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TALLYHO.



# TALLYHO.

SKETCHES OF HUNTING, COACHING,  
ETC. ETC.

BY

FRED FEILD WHITEHURST,

(A VETERAN.)

“ Listening how the hounds and horn  
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,  
From the side of some hoar hill,  
Through the high-wood echoing shrill.”—*Milton*.

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## P R E F A C E.



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# TALLYHO.



## A DAY WITH THE BARON.

THERE may be a diversity of opinion as to the comparative merits of fox and stag hunting; but there are very few who would not be contented with a spin across such a matchless "country" as the Vale of Aylesbury, where the size of the fences is in unison with the fields, most of which take a good deal of getting over, compelling occasionally those who desire to go in the first flight to "harden their hearts, hustle their horses, and go at them full tilt." In the pursuit of the stag, they who hesitate are lost. There is no time for "craning" if they desire to live with such a pack as the "Baron's," and unless their hearts are in the right place, and they keep their hands down, they will, in sporting parlance be "nowhere." It is in such countries as the Vale of Aylesbury and the Roothings of Essex that stag hunting is to be enjoyed

in its fullest perfection ; for although the " Queen's " hounds are all that can be desired, the huntsmen, the whips, the horses they bestride, and the deer they hunt, good enough for any time or place, yet the " country " has its serious drawbacks, for the cream of it is so gridironed by railways, and so studded with semi-detached villas, with their poultry yards, cucumber frames, and kitchen gardens, that in the event of the deer electing to run over the far-famed Harrow district, the " field " are bound sooner or later to come to grief over broken bottles, wire fencing, or tenter-hooks. Even should they steer clear of such obstacles, they run the risk of encountering a landed proprietor, who, ignoring the fact that property has its duties as well as its rights, strongly objects to your riding over his domain.

Years and years ago a curious little scene occurred at Down Barn Farm, Hillingdon, when Anderson's hounds met by stealth at the Adam and Eve at Hayes. The deer was uncartered at the back of that dilapidated hostelry ; the field included Anderson, Jem Mason, Philpot on " Tam Bouff," a Russian horse, and a marvel at timber, Tom Shackle on his celebrated grey, and a man on the leader of the Amersham omnibus, which he had taken from the team, and by a rapid act of horsemanship converted into a hunter, *faute de mieux* ; the whole lot were soon sailing over the fences of this place of evil repute. Anderson, who was very " hard of hearing," and who was mounted on a nag, which if he could have been prevailed upon to sell, he would have given but small change out of a " thou," but whose *forte* was not fencing, seeing an irate farmer, gun in hand, and with many imprecations, making

tracks to cut him off, asked the man on the 'bus horse what it meant.

“That he will shoot you with as little remorse as he would a garden thrush,” was the reply, “if you ride over his wheat.”

“What is to be done ? ”

“Why, charge that stake and binder fence with the brook flowing on the other side, and get out of his way as soon as you can.”

Thereupon he hardened his heart and negotiated the lot, and, looking back after the man on the coach horse, was considerably astonished at finding him landed safely by his side.

In the Vale of Aylesbury no such *contretemps* are to be feared. There the landlords and tenants are to the manner born huntsmen, and look with consummate indifference on a few gaps in their fences or a well-trampled piece of wheat, knowing full well that it will be all right when harvest time comes.

It is now 37 years since “the Barons” made their *début* in Buckinghamshire as masters of hounds, starting with a few couples of Sir Charles Shakerley's staghounds, and adding drafts from the kennels of the Old Berkeley, Harvey Combe, and, above all, the Fitzwilliam; and when it is remembered that these hounds were, as a rule, drafted from their own packs on account of their excessive speed, it is little wonder that a pack of flyers was soon established, to be still further improved year by year by the addition of fresh blood of the best strains.

Frederick Cox, who has hunted the Baron's hounds for 22 seasons, takes for his motto “Excelsior,” and promises still further improvement, the necessity for

which, however, is not obvious to a casual observer, more especially when he hears this sportsman, of such lengthened experience, give his opinion that the best deer that was ever uncarted could not live before the present pack for more than sixty minutes across the best parts of the Vale.

The meet on Thursday last was at the Windmill at Tring. An hour's ride from Euston brings you to the station, and a few minutes behind a pair of steppers, of more than average excellence, suffice to land the visitor at Tring Park, the hospitable hunting quarters of Sir Nathaniel Rothschild, as pleasant a spot as eye could desire, with its "fading many-coloured woods" which make "the pale descending year yet pleasant still."

Tring Park was one of the gifts of that ever free and altogether merrie monarch Charles II. to his some time mistress, fair Nell Gwyn, whose portrait still adorns the walls of the mansion. If the appointments in this place of Royal retirement were equal in comfort and elegance to those of the present possessor, then the merrie monarch must have had an exceedingly good time of it when he retired to its peaceful shades from "that fierce light that beats upon a throne," and wandered through the lovely glades with the fair Nell Gwyn.

A few minutes' ride through the quaint old town, and the windmill is reached, to find a large "Field" assembled, with many lookers-on, watching eagerly for the uncarting of the deer. Cox, mounted on *The Rascal* by *Adventurer*—who, having misbehaved himself on the turf, has been relegated to the chase—looks fit to go for a man's life, and 20 couples of unusually level



and symmetrical hounds give promise of sport if the deer but run well. The deer, having been uncartered, declined to face the sharp north-east wind, and, leaving Tring on his right, takes a line of country in the direction of Amersham, crossing the Berkhamstead Road, and on to the large woods near Chesham, where, after ringing round the covers for a while, he is finally taken in a farmyard, after a fair hunting run of an hour and a quarter. The country rides well, but the fences are blind, and several horses are to be seen at an early stage running riderless after the hounds.

The scent was bad throughout, though it improved as the day advanced. Sir Nathaniel, on a promising young Irish horse, and Messrs. Flower, Foy, Williams, Cazenove, and many other well-mounted sportsmen are all there, or thereabouts; but as the Vale is not hunted until the end of the month in consequence of the blindness of the fences, there were several of the first flight absent, who will put in an appearance as the season advances.

Returning to Tring Park, there is time for a cursory view of the house and grounds. Many gems in the way of portrait-painting—prominent amongst them Millais's picture of the son and heir and a full-length portrait of Queen Elizabeth—adorn the walls. But all the attractions are not inside the house. The paddocks in which emus and ostriches were to be seen, Shetland bullocks, flocks of turkeys, geese, which might very well be swans if size is the qualification, hares, pheasants, a kangaroo and infant, several newly arrived chamois, gold, silver, and other choice and rare pheasants; an aviary, amongst the inhabitants of

which were two pigeons of the sort known as the "Sacré Cœur," whose white breasts are apparently bedabbled with blood, valuable and hitherto very rare ; these, with a conservatory the home of many macaws and cockatoos, occupied the short remaining space of time before leaving to catch the train. Good hunting and plenty of domestic comfort are certainly to be had in the neighbourhood of Tring Park.

## WITH THE FITZWILLIAM.

“NEXT unto Cambridgeshire lieth Huntingdonshire, a country good for corn and tillage, and towards the east, where it is fenny, verie rich and plentiful for the feeding of cattle ; elsewhere right pleasant, by reason of rising hills and shady grouves. The capital is Huntersdune—that is, the Hil or Downe of Hunters ; and hard by is a medow called Portsholme, environed round by the Ouse, where the pleasant spring fair floures doth yeeld, of divers colours in this feeld.”

Such is the description of Huntingdonshire in olden times, and it stands good to this day, barring the addition of railways, telegraph poles, level crossings, and threshing machines—things calculated to interfere sadly with the straight going of the man who desires to sail across this magnificent country at the tail of the “Fitzwilliam,” one of the finest packs of foxhounds in the world.

The best meets of the Fitzwilliam are Barnwell Wold, Bythorn Tollbar, Catworth-gorse, Stanwick Pastures, Leighton-gorse, and Elton and Buckworth. And the best place of sojourn for the adventurous is, without doubt, the Haycock at Wansford. What Limmer’s was to the army, the Haycock was, and still is, happily, to the hunting world. Distant about seven miles from Peterborough, and five from Stamford, it was in bygone days, ere the iron of the rail had entered

into the heart of this country, the great posting-house on the road from London to York. The records of this celebrated hostelry prove that not only was it frequented by all the nobles of the land, as shown by the fact that no less than five dukes put up there on one occasion—a perfect covey of coronets—but it was also the resting-place of Royalty, her Majesty the Queen, accompanied by her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent and their retinue, having rested here whilst journeying northwards. In fact, not to know “Tom Percival,” of Wansford, is to be unacquainted with one of the most pleasant, kind, considerate, and genial of sportsmen; and not to have rested under his hospitable roof is a proof of little knowledge of sporting matters, and, at any rate, shows that he who makes that confession could never have been “entered” at Cambridge, for it was here that the overworked undergraduate was in old times wont to retire for a while—especially on hunting days—in order to obtain rest and recreation when oppressed by severe study and reflection.

It was here that the late Duke and Duchess of Bedford were in the habit of retiring every season for a while, exchanging the splendours of Woburn for the comforts and quiet of Wansford; here Byron rested, and a search over the archives of the Haycock would show that most people of note in the pre-railway era have at one time or other sought the hospitality of this noted hostelry. To say nothing of the lot of jolly fellows who have from time to time put their feet under the well-worn “mahogany” when the days would run so curiously into the nights that, with that and other causes, there was a probability of their finding

themselves in the predicament of the nigger who couldn't tell t'other from which.

"What sort of a morning is it?" said a "noble sportsman" to his London valet, when he called him at the ghastly hour of six to go a-hunting with the Cottesmore.

"Very dark, sir, and smells of cheese," was the reply, for the attendant had opened the cupboard door instead of the window shutters.

Departing from King's-cross by the splendidly appointed three o'clock train of the Great Northern Railway, Peterborough is reached in an hour and forty minutes, punctually to the instant; and as the Great Northern runs through the very centre of the Fitzwilliam country in its passage from Huntingdon to Peterborough, an opportunity is offered to "take stock." No doubt the traveller will arrive at a conclusion similar to that of the gentleman who remarked to a fellow-passenger, as the result of his observations whilst flying through this part of the world, "that there seemed to be a good deal of land about;" and this being the only remark he made during the journey, goes far to show that he was a very pleasant companion as well as an acute observer. Leaving Peterborough by a branch line of the North-Western Railway, Wansford-road station is reached within half an hour or thereabouts, and a short drive lands the visitor at the door of the Haycock, over the portals of which hangs the well-known sign, now sadly stained and weather-beaten, showing the bridge, with a countryman reclining on a haycock, who had been borne sleeping by the waters of the Nene until he reached this spot, and, in reply to inquiry as to where

he had floated, and being told "Wansford," says, "What! Wansford in England?" by which title it has been known ever since.

The meet, on the occasion of my visit, was at Lilford, and many a man has had a worse fate than, that morning, was mine. A mount on Harkaway by Hieover, dark-brown horse with tan muzzle, 16 hands, master of any weight, flat legs, short pasterns, clean and powerful hocks, sloping shoulders, high crest, deep girth, well-ribbed up, arched neck, small head, symmetrical ears, and eyes like a hare, with exceedingly "good manners," though a trifle sensitive, as one may see by his playful gambols, suggestive of being "all there" whenever his path is crossed by

blackbird or thrush, as it darts from the hawthorn hedge. Cornered in a narrow lane running parallel with the rail, the gates of the level crossing closed, and a coal train thundering in the rear, he stands bewildered, quivering in every muscle; then come a whistle, a whirl of smoke and dust, the din and crash of the passing trucks, and, with a snort and a bound, he is round on his hind legs in an instant, and goes through a variety of evolutions that tax the powers of his rider to the fullest extent. Decidedly railways in hunting countries should have been constructed on the underground system.

A sharp gallop through the quiet little village of Elton, past Elton Hall, the seat of Lord Carysfort, away through the sleepy, deserted-looking town of Oundle, and Lilford Cross-roads are reached. During the whole of the ride, some nine miles or thereabouts, there is no occasion to go a yard on the road, which is bordered all along with a broad margin of turf, so that

“the pace may be gone” without hammering the hack’s feet to pieces over the stones, and those who know their way about and are good at opening “bridle gates” make short tracks across country through their knowledge of the localities, where a stranger would come to grief, as he may frequently ride for two or three miles without seeing a soul. If he does meet one of the “sons of the soil,” he won’t get much information from him, for ten to one his knowledge of localities is strictly confined to the limits of the parish he is born in. However industrious and clever he may be at husbandry, he makes but an indifferent guide to an inquiring stranger. Arriving, however, at our destination, we find George Carter and his two whips, with 20 couples of hounds, which it would be difficult to match, in splendid condition, showing great quality, and as blooming as a bed of roses.

Returning after a lapse of many years to the scenes of our youth, we naturally look around for the old familiar faces of those who hunted with the Fitzwilliam in bygone days. But few of the old sort are to be seen, for a fresh generation has sprung up; and we may search in vain for many an old friend or acquaintance. First and foremost we miss Tom Sebright, who hunted the Fitzwilliam for forty years---a very king of huntsmen, admitted to have been one of the finest sportsmen that ever carried a horn, and one through whose judgment and knowledge of the breeding of hounds the Fitzwilliam attained so great an excellence. Kindly and pleasant in his manners, he was a favourite with all; and the esteem in which he was held was proved by the presentation of a silver cup, containing 800 guineas, subscribed for by 293 of his friends.

Well do we remember the day when the meet was Bulwick—the time the month of March, a season when foxes travel long distances. No sooner were the hounds thrown on than a noble old dog-fox was viewed; disdainful of the covers, he took to the ride, and was run in full view until the open was reached, when for an hour and a quarter he went across country at racing pace without a check, and died before the hounds in the centre of Rockingham Park. Experience recalls no better run, and when sailing along by the side of Sebright the conclusion was inevitable that nothing could beat fox-hunting. Again we may look but fruitlessly for Lord Cardigan and Hubert de Burgh, who would occasionally come over from Deane to have a turn with the Fitzwilliam; for Mr. Tryon, of Bulwick Park; Lord Sandwich, Mr. Wells, of Stilton; Parsons Croft, of Shelton; and Shafto, of Buckhurst; Tom George, of Bythorn, a welter weight; Tom Day, of Kimbolton, whose weather-beaten face gained him the sobriquet of “purple day”; Banks Tomline; Vipan, another welter; Charlie Lindow, better known as “The Captain”; Jack Stevens, on Cock-of-the-Heath; Alick Goodman, a bruiser, and well known to fame as a hard one to beat; the Sartoris Brothers; or “Miss Reynolds,” who now and then mowed down the whole field, including even George Carter, who used to indulge in forcible notes of admiration when she squandered the lot, as she flew a bullfinch.

But the past must take care of itself; our business to-day is hunting. The covers at Lilford Hall, not having been yet shot through, were not drawn, and the hounds were trotted on to the Fox Covers, where we soon found, but little good was done with the fox,



as he hung to the covers and could not be forced away; so, ringing about Clapton and Cocksbrook Spinneys, he was lost. A second, however, was found in Mariner's Gorse, which ran in the direction of Tichmarsh and Old Western; but the day having become wet and cold he gave but little sport, and the hounds trotted off to the kennels at an early period of the afternoon. The next day the fixture was Washingley. The morning, which was fine at the commencement, changed to heavy rain at nine o'clock, and the ride to the meet, distant ten miles from Wansford, had to be performed in a soaking downpour which left nothing to be desired as far as water was concerned. Arriving in good time, an opportunity offered of looking over the 20 couples and a half following George Carter, which fully confirmed the previous impression, that it would be hardly possible to show a finer pack of hounds, take them for all in all, than the Fitzwilliam. Amongst a field of some 50 or 60 well-mounted men the Master, the Hon. Charles Fitzwilliam, was to be observed, looking fresh and well as if time had used him kindly; there were also present, Lord Esme Gordon, and "Frank Gordon," looking as perfect a horseman as ever, and as fit to show the way across the open as he did in the days when he piloted Miss Percival—now Mrs. Gordon—across the fences of Huntingdonshire, to the admiration of all beholders. Men who hunt with the Fitzwilliam come for business, not show, and some of the finest heavy-weight horses were to be seen at Washingley, equal to carry any weight across the large fields and bold fences which are the characteristics of this fine country.

Washingley Wood and the covers adjacent to the

Hall having been drawn blank, in consequence of their having been recently shot through, the hounds were taken to Papley Gorse, which was next tried without a find, and at last a fox was viewed away, going towards Elton at a rattling pace, which at first looked like lasting ; but his heart failed him, and, instead of going a clinker across to Barnwell Wold, he shut up after a short burst. The result of these two days must not be taken as a fair sample of the usual sport. The season is young, the covers blind, especially the gorse, which will readily account for Papley being drawn blank—a very unusual circumstance.

There can be no better place of resort for those who really value the comforts of man and beast than the Fitzwilliam ; it is in truth a real hunting country, in which a well-mounted man can always go straight if his heart is in the right place ; the land, especially the grass, rides well, and even the plough in the wettest weather is never holding ; the fences, though big, are always to be negotiated, and if any one has a taste for water, the Nene—now a bumper—will accommodate him. The railways, though interfering with the integrity of the country, enable visitors to travel from point to point with facility ; and there can be no hesitation in recommending good sportsmen on the lookout for quarters to try their luck with the Fitzwilliam. Those, too, who wish to enjoy a treat will visit the kennels at Milton, near Peterborough, where they may make certain of a friendly reception from George Carter, the worthy successor of poor old Tom Sebright, who follows closely in the footsteps of his predecessor, and, there, they may judge for themselves whether the opinion already expressed as to the merits of this pack

is overrated. A non-hunting day may be well spent in an inspection of the Wansford stud, which consists of highly bred animals, mostly weight carriers, especially a thoroughbred Irish horse, fit to carry many a stone to the fastest hounds, a chestnut of superior order, and, in fact, a rare lot altogether, calculated to cheer the heart of a hunting man.

A drive to Stamford gives an opportunity of a look at Burghley House, the seat of Lord Exeter, its noble trees and herds of deer, coveys of partridges, and host of well-contented rooks returning after a successful search in the new ploughed land, accompanied by immense flocks of whistling starlings and chattering jackdaws.

Altogether Wansford and its hospitable inhabitants cannot fail to revive in the minds of "veterans" many old recollections, and will certainly beget a full determination to revisit the Haycock on some future occasion.

## WITH THE H. H.

“SEE winter comes to rule the varied year, sullen and sad, with all his rising train—vapours and clouds and storms,” making the “country” terribly deep for riding, filling the furrows, damming up the ditches, causing the brooks to run “bumpers,” whilst “the rivers swell, of bonds impatient,” flooding the pleasant valleys of the Ouse and the Nene; compelling “welter weights” to seek fresh fields and pastures new for a while, until the waters subside and the Oakley and Fitzwilliam countries once more afford good going for those who ride some sixteen or seventeen stone. Vapours and clouds and storms are no doubt thoroughly seasonable at this time of the year, and highly beneficial from an agricultural point of view. And this we were glad to learn, whilst returning from hunting, from a venerable husbandman, bent double with toil or rheumatism, or both, weather-beaten and soiled with earth—who, regardless of the pelting of the pitiless storm, yet cheerily “passed the time of day,” observing that it was “foin weather for the turmuts.”

Up to this time we, who had been on pleasure bent, had taken a different view of the atmospheric arrangements, and were naturally greatly pleased to find that agricultural labourers could be so “deep contemplative” as to find “books in the running brooks,

sermons in stones, and good in everything"—even in such a withering wind and persistent downpour as that which had drenched us to the very skin. Truly our bucolic friend was an observant man, for, whilst stopping under the friendly shelter of a wheatstack, lighting a cigar to cheer us on our lonely way, we observed that the wind, whilst rudely playing with the leaves of the young swedes, was loosening the moistened earth, thus allowing the plants to take strong hold of the ground, a process decidedly "good for the turnmuts." But, however advantageous heavy rains and high winds may be for agricultural purposes, they are not equally beneficial for those on hunting bent, and we decided to change the *venue* for a while, and to try the lighter lands of Hampshire.

Hence our visit to the celebrated pack of fox-hounds which hunts this country, where much of the going is over light lands, with a considerable amount of open country and easy fences, offering facilities to those who, by reason of advancing years look twice at an ox-fence or a bull-finch in the shires, though they enjoy a rattling spin over a good hunting country at the tail of a pack of hounds so long and favourably known to sportsmen as the "H. H."

On Saturday last the meet was at the Grove, for Hackwood Park, near Basingstoke; the route, *viâ* South-Western, by the nine o'clock train from Waterloo, where, on taking a return ticket, the passenger is informed that the fare is sixteen shillings if he return the same day, and only twelve shillings if he stop until Monday.

Now this would appear to be somewhat of an "anemone," to use the expression of a certain bibulous

old gentleman who was accustomed to muddle himself and his parts of speech by the too frequent use of the cup that cheers and yet inebriates. Why should the directors of this railway hold out such inducements to travellers to desert their "Lares et Penates" on the Sabbath Day, unless it be in the interests of the proprietors of the Pig and Tinderbox, the Angel and Half-boots, and the Cat and Cauliflower, or some other of the many hostelries to be found in the quiet old town of Basing, which appear to be waiting open-mouthed for guests. Well, they owe the town some compensation, for the opening of the railroad inflicted serious injuries on the coaching interest, which was largely represented there—however, let that pass, for the train starts military time.

"Pray, sirree," said an American traveller fresh from the wilds of Arkansas, or some such remote region in Yankee-land, "is this an express engine or a huckleberry train? Wall, I see you don't reckon that up quite," he continued, finding that his query required some explanation. "But, you see, some of the trains in our country air so slow that you have time to git down from the cars and pick the huckleberries off the hedges, and then overtake the engine again."

Being assured that there was no fear of such complications here, his fears were allayed, whilst his daughter was good enough to pronounce the travelling in the old country to be "rale elegant." The passenger accustomed to travel solely on the branches and loops of this line, on which there is a very prodigality of unpunctuality, and where "time is never the essence of the contract" between the directors and their

passengers, to use a legal phrase, is delighted to find that there is no opportunity on this occasion for the gathering of huckleberries; for Basingstoke Station is reached to the moment. An exceedingly well-appointed and sporting-looking turn-out is in waiting, and bears the visitors promptly to "The Grove," the pretty old-fashioned residence of Mr. Pain, a gentleman well known to every sporting man whose pursuits have ever led him to the "Corner."

It being a lawn meet, all comers are expected to partake of the elegant breakfast provided for the occasion; and the only thing which seems to interfere with the serenity of the host and hostess is a regret that there are not many more visitors to partake of their profuse hospitality.

There are worse moments in life than those passed at a hunt breakfast. Seated at a table decorated with flowers of surpassing brilliancy and freshness, and covered with viands which afford every facility for the gratification of the more material tastes; the windows overlooking the lawn, dotted all over with scarlet coats; the Master dismounted, and surrounded by twenty-two couples of "varmint"-looking hounds, watching attentively his every movement; the whips now and again recalling some wandering members of the pack, with an occasional and musical cry of "Ware horse!" as some straggler approaches too nearly a fiery and impatient steed, who, in his eagerness to commence the business of the day, is lashing out dangerously with his hind legs; the arrival of men on hacks and carriages of all descriptions—notably, a four-in-hand wagonette drawn by four very neat cobs; ladies mounted on likely-looking nags;

pedestrians, and the usual number of "loafers" who are always to be found at a "meet"—these things, together with a background of evergreens and a merry sunshine, form the materials for a pleasant picture. Add as a further advantageous ingredient an invitation to mount a six-year-old horse of fine form and fashion, whose subsequent performances prove that he makes light of such a trifle as sixteen stone, and you have all the incidents that promise a good time.

Starting under such fortuitous circumstances, the first introduction to the "H. H." may be said at least to be happy in its commencement. As soon as the time was up, Mr. Deacon, who, in addition to playing the part of Master, undertakes the task of hunting the hounds himself, proceeded to draw the wood at the back of "The Grove," which was, however, blank, though looking all over like holding a fox. Thence the hounds were taken to Hackwood Park, and but few minutes were given to look around at the noble old trees, to note the scuttling rabbits, see the fine old cock pheasant sunning himself in the brilliant December sun, and drying his plumage after the heavy rains of the past week; for a whimpering of the hounds is heard, then a view-halloo, followed immediately by a "who-hoop," the fox literally running into the jaws of his pursuers, and being in an instant catawampously chawed up, or, in sporting parlance, "chopped." Again the hounds speak, and a fox is seen going across the ride; a view-halloo is given and the hounds are at him in a trice, and he is rattled around to the music of the whole pack; but, being headed by some footpeople, he doubles back and



breaks cover in the direction of "The Grove," where, after a few minutes' run, he is lost.

Splendid and enjoyable as the day was, yet it was bad for scent, the ground being very wet and cold, and fetlock-deep even on the light lands, whilst in some of the rides in the covers it was exceedingly bad going, the horses sinking up to their knees at every step. The first thing that struck me was the tendency of the men hunting with the "H. H." to override and head the hounds. They are fortunate in possessing so courteous and easy-going a gentleman-huntsman as Mr. Deacon, who appears to be one of the sort alluded to in an old anecdote.

On the occasion of an over-eager sportsman starting after the fox himself, he was asked whether he thought he could catch him, and replying "No," was requested by the Master "to be so good as to allow his hounds to try if they could." Those who were acquainted with "Old Conyers" of the Essex hounds, Lord Gifford, or the late Lord Fitzhardinge would have been greatly astonished if, under such provocation, they had not heard much stronger remonstrances, couched in language which we remember to have heard described as being "neither Parliamentary, parochial, nor otherwise." It would be well if such energetic performers would study 'Thoughts on Hunting,' a volume which, though of ancient date, contains much sound and seasonable advice on the subject of the evils of over-riding hounds—a process by which many a good run is spoilt. By all means let the hounds have a good start, and then in a sharp burst over the open, in the best parts of the "H. H." country, if you can tread on their tails you may be

certain that you have got a horse who can go the pace, at any rate.

Returning, however, to the Park, another fox was immediately found, which ran through the covers and broke away towards Greywell—or “Gruel,” as the natives are wont to call it—leaving old Basing on the left, and pointing towards Odiham, thence through the covers, with now and then a burst across the open, running for somewhere about an hour and a half, until it went to ground in the vicinity of the old Basingstoke Canal. The line of country crossed was not one to be selected for sport, the covers being numerous and large, the land in places terribly heavy. Yet any one fond of seeing hounds hunt would have no doubt of their ability to pull down a fox whenever he tries to live before them in the big fields lying in the direction of Winchester and the country around.

Again the hounds were trotted off—this time to draw some osier beds. Not finding there, an adjacent cover was tried, with a similar result; but, on leaving, the hounds suddenly came across the scent of a fox which had stolen away, and, settling down with a will, ran at a merry pace for some fifteen or twenty minutes. But the scent being cold and the fox some way ahead, the hounds came to a check. Then, recovering, they turned back towards the Greywell Woods, after a short but pretty burst over a capital country.

Once again I felt that none but an old sportsman can understand the feeling of delight experienced when the cry is heard of “Gone away, lads; gone away!” and he finds himself sailing along at a

rattling pace, leaving black care behind for the while ; and as he takes his fences with judgment and discretion, keeping a good eye to the hounds, and saving his horse in the deep ground, forgets that he is heavily handicapped with age and weight, and congratulates himself as he pounds along that "there is life in the old dog yet."

A large field attended the meet, numbering in all some 120 or 130 horsemen, among whom were Mr. Pain, on an old-fashioned nag ; Mr. Edmund Tattersall—the genial representative of a real "sporting" family—on a dark chestnut, up to great weight and a fine fencer ; Colonel Randolph on a bay as fresh as a kitten ; Mr. Schlater, and several ladies who seemed to be thoroughly at home at their work, and a number of well-mounted men fit to go across any country. The attendance of ladies is now common to nearly every pack in the kingdom, and far be it from me to do or say anything that could by any means interfere, even in the slightest way, with their enjoyment of a day's sport with the hounds ; nor would I have it supposed for an instant that I could under any conceivable circumstances consider a lady to be *de trop* ; but yet I feel somewhat inclined on such occasions to say, "Oh, woman, in our hours of ease, delightful, charming—when you please—don't take to hunting unless you have good figures, light hands, brave hearts, strong nerves, short habits, and perfect horses. Without these essentials, do not go a-hunting, lest you come to grief—a state of things too distressing to contemplate, even for a moment."

Talking of coming to grief reminds me of the sorrow that was expressed in the field at the serious

accident—which has since ended fatally—to Major Marx, of Arlebury, near Alresford, a great supporter of the “H. H.,” whose horse threw him heavily whilst quietly riding home from hunting. It is a singular fact that accidents by falls from horses are very seldom fatal to those actively engaged in hunting, but more often happen to persons riding steadily along—frequently to first-rate horsemen.

Lord Cardigan was one of the finest riders it has ever been my fortune to see, either at the head of a regiment, on the road, or across country, yet he was killed by a fall from his hack whilst quietly riding in the woods at Dene; Lord Waterford, who passed through more perils than fall to the lot of ordinary men, lost his life in the same way, when quietly riding by the roadside; and many others have met with a similar fate.

On no occasion during an experience of nearly fifty years have I ever witnessed a serious accident in the field, though hunting in many difficult countries. I really think there is less risk for hard riders across country than for those who jog quietly along the highways and byways. Considering the many advantages which the “H. H.” country offers—its proximity to London—an hour and a half by rail sufficing to land you in its centre, its good going, light fencing, abundance of foxes, and well-hunted and fast hounds—I have no hesitation in advising those who are in doubt where to go to try Hampshire; but I should strongly counsel those who would use the opportunity to the greatest advantage, to take nothing but thorough-bred horses;

for then they will be able to go the pace, as they will rarely find a fence that cannot be taken in the stride; and when the ground rides light and the scent holds well, they may depend upon it it will take them all their time to live with the hounds.

## A WEEK AT MELTON.

### I.

“MEL-TON—Mel-ton Station,” a sound pleasant to the ear of the weary passenger who arrives at his destination four hours after his appointed time, though it causes his spirits to rebel at the altered state of circumstances under which he makes his re-entry into “Melton Mowbray, the Metropolis of Hunting,” after a lapse of many years, causing memory to “hark back,” and to recall the scenes of bygone days. Where now the four reeking “tits,” the postboys in blue jackets, the mud-bespattered chaise, the obsequious waiters, napkin in hand, who, having watched “the gallop up the avenue,” are in readiness to let down the steps with a rattle, and bow you a respectful welcome to the hostelry of your choice? Gone like the baseless fabric of a vision, leaving only ticket collectors and railway porters to receive you when you do arrive—a matter of congratulation to those who are weak enough to put their faith in trains which are advertised to meet at what are jocularly called junctions. Man proposes to do many things, but adverse fate disposes of his propositions with but scant ceremony.

A forced sojourn at the Kentish Town Station is not an incident to look back on with delight; but, leaving this dreary locality to its denizens, the iron

horse speeds rapidly on his way, "now plunging into tunnels, now bounding into light," puffing and snorting as if he found "the going heavy," whilst he gallops along over the still green fields of Hendon and Finchley, dashes through Amptill and Bedford, then "ferrard, ferrard," through Sharnbrook—a well-remembered meet of "the Oakley"—Finedon Poplars, the delight of "the Pytchley;" then, skirting Kettering, he comes to a check at Leicester, after a sharp burst of an hour and a half. During this long halt we have time to revisit the town which some forty years' since was one of the head-quarters of people who hunted in Leicestershire, vying at that time with Melton in offering accommodation to those who visited the shires.

By the introduction of iron-ways that which was comparatively a small country town now approaches very closely to a city, boasting of its Theatre Royal, tramways, Temperance Hall, American Meat Stores, where a roaring trade is carried on in fresh beef at from fourpence to eightpence a pound—our enterprising cousins on the other side of the Atlantic, having had the hardihood to challenge the English grazier to a trial of strength on his own ground, even in the very centre of the finest grazing land in the old country—whilst a convocation of coal trucks, such as eye has never beheld before, hailing from every quarter, the best Wallsend, the Derbyshire Brights, the ardent Silkstones, meet, in a way highly suggestive in these parlous times of a "conference" on some "burning question" of the day—probably the approaching roasting of Turkey—which at this season so occupies our insular minds. This alteration in

Leicester, though eminently satisfactory from a mercantile point of view, is not equally so to those on pleasure bent. Little wonder, then, that the "Metropolis of Hunting" has borne off the palm, and is the place, *par excellence*, for those who wish to enjoy hunting in its fullest perfection; where, to quote Nimrod, in his celebrated work, 'The Chase, Turf, and Road,' "it is the union of the elegant repose of life, combined with the energetic sports of the field, that constitutes the charm of Melton Mowbray."

Leaving Leicester by a branch line, a short journey brings me to Melton. The hour is six, the evening misty and murky; the earth, from the long-continued and heavy rains, has arrived at the point of "perfect saturation," and I splash through the mud and slush, under the guidance of a porter, to the Harboro' Arms, to find that noted hotel full to repletion. In vain the obliging proprietor, Mr. Dale, tries to find accommodation, but is reluctantly compelled to deny me the shelter of his roof; and a feeling of painful disappointment, almost approaching to despondency, comes over me as I look at the bright-burning fires, the cheerful lights of the elegantly furnished rooms, see the dinners preparing, and note the goodly array of bottles calmly reposing on the ice, soon to yield up the sparkling wines of the Widow Pommery to restore the strength and cheer the hearts of the tired sportsmen.

Whilst the chambermaid is being cross-examined as to the state of affairs I have time to look at the list of names of those who have had the good fortune to secure quarters in this eligible place of abode, and I find at the head of the list Mr. Little Gilmour, whose name is a household word in Melton, having been a



visitor for upwards of forty seasons ; Sir John Lister Kaye, Messrs. Fruen, Tompkinson, Baltazzi, Captain Starling, and three Australian gentlemen, the Messrs. Russell, who have come over, bringing their horses with them, to gaze on the glories and partake of the pleasures of Melton ; and though Captains Olifant and Atkinson have recently retired, their places have been filled up, and the inexorable official pronounces our doom. I have "to move on," like Jo. It did not occur to me to ask if I could have a shelf in the pantry, after the fashion of a deceased frequenter of Limmer's in the olden time, who received me on one occasion in that wise, and whilst seated in the position usually dedicated to spoons and forks, discussed with calmness, if not perfect indifference, the affairs of one of his chosen friends and boon companions, who had come to much grief through indulging in the pleasant and congenial sports so affected by the frequenters of that once rollicking hostelry.

So I move on until I reach that far-famed place of entertainment described some forty years since by "Nimrod" as "that excellent inn called the George Hotel," where I received a cheerful welcome at the hands of Mr. Childs, the popular proprietor, who maintains the reputation of the house fully up to the standard of olden times, as my subsequent experience proved. But then my tastes are so simple, requiring only the best and plenty of it, with the proviso that the little wine I take shall be dry, so that but slight difficulty was found in supplying my wants ; and when I found that these quarters had been selected by Major and Mrs. Whyte-Melville, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Chaplin, Messrs. Lubbock,

Parker, and Creyke, I felt perfectly satisfied that I should have an exceedingly good time of it at the George. "Passato il fiume è scordato il santo"—the journey is over, my troubles by the way are forgotten, and whilst smoking a cigar before a blazing fire I inquire who is to be found at Melton this season. First I learn that the Earl of Wilton, with his Countess, are shortly expected to arrive at his lordship's hunting-box, Egerton Lodge, which he has occupied for forty years or more; but I hear with great regret that, owing to failing health, it is doubtful whether this veteran sportsman will be found in the saddle during the present season, though his presence at the meets is looked forward to, where he will doubtless put in an appearance on wheels. The only names I recognise amongst the number familiar to me in early days as frequenters of Melton are those of Lord Wilton, Mr. Gilmour, and Mr. Burbige.

Next I ascertain that Lord Grey de Wilton resides at North Lodge, Lord Wolverton at Park House, having left his noble pack of bloodhounds for a while, exchanging the pursuit of the stag for that of the fox, in order to contrast the sharp bursts across the grass in Leicestershire with the clinking runs of his own "country;" Lord Carington at the Manor House, the Earl of Wicklow at Wicklow Lodge, Sir Beaumont and Lady Florence Dixie at Sysonby Lodge, Colonel Williams at what was formerly the Old Club, the Messrs. Behrens at Newport Lodge, occupying the stables originally built by "Lyne Stevens," with a stud of forty-one horses, all told, of which I shall make mention hereafter; Captain Farley Turner at Wartnaby Hall, Captain Boyce in

lodgings, Captain Atkinson on a visit to Lord Carington, Mr. Powell at the Lodge which he has rented for the season from Sir Francis Grant, Mr. Younger at Craven Lodge, Captain Smith, of steeplechase fame, and a bruiser to hounds; Mr. Chaplin at Brooksby, Captain Elmhurst, Mrs. Stanley, Colonel and Mrs. Markham, their sons and two daughters, in the town; Captain Hartopp at Little Dalby Hall, Mr. Chaplin and family at Wyndham Lodge, Captain and Mrs. Molyneux, etc.—forming the *crème de la crème* of the visitors to the “Metropolis,” the great charm of which is that hunting can be obtained from it every day in the week; and I may say, without fear of contradiction, that no town in the world can show such an assembly. Where else could one see such a bevy of sportswomen? Lady Wilton, who goes steadily and well; Lady Florence Dixie, who, across the grass, knows neither fear nor doubt, and apparently has never heard of mistrust, if I may judge by the way she handles her horse when he goes short at his fences, and a lady, it is quite clear, who will brook no refusal; Miss Chaplin on the “Stiff Un,” who goes the pace; Mrs. Stanley, as neat as if she was just turned out of a bandbox, but hard, very hard, across country; Lady Grey de Wilton, who seldom misses a day’s hunting, her favourite horse being a sight to behold, and a sufficient warranty of good going; the Misses Markham, who are to be found in the first flight; Mrs. Molyneux, a slasher; and several others of whom my limited time did not allow me to form an opinion.

An eminently quiet and prosperous place is Melton Mowbray, which is described in ancient writings as a

“mercat town,” celebrated for the beauty of its church ; situate on the river Stoure ; placed on one of the great North roads, some fifteen miles from Leicester and eighteen from Nottingham ; but though it is true that the town boasts of “mercat,” and a good one too, it is as the Metropolis of Hunting that it is distinguished in these days. In the morning I am awakened by the tramp of horses going out to exercise, and as I sit writing my attention is diverted to the splendid studs of animals that pass my window, the equals to which, in number and quality, I have neverseen at any time or place. Stags’ heads and horns, horses’ hoofs, sporting prints, portraits of celebrated masters of foxhounds and hunting crops, decorate the walls of the rooms ; the shops are devoted to the sale of saddles, bridles, whips, horns, horse-clothing, dog-collars, whistles, currycombs, leather gaiters, gloves, bird’s-eye neckcloths, and scarlet mittens. Fox terriers abound. The male inhabitants in general may be described as being of the order of the horse—horsey, hospitable, jovial, and generous ; of the fair sex I could say many pretty things, but will refrain, as it might be deemed impertinent if I were to particularise where all are charming. Pleasant as I found Melton on this occasion, I could but note the change that has taken place. The Old Club no longer exists, the junior clubs have vanished, and after eight o’clock the shops are closed, the visitors at dinner, and quiet rules the night. A change indeed from the olden style of living at Melton.

“ You knew the Marquis of Waterford, of course ? ”  
says the oldest inhabitant.

“ Yes.”

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“ Ah! well, he was a rum customer, and no mistake. I remember when he said to me one afternoon, after he had returned from hunting, ‘ Come along, my boy, and see fair play; I have been grossly insulted by three fellows, and I mean to give them a hiding.’ Well, we soon overtook them, close by the bridges, where the railway station stands now. ‘ Now,’ says my lord. ‘ I’ll fight the whole lot of you, one down another come on.’ Sharp’s the word and quick’s the action, for my lord offs with his scarlet coat, waist-coat and shirt, but he would not wait for me to take off his spurs, and he lets drive at number one, who gives him one in the mouth in return, and head over heels goes my lord on to a heap of broken flints, and his back was scored like a loin of pork. I picks him up and prevailed upon him to let me take off his spurs, and then he finishes number one, takes number two and three in succession and polishes them off, and no mistake. Ah! but he didn’t always come best off. I recollect when he was coming out of the Harboro’ at daylight, after having had a night of it, and seeing a man about to put out the lamps, he says,

“ ‘ Don’t do that.’

“ ‘ Why not?’ says the lamplighter.

“ ‘ Because I’ll give you a hiding if you do.’

“ ‘ Don’t know so much about that,’ says the man.

“ ‘ Will you fight?’ says my lord.

“ ‘ Shouldn’t mind much about that.’

“ ‘ Come on, then,’ says the Marquis.

“ And at it they go; but the lamplighter is too many for him, and he acknowledges he is beaten, but takes it all in good part, saying, ‘ You ain’t a bad sort of fellow; come in and have a drink.’ Ah! a liberal man, he was, very free with his money.”

Many were the sprees this madcap Marquis indulged in—one night painting a house all red from top to toe, to the astonishment of the occupant when he turned out in the morning; on another occasion driving up to the house of some one to whom he owed a grudge, calling him to come out instantly, and, when he came to the door in his nocturnal costume, whipping him into the drag, driving off to a neighbouring town, and putting him down in the market-place, leaving him shivering at two o'clock in the morning, to find his way home as best he could in his light and airy costume. With all his follies and foolish exploits, those who knew him at Melton will acknowledge that not only was he an "original," but a generous fellow at heart, if a trifle fast. "*Autre temps autre mœurs.*" Such goings on would not be tolerated in Melton nowadays.

Of Prince Batthyany, who no longer rides to hounds, there are many who speak, when they call to mind old times, of his courtesy and kindness; but no one is talked of with greater respect than Lord Cardigan, hot-tempered, imperious, if you please, but kind and generous to the highest degree; and the days are not forgotten when his lordship and Lord Gardner used to ride to hounds, too high-bred to show anything like jealousy. These two splendid horsemen took up their positions a field apart from each other, and the instant the fox broke cover, sat down on their horses, and went like the very mischief, and it was "devil take the hindmost." There have been many ill-natured things said of Lord Cardigan by those who did not speak the truth or know the man; but the narrative of one of the Six Hundred who galloped side by side with him in and out of the valley of death proved that he was as

much at home in the mad charge at Balaclava as he was in a run with the Cottesmore from Ranksborough Gorse.

On the particular occasion of my visit, however, the fixtures were : The Quorn, at Swithland Village, about sixteen miles from Melton ; The Belvoir, at Allington Hall ; Mr. Tailby's, at Stockerston, eighteen miles ; and The Cottesmore, at Langham, about eight miles, lying in the direction of Oakham. Knowing the latter country of old, I determined to try the Cottesmore first, as my recollections of the neighbourhood of Langham were decidedly favourable. When I sat down to breakfast I was not a little surprised at the provision that was made for an intending sportsman—a round of beef somewhere about 20lb. in weight, flanked by a ham of equal proportions, with sundry little kickshaws, mere trifles in comparison with the *pièces de résistance*, such as chickens, eggs, bacon, etc., which seemed a very liberal provision for one. But the wisdom of such a bounteous supply was soon apparent, for, whilst I was discussing the “delicacies of the season,” a gentleman arrived and sat down with me whom I afterwards ascertained to be Mr. Spafford, of Navenby-heath, Grantham—a well-known Lincolnshire farmer—who had ridden from Lincoln to Melton, a distance of thirty-two miles, in order to hunt with the Cottesmore. I felt satisfied that if there were many visitors who were in the habit of taking such rides before breakfast, it was highly necessary to make ample provision. A very fair day's ride this gentleman accomplished, as he came eight miles to cover, went with the hounds all day, came back to dinner at the George, and rode again to Lincoln at night—one

hundred and five miles in all, at the very least. I willingly accepted his statement that "it was a very good little horse he was riding"—and so he ought to be to carry a man of thirteen stone sixty-four miles, which was his share of the day's work.

At nine o'clock Melton begins to awake: grooms and second-horse men are taking the hunters to cover; by ten o'clock the town is all alive; broughams and carriages of various descriptions are in waiting; nice-looking hacks are being walked about, whilst from nearly every door emerges a "bit of pink." Soon after ten my hack is announced, and I jog leisurely through the town, studying the manners and customs of the visitors to the metropolis of sport. I see one fair lady wearing an Ulster of unmistakable fashion, who steps into a pony dogcart, handling "the ribbons" with the air of one accustomed, and, drawing her whip across the smart little nag, she dashes off in good style. As I gallop along the undulating road leading to Laugham, admiring the splendid pastures and fair fences, I overtake numbers of well-mounted men in scarlet, and smart grooms taking the favourites of the stud carefully to cover; then a horn is heard, and up dashes Lady Florence Dixie, in her four-in-hand pony wagonette, tooling along at a slapping pace, and looking as if she liked it.

Next comes a hack carriage drawn by two sporting-looking animals, going at a pace which only admits of a cursory glance at the occupant, allowing me sufficient time, however, to catch a glimpse of a pretty face, a natty hat, a well-gloved and symmetrical hand, holding a light hunting-crop, a vision which afterwards resolves into a well-proportioned figure in a close



fitting, well-cut habit, mounted on an exceedingly good-looking bay horse, which would doubtless, had circumstances been more fortuitous, have been seen in the front rank. *A propos* of neat hats, I am reminded of the two low-class betting men, *en route* to a "gate" meeting at Kingsbury, the other day.

"Beautiful hat, that, you've got on to-day, old man, and no mistake!" says one.

"Well," says the other, "it is a neat one; isn't it, now? Suits me, doesn't it?"

"Down to the ground. Where did you get it, eh?"

"At Hastings's, in Lombard Street."

"Did you, now? And what was the price?"

"Can't exactly say," replied the envied possessor, "for the gentleman wasn't in the shop when I took it."

Arriving at the meet, I find Neale with nineteen couples of racing-looking hounds, light in flesh, though in splendid condition, the result of high feeding and hard work. Very pleasant in his manners and workmanlike in appearance is the huntsman of the Cottesmore, well mounted are the two whips, and the whole turn-out is suggestive of going the pace when occasion requires it. The little village of Langham is all alive from one end to the other—filled, in fact, with carriages, dogcarts, hunters, hacks, and pedestrians. First I observe Mr. Little Gilmour, looking hale and hearty as if time had dealt pleasantly with him during the half-century he has hunted in this part of the world; Lord Wolverton, exceedingly well mounted, appearing very fresh and likely to go; Mr. Cecil Chaplin on a chestnut horse, a remarkably clever-look-

ing animal, recently purchased at a very long figure; Major Whyte-Melville in very good form; Mr. Lubbock apparently all over the performer which report pronounces him to be; Lady Florence Dixie on a bay horse as "fit as a fiddle"; Mrs. Stanley well-mounted, well-dressed—her habit fitting to perfection, cut to the sixteenth of an inch of the proper length, a smiling face set off by a neat tall hat, a white cravat with a plain gold pin, the corner of a white pocket-handkerchief just peeping out from between the buttons of her blue habit, presenting as perfect a picture of the "huntress" of modern days as eye could desire to rest on.

And in addition to these are Sir John Lister Kaye, Mr. Creyke, Mr. Parker, and a field of from 150 to 200 well-mounted men, of whom there is no time to take further note, as Neale trots away at a sharp pace to Ranksboro' Gorse, the oft-renowned meet of the Cottesmore, which stands on a gently sloping hillside in the very centre of the cream of this beautiful country, and is pronounced by Lord Wolverton to be the best meet in the world and the prettiest sight, as it assuredly is. "See Naples and die" is the boastful proverb of the Italians. See Ranksboro' Gorse and live, I say—if you can—at the tail of the Cottesmore in a forty-minutes' spin across this grand country, taking the "Whissendine" in your way and then you will know what the perfection of hunting is.

"Halloo in! halloo in!" cries Neale, and the hounds dash into cover with a will. Then mounting "from the moist meadow to the withered hill," I survey the prospect, and am fully in accord with Lord Wolverton in respect to the position of the cover and

the beauty of the sight—the hill dotted all over with men in scarlet, one or two at each point desirous of having a good start, the bulk of the field taking their position on the top of the hill. Not a whimper is heard though the cover is carefully drawn, as well as some gorse adjacent. Ranksboro' doesn't hold a fox to-day—a most unusual occurrence, attributable, in my opinion, to the heavy and long continued rains, which have driven the foxes to the high and dry hedge-rows, as I have in the course of the last few weeks seen the best covers in several countries drawn blank. 'Awoi, lads! awoi, lads!' cries Neale, and the hounds are trotted off to Little Dalby Hall, the seat of "Squire" Hartopp, the representative of one of the oldest Leicestershire families.

As we leave the cover one man comes to grief, as his horse, blundering in the deep ground, falls, and rolls over him. Fortunately no harm is done to his rider, who, however, is plastered with mud from head to foot. During the fifty years I have ridden to hounds I never remember to have seen the country so holding, and the going so bad, especially for heavy men. Little Dalby Hall is prettily situated on a hill commanding beautiful views of the surrounding country, embosomed in plantations, the spire of the beautiful church standing boldly out in the background. When the hounds are thrown into the "Punch Bowl," another celebrated cover, but on this occasion it is empty, for, though Neale draws it with his customary care, no fox is to be found. This cover is situated at the foot of the Burro' Hills, and a prettier picture is not often seen than it presents on such an occasion as this. On the summit of the highest part

of the hill are men in scarlet, looming large in the distance; others occupying every "coign of vantage" on the hill-sides, some standing at favourite points in the hope of getting a good start. Next we draw the Spinneys in the park and the shrubberies around the house, but again I am doomed to disappointment, for "nary-nary" a fox is there, and away we trot to a gorse cover near Pickwell, which is also drawn blank, while the same result followed the drawing of the next very likely-looking cover. The hounds then went in the direction of Whissendine, and at last a fox is found in an unexpected place—namely, "up a tree"—dead, with a rabbit-trap attached to its foot. Whether it had crawled up and died there, or had been placed there as "a sell," was a point that the learned differed upon. A fortnight preceding this occurrence a fox was found in a tree near the spot, and the whip climbed up and made him break from this unusual cover, which he did jumping down in the midst of the pack, and giving a splitter for fourteen minutes, when he went to ground, proving that the fox which runs boldly away stands a good chance of being hunted again some other day. It is not considered extraordinary to find foxes in trees in some localities. "Birds in their little nests agree," we are taught, but the addition of a fox or two must be bad for the birds, I should imagine. At last, however, a live fox is found, but he only potters about in the vicinity of Stapleford Park, affording no sport, and so ends my first day with the Cottesmore, and I turn home to Melton, hoping for better luck next time.

## A WEEK AT MELTON.

### II.

ON Sunday, during my week at Melton, I attended Divine service at the fine old church for which Melton Mowbray is celebrated. In Camden's 'Britannia' it is spoken of as being the most noticeable feature in what we nowadays designate the metropolis of sport. The church is cruciform in shape, and is said to be one of the most ancient of the Norman style of architecture extant in this country. It is built of stone, and has been restored from time to time, and the interior is now in an excellent state, whilst extensive repairs are going on at a heavy cost to preserve the elevation of this venerable structure. Funds, I am told, are never wanting to maintain that which is justly described as being the pride of Melton Mowbray. It boasts of several very handsome windows, but these are of modern date, one being formed of odds and ends of painted glass, gathered from all quarters, presenting features of interest to those learned in such matters.

Amongst the numerous tablets and monuments the first that meets my eye is that of "John Ferneley, Animal Painter, of Melton Mowbray," who lies in Thrusington Churchyard. There are many members of the Myddleton family buried within the church, and I read "Hic Jacet Dame Mary Hartopp," who died in

1639. Within a niche in the side wall is the recumbent figure of a knight in armour, the feet resting on the form of a dog, executed in granite. This figure must be of very ancient date, if I may judge of it by the time-worn appearance of the stone of which it is formed; and I could find no other record than "This is the Lord Hamon Beters, brother to the Lord Mowbray." Over the figure hangs the iron helmet or head piece of the knight, pierced in several places, but still in a very good state of preservation. In one corner of the church there stands a large round table, on which are placed a number of old books secured by padlocks and chains. Amongst others a Latin Bible of the date of 1617; 'A Defence of the Church of England, imprinted at London in Fleate streete, at the sign of the Elephant, anno 1570,' with annotations by 'John Jewel, Bishop of Sarisburie;' and several other books of like dates, amongst which is an old copy of 'Foxe's Book of Martyrs.'

Very quiet is Melton on a Sunday, and I retire to rest at an early period of the evening, so as to be ready for a day with the Quorn in the morning.

On the Monday I rise betimes; the meet is at Wartnaby Hall, the residence of Mrs. Turner, and I look forward with eagerness, hoping to have a good day's sport with this world-famed and historical pack. But the morning is lowering; one of that sort which old Stevens, under whom I graduated in hunting—and the father of the celebrated Jack Stevens, of Leicestershire fame—was wont to describe as being "amongst the muddlings," a description which, if not particularly lucid, is at any rate expressive.

As the distance to Wartnaby Hall was only three

miles, and the weather not calculated to allow of dawdling by the way, I did not mount my hack until half-past ten, and then, as I ride to cover, I overtake a number of magnificent horses, a group of eleven attracting my special attention, such as I have rarely if ever seen together, each in charge of a well-dressed groom or second horse man, of sedate appearance as befits these who bestride animals of such value. One amongst this number takes my fancy captive. A powerful black horse, with a "hog mane"—a fashion which appears to be coming in vogue again—as handsome as need be, as fresh as paint, and ready to jump out of his very skin from light-heartedness; a noble animal, and fit to carry any man in the best run that ever this grand country can afford, if he has the pluck and nerve to ride a nag which I should say, from appearances, would be likely to go a trifle fast at his fences.

Arriving at Wartnaby Hall in good time, I see, for the first time, "Tom Furr," with eighteen couples of fine hounds, and, as I look them over, I am told that the huntsman of the Quorn is the very best in the world; and I am bound to say he looks altogether a "workman" able to handle the tools in first-rate style; and I accept the statement of his abilities, coming, as it does, from a Master of Hounds in whose judgment I place implicit reliance.

Amongst the earliest to arrive is Lord Wolverton. Entering the hall under the friendly auspices of Major Whyte-Melville, I have the pleasure of being introduced to Mrs. Turner, to Mr. Copeland, the Master of the Quorn, and to Captain Farley Turner.

Wartnaby Hall is the *beau-ideal* of a hunting-box

from its situation and style; and, when ushered into the dining-room, where a splendid breakfast is laid—the fine old pictures, china, glass, and other accessories to comfort and luxury, with the addition of a bevy of ladies and gentlemen in hunting costume, form as pretty a picture as can well be imagined. “Thank you; just one glass of curaçoa,” and I mount my horse and trot away with the hounds to Holwell Mouth; a cover placed on the slope of a very steep hill—a bad place to get away from unless the fox breaks at the top, the descent not being facile. However, there is not much time to look around, for a view halloo is heard in the vale, and the fox goes away at a good pace, running a wide ring over excessively heavy land; then, making his way back to the cover, he is headed by the foot people, and he turns his back on Holwell Mouth, and goes away at a rasping pace in the direction of Six Hills, and, after a short spin of forty minutes, is killed in Schobyschold. Never in all my experience have I seen a field so utterly squandered, the country riding knee deep, whilst the atmosphere being wet and warm, the going was distressing, even for horses in the best condition, especially in the early part of the run over the vale. Prominent amongst the numerous sportswomen who were out to to-day was Lady Florence Dixie, who came to grief over a flight of posts and rails, drawing the posts out of the ground, without damaging herself, and, as the hounds were not running at the time, it was a matter of very little consequence to any one but the farmer whose rails she smashed. Though the day was all against sport, yet I saw enough to satisfy me of the fitness of the Quorn,



and the way in which they are hunted by Tom Furr.

Thursday being "Mercat" day at Melton, I determined to have a quiet time, and to make myself acquainted with the statistics of the town, the prices of oxen, sheep, and pigs, and generally to go in for agricultural information. To this end I visited the market, which may be described as first-class. Here I handled the sheep and oxen after the manner of an expert, glancing at the pigs, taking especial notice of two bacon hogs in a highly comatose condition, offering to lay ten to one that they would cheat the butcher by dying before they reached their destination—a clear case of apoplexy waiting upon appetite.

At the door of every inn were to be seen taxcarts, dogcarts, gigs, and vehicles of all sorts; and the town was full of visitors examining the fine displays of meat, poultry, and other comestibles.

Having gathered an ample store of knowledge in respect to things bucolic, I returned to the George, and, it being intimated that my presence at the market table would be agreeable, I joined the party, and sat down to a right good dinner.

Being somewhat of an observant turn of mind, I noticed that the whole company, to a man, went in for Turkey. Whether this was simply a curious coincidence or a covert expression of sympathy that animates the farmers of Leicestershire and Rutlandshire at this time, I cannot say; but I know that the old-fashioned love of fair play, and the dislike of Englishmen in general to see the weakest pushed to the wall, is an inherent quality in those dwelling in the shires.

A volume would be required to hold all the anecdotes that passed around that jovial table—of days when the “Squire” (Osbaldeston) was to the fore; when Assheton Smith was in his prime, Sir Bellingham Graham hunted the Quorn, and Lord Brudenell went the pace; how Sir Harry Goodricke had eighty couples of hounds in his kennels, and fifty horses in condition; when Mr. Maxsee was a great goer; and when Jack Stevens whipped into the Squire.

