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JOHN A. SEAVERNS

FARMING AND FOXHUNTING

(From the 'Seventies to 1940)

FARMING AND FOXHUNTING

BY
CHARLES W. WHATLEY

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PREFACE

NO one who writes his own biography can escape the charge of egotism. To deny it is futile.

It has occurred to me on occasion during my occupation in recording a few details and incidents of my life, that after all it has been a very common existence and in no way out of the ordinary general farmer's life, and therefore why record it? To be truthful I could not deny myself the pleasure.

It will, I hope, interest a few readers, and at the same time may I express a further hope that no one will bear me ill-will if I have inadvertently misdrawn their true intentions. My first thought was to write a few facts and features of the Cricklade Vale Hunt, adding to it a broadcast talk on Farming and Foxhunting given a year or so ago, and to put the profits of the book to the Red Cross Agricultural Fund.

However, in taking counsel with my friend Anthony Hurd, the idea has been expanded to cover a wider field.

During the pleasant occupation I have found in writing these few incidents of my life, help and advice has been ever at hand from my wife. My secretary, Mrs. Butlin, has shown endurance beyond praise. I shall venture to hope my friends,

P R E F A C E

farmers and sportsmen will buy a copy and thereby make a small contribution to a good cause.

Mr. Dennis Moss has been most helpful in producing suitable illustrations.

I also owe something to my friend Richard Stratton, who has been instrumental in correcting a few indiscretions.

C. W. W.

FOREWORD

ONCE again British agriculture comes into its own. After the last war farmers were left to their own devices, but to-day the nation realizes that everything that can be grown at home is really needed. Farmers are being cajoled and ordered to produce more food from the land. They are responding as they did in 1917 and 1918. So we see the face of the country changing. Thousands of fields, which a year ago were no better than an exercise ground for cows living on imported feeding stuffs, are now ploughed and cropped as they were in our fathers' time.

Through the lean years, when opportunism and ranching seemed to pay, some farmers managed to keep the plough going, maintain a high standard of farming and make a good living. All credit to them. They tempered the traditions of good husbandry with business acumen, recognizing that whatever happens this country provides "The finest market filled with consumers possessing a taste for the best that money can buy."

Charles Whatley is one who has never been afraid to take his own line. In this book he tells how he has made his way. All is grist that comes to his mill. Yet, wise in the art of living, he has

FOREWORD

managed to fit in with his farming a full share of public work and many days with the hounds. His reminiscences need no embroidery from a fellow Wiltshire farmer. I wish every farmer could tell such a cheerful story.

The author is outspoken. One welcomes the book for two reasons. First, it provides an account of farming in peace and wartime and as such will render a service to the Country. Secondly, Charles Whatley, himself a Yeoman, gives the proceeds of this book to farming's only wartime appeal—the Red Cross Agriculture Fund. In his early days Charles Whatley showed his patriotism as a soldier : now having reached three-score and seven he shows his patriotism by devoting any profits to the Fund.

ANTHONY HURD.

June, 1940.

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FATHER AND SON.

CHAPTER I

FAMILY ORIGIN

BORN in the year 1873 I cannot say whether my forebears were of direct agricultural stock. There appears to be little information handed down as to the pedigree of Charles Whatley, the paternal grandfather of the present generation of the family ; he originated from somewhere in south-west Wilts—it has been rumoured it was on Lord Bath's Estate—but what occupation he or his people carried on, history, so far as I have information, does not relate.

He appears to have migrated to Shaftesbury and taken service as an apprentice to one Horder, a wool-stapler. I have an idea he was not looked upon as one of the world's workers ; it may be instinct that prompted him to make the best of the going whilst it was good, for he eventually married his master's daughter, the result being a family of nine, of which my father was one, Samuel Horder Whatley.

I very well remember my grandmother, the daughter of Mr. Horder, the wool-stapler of Shaftesbury—a fine old lady. She, I rather imagine, was the source from which came my father's strong characteristics and robust nature. My grandmother too must have been quickened by instinct in

some way, for she selected a very useful member of her large family to carry on the surname of "Horder."

Before I proceed to outline a few features of my father's life, let me digress for a moment and clear up the relationship of the present-day Horder family and myself. The three Swindon brothers, Edward, Arthur and Tom (the present Lord Horder), are sons of my grandmother's brother. He evidently was the younger son of the Shaftesbury wool-stapler, thus the relationship between my family and the Horder brothers is second cousins.

My father related that he left home at an early age with a pound in his pocket. His early life appears to have been spent in south Wilts as farm manager. He numbered among his employers Messrs. Self, Carpenter and Parham, all farmers of some standing. I believe it was whilst he was managing for Mr. Joseph Carpenter of Burcombe that he married my mother, Elizabeth Fry, daughter of the butcher in High Street, Wilton. Records appear to relate that I was born at Burcombe on the 21st day of August, 1873, whilst barley cart was in progress. I am not quite clear whether it was from here that my father went into Hampshire, or whether it was from Chaulk. I do know that Messrs. Rawlence & Squarey, Land Agents of Salisbury, sent him into Hampshire in the year 1876 to manage a series of farms for Lord Portal of Laverstock. When he left this post in 1883, I have an idea that he was managing about six to eight farms. What is certain is that about this date on the Portal Estate farm after farm came into

the Landlords' hands owing to troubles brewing up in the farming world after the disastrous year of 1879. Salaries in those days were not of the high order, £200 per annum was somewhere about the income that my father received for his labours, plus a little he could turn over on his horse sales, amounting to £50 a year according to his account.

I can seem to see him always in the saddle tiring three horses a day, directing operations on this series of farms. What a change has appeared in the farmers' life to-day! Most of this work is now done from a motor-car.

It must have been in the early 'eighties that I can well remember spending the day at Overton station unpacking self-delivery reapers, purchased from Brewer of Wilton, and sending them off one by one to the various farms. This new venture into the world of machinery was the talk and excitement of the neighbourhood.

In 1883 the family came back into Wiltshire, when my father started farming on his own account at Badbury and, in spite of his acquired great knowledge of arable land, started a small dairy in conjunction with his arable crops. Here I think we strike the root of his successful start. How often do we see this beginning with a few cows lead on to a larger life and a bigger income. Then, again, is it not the old dairy cow which in a last resource carries the declining family? Much as we may dislike the old varmint for demanding so much labour and attention, she has at least above all animals been a saving feature in farming

pursuits during the last half-century. Even the medical profession now admits that the dairy cow must play a big part in the health of the rising generation. We will take off our hats to the dairy cow, and leave it at that.

Up to the time of his death in 1909 my father led a very active life, and it must be admitted a successful one as far as farmers' incomes were common at the end of the nineteenth century. He had a large family of eleven all fairly well schooled. Perhaps some of it might have been better; it may, or may not, have given better results. To leave us each a thousand pounds when the Great Call came, was not a bad effort in those days.

It might be charged against him that he was to some extent of a driving nature. Well, who is not when Nature has furnished him with a forceful character? Strong men are generally impatient with the weaker man's slower movements. I well remember him on one occasion during harvest. Three of us began building a rick, the only other man present enquired where the other men were coming from. "What," he replied, "more men why, I am always as good as two men." He really was.

He would stand and take the sheaves in from the man unloading and hand them to me, and, at the same time, give me instruction how to make the rick. There was never a sheaf put in a wrong place, his argument being that once put a sheaf in the right place, no further replacing should be necessary. How true this is and yet how little do farm men practise it. Unfortunately they

FAMILY ORIGIN

never count the loss of energy by indifferent observation—to their loss be it said.

My father was not a great sportsman : that is by way of hunting and shooting. His only recreation was coursing. Coursing parties at Badbury were a feature in my early days.

There was generally a young horse to be ridden, not always without fear and nerves. I remember a certain gentleman, arriving with a young horse not very well schooled over fences—in any case he was not putting up a very good show—and my father demanded, “Here, you get down and let my son Charles get up, he will show you how to do it,” with son Charles shaking with fear and trembling at the suggestion. However, it had to be done. I think most horsemen will agree these awkward jobs are best done with no spectators.

Now my mother was of a totally different character. Her strength lay in her moral qualities. She would have us all properly schooled, that is according to the resources available for the purpose. I sometimes hesitate to think what might have happened to a family of eleven had she not insisted on this side of life being carefully attended to. After all, a mother’s good influence in this direction is worth more than father’s cash.

I look back and picture my mother having a hard life bringing up this large family. Was it any wonder that her nerves were a little ragged in later life? One might well ask how did a nervous system carry through such a programme with credit and always a smile?

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL AND EARLY DAYS

LIVING in modern times with all the attractions that quick speed can give us, I sometimes fancy we are very prone to think that school and learning ends at the age of 15 or 16, instead of at three-score years and ten. Having this thought in my mind I will touch very lightly on early schooldays. They were, after all, of a very normal and limited character, and therefore will be of very little interest except to a few.

Studies were started in Hampshire by attending a day-school at the village of Overton, a distance of three to four miles. For two years my eldest sister and I took this journey daily in a pony and tub. Occasionally I did the journey by myself and this necessitated the pony being ridden, a job which was not altogether to my liking, for the old pony very well knew that she could pop me off just when she liked, particularly on the way out ; coming home nothing ever happened. Those who ride horses will very well know why this is so. I would explain it like this. When you ride a horse away from his stable, he has his eye on you and is watching your every movement. When

SCHOOL AND EARLY DAYS

he is coming home he has his eye, or perhaps his thoughts, on the stable and seldom bothers much about you. Well, these two years' schooling at Overton brought to an end the family's migration into Hampshire.

On getting back into Wiltshire the family finances would seem to have been swallowed up in a hungry farm. In any case there would appear to be very little to spend on education and therefore no alternative was forthcoming but the village school at Chiseldon. There is nothing very derogatory in this. One does at least get a good grounding in the three "R's." Mr. Stanier, the schoolmaster, was a fine old chap, and I look back to those years in the 'eighties with pride and think that some of us were fortunate to have a good foundation laid by a man of such high character and good reputation.

Well, the time came when I must wind up schooldays by finishing off with a couple of years at Swindon High School in the days of Samuel Snell. Sammy had the reputation of pushing on the smart and forward boys, and for this I can very well vouch. On reflection I can seem to see such boys as Tom Horder, Williamson (later a pillar of the Church), and then Potter major and Potter minor, all destined for good posts in later life.

There were quite a few of us farmer boys, sons of the soil, but as far as I can remember we were all in the back row. When the old man took on a class during a morning, I can see him now, putting a question on the blackboard. "Here, Wiseman," (it may very well have been Whatley), "what's the

answer? Ah, not a bit of good," the old man would say, "Horder, you can tell us," and a smile of satisfaction came over the old man's face, when, of course, the correct answer was forthcoming from the Lord to be. And then there was another renowned man at Snell's during my short stay—E. B. Maton—who afterwards filled the farming world with amazement at the beginning of this century, but I cannot think that he derived much farming information from Snell's school at Swindon. I remember that he was there as a junior master and left, I believe, after me, to start his farming career. I have often wondered how he came to do it, and can only conclude that he had a most amazing faculty to pick out his farm managers—men who knew more than he did himself. But whatever it was, the fact remains that he was in his day a most successful farmer by general consent.

By the early part of 1889 my schooling days came to an end and the very important question was put, "Are you going to be a farmer or have you an idea of something else?" As far as I can remember the question did not long remain in doubt and a farmer it was to be. Where is the farmer who has sons (I was never so fortunate) who can resist the temptation to have one around him when he leaves school just to relieve the tension? Has he not been looking forward to it for years? Is he not then provided with some cheap labour at cost price, besides someone to get up in the early mornings to give the orders for the day?

I well remember climbing up the step-ladder of

SCHOOL AND EARLY DAYS

the garden-wall in Hampshire at the age of 9 years and giving the carter the order to carry on as he was yesterday. One of my jobs on leaving school was to take charge of the threshing tackle. I rather liked the work of driving the engine, it certainly did not require so much expenditure of muscle as some jobs ; besides, it did excite the mechanical faculties, and that was useful knowledge to get even on a farm in those days.

Shall I ever forget that in February 1888 I was taking a hand at lambing, or rather giving the shepherd a hand ! It came on to snow pretty early in the day and fell for hours, great drifts came sweeping off the Downs and filled up the pen, and what a time we had digging out the lambs, and what a job we had to keep them alive. The old shepherd's hut was wellnigh full by morning, and was I not glad when morning came, for the wind howled through the cracks of the old van with a vengeance. What a winter ! The frost and snow held on until late into March, and what trouble we had with sore mouths in the lambs and bad teats with the ewes. However, these troubles came to an end, as they generally do, but they live green in the memory.

I cannot think that the late Rev. Pitt, Rector of Liddington, ever forgot the day (February 14), for he was taken over to Chiseldon in a dung-cart to conduct a marriage service. No other vehicle could surmount the drifts of snow. I am not just clear in my memory whether he did actually pick up the weather-bound bride at Badbury on

his way, a Miss Lucy Choules, but we can very well imagine that he would be chivalrous enough to do so.

It must have been Michaelmas 1892 that the next move came in my early training. Arrangements were made for me to take service with John Lawrence, of Ildstone ; a nice quiet man was John Lawrence. I think the post was called improver pupil. All the Lawrences were farmers of the old school ; they and their father before them farmed at Ildstone for many years. It is interesting and fitting to see that their nephew, Richard, is now again in occupation.

There is no doubt that a good experience in arable farming could be obtained at Ildstone, and I do not think I altogether neglected the opportunity. The social side was sound and good and always church on a Sunday morning. The Vicar of Ashbury at the time was a bachelor and a newcomer, I believe. In any case he formed a new idea of bringing law and order into the church during the hours of service by introducing a new vergers, whose duty it was to act when occasion demanded. I remember one Sunday evening one or two young men were not giving much attention to the Vicar's deliberations, consequently he stopped short and called upon the vergers to put them out ! Dabney, the vergers, walked up the aisle to carry out his duty. However, there was nothing doing, the young men definitely declined to go. Eventually the order rang out, " Go back to your seat, Dabney," and the service proceeded.

SCHOOL AND EARLY DAYS

The Vicar was of rather a musical turn of mind and gave much attention to training the choir, and on occasion when they got into a tangle he would pull them up and close the service.

I should not like to think that a few of my readers may have gathered the opinion that I am quoting fairy tales, but what I have related is perfectly true, although for the credit of the Church perhaps they should not have been recorded.

