely left the case to his junior, who pulled his client through triumphantly and against the machinations of the most infamous confederacy of swindlers that ever blackened the annals of horse-racing.

Though he preferred training-stables to the race-course, Baron Martin was not infrequently seen at race-meetings. A friend, meeting him in the Bois de Boulogne, at the Sunday races, said :

"It would not do for you, Baron, to be seen in England like this on the Sabbath day."

"Well," said the judge, "what would you have me do when they only race here on Sundays?"

When judge on the Western Circuit, he was invited with several members of the Bar to dine with the Dean of Winchester, whom he had never met. A few days after, a friend asked the Dean what he thought of Baron Martin.

"Well," was the reply, "he does not appear to be a man of enlarged information. He had never heard of William of Wykeham, and wanted to know who he was."

Martin was asked by some one what he thought of the Dean.

"Why," said he, "I can't say I think much of him. He seems very deficient in general knowledge; he didn't know who John Day was, and has never heard of Danebury, though he has been years in Winchester."

Baron Martin's knowledge of matters outside the Turf and the Law was certainly limited. Only once was he induced to see a play of Shakespeare's. The play was *Measure for Measure*, and his feelings as a judge were so outraged by the atrociously bad law in the play that he entertained the greatest contempt for Shakespeare ever afterwards.

Baron Martin had an almost rabid aversion to the "prophets" who profess to give weak-minded men "the straight tip." When a prophet came before the Baron, he

let him know in pretty strong language what he thought of him. On one occasion, after he had become deaf, he was trying a racing case that he revelled in. One of the counsel was named Stammers, a solemn, sententious person, who seldom made a speech without quoting passages from Scripture. In addressing the jury, he had got as far as "the prophet says," when the judge interposed.

"Don't trouble the jury, Mr Stammers, about the prophets; there is not one of them who would not sell his father for sixpennyworth of half-pence."

"But, my lord," said Stammers in a subdued tone, "I was about to quote the prophet Jeremiah."

"Don't tell me," said the Baron; "I have no doubt your friend Mr Myers is just as bad as the rest of them."

Like Mr Justice Hawkins, Baron Martin was made an honorary member of the Jockey Club—a compliment which he highly appreciated. On the Bench the reputation of the two was similar. Both were *strong* judges. Martin had a bluff, blunt manner without the caustic humour of Hawkins; but he was, perhaps, even a greater favourite with the Bar and the public.

With the three notable exceptions I have named, the Bench has been singularly lacking in sportsmen. Baron Alderson, indeed, has been credited with horsy tastes on the strength of a visit to John Scott's famous training establishment at Whitewall. But he had no real sympathy with the Turf. Lord Eldon, too, tried to pass as a sportsman; but his attempts were futile and ignominious.

Eldon (the "Jock" Scott of that romantic runaway match with Bessie Surtees) was a bad rider and a worse whip. Even William Henry Scott, that pattern of a dutiful son, used to laugh at the Chancellor's ignorance of horse-flesh. Lord Campbell tells the following story of Eldon and his favourite boy. They were walking together in Piccadilly when a gentleman, driving past them in a cabriolet (with a tiger behind), took off his hat and made a low bow. "Who is that," said Lord Eldon, "who treats me with respect now that I am nobody?" "Why, sir," said William Henry, "that is Sir John Campbell, the Whig Solicitor-General." "I wonder what they would have said of me,"

cried the ex-Chancellor, "if I had driven a cabriolet when I was Solicitor-General?" "They would have said," replied William Henry, "'There goes the greatest *lawyer* and the worst *whip* in England.'"

Lord Eldon was quite aware of his own limitations. Clumsy and inefficient in all field-sports, he used to laugh at his own deficiencies. This good-humour was the more creditable as he enjoyed playing the part of a country squire, and took great pains to qualify himself to kill the game which he preserved at considerable cost. As long as he could relish bodily exercise he carried a gun; but he never rode to hounds after reaching years of sound discretion.

Lord Chief Justice Cockburn was fond of yachting and shooting, and was by no means a bad shot.

I remember a story in which both the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice, then Sir Alexander Cockburn, figured. The latter took a house and some shooting in the neighbourhood of Lingfield in Sussex, and among his guests at one of his shooting parties were Lord Westbury and his son, Dick Bethell. Cockburn had never seen either of them shoot, but had heard Westbury telling extraordinary stories of his success at the covert side.

After the first beat Cockburn observed the two members of the Bethell family shooting rather wildly, and as, besides the pheasants, there was a good deal of ground-game in the covert, he told his head keeper to post the pair close together.

Presently, from the spot where Lord Westbury and his son had been posted, a yell of pain was heard, and it was found that the keeper had been shot in the leg. Cockburn made his appearance from quite another part of the wood; but Lord Westbury at once began to accuse his host and to read him a lecture as to how careful one should be, and as to the folly and danger of commencing field-sports late in life. As for himself, he explained, he had been educated to them from boyhood.

The Lord Chief Justice was a great deal too polite a host to make any reply. When, however, the party were proceeding to a neighbouring spinney—Lord Westbury

and his son walking together behind—Cockburn, making a sign over his shoulder towards the two who were following, said, “Which of them shot you, Bacup?” “Which, Sir Alexander?” replied the keeper. “*Both*, damn ’em!”

Chief Baron Pollock was a first rate runner, jumper, and boxer; he was probably the most active man for his years that ever graced the Bench. When he was made chief Baron of the Exchequer in 1844, being then in his sixty-second year, he offered to run, walk, or box with any man twenty years his junior, and I am sure there was no man of forty at the Bar who could have beaten him. To the very last he prided himself on his athletic vigour, and the following story is told of him. When he was close upon eighty an officious friend urged upon him the advisability of resigning on account of his advancing years and general infirmities. When the gentleman had finished the Chief Baron rose and said, in his own peculiar, sarcastic manner:

“Oh! you think it is about time I gave up work, do you? Got too old and stiff, you fancy? Come here!”

The too candid friend stood up, and the Chief Baron, skipping up to him with all the nimbleness of a lad in his teens, said:

“Will you dance with me? Imagine yourself a charming lady, and abandon yourself to the ravishing waltz.”

“Thank you; I don’t dance,” replied the other coldly.

“Dear me! you don’t dance? Well, but you can box, can’t you?”

“I could when I was a young man.”

“But surely you haven’t forgotten—come, let us have a spar.”

And with that the Chief Baron began to frame up to his officious friend, and let out right and left. He kept on hitting with bewildering quickness and considerable sting, till a smart left-hander on the nose drew blood from that organ and tears from both eyes. This was more than the candid friend had bargained for from the man whose decrepitude he had been insisting on; he turned and fled from the room. After that, I need hardly say that Chief Baron Pollock had no more visits from friends suggesting

his retirement. He retired at 84, after two-and-twenty years on the Bench, and it was not till four years later that he died, hale and vigorous to the last.

Among the present ornaments of the judicial Bench, Sir Thomas Townsend Bucknill is the most pronounced lover of sport. "Tommy Bucknill," as his friends call him, has always been a keen sportsman. In his younger days he was one of the cleverest light-weight boxers I have ever met among amateurs—the cleverest, I think, was the late Thomas Brett, of the Chancery Bar, whose learned *Commentaries* will long keep his memory green in both branches of his profession. "Tom" Brett was as eccentric as he was brilliant, and his eccentricity was unfortunately a bar to his success. He was a good all-round athlete, but boxing was his *forte*, and I have often accompanied him in our "salad days" to the Blue Anchor in Shoreditch, where he would put on the gloves against all comers—professional or amateur—and so well did he acquit himself against the pro.'s that I have often heard derisive cries of "Which is the hama-toor?" from the critical spectators. Brett was standing counsel to the "Fancy," and I have known such eminent ornaments of the Prize Ring as Jem Mace and Joe Goss express the profoundest reverence for his legal acumen.