And thus we whiled the hours away, recalling days long past, the recollections of which caused a glow of warmth in the bosoms of those of the party who were entitled to call themselves veterans. Then having retired to rest I was soon fast asleep, dreaming that I was travelling in the soda-water line, and that, “Kirby” gate being shut, I went at it a “buster,” after the fashion of Jack Mytton, smashing the lot with a loud crash, and waking to find it was “Boots,” with my hunting clothes, knocking loudly at the door, for fear I should be too late for the meet with the Belvoir.

Leaving Melton I find the waters out in all directions, and, passing “Melton Spinneys” on the left, and cantering along at a steady pace, there is an opportunity of examining this splendid country, which offers every facility for sport. Overtaking some scarlet coats, and profiting by their knowledge of the place, the distance is shortened by going on the bridle-roads, and Saltby Church is reached to the moment. There I find a large meet, certainly not less than two hundred of the cream of those hunting this country being assembled. No time is lost, and the hounds are taken to a cover close by, and, whilst they are drawing,

an opportunity is given of admiring the "Cattle" and their riders.

Prominent amongst the ladies are Mrs. Stanley, Lady Florence Dixie, and Miss Miles, splendidly mounted, and looking very much at home. His Grace the Duke of Rutland, the Master of the Belvoir, is in his place, and amongst the numerous company are Lord Wolverton on a handsome grey, Major Whyte-Melville, Sir John Lister Kaye, Captain White; Mr. Younger and his son, fresh from Eton, and entering well to hounds; the Messrs. Burbige; Mr. Jos. Wilders, who, with Lord Carington, shook off the whole field a few days back by charging the strong posts and rails forming the boundary fence to a line of railway now in the course of construction; Mr. Black, Mr. Childs, and a host well-mounted, waiting eagerly for a view halloo, but in vain, for the cover is drawn blank, and Frank Gillard blows his horn, and the hounds soon gather round him.

Whilst waiting for two or three stragglers there is time to notice this splendid pack, which reflects the highest credit on the huntsman; even in size and colour, carrying more flesh than the Quorn, they appear more compact: whilst their splendid condition causes their coats to resemble velvet, rivalling even the "Fitzwilliam," which are noted for their bloom. The whips are well mounted, and by the persistent way in which one of them follows a disobedient hound it is evident that he knows his business. Then on we trot to another cover, the property of "His Grace," which rarely fails to hold a fox, but on this occasion is also drawn blank. Innumerable hares leave the cover, proving the hounds to be steady as a die, there

being no occasion to cry, "Ware hare!" to them. So on we go from cover to cover, drawing five before a fox is found; but the moment the hounds reach the Swallow Hole a halloo is heard, and they go away at a swinging pace, making for Croxton Park. Up to this point the land rode horribly deep. The lane which leads up to the Park was bad in the extreme, but, when the Park was crossed, the grass riding tolerably well, the pace was smart; then, bending towards the right, they run sharp to Belvoir Woods, where the fox is lost, after a run of forty minutes. Another fox was soon found, but did not afford any sport worth notice.

During the run an accident occurred to Lady Florence Dixie, which fortunately resulted in but trifling consequences. Whilst galloping through a gateway, the gate being on the swing, it caught in her habit, and pulled her off her horse, the only damage done being a slight sprain of the wrist. A gentleman riding at a brook during the run abundantly proved the fact "that 'twere better to halt than to ponder, for the stream runs wide on the take-off side, and washes the clay bank under"—and in they go, both man and horse, taking a header into the deep and swollen stream. Then, turning my steps homewards, halting at Waltham for a few minutes at a quiet-looking inn, I am supplied with bread, cheese, butter, and delicious home-brewed amber ale, at the small cost of  $7\frac{1}{2}d$ . Mounting and following the high road to Melton, a glorious panorama unfolds itself, showing a large expanse of grass on the left, and I cannot imagine any finer tract of land than this for hunting.

But the evening closes in, and as I approach an old-fashioned house placed in this most desirable locality—the Rectory, I am told—I think what a charming living this would be to hold, especially as one of the crack covers is close at hand; then “a blackening train of clamorous rooks thick urge their weary flight, and seek the closing shelter of the grove”—warning me that it is time to “shog” along, and in a short time the George is reached.

After copious ablutions to remove the soil of Rut or Redlandshire, with which I was plentifully bespattered, the pleasing announcement is made that dinner is served. When it is considered how important is the part that this meal plays in all the business and pleasures of life, it may not be considered inappropriate if a few lines should be devoted to the discussion of the subject. How imperative it is that good digestion should wait on appetite is a fact that comes home to all; and certain it is that as no one can ever hope to shine in political or social circles if he is dyspeptic, and what is more to the point at this moment, is that no one can hope to ride to hounds with nerve and vigour unless he lives wisely and well. With this view I venture to submit the particulars of the dinner I sat down to as an exemplar worthy of imitation. Potage au printemps, fillets of sole fried to perfection and served hot, boudins of hare, a small well selected rump steak, a hen pheasant hung to the hour and roasted to a turn, a mould of excellent jelly, and a ripe and real Stilton cheese, with one bottle of exceedingly dry and old Perrier Jouet’s champagne—and I think it will be admitted that the *chef* at the George is endowed both with ability and discretion.

On Thursday morning the meets are wide, Mr. Tailby's hounds being at Ilston, sixteen miles from Melton, and the Cottesmore at Stocken Hall, a similar distance.

I determine, therefore, to devote a day to the examination of some of the many studs, and with this view I proceed to the Harboro', and enter the stables where Sir John Lister Kaye's horses stand. The stud-groom has them stripped in succession, and I see 11 animals of a superior class all in blooming condition. The first, a black horse, "Justice for Ireland, as we call him," said the groom, a very handsome horse, great power, compact frame, large flat legs, splendid hocks, and noble head and neck, and as high in condition and as full of spirit as any horse need be. And I can readily believe that Sir John, who stands considerably over six feet in height, cannot be tempted to part with him; though I believe the large sum of 1,000 guineas has been offered, but such animals are not to be met with every day, and I think his owner shows much wisdom in declining to part with the flower of the flock, as it would be no easy matter to replace him.

After examining the rest of the stud, I come to the conclusion that if a man's heart is in the right place, and he has such a string of animals to carry him, that there is no country in which he could not sail to the front, and that it ought to be a very big fence that should prove a stopper to him.

From the Harboro' I go to Lord Grey de Wilton's stables, where I find 11 or 12 thoroughbred horses with coats shining like satin—a stud of unequalled quality to carry a man of 12 stone; the favourite

horse of her ladyship being a perfect picture, worthy of its rider, who goes well to hounds.

From thence I go to the stables occupied by the Messrs. Behrens, where I find 41 horses in all. As each is stripped I am told his pedigree and performances; several have been bred by the owners, the blood of King, Tom and Brocket, being conspicuous. It has never been my good fortune before to see so large and useful a stud in such perfect order and condition, reflecting the highest credit on the "Master of the Horse" who has charge of them, and who kindly showed me over the establishment. It is evident that neither expense nor trouble is spared, even to the minutest detail, to approach as near perfection as possible.

On Friday the Quorn met at Great Dalby, three miles from Melton. "Post nubila surgit Phœbus," who puts in an appearance for the first and only time during my visit. As I trot over the bridge and mount the hill on the way to the meet, the thrushes are singing and the morning is like an April day. The horses of the sun were evidently out of condition, and the day which had commenced so brightly ended in a snowstorm. Such are the conditions under which I pay my second visit to the Quorn, and a better opportunity is afforded to judge of the merits of "Tom Firr" and his racing-looking pack; and I learn with great satisfaction that the first cover to be drawn is Gartree Hill, which is sure to hold a fox, and one of the very best covers in the country to see a start—promises that are amply fulfilled when the time comes to test them.

Arriving at the village of Great Dalby, the first to

gallop up is Lady Florence Dixie, on this occasion driving a tandem at a rattling pace, and looking none the worse for her spill on Wednesday, and I afterwards see her on a big bay horse, "a tower of strength, with a promise of speed," and I recognise him as one of the stud of Sir John Kaye which I had seen yesterday. Next to put in an appearance are Lady Wolverton and The Hon. Mrs. Whyte-Melville in a carriage, Mrs. Stanley, the two Misses Markham, accompanied by their father, Major Markham, and his son; Lord Wolverton, on a clipper—a bay horse, which I am told goes like a bird at the tail of his lordship's bloodhounds when they go the pace; Major Whyte-Melville, on a favourite chestnut mare; a lady whose name I am unacquainted with, training up her little boy in the way he should go, entering him young, so that when he grows to man's estate he may be a shining light in the Quorn country; Mr. Lubbock, Mr. G. B. Parker, Captain Farley Turner, Captain Hartopp, Mr. Chandos Pole, Captain Smith, Mr. Younger and his son, Mr. Black, and Mr. Burbige.

Time is up, and away goes Tom Firr and his hounds at a rattling pace to Gartree Hill, a beautiful cover, placed like many others in Leicestershire, on the slope of a hill, from the top of which a view is afforded of every point from which a fox can break. "Halloo in! Halloo in!" cries the huntsman, and the hounds draw steadily and well. Following Mr. Burbige, who knows his way about—as he should after upwards of half a century's experience—I mount the hill; then a hound speaks, and a fox is viewed across the ride, running back to the hounds. At him they go with a will, a rattling view-halloo is heard in the vale, and



the fox breaks away at a swingeing pace, with the pack in full cry close to his brush; bearing to the right for a while he then turns and faces the Burro' Hills, making for the Punch Bowl cover, quitting which he goes through the Spinneys, and, leaving Little Dalby Hall behind, goes a short ring, and is lost at Pickwell after a run of 20 minutes, or thereabouts. The find was one of the prettiest I ever saw, and the fox a splendid fellow was bound to go the pace as the hounds were close at him. Then we trot off to a cover known as "Sir Francis Burdett's"—a sure find. In a few minutes a challenge is heard, and a fox breaks cover, going away at a racing pace for the Burro' Hills. At the very first fence down comes Mrs. Chaplin, her horse rolling on to her, but no further damage is sustained than a disordered state of the back hair and displacement of her hat; and finding her properly attended to by some gallant cavaliers, I gallop away to the left of the hounds. Rarely if ever have I seen a prettier sight than when the hounds, having run along the ridge of the hills, came down the slope at a rattling pace, making for Little Dalby Hall, and never have I seen men ride harder to hounds than some did on this occasion. Skirting the Punch Bowl, the fox runs for the plantations adjoining the hall, from which I view him away, making for the open. "Hold hard, sir, hold hard; let the hounds have time," are the sounds that salute my ears as I wave my hat in order to lay the hounds on to the scent; and I subsequently claim those remarks as proofs of my being "there or thereabouts," but unfortunately the fox is headed back by some foot people, and running through the cover breaks at the

end, and goes for the open. Here the hounds come to a check, but a halloo is heard, and away they go, crossing the hills again and returning to the cover, from which he is forced away once more, running another ring, and finally goes to ground under Summerley Hill. A very pretty range of hills are these, but too steep to be pleasant, and I should have much preferred a burst across the open to these several rings.

## MELTON: ITS HORSES AND HOUNDS.

LOOKING back on the pleasant days spent at Melton; reviewing the different packs of hounds and their huntsmen, the horses and their riders, I can see no trace of degeneracy in any shape or form on the part of either. It is a very usual remark of those who have fallen into "the sere and yellow leaf" to pronounce the things of the present time unworthy of comparison with those of bygone days. In no such spirit shall I speak of hunting as now to be enjoyed in the Shires. I see no symptom of any falling-off in style, no trace of inferiority in the horses, their riders, or the hounds they follow; and I will back the men of the present day to ride as hard, go as fast, charge as big a brook, as stout a gate, as high an ox-fence, or as stiff a bull-finch as ever did the renowned Captain Ross, on Clinker, in the glorious times when the Quorn were hunted by Osbaldeston, now exactly fifty-one years since. To say that the hunting to be enjoyed from Melton is as good as ever it was is to say sufficient; comparison is almost needless; at all times it has been excellent, and is so at this date. He would be a difficult man to please who could find fault with Neale, of the Cottesmore, and his fine-drawn and fine-conditioned hounds; Frank Gillard, of the Belvoir, and his blooming beauties; or Tom Firr, of the Quorn, and his

rasping and racing-looking pack; and though distance is said to lend enchantment to the view, yet I do not think that any one of the few remaining who hunted from Melton in olden times, on looking back to the past, will differ from me in the view I take of hounds and hunting nowadays.

It would be presumption on my part to award the palm of merit to either of these packs, especially as the sport I witnessed fell short of the average standard, owing to the marvellously wet season causing many of the very best coverts to be drawn blank; but I can fairly say that, in respect of looks, the most splendid of all the packs of hounds I have ever seen is the Belvoir. Perfectly matched, even in size, and specially noticeable for their superb condition and beautiful colour, they are, in my opinion, not to be surpassed; and were I an artist about to paint a hunting picture I would choose them for models before all. In respect to the Cottessmore, I am of opinion that for dash and speed they will not be readily matched; whilst of the excellence of the Quorn there can be no question; and therefore I think that, as far as the hounds are concerned, Melton stands first on the list of those places I have as yet visited.

Looking at the style of horses of which the studs are composed, I believe they will bear comparison with any of the cracks of former days; even when contrasted with such nags as "the Squire's" celebrated Clasher, Billy Coke's Advance, Sir Francis Burdett's Sampson, or any other of the renowned hunters whose fame is recorded in the annals of Melton; and I assert with little fear of contradiction that out of the number of horses now to be found there, as prime a lot of high-

bred and handsome animals as ever were seen will be met with in the various stables. As a specimen of a heavy-weight carrier I consider Mr. Little Gilmour's grey to be perfect ; that Lord Grey de Wilton's lot of thoroughbred horses could not be easily matched ; whilst those of Lord Wolverton's stud, the pick of Sir John Lister Kaye's, the lengthy bay horse recently purchased by Mr. Lubbock, the chestnut which carries Mr. Cecil Chaplin, or the black horse with the hog mane that has already been mentioned, are deserving of the highest commendation, and are quite good enough to go across any country ; and, looking at the straight going over the unusually heavy lands which I witnessed, I refuse to believe that even those far-famed riders whose names are familiar to old frequenters of Melton cannot be readily matched by the men of the period. The Messrs. Russell, who have come from Australia, have brought some horses with them ; and the one alongside of which I rode, though very raw, may be described as a useful animal, but hardly worth the trouble and expense that it must have cost his owners to bring him over. These gentlemen ride very hard indeed, not being at all particular as to what they charge, and being mounted on some occasions on horses supplied by Percival, of Wansford, they are able to go the pace.

Whilst speaking of imported horses I am reminded of one I saw the other day at the Bell at Leicester, the most perfect specimen of the Flanders breed that I have ever seen, such an animal as Rosa Bonheur would have delighted to paint—coal black, very small and beautiful head, arched neck, prominent eye, high crest, round barrel, and splendid mane and tail ;

and I consider it a waste of good material that this handsome animal should be doomed to convey those of the inhabitants of Leicester who have "shuffled off the mortal coil" to their last home. Whilst speaking of Leicester, I will relate an occurrence which amused me.

A stranger, accompanied by a boy, entered a silversmith's shop, whose name, for obvious reasons, I suppress, and asked to look at some articles of plate. The shopman, not liking the look of his customer, was very cautious and abrupt in his manner, evidently wishing to get rid of him; and he left without making any purchase.

"Father," said the boy, "I think that man was very rude to you."

"Well, he was, my boy, very rude indeed."

"He seemed to kind of suspect you, I thought," said the boy.

"Ah, my boy, that's a bad man, a very bad man; but he'll suffer for it, both here and hereafter. I've six of his spoons in my pocket now!"

It may be easy enough to express an opinion of the comparative merits of the sportsmen of times past and present; but when I come to speak of the sportswomen, I find a difficulty. In my early days I hunted in Essex with Lord Petre's hounds, and the only lady I remember to have seen attending the meets was the then Lady Petre—an elegant woman, as a Howard would naturally be—dressed in a light blue habit, with a velvet hat and drooping feather, mounted superbly, followed by a couple of grooms in livery, and riding by the side of the noble master at such home meets as Warley-common or Thorndon Hall; canter-

ing quietly for a while, seeing the find and start, and afterwards gracefully retiring from the scene. Then, in after times, appeared a few professional riders, going very hard indeed ; and by degrees ladies began to hunt in earnest, and now it may be considered an invariable rule that a certain number will be found with every crack pack, many of them beautifully mounted, thoroughly well appointed, even to the minute details of the luncheon-case and sherry-flask, riding boldly and well to hounds, and seeming thoroughly to enter into and enjoy the sport, whilst exhibiting much nerve and showing a total disregard of danger.

Opinions differ with respect to amusements, some looking indifferently on, and speaking disparagingly of, hunting. To my mind there is no finer exercise or manlier sport, and no pursuit that is better calculated to make dashing cavalry officers or fearless fellows. To a young man born with any amount of silver spoons in his mouth, about to start on a career of pleasure, I would say : There are three pursuits open to you—the Chase, the Turf, and the Road. If you follow my advice, you will stick to the first and the last in the days of your youth, leaving the Turf until time has brought you knowledge, and age has given you experience ; and even then you will find it will take you all your time, and possibly all your money, to compete with the shrewd and clever men, who make racing a profession rather than a recreation. Admitting it to be a very alluring pastime, and confessing that it must be a very pleasant thing to have a string of racers and to go in for the Blue Riband of the Turf and other splendid prizes, it must still be borne in mind that the

race is not always to the fleetest, there being such things as nobbling and other trifles, which oft-times cause the "pot to boil over," and lead to much vexation of spirit and damage to the pocket. Now, in hunting there are no such drawbacks; it is the Turf by day, and the green cloth by night, over which the going is so remarkably easy, that bring the best men to sorrow. Be advised, then, and stick to the two more pleasurable, if less exciting pastimes. Put money—plenty—in your purse, and, having selected Melton for your place of abode, go to such men for your nags as Percival of Wansford, Toynbee of Acton, or Cox of Stamford-street—where, by the way, I saw a clinker the other morning; make known your wants, take your choice, pay your money like a man, and, I'll warrant you, you shall go well across the big fields of Leicestershire if you have nerve and pluck, without which you will be nowhere. In respect to the "Road," you will find it extremely pleasant to drive a well-appointed drag to cover, and will never want companions by the way; and, should you by any chance become a married man, keep the reins in your own hands, lest the grey mare on the near side should get the better of you. I like to drive myself.

Having then established yourself either in a house of your own, or at either of the comfortable hotels, make friends with Mr. Childs, who will put you up to a thing or two, telling you the best meets, the nearest routes, and sundry useful pieces of information, which he is always ready and pleased to do, and you will have a good start. If you like society you will have an opportunity of making many friends, and, if you play your cards pleasantly, will never find the time



hang heavily on your hands; if you delight in whist or loo, or such like entertainments, you will be able to indulge your fancy.

"Tell me, me boy," said a hard-riding man from the county Meath, the other evening, "What is the meaning of 'Vingt-et-un'?"

"Why 21, of course," I replied.

"Well, faith," said he, "I thought it was 22, and I have been thrying for it all the night long," which accounted satisfactorily for his apparently eccentric style of play, and the "pot of money" he lost.

Then, having got your stud in condition, you should, if you are a moderate man, intending to hunt every day in the week, but yet content to have only two horses out each day, have a string of 16 fit to go, four thoroughbred galloping hacks, and a pair for the phaeton, and then you will be able to get along. You cannot do better after this than make the acquaintance of Mr. Burbige, whose exploits on his well-known grey have been so often narrated, and you will soon gain a knowledge of the "country."

If you have confidence in yourself you will select your own line, looking well forward, and never hesitating as to which part of the fence you should go at, but sitting well down on your horse, and going in for a good start. You ought—all the foregoing conditions being carefully observed—to make one of the first flight. Should you, however, not have implicit confidence in your own powers, and decide on following some good man, don't follow Lord Carington for choice; for you will find him an ugly customer if you take him for a pilot, and not all your money will save you from coming a cropper if you try to steer close in

his wake. I would also have you take warning from the fate of a canny Scot who had a mount with the Cottesmore the other day, who said "There was just a wee bit lassie mounted on a pony, and I said to mysel', 'I'll just keep along wi' her. Where yon sonsie little-body gangs I'll be bound I gang too;' but eh, mon, I had na' gane a mile before I came to muckle mischief over what they ca' a bullfinch. Eh, but it joost served me right for ganging like a daft laddie after such kittle cattle."

Having adopted this advice, if you do not go a clinker across the grass, and are not heard of always as being in the front rank, I shall consider you have mistaken your vocation, and are not to the manner born a huntsman.

## AT BADMINTON.

THE Angel at Chippenham! Well, it is many a long day since I rested beneath the shadow of the wings of this particular Angel, which now, as then, is a place for any one to take his ease at his inn—if he covet real comfort, and expects “good accommodation for man and horse.” Some thirty years ago, if memory serve me rightly, I was the travelling companion of “Elizabeth Vassal, Lady Holland,” in all her journeys to and from Bowood, on the occasion of her annual visits to Lord Lansdowne—having been selected by Isambard Kingdom Brunel as his representative—standing in his shoes, in fact, and taking charge of that distinguished and considerate peeress when she travelled by rail. Where now the celebrated personages whom it was my privilege to meet at her luxurious and splendidly appointed table: Moore, Rogers, Alvanley, Luttrell, and many others of that type? Gone! As I sit musing on the past a host of memories return.

“What do you think of him?” was a question asked by Sir Henry Webster—Lady Holland’s son—at a marvellous *déjeûner* given at his residence, Granard Lodge, Roehampton—where the distinguished guests were assembled in such numbers that a table had to be improvised for Count D’Orsay and myself, with whom, by the way, I passed a by no means *mauvais quart d’heure*.

“Well, I don’t think he’ll ever set the Thames on fire,” was my reply

That man was Louis Napoleon, fresh from the fortress of Ham, to whom I had just been introduced, and with whom, in those days, I would not have exchanged position or prospects; but when seated in the Palace of the Tuileries awaiting an audience of Napoleon III., then at the zenith of his power, I was constrained to admit that circumstances had altered, and that he had considerably the best of me.

On the Saturday of my visit the meet was Foss Lodge, and at 10.30 I mounted my horse, and, having seven miles to get over before eleven o’clock, at which hour the meet was fixed, I had to pound away at a swinging trot, passing through Yatton Keynell, by Grittleton House, the beautiful seat of Sir John Neeld, in order to be in time; and although the roads for nearly the whole distance were newly metalled, I arrived before Lord Worcester—who hunts the hounds himself—had put in an appearance. The first person I see is the Duke of Beaufort, looking remarkably fresh and well, mounted on his favourite grey, the pick of the Badminton stable.

“It is some years since we met in the hunting-field,” says his Grace, in the pleasant and cheery way which renders him so popular throughout Wiltshire, and everywhere else for the matter of that.

Then I pass on to take a survey of the “field.” First to attract my attention is a beautiful girl, with a laughter-loving face, well-mounted, neatly appointed; and I recognise the form of one I had seen a few days since going like a bird across Rutlandshire. Next I see a young lady wearing the Duke’s uniform—a blue

habit, the lappels lined with cream colour, turned back, and showing a waistcoat of the same; a stand-up collar, white cravat, tall hat, neatly and closely braided hair, and a "button-hole" of the choicest description—a charming costume for a handsome huntress; and the conviction is forced on my mind that after all there is something very pleasing in the fact of women entering so heartily and sociably into the pleasures of the chase, a sentiment shared on the occasion by several others, if I mistake not. Then Lord Worcester, on Red Dragon, a superb chestnut horse, arrives with 18½ couples of magnificent hounds, followed by his two whips, and I count no less than six servants, well mounted, wearing the green livery of the hunt, riding in a row.

Ready for action there are Lords Arthur and Fitzroy Somerset, Miss Miles, and several well-mounted ladies; Sir John Neeld, in a phaeton, very well coached by his daughter; the Messrs. Neeld, Granville Somerset, Henry Sutton, Grace, Captain Fuller, Captain Methuen, of Corsham Park, who is a staunch preserver of foxes; Mr. Harris, of Rowden Hill, Chippenham, on an Irish horse of great power, whose lively habits are a caution to behold. And I am told that foremost in the flight is Lady Dangan whenever there is a splitting run; that Lord Dangan, who resides at Draycot House, Chippenham, goes right well; that Mr. Fernie, of Dauncey, is a brilliant performer across country; that Lord Lansdowne goes the pace, and is a very straight man to hounds; that Colonel Ewart and Mr. Charles A. R. Hoare ride hard, and will take a good deal of beating; that Colonel Miles, of Malmesbury, also goes well; whilst Mr. and Mrs. Miers, Messrs. Brown,

Coates, John Spicer, and many more, are usually found in the front rank during a good run. The "field," in all, consisted of somewhere about 200, many wearing the aristocratic uniform of the Hunt, others in scarlet, and all well mounted, presenting a brilliant sight, seen on a glorious day such as would have been worthy of May.

Foss Lodge is the property of Sir John Neeld, and is well stocked with foxes. But little time is wasted, and Lord Worcester halloos his hounds in cover. Soon a challenge is heard; the pack is in full cry, and the fox breaks away, reaching an adjacent cover in a few minutes, where they run into him. Then we draw in the direction of Grittleton House, and a view-haloo is soon heard, and a fox goes away as if he meant business, but, changing his tactics, he runs a short ring, and then doubles back and makes his way to the cover where he was found.

Having the good fortune to be well placed, I had an admirable opportunity of seeing the dashing style of the Duke's hounds as they raced after reynard until he got home. But the cover is soon made too hot for him, and he bolts again, giving me another opportunity of seeing the dash of the pack as they streamed along in full cry.

"Beautiful, isn't it, sir," says an old man mounted on an ancient pony—a used-up "whip," apparently—who seemed thoroughly to enjoy the sport. Then they rattle the fox round the corner, Lord Worcester leaving his hounds to do the work themselves, his voice only being heard occasionally. The fox crosses the ride within a few feet of my horse, and again they are at him. Once more he bolts, but is headed back, and,

after running for a few minutes with the pack at full cry close to his brush, he is run into and killed, and "Who-hoop!" is heard and he is speedily broken up.

As the hounds now draw away in the direction of Badminton—where I afterwards heard two foxes were found—the pack dividing, the Duke going away with nine couples, and Lord Worcester with the rest, I make my way back to Chippenham.

To Lord Worcester in his character of huntsman too much praise cannot be accorded. A fine horseman, remarkably quiet with his hounds, steady and workmanlike in his ways, I consider him first-rate, and I am justified in this opinion by the fact of the wonderful sport he has shown throughout the present season, having had four swingeing runs during the week of my visit, one fox having been found in a tree, which, after being whipped down, gave them a splitter.

Beckford, in his work on hunting, dwells on the necessity of having a good horseman for a huntsman, for, says he, "it is of the utmost consequence to your sport, nor is it possible for a huntsman to be of much use who is not; for the first thing, and the very *sine quâ non* of a foxhunter, is to ride up to his head hounds." Whoever sees Lord Worcester go will find these conditions fulfilled to the letter. Standing over six feet in height, it is no slight animal that is able to carry him up to the leading hounds; but mounted on such nags as Red Dragon or The Fenian—a remarkably clever Irish horse, for which I am told he has recently refused seven hundred guineas—he has no difficulty in getting and keeping to the fore. The country is grand, the fences large, with loose stone walls here and there; but it is evident "that stone

walls do not a prison make” in these parts, for I observed a young lady putting a horse at one in a remarkably handy way, and it landed her cleverly on the other side; whilst another fair rider, not so cleverly mounted, “upset the whole box of tricks,” her clumsy animal bringing the loose stones down with a crash, though neither he nor his rider came to grief. I have ridden over stone walls myself, and, provided I have a bold animal used to this particular style of fence, I would as soon ride over them as not; but with an unhandy or shifty nag I have no desire to negotiate them.

The extent of the Duke of Beaufort’s country is no less than forty square miles, very varied in its nature, some parts being equal to any that can be found; and, as railway engineers have apparently had their wicked will with the district, it is to be hoped that no further cutting up of the Duke’s territory will occur. This pack was established by the fifth Duke of Beaufort, and it is on record that on one occasion Will Long, during the time of the sixth Duke, took the field with 49½ couples, with which he went cub-hunting—the largest number I ever heard of. To have heard their music as they woke the echoes of the early morning must have been truly a pleasant occupation. Of the present Duke it may be said that he fully maintains the efficiency established by his predecessors, as the three packs with which he does the work are as splendid as it is possible for hounds to be.

As this “country” is much more severe than either Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, or Rutlandshire, a bigger style of hound, combining strength with speed, is required; and the same remark applies to



the horses in use. They do not as a rule show the high breeding of those which fly over the shires, but are more of the old style of hunter. Being desirous of visiting Badminton, its kennels and stables, I decide upon going to Bath, which is a most delightful abiding place for those wishing to hunt with the Duke, whilst combining the pleasures of a minor metropolis with the sports of the field.

I therefore bid farewell to the Angel and its courteous proprietor, Mr. Careless, and travel *viâ* the Great Western Railway to the ancient city of "Akemannesceaster," as it was designated by the "Romanised Briton," but which we, having less leisure than the ancient Briton, call "Bath" for shortness in these busy times. At least so I learn by the perusal of Mr. Peach's last edition of 'Rambles about Bath and its Neighbourhood,' which I recommend to all visitors, having found this author "a guide, philosopher, and friend," during my short stay. The weather on my arrival was splendid, and being Sunday afternoon, the Park was thronged with pedestrians. Never have I seen so many pretty women, of all classes, assembled at any given time or place. I have always had a strong affinity Bath-wards, and retain a recollection of its beauties in my early days.

After deliberate and careful consideration, I come to the conclusion that the best advice I can give to "persons about to marry," is to "go to Bath." But from every other point of view, the place is charming; the houses are excellent, especially those in the Crescent, Brock Street, or the Circus; the inhabitants are very prone to hospitality. The hotels are attractive; those who prefer old-fashioned and comfortable

quarters selecting the White Lion, and those who desire more style and elegance in their apartments and cuisine taking up their abode at the Grand Pump Room Hotel, which is deserving of especial notice by reason of its connection with the baths, erected at a great expense by the Corporation, and which are the most elaborate and best arranged that I have ever seen. The hotel is built on the site of the old White Hart — see the ‘Pickwick Papers’ — the great coaching-house of fifty years since, facing the beautiful Abbey, and midway between the Great Western and Midland stations, it makes up seventy beds, and is replete with every comfort and convenience. Its chief importance, however, arises from the fact of its opening direct into the grand suite of baths; visitors are conveyed by a lift from the hotel, or, in the case of invalids, by bath chairs, and facility is given for the enjoyment of whatever style you may prefer—the ordinary warm, the douche, sitzbath, etc., and those specially provided for medical treatment. So complete are the arrangements that, if necessary, invalids are placed in comfortable wooden chairs, and lowered or raised by strong cranes into the baths, an arrangement I have never seen anywhere else. In addition, there is a large swimming-bath, the water being in all cases the natural mineral water for which Bath has so long been celebrated, and which rises from the springs at temperatures varying from 104 to 120 deg. F., its principal constituents being calcium, magnesium, potassium, and sodium. The Grand Hotel is now under the management of Mr. Radway, who resigned his appointment of manager of the Midland Station in Bath, in order to develop the business of

this establishment; and visitors, specially invalids trusting themselves to his care, will ensure themselves attention and kindness, if I may judge by the style of management exhibited during my brief visits.

On the Monday morning I started by an early train, travelling to the Yate Station of the Midland Railway, and, on my arrival, I found it was distant some eight miles from Badminton. Passing through the exceedingly antiquated village of Chipping Sodbury, by the Bell, a celebrated meet of the Duke's hounds, past the Cross Hands Inn, a large, rambling building, formerly one of the great posting houses on this road; noting the fine hunting country I go through, I arrive at Badminton. The sun is shining brightly, the birds are singing lustily, and, after the long continued and depressing wet weather, my spirits rise with the barometer, and incline to a roseate view of things in general and Badminton in particular. Nor are my anticipations this time doomed to disappointment, for a rare treat is in store. At the entrance of the Park is the Portcullis Inn, where visitors will find accommodation for themselves and their horses should they wish to pay a passing visit. Badminton offers no striking architectural features in itself, but is a large and commodious house. Its glory however is its splendid Park, its noble avenue, immense herds of deer—red and fallow—its unequalled kennels, and large and convenient range of stables. A guide being provided, I pass from stall to stall, seeing upwards of sixty horses in condition, besides several stud horses and the perfect Arab sire presented some years since by the Sultan to the Duke of Beaufort. The caution not to go too near to this noble animal is wholly un-

necessary ; there is a sparkle in his eye and there is a vivacity in his heels which negative the idea of a too near approach to this royal horse. Jumping, rearing, bounding, lashing out, he yet allows his attendant to enter his box without attempting to harm him ; and I can well believe that no finer specimen of his race can be found than the worthy present from an Eastern potentate to an English Duke. Then I proceed to examine the hunters in detail, recognising at once the grey that carried his Grace on Saturday ; Red Dragon, Lord Worcester's first horse ; Fenian, a remarkably clever Irish horse with a beautiful head and neck, and it requires but little technical knowledge to pronounce him a clipper. The characteristic of all the horses at Badminton is usefulness ; a sort of apology in respect to their appearance is offered, from the fact of the hair being allowed to grow from the knee downwards, a wise precaution against thorns and bruises, even if it detracts a little from the beauty of the animals. The stables are not in any way constructed for show, but rather for extreme convenience ; they are lofty and well ventilated, and, as I look over the lot, all fit to go ; I consider a great amount of judgment has been shown in their selection, and a vast amount of attention paid to their condition. Passing by the coach-houses, harness rooms, noting the clever-looking harness-horses reserved for the use of her Grace, I reach the kennels. Entering first into the kitchen, or more properly speaking, the boiling-house, I see dinner being prepared for this large family, which consists of seventy-five couples of hounds, forming three separate packs, with sundry hangers-on in the shape of fox-terriers—this large number being

requisite if the country is to be hunted five or six days a week. At a call from the attendant every hound rises and comes into the stone paved yard; one old veteran audibly expressing his disgust at being disturbed by a deep and suggestive growl; and, as I stand in the midst of them, I have a full opportunity of noting their size, quality, and condition, which I pronounce to be unsurpassable. It is a beautiful picture; a sight that would please any lover of animals, but far more attractive to one in whom the love of hunting and all belonging to it is inherent; and, as I watch the faces of these sagacious creatures, I hear with great regret that one of the flowers of the pack was killed by a kick from a young horse, and that Lord Worcester, terminating the day's sport at once, declared that he would have sooner lost a thousand pounds than this favourite hound. I am next shown two Irish deerhounds of great beauty, the like of which I have never seen before. Passing into the gardens, I revel for awhile amidst beds of violets, admire the flowers, the vines, and the neatness and order in which everything is kept; and then, as I turn my back on this hospitable mansion, I say—to myself, of course—as far as I am concerned—and my opinion binds nobody else—"Let laws and commerce, arts and science die; But leave us still our old Nobility." Bidding adieu to Badminton, and taking note of a row of almshouses bearing heraldic devices, I trudge off on my way back to "Yate," but not before I hear an acknowledgment of the kindness and thoughtfulness on all occasions of her Grace. If any value is attached to the goodwill of friends and

neighbours of all degrees, then the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort are rich in that respect.

A walk of eight miles is before me, and I trudge away. Meeting with a Gloucestershire labourer who is journeying the same road, I learn a lesson in life—rather late—how to maintain a wife and six children, in comfort, health, and cleanliness on thirteen shillings a week. It hardly needed an assurance that little of this modest stipend finds its way to the till of the public-house. After a brisk walk, I am once more in Bath, well satisfied with my day's work.

## IN THE SHIRES.

### I.

CHANCE having led me again into the shires, I find myself once more at "Wansford, in England," reposing at the "Haycock" as in days of yore; the weather beautiful, exactly the sort in which to do nothing nicely; so I saunter about the stables, examine the stud, try the horses, admire the breed of fox-terriers, fraternise with the tame fox—a noble specimen of the vulpine race, who plays with me with all the confidence of a pet dog, and is the only one of his race that I have ever met on such intimate and friendly terms. Then fishing in the pleasant waters of the Nene suggests itself; and, regardless of the remarks as to the two things usually to be found at the extreme ends of a rod and line, I go roach-fishing for choice; and—though "fishing is a pleasure which nobody can deny"—at least so the song asserts—there can be no doubt that it is the most disappointing of all the sports of man. There is always too much or too little water; it is either too thick or too clear, or something else that "didn't ought to be," and the result is that my attendant caught a small fish, and I a big cold.

Another day I go farming, laying in an immense fund of knowledge in respect to sheep and lambs, oxen and pigs, which will enable me on my return to be down on the London butcher, if he does not reduce

his extortionate charges. Then I listen to the lark's loud carol, see the yellowhammers twittering on the hedges, the wood-pigeons hastening to their home, as I go towards the village of Thornhaugh, calling at the pretty farmhouse, gay with beds of golden crocuses and silvery snowdrops, the abode of "Frank Gordon," so well known to all frequenters of the Shires; and as I view these scenes so charming, I say, assuredly "If there's peace in this world to be found, a heart that is humble may hope for it here," especially if the owner of that humble heart should happen to be the incumbent of the parish, whose lines are evidently drawn in very pleasant places, judging by the appearance of the rectory and its surroundings. Throughout the Shires the grand old grey stone churches, standing out boldly in the landscape, are noticeable features. On Wednesday the "Fitzwilliam" met at their crack fixture, Bythorn Tolbar, and a large contingent arrived from Cambridge, Leicester, and other places. The Duchess of Manchester rides over from Kimbolton Castle to join in the sport, and amongst a large field assembled at this favourite meet are Lord Esme Gordon, Count Lemberg, who has come from Vienna to enjoy a few weeks in the Shires, staying, according to custom, at the Haycock, which is his usual place of abode, chosen as well by Count Metternich and other Austrian nobles who arrive every season to hunt in this locality; Frank Gordon; Charlie Percival, "a chip of the old block;" Cannon and Jewett, the well-known jockeys, and a host of regular attendants on this pack of hounds. George Carter then proceeds to draw the adjoining cover, and a fox is soon found in "Hunts Closes," going away at a good bat, passing



through Catworth, and giving a merry little spin over this fine hunting country ; but this time the clever huntsman cannot, according to his usual custom, pull down his fox, and after a fair run he is lost—though I was afterwards told he was so beaten as to be unfortunately killed by a sheep-dog who was lurching about, veritably falling out of the frying-pan into the fire.

On Thursday the Fitzwilliam met at Cotterstock, on the lawn of the hunting-box of the Marquis of Huntly. Starting a little late, I am taken to cover at a rattling pace by a pair of “goers,” and as we fly through the quiet old villages I have only time for a glance at the small remaining ruins of Fotheringay Castle, where Mary Queen of Scots was so ruthlessly beheaded ; and as we approach the Valley of the Nene we find the water is so much out that for nearly a mile it is up to the middle of the wheels, and we splash through as best we can till the village of Cotterstock is reached.

A pretty scene meets the eye on our arrival. George Carter and his noble pack of hounds are seen standing on the lawn, with the two whips in close attendance ; the hounds disporting themselves on the green lawn or rolling on the turf, which is dotted all over with groups of snowdrops in full bloom. In the road at the bottom of the lawn a large number of sportsmen and sportswomen are assembled, amongst whom I notice the Earl and Countess of Westmoreland and Lady Grace Fane, well mounted ; the Marquis of Huntly, on Pathfinder, the winner of the Liverpool Steeplechase ; Lord Carysfort, Lord Esme Gordon, Lord Lyveden, Count Lemberg, Frank Gordon, Mr. and Miss Vipan ; Charlie, Frank, and

George Percival; and Mr. Harrison, mounted on a noble chestnut.

Percival, many old sportsmen will be glad to hear, was sufficiently recovered to be able to mount his favourite pony and to acknowledge the friendly greetings which hailed him on all sides. Then I find I am expected to ride Clonmel—a six-year-old, temperate, weight-carrier, full of spirit, a flying jumper, as clever as a kitten, not pulling an ounce—and I accept the responsibility without fear or mistrust. Away we trot to Cotterstock Wood, where the hounds are thrown in; soon a whimper is heard, then a view halloo denotes that a fox has gone away. George Carter gallops up, blowing his horn loudly, and cheering on his hounds to the halloo, and on we go; at the very first moment I have to endure a baptism of mud, for an eager sportsman dashes by me, his horse discharging a hoof-full into my mouth. The mental verdict I returned was, “Serves me right for allowing any other man to go by me, mounted as I am.” But then I plead that the ground is so extraordinarily heavy and holding that it behoves a man of 16 or 17 stone to nurse his horse. For a few minutes we go at a racing pace, and Clonmel carries me well to the fore, and somehow I am on extremely good terms with myself in consequence.

Narrowly escaping jumping, however, on to a hound—a practice much to be deprecated, but a mishap which will occasionally happen, even to a cautious rider—we come to a check in a heavy ploughed field, where Lord Carysfort’s horse played him a scurvy trick by lying down and rolling over, regardless of his rider—a bad habit, and especially in-

convenient when crossing a brook. Then the hounds pick up the scent again, and we go away merrily; ringing about with occasionally a pretty spurt, we run our fox into a wood, and the hounds come to a check for a while, giving time for the enjoyment of a sandwich, or cigar, as the case may be. We soon pick up the scent again and go merrily away; the fox is viewed stealing across a wheatfield, and Carter lifts his hounds to the halloo; then I pull up, not caring to ride across the heaviest land I ever met with, and I turn homewards, passing through the village of Ape-thorpe, the residence of the Earl of Westmoreland, and as I ride through the pleasant private ride, reaching five miles in the direction of Wansford—a charming place indeed for a woodland ride in springtime—I hear how highly esteemed are the noble lord and lady by their tenants and neighbours.

The following day I ride a clever pony over to the common, and see two or three nags take their gallops. A thoroughbred chestnut destined to perform in a forthcoming hunt race should carry my money if I was a betting man. Then I have just time to bid good-bye to my friends, and am going at a racing pace in a dog-cart drawn by an ex-hunter, and my youthful driver is good enough to tell me that the nag prefers galloping, so there is little fear of my losing the train. Passing Burghley House, Stamford is reached, and I am soon on the way to Oakham, going through a lovely line of country, looking from a hunting point of view. Half an hour's journey brings me to my destination, and finding that the kennels of the Cottesmore are within a short distance I drive over to Barley-thorpe, and take up my abode at the old-fashioned

little roadside inn, "The Horse and Groom, by George Feveryear," a curious name: but what's in a name? and finding I could be accommodated, I halted there on the principle that I might go further and fare worse, and found no cause to regret it, as I had comfort, civility, and good fare. Barleythorpe is the hunting-seat of Lord Lonsdale, the master of the Cottesmore, and is, without exception the most complete establishment that it is possible to conceive, and the most desirable locality for a hunting man. Beyond the undulating grass land stands the renowned cover Ranksborough Gorse; on the other side is Burley-on-the Hill, the seat of Mr. George Finch, the field master of the Cottesmore. This beautiful residence is situate on an eminence overlooking the cream of the grass-country and is visible for many miles. Here I fall in with Mr. H. Harrison, who occupies the stables of the Horse and Groom, and who kindly offered to put me in the way of seeing all the wonders of Barleythorpe. First, Mr. Allen, who has the management of the carriage department, shows me over his portion of the stud, and I note some first-class high-stepping horses suitable for town work—a pair of phaeton horses recently purchased for the high price of 600 guineas. Then I see the coach-houses, and admire the system by which all the carriages and cushions are kept in order, hot-water pipes being judiciously distributed throughout the building. Next I am taken to the harness-room and shown the state harness, which cost the large sum of 400 guineas, and the silver-mounted whip *en suite*.

The house, stables, and kennels are all newly built of stone, and are beautifully arranged, and replete

with every possible convenience. I am subsequently handed over to the care of Mr. Weatherston, the stud groom, who spares no pains to exhibit all that pertains to his department. Amongst some forty or more horses I am shown the "Pick of the basket," Montrose, who has done the State much service, and carries Neale, the huntsman, right well up to the hounds, and no day is too long or fence too big for him. I see Chameleon, a wonderful weight carrier, and Student, another of the same sort, supplied by Percival, with some forty more excellent hunters, who, notwithstanding the severe work they have had throughout this unusually open season, look as fit to go as need be. No trouble or expense is spared, and Mr. Weatherston, under whose charge they are placed, is the right man in the right place, a strict disciplinarian with a thorough knowledge of his business. After this, I accompany Neale to the kennels, which are admirably placed and most judiciously arranged, and I am shown some sixty couples of splendid hounds, which are divided into three packs. At the command of his huntsman, Chanticleer steps out.

The sire of this beautiful specimen of a foxhound is Lord Fitzwilliam's Bacchus. In obedience next to the call of "Lictor! Lictor! good dog!" there walks out a noble hound. Then, "Stately, good lass!" responds to the call, and, in succession, all the flowers of the pack are invited to stand forth for my inspection, and having been duly paraded in the field at the back of the kennels, they return, passing down an incline at the bottom of which is a shallow pool of water, through which every hound passes before he is allowed to re-enter—an ex-

cellent plan, insuring cleanliness and helping to keep their feet in first-rate condition. I afterwards visit the boiling-house, meal-house, the dwelling-rooms of the kennel huntsman and his assistants. The fine condition of the hounds—the order, cleanliness, and care that is taken of these valuable animals—reflect the greatest credit on Neale, ably assisted by his first whip, Goddard, who a day or two back jumped the brook at Munton on *Multum-in-Parvo*, one of the cracks of the stud—three good men going wrong on the occasion, taking headers into the deep and swollen stream—Lord Carington being the only man who followed him safely over. In order to appreciate the value of these hounds it is only necessary to say that the large sum of £600 was paid for three couples at the sale of the Rufford pack.

Neale invites me to visit his house, and an hour is passed in pleasant chat; the youthful Neale, aged two years, shouts loudly for his favourite pup, and will not rest contented until he is produced. Children in the Shires are early initiated into the art and science of the chase; and, instead of asking if they have learned their A B C, you inquire whether they know their “Tallyho!” whilst whips and horns take the place of toys.

The following day I rise early. The morning is splendid. The starlings are whistling on the leafless branches of the old elm, and the rooks are assembled in great numbers, flying from tree to tree in a great state of excitement, and I had cause to believe that the subject under such loud discussion was a recent speech, which they seemed thoroughly to appre-

ciate. The rooks of Rutlandshire are intimately connected with those of Lincolnshire, and being so closely allied to the land, are naturally highly Conservative.

The gardens and hothouses are filled with the choicest and rarest flowers, ferns of every description, orange-trees, choice and beautiful primulas, crocuses the size and colour of which I have never seen equalled; and I have no reason to doubt that as the spring advances these beautifully-tended grounds will be a sight worth seeing.

After this, I look over the house, which is in accord with everything else in this charming establishment. Family portraits for generations back adorn the walls of the hall; pictures of favourite hunters and racers, some beautiful as mere paintings—all most interesting to those who are learned on such matters; conspicuous amongst the number is King Lud, with Custance on his back, and I especially note one of a grey horse, to which no name is appended, but, from the costume of the jockey and groom, I judge it must date far back.

On Saturday the Cottesmore met at Beaumont Chase Lodge, near Uppingham. I had the offer to ride Bridegroom, a noble horse, that took the first prize for hunters at the Eastern Counties Show, held at Lynn; but not being able to prolong my stay for that purpose, and not caring to ride a horse of the value of £400 over the heavy ground, I accepted a mount on Beverley, a five-year-old horse, by Theobald, dam by Wild Hero, very temperate, a fine fencer; master of any reasonable weight, but a trifle raw.

As I trot along, passing through Oakham on the way to Uppingham, I pass the winter residence of Custance, who has a string of some eight or nine thoroughbreds, in order to while away his hours of ease, amongst which is the old steeplechaser Doctor, upon whom he performs, and he may be truly described as a "Nailer" across the grass.

On arriving at the meet, Neale and his pack are to be seen looking exceedingly fit. The field is small, but amongst the attendants on the Cottesmore I see Messrs. Finch, Captain Gosling and his brothers; Mr. Hayn, of Preston Hall—a very good man, who has just recovered from a severe fall; Sir Henry Fludyer, Captain Fludyer; Captain Mason, from Leamington; Squire Rowley; Mr. Sutton, of Morcot Hall; and Mr. Brown, of Uppingham, on a weight-carrier. The hounds are thrown into Stock Wood, which is situated on a steep slope, and, had the fox gone away from the lower end of the cover, a noble expanse of grass land would have been traversed; but a boisterous wind is blowing, whilst "snatched in short eddies plays the withered leaf," and the fox, fearing to face it, breaks away at the top of the cover, running for Uppingham; then, leaving it on the right, he makes for the pretty village of Ayston, thence on to Wardley Wood, then, ringing round, he leaves Stock Wood on the right, and goes away at a rattling pace straight for Rockingham village; but, not daring to face the brook, he races along the bank, and seeks a place of refuge in Holt, one of Mr. Tailby's covers, where he is no longer persevered with.

During the run, Neale has two croppers, his horse



falling over some rails and lying on him, fortunately without any damage.

The only wonder is that in the state of the country so few casualties occur to such a hard rider, who goes with a will at every fence that comes in his way.

## IN THE SHIRES.

### II.

HAVING long had a great desire to see Belvoir Castle, together with the kennels and stud of his Grace the Duke of Rutland, and finding that the fixture for Monday would enable me to accomplish these objects, I determined to go again to Melton, paying a passing visit to Oakham, that I might see the ruins of the Castle and Hall, as well as the Church, which has recently been entirely restored, being now considered a very fine specimen of Gothic architecture. Of the Castle nothing remains save the walls and a curious building called "the Hall," in which the assizes are held, and the business of the county court carried on. It is supposed originally to have been the banquet hall of the Castle.

On referring to the legends of the town, it appears that Henry II. granted the manor as created to a younger son of the Earl of Derby, Walcheline de Ferrars, a gentle and a joyous youth, apparently with a tendency to poach on the Royal preserves and generally to go the pace, so as to have become entitled to the appellation of a "roysterer," whatever that may mean. Be that as it may, it did not prevent Walcheline de Ferrars from being made Baron of Oakham, and enjoying the manorial rights of the capital of Rutlandshire.

A curious custom exists to this day of compelling every peer of Parliament, the first time he passes through the town, to give a horse-shoe to be nailed up on the Castle gate. Should he refuse, the bailiff of Oakham has power to arrest his progress, and take one from his horse's foot. In compliance with this ancient custom, the origin of which is obscure, her Majesty the Queen, the Duchess of Kent, and nearly every peer of the realm, has given a shoe—more or less ornamental—which is affixed to the walls of the Hall. Amongst the number is one of the date of 1814, given by the Prince Regent, and what was supposed to be a golden shoe belonging to Clinker, the property of Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, stolen from the Hall under that supposition, but which the thief was good enough to return on finding that it was manufactured from a baser metal. Amongst the celebrities of Oakham, I find the remarkable character Jeffery Hudson, whom Fuller aptly described as the least man of the least county in England. Jeffery was born in the year 1619, and at seven years of age, was only 18 inches in height. He was taken into the family of the Duke of Buckingham at Burley-on-the-Hill, as a curiosity; and it is related that when the Court was visiting there, "he was served up in a cold pie." Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before a King? Many were the vicissitudes of this little man, who figures as one of the characters in Sir Walter Scott's "Peveril of the Peak."

Beyond these facts I did not observe anything particular, except a custom which would be more honoured in the breach than the observance—that of shunting trains on the level crossing of the railway

which runs through the town. Arriving there at the moment the gates were closed in my face, I found it by no means a delectable position to be placed in with a nervous young horse, and I would respectfully call the attention of the local authorities to this dangerous practice. Reaching Melton after a short run by train, I find the hunting metropolis full of visitors and every stable occupied. At the Harborough every suite of apartments is engaged, the occupants being the Countess of Cardigan, Mr. W. Little Gilmour, who, I am happy to be able to report is rapidly recovering from an illness which has compelled him to keep his room for some weeks, Sir John Lister Kaye, Colonel Oliphant, Messrs. Morton Frewen, and Hill Trevor, Captain Gilbert Stirling, Captain Wingfield, Mr. Wingfield Baker, the Messrs. Russel, from Australia, the Hon. Hugh Lowther, and Captain Atkinson. At the George are Mr. Babington Parker, Mr. Creyke, and Mr. Lubbock; whilst amongst the visitors in the town and vicinity I find first and foremost the Earl and Countess of Wilton. I am glad to record the fact of his lordship being once more in the saddle, having regained his health sufficiently to enjoy his favourite sport again, the zest for which time has not diminished, although the noble lord has spent more than fifty seasons in his pleasant hunting-box, which adjoins the town. On the occasion of his return, a few days since, the bells rang merrily to welcome the arrival of this veteran, who is highly esteemed by the inhabitants, and whose name is a household word in Melton. Lord and Lady Grey de Wilton, Lord and Lady Wolverton, and Captain Glyn, Colonel Forester, Sir Beaumont and Lady Florence Dixie,

Mrs. Stanley, the Messrs. Behrens, Major and the Hon. Mrs. Whyte-Melville, with many others are also to be seen. Having a lively recollection of past comforts, I repair again to that "excellent inn called the George Hotel."

In the morning, which was dry and fine for a change, I gallop along at a rattling pace, having 12 miles to go to cover, the meet being Belvoir Castle; away through the pretty village of Waltham, soothed by the Æolian strains of the telegraph wire which stretches for miles along the roadside, disfiguring the country, and producing a musical effect which is, to say the least, monotonous, if not melancholy. Turning to the right, I pass through a hand gate and go at a gallop over the turf across Croxton Park, and the smiling village of Knipton, which adjoins the demesne of Belvoir, is soon reached.

On entering the park an extensive lake is seen, studded with innumerable swans and crossed at the end by a handsome stone bridge. The huntsman's house and the kennels are placed close to the lake, and well away from the Castle, which, standing on an eminence, looks proudly down upon the beautiful vale of Belvoir, with its numerous villages and conspicuous churches, the spires of Grantham and Lincoln and the smoke of Nottingham being visible from the terrace. It is hardly possible to conceive a nobler landscape, especially when looked upon from a hunting point of view, than that which meets the eye on ascending the high ground on which the Castle stands.

The Belvoir hounds have hunted the country since 1750. The Dukes of Rutland have always made

Belvoir Castle their chief residence, and being good sportsmen, have maintained the high character of the pack. For 27 years the late Lord Forester took the management of them, and is spoken of as having been an exceedingly fine horseman, a consummate judge of hounds, and a most courteous Master during the number of years he held the important office, which was, in fact, the Golden Age of fox-hunting, when railways were in their infancy, and steam ploughs unknown to agriculture. Nowadays the best parts are crossed by the different lines of railway passing through the district; and the deep steam-ploughing system causes the land to ride very heavy, especially in such a season of rain as has prevailed during the winter months. It is twenty years since Lord Forester terminated his career as Master of the Belvoir, since which period the present Duke of Rutland, in the most liberal and sportsmanlike style, has maintained the high-class character of his hounds, and won the regard and esteem of all classes to whom he has afforded so much sport in the wide tract around the Castle.

The country hunted by the Belvoir embraces every description of ground. It extends on the West from the Trent to the German Ocean on the East, and reaches from the Blankney country to Melton Mowbray. The woodlands are very extensive, being of infinite value in steadying hounds, and are homes for the foxes, where they can disport themselves at their pleasure. Nowadays woodland hunting is not much esteemed by those who want a burst of five-and-twenty minutes at a screaming pace across the grass, and not a hunting run in the big woods; though the

latter, to a thorough sportsman, is a most enjoyable amusement, especially at the close of the season, when frequently some of the best runs of the year occur, the hounds coming across a travelling fox, who, disdainng the coverts, goes straight away for his home. The two best runs I ever witnessed occurred under these circumstances, and as the ground rides light in the springtime, and the foxes are in good condition, you may depend upon having a "burster" if you come across one of the right sort.

The love of hunting in Lincolnshire is universal amongst all classes, the farmers especially riding very hard to hounds, and making their hunters handy and fit for business. So popular is the sport, that a "vulpecide" would have a hot time of it; but, fortunately, so base a proceeding as the destruction of foxes is not chronicled in the annals of Rutlandshire. Amongst the regular attendants and supporters of the Belvoir are Sir Thomas Whichcote, who has long followed the fortunes of this pack; Mr. Wilson, of Ranby; Colonel Reeve, of Leadenham; the Hon. Murray Finch-Hatton, and Colonel Lane, representing the east side of the country; whilst around Grantham are to be found Sir W. Welby Gregory, Mr. Turner, of Stoke, and his brother, of Panton; Sir John Thorold, Captain Thorold, Sir Hugh Cholmeley, Captain Longstaffe, Mr. Hardy, and Mr. Welby, of Allington. The coverts of Mrs. Sherwin Gregory and the Earl of Dysart are the homes of many foxes, the owners affording much sport to their friends and neighbours, though not participating in the pleasure themselves. Grantham is the centre of the hunt, and the Cottesmore and the Blankney, in

addition to the Belvoir, can be reached easily from thence.