But let me proceed with the story of farming at Ildstone. The summer of 1893 was a real scorcher. It began very early in the spring and sheep-keep was at a premium. When the swedes and hay were reaching the end John Lawrence said, "Well, we must get round and try and find some feed for the sheep couples." I seem to recollect that he drove off in one direction whilst I was instructed to ride in another. Finally, we were able to find some useful water meadows in the neighbourhood of Chilton. I forget the cost, but that did not particularly matter. Keep we must have at any cost. When we got home that night John Lawrence's brother, William, had turned up to have a friendly chat and talk over the difficulties of the times. I seem to hear him greeting him something like this : "Of course, John, you know the Biblical story of old when there was famine in Judea and how Ahab and Obadiah parted the country between them, Ahab going one way and Obadiah another, so that they may save at least half of the flocks." We are told that history repeats itself : it certainly had in this case.

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The hay-crop was particularly short. That year one small hayrick was made in the lower meadows for the cows the following winter, and that we gathered together with hand-rakes, it was so short and thin.

Harvest too was quickly gathered. One reason being that the autumn manœuvres were being held on the surrounding Downs. Sir John French had a great cavalry charge on the Ashdown slopes which still lives in the memory of local people, who will recall that parched-up summer when soldiers were more in evidence than hayricks. When the "Cease fire" sounded at 4 p.m., Coate Reservoir and the nearest water were some way off for the thirsty horses. Sir John gave us of his best that day, as he did again on a later one in the South African War.

CHAPTER III

WANBOROUGH PLAIN DAYS

AT Michaelmas 1893 my father took over Wanborough Plain, a farm of some 450 acres of mostly arable land. After the preceding dry summer the ingoing valuation was a high one. Prices for the fodder crops were pretty stiff, but then we sold them off at a good price. The straw, I know, was soon cleared at around £5 per ton, and hay £12 to £13 per ton. Many years later the same situation presented itself when I came into Burderop. It really cuts both ways, provided, of course, one does not get into a tangle when signing the farm agreement. But to-day any obligation not to sell hay and straw is not tolerated, or ever will be again I should imagine. All that really matters is that one should give an obligation to keep up a good head of stock.

The date I have mentioned, 1893, was the beginning of twenty-six years of my life spent on Wanborough Plain. Years which brought many incidents to me and gave much colour to the neighbourhood. Colour was introduced by the coming, soon after I arrived, of a strong racing contingent headed by the great trainer W. T. Robinson,

later in life to be known as the Napoleon of the Turf.

Those who put their eye on this neighbourhood to-day have no conception of its appearance in those early days of which I speak. From a farming point of view there may not be so great a change, although this has undergone much variation and I very much doubt whether the output of farm produce is anything like as much to-day, but that is not to be laid to the charge of those who now farm the land. It is quite certain that, had the present-day tenants continued to practise the old methods of farming, their pockets would be now very nigh empty.

But let us get back to those early years. On my arrival my neighbours were William Chandler at North Farm, Job Kevil at the manor, Farmer Kemble at Nettlebed Farm—to-day known as King Edward Place—all farmers following the four-course system and hurdle flocks. Versed in the same system, I could not do otherwise than fall in, and so practised the same methods until I came out twenty-six years later, 1919, and I am not conscious of coming out with less than I went in.

Henry Jeans at Hill Manor followed Ferryman, who I believe left the neighbourhood because he did not feel happy at hill farming on the old lines. Perhaps this particular farm did not lend itself to the later nineteenth-century habits. It certainly was, and is, a difficult job to get up and down the hills to the Homestead with the home-grown arable crops. Henry Jeans was wise in his generation to adopt the round fence system and lay on the water.

I should put him amongst the lucky ones who got away with a bit in his pocket.

Job Kevil, the hunting farmer, was a gentleman in any crowd, but perhaps not quite fitted to push even a thin income out of farming in those days. He joined the great majority in 1894, and my wife's people followed him into the Manor Farm.

I am not quite sure whether it was in 1895 or '96 that Robinson bought up the Foxhill property, but it really is not a very important point; it is much more important to relate that from the time of his arrival important changes would seem to date.

W. T. Robinson in many ways was a great character. Whilst he possessed a hasty temper, he never lacked a generous spirit. Is his great character not demonstrated by the amazing developments to which the surrounding neighbourhood bears witness to-day? During his occupation the racing establishment at Foxhill expanded three-fold. King Edward Place sprang into existence during his first five years on the Plain, and when to-day I cast my eye on this particular piece of his handiwork, I take my hat off to his foresight. Planting those lovely belts of flourishing trees was the work of a man with an eye to the future, although he did not live to see it.

I am quite sure the present owner, E. P. Barker, appreciates the thousands spent in the day of what I call "The Foxhill boom." I can only think it was the income-bearing horses, such as Clorane, Winkfields Pride, Black Arrow and other good

winners, which attracted the wherewithal to warrant the expenditure. I have an idea that there were about three partners in this development scheme—Robinson, Capt. Machell, and a man called Seaton ; the latter died at Foxhill in the middle of these operations—poor fellow, he never saw the development as we see it.

Robinson, good fellow that he was, like most of us had his failings, and one was a streak of jealousy which would creep into his nature on occasion. Like all energetic, forceful men, they never like to be baulked in their enterprise.

When I took over the Manor Farm in 1905 he and I crossed swords. The incident occurred over the renting of Manor gallops. At the time I believe he was paying the very nominal rent of £25 per annum and I thought the moment was opportune to have a new arrangement. An extra farmhouse I did not want ; the shooting rights I could not afford ; a line of horse-boxes I could not fill, and gallops I could not use. Therefore my plan was to put all these superfluities to the land I rented, up to let in one block at a figure in the neighbourhood of £150 per annum, and since I had taken the farm at about £200 a year, I thought that I might very well be able to find the balance of the rent, that is if the bottom did not drop out of farming altogether. Naturally, my friend Robinson was not thinking along the same lines and hence the difference of opinion which was brought to a head by a real charge on horseback one morning when we both met on the Downs. If we had been

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armed with a couple of lances I hesitate to think what might have happened. However, in the end a settlement was reached and we were very good friends afterwards.

In those days both he and I did a bit of hunting, but he never quite liked to be a follower, as of course we all have to be at times. I do not care who the man is, he cannot always lead the van when following the hounds.

Before I leave the racing fraternity of the Plain, I must put in a few words relating to other celebrities of King Edward Place. I rather think the first occupier on its completion in 1901 was Eugene Leigh, who was trainer for an American named Gardener. His staff was largely composed of black men. Well, eventually Leigh and his staff went to France, but unfortunately he was unable to pack all the black blood strains in his baggage on leaving, and even to-day a trace here and there shows up in a good light.

This move ushered in my friend Metcalf. I saw a good deal of Metcalf, a man with plenty of money who spent it freely. During his time reconstruction of buildings seemed to be in progress all the year round. I remember meeting one morning the foreman of this building programme and remarked : " George, is it not about time that this building was finished ? " and he replied, " No, sir, we don't want to finish, we ain't got no other job to go to."

During the summer months most farmers' credit at the bank runs low, and it was no exception in those days. When this happened I made it my

business to look up my friend Metcalf to make a deal, either for a rick of hay, or perhaps a field of wheat to which he had taken a fancy to purchase the straw. One could always be certain of a cash transaction cemented in a glass of champagne. A good friend to a poor farmer was he.

What a memorable year was 1911 ! A hot and burning summer, about the middle of July the *Daily Mail* offered a prize of £1,000 for the fastest trip round the British Isles by air. Metcalf said that we must have a look at this show. What about a trip to Scotland by car just to see the 'planes arrive and leave ? So off we went, and fortified with a good dinner at King Edward Place, we arrived in Oxford just on the stroke of twelve. Then on again to Bedford, running through the town at sunrise. Here we got the information that the airmen had passed over some minutes earlier. However, nothing daunted, away we drove on the Great North Road in hot pursuit. Up through York and over the Border at Berwick, with no luck until we arrived at Edinburgh about two o'clock the following morning.

On nearing Edinburgh I remember leaning out of the car and enquiring whether we had reached the city, and the reply I got was, " This ain't Edinburgh, this is Musselborough." Well, eventually we did arrive in Edinburgh and managed to get into an hotel in Princes Street worn out and hungry. The bar was full of information about the fliers who, incidentally, were leaving next morning at a very early hour.

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After a little careful thinking I came to the conclusion that if we got to bed we stood a good chance of missing even a glimpse of an aeroplane. Consequently I got hold of one of the hotel staff and made him promise to pull me out of bed when the clock struck five. I could see that this would be our only chance of seeing the air-pilots start off for a point farther north, Stirling I believe. Luckily the plan worked well. I went into Metcalf's room, pulled off the bedclothes, and after many protests got him out of bed. Off we went in a taxi up to the flying-field. I can see now one of the pilots lying in a rug on the ground trying to get a few extra winks of sleep before making his hazardous journey. After about an hour of waiting, wind and light took a favourable turn and off went the brave men, not without a certain amount of hesitation about leaving the ground. Well, that is all we saw of the celebrated flight around the British Isles. So far as I remember a few minor mishaps did occur, but I have no recollection of anything serious taking place.

The three days' trip came to an end, and when I arrived home my wife hardly recognized me, since I had grown a three days' beard. So ended my second visit to Scotland. But the incidents of the year 1911 were by no means over, for it was a hot and scorching summer.

The following day was a Saturday, which called for a good look round the farm to make arrangements for the following week. In doing so my attention was called to a field of beans which I

found must be cut at once, unless I was to lose a portion of the crop. Consequently a binder was started right away in the heat of the day. This I found was a fatal move as the beans "britted" out owing to being over-ripe, and this quite frightened me. I said to my head carter, Goddard, "This won't do. You must stop at once and we must have a fresh programme. What about getting a few hours' rest and getting to work when the sun goes down?" To this he was quite agreeable. Eventually we fixed up to start two binders at nine o'clock on a Saturday night with lanterns fixed on the forepart of the machines, and worked on through the night. I was to provide a jar of beer and leave them to the job. However, about three o'clock the next morning, feeling a little restless in bed, I got up and paid them a visit, and to my satisfaction the work was going well and I left them to finish the job, which they did about eight o'clock on the Sunday morning. A field of twenty-four acres cut during one night with two binders was not very bad going, was it? Unfortunately the news soon spread, and our Wanborough parson accused me of desecrating the Sabbath Day. Well, we may have, but then we had saved the beans.

Those who remember that summer will recall the good and early harvest finished before Marlborough Fair, August 22nd. Unfortunately, gathering the harvest was a minor trouble to providing keep and water for the sheep. Roots were practically a failure and, to obtain a spring feed, rye was drilled over the fading crop.

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My flock of 500 Hampshire Down ewes took a daily walk of nearly three miles to get their fill of water. Penning on some stubbles somewhere near Chandlers Trees, they left the fold in the early morning and strolled leisurely down through the farm, feeding a bit here and there, to the brook at Lyddington, resting for three hours and then wandered back for the night. How well they thrived on the treatment and what a crop of lambs we had in the following year! Let others find fault with dry summers, but I like 'em. Stock prices may feel a draught, but yields from your straw are generally good.

CHAPTER IV

A TRIP TO AUSTRALIA AND FOLLOWING YEARS AT WANBOROUGH PLAIN

IN 1898 the Wiltshire Yeomanry presented an attraction. I say an attraction because in those days no one ever thought about the possibility of a war. We were very proud of our D Squadron with Major Goddard as its leader. In November 1900, the Wiltshire Yeomanry, as the premier regiment of Yeomen in the country, were chosen to join a contingent of soldiers representing every branch of the British Army going to Australia, to take part in the forthcoming great ceremony of federating the Colonies.

A memorable visit this, and to the unsophisticated a chance of a lifetime. Life on board a troopship for some five or six weeks was not altogether a life of luxury, but seeing life and the great experience, justified any discomfort, and so far as I can remember no one ever regretted this long and trying trip, or was he ever the worse for it.

Major Goddard and Lieutenant Fuller were our two officers. The Major, a man you would always place in the world of diplomats—in his younger days I rather think he was in the service of Her

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Majesty Queen Victoria in some such capacity—never possessed the air of a soldier, and with his eyeglass he came in for a considerable amount of ridicule from the rank and file of the regular Army. But with all his mannerisms, he was one of Nature's gentlemen, one who had learnt the true philosophy of life whilst passing through it, and in the end made a good finish. We don't all do this, do we? He was my landlord of the Manor Farm, Wanborough Plain, for many years, and as such I had the greatest admiration for him.

Lieutenant Fuller, who subsequently rose to the rank of colonel, never lacked popularity at any time, or has he since. Whether soldiering or foxhunting, he has never ceased to show that charm of manner, and hearty good-fellowship on every occasion. If I can persuade my pen to carry on this yarn to include a period of foxhunting, I may be able to tell a tale or two relating to Colonel Fuller, but that is another story. For the moment I must furnish a few more details of this Australian trip.

On the way out, the Bay of Biscay came as a shock to our nerves. The real bad sailors thought without a doubt that their end was near. Who does not when they are filled with the fear of sea-sickness and seas run high? However, these bad reactions soon pass when you begin to realize that the ship does not go under when washed by a few waves. And passing through Gibraltar into the Mediterranean you soon live again.

I rather like life on board ship. It is surprising how time goes and what interests you have to keep

you occupied. In our case we were called upon to furnish "Guard" when our turn came round. It does seem foolish to put a guard on any part of a ship in mid-ocean, but there it is : military rules and regulations must be carried on.

At Malta we had our first stop. Decked in full dress, I rather think we made a good show when we went ashore. Just imagine a thousand men representing every branch of the British Army passing in review order. Why, the occasion was unique in history. What impressed me most at Malta was the armoury of the Knights of Malta. Here we have evidence that throughout history Christendom has ever been fighting the cause of the Jew and yet he is to-day far from a settled home. But it was no business of ours to settle the troubles of the Jews, we were out to settle those of the Australians. As a matter of fact we were not clear of our own by any means.

Cheering and hand-waving was a part of the show as we weighed anchor, and then down to a dinner of hot pork and beans. I can seem to hear the sudden silence as we neared the open sea outside the breakwater. Oh, was it not rough ! Next stop Port Said, for coaling, and then on through Suez. Going through Suez with land on both sides, you rush about from port to starboard afraid you might miss something ; it all seems so fascinating.

After Suez the next call was Colombo. Leave was granted to those who wished to go ashore, and the Yeomen were never behind when a new venture was afoot. We had a few lively sparks in our party.

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Rickshaws were hired for a real good lark, and no opportunity was missed I can assure you. Lucas, a resolute kind of character, had an idea the speed was a bit slow and he took off his pith helmet, which had a spike on it, and prodded the poor fellow who was doing his best to give us a good ride on our way to the post office to pick up letters.