Another mighty athlete of those days was Richard Ouseley Blake Lane, now K.C. and one of the West London Police Magistrates. He, too, was a fine boxer, a heavy-weight standing considerably over six feet, remarkably powerful, and singularly active for his size. Like Tom Brett, he was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and both of them afforded signal proof that men of muscle may also be men of brains.

But "Tommy"—I beg his lordship's pardon, I mean Mr Justice Bucknill, was what neither of these fine boxers could ever claim to be: he was a first-rate horseman, and at one time promised to take high rank among the gentlemen riders of England both on the flat and across country. But for a serious affection of the eyes, which for many anxious months threatened to deprive him altogether of sight, he would probably have made a considerable name

for himself as a jockey. There is a story that he rode and won a steeplechase when he was only a boy of ten. He still retains his light hands and a good seat, as all who have seen him riding to hounds can testify. A few seasons ago he had a bad fall in the hunting-field, but he has, I am glad to say, recovered from the effects, and will, I hope, for many a long day show the world that a man may have passed sixty and be a judge without losing his love of sport or his power to enjoy it.

The present Lord Chief Justice of England, Lord Alverstone, was a famous runner in his 'Varsity days. Cambridge knew that she was sure of the Two Mile Race when Dick Webster of Trinity was her representative. He was a fair rifle-shot too; I have shot with him at the Cherry Hinton Butts at Cambridge, and seen him pile up a very creditable score at the short ranges. Lord Alverstone also takes a keen interest in cricket, and is President of the Surrey Cricket Club.

Another eminent member of the Bar who was a noted sportsman in his early days is Mr Thomas Milvain, K.C., leader of the Northern Circuit. "Tom" Milvain had a big reputation as a boxer and hurdle-racer when he was up at Trinity Hall, and he was a good quarter-miler to boot. Trained and fit, he looked the picture of an athlete. "Tom" was great in Town and Gown rows, as the roughs of Cambridge found to their cost. He was a heavy-weight, and a very hard hitter, but on one occasion the "Town" got the best of him.

Milvain and another man of his own college were leading a party of gownsmen down Green Street, the townsmen retreating before them, for no one was bold enough to tackle the redoubtable Tom of "The Hall." Suddenly the "Town" rallied and faced the "Gown." "We've got a chap as'll fight the best of ye!" they yelled. Milvain strode forward to meet this unknown champion. The opposing ranks opened, and six lusty roughs, with a barge-pole as battering-ram, charged straight at Tom. Before he could move, the barge-pole took him full in the pit of the stomach, doubled him up, and he fell gasping for breath and half dead. With a whoop of triumph the "Town" fled,

leaving the barge-pole behind them, whilst the "Gown" gathered round their fallen leader.

But never again did the "Town" score a point against the great bruiser, who carried off subsequently, once at least, if not twice, the Amateur Heavy-weight Championship of England.

CHAPTER XLVIII

A GOSSIP ON HUNTING MEN

I DO not suppose that William Somervile, the poet of "The Chace," is much read nowadays, though, doubtless, his poems lie among the neglected classics in the libraries of most country houses. Yet he can lay better claim than any other bard to the title of "Laureate of the Hunting-field," and he was a royal good sportsman to boot. "A squire, well born and six foot high," is his own description of himself to his brother poet, Allan Ramsay; and among the squires of his native Warwickshire he held a foremost place. For his estates brought him in £1500 a year—a rental equivalent to at least £4000 in the present day. A jovial soul he was, too, with a heart as big as his body, generous to a fault, and free-handed with his money. William Somervile, like many good sportsmen of the same type, ran through his patrimony before he was forty. He died in 1742, and was buried at Wotton, near Henley-in-Arden.

No one has depicted with more animation and spirit than Somervile the opening of the hunting season; and there are at any rate three lines of his which are familiar to all educated sportsmen, if only through Mr Jorrocks's emendation:—

"My hoarse-sounding Horn
Invites thee to the Chace, the Sport of Kings;
Image of War, without its Guilt."

"The sport of kings" is nowadays more often applied to the Turf, in the absence of Royalty from the hunting-field. English statesmen, too, no longer ride to hounds as they once did. Golf seems to have more charms for Ministers than hunting. Time was when Premiers and

Secretaries of State were figures as familiar at a meet of hounds as at a meeting of the Cabinet. Sir Robert Walpole, the Duke of Grafton, Lord Althorp, Lord Palmerston, Earl Granville, were all hard riders to hounds, and loved no sport better than the chase. Mr Gladstone, in his earlier days, was to be seen mounted on his old white mare, galloping after hounds with his friend and Parliamentary patron, the Duke of Newcastle. And I have met those who remember the "Grand Old Man" at a still earlier period of his career, in Berwickshire, keeping close up to Willie Hay of Dunse Castle during a hard run. And this, let me tell you, was no mean feat, for Willie Hay, when mounted on his famous hunter, Crafty, despite his welter-weight, was hard to beat. In fact, he nearly always led the field with Crafty under him; and after a bursting hour and twenty minutes the horse seemed as fit as his master, for both were thoroughbred. Willie, to distinguish him from others of his numerous clan, was known as "Hay of Drumelzier." He came of Tweeddale blood on his mother's side, and there was a touch of the ancestral reiver about him. He was present at Waterloo as a spectator, like the Duke of Richmond; but tradition has it that, unable to control himself at the sound of battle, he dashed incontinently into the fray and rode right through one of the cavalry charges unhurt—more fortunate than his younger brother, an officer in a Highland regiment, who was slain on the slopes of Mont St Jean.

The late Earl of Wemyss, then Lord Elcho, was another Scotsman who had a reputation for dare-devil riding. As a youngster he had "made things hum" to such a tune that his father found it necessary to screw him up tightly. But this did not prevent him from getting a pack of hounds together in 1830. He had the misfortune to lose his huntsman at the commencement of his first season—the man broke his leg, and died from the effects of the accident—and Lord Elcho hunted the hounds himself. In this capacity he showed that he could combine with hard riding a creditable amount of Scottish canniness and caution.

In Joe Hogg, moreover, he had a capable first whip, a

man who would follow wherever the master or the hounds led. One day the fox made for a bog and crossed it, the hounds following in pursuit, while behind them came Lord Elcho and Joe Hogg. Next day someone asked, "Joe, how did you feel when you were following his lordship over the bog?" "Lord, sir," he replied, "I did expect to be swallowed fairly up alive every time my horse jumped, but nothing else could be done, for the hounds were running right into him." The bog was a mile and a half across, and the frost was just enough to make firm the driest parts, which admitted of the horses jumping from one tussock of grass to another.

Lord Saltoun, an excellent horseman, had the pluck to ride down the jagged steep of Berwick Law. He shone, too, at the festive board, where his rendering of the "Man with the Wooden Leg" and other comic songs of the day always brought down the house. He fought at Waterloo, where he distinguished himself in the defence of Hougoumont, and afterwards remained in France with the army of occupation. And thereby hangs a tale.