The meet on the occasion of my visit was in the stableyard at the foot of the Castle slopes, and having arrived in good time I availed myself of the offer of the stud-groom to look over the stables, where I saw from forty to fifty fine hunters in blooming condition, showing evidence of the greatest care and attention. First I am shown those which carry the Duke, and my eye falls upon a noble chestnut that carried him at Saltby a week or two back, besides several other high-class animals. Next I see those reserved for "Frank Gillard," the huntsman of the Belvoir. After looking them over, I am not surprised to hear that he always rides well up to his hounds, and is a bruiser across this stiff country. Scarcely have I time to note all these choice animals—for the hounds are off, and within a few yards of the stables on the slopes of the castle, one of the pack speaks, a halloo is heard, and away they go through the beautiful shrubberies, up the heights, over the lawns, through the woods, and down the slope, into the Vale beneath. Fearing to face the open, the fox harks back to the woodlands, dodging about, and after some twenty minutes, more or less, is run to ground in a badly stopped badger's hole. Then Frank Gillard draws away, and only a few minutes elapse before tallyho is heard again at the foot of the slope; then I view a fox away, making for the open, and give a rattling halloo, which speedily brings the huntsman to the spot. Two or three foxes being on foot, it is some time before the hounds settle down on the one I saw going across the ride; then he faces the open, but his heart fails him, and, returning



to the woods, he is rattled about for awhile, being finally broken up. After this, the hounds draw away to the woods at the foot of the slopes, until they reach a cover near the Belvoir Inn, where a fox is soon afoot, and, breaking away, he runs straight up to me. In vain I crack my whip, in order to drive him towards the open. He makes for the gardens, and after running about for a few minutes, is caught in one of the hothouses, to be turned down soon after, and run into after a few minutes' spin. Then again, the hounds draw the pieces of gorse on the down-like hills that stand on the further side of the lake, and in a short time a fox goes away at a pace, leaving Knipton to the right, and running for the open; but the scent is cold, and, after a short time, he is lost.

Availing myself of Frank Gillard's offer to view the kennels and hounds, I halt awhile for that purpose. Alighting at the pleasantly-situated home of the huntsman, I am shown into a drawing-room embellished with numerous sporting prints and trophies of the chase, and I specially note two arm-chairs covered with skins of favourites of the stud, so preserved as to show the manes and tails. I place myself under the guidance of the kennel huntsman, and proceed to inspect the establishment, which is on a grand scale, admirably placed for drainage, and altogether suitable for the accommodation of the pack, which consists of somewhere about sixty couple of hounds. The beauty, evenness, uniformity of colour, and family likeness, at once strike the eye, confirming the opinion expressed on a former occasion, that for beauty these hounds stand unrivalled, whilst their condition shows the great care and attention that is

paid to them. Frank Gillard may well be proud of his beauties, who resemble horses stripped for a race—such is the bloom on their coats, and their healthy appearance. The hounds are divided into three packs, the large animals hunting the Vale; and I specially remark three or four couples of youngsters who will maintain the efficiency of the pack in due time, if I mistake not. The kennels are built on an incline, and the place is as sweet and clean as a drawing-room. A room is set apart where his Grace, when he visits the place, sits and reviews the pack, passing judgment on the sagacious creatures as they appear before him at the word of command. It is wonderful to note the intelligent countenances of foxhounds, and I was much struck with their keenness of scent on the occasion of my visit to the Barleythorpe Kennels a few days since, for, on entering, I found myself an object of much interest—being surrounded by a number of hounds, who sniffed at and examined me closely. I remembered that I was wearing the same gloves I had on when I took leave of the tame fox at Wansford in the morning; and as a man is known by the company he keeps, being esteemed accordingly, I evidently, from the attention I received, was considered a proper associate for a foxhound. Then I ride home through the park, delighted with the day's sport, reflecting that in no country in the world save England, are noblemen to be found who at a vast expense keep up such magnificent establishments as Belvoir, for the gratification of the public in general, who are permitted to ride and walk about the lovely grounds, and are provided with the means of enjoying

the noble sport of fox-hunting free of all cost and trouble to themselves.

The following being a leisure day, I take an opportunity of looking over some of the studs, and I examine in Mr. Little Gilmour's stables three of the most perfect horses, looking at them with a critical eye, that I have ever seen—the grey which is so well known, and two bays that are almost equally good. Next I see Lord Wilton's string, and a grand lot of hunters they are; fit to carry a man across any country in the world, at the tail of the fleetest hounds that can be found. Then I fall in again with the "oldest inhabitant," who tells me yet one more tale of the Marquis of Waterford. Thinking he should like to try a fresh team, his lordship desired the harness to be put on four racehorses which he had in training for the meeting at Croxton Park, neither of which had ever looked through a collar before.

"But, my lord—" said the stud-groom, who was instantly bid to do as he was told.

"The horses are mine, ain't they?" said my lord; "put them to at once, and look sharp about it!"

When they are ready for a start he says, "Now, then, what are you staring at?—jump up!" and the two grooms ruefully do his bidding, mounting the drag in a state of mind that evidences considerable doubts as to their fate. Then, looking carefully over his team, as every good coachman should, and finding the harness all right, he gathers up the reins, and mounts the box.

"Let them go," says the Marquis, and they are off with a bound; but as soon as they feel the collar they come to a stand, the wheelers shaking their heads and

showing a tendency to lie down, while the leaders stand on their hind legs and paw the air. But they are bound to go, for my lord lays the whip well into them, and off they start in a gallop from where Mr. Behrens's stables now stand, past the George, away by the Harborough, over the bridge, and round the gravel sweep of the lawn of a house in the vicinity of the town, where he pulls up and invites the lady to take a drive. Accepting the offer, she takes her seat on the box, by his side, and away they go. After an hour's spin, he returns safe and sound, showing what pluck can do, and how the boldest come to the least grief.

## WITH THE PYTCHLEY.

BEING reminded that the days of hunting are numbered, and that if I wished to see the Pytchley at one of their most renowned "fixtures"—Crick—I must avail myself of the opportunity which presented itself, as in all probability it would be the last time they would draw this favourite covert during the present season, I determined to start for Rugby, as the most convenient road by which to reach this splendid pack. After two hours' fast running by the London and North-Western Railway I arrived at the George, the excellent headquarters for those desiring to hunt with the Pytchley, the North and South Warwickshire, Mr. Tailby's, the Quorn, and the Atherstone, and who wish to enjoy sport every day in the week without the necessity of travelling any excessive distances.

I had the good fortune to secure rooms in this most comfortable and thoroughly well-managed hotel before the arrival of a contingent of "distinguished foreigners," who came down for the purpose of seeing the meet at Crick, and of observing the style in which the thing is done in the "Shires;" some of these gentlemen being associated together for the purpose of establishing a pack of hounds at Beivre, in the province of Namur, of which his Majesty the King of the Belgians is to be president, the intention being, I believe, to hunt the wild boar, for which purpose some

of our largest foxhounds have been selected. The following are the names of the distinguished visitors who arrived in the course of the evening: His Excellency Count Larisch, Count Clam-Gallas, the Duc de Croy, General Calderon, and Count Outremont. In addition to whom I found, located in the George: Captain Bridson, Mr. Scot Murray, Mr. Gebhart, Mr. C. Addison Birley, Mr. Heysham, and Mr. Sheil.

The morning broke clear and crispy, the searching wind rapidly drying up the land, causing the going to be better than I have seen it during the whole of the season. Cantering along on a clever hack, I see a grand expanse of grass, interspersed here and there with small portions of ploughed land; and I note that the fences are big, but honest, and that there are some very likely-looking covers. Arriving at the village of Crick, I find an immense field assembled, numbering, I was told, little short of five hundred well-mounted men, with a large sprinkling of sportswomen, who come to the meets of these hounds on business bent—not for the sake of display.

In the adjoining field, well out of the way of this enormous crowd, is the noble Master, Earl Spencer, with some twenty couples of first-rate hounds, attended by Goodall, who hunts them this day, and two well-mounted and sporting-looking “whips.” Twice in each week there are two packs out, in order to accommodate all who hunt in the extensive district embraced by the Pytchley, on which occasions the noble Master takes the horn and hunts the one, whilst Goodall has charge of the other, generally hunting the Woodlands; thus all the subscribers and hunting men

in Northamptonshire are accommodated, the extent over which the Pytchley draw being somewhere about forty square miles.

Of Lord Spencer as a sportsman it is impossible to speak too highly. A first-rate huntsman, a perfect horseman, a very glutton for sport, never leaving off whilst there is a glimpse of daylight, he is as popular as it is possible for any master of foxhounds to be. At the word of command Goodall trots away, followed by a cavalcade on foot, on horseback, and in carriages, and the hounds are speedily thrown into the often-drawn Crick covert. And it is a noticeable feature in the management of these hounds that the field is under the most perfect control of the noble Master—to an extent, in fact, that I have never witnessed with any other pack I have seen—no one being allowed to go beyond a certain defined line, in order to give the fox a fair chance of getting away, after which you may have your wicked will, and ride over the hounds if you can—that is, whilst they are going the pace. Having, with some of the still remaining impetuosity of youth, gone beyond the line of demarcation, I am bid to hold hard and return within proper bounds; and promptly obeying the command, I am courteously thanked by his lordship for my ready compliance with his request. I have known in my time several masters of hounds who, under the circumstances, would have used more forcible, if less pleasant, language to any one who endangered other people's sport in his endeavour to secure a good start for himself.

This circumstance recalls to my mind a story which was told of the late Lord Strathmore, the owner of

the Switcher, in Crimean days ; who was one of the first people to adopt the fashion of wearing a beard, which he cultivated to an alarming extent. Wishing, on one occasion, when hunting with the Pytchley, to secure a good start, he took up a position where he was likely to head the fox if he attempted to break away. Whereupon the huntsman rode up to him, saying,

“ Pray, my lord, come away, or you may frighten the fox.”

Whilst the hounds were drawing the cover—which they did carefully, only finding a vixen, which, of course, was not followed—I had time to look over the field. Amongst the number who hailed from all quarters I found Lord Denbigh, and his son Lord Feilding, Lord Tredegar, and Lord Massey, all of whom go very well to hounds ; Sir Bache Cunard, Sir Hereward Wake, Count and Countess Stockau, Captain Clerk and Major Tempest, Captain Riddell and Captain Middleton, two first-rate performers ; Admiral Jones, a fine specimen of a veteran rider to hounds, who forgets his age, and goes like a youngster ; Captain Pritchard Rayner, who goes extremely well ; Mr. Augustus de Trafford, Mr. Foster ; Mr. John Foy, so well known with the Baron’s hounds, and who travelled from Aylesbury to Crick for a few days’ sport, the death of the Baroness Meyer de Rothschild having terminated the season in the Vale ; Captain Bridson, Mr. Scot Murray, Mr. Birley, and Mr. Sheil, all good men and true : Mr. Fred. Shoolbred, who rides hard and has some good goers ; Mr. Heysham, who managed to find time to canvass—successfully, too—for the “ Hunt Servants’ Benefit Society,” adding



thereby the names of several ladies to the already long, but not long enough, list of subscribers to this admirable institution, to which, by the bye, the Dowager Marchioness of Westminster has given the noble donation of £300; Mr. Muntz; Mr. J. A. Craven, ex-Master of the Pytchley; Mr. Ridgway, who, in his anxiety to be present at Crick, started from Paris the evening before at eight o'clock after dining at the station, and was found quietly breakfasting at the George at Rugby the following morning at ten o'clock, appearing as fresh as paint as he passed me on his way to cover; Colonel Fitzroy, who resides in Rugby; Mr. Fitz Oldacre, who rides as well as ever he did in his life, which is saying a great deal, for a better horseman never put foot in a stirrup, and I say that after forty years' acquaintance with this well-known sportsman; Mr. Whitfield, another good man who never goes wrong, as tough as a telegraph wire, without an ounce of superfluous flesh, as neat a horseman and as hard a rider as you will find in a very long day's march, who may also lay claim to the title of "Veteran," a handful more or less of years not seeming to impede his going in the slightest degree.

So far I have chronicled the attendance of hard-riding men, but it now becomes my pleasure to record the presence of a number of ladies, who, in addition to being graceful horsewomen, are exceedingly good goers across country.

First on the list is Mrs. Arthur, so long and well known to all who have hunted with the Pytchley, as a first-rate and distinguished sportswoman; Mrs. Edward Kennard, Mrs. Pritchard Rayner, Mrs. Corbet

the Hon. Mrs. Smith, the Misses Fitzroy, Mrs. Starkey, Miss Podmore, and Miss Darby, who, trained to ride from her earliest days, is a performer of the first-water; Miss Davey, Mrs. Thursby, Miss Caldicott, and Miss Pennington.

In no other hunt will there be found so many first-rate sportswomen as are to be seen at every meeting of the Pytchley; and they are quite distinct from many I have seen; riding quietly and well, without any attempt at display, or desire to obtain notoriety by running unnecessary risks.

As long as these conditions are observed, and provided each fair rider is endowed with plenty of nerve, judgment, and presence of mind, all goes well.

Presence of mind, by the way, is invaluable in other ways than the hunting-field. For instance, dining the other day with a Leicestershire squire with strong political tendencies, the ladies having left, my host, entrenched behind a bottle of 1820 port, for which he knows I have an amiable weakness, thought to entrap me into a discussion upon the Eastern Question—a subject of which I am utterly weary, not having the slightest sympathy with the Turk; though I think there may be something advantageous in his domestic arrangements which may possibly lead to an increase of domestic comfort—though, by-the-bye, it must tend to greatly increase his milliners' bills.

I listened attentively for awhile, filling the largest glass I could find, and forgetting to pass the bottle. "I am thoroughly in accord with you," I said, "for there is no doubt you have hit the right nail on the head when you say it is not only *able men* that we

want at this momentous crisis, but *stable men*—by all means let us have stablemen, they are the fellows to help one over a difficult country. Without them we should be nowhere.”

“Upon my word,” he said, “you are so quick. I really have forgotten the point I was about to illustrate, and have dropped the thread of my argument.”

“Pray don’t trouble yourself to look for the one or stoop to pick up the other,” I replied, “you have thoroughly convinced me; and as society has its duties as well as its pleasures, I think I will join the ladies.”

So I left him to his politics and port wine, both of which are equally dry.

After drawing Crick covert, we trot away for Cracks-hill, which we draw blank, thence to Mr. Hensworth’s Spinnies, where there is no trace of a fox, after which Yelvertoft Field-side and Lord Spencer’s cover are drawn with similar results; then away we go to Cot-hill, where a fox is soon found, who goes away at a screaming pace towards Hemplow, running around the fish pond, back to the covert where he was found; but it being made too hot to hold him he breaks away at the bottom. Going away over the road at a rattling pace, he gives us a burster over the open, crossing the canal, and running to Yelverton Field-side, where he is lost.

After losing our first fox, which arose from the badness of the scent, the weather having become gusty, with whirls of hail and flakes of snow falling at times, we moved off to Swinford old covert, drawing it, and also Stamford Hall coverts, blank; after which a good

fox was found at South Kilworth, who, racing over the railway and the canal, was killed close to Mr. Mills's house at Husband's Bosworth, after a slashing good run.

For downright good hunting, a thoroughly sporting country, fast hounds, and first-rate riders, commend me to the Pytchley. You may travel far and wide before you will see collected together so many hard men, or so pleasant and genial a Master as the Lord of Althorp. I cannot conceive a better place to take up one's abode for the hunting season than Rugby; from its central position, railway facilities, and healthy situation.

For those who wish to combine fashionable society with the pleasures of the chase, Melton will always have its attractions, and there is no doubt those excellent hotels, the George and the Harborough, will never lack visitors; but for those with whom fashion is a secondary consideration, Rugby offers many advantages.

It is a very healthy and cheerful town, remarkably clean, has excellent shops—*vide* Billington's, the principal bookseller; an admirably-managed hotel, conducted by Mr. Leonard Hards, who lived with Earl Spencer for eight-and-twenty years, and, having acted as steward at Dublin Castle during the viceroyalty of his lordship, knows what's what; excellent hunting stables belonging to Mr. Walker, the well-known veterinary surgeon, where there is a choice of fifty first-rate boxes in the healthiest part of the town. There are also excellent private houses and lodgings in the town for those who desire them, and convenient hunting-boxes in the vicinity.

It would be hard, therefore, to pick out a place having greater advantages for hunting men, regard being had to the fact that no less than six first-class packs of hounds are within easy reach.

Nor must it be imagined for one moment that Rugby is *triste*, or that the inhabitants are unsociable or inhospitable, for my experience tells a very different tale.

I had been but a few hours in the town before I discovered many old friends hailing from all quarters, with whom I passed an exceedingly good time; and had my mission in life been the writing of a historical account of sporting events during the last half century, I could have given "the names, weights, and colours of the riders" as faithfully as the most "C'r-rect Card" that was ever issued by Dorling. And as I listened to the recollections of Fitz Oldacre, who rode in many of the most celebrated steeplechases of former days, heard the criticisms of Darby, and the corrections of Whitfield, I seemed to be living again in the old far-off times when prize-fighting, cocking, and steeplechasing were the amusements of the aristocracy; and memory recalled the time when I, a boy of twelve or thirteen, following the fashions of the day, rode a race at Chadwell-heath, and afterwards backed Simple Simon in his fight with a travelling tinker, "Mais nous avons changé tout cela," and have become virtuous accordingly, and eschew cakes and ale.

Without seeing the stud and stables belonging to Mr. Darby, and failing to inspect his model farm, I should leave Rugby, I was told, without seeing its most notable features.

First, I visited the stables, which are situated in

the midst of the town, the space occupied by the house, gardens, and paddocks, being somewhere about eight acres. The stables have accommodation for one hundred horses, and were designed by and built under the direction of Mr. Darby, and are the neatest and most complete I have ever seen.

The boxes are lofty, spacious and ventilated on really scientific principles; the materials are of the first quality; the doors are all constructed so as to shut flush against the walls, presenting no angles against which the horses can possibly bruise themselves; every detail has been considered, and these spacious and convenient premises are evidently the result of much practical knowledge and thoughtful consideration.

I should recommend any gentleman contemplating the erection of stabling to ask permission to inspect these before commencing an outlay, as he will, after seeing them, know how to lay out his money to the greatest advantage.

After viewing the whole of the premises. I was invited to inspect the stud, and I saw an excellent lot of first-class hunters, many of them up to great weight, and all well-bred and handsome animals. Two or three were shown me which had been selected by the distinguished foreigners located at the George, destined to carry the huntsman of the Belgian pack before alluded to. All I can say is that, if he can ride them, it will be a difficult fence that will stop his getting to hounds, for they looked all over hunters. A well-bred dark chestnut horse, sixteen hands high, and master of great weight, particularly took my fancy as being the class of animal I should select to

carry me across the Pytchley country. Amongst the number was an Irish pony, little more than thirteen hands high, with a lovely head and neck, and good shoulders, a perfect picture, and I was told a perfect hunter, up to great weight, and a beautiful goer, and no money will buy him.

After inspecting the stud I am taken to the farm, which is about half a mile from the town, in the direction of Dunchurch. The farm buildings and range of stabling were also designed and built by Mr. Darby. No expense has been spared in the construction, and they are perfect in every respect. Not a shilling has been unnecessarily expended, and though they are a very costly range of buildings, you can see the money's worth in the shape of convenience and durability. The carthorse stable is a pattern to farmers, who frequently keep their horses in places only fit for pigs, without any attention to the cleanliness or comfort of their animals. The land is nearly all laid down with grass and richly manured, and the result is shown in the well-filled rickyards.

A prime lot of fat beasts, which had just been sold at something like £36 a head, gave me an assurance that we were not entirely dependent at present on America for our supply of beef. The neatness of the fences, the fine view over the splendid hunting country, all combine to make this a most valuable and desirable property, and place that will well repay a visit from any landlord who wishes to improve his property by a judicious outlay of capital.

The reflection that crossed my mind on seeing the meet at Crick, and considering the amount of capital that was represented in the form of hounds and horses,

was that, whatever croakers may say, or persons hostile to hunting may write, it has not as yet had any effect on the popularity of the sport, and certainly has resulted in no decrease in the value of hunters; and though railways have to some extent cut up the country in the Shires, I believe the sport will last for many a long day yet, being an encouragement to the breeders of horses, and leading to large consumption of agricultural produce, to the benefit of the farmers; whilst being one of the healthiest and manliest sports in the world. During my visit to the Shires, I have seen several men who have gone beyond the allotted space of time, riding hard, and with judgment, well up to the hounds; and, inquiring of one of them how he had managed to retain so large a portion of the vigour and nerve of his youthful days, he replied, "I always live well, lie warm, and take plenty of exercise." And I found, in practice, that by following his advice, taking care that the dinners were light and the wine dry—the quantity not to exceed one bottle—champagne for choice—and hunting as often as circumstances would allow, the result was a large increase of animal spirits, a decided improvement in figure, a considerable increase of muscle, and a strong determination to partake of the noble sport whenever opportunity offers.



## WITH THE WARWICKSHIRE.

ON the Thursday the Warwickshire Hounds met at Shuckburg and the Rugby division separated, some going with Mr. Tailby's Hounds, and the rest with the Warwickshire. A large field assembled, although the weather was rough, the scent lying badly. Amongst those present, first on the list was the noble Master, Lord Willoughby de Broke, then Lord Massey, Sir Charles Mordaunt and his brother, Mr. John Mordaunt, the Hon. Gilbert Leigh, Sir Rainald Knightley, Mr. Valentine Knightley, Count Clam-Gallas, Lord Camperdown, Colonel and Miss Ashton, Captain and Mrs. Pritchard Rayner; Mr. J. A. Craven, formerly Master of the Pytchley; Mr. Henry Everard; Major and Mrs. Starkey, from Cheshire; Mrs. Jessop, of Jellicote; Mrs. Philpots; the Hon. Miss Verney (sister of Lord Willoughby de Broke), Admiral Jones, Mr. Muntz, Mr. G. Rennie, Mr. Hetherington, Mr. W. Rhodes, Mr. W. S. Cooper; Mr. Dyson-Moore, of Pailton; Captain Garrett, Mr. W. H. Milne, Captain Osborne, Mr. Robins, Mr. Blennerhasset, Mr. F. Wedge, Mr. Roach, Colonel Close, Mr. Cotton, Mr. and Mrs. Wright, Mr. Grant, Mr. Bulling, Mr. Broomfield, Mr. Sargent, Mr. W. H. Chamberlain. From Rugby—Colonel Rattray, Captain Riddle, Captain Bridson, Mr. Fred. Shoolbred, Mr. Heysham, Mr. Sheil, Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Fitz Oldaker, Mr. S. Darby,

and several others with whom I was unacquainted, making up a goodly array. Many of these gentlemen are well known in the "pigskin," and an excellent opportunity was afforded of judging of their powers. It is pleasant for us veterans to know, when we are knocked out of time, that the rising generation are coming out in good form and well up to the mark. Witness Mr. Shoolbred, who, I am told, is an extremely hard man, who rides well up to the hounds, and is likely to prove a shining light in the Shires; Captain Bridson, a neat horseman, very quiet, riding well, but without display; Mr. Cameron a light weight, who, if I may judge from appearances, is as little daunted by a difficulty, and as well able to take himself safely across a dangerous country, as his brother the renowned African explorer. It will bear repeating if I allude to the fact again, that it is to the noble sport of hunting, which, in my opinion, stands first of all manly amusements, that we owe so many indomitable spirits that crop up on many occasions, and who take walks across Africa, or rides to Khiva, with such marvellous coolness and courage and absolute disregard of consequences. I will venture to say that if the antecedents of such men were traced, they would be found to have been the first at all athletic games, the hardest to pull an oar, the toughest at a game of football, or the last to be shaken off at a paper chase; and it is well known that it is not always the best crammed scholar who, though he passes an examination with amazing *éclat*, turns out either the finest soldier or the jolliest companion. Decidedly, if I had anything to do with Army examinations, I should require a certificate from a M.F.H.

for a certain number of attendances and good conduct in the field.

With the Warwickshire, as with the other hounds in the Shires, the superiority of the horses is a noticeable fact; and I specially remarked a grey horse from Leamington, belonging, I believe, to Mr. Rennie, that would have borne comparison with the noble animal that I have spoken of before—the superb hunter, the property of Mr. Little Gilmour. The Warwickshire Hounds are hunted by Charles Orvis, whose father lost his life by the upsetting of the Newby ferry-boat when conveying some of the horses and their riders across the river, during a run with the York and Ainsty Hounds, on which occasion that first-rate and most popular master of hounds, Sir Charles Slingsby, and one or two members of the hunt, were unfortunately drowned, Sir George Wombwell nearly sharing the same fate. The first covert that was drawn was Calcut Bushes, where a fox was soon found, who went away at a racing pace for thirty-five minutes, over a very fine but stiff country, bringing not a few of these hard riding men to grief, as shown by the loose horses that were galloping riderless along; leaving Grandborough on the right towards Leamington Hastings, and going the pace to within a short distance of Deb-dale, when a heavy storm came on; and, the scent becoming cold, the hounds had to pick their way slowly, crossing the Southam Road back to Calcut, where the fox was lost. After drawing the Shuckburgh coverts blank, the hounds were trotted off to Ladbroke four miles off, and most of the Rugby men returned home.

On this occasion Mr. Tailby's hounds met at Ilston-

on-the-Hill, and as usual a lot of the best men from Melton put in an appearance. A fox was speedily found in Norton Spinney, and leaving the gorse covert behind, the hounds soon threw up, the weather being cold and stormy. Then picking up the scent again, they ran away at a good pace for Nosley; but doubling back, the fox ran gallantly away, and was finally lost near Shankton Holt. During the run a brawling brook presented itself, and was the cause of several good men going wrong. After this they drew Rolleston and the adjoining Spinney blank, and trotted back to Nosley, where a fox was found in a tree—not an unusual occurrence this season. Being dislodged from his roosting-place he gave them a splitting run for twenty-five minutes, when he was lost.

The Pytchley (the Woodland pack) had a very fine run the same day from Weekly Hall Wood, crossing Boughton Park, skirting Boughton Wood, going through the Chase, leaving Stanton on the left, away through Brigstock Forest; making for Dene Thorpe Woods, where the fox turned and raced away in the direction of Oundle; turning then to the left, he made for Lilford Hall, through Lyveden Wood, where the hounds came to a check. Here the fox was viewed, and Goodall, whose horse was by this time pretty well done, had some little difficulty in getting up to his hounds; but persevering, he got once more on good terms with his fox, and raced him away through the Lyveden Woods, on to Titchmarsh, finally running him to ground near Lowick; whence he was run into, after one of the grand runs that are often met with at this period of the year when the Pytchley wood-

lands are drawn. Those who know the excellent country over which the hounds ran will appreciate such a spin as this, the distance traversed, chiefly at a racing pace, being something approaching to fifteen miles. At the close of the season those who are fond of woodland hunting should make Wansford their headquarters, whence they can go with both the Pytchley and the Fitzwilliam, and they may make certain of getting some fine runs from the extensive covers which are common to both packs. When they draw Bulwick, and on towards Dene, it is almost a certainty that there will be good sport. Some of the best runs I ever saw during my whole career were from these big woods, the foxes being clinkers, who did not fear the open, but went away straight, and those who hesitated to follow were soon lost to sight. I have a distinct recollection on one occasion of taking two big fences in and out of the Stamford Road on a tired horse, the fox being dead beat, and, coming upon a stiff flight of rails with a brook on the further side, my nag, making a last effort, gathering himself well together, and going with a rush, cleared the lot, and stood stock still, being thoroughly pumped out. On visiting the locality shortly after, I went to take a look at the place, and was astonished to find how big a jump this plucky animal carried me over, after an hour and a quarter's run across a grand line of country without a single check, the pace being severe from end to end.

On the Friday the Pytchley met at Holdenby, in which vicinity "Whyte-Melville" has laid the scene of one of his most charming novels, 'Holmby House.' Although the weather was bitterly cold, Lady Spencer,

accompanied by her daughters, Lady Victoria and Lady Sarah, faced the bitter North wind, as did also Mrs. Beesley, Miss Langham, and Miss Heskett; but little sport rewarded their courageous defiance of the elements, and though Lord Spencer persevered in his usual energetic style—killing two foxes, by the bye—yet there was no run worth chronicling during this most unpleasant of March days, which was more prodigal of roar than redolent of daffodil and crocus. The same day the North Warwickshire met at Hockley, but, from the same atmospheric disturbances, they had but very little sport. On the Saturday the Atherston met at Corley, finding a fox in Meridenn Shafts, whence they had an excellent run of an hour, through the woodlands, killing their fox near Birchley Hays. Judging by this sample of a week's sport in Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, it will be seen that I have not over-rated Rugby in describing it as a very first-rate position for those who have studs sufficiently large to allow of hunting every day in the week, and that with first-rate hounds, over a magnificent tract of land principally grass, across which the going is light, the fences bold, and foxes abundant. I should recommend any one (especially those whose season is cut short by the death of the lamented Baroness Mayer de Rothschild) wishing to wind up with a look at another country, to transfer their studs and try their luck with the Pytchley, and I can venture to promise they will have no cause to regret their visit to this splendid pack of hounds, whilst they will have an opportunity of witnessing the energy and admiring the courtesy of the noble master, who is so thoroughly devoted to hunting, and desirous of

affording sport to all. In order to form an opinion of the style of management of these hounds, and to judge of the magnitude of the establishment, it must be stated that there are at least one hundred couples, and, as near as I could learn, about one hundred and thirty horses, three separate sets of kennels, and that they hunt seven times a week,—the pack hunting the open, five times, and that hunting the woodlands, twice; and when the area over which the Pytchley extends is considered, reaching, as it does from Rugby to Higham Ferrars in one direction, and from Market Harborough to Northampton in the other, it is evident that this establishment, large as it is, does not exceed the requirements of the case, and I shall not be far wrong in my estimate if I say that an expenditure of £10,000 per annum does not cover the entire cost. I may, I think, therefore point to this as a confirmation of my statement that, whatever people may write or say on the subject, hunting is as popular as ever it was, and, I am happy to say, as likely to last as any other of the institutions of this country; and, now that there is a strong tendency upon the part of our politicians to rest and be thankful, there is but little fear that we shall witness the disestablishment of the Pytchley or a diminution of the number of good men and true who hunt in the shires. Before closing my trip to Rugby I visited the schools, examined the beautiful chapel; the splendid swimming-bath, the gift of one of the masters; the gymnasium, the racket and tennis courts; the cricket-ground, the condition of which is superb; the arrangement for practising jumping over hurdles, and the noble grounds in which this fine establishment is placed, and I was glad to

hear that the school was recovering from the effects of the dissensions which led some little while back to a considerable diminution in the number of the scholars, the total at present reaching nearly to the full complement of five hundred pupils.

In the centre of the town a large building is in the course of construction as a middle-class school, the establishment of which is looked for with considerable anxiety by the people of Rugby, as being likely to affect the interests of the town to a great extent, as, in the event of the terms and arrangements for the education of middle-class boys being liberal and satisfactory, it must necessarily advance their interests and increase the value of property. At present there are not a few excellent houses empty, suitable for residents of the middle class of society, who will not be slow to avail themselves of an opportunity of placing their sons at a school situated in so healthy and desirable a locality, when the arrangements are made known, especially with the prestige that attaches to the names of those educated at the celebrated Rugby Schools. For my part, I should give the preference to them over all similar establishments I have seen, approving thoroughly of the manly style and gentlemanly appearance and behaviour of the "young Rugs," of whom I formed a very favourable opinion during my visit, being received by them in a very courteous and pleasant manner, and having all the particulars explained of their arrangements and places of amusement in a genial and agreeable fashion. And my admiration was still further increased on attending their annual steeplechases, which took place during my visit to Rugby, on which occasion many



hundred spectators were assembled to witness the fun and to see these dashing boys running over their severe course, finishing at a brook too large to be jumped, through which they rushed breast-deep in their struggle to reach the goal. For my part I would rather not have waded through that icy stream, but I was told that was the chief fun of the race.

## COACHES IN THE PARK.

HAD the celebrated lexicographer made his oft-quoted remark to me, touching that walk down Fleet Street, my reply would have been, "Thank you very much, but I had rather not."

For my part I never go eastward of that dilapidated structure which straddles epileptically across the greatest thoroughfare in the world, unless some pecuniary attraction leads me citywards. No; if I am to take a stroll let it be along Piccadilly for choice, the main artery through which circulates the very life's blood of London society.

In what other city in the universe will you find so grand a highway, leading to so glorious an end as Hyde Park?—seen at its greatest advantage at the moment when "the icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter's wind" have given way to the softer gales of mild ethereal spring; the occasion the meeting of the Coaching Club at their customary trysting-place on the banks of the Serpentine.

To one who has persistently polished the pavement of Piccadilly for a period approaching half a century, how patent is the fact that "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players," who, after performing their brief parts in the drama of life, make their "Exits," and straightway are forgotten?

Else, as I journeyed on my way I should have seen,

as of old, Tom Duncombe, the neatest man in London, emerging from the Albany, looking as if there were no such things in the world as unperformed promises to pay—a cheerful example of the old adage, “When house and land and money’s spent, Then credit is most excellent”; and Sir St. Vincent Cotton, rolling along in a thoroughly well-appointed cab, hastening to pay into his account the proceeds of the “Bank” he had broken overnight.

Then turning into Bond Street, Lady Blessington would have been met, pursuing the even tenour of her way in her well-known carriage, drawn by two peacocky bay horses; whilst at the corner of St. James’s Street, Alfred Count D’Orsay, driving a perfectly-equipped curricule, waves his well-gloved hand to the ever-smiling and cheery Earl of Chesterfield. “Handsome Jack” Spalding is on a perfect “Thoroughbred one,” followed by the smallest and neatest of “Tigers,” looking as if such things as debts and duns were utterly unknown to him.

Issuing from Arlington Street, Lord Macdonald, driving his matchless pair of steppers, whilst the brightness of his pole-chains dazzles the eyes of all beholders, cheerily acknowledges Lord Cantelupe *en passant*, who glides along on an incomparable pony, seeming as if exertion was a thing utterly foreign to his nature, yet having sufficient animation to bow a smiling look of recognition of Colonel Lyster, the handsomest aristocrat of his time.

Then, as I cross Park Lane, I should have seen Charles Manners Sutton, alighting from his cab, to extricate a stone from his horse’s foot with a richly-jewelled cane, whilst his exceedingly fair companion

looks listlessly on, as if she were utterly unconscious of being the handsomest and most admired woman of the day.

But a truce to such useless recollections. It is time to speak of the living performers of the period, rather than of those who, having strutted their brief hour upon the stage, have shuffled off the mortal coil, for Hyde Park corner is reached, and a well-appointed drag, drawn by four stylish and useful-looking greys, is just turning into the Park. A motley lot are the frequenters of Hyde Park. Superb equipages, hack carriages, lovely horsewomen, dowdy pedestrians, noble steeds, sorry hacks, aristocratic men, and galloping snobs are in juxtaposition; whilst not a few, taking their pleasures sadly, "seated beneath the melancholy boughs, lose and neglect the creeping hours of time."

"How are you?" says an old friend. "Can I assist you with any information as regards things in general, and the Coaching Club in particular?"

"Well," I replied, "if my memory serve me rightly, you were concerned in the establishment of the club, ably assisted by Lord Carington; hence the success of the undertaking, which now numbers in its ranks, I believe, as many as one hundred and nineteen members."

"Be that as it may, what do you think of the twenty-seven coaches assembled together to-day?"

"I have seen a better lot, I must admit," was my reply; "but that team which is so well handled by Lord Macduff steps and goes well together; and those four chestnuts so admirably matched and well driven by Mr. Arthur Byass are in every respect entitled to

rank as A 1 ; whilst the four handsome brown horses driven by Mr. A. Brassey, and the stylish team of Mr. Murietta, would do honour to any club."

At this moment his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, seated on the box of the Duke of Beaufort's drag, coached by Lord Arthur Somerset, appeared on the scene ; and I regretted to hear that his Grace was absent through indisposition, as the meeting always seems to lack one of its principal features of interest when the Duke is absent. Then, moving amongst the assembled teams, I note Captain Whitmore's four greys, a very neat lot ; and I observe that the Duke of Teck occupies the box seat. Colonel Somerset's chestnuts and Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson's browns next attracted my attention ; and amongst those to be classed in the front rank, the admirably-appointed and well-horsed coach of Sir Bache Cunard must not be omitted. By this time Colonel Armytage had marshalled his forces, and, the road having been cleared by Inspector Frazer, the coaches passed in review before the assembled multitude which lined both sides of the road. It is not every one who can handle four horses in a workmanlike form, and nothing more strongly denotes a good coachman than the way in which a start is effected. To my mind it is the most difficult part of the performance, as any moderate " whip " can keep four horses going that are accustomed to work together ; but to put them in motion and to pull up like a workman are crucial tests.

Some difference of opinion exists as to the use of bearing-reins, but the " bearers-up " had it, for I noticed that there were only seven drags where the use of them was dispensed with. Then keeping by

the north side of the Serpentine, and bearing to the right, passing Albert Gate, the Queen's Gate was reached, and the coaches emerged from the Park. At this point several fell out, and the remainder rattled away at a fair pace to Orleans House, which was reached in about an hour and a quarter. The eye is charmed on entering the grounds of the newly established club, which has pitched its camp on the banks of the river Thames at Twickenham, with the view of going into summer quarters under the most favourable and luxurious conditions; for there "fair-handed Spring unbosoms every grace," and the lilacs, horse chestnuts, and magnolias put forth their buds, unfolding by degrees "in full luxuriance to the sighing gales."

On the lawn which runs down to the banks of the river the band of the 21st Hussars was stationed, and from time to time played a choice selection of music. Groups of ladies and gentlemen were dotted all over the closely-shaven grass, and at this time the weather was fine and enjoyable; but, as luncheon was announced, the clouds, which had long threatened rain, amply fulfilled their promise. On entering the elegantly furnished suite of rooms, one was bound to acknowledge the faultless taste which was displayed, even to the minutest detail. Luncheon having been laid in the large dining-room, his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales took his seat at the head of the table, with the Countess of Westmoreland on his right, whilst amongst the numerous visitors assembled to partake of the hospitality of the Orleans Club were his Royal Highness the Duke of Teck, Lord and Lady Bective, Lady Emily Kingscote, Lord Lonsdale, etc.

At the conclusion of the luncheon Colonel Armytage proposed the health of the Queen ; and the Prince of Wales, in a few words, gave the only other toast the rules of the club permitted, namely, "The Road." The company then rose—to be succeeded by a second detachment of visitors, the number having exceeded by nearly double that which had been expected to attend the gathering of the Coaching Club ; thus putting to the test the resources of the establishment, which, under the trying circumstances, yet left nothing to be desired.

Heavy storms swept over these beautiful gardens, and were the only drawbacks to the otherwise delightful gathering. However, if the weather was unpleasantly wet, the wine was proportionately dry, and so matters arranged themselves on the whole in a satisfactory way. No doubt there were some who had cause for disappointment ; for there must have been several who would have whispered to the objects of their admiration, "Oh ! come, and while the rosy-footed May steals blushing on " together let us wander, for "the garden glows and fills the liberal air with lavish fragrance."

But how could one possibly make such a suggestion under these circumstances ? I never heard of any one with wet feet being sentimental ; usually I have found even the fairest enslaver a trifle touchy, not to say difficult to please, when so situated ; but then that is only my own experience—others may have been more fortunate. However, I think that the "verdant lawns," which we so often read of in romance, should above all things be dry. Personally this matter did not affect me, as I sought the shelter of the billiard-

room and the soothing influence of a remarkably good cigar ; but yet I have a heart that can feel for another—or several others, for the matter of that—and there is this consolation for them, that it cannot keep on raining for ever, or the stock will run out. The newly appointed coach which runs twice a day between London and Twickenham, for the accommodation of the visitors to Orleans House, now appeared on the scene ; and the guard is greatly to be congratulated on the possession of the longest horn that ever was tootled upon. The rain by this time having ceased for a while, the visitors by degrees began to take their departure.

Another opportunity was now afforded of judging of the skill of the coachmen as they drove round the sweep, stopping to take up their passengers at the door of the club. Of those which were thus paraded for inspection I must certainly adhere to my opinion that for quality and style, together with good coachmanship, the meed of praise must be awarded to Mr. Byass, whose blood-like horses stepped and went well together, and were decidedly indicative of pace. In one or two instances I noticed the excessive shortness of the traces of the wheelers, and in one case in particular I think it fully accounted for the disinclination of the near-side wheeler to start. In my opinion more space should be allowed, or the nags feel hampered, and consequently require a little persuasion to make them move on in proper form. There cannot be two opinions as to the success of the gathering and the good fortune that provided so suitable a rendezvous for the meeting as this unique and elegant club ;



and the conclusion that I arrived at after mature reflection, was, that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales had acted judiciously in allowing his name to be enrolled on the list of members of the Orleans Club.

## THE FOUR-IN-HAND CLUB.

It is forty years since the late Sir Henry Peyton, one of the staunchest members of the F.H.D.C. in those days, elicited that remarkably clear and conclusive criticism from "Will Bowers," the noted Oxford coachman, on the difference between the newly-instituted mode of locomotion by rail and the old, legitimate, well-established, and delightful system of travelling on a well-appointed coach, drawn by four slapping horses, and tooled by a first-rate workman who handled the ribbons like an artist. "Why, you see, Sir Henry," said this veteran of the road, "if an accident happens to a coach, why, *there you are*; but, if an accident happens to a train, *where are you*?" Yet, notwithstanding the soundness of his views in respect to the then vexed question of the day, he lived to see railway travelling entirely supersede the ordinary modes of conveyance; the great posting-houses, such as Cranford Bridge, closed; and the grass growing in the streets of Hounslow, Brentford, Barnet, and other towns, which were entirely maintained by the traffic of stage-coaches. Nor was it only the public conveyance that went out of favour, for even the Four-in-Hand Club languished, and there were many wise men of that generation who shook their antiquated heads, and said, with solemn and seer-like emphasis, that the days of coaches and coaching were

over. That these prophets were entirely in the wrong in their senile vaticinations was abundantly demonstrated on the occasion of the meet of the Four-in-Hand Club at the Magazine in Hyde Park on Wednesday, when the greatest number of carriages, and ladies and gentlemen on horseback, were assembled to look at the teams and their coachmen that it has ever been my fortune to witness gathered together on any similar occasion. "As yet the trembling year is unconfirmed, and winter oft at eve resumes the breeze," so the poet tells us; all I can say is, that I hope the ceremony of confirmation will not be much longer postponed, as, after the experience of the tempestuous and disorderly doings of the wind on the Oaks Day, and the noise and unpleasant termination of the afternoon selected for a display of the coaches, one begins to lose confidence in those who are responsible for the proper bringing up of the seasons, and to look with apprehension to the possibility of a continuance of these disorderly proceedings extending possibly over the meeting at Ascot Heath.

That the Four-in-Hand Club is now in grander form than it has ever been at any period is easily accounted for, when it is found that the committee consists of the following distinguished persons: The Duke of Beaufort, the Duke of Sutherland, the Marquis of Londonderry, the Earl of Sefton, the Earl of Macclesfield, Lord Londesborough, Lord Wenlock, and Lord Aveland. The number of members amounts to somewhere about fifty, of whom the following put in an appearance at the Magazine on Wednesday afternoon: the Duke of Beaufort had on this occasion handed over the reins to his son, Lord Arthur Somer-

set, who handled the ribbons right well, and His Grace had no cause to regret the selection of a deputy to work the well-known brown-and-yellow drag which took the lead in the procession when the time for moving had arrived; Colonel Tyrwhitt, driving the Earl of Sefton's handsome blue-and-yellow coach; Colonel Dickson, Sir Henry Tufton, Colonel Ewart, the Earl of Macclesfield, Mr. F. Villiers, Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson; Captain Percival, tooling the drag of the Second Life Guards; the Marquis of Waterford, Sir T. Peyton, Lord Aveland, Lord Abingdon, Captain Whitmore, Count Münster, Mr. A. Hope, Mr. W. E. Oakeley, Colonel Owen Williams, Lord Londesborough, Sir Lawrence Palk, and Lord Poltimore—21 in all; a very good muster, considering the boisterous and unpleasant weather, which probably diminished the number.

Amongst the list of absentees were the Duke of Sutherland, the Marquis of Londonderry, and Lord Wenlock, the Hon. L. Agar-Ellis, Mr. J. L. Baldwin, the Earl of Bective, Lord Charles Beresford, the Marquis of Blandford, Colonel Chaplin, Mr. Henry Chaplin, Colonel Stracey Clitheroe, Viscount Cole, the Earl of Craven, Mr. W. G. Craven, Mr. E. W. Eaton, Viscount Hemsley, Mr. H. R. Hughes, Sir John Lister Kaye, Viscount Macduff, Lord Muncaster, Sir Roger Palmer, Captain H. R. Ray, Mr. C. Birch-Reynardson, Sir M. Shaw Stewart, Mr. Anstruther Thompson, Lord Tredegar, Sir George Wombwell, Mr. H. Wombwell, the Marquis of Worcester, etc.

First on the roll of those entitled to special rank for general fitness the Duke of Beaufort's name must be placed, the whole turn-out looking like business;

the well-built drag, and the four useful coaching-looking nags, who stepped and went well together, and were admirably handled by Lord Arthur Somerset, must have been admitted by every judge of coaching to have been a thoroughly workmanlike turn-out; the horses doubtless having been accustomed to go together for some considerable time, and having been well selected for the work they have to perform, not chosen for fashion or appearance only, and giving one the idea of being able to go the pace and to maintain it for any reasonable distance.

Next in rotation of those entitled to honourable mention was the team driven by the Earl of Macclesfield. A more complete turn-out cannot be found than his lordship exhibited on the occasion, the four dark-brown horses, admirably matched, very handsome, stepping well together, showing signs of possessing both pace and endurance. The blue-and-red coach, built by Hollands, the neat and well-appointed harness and well-dressed grooms, betokened the eye of a master who has had the experience of years to guide him in the selection of his cattle and equipment; and if such indications of a workman are not sufficient to satisfy any ordinary critic, then he must acknowledge that it is an artist who sits on the bench and handles his team right well; and if that does not satisfy him, then I should have no hesitation in saying that he knows nothing of such matters. Of the same school of first-class performers and veterans of the F.H.D.C. is Colonel Tyrwhitt, who displayed the excellence of Lord Sefton's turn-out to the fullest advantage; and had no previous opportunities been afforded me of judging of his efficiency, his appearance

alone as he sat on the box would have sufficed to convince me that he knew how four horses should be handled, and, if further confirmation had been required, it would only have been necessary to watch him put his nags in motion, and all doubt as to his capabilities would have been put to flight. No beginner should be discouraged if he finds he cannot handle a team in the style such men as Lord Macclesfield and Colonel Tyrwhitt exhibit; he will have to go through many years of experience before he can hope to compete with such coachmen; it is only by constant practice that he can hope to approach towards perfection. If his knowledge of classical history extends to the period when Rome was built, he will be aware that the eminent city was not constructed in a day; and so he must not be surprised that the driving of four horses, however well chosen, or handy at their work, is not to be accomplished in one, or even several seasons.

As somewhat of a contrast to the teams I have just alluded to, I will point to the handsome, bloodlike horses drawing the exceedingly well-appointed coach of Mr. A. Hope, but which were spoken of by a man of long experience as being "a flashy-looking lot," and when seen alongside of the Duke of Beaufort's or Lord Macclesfield's nags, I must admit the criticism to be just; though, doubtless, many who judge only superficially of the qualities of coach-horses will think differently. But the definition I should give of the lot would be that, whilst Mr. Hope's team are all that can be desired for the Park, the others have all the qualifications needed for the road. Very high on the list Lord Londesborough should be placed—a coach-

man *par excellence*, as all must admit, an ardent admirer of the manly amusement, and one who would not fail to attract the attention of any qualified critic of such subjects. A glance at his turn-out would suffice to prove that it was no novice who was handling the ribbons, looking all at home, and capable of any evolution that can be performed with four horses.

Next to attract my special attention was the turn-out of Colonel Owen Williams, whose team consisted of four admirably-matched chestnuts, showing breeding and quality of more than average excellence—put together, I believe, by Mr. George Cox, of Stamford Street—going through their performances with credit, and being altogether a bright-looking and taking quartet, behind which no one would object to ride. Captain Whitmore's exceedingly smart team of well-selected, handsome, evenly matched, and useful horses, went in excellent form, and were well handled; and I at once called to mind having seen and noticed them on the occasion of the meeting of the Coaching Club a week or two since. Then, again, to be much admired, was the Marquis of Waterford's new blue-and-white coach, just turned out by Holland, who appears to supply a larger number of drags than any other builder, and which are always recognisable from their special make. Of course there was not any opportunity for dashing coachmanship, consequently I could not contrast the present noble lord's performances with those of the Marquis of my earlier days; but I have little doubt, from his appearance, that if the occasion should arise where it was necessary to

drive to half an inch that he would be there or thereabouts.

Then to be much commended was Sir Henry Tuffton's team of four blacks—his favourite colour—well selected, admirably matched, and first-class animals, harnessed to a remarkably handsome and well-appointed coach, beautifully appointed and excellently turned out. Equally worthy of notice was Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson's team, which are both good-looking and useful horses, well put together, and handled in good form. Count Münster's team of chestnuts were a stylish-looking and fashionable lot, and the coach turned out in good form and taste. By the time the coaches reached the Albert Memorial the boisterous wind abated sufficiently to permit the rain to come down bountifully, and somewhat diminished the number of visitors to the Orleans Club, which is now the chosen rendezvous for the members of the Four-in-Hand Club.



## A YEAR'S COACHING.

ONE of the most noteworthy enterprises of the past season was the working of well-appointed four-in-hand stage coaches by gentlemen, who, at considerable cost, put thoroughly well-appointed vehicles on the road, combining business with pleasure, and giving the public the opportunity of journeying on a first-rate coach drawn by four slapping good horses, tooled by a workman, through various parts of the prettiest scenery in the vicinity of the metropolis. Although at the close of the season the number was diminished, there are yet several of the best of these stage coaches still running from Hatchett's White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly. First on the list is the Rocket, owned and usually coached by Captain Hargreaves, with E. Fownes as assistant, an excellent whip, who takes charge in the absence of his chief.

There can be no doubt that railway travelling is expeditious and well adapted for business people and purposes; but even business people have sometimes leisure enough to compound for a little loss of time by a great gain of healthful and pleasurable enjoyment. Having a strong predilection for travelling behind four good horses, which I consider compensates in some measure for the loss of hunting, and having tried my wing on several occasions at those flights, making the Star and Garter the haven of rest,

I may venture to tell you there are many worse ways of employing the shining hours of the summertide than being picked up at your own door and conveyed by a workman on an excellent drag to that celebrated place of entertainment, and, after dining both wisely and well, being safely deposited at the starting-point, refreshed in body by the carefully considered hospitality of your friend, and elevated in mind by the society of the ladies whom you have had the good fortune to accompany.

After such preliminary trials I felt a desire to extend my flight; and therefore, choosing a bright and pleasant day, I repaired to the White Horse Cellar, into which I dived, and was informed by the brothers Banks, who conduct the booking-office business, that I should be likely to have a good time of it if I travelled to Portsmouth by the Rocket. I determined to be guided by the advice so pleasantly and courteously given, and when the arrival of the coach was heralded by the winding notes of the well-blown horn, I determined to trust myself to the care of that excellent whip and spirited proprietor, Captain Hargreaves, and was soon bowling along Piccadilly at a steady pace, passing Hyde Park Corner, down the Brompton Road, over Fulham Bridge, through the streets of Putney, better known now as the suburban dormitory, being largely inhabited by professional men who only "come home to their tea," and return to their avocations in the early morn.

Then the breezy heath of Wimbledon is reached, and we trot away at a merry pace through Kingston Vale, with occasional glimpses of the rich verdure and noble old trees of Richmond Park, stopping at

the Robin Hood to water the nags, for the day is hot and the way is dusty. Then on up the hill past the numerous suburban residences which have sprung up in the locality of Coombe Wood, until the town of Kingston is reached where the first stage ends, and we pull up at the Sun, when a fresh team is speedily put to. Then on again by the riverside, the stream sparkling in the bright sunlight, and gay with pleasure-boats and parties, past the enormous water-works constructed for the supply of London, through Esher, leaving Claremont on the left, pulling up at Cobham, at the White Lion, again to wash out the horses' mouths.

From Esher to Cobham the road is lovely, and as we drive beneath the grateful shade of the pine-trees, the air is redolent of their perfume, which the great heat of the sun has extracted. Then, time being up, we jog along at a fair pace, with a full load, to Ripley, which finishes the second stage.

Our fresh team being put to, we trot away until the fine old town of Guildford is reached, stopping at the White Hart to put on the skid, in order to descend with safety the exceedingly steep hill, which forms the High Street; then, crossing the bridge at the end of the town, we go straight away for Godalming, passing the numerous charming residences which abound in this favoured locality. Pulling up at 1.25 sharp at the Angel, where half an hour is allowed for luncheon, we find the landlady, Mrs. Stokes, fully prepared and equal to the occasion on the arrival of the London coach.

Now, Godalming, though a charming place, seems to one accustomed to the gay scenes of the metro-

polis just a trifle dull, which no doubt accounts for the large attendance of the inhabitants, assembled to witness the arrival and departure of the Rocket. Doubtless, it is the one event of the day.

The clergyman has paused for a while from his ministrations; the brewer has left his mash-tub; the retired officer has delayed his early dinner; and even the lawyer has looked up from his deeds to peer through the dingy blinds of his office at the Portsmouth coach. The little boys run about in a great state of excitement; whilst sundry ancient and horsey-looking parties audibly express their criticisms, evidently being looked upon as judges and reliable authorities, when contrasting the turn-out of modern days with the stage of olden times.

“All right; let them go,” says our coachman, and away we trot up and down the hilly road which leads to Hind Headhill, familiarly known as the “Devil’s Punchbowl,” passing through a beautiful piece of wild moorland scenery; stopping at the top of the hill to breathe the horses, opposite the monument erected at the close of the last century in memory of an unknown sailor who was murdered by three ruffians at this lonely spot.

Whilst the horses are recovering their wind there is time to admire the wild and beautiful landscape that extends in each direction, making it difficult to realise the fact that we are still within thirty or forty miles of London. Then resuming our journey, we wend our way merrily along until Liphook is reached, where again we change horses, and then finish our next stage at the Dolphin at Petersfield—an exceedingly quiet and contented-looking locality. Then

away through Horndean, stopping at Waterloo to change horses for the last time; then, spanking along through Cosham, we descend Portsdown Hill and see Portsmouth lying at our feet, and reach the George Inn, which is the termination of the journey, precisely as the clock strikes the hour of six, at which moment we are timed to arrive, having performed the distance (seventy-two miles) in eight hours and a half, including stoppages—capital work, considering the severe country that has to be traversed between Godalming and Portsmouth.

On the occasion of my trip Captain Hargreaves quitted us at Liphook to return to London, having done his share of the work in exceedingly good style; and we were handed over to Fownes, the regular coachman, who drove in right good form, springing his horses like a workman whenever the opportunity offered, and keeping his time to a second. The coach is one of Holland's make, and, together with the harness, is turned out in first-rate style; the horses are in excellent condition, as they need be to go the pace over the exceedingly heavy line of road, and they may be described as a very useful and handy lot of animals, well up to their work, doing the journey throughout at the rate of ten miles an hour, without showing any symptoms of distress, though the day was exceedingly hot and the load heavy.

To any one liking to sit behind four good nags and to travel through a lovely country at a rattling pace, I strongly recommend a trip by the Rocket, and I shall be greatly surprised if he does not coincide with me—especially if he is fortunate enough to select a day when Captain Hargreaves works the coach him-

self—in thinking it an extremely pleasant way of passing a summer's day.

Not being of a nautical turn of mind, Portsmouth does not delight me, so I went by rail to Brighton, having determined to return to town by the coach which runs on alternate days.

Now at the City by the Sea there is always something going on, therefore by visiting the Aquarium, which alone is worth the journey from London, walking on the pier in the cool of the evening, and partaking of the abundant hospitalities of the place, the time passed pleasantly enough until the appointed hour for joining the coach at the Old Ship. Precisely at 11.45 A.M. the exceedingly well-appointed "stage," driven on this occasion by John Thorogood, drew up in good form to take up its load of passengers, and as the clocks sounded the hour of noon we trotted merrily away, passing through Preston, a rising suburb of Brighton, away through Albourne and Handcross, until we reach the Chequers at Horley, where a quarter of an hour is allowed for lunch.

At this stage we start with a very spicy team—two sturdy, active wheelers, strong enough to draw the coach by themselves; a dark-brown, nearly black, hunter-like horse, and a skittish bay mare as leaders. Full of condition, as blooming as peacocks, and as playful as kittens, they start with a rush and a bound; but as they are in the hands of a thorough workman they are admirably handled, and Thorogood, who is one of the quietest and neatest coachmen I have seen for many a day, soon settled them down to their work, so that they did the stage with a will, making light of Redhill, and drawing up at the Feathers at Merstham

punctual to the moment. Then, changing for a more sedate lot of nags, we trot away cheerily through Croydon, stopping at Thornton Heath for the last change of horses.

This time a remarkably good-looking team, in splendid condition, with coats shining like satin, are put to, and we rattle through Streatham, Clapham Park, and over Vauxhall Bridge, reaching the White Horse Cellar well up to time. This coach (also one of Holland's) is turned out in first-rate style, admirably horsed throughout with handsome young animals imported from Ireland for the purpose. At the close of the season they will, if I mistake not, be found to have grown into money. They are admirably matched, doing credit to Thorogood, who had the putting of them together, I believe.

The Brighton coach is the joint property of Colonel Clitheroe and Mr. Freeman. One or other of them is usually to be found on the "bench," and their turnout is quite up to the standard of old times, and not a whit behind the form of Stevenson, Willan, or Sir St. Vincent Cotton. The time occupied on the way is six hours, including stoppages. The country is exceedingly pretty throughout the length of the journey; and, as the coach will run for a considerable time, there will be many opportunities of varying the monotony of the rail and enjoying a ride "down the road" after the fashion of bygone days.