From Colombo to Fremantle, the Port of Perth, is a ten days' sail without seeing land. However, the weather was good, and time quickly passes, even at sea. At Perth we had a great reception. The hospitality was good, excitement great and our throats were sore when we eventually embarked again at Fremantle to cross the great Australian Bight to make a call at Adelaide. Here we found the town sweltering in a heat of 107° in the shade, which apparently is quite common during hot months. No one was sorry to leave early the following morning *en route* for Melbourne and Sydney.

In looking up my notes on this trip I see that I described Melbourne as a very fine city, and did it possess a harbour equal to Sydney it would soon develop into one of the finest cities of the world. Sydney was our real objective : here was to be the ceremony of Federating the Australian Colonies.

We must have steamed up through the "Heads," the entrance to the harbour, about the middle of December 1900, having been on board the old *Britannic* for some four or five weeks. One ought, of course, to be able to give some description of this celebrated harbour, but I am afraid my memory

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cannot be stretched to give the fullest details, but I think I am right in saying that the three miles from the outer harbour, the "Heads," to the inner quays for landing is one series of inlets and outlets, all surrounded by lovely scenery. What, of course, is the most important point about the harbour is that it carries vessels of any size, right up to the embarkation stages. Sydney is reputed to be the finest harbour in the world.

Well, our outward journey had come to an end. Disembarkation followed and a march through the city brought us to our quarters in the permanent Agricultural buildings, and very comfortably were we housed for a month's stay in Sydney.

On January 1, 1901, the great ceremony took place. Our part was really a minor one, being that of a spectacular unit, and it may be that the Australian people thought us the major unit of the show side of that spectacular ceremony. We certainly did look smart when you consider there was not absent any specimen or part of the British Army. The colour scheme did make a good effect. But whether we took a minor or major part in the re-building of Australia's Constitution, the fact remains this good work stands firm to-day. Lord Hopetoun was the first Governor-General of the Australian Commonwealth, so at least he and we gave the Australian people a good start on what appears to be a successful venture.

During our few weeks stay in Sydney the people never slackened in their hospitable impulse. They found us horses to ride and not without adventure,

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of course. I seem to have a recollection that one or two of our party were not quite the horsemen they aspired to be. Suffice it to say that the whalebone riding-horse of Australia is not of the most amenable nature, and it may be that his instinct suggested he was expected to play his part in that great spectacle.

Of course what usually happens, as no doubt it did in this case, the amateur proceeds to hang on with his spurs and then you know what happens. But with all our rough-and-tumble incidents, on the whole the horses served us well. They indeed gave us fun and frolic, particularly at the sports and military tournament. At the latter we had a great tug-of-war on horseback between the sailors of our old ship the *Britannic* and the Army. Of course, the sailors won—why, they could hold on to a horse's tail, a leg, or even his ear. Those who have seen this good fun know the sailor's tenacity for hanging on.

On January 14 the great hospitality that the people of Sydney had shown us by way of good living, theatres and parties, came to an end, and back to the old ship we marched and sailed away for Newcastle, a place of call on the way to Brisbane, where another great "do" was staged. Unfortunately the heat increased as we neared the equator, and this was our undoing in our effort to do justice to the hospitality of Brisbane.

All might have been well had the people of Brisbane been acquainted with the tale told by the late Lord Fisher. His Lordship, when serving as a

junior officer, was invited to take the ratings of his ship, which apparently was in port, to an entertainment given by the Mayor of Liverpool. The Mayor, wise in his generation, took the precaution to limit the supply of beer, and as the evening was drawing to a close Lord Fisher rose to thank the Mayor for his hospitality in language something like this: "Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the ship's company I must thank you for this great entertainment; the food has been excellent and as for the beer, well—Jack, hand me up the beer to drink the Mayor's health." Back came the reply from Jack: "Beer! Why, there ain't no beer, it's all gone." The end of the tale, of course, is that more was soon forthcoming, and the men marched back to their ship having received the order, "Arm to arm, quick march." It may be, of course, that no one seemed to think it necessary to take these precautions when dealing with the British Army in Australia.

What really happened to the Army in our case was that the day was hot, the march long, the men thirsty, and the beer good, but whatever the cause, the end of the spread brought trouble. I am not sure that even half the soldiers ever reached the ship standing in harbour that night. I am not sure that one or two ever did return to parade on this trip. By a stroke of luck the Yeoman all answered "Present" next morning when the roll was called, and so came to an end our call at Brisbane.

January 22 brought us into Hobart to hear the news that Queen Victoria was seriously ill, and the next day information reached us that her long and

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useful reign had come to an end. This unfortunate news rather damped the programme fixed at Hobart. Tasmania is a lovely island, the climate is so temperate, and the vegetation was refreshing after the drought of Australia. Fruit of all kinds simply abounds in Hobart, and how much safer it proved to be rather than the beer of Brisbane.

On our way across to New Zealand we called in again at Melbourne. The Queen's death raised a doubt as to whether we should continue the round trip. However, fresh instructions must have arrived on our reaching Melbourne, and then off we sailed again for the Bluff, the most southern part of the South Island. I note from my diary that we arrived at the Bluff harbour on February 5 and left Auckland on the 19th. During this fortnight we travelled the whole of New Zealand, either by land or sea.

A good deal of travelling was done in the train, and when this occurred, the old ship was sent on to a fresh port and waited our arrival. By general consent this was the most delightful part of the whole round journey. We spent a night at most of the large towns ; to mention a few, Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and finally Auckland. The hospitality was great and the enthusiasm of the people really outrageous. I have an idea that the welcome was so great that one or two of the regulars made up their minds that life in New Zealand compared to the Army was too good to leave.

You can quite imagine how quickly rumour of this sort ran round the ship on leaving, but what makes me think that there was a margin of truth in this

one, is that when we were running out of harbour a good old lady ran out of her cottage and waved a Scotsman's bonnet. She was a proud woman that day, she evidently had a soldier for keeps.

The journey back to Suez calls for very little comment, except that I must mention our stokers had been giving trouble for some weeks, in fact a mutiny broke out one day in New Zealand and the guard with fixed bayonets was called in to quell it. This made the Captain short-handed in his crew, with a consequent drop in speed. However, volunteers from the Army were soon forthcoming, anything for a change. I remember having a week at this stoking of the old ship, but it was a real black job.

We pulled in again at Melbourne, Adelaide and Colombo, and arrived at the entrance to the Suez Canal on March 30, and in passing through the old ship got into trouble. A very rough wind sprang up and we did hear that the steering was bad. Whatever it was the old ship got stuck on a sand-bank when passing through the Salt Lakes. All sorts of dodges we tried to get her off, first tugs and then disembarking the soldiers, and finally unloading the coal-bunkers, but nothing would move her, and there she stuck for at least a fortnight. This indeed was a setback, particularly to some of us farmers who were due back home for the spring and summer work. However, four of us set to work making enquiries about getting our discharge, and eventually this arrived from the War Office, and on April 8 we took passage on a P. & O. liner for Marseilles.

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This took all the cash we could find, but that did not matter, we would get as far as we could and trust to luck.

On arrival at Marseilles we put up at a good hotel and immediately cabled home for cash to pay our fare and hotel expenses. The hotel manager was quite decent about it, fed us well, and he was eventually paid his bill.

Travelling across France for twenty-four hours in a third-class railway compartment was not a very good finish to the round trip, but a day in Paris to wind up was better, and home the following day to find ourselves looked upon as real travellers, as indeed we were. The old ship *Brittanic*, I believe, arrived at Southampton about the same time as we did in London, but that did not matter, we had seen a bit more of the world.

Whilst still in the Yeomanry I had the good luck to be one of those chosen to attend the Coronation of King Edward VII on August 9, 1902. I have never seen such a collection of the Crowned Heads of Europe, and never shall again ; neither will London. Too many fell at the end of the Great War, some never to rise again. Kings, Queens and members of Royal Families do make a good show after all, and surely life will lose something if we clear it of all that is spectacular and picturesque.

On this occasion Kaiser William II was at the top of his form, and I remember, too, seeing Lord Kitchener well mounted and looking his best. Were not these two giants a few years later the great leaders of the opposing forces in the Great War, and I think

it will be generally admitted that Kitchener laid the foundation for our final victory. Will historians give the former a clean bill when later they sum up the troubles of Europe? I hardly think so. I often wonder what his mind reflects when he ponders over his early handiwork, sitting safe in his castle at Doorn. Enough, it is not my work to write politics, let's get back to the countryside where I shall be more sure of my subject.

To get the first stripe in the life of a soldier is a most exhilarating moment. You begin to feel that you are a man of authority. I remember going out to spend the evening at Stallpits Farm with James Lawrence, brother of the one at Idstone, a man full of good humour and one who loved a joke, saying, "Charles, have you heard the story of the old lady who had a son in the Army? The good old soul was proud of her serving son and particularly so when he obtained his first stripe. On being asked what rank he now held, she replied: 'Well, I am not quite sure whether it's a Corporal or a General, but I am sure it's a 'ral, and I am proud of it, he's a good boy.'"

One or two more camps on Salisbury Plain brought soldiering days to a close. Just about this time Jordan's Farm, situated at the Wanborough end of the Plain, was handed over to me from the late Albert Deacon, which gave me another 250 acres of arable land to tackle. I could hardly expect my father to carry too big a burden whilst I was away soldiering. Consequently, with many regrets, I retired on the rank of senior sergeant.

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Two years later my father-in-law gave up the Manor Farm, thus linking up my holding from Chandlers Trees to Wanborough, which gave full employment for the next fifteen years.

This stretch of land, some 1,200 acres, lying as it did half-way between two villages, did not lend itself to a full complement of farm labour. Cottages on the farm were few. To meet this shortage during the summer season, it was necessary to find some attraction by way of employment during the winter months.

I have never thought a threshing machine proprietor made a fortune out of the job and, since I have been one for many years, my books do not prove to me that I am wrong in coming to this conclusion. But when living on Wanborough Plain I must admit this winter business did fit in very well and gave me most years a plentiful supply of labour to deal with seasonal work.

Furnishing a threshing machine with six men and a van to live in is a solution to finding labour on these out-lying farms. There is no secret about it for I copied the principle from the late Arthur Stratton. I am always proud to think that I had one feature of business in common with such a progressive man. Speaking of Arthur Stratton, he was the mainspring at a later date (1917) to my owning steam-tackle. He it was who organized the Government programme for three new sets to come into Wiltshire during the Great War. As far as I can remember he had two and I had the other, and £3,300 apiece was the outlay, paid for on an instalment system. This was

not a bad investment at the time and they did earn a good income during the subsequent years, but they are not worth much to-day, although still at work, and will do their share in the 1940 ploughing programme I hope.

One summer I managed to work in another very pleasant trip, and this time to Norway. It came about by a pure accident, or at least I in my ignorance thought so. My sister, during her spare hours whilst running the house, started in on pedigree poultry. This I presume qualified her to take a pupil who happened to be a young lady. This lady took her holidays about midsummer, her home was in Hull and her father a captain on a boat doing regular service to Norway, and when she reached home she persuaded the Captain to invite me to join his ship for a trip to Norway. A most enjoyable holiday it proved to be, but I am afraid I never paid the bill quite in the way that I was intended to.

My most successful year was 1907, when I was in occupation of these upland farms. Getting married should always be a very important step to take in any man's life, and to me it was a master step from every point of view. I cannot say more, and I shall leave it at that, and be happy in doing so. London and the Channel Islands was the first arrangement for the honeymoon holiday. However, one day when basking in the sunshine at Jersey, we had time to take a look at the daily papers and discovered the price of wheat was advancing to an unusual degree. We therefore decided to extend the holiday and spend a few days in Paris. Paris

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is a poor place without cash, and to enable us to reach home an appeal to the banker was made for yet more funds. This I admit was rather an extravagant start on which to begin married life, but then one hopes to get married only once in a lifetime, and so why not make a good job of it?

In 1909 my father took a trip to Canada. I remember on his return we were dealing with a very troublesome harvest. This worried him much, and the family's great loss came the following November when he died at the age of sixty-seven.

However well started in life one may be, at the death of a father, when the time comes to remove the prop, a feeling of isolation creeps in for a time, which is only natural, and in my case it was real loss. My father and I had worked out together many business schemes, and his good judgment had warded off many a jar which might otherwise have come my way had his foresight not barred the road.

I can remember the late Francis Walker, our neighbour at Chiseldon, coming to me in Swindon Market and paying him this compliment: "Charles," he said, "you have lost your father, and I am truly sorry, but you have the satisfaction of knowing that he was a man who brushed away difficulties with a real vigour, as some of our warriors did of old." That truth certainly filled me with courage to carry on the management of the Badbury Farm in conjunction with brother Walter, who had luckily just finished a couple of years experience in Canada. Walter unfortunately was not too strong on his chest, and left in 1911 to start his career in

Australia. I have never seen him since. One thing to his credit in his new country is that he has given her (his country) a long family ; after all, a rising population must be an asset to a country like Australia. Not that he has done too badly in his farming operations, for he certainly has got ahead a bit during these last few years and is now farming a thousand acres.

Farming at Badbury involved the starting of a fifty-cow dairy, a new experience to me ; but there was no avoiding the issue, it suited the farm and to milking we must go.

During the next few years, indeed until the end of hostilities, this old family farm was kept in being as a home for the returning warriors. Norman eventually took over the Badbury Farm. The other fighting member of the family, Harry, who before the War was farming in Canada and was never very happy about a return to that hard and inclement country, was eventually brought into the scheme of farming at the Ogbourne end.

Horse-dealing is a fascinating occupation, and happy is the man who can make it pay when farming a useful track of land. I cannot say I ever felt particularly happy at it, and it therefore follows that I never made much money out of it. My spasmodic deals occasionally never reached out into a real business. A good hunter got sold now and again, and perhaps a few polo ponies.

In those days we had a small club at Blunsdon. It was not exactly a Hurlingham Ground, but it gave us plenty of fun, and allowed us to train a

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pony or two for sale. Among others, Harry Deacon, Little Arkell (as we used to call him), nephew of big Thomas of Kingsdown Brewery, were members. On the occasion of the Wiltshire Yeomanry coming to Burderop Park, the Club were invited to send a team to play a match in the meadow which stands in front of my house to-day. This game, a never-to-be-forgotten one for some of us, was filled with incident—in fact more than incident, for there was a real accident before the game was over. On the Club side we had Harry Deacon, Percy Woolcott, Little Arkell and myself. I am afraid that I cannot name the full team of Wiltshire Yeomanry. Lord Long and Lord Eric Thynne I know were there. I sent on one pony by my man and took the precaution to ride the other, a real resolute fellow called “Satan,” over to Marlborough in the morning to have a look at the Wiltshire County Show and then back across the Downs to the polo match at Burderop.