While in quarters at St Denis, Lord Saltoun, Lord William Lennox, Sim Fairfield, and one or two more found their beds occupied when they got to their billets in an hotel one night. A French cavalry regiment had ridden up, and the officers had taken possession of every bedroom and locked themselves in. The Britishers were by no means disposed to submit tamely to this unceremonious invasion. They held a council of war, and a bright idea suggested itself to Lord Saltoun. First, the waiter and ostler were bribed to secrecy. Then the conspirators went softly to work and changed the boots which stood outside each door. When this was done, Sim Fairfield, who could play any instrument from a jews' harp to a trombone, got hold of a trumpet and sounded the French "boot and saddle." In an instant every Frenchman was out of bed—doors were opened, boots eagerly snatched, and *then*—the band began to play! Never was heard such scrambling and swearing. Men with large feet had got hold of small boots; men with small feet found themselves lost in "jacks." They tugged and cursed, till they all got outside

and finally galloped off. Then Lord Saltoun and his brother plotters quickly took possession of the vacant beds, barricaded their doors, and slept the sleep of the just.

About four miles from Campbeltown, in the Mull of Kintyre, a lovely glen runs right up into the heart of the wooded hill-side. In the foreground, among its trim lawns, stands Saddell House; close by are the ruins of a grim old castle-keep; and one can trace the venerable avenue of stately beeches which leads to the ancient abbey where the old monks of Saddell enjoyed themselves six hundred years ago. It is a place which has a peculiar interest for sportsmen, for it was the home of John Campbell of Saddell, whose hunting songs have won for him in Scotland a reputation as great as that of Whyte-Melville or Egerton Warburton in England—a man, too, who could not only write good songs, but sing them as no one else could.

“Johnny” Campbell was a welter-weight, scaling something like sixteen stone, yet he was always in the first flight. He chose his horses more for strength than appearance, and seldom rode one over fifteen hands, but they were all short legged and well bred. When he was at Melton Mowbray in 1832 he was looked upon as the maddest of Scotsmen, because, in trying to save his horses, he would jump *into* the hedges instead of *over* them, quite regardless of the consequences to himself; for, like Assheton Smith, the Laird of Saddell did not mind how many falls he got. He was a tall, handsome man, and when dressed at night in his scarlet coat with green facings and buff breeches (the uniform of the Buccleuch Hunt) his equal would have been hard to find in the three kingdoms.

It is not often that the qualities of poet, singer, *bon vivant*, and sportsman are found combined in one personality, as they were in “Johnny” Campbell, and consequently it is not surprising that the Laird of Saddell was immensely popular, or that he was the life and soul of the convivial parties, where he would sometimes improvise a song, setting it to an air and singing it the same evening. When he was a guest at Rossie Priory, Lord Kinnaird’s Perthshire seat, in 1831, they had had a famous run with

Mr Dalzell's hounds, and, taking that for his theme, he rattled off a parody of "We have been friends together." Beginning with "We have seen a run together," he described the run throughout, and concluded with :

"By Auchter House he hied him,
 Still haunted by their cry,
 Till in Belmont Park we spied him,
 When we knew that he must die.
 Through the hedge he made one double
 As his sinking soul did droop ;
 'Twas the end of all his trouble
 When we gave the shrill *Who-whoop* !
 Oh ! now then let us rally ;
 Let us toast the joyous tally,
 And a bumper to our ally,
 The gallant John Dalzell."

But there were times when "Johnny" Campbell was not altogether a desirable companion to those who valued their lives and limbs ; for he had a strong smack of Jack Mytton's devilry in him, and did not care a rap for his own skin or that of any of his companions. One night—or rather morning—a party of four gentlemen, including "Johnny" Campbell and Sir David Baird, who had been dining at Marchmont House, started home to Dunse in a post-chaise. After passing through the park gates the post-boy got down to close them. Campbell thereupon leaned out of the window, and with a terrific "Who-oo-op awa'," set the horses off in a panic. There was an open drain in front of them, a big mound of earth to the left, and a lake to the right. What the fate of the chaise and its occupants would have been had not the post-boy, who was a particularly smart young fellow, sprinted to the horses' heads and stopped them, one shudders to conjecture. Campbell laughed heartily, and thought it was an excellent joke. Sir David, son of the hero of Seringapatam, and a dare-devil himself of a different kind, preserved a saturnine indifference ; but the other two were scared almost out of their senses. Never again would either of them trust himself in anything on wheels with Campbell of Saddell ; for, as one of them remarked, "Johnny Campbell is one of the most agreeable companions—*anywhere but in a post-chaise*"

Charlie Lamb, half-brother to Lord Eglinton, too, was another of the right sort, who could hold his own with the best on the race-course or with hounds. But Charlie had, what Lord Eglinton lacked, a dry humour, of which this anecdote of his earlier years is a sample:—

“Why don’t you send Charlie to sea?” an old friend and a right honourable old maid one day said to the Countess, his mother. “It is very bad for a young man to be idling away his time at home.”

After a short pause, Charlie, who was present, furnished the answer himself.

“Do you not think,” said he, “a stomach-pump would answer as well?”

But let me turn to England and her fox-hunters. The name of John Warde is, of course, familiar as a household word to everyone who takes the slightest interest in hunting-lore, for was he not one of the greatest among the “fathers of fox-hunting”?

There are some stories of John Warde which will, I dare say, be new to many of my readers. Richard Tattersall, the then head of the famous house, always gave a “Derby Dinner,” to which some of the most distinguished men of the day were invited. John Warde never missed this function—indeed, the festive occasion would have been nothing without him to represent fox-hunting. The pipe of port which the host and his brother Edmund laid down annually had to pay a heavy tax, for each man had to drink “John Warde and the Noble Science” in a silver fox’s-head which held nearly a pint and admitted of no heel-taps. None stood the ordeal better than “glorious John” himself; he would rise from the table steady as a rock, and before he left always made a point of going up to the drawing-room in the small hours to bid Mrs Tattersall good-bye, for that good lady never went to bed till she had seen her husband precede her.

His mother lived to a great age, and became very deaf, but she had her page-boy in every Sunday to say his Collect and Catechism, and although she could not hear a word he said, yet from the earnest expression of his face and his never hesitating she took it for granted that he

repeated them properly, and invariably gave him a shilling. John, however, getting a hint that the young rascal imposed upon the good-natured lady, hid himself in the room one Sunday morning. As usual, young Buttons was called up and requested to commence his religious exercise; then, with a perfectly solemn face, he began, "Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle, the cow jumped over the moon," and so on, to the end of the old nursery rhyme. "There's a good boy," said the old lady, putting into his hand a shilling. But just as Master Hopeful was departing jubilant, whack came the whip with which John had provided himself, and the welting he got made him remember Collect and Catechism for many a day.

Warde attained the patriarchal age of 85. Like all sportsmen of the "golden time," he was a *bon vivant*, but in his last days he had to give up wine. By a strange irony of fate, he died of water on the chest. "This is a pretty business," he said. "Here is a man dying of water who never drank but one glassful of that nauseous liquid in his life."

Many years ago the younger son of a gentleman in the North of England was foolish enough to fall in love with one of his father's maid-servants, and quixotic enough to marry her. As soon as the news came to the parental ears, the imprudent Benedict was turned out of doors, his only worldly possession being a Southern hound in pup. He and his partner in disgrace started for London, and after a while the young man succeeded in obtaining a situation in an attorney's office at £60 a year. As time went on, olive-branches gathered about him to the tune of half a dozen, from which it may be supposed he had enough to do to keep eight sets of teeth in work. Yet he not only discharged these onerous domestic duties, but also enjoyed his favourite sport, and kept a couple of horses and two couples of hounds.