Encouraged by the success of my two first ventures, and having heard of the fame of the Hironnelle, of which Colonel A. P. Somerset is the proprietor, running three times a week from Enfield, through Hatfield, Welwyn and Hitchin, I journeyed by rail

from Liverpool Street, reaching the George Inn, Enfield, in time to secure the only remaining seat, and to find the advertised promises carried out to the letter.

Precisely to the minute the winding of the horn is heard, and "the fast and well-appointed four-horse coach" draws up to the old-fashioned inn, where a party of ladies and gentlemen are assembled. The coach is loaded with the utmost despatch, and from the quiet and business-like way in which the start is effected, one recognises the fact of the proprietor being a man of judgment and experience, which is subsequently proved by the way in which the journey is performed.

When the "office is given" the cloths are pulled off, and we trot gaily along. Our first stage is all against the collar, and tries the mettle of the four spanking chestnuts, who walk away with their heavy load as if they liked it. Then away by Bell Bar, where we change horses—the fresh team consisting of two powerful chestnut wheelers, as fresh as paint, and a bay and a dun leader, both excellent animals, who go away in right good form, beautifully handled by Colonel Somerset—we bowl over the ground at a rattling pace, the journey being done throughout at the rate of eleven miles an hour, so that, travelling at this speed, Hatfield Park is speedily reached.

The Hironnelle being allowed the special privilege of traversing the park, through the kindness of the Marquis of Salisbury, an opportunity is afforded of a glimpse of the old house, and enjoying a view of the stately avenues of trees, the herds of deer, and the



countless scuttling rabbits, which adds greatly to the pleasure of the ride.

Then, carefully descending the steep pitch as we approached the town of Hatfield, we had an opportunity of judging of the qualifications of our coachman, who proved himself a master of the art of driving four-in-hand by the skill with which he handled his horses at this part of the journey, and without which any one might easily come to grief. Quickly leaving Hatfield behind us, we reach Digwell Hill, passing along a road belted on either side by luxuriant uncut hedges—the home of the wild rose, the woodbine, and the foxglove, which blossom unmolested, scattering their perfumes to the winds.

So, through such pleasant ways, we journey on until Welwyn is reached. The principal product of this quiet town would appear to be population, as, for its acreage, which is limited, it can boast of more children of tender years than any other town I have ever met with. I presume that on this occasion the inhabitants of riper years were busy in the harvest-fields, and so had left the place in the possession of the infantry. But this is trifling by the way, for Hitchin is already in sight; and, it being market-day, a very numerous company is gathered together to witness the Hironnelle draw up at the Swan Inn. On alighting, the passengers are ushered into the ball-room, dinner being provided after the fashion of the good old times, and the roast beef, pigeon pies, ducks and green peas, calling vividly to mind the old coaching days, when we were content to travel behind four good horses, even if we were a little longer on the road.

A walk round the town and a visit to the old church filled up the time ; and starting on our return precisely as the clock struck four, to the accompaniment of the key bugle, admirably played by the guard, and which, by the bye, is the legitimate form of horn belonging to the stage coach, we left Hitchin, retracing our steps without let or hindrance until Enfield was again reached, after a most pleasant and enjoyable ride.

Having been invited by Colonel Somerset to look over his establishment, I availed myself of the opportunity, and found an excellent range of roomy, well-built, and cleverly-ventilated stables, tenanted by harness horses and hunters of superior quality, all, with one or two exceptions, being bright chestnuts, and all, I believe, supplied by Cox, of Stamford Street, every horse working the coach being a sound, valuable animal, fit for park work, and evidencing great judgment in the selection. The carriages, notably the drag, all built by Hollands, and kept in superb order and condition, specially attracted my attention ; whilst the harness room, with its array of bits of every known form and shape, showed the eye of a master and the skilful hands of well-trained servants, the whole place being a model of order and completeness.

The Guildford coach has, till it was recently stopped, and the team sold off, maintained admirable punctuality in leaving the " Cellar " at eleven o'clock ; and the proprietors, Messrs. Shoolbred and Luxmoore, may take credit to themselves for having put one of the very best coaches on the road. No trouble or expense seems to have been spared to make the turnout complete.

Breakfasting at the Badminton towards the end of August, it was suggested that we should step into Piccadilly and watch its descent down the somewhat steep pitch opposite the entrance to the Club, as an opportunity would be afforded of seeing the team and noting how it was handled; and he must be a captious critic indeed who could find any fault with the coach, its admirable horses, or the workmanlike way in which it is handled by Mr. Shoolbred, who occupied the bench on that occasion.

The afternoon coach to St. Albans, the proprietor of which is Mr. Parsons, still runs three times a week, leaving the Cellar at 4.30 P.M. The Windsor coach has been withdrawn, as also the Tunbridge-wells and Sevenoaks, which is to be regretted, as a journey through the "Garden of England" at this season is doubly charming. The road through Bromley, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge, and Tunbridge-wells is delightful; and the traveller, if he be of a horticultural turn of mind, may learn much respecting the cultivation of cherries and cobnuts; and if he is one of those hardened individuals who have not the fear of Sir Wilfrid Lawson before their eyes, he will see with interest the growth of the plant from which the bitterness of Bass is derived.

It is to be hoped that the proprietors of this well-appointed and excellently-horsed coach—the Earl of Bective, Lord Helmsley, Lord Castlereagh, Captain Dunbar, and Colonel Chaplin—have found the venture sufficiently satisfactory to allow of its being put on the road again at an early period of next season. The coach which was worked between London and the Orleans Club was withdrawn from that journey at the

close of the season, and is now working under the direction of the proprietors—Captain Gould and Mr. Boulter—from the Granville Hotel, Ramsgate, through Margate, Westgate, and Upstreet, to the Rose at Canterbury. The coach is loading well, and is one of the many attractions provided for the dwellers at this palatial abode, who may choose to vary their amusement by taking an inland ride, when tired of the plashing of the sad sea waves.

There is no doubt that the revival of stage coaches is appreciated by the public ; and those who have the enterprise and are willing to contribute to their pleasure should receive a cordial recognition and encouragement. There are many places in England that will yet support a well-appointed four-horse coach, which, whilst affording pleasure to its proprietor, will be advantageous to the locality traversed by it ; in addition to which it causes a distribution of money, encourages several trades, and finds employment for a considerable number of people—all good and sufficient reasons for wishing success to those who offer us facilities for going “down the road” when our inclination leads us that way.

## HUNTING THE WILD RED DEER.

“THE busy reapers sheaves are binding, singing loudly o’er the plain ; and the silent brook is winding, through the fields of golden grain ” as I wend my way to Dulverton, in order to hunt the wild red deer with the Devon and Somerset Staghounds. Widely different were the conditions under which I last hunted the stag, the occasion being the meet of the Queen’s Hounds at Barleythorpe, at the close of the past season, when Lord Hardwicke brought down Goodall and the Royal pack, to give the dwellers in the Shires a taste of their quality. Then the corn was green, the hedges bare, the brooks bumpers, and the “country” fetlock deep ; so that out of a field of nearly 1000 well-mounted men assembled at Lord Lonsdale’s to see the uncarting of the deer, but a mere handful put in an appearance at the finish, a run of two hours and thirty-three minutes over the grass in the vicinity of Ranksboro’ Gorse having sufficed to bring many to grief, whilst those who went the pace soon found it a case of “bellows to mend.”

With the recollection of this rattling run fresh in my memory, and a lively remembrance of my mount on “Beverley,” who carried me like a bird, I listened with grave attention to a suggestion that it would not be a bad way of passing the time until cub-hunting begins if I were to pay a visit to the Somerset and Devon,

and for the first time to witness the hunting of the wild red deer amid the glorious scenery and rugged moorlands, where the Aclands, Bassetts, Fortescues, Worths, Chichesters, etc., have for generations past indulged in this noble and unique pastime. Time was that the deer roamed wild over a great part of North and South Devon and the West of Somerset; but the increase of population and the enclosure and cultivation of large tracts of waste lands have curtailed the area over which these beautiful and graceful animals bounded at will; and it is extremely probable that in the course of a few years the opportunities of enjoying this Royal sport will be still further diminished.

So the fiat went forth that my hunting clothes, boots, whips, etc., which had been carefully relegated to the lumber-room, should forthwith be packed for the journey. At this unexpected announcement, a cry arose, "What, going out hunting in August, with the thermometer at 87 degrees in the shade! You must be——," but the stern look of an offended parent soon put a stop to this babbling, and I packed off, with bag and baggage, to these, to me, new and happy hunting-grounds.

Having by a most fortunate chance been introduced to Mr. Collyns, whose father, Charles Palk Collyns, of Dulverton, was the author of 'Notes on the Chase of the Wild Red Deer in the Counties of Devon and Somerset'—dedicated to Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, a celebrated patron of the sport in former days—and, being kindly allowed the opportunity of perusing this rare and valuable work, which gives the author's experience of 46 years' sport in Devon and Somerset,

I was soon deep in the mysteries and science of "harbouring," "tufting," and "slotting," and all the ancient and recondite lore pertaining to "hartes and hinds," their habits and customs, especially the yearly shedding and marvellously rapid growth of their spreading horns; and my blood warmed as I read the vigorous and glowing descriptions which this practical and still well-remembered sportsman gives, in his work, of the beauty of the scenery, the nature and habits of these noble animals, and the craft of the hunter who chases the wild deer o'er the heather-clad hills of Devon and Somerset.

It was from this work that I first learnt that "the surpassing glory and majesty of the stag lie mainly in the *beamed frontlet* which adorns his brow." And I forthwith determined to lose no time in visiting the spot where the author had gained his experience; so that I also might be able to say, "It was a stag, a stag of ten, bearing his branches sturdily," that I had followed to the death, "along the huge mile-long waves of that vast heather sea"—to use the words of Kingsley, in his remarks on this glorious pastime. Nor was my excitement diminished when I further read that a "warrantable deer" would often run for four hours, or even more, "from moor to moor, from wood to wood, and from stream to stream, along the narrow strip of sand and rushes, speckled with stunted, moss-bearded, heather-bedded hawthorns, between the great grim lifeless mountain walls."

Leaving Waterloo by the 10.45 morning train, travelling *viâ* Salisbury down the lovely and luxuriant vale which the South-Western Railway traverses, past Gillingham and Sherborne, Temple Combe, Yeovil,

and Chard, Taunton is reached, after a beautiful and enjoyable ride ; thence to Dulverton, where I find a resting-place at the Lion Inn.

My first impression of Dulverton was that the scenery was magnificent, but that anything less like a hunting country I had never beheld. This quiet little town, lying in a hollow, encircled and overtopped by high and well-wooded hills, with the River Barle flowing noisily and rapidly through it, looked far more like the resort of those who pursue the gentle art of the fisherman than the home of the hard rider ; and I felt for a while dispirited and dejected at the prospect, until a safe and steady-going cob was brought to the door, and I proceed to prospect the "country." Having been told that "Miles the Harbourer" was a man to know, I proceed up and down the steep hills, along the narrow, shaded lanes, with their luxuriant hedges, rich in foliage, decked with foxgloves, ferns, and sprays of wild honeysuckle, and interspersed with many mountain ashes loaded with their gorgeous crimson berries.

But how about the hunting ? was my reflection ; that is the business on which I am bent ; and, with my preconceived notions, taken from past experience in many hunting countries, I could not reconcile the present conditions as being likely to conduce to the success of one bent on enjoyment of the chase. But when "Miles the Harbourer," recognising a kindred spirit—one that could enter into the mysteries of the craft, and was capable of appreciating the skill and dexterity necessary in his calling—offered to accompany me, to point out the home of the wild deer in the lovely woods of Pixton Park, the seat of the Earl



of Carnarvon—a liberal and popular landlord and staunch preserver of the wild deer—my spirits revived, my views were soon altered, and I began to feel assured that stag-hunting in this lovely country must be a grand and glorious sport.

Then away we jog through the purple heather, startling the black game and the hares from their cover, noting where the foxes bring their cubs to bask in the sunshine, until Hadden Hill is reached, from which a splendid and unequalled view of the beautiful county of Somerset is obtainable. In whatever direction the eye turns is a scene of hill and dale, of rich meadows, heather-clad hills, densely-wooded Coombes, sparkling rivulets, and rugged moorlands. Far away in the distance is Dartmoor; on the other side the range of the Quantock Hills, looking proudly down on the lovely vale of Taunton; and what is nearer to my purpose, a splendid line of woodland close at hand, extending for seven miles, where I am told there are any number of wild deer; and I am delighted to hear that there are a greater number of these beautiful creatures to be found in these parts than at any former time. Pausing as we rode along the “Harbourer” shows me the “slot” or footprint of a stag, and then explains the mysteries of his craft.

It is the duty of the harbourer to track the deer and to be able to point out to the huntsman the spot in which a “warrantable or runnable stag” is to be found. This, by close observation of the habits of these animals, and by a perfect knowledge of the “slot,” he can readily do, accurately defining by a footprint the age and sex of the deer—whether stag or hind—that is to furnish sport. Having done this he accom-

panies the huntsman, who, with two or three couples of hounds known as "tufters," proceeds to rouse the deer and drive him from the covers. This done, the "tufters" are whipped off, and after half or three-quarters of an hour's law, the pack are brought up and laid on to the scent.

It will be seen, therefore, that the duty of "harbouring" is a most important part of the business; and it was evident that my informant was thoroughly up to his work, being a man of great intelligence and a close observer of the manners and customs of the deer tribe. Profiting by his instructions and the experience gained in a four hours' ride through the lovely woods of Pixton, I began to feel my confidence revived, and returned to the Lion to arrange for my first day with the Devon and Somerset, the meet on the following morning being on the Quantock Hills, some 16 or 17 miles from Dulverton. Having sent my horse on by rail to Milverton, saving thereby some ten or twelve miles of road work, I started by the eight o'clock train, the morning being beautifully bright and warm; but scarcely had I journeyed a mile from the station when a terrific downpour of hail and rain overtook me, lasting for a quarter of an hour, after which the sun shone forth bright and clear again, and a lovely ride through pretty lanes, charming villages, especially Coombe Florey, stopping at a cottage half hidden with crimson roses and gigantic hydrangeas to inquire the way, and the "meet" was reached, where a large number of horsemen and many lookers-on in carriages were assembled, bringing vividly to mind the scene of a country race meeting, every carriage being provided with a hamper, the contents of which were to be dis-

cussed by the occupants of the vehicles whilst the covers were being drawn.

The "tufters" having been taken into the deep woods, but a short time elapsed before they found, and I had the satisfaction of viewing a noble stag breaking cover and going away over the hill; but an over-eager and selfish sportsman having, in his anxiety to get a good start, placed himself in the way, the stag was headed, and returned to cover. Need I remark that that particular sportsman had my sincerest and warmest wishes for his welfare. Then a time of waiting elapsed, during which the picnic parties pulled out their hampers, and revelled in their good cheer, disturbed though for a while by a heavy hailstorm which swept over the hills. Fortunately this was the clearing shower, and a stag having been driven from the cover the hounds were laid on, and I soon found myself going at a racing pace over the heather; but as the thoroughbred chestnut seemed to have a will and a way of his own, I determined to give him my unreserved confidence; and I am bound to say that he deserved it. Never putting his foot wrong or making the slightest slip, thus he careered gaily along, up hill or down hill, as I galloped away, in order to get well up with the hounds.

Having determined to take a line of my own, I went down a pathway covered with loose stones, which very much resembled Ludgate-hill with the pavement up; but having the additional advantage of some boggy ground and a running stream at its base. This safely passed, and being thoroughly satisfied that I should not be likely to meet with anything worse, I mounted an exceedingly steep hill, to be rewarded with the

prettiest scene imaginable. On the opposite hill-side were twenty-four couples of splendid hounds, breast-high in the heather, drawing towards me, the stag having been viewed going away towards West Quantocks Head. Then we hunted him through the woods, and far away, the wind blowing freshly from the Bristol Channel; and I began to feel thoroughly at home and delighted with the beauty of the scenery and the novelty of the sport, catching every now and then glimpses of Bridgewater Bay, with Cardiff in the distance; and the conviction was forced on my mind that, though utterly different from fox-hunting, as pursued in the shires, there is a special charm in hunting the wild deer over these lovely hills and dales.

But after a check at the foot of a steep hill, the hounds have hit on the scent again, and whilst hesitating as to which of the paths I should choose, a fair young girl on a chestnut horse having expressed her opinion that the stag had gone up the stream, I felt I could not go wrong if I followed such a leader, and again we go away at a rattling pace. The stag made towards the sea, descending one steep hill-side, mounting another steeper still, crossing the vale, and up the densely-wooded slopes of a cover into which he ran. For awhile the hounds were at fault, for the stag was "laid up" and some little while elapsed before he was viewed; but at length the place of his concealment is surrounded with horsemen, and the hounds are drawing up close to his lair. He makes for the shelter of St. Audries, the lovely residence of Sir Alexander Acland Hood, in close proximity to the sea shore. A grander sight to the sportsman than the moment when he cleared the stone wall and ran

in full view down the hill-side over the big fence into the park cannot be imagined, and I felt a shiver of excitement running through me and an increase in the pulsation of my heart when I saw the brave animal going gallantly away, distancing the hounds as he dashes into the lovely shubberies which were, however, soon made too hot to hold him; then, breaking cover again, we raced him across the park at a rattling pace, by the farmyard, and away through the plantation which leads towards the shore, when he makes for the sea, and is soon swimming for dear life in the muddy waters of the Bristol Channel. The tide being low, and no boat being at hand, he made his way through the water until he was lost to view, doomed, in all probability, I was informed, to be drowned in a short while, and thrown on the shore by the advancing tide. I have seen a stag captured in various places—on one occasion in the canal in the Regent's Park, after running over Hampstead Heath and Primrose Hill; but never before have I ridden at full tilt over the shingly beach, to pull up amidst the plashing of the salt sea waves. The master of the Devon and Somerset hounds is Mordaunt Frederick Bissett, Esq., who has hunted the country for the last 23 years, and a fit and proper man he looks to conduct such a noble sport, standing considerably over 6ft in height and riding 20st. or more. "You must not take this as a specimen of our sport," said this gallant huntsman; "in order to see our hunting at the best you must witness a run across Exmoor." However, I would not for a great deal have missed the opportunity of witnessing the breaking from cover

of this splendid and majestic animal, seen by me for the first time in his wild and natural state.

The finish, though novel, was to me unsatisfactory. I should have preferred seeing the stately animal run into, and falling like a warrior on his native heath, rather than rushing to his fate and being engulfed by the dirty-looking waters in which he sought refuge from his pursuers. Had there been a boat at hand he might readily have been captured; but as it was, we were obliged to abandon him to his fate. The season for hunting the stag commences on August 12th, and ends October 8th; then, after a delay of three weeks, hind-hunting commences, and may be continued, if the weather is mild, until Christmas. In former times hind-hunting recommenced in the spring soon after Lady Day, continuing until the first week in May, but this has been discontinued of late.

In thus giving my first description of a run with the far-famed Devon and Somerset hounds, it must only be looked upon as a preliminary canter. In order to see this exciting sport in perfection, I must wait until the season is further advanced; and then, when the covers in the vicinity of Hadden Hill are drawn, in which there are lots of noble stags and royal harts, if one should go away across the open, taking the direction of King's Brompton, and I can live to hounds across that grand line of country, I shall have a tale to tell which will rouse the spirit in the breast of every real sportsman. There will be no complaint in respect to the size of the fences. They will be big enough to satisfy the best man that goes across the shires; and if he can negotiate them to his satisfaction, he will thank me for having suggested a new pleasure,

for he will find a run with these fine hounds over this varying country not only novel, but exciting in the highest degree; and I recommend any one whose inclination leads him to follow my advice, to spend a month at Dulverton, from whence all the best meets can be reached, promising that he will find comfortable quarters at the Lion; and until he sees the requirements of the country he can hire safe animals of Mr. King, the landlord, which will enable him to judge whether it is worth while to bring his own stud to perform in these parts.

For my own part I should prefer hiring horses accustomed to these hills and dales; and I should by no means recommend anyone to bring unhandy animals here, as there are abundant opportunities of coming to grief. For instance, when taking a short cut down an exceedingly steep pathway, where several men dismounted, the chestnut I had the good luck to ride picked his way over the loose, rolling stones with such skill that I felt that I was safer on his back than I should have been blundering on my feet down the uninviting descent that I had ventured, in my anxiety to get to the hounds, and have a gallop down the lovely glade which lay between two steep and densely-wooded hills. Finding at the finish of the day that I had a ride of some 20 miles to accomplish before I reached Dulverton, I pulled up at Williton, and, after resting half an hour, in order to obtain refreshment for both man and horse, remounted, and, passing over a beautiful tract of country, through Nettlecombe, over Brendon Hill, leaving King's Brompton to the right. I finally reached Dulverton as the shades of night were closing over that eminently quiet little

town, after being on horseback for eleven hours ; and, as neither I nor the animal I bestrode showed any signs of fatigue, I am convinced that there must be something particularly invigorating in the fresh breezes of the Somerset hills, which allows of such an amount of exertion to be taken with impunity at this season of the year, for it seemed somewhat strange to be returning from hunting, whilst the corn was still standing, on a lovely evening on the last day of August.

On a future occasion I hope to visit the kennels of the Devon and Somerset hounds, and to make the acquaintance of the huntsman—who seems to be all over a workman—and to have a better opportunity of judging of his qualifications, when I have the good luck to follow him in a three or four hours' run after a "great stag" over the heather-clothed slopes of Dunkerry, or across the lovely vale of Portlock, and have seen the hunted hart "take soil" in the limpid waters of the impetuous Lynn, or seek refuge from his untiring pursuers by taking a desperate headlong leap from the edge of the tall cliff into the turbid waves that break on the beautiful beach of Glenthorne.



## A FOREST RUN WITH "THE QUEEN'S."

I STOOD upon the course at mid-day; the clock was striking the hour of noon as I wended my way over Ascot Heath, in order to visit "Frank Goodall" and the Royal staghounds. Now, there are three things that exercise a most depressing influence on my spirits. A theatre, when seen by daylight; a drinking fountain, with the water cut off; and a race-course, after the meeting is over.

Pausing for a moment in front of the Grand Stand, now shorn of all its accessories, I see a mere collection of bare scaffold poles and empty benches; the lights are shed, the garlands dead, and all its charms departed; whilst memory recalls that unlucky investment on "Atalanta," when the wincing jade failing to pull off a dead certainty, I dropped my money like a man. It was there that the yellow barouche was drawn up on the memorable Cup-day when I first beheld—but in an instant these melancholy retrospections are put to flight, and a change comes o'er the spirit of my dream, as I listen to the sounds so familiar to my ear. "Tallyho!" "Tallyho!" "Gone away, lads, Gone away!" and I see Mr. Garth's hounds streaming across the heath in full cry after a cub, which they are rattling along at a merry pace, in the heat and dust of a lovely October morn.

The feeling of depression having been dispelled by the melodious music of the pack, I resume my journey, and in a few moments reach the kennels, which are situated close to the heath. Here a kind and cordial welcome is given me by the Royal huntsman, and I am soon taken to look over the noble lot of hounds in which Mr. Goodall takes so great a pride, and which, when viewed with a critical eye, prove the judgment and skill of this first-rate sportsman. First I am introduced to the young ones, averaging some fifteen or sixteen months old; and I am especially struck with the beauty of Waspish, Fairmaid, and Psyche, who will in due course make, if I mistake not, a grand addition to the "Lady" pack. Then Hercules and Boreas are summoned to appear, and I note two grand youngsters, of whom much is expected by their huntsman; next follow Marplot and Magic, and the rest of the juveniles, who promptly step forth in obedience to the call of their master, and I am fully satisfied that a better or finer lot are not to be found in any kennel in the country. The total number of all ages is forty-three and a half couples; three hounds dating back to the year 1871, twelve to 1872, sixteen to 1873, twenty-one to 1874, fifteen to 1875, and twenty to 1876; the average working life being six years.

Early to attract my attention amongst the four-year-old lot was Captor, a very beautiful specimen; then Rarity and Ransom, sons of Mr. Garth's Rustic, Restless, Richmond, and Romeo, put in an appearance; and I am bound to say that it was difficult to award the palm. Amongst those classed as one-year old, I would call the attention of any master who may

visit the Royal kennels before the season commences, to the form and condition of Baronet, a son of the Heythrop Wanderer and Barmaid, as a specimen of a magnificent young hound, the like of which any huntsman may be proud of. After which, if he will note his companions, Reynard, Sepoy, and his half-brother Sailor, I think he will admit that I have not over-rated the quality of the animals to which I have directed attention.

Having, during the past year, visited many of the best kennels in England, I am fully justified in saying that I have not seen one that can produce a pack better fitted by condition and quality to hunt any "country," and to go the pace sufficiently fast to satisfy the most exacting sportsman that flies across the shires, or one who prefers a twenty-five minutes' spin at a racing pace to a good hunting run of an hour and a half, which he votes a bore. Of the ability of the Royal Buckhounds to hold their own I had ample evidence on the occasion of their visit to the provinces last year, when they showed the rustics how the thing is done, and won golden opinions from some of the best men who are to be found amongst the Melton division. Nor is it to be wondered at that the Royal pack should be found A 1, when it is remembered that it can boast of some of the very best blood from the kennels of the Duke of Rutland, Lord Middleton, Lord Portsmouth, Sir Watkin Wynn, and Mr. Garth; and it is apparent that Goodall has spared neither trouble nor exertion to make the hounds worthy of their name. I may say that at no time within my knowledge of them, ranging over a period

of forty years, have they ever been in finer form and better fettle than they are at this present moment.

It is no light or easy thing to fulfil the duties attached to the position of the huntsman of the Queen's Hounds; on the contrary, it is a task that requires much tact and temper to conduct the sport in a satisfactory manner. Many and oft are the times when he is obliged to see his every effort to show a good run frustrated by the unsportsmanlike conduct of a portion of the field, who ride after the stag and over the hounds with a total disregard of consequences; and it matters little whether such proceedings originate through the ignorance of the horsemen, or the selfishness of those who, calling themselves sportsmen, will yet override the hounds, and destroy their own sport, as well as that of the rest of the field, who are content to wait with patience until the hounds get well away.

Of late years the difficulties of hunting the Queen's have greatly increased. The country is sliced up by railways; semi-detached villas abound on all sides; wire-fencing is not unfrequently met with; and asparagus beds and cucumber frames are often crossed by the stag, instead of verdant meads and purling brooks. It behoves every true sportsman, therefore, to aid the huntsman in his endeavours to show sport, and to mark their sense of the conduct of those reckless or inconsiderate riders who wantonly disregard the rules of fair play in their selfish endeavours to obtain pleasure for themselves at the cost of that of other and better men. Looking at the prospects of the ensuing season, I think there is every probability of a good time. Goodall seems to have entirely recovered from

the effects of the very serious fall he met with on the last day of the past season ; and I venture to say that, given an open country and a "warrantable stag," he will be a hard man to beat when he sits down to ride at the tail of his pack. Then he may exclaim, as Charles Davis was wont to do when he got well away, "Why don't you ride over them now?"

Having learnt that the meet on the following morning was to be at the Royal Hotel, at Ascot, I determined to see a forest run, which, prior to the commencement of the regular season beginning on November 1, is for the stag what cub-hunting is to the fox-hound, and is the means of exercising the pack and breathing the deer preparatory to the commencement of the real business of the year. Starting from Taplow and journeying across Maidenhead Bridge, through the village of Bray, away by New Lodge, the lovely residence of Madame Van de Weyer, skirting the edge of Windsor Forest, and passing between the kennels and the race-course, the Royal Hotel is reached, where a small field is assembled, amongst whom several ladies are to be seen, and several veteran sportsmen well known with the Queen's. The mist having been dispelled by the bright sun, which shone with all the ardour of a summer's day, Goodall trotted off with the hounds, through the lovely lanes and glorious rides of Windsor Forest, which are seen in perfection on a brilliant October morning, the foliage just showing the first golden tints of autumn ; and though doubtless the proverbial southerly wind and the cloudy sky proclaim a hunting morning, yet a lover of the noble sport can find much to delight him should he try his hand at a forest run with the Queen's

at this this period of the year. Jogging along in the direction of Swinley, we arrive at Gravel Hill, to find that the hind Accident has already been uncarted ; and sufficient law having already been given, the hounds are at once laid on and go away at a rattling pace, running parallel with the Nine-mile Ride, pointing for Broadmoor ; then bearing away to the right they cross Easthampstead Park in full cry, and away in the direction of Workingham ; but turning short to the right they make for the London and South-Western Railway, along which they run for a considerable distance ; quitting the rail at the Bracknell Station, the hind is followed into a garden adjacent where a fruitless attempt is made to take her ; but, notwithstanding the heat of the day, Accident, who has shown a decided preference for the "open," not caring to skulk under the shade of venerable oaks or to stalk along the elastic turf of the verdant forest glade, is not to be caught, and, breaking away from the shrubbery in which she had sought a resting-place, goes merrily away, leaving Bracknell village on the left, bearing still to the right, and going straight for Swinley ; but, turning again to the left, she crosses the Bracknell road, followed closely by the hounds away over Fern Bank, and rattles across the beautiful grass enclosures belonging to Mr. Ferrand. Being headed at this point, the hind turns to the left once more, running on to Winkfield Row, and thence to Fern Hill, being finally taken in the road close to Windsor Forest, after an excellent run of two hours and a half.

"I never remember," said Goodall, "hunting on a hotter or dustier day, and it was rather a remarkable

thing that the deer should have so studiously avoided the forest."

Considering the time of year, this was a severe run, the sun shining brilliantly throughout the whole time, the heat at mid-day being equal to any period of this somewhat eccentric summer; and it speaks well for the condition of the hounds that so few stragglers were to be found, though here and there one was to be seen showing symptoms of distress. On the whole the work was done in a highly satisfactory way; and my opinion as to the fitness of the pack was confirmed by the performances during this exceptional day. In order to see the "Queen's Hounds" to the greatest advantage, a day should be selected when the "meet" is fixed either at Gerrard's Cross, Pole Hill, or Maidenhead Thicket, from either of which places I have usually had the luck to drop in for a good thing, the country being sufficiently open to give you a breather. Starting from Pole Hill, you will, if fortunate, have a taste of the Harrow country, which rides well in the early part of the season; but after heavy rains it becomes, as the winter advances, very deep and holding. Should you have the good fortune to follow a stout deer in a run of an hour and a half, or thereabouts, going by way of Pinner, leaving Harrow on the right, and making for Finchley, you will find, if you go well up to the hounds, that you have had nearly enough of it by that time.

In olden days one of the best fixtures of the Royal Buckhounds was Elmore's Farm, at Uxendon, within five miles of Hyde Park corner, and about an equal distance from Harrow spire. This, in the pre-railway era, was the cream of the "country" hunted by the

Queen's, and when the meet was there, or at Castlebar Hill, Ealing, or the Red Lion, at Southall, in the merry days when the Earl of Chesterfield was Master, and Charles Davis huntsman, it was a sight to behold, especially in the spring time, when all the best men from the different hunting countries were wont to put in an appearance. Now, London has made such rapid strides that a great portion of the grass is covered with buildings, and it is only on occasions that you have a chance of trying a spin across that which remains between Harrow and Willesden. Even after the Great Western and North-Western Railways first commenced running, and building operations were only threatening the districts, I remember the pack being brought up by train to the Ealing Station. The deer was then uncarted, in the vicinity of Twyford Abbey, which lies over by Hanger Hill, and but a very short distance from East Acton and Old Oak-common; thence we ran over the grass in the direction of Harrow and Finchley for an hour and a quarter at a racing pace without a check, finally taking the noble animal at Stanmore. During the whole of this run we were never off the grass for a moment; and I well remember that at the finish, "Grasshopper," a flea-bitten thoroughbred, who, in his prime, had figured as one of the fastest and best steeple-chasers of his day, after carrying me like a bird in the very first flight, without for a moment showing the slightest symptom of distress, lay down on the grass at the end of the ran, where I was compelled to leave him until I could obtain assistance from a neighbouring village to effect his removal.

From Gerrard's Cross I have had many a good spin,



and should recommend that meet, when the opportunity occurs, to anyone who wishes to see the Queen's at their best; and if the deer should take a line through Bulstrode Park, and go away in the direction of Amersham or Beaconsfield, I think he will not regret his venture. Maidenhead Thicket is also a favourite and pretty meet; but as Burnham Beeches is close at hand, with a line of covers running in the direction of Marlow or Henley, and the river runs hard by, I give the preference to Gerrard's Cross. During the remainder of the month the hounds will hunt twice a week in the Windsor Forest district; and the trouble of a visit will be amply repaid by a sight of the pack and a view of the lovely country in the vicinity of Windsor Castle. It is to be hoped that the noble Master of the Buckhounds, Lord Hardwicke, will, in the course of the ensuing season, venture out of the beaten track, and try his fortune further afield. There are many places, within easy reach by rail, where he would be welcome; and I know that another visit in the course of the season to the neighbourhood of Melton will be hailed with satisfaction, especially if it is of longer duration than the last. Good as the sport was on that occasion, it would be far more enjoyable at a time when the going across that splendid part of the shires is a little less heavy than it was at the end of last spring.

## HUNTING IN THE ISLE OF THANET.

A GOLDEN opportunity offering, I availed myself of it to visit the Isle of Thanet ; and, as a preparation for the serious business of the approaching season, to enjoy a gallop over the breezy downs in the vicinity of Ramsgate and Margate, at the tail of the business-like pack of harriers that hunt over the wide tract of land in this division of the “ garden of England ” of which Camden, writing in the year 1695, says :—“ The country people and town dwellers of Kent retain the spirit of that ancient nobility above the rest of the English, being most ready to afford a respect and kind entertainment to others.” And I am happy to be able to record, from personal experience, that this high reputation is fully maintained at the present date ; and that the qualifications of the dwellers in this pleasant isle are not a whit less admirable than they were in the days of that distinguished historian, kindness and hospitality being the especial features in the character of those of the inhabitants that I had the good fortune to fall in with. Nor is it only of the dwellers in this pleasant place that I am bound to speak well, for in no part of England is it possible to find a healthier soil or more bracing air ; and for those who desire to escape from that portion of the inheritance to which flesh is heir, taking the form of gout, rheumatism, or such kindred evils, I should

suggest a visit to this health-giving locality, where, however heavily handicapped the patient may be, I will guarantee that he will speedily find himself in better form if he will mount a thoroughbred one, and, leaving black care behind, go the pace with the Thanet or West-street harriers, or have a spin with the Earl of Guildford's noble pack across that portion of East Kent which is hunted by these well-appointed hounds, and which is within easy reach of visitors to Ramsgate, Deal, Dover, and Folkestone. And here I may remark that, whatever objections may be taken to ladies riding to hounds in general, there can be none in the case of well-mounted horsewomen who may be disposed to follow the harriers in any portion of the Isle of Thanet, where the land is light and devoid of fences, and the hares being abundant, there is a certainty of a find, and the probability of a good burst over the open, for those who prefer this style of thing to hammering along the hard high-roads in the pursuit of pleasure, or for the sake of exercise.

At no time, in my opinion, is a fair maiden seen to greater advantage than when she is mounted on a good horse; of course I assume that she has an elegant figure, a light hand, confidence in the animal she is to perform on, and a well-fitting and short-cut habit. By a good horse I mean an animal that is handsome in form, with sloping shoulder and high crest, ensuring thereby perfect freedom of action and elasticity and comfort in his movements; with high courage, a turn of speed, and a light mouth, and whilst being full of spirit, and ready to spring into a gallop at the slightest movement, is yet always and at all times perfectly under the control of his rider. Such being

the conditions, I think that the companionship of ladies in the hunting-field is pleasant and agreeable in the highest degree ; but when I see young girls badly appointed, wanting in hands, and endowed with more courage than discretion, mounted on raw, unmade, and unmanageable animals, with legs like clothes-props and mouths like coal-scuttles, attempting to ride to hounds across a stiff country, well—then I wish that they were at home embroidering slippers for the new curate, who is charged with the care of the souls in their particular parish.

But whilst indulging in these discursive criticisms, I am forgetting that the Thanet Harriers are to meet within easy distance on this bright October morn. Starting off at a lively pace, the quiet and pleasant little village of St. Lawrence is soon left behind, and the open country speedily reached. On the one side I see the shores of Pegwell Bay, over which the white spray is flying in dense clouds, a boisterous wind blowing rudely o'er these downs so free, whilst on the opposite side I behold the "white horses" tumbling over one another on the treacherous sands in the vicinity of Margate.

Though a trifle less wind would have been desirable, yet there was something extremely exhilarating in galloping against it over these open fields. True it is that the ground was unusually dry and hard, and that there necessarily could be but little scent. Yet it had to be borne in mind that before the regular season commences little more than exercise and practice for the hounds is looked for.

The Master of the Thanet Harriers is Mr. Johnston, of Sarre Court, who looks the huntsman all over, and

is extremely pleasant and agreeable to boot. The pack consisted on this day of eleven couples of useful-looking hounds, which forthwith proceeded to draw for a hare, a short time only elapsing before there was a find ; and away they went merrily at a rattling pace, running puss into an enclosed meadow, from which escape was impossible.

Owing to the violence of the wind, the ladies who had honoured the field with their company, retired from stress of weather, and it was proposed that the meeting should stand adjourned until the following day, in the hope that the elements might give up their boisterous play ; and it would have been better if this resolve had been carried out, for, having drawn for some little while, one of the hounds suddenly disappeared down a drop, and giving tongue, the whole of the pack followed him, unfortunately jumping some forty feet into a disused chalk-pit. When we rode up it was to find that the first hound, who had set this evil example, was dead, and that three were limping and howling with broken legs. This was an unfortunate accident, terminating the day's sport abruptly, and being a great loss at the commencement of the season. I had never in my experience seen a disastrous occurrence of this sort, and it was evident that the pack mistook the yell of the hound that fell first into this trap, for a find, to which they hastened at once. I think it would be an advantageous thing if a few fir poles were to be used as a warning and protection against accidents, or some day we shall hear of horse and rider going headlong into one of these dangerous unguarded pits.

Owing to the unusually fine time and long con-

tinuance of dry weather, hunting had to be suspended until the welcome rain shall have fallen; consequently this was the only opportunity I had of seeing the Thanet Harriers, of whose performances, however, even this short experience showed me to be a sporting pack, which in due course will show many a pretty spin to those who are content to ride over an open "country," where fences are unknown and where you may gallop to your heart's content over the wide space of land which lies before you.

Owing to the same cause the West-street Harriers, of which Lord Granville is Master, were compelled to suspend their sport, and await the good time, when copious showers shall render the going pleasant over the plough. I was therefore unable to have a look at them; but I heard on trustworthy authority, that this is an excellent pack, as might be expected, from the fact of their having so good a sportsman as the noble lord at their head, whom I have followed on many occasions when he was Master of the Buckhounds, and was first "entered" for politics, in which field I believe he is just as genial and pleasant as he was in his more youthful days, when he presided over the destinies of her Majesty's Hounds.

The West-street Harriers hunt over a large tract of land, extending from Dover and Deal to Sandwich, and from the report I heard of them I have every reason to believe they will well repay a visit when the season is a little advanced. Having received permission from the Earl of Guildford to look over his lordship's kennels and stables at Waldershare

Park, near Dover, and being desirous of seeing the East Kent hounds at home, I started on a lovely morning for a ride of some 16 or 17 miles, in order to carry out my desire. Riding by way of Pegwell Bay, the abode of the shrimp and shrimper, I galloped along until the exceedingly quaint town of Sandwich appeared in sight, and, crossing the drawbridge without let or hindrance, I hastened through the narrow ways and quiet streets of that tranquil place, and, following the Dover road, made for Waldershare at a hand gallop wherever I could find a piece of soft ground.

Upon reaching the well-wooded park, which abounds with fine old timber, a large range of buildings, standing on the high ground was pointed out as being the kennels of the East Kent, and I at once made for the village of Eythorpe, where I found stabling for my steed, who was nothing loth to receive a dressing and a feed after the merry little spin across the open, though having had only a feather-weight of 16 stone or thereabouts to carry—a weight which is scarcely worth mentioning. Then, having seen my nag properly attended to, I proceeded on foot to the entrance of the park, where I learnt from one of the whips that his lordship was from home; but that I was expected, and that he had kindly left instructions that I was to have the privilege of inspecting the wonders of Waldershare. A few minutes' walk across this noble old park, over the racecourse which is placed in the hollow, along which the hunters' stakes are run for in due season, under the noble spreading beech trees, now clad in their russet suit of many and glorious tints, pausing

for a while to watch the red and fallow deer feeding contentedly on the beechnuts, the kennels are soon reached, and I find John Hill, the kennel-huntsman, ready and pleased to show me his beauties. Many will remember Hill, when he acted for several years as first whip to the Fitzwilliam, under the tutelage of George Carter, who was himself a pupil of one of the best huntsmen that ever sat in the pigskin, by name Tom Sebright, with whom I have ridden in days long past, through some of the best runs that ever were seen in any country.

A smart man in dress and manners is John Hill; and if appearances go for anything, I should say he was a hard man across country, otherwise he would not have whipped in for six or seven years to such a bruiser as George Carter, who, when well mounted, stands for no repairs, but goes as resolutely across country as if he was riding for dear life, when his blood is up, in a crack run from Stanwick Pastures, Catworth Gorse, or any other of the best meets of the Fitzwilliam. The kennels and stables are a fine range of buildings, covering a large space of ground, erected at great cost within a very recent period, amply supplied with water pumped up by steam to an elevation that commands the whole of the buildings; and it is evident that no expense has been spared to render this large establishment as nearly as possible perfect. The huntsman's house is close to the kennels, and is a neat, roomy, and pleasant abode. A magnificent covered riding school, on a most extensive scale, forms one side of the square of the stable-yard; a range of boxes for the entire horses stands by itself, and the boiling houses, meal



stores, feeding chambers, and floors are all in good form, and show by their cleanliness that the management is good. The number of hounds on the books at the present time is somewhere about fifty couples, amongst which are three or four old pensioners, who, though past work, are, by the special desire of the noble master, still retained on the muster-roll. First, the dog pack is brought out on the green sward for my inspection, and my attention is at once directed to Comus by the Berkeley Calaban, a model hound. I find, by examination of the book, that the Berkeley blood enters largely into the composition of the pack, and that it can boast of some of the best blood from the finest kennels in the kingdom, to wit, those of the Duke of Beaufort, the Hon. George Fitzwilliam, the Cotswold, the Quorn, the Heythrop, the Duke of Rutland, Lord Portsmouth, the Blackmore Vale, and Sir W. Wynn. Little is it to be wondered at that, with such strains of blue blood, Lord Guildford can show as good a pack of hounds as can be desired.

Next the "ladies" are called forth, and, if I know anything of the shape, make, and quality of the breed of foxhounds, I will venture, without further knowledge of them, to pronounce them "flyers;" and as a specimen of what a hound should be, I will select Promise for choice.

The East Kent country is a difficult one; the woodlands are extensive, and difficult to get through, as there are but few rides cut, and the hazel boughs are tough, whilst the hills are steep, and the ground flinty; but as I hope during the ensuing season to witness a performance of the pack, I will reserve further remarks until I have seen them go the pace

after one of the sturdy-looking foxes which I am glad to hear abound in East Kent. Having had the young hounds drafted out for special examination, and, time pressing, I am next shown over the splendid range of stalls occupied by nearly fifty useful nags, all in excellent condition, and looking extremely fit to go; and I have rarely seen so good a lot of horses provided for a huntsman and his whips as those which are to be seen in the stables of Waldershare. Those reserved for his lordship's own use are a powerful lot of animals, but I was told that Lord Guildford had the bad luck to lose two of his best and most prized horses during the summer; and, as he is a heavy weight, animals suitable to carry him to the fore are not very easily picked up. Nevertheless, there are several which I should not be afraid to trust myself on, however big the fences might be. Having taken a look at the riding school, which is a grand place, of sufficient extent to accommodate the whole stud at exercise, I bid farewell to Waldershare, as the shades of evening were closing o'er me, and I had a long ride to perform between sunset and dinner time.

A brisk walk speedily brought me to the village inn where my steed was stalled, and I was soon in the saddle jogging towards home, passing along the same route that I traversed in the morning. The rooks were hastening to their haunts in the park, whilst large flocks of starlings and other wild birds were to be seen congregating together, betokening the advent of winter and cold weather. Lights began to twinkle here and there in the cottage windows; and night closed in ere I had completed my journey, at the conclusion of which I felt as fresh as a four-year-old after

a pleasant ride of six or seven-and-thirty miles ; and whether it was the result of the fresh air and exercise, or from my having adopted the salutary custom of providing myself with a night-cap of a particular class of manufacture, for which the islanders of Thanet are so justly celebrated, I know not ; but it is a fact that I fell asleep in an instant, dreaming that I was riding to the East Kent Hounds in the very first flight, taking my fences in good form, and feeling that I should be well in at the death, when my vision was rudely dispelled by a loud knock at my door, and an intimation that the clock had struck the hour of eight.

## THE ROYAL BUCKHOUNDS.

ACCORDING to long-established custom the first meet for the season of the Queen's hounds came off yesterday at Salt Hill. The morning was dark and lowering and the rain fell heavily at intervals, the atmosphere being close and altogether uninviting to those who merely came to see the sight, but to those who meant business there was nothing to prevent the chance of a good run on the opening day. The ten o'clock special train from Paddington arrived at the Slough Station a quarter of an hour after time, bringing down seventeen horse boxes and a numerous array of ladies and gentlemen on pleasure bent. I cannot compliment the managers of the Great Western Railway on their arrangements for disembarking the horses. I think that a better mode could be adopted than making some forty or fifty hunters traverse the platform, whilst having to pass by the noisy engine, on their way through the passenger exit. I for one should be sorry to see a horse in high fettle subject to such treatment, and I call attention to the fact, as a hint may amend a dangerous practice.

The usual motley assemblage was to be seen on my arrival at Salt Hill. Carriages of all sorts and sizes; pedestrians innumerable, and a number of men more or less well mounted; and a sprinkling of ladies, who, the weather notwithstanding, had resolved to join in

the day's sport. Punctual to the appointed time, Goodall, with fifteen and a half couples of hounds in racing condition, attended by his three whips, appeared on the scene; Bartlett riding Barleythorpe, a remarkably clever looking bay horse, recently purchased in the shires.

The customary parade in the adjoining paddock soon drew a host of spectators. Amongst the first to attract my attention was Mr. Cox, of Hillingdon Park, who I have known as a constant attendant on the Royal pack for the last forty years. A straight man across country and an elegant rider was this fine sportsman; and many a time have I been content to follow in his wake across the Harrow country, feeling sure I should not go very far wrong if I stuck close to so excellent a pilot. Now he has ceased to ride hard, and is content to trot quietly along instead of sailing across the grass as he was wont to do in former days.

Another familiar face now appears upon the scene, and I recognise Mr. Hurman, a bold rider and an excellent horseman, who could hold his own over the stiffest country, and was wont to go the pace as well as any man I have ever seen with the staghounds. Amongst a large field I observed Colonel Harford on a thoroughbred one, accompanied by Mrs. Richardson, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert of Mucross, Mr. Seymour Grenfell, Captain C. Needham, Captain Knowles, Mr. Gerald Paget, Mr. Bowen May, and many of the old inhabitants of the district—true lovers of sport. But I missed the familiar face of Mr. Tattersall, who failed to attend on this occasion, and some others whose places are now filled by the rising generation.

Upon the arrival of Lord Hardwicke the motley

cavalcade moved off to Bayliss Court Farm, where the deer Baronet was speedily uncarted ; but, bewildered by the hideous hullabaloo which proceeded from the crowd of spectators, he declined to face the open country which lay before him ; and, jumping over a small and crowded dog-cart and the heads of some of his pursuers, made away for the Slough Station, followed by the howling crowd and a lot of horsemen, who, disdaining to follow the hounds, preferred themselves to hunt the stag. Then, getting clear of the brickyards and railway sidings, he made for Langley Park : but, bending to the right, he went over the rail near Langley level crossing, going at a splitting pace across Langley Broom, and making for Horton, where he took to the water, closely followed by the hounds ; but, contriving to shake them off, he emerged from his bath, and refreshed by the immersion, soon showed them his heels, running across Staines Moor, in the direction of Stanwell, at great speed, scattering the field in all directions, and making for the river, which he crossed, and laid up in the osier-beds at Laleham. Having thus far distanced his pursuers, he had time to recover his wind, whilst Goodall trotted the pack to Chertsey Bridge, and then along the Surrey side of the Thames back to these osier beds, whence the deer was soon driven again, and made to face the open, being finally taken in a chalk pit at Rowton, near Addlestone, in Surrey, after a terrific run of over four hours, during which time a distance of about thirty miles must have been traversed. The field was diminished at the end of this almost unparalleled run to the small number of half-a-dozen or thereabouts, and the deer was with diffi-

culty saved from the hounds. Edrupt, one of the whips, fell whilst jumping into a road, breaking his collar-bone, and was taken in a vehicle to Chertsey. Thus finished the first day of the season; and if this is a specimen of the style of sport that Goodall intends to show, even the most greedy of sportsmen will have a chance of being satisfied.

When the deer crossed the Thames a great number pulled up, having had enough, amongst whom was the noble Master Lord Hardwicke, who went uncommonly well throughout. Considering the line of country chosen by Baronet, especially that portion in the vicinity of Staines Moor, it is wonderful that any horse could have lived through such a run. Those whose nags lacked condition found it was a case of "bellows-to-mend" long before they reached the river, and several loose horses showed that some had come to grief, as was to be expected from the heaviness of a portion of the country and the stiffness of the fences throughout. With such a performance at the commencement of the season I think that Lord Hardwicke must be considered as having maintained the reputation of the Royal Buckhounds, which have fully justified the opinion I expressed of their condition on a late occasion when visiting the kennels at Ascot; and I venture further to predict that, provided the field will assist Goodall in restraining the impetuosity of the hard riders, and let the hounds have a chance of getting well away and settling down to their work, there will be no lack of future sport with the Queen's.

## HUNTING ON THE SOUTH DOWNS.

“WHAT’S the use of sighing when time is on the wing. Can we prevent its flying? then merrily let us sing.” Such was the burthen of my song as I entered the most delightful of all seaside resorts—Brighton—on a bright and beautiful morning at the close of October. True it is that half a century has elapsed since I first visited this City by the Sea; but what matter? Is the view less charming, the sea less sparkling, the air less bracing, are the women less lovely and fascinating, or the men less jovial and hospitable? Decidedly not; and as sighing under these circumstances would be a folly, I came to the conclusion that, notwithstanding the efflux of time, we may be happy yet, provided we set about it in the right way. Deeply impressed by this conviction, I immediately made tracks for the West Brighton Riding School, where I was told that Mr. Dupont would mount me right well, if I meant to try my luck at hunting on the South Downs.

Having fortunately taken time by the forelock, I was enabled to make satisfactory arrangements; for though the stud consists of some seventy animals, yet such is the reputation it has obtained, that, had I not with judicious foresight been early in the field, I should have been forestalled by the distinguished foreigners who, during their residence at Brighton, trust to Mr.



Dupont to mount them safely and well. As it was I was fortunate enough to secure the pick of the basket. On looking over the stud I made instant choice of a sturdy little chestnut horse, very fresh and clean on his legs, in blooming condition, looking as hard as nails and as fit as a fiddle.

Having secured such a business-looking mount I congratulated myself on my good luck. Being somewhat like the welter weight of whom the famous Dick Christian remarked, that "he was a heavyish sort of man, but he did cuff along uncommon," it is a matter of importance to have a hunter well up to my weight. "Behold how brightly breaks the morning," I exclaimed, as I threw up my window, and watched the sun rising from the crimson clouds, but this was a promise which, like many others I have met with in a somewhat lengthened career, was not fulfilled. On the contrary, the rain set in with a persistence worthy of a better cause, and I have never in all my life been out hunting on so wet a day as that on which I attended the first meet of the season of the South Down Foxhounds, at the kennels at Ringmer.

When I stepped on to the well-appointed four-in-hand that started from Waterloo-street, with its neat team of chestnuts, I thought as we drove along the King's-road, and saw the wild waves dashing on the beach, and looked at the leaden skies, that I had never seen so unpromising a day, and began to doubt whether the game was worth the candle; but when I found a most agreeable lot of companions, and listened to the racy jests and witty remarks of my fellow-sportsmen, I thought, Well, after all, what does a little rain matter? Arriving at the kennels, George

Champion, who has hunted these hounds for the last twenty years, stepped forward and welcomed me to Ringmer, showing me into a room where an elegant breakfast, worthy of Gunter in his best days, was provided for all comers; and I was fully convinced that a little more or less water was, after all, a matter of but trifling importance whilst such excellent antidotes were close at hand.

The meet, however, was shorn of its brilliancy by the disastrous weather; and the only other drag was that of the 20th Hussars, which came up in good form, having evidently a workman on the bench, whilst their Excellencies Count Schouvaloff and Count Beust, with Count Deyme, were to be seen booted and spurred, and eager for the chase, and wholly undaunted by the elements. Amongst the field, which did not come up to its usual proportions, I noticed the veteran Squire Ingram, Mr. Christie, of Glyndebourne, and Mr. Donovan, former masters of the South Down; Major Lockwood, Captain Mangles, Mr. Pullen, Mr. Johnstone Stewart, and Mr. Irvine, representing the 20th Hussars; Captain Foster; Mr. C. Vaughan, who once more appears in the saddle, and who in the course of the day showed that his right hand had not lost its cunning, by going in his old and accustomed form; Mr. Keen, of Patcham; and Mr. C. Kennedy, who is just as good across country as he is on the cricket field. Having been introduced by a friend to Mr. Streatfield, the Master, who expressed his regret that my first visit to the South Downs should be made under such unfavourable circumstances, I mounted my lively chestnut and trotted off with the hounds.

The pack consisted of sixteen and a half couples, in

capital condition, doing the greatest credit to Champion, and subsequently, during a capital hunting run, proving themselves a very sporting and excellent lot. As I trotted along in the dismal downpour, I observed one young lady, who was evidently not afraid of a wetting, and when I saw her at the end of the day, soaked by the rain and spattered with mud, I learned that it was Miss Kennedy, who is very well known in this country, and who, being slight in form and of light weight, is able to go in such style that it must indeed be a rasper that will stop her.

Arriving at the cover at Glynde Brooks, Champion soon threw his hounds into cover. A few minutes only elapsed before a whimper was heard; then a crash through the underwood, and the pack were in full cry. Galloping as hard as my eager little horse could carry me through the deep rides, I jumped into the field at the moment the fox broke cover, closely followed by three hounds which were running him in view. "Tally-ho," "Tally-ho." "Gone away," "Gone away," sounds delightful to the sportsman's ear; and out of the copse comes Champion with the rest of the hounds; then, going along at a racing pace, we make for Rype, but, altering his course, the fox turns back and retraces his step towards Glynde Station. Then, going again to the right, he ran through the cover in front of Glyndebourne, and went at a rattling pace up the steep Downs in the direction of Lewes; but fearing the wind and rain, which faced him, on arriving at the summit of this steep hill he turned to the right, and came down the hillside at a tremendous pace.

At this point, being well up with the pack, I had

an opportunity of seeing how the men sit down on their horses and gallop to hounds over these noble uplands. Whilst I am talking the fox is making his way back to Lord Gage's cover at Glyndebourne, where he was found; but Champion soon made the place too hot to hold him, and a "holloa" from a shepherd on the hill, tells us that he is away again. Then we hunt him slowly over the marshes, going in the direction of the Firl Union, crossing a brook on our way. Here an incident occurred that caused no little merriment for the moment. A horse and his rider differed as to the crossing of this somewhat deep and dirty-looking stream. The rider was Willing, but the horse was not; the latter inclining to lie down in the water, but the former, who has the habit of hoarding up his resources, being equal to the occasion, speedily extricated himself from the difficulty and cleverly posted the unwilling animal on the high ground on the other side. After crossing the brook, the hounds hunted their fox steadily until they threw up in a road; then, Champion, making a quick and clever cast, soon picked up the scent, and ran his fox for a little while longer; but, the weather continuing wet and windy, we let him steal away, in the hopes of meeting him again some other day. In the opinion of one of the hardest riders to hounds, who is accustomed to hunt in the shires, these are an excellent pack of hounds, showing capital sport over a varied and difficult country, and killing their stout and wild foxes in good style, an opinion in which I heartily concur, after seeing how they performed on this deplorable day. Then going at a hand-gallop along the seven miles that led us back to Lewes, the little horse pulling

double all the way, and as fresh apparently as when we started, we reached the town in time to catch a train to Brighton, arriving in the damp, moist, unpleasant state alluded to by Mr. Mantalini. But a hot bath, an excellent dinner at Reichard's restaurant—a new establishment to me—a good cigar, and pleasant company, soon enabled me to say that I fairly had the best of the weather, persistent as it was in its attempts to spoil our sport.