Well, the game started. As you may imagine it was not altogether an International match : most decidedly a rough-and-tumble game. I was allotted to play No. 4 (Back). Presently my chance to score came, Satan and I got hold of the ball and down the field we thundered, cleared and threw off the first three of the opposing side, the last being Lord Long, playing No. 3, whom I rode off and regained the ball. Then appeared the Back, Lord Eric Thynne, between me and goal. He rode as he should to meet the ball, but by mischance his pony turned round on my approach and I took him broad-

side on and rolled him over pony and all, and that was the end of the last game of polo played at Burderop. Luckily everybody escaped with a bad shaking.

To finish the tale of Satan, the polo pony, he eventually got sold to a club at Porlock ; the man who bought him was a strong horseman. Satan really was a fine pony, full of courage, but on occasion got you into trouble unless you just knew him.

My friend Bill Withycombe invited me down to Minehead one summer during the polo season, and incidentally with an eye to business a game of polo was fixed up at Porlock. In those days the much more fashionable Dunster Lawn Club had not started, but I presume it grew out of the one at Porlock. By the by, I know of no finer site for a game of polo than the Dunster Lawn. The game itself is one that I place well to the fore in all sporting events, and to play it on Dunster Lawns in that fine setting is a real pleasure. It has been my good fortune to get a few games on this famous ground. But to return to the day at Porlock : the great Frank Rich was present with an eye to picking up a good pony or two. Satan was putting up a good show and Frank thought he would like to give him a trial, and thereupon got mounted to play the next chukka. All went well until he too got hold of the ball when playing back, and came down the field at a hard gallop, struck a goal, rode on through the goal-posts straight out of the field-gate and got half-way to Minehead before he could pull him up. I am afraid Satan never got the honour of being played

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in the London clubs, but nevertheless he was a fine pony.

Two years before the War the Swindon Polo Club came into existence. It proved good fun and brought a little business at times. Major Cecil Wilson was the Organizing Secretary and Aubrey Hastings the Captain. Two afternoons a week it was a great social gathering for the neighbourhood. Notable players turned up on occasions ; amongst them I remember the present Lord Rosebery, Rattle Barrett, Major Edwards, both of International fame, General Hurndell and Maurice Kingscote, all out to do a deal when opportunity presented itself, and then came the War and no more polo. My readers must not think that in those days the farms were left to look after themselves : polo ponies were quite handy during the summer on which to do one's farming. My programme was to ride them round the farm in the morning and then play them twice a week in the afternoon. Well, if one earned a fiver now and then the outlay was justified.

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT WAR PERIOD

OPTIMISM is a most soothing balm to fold round your daily life when all seems to be going well. For good health and true happiness no one can afford to disregard its appeal, but it can produce a frame of mind which is very misleading at times.

The general public in the days preceding the War—I must admit my mind subscribed to the same school of thought—never could bring itself to believe that a great war was imminent or even likely. People quite erroneously were hoping that war like duelling was going out of fashion and that the good sense of mankind was gradually overcoming its bad sense. How rudely was their optimism shaken in the days of 1914!

The impact of war brought changes in most people's lives. The drastic changes came to those whose accident of birth brought them into the grip of military service. In my own case my occupation and, to some extent, my age, gave colour to the suggestion that I must carry on the farms and keep business going until my two younger brothers, Harry and Norman, returned from the war; all that I

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can say is that mine was the easier task and certainly the most agreeable.

Farming during the War years was not clear of difficulties. The call to the Colours stripped us of all our young men. Labour demands in every direction forced up wages ; farm horses were required for the Army ; tractors had not arrived and when they did, towards the end of the War, it was several years later before they became reliable as an approved implement of the farm. To-day they have arrived at a state of efficiency which puts them into the category of real usefulness. Like self-binders and threshing machines, they seem now to have reached a more or less static stage of development, and in this present effort they are playing a greater part in our work of food production.

The Land Girls in those days did yeoman service in filling the posts vacated by the young men called to the fighting forces ; they drove tractors and horses. I must pay tribute to two girls who did great service by taking on the work of horsemen, driving teams regularly for several years, and when hostilities ceased both were happily married. Girls, too, were employed on fodder-baling gangs, but I seem to recollect that this proved to be rather a mistake owing to lack of proper supervision, and eventually they were replaced by prisoners of war.

Many of these men proved to be capital substitutes to fill the gaps caused by the great demand for the Army. In order to have these men close to their job I took empty cottages, one in Aldbourne and one at Shepherd's Rest, and put six men in

each under a Corporal guard. They were never the least bit of bother or trouble, and I must say they did me a great service, for by this means I was able to keep two sets of threshing tackle running full time.

What a consternation was caused in Aldbourne ! When the news got abroad of my intention to plant prisoners of war in the village, the parson wrote me a very sharp letter hinting that the morals of their country village would be endangered by my outrageous proposal and would I not give it further consideration ? But believe me, after the first excitement had passed they were accepted as a part of the working community of the village and never gave the slightest trouble.

When taking stock of the labour situation to-day in the midst of this second war, I see a great similarity to those days of 1914. The Army supplied a certain amount of help, and I was fortunate to obtain a family of Belgian refugees, four good workers they turned out to be. My wife met them at Swindon station and found them all with labels round their necks, addressed, "Whatley, Wanborough Plain."

The Land Girls made their contribution, but I must say our farm staff of men, those that were left, continued to give their services with a loyalty which was commendable, and I feel certain they will extend that same loyalty throughout this present struggle.

The great ploughing-up programme came in 1917, and when I look back I am fully persuaded the

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experience gained in those days has guided the present County Organization to avoid some of the mistakes and pitfalls of that year. I shall make no attempt to enumerate them, but one knew they existed. One assumes the Government did record them, hence the advice given to County War Committees of 1939 to appoint local scheduling committees. These to my mind have proved so far to be a sound proposition ; these men's local knowledge has been invaluable in getting to work on the right type of land to plough.

In 1917 Mr. Lloyd George introduced the Corn Production Bill, guaranteeing cereal prices and fixed wages for a term of years. This was, of course, the great draw to get farmers to put their backs into the new venture, and a great venture it proved to be.

I can recollect a conversation I had with the late Mr. Thomas Lavington, who was no believer in promises. "Ah," he said, "place no confidence in these Government offers, they will let you down for a certainty." Unfortunately history proved his words to be true ; none the less, he who would listen to such an argument was no patriot in those days of danger and stress, neither is he in these.

The County Agricultural War Committee of those days was led by Mr. Arthur White, and an excellent choice he was. No man gave more of his time ; his tact and good judgment were never in question, and he was rightly honoured with the O.B.E. at the close of the War. In my opinion Arthur Stratton made a good second in command, and his knowledge lay perhaps in his great experience of

machinery. He it was who eventually roped me in as representing this northern side of the county on the County War Committee. Dan Coombs was another who did yeoman service in the south and Ernest Pritchard for the west, to mention just a few. On this Committee I remember first meeting Richard Stratton, who has never looked back since when called upon to give time and attention to public work ; and there I must end. There were others I know, but memory carries me no further.

Finally the War came to an end. Many farmers thought the moment opportune to retire from business. I believe it was for those whose life-span had given them a good run. They certainly were getting out when they could recover their full farm investments. A "New Order" for farming was hardly likely to suit their style. I believe they were wise to make room for the younger men, and there were plenty coming out of the Army who must again be absorbed into civil life.

It proved that these older men were wise in their generation ; of course they had no intention of doing it, but they did let in the younger generation to start at top prices, which was their undoing for many succeeding years.

Prices and wages fell away at an alarming rate ; nothing would seem to stop the spiral spin downwards. The Corn Production Act was swept from the Statute Book, and the farming community left to stew in their own juice. I really believe that those farmers who were fortunate enough to make money during the years of the War lost it, and in

some cases more during the ten years following the last Great War. But then farmers were not the only people who received these great shocks.

At the close of the War Jimmy White, the great financier, appeared in our neighbourhood. Rumour had it that he was a millionaire, and there is no doubt he was. I believe he started life as a stonemason, and like most men of courage he seized the opportunity during the War years to keep buying anything that came along, whether it was cotton mills, theatres, and, I presume, stocks and shares of every description, and like all these men when they acquire great wealth, they must have a racing stud with a country estate. At the time Foxhill and King Edward Place were both vacant. Robinson had died towards the end of the War, and Metcalf was killed in the front trenches of France during 1918.

All this property I believe Jimmy White bought at a low figure, racing having dwindled to a very low ebb during the War years, but it was rather amazing how quickly it got going again.

During the summer of 1919 I can remember spending an afternoon with Harry Cottrill at Bath Races—he, I believe, was a temporary tenant of Foxhill at the time—just to find out whether Jimmy White had a keen appetite to buy the adjoining farms to his racing property. Being well assured that he was a man of wealth with keen desire to invest in farming, I was very well satisfied with my little journey to Bath.

During the following weeks negotiations were put

in motion and finally a deal was brought about, bringing to an end my twenty-six years on the Plains of Wanborough, twenty-six years full of incident, some pleasure and not altogether unprofitable.

Major Bland came on the scene as Estate Agent, and I must put it on record, it was through no fault of his that Jimmy White's farming career came to such an early close. Jimmy White was a great gambler, and like many of these men, their time is short, but they do move at a great pace when they get going, and pace tells in the end.

Rumours began to get about that all was not well with his affairs in the world of finance, and when the flock and herds of cattle left the farm we began to realize his gambles were coming to an end. Report has it that even then he might have recovered had he exercised a little patience, but no, he preferred to call finis ; motoring down from Town late on the last night to his well-appointed home at King Edward Place, he went to bed, never to rise again. Apparently a strong sleeping draught had done its work, and so ended the career of Jimmy White.

CHAPTER VI

BURDEROP

AT Michaelmas, 1919, following the War, farming at Burderop commenced. The farm had been in hand for many years. I rather think the last tenant was a Mr. Pearce Brown. I just remember the old gentleman. He got very deaf in his declining years, retired to Baydon and came down regularly to Swindon Market. One day as he walked into the Corn Exchange, seeing an old friend he shouted in a loud voice, "Keylock, I am very sorry to hear that you have taken to horse-racing." The whole crowd of people looked up and had a good laugh at poor Keylock's expense, and then the old man seeing the consternation he had raised muttered to himself, "Deaf people talk loud, deaf people talk loud."

Well, Burderop, as I have already remarked, had been in hand for many years. I remember it first under the direction of Henry Kemble, who in those days was also the occupier of Overtown, a farm adjoining the Estate, and by the by in those days he was Secretary to the Cricklade Hunt. Henry Kemble was, I understand, unable at that time so to organize the property to show an

income. This fact, I believe, brought Mr. Ashford on the scene about the year 1893. To him very much credit is due in restoring the Estate to a paying proposition. During his forty-five years as Estate Agent, twenty-six of which he also managed the home farm, the property has been regenerated out of all recognition. It might be argued that the return has been a minor one, but those who think this must remember the reconstruction of farm property to meet the need of modern farming was most necessary, following the declining return from arable land which set in during the 'nineties. It was imperative to introduce the product of milk if the farms were to be a lettable proposition. Had he not moved along these lines there was no possibility of his maintaining his rent roll. Mr. Ashford has the satisfaction of knowing that when he gave up farming Burderop he was able to hand over some twenty thousand pounds to the credit side of General Calley's banking account. I well recollect my contribution to this amount, for I was called upon to write a cheque for over £9,000 for the valuation, including only hay, straw, tillage and tenant's fixtures. It had never been my experience, nor has it since, to make such a sudden raid upon my banker. I am quite conscious that since that date I have given him a shock or two, but bankers soon survive when you make the slightest hint that even banks must be keen competitors in business.

It took me many years before I felt quite confident to deal with a new set of circumstances which

presented themselves at Burderop. A 1,000-acre farm, 400 of which were heavy arable, and a dairy of 100 cows, was a proposition which at least was a little strange after such a long experience on the light and sheep lands of Wanborough Plain.

Agricultural prices began falling like butter before the sun, but what of course actually happened was one's trading account did not show signs of bad management, but it was the horrible loss of capital which struck terror into one, and I must admit that my courage was never so severely shaken as each Michaelmas, when accounts were cast, the figures never seemed to plumb bottom.

I am not suggesting that my own case was singular by any means. Those were very difficult years which followed the War, and there is little doubt this was happening throughout the farming world. When those times of stress arrive, and they do in most people's lives, one should take stock of one's philosophy of life and if possible slip in a compensating gear, or in other words one must change the wave-length. I am not quite sure that I was ready to do this sort of thing : business had too much engrossed my life up to this period.

Recreation under ordinary circumstances one should never fail to carry on ; it does put a spring into your life which is most invigorating and it gives the mind relief from its toils and allows it to regain a new balance. It is very important to those who have business of any kind, large or small, that this lesson should be well applied early

in life. There are cases, of course, where this medicine of recreation is not strong enough to institute a break from the contact of business and worries. To meet this state of affairs it is imperative that one should take a look at another side of life, in other words work away at some new occupation which will eventually become a real pleasure when one's ordinary business fails to interest.

During this trying years I must say that my landlord, General Calley, was ever ready to meet these difficult times, and without fear of contradiction I place him as the most popular man in Wiltshire in his day. I use the word "popular" without hesitation, for no one can attain popularity unless he is well supplied with Nature's gifts, and these General Calley had in full measure. I count myself honoured to a high degree when I claim to have farmed his land, joined his shooting parties, followed him over the Cricklade Vale and supported him in his politics. In the world of Freemasonry I accompanied him on many occasions. He was a man who could always find something in common with everyone he met, and he radiated good humour under any circumstances. Shall I ever forget attending a funeral of a mutual friend! We were walking together across a meadow adjoining the church, when he suddenly said to me, "Charley, there is more grass here than we seem to have at Burderop." My reply was, "Ah, General, it's better land here."—"Nothing of the sort," he rang out, "it's better

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farmed.” Of course he bowled me out first ball, and there was nothing more to say.

He sat as Member for the Wroughton area of the Wilts County Council for many years, and I have little doubt that he used his influence to obtain me a seat as Alderman of the Council on the death of Stephen Butler in the year 1925.

In 1923 an opportunity occurred to extend the business by taking over another 1,000-acre farm at Ogbourne St. Andrew. The Olympia Company's short career of farming had come to an end by the death of Lord Manton. My brother Harry had been managing this farm on the Estate of Lord Manton, and it seemed a good proposal that we should take it over, seeing that the top end practically joined Burderop, and thus linking up the two farms, one heavy and the other light land. The prevailing situation at the time did make it appear a doubtful move, but time has proved it was a sound proposition.