But how, in the name of wonder, could he afford to keep horses and hounds? Of course he neglected his home and business, and ended his days in the workhouse. Nothing of the kind! His wife and children were well fed and comfortably clothed, he never ran into debt, and always

had a decent coat on his back. And the way he managed it was this.

After office hours he acted as accountant for certain butchers in Clare Market, who paid him in kind. The best of the meat provided the daily dinner for himself and family, and the scraps and offal fed the hounds, which he kept in his garret. Having saved up sufficient to buy his horses, he stabled them in a cellar, fed them on grain from a brew-house close by and damaged corn from a chandler's—writing letters, correcting bills, keeping books, and assisting the proprietors with legal information, and so saving all expenditure of coin. Down in the country where he hunted during the season he gained the goodwill of the farmers by giving them a hare now and then and tipping them a legal hint, while the gentlemen over whose manors he rode were so delighted with his enthusiasm for sport that he could go almost where he pleased. If any poor hunting enthusiast of to-day were to keep hounds in a garret and horses in a cellar, he would meet with a very different fate; he would promptly be indicted as a nuisance, and summarily be suppressed by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Times are indeed changed!

The poet of "the Chace," whom I have already quoted, describes hunting as the "image of war without its guilt." It is not only the "image of war," but it is the finest possible training for facing the perils and confronting the crises of actual warfare. The following anecdote of a once famous Leicestershire hunting man, "Tommy" Yule, is one of the best illustrations of this truth that I have come across.

On the night of 5th December 1857, the 11th Native Cavalry, stationed at Jalpaiguri, 650 strong, mutinied during the night, slew their English officers, and galloped off to meet the other portion of the regiment, then encamped some thirty miles off. Next day, having effected a junction with their comrades, they started to join the revolted Sepoys at Dacca. They rode in the direction of Purneah, with the intention of plundering that station on their way to the North-West. But they left out of their calculations

a little man who was John Company's Commissioner at Bhagalpur. Mr Yule was an old Leicestershire hunting man, and was one of the most daring riders to hounds ever seen in the Shires. He had ridden at both Newmarket and Liverpool as a gentleman jockey; he could box, shoot, fence, and play cricket in brilliant style—in fact, was a first-rate all-round man. He knew very little about soldiering, but he knew too much for the Pandies.

Well, to "Tommy" Yule the news was brought that the mutineers were "on the rampage." At Bhagalpur he had with him fifty of Her Majesty's 5th Regiment, 100 sailors, and two guns. As Commissioner of the district, he was in command. Off he started without a moment's delay, came up with the rebels just outside Purneah, and dashed at them at once. They, however, had no heart for fighting, bolted, got round the station, and made off for Dacca. But Yule's blood was up. He had brought his stud of hunting elephants with him. He mounted fifty sailors and forty soldiers on them, and pounded after the flying foe. The little party marched all day and night, and got in front of their quarry the following morning. Then the rascals had to fight—ten Pandies to one Englishman. They could not charge: their horses were fagged out. But Yule charged them, with some of his men on the elephants and some on foot, and killed 111 without losing a man. And the nerve, the pluck, the dash which achieved that brilliant success had been fostered and trained by hard riding over the pastures and bullfinches of Leicestershire.

I remember hearing Lord Wolseley tell the following story, which is a further proof of my assertion that hunting develops a man's pluck and confidence:—

"I once saw," he said, "a Staff officer, a man well known in the hunting-field, gallop with an order to a column of cavalry which had been drawn up in a sheltered position behind the village to be screened from the enemy's fire. As he drew near the column, a round-shot struck the ground under his horse's belly. The horse made an effort to swerve, which was checked by its rider, without taking the cigar out of his mouth. He galloped up to the column, coolly gave his orders, and cantered back over the open ground, where

the round-shot were striking pretty thickly, still smoking his cigar, as if he were taking his morning exercise. A few shots had previously plunged into the column, causing the excitement which always happens when horses get knocked over; but the calm indifference of this officer, and the manner in which he appeared altogether to ignore the existence of danger, had a capital effect upon the men."

Lord Wolseley did not give the name of the officer, but I have been told that it was "Bob" Wood, sometime Colonel of the 8th Hussars.

Lord Roberts, after his great campaign in Afghanistan, declared that one of the most valuable Staff officers in the British Army was Lord Melgund (the present Earl of Minto), who had few equals in those days as a cross-country rider.

The late Earl of Wilton, one of the finest horsemen ever seen, heard the great Duke of Wellington remark that "England would rue the day when her field-sports were abandoned," and that "his best officers were those who had most distinguished themselves in the hunting-field."

The "Iron Duke" himself was a keen lover of the sport, and a hard rider. He kept fifteen horses, and paid high prices for them; and when one reads of so much galloping to and fro one is not surprised at the number of the Duke's stud.

Here is an extract from the journal of Mr Larpent, Judge-Advocate of the Forces, which illustrates the tireless energy and the keen sportsmanship of the Duke:—

"Lord Wellington is quite well again, and was out hunting on Thursday. To-day he was to set out at seven in the morning for the review of General Cole's division, about twenty-eight miles from here, be on the ground about ten, and back to dinner by four or five o'clock. He has a notion that exercise makes headquarters more healthy than the rest of the Army, and that the hounds are one great cause of this."

Of these hounds Mr Larpent writes:—"We have three odd packs of hounds here. Firstly, Lord Wellington's, or, as he is called here, 'the Peer's'; these are fox-hounds, about sixteen couples; they have only killed one fox this

year, and from want of a huntsman they straggle about and run very ill. From a hard rock sometimes the horse gets up to his belly in wet, gravelly sand; thus we have many horses lamed and some bad falls. The next set of hounds are numerous. The Commissary-General, Sir R. Kennedy, is a great man in this way, and several others. And thirdly, Captain Morherre, the principal man of this place, has an old poacher in his establishment, with a dozen terriers, mongrels, and ferrets, and he goes out with the officers to get rabbits. Lord Wellington has a good stud of hunters. He rides hard, and only wants a good gallop, but I understand knows nothing of the sport, though very fond of it in his own way."

The Duke, as many readers are aware, was a warm friend and admirer of Thomas Assheton Smith, whom Napoleon introduced to his officers as "le premier chasseur d'Angleterre." And it was always a subject of regret to the hero of Waterloo that Assheton Smith had not joined the Army. "For," said the Duke, "he would have made one of the best cavalry officers in Europe"; and he frequently remarked that many of his cavalry officers in the Peninsular War owed their horsemanship to the example of Assheton Smith.

I have said that the Duke took a keen interest in hunting, and I may add that he gave practical proof of his love of the sport; for when he was once asked to subscribe to a pack which was in financial difficulties he said, "Get what you can, and put my name down for the difference." The "difference" was £600 a year, which the Duke cheerfully paid for many years.