One lazy day intervenes, and again I am up with the early birds, for the Brighton Harriers meet at Water Hall, on the Downs, overlooking Shoreham. Arriving, fortunately, in good time, I had only a moment for an introduction to Mr. Dewé, the Master, and to receive an invitation to visit the kennels before the hounds began to draw for a hare. A prettier sight cannot be imagined than that I saw as the twenty-one couples of beautiful hounds spread over the hill-side whilst drawing the gorse. In an instant there is "holloa!" and away they go at a tremendous pace, the little chestnut horse, as fresh as paint after a day's rest, pulling double as he goes at full speed down the steep incline, galloping knee-deep in the green rape, regardless of ridge and furrow; but there was no time for thought—it took me all I knew to live within a moderate distance of them as they raced over hill and dale, killing their hare in the open, after running her for twenty minutes over a distance of some four or five miles. Only a few were able to live with the hounds; but conspicuous among that select few was Miss Lottie Dupont, a little lady of some eight or nine years of age, who, mounted upon Primrose,

a noted grey pony — having given her father the go by, even at this early age—seemed to think the best part of the fun was the fact of her having escaped for a while from parental control. Every one of these hounds is a draft from some good pack of foxhounds; they stand twenty-one inches in height, are in magnificent condition, and run like racehorses. This is the secret of the capital sport that they show. Instead of ringing about, as hares will do when not hard pressed, such is the dash and speed of the Brighton Harriers, that puss is bound to go straight if she would get away from them. A second hare was speedily found, and a capital hunting run followed. The scent appeared to have grown cold, and Mr. Dewé allowed the hounds to hunt every inch of the way, and they picked out the scent over the cold plough land in a way that showed that they could stoop as well as go the pace. This hare, however, was not to be caught. A third being found, I left them running hard, thinking my horse had had enough of it; but though we had careered over hill and dale for many hours regardless of consequences, yet so plucky was this sturdy animal, that he was as fresh and ready to go when I rode him homewards as he was when I mounted him in the morning.

Availing myself of the opportunity so politely offered me by Mr. Dewé, I visited the kennels of the Brighton Harriers, which stand within a short distance of the station; but, buildings having surrounded them on all sides, they are to be replaced by new ones—not before they are wanted. Sherwood, who fills the double post of whip and kennel huntsman, is to be congratulated on having as good a pack

of hounds, in as fine condition as they can possibly be, under his control. I know of no prettier sight than to watch the expressive countenances of these intelligent animals as they rise from their benches at the call of the huntsman, and step out one by one for examination. First to attract my attention is Duchess, by Sir Robert Hervey's Marksman, being, in my opinion, the exact form I should choose if I were about to establish a pack of harriers; next Dainty, by the same sire; then Lavender, Laudable, Lucy, Damsel, and True Lass exhibit their perfections; whilst Playful stands conspicuous as a model hound. One by one they step forth, and I consider that there is not a better pack to be found in the kingdom than the Brighton Harriers, or one that exhibits more care and judgment, and that both master and man deserve the highest credit. Owing to the limited amount subscribed to these hounds, they only hunt twice a week; and I cannot but think that the tradesmen of the town are blind to their own interests in not giving a greater amount of support in aid of one of the leading attractions of Brighton, £50 only being subscribed by them. Mr. Catt stands at the head of the subscription list for the erection of the new kennels, for the noble sum of £750; Mr. Benett Stanford, for £100; and several other gentlemen for sums of £25. This should be a hint to hotel and stable-keepers, as well as others whose success depends on the visitors to Brighton. The following morning the meet of the Southdown was at Polegate, and they had a clinking good run for fifty-five minutes without a check, pulling down a fine old dog-fox in the open. The pace throughout was severe. On the Friday the

meet of the South Down was at Buckingham, the residence of Mr. W. Bridger, in close proximity to Shoreham Harbour. On arriving there I found the hounds parading in front of the Manor House, which is charmingly situated and sheltered by fine old trees. A large field was assembled, amongst which I observed Mr. Streatfield, the master, and many well-known supporters of this popular pack, Major Gaisford, Mr. Smith, jun., of Hurst, Mr. Dewé, Mr. Champion, of Danny Park, Captain Macdonald, Captain Bowers, Mr. Ingram, of Chailey, Mr. Alexander Donovan, Mr. Smith, of Clayton, Mr. Vallance, and Mr. Gregson, the foreign division being represented by Count Schouvaloff, riding a very useful grey, that he had purchased a bargain from Mr. Dupont. In addition to these a great number of visitors attended, this being a show meet and the first of the season in this district. First the hounds drew the fields of rape on the Downs adjacent to the Manor House, and, not finding a fox there, proceeded to a piece belonging to Mr. Gorringe, where they chopped a cub. Then, whilst going in the direction of Thunder's Barrow, they found and, ringing around, killed their fox in about twenty minutes. Next, Champion draws Honeycrot Furze, where a fox is immediately found, going away in the direction of Thunder's Barrow, but, changing his mind, he ran for "Cock-a-roost" Gorse (a very suggestive name), but, being hard pressed, he made for Fulking Gorse—then away at a rattling pace down the hill, through Paythorne Valley, and over the hill to Tenantry Gorse, near which he was lost.

The hounds were then trotted away to Perching Wood, where a fox was immediately found going away



at a clinking pace through Newtimber Park Wood, being finally run to ground in Newtimber Holt, after running about thirty-five minutes. It is evident that there is no lack of foxes, and that Mr. Streatfield uses every exertion to satisfy the supporters of the South Down, as the veriest glutton could not have failed to be satisfied with the day's work. Noticeable amongst the number who persevered to the end of the day was Mdlle. Lasky, a youthful huntress of some ten or twelve years of age, accompanied by little "Lottie Dupont," and piloted by Parsons, both mounted on rare ponies, going well, and crossing at one time a difficult line of fences. There is nothing like training up a child in the way it should go, and I was pleased to find that Champion, in admiration of the courage and skill of Mdlle. Lasky, had decorated her with the brush for distinguished services in the field, which is to be taken in due time as a trophy to St. Petersburg.

I have often heard people speak contemptuously of Sussex as a hunting country. I do not, of course, seek to maintain that it is equal to Leicestershire or Northamptonshire ; but as everyone has not the good fortune to be able to visit those crack counties, my experience of the week's sport I witnessed is sufficient to enable me to say that if a man is fond of hunting, and can ride with nerve and judgment, he may go further and fare worse than at Brighton, following the South Down, the Brookside, or the Brighton Harriers, at his pleasure. The facilities offered by the railway company, and the time occupied in the journey being so short, opportunities are afforded to dwellers in the metropolis, with but little trouble or

expense, to enjoy a gallop for a few hours at a stretch over the wide expanse of open country in the vicinity of the town; and, if only taken as a means of relaxation from the toils and cares of business, cannot fail to be beneficial to the health and spirits of those whose avocations necessarily prevent them going further afield for their sport or amusement.

## MELTON MOWBRAY.

### I.

IF what Congreve said be true, "that uncertainty and expectation are the joys of life," I must have had rather a good time of it of late, having been in great doubt as to where fortune might next direct my steps; and now finding myself once again at Melton, I have great expectations of enjoying myself exceedingly during my visit to the metropolis of hunting, unless things have greatly altered since I last set foot in "that excellent inn, called the George Hotel." I take leave, however, to differ with our distinguished author in thinking "that the overtaking and possessing of a wish discovers the folly of the chase." For, in my early days, when Osbaldeston hunted the Quorn, and the field was composed of such men as Sir Harry Goodricke, Sir James Musgrave, John White, Val Maher, Lord Brudenell, the Earl of Wilton, Lord Gardner, Lord Alvanley, Little Gilmour, Mr. Maxse, and others of that stamp, a visit to Melton was the dream of my life; and when I did realise this much-cherished vision, and overtook and possessed my wish, I did not realise the folly of the chase; but, on the contrary, I was never on better terms with myself than when I was sailing over the splendid grass enclosures of Leicestershire, at the tail of the Cottesmore,

on a thoroughbred horse for whom no day was too long or fence too large.

But this is "harking back" to old times, and backward "casts" as a rule are bad. What's the use of dwelling on a cold scent? So "Forrard! Forrard!" shall be my cry, while I try to get on to the line of a fresh fox. On my arrival I found that Melton was brimful of visitors; that every room in the hotels, and all the stalls in the town were occupied; and I was told by one who has frequented this sporting centre for the last fifteen years, that he had never seen a finer lot of horses than those which are assembled here for the present season.

Then, having consulted Mr. Childs, the popular proprietor of the George—himself a good sportsman—as to the state of things in general, and hunting in particular, I learnt to my satisfaction that the country never rode better, that the hounds were in good condition, that there was every prospect of a brilliant season, and that the Cottesmore were to meet the following morning at Langham Village, about six miles from Melton, and that the first cover to be drawn would undoubtedly be the far-famed Ranksborough Gorse. Satisfied with the prospect before me, I congratulated myself upon having fixed so propitious a time for my visit.

I cannot give the reason why, but it is a fact that I was never in Melton for twenty-four hours without feeling myself the better for it. Whether it is the cheeriness of the inhabitants, or the freshness of the air, or the invigorating nature of the exercise, I know not, but of one thing I am quite certain—it is not due to any peculiar properties of the water—a most im-

portant item in respect to the health of the inhabitants, I must admit, but one that does not affect me at all, inasmuch as I cannot call to mind ever having imbibed any of the fluid in question during my visits to the metropolis of hunting.

Be it how it may, there is something peculiarly enjoyable in the prospect of a day with a well-known pack, and better still when the reality equals the anticipation. Poets of all ages have sung the pleasures of the chase. Even Milton speaks of

“Listening how the hounds and horn  
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,  
From the side of some hoar hill,  
Through the high wood echoing shrill.”

Well, it is not the custom of the frequenters of Melton to rouse the slumbering morn, as our forefathers were wont to do. “*Nous avons changé tout cela.*” We rise at a respectable hour when the sun—if there is any—has aired the world, and after a comfortable breakfast and a glance at the morning papers, which we find on the table ready for our perusal, we mount a clever hack or jump into a dogcart with a knowing-looking hog-maned cob, or, if very careful of ourselves, go to cover in a well-appointed brougham and a pair of steppers; but anyhow, we go, and nothing is more delightful, in my opinion, than a canter of six or seven miles on the back of a performer when *en route* for a first-rate fixture on a cheerful winter’s morn.

Awaking early I drew my curtains to find that “The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night, Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light,” but alas! when I mounted my horse there were no

smiles to deck the overcast sky. It was a decidedly wet morning, with a cold north-east wind and a steady downpour that wetted me through before I reached the quiet little village of Langham. However, it is said that there is a silver lining to every cloud, and the proverb was not belied on this occasion, for the rain ceased before Neale and his noble pack appeared on the scene. I have a great respect for the huntsman of the Cottesmore. I think he is one of the most earnest and persevering men of the day, always desirous of showing sport and determined to kill his fox if fortune gives him the smallest chance, in addition to which he is a very neat and excellent horseman, and goes at his fences in a determined way that shows his heart to be in the business, and it must be a rasper indeed that will make him turn his head away.

Exceedingly well-mounted is Neale, as also are his whips. The first, James Goddard by name, is a clinker to hounds, and on this occasion was mounted on a chestnut that looked all over a hunter, fresh as a kitten, and clever enough to jump through a hoop. I have seen this first-class whip perform on several occasions, and predict a successful career for him. Of the hounds it is impossible to speak in too high terms. Had I not noted their condition at the early part of last season, and subsequently at the close seen them at work, I might have suggested that they are a little too fine-drawn; but, remembering that I had then to change my opinion, I am content to think that Neale knows his business better than I do. Anyhow, they are a noble lot of animals, and fully maintain the celebrity of the Cottesmore Hunt.

After receiving a pleasant and courteous reception

from the Hon. Hugh Lowther, who appeared to be the acting master of the day, I trotted off to Ranksborough, in order that I might be in time to see the hounds thrown into cover, and to witness, if possible, the find and the start from this noted gorse. Mounting the hill, I saw lying before me a line of country which is not to be equalled. Should the hounds run straight in the direction of Teigh, a glorious gallop, with the opportunity of having a shy at the Whissendine, is the result. Every writer, from "Nimrod" downwards, has sung the praises of this particular spot; sufficient, therefore, for me to say that no prettier sight is to be seen than that which I beheld on this occasion, standing, as I did, on the summit of the hill, watching the large field of well-known men taking their favourite positions to ensure a good start.

"Hark in, hark!" cries the huntsman, and the hounds dash into the cover, drawing steadily for a while, then a view halloo is heard, and I see a fox stealing away from an outlying patch of gorse, making his way in the direction of Cold Overton. Then Neale gallops up, and the hounds are soon on the line of the fox, and they go away a rattler up the hill, and on to the village, where they come to a check. But, the wind blowing cold, with a stormy atmosphere, there was but little scent, and, after several casts, the hounds being unable to pick up the scent, we left him to his fate, and, drawing a small spinney by the way, which, however, did not hold a fox, we trotted back to Ranksborough and tried our luck again.

Soon a hound speaks, and Neale cries, "Have at him there!" and after a short time "Gone away!" "Gone away!" is the cry, and I see the fox going in

the same direction as before ; but he hesitates, and, not liking to face the cold north-easter, doubles back and seeks refuge in the gorse again ; and then, being rattled about, he breaks away, pointing for a beautiful line of country, when a stupid lout, getting in his path, heads him, and turns him in another direction. Then he goes to the right of Langham Village, and away in the direction of Burley-on-the-hill, where he is lost after a short gallop. Subsequently another fox is found, and they race him away at a rattling pace to Manton Gorse, where he is lost.

Conspicuous amongst the ladies riding with the Cottesmore this day were the Countess of Cardigan, mounted on a good-looking brown horse, and Lady Florence Dixie, who appeared with her arm strapped up, in consequence of a fall she had recently met with, her horse having come down heavily with her on the hard road ; otherwise this exceedingly bold rider appeared uninjured, and was as plucky as ever, and, being mounted on a thoroughbred horse that jumped like a deer, she seemed to go without difficulty at every fence that came in her way. If it were not impertinent to give unasked-for advice, I would suggest that this lady should take a little more care of herself, and not throw away too many chances. No one can help admiring her courage, though they may wish to see a little more judgment and discretion in the way she goes across country ; and no one can well accuse her of being afraid if she should happen to turn away from a flight of rails or pull up at an ugly-looking brook.

Thus ended my first day with the Cottesmore ; and I think the greatest credit is due to Neale for the way



in which he brings his hounds into the field, as well as to Mr. Weatherston for the state of the stud, as I heard it remarked by an exceedingly good judge that he had never seen the huntsman and whips of this pack so well mounted as they are this season. Amongst the many visitors I found located at the George were Sir Henry Meysey Thompson, Mr. B. W. Lubbock, Mr. G. B. Parker, Mr. A. A. Brand, and Mr. Creyke; at the Harborough, the Countess of Cardigan, Lady Caroline Lister Kaye, Sir John Lister Kaye, Mr. Cecil Kaye, Mr. Gilmour, the Hon. Hugh Lowther, Mr. Ferdinand Roy, Mr. Delacour, and the Messrs. Brocklehurst. The Earl of Wilton has not as yet put in an appearance, but his stud of fourteen highly-bred and beautiful horses stand ready for him in blooming condition, and as fit as it is possible for horses to be. It is a perfect treat to look at such a string of splendid animals, and I do not know where I should go to match them either for quality or condition. Egerton Lodge, the residence of the noble earl, is said to be the most complete hunting-box in the world.

Beautifully placed in the midst of a charming garden, at the foot of which flows the river, the range of loose-boxes are a picture, and as you look from one end you have a view of the whole fourteen stalls in a line, every one occupied by such a nag as would delight the heart of any sportsman. In due time I hope to visit several of the crack studs, that of Mr. Lubbock for one; and the long lot of the Messrs. Behrens, numbering forty-one, of which I hear very favourable opinions expressed. Lord Grey de Wilton, Sir John Lister Kaye, and Mr. Gordon Bennett,

of New York, have large studs, all of which I shall be able to speak of hereafter, as well as of several other crack lots, which I shall manage to see on off days. At present I hope to visit the Duke of Rutland's pack, the Quorn, and Mr. Tailby's in succession, of all of which I hear first-rate accounts.

## MELTON MOWBRAY.

### II.

ONE of the advantages of fixing your quarters at Melton is that of being able to hunt every day in the week without having to travel great distances; and this, combined with the excellent accommodation obtainable at either the George or the Harboro,' renders it a more pleasant and agreeable place of residence than any other I have ever met with when on sporting bent.

The handsomely-furnished suites of rooms, decked with sporting prints, racks for whips, spurs, sticks, and even a piano if desired, will enable the most fastidious to exist for a while in country quarters; whilst the cuisine and cellars at these well-managed establishments are such that he may live as luxuriously and fare as sumptuously as he does in the best club in London.

If he is so fortunate as to be invited to the houses of the residents in this sporting and hospitable locality, he will never repent accepting the invitation. Should he by any chance feel tired with what is called single blessedness, and desire for the future to hunt in couples, he will find a precedent established, and may in due time also be united to the object of his admiration in the venerable parish church of the metropolis of hunting, attended by his fellow-sports-

men clad in full hunting costume, who, after seeing him have a good start, will attend a special meet of the Belvoir Hounds, assembled on the lawn in front of the home of the bride, as a compliment to her boldness and dexterity in the field.

And as I write these words I feel assured of the truth of the old proverb, "That there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it;" for, drawn up in front of my window, I see a dogcart, thoroughly well equipped, to which is harnessed a first-class brown horse, with the nattiest of grooms, in which is seated a lady who would induce any man with a grain of spirit to follow her, however difficult the country might be, or great the opposition, or obstacles he might have to encounter.

But my hack is announced, and I am informed that I have no time to spare if I intend to reach Stonesby, about six miles distant, in time to see the hounds, and to watch the arrival of the field, which, I hear, is likely to be in full force, this being a favourite fixture of his Grace the Duke of Rutland's hounds.

A pleasant canter through Thorpe Arnold and the old-fashioned village of Waltham brings me to Stonesby, and there I see Frank Gillard and his hounds, assembled in a meadow, awaiting us. On a former occasion I have written my opinion of the qualities of the different packs of hounds that hunt the country round Melton, and I now, on again riding with them, express the same opinion, though in different words; for I say the Belvoir for beauty, the Cottesmore for quality and condition, and the Quorn for speed. If I name the list of noble sportsmen and ladies assem-

bled at Melton this season, it will suffice to tell how well every meet is attended.

First I have to record the fact that Lord Wilton, though not arrived at present, will be here shortly; and his advent is looked upon as the one thing necessary to crown the season with *éclat*. No more popular man is to be found than the noble earl, who, for the last half century, has been a resident during the hunting season at his beautiful abode in the town.

Next, it should be intimated that Mr. Little Gilmour, who has been absent in the North for a while, will shortly return; and I am happy to hear he still goes as well as ever.

Mr. Burbige—and this closes my list of veterans—is for a while indisposed and unable to go with the hounds, and when I had the pleasure of calling upon him at Thorpe Arnold on Sunday I found two noble lords, well known in these parts, who had called to express the hope that he might soon be seen in the saddle again, though at seventy-six it is necessary to hold hard a little now and then.

After giving precedence to these well-known names, I must add those of Lord and Lady Grey de Wilton, Colonel Forester, the Earl of Wicklow, Lord Wolverton, Lady Cardigan, Lord Downe, Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson, Sir Henry Des Vœux, Sir John Lister Kaye, Sir Beaumont and Lady Florence Dixie, the Honourable Charles Lowther, Mr. Lubbock, Captain Farley Turner, Major and Miss Markham, Mr. Samuda, the Messrs. Behrens, Captain Smith, Captain and Miss Hartopp, Major Paynter, Mr. Gordon Bennett and Miss Bennett, Captain and Mrs. Candy, Mr. Livingstone, Captain and Mrs. Molineux, Mr. Grey frae the

North, Mr. and Mrs. Younger, Mr. and Miss Chaplin, Mr. Delacour, Captain Wingfield, Captain Elmhirst, Captain and the Hon. Mrs. Sterling, Captain Middleton, Mr. Adair, and the Honourable Hugh Lowther, who, report says, is to be the future Master of the Cottesmore, his brother, Lord Lonsdale, not caring much about hunting himself, though he keeps up the splendid pack for the gratification of others.

The morning being fine, the scene in the quiet little village of Stonesby was delightful, and we were soon on our way to draw an adjoining cover.

“Halloo in !” cries Frank Gillard, and the hounds in a minute are at work, startling the pheasants and hares from the quietude of Freeby Wood. Then a halloa is heard, and we gallop up to the end of the cover, but the fox has been headed, and some little while elapses before he breaks again.

The fences are large, and, after a while, we come to a narrow yet deep brook. At it goes a man on a bay horse ; but either the steed or his rider did not mean it, and they go in, instead of over, and I left them blundering out as best they could ; and having a nag under me with a reputation for jumping, I rasped him at it, and landed all right.

It is curious to see, when hounds cross a brook, how few horsemen are found to face it ; and out of that few what a small proportion get safe over. I believe, as a rule, it is more the fault of the riders than that of the horses, as I often observe a man beginning to race at a water jump who goes full tilt for fifty yards, and then, at the very moment that he should sit down and clap to his horse, and shout at him after the fashion of an Irish jockey, he drops his hands, and

the horse, for want of a little more shaking up, stops short or jumps into the middle.

By this time the weather had changed, threatening to be wet, and the scent was cold and bad. Gillard persevering, we went away as if for Belvoir; but again we turned to the right, and made for Croxton Park, and finally left our fox in the Spinnies.

The rain had begun to fall, and the afternoon was bitterly cold. However, we trotted away to Stonesby Gorse, and in a few minutes we hear a hound speak. "Have at him, there!" cries the huntsman, and I view a fox stealing away, pointing for a good line of country; but the scent is bad, and the fox having doubled back, we hunt him up to the rectory at Waltham, and then through the village.

Here, I and many others left them, and returned to Melton through a pitiless rain that drenched me thoroughly before I arrived at the end of my journey.

On the following morning the Cottesmore met at Teigh village, their best meet in this crack part of Leicestershire. All the Melton division were present, but the day was very stormy and disagreeable, and there was no sport worth recording.

On Friday the Quorn fixture was Ashby Folleville, a meet that was famous in the days when "Nimrod" described a run with these hounds, and which keeps up its reputation to this date. As I rode to cover I could see a stretch of open country not to be surpassed by any other I have seen.

But here the navvies at present interfere with the quiet of the foxes, as a useless line of railway is being

remorselessly cut through the district, and will sadly interfere with the sport, I am afraid.

No time is lost, and Mr. Coupland, the Master of the Quorn, soon gives the order "to move on," and Tom Firr sends his hounds into a cover close at hand. But to-day it does not hold a fox, so I have no opportunity of trying a gallop across these well-known pastures; and we trot away to Sir Francis Burdett's cover, where we are speedily on the line of a fox, and we race him away for Dalby.

All but a select few turned to the right, and were out of the hunt entirely, as the fox turned to the left, and went straight as a bird for fifteen or twenty minutes at a racing pace, with only six of the field near the hounds.

Over the Whissendine they go. Sir John Lister Kaye, taking it at full swing, comes a cropper, and lies insensible for some time. Mrs. Molyneux goes well in, and has to be pulled out at leisure; and Mr. Coupland's horse takes a bath, and is not easily got out again.

The banks of the Whissendine are extremely rotten, and this noted brook often becomes a settler for the riders of the present time, as it did for those who were bold enough to try a jump at it in the old days when "the Squire" hunted the Quorn.

Away, however, the hounds race, and run their fox into Stapleford Park, where he is lost. Like many others, I had to follow a stern chase, and should not have been up at the finish now had not Lady Florence Dixie, who had stayed until she saw that no serious mischief had befallen Sir John Kaye, galloped up and told me in what direction to go; and as I knew if I



followed her ladyship I was bound to go straight, I pounded after her, and put in an appearance as early as other and better men.

After this merry little spin, the hounds were trotted back to Gartree Hill, a fox was soon on the move, a holloa was heard, and we went away at a rattling pace straight up the Burrow Hills, and, bending to the left, ran him for some fifteen or twenty minutes, finally losing him in the vicinity of Easthope Grange.

Having got away on to the high ground, and the hounds running for some distance towards me, I had full opportunity of seeing how the Melton division spin along; and there can be no doubt that when hounds go a clinker they are hard to beat, and it would require a good man out of any hunt in the kingdom to show them his heels.

As a close to the week's sport, I went on the following day to Hose Grange, where the Duke of Rutland's hounds were appointed to meet on the Saturday. The morning was brilliant, a sharp white frost covering the grass lands and glazing the puddles with sheets of ice; but as we made our way through the celebrated Belvoir-vale, the country assumed a less wintry appearance. After a pleasant canter of some nine or ten miles, leaving the castle and woodlands to the right, and passing over another line of railway now in the course of construction, the meet is reached, and I have time to notice the nags. A group of six trotting together were a very desirable lot, and I mentally valued the string at £2000. After that my attention was directed to a brown horse, clipped, with a hogmane, a perfect picture, with beautiful head and neck, and I find he is the property of the Earl of

Wicklow, who subsequently told me that he was as clever as he was handsome.

Amongst the field I saw Mr. Welby, of Allington, Mr. and Mrs Hornsby, and several whom I had met on former occasions when hunting with the Belvoir hounds. But I missed one bruiser and good fellow to boot, Mr. J. Wilders, of Croxton, whom I have seen perform to perfection over a stiff flight of rails on more than one occasion. A large detachment of the Melton division put in an appearance, amongst which I observed Mrs. Molineux, who is a grand performer across the open; Mrs. Candy, who is what a dutiful wife should be—always ready to follow her husband over a difficulty; Miss Bennett, representing our Trans-Atlantic cousins; Mrs. Sterling, who is generally to be found in the front rank; and the hard-riding young lady who has evinced a determination to go in double harness for the future; Mr. Lubbock, very well mounted; Major Paynter, who looked like going; Lord Wolverton, and many others whose names I have already given as riding with these hounds.

The Duke of Rutland not having returned to Belvoir as yet, though expected in the course of the ensuing week, Frank Gillard trotted us away to Hose Gorse, where a fox was quickly found. but being headed back, was unfortunately chopped. Then away we trotted for two or three miles, going out of the vale in the direction of Melton, where a cover situate on a hillside was drawn, and, a fox being found, we were away at a racing pace over a good line of country, crossing a nasty looking brook, not much to the taste of the riders in general, apparently, as but few crossed over the sluggish stream with its rotten banks. Then away

we went at a good pace ; but the scent became bad, the day cold and stormy, and, the hounds coming to a check, the fox was lost. After this we drew another likely-looking cover, which was blank, and, as the hounds were then trotted off in the direction of the vale district, I left them and rode back to Melton. Thus ended my first week in this magnificent hunting country.

## MELTON MOWBRAY.

### III.

ON the Monday of my visit the Quorn met at Widmerpool New Inn, and, the morning being fine, a numerous assemblage was to be seen on horseback and in carriages; whilst, owing to the proximity of the railway now in course of construction, the presence of countless navvies added to the numbers, if not to the appearance, of the gathering. There are many of this class who are most industrious and respectable; but the numerous hangers-on who follow their fortunes—too idle to work and too ready to appropriate whatever they can lay hands on—are foes to foxes and game; and it is to these loafers that I should attribute, in part, the scarcity of the former in some of the covers in the vicinity of the works now in progress. But there is yet another reason, which, if known, may be of service to the members of the Quorn Hunt in promoting their sport. I venture, therefore, to direct attention to certain facts which came under my notice during my stay at Melton; and, as the remarks I heard did not emanate from one source only, but from several well-wishers, I think I should not be wise to refrain from mentioning them. Some of the tenants in different localities feel aggrieved at not receiving the customary presents of game, and say that the least the members of the hunt could do for those who

provide them with the means of enjoying their sport would be an acknowledgment, in the form of a brace or two of pheasants and a hare, of the care they take of the foxes, and the ungrudging way in which they permit their land to be ridden over. I feel certain that this is an unintentional neglect which has only to be known to those hunting with the Quorn to be remedied; and the remark is applicable to other counties which I have visited, where, if a little more thought for the tenants was shown, there would be less dissatisfaction expressed when their fences are broken down or their wheat crossed. There can be little doubt that if a thoroughly good understanding is always maintained between the sportsmen and the farmers, there will be fewer places drawn blank. Moving off to the Rowhoe covers the hounds were thrown in, but nothing was to be found in this range of woods; next the Wynstay cover and gorse were drawn with a similar result; in Kinoulton Wood a mangy fox was killed in a few minutes; Parson's Gorse was found to be without an incumbent; but at the Curate's better luck was in store, and Tom Firr at last drove a good fox from the cover. Here the field was baulked by the railway, which allowed time for the hounds to get away, and the result was a run of short duration, but the pace was merry whilst it lasted, finishing in Willoughby Gorse. After a considerable time, the fox broke cover again, intending to retrace his steps; but, being headed back, the hounds ran in to him. On the Tuesday the Cottessmore met at Uffington House, and had a good gallop in the afternoon. On the Wednesday the Belvoir met at the Three Queens, a favourite fixture of his Grace

the Duke of Rutland, who rode with his hounds for the first time this season. In consequence of this, there was a large muster from all quarters.

Having heard there was a good deal of light plough land, with flying fences and few ditches, and thinking it would be just the place to suit me, I secured a mount on a well-known grey horse—who, I was told, would jump anything; “Though,” said his owner, “he does make a little noise in his gallop.” My reply was that, in such case, I should go like a Scottish chieftain, with my piper before me; and I found, on further acquaintance, that the grey was quite equal to the occasion. I trotted away through Thorpe Arnold and Waltham, leaving Croxton Park to the left, turned into the fields, and having had a private trial, which came off satisfactorily, I rode into the farmyard in time to witness the arrival of the numerous well-mounted ladies and gentlemen who put in an appearance on this occasion, hailing from all quarters, Melton being well represented. Amongst the ladies I observed Mrs. Hornsby, Mrs. Younger, mounted on a real lady’s horse, temperate, and a perfect jumper; Mrs. Candy, Miss Bennett, accompanied by her brother, Mr. Gordon Bennett, and a young lady who went at her fences with an earnestness of purpose that led me to believe that in a year or two’s time she will be a luminary that will dazzle the lookers-on in the shires. If I was asked to select a model sportsman from among those present, I should choose Captain Myddleton for one, and Major Paynter for another, who, if he does not ride as hard as he used to do, yet still takes a good deal of beating when he makes up his mind to go the pace. I observed also Mr. Turner, of Stoke, and Mr.

Charles Manners, whose acquaintance I made under specially pleasant circumstances last season, besides a reverend octogenarian, who had ridden with the Belvoir all his life. But his Grace has lighted his customary long cigar, and we move off to Tipping's Gorse, which was drawn blank; then away to Humberstone Gorse. "Halloa in!" "Halloa in!" cries Frank Gillard, and in a very few minutes we go away at a splitting pace. By the time I had flown three or four hurdles I was satisfied that my nag's qualifications had not been overstated, and was preparing to settle down for a burster, when "Whoop!" "Whoop!" was shouted, the hounds having pulled down a mangy fox. Then to Herring's Gorse, where once more the welcome cry of "Gone away!" "Gone away!" was heard. Gillard, on his old grey, blows his horn, and off we go at a rattling pace across the light plough lands, over the beautiful fences, galloping at full tilt for twenty-five minutes, but losing our fox near Sproxton Village. A more enjoyable gallop I have not had the good fortune to meet with for many a day—the land riding light, and every fence negotiable. The same geniality exists amongst the sportsmen of the present day as was graphically described by "Nimrod," in his work, 'The Chase, Turf, and Road,' where he tells of the reception of a stranger in the shires, for a noble earl, riding up, proffered me a share of his luncheon and the contents of his flask which I thankfully accepted, and was then ready for our third fox, which was soon found in Humberstone Gorse. Again we go away, running through Swallow-hole Cover, and then, hunting slowly, leaving Croxton Park on our left, through Bescaby Oaks,

pointing for Sproxton. Bearing away to the right, we ran for Croxton Park, where we came to a check and the Meltonians left; but Frank Gillard picked up his fox again, and followed him through Grandby Gorse, on to Bullimer, then back again across the Waltham-road, by the old tollbar, and away towards Stonesby, where the hounds were whipped off, as night had closed o'er them. As I rode home to Melton, Captain Myddleton overtook me, and said that five couples of hounds, which had separated from the pack, went away with another fox, that he had enjoyed a merry spin by himself for thirty minutes, and that he should have killed his fox if he had had any one to whip in to him.

On the Thursday, the annual Christmas Show of the Rutland Agricultural Society was held at Oakham. The day was miserably cold and wet, but, nevertheless, there was a large attendance; and the mud, though ankle-deep, did not frighten the pretty girls of Rutlandshire from visiting the fat beasts, and witnessing the prowess of the horsemen in their competition for prizes. They jumped in good form, Mr. Stokes taking several prizes, handling his horses in excellent fashion. The Honourables Hugh and Charles Lowther rode boldly and well, but were unsuccessful, as I know to my cost, having backed Mr. Charles for a small sum with a sporting butcher to take the prize, with his varmint-looking flea-bitten grey, which looked all over a hunter. The show of cattle was first-rate, some magnificent beasts being exhibited—the prime sheep and extremely apoplectic pigs attracting much attention.

On Friday the Cottesmore met at Burley-on-the-



Hill, the residence of Mr. Finch, near the town of Oakham. Having had the offer of a first-rate mount, I went over to Oakham by rail, and rode on to cover with Neale and the hounds. A beautiful place is Burley, and pretty was the sight when the huntsman, on a grey horse, stood at the foot of the wide steps of the house, with his hounds on the lawn, and a numerous company of lookers-on and intending performers assembled. Amongst them were to be seen the Honourables Hugh and Charles and the Misses Lowther, the Countess of Cardigan, and a host of others. With little loss of time we proceeded to draw the covers adjacent to the vale, but the weather became disagreeable, and a soaking rain diminished the pleasure. Soon, however, a challenge is heard; "Have at him, there!" cries Neale; then a view halloo, and away we go. At this time the wind was blowing hard and heavy rain was falling. Our fox, not liking to face the elements, turned his back on the beautiful line of country before us, and went off at a rattling pace for the Burley Woods; through which we drove him until he made for the open, and ran to Exton Park, the seat of the Earl of Gainsborough; across which we hunted him steadily, having a merry spin over the turf. After this our road lay through a line of woodlands, with occasional spurts across the open; Neale sticking to his fox like a workman for two hours and thirty-five minutes, but losing him, after an excellent hunting run, which I thoroughly enjoyed. The latter part was over the open, with big fences, but, being carried in splendid form, I was not far from the hounds, and never desire to see a better day's sport. The hounds are thrown into cover

again, and whilst drawing for a fox I see Charlie Percival on a fine looking brown horse, quite the old Wansford stamp, and I heard with pleasure, as many others will, that his father, the veteran "Tom Percival of the Haycock" is recovering from a severe illness. Then up rides Custance on the celebrated old steeple-chaser, The Doctor; and old as this clever animal is, it must be a first-rate man to follow his prescription over a stiff country when piloted by such a bruiser as this celebrated jockey. I watch the field till they disappear in the Woodlands, and turn my head towards Oakham, which I reach after a ride of some nine or ten miles. On the following morning the Cottesmore fixture was Leesthorpe, four and a half miles from Melton on the Oakham Road, and in the very cream of the country. When I started from the George the rain fell steadily, with a murky atmosphere—a souvenir of the departed month—and as I drove to cover I had little hopes of a pleasant day, but when I mounted my horse the sky began to brighten, and by noon the sun shone bright and clear.

Nothing daunted by the weather, the Melton division appeared in full force. Very soon Neale was on the move, and after drawing a small cover blank, trotted off to the Punch Bowl, where a view "Halloa!" is instantly heard. Away we go at a racing pace, skirting the Barrow Hills, and rattling away towards Gartree Hill, which we leave to the right, and, the hounds coming to a check, Neale returns to look after part of his pack, which was divided, half of them running a fox on their own account, without a soul with them. We wait until Jem Goddard brings back the truants, after which we draw the spinney in Dalby

Park, and a fox goes away in an instant, topping the hill, and off at a slapping pace to Laxton's Gorse, where we lost him. Then we try the cover in Stapleford Park, where we soon find, and the fox starts in the direction of Wymondham. We now meet with difficulties, having to find our way over a disused canal first, and then the line of railway. Turning to the right, I viewed the hunted fox, and fondly hoped that the hounds were running him; but this delusion was speedily dispelled, as I heard them in an opposite direction. Putting spurs to my horse, I pounded after them, galloping down a large old pasture, at the end of which there was a very tall hedge-row with rails intertwined; clearly a fence that could not be negotiated at any price. "This way, sir," said Horsepull of Billesdon, a professional rider, who I had recently seen perform in a marvellous way at some tremendous fences. "It's capital landing," he cried, as he jumped a flight of rails and then popped over a big fence. Had there been any alternative I would gladly have taken it, as I am not at all in love with flights of new posts and rails, which neither look like bending or breaking. However, going at full tilt—there being no time to lose—I landed safely, and proceed on a stern chase, viewing another fox on my way—but not the hunted one, for the hounds are racing towards Coston; from thence to Freeby Wood, Thorpe Arnold, and Buttingby village, and back to Stapleford Park; having run their fox at a screaming pace for forty-five minutes. Amongst the few who lived with the hounds was Mr. Grey, who rides uncommonly well. Captain Myddleton, Captain Hartopp—who, though a welter weight, rode

well in this clinker with the Cottesmore—and Mr. Childs on a new horse belonging to Mr. Burbige; Mr. and Miss Chaplin, and a few others, went well; but the bulk of the field were nowhere, except those who took a bath in the brook which was crossed during this capital run.

## A PINK WEDDING.

EVERYONE has heard of gold and silver weddings, but I venture to say that a Pink Wedding is a novelty, and that the ceremony I witnessed on Wednesday last in the grand old parish church of Melton Mowbray, on the occasion of the marriage of Mr. Cecil D'Aguilar Samuda and Miss Cecile Mary Isabella Markham, daughter of Colonel and Mrs. Markham, of Becca Hall, Yorkshire, and "The House," Melton, was unique and unrivalled as a bridal pageant.

For many days previous I had heard marvellous reports of the magnificence of the presents, the splendour of the dresses, the countless number of the guests who were invited, and the great preparations that were being made for their entertainment. But I do not know that I should have taken so great an interest in the matter had it not been for a circumstance that attracted my attention. Having occasion to visit a bedridden inmate of the Melton Union—whose name, once familiar to many hunting men, I will name on a future and more fitting occasion—I found preparations being made for the entertainment of all those whose destitute condition compels them to dwell within its cheerless walls, in order that they might share to some extent the festivities of the wedding-day. And hearing, in addition to this kindly recog-

nition of their poorer neighbours, that upwards of 1,300 school children and parishioners of the town of Melton, and the vicinity of Becca Hall, were to be similarly regaled by Colonel and Mrs. Markham, I was reminded of the words of an old, old song, which told of the fine Old English Gentleman, one of the olden time, who when he feasted all the rich, did ne'er forget the poor. And the thought was pleasant. But then I am one of the old school, and like to see the manners and customs of my youthful days maintained as in days of yore. At an early hour Melton was astir, carriages arriving, hunters walking in, and the juvenile portion of the community in a high state of excitement; but the early morning was gloomy—it appeared likely that the beauty of the ceremony would be marred by bad weather; but fortunately the sun, having been somewhat remiss in its duties of late (see meteorological reports), determined to make up for its deficiencies, and at half-past ten, when I walked into the venerable church, the clouds were dispersed, and all henceforth went—to quote a line which is none the less quotable, I hope, for being hackneyed—as merry as a marriage-bell.

Having by the kindness of the officials of the church been placed on a coign of vantage, I was enabled to see the whole of the interesting ceremony from first to last; and I have never beheld a prettier sight than when the bridal procession, entering the church, proceeded along the carpeted aisles and took their position at the altar. The youthful bride, now in her seventeenth year, leaning on the arm of her father, looked a picture of happiness and hope; and, as I suppose I ought to give some description of the bridal

costume, I will endeavour to do so by saying that it was composed of a white velvet train, made "en Princesse," white satin body and petticoat trimmed with Honiton lace, garlands of orange flowers, wreath, and tulle veil, with pearl and diamond ornaments, and a superb bouquet.

Accompanying the bride was the "House party," consisting of Mrs. Markham, wearing a myrtle green velvet dress, with bonnet and mantle to match, trimmed with wild ducks' wings, holding a superb bouquet of gardenias and Neapolitan violets, whilst carrying the youngest of the family—an infant in arms. Next followed the Earl and Countess Annesley, sister of the bride, elegantly dressed in bronze green velvet, with cape and bonnet to correspond, trimmed with pale eau de niel satin. Then followed the eleven bridesmaids—the Misses Hermione, Ethel, Averil, May, and Sibyl Markham, the very youthful sisters of the bride, the youngest probably having arrived at the advanced age of three years; Miss Samuda, sister of the bridegroom; Miss Mary North and Miss Rachael North, cousins of the bride; Miss Callander, and the Misses Alice and Evelyn Webster—all arrayed in white silk petticoats, with polonaises of cashmere, trimmed with swans-down, ornamented with sprigs of holly, mixed with mistletoe and robins, wearing as ornaments crystal hearts, with hounds' heads and foxes' brushes engraved, the initial letters C. S. being formed of a stirrup and strap; accompanied by Mr. Robert Pryor, the best man, Mr. Markham, Messrs. Rupert, Ronald, and Nigel Markham, Mr. Wade Brown, Mr. Percy Armytage, and last, not least, Miss Markham (of Shiplake), in a bronze velvet dress with

old lace collar and cuffs; and Miss Grant, in a rich brown velvet dress trimmed with old Brussels lace and lynx fur; the immediate relations and connections of the family taking their places near the altar, consisting of his Grace the Duke of Rutland, Canon and Lady Adeliza Norman, Rev. Octavius and Mrs. Norman, Mr. and Mrs. George Norman, Rev. S. and Mrs. Bellairs, Rev. S. and Mrs. Swift, Mr. and Mrs. Samuda, Captain and Mrs. John Benthall, Master Benthall, and Captain and Mrs. Ward Bennett. Conspicuous amongst the numerous invited guests was the Countess Grey de Wilton, whose elegant figure I can admire, though I cannot describe her dress. Next I see the Countess of Craven, Lady Manners and Miss Manners, Sir Beaumont and Lady Dixie, in hunting costume; Mrs. Turner, of Wartnaby Hall; Lady Augusta Palmer, Captain and the Hon. Mrs. Candy, Captain and the Hon. Mrs. Sterling, Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. Palk, Sir Frederick and Lady Fowke, Mr. and Mrs. George Drummond, Mr. Francis and Mrs. Sloane Stanley; the Earl of Wicklow, Viscount Grey de Wilton, Lord Hastings, Lord Manners, Lord Rossmore, Lord James Douglas, the Hon. Hugh Lowther, Hon. C. Lowther, Sir John Lister Kaye, Sir Henry des Vœux, Captain Coventry, Mr. H. Behrens, Mr. Coupland, the Master of the Quorn; Major Paynter, Captain Boyce, Mr. Horace Flower, Mr. Parker, Mr. Gordon Bennett and Miss Bennett, etc. The Earl of Lonsdale, Lord Wolverton, and Mr. Little Gilmour were unable to attend.

At the moment when all were assembled, I thought I had never beheld a prettier sight. The Duke of Rutland, Mr. Coupland, the Earl of Wicklow, and all



the bridegroom's fellow sportsmen were dressed in full hunting costume, wearing "pink," with white leathers and top-boots, and, mingling with the numerous elegantly-dressed ladies, added a finishing touch to a beautiful and unique picture. Then the Rev. Canon Norman, assisted by Dr. Collis, the vicar of Melton, proceeds to read the Service, and in a few minutes the youthful bride and bridegroom are pronounced to be man and wife, and the company advance to offer their congratulations. If there is anything in omens, then happy will be the bride that the sun shone on. Having duly registered their signatures, the bride and bridegroom left the church, their path being strewn with flowers by some pretty little damsels selected from the school, dressed in white, and brimful of happiness at having had the good fortune to be selected to perform such an important and graceful part of the ceremony.

The visitors then adjourned to The House for breakfast, the band of the Melton Volunteers, stationed on the lawn, playing an excellent selection of music. Without some notice of the presents, an account, nowadays, of a wedding would be incomplete; it will give, therefore, some idea of their number and value if I state that no fewer than 3,000 people were admitted to see them during the two days they were on view. On the departure of the bridal party, the multitude of lookers on adjourned to the paddock where the Belvoir hounds were announced to meet in honour of the occasion; others surrounding the house in their eager desire to have a peep at the bride.

After the breakfast was over the guests strolled on

the lawn or mounted their hunters and joined the hounds. The Duke of Rutland was to be seen giving directions to Frank Gillard, who was mounted on his well-known grey; Lady Florence Dixie taking an affectionate farewell of her companion in the chase, who, having put on her travelling dress of ruby velvet trimmed with silver fox fur, with hat, cape, and muff to correspond, looked as happy a bride as I have seen for many a day; Mrs. Sloane Stanley, attired in walking costume, and the youthful members of the Markham family disporting themselves on the verdant turf, the band playing cheerily, the church bells ringing merrily, the tramp of horses on the stone-paved street, the constant arrival of well-mounted men—all tending to make up a bright and cheerful gathering, in honour of what I have designated a “Pink Wedding,” to me a novelty and most pleasing event. Then Gillard trots away to Mr. Burbige’s new cover, about a mile from the town, followed by an immense number of pedestrians, and a host of the best mounted men the world can show. “Hark in, hark!” cries Frank Gillard. Soon a challenge is heard. “Yooi, have at him there!” cries the huntsman, and ere long a fox breaks cover, amidst shouts of “Tallyho, tallyho! gone away, lads, gone away, gone away!” and he goes straight for Burton; then, pointing for Stapleford Park, he runs in the direction of Cold Overton, crossing the Whissendine on his way; then “forward” to Dalby, racing along through Leesthorpe, and running to ground close to Melton, after a clinking good hunting run of over two hours across an excellent line of country, and delighting the hearts of the many riders who came over to Melton to see the

unusual sight of the meet of the Duke's hounds, in the centre of the town, combining a good day's sport with a glimpse at the wedding festivities, which will long be remembered as a red letter day in the chronicles of Melton Mowbray.

## MELTON : ITS MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

HAD I been a Prince of the Blood Royal on a progress through the shires, I could not have had a better time than I experienced during my recent visit to Melton Mowbray. Arriving opportunely, I saw it at its very best. Never had the town been so full—not less than five hundred hunters being stabled therein—whilst every stall being occupied, it became a matter of consideration whether it would not be advisable to erect some temporary buildings, in order to accommodate the numerous applicants who desired “good accommodation for man and horse” at the George and Harboro’. Not only were the studs more numerous than ever, but never had there been a finer gathering of first-class horses, or a better lot of men to ride them. The geniality of the people, the surrounding fortuitous chain of circumstances, and the cheerful aspect of the place, naturally made one feel on good terms with one’s self; and when certain of the inhabitants expressed a desire to entertain me at dinner at The George, prior to my departure, I should have been churlish indeed—nay, it would have been foreign to my established principles—to have declined the flattering invitation. It is only by mixing cordially with society that one learns how to live wisely and well; thus I profited by the occasion. I am not

going into prosy detail of that most admirable *menu* ; I simply desire to remark that well-made *potage au gibier*, taken after a day's hunting, leaves little to be desired ; and that the *chef* who conceived and executed that rare and happy combination of *tête de veau* and Oriental pickles should, in the very fulness of time, have his name recorded on a mural tablet in the venerable church of the "Metropolis of Hunting," similar to that which tells us "This is the Lord Hamon Beters, brother to Lord Mowbray ;" for he at least has contributed to the pleasure of others, whereas I cannot find that the knight whose recumbent effigy occupies a niche in the wall ever did anything remarkable—at least history does not record it ; for I carefully searched through the venerable, not to say musty, tomes which I found chained to an oaken table placed in the aisle.

But it must not be supposed that merely selfish enjoyments occupied my time. Society has its duties, I am aware, as well as its pleasures ; and therefore I occupied myself on off days in studying the manners and customs of Melton, visiting the handsome cattle market, making a bid for half a score of fat wethers—being quite sure they would not be knocked down to me—*pour encourager les autres*, handling the fat oxen in the usual bucolic style, and generally taking a truly rural interest in things in general. Then, having learnt by chance that the widow of Dick Christian, whose name—once familiar to every hunting man—occupies so large a portion of one of the Druids' admirable works, 'Silk and Scarlet,' to wit, and who was first made famous by Nimrod, in his celebrated description of a run with the Quorn, was a bed-ridden

inmate of the union workhouse, I determined to pay her a visit. On my arrival I was politely received by the master, and making known my desire, was handed over to the matron, who introduced me forthwith to the venerable dame, who has numbered no less than 87 years. Occupying a bed in a clean and comfortable ward, which would have borne comparison with those of any other well regulated and similar establishment that I have ever seen, I found the poor old soul who, though acknowledging that she was well treated and comfortable, yet truly said that such a place ought not to be the home of her latter days. I allude to the fact in case there may be any who, still bearing in mind the once well-known hard rider who was wont to stake his life on the hazard of a leap when charging a bullfinch or a brook, instructing a four-year-old how to negotiate a stiff flight of rails, or go a rasper at a five-barred gate or a hog-backed stile, might feel disposed to contribute a trifle to provide some additional comforts now that she is deserted by kith and kin and left to end her lonely days in the parish workhouse. In the event of any one desiring to do so, Mrs. Childs, of the George, will, with her usual kindness, take charge of any remittance and see it properly applied.

Then, being courteously invited to visit the studio of Mr. Fernely, the son of the well-known animal painter, who depicted so cleverly the performances of Count Sandore, an Hungarian nobleman who resided for a season at Melton some fifty years ago, I singled out an unfinished picture of a group of sportsmen by the elder Fernely, in which there is the portrait of a grey horse, more beautifully executed than any I

have ever seen before. Next I observed a copy of a celebrated picture by the same artist, which contains the famous sportsmen of his time, Mr. Holyoake on Cross Bow, the Squire on Ashton, and Sir Harry Goodricke on Dr. Russell; an admirable and life-like picture of men and horses; after which I was shown a collection of rare and beautiful water-colour paintings, and two capital portraits of favourite horses by Mr. Fernely, recently painted for Sir John Lister Kaye. It must not be for a moment imagined that Melton is simply engaged in providing for the creature comforts of those visiting the town for sporting purposes. Far from it; can it not boast of a museum? in which is collected the most extraordinary and whimsical assortment of odds and ends that I have ever met with, comprising everything, from a specimen of that nearly-forgotten weapon known in former times as "Brown Bess," to a case of butterflies, and the wedding garments of some savage tribe, to which the venerable dame who resides in the old Bede House, which contains these curiosities, called my special attention. It closely resembles those I have read of in some book of travels—being very short before, with nothing behind, and no sides—eminently suited no doubt for a warm country, but not such as our fashionables will readily adopt in this somewhat variable clime. But there is no knowing what the votaries of fashion may do, and stranger things have come to pass than the adoption of the light and airy costume I have called attention to.

So, much for science and art, without which we are nothing in these days. Then, as to manufactures? Is not Melton Mowbray celebrated from Indus to the

Pole for its raised pies ; and do not the firms of Colin and Co., Evans and Hill, and Tebbut and Co. despatch thousands of these delicacies every day to all parts of the world by the morning passenger train ? At any rate I am aware of the fact, by the delay which it occasioned when I was anxiously hoping to catch another at the junction at Leicester ; a fallacious hope, I need hardly remark. Having obtained permission from Mr. Joseph Dickinson to visit his establishment, I had the opportunity of witnessing the career of a pie from the cradle to the grave ; for I saw it, after being most carefully and delicately made, placed in the oven, and subsequently ate it, which enables me to speak upon the subject in a practical manner. The distinguishing features in this manufacture are marvellous cleanliness, and the purity of the articles used ; everything being done where possible by machinery, so as to prevent the pies being touched by hand except when absolutely necessary. Much business, I was informed, is done with Paris, and even with the Colonies, whence they are despatched in air-tight cases. Melton is also the centre of the district from which we obtain our Stilton cheeses—a large trade being carried on, especially at this festive season.

So much for the commerce of this prosperous town. Now let us return to its more prominent feature ; and, as it is “ Mercat Day,” when I never miss an opportunity of meeting the stalwart farmers of Leicestershire and Rutlandshire at dinner at the George, there is time to examine some of the studs before the dinner hour. First let us look at the string of excellent hunters, the property of Mr. Gordon Bennett, of New York, who, having exhausted the Continent of America,



is now trying how he can go across Leicestershire. I am bound to say he has set about it in the right way, for I saw some twenty-five hunters in blooming condition, with coats like mirrors, good enough to carry any man in the front rank to the fastest hounds in the shires, notably a horse purchased of the Duke of Hamilton for the sum of 1000 guineas. I should wish no worse mishap to befall me than to find myself confronting the Whissendine when seated upon him, whilst riding in a clinker with the Quorn; and, old as I am, I would have a shy at that swiftly flowing brook. Then let us ask Mr. Hughes, stud groom to the Messrs. Behrens, to allow us to look over the nags under his charge, for there we shall see a string of upwards of forty capital hunters, in splendid condition, betokening the utmost care, and all looking fit to go for a man's life. I have seen this stud on a former occasion, when I observed their exceedingly fine condition, and the care that is taken of them; and I was struck with the management and style in which this and similar establishments in Melton are conducted, and of the superior class of men who have the sole charge of such valuable stock; for instance, that of the Earl of Wilton. But there is this to be said, that good masters make good servants, and it was a treat to me to hear Mr. Martin, his lordship's stud groom, speak of the kind and considerate treatment he had received when suffering from the effects of an accident, at the hands of the noble earl and his countess as well. It did not surprise me to find that he took, not only great pride in the performance of his duties, but that he seemed to feel it a pleasure to have the opportunity of acknowledging the care and thoughtful considera-

tion he had experienced ; and I came to the conclusion that the way to be well served is to treat those in whom you place trust, in a generous spirit.

Returning to the subject of Mr. Behrens' stud, there is one pleasing feature, namely, the association of birds and animals with the horses. The first to attract my attention was a handsome goat, which accompanied Mr. Hughes into every stall, in perfect confidence that these highly-bred and high-conditioned nags would not harm him. Then I saw several bantams flying about and perching on the back of any horse they might fancy ; and a splendid owl, who, retiring from general observation, ensconces himself in a gloomy corner, ready, nevertheless, to be down upon any stray kitten or unfortunate chicken that may come within the grasp of his powerful claws ; whilst a handsome fox terrier roams about apparently on excellent terms with everything.

I have never seen a number of animals so quiet as these. Not unfrequently the occupants of loose boxes, when stripped for examination, have a tendency to lash out with their hind legs, and to exhibit many playful little ways, suggestive of a not too close approach to their heels, and I wonder whether the association with these unusual companions had anything to do with their gentleness. I think it not improbable, as I believe that what is often treated as a vicious act on the part of a horse is in reality simply the result of nervousness. Kindness, and the exhibition of confidence, will do more, in my opinion, to render animals gentle and tractable than any amount of blows and brutality. But now it is time to return o the George to meet my bucolic friends, and join in

the feast of reason and the flow of soul, which I believe is the proper way to describe an excellent dinner and extremely pleasant company.

Then having exhausted all the wonders of Melton, let me, as we ride to cover this bright morning, point out some of the notabilities of the place. First, direct your attention to that neatly-appointed phaeton, drawn by two high-stepping roans, which is conveying to the meet a "whipper-in" who used to belong to a noisy and unruly pack, very much given to tongue, prone to division, frequently splitting up, and getting on the line of the wrong fox. Now, he goes at the tail of the Cottessmore or the Quorn; and when he rides with a will at a stiff fence, or tries his hand at a babbling brook, it is all Lombard Street to a China orange that he maintains an even balance. Then note that gentle and joyous cavalier galloping so fleetly to cover on a handy looking hack, who, from the pleasing sweetness of his manner, and his habit of sticking close to his saddle, has a strong resemblance to the delicious compound known as sugarcandy. Afterwards observe that exceedingly domestic bird, who is always ready to fly at any game, or to lay against any one, for a matter of that, and if you watch him a little later on, you will find that there will not be many to crow over him if he should have a merry little flutter from Ranksborough to Teigh.

That cheery looking man on the bay horse is an extremely good rider, and when he has his proper bearings, will be found going hammer-and-tongs at his fences—seldom having occasion to cry "bellows to mend," as he is no tinker, but a regular nailer to hounds, and a hard and able performer over a steeple-

chase course. The very neat man on the handsome grey, whose name is suggestive of Banks and holidays, is found in practice to be extremely good at banks and ditches; and if you follow his lead too closely, you may perchance find your account on the wrong side of the hedge, for as Spenser observed, "He that strives to touch a starre, Oft stombles at a strawe." But here comes Tom Furr, the premier huntsman of England, as I once heard him called by an exceedingly good judge.

A very neat horseman is the huntsman of the Quorn, as bold as a lion, exceedingly quick in getting to his hounds, and showing sport whenever he has an opportunity. It must be remembered that whoever hunts the Quorn will always find that he has great difficulty to contend with, from the fact of the "field" disdaining to wait for the hounds in their anxiety to get a good start. But it must not be forgotten on the other hand, that he that hesitates is lost, for the Quorn have a habit of slipping away at a racing pace; and if you want to be in the front rank, you must get away close to the pack, or you will find yourself nowhere at all.

With regard to ladies riding regularly to hounds, I have before spoken; and it must now be considered an established fact that the presence of a considerable number of good sportswomen is always to be looked for with every first-rate pack. As a guide to those of the fair sex who may intend to join in this favourite amusement, I may as well say that the costume of a hard-riding huntress of the present day consists of a short, closely-fitting habit of blue cloth of different shades, or, in some cases, of light grey, with collars

and facings corresponding with the uniform of the hunt, when it is of a distinctive character, such as the Beaufort or the Pytchley. A tall hat well curled at the brims, a white neckcloth with neat gold pin, stand-up collar, and last, not least, high boots of varnished leather and a hunting crop, with, of course, a drab Ulster of many capes, to wear when driving to cover in a dark green or oak-coloured dogcart, drawn by a very clever stepper, with the nattiest of grooms alongside ; or, if preferred, a tandem, or team of first-class nags. It is essential that ladies, in the latter case, should take lessons, so that they may be able to handle the ribbons in proper form when they come into the shires to exhibit their perfections, as they will find many first-class performers already in the field.