There is to my mind a tremendous advantage in farming a variety of soils. You are able to move livestock about to meet seasonal changes ; more particularly does this apply to a flock of hurdle sheep. If you are on light and dry land in winter and then give the heavy land a turn in the summer, you need never be unhappy in a rainy period for the well-being of the livestock on your land.

It was also in 1923 we began to think about Tuberculin Tested milk. The thinking about the job was an easy problem compared to the carrying

it out. The first veterinary examination disclosed a situation of over 50 per cent. reactors in a herd of 100 cows. However, in spite of misgivings and advice not to take the step, the move was made by establishing a new dairy for the reactors at some off-lying buildings, and to this day I have never regretted this violent step. To put it in moderate language it had added several hundred pounds per annum to the farm's income. Therefore there is no reason to find fault with the initial move in 1923.

There is another method practised at Burderop which may be of interest, and one perhaps which will raise a certain amount of criticism. We have given up rearing our own stock to refill the dairies. In my particular case it certainly has proved more profitable. I find that if your milking equipment is on a large scale and land specially suitable for milk, costs of production are lowered by driving this equipment and the land to its utmost capacity, and therefore, milk every cow you can every day in the year. In my opinion there are plenty of farms, light in character, not suitable for milk or milking where young stock can be raised in more healthy conditions to fill our dairies from time to time. I can well imagine it a very profitable business to raise T.T. stock on many of these upland farms, for the future will bring a good demand for this class of stock.

For some years it has been our practice to use black poll Angus bulls in the herds. We find less bother with the calving, and the calves meet a good

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demand to wean for fattening purposes, but I have my doubts whether this cross does eventually produce good fattening animals. In fact I have decided to change over to the Hereford bull, which I have good reason to believe will be a great improvement.

CHAPTER VII

A HARVEST HOME IN 1938

THE historic custom of having a harvest home has been allowed to lapse of late years, perhaps owing to the fact that farming has been under a very heavy cloud ; this certainly is a matter of regret and not only is it a matter of regret but rather a short-sighted policy.

To-day we are straining every nerve to make the country-side more attractive, and not only attractive but to make those who have their occupation and business on the land, feel they are people of real importance to the nation.

I am confident that this effort would be stimulated if the practice of holding an annual harvest home would again become popular. One knows, of course, that it is not always easy or convenient to arrange. Sometimes parties are too small, perhaps the harvest too prolonged or even too disastrous, but surely the difficulty of too small a number can be overcome by the joining together of neighbours, or the farmers in an agricultural village might co-operate and run a show together. If such parties were arranged, the county M.P. could be invited to make an appearance, not to talk about politics,

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but to talk about the land, crops and stock, and the importance of the country-side as a unit in the national picture.

To illustrate my point a little further, let me make an attempt to picture such a gathering which took place on my farm last week. The barn building, holding about 100, was cleaned up—this, by the by, I rather expect in most cases is not overdue—the electric light laid on, and the tables nicely decorated with flowers, and newly threshed wheat in sacks made most comfortable seats, and incidentally stopped all the draught to the feet, and finally the piano was moved up from the house, which completed the setting for a jolly evening. I had nearly forgotten the most important feature of all, and that is the provision of the meal. This was done by a local caterer, and consisted of English cold meat, sweets and cheese, but not the beer ; this was ordered as a separate item, which ensured equal distribution.

The farmer, his family and guests and farm staff dined together, and to complete a most enjoyable evening, a pianist and songster was engaged to entertain after the dinner.

The host naturally led off with a necessary speech of welcome and recounted the difficulties of the farmer, and said that of course his only wish was that the seasons would let him run to a harvest home every year.

The occasion was seized upon to bestow a word of praise to the heads of departments, for in most cases they were well deserved, and incidentally the oppor-

tunity was taken to install a new foreman. But the charm of the evening was reached when eventually one got these pilot men on their feet : they knew what to do. The excitement, the wit and humour which passed was amazing. The chief engine-driver was called upon for a song, and he advanced steadily towards the piano and then turned and asked if he was permitted to say a few words. " Well," he said, " I should like to congratulate the new foreman on his appointment. I have worked with him for many years, and I am quite certain the governor is right in giving him the job. Jim—I beg his pardon—Mr. Pressy, is a man who can do a day's work and knows what a day's work is, and I think we shall all get on with him the very best." Much to the master's satisfaction, this speech was received with great acclamation, bringing as it did good feeling all round and an atmosphere of unity.

Later on the new foreman was called upon to respond, and naturally was a little nonplussed as to how to tackle the new situation. However, he got into his stride by saying, " I am a little nervous in taking on the new post ; however, by the expressions of goodwill I am encouraged to take on the job. I am just a little shy with some of these head dairymen and head shepherds. They know a bit too much about their jobs for me to interfere on their domains ; however, I feel quite sure that I shall get their support, and as for the master, well, I have worked for him a good many years, and I think I shall know how to manage him. He men-

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tioned early on that unless a good harvest was assured there could be no harvest home. Well, I shall see that we get a good harvest next year, and we must all hope this will bring another jolly evening."

Then followed the head shepherd, full of anxiety to express his sentiments on the evening's entertainment. He hadn't got very far before someone chipped in to say, "Now then, Charley, can't 'ee make a better speech than that? Why damn'ee, you goes up to that shepherds' supper every year, 'avn't 'ee learned nothing up there?" Then the shepherd, being challenged, has another go. "Well," he said, "it's all very well for you engine-drivers to talk, but the governor tells me this 'ere threshing business don't pay, but he did tell me that he got a bit of profit out of sending a few rams out to Germany."

The head dairyman rises to put in a spoke for the dairy staff. "Now, sir, I would like to say a word for my mate. He has given me no end of help during the last year and I feel quite certain I shall get it again this next winter. Now you chaps that belongs to my staff at the dairy, the governor tells me we shall get a smaller income from the milk this year. Now what are we going to do about it? Well, we must all pull together and see if we can't make the cows give a drop more milk."

Finally a call is put in for a speech from a member of the staff on an off-lying farm, and he expressed himself in these actual words :

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“ We hear a lot about Burderop,
Which is all very well and good ;
But I’m going to talk about our place,
Just as a good man should.
Over the hill by the Bourne,
We’ve a place called Ogbourne,
Where workers live long and tarry,
On a farm well-managed by Mr. Harry.
It’s a winter resort for the sheep,
As we’ve always got plenty of keep,
Every man there for work has a thirst
For we’ve always the harvest in, first.
So if you’re ever in trouble or doubt,
Send for Ogbourne and they’ll get you out.”

N. B.

Then “ Auld Lang Syne ” and “ God save the King,” and we all woke up next morning and talked over the enjoyable evening spent, with every intention of working for another next year.

CHAPTER VIII

BURDEROP ON THE AIR

FOUR of my men at Burderop were invited to take part in a broadcast discussion on the farm-workers' part in the present war. Mr. Anthony Hurd took them to the microphone. With the permission of the B.B.C. I am reproducing their talk here.

Farming To-day

The Farm Worker's Part

Thursday, May 30th, 1940 : 6.15-6.30 p.m.

A. H. : Before this war is over the nation is likely to want every bit of food that can be produced at home. It is not so much a question of food shortage or possible starvation as a matter of saving shipping for the most urgent war needs. People must be fed and the men who are doing that job in our own fields at home are performing national service of first importance.

This evening I've brought to the studio four farm workers from my own county—Wiltshire—and I'm going to ask them to tell you in their own

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words something about their jobs and the part they are taking in the nation's war effort.

Now, Mr. Pressy, you know about the national effort to plough another two million acres of grass-land for cropping this season. Actually 2,034,000 acres have been ploughed and Wiltshire has done its share well with 42,600 acres. How have you and your fellow-workers been getting on with this job.

J. P. : Well, Mr. Hurd, speaking from the farm-worker's point of view we look upon it as a very easy job for the officials in Whitehall to give an order for 2,000,000 acres of fresh land to be broken up, and it's all very well for the County War Committee to drive round the country-side and mark off the fields to be ploughed. But after all it is we farm workers who have to do the donkey work in ploughing the land, sowing the seed, harvesting the crop, and threshing the corn, all extra work for our already depleted staff, but I can assure you we shall put our backs into the work. Provided we can have assistance during harvest, I believe we shall do it all right.

We are not blind to the fact that we farm workers have been placed in a reserved occupation during wartime so that we can make a big effort to keep the people from starving. Those of us who fought in the last war know only too well that ours is a better job than fighting in the trenches.

A. H. : Yes, I am glad to know that you are all stout-hearted enough to face whatever is ahead. Tell me, foreman, what is your opinion about

ploughing up a further acreage for next year and an extra harvest in 1941? Do you think the farm staff will be equal to dealing with still a bigger harvest?

J. P. : Well, I think that very much depends upon what extra labour can be found to give us assistance. If the fighting forces will leave us a good foundation in our well-trained men we don't mind working in a few untrained people if they have got a will to work. Land girls and strong schoolboys can be very useful during hay and corn harvest. Why, back in my early days we used to have quite a lot of women to work on the land during the summer months and even in the winter they would come out and cut the bonds when we were threshing.

A. H. : Now is there any other direction, do you think, where we might look for a bigger yield from the land?

J. P. : Yes ; previous to my present job, for many years I was driving a threshing machine moving about from farm to farm, and during that time I came across some very low yields per acre. I expect the same thing goes on to-day. What these fields want is more put into them and then bigger crops will be grown. I always found the best yields on the farm where the farmer kept a flock of sheep. And you know we landworkers know when land is being properly farmed, and when it isn't—and there's too much bad farming about to-day. One day the war committees will have to get after these slack farmers.

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A. H. : Yes, I am sure you are right. Have you been troubled with wire-worm this spring?

J. P. : I can say "yes" to that question, although we are not so bad as some, but I have noticed that where we put the corn in after heavy rains, and really planked the land down hard the crop has come up well and strong. Our later sowings put in under these conditions have been quite successful.

A. H. : Now, Mr. Durston, you are the head dairyman over a big herd of cows. Tell us, will you, how you think the milk of the country will be affected by this ploughing up and shortage of pasture?

W. D. : I think, Mr. Hurd, that our cows should give us as much milk in wartime as they did in peace, but that has not proved to be the case in the first six months of the War. This can be attributed to the fact that our cake was inferior, and not being able to get an adequate supply. Our cows are out to grass now and yields are very satisfactory, which will help to balance our winter shortage. Of course, all these extra acres going under the plough will make our grazing land scarcer and also we shall not have as many hayricks for the coming winter, but we hope to have more good oat straw which will be a good substitute for one feed of hay.

I shall hope to see the governor make more silage, and if I can only get the same ration of cake as I did last winter I don't see the milk supply falling off much.

A. H. : How are you off for staff at your dairy?

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W. D. : Well, sir, we might have been better, but then we might have been worse. This drift from the land has been caused by camp contractors paying these high wages, but if the Government would guarantee the farmers a fair price for their produce it would enable them to pay a good minimum wage to compete with this.

Of course, a good milking-machine helps to solve this labour problem, as in our own case with an eight-unit parlour type machine and washing-stalls attached. Six men and myself milk 110 cows in the winter. In the summer there are four men and one girl, which speaks for itself. We farm chaps don't mind a bit of hard work, and shall stick to our guns, but it is a bit galling to us to see these big wages paid to casual labourers, for I think everyone will agree that the farming industry takes one of the foremost positions on our Home Front.

I am very glad to see that the Government have now taken this matter in hand and we hope we shall now see wages put on a more equal basis.

A. H. : I quite agree with you. It is one of these vicious things which does grow up in wartime. We can all see now it is one of those matters which should have been put right at the start. I am afraid you and I can't settle it. Now tell us, have you any land girls in your dairy ?

W. D. : Yes, I am training one and she is coming along very well. I think this is the best time of year to train these girls. They then have an opportunity to get into their work before winter-time when the work is not so pleasant and agreeable.

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A. H. : Now, let's hear what the head carter has to say. You, Mr. Marchant, are in charge of the horses on this big farm in Wiltshire. I hope you have kept them hard at work during the spring sowing ?

W. M. : Yes, Mr. Hurd, we have been working late many days this spring, sowing the corn, and I expect we shall have to put in many overtime hours during the hay and corn harvest. But horses are like men, they get tired after working their usual hours, and for that reason I am very pleased to see the tractors doing a fair amount of this extra work. We are particularly well equipped with machinery, and we've been able to get on well with the job. Of course a tractor don't get tired like the horses, and what I say is, that it's a far easier job for a man to ride on the seat of a tractor than it is to walk behind a team of horses all day.

A. H. : I am sure it is, but then we can't do without your horse teams.

W. M. : That's just as I see it, Mr. Hurd. We have got so many jobs on the farm which only the horses can do. There is waiting on the sheep and cows in winter ; hauling the corn from the fields in the summer is far better done by the horses ; horse-hoeing, hay-turning and -raking can only be done by the horse after all. But there is one job I am pleased to see taken away from the horse and that is hay-sweeping. That was a horse-killing job, and I am glad to be rid of it. Then there is another useful job for the horse in the winter, hauling out the cow dung from the winter stalls.

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The governor has bought one of these dung-spreaders and I can see a good deal of saving in labour by using one of these machines for spreading the dung in the fields.

A. H. : Very well, carter, I can see you are one of the most useful men on the farm, although you perhaps have to walk when the others can ride. I believe, too, you are very fond of your horses and that's all to the good.

Now shepherd, I believe you are one of the family of Swattons who for many generations have been shepherds in Wiltshire. We should like you to tell us how the war and the weather has affected you during these last eight months.

C. S. : Yes, it is quite true my family for years have all taken to sheep. My father before me, and since he gave up work I have been in charge of this Hampshire Down flock of sheep. He took over in 1908 and since 1920 I have been head shepherd.

A. H. : That's a good record. How did you manage to get through this bad winter?

C. S. : Well, we have had a pretty hard struggle. Since Christmas I have never known such bad weather for hurdle sheep, not since I have been shepherding. On Christmas Day I looked round and came to the conclusion we had more good swedes than I had seen for years, forty acres of the best it was, and then by Lady Day every one had gone rotten, and there wasn't a sound swede left in the field. The master said I must pitch the hurdles over 'em and make up with a bit of extra hay.

The usual cake and corn ration had to be cut down and that didn't help matters much. I can tell you I was pleased to get away from those poverty-stricken root fields, and get on to some early grass. I told the master we were very lucky to get the results we did after having to go through such a trying time—the sheep as well as myself!