CHAPTER XLIX

AN OLD SQUIRE'S DIARY AND A CAVALIER'S NOTEBOOK

OLD diaries and journals have always had a fascination for me, and I think most people are interested in these pictures of the daily lives of their forefathers. They put us on intimate terms with our ancestors, and tell us how they really passed their time, and what were their pursuits and amusements. Now one of the earliest of these domestic chronicles is the journal of Nicholas Assheton, lord of the manor of Downham, near Clitheroe, in Lancashire, during the years 1617 and 1618. The writer appears to have been a typical English squire, and the diary, no doubt, was kept purely for his own amusement. He would have been amazed, and perhaps somewhat dismayed, had he guessed that his frank and simple jottings would be handed down to posterity; for he writes without any caution or reserve, and makes no secret of his peccadilloes. Fox-hunting, otter-hunting, shooting, cocking, fishing, foot-racing, horse-racing, tipping, and dicing seem to have occupied most of his time and thoughts, though he never fails to record the fact of his attending church twice every Sunday, and generally gives the texts of the parson's two sermons. The squire had to set a good example, and felt it his bounden duty, as a pillar of Church and State, to attend divine service regularly on Sunday mornings and afternoons.

After this severe religious exercise it was only natural that he should unbend in the later part of the day, and consequently he generally spent his Sunday evenings tipping in the ale-house—sometimes alone, sometimes with the parson from whose sermons he had derived so

much edification a few hours before. I don't know on what topics the tipplers conversed, but I doubt whether they confined themselves to theology.

The ale-house or inn played an important part in the life of the country gentlemen of that day. The Lancashire gentry of Nicholas Assheton's time seem to have kept very little wine in their own cellars, and it was their custom after dinner to adjourn to the nearest inn and quietly fuddle themselves till it was time to go home to bed. One needs no better proof of the excellent quality of the liquor which the innkeepers of that day provided for their customers.

It will shock sportsmen of the present day to hear what lax ideas Squire Assheton had on the subject of fox-hunting. There was no close-time for foxes then. They were hunted all the year round, and indeed were regarded as vermin. A penny a head was paid by the parish authorities for every fox's mask, and these trophies were nailed to the door of the parish church. The fox was as often coursed with greyhounds as hunted with hounds, and if a fox could not be found a rabbit or a badger did just as well. Here is an entry in point:—"June 24th. To Worston Brook. Tryed for a foxe, found nothing. Towler lay at a rabbit and wee stayed and wrought and took her. Home to Downham to a foote race." Again:—"June 25th. I hounded and killed a bitch foxe. After that to Salthill. There we had a bowson [badger]. Wee wrought him out and killed him." From which I gather that the hounds, like their master, were not particular what they hunted.

As to the convivial propensities of our Squire, let the following candid entries suffice:—"July 3rd. I and Richard Sherburne to Sladeborne. It rayned; so we stayed and tiddled most of the day and were too foolish." Again:—"Aug. 19th. All this morning we played the bacchanalians; at night as merrie as Robin Hood and all his fellowes.—Dec. 3rd. Went to Mr Parkinson, the steward—somewhat too busie with drink.—June 2nd. We all to Pescod to a cocking, very pleasant; tables (dice and cards) all night; made more than merrie."

In this respect, however, Nicholas was no worse than most of his class. He was not a sot, and his head was

generally clear enough in the morning to enable him to attend to the business of his estate ; for he seems to have been a good manager, a liberal landlord, an obliging neighbour, and an honourable gentleman in his dealings with all men.

But to return to his sports. Fishing, I regret to say, he generally carried on with casting-nets : an unsportsman-like proceeding to modern ideas. Shooting was a somewhat barren sort of amusement, to judge from such entries as these:—" Had some sport at moor-game with my piece, but killed not." " To Rowe Moor and there killed three heath-cocks." " With brother Sherburne went to Harrope and Skelfshawe Fells with gunnes, shott at a moor-cock, struck feathers off and missed." Doubtless they shot at the game sitting—with the clumsy fowling-piece of those days it would have been almost impossible to hit a bird upon the wing.

Here is a pathetic entry in which our Squire bewails his inability to go hunting, for reasons which I think will come home to the heart of many a sportsman to-day:—" Teeth lanced. Toothache, headache, cold, and rheume." Life was not *all* beer and skittles even in those good old days.

There was another ailment, too, only too common, alas, in our day, from which our Squire occasionally suffered, viz. what Theodore Hook wittily called "tightness of the chest"! In witness whereof take this item:—" August 21st. I to Boulton to Parson Emmot. Would have borrowed £30, but he had it not, *or would not have it*. Spent 4d. with him." Shrewd chap that parson! Had his share of the four-pennyworth of ale, but did not see his way to "parting"!

The squire, however, had better luck in another quarter, as the following curious entry shows:—" December 7th. Sunday. To church, parson preached. To Downham. Met P. ; borrowed £30 of him and made bargain with him to have £100, and pay him £10 a year for 10 years, and if his two children die within that time go away with the £100." A good stroke of business that! The better the day the better the deed!

Keen sportsman and good man of business as he was,

Squire Assheton was sufficiently simple in some matters to be taken in by the "sharps" of the period. Here is a story which he tells against himself:—"June 23rd. Downham. There came one to us in the street and asked if we heare nothing of a bay gelding stolen from Mr Holte's, Castleton, by the miller there, and one silver bowle, and eighteen silver spoones. I took him to the ale-house and spent 12 pence on him. I lent him two shillings. *Hee was a cheate.*" How the Squire discovered that the person whom he treated at the ale-house was a "cheate," or in what his cheating consisted, we are not told, which is tantalising.

There are several allusions to horse-racing, of which the Squire was evidently fond; but they are provokingly vague, though this is not always the diarist's fault. I will give one or two specimens:—"January 26th. Self, John Braddyll, cousin Assheton, with others, went to Walton to see Sir Richard's horses that stood there." Here, in the original manuscript, follows a long account of a horse-race which the first editor of the journal, the Rev. Thomas Dunham Whitaker (who introduced the diary into his history of the Parish of Whalley) did not think worth reproducing. The second editor, the Rev. F. R. Raines, was of a different opinion, but unfortunately the MS. had been mislaid or destroyed; at any rate, it was not to be found amongst Dr Whitaker's papers, and thus what would have probably been the earliest detailed account of a horse-race has been irretrievably lost.

Another entry respecting horse-racing is as follows:—"Sir Richard and Mr Assheton made a match, his dunn gelding against a dunn nag of Sir Richard, for twenty pieces a side. Sir Richard and my cousin to ride as light as they can, so as Sir Richard be 10 st." This I take to have been a match, owners up, Sir Richard to scale not less than 10 st., Mr Assheton to ride at catch-weight. Such matches were a common form of amusement among the country gentry, and large sums were wagered in addition to the stakes.

I have noted how careful Squire Assheton was to observe Sunday; but the temptation of a horse-race appears sometimes to have been too much for him, and the parson

looked in vain for the Squire of Downham in his pew on one Sabbath at any rate. For an entry in the diary runs thus:—"July 19th. Sunday. With Sherburne, Starkie, etc., to Clitheroe: stayed drinking some wyne: soe to a summer game: Sherburne's mare run and lost the bell: made merrie: stayed until 2 o'clock." The silver bell, by the way, was the usual prize at the County Races. From which it may be inferred that Sunday racing was not deemed an indecorous pastime by the country gentlemen of that date.

Twice in the course of the two years our Squire visited London on law business; and a journey to the capital was a rare and perilous adventure in those days. He carefully notes the names of the inns at which he put up, such as the "Cock" at Stony Stratford (still in existence), the "Antelope" at Barnet, the "White Horse" at Dunstable, and the "Bell" in Gray's Inn Lane. He tells how he "shott at thrushes" between Mimms and Barnet, and gives the number of miles he rode every day, varying from twenty-five to thirty-five. But of his adventures in the great metropolis he makes no mention. Perhaps they were not of a nature to recall agreeable memories.