Pressing invitations drawing me towards Warwickshire, it became necessary, after a three weeks' residence amidst the inhabitants of Melton, to move on ; and the conclusion I came to, after close observation, was that their manners were extremely agreeable, and their customs greatly to be admired.

## A GOOD TIME AT RUGBY.

FROM the George, at Melton, to the Royal George, at Rugby, is an easy transition. Leaving Melton at midday, going *via* Leicester, and passing through a splendid line of grass country, Rugby is reached in time for luncheon. Here, again, I met with a Royal reception, for I found that, though the George was unable to accommodate all the visitors who were constantly arriving in order to be present at the annual football match and other festivities at the school, prior to the Christmas holidays, Mr. Hards, of whose kindness and attention during my last visit I had a very lively recollection, was in readiness to receive me, and I was soon safely housed in excellent quarters in this comfortable hotel.

In one of the invitations I received I was told that if I would sojourn awhile at Rugby during my "progress" through the shires, "everything should be done to make my ways pleasant." Faithfully did my friend perform his promise.

First, I was informed that he had proposed me as an honorary member of the mess, which had been established at the George, by the hunting men residing there for the season.

On looking over the list I found the names of Captain Osborne, Mr. Hamilton Osborne, Captain Hunter,

Captain Spilling (of the 13th Hussars), Mr. Sheil, and Mr. Heysham, whose name is a pass-word to every hunt in the kingdom, by reason of his disinterested exertions on behalf of that admirable institution—which I especially commend to the notice of the sportswomen of the day—the Hunt Servants' Benefit Society.

Next, I learned that my name was entered as an honorary member of the Rugby Club, of the comforts of which I availed myself during my stay. Then, when I visited my friend, Mr. Darby, hunting men will appreciate my good fortune if I say that I had not been in the room five minutes before I was offered a mount on the pick of his stud, and that during my stay I had the privilege of riding the most valuable and best horses in his stable. What more was wanting to ensure a good time?

When Queen Elizabeth, who also was very fond of the chase, visited Kenilworth, it is not recorded in history—for I have carefully searched—that the Earl of Leicester placed his hunters at her Majesty's disposal during her stay in Warwickshire.

I was more fortunate. I had everything that heart could desire during my visit, without the unmeaning pomp and pageantry that is attendant on Royalty—an excellent dinner at the mess, extremely pleasant companions, an hour or two's chat, and a good cigar at the evening reception of Mr. Darby, where more anecdotes of sportsmen of past and present times are to be heard than ever it has been my luck to come across before.

I went to bed betimes, to be in readiness in the morning for a day with the Atherstone, the fixture

being Brownsover, the seat of Mr. Allesley Boughton-Leigh, distant about four miles from Rugby.

The night was frosty, but the morning, though cold at first, the roads being hard and slippery in places, was soon made pleasant by the brilliant sunshine.

When I looked at the nag which was brought out on my arrival at Mr. Darby's, I saw an extremely handsome bay horse, well up to my weight, and, being told he was perfectly quiet and temperate, I came to the conclusion that it would be my fault if I could not live with any pack of hounds on such a good-looking hunter.

At the first start I was made perfectly at ease in respect to the temper of my horse, for we had to pass underneath the railway arch, with trains, of which he took not the slightest heed, screaming, rattling, and rushing about in all directions. This is a very dangerous place, and should be screened, after the fashion of some of our metropolitan bridges, or an accident is bound to happen sooner or later.

I know of nothing more unpleasant than to be caught underneath a railway bridge, with a train thundering past, when mounted on a fresh young horse just out of the stable. Having experienced one or two narrow escapes from this cause, I venture to draw the attention of the authorities to it, as the bridge I allude to crosses over the high road close to the town.

Then, trotting along, I found my horse, in addition to his qualifications as a hunter, was a first-rate performer as a hack. having superb action and being a delightful nag to ride.

Numbers of well-mounted men galloped along, and



many first-class horses were going steadily to cover Lady Evelyn Riddell driving a pair of steppers, and sundry other ladies in carriages were wending their way to the meet.

Brownsover is a charming place, situate in the midst of a splendid hunting country, with beautiful grounds, having plenty of wood and water.

At the cross roads George Castleman, the huntsman of the Atherstone, was in waiting with a fine pack of hounds, handsome and powerful, even in size and colour, and in excellent condition. Of Castleman and his first whip, Sam Hayes, I was told that there were no two better servants in the kingdom; and as my informant was a man who has had a vast experience, it sounds well for those hunting with these hounds. A very large field was assembled, amongst whom I noticed Lord Fielding, from Newnham Paddox; Messrs. Rennie, of Leamington; C. J. Graves, of Newbold; E. W. St. John, of Bitteswell; T. H. Watton, of Lutterworth; R. Pennington, of Rugby; W. N. Heysham; T. F. Hazlehurst, of Misterton; J. W. Morrice, of Catthorpe; C. Marriott, of Cotesbatch; Major Pearson, of Walcote; Count and Countess Stockau; Major Tempest; Messrs. Wyatt Edgell; R. Gillespie, of Stainton; H. Pole Shawe, of Weddington Hall, acting as Master in Mr. Oakeley's absence, who, I was pleased to hear, is progressing in a very satisfactory way towards recovery from his severe accident—a broken leg—which occurred a week or two back; Mr. Sheil; Captain Hunter; Mr. Allesley Boughton-Leigh; Captain F. Osborne; Admiral Jones, who, in spite of his age, goes a clinker to hounds; Mr. I. Nevill Fitt, and John

Pye, stud groom to the Atherstone, very well mounted indeed; whilst among the ladies I observed Mrs. Jones, Miss Davy, Miss Beech, Miss Darby, Mrs. Standbridge, Mrs. Upperton, Miss Morice, Mrs. Pennington, and Miss Caldecott. Then we trotted to Coton House, and the hounds drew the plantation.

A few minutes only elapsed before I heard a view-halloo, and got to it as quickly as possible. The fox then broke away and ran over two or three fields across the Lutterworth Road; but, shirking the open, he came back to the plantations, which, however, were soon made too hot to hold him, and he went across the park, making for the village of Newton, to the Cross-in-hand, where two impediments were in our way—the river and the Harborough Railway—and then to Clifton. Hunting our fox slowly over the old grand military steeplechase course, he crossed the brook, in which several took a bath, and sundry loose horses were to be seen galloping about.

I noticed, however, one young farmer, riding an animal with a coat an inch long, and generally out of condition, who put his nag at the brook in right good form; not picking the place, but going where it was the widest, with a low hurdle on the taking off side, and landing in grand style on the other. The scent was bad until we came close to Hillmorton cover. Disdaining to seek shelter as yet, the fox went over the old Street Road, across some splendid grass fields, and away for Crick cover, the crack meet of the Pytchley, where we lost him, after a sporting run over a capital line. Having been nobly carried throughout, my horse proving to be not only temperate at his fences, but very fast—not pulling an ounce, though going

well up to the bit—I most thoroughly enjoyed this capital hunting run, which only required to have been a little faster to have been as good as any I have seen this season.

On the following Wednesday the Pytchley met at West Haddon, about nine miles from Rugby. When I crossed over to Mr. Darby's to mount my horse, I found a five-year-old brown mare, showing great breeding and strength, and well up to my weight, which exceeds 17st.

“But how about her manners at five year old?” I said to the groom.

“Perfect in every way,” was the reply.

“Quiet to ride?” I asked somewhat doubtfully, as it is an early age to arrive at perfection.

“As quiet as a lamb, and a child might ride her,” was the answer, “and a capital hack to boot; and when you return,” said the groom, “you will say you never had a better mount in your life.”

It was so. The day was wet and foggy, a Scotch mist falling throughout the day, which insinuated itself wherever it got an opening; and being “one button short” myself, I offered every facility for a soaking, which I had in due course.

Notwithstanding the state of the weather there was, as is usual with the Pytchley, a very large and well-mounted “field,” many very hard men being out. Amongst a host of others Lord Henley and his son the Hon. Frederick Henley, Mr. and Mrs. Craven, of Whilton Lodge, Mr. and the Misses Langham, Major and Mrs. Tempest. Colonel and Mrs. Gosling, Count and Countess Stockau, of Catthorpe, Captain Walker, Colonel Close, Captain Wheeler from Weedon, Miss

Davy, Messrs. Marriot, Mills, Laing, Gebhart, Shoolbred, Cameron, Bolden, Hamilton Osborne, Heysham, J. W. Morrice, Percival Cooper, Dalglish, and Wilkinson, Major Pearson, Captain Hazlehurst, Captain Septe, Captain Osborne, Captain Garrett, Admiral Jones and Mrs. Jones, Miss Davy, Mr. Drury Wilkinson, Mr. T. W. Rhodes, Mr. Samuel Baker and his son, Mr. A. Benn, Captain Spilling, Mr. Sheil, and very many more with whom I was unacquainted. Amongst those representing the landed interest the following tenant farmers were present, all of whom go well to hounds : Messrs. Gee, Atterbury, John Cooper and Gilbert.

I was not so much struck as I expected to have been with the Pytchley pack ; as far as appearances go I have seen several to which I should give the preference ; but with respect to their performances, I was told by a friend who hunts regularly with them that they leave little to be desired. Will Goodall is the huntsman, and is a fine horseman. He has two first-rate " whips "—his first, Tom Goddard, who has been with the Pytchley for some years, is a clinker across country, and after a little more experience will probably make a good huntsman ; the second, Charles Isaacs, is a very promising young fellow, who knows his way about. Time being up, we trotted away to Watford Cover, where we soon found ; and the fox breaking away, went in the direction of Crick.

At the very first fence a lady comes to grief, falling on her back into a ditch, and her groom, following close behind, jumped right over as she lay ; but she was soon up again and no harm was done. It soon came to my turn to try the skill of the five-year-old

mare, the country being very stiff with some blind and awkward fences. Coming to one of these, the Countess Stockau gave me a lead, and as "Noblesse oblige," to give a new reading to an old phrase, I was bound to follow. I found my nag as handy and clever as could be, and had no hesitation afterwards in putting her at any fence, large or small, that came in my way.

The scent, however, was cold, and the fox, not liking the weather, gave us a ringing run around the village of Crick and back to the cover we found him in, where we could not do anything further with him. Next we drew Winwick Warren, where a view-halloa was promptly heard, and away we went at a racing pace running a ring round Thornby and back to Winwick; then, driving our fox from the cover again, we ran him another ring over the same ground back to Winwick Warren, where we lost him. During this day I noticed how the men rode, and being myself on the right side of the hedge for once in my life, I could afford to pull up and be critical. The hounds having turned sharp to the left, about a dozen fellows charged in succession a tall, stiff-plashed hedge, with a deep drop on the further side, a sort of thing that there was no trifling with. It was no use craning, so at it they went with a will, every one landing safe and getting to hounds directly. After this the pack went away to draw another cover, but, thinking I had done enough with a five-year-old for one day, I turned back and rode through the rain some eight or nine miles, reaching Rugby thoroughly wet through.

## THE NORTH WARWICKSHIRE.

ON the Friday of my visit the North Warwickshire Hounds met at Rugby Station, and, according to custom, trotted up to Mr. Darby's yard, where a host of sportsmen had assembled. The morning was not inviting, a dense fog hanging like a wet blanket around us, and destined so to hang throughout the whole day. This somewhat spoiled the effect of the picture, but, nevertheless, it was a pretty sight to see Wheatley surrounded by his handsome pack, and attended by his two whips, Jack Press and Walter Dale.

The huntsman of the North Warwickshire was formerly in Ireland with Lord Shannon, whence he brought an excellent reputation, and the whips are two very smart fellows, and good horsemen to boot. Amongst those present were the Master, Mr. Richard Lant, of Northcote Hall, and his brother, Mr. John Lant; Lord Leigh and the Hon. Gilbert Leigh; the Hon. Edward Petre, of Whitley Abbey; Mr. John Greaves, of Bencote; Mr. F. Wedge, a light weight, and a capital man to hounds; Major Tempest; Mr. Shoolbred, whom I have seen before in the shires, a very good and bold rider; Mr. Cameron, who goes right well to hounds; Mr. C. Tinsley, from Wolverhampton; Colonel Fitzroy, Mr. Sheil, Mr. Heysham, Mr. J. Nevill Fitt, Captain Osborne, Captain Spilling,

Mr. J. W. Morice, Count and Countess Stockau, Miss Darby, and Miss Govey; and others whose names I was unacquainted with, many coming by train from Leamington, as also did the hounds.

The order to move on being given, I mounted my horse, the same which I rode with the Atherstone, and being therefore quite at home on my good-looking nag, felt no doubt as to where I should be if there was a splitter across the grass, provided my heart was in the right place. A brisk trot for two or three miles brought us to Hillmorton Cover; and Wheatley crying, "Halloo in there! halloo in!" scarcely a minute elapsed before the note of a hound was heard, then a view halloa, and "Have at him, there—have at him!" followed by a crash of musical notes from the whole pack.

Away goes a fox at a rattling pace through the dense mist; but, as there were three on foot at the same time, a portion of the hounds were with difficulty whipped off and got away from the cover. Going with the first division, I found myself galloping at a racing pace over the grass, unable to see for more than fifty yards ahead, the country riding deep in some parts, though the grass was in fine condition, and the fences looming large in the dense atmosphere. "For'ard! for'ard!" is the cry, the hounds are running hard, and if you lose sight of them for a minute there is but little chance of finding them again in this thick fog, and you will be out of the hunt altogether.

Then away we race in the direction of Lilbourne; and turning to the left, go a rattler over the splendid large grass fields and big fences, running close up to Crick Cover, thence in the direction of Yelvertoft,

where we lose our fox, after a capital burst over a considerable part of the cream of the Pytchley country, the run lasting for thirty-five minutes. So heavy was the mist that when the hounds came to a check I thought I had lost them ; but as the cloud of steam from the horses around me cleared away, I found they were within twenty yards of me.

Had it not been for the gloominess of the day, this would have been a most enjoyable run ; but, nevertheless, the gallop on such a clinker as that I was riding was to me a very pleasant entertainment, the weather notwithstanding. After this the hounds were taken back to Hillmorton Cover, where they speedily found another fox, which went away through the fog at a slapping pace ; but whither we ran it is impossible for me to say, as the atmosphere was denser than ever. I therefore pulled up, and, falling in with Mr. Fitt, who is so well known to all hunting in these parts, and Mr. Heysham, who appeared to know every stone in the road, I was enabled to find my way back to Rugby. Had it not been for the assistance of these able pilots, I might have been wandering at this present time through the mazes of the Midland counties.

Having hunted with the Atherstone, the Pytchley, and the North Warwickshire Hounds, I came to the conclusion that any person not having made up his mind where to locate himself after the Christmas holidays, and when the frost had given, could not do better than make Rugby his head-quarters. The North-Western Railway offering great facilities and Rugby Station being on the main line, a two hours' journey lands you at your destination.

Season, or rather hunting tickets, are issued on



very moderate terms. Excellent stabling is procurable at Walker's, where there is a large range of loose boxes, situate within two or three minutes of The George; at which hotel every comfort and convenience is to be obtained—capital suites of well-furnished apartments, an excellent cuisine, and a well-stocked cellar. There is also the mess which is established there, to which I have alluded, and the certainty of having everything done to make your residence comfortable. Then if you are known to any of the members there is the club, with its reading, smoking, and billiard rooms, where you can while away the time very gaily between your return from hunting and the dinner-hour, and in the evening you will find an opportunity of joining in the very pleasant society assembled there. By the aid of the railway, you can hunt every day, reaching Mr. Tailby's hounds as well as the other three crack packs I have enumerated. The town itself is a very cheerful and healthy place for a residence, with plenty of excellent shops, a capital library, and all the accessories necessary to make things agreeable. I think, therefore, that anyone seeking hunting quarters, may go farther and fare worse than at Rugby. The absence of the noble master of the Pytchley—Earl Spencer—is a subject of great regret to all hunting with this pack, his lordship having, in consequence of a domestic affliction, been residing for a while on the Continent; but it is expected that he will return to his post at the commencement of the New Year. There is no better or more popular and esteemed master of hounds in England than the noble Earl, or one who keeps his "field" in better order, which is, by the way, the only mode of showing sport. Sportsmen,

whose zeal outrides their discretion, are restrained and kept from over-riding the hounds by the courteous and thorough control which is enforced.

Her Majesty the Empress of Austria, having brought over a stud of some twenty-five horses, intending to hunt with the Pytchley, has arrived here and has had several very capital runs. Not to speak of Mr. Darby and his establishment whilst on a visit to Rugby, would be either to confess one's ignorance, or to show small powers of observation, for it is, in fact, one of the institutions of the town. If Mr. Darby's position was not so well known to hunting men of all ranks, and he himself so greatly respected, I might have doubted whether I should speak freely of what I observed during my visit; but as his house is always open to all comers who are known to him, or have proper introductions, and he himself being always willing to permit an inspection of his stud and all appertaining to it, I have no hesitation in stating that I believe a description of what I saw and heard may be interesting to a vast number of sportsmen. Suffering from rheumatism, and, like myself, being able to give his experience of over half a century, it is not to be wondered at that he has given up riding, and is content to go upon wheels.

"I do not know which is the lamest of the three," he said, when driving me to his farm, "I, my old pony, or my favourite dog."

All three being good of their sort, however, they managed to get along, and we drove first to the grounds adjacent to the railway station where horses are shown or tried over big fences, with a good stretch of galloping-ground of ridge and furrow grass land

to test their form in their gallop. Arriving at the time when one or two were undergoing examination, I observed a rare sort of horse—a chestnut, up to a heavy weight—who did his fences in first-rate style. Then driving around, we inspected a flock of South-down ewes of a very superior quality, bred by the Duke of Richmond, which were feeding near at hand, and a beautiful lot of animals they were ; from thence we drove to the farm and looked over the stock. The buildings and arrangements are the most complete I have ever seen ; and everything must be in order if the eye of the master is to be pleased. A large number of stacks of prime old meadow hay betokened the quality of the land, and the neatness of the hedges and the good roads, make up one of the neatest places I have ever seen. Mr. Darby is his own architect, and has shown the greatest judgment in his plans, not only of this farmstead, but of his extensive range of stables and buildings in the town, which are all built alike of the best and most durable materials, and executed in a first-rate style. On my return from the farm I proceeded to look over the stud, numbering as a rule about one hundred, all hunters of first-class quality, showing breeding ; and it would be a difficult man to please who could not select a few to carry him in proper form out of this lot. Here, again, neatness and order are the ruling features, and it is quite evident that Mr. Darby is endowed with the bump of organisation, as every detail shows the hand of a practical and thorough business-like man.

When sitting in the evening in the billiard-room, decorated with innumerable sporting prints, portraits of celebrated characters, and notably the fine collection

of coaching pictures gathered together by Mr. Darby, jun., which recall past times vividly to mind, I am carried back by the countless anecdotes I hear to the days of my boyhood, and I fancy I am again sallying forth from the old house at "Havering at ye Bower," to hunt the red deer with Rounding through Hainault and Epping Forests, or going with "Plummy Pratt" to a merry mill at Navestock-heath, to see Jack Scroggins or some such worthy fight "Gipsy Cooper" for £100 a side—prize-fighting in those days being allowable, and a fashionable amusement as well.

"Who was that," I asked, "who went to Melton on one occasion in order to cut down 'Little Gilmour?' "

"Oh!" said Mr. Darby, "you mean the West of England man, who when he rode in Gloucestershire was 'Miles' before, but when he went into Leicestershire was 'Miles' behind. Ah!" said he, when I was speaking of a mutual acquaintance who had killed himself by hard drinking, "I have often seen brandy tried, but I never knew it beaten."

And thus we ran through the list of people once celebrated in the sporting world; and it must have been an insignificant personage indeed whose pedigree and performances were not retained in his singularly retentive and correct memory.

Walking round the town, I noticed the new middle-class schools now in the course of erection. Some anxiety is felt as to the constitution of this portion of the altered scheme for distributing the funds of the founder of the schools, a reform which does not find universal approval, it is quite clear, as I learnt when conversing with some of the old inhabitants. I left

Rugby before I had worn out my welcome, or used up all my proffered mounts, and it required but little pressure to exact a promise that I would repeat my visit, which, under the happy circumstances of my sojourn in this part of the shires, was, I think, a wise decision to come to. Having during the first part of the season visited the Devon and Somerset stag-hounds, and galloped over the Quantock Hills; ridden with the Royal Buckhounds in Windsor Forest; hunted the wily fox and the timid hare over the South-downs; had a merry spin or two with the Belvoir, several rattlers with the Quorn, and some out-and-out clinkers with the Cottesmore—I can affirm that never was hunting more popular than at the present time; that there were never harder riders to be seen, or better horses to carry them; and that, in my opinion, there is little fear at present of Englishmen giving up this manliest of amusements, notwithstanding the maudlin effusions which sometimes appear in print by persons who “compound for sins they are inclined to, by damning those they have no mind to.”

## A MERRY TIME IN THE MIDLANDS.

MAN proposes, but Kings and Empresses dispose of such propositions in a most ruthless and inconsiderate way. Several times have I suffered from this—on one occasion greatly—having been invited to attend a royal stag hunt at Compiégne, in the days of Napoleon III., but the untimely death of the King of the Belgians put a stop to the Imperial sport, and an opportunity never again offered of seeing that grand spectacle. This time it was the death of the King of Italy which upset my arrangements, and deprived me of a view of Her Imperial Majesty the Empress of Austria, who was expected to attend the “meet” of the Pytchley, at Lilbourne, but was prevented doing so by this lamentable event. My disappointment was great, for I had travelled expressly to Rugby for the purpose of seeing this royal huntress ride to hounds; taking up my quarters at the well known and excellent hotel called the Royal George with that intent, where, by the by (and trifles, it is said, make up the sum of life) they varnish one’s boots to such perfection that it recalled to mind an anecdote of Horace Clagget, who some forty years since was a dandy of the first water, and a *roué* to boot, who, having played ducks and drakes with his patrimony, and being over head and ears in debt, ran away with the daughter of a millionaire, partner in the then celebrated blacking

manufactory known as Day and Martin's, and when deploring the fact of his inability to obtain the pardon of the offended parent, who was stone blind, remarked, "that it was most unfortunate, for if his father-in-law could only have seen the polish on his boots, forgiveness would have been instantaneous." But to resume the thread of my discourse. Having received an invitation to attend a grand Masonic ball at the Town Hall on the evening of my arrival, I was in due course ushered into the elegantly decorated ball-room, where I found a large party assembled, some 150 in all. The brethren in full dress, wearing the costume, jewels, and insignia of their rank and office; officers holding Her Majesty's commission, and those of the volunteer service, in full-dress uniform. The splendid band of his Grace the Duke of Rutland, under the able direction of Mr. Henry Nicholson, and a bevy of beautifully dressed and graceful women, waltzing to the enlivening music so admirably played by these skilled musicians. A "gay and festive" scene in every sense of the word was this that met my eye; the brilliancy of the dresses, the tastefully-arranged suite of rooms, the profusion of choice flowers, and the evident enjoyment of the dancers, all combined to render it a striking and delightful *réunion*. A splendid supper was provided, including all the delicacies of the season, to use the stereotyped phrase of descriptions of such banquets; but having due regard to my nerves, and the fact that I was to ride with the Pytchley the following morning, I contented myself with a humble meal, befitting an anchorite, or one of the monks of old of whom we occasionally hear, merely refreshing myself with a

few oysters, a slice or two of brown bread, and a bottle of Ernest Irroy's finest and driest champagne; a frugal repast, I admit, but one I can recommend to any one desiring to feel fit as a fiddle when intending to go across country the next day in proper form. Leaving the George in good time, I crossed over to Mr. Darby's, who had kindly proffered me a mount on a splendid horse, which I had ridden during a former visit; and mounting this good-looking nag, I was soon on my way to Lilbourne, a favourite meet of the Pytchley, distant between three and four miles from Rugby. On my arrival I found a very large "Field" assembled, many, like myself, having travelled some distance to see the Empress perform across the grass, but who also were doomed to disappointment on this occasion. I was glad to find the noble Master, Earl Spencer, at his post, looking exceedingly well, after his sojourn for a while in foreign lands; then I observed a party of distinguished foreigners, consisting of Count and Countess Larisch, their son and daughter, and Prince Lichtenstein. Captain Myddleton, who always pilots the Empress across country—and no fitter man could be found to fill the distinguished post—and a host of well-known riders with the Pytchley, including Capt. Riddell, Major Tempest, Capt. Pritchard Rayner, Colonel Fitzroy, Sir Bache Cunard, Colonel Gosling, Messrs. E. Kennard, Arthur Byass of the Mount, Buckingham, Laing, Herbert of Langham, and the Hon. F. Henley; Capt. Elmhirst, well known in Leicestershire, where I have seen him go very hard, as well as in his own country; Major Pearson, Mr. Gillespie of Stainton, Mr. T. Rhodes, Mr. Muntz, a welter weight, but a good



performer ; Major Furness, Messrs. Wedge, Solomon, A. Benn, E. St John, Hazlehurst, Block, Cameron, and F. Shoolbred, with a large party hailing from the George, consisting of the well-known and widely-esteemed Mr. W. N. Heysham, Mr. Sheil, Capt. Osborne, Mr. Hamilton Osborne, Capt. Spilling, Mr. Walmisley, and Mr. Entwistle, and last, but by no means least, a select party of ladies, who hunt regularly and ride hard with these hounds, comprising Lady Evelyn Riddell, Mrs. Tempest, Miss Elmhist, Miss Davy, Miss Caldicott, Miss Lancaster, Miss Langham, Miss Fitzroy, Miss Govey, Miss Darby, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Upperton, Mrs. Craven, etc., whilst the landed interest was fully represented by Messrs. John Gee, George Gill, H. Atterbury, W. Daniels, J. W. Balling, and H. Broomfield. On my last visit to the Pytchley, I said, speaking of the hounds, that I was not much struck with their appearance, but I hasten to qualify that opinion on second thoughts.

On that occasion it was a damp, foggy, depressing morning, when you could not see fifty yards ahead, with a drizzling mist, which made one feel cantankerous, and consequently I looked upon them with a distorted vision. Now that I saw them surrounding Will Goodall, who, with Tom Goddard and Charles Issacs, looked in excellent form, I considerably modified my opinion as to the merits of this pack.

The huntsman of the Pytchley is a very fine horseman and an excellent sportsman, as becomes one of that well-known name ; whilst his two whips are very hard and good men across country, and are spoken of as valuable hunt servants, who will be heard of hereafter, when they have gained further experience.

Then we move off, and the hounds are thrown into Lilbourne Cover. "Halloa in!" "halloa in!" cries Goodall, but some time elapses before a hound is heard to speak; but at length I view a fox stealing away and going in the direction of the railway which runs along the valley, but altering his mind he bends his steps to the left, going away at a screaming pace, speedily followed by Goodall and his hounds. Here I witnessed a novel feature in hunting, some twenty or thirty men riding for a mile or more along the line of railway at a splitting pace. Fortunately there were no trains to compete with these impetuous sportsmen, or it might have been as awkward for them as it was for "Geordie Stephenson's" celebrated "Coo." Then away we ran at a rattling pace, the ground at this part of the run riding very heavy indeed; but crossing the Old Street-road, and getting on the grass, the going is splendid. Then the fox makes for Mr. Churnside's Cover, which he skirts, and leaving the house to the left, goes a burster over the Grand Military Course, crossing the brook on our way, which, small as it is, proved a stopper to many; thence across the splendid large grass fields pointing for Yelvertoft, and away to the right towards Crick Crackshill, a magnificent line of country, which will be rarely found equalled in any part of the shires.

Now is the time for an eager sportsman—one who cannot be persuaded to give the hounds time at the start, but who is not always so eager at the finish—to ride over the hounds—that is, if he can catch them, for they are going a clinker, and no mistake, and there is no necessity to cry "Hold hard!" now, for

the grass rides splendidly, the pace is severe, and the fences are big enough to satisfy the veriest glutton. There goes Raymond Govey in the front of the first rank, taking a line of his own, and putting his magnificent bay horse at a yawner. "Yo-oi, over!" he goes, and you may follow him if you please, but unless you are a good man, I'll lay you two to one you come a cropper. Hardly has the thought passed through my mind when I see a man putting his horse at the fence, as if he meant it; but when the animal got close to it he stopped short, swerving round, and cannoning against me, nearly spoiled my chance. Beshrew such a brute as that! I would sell him for a cab horse; but whilst I am moralising the hounds are going away merrily in the direction of Crick. But our fox not being allowed to dwell long in the celebrated cover, runs in the direction of the village, where he has a magnificent line of country before him, but his heart failing him he runs to ground, and being dug out and turned down is speedily run into, and "who-hoop" is the cry. This was a capital run, good enough to exhibit the quality of the hounds, and to try the mettle of the riders.

Conspicuous amongst the hard goers was Tom Firr, the huntsman of the Quorn, mounted by Mr. Darby, and going like a man. I know of no neater or better horseman than Tom Firr, whose reputation as a sportsman and first-rate huntsman stands exceedingly high. There was one well known and first-rate sportsman, whose familiar face was missed by all; but whilst we were running our fox hard, the bell was tolling near at hand, as they laid Admiral Jones in his grave. It is little more than ten days since I followed him,

apparently in good health and riding hard to hounds, as he was wont to do, notwithstanding his age; but then comes death, "and with a little pin, bores through his castle walls, and farewell King."

Next we proceeded to draw Watford Cover, which, however, does not hold a fox to-day, and thinking my horse had had enough, I turned his head and retraced my steps to Rugby, coming to the conclusion, as I trotted quietly back, that there is nothing more delightful than to ride a horse who is an equally good performer on the road as he is over the grass, a combination not always met with, and I know nothing more tiring than to ride a tired horse home after a hard run who trips and stumbles at every step.

In the Pytchley country, be it understood, it is no use to bring an indifferent animal if you intend to go straight; it must be a blood-like, stout, courageous horse, and a bold fencer, if he is to carry you close to hounds over these big fields and fences. Not a screw such as "Petruccio" bestrode, which was described as being "full of windgalls, sped with spavins, swayed in the back and shoulder shotten." No, you will be out of the hunt entirely, unless you are well mounted, when you hunt with the Pytchley.

During my stay at Rugby I had a look over Mr. Darby's stud, numbering somewhere about 100 first class, highly bred hunters, one of which, freshly arrived from Ireland, especially took my fancy, as he would that of anyone who knows what a hunter should be, a superb chesnut horse with a lovely head and neck, up to any weight, with a big reputation, and worth a flower-pot full of money—at least, that is my opinion.

I wonder what will become of all this class of animals when Mr. Taylor's (the member for Leicester forsooth) Act passes the House of Commons, by which he intends to put a stop to sport in general, and hunting in particular, he being of the opinion "that the preservation of wild animals for sport is unjust to the farmer, and demoralising to the labourer, and injurious to the whole community." He must be a far-sighted legislator, this Mr. Taylor, but better fitted, in my opinion, to represent Colney Hatch than the chief town of one of the grandest hunting countries in the world. Is this wise representative of a midland county borough aware that it has been estimated by a very competent judge that at the present time there are no less than 342 packs of hounds in the United Kingdom; that employment is found for at least 1000 professional huntsmen and whips, 5000 grooms and helpers, and 3000 earth stoppers and other *employés*; that 100,000 horses are at work, with 30,000 good men and true to ride them, and that the annual expenditure is not less than £700,000 per annum for maintenance of the hunting establishments, besides the annual cost of the horses and many items of expense incurred by those who, differing from the honourable member, consider hunting a manly and invigorating, as well as pleasant and agreeable pastime? Of course there must be a difference of opinion, but at the next general election I shall certainly require to know the views of the candidate in respect to this question, before I plump for him.

Of the other merry doings in the pleasant town of Rugby, and of the sport with two other celebrated packs, namely, the Atherstone and the North War-

wickshire, with which I had the good fortune to ride during my stay at the cheeriest of hostelries, the George, which was brimful of pleasant people and jovial companions, I must postpone speaking until another occasion.

## WITH THE NORTH WARWICKSHIRE AND THE ATHERSTONE.

RESUMING my account of the "Merry time in the Midlands," which I have been enjoying, I now have to record a capital spin with the North Warwickshire on the day following my visit to the Pytchley. The fixture was Hillmorton, which always draws a host of visitors, but the attendance on this occasion was even larger than usual, in consequence of the Rugby Hunt Ball taking place in the evening. Again I had the good fortune to ride a perfect horse, which my liberal friend Mr. Darby was kind enough to trust me with, and I had ample time for observation, as my nag was quite able to take care of himself and his rider too. Hillmorton being within two or three miles of Rugby, there were many lookers on in carriages, and the "Meet" was a very lively and inspiring scene.

Punctual to time up trotted Wheatley with his handsome hounds, accompanied by his two whips, Jack Press and Walter Dale, and we speedily moved on to draw this favourite cover. Amongst the many well-mounted men present on the occasion, I observed, in addition to most of those whose attendance I noted in my account of the Pytchley on the previous day, Mr. Richard Lant, the Master; Lord Mountgarret, Mr. John Lant, Mr. John Arkwright of Hatton, Mr. Dyson Moore, Mr. Sydney Hobson, Major Edlemann,

Mr. and Miss Beech of Brandon, Mr. Henry Madocks, Mr. C. W. Wilcox, Mr. Walker of Weedon, Mr. T. W. Rhodes and his son, General Cureton, Mr. Samuel Baker and his son, all the Rugby men, and those residing at the George, including Count Kalman Almàsy, who has taken up his abode at this hotel for some months, during the stay of the Empress of Austria at Cottesbrook in fact, having a capital stud of hunters provided by Mr. George Cox of Stamford Street, amongst which I hear there is a clinking good brown mare, which I shall not fail to observe on my next visit to the Pytchley. Count and Countess Stockau, a lady who rides extremely well to hounds, and seems to enjoy the fun immensely, Captain Hunter, Mr. S. Darby, etc. etc.

“Halloa in, Halloa in there,” cries the huntsman, and scarcely a minute elapses ere a whimper is heard, then a chorus of most musical notes, then a crash, and I view a noble fox breaking cover and going in the direction of a splendid line of country; then Wheatley brings his hounds to the halloa, and they overrun the scent, and before they have time to settle down to it, back comes the fox, who had been headed, slap through the very middle of the pack, and being coursed by four or five couples of hounds, only saves himself by the skin of his teeth, and regains the cover.

However, he is not allowed to remain there very long, for the whole pack are soon at him, and he bolts at the further end, crossing the brook and going away like steam, running for a mile or two parallel with the Old Street-road, then turning sharp to the left he goes a burster, crossing the Clifton Brook, and on by



the old Grand Military Course ; here there were many who came "muchly" to grief, Mr. Craven's mare unfortunately breaking her back. Then away they race in the direction of Major Furnely's Farm, running over the allotment gardens, and away across the railway, straight over Mr. Darby's Model Farm and the turnpike road, and making at a rattling pace for Onley Ground, and from thence up to Kilsby, where the hounds ran into their fox after a capital run of forty-five minutes.

Some part of the run was over a brilliant line of country, with plenty of big fences, and large grass fields, over which I had the felicity of being carried at a racing pace by the most perfect horse I have ridden for years ; and I have yet to learn that there is a pleasure greater than that of being carried well up to hounds over a fine grass country for forty or fifty minutes on a temperate animal, on which you have only to sit down and let him go straight as a die, crossing ridge and furrow without a blunder ; galloping over the hillocks which abound in some of these old pastures, and which are a caution to a clumsy goer, without putting his foot wrong, and taking his fences as they come, with as much regularity and precision as an old maid does her five o'clock tea. After this we travelled back to Belton Grange, where we found our second fox, and ran him a rasper to the Rains Brook, where no end of men came to grief ; thence away over the canal to the top of Barby Hill, where we came to a check, after which, the scent being bad, we had to hunt our fox slowly for a while, but a view halloa ! being heard near Ashby St. Ledgers, Wheatley lifted his hounds, and speedily ran his fox to

ground at Braunston. I was glad to hear that a subscription is now being made for the restoration and replanting of "Cook's Gorse," which is situate close at the back of Hillmorton village.

The position of this cover is extremely good, and, doubtless, when it is replanted and preserved, we shall find the benefit of it, and have as many clinking good runs from it as we have had in former times. I was told that already several subscriptions have been paid into Lloyd's Bank at Rugby by gentlemen residing there, and by others who make it their headquarters for the hunting season; and as this is a most important feature in connection with the sport of this district, I will take the liberty of saying to those who have not as yet contributed to the fund for the re-establishment of this home for vagrant foxes, "Go thou and do likewise." In the evening I had the pleasure of attending the Rugby Hunt Ball at the Town Hall, the elegant decorations of which I described in an account of the Grand Masonic Ball, at which I was a guest, on the previous Tuesday evening, Upwards of two hundred visitors were present, the gentlemen, in the uniform of their respective "hunts," adding greatly to the beauty of the scene; and the ladies, the elegance of whose attire baffles my descriptive powers, left nothing to be desired, save and except the pleasure of dancing to the splendid music of the Duke of Rutland's band with one of the graceful and elegant girls who represented the beauty and fashion of Rugby and its vicinity; and he must have been made of exceedingly dull metal who did not feel the pulsations of his heart quickened as he listened to the strains of the most fascinating and en-

trancing waltz I have ever heard, and which rejoices in the delightful and appropriate title of "Sweet-hearts." Among this numerous assemblage were Count Kalman Almàsy and the Countess Almàsy, the Rev. T. B. W. and Mrs. Boughton Leigh, Mr. and Miss Caldecott, Colonel Caldecott, Captain J. A. Caldecott, Miss Alston, Miss Belcher, Mr. H. C. Maclaine, R.A.; the Hon. Lady Inglis, Mr. A. M. and Miss Inglis, Mr. Dyson Moore and Miss Moore, Major and Mrs. Inglefield, Captain and Mrs. Radford, Mr. Guy Scott, Captain Hunter, Mr. Steel, Captain and Mrs. Watson, Mr. and Mrs. Morrice of Catthorpe Towers, the Misses Morice, Captain and Mrs. Levett, Captain Osborne, Mr. Hamilton Osborne, Mr. Lindsell, Mr. Entwistle, Mr. Allesley and Mrs. Boughton Leigh, Mrs. and Miss Elmhirst, Captain Elmhirst, Miss Elmhirst, Sir Joseph Spearman; Mr. Cecil Butler, Mr. and Mrs. Wyatt Edgell, Mrs. Ernest Chaplin, Mrs. Beech, Mr. Rowland Beech, Mr. Charles and Mr. Henry Beech, Miss Rose, Lady and the Misses Hulse, Colonel Wilkinson, etc. etc. etc. Well, balls are very delightful things I must admit, but it is rather trying when one has fallen into the "sere and yellow leaf" to be compelled to look on instead of joining in the pleasures of the evening, and one is inclined to sigh for "The merry days when we were young, when youth's gay fancy threw o'er life its glowing hue." But, bah! what's the use of crying over spilled milk, better to console oneself with those beautiful lines from Horace:—

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

By-the-bye, it was Adelina Patti, then at the zenith of her fame and beauty, and previous to her unfortunate marriage, who, at a delightful *réunion* at her house in the Champs Elysées, first convinced me that I had "silver threads amongst the gold." Having asked me to waltz with her, I replied, "Now, then, I know I am an old man indeed, since I am compelled to deny myself a pleasure that hundreds would give their right hands to enjoy."

On the morning following the ball the Atherstone met at Brownsover, the residence of Allesley Boughton Leigh, Esq. The morning was brilliant, and the company very numerous. A little law was allowed on this occasion, dancing having been kept up to the latest of hours. It being too great a distance for Mr. Oakeley, the Master, to travel, who, I am glad to be able to say, is steadily improving and recovering from his accident, he having a few weeks since had the misfortune to break his leg, he, therefore, was ably represented by Mr. Pole Shawe, the "field" consisting of many others besides those I have enumerated as being with the Pytchley and North Warwickshire on the two previous days, amongst whom I noticed Mr. Hans Blackwood, the very popular and efficient secretary, who is a model for gentlemen holding similar honorary posts, for I am told he has a kind word for every one, and contributes greatly to the harmonious working of the hunt. Mr. Henry Townsend, of Caldecott Hall; Mr. Worswick, Captain Heniker, Mr. White, Mr. C. Marriott, Mr. Watson, of Lutterworth, and his brother Captain F. Watson; Mr. Cunliffe-Brooks, of Anstey; Captain Elmhist, Mr. Lindsell, Mr. Healey, Mr. Wyatt-Edgell, Captain

Barwell, Mr. Nuttall, Mrs. Standbridge, who rides very hard and well to hounds without making any display ; Captain Pritchard Rayner, Mrs. Upperton, also a very clever horsewoman ; Mr. S. Darby, Count and Countess Stockau, Miss Podmore, etc. etc. The hounds were speedily trotted off to Coton House, where there is an extensive range of plantations, and as I trotted up to the cover side, a view halloa proclaimed that a fox was found, who went away pointing for a capital line of "country." Castleman soon brought his hounds to the halloa, and away we went at a racing pace over some stiff fences. At this moment I thought we were in for a good thing, and having a capital start I fancied I could hold my own, mounted as I was on so perfect a hunter, but our fox shirked the open, and took to a drain at this early hour of the morning, after a run of ten minutes. However, he was not allowed to throw up the sponge at this early period of the day, and a terrier having been introduced to his temporary abode, he forthwith gave notice to quit, and bolting out, ran past the village of Newton, making for the Rugby and Stamford Railway, which he crossed, then over the brook, which took in some, and did for a good many others, and then raced away to Lilbourne ; at this time the pace was severe and the fences stiff ; from thence we ran to Mr. Morrice's, Catthorpe Towers, which were speedily left behind, and then we went a splitter to Swinford, where we ran our fox to ground after a very good run. After this we proceeded to draw for another fox, having to return to Coton House, as we had run our first fox to ground in the Pytchley country. There we drew the covers blank ; no doubt there were plenty of other

foxes, but they had been disturbed in the earlier part of the morning. Thence we proceeded to Browns-over, and drew the likely looking spinnies blank, as well as one or two other promising covers. Next we tried the Osier-bed, which usually provides a fox, but we were doomed to disappointment, for it did not hold one to-day. Then we jogged on to Cester's Over, with the same ill-fortune; but on reaching Newbold Revel we came upon the scent of a fox, who had gone away evidently a long time before we arrived, and we could do nothing with him. Short as our gallop was, it was long enough to bring several to grief, one good man coming down at a flight of rails, and several others hitting them hard, but it did not concern me, as my horse made no such blunder, getting over the difficulty as cleverly as a Master of Arts. At another flight of very stiff rails, with a deep ditch on the further side, a young fellow who put his nag at them in right good form took a header clean over the rails, and down to the bottom of the deep, deep ditch, his horse having stopped dead when he got up to the rails, thus getting rid of his rider without saying "With your leave," or "By your leave."

Every one was compelled to laugh at this exhibition, which bordered on the ridiculous, but it was rather rough on the youngster, who went at them with a will. I witnessed another disaster about this time, a horse falling on the road with a heavy man on him, literally ploughing up the ground, cutting his knees worse than ever I saw done before, the skin hanging down in strips as broad as the palm of a hand. The rain having now commenced, and the afternoon becoming cold and foggy, I turned my head homewards,

and trotted steadily away for Rugby, thus finishing a most enjoyable visit, where I had hospitality without end, noble horses to ride, and gentle and joyous companions with whom to while away the time; and thus the curtain descends, the fun is over, and all that remains is the recollection of an exceedingly "Merry Time in the Midlands."

## WITH THE BROOKSIDE.

THERE is much diversity of opinion as regards the sport to be met with in the county of Sussex, those accustomed to hunt in the shires speaking somewhat contemptuously of the open Downs, the small enclosures, and large tracts of woodland. But whilst admitting the superiority of Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Rutlandshire, Warwickshire, etc. etc. I am very well content, notwithstanding a long acquaintance with those favoured and favourite "countries," to gallop over the beautiful Southdowns and the enclosed, though somewhat thickly wooded, district which is to be reached from Brighton. Considering its proximity to London, the facilities offered by the railway company, and the many attractions that are to be found in that delightful place of abode, and the fact that three excellent packs of hounds are to be reached without difficulty from thence, I have no hesitation in recommending those who, from circumstances, are unable to go far afield for their amusements to follow my example, and try a day with the Southdowns, a gallop with the Brookside, or a spin with the Brighton Harriers, and I venture to say they will be grateful for the suggestion.

To any one inclined to take advice "gratis" I say, put yourself in a fast train, and in an hour and a quarter you will be landed, if you have luck, at the



place of your destination. There you may take up your abode in one of the many palatial hotels, or if of a frugal turn of mind you may select a "cottage by the sea." Then, if you do not bring down your own horses, lose no time in visiting the West Brighton Riding School, and selecting from the stock of Mr. Dupont an animal that takes your particular fancy, and if you are not very hard to please you will not be long before you are fitted. Then having strolled along the King's Road, admiring the host of beautiful and elegantly dressed ladies who daily exhibit their perfections in this fashionable promenade, you can drop in at Reichard's, or take your fish at the Aquarium Restaurant, afterwards passing an hour or two at the well-managed theatre, and you will find that the time has fled quickly and pleasantly away. Then in the morning you should be in proper form for a gallop with the Brookside Harriers, which hunt two days a week (Mondays and Thursdays), and if you have the same good fortune as I had, you will say you have had an exceedingly good time.

On the day of my visit the meet was at the Newmarket Plantation, and the morning being bright and clear, a pleasant hour's ride, passing through Preston, leaving Stanmer Park, the beautiful seat of the Earl of Chichester, to the left, I rode on to the downs and cantered quietly along until I saw the hounds rising the crest of one of the steep hills in the direction of Lewes. The Brookside Harriers have for nearly two centuries been in the possession of the family of which Mr. Steyning Beard is now the representative. These hounds, seventeen couples of which formed the pack on this occasion, were in

blooming condition, and I have never seen a more beautiful lot of animals.

A "field" numbering between forty and fifty were assembled, amongst whom I observed Mr. Stamp, Mr. Patman, Mr. Philcox, Mr. Slimmer, and a young gentleman on a chestnut horse, who seemed very much at home with hounds, who, I was told was a son of Mr. J. S. Clarke, the well-known actor, who trains up all his children in the way they should go—that is if they mean going with hounds; Mr. Dupont, on a likely looking thoroughbred that ought to make a hurdle racer; several officers of the 20th Hussars, and two ladies, one of whom was mounted on a grand-looking bay horse, with a rat tail, which looked like a performer.

Mr. Steyning Beard, who hunts the hounds himself, lost no time, and the hounds were speedily on the line of a hare that had stolen away unobserved, but the scent was cold, and they had to pick their way, step by step, over the plough, but getting on better terms with puss as they ran across the grass they went with a will in the direction of the railway. Here my attention was directed to a flight of rails on the side of a steep hill, leading out of a belt of trees, over which some half-dozen adventurous riders showed me their heels, and I hardened my heart, and put my sturdy little chestnut at it, who, though eager with hounds, took me over an awkward fence in such form as to win my entire confidence; though I admit I preferred going in and out of a double to having a shy at a high flight of rails which next presented itself. The hare, however, doubled back, and went at a slapping pace over hill and dale, and making for a small plantation,

ran straight into a snare, and was consequently quickly disposed of.

During this run I observed that the Master never lifted his hounds, but allowed them to puzzle out the cold scent as best they could, which in my opinion is the only way to hunt the hare, and it was to me a very pretty piece of sport, and fully entitled these harriers to the praise I had heard given to them by one of the best judges in England, who said there was no better pack to be found than the Brookside. Then we drew for some little while up and down these steep hills, which at this season look anything but verdant; but at length a hare slips away from out the long brown tussocks of grass, and goes at a rattling pace in the direction of Lewes, then crossing the railway, doubles back, and runs for the hills.

Here the scent became cold, and we hunted her slowly and steadily with occasional bursts over the steep downs; then bending to the right she ran in the direction of the Brighton racecourse, and the hounds came to a check in a small plantation; but there being no cover to hold our hare she doubled back, and the hounds getting on good terms with her, went at a racing pace, compelling her to go as straight as a die, and after a splitting burst of ten minutes ran into her, and "Who-hoop" was the cry. These hounds, in addition to their steadiness, can go very fast when occasion requires, for there was not a man within a field of them during this merry little spin.

After this the hounds drew for another hare, and finding quickly, ran close up to the town of Lewes, where I left them. I consider this to have been a most excellent day's sport, the hounds being hunted

in a first-rate style by Mr. Beard, and the going over the elastic turf very pleasant for a well-mounted man, who is not afraid to ride up and down these steep ascents and descents, which to a stranger are a little startling at first; and I must say I think a gallop over this style of country is not to be despised, and that any real sportsman who visits the Brookside will hold the same opinion, when I say I consider them a very fine and sporting pack of old-fashioned harriers, well worthy of a visit from any one who loves hunting for hunting sake, and especially those who, like myself, are not quite so young or so ardent as we were half a century ago, but who, nevertheless, can enjoy a hunting run over an open country, leaving the younger men to declare that twenty-five minutes across Leicestershire is their idea of what a run should be, and that hare hunting is only fit for old fogies. However, there is the consolation for the veterans, that these fast young fellows, if they live long enough, will find that there is yet much pleasure to be found in the pursuit of the nutbrown hare, even when they no longer relish the appearance of a yawning brook, or an ox fence, or a stiff flight of rails, over which they used to pop so merrily in their youthful days; and when they come to this happy state they may find that there are many worse things than a day with a pack like the Brookside.

After this, a pleasant ride over the downs, crossing the racecourse on my way, I reached Brighton, on excellent terms with myself, and a stern resolve to enjoy another gallop "o'er the Downs so free" wherever the opportunity offers. The following morning I mounted my hack and cantered away to Rotting-

dean, in order to visit the kennels of the Brookside. After a lovely ride over the breezy downs I reached the quiet little hamlet of Rottingdean, and passing the residence of Mr. Steyning Beard, found the kennels, which are situated in a hollow, well sheltered from the wintry winds. Having intimated my desire to inspect the hounds, for which I had obtained the permission of the Master, I was shown over by the lad who was in charge, in the absence of the kennel huntsman and whip, John Funnell. The kennels are very well built, spacious, and placed in a good position for drainage, a most important consideration for those who do not desire their hounds to suffer from attacks of kennel-lameness, and which does not always receive sufficient consideration at the hands of those who are entrusted with the building of such establishments. The huntsman's house adjoins them, and is a neat and commodious building.

A large enclosed paddock is devoted to the puppies, in which, on the occasion of my visit, there were five couples of youngsters, very promising hounds, indeed, from which I selected Warbler for choice as likely to prove a valuable addition to the pack next season. Then going into the first compartment which contained the hounds that had been hunted on the previous day, I was struck by their beauty and wonderfully blooming appearance. First to show themselves were Towler and Jupiter, then Warrior, all beautiful animals, thoroughbred harriers, and I heard with great regret that five couples of this beautiful pack had run over the cliffs during last season, and were dashed to pieces, whilst in pursuit of a hare. A loss not easily replaced ; nevertheless there are some thirty couples

still remaining, amongst which I noticed Painter and Pillager, and a light coloured hound, Traveller, also first-class specimens of high-bred harriers. Next I was introduced to the ladies, and Levity, who took the prize at the Crystal Palace, was pointed out to me ; then Festive, a real beauty, also a prize taker ; Thoughtful, an exceedingly good specimen, as, indeed, were a trio of ladies—Harmless, Affable, and Actress, whilst Crafty, an exceedingly fine bitch, with Sportive and Ransom, attracted my special attention and admiration, calling to mind the words of one whom Nimrod styled the Father of the modern chase, who said that perfection in the shape of hounds consisted in their having short backs, open bosoms, straight legs, and compact feet. It must be remembered that these hounds have been for a great number of years in the hands of the same family, and that the greatest care and attention has been paid to insure their quality being maintained up to the standard of excellence that has existed for so long a period in the kennels of the Brookside. After this I returned, delighted with what I had seen, and whilst cantering along over the open country I came to the conclusion that it would be but a slight punishment if I were compelled to give up the frivolous gaities of the metropolis, and retire to this “city by the sea,” where, lulled by the murmur of the sad sea waves, I might live a life compatible with my advanced age ; but there would be one condition attached to my acceptance of this proposition, namely, that I should have two or three compact horses, not less than fifteen hands two inches, with good action and fine mouths, standing in the stable, in order that I might

hunt occasionally with the Southdown Foxhounds and the Brighton Harriers, the former of which are an exceedingly good pack of hounds, being kennelled at Ringmer, near Lewes, under the management of Mr. Streatfield, who is a popular Master, always desirous of showing sport. The huntsman, George Champion, who has hunted this pack for the last twenty years, is an energetic man and thorough good sportsman, who takes a great pride in keeping up the quality and condition of the hounds under his charge. Whilst the Brighton Harriers, of which Mr. Dewè is Master, are a clipping good lot; every hound being a draft from some well known kennel of foxhounds, and being entered to hare now, show excellent sport, compelling the hares to run straight and go the pace, if they mean to escape from their eager jaws. As I hope very shortly to have a gallop with both of these packs, I will defer further comment until I have ridden as near their tails as I can, across the wide tract of land over which they hunt.

During my rambles through Brighton I chanced to call in at the photographic establishment of Messrs. Hennah and Kent, in the King's Road, where I saw a portrait of Admiral Rous, the last that was ever taken of this celebrated handicapper and supporter of the Turf. It is a life-like and beautifully executed work of art, and it will be a matter of interest to many to hear that in consequence of the demand for copies from the friends and admirers of the deceased Admiral, it has been lithographed, so that Messrs Hennah and Kent may be able to respond to the many requests for a last memorial of this celebrated and popular character.

## HUNTING IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

“THE ship is ready and the wind blows fair, and I am bound for the sea,” I hummed to myself as I embarked on board the vessel which was to bear me to the Isle of Wight, where I purposed hunting with the foxhounds and riding with the harriers, so as to be able to contrast the sport in this (to me) unknown “country” with the clinking good gallops I have recently had in the shires. Now, it was not a big ship or a long voyage I was about to venture on; but, nevertheless, I have always anxious forebodings as to whether I may not be called upon to provide for the necessities of the denizens of the deep. On the back of a horse, even if he cuts up a little rough, I generally maintain an even balance, but in a rolling craft and a heaving sea I am, so to speak, nowhere. Fortunately no adverse wind—nay, not even a ripple—arose to impede my progress, and in a very brief period I found myself safely housed at Ventnor.

Of this fashionable watering-place I had heard marvellous accounts; if report was to be credited I should find a floral display that would put Covent Garden to the blush, and cause Mrs. Buck to hide her diminished head. Geraniums, veronica, roses, and mignonette were to be seen “all a-blowing and a-growing;” but, alas for the veracity of my informants, instead of this wealth of flowers I found



here and there a giant geranium, with its lower extremities wrapped in swaddling clothes, huddling in a corner, whilst "bitter blew the blast," and an eastern blast, too, that shrivelled one up until one's resemblance to a Normandy pippin was apparent, if painful; and when I arose the following morning it was to find the earth icebound, the roads like cast-iron, and it was evident there would be no hunting on that day.

There, as I sat before a blazing fire, listening to the music that the wild waves made, I reflected that, after all, I ought not to grumble at my lot, for this is the first day's hunting I have lost through frost during the present season—a somewhat remarkable fact. In this state of forced inactivity there was nothing left but to recall the pleasures of the past, and I ran over in my mind the different packs of hounds I had ridden with since hunting began. Commencing first on the 31st August, be it observed, with the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, when for the first time I beheld the grand sight of a "warrantable" deer—a "stag of ten"—breaking cover, and going away at a rattling pace over the beautiful heather-clad hills which look down on the smiling vale of Taunton, along the emerald green valleys, across the sparkling streamlets, through the lovely and leafy "coombes," which form so beautiful a feature in parts of Devon and Somerset, until the noble animal having outpaced the eager hounds, took refuge in a friendly copse, and "laid up," as is the custom of the wild red deer, when hardly pressed, thus for a while baffling his pursuers, and bringing the hounds to a check. Not long, however, is he

permitted to rest in his lair, for the fiat has gone forth, "This day a stag must die." Gradually the hounds draw up, and when they closely approach his resting-place, up starts the antlered monarch of the woods:—

“‘But ere his fleet career he took,’  
 The dewdrops from his flank he shook,  
 Like crested leader, proud and high,  
 Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky,  
 A moment gazed adown the dale,  
 A moment snuffed the tainted gale,  
 A moment listened to the cry,  
 That thickened as the chase drew nigh,  
 Then as the headmost foes appeared,  
 ‘With one brave bound, the copse he cleared,’”

landing within a few feet of me, and going a rattler over the lovely country, running down from West Quantock Head, and making seawards. For a while we followed him in view, then ran him through the beautiful park and pleasure grounds of “St. Audries,” a charming residence situate on the shores of the Bristol Channel. It was at that moment I fully realised what the pleasure of hunting is, and as I sat down on my nag—a son of Thormanby—and went at a racing pace over the springy turf, I experienced a greater delight than has ever fallen to my lot before—I mean whilst indulging in the pleasures of the chase—and when I saw him, no longer daring to trust himself on *terra firma*, make for the muddy waters, and go boldly out to sea, in the hopes of shaking off his foes, I could but admire the courage of this splendid wild red deer, whose motto evidently was “no surrender;” and it was with regret that I

heard that, thinking the coast was clear, he returned, only to find his enemies lying in wait, and he was forthwith captured and killed. Had I been the Master, I would have let the gallant beast live; but then I have no right to set up my judgment against that of so thorough and greatly respected a sportsman as the popular Master of the Devon and Somerset, Mr. Bissett, who has hunted this "country" for the last twenty years and upwards; but then, also, I am exceptional in my views, for if ever I am an M.F.H. I will never dig out a fox that has gone to ground after affording me a good gallop.