A. H. : This nice growing weather must have gladdened your heart a bit I should think.

C. S. : Yes, since I have been able to give 'em a bellyful they have done better, and we have already had the first draw of fat lambs.

A. H. : That's good. Tell us, how is this ploughing up programme going to affect your hurdle flocks?

C. S. : Well, I have been looking at a few of these ploughed-up pastures and it looks to me that the hurdle sheep will be wanted more than ever. I can see the wire-worm busy in every direction and I think to get rid of them you will have to get in some green fodder crop, and then feed them off with hurdle sheep. The treading by the sheep will put paid to the wire-worms, and give us better corn crops, which I think is what we want in wartime.

A. H. : Now I should like to ask the foreman a question about these farm tractors. You can remember the time, I expect, when the horses were called upon to do all the work of the farms. You will agree that the coming of the tractor has taken away much of the hard work, both of the horse and the man.

J. P. : That is perfectly true, a tractor on rubber

tyres is the most useful implement we have on the farm to-day ; in fact no up-to-date farmer should be without one. It saves time, it saves labour, and I am sure it will do its share in helping us to produce more food, but although tractors are a very useful implement, as the carter has already said, riding on a seat all day is quite an easy job. Compare the tractor driver's job with many others. Take our lorry drivers, they have been loading straw to the railway station during the evenings, and that takes a good deal of heavy labour, and I must say they have been very willing workers and have never grumbled when asked to do extra work.

I can assure you, Mr. Hurd, farm workers generally will pull their weight in winning this war. I want to appeal to all my fellow-workers to put in a bit of overtime now and through these summer months: Root-hoeing for instance, is a thing that must have attention at the right time. If not, the roots get in a bad mess and they may have to be ploughed up. Then all our labour is in vain.

A. H. : I'm glad you mentioned that. Even if the working day is long, we've all—like the munition workers, got to put the job first and, if necessary, work unlimited overtime to make a really good job.

CHAPTER IX

ARABLE OR GRASS?

HAVING finished off an earlier chapter by a dive into farming principles, I will make an effort to set out a few facts and features on arable farming on which experience has given me an object lesson. I am well aware that what I shall record will be already known to many of my contemporaries, but even they will, I am sure, agree that it is not a bad principle to refresh one's memory from time to time. Certainly a little reflection keeps one from running off at a tangent in a hurry.

During the last half-century arable farming has undergone many changes, the fact that arable acres have continued to fall since the last war is strong evidence that without careful management and what I call a dovetailing principle, arable farming has been a difficult proposition for many years. But I do feel that, with the proviso I have mentioned, there has never been the necessity for the radical change which has possessed the minds of some people.

We have certain gentleman writers who have glorified the grass farmer to a pedestal of fame. They would seem to infer that a farmer to get a

living must lay his farm down to grass and either have a flock of sheep with a dog, or he must have a herd of cows with a milking bale, prepare ensilage and make hay to turn out milk.

Assume for a moment that the farming community had followed this line of thought to its fullest extent, a pretty mess the country would have found itself in at the opening of this second war. Farm equipment broken up, labour gone, and what is more fatal than every other loss that we can add to the list, arable farming sense relegated to the melting-pot.

Was it right to revert to the days mentioned in the Old Testament when Joseph's brethren fed their flocks in Shechem, or shall we draw an earlier analogy by referring to the days when Adam left the Garden of Eden? Why did he leave? Was it not that he took to romancing rather than cultivating his garden? I am not suggesting that he was ill-advised to be the first man (so it is recorded) to introduce a little romance into life, but I do think he might have made an effort to bring off a compromise.

During the last twenty-five years I recall men who launched out into this direct opposite to cultivation by laying whole farms down to grass. Where it was done on a vast scale no doubt it has been very successful, but one regrets that some men have been swept from the scene of action by so doing. I am not suggesting that this style of farming presented no credit balance, as I say on a large scale it may, but on a small scale the balance is so small

that one's labour does not meet the demands of a standard of living to which one had been accustomed. I may have overdrawn the picture a little, but surely all is not lost because you farm a few acres of arable land.

Let me draw a picture of another line of country which is not altogether a direct negative, but one which I would call a half-way system, or as I earlier described it, the dovetailing principle.

My efforts have been directed along these lines since coming out of a totally arable district. My aim has been to keep increasing the income ; this effort has naturally increased the outgoings, but I have always found that on balance it has been a wise policy to follow working along these lines. I am quite willing to admit that without due care and attention the law of "diminishing returns" springs into existence, but these cases are few and far between. I am convinced that we have too many farmers who err on the side of low production. If they thought more about bulk and talked less about price, I rather think they would make a better show.

Let me describe what I mean when I use the phrase "dovetailing." Naturally it embraces as many branches of farming as can be usefully accommodated on your farm. Milk, sheep, corn, pigs and poultry cover most of the products on an ordinary farm. I do not cover so many. I have never tackled poultry, probably to my cost. Each one of these branches helps to make the other pay. It may be that if you pick one out and treat it as an economic unit you would find the balance on

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the wrong side. Take one in particular, hurdle sheep. I often tell my head shepherd that his branch would show a direct loss was it not for the few ram lambs we are able to turn out yearly, with very little extra cost. Indeed it would be a still greater loss if one could not grow the heavy corn crops which follow the hurdle sheep.

No one will deny that it takes very little extra labour to harvest a good crop than it does a bad one. Then again, assuming you have been fortunate to harvest a good crop you possess this bulk I have been talking about to carry a few extra dairy cows, you have plenty of litter for the pigs and stubble rakings for the poultry, and again oat straw in abundance to supplement a short hay crop.

It would be foolish of me to make any suggestion to include crops under glass because in most cases it would be impractical, but I can say in my own case I find the one helps the other. I propose to say a little on crops under glass in a later chapter.

Believe me, I am not making a claim that during the years following the Great War one was right to cultivate every acre possible, but what I am arguing is that arable farming in conjunction with alternate husbandry in a limited form, is a much safer proposition than going all out for grass.

Farming Systems

It was the practice in my early farming days I know to work one's farm on either the three- or the four-course system. Quite sound in principle

whichever one you select, and even to-day we all carry these ideas very much into practice. The fact is, we are forced to if we wish to have a continuity of useful straw crops, but I have never stuck rigidly to the system.

My father used to tell me to take a crop when you can see one, and so one ought unless by doing so you get into a bit of a tangle with your sheep-fodder crops. To provide the latter in regular rotation without let or hindrance, when perhaps the weather besets you at every point, is one which will often tax the best organizer, but nevertheless I have always thought it worth while during my farming career. Good roots I will have. Really they are not too difficult to grow if one uses a little care and judgment as to the cultivation, and perhaps more so to the sowing period.

One important factor to success with hurdle sheep is that it is imperative to possess a good shepherd, and in this I believe I have been most fortunate.

The family of Swattons in north Wilts have the sheep sense to a marked degree. For some thirty-odd years, at least one member of the family has been in charge of my hurdle flocks. Their good judgment and faithful service has kept me true to the Hampshire Down breed. William, the father of my present shepherd Charles Swatton, was with me in the old Wanborough Plain days.

I remember in those days paying the flock a visit one wet morning, in fact there had been several very wet mornings, and saying, "How are they standing up to weather, shepherd?" and getting

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an answer something like this: "They are all right, sir, they will stand a wet day or two. Do you remember coming to me last September and telling I the turnips were going a bit too fast? Well, I knowed I wasn't giving 'em too much. You must give 'em the victuals when they can eat it on a clean plate, and that'll put a bit of flesh on their backs to stand again bad weather." Of course he was right and I was wrong. I have never forgotten this wise and excellent counsel.

When I look into the future I sometimes doubt whether the farming of to-morrow can continue to travel just the same road. I rather think some modification of our present management may creep in, but just how this alteration will come I am unable to offer any prophecy. Our pedigree flocks will continue to fill their niche in the farming world of to-morrow I am sure, if we agree on this. Then I am also sure that we shall find masters and men who will still aim at the top storey. To get it you must have fresh food, produced from arable land, which will involve a labour bill. To me there would appear no way of escape from such a bill, and I am not thinking we should be looking for one. Men, masters, flocks and herds, yes and straw crops in plenty will still take their place in any "New Order" which may meet the farmer of to-morrow.

Arable Cultivations

To my mind no other work on the farm needs more careful watching than this. Patience is a

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virtue we are told, I would go further and say, Patience is not only a virtue but a sheer necessity in farming arable land, unless you are prepared to be wasteful in your energy and resources.

My father was ever reminding me that you must take from Nature all the help she can render. Do not foil her good work by choking her efforts. If you want the frost get ready for it before the frost arrives. If you must have the sun, do not prepare for the frost and then expect the sun to give you a full measure of support.

I often think we are too apt to blame Nature for our mistakes when all the time it is we who have misbehaved ourselves and never given her a chance. Having opened my mouth a little wide at this point, I cannot escape further explanation. We all know the old adage, get your stubble ploughing done before Christmas, this gives the fallows a good opportunity to get well pulverized by frost for the Spring sowing. Any fool of course knows this ; yes, that's quite true ; but suppose one has a very dirty field which must have a good cleaning next summer, it may be very tempting to plough it up in the winter when you have time to spare. To my mind this is where a little patience is most necessary. Leave it alone until all possibility of frost has gone and then plough. The chances are it will come up sleek and wet with no possibility of being pulverized by frost.

These are ideal conditions for cleaning, the wind and sun will draw down between the furrows to dry out all growth. Should one be fortunate to

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be able to create these conditions, then all that is required is to turn the big chunks over at intervals, and it follows that any couch grass present will be squeezed to death by the forces of Nature.

Root Cultivations

In different counties there is, I know, a rule which governs the date of sowing and one assumes, of course, that there may be some good reason to get an early start, but this early start has never fascinated me. I do like the ground to get warm before getting in the roots and kale (other than the mangold crop). Even the latter overtakes a late start, and this late start often gives you another chance of a late skim, and this late skim will inevitably save you a hand hoe costing perhaps a pound per acre.

Too often do we see farmers plant even mangolds too early and then spend the summer trying to clean them and never succeeding. You often hear a farmer say, "I must get my mangolds and kale in early and get them hoed out before haymaking." How often do they do it? Not once in ten years. Would they not be better advised to get on with the haymaking, weather permitting of course, and then deal with the root hoeing perhaps half-way through? Surface weeds make very little growth until the land begins to get a little warm, and your root crop, too, shows a strong objection to these cold conditions. Then why ask your soil to take care of the seed whilst you are dealing with the surface weed?

Deal with the surface weed first and then put in your seed.

Professor Wrightson, late of Downton College, once said, "It is the first six months of the year which give you the corn crop, and the second the root crop." This observation of the Professor I believe to be a very true one. But do not let me mislead anyone by this statement. I am not suggesting one must wait until June 21 before making a start with the sowing—much depends upon what you require the crop for. For cows to haul off one must aim at a heavy crop and this objective will not be attained by too late a sowing, but for sheep feed one is very safe to delay until June is well in, and not sow beyond mid-July or early August, on a warm soil.

Another feature of this late sowing of roots is that your crop keeps sound and fresh late on into the autumn. The late swede will resist a winter frost far better when it is full of growing juices than it will when old and tough.

Haymaking

By close observation throughout my life I have come to the conclusion that the man who is a bad haymaker is finally left wondering why it is that he does not make the progress he thinks he is entitled to. As a rule he usually starts too late, and then makes a bulk of old stuff with neither milk nor feeding value in it, with the result that he gets a poor milk yield, in fact his flocks and herds

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suffer loss of condition throughout the winter six months by his inactivity during haymaking.

Where you find a man nippy and quick throughout the haymaking period, taking advantage of every hour of sunshine, you will invariably find that he stores away some useful hay even in a trying season.

I think Wiltshire men can claim to have speeded up haymaking to a remarkable degree. Our friend Mr. Arthur Hosier's idea of putting power behind the hay sweep has done much to gather it quickly, and how important this is. Putting your ricks in the fields has become a general practice and saves at least 25 per cent. of time which is so all-important. One sees, of course, here and there the old style of carrying the crop home, where it is safe and sound for winter consumption, still living on and perhaps rightly so in many cases. I sometimes wonder what would be their saving supposing they provided themselves with a rubber-tyred vehicle and hauled it home during winter months. Perhaps not as much as I imagine.

We see at our agricultural shows another new style in the offing for dealing with a crop of hay lying in the fields. I allude to the travelling baler. Somehow or other this machinery does not appeal to me. I cannot see it in common practice, for the simple reason that it is too expensive for the small man and too slow for the bigger one.

Harvest

The self-binder has served us well for many years. Those of us who can carry our minds back to the nineteenth century when the old self-reaper did its sloppy work, realize what a grand implement the self-binder has been. Are we now to see it replaced by the harvester-thresher? Well, it may be (but only to a minor degree) as I see it. The big corn farmer cannot disregard the great value he scores by this method of getting his crop to market.

We are led to believe, and I do not doubt it, that if you discount all your fodder value as wasted you still come home with a handsome pull over the self-binder. Well, as I say, I do not disbelieve these statements and there is little doubt but what we shall see the idea gather momentum in years to come. I believe the praises of the binder will still be sung for many years on the farms of England, and we need have no fear that one will be immediately packed off to the museum to save its type from extinction.

I have made an earlier allusion to tractors. It is really amazing when we come to reflect upon it, what a radical change the internal combustion engine has brought to the farming world. To-day it bestows energy in every department of farm life, it has lightened the load of man and beast to an astounding degree. What need has any farmer to fear the toils of the farm provided he can keep his banker smiling?

Mentioning the banker reminds me of another

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side of the farmer's life in which that much-abused word "capital" is mixed up. Does history relate—if it does I have never been able to find even a trace of it—in any period since records have been handed down, when the cry has not gone up that So-and-so has been brought down by lack of capital? Of course it is only human for the mind to prompt one to find a way out of a dilemma which has overtaken the "misfit." No doubt he finds it a balm to his soul. Who is prepared to rob him of it?

Have we not seen too the man who has had too much capital? Is it not very probably that he too may be numbered amongst the "Misfits" unless he be warned in time? Of the two cases I rather think there is more hope for the former, i.e. the one who has too little capital. That self-made capital which one has been able to get together by one's own effort is worth double any other.

During the propaganda period through which we have just passed for a plough-out programme, voices have been raised here and there on the question of capital. "Where was the farmer to find the cash to pay his way until harvest?" was a common question to put up to the authorities. Whilst one is conscious that here and there it was a vital query, I am satisfied that the authorities were right to resist up to a point any suggestion that the State should find credit beyond the £2 per acre. I believe that this rattle round for a better response from the land during wartime will

do much to revitalize the industry. Too long have some of these "misfits" encumbered the land. In the real bad cases War Committees have no option but to step in and call for a new tenancy, other offenders get cultivation orders to summer till and generally put their house in order. Who knows but it may be this strong line of action may restore a peace of mind which has been long absent from some who struggle to obtain a very thin living from the occupation of land.