I picture this Master Nicholas Assheton as a sturdy, broad-shouldered, ruddy-faced Englishman, whose days were passed in sport, and his nights in tipping, after the fashion of the country gentry of his time. A staunch supporter of Church and State, who with all his convivial habits and love of sport found time to discharge creditably his duties as a landlord and a magistrate. I think I could lay my hand even now upon one or two country gentlemen who are of pretty much the same type.

A fitting companion picture to the diary of Nicholas Assheton is "The Notebook of a Cavalier," containing the random jottings of William Blundell of Little Crosby, about six miles from Liverpool.

The Blundells were an old county family who had held the manor of Little Crosby for four hundred years without a break. William, the author of the "Notebook," was a specimen of the best type of English country gentlemen, of a superior stamp to Squire Assheton. I should judge him to

have been in his youth the very beau-ideal of a dashing cavalier. Writing in later years to Lady Haggerston of Haggerston in Northumberland, whose daughter he had wedded, he thus playfully pictures himself when he came as a suitor to the house of his future father-in-law. "You will remember what a pretty straight young thing all dashing in scarlet I came to Haggerston." In the Civil War he joined the Earl of Derby's regiment of Dragoons; but his career as a soldier was soon brought to a close. He was one of the heroic band who stormed the Castle of Lancaster on the 18th of March 1642. But in the assault his thigh was broken by a shot, and he was a cripple for the rest of his life.

Up to this time William Blundell had been a gay young spark, and went the pace with a vengeance, scattering his money right and left, and ruffling it with the fastest of his contemporaries on the race-course, at the card-table, and in the hunting-field; and, to judge from his description, the cavalier squires of Lancaster must have been a "very warm lot" indeed. The way they drank fairly takes one's breath away. Here is a record of a drinking-bout which shows how the good old English gentleman could put away his liquor: "Sir William Stanley told me that at Hooton my Lord M——, the three T.'s, and some few more in three or four nights consumed sixteen dozen bottles of wine, two hogs-heads of beer, and two barrels of ale."

And yet, with all their drinking habits, these Englishmen were hardy, athletic, and active, capable of great feats of endurance and speed. As a specimen of the arduous sport in which the nobles of that day indulged, our "Cavalier" gives the following:—

On a Thursday in August 1664, "the Earls of Castlehaven and Arran (whereof the first was about fifty years of age), in St James's Park, upon a wager laid with the King, killed a fat, strong buck by running on foot, having each a knife in his hand. They had six hours to perform it, but they did it in two and a half. They were a good while before they could unherd him, then they run him till, being extremely hot, he took the water in the pond, where they threw stones at him, and toiled, and drove him so to the

side till they killed him with their knives. This was told me by a gentleman present when the buck was killed, and the thing is very true."

Is there any English nobleman or gentleman of fifty years of age in the present day who would undertake to perform such a feat as that?

William Blundell, after he was crippled by his wound, took life much more seriously than he did in his earlier days. He settled down into a sober, decorous country gentleman; but his love of sport remained, and he evidently did not consider an interest in horse-racing inconsistent with the character of a respectable member of society.

There was an excellent race-course at Little Crosby, which William Blundell himself had laid out, and the principal county meetings were held there. There are frequent references in the "Notebook" to this race-course, which was 403 rods 4 yards in length, or, in other words, 1 mile 460 yards. Twice round the course was the shortest distance for any race, four times round for the big races.

The following "Articles for Races at Crosby, to be run on first Monday in August 1682, and yearly afterwards," were drawn up by W.B. at the request of the Hon. W. Molyneux. After providing that a piece or pieces of silver plate be the prize for the winner, come the following rules which I select from the rest as most noteworthy:—

"2. Horse to be brought to the ground ten days before the race, aired and trained there, housed and fed within a mile of the course. Name of horse and person who intends to put him in to be given, two days before the horse comes to the ground, to a qualified person or subscriber of 20s.

3. Every person bringing a horse to deposit 40s. as a stake eight days before the race, which stake or stakes either to be given to the second horse or held for another race next year, as the subscribers may judge. 40s. subscribers to the plate exempted. No subscribers to bring more than one horse.

4. Horses to be drawn out on the race day at 2 p.m., and weigh with rider and accoutrements 10 st.

6. That the horse which shall first end the first course or heat by returning back to the starting-post, and by carrying his rider thither with his full weight, or within a pound thereof, before any horse has come back to the distance-post which stands upon the same ground about twelve score yards from the end, shall win the plate. But if no such thing happen, a second heat to be run at the end of half an hour with horses not distanced. Again, after another half-hour, a third heat if necessary.

7. In case the plate be not gained in three heats, the horse coming in first in two, and within the distance in the one he loses, shall have the plate. If two different horses win the first and second, the winner of the third shall take it.

8. Riders not submitting to the rules to be excluded from running. A cloth or flag to be placed at the top of the ending post, which shall fall immediately the first horse comes to the end.

9. If only one horse comes, he must take the plate after galloping over the course. Riders and horses to be weighed afresh after each heat, and before he enters the scales a flagon of beer to be given to each rider if he requires it."

The most noteworthy feature of these rules is the immense amount of superiority over all rivals which they exact from the winner. He must come in with a lead of twelvescore yards; in all cases he must "distance" his nearest opponent to enable him to win the plate. If he could do that, the prize went to him at once. If he failed to distance the second horse, or if he were anything less than 240 yds. in front, there must be another heat run. If the horse won both first and second heats, no matter by what distance, he took the plate; or if he won the first and third heats, and was outdistanced in the second, he secured the prize. Considering the length of the course, what a terrible bucketing it must have been to any horse to be sent over it three times in the space of an hour and a half with 10 st. on his back! How those old Turfites would have scorned the notion of winning by a short head! and how measureless would have been their contempt for the weedy, spindle-

shanked two-year-old flyer of to-day! They must have had rare stoutness and staying power, those "running horses" of the seventeenth century. It will be noted that no mention is made of the refreshment to be allowed to horses between each heat. Perhaps, like their jockeys, they too were treated to a "flagon of beer," for assuredly they needed a stimulant more than their riders.

These rules drawn up for the races at Little Crosby may be taken, I imagine, as a specimen of the regulations generally in vogue at race-meetings all over the country at that time.

CHAPTER L

REMARKABLE RACING DREAMS

OF all forms of superstition by which sportsmen of the gambling sort are affected, the most prevalent is the belief in dreams as prophetic of future events; and it must be admitted that there is some ground for such belief, for in many cases wonderful tips have come from dreamland. I have collected a few of these as samples, and I have no doubt most readers could add to the list.

About a month before the Derby of 1873 Mrs Peters, the wife of the steward at a certain London club where a large Derby sweepstakes was made up every year, dreamed that one of the members had sold his chance to her husband, and that the horse won the race. At breakfast next morning she told him her dream. The steward, who was very sceptical about such things, laughed at her, but asked the name of the horse.

"Doncaster," she answered; "I saw it as plainly as I see this cup and saucer, and the whole thing was so vivid that I am sure there's something in it."

"Pooh! pooh! old girl; Doncaster hasn't a chance," replied her worser half. "I've backed the winner, and his name's Kaiser, and you shall have a new bonnet out of the stakes."

The lady shook her head and stuck to her text, though she knew it was no use arguing. A few days before the great event came off one of the members of the club said to the steward:—

"I say, Peters, I sail on Monday for the East, and I want to get rid of this ticket. Everybody says the horse has no chance, and if you can get someone to give me a guinea for it, let me know."