Much more could I say of these beautiful hounds, this magnificent country, and of the glorious sport of hunting the wild red deer; but I must reserve those remarks to some more fitting and appropriate opportunity, being fully determined, however, if all goes well, to spend a few days at Dulverton during next autumn, in order to enjoy the royal sport once more. Then my mind reverted to the glorious October morn on which I rode with Frank Goodall and the Royal Buckhounds through the lovely glades of Windsor Forest, running our deer for two hours and a half, "through the woods, through the woods," under a broiling sun. Then I am, in imagination of course, taking a breather with the Thanet Harriers over the wide expanse of open "country" lying between Margate and Sandwich, and let me tell you that, *faute de mieux*, you may do worse than have a gallop with this sporting little pack should the opportunity offer. Next I am mounted on a sturdy little horse, following the Southdown foxhounds over the Lewes Downs, and across the stiff vale, during a persistent down-

pour, which drenched me to the skin. Anon I am galloping for twenty-three minutes with the Brighton Harriers, over the breezy downs, killing our hare in splendid style. Then I am at Melton Mowbray, "the metropolis of hunting," as Nimrod described it, having, as I usually do, an exceedingly good time of it when I visit that cheerful and hospitable locality. Riding with the Cottesmore from Ranksborough Gorse, admiring the skill and perseverance of that first-rate huntsman, Neale, who goes out with a fixed determination to kill his fox, or meeting the Quorn at Ashby Pastures and going a burster to Woolwell Head, crossing the Whissendine, and finally seeing Tom Firr break up his fox, after a splitting run of twenty-five minutes, in his usual workmanlike style. Next I am galloping to cover on a clever nag, in order to ride with his Grace the Duke of Rutland's hounds from the Three Queens, a well-known meet of the Belvoir, where the going over the light plough lands and the easy fences is so extremely pleasant, enabling one who is on the shady side of half a century, to live with hounds, and watch Frank Gillard persevere with his fox when the scent is cold and the weather stormy. But here I am open to the remark, "But how about hunting in the Isle of Wight?"

Well, I must admit that I have been somewhat discursive, but then I must bring Jack Frost to the bar of public opinion, and make him explain how it was that he upset my arrangements, and prevented my seeing the foxhounds which hunt two days a week, being kennelled at Marvel, near Newport—a very fair pack, I hear, hunting an inferior "country." How-

ever, though prevented chasing the fox, I was yet able to hunt with the hounds, and hold with the hare. Having ascertained that the Isle of Wight Harriers were to meet at Sheats Farm, distant from Ventnor some eight or nine miles, lying to the left of the Newport Road, I secured a mount on a clever little nag, who, however, exhibited some slight eccentricities, objecting, for instance, to the touch of my coat tails, declining to go beyond certain defined boundaries; but yielding under pressure (like the Turks), and getting the wrong end of the stick (also like the aforesaid) he conceded more territory, and finally concluded an armistice, which enabled me to reach my destination, though a little late, like the Russian despatches.

As I galloped along what no doubt is a beautiful country, but which was obscured by a dense fog, the prospect was not inviting. To the left, as I passed along, I caught a glimpse of Appuldurcombe, formerly the seat of the Earl of Yarborough, a very charming place for a residence; then away through the exceedingly tranquil, not to say dull, villages of Rooksley, Wroxhall, and Godshell, I arrived at the "Meet," to find that the hounds had left, and when I got up to them they were running a hare through a copse on a steep hillside. Looking around me I was constrained to admit that "it was a queer up-and-down sort of country," bearing a strong resemblance to the Brighton Down, with, however, a considerable tract of compensating level "country," with small fields and tolerably stiff fences.

Shoving my heels into my little horse, I was not long before I reached the hounds, which by this time

had crested a stiff hill, from whence they ran their hare into another cover on the side of a steep incline. Here the scent being very bad, they hunted step by step through the covert, driving her out at the end, and running her into the cover where they found her. Then they rattled her around, giving tongue in the old-fashioned style, which I think all harriers should do, until they made the place too hot for her, and she went away in the direction of a very fair line of "country," and I anticipated having a pretty gallop, but the weather was so raw, with small rain falling, and the scent being cold, they were unable to do any good with her. After this drew some fallows, where we saw several fresh seats, but never a hare, and as the prospect of sport seemed of the smallest, and the weather most disagreeable, I left them to their devices, and cantered home to Ventnor.

I heard that these hounds show very good sport; they are rather a scratch pack, but amongst them are some very handsome old-fashioned looking harriers, and they hunted their hare very steadily, picking up the scent step by step. They are hunted by the Master, Mr. Barton, who has the reputation of being a very good sportsman. He looks like a workman, and is evidently not afraid to ride. It is a caution to see some of these gentlemen gallop down these hills at full speed; but I suppose use is everything, as I observed one man on an old Irish horse, go straight down a place as steep as the "side of a house." On this occasion there were only nine couples of hounds out, as some were suffering from lameness, but the pack in all consists of seventeen couples, and the

conclusion I came to was that, though I would not come to the Isle of Wight to hunt, yet if circumstances led me into this part of the world, I should certainly try these harriers again.

Anyone having occasion to visit Ventnor will find excellent hotels, the Royal, the Marine, the Crab and Lobster, etc., and if he goes to Mr Jackman's stables he will find a very useful lot of horses indeed; and out of the forty animals all in hard condition, and turned out in proper form, he will be able to select some that will carry him to his satisfaction. Of the place itself it is not fair to judge at this season; whilst east winds prevail it is very cold indeed, but at any other time I should say it must be a very lovely spot, for those who take a pleasure in wandering by the sad sea waves. On some future occasion I hope to be able to have a look at the foxhounds when the fates are more propitious than at the present time.

## HUNTING AT BRIGHTON.

“WHAT are the wild waves saying, sister, the whole day long?” was the question that suggested itself to Paul Dombey as he wandered listlessly along, listening to the rippling waters as they broke on the beach at Brighton. What the reply was I do not distinctly remember, but had the query been addressed to me, I should have answered, “Glad to see you here again; remember, we dine at eight. I have a young horse I particularly want you to ride, and we are having wonderful sport, both with the foxhounds and the harriers.” Such at any rate, were the pleasant words that greeted me as I bent my steps along the King’s Road shortly after my arrival at the queen of watering-places.

On the following morning the Southdown Foxhounds met at Erringham House, the residence of Mr. Pearson, who, after a pleasant fashion, which is very much in vogue in this hospitable locality, entertained the field, numbering some eighty or ninety performers, in a most liberal manner. Nor was such thoughtful provision unneeded, for a dense fog hung over the country, like the proverbial wet blanket, and it was doubtful, in fact, whether the hounds would be able to hunt on the occasion. At any rate, it was thought highly probable that, if a fox went away, the hounds would very speedily be lost to sight, as it was impos-



sible to see more than two or three yards ahead. However, Mr. Streatfield, the Master of the South-down, is always anxious to show sport, in which laudable desire he is invariably aided by Champion, who has hunted these hounds for the last twenty years, and orders to move on having been given, he proceeded to draw the covers lying below the hills, first trying Horton Rough without finding a fox, then Toddington Wood with similar ill-luck, next Hoe Wood, which was also drawn blank, and afterwards the Osier Bed, and Perching Wood; but "nary nary" a fox was at home this dismal day.

A most unusual run of bad luck was this, as on former occasions when I have seen these covers drawn, we found lots of foxes. In consequence of the dismal state of the atmosphere and this want of success, most of the "field" threw up the sponge—a very moist sponge it was too, and returned home. Not so Champion and some half-dozen men, true to the core, who determined, the weather notwithstanding, to persevere to the end. Here as they reached a patch of Gorse in Paythorne Valley, they met with their reward, for a fox went away at a rattling pace, making for the Tenantry Furze, then going for the Roughts, through which he made his way, then on to Erringham Furze, and being driven from thence he ran down the hill in the direction of Beeding Windmill, where Champion was compelled to whip off the hounds through stress of weather, thus terminating a wretched day's sport, a very unusual occurrence with this pack, by-the-by, but saving the "country" from the discredit of having shown a blank day.

But if much disappointment resulted from these un-

toward events, all was duly atoned for by the sport shown on the Monday following, when the South-downs met at Offham. The weather this day was an improvement upon that of Friday, but there was a damp drizzling rain and cold wind which was not promising. Amongst those attending the fixture was Mr. Streatfield (the Master), Mr. Champion, M. Ferdinand Hardelay, Colonel Keen, Mr. G. Smith, Mr. Verral, Mr. Dupont, Mr. Broughton Smith (an excellent sportsman), and many others who constantly hunt with these hounds. First Champion proceeded to draw Warringer Wood, from which a fox broke away without any unnecessary delay, going southward of the hill, passing Lewes Race Course to Ashcombe Plantation, where the hounds ran into him after a merry little spin, when he was duly broken up, and "Who-hoop" was the cry. After this breather, the hounds were trotted away to Earl Chichester's, where they were soon rewarded by a find, as a fox went away at the north-west end of Stanmer Park, and they raced him at a terrific pace to Ditchling Beacon, thence going a screamer to Clayton Holt, where the hounds came to a check, but speedily picking up the scent, they ran over a good line of "country" nearly to Keymer Gate, passing through Colonel Lane's, and back to Botting's Wood, where they raced into him and ate him, after a blazer of forty-five minutes, the pace during the first ten being tremendously fast. The brush was presented to Mr. George Smith, who came from the East Essex country to show the South-downers how the trick is done, and who went a clinker throughout this capital run, riding one of the pick of Mr. Dupont's stable. Mr. J. S. Clarke, jun,

also made his mark on this occasion ; but if he will take a word of advice from a veteran of the chase he will not be quite so prodigal of the powers of the animals he bestrides, as it never pays to ride a willing horse too hard.

However, with age will come experience, and I can boast that during the many years I have hunted, though riding a welter weight, I have invariably managed to live to hounds through the longest runs, as I never pump a horse out, but always contrive to have a gallop left at the finish. There is no doubt that these are very first-class hounds, and that Champion hunts them right well. It is a varying "country" and the foxes run straight and well, and take a deal of killing. During my visit I made a special point of having a ride with the Brighton Harriers, which are, in my opinion, entitled to rank amongst the very best in the kingdom. And on this occasion that good opinion was considerably strengthened after I saw them perform. On my arrival at Hangleton I found a large field assembled, some sixty in all, I should say, including Mr. Dewè (the Master), Mr. and Mrs. Morrell from Oxfordshire, who are residing during the winter at Brighton, Mr. Carter Wood and Miss Wood, Mr. and Mrs. Schlimmer, Mr. Philcox (Preston), Mr. Stamp, Mr. Gregson, Mr. Dudney, sen. (Portslade); Mr. Dudney, jun.; Miss Dupont, Miss Lottie Dupont, both mounted upon wonderful ponies; with whom was a lady who is well known with these hounds, but whose name I for the moment forget; a bold and graceful rider, however, who is to be found on most occasions in the first flight; as also are Miss Dupont and her youthful

sister, who, ably piloted by Parsons, ride with courage and skill, that will in due time make them stars of the first magnitude in the hunting field, if they carry out the promise of their youth. In addition to those I have named there were many others I have seen out on former occasions, including Mr. Maple, who is a frequent attendant, and Mr. G. Smith, of the East Essex, who is equally ready to claim the scut of a hare if he gets a chance as he is to take the brush of a fox when he is entitled to the honour, and who being mounted on a lively thoroughbred one, Columbine by name, was able to hold the pace during the capital run we had the good fortune to fall in with on this occasion. A hare was quickly on foot when we drew North Lane Hill, and away she went at a rattling pace (as I know to my cost, having been behindhand at the start), over hill and dale, mounting Hangleton Pond Hill, and from thence, at racing speed to Blatchington Point, and away to the right in the direction of Hangleton Church, which she promptly left behind her, going still at a rattling pace along the valley, making for Pond Hill Furze, and thence to Skelton Barn; and on for a fox cover, near the latter place. There a fox was viewed away; but Mr. Dewè, persevering with his hare, picked up the scent step by step, and away we went again in the direction of the Dyke Hovel; making for Jeffries Point, through the gorse on the slope of the hill, and then at a tremendous pace to Whitelock Gorse, close to Mannington's training ground, near Portslade; then back over the steep hills, through the Tenantry Furzes, by Thunder Barrows Barn; and down the hill, a rattler to "Honeycrots." But we had not done with our hare

yet, for she doubled back, and went straight as a bird for Cock-a-roost Gorse (an appropriate title for a fox cover); but changing her mind she pursued her way to Paythorne, where the hounds threw up, and after some ineffectual attempts to recover the scent, we left her to her fate in the hope that such a gallant hare might live to give us another, and as good a spin as this. The time occupied by the run, extending fully over two hours, was long enough to satisfy the most exacting sportsman; consequently the field was considerably reduced, and though I changed horses during the run I considered my nag had done enough work for one day, the pace at all times being severe, and the hills exceedingly steep. The hounds were in blooming condition, and reflect great credit on Sherwood, the kennel huntsman and whip; Mr. Dewè hunting them himself, and doing so in a very workmanlike and sporting manner. As that is not the first experience I have had with this pack, I can confidently recommend those who are fond of riding with harriers to try a spin with them, and I shall be quite out of my reckoning if they do not concur with me in the opinion I have already expressed, that they are a clinking good lot of hounds, capitally hunted, going the pace over hill and dale in a most satisfactory manner, almost invariably showing sport, and giving one a breather on the Southdowns, over which I am quite content to ride whenever I have the chance. Thus, having gleaned ample materials for a full report anent "hunting at Brighton," I found leisure to visit the many attractions of the town.

Paying a visit, as I invariably do, to the Aquarium,

in order to gaze upon the wonders of the deep; envying the King crab above all, for he seems to be devoid of care, if I may judge by the way he lies on his back kicking up his heels in a highly acrobatic and persistent manner; observing the manners and customs of the "Lampern," a recent addition to the splendid collection to be found at this admirably-conducted place of amusement; noting the artful angler, the noisy sea lion, and the marvellous bouquet of sea anemones, which bloom all the year round in their pleasant *parterre*. Then a friend of a similar turn of mind to myself, knowing that I delighted in looking at a good lot of nags, directed my attention to Mr. Silverthorne's large establishment, which I had never seen before, where I learnt that he has a stud of harness horses, exceeding two hundred in number, and if I may judge from those I saw at home—many of them being on job for lengthened terms—they must be an exceedingly good and valuable lot.

In the evening a visit to the theatre produced a very satisfactory result, as I witnessed a pantomime which excels all I have seen, and reflects immense credit on Mrs. Nye Chart, who spares no expense or trouble to render her performances attractive. Having for reasons of my own a desire to look over the horses of a cavalry regiment, I called at the barracks at Preston, and having sent in my card and expressed my wish to inspect the stables, I was most courteously received by the colonel and officers of the distinguished regiment, the 20th Hussars, the Colonel being good enough to accompany me through the stables, permitting me to examine the horses, and enabling me

to attain the object I had in view when I solicited permission to inspect them. This regiment is very well mounted—above the average I should say—and the horses are in very excellent condition; how such superior animals are obtainable at the present regulation prices I am quite at a loss to know. It is this variety of amusement which I find at Brighton that exactly suits my temperament, and, as I invariably praise the bridge that carries me over, I have always a good word to say for Brighton and its many and pleasing diversions.

## THE ROYAL BUCKHOUNDS.

OBSERVING in the columns of 'Bell's Life' that the Royal Buckhounds were to meet at Gerrard's Cross on the following Monday, I resolved to have a ride over that which I consider the best part of the Queen's country, supposing the deer to go in the direction of Chalfont or Amersham. With this intent I journeyed to Windsor, and straightway made for the well-known and old-fashioned hostelry, the White Hart, a place of entertainment I have known any time these forty years. Now there are divers sorts of hotels; some of them conducted by joint-stock companies, where everything is limited, including the comforts of the visitors and the profits of the shareholders, the result of mismanagement. Not so is the principle on which the White Hart is conducted, for here, as in days past, everything is first-rate and inviting, and I could not help contrasting the style of this establishment and its substantial comforts with the parade and pretensions of some of the palatial hotels which nowadays compete with individual enterprise.

As I sit at breakfast I see the Royal pack journeying leisurely down the hills, *en route* for the meet. Then this exceedingly quiet—not to say dull—abode of royalty, is for a moment enlivened by the harmonious strains of the Guards' band, as it wends its way



towards the portals of the castle, within the precincts of which no sounds of mirth or revelry are ever heard in these, our days, for in truth the mode of life followed by the Court is very much after the style suggested by King Richard the Second, who in his hours of fallen greatness, said to those who still remained faithful to his cause, "Let us make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes write sorrow on the bosom of the earth"—'tis true, and pity 'tis, 'tis true. However it is not my business to moralize or descant upon things that do not concern me—so to business. The advent of several "noble sportsmen," and a very well appointed huntress, aroused me to action, and remembering I had seven miles to go to cover, it became necessary to know how to do it.

The resources of the White Hart, however, were not exhausted, and I was able to secure a first-rate hack, a capital stepper, and a light-hearted and pleasant animal to ride. Then journeying through Eton, leaving Slough behind, cantering through the quiet village of Stoke, I arrive in excellent time at the meet. There I find Goodall, whom I was glad to see looking well and hearty, with his extremely fine pack of hounds in blooming condition. As usual there is a goodly assemblage at this popular fixture, and I observe amongst the ladies who ride regularly with the Royal Buckhounds, Mrs. Herbert, who is a nailer across country; Mrs. Aitcheson, who looks as if she could go well; Mrs. Paget, who has distinguished herself on many occasions, and Miss Worthington; and amidst a host of strange faces I recognise some of those whom I have known in former days, including Mr. Douglas of Hounslow, Mr. Bowen May, and look-

ing as fresh as a four-year-old, Mr. Fitz Oldacre, who goes as well to hounds as ever he did, as I can testify from having seen him perform a short time since in the shires.

Then the noble Master, Lord Hardwicke, drives up, and the fog having cleared sufficiently to allow of the deer being uncartered, the order to move is given, and the noble animal is driven to the place of execution, accompanied by a howling and yelling mob, who shout and bewilder the unfortunate deer, when he makes his appearance, sufficiently, I should have thought, to drive him mad, and make him turn upon his persecutors. It takes all the energy of Lord Hardwicke to restrain the rampagiousness of the many headed multitude; but with the aid of Goodall, order is to some extent restored, and Rob Roy goes away, and seeks for safety in a neighbouring copse. It appears to me that the only way to ensure a run would be to send the van to a spot which should be kept secret, and then by trotting away some three or four miles from the meet the mob would be shaken off, and the deer having been uncartered quietly, and allowed to select his own line of country, there would be a fair chance of sport. It is no use, in my opinion, attempting to force the deer to take a particular line, the usual result being, in my experience, that he goes exactly where he is not wanted.

Any one who has observed the habits of the stag will have noticed that when he is uncartered at a quiet spot he will look around him, and, after due deliberation, go in the direction that suits him best. No amount of yelling or hooting will compel him to alter his views, as no doubt instinct teaches him in

what direction his chance of safety lies. After the usual law the the hounds are laid on, and I have never seen animals under better control than these, as, until Goodall gave them the office, they kept quietly at his heels; but at the word of command they slipped away, and, spreading over the field, picked up the scent in an instant, and went away at a rattling pace, going in the direction of Gerrard's Cross, but, turning to the left, Rob Roy races away, scattering the field broadcast, and making for the Grove, a small park-like enclosure, around which he runs; then, had he been allowed a chance, he would have gone away across the line of open country before him; but as he came close up to me, and was about to clear the palings, he was headed and howled at, and a stick being judiciously thrown at him, he was effectually baulked, and our chance of a run destroyed. Once more he traversed the park, then going through the shrubberies he made his way in the direction of Beaconsfield.

After a little while Goodall came up, and the hounds being laid on we ran him across a field or two, into a small copse, and the hounds running up close to him, he went back again into the park, and they were whipped off. After a few minutes' pause we were off again, running in the direction of Amersham, but, wheeling round, he went over the common and back at full speed to Gerrard's Cross; then hanging about for a while he made for Bulstrode Park, but finding there was not much more to be done with him I left them, and subsequently heard that after running him about for a while, he took to the water, and the hounds getting at him, speedily put an end to Rob Roy. This could not be considered a good day's

sport, and no wonder, for it is impossible that it should be otherwise under existing conditions.

A Royal Huntsman in these days should have an amount of patience that is not usually meted out to mortals. With every exertion, it appears to me almost an impossibility to overcome the many difficulties that present themselves. Within thirty miles of London the chance of sport must be slight. The country is cut up by railways, small enclosures abound, wire fencing is not unfrequently met with, large fields assemble, and many ardent sportsmen, disdainng to follow even the hounds, ride in advance, like so many "Uhlans," apparently in hopes of catching the stag themselves. In vain is remonstrance, consequently the stag is badgered and bewildered, the chance of a run spoilt, and real sportsmen disappointed.

With a remembrance of the many good runs I have had from Gerrard's Cross in days of old, I own to a feeling of regret on this occasion, and sighed for the times when Charles Davis was in his prime, when Lord Chesterfield was Master, and the country was open, and the stag had a chance of getting away; then you might go your hardest, and yet find that you could not give the go-by to such men as the Coxes of Hillingdon (as they were familiarly called), Captain Howard Vyse, Jem Mason, Philpots, Captain Best, Mr. Newdigate, and a host of others who have passed away, who used to go the pace, and take a deal of beating. Of one thing I am perfectly certain, that is, that no exertion is spared by Goodall to show sport.

A visit to the kennels will satisfy any one who has

a knowledge of hounds that the greatest care, attention, and judgment are shown in respect to the quality and condition of the royal pack, and when it is noted that the best blood from such kennels as the Duke of Rutland's, Lord Middleton's, Lord Portsmouth's, Sir Watkin Wynn's, Mr. Garth's, etc., has been imported into the kennels at Ascot, there can be little doubt that everything necessary has been done to maintain the efficiency of the Royal Buckhounds.

I regret to hear that it is not probable that Lord Hardwicke will repeat his visit to the shires this year, notwithstanding the success he met with on the last occasion, when the Earl of Lonsdale placed his beautiful kennels at Barleythorpe at his lordship's disposal, mounting Goodall and his men on the pick of his stud, my friend, Mr. Weatherston, taking care that the royal huntsman did not have the worst of the lot, mounting him upon "Sunbeam," of whom Goodall had so satisfactory a remembrance that nothing would content him until he had a shoe taken from the foot of the chestnut mare that carried him so well, and I saw the train delayed on its departure from Oakham when conveying the royal visitors back, in order to give time for the messenger to arrive with it, and when last I visited the kennels at Ascot I found it occupying a space amongst the many objects of interest to be found adorning the walls of Goodall's residence. It is apparent to anyone who remembers how Davis and his men were mounted in days of yore, that the stud now provided is not of the same style or quality. Nor is it to be wondered at, as the allowance for the maintenance of the buckhounds is not

elastic, whilst within the last forty years the price of hunters has been trebled. £100 will not go far in mounting a whip nowadays, whereas from £30 to £40 would, in former days, have sufficed to provide a sound, fresh young animal. I remember in those days being offered a thorough-bred mare, with a character for jumping, for the sum of £30, but, the season being over, I declined taking her at that price, stating, however, that three £5 notes would always be ready when the owner liked to take that sum. This was indignantly refused, and after twenty-eight weeks (during which period the mare stood at livery at 21s. per week) the owner wrote to me to fetch her away at the price originally offered. For three seasons I rode this nag, and never once did she refuse a fence, however big it might be; on no occasion did she ever put a foot wrong, nor did she during the three seasons I rode her at any time bring me to grief. I could do with one or two of that sort at the same price, but I do not think it is likely I shall get them, as the veriest cab-horse will fetch double the amount.

Having to return to Windsor, I rode leisurely through Bulstrode Park, and back by way of Stoke Park, a charming residence, now occupied by Mr. Coleman, and thence through Eton to the Royal borough, where I was glad to observe that, proudly and wide the Standard flies, denoting that her Majesty has returned from Osborne.

Not discouraged, but hopeful, in fact, of better sport when next I try my luck, intending on a future occasion to select a meet as far from the "busy haunts of men" as may be; the hives of industry being doubtless productive of profit, but decidedly adverse

to hunting ; and I shall then hope to have to report a real old-fashioned, clinking good run, worthy of the Royal buckhounds in their best days.

It was my intention, in accordance with my promise, to have followed—at a respectful distance, of course,—Her Imperial Majesty, the Empress of Austria during a run with the Pytchley, and to have witnessed her skilful performances over the grass, under the able direction of Captain (Bay) Myddleton, who had the especial honour of piloting this Imperial Huntress during her stay in the shires. Wars and rumours of wars have, I am sorry to say, cut short her Majesty's *séjour* at Cottesbrook, but I have reason to know that she has thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed the sport which the noble Master, Earl Spencer, has shown during her visit. For this cause I am unable to perform my promise. Eleven first-class horses were provided by Mr. George Cox of Stamford Street for the use of some of the Austrian nobles forming the "suite" of her Majesty, several of whom ride very hard and well to hounds, and appear to enjoy the sport thoroughly.

## HUNTING THE HARE.

I WAS warned by the signs of the coming spring that if I meant to keep my promise, made some time back, of revisiting the Isle of Thanet, and having another day with the harriers, it would be necessary that I should lose no time in carrying out my intention. Leaving London by the Chatham and Dover Railway, travelling in one of their excellently-appointed fast trains, I was landed in Ramsgate in time for dinner—a very important hour, for if one does not dine wisely and well, how can one possibly expect to ride with nerve and judgment on the following morning?

The Arabs have a saying to the effect that “hurry is the devil.” I substitute the word “indigestion.” Whoever saw a dyspeptic man ride well to hounds? Why, the thing is an impossibility, for under the malign influence of a disordered liver molehills assume the proportions of mountains, and the babbling brook, the flight over which, in happier hours, is readily accomplished, looms as largely in the distance as the mythical and gloomy River Styx. Sufficient, therefore, to say that I arose in the morning in first-rate order to enjoy what is to me a very pleasurable pursuit, namely, the hunting of the hare over the wide extent of open country lying contiguous to Ramsgate and Margate, reaching to the old-fashioned town of Sandwich on one side, and going far towards Canterbury on the other.



Then, as I drive merrily to cover, passing *en route* the quiet village of St. Lawrence, where I ought, had time permitted, to have paid my respects to the vicar, who for the last forty years has presided over the destinies of this parish, winning the good will of all by combining the pursuits and pleasures of a country gentleman with the cure of souls; the right way, in my opinion, for clergymen in rural districts to render themselves popular with all classes. But as I have some seven miles to cover ere I reach "Sarre Windmill," which is the fixture of the day, I trot smartly along, whilst a gentle south-west wind blows pleasantly over the open fields, which are teeming with industry; some of the sturdy Kentish husbandmen speed the plough with a will, whilst others scatter the seed with a liberal hand.

Flocks of clamorous rooks revel on the freshly turned-up lands, apparently having a good time of it; the larks are on the wing, carolling gaily as they mount on high, rejoicing in the lovely spring morning; and it is evident, from the forward state of the crops of peas and beans, that the days of hunting in this part are numbered, for this season at least. Then as I approach the quiet little village of Sarre, I notice an old-fashioned residence, which, to use a slang expression of the day, savouring somewhat of the music hall, "would suit me down to the ground." Snugly ensconced amidst evergreen oaks and other hardy shrubs is this pleasant abode, the garden gay with the brightest of golden crocuses peeping forth from amidst the groups of snowdrops which blow in profusion, forming, to use an expression much in vogue with fashionable novelists of the day, "a wealth" of spring

flowers, which it would delight the heart of an artist to depict.

But the meet of the Thanet Harriers is reached, and, pulling up at the Crown, there is just time for one glass of Mr. Pay's inimitable cherry brandy before putting in an appearance at the Windmill, where Mr. Johnson, of Sarre Court, the Master of the Thanet Harriers, is in waiting with nine couples of useful harriers, which show evident signs of hard work, being rather fine drawn at the close of the season. A small field only is assembled, and with little loss of time Mr. Johnson proceeds to draw for a hare. A very neat horseman and workmanlike man is the Master of the Thanet, and a very cheery and agreeable person to boot, as every Master of Hounds should be; hunting his hounds in first-rate style, and showing very good sport as a rule. Drawing several pieces of clover and two or three fallows blank, at last a hare is seen stealing quietly away, and the hounds are promptly lifted to the halloo; then puss, as she passes close to me, lays back her ears, and, pulling herself together, goes away at a rattling pace in the direction of some hop grounds, and then, doubling short, bends to the left, whilst the hounds, overrunning the scent, consequently come to a check.

The surface of the fallow ground being very dry, there is but little scent; Mr. Johnson, however, makes a wide cast, and, getting on to the line of the hare, they ran her at a racing pace over the hill and away for Hale Farm; leaving the village of St. Nicholas to the left, and going up to the marshes, where the hounds again come to a check; but the Master, by patience and perseverance, picks up the scent again,

and we hunt our hare slowly along, going in the direction of Birchington, but doubling back she runs again past Hale Farm, and is subsequently lost in one of the large fallow fields near St. Nicholas.

This was a merry little spin whilst it lasted, the hounds running very fast, indeed, for a while, the going over the light land being first rate; and I think a gallop at full speed over a country such as this—the absence of fences notwithstanding—may be considered a very satisfactory performance, the musical accompaniment of the pack adding greatly to the hilarity of the proceeding. After relinquishing the pursuit of our first hare, we were not long in finding another, for in the middle of a large fallow field up jumps one close to the hounds, who ran her in view at a rattling pace, through the farm yard and thence in the direction of Birchington, where they come to a check at a small spinney; but a ploughman having viewed puss sloping quietly away, the hounds are lifted to the halloo, and being laid on her line, go away at a clinking good pace, running up to the Canterbury and Ramsgate Road, where they come to a check, and a backward cast being made the hounds hunted slowly, picking their way over the dry fallows, going in the direction of Hale Farm again, and thence back to the field where we found, and as nothing more could be done, we left her to her fate. The hounds then moved off in the direction of St. Nicholas, and as hares are evidently abundant, doubtless plenty more sport was shown.

Having seen two runs, and being satisfied with this sample of the doings of the Thanet Harriers, I rode leisurely back to Ramsgate, well pleased with the sport

I had enjoyed, delighted with the prospect, and invigorated by the fresh and healthy breeze which blows across the Isle of Thanet. It may be that with advancing years a rattling spin across an open country suits me better than a burster across a close one; but, nevertheless, when the humour takes me, I forget that it is upwards of fifty years since I first began hunting, learning the rudiments of the noble sport under the guidance of the father of the celebrated "Jack Stevens," the whipper-in to Osbaldeston, when that thoroughbred sportsman hunted the Quorn, and I am yet able to hold my own, and feel as much enjoyment as ever I did, when mounted on a nag that can go the pace.

I am quite in accord with that charming writer, agreeable acquaintance, and thoroughly good sportsman, "Whyte-Melville," who says, "puerile as it may seem, I doubt whether any pursuit in life affords for the moment such intense gratification as a quick thing over a grass country, strongly enclosed, in a good place, and only half-a-dozen men with the hounds." I venture to say that it will be an evil day for old England when the maudlin efforts of those who now make a dead set against all manly sports are successful in putting a stop to amusements of that description. (I do not think it will be just yet.) I cannot help thinking that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has lost "caste," which is a matter of regret, by its ill-advised and abortive attempts to convict persons using bearing reins, marking swans, etc. etc., and though no one is fonder of animals, and would be more ready to repress acts of wanton cruelty, I do not hold with the foolish twaddlers

who, whilst they have never raised a voice on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of innocent sufferers who are the unhappy victims of the present exalted promoter of Christianity, who has been waging the wickedest and bloodiest war that ever darkened the pages of history, yet can howl aloud at the accidental death of a stag when pursued by hounds, or shed crocodiles' tears (which analysis shows are hot, bitter, and strong) over the death of a blue rock, whilst at the same time they will never lend a hand to help one of the many "soiled doves" that are to be found straying in this great city.

Doubtless ere long, if these people have their way, we shall find that fishing will be prohibited; that there is to be a close time for black beetles, and that the amusements of the rising generation will be restricted to the keeping of tame rabbits and guinea pigs; and their society limited to the companionship of their sisters, who will learn them how to lisp in numbers or prattle prettily at penny readings to the delight of the dirty little boys who patronize those feeble entertainments. When I was young, people were not so squeamish as they are in these times; before I was fourteen I had been initiated in the mysteries of the ring, and had seen several merry little mills; making my *début* by backing the pieman, who fought a travelling tinker at Chadwell Heath, on the borders of Hainault Forest, particulars of which no doubt duly appeared in the columns of *Bell's Life*. I do not find that, with all the so-called refinement of the present day, people are more moral or humane than they were in olden times; at least I judge so by the police reports.

By a letter just received from Melton I hear two facts, which discomfort me. First, I am told that, beyond doubt, Mr. Tailby retires at the close of the present season, which will be a matter of regret to very many. The country, I hear, will be absorbed by the Quorn, which will hunt the greater part, but not, I believe, the Woodland district. The second piece of information conveyed by my correspondent, is to the effect that the Earl of Lonsdale will give up the Cottesmore at the end of the season. This I consider a great misfortune, and I hope the decision is not final and irrevocable, and that, upon reflection, his lordship may withdraw his determination. True it is that the noble owner does not himself take any pleasure in hunting with these fine hounds, which I think are equal to any in the kingdom, invariably showing first-rate sport over the magnificent country which they hunt, and affording enjoyment to so many. The splendid stables and kennels at Barleythorpe were built by the late Earl at a very great cost, and it will be a misfortune to the county, and the many frequenters of Melton, if this noble establishment is broken up, and the hounds and horses transferred. Let us hope for the best, and when at the close of the season I revisit the metropolis of hunting I trust I shall hear that his lordship has reconsidered the subject, and determined still to remain Master and owner of the Cottesmore.

But I am forgetting that I am on my way back to Ramsgate, and passing without notice the Bay of Pegwell, upon the shores of which the waves are breaking lazily this pleasant day; whilst beyond, all in the Downs, a noble fleet of vessels lies at anchor,

awaiting a favouring gale, and thus I while the time away, as I saunter quietly home from a ride with the Thanet Harriers for the last time this season, as they will not hunt after the first week in March. Vast improvements have been made in Ramsgate. The splendid hotel, designed and commenced by Pugin—the Granville—is in full swing; by the way, the baths at this establishment are of a very superior description, and worthy of a visit; and as alterations and enlargements seem the order of the day, I presume it is a success, which will, doubtless, be still further increased if it is true that the managers of the Chatham and Dover line intend to greatly accelerate the speed of some of their through trains. When this is done, and a low scale of charges established, sufficiently so to draw visitors, Ramsgate may hope to some extent to compete with Brighton. The enormous outlay which has been expended in improving the Granville estate, which cannot be less than a quarter of a million in amount, has certainly altered the prospects of this hitherto unfashionable but yet extremely healthy place of seaside resort; and it is to be hoped that the present proprietor (Mr. E. Davis) will reap the benefit of his spirited exertions to provide attractions for those visiting Ramsgate when on pleasure bent or seeking for health and recreation in this highly-favoured locality.

## THE ESSEX UNION.

A LOVELY spring morning, a brilliant sunshine, a balmy atmosphere, a quiet stroll along Piccadilly, a leisurely lounge in Hyde Park, a smile from the prettiest girl honouring that place of fashionable resort with her presence, a cordial invitation to luncheon at the pleasantest club of the period—the Badminton—and a suggestion that a ride on the following day, with the Essex Union Foxhounds would be an exceedingly good way of passing the time, were things eminently calculated to put a man on good terms with himself; and it was this happy combination of circumstances that led me to fall so readily in with the idea, and fixed my determination to try, after a lapse of many years, a gallop across the “country” in which, half a century since, I first learned to ride to hounds. Now, I like hunting at all times, but I have an especial predilection for pursuing the noble sport in the spring time of the year,

“When daisies pied, and violets blue,  
And lady-smocks all silver white,  
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue  
Do paint the meadows with delight.”

Many are the good runs that I have enjoyed during the month of March; the “country” usually rides light and well, and if you get on the line of a good



old dog-fox who is on his travels, the odds are in favour of his giving you a clinker. The best sport I ever had was from the Pytchley and Fitzwilliam Woodlands at the close of the season, in the days when old "Tom Sebright" held the horn of the latter crack pack.

Up with the morning early, I made my way to Stamford Street, where Mr. George Cox had promised to have a nag in readiness; and I found on arrival a well-bred grey horse at my disposal, which subsequently proved to be as handy as a lady's maid, and as resolute and determined to get over a difficulty as a Russian diplomatist is to break through a treaty. Well, after all, there is nothing like determination, whether it is shown in riding to hounds or bamboozling and defeating an enemy. It is your shilly-shally fellow that comes a cropper in the one case or turns tail in the other. A short run of half an hour landed me at the Romford Station, and then a ride of three or four miles brought me to the Bell at Upminster, the meet of the Essex Union Foxhounds. By the way they have a pleasant habit in the vicinity of Romford of allowing traction engines to wander about at will along the highways and byeways, puffing, snorting, priming, and otherwise disporting themselves indecorously, as they toil clumsily along the public thoroughfares. A reckless proceeding is this, and one that cannot fail to lead to mischief. I do not speak in my own interest, as my horse stood fire like a "Salamander," and I am not likely to travel that way very often, but on behalf of the unwary traveller, who, emerging from the railway station, with a horse trembling with the excitement, noise, and

bustle of a journey by rail, comes suddenly upon one of these hideous machines. Why, it is a hundred to one that he comes "muchly" to grief, and I respectfully inquire what the great unpaid have to say in defence of such a dangerous proceeding? If a "tramp" should conduct himself riotously and unbecomingly in a public road they would "run him in," whilst they permit this traction atrocity to be executed daily, to the terror of many and danger of all.

Having duly stabled my steed, I proceeded to sound the Bell as to its capacity to provide breakfast. After a short interval I succeeded in obtaining a modest repast, and whilst they boiled the kettle and cajoled the hens into laying some eggs, I retired to a parlour from the walls of which Cicero and Demosthenes looked sternly down upon me as I made mysomewhat close approaches to the "Right Honourable Anne, Lady Sheffield," who was leaning idly against the wall; whilst the "Three Mr. Wiggins," evidently persons of distinction in the pre-Georgian era, at least I judged so by their costume; and "Wilkes, the Aged Pedestrian," who, according to the legend attached to him performed the *extraordinary* feat of walking (many years ago) the enormous distance of twelve miles in two hours and seven minutes, seemed to be whispering sarcastically to the representative of "Thorley's Food for Cattle;" and, not liking my company, I chummed, so to speak, with a "chummy," one of the representative chimney sweeps of the country—not one of your tin-pot suburban "Ramoneurs" of the present day, but a regular 'sweep,' travelling his round with his assistant in a dilapidated cart drawn by a couple of "mokes," and having introduced myself through the medium of a

pint of ale, I proceeded to make inquiries about those I had known in olden times as residents in a locality where once every house was open to me.

“Ah,” said my informant, who from the nature of his profession has the *entrée* to all the families of distinction for miles round, “he wasn’t a bad sort wasn’t Parson Holding—a bit odd, you know; well, he lies there,” pointing to the churchyard, which is in lugubrious vicinity to the Bell.

“And the Major?” said I.

“Well, he’s dead and gone, and all belonging to him; and there’s new folks there now, but they don’t carry on now as they did in the old times, master, that you remember—at least I judge so, and I ought to know, as I allus attends to the kitchen chimbley myself, same as I used to do, and I knows that there’s a great deal less soot, and a plaguey sight less beer about than there used to was.”

“And the Sterrys?” I asked.

“Well, the’re all dead and gone, as far as I know; leastways she was brought home from ‘furren parts,’ and laid along with t’others in the old churchyard there, near which they lived for many a long year, as I dare say you remember.”

Fortunately by this time my acquaintance had put himself “outside his pint,” and the conversation being decidedly melancholy, I mounted my “gallant grey,” (I don’t know why horses of this colour are invariably spoken of as being addicted to gallantry), and rode off to meet the hounds. Not far had I to travel before meeting with Mr. W. H. White, the Master and Huntsman of the Essex Union, alongside of whom trotted seventeen couples of speedy-looking

hounds, showing evident signs of hard work. An energetic and excellent sportsman is Mr. White, a quiet and unpretending horseman, who is all there "when the bell rings," that is to say, he rides hard and close to hounds when occasion requires, and especially so I was told when he performs on the little short-legged white horse which he rode this day for awhile, who is a rare animal through dirt, and especially clever over the high banks and big ditches which abound in this sporting part of the world.

By this time we have arrived at the four cross roads, to find a "field" of some forty well-mounted men assembled, amongst whom I recognise Mr. Courage of Shenfield, a welter weight, mounted on a horse thoroughly up to the mark, who rides well to hounds; Mr. Lescher, also a heavy man, well-mounted and a good sportsman; Mr. Cotton, though no longer in his *première jeunesse*, yet can hold his own over the stiffly enclosed fields of Essex with any of the young ones, which is saying much, for if a man can go the pace and live close to hounds in this country, he must have pluck, judgment, and nerve; Mr. Morgan, who looks like a workman; Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Helme; a young lady on a grey horse, who seemed to pay the greatest attention to the instructions of the cavalier in attendance, who was always close at hand to offer advice and assistance should occasion require—a very proper, polite, and pleasant proceeding, by the way, for the cavalier; and many others with whom I was unacquainted.

Then we moved off, and the hounds are speedily thrown into a cover close at hand, and the cheery

voice of the Master is heard, "Halloo in, Halloo in. Yoi, have at him there!" but in vain, for we draw this likely looking place blank, and move off to another with a similar result, and another and another yet, without finding a fox. Sitting idly by the coverside whilst the hounds were drawing, a thought came across me as to the question of memory, and I called to mind grave discussions, acute cross-examinations, and ill-tempered interruptions, when that "unhappy nobleman," now expiating his errors in a criminal gaol, was relating his career in a court of justice; telling how he remembered all about the death's head tobacco pipe his particular friend smoked, though he forgot the Christian name of his own mother, and many incidents of youthful days which the rightful Roger could scarcely have failed to remember.

It is, as I have said, fifty years since I first hunted in these parts, and I declare that I distinctly recollect every inch of the country, every spinney or wood that I saw drawn in those far off times. No, no, you may forget where you put your eyeglasses five minutes since, my friend, but you do not forget the scenes and incidents of early life. So vividly did the recollection of past times return, that as I passed in the morning one of the trysting places, where we used to meet to draw for a hare on off days, with a scratch pack, odds and ends, three harriers, two beagles, a spaniel, and a fox terrier, I paused for a moment almost expecting to hear some once familiar voice. "But mute the echoes now, which rang so loud with boyish glee," and I trotted sharply away leaving black care and vain regrets behind me. Then we reach "Mallards Gardens,"

which used always to be a sure find, and draw for some while without success; but at length, as the hounds had nearly gone through the cover, a holloa back is heard, and a fine old fox is viewed going away; the hounds are speedily laid on, and we gallop at a smart pace in the direction of Belhus Park, the seat of Sir Thomas Barret Lennard; but there is little scent, and we speedily come to a check outside of the park pailings; a holloa, however, is heard, and Mr. White lifts his hounds to it, and they pick up the scent and hunt our fox through the park bit by bit, beneath the shade of venerable oaks, amidst groups of ancient hawthorns, and over the glorious turf, which rides like a lawn, scattering a noble herd of deer as we pass along; then going away from the park we run for a while amidst the numerous covers, and finally lose our fox after a brief and unsatisfactory run, but a pleasant and enjoyable ride with these excellent working hounds. Then we draw several other covers near at hand, and in the vicinity of Belhus and Stifford, trying Mallard's Gardens again, but this second time unsuccessfully; next, one that I was told was a sure find, but not to-day, and we trot away for two or three miles, and then turning into a gateway, and crossing three or four heavy-riding fields, and having several specimens of the true Essex steep bank and big ditch to negotiate, we arrived at Puddle Dock, a well-remembered and seldom failing place for a good, wild, stout-running fox. "Halloo in there!" is again the cheery and welcome sound that meets the ear as the huntsman steadily moves through the thick brushwood, and at length a view holloa is heard. "Gone away, gone away!" is the cry at the extreme

end of this capital cover, and away they go at a racing pace, and no mistake. It is a case of "the devil take the hindmost," now, and the hounds slip away liked greased lightning, bending to the left, crossing the Warley Road, and going in the direction of Brentwood. Thinking to be double cunning, I took a line of my own, in order to avoid a deep-riding field, and got into difficulties at an early period in this feeble attempt to cut in, instead of sticking to the hounds, as I ought to have done, and as, in fact, every fellow ought to do. So verily I had my reward, for I found myself pounded in a corner in close proximity to a large farmyard, with locked gates, and in a moment of desperation I crammed the gallant grey aforesaid at a yawner, and landed safely on a dunghill; but before I had time to extricate myself from the mazes of the rickyards and get into the road the hounds had gone from my gaze like a beautiful dream, and I sought for them vainly by meadow and stream—if I may be allowed to slightly plagiarise a poet who in some such fashion sighed his regrets at the loss of his ladylove. The Essex Union have had grand sport of late. A fortnight since, finding an afternoon fox, they ran him for fifty minutes at a racing pace, killing him in the open; and on Saturday last, after running for some time, the pack divided, six couples with one of the whips getting away with one fox, running him a burster and killing him in the open; whilst Mr. White and the remainder of the hounds went away with another, and also ran into him in the open, and after an equally good run breaking him up in a workmanlike style. The Essex Union is one of the countries," within easy reach of the Londoners, that

is well worthy of a visit. The hounds are very fast and steady; the country, as I have before said, is a stiff one, and requires a man and a horse to go across it; and it is a fine, wild, hunting district, at present little damaged by railways and building speculations, where you are sure of a good day's sport and a rattling gallop if you have a nag that can carry you, and the pluck to ride him straight over the yawners that present themselves. In olden times this "country" was hunted by Lord Petre, who had a magnificent establishment at Thorndon Hall, a splendid pack of hounds and grand stud—no expense being spared to render the turn-out complete. The best part of the country lies between Brentwood and Chelmsford, and in the days of my youth I have had many and many a good run in the vicinity of Ingatestone, Margaretting, etc. But it is time to be thinking of wending my way homewards, and I jog leisurely along through Upminster, passing by Hornchurch Lodge with "a sigh of remembrance," almost "a tear of regret," as I call to mind the merry times passed beneath that once hospitable roof; and so on until I reach Romford again, and, catching a fast train at once, I am quickly landed in Liverpool Street, and, for the first time in my life, ride through the City in hunting costume, passing the busy haunts of men as I journey along Old Broad Street, by the Mansion House, and over the water to Stamford Street, a dirty looking little shoe-black touching his hat respectfully, and inquiring if I had had good sport. He was a country-bred one, I'll bet, and should be polishing top-boots, not blacking down-at-heel highlows for a living.



## WITH THE SURREY STAGHOUNDS.

CHANCE having directed my steps towards Epsom, and finding that the Surrey Staghouuds were to meet at the Spring at Ewell, I determined to have a look at a pack of hounds of which I had often heard good reports, but had never before had an opportunity of seeing and judging of their merits for myself. Having hastily improvised a mount, I trotted off on a brilliant spring morning, and made my way to the meet. On my arrival I found a considerable number of sportsmen and two or three ladies assembled in front of that well-remembered hostelrie; but the bulk of the regular performers, I found, were enjoying the hospitality of one of the residents in Ewell, who gave a breakfast on this occasion to those who are in the habit of riding with the "Surrey," and in consequence of this pleasant entertainment a short delay occurred in the proceedings of the day, and it was not until some half an hour or so beyond the appointed time that the bulk of the large "field" put in an appearance.

During the period of "waiting for the verdict" of the Master as to where the deer was to be turned out I called to mind an occasion when, returning quietly from the races, I became entangled in the customary block of vehicles which has occurred on every Derby Day within the memory of man at the Spring at Ewell. Some rough customers in a tax-cart having threatened

to drive into me if I did not move on with my phaeton, and being especially regardful of the safety of my panels, I alighted in order to protect myself from the threatened attack, when a well-applied cut from the lash of a brass-bound pig-whip drew first blood (mine), and I smarted under the indignity as well as the sharp sting of the plebeian whipcord, the knot of which was well let into my cheek.

To jump into the cart and belabour the rascal with his own whip until only the stump remained was the work but of a moment; but this vigorous retaliation led to the necessity of fighting the lot, and I had to take them in prompt succession, "time" not being allowed even for me to pull off my driving cape; and when my fourth man hit out right and left, whilst I stood with my hands down, endeavouring to recover my wind, I had only just time to step back a pace, and the result of his well-directed blows was the merest scratch on either cheek-bone, in close proximity to the eyes. Then, my dander being raised at this cowardly attack, I went at him in earnest, breaking down his guard, and hitting him as I pleased, and, when tired of giving him pepper, I struck him a knock-down blow with my right hand—(what do you say to that, Mr. Reade?)—and having satisfied myself that my customer had been well served, I jumped into a drag, and was whirled away from the scene of riot and confusion, and when appearing on the following day, with my hand in a sling, the bone being splintered from the violence of the blow, I learned that the fellow I had last encountered was a well-known member of the P.R.

If ever I am sent to Parliament I shall move for

a return of the number of "shindies" that have occurred at the Spring at Ewell on Derby days, with a view to early legislation thereon. By this time the Master, Mr. Robinson, has appeared on the scene, as well as many other well-known riders with these hounds, amongst whom I noticed Mr. J. Bovill, who has ridden hard and well with them for many a long day, and has sons who follow steadfastly in their father's footsteps, and maintain the honour of the family, being always found in the front rank, and many well mounted men with whose names I am unacquainted.

It having been decided that the locality in which the deer was to be uncarted was to be at the back of Ewell village, we trotted away for a mile or two, crossing the South Western Line of railway, and a sparkling but shallow stream, until we arrive at an open part of the country, which looked like business. As usual, the cart was followed by an unruly mob, who gave some little trouble, but at length were got into more or less order, and the deer was uncarted in a wheat field adjoining the road. A noble stag was this; I never remember to have seen a finer animal, or one looking more likely to show sport, and he went away with a howl from the pedestrians who rushed after him, frightening him somewhat from his propriety.

If it is any satisfaction to this class of lookers on to know that there is no better or more likely way to spoil other people's sport than to bewilder the animal by their uproar, they are welcome to the information. But at length the deer shows the multitude his heels, and goes away in the direction of Worcester Park.

Whilst the usual period of law is allowed I have time to look over the hounds, and I think the Master must be proud of the quality and condition of this superb pack of staghounds—animals of great strength, size, and substance, and thoroughly up to their work; indeed I do not know that I was ever more struck with the appearance of any pack of this description, though I have ridden with most that have existed during the last half century, commencing with those of old “Rounding.” It is necessary that the “Surrey” should be a stout and enduring pack if they are to have many such runs (and they frequently have, I am told), as they had on Saturday last, when they ran their deer a burster for over two hours, taking him in the vicinity of Tunbridge, on which occasion the noble Master of the Buckhounds, who was out with them, expressed his satisfaction at the sport, though he had had sufficient, and did not remain until the end of this clinker. In the absence of Bentley, the regular huntsman, who, I was told, was laid up, but whether from accident or illness I did not hear, the Master hunts the hounds himself, and time being up, they were trotted to where the deer had been uncarted, and were laid on, picking up the scent and dashing away in a close and compact body, giving tongue in a most melodious fashion, followed by a large number of men who evidently meant business.

Bending to the right for a while they looked likely to make for Ewell, but turning again to the left went at a rattling pace in the direction of Worcester Park, and then turning again to the right they ran in the direction of the Downs, passing within a short distance

of the cemetery, and going at a swingeing pace in the direction of Epsom, the deer finally being taken at Down Hall, close to the town of Epsom, near the approach to the course, after a very sharp and pretty spin, over a very fair "country," the ground riding light and well, the fences being easily negotiable, and the sun shining sufficiently to give a warm jacket to those who rode close to hounds during this half hour's burst. Not content with this pleasant and satisfactory, if short performance, the Master, having a second deer in readiness, trotted the hounds back in the direction of the spot where the first was uncarted; and thinking that the bit of blood upon which I was mounted, and whose pedigree was better than his legs, had had sufficient for the day, I left them journeying onwards with every probability of further good sport. The weather being magnificent, the crowd dispersed, and the field reduced to comfortable limits, and judging by what I had already seen, I had but little doubt that, barring accidents, I should hear eventually that they had afforded the persevering members of this home county another of the clinkers for which they have attained such an enviable notoriety.

The conclusion I came to after this highly satisfactory visit was that the Surrey Union are a very workmanlike pack, affording capital sport as a rule, some portions of their country being very good, although, of course, other parts are indifferent; but, taking it all in all, it affords an opportunity to those whose avocations prevent them going far afield of having some rattling good gallops after as fine a pack of hounds as are to be found in any other "country." It is the fashion for some people to decry "calf

hunting," but let those who do not appreciate the fun stay away, and there will be more room, if less company; whilst those who thoroughly enjoy a rattling spin across a stiff country can avail themselves of the opportunity which is offered by the Master of the Surrey Staghounds; and it is to be hoped that his successor (a change in the Mastership being about to take place at the close of the season) may maintain the efficiency of the pack up to the present standard of excellence.

The kennels of the Surrey Staghounds are situate at Smitham Bottom, near Coulsdon, not very far from Croydon. The pack consists of thirty couples of hounds, and if they are all of equal quality with those I saw out on the occasion of my visit, they will well repay the trouble of an inspection by any one desirous to see a fine lot of animals. These hounds hunt twice a week, namely, on Tuesdays and Saturdays, the fixtures not being advertised, for obvious reasons, though no doubt particulars of the meets may be readily obtained by those desiring to have a look at them, by means of a post-card addressed to the huntsman at the kennels, the locality of which I have pointed out.

There are in all thirteen packs of staghounds in England and four in Ireland, and it does not look, therefore, as if the interest in this branch of sport is diminishing, and I think there is little likelihood of the national pastime being affected by the occasional feeble and contemptible howlings of those who take a delight in running down sport of every description, forgetting that by indulging in such manly amusements as hunting that the youth of England can furnish, when

the necessity arises, cavalry officers, who for daring and horsemanship combined are not to be equalled in any army in the world. I am not one of those who think that hunting has seen its best days. No doubt the country has been greatly cut up, and to an extent damaged by the railway system which has penetrated every country; but when I look at the large tracts of land which yet remain untouched, and consider the amount of excellent sport that I have had the good fortune to witness during the present season in my different journeys, I feel certain that the present generation at least need not heed the croakers, and that it will be a long time before the necessity arises for any diminution of the number of noble packs that are productive of such a vast amount of pleasure to many; and especially so whilst this exciting amusement continues as popular as it is at the present time.

Now, in my opinion, is the time to enjoy stag hunting. The land rides well, and, the days being long, you can return home by daylight, even if you have a spin of two hours and a half or three hours' duration. Of the staghounds within easy reach of London there are two packs which will well repay a visit at this time of the year, the first on the list being Baron Rothschild's, with which you can enjoy a ride across the magnificent vale of Aylesbury with but little trouble, despatching your nag by train to Leighton Buzzard, where you will be within reach of the cream of the valley, and be able to judge of the quality of the hounds and the style in which Fred. Cox, who has hunted the Baron's hounds for twenty-three seasons, performs across these grand pastures. By the way, you must not shirk the

doubles, or you will speedily be out of the hunt; neither must you go at them full tilt, or grief will be your portion. Judgment and discretion are needful if you mean to last with these crack hounds to the finish. As yet I have not had an opportunity of visiting them during the present season, but hope to do so at an early period, having a lively recollection of my ride with them last year.

The second easily-accessible pack is that of the Hon. H. Petre, which is kennelled in the vicinity of Ingatestone, and to be easily reached from Brentwood or Chelmsford; and no finer country for stag hunting is to be found than the Roothings of Essex, where if you delight in jumping you will find ditches big enough to satisfy a glutton, and hold him, too, if he rides without nerve and judgment. If any one seeking where to finish the season should follow my advice and try a spin with either or both of these packs, I shall be greatly surprised if he is not grateful for the suggestion. Advice gratis is seldom palatable, but I think if my recommendation is followed, and provided the patient attends to the prescription I have shadowed out as to the style in which he should perform, he will not have cause to regret his visit to the light riding lands of the Essex Roothings, or the elastic turf of the Vale of Aylesbury.