CHAPTER X

PRESENT-DAY FARMING

AFTER some twenty years' occupation of a holding, it would be surprising, in fact unprogressive, did one not alter his methods of management. It has been our annual practice to have a valuation each year. In fact we make an effort to do rather more than this, and have not failed yet to draw a balance sheet at the close of each farming year. It does give one an idea not only of the collective effort, although that is the most important one, but you take the opportunity to examine each branch in detail just to see whether there is any possibility of cutting down the expenses, or if this is not possible to find some way to increase the output of a particular branch.

A great effort is made to get all this into line as quickly as possible after Michaelmas. It not only satisfies your curiosity, but you are able to get your plans well forward for the New Year. Incidentally in my own case having done this, I then feel free to put in a few days of sport during the winter months. A clear conscience is a soothing balm, is it not?

My valuer said to me one day, "Your turnover

is certainly in a better condition since you have got well settled in at Burderop," and my reply was something like this, "Well, Mr. Valuer, after a few years' experience you begin to know your farm, its different fields, the stock it will carry, and knowledge of all these factors should give you a better result, should it not?"

It seems to me there is a growing practice amongst farmers to-day to run their business more on departmental lines. It certainly relieves you of much anxiety if you can get one good man in charge of a department and then have an organizing foreman to link these different departments together. Of course to follow out a system of this sort you must be in a fair way of business. To use a slang term it is not good business to have cats about unless they catch mice.

Some years ago I overheard a certain man in conversation with my father remark, "You must not work your son too hard, Mr. Whatley, he isn't built for hard work." I am rather afraid that remark left an indelible stain upon my character, and ever since I have schemed to avoid hard work.

It is somewhat snobbish to admit that a common farmer employs a secretary, but I am sure those who read my correspondence are delighted to think that I do; by doing so I can claim to save their time and relieve them from nerve strain. What a bother it is to read some people's letters. I often fuss over a certain word for hours.

A great friend of mine called one day, tapped on the door of the office and said, "I see you have

your secretary and foreman present, but may I be allowed to come into the Holy of Holies? This, I presume, is what one must call the nerve-centre of this departmental business." Looking round the office he followed on, "Ah, here we have the telephone exchange, one line to the nurseries, one to the foreman, yes and another to the house, I see. What a lazy man you must be, Whatley. Well, good-bye, I must not detain you. I shall see you at Lotmead Gate to-morrow morning, I hope. What time do the hounds meet? By the by, can you send a horse along for the huntsman to ride? I can't do it, I have one gone lame."

But to be serious, it is very helpful to be assured at an early hour in the morning that the work is going somewhat to plan, and whilst my friend was very amusing over the system of telephones, one does find a great relief in working things this way. My friend was not able to see the whole bag of tricks, for he little knew that the foreman too is linked up with the main lines and therefore able to carry on when I am out, and often I must admit when I am in. One in my sitting-room and one in the bedroom completes the list. You see, laziness is no good unless it is on a grand scale.

Talking of this linking up business it is really a very important one and if worked successfully can be the means of a tremendous saving in time and expense. For instance we are milking some 200 cows at three different dairies and in the old days, three horses and milk-carts were kept in use carting milk to the station, and incidentally were

a continual expense. All this has been eliminated and we now haul the milk right to London in our own lorries, daily, of course. This involves the use of two lorries and two drivers. One would do the job, but it is not a safe proposition because one might very easily break down, therefore we provide two and when one is on the road doing the London journey, the other is available for the farm and nursery work. I calculate this saving in railway carriage to be a considerable one. I am pretty certain you can afford a new one every three years.

There is also another pull to the credit side of the account by this new organization ; each day we haul the milk out we bring back the feeding-stuffs for animal consumption. In the old days what a bother it was to find someone to take the milk to the station when the milking was over, but we find no difficulty in getting a driver to take the London daily journey. During hay and harvest time I have often heard this remark as the men were sitting down taking their tea, "The milk lorry is back, we shall have a bit more help soon."

It has often occurred to me when examining the detailed figures of the balance sheet to give up the bother and trouble of dealing with a neighbour's threshing business. When I do give thought to this question I cannot escape a new urge to carry on for the very reason that it is a unit of the whole, and therefore why discontinue it? It certainly fills up an odd moment for a lorry to haul coal, oil, etc., and the men too come in for the summer

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season's work on the farm, or probably at the nurseries.

This question of keeping your staff employed the full year round is solved to some extent by using a parlour type of milking machine. You certainly release three men to deal with work in the fields during the summer months. It is often claimed—perhaps with some truth—that your yield of milk will suffer when you are forced to resort to using machinery in the cow-byre, but when you weigh it all up I believe one is well advised to install it. In the case of sickness too you can often produce a man who can untie a cow or perhaps wash it, when he might be totally unqualified to milk it.

Sheep

Hitherto pedigree Hampshire Down sheep have been a very strong feature in our productive effort. There is little doubt but that they have made a good contribution to heavy crops of corn in past years, in fact up to the outbreak of this present war, but at the moment they appear to be a heavy liability. One can very rightly argue it would be a sound proposition to clear them off and take the cash they should have left lying in the soil, but taking the long view can we visualize the day when our pedigree flocks and herds will be no more? I hardly think so.

Look back through the last century and note the time and effort expended to build up these excellent stocks, surely we are not going to lose our pride

of place in re-stocking the world with high-class animals. Is it not claimed the world over that the English climate and soil just fits the job of providing the right size, breed and type of animal to suit all temperate countries? Must we not look a little beyond this present war which has brought a limitation to our practice in this direction?

We do, of course, receive a few jars to our confidence when we see good men like Mr. Roland Dudley of Linkenholt and Major Bland of Aldbourne proclaiming the wonderful results of chicken farming in restoring fertility to the land. Well, it may be we shall find room for both systems to take their place in any new order which may appear in the farming world of to-morrow.

The Hampshire Down breed is certainly holding its own in the world of sheep. I must qualify this by saying the pedigree flocks compared to many breeds are holding their own. For folding the arable land nothing else seems to fit the job; as a folding breed for your roots and other soiling crops it is far preferable to the cross breeds which seem to resent any kind of food except grass. It makes a capital cross on almost any breed, has the early maturing qualities, a good type of wool and certainly is not coarse in its conformation. That this argument is sound is very well demonstrated by the fact that the ram lamb sales at Salisbury and other county fairs are well maintained.

I find that I have no difficulty in disposing of all I can save each year, sometimes we may reach to as many as sixty in a season. I am quite pre-

pared to say that did we not have this ready market for our ram lambs at a figure in the neighbourhood of six guineas apiece, our Hampshire Down flocks would show us a very different return.

Some of us diehards have got to admit the disappearance of many hurdle folding flocks during the last generation. I myself look with pleasure to my half-bred flock of breeding ewes, they indeed take their place and make a very useful contribution to the credit side of the balance sheet, and certainly without much expense, but they cannot fill the rôle of keeping the arable land in good heart by regular folding, or is it that I just do not manage them the right way? I prefer to use them to dispose of surplus crops or to keep certain crops in check, such as the seeds in the autumn, to clean up the pastures when the dairy cows go into winter quarters and perhaps a few acres of rape and turnips which must be cleared for a wheat break. How well they take to mating when they get this latter opportunity ; besides, it puts a bit of flesh on their backs to stand the rigours of the higher enclosures where they must finally winter.

Then just about the end of February they come back to the better pastures in time to tune up for lambing in the middle of March, or perhaps carry on in the low pastures to keep the grass in check until the arrival of the milking cow at grass time, whose arrival may be delayed owing to a wet spring.

This year we had a most amusing time with this flock of half-breds. As usual they were removed from their bare winter quarters to feed pastures in

rotation, all worked out to arrive on a certain day to commence lambing. By some mischance the shepherd had miscalculated the day on which they were due to start, consequently they were held back in a certain field ; however, instinct must have prompted them to make an effort to arrive on time ; on two occasions the foreman reported that he was obliged to send someone to put them back into the half-way meadow. On the third morning, to my amazement, I met them again on their way down, just comfortably walking along. They were determined to get into the right field for lambing. They were right and the shepherd was wrong, for lo and behold the very next morning quite a few lambs arrived.

Machinery

There is no escape from a situation of finding yourself surrounded by obsolete machinery. Last year I remember a conversation with a well-known and up-to-date farmer at an agricultural show. He remarked, " How happy one would be if one could just give an order to transport all this modern machinery home and send back all the obsolete stuff one has about." How true that is, but then one cannot just do it, the balance sheet resents such treatment.

We have a set of steam-plough engines in very good order, in fact they are still doing good work, and we quite realize they are far from an economic proposition. But there again they seem to take their place in the general scheme when a busy time

arrives after harvest—the drivers are able to interchange with the threshing-machine men. There is one good feature about this kind of tackle, they do not require much housing. Lying around they don't even attract my neighbours, for I seldom get asked to do a job these days. There is only one thing to do, they must be retired gradually and gracefully, such tackle is too expensive.

The steam-engine still provides the motive power for our threshing-sets, the track-laying tractor is, I know, considered to be ideal for moving threshing machines and their gear about the country together with a gang of men for hiring purposes, but again you are up against an enormous expense when your tractor requires a new track to run on. This makes me hesitate to scrap the old steam-engine ; besides, what would my banker say did I think it right to ask for another £1,000 overdraft to enable me to bring about the change-over ?

Now do not let me create the impression that tractors find no place in our scheme of things. I rather like the Fordson on rubber tyres, she is so quick and nippy and most efficient for sweeping the hay ; ploughing, too, she will tackle with her rubber tyres unless the ground is very weather-sodden. When that day arrives, well is it not wise to stand off altogether ?

Ensilage

What a burst of popularity seems to have overtaken the making of ensilage ? Why, some of us

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have never failed to fill a silo for the last twenty years, but during that time and particularly in a nice dry summer, I have often wondered whether my labour costs were ever returned in value of winter produce, but here again it becomes a regular part of the system. Why? Because you make full time with labour. For several weeks, from the middle of June until the middle of July, it often fits in to fill the silo during the morning and then make hay during the afternoon.

Of late years we have made an effort to grow a crop usually made up of a mixture of oats, beans and vetches, plus one or two cwt. sulphate of ammonia, but how difficult it is to provide a crop of equal proportions to your sowing efforts, one which can be comfortably dealt with by a binder. Weather conditions would seem to affect the growth of each product in a different way and you will often find one will outgrow the other. When ideal conditions do exist the job is easy compared to dealing with your crops by mowing machine. Another point, putting the sheaves through the silo cutter is a much easier job than feeding loose material.

There is one good feature about ensilage making, one never needs to be conscious of any break in your summer operations of putting away winter produce. Of late years we have somewhat reduced our effort in making silage, that is we do not follow the system to such an extent that we let other operations get too much in arrears. One has to consider the call from other branches of production.

Silage, I find, is of a fairly strong nature from a

feeding point of view, therefore at feeding time I like to water it down with wheat chaff or what some people call blowings from the threshing machine, and at the same time mix in one or perhaps two pounds of sugar-beet pulp to each cow. This method cuts out entirely one ration of hay ; besides, it makes a variety of food and it does help the yield of milk. The dry beet pulp mixes off well with the damp silage.

Crops under Glass

When you come to think it out farmers spend a good deal of their time in trying to defeat the ravages of Nature. Frost, wind, rain and even sunshine can do an immeasurable amount of harm unless you can control them. When you get crops under glass you have a much better chance of exercising this control. When a frost is imminent you put on a little more heat, when the sun shines you can open a window and you can regulate the water by the hose-pipe. This process if carefully handled will invariably give you a good crop ; this crop as a rule will generally find a good market. Have we not in our very midst—when I say midst, I mean this country—the finest market filled with consumers possessing a taste for the best money can buy ? When you fail to provide the goods, this customer does not understand your argument when you explain something about a frost or wind which swept your crop away in the night, and therefore you cannot supply his want. What he says is, I must have it, cost what it will.

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It is amazing what a taste for tomatoes has grown up during recent years, the taste seems almost insatiable, and now in wartime they are regarded as a necessary food, one is well satisfied with every effort to grow the crop.

On four and a quarter acres we shall hope to gather during the season, of six months, something approaching 160 tons with a staff of 25 men, women and boys during the peak period. No very close observation is necessary to conclude these few acres are turning out their quota of food in wartime.

Since venturing into cropping under glass I am agreeably surprised to find how it can be linked up with general farming. Labour is a very important factor and one which can be very expensive unless carefully organized. The nurseries provide work under cover when the weather does not provide work in the fields. I also find one can place a delicate man under the glass where he continues to find employment which might otherwise be discontinued. Interchanges can be instituted during seasonal operations, at times one can just save a crop by concentration of labour if only for a few hours. Then, again, your farm can provide the farmyard manure, straw, etc., and your transport is forthcoming from your farm lorries to haul a matter of 500 tons of coal. All these various services can be charged up to the nursery account which indeed makes quite a useful credit to the farm balance sheet.

It was rather curious how the idea emanated to enter the market-garden world, or rather growing

crops under glass. A daughter was about to finish her educational studies when the usual family discussion arose as to her future career. Well, why not gardening to include culture of crops under glass? When this seemed to be the general opinion, it followed that some training was necessary and in the meantime a contractor was called in to give an estimate to put up a single house, and when I suggested that his estimate seemed on the high side he replied, "But why not put up five, they will cost so much less in proportion?" Well, this set us thinking and eventually we took the plunge. It really was the only sensible thing to do, for you must have a water system, a cottage and a packing shed. So why build all this for one single house?

One day I was having a look round just to see how the building was going on and in chatting to the men remarked to the foreman that I hoped he would make a good job of this, our new venture, and he replied, "Ah, sir, you needn't bother too much about our work, we shall sure to be here again soon." He was a knowledgeable man that foreman.

When one takes on these new ventures with a clear absence of information it is most essential to select someone with knowledge to run the show. In my case it certainly was a happy choice when I engaged my present nursery manager, E. Messenger, to take charge. He certainly has the knowledge, is a good organizer of men, and not only organizes, but works with them and thereby despatches the work which is so important.