Peters looked at the name on the ticket and read "Doncaster." Now whether he thought of his wife's dream, and the peculiar coincidence influenced him, or whether it was done in a spirit of pure speculation, it would be useless to inquire; but his reply was, "All right, sir, there's the guinea, and if nobody will have it I'll keep it; not but what I feel sure that Kaiser will win."

The ticket was at once transferred to him, and he actually offered it to several gentlemen, who promptly refused it. When the great day arrived, and James Merry's horse was declared the winner, to the great astonishment and consternation of a good many people, Mr Peters had the satisfaction of pocketing 150 sovereigns.

There seems to have been something very peculiar and ominous about this horse Doncaster, for Mrs Peters was not the only person whose slumbers he invaded. On the Sunday morning previous to the Derby the wife of a costermonger—Timson by name—woke the partner of her bed by singing out lustily, "The boy in yaller wins the day." Ned Timson, who had been bawling mackerel all the previous day and had been taking the hoarseness out of his throat the previous night with sundry pots of four ale, wild at being aroused out of his refreshing slumbers, gave her a thump, and told her to shut up. When they were both awake he asked her what she meant by kicking up that row. Then she told him that she had dreamed she was on Epsom Downs, and had seen a jockey in yellow pass all the other horses, and everybody shouted "The boy in yaller wins the day!"

"That, you know, Ned, was a song my mother used to sing when she was a girl. If there's a jockey in yaller I'd put a bit on him, if I was you."

"Shut up your silly mug," growled Ned, who put as little confidence in dreams as did our friend the steward.

But these sceptical gentlemen are sometimes not quite so sceptical as they would fain make believe; and when Mr Edward Timson, who was a bit of a sporting man in his way, saw the horses taking their preliminary canter, and one of the jockeys dressed in yellow—James Merry's colours—he clapped all the money he had in his pocket—

thirty shillings—upon “the boy in yellow,” and pocketed sixty yellow boys for his pluck. It was the making of him; he bought a new horse and cart, and christened the former “Yellow Boy,” while Sal, you may be sure, did not forget to exult about her dream.

My next Doncastrian anecdote is not exactly a dream story, though its hero was a sleeping man; it belongs rather to that class of superstition which the Romans included under divination—the foreshadowing of coming events by some chance incident or stray word. A sporting man of my acquaintance was travelling into Scotland by the “Flying Scotchman,” and, having fallen asleep, was awakened by the guard shouting, “Doncaster!—Doncaster!”

“Eh, by Jove!” he cried, starting up and rubbing his eyes; “you don’t say so; has Merry’s horse, then, really won?”

The guard was so struck by the words that he related them to several people. “I should take it as a tip,” suggested one. He caught at the idea, put half a sovereign on the horse, and made twenty.

But not even yet have I finished with this wonderful Doncaster and his lucky omens. A commercial traveller named Ramsden, nephew of a well-known trainer, though he had a great taste for racing, never staked a farthing upon any other event than the Derby, but regularly put his fiver upon his fancy for the Blue Riband. It so happened, however, in the contrariety of things in general, that he was never able to pay a visit to the Downs on the great day, as his Dublin journey was always due that week. His manner of selecting his horse was singularly original: he never took a tip, never allowed his judgment to be influenced, as far as putting on his money went, by any sporting “organ”; he appealed purely and simply to blind chance, in this manner: he wrote out the names of all the horses that ran, each upon a separate slip of paper, rolled each up into a little pellet, then, taking the lot up in his hand, cast them with as much force as he was able against the wall of his room, and backed the horse that rebounded farthest. Though the experiment had not been successful on the whole, it was eminently so for the Derby of 1873,

for the pellet he picked up had "Doncaster" inscribed upon it.

Another famous dream horse was Blue Gown. The following story was related to me by a sporting writer as a personal experience:—"After that famous Derby was run, I went off to finish the night at Cremorne. I had scarcely passed through the gates when I met a pal, in the commercial line, in very high spirits, who asked me to come and have a drink. "I have just landed a thou over Blue Gown," he said, "and it's the queerest start you ever heard. I fancied Rosicrucian, and had a bit on him, when I dreamt the funniest dream. You know I'm in the hosiery line. Well, I was down at Manchester a few weeks back, and one night I dreamt a lady came to me and said: 'Mind, I shall require a *blue gown* to match with the stockings you have given me.' Well, I never take any notice of such things, and certainly I never thought of connecting it with Hawley's horse: hang me if two nights afterwards I didn't dream precisely the same thing over again. I began to think it rather singular; but still the coincidence never dawned upon me, though I actually dreamed it a third time. But it was now so very extraordinary that I mentioned the circumstance to a friend. "It's a tip for the Derby, as sure as you're alive," he cried at once; "lay on all you know, and I'll go in with you." Then it seemed to come upon me all at once, and I could not understand how I could have been such a fool as not to see it before. I didn't lose a moment in putting on Blue Gown every farthing I could scrape up, and this," showing a role of bank-notes, "is the result."

About the same time a man named Lowry, who had been a tout to Henry Padwick, was lying dangerously ill, his life being despaired of.

"Look here, my girl," he said to his wife one morning; "get together all the money you can and put it on Blue Gown, for that's the Derby winner for this year. I mightn't live to see it, but it's a dead certainty, as sure as you are here."

"La, Jim, what makes you think that?" inquired the wife.

"Because it's come to me in my sleep," he answered.

She had the courage to follow his advice, and, though he was under the turf before the event came off, she made a nice little sum to console her widowhood and give her a good chance for another husband.

The triple dream I have just mentioned had a parallel some years previously. A man named Coakley, a chemist and druggist at Stockbridge, one night in the spring of 1846 dreamed that he saw Pyrrus the First win the Derby. He was not a betting man, so he could not understand what had put the horse into his head; he was still more puzzled when he dreamed the same thing the following night; he was yet more astounded when it returned on the third. Being acquainted with John Day, who, as everybody knows, lived in the neighbourhood, he told him about this curious vision of the night. "I should back him," was the worthy trainer's advice; the chemist very wisely took it, and made more by that tip in a day than he could have done by pills in a year.

For my next anecdote I must go as far back as 1839. A provincial actor named Freeman, very well known in his time, while performing in some country town had his benefit fixed for the Derby night. In those days of small salaries the benefit was the actor's main dependence to clear off debts, stock him with clothes, and prepare him for his next engagement, and the choice of a piece likely to prove the most attractive was a matter requiring the most careful attention, and a source of much anxiety. Mr Freeman, on the present occasion, found the task so difficult, and was so worried by conflicting ideas, that he was almost ill. One night his wife awoke him with, "Jim, did you hear that?"

"No," he said; "what?"

"I heard a voice say, quite distinctly, that if you put up the *Flying Dutchman* for your benefit you'll have the biggest house of the season."

"Good Lord!" cried Freeman, "I never thought of that piece; and that is the name of the Derby favourite. A splendid idea! I'll do it; if the horse were to win it would fill the house."

He lost no time in issuing the bills. Those in the town who had betted on the horse, thinking it a lucky tip, took tickets, and when the news came that Flying Dutchman had won the Blue Riband, numbers of people, struck by the coincidence, flocked to the theatre, filling it from floor to ceiling, and making it indeed, as the mysterious voice had prognosticated, the biggest house of the season.