## THE WANE OF THE SEASON.

A PECK of March dust is said to be worth a King's ransom, but, however valuable it may be, looked at from an agricultural point of view, it is certainly not favourable to hunting, and bids fair this year to somewhat curtail the noble sport. Already notices have been issued by several Masters of Hounds that hunting is suspended until rain shall fall. A retrospect of past sport may not, therefore, at the present time be deemed inappropriate. During the last two years there has been less hindrance from frost than at any time during my remembrance. This season has not been only remarkably open, but the land has ridden fairly well throughout the whole year. The scent as a rule has been indifferent, at least that is my experience in my visits to some fifteen or sixteen of the best countries, in which I have ridden to hounds; but on the whole the sport has been good, and the only complaint that seems likely to have any serious effect on future prospects, is the scarcity of foxes in several "countries"—a fact that has been ably alluded to in the columns of 'Bell's Life.' These very pertinent remarks in the columns of your widely-circulating journal will, I trust, be the means of drawing the attention of those directly interested in the question. I cannot too strongly urge upon those riding to hounds that, if the sport is to be fully maintained,

it is necessary that the hands of the M. F. H. should be strengthened, and his efforts supported by every real sportsman. That much can be done by cultivating the friendship of tenant farmers, and treating them with courtesy and consideration, I am perfectly assured. It is to their kindness we owe the privilege of riding across their lands, causing frequent eyesore and not unfrequent damage and loss. It is to their friendly offices we must look for the preservation of foxes, and it is only right that we should recognise the extent of our dependence on their good will. At the same time it will be well for the farming interest to remember the importance of helping, by every means in their power, to keep up the efficiency of the 342 packs of hounds that are maintained at the cost to the Masters and subscribers of the large sum of £750,000 to £800,000 per annum, giving employment to 10,000 persons, and requiring no less than 100,000 horses to be provided for the use of the large number of men riding to hounds. Nor must it be forgotten that no better means exist of securing "resident landlords" than by upholding the sports of the country. There can be no two opinions as to the benefit that arises to tenants from their being brought into direct contact with the proprietors of the soil, rather than with the lawyer or the agent. It is clearly, therefore, to the interest of all concerned that the most friendly relations should be fully maintained. I speak with some knowledge of the subject when I say that sufficient consideration is not always shown to the tenant farmers, and by a letter just received from Mr. H. W. Nevill, a gentleman well known with the Royal Buckhounds, I am well pleased to learn

that those who ride with the "Queen's" recognise the good feeling existing through the district, and notify their intention of entertaining "the farmers in the country over which they hunt" by inviting them to a banquet, a course pursued a year or two since, which has resulted in "a strengthening of those amicable relations, which in the interest of all concerned in the sport, it is desirable to cultivate." I heartily commend this notable example as the best means of attaining the end I desire to advocate; as I feel certain that nothing but good can result from the bringing together those mutually interested in upholding the noblest of all our national sports.

The following incident is an illustration of the advantages resulting from the existence of a good feeling between landlord and tenant:—A friend of mine, who holds under his Grace the Duke of Rutland, suffered considerable damage to the crops growing in the vicinity of one of his grace's covers; and having named the circumstance to the noble duke, he expressed his regret, and asked his tenant what he could do for him.

"Well, your grace," was the reply, "will you give me permission to shoot one or two outlying covers in such and such a locality?"

"Certainly."

"And," said my friend, "the very next morning I received a written permission from the steward to that effect."

Little wonder, then, that when you draw any of the Belvoir covers, you not only find as much game as any one could desire, but an abundance of foxes as well, showing clearly that when such friendly re-

lations exist, it is not a difficult matter to maintain a goodly show of hares and pheasants, and that without limiting the numbers of the vulpine race.

During this season I have had the good fortune to ride on several occasions with the Belvoir Hounds, and of witnessing the untiring perseverance of Frank Gillard, who will puzzle out a cold scent and recover the line of a hunted fox in a style I have never seen surpassed. Let the fixture be the Three Queens when I have my choice, for the land is light, the fences easy, with but few ditches, so that you have nothing to do but to sit down on your horse and go your hardest. This is not a fashionable "meet" with the Melton division, as there is too much ploughed land to suit the taste of those who think twenty-five minutes' across the grass the correct thing. But to my taste the going over this portion of the Duke's country leaves nothing to be desired. No doubt a run from Melton spinnies is likely to lead you over a grander line, but I am well pleased to follow this splendid pack, whenever I get a chance, over the more easily negotiable "country" in the vicinity I have named; but then the fire of youth is wanting. I hope ere the season finishes to have another day in Belvoir woodlands.

On the last occasion at which I was present the meet was at the castle, and a fox was found within a few yards of the stables, running over the beautiful lawns and shrubberies of this truly ducal abode, and away to the line of woods which crown the heights that look upon the vale of Belvoir.

These hounds were established in the year 1750, and the high character of the pack has been most

fully sustained during the Mastership of the noble duke, who has won golden opinions from all classes with whom he has come in contact; in proof of which I may cite the fact of a splendid testimonial being presented to him at the close of last season.

I know of no more pleasant way of spending an off day, if residing at Melton, than by riding a good stepper away through the quiet hamlet of Waltham, admiring the splendid line of country lying on either side of the roadway; then cantering over the verdant turf of Croxton Park, where at some time or other you have in all probability dropped your money, when backing your particular fancy, or going for that dead certainty which, strange to say, didn't come off; and on through the pretty little village of Knipton, at this season bright with the loveliest of spring flowers, and the park gates of the noble demesne of Belvoir are reached. Then, as you ride along the level grass you have a splendid view of the castle, standing boldly on an eminence, the slopes of which are thickly covered by choice evergreen shrubs and lordly trees; whilst at a respectful distance on the banks of the lake, the bosom of which is thickly studded with innumerable swans, stands the huntsman's house and the fine range of kennels.

A pleasant welcome from Frank Gillard is a certainty, and then, when you look upon the noble lot of animals, I shall be surprised if you do not say as I do, that for evenness of size, uniformity of colour and blooming condition, they cannot be excelled by any pack in the kingdom.

It is greatly to be regretted that two lines of rail-

way are now in the course of construction within a short distance of the castle, which cannot fail to be more or less prejudicial to the sport, probably less so when finished than whilst the works are going on. The location of a body of navvies in the vicinity of a cover is bad for the foxes as well as the game.

Then on another leisure day a short journey by rail from Melton will land you at Oakham, the chief town of the smallest county in England—Rutland, or Redlandshire, as it is described in history. A walk of a mile will bring you to the hamlet of Barleythorpe, where the kennels of the Cottesmore will be found, and as Lord Lonsdale has unfortunately determined to give up the hounds at the close of the season, an opportunity may not hereafter be afforded of seeing this most complete establishment, and admiring the fine pack of hounds, the excellent and admirably-arranged kennels, the grand stabling, and the first-rate and useful stud that has been provided for Neale and his men. Good they need be to carry so straight-going a man as the huntsman of the Cottesmore, than whom no better sportsman or more determined rider exists. Nor must he be an indifferent animal if he is to carry Goddard, the first whip, in his usual place; he must neither shirk his fences nor refuse to go the pace, and be equally ready to charge a stiff flight of rails or a big brook when they come in the way. The pack consists of between sixty and seventy couples, and has had capital sport this season, and to my mind, there is no better pack of hounds or better country to ride

over than the Cottesmore, and it is greatly to be hoped that the future Master will keep up their *prestige* now that the noble earl has resolved to relinquish them.

The Quorn have, on the whole, had very good sport, though there has been complaint of a shortness of foxes in some parts. This far-famed pack fully maintains its long established reputation, and has the advantage of being hunted by a first-class man, "Tom Furr," a thorough sportsman and tip-top horseman, and when the Quorn get well away and settle down to their work, it must be a stout fox that lives for more than half an hour before them; especially should they find at Gartree Hill, and go a burster in the direction of Teigh.

The Pytchley have had some very good sport, but I was not fortunate in the weather during my visit, nevertheless, I saw one or two very good runs over the best part of the country. Here again there is a source of regret, in the fact of the retirement of Lord Spencer at the close of the season. A better or more popular Master there cannot be, and his strict but courteous manner of controlling the enormous fields that ride with these hounds, frequently numbering from 400 to 500 men, has conduced in a remarkable way to the sport which they have shown. The North Warwickshire and the Atherstone have both done very well, and I was fortunate enough to fall in with a very fair share of sport during my visit to Rugby with both of these business-like packs.

The Devon and Somerset Stag hounds have had a very good season, and during the latter part the

hinds have shown capital sport, there having been some first-rate runs over this superb and beautiful "country." The wild red deer are flourishing amidst the leafy Coombes, and there are as good a head of deer as can be desired, and a fine promise of sport for the ensuing season. If all goes well I hope to pay a longer visit to this splendid country, and to enjoy a few more gallops over the heather-clad Quantock Hills, and across the wild moorlands of the district—Devon and Somerset being the only remaining counties in which hunting the wild red deer in his natural state is still to be enjoyed.

The South Down Foxhounds, and the Brighton and Brookside Harriers, have all had good sport, and I was fortunate enough during my visit to see some excellent runs with these packs, and shall be well satisfied to have the chance of riding with them on a future occasion, as I consider them to be a very good lot of hounds, with which any one who likes a gallop over an open country, and has no objection to rattle up and down the steep hills, may thoroughly enjoy.

With returning moisture there is yet time for the enjoyment of woodland hunting, and I look forward to what I consider by no means the least enjoyable time, viz, the close of the season, and hope to have a look at the Fitzwilliam and the Pytchley when they hunt their large tract of covers, from which I have in times past enjoyed some first-rate sport in the spring time of the year. Easter falling late there is yet time for some more fun with the Royal Buckhounds, which have had some clinking good runs.



I regret to hear that Lord Hardwicke, whilst riding with them from Horton on Tuesday last, had a fall that shook him severely. There have been many mishaps during the present season, but such is the fortune of war.

## THE FIRST AND LAST HOUNDS IN ENGLAND.

BOREAS first, Eurus second, Favonius third, and the rest nowhere—myself included—was the result of the race with the elements, for which I was entered for the last week in March. Yes, beaten on the post by a savage north wind—a bitter, biting blast—“that tells the plovers when to scatter o’er the heath and sing their wild notes to the listening waste,” dries up the earth, “and in its mid career arrests the bickering stream,” kills the scent, and renders hunting for the while impracticable.

The best laid plans of “men and mice off gang agley.” So did mine on this occasion, for my well-considered intentions were frustrated. I proposed to have a day with the Baron, and a gallop across the Vale of Aylesbury, having written to Sir Nathaniel Rothschild to ascertain the fixtures for the present week. In due course I received a very courteous but disappointing reply to the effect that “Baron Rothschild’s Staghounds would not go out any more this season, owing to the hard state of the ground.” The same post brought me a somewhat similar reply to an inquiry respecting the Belvoir, from my hard-riding and cheerful companion in the chase, Mr. Jos. Wilders, whose bruising propensities across country are well known, and whose preference for stiff flights of posts and rails makes him an exceedingly awkward customer

to follow in a cracker with the Cottesmore, or a burster with the Belvoir. Similar disappointments met me in other quarters, consequent on the severe weather we have recently experienced. However, what's the use of grumbling? "Be patient, swains; these cruel-seeming winds blow not in vain."

Under this adverse state of circumstances nothing remains but to draw on recollection for "A Day with the First and Last Hounds in England," viz, the West Cornwall Foxhounds, which hunt the "country" in the vicinity of the Land's End. Fortune having led me thus far west a short time since, I took up my quarters at Landithy, a farm adjacent to "Madron Church Town," a modest village situated some two miles from Penzance. In order to while away the time I went one day a-fishing in Trengwainton Ponds; a head of water collected from the adjacent moorlands and hills—a lovely spot, enclosed and planted with noble rhododendrons and various flowering shrubs, lying snugly amidst the almost mountainous hills that are the great feature of this part of Cornwall. On another, riding a marvellously ill-tempered cob over hill, dale, and moor, on an expedition to the Gurnard's Head, and though this ill-favoured animal did not "guide me in the path of honour and keep me from the path of shame," still he led me into much trouble and perplexity.

Desiring a short repose, and no house of entertainment—nor in fact any other sort of house except a small farmstead—existing on the wide expanse of moorland, I there asked permission to put up my erratic steed for a while; and leave being promptly granted, I turned the beast loose into an empty cow-house to enjoy a little rest and a frugal repast whilst

I occupied myself in a like manner. Then, after a brief halt, the way being long, night drawing on apace, and having many miles to journey over strange and lonely roads, I essayed to saddle my nag, but the ill-conditioned brute, resisting my every attempt, ran back, kicking viciously at me in whatever direction I approached him. To lay hold of my whip and hide him was the work but of a moment, when to my horror he gave a spring at the partition (some six feet in height) between the stall and a narrow passage, across which he remained, his fore legs hanging down in the passage, his head turned on one side—the space in front being too narrow to allow of his taking a straight position—and his hind legs dangling down helplessly in the stall, whilst he “made night hideous” with his stertorous groans. All my efforts to release him were futile; the only inmate of that lone farm house was a maiden of tender years, who could give me but little advice and less assistance, and, according to Cornish phraseology, “I was in a brave fix.”

At length I espy three weary labourers returning from their daily toil, and hope springs eternal in my sorrowing breast. With liberal offers of unlimited cyder I urge the stalwart Cornishmen to lose no time in knocking down the partition, and with hearty good will and a sledge hammer they set to work, whilst at every blow that sorry—in every sense of the word—steed groaned louder still. But all in vain, that stall was formed neither to bend nor break, and it yielded never an inch, nor half an inch. Then I urged them to saw through the solid planks, but soon found that at the rate they progressed, it would take many hours to cut through the tough oak. Then “Pol, Tre, and

Pen" scratched their heads ominously, and I thought it was all over with that ewe-necked, Roman-nosed, pig-eyed, pigeon-toed brute, upon whom I looked more in sorrow than anger, wondering what value his master could possibly put on him, when a sudden thought struck Pol, and he caught hold of the wretched animal by the forelegs, and threw him bodily on to the stony floor, leading me to imagine that every bone in his miserable carcass must be broken; but no, he rose and shook himself, and in a few minutes I was mounted and away, and I made that wincing jade pay dearly for his gambols long ere I reached my destination.

On another occasion I stroll through the village, wending my way towards Madron Bottoms, in order to visit the kennels of the Western Foxhounds, which are situated at the foot of a steep gorse and heather clad hill—a dreary spot in the winter season, but a lovely piece of wild scenery in the spring, the blossoms of the gorse bushes exceeding in quantity, colour, and odour any I have ever seen elsewhere. The pack is maintained by subscription, and consists of somewhere about twenty couples of handsome hounds, drafts from some of the best kennels in the kingdom. The joint Masters are Messrs Thomas Bedford Bolitho, of Trehidden, and Thomas Robins Bolitho, of Pendrea, members of a greatly respected family, who, in addition to being large landowners in the country, are bankers, merchants, shipowners, and I know not what besides.

The "country" hunted by the "Western" lies to the south-east and north-east of Penzance, extending as far} as the parish of St. Hilary, and westward

over the wild tract of land around the Land's End, and the vicinity of the renowned Logan Rock. The principal fixtures are Madron Church Town, when they draw around Trengwainton Carn, Gulval Cross, Sancreed Church Town, the Logan Rock, the Quakers' Burial Ground, the Land's End, etc. The members and chief subscribers of the Hunt are nearly all of the Bolitho family, though Sir John St. Aubyn, of St. Michael's Mount, when his Parliamentary duties will permit, is in the habit of joining them, as also does Colonel Trelawney of Poltaire, Mr. Laity of St. Hilary, and Mr. George Carter of Penzance; the rest of the field being made up of the farmers of the locality. The huntsman, J. W. Thompson, is a Yorkshireman, formerly whip to the York and Ainsty, a good-looking, active and obliging man, well up to his business, and noted as a good kennel huntsman, and for being skilled in the management of his hounds. The whip is Bill Nute, a son of Nute, a noted rider, who was groom to the late Colonel Conyers, the Master of the Essex Hounds.

At the time of my visit the month of October was drawing to a close, the leaves on the few trees that are to be found in this granitic region had put on their autumn tints. The morning was brilliant, and the sky, deeply, darkly, beautifully blue. Then the horn of the hunter is heard on the hill, and up trots Thompson with the hounds. There being no time to lose, we jog away for St. Buryan, a small village in the vicinity of the Land's End—distant about ten miles—and we make our way up and down the steep and stony hills, until we reach that quiet hamlet which is the "fixture" of the day.

To one accustomed to ride in the shires the prospect

is not alluring. The country is exceedingly wild, much of it being common land, the principal features of which are huge boulders of grey granite and gorse bushes. The enclosures are small, and the fences in general are represented by stout granite walls, and it is necessary to possess considerable nerve to go across this part of the world. The stiles are a caution, and are constructed somewhat of this fashion—first a granite step, then a gutter, then several more wide steps; a gutter on the opposite side, and another step. Consequently there is every facility afforded for coming to much grief.

On arriving at the meet we find a “field” of about twenty performers assembled, and, the order to move on being given, we proceed to draw for a fox amongst the patches of gorse which abound in all directions over the wide expanse of rough-looking land before us. We then, not finding in this direction, leave the Land’s End to the left, and draw the range of cliffs on the high ground leading towards the Logan Rock. At this point it is necessary to seek the aid of some fox terriers which accompany the pack, whose vocation it is to hunt out the fox from his dwelling-place amidst the huge boulders or massive weather-beaten rocks, and make him bolt into the open, and if successful there is a chance of a gallop over a fair line of country. On this occasion, however, our fox was not disposed to quit the security of these strongholds, and he dodged for some time in and out the steep cliffs, and it was rather trying to the nerves of one unaccustomed to this style of hunting when descending one of the steep passes on the cliff side, to have to negotiate a granite wall which presented itself.

But needs must when you have a lot of eager sportsmen close behind you who consider granite boulders "trifles light as air," and gallop away between them with consummate indifference. Running our fox in and out of his stronghold, we finally lost him, and proceeded to draw for another in an enclosure, lying close to the spot where the School of Telegraphy is established, a place where the young idea is taught how to send messages across the Atlantic; and it was evident that the pupils located in that dismal establishment, which is situated hard by the inhospitable shore, welcome the coming of the hunter with hound and horn, as a change from the quietude and monotony of that dreary spot where the cry of the sea gull and the roar of the sad sea waves is all that is to be heard on ordinary occasions.

Then a view halloo is heard, and a fox goes away, but we could do very little good with him, and he was speedily lost in the Cliffs. Whilst riding in these parts it is as well to bear in mind that you are liable to come across the shafts and adits of disused mines, and it consequently behoves a stranger to look well ahead, or, what is better, to pick out a good man and play a game of "follow my leader" over this most difficult, not to say dangerous hunting country. After this we drew for a considerable time without finding another fox, and finally we left off, with the prospect of a long ride before us.

The Western Hounds have had very good sport this season, and the prospects for the ensuing are good, as already there is a sprinkling of cubs in some parts. To use the expression of the huntsman, "We don't go in for killing foxes, we cannot afford to spare them,



but we have plenty of good natural sport, and kill from nine to twelve brace every season, besides having good runs with those which get away from us under the cars and into the shafts and adits of the mines." The hounds only go out twice a week, and the western part of the country, especially round about Buryan, is considered by far the best. On the whole, this wild and grand country is more beautiful to look at than easy to ride across. The greatest drawback is the want of covers, and consequent shortness of foxes, and the difficulty of forcing them away into the open from the cliffs—natural fortifications and strongholds, which, like Plevna, are not easily to be got at. On a future occasion I hope to see them to greater advantage; the occasion alluded to was the commencement of the season, and therefore not favourable to sport.

By a letter just received I learn that there has been a meeting at Oakham of the landowners and gentlemen of the Cottesmore Hunt, which was well and numerously attended. Amongst those present were Mr. Finch, of Burley-on-the-Hill, and his brother, Lord Gainsborough, Sir Henry Fludyer, Mr. A. Fludyer, Colonel Blackett, Major Claggett, Captains Orme, Dawson, Ashton, etc. etc., and it was decided that Lord Carington should assume the Mastership for the period of four years, the Earl of Lonsdale lending the hounds and giving the use of the stables, kennels, etc., whilst subscribing the liberal sum of £500 per annum to help to maintain this noble pack. Lord Aveland has promised that foxes shall be preserved on his domain, and contributes a liberal subscription. Lady Willoughby has also intimated her intention of having the foxes preserved in the covers on her

estate ; therefore, so far, things look promising for the future of the Cottesmore ; and as Lord Carington is a thorough sportsman, and a very hard man across country, I think the frequenters of Melton and residents in the locality have reason to be satisfied with the course of events, though it must be a source of great regret that Lord Lonsdale should have adhered to his determination of resigning the country, and breaking up his delightful residence and noble establishment at Barleythorpe.

No allusion is made in respect to the stud ; should it come to the hammer, I commend it to the attention of Masters of Hounds, as there are many first-class animals amongst them, which have stood their work well throughout a very hard season. Mr. Weatherstone, who has had charge of the Barleythorpe stud for the last eleven years, will, in consequence of this change, be disengaged, a fact which I notify to those who want a thorough disciplinarian, with judgment and knowledge of his business, to undertake charge of a valuable stud. Brought up at Badminton, and having gained the respect of his former masters, there is little doubt that his services will be readily sought for.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

THE unprecedented weather which was experienced during the last days of March and the commencement of April put a stop to hunting for a while, causing the close of the season to be the least satisfactory part of the performance. "Winter lingering in the lap of spring" is a pretty poetical idea, but in practice it proved extremely inconvenient, upsetting my plans and arrangements for being present at the "finish" with several of the crack packs in the shires.

However, there is a tide in the affairs of men, and on this occasion it led on to Melton, where I found myself late in the evening, a cold wind blowing, a fitful rain falling, every bed at the George, and every steed in the stable engaged—such was the announcement that met me on arrival. "But," said Mr. Childs, the ever pleasant and obliging proprietor of this celebrated establishment, "I will see what can be done for you." Fortunately a noble lord, well known in the racing world, having failed to fulfil his engagements, a vacancy occurred, and I was removed to the Upper House, and promptly installed in comfortable quarters. All was bustle and excitement, and the town was rapidly filling; those who had braved the elements were returning from the Melton Steeplechases in a more or less moist condition; others were flocking in from all quarters, with the intent of being present at

Egerton Lodge, which was the "fixture" of the Quorn for the following morning; while from time to time visitors were arriving, in order to be present at a grand ball at Mr. Gordon Bennett's, largely augmenting the numbers already assembled to witness the closing scenes of the hunting season.

Then I listened to the accounts of the day's proceedings at Burrough-Hill, and I found that out of seven events on the card, five had been placed to the credit of Captain Smith—a clinking good man across country, a bold and resolute rider, who adds judgment to his other qualifications, and one whom it is a caution to see come down the steep descent on the Burrough-hill course, making play at this point, going as straight as a dye, and as hard as his horse can gallop, squandering the field by his dash, and pulling off the event, in spite of the exertions of his competitors, amongst whom on this occasion were such good men as the Marquis of Queensbury, Captain Myddleton, the Hon. Hugh Lowther, Mr. Frewen, and Mr. Lubbock.

When I awoke the following morning it was to find a lovely spring day, a brilliant sunshine, balmy breezes, and a delightful and exhilarating atmosphere. All nature seemed to rejoice at the departure of the cruel cold winds. "The blackbird whistles from the thorny brake, the mellow bullfinch answers from the grove," and it is evident that the last day with the Quorn is to have the benefit of splendid weather to enhance the beauty of the sight, and to add to the pleasure of those who intended to see the meet at the Earl of Wilton's charming residence, and take leave of this noble pack of hounds for awhile. Egerton Lodge is situated in close proximity to the town of Melton, and has the

reputation of being the most complete establishment of its class in the country ; for more than half a century it has been the winter residence of the veteran sportsman whose name is associated so closely with all the traditions of the shires. Placed on a gentle slope, amidst trim gardens, gay with spring flowers, and hedged around with luxuriant evergreen shrubs, running down to the banks of the river Eye, upon the bosom of which sails a stately swan, who seems somewhat disconcerted at the intrusion of such a host of visitors.

Assembled in the field on the farther side of the stream I find "Tom Furr" surrounded by his renowned pack, and encircled by a ring of admiring spectators. Then I have time to note some of the best performers with these crack hounds. First to meet my eye is the Earl of Wilton, looking hale and hearty and fit to go—a trifle more or less of years seems now to make no difference to the noble lord who has been hunting some three days a week during his residence this season at Melton; by his side rides the Countess of Wilton, admirably mounted, accompanied by Lady Florence Chaplin, who has the reputation of being a first-rate performer over the big fields and large fences of the shires.

Next I observe Lord and Lady Grey de Wilton, the latter one of the most graceful and elegant horsewomen I have ever seen; the Countess Annesley and her sister, Mrs. Cecil Samuda, both accomplished and experienced riders; Miss Chaplin of Brooksby, who goes in first-rate form and is thoroughly at home on the light-hearted nag, whose courage and playfulness is evidently not diminished by a long and severe

season. The Countess of Cardigan, who is conversing with Colonel Forester across the sluggish stream which meanders through the inviting meads; Mrs. Sloane Stanley, well mounted, and a model for those who would desire to appear in proper form in the hunting field; Lady Florence Dixie, on a blood-like chestnut, who must now be placed in the front rank of the very best performers, being entitled by her indomitable courage, unfailing nerve, and love of the sport, to rank as "a bright particular star" in the firmament of Melton; Mrs. Younger, on her favourite and perfect lady's horse; Mr. and Mrs. Adair, Captain and the Hon. Mrs. Molyneux, Captain and the Hon. Mrs. Stirling, Sir Charles and Miss Clayton, Captain and Mrs. Tomlinson; whilst among the sterner sex appear the well-known forms of many hard-riding men. I see Lord Carington, the future Master of the Cottesmore, who has undertaken their management, upon the retirement of the Earl of Lonsdale; and the members of the hunt, as well as the frequenters of Melton, are to be congratulated, the noble lord being a first-rate sportsman, a good man across country, with a reputation for geniality as well as unbounded liberality, admirable and necessary qualities in an M. F.H. The new master will take up his abode at Barleythorpe, Lord Lonsdale lending his splendid pack of hounds, giving the use of the kennel, etc., and subscribing the liberal sum of £500 per annum towards their maintenance. Lord Wolverton, who cannot resist the attractions of the Belvoir, the Cottesmore, and the Quorn, which draw him from his own country, and his splendid pack of bloodhounds, with which he pursues the stag across one of the stiffest "countries"

in the West of England ; Lord Douglas, Lord Norreys, Lord Hastings, Lord Calthorpe, the Earl of Wicklow, Earl Annesley, not mounted, but seated in a carriage by the side of Mrs. Markham ; Captain Riddell, Mr. Cecil Samuda, Colonel Markham, the Hon. Hugh Trevor, the Hon. Hugh Lowther, Sir Beaumont Dixie, Mr. Lubbock, Mr. Frewen, Captain Smith, the Messrs. Behrens, Sir Charles Fitzgerald, Mr. Delacour, Captain Tempest, Mr. Gordon Bennett, Captain Atkinson, Mr. Brand, Count Lemmerman ; Mr. Younger, dismounted, with his arm in a sling ; the ever-pleasant and agreeable Major Paynter, the Rev. Mr. Buller, who, though handicapped heavily by age, having scored upwards of eighty years, seems as tough and as fit to go as ever ; Mr. Chaplin (of Blankney), Dr. Roberts, Dr. Powell, Mr. Cass, Captain Boyce, and "The Coming Man" in Leicestershire, Colonel Burnaby, of Baggrave Hall. Then up rides Mr. Coupland, the Master of the Quorn, and the order is given to move on to Gartree Hill, a cover that never fails to hold a fox ; at this point many other well-known men are found in waiting. Captain Hartopp, Mr. Burbige in a carriage, but looking as if he was merely reserving himself for next season, not having been fit to go during the present—well, I suppose, like myself, after hunting for upwards of half a century, he finds it necessary to pull up now and then ; Custance, who whiles his leisure hours away by going his hardest over the grass ; and many others who had been made acquainted with the programme of the day. "Halloo in there" is the cry of the huntsman, and but a brief space of time elapses ere the welcome sound of "Gone away, Gone away" is heard, for a noble fox has

slipped off, pointing for Barton. Now is the time for a spurt across this inviting line of country, if you can get through the crowd, and are not afraid of the fences, for the hounds go as if they meant it; then they bend round and make for Wicklow Lodge, away across Sandy Lane, the fox evidently intending to return to Gartree Hill; but the country, notwithstanding the rain of the previous day, was hard and the scent bad, consequently nothing more could be done with him. After which the hounds were taken to the well-known cover, "Sir Francis Burdett's" by name—which seldom fails—and here again a view halloo is promptly heard, and a fox goes away. The scent, however, being cold and bad, no good could be done with him, and, after ringing about for a considerable time, he was lost. Thus ended the last public day with the Quorn, for, though they continued to draw after losing their second fox, there was no further sport worth recording.

In consequence of Mr. Tailby having given up his hounds, after hunting the Billesdon side of the Quorn country for the last twenty-two years, a dissension has arisen which is deeply to be regretted. Upon Mr. Tailby signifying his intention to retire, it was considered desirable by the members of the Quorn Hunt to re-assume that portion of their territory, which, as they allege, had only been held on sufferance by Mr. Tailby. In the meantime Sir Bache Cunard had come forward offering to hunt the country resigned by Mr. Tailby, in which movement he was supported by several covert owners and a considerable number of tenant farmers in the district. It would appear, on examination of the documents which I have had the opportunity of perusing, that the Quorn are clearly in the right



in asserting their claim to have the whole country re-united, with the view of maintaining in its integrity the grandest and most renowned—historical, in fact,—hunt in the world. The Earl of Stamford and Warrington writing on the subject, says in a letter dated March 30 of the present year, “When I took the hounds it was with the distinct understanding that I could hunt the whole Quorn country, viz., the part hunted by Mr. Tailby, at any time I wished, by of course giving him proper notice. That part of the country was originally comprised in the old Quorn country, and has from time immemorial belonged to it.” This view would appear to be supported by the following influential covert owners: B. E. Bennett, Esq. of Marston Trussell Hall; the Countess of Cardigan, who is the owner of some of the best coverts in High Leicestershire; the Hon. H. Tyrwhitt Wilson, of Keythorpe Hall; the Earl of Aylesford; Chas. Packe, Esq. of Stretton Hall; Sir Henry St. J. Halford of Wistow; I. T. Mills, Esq., of Husbands, Bosworth; T. C. Douglas-Whitmore, of Gumley Hall; James Baillie, Esq., of Illston Grange; Sir Charles Itham; J. Holford, Esq.; Sir F. Turville; J. Perkins, Esq., of Langton; G. Everett, Esq., of Hothorpe; Sir Arthur G. Hazlerigg, of Nosely Hall; Sir Geoffrey Palmer, etc. With such an important array of landowners, it must be admitted that Mr. Coupland is fully justified in laying the vexed question before the Foxhunting Committee of Boodle’s Club, for decision. In my opinion the necessity of so doing is deeply to be regretted, and I cannot help thinking that under all circumstances it would be a graceful act on the part of Sir Bache Cunard were he to retire from the contention

rather than jeopardise the friendly relations now existing between the landowners and tenant farmers of the district in question. Undoubtedly those covert owners and tenant farmers who have evinced a disposition to support the liberal proposals of Sir Bache Cunard are entitled to all possible respect and consideration; but it is clear to me that if the matter is decided by the Foxhunting Committee, whatever their decision may be, the result will be ill-feeling and heart-burnings on one side or the other, to the infinite injury of the sport itself and to the good feeling now existing between the owners of the soil and those who till it. In the matter of fox-hunting, union means strength, and division and discord a dearth of foxes. Those riding with hounds are deeply indebted to tenant farmers for their liberality in allowing their crops to be ridden over, and their fences broken down; but they are equally under obligation to those who allow their covers to be drawn, and who, in many cases, though not in the habit of hunting themselves, yet are good enough to preserve foxes for the pleasure of others. Having had the opportunity of discussing the question with several of the oldest and most respected sportsmen in Leicestershire, I am satisfied that Mr. Coupland has right on his side, and that nothing but injury can result from the continuance of this agitation, and that anything that tends to diminish the well-being of the Quorn Hunt is greatly to be deprecated and regretted in the interests of all parties concerned, whether they be landlords, tenants, or members of this distinguished hunt, so long and justly celebrated in the annals of the grandest of our national sports. It is evident from what I have stated that difference of opinion in regard

to territorial arrangements is not confined to the East, but I sincerely trust that the unhappy dissension may be terminated without an appeal to the congress which holds its sittings in St. James's Street.

The Quorn have had a grand season on the whole, and Melton has never been fuller of visitors. At no time has a better lot of sportsmen or grander horses been seen in the shires. Under the able and judicious management of Mr. Coupland, with the aid of such a clipping good huntsman as Tom Firr, and with a pack of such first-rate dashing hounds, the season could not fail to be satisfactory. The only drawback has been a deficiency of foxes in some quarters; but steps, I hear, will be taken to remedy this defect—successfully, I hope. The completion of the railways now in the course of construction, and the consequent withdrawal of the navvies and their hangers-on, will be the means of contributing to that much-to-be-desired result. That branch of industry is not favourably disposed to the preservation of game, or foxes either. On the morning following the meet at Egerton Lodge I rose to find that the easterly winds had resumed their sway, and that the customary downfall of snow might undoubtedly be depended upon by those who intended to honour Croxton Park Races with their presence. It will be apparent, even to those of the meanest capacity, that the frequenters of Melton have no occasion to sit down and sigh over past delights; for, with the races in the morning, a ball at Colonel Markham's in the evening, and the last public meet of the Belvoir at Croxton Park on the following day, there was a prospect of a good time yet. By the way, through the kindness of Colonel Burnaby, I had the opportunity of

being introduced at "The House" and examining the extensive and beautifully-arranged collection of arms and trophies of war, as well as the tastefully-disposed selection of rare and antique china in the possession of Colonel and Mrs. Markham. Then, as time was fleeting, I sought a conveyance in which to journey to Croxton. Here fortune favoured me again, for I fell in with Custance, and rode with him to the course. The tedium of the journey was lightened, and the way shortened considerably, by the racy anecdotes and pleasant converse of this agreeable and cheerful companion. I have heard Scott, Moore, Byron, Tennyson, and many other poets of celebrity recited, but there was one verse from an anonymous author which he quoted which led me to offer to back the "Unknown" at 100 even against the field. I wish it had been more deeply impressed on my mind, but the bustle and excitement of the day have obliterated it. On arrival at the meeting I found as usual the *élite* of the county assembled. His Grace the Duke of Rutland, in hunting costume, was conspicuous amongst his distinguished visitors at Belvoir Castle, amongst whom I noticed the Marquis and Marchioness of Bristol, Earl and Countess of Zetland, Earl and Countess Grosvenor, Earl and Countess Scarborough, Earl and Countess Bradford and the Ladies Bridgeman, Lady Mary Hervey, Lady Adeliza and Miss Manners, Lady Pigott, Count Danhoff, Colonel and Mrs. Reeve, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Worsley, Mr. Praed, Mr. and Miss Miles, and Mr. John Norman. In addition to this distinguished list of visitors I observed the Earl of Wilton and Colonel Forester, Lord Grey de Wilton, Lord Calthorpe, Lord Cawdor, Lord Wolverton, Lord

Hastings, Colonel Burnaby, Captain Anstruther Thompson, Lord J. Douglas, Lord Newport, Lord Kesteven, the Hon. Hugh Lowther, Lord Norreys, the Messrs. Behrens, Captain Smith, Sir Beaumont Dixie, and many others; whilst Lady Cardigan was to be observed anxiously watching the performance of her horse, "Dandy," ridden by the Hon. Hugh Lowther, but which, though well piloted, did not succeed in pulling off the Billesdon Coplow Stakes. One fair lady in a cream-coloured dress, trimmed with swans-down, was an example to all beholders. Had it been a tournament instead of a race meeting, there would have been a large "entry" of knights, I ween. A brilliant scene is the Croxton Meeting on a bright day. On this occasion the weather was tolerably good, though a fall of sleet at the close asserted its right to be present. Again I had the pleasure of listening to the strains of the Duke's band, ably conducted by Mr. H. Nicholson, and to hear once more the charming 'Sweetheart's Waltz' and a selection of delightful music, and I wished from my heart that the uproar and shouting of the betting men could be banished from racecourses. After the seven events on the card were disposed of, the Waltham Hurdle Race concluded the amusements of the day. "Now, if you want to make some money," said a particular friend, "back the Duke; it's a dead certainty." I did want to make some money, but I did not back Mr. Behrens's nag, although Captain Smith was up; and the consequence was I saved my money and went home to the George with the determination of being present at the last meet of the Belvoir on the following day.

## FAREWELL TO THE BELVOIR.

AFTER the racing was over, after the dancing was done, Melton was in a state of utter demoralization; everybody was late, everything behind-hand, and the demon of unpunctuality held undisputed sway, the day's sport at Croxton Park having been succeeded by a ball at "The House," where Colonel and Mrs. Markham entertained the *haute volaille* of society frequenting this, the liveliest place in Leicestershire; and, it being in the nature of a farewell festivity, the assembled visitors prolonged their stay until the creeping hours of time had so far advanced that there was but little chance of rest for those who meant to be present at the last day with the Belvoir.

The "fixture" of the Duke of Rutland's hounds was Croxton Park; the hour, noon; and such was the strain on the resources of the George that it was not until five minutes before the appointed time that the dogcart, which was to take me to cover, was announced. Relying upon the general unpunctuality of the period, and the fleetness of the steed which was to convey me to the "meet," I had but little fear of accomplishing the distance, seven miles, in time to witness the closing scene with this noble pack of hounds. The morning was bright, though there was a nipping and an eager air which augured ill for sport; and little more than a grand parade was to

be expected, in consequence of the hard and dry state of the ground, which caused the close of the season to be somewhat premature, and, to an extent unsatisfactory.

I know of nothing better calculated to elevate the spirits than a drive along a good road at a racing pace, consequently "my bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne" as I whirl through the stony streets of Melton, and mount the steep hill that leads to Thorpe Arnold; then, my horse having settled down into a slinging trot, I rapidly overhaul some of the laggards who are wending their way to the Park. Here is Major Paynter on a handsome thoroughbred, looking, as he trots quickly along, very much as if the going had been heavy across the brown-holland the night before.

Arriving at the village of Waltham I find it all alive; there stands Lady Florence Dixie's "four-in-hand," the ponies looking as if they had been made to go the pace, as in fact they generally do; several other empty carriages, sundry grooms in charge of hacks which appeared to have been galloped full tilt from Melton, and, in the distance, a group of well-known men steadily trotting along, which satisfied me that, notwithstanding the delay in my start, I should not be too late to witness the performances of the day. Turning into the lane that leads to Croxton Park, but a few minutes elapsed ere I reached the course of yesterday, so late the scene of noise, bustle, and excitement, now dreary, dull, deserted; and then I gaze on scenes of past delight without my wonted pleasure, and turn with disgust from the *débris* of the day before—empty bottles, broken glass, dirty

papers, and "c'rect cards"—which are strewed about in all directions, whilst a melancholy, tenantless, weather-beaten structure is all that remains of that which, but a few hours since, was the grand stand, thronged with the *élite* of the county, and the distinguished visitors from Belvoir Castle, bright as a blooming parterre with the radiant costumes adorning the gathering of youth and beauty assembled beneath its roof.

Then, as I remember that it is a thoroughly well-authenticated fact that all that's bright must fade, I draw the whip across my willing steed, and hasten to join the gay and festive throng who, failing racing, are content to enjoy a final day's hunting. In the centre of the park, on a grassy knoll, stands Frank Gillard, the huntsman of the Belvoir, mounted on his well-known grey horse, with the beautiful pack of hounds, some stretched on the grass, others roaming about, but confined within due bounds by watchful eyes and ready whips. A prettier sight it would not be easy to imagine, especially to a lover of hunting, for no more beautiful hounds are to be seen than those of his Grace the Duke of Rutland. For evenness of size, beauty of condition, and richness of colour, they may challenge comparison with any pack in the kingdom; there may be many others faster, stouter, and more resolute, according to the requirements of the country they hunt, but there are none I have ever seen that excel them in appearance; and the sport they have shown during the past season goes far to prove that their performance does not fall far short of their promise. Emerging from his carriage, his Grace proceeds to examine a well-made



animal that is being paraded for his inspection. A clever jumper and good performer is the bay mare, which its owner, the veteran and thorough-going sportsman, Mr. Burbige, is exhibiting to the noble master as a fit and proper style of nag to carry Frank Gillard close up to his hounds.

Conspicuous amongst the Melton division, which is here in full force, is the Countess of Cardigan, apparently anxious to finish the season with *éclat*; Lady Florence Dixie, who has gone through a severe campaign covered with laurels, and as eager and undaunted at the close as she was at the commencement of the year, albeit there was a certain look of reflection which told of the previous evening's diversion, which, however, was promptly dispelled by a preliminary canter that her ladyship took by way of giving her horse a "breather;" Mrs. Hornsby and her daughter, from the Grantham side of the country, beautifully mounted, and looking thoroughly at home on their handy nags; Mrs. Markham, in her phaeton, driving a pair of high-stepping greys, which, if I mistake not, were accustomed in former days to carry the Countess Annesley and Mrs. Cecil Samuda in first-rate style across country. In addition to these were most of the notabilities of Melton and the neighbourhood, making in all a noble show, and exceeding in number that of any meet of the Belvoir at which I have ever had the good fortune to be present.

A leisurely and lordly meeting was this last day with the duke, sundry members of the Upper House being present, tired in all probability with the peaceful platitudes, ill-timed inquiries, or bellicose speeches

of the period, hoping, no doubt, to strengthen their nerves, and to mature their judgment, by galloping across country in their hours of ease, thus rendering themselves generally fit to take their parts in the vexed questions of the day. There is nothing in my opinion so well calculated to give a man coolness and decision as the habit of riding hard across country in pursuit of the wily fox, by which he is enabled, when called upon, to take the bull by the horns, or the bear by his tail, as the case may be. There was a thoroughly easy-going and friendly disposition evinced by all assembled in that fine old park to bid farewell to the Belvoir for a while. Then, his Grace having given his instructions, Frank Gillard and his hounds, accompanied by the large cavalcade, move off in the direction of Waltham, and we trot away, passing along the course in order to draw a favourite cover in proximity to that quiet and retired village.

The day, however, though bright and clear, was not calculated to produce much sport, and though one or more foxes were found, and hunted for a while, there was so little promise of a run that I left at an early period of the day, and proceeded towards Belvoir Castle, an opportunity having presented itself of seeing that ducal abode in all its glory, a chance I thought that might not be afforded me again for some time; and though I have on many occasions been in the vicinity of the Castle, and have visited the noble range of kennels, and examined the stables and stud, yet I had never been within the portals of the lordly edifice that stands so boldly forth on the densely-wooded heights of Belvoir.

Having turned my back on the hounds, and bidden farewell for awhile to many friends and pleasant acquaintances made in the hunting field, I trot briskly away in the direction of the Castle. Going by the side of the park, passing Croxton Spinnies—a well-remembered cover—and, descending a steep hill, I find myself at the well-to-do village of Branstone, which lies in the sleepy hollow at its foot ; and from the comfortable cottages, with their trim gardens, and the absence of squalor and poverty too often observable even in some of our prettiest villages, I judge I am within the zone of the ducal demesne. Then, leaving this pleasant spot behind, I journey along, mounting another steep hill, where I observe an extensive, deep, and sullen-looking pool lying between the wooded heights and the red lands which slope down towards its gloomy waters, and from which the title of the county is derived, viz., Redlandshire, as it is described in ancient books, but which in these times is known by the modern appellation of Rutlandshire.

Then I pause for a while to listen to the chorus of feathered songsters, in which the notes of the black-bird and thrush predominate, as they carol out a welcome to the approach of spring, a short foretaste of which is given us on this lovely afternoon ; whilst the hares and rabbits come forth from the hedge-rows and covers and bask securely, now the sporting season is ended, in the welcome sunshine ; and the playful lambs frisk about as merrily as little boys were wont to do in the good old days, before school boards were invented, when, under the tuition of the village pedagogue, they learned their A B C at leisure, and

frightened crows at discretion, in order to swell the modest earnings of the family.

Then away again, and the cheerful little hamlet of Knipton is reached, when a short trot brings me to the entrance of the park, and I am soon lost amidst a labyrinth of shrubberies, where innumerable rabbits scuttle along, seeking shelter beneath the clumps of magnificent rhododendrons; but, quickly regaining the right road, I traverse the avenue, "whose lofty elms and venerable oaks invite the rook, who, high amid the boughs, in early spring his airy city builds;" and I arrive at my destination, forthwith knocking at the castle gates, and promptly obtaining admission within its walls. Passing through the entrance hall, I note the goodly array of arms of every description that adorn the walls; and then mounting the broad staircases, on through the noble corridors, till the picture gallery is reached, where, though unlearned in the matter of paintings, I could not fail to be struck with the beauty of many I beheld. Then I am ushered into the drawing-room, the elegance of which delights me; and I pass along until I reach the Regent's Gallery—a splendid room, extending some 130 feet or more, with numerous bow-windows, commanding a wide and extensive view far away over the beautiful vale of Belvoir.

Decorated with beautiful tapestry, adorned with works of art, and embellished with groups of exquisite flowers of every hue and kind, I think I have never seen a more princely apartment, or one in which harmony of colour was so admirably preserved. Next I am shown the chapel and the beautiful Murillo which forms the altar-piece, and which is insured for

the large sum of 3,000 guineas. Then, through the courtesy of Mr. Sicklen, who has filled the post of steward of this palatial abode for the last 30 or 40 years, I am permitted, after wandering through the range of noble rooms, to view the splendid collection of plate, comprising services of the most elegant and elaborate designs, countless costly racing cups, gold and silver salvers, all of which had been in use the previous evening at the banquet provided for the numerous visitors at the castle. Then, after a somewhat hurried visit, during which there was only time to take a cursory glance at all the treasures before me, I was introduced to Mr. Ingram, under whose charge are placed the beautiful and extensive gardens, and I derived, I think, greater gratification when I strolled through the beautiful grounds than I did even from the view of all the wonders within the castle walls.

Spring flowers of every description were to be seen, grouped together with such marvellous taste and exquisite skill and judgment as to produce a result I have never seen equalled elsewhere. To enumerate all the flowers, or to describe the rare and happy combination of colours, is beyond my power. These gardens are formed on the castle slopes, and are very extensive and kept in wonderful order. Wire-fencing keeps off the attacks of the many hares and rabbits; but the pheasants wander over them at will, making inroads on the bulbs of the crocuses, especially those of one particular colour, for which they have a predilection. Innumerable squirrels inhabit the stately trees; and within a few yards of the Castle a fox, or rather a family of the vulpine race, have a local habitation and a name for discretion, as they scrupu-

lously avoid robbing the adjacent hen roost, going far afield to provide for the necessities of their growing and interesting family.

Then, time not permitting me to see the range of houses and kitchen gardens, I accept the invitation of Mr. Ingram to visit them on some future occasion; and, as I quit these scenes so charming, I repeat the verses written by Fanny Kemble, which are engraved and placed on the trunk of one of the venerable trees: "Farewell, fair Castle, on thy lordly hill, Firm be thy seat, and proud thy station still; Soft rise the breezes from the vale below, Bright be the clouds that wander o'er thy brow."

Then I journey back to Melton, passing by the same route that I followed in the morning; and find on arrival that the exodus of the visitors has commenced in earnest, many having already winged their flight to distant parts, in order to find fresh fields and pastures new in which to indulge in some of the pleasant little pursuits with which time is beguiled when the season for hunting is closed.

On the following day (Sunday) a great alteration was observable in the state of Melton. With the exception of the Earl and Countess of Wilton, Lord and Lady Grey de Wilton, Colonel and Mrs. Markham, and the Messrs. Behrens, all the visitors had departed, and this always staid and decorous town seemed in a perfect state of rest. Even these *habitués* of the metropolis of hunting were only resting for a short while before taking wing. The note of preparation for departure had been already sounded in the case of Messrs. Behrens, who were to leave in the course of a day or two, a special train being engaged as usual to

convey their stud, which consists of upwards of 40 first-class hunters, accompanied by their companions, the goat, the owl, and the bantams, which form part of this extensive establishment, straight away to Cheshire.

On the following day I paid a farewell visit to Barleythorpe, in order to see the kennels of the Cottesmore hounds, previous to their transfer from the Earl of Lonsdale to Lord Carington; and, as I travelled *viâ* Oakham to this quiet hamlet, I experienced to the full the delightful changes of our variable clime, a bitter biting wind and a hot sun being the order of the day. Having expressed my wish to see the hounds, Neale, the huntsman of the Cottesmore, readily accompanied me, and showed me over the kennels, which are admirably situated and replete with every convenience. There I saw upwards of 70 couples of first-rate hounds, in racing condition, looking, if possible, more fit to go at the close of the season than they did at the commencement. Under the new management there is but little fear that they will continue to show the same excellent sport that they have done in the past. A better country, a finer pack of hounds, or a more persevering and workmanlike huntsman, it will be difficult to find.

Then Mr. Weatherston, who has had charge of the Barleythorpe stud for the last eleven years, showed me over the stables, and I was struck with the excellent condition of the nags, which, notwithstanding the long and severe season's work, appear to be in right good form.

Whenever I have had the pleasure of visiting the home of the Cottesmore I have never failed to ask

permission to view the beautifully-arranged gardens attached to the residence of the Earl of Lonsdale at Barleythorpe.

On this occasion Mr. Clarke was good enough to accompany me, and the unique display of spring flowers must be seen to be fully appreciated. Not resembling those I had so lately seen at Belvoir Castle, and consisting of a different class of flowers, a most perfect and brilliant picture is presented to the eye. In the glass-houses the display of rare plants, though on a small scale, is of a very high order—the cinerarias and hyacinths being specially remarkable for colour and size. Having no longer any excuse for prolonging my stay at Melton, I took leave of my numerous friends and acquaintances, and was soon *en route* for Rugby, where I found an opportunity of visiting the Daventry Races, under very favourable circumstances, which to some small extent compensated for the loss of my favourite amusement.



## LAST SCENE OF ALL.

“WHAT shall he have that killed the deer? His leather skin and horns to wear. Then sing him home.” That was the merry refrain of the foresters bold in days of yore, when people were not so squeamish in respect to the sports of the field as they are nowadays. It must not be supposed, however, that I am about to offer an apology for stag-hunting, or to speak with bated breath of one of our national amusements. On the contrary, I am going to proclaim the doings on the last day of the season of the Royal buckhounds; recount the exertions of the premier huntsman, Frank Goodall; tell of the proceedings of Edrup, Hewson, and Bartlett, his tried and trusty “whips,” and of many a good man and true who, like myself, take pleasure “in chasing the wild deer and following the roe,” and, when he cannot do that, is content to have a clinking good gallop with “The Queen’s” whenever an opportunity offers. There have been some feeble attempts of late by prejudiced people—a minimised minority, happily—to disparage sport of every description, and stag-hunting in particular.

False allegations of cruelty have been put forward by the ill-natured or ignorant; but the verdict is “Not proven,” and never will be, I hope, in my time. Posterity never having done anything for me, must

consequently look after its own affairs ; but it will be a sorry day, in my opinion, for Old England when the voice of the majority puts a stop to the manliest of all our national pastimes. Not that I think there is much probability of such a step being taken at present. Never, in my recollection, was the noble sport more popular, nor do I remember at any time more ample provision being made or better prospects of success for the future. As a proof of the strong interest that is felt in respect to hunting and things appertaining thereto, I am reminded of what I saw a day or two since when strolling down New Bond Street.

Chance having led me to visit the Dickinson Gallery, I found an exhibition of pictures illustrative of two centuries of hunting. Many of the pictures forming the collection have been lent by such well-known sportsmen as his Grace the Duke of Beaufort, Mr. Thos. Slingsby, Mr. George Lane Fox, Mr. J. H. Kearsley, Mr. F. J. S. Foljambe, Mr. G. W. Quekett, Viscount Castlereagh, and a host of other distinguished people. First to attract my attention was a portrait, by Sir Francis Grant, of Charles Treadwell, the celebrated huntsman, on Cato. The Quorn hounds by the elder Fernely ; a portrait of Georgina Charlotte Theobald, flying a five-barred gate in first rate style, and I pause at that, remembering her in the pride of youth and beauty, when she went across country like a bird, "in the merry days when we were young," and used to hunt regularly with "The Queen's." But that is a long time ago, so let us pass on, for the curtain is rising, and it is time to be off if I am to

witness the last performance for this season of the Royal Buckhounds.

The first scene of all is the White Hart at Windsor. My hack is at the door, and the fixture is Maidenhead Thicket. Consequently there is some considerable distance to go to cover—which, by the way, reminds me of a circumstance that occurred on one occasion when riding to the meet of the Queen's on an exceedingly dirty morning. My companion, fresh from "County Meath," not wishing to sully the spotless purity of his leathers, or dim the brightness of his exquisitely polished boots, rode gaily along on the footpath. This called down the ire of a newly-elected vestryman, whose attention was arrested by this daring proceeding.

"Do you know, sir, that you are committing a misdemeanour, sir?" he shouted.

"Faith, and it isn't an idea of the thing that I have. Is it anything like a cauliflower now?" was the audacious reply.

At this moment the horse put his foot in a puddle, splashing the parochial official from head to foot, who stood transfixed with amazement, and speechless with indignation, at the lawless proceeding of this heedless horseman.

Having mounted my hack, I trot away by the Long Walk, making for Fern Hill and Ascot Racecourse, on my way to the Royal Kennels, which I wished to visit *en route* to the meet. A sombre sky, more like November than the middle of April, spoiled an otherwise lovely ride; and had it not been for the chorus of the "plummy people," the atmospheric pressure would have kept my spirits below zero.

During the five miles I cantered along the notes of the blackbirds, thrushes, and nightingales were to be heard on every side ; from amidst every bush and from the boughs of every tree they poured forth their joyous songs ; and this, combined with a rattling gallop over the grass, soon dispelled the gloomy feelings engendered by the murky appearance of the morning. Arriving at the Kennels, I found that the hounds had already started, so away again by New Lodge and White Waltham, and Maidenhead Thicket is reached at the appointed hour. I imagined there would be a considerable number of persons assembled to see the uncarting of the deer ; but I was not prepared to find at least two thousand people spread over the thicket ; on foot, on horseback, in carriages of every sort and description, from the modest donkey-cart to the aristocratic four-in-hand, they occupied every available space in their anxiety to obtain a sight of the deer. Epping Forest on Easter Monday was vividly recalled to my mind, and I doubt even in the palmiest days of old Tom Rounding, if a greater or more motley assemblage ever appeared at that celebrated meet than was to be seen on this, the last day with " The Queen's."

The van containing the two deer selected for the occasion—Accident and Burley—was the centre of attraction, around which the crowd surged and jostled, got in the way of the horsemen, tumbled over the furze-bushes, and disported themselves generally according to their different ideas of pleasure ; and when the stag emerged from the cart an uproar loud enough to disturb a herd of deer from their propriety arose, and there was not the least necessity for hounds,

as the foot people, those in wagonettes, carts, and vehicles of every sort, as well as horsemen, hunted the noble animal to their hearts' content; but at length the bewildered quarry made his way through the multitude and got into the open. Then Goodall, with fifteen couples of his grand hounds, having carefully made his way through the crowd, laid them on the scent, and they quickly got on the line and ran in the direction of Cookham Dean.

Whichever way I looked I saw horsemen galloping, the roads thronged with vehicles, and countless pedestrians hurrying along in the vain endeavour to keep up with the hounds. But the pace soon told on the "many-headed," who were speedily outpaced, and, after a gallop of some three or four miles, I found myself going at a racing pace through the beech woods which overhang the valley of the Thames. Excited by the unusual noise and the throng of people, my horse careered at full speed, regardless of overhanging boughs, indifferent to the stumps of trees, and careless as to what became of his rider, his sole object apparently being to maintain his place in the front rank. But soon his fleet career was checked; the deer, being determined to be rid of his pursuers, descended the steep hillside, and, making for the river, dashed gallantly into the stream, made his way across, and cantered quietly along, leaving the hounds and horsemen to get over as best they could.

Some of the field made their way towards Cookham Bridge, others were galloping in the direction of that at Marlow, whilst Goodall and the hounds crossed over the ferry near Cookham Dean, and, picking up the scent, went away in the direction of Wycombe.

Not wishing to gallop for two or three miles in order to cross over either Marlow or Cookham Bridges, and, caring very much less to embark with a restless horse in a ferry-boat, I pulled up, in company with many others, on the banks of the Thames, and then rode quietly back to Windsor.

Thus ended my last day with the Royal Buckhounds. It was not to be expected that much sport could be shown under the circumstances, and it is, in fact, in compliance with an annual custom that an exhibition of this sort is afforded to the public in general, who on this occasion showed their appreciation by flocking from all directions to join in the sport, and it would be selfish on the part of those who have ridden with the Royal Pack throughout the whole of the season if they begrudged a day's amusement for those having a few hours' holiday on Easter Monday. The Royal buckhounds have had an unusually long, hard, and successful season. They commenced hunting in October, going out nine times during that month, and having six good runs.

On November 2, the regular work commenced, on which occasion, the meet being as usual at Salt Hill, they had a capital run, taking the deer in a chalk-pit, near Addlestone, in Surrey. Since then, they have been out fifty times, and have contrived to score no less than thirty more of the same sort, though not so long, and on nearly every occasion they have had to travel unusually long distances.

During the whole season they have only been stopped from hunting by frost on two occasions. Some remarks having been made in respect to the killing of a deer—a perfectly accidental occurrence—

it is well to remark that no similar mishap has occurred since that which happened in the middle of January. On the whole, therefore, I think the noble Master has to be congratulated on the result of the season; and it is to be hoped that, long ere he is called upon to take his place in the field again, he will have recovered from the somewhat serious accident which he met with a short while since. Much credit is also due to Goodall for his exertions in maintaining the efficiency of the pack; and I cannot recall any period, during the many years I have hunted with the Queen's, when there were a finer lot of hounds than those which are now to be seen at the Royal kennels.

THE END.





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