This disposition on the part of sporting men to accept such omens has before now been taken advantage of by impostors, and more than once advertisements have appeared in the sporting papers announcing that a lady who had twice dreamed the name of the Derby winner had again been so favoured, and was prepared to send this tip from Queen Mab on the receipt of thirty postage stamps. It is said that she reaped a goodly harvest, though it was more than the senders of the half-crowns did. Spiritualists have also tried the dodge, and mediums have seen horses gallop past the winning-post that never came within half a mile of it.

To come again to the experience of persons still living, here is a curious instance of a lucky dream. The night before the race for the Chester Cup of 1856, Mr William Day, the trainer, dreamt that One Act won, and that William Goater was second after a good race, and that he told Goater after the horses had passed the post that he thought he (Day) had won. To this Goater hastily replied, "You know you have"; and, walking up the course together, the Findon trainer added, "You have done me out of the best stake I ever stood."

This dream William Day told to some ten or a dozen gentlemen during breakfast at the hotel at Chester where he was staying. After saddling One Act, William Day stood close to the winning-post to see the race, and as soon as his mare had passed it the third time he thought she had won. He said to the judge, "What has won, Mr Johnstone?" "White," he replied; and then, looking up, he added, "Oh, *you*, Mr Day!" Strange to say, William Goater was standing by Day's side all the time, quite unnoticed by the latter, until, turning round to go and meet One Act, Day found himself face to face with his

Findon rival. As they walked up to meet their respective horses, Goater said, "I stood to win more money on mine to-day than I ever stood before," thus fulfilling Mr Day's dream to the very letter.

The famous mare Caller Ou, winner of the St Leger of 1861, was the heroine of an equally vivid and prophetic dream. Caller Ou had been performing very moderately during the summer of her three-year-old career, and the odds of 100 to 1 offered against her seemed to foreshadow her absence from the post. A gentleman with whom Mr I'Anson was slightly acquainted—a keen sportsman and courser—Mr Peat, dreamed that Caller Ou won the St Leger, and like a true Yorkshireman backed her for that event. On being told by his friends that she was not likely to run, he wrote very respectfully to Mr I'Anson, informing him of his dream and of his having backed the mare, and offered, in case the owner did not think of running her, to pay the stake and all other expenses if he would allow her to go to Doncaster and take her chance. Mr I'Anson, on considering the matter, desired his daughter, who was then, as always, his trusty counsellor and amanuensis, to reply in courteous terms to Mr Peat's letter, thanking him for his handsome offer, and informing him that Caller Ou should run and take her chance in the St Leger, but that he would himself pay all expenses. The result, as is well-known, gained Caller Ou the brightest gem in her chaplet of fame, and won Mr Peat his money.

Mr Alexander Young, the brewer, of Richmond, Yorkshire, dreamt on the eve of the Chester Cup that he was standing in the ring after the race and saw No. 21 hoisted as the winning number. This dream induced him to go to Chester Races, and on the course he met his friend Mr John Jackson, the then leviathan of the betting ring, who inquired what had brought him there. Mr Young laughingly replied that he had come on a fool's errand to back No. 21 on the card, as he had dreamt it had won. The race cards were just coming out, and Jackson said, "We'll buy one, and see what it is." To their surprise, they found that No. 21 was Jackson's own horse, Tim Whiffler; and on being assured by the owner that the horse

really had a great chance, Mr Young backed him to win a good stake, and always declared that he stood on the course in exactly the same place as he did in his dream. Mr Young (who was the breeder of Digby Grand, Grand Flaneur, and at one time owned Controversy) told several people at Richmond of his dream before he went to Chester.

I have heard it stated on very good authority that the Hon. Amias Charles Orde-Powlett, younger brother of the late Lord Bolton, some time before Voltigeur won the Derby, dreamt that the first three horses in that race were: 1. Voltigeur; 2. Pitsford; 3. Clincher. He wrote to his brother, the Hon. T. Orde-Powlett, to that effect, and both gentlemen backed the lucky dream, the horses, as everybody knows, finishing as above placed. The mother of these two gentlemen was also celebrated as a lucky dreamer: she twice dreamt the winner of the St Leger, her husband on each occasion backing the dream and landing good stakes.

Lord Vivian's famous City and Suburban dream is probably known to most Turfmen. Still, it may be new to some, and therefore I give it in Lord Vivian's own words:—

“I dreamed on the morning of the race for the City and Suburban in 1874, that I had fallen asleep in the weighing-room at Epsom prior to the race, and that after it had been run I was awakened by a gentleman, the owner of another horse in the race, who informed me that The Teacher had won. Of this horse, as far as my recollection serves me, I had never heard before. On reaching Victoria Station the first person I saw was the gentleman who had appeared to me in my dream, and to whom I mentioned it, saying I could not find any horse so named in the race, to which he replied, ‘There is a horse, now called Aldrich, which was previously known as The Teacher.’ The dream had so vividly impressed me that I declared my intention of backing Aldrich for £100, and was in the act of doing so when I was questioned by the owner as to why I was backing his horse. I answered, ‘Because I dreamt he had won the race.’ To this I was answered, ‘As against your dream I will tell you a fact. I

tried the horse last week against a hurdle-jumper, and he was beaten at a distance.' I thanked my informer, and discontinued backing Aldrich. General Taylor, who had heard what had passed, asked me, if I did not intend backing the horse again for myself, to win him £1000 by him. This I did by taking for him 1000 to 30, and Aldrich won.

Sir George Chetwynd, by the way, had an almost equally remarkable dream with respect to Curate in the same race (the City and Suburban of 1874). He dreamt that Curate came in first, but ran up a bank just beyond the winning-post, and, disappearing, never returned to weigh in; consequently the race was awarded to Mr Lefevre's Minister, who came in second, ridden by a jockey in deep mourning, crape on jacket and cap, as well as on boots and breeches. Now Curate was a horse that had been heavily backed for the City and Suburban, but was scratched just before the race, and Minister did come in second. The dream, grotesque as it was, left so vivid an impression on Sir George's mind that he backed Minister for a place, and had reason to be well satisfied that he had not scorned his queer dream-tip.

Colonel Starkey, the owner of Sulphur, was another sportsman who was indebted to a dream for enabling him to hedge at the last moment. When the Colonel ran Sulphur for the Lincolnshire Handicap he was very sanguine up to a certain time that the horse would win; but on the Monday prior to the race he was out with the Burton Hounds, and rode nearly all day side by side with Mr Lawrence Thornton, mine host of the Saracen's Head Hotel, Lincoln, when, just as the hounds were running into their fox, and each man was putting on his best "spurt" to be in at the death, Mr Thornton rushed his old hunter past the horse the Colonel was riding, and, turning round, said: "Ah, that's how I want to see Sulphur rush past 'em in the Handicap for you." Well, on the way back the Colonel seemed gloomy. He said: "Thornton, you beat me to-day, and I shall be beaten to-morrow. I dreamt," he went on to say, "last night that Sulphur's number was put up third, and that's

where he will be; so I advise you to back him only for a place." And, sure enough, Sulphur was placed third by the judge.

There can be no question, then, that dreams do sometimes come true, and that there have been lucky sportsmen who have had reason to bless Queen Mab for her "correct tips." Yet I candidly confess that I regard these prophetic dreams as mere freaks. When a dream is fulfilled, it is remembered as a phenomenon. But think of the countless myriads of dreams which *do not* come true, and are consequently forgotten, and the reflection will probably lead you to the conclusion that to put faith in dreams is to lean upon a broken reed.

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