Before I finish up these remarks on "Crops under

Glass " I must give a little heed to the question of marketing the produce. When you are in a small way retailing the goods to some extent can be a very profitable business, but a few boxes of tomatoes here and perhaps a few there, entails an incalculable amount of time, labour, expense and bother. Since launching out to a real effort and covering some four acres with glass, this marketing business must be reconsidered. Arrangements are well forward to start a bi-weekly auction sale in the local town of Swindon. This is an entirely new venture for us and for Swindon. Whether it proves a success or otherwise we shall at least have handed over our troubles of sales, and more particularly the collection of the cash to a well-known firm of auctioneers.

When one leads a busy life how helpful, indeed how necessary it is to be surrounded by a good staff of willing workers. I count myself particularly fortunate in this way, no man could be served better. My present farm and general manager, Jim Pressy, relieves me of much detailed organization and thus gives me time to exercise my energies in other directions. It is no good clogging your life with too much detail if you can get along easily without it, neither can one, or at least I can't, consider the idea of retiring from business, the fact is one cannot afford to, either metaphorically or monetarily. Those who do are at their wit's end to know how to occupy their time, amusement soon tires, and then where are they, just lonely and miserable.

CHAPTER XI

A FLYING VISIT TO SCOTLAND— AUGUST 1, 1937

TO a farmer this is perhaps the most interesting time of year to pay a visit to Scotland. You strike the country when practically all the crops are in the fields, and in this year of Grace 1937, much of the hay. The crops make a great show, a show certainly equal to anything in the British Isles, and in my opinion not excelled anywhere in the world.

I am sure as one proceeds north by rail via Berwick and Edinburgh right away up the east coast as far as Aberdeen, the land seems to lend itself to heavy crops. To leave Edinburgh on a summer evening and pass through that marvellous country of Midlothian and over the Forth Bridge and away north, seems to strike a note of romantic thrill.

From the rail you get a much better view than you do from a car, and as you near Dundee the great Tay Bridge comes into sight, and someone in the train will be telling you the tale that in 1879 on a Christmas night the bridge broke up and the train fell in. Then again you get a view of the golden grain crops running down to the water's edge,

with the blue sea beyond. Such a picture puts you into a dream, and you wonder for one short moment whether life as an artist would not be preferable to the strenuous life of a farmer.

But that vision quickly passes when you begin to work out the method of the Scotsman's cropping, which seems to be potatoes, wheat, swedes, oats and then temporary pasture. Are not some of us thinking of temporary pasture without roots? The Scotsman seems to have both and we must too. It is no good getting too lazy, following the line of least resistance.

I made some enquiries about grass-drying plants and was told that there was only one in Scotland. One would have thought that here was God's own country particularly adapted for grass drying. Ah, the Scot is a canny fellow, and he is waiting for information from the south.

Some of you may begin to wonder why I have been wandering about Scotland at this time of the year when one should be home gathering the crops, others will know that in that country the great sheep sales are fairly frequent during August and September, and my primary object of going north was to buy sheep.

There seems no doubt that the Half Bred lamb is the one that comes south in the greatest numbers, being perhaps the most suitable for a general purpose; where the keep is of mixed character and not too poor in quality, he certainly is the best. The Scotsman says that if you want them to live on air, of course you must have the Cheviot or the Scotch

Black Face, but Half Breds must follow the plough ; in other words, you must plough for the Half Bred or he will suffer from sheep sickness, when perhaps the others will come through.

Prices would seem to be about on a level with our local fairs, and Marlborough in particular. Railway carriage from just over the Border works out at about 2s. per head, whilst from Aberdeen and sales on a line as far north will be 4s.

CHAPTER XII

AN IMPRESSION OF GERMAN FARMING—

1938

AT the invitation of Count von Metternich, who is himself farming about 2,000 acres, I spent a very pleasant and agreeable week on this gentleman's estate in Westphalia. To quote his own language to a friend who was the medium of the invitation, "I could easily give him the opportunity to look round our organization . . . and I am sure that such visits may tighten the mutual relations between our two countries." In an invitation embodying such friendly relations, one could well look forward to an interesting time, and so it proved.

On my arrival by air liner at Hanover, the Count, true to his appointment, met me with his motor-car. Shall I ever forget that drive, and the day following, to a Horse Show at Cologne! What a driver and what a pace! I have never travelled so fast in a car before; but nothing happened, a few near shaves of course, and one would expect to get them when travelling at well over 100 kilometres an hour. All I know is that I sat in the car and worked it out to be between 80 and 90 miles an hour. However, let me hasten to say that cars are not so numerous in

Germany as in England, therefore the risk is not so great as one might imagine.

To get back to the farming story, the first impression on the journey from Hanover down into Westphalia is one of admiration. You think, what crops ! and how well the land is farmed, not a spare foot in field, forest or garden ; even the roadsides are planted with apple- or pear-trees. The fields were just heavy with standing crops, and reminded me very much of a visit I paid to the Lothians of Scotland in the late summer recently, just vital crops for man and beast. No meadow hay for the cows in winter, or very little, just a few odd pastures for summer feeding. You would see clover, wheat, barley (winter), sugar beet, rye, oats and beans, also many fields of rape seed to supplement the call for oil, following on in rotation much as I have recorded them, and I must not forget the very important potato crop.

I was particularly interested in the oat and bean mixture, both of spring variety. This is a crop grown on a 4 to 9 basis, and quite a common one, more particularly for the milk cow. In order to make myself quite clear, let me say the 4 to 9 basis is for planting purposes, and is not quoted as a correct balanced ration. It is my intention to give this crop a trial. I rather think it will fill the gap we have in our home-grown feeding-stuffs.

Another thing that strikes one, or it did me, who is in the habit of seeing a few fallow fields on heavy land, is the absence of them in Germany. It may have been partial, of course, to that part of the

country in which we were motoring, but apparently it is not very common anywhere, for I remarked to my host, "Where is your summer fallow to ensure a periodical cleaning for all this cropping?" and he promptly replied, "Oh, the summer fallow was driven out when Hitler came in, the inter-cropping with sugar beet and potatoes does not admit many weeds."

On reflection it occurs to me what happy farmers we should all be if we could get a Minister of Agriculture appointed, who, with a magic wand, could sweep away all weeds and rubbish from our arable land. What it really amounts to, is that under the Hitler regime, embracing as it does the partial closing of the ports, if not entire closing, against importations of goods which can be produced in the country, every effort must be made to grow heavy crops, and there would appear to be plenty of men ready and willing to make that effort.

Hitler says the labourer must be paid a fair wage, and the farmer guaranteed a living profit, and certainly there would appear to be a sense of satisfaction and mutual trust prevailing in the rural areas, which most probably springs from this arrangement, or perhaps I should say, order.

The farm wage, I gathered, was about three marks per day. A mark in our English money would be about 1s. 9d. This would put the wage bill on a par with ours. The key men would get more, and in many cases other privileges, such as a strip of land and perhaps the use of the farmer's horses and tools in the evening to gather in his crops.

Before I leave the question of crops I did obtain one piece of information to the effect that little, if any, importation of grain would be required that year, and if they get a surplus it would be stored in silos, and not exported as in other years of plenty.

The universal greeting "Heil Hitler" instead of "How do you do," seems uncommonly strange to one from a free and easy country like old England who has, as my friend remarked, a lead of some three centuries in the art of democratic Government. However, the fact remains that in 1933 the countryside of Germany was apparently on the verge of a great social upheaval and by 1938 a sense of satisfaction seemed to prevail.

It is difficult to get away from the country's politics, they are so fascinating, but then a display of force generally is fascinating if a little disturbing. Perhaps I shall be on firmer ground if I return to the cows, these are practically all of the Friesian breed and much good work is being done in grading up the better milking strains. But when we took a look at the sheep, which are mostly of the Hampshire Down type, or what I saw there were, these apparently were originally imported from England, and are now showing signs of a lack of fresh blood. Importation presented difficulties, for it is no easy matter to get money out of the country for any purpose. However, this I think is a short-sighted policy which I believe they must find a way of overcoming, and then our breed societies must get busy and be ready for business.

In the meantime why should this factor be the medium to put the wheel of negotiation in motion? In our dealings with Russia, of course, this difficulty does not exist, they have the gold from the Ural Mountains at their back.

A day at the Cologne Show gives one a good idea of the horses. These are mostly of Percherons and Suffolk type, and a good type they are. Government inspection here again is doing good work in weeding out all undesirables and only the best are allowed to propagate. In the parade one saw many unique features. Just fancy putting heavy horses into sulkies and trotting them round the ring to show off their good movements, and another, fastening ten led horses into a line and dressing them by the crack of the whip, and trotting them round the ring. I thought, and later remarked to the Count, even the horses in Germany keep step.

The poor pig was having a thin time. There are, of course, many in the country, but not so many just in the area of my visit. We in England do understand, do we not, that the pig is a very expensive animal to have about when foods are dear.

I gathered in Germany he was waiting patiently until Hitler had his four years to right the country, which apparently is his objective, and then perhaps the pig will again come into his own. In normal times one can hardly imagine the country being short in her pig population.

I saw one old lady wheeling home a barrow-load of thistles, and when I enquired their destination, I was told that they were for the pig. I thought to

myself, I would go on strike if I were the pig, but then strikes are not allowed in Germany.

In a general survey, one cannot but notice the absence of decay in any form : reconditioning of buildings and cottages would seem to be in operation wherever necessary. Money put back again into the estate would appear to be insulated against tax. What a practical idea ! Should we not welcome such a programme for our country-side in England ?

I was particularly interested in the erection of a new dairy ; this, I thought, embraced many good features somewhat in advance of our own ideas.

I must admit being checkmated when asked to examine the system of accounting recently adopted for analysing the ebb and flow of farm progress. However, I did come to the conclusion that this principle was showing good results. We in Wiltshire, of course, know similar societies are doing excellent work.

Of course, the visit would be incomplete without seeing the Labour camps. On arrival at headquarters of these camps, one sees a large map of Germany hung on the wall, giving all the information, and a tracing of the localities in which labour is required for draining swampy land, and other work of national importance. Parties proceed daily into these areas, and there is no doubt in this way useful work gets done. The farmer, too, can draw on this labour should occasion arise, such as dealing with crops, for which services he pays the Government direct. Of course, this method does not appeal to us as a nation, and what is more, one

cannot think it will ever become part of our social life, but to a conscript people, and there are many in Europe to-day, it is no great hardship. It really means six months longer in the Army, for the life is the same and the pay identical.

Finally I left the country with very mixed feelings. One sees the great movement and progress of the country-side, the completeness of the Germans' great organizing powers, and for this the Nazi regime is largely responsible. But one feels that, behind it all, there is that over-riding dominating force which must dumb the conscience and retard the responsibility of the individual, and the objective of which leaves a doubt and a fear in the minds of so many.

CHAPTER XIII

HOLIDAYS

A FEW enjoyable trips abroad have come my way during these later years. My wife and I took a very interesting voyage down the Atlantic and I seem to think we put in a month calling in and out of places like Maderia, Portugal, and then as far as the Canary Islands. This time of crossing the Bay of Biscay the waves gave no trouble. How delightful to travel by sea when weather conditions are good and how miserable one can be when conditions are bad.

At the close of the Great War my brother Sam paid us a visit from Canada. Canada in those days was booming, the world was hungry, and this I presume gave her the peak years in growing wheat. What a fall she has sustained since. Well, in those days everyone had a pound or two in his pocket, and we both agreed it would be a mistake to put off the day to pay a visit to the battlefields of France and Belgium until circumstances had relieved us of those few pounds. But it was a never-to-be-forgotten and sorry sight ; any Englishman who still retains a vision of that devastating picture must be ever thankful that battlefields have been absent from his country for centuries.

Before the days of the Pigs Marketing Board, when bacon production in the county was certainly in its infancy, Mr. Stratton, the Chairman of the County Agricultural Committee, thought it advisable that his staff organizers should obtain more useful information from Scandinavian countries on modern methods of the pig and bacon industry.

The choice for this work fell to the lot of Mr. Price, the Chief Organizer of the county. However, Messrs. Harris, of Calne, had a thought that they would like to support this movement, and on the condition that a farmer was selected by the N.F.U. to be one of the party, they would be prepared to contribute £50 towards the expenses of the expedition. The County N.F.U. very kindly offered me the job which I gladly accepted. This proved to be a very instructive and interesting trip, covering Denmark, Sweden and Germany. The Danes have for years led the way in modern bacon production and from them we obtained the latest ideas of the housing and feeding of the pig. I was amazed to find such a massed pig population very free of infectious diseases ; this, of course, is from the fact that the Dane has the pig sense to a marvellous degree ; he certainly has the will and the knowledge to keep the pig clean, comfortable and well fed. When the pig enjoys these conditions he makes a flourishing industry. Where else can you find pigs housed in such numbers in such a small space ?

One sees there several centres where they are accommodated in two storeys, the weaners on the upper and the fatters on the ground floor. Luckily

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Mr. Price was armed with an introduction to the Minister of Agriculture for Denmark which enabled us when in Copenhagen to accept the honour of meeting him. It was from him that we gathered the information that Denmark was in a very bad way with her agriculture at the close of the nineteenth century and that the bacon industry dated its birth from those depressing times. We might well ask ourselves the question, Does this not coincide with the expansion of milk production in our own country? I am well assured that we farmers in this country had the choice of seats in the English market at a time when both countries were seeking a solution to the troubles of a passing age.

What an exciting journey we had when passing from Sweden to Germany! You entrain at Malmo in Sweden, get into your sleeping-bunks and wake up and find yourself in Germany, or I should say you could if you felt sleepy. You could very well imagine the regular traveller doing this, but not so those who were anxious to see and to experience scenes of a lifetime. What really happens is that the whole train is ferried over during the night and the passengers have an opportunity to explore both the train and the boat. You can either drink in the bar of the boat or dine in the car of your train.

Berlin in the days of 1929 was a city of quiet orderly enjoyment; two days spent here were full of pleasing interest and apparently no one was dreaming of Hitler's disturbing influence which was soon to overtake the city.

When we had finished our business in Germany of

seeing the various pig farms, we took a few hours off to see the sights of Berlin, and a few of us joined a party of tourists on a jaunt round the city. The conductor was a man who spoke several languages and really was a witty fellow. As we passed through the Brandenburg Gate he said, "Here we have the Brandenburg Gate of Berlin through which the great Blucher passed after winning the battle of Waterloo." As an Englishman I thought surely this was a tall story, so I pulled him up to ask a question. "Here," I said, "can you tell us who won the battle of Waterloo—was it Blucher or was it Wellington?" and with a smile upon his face he replied, "Ah, Monsieur, I must be diplomatic."

I little thought at the time we left Germany it would fall to my lot to pay a return visit some years later. Now I have already made some comments on this trip to Germany in 1938, but in the light of subsequent events I think I can add a little which may be of interest.

In my early remarks I mentioned that I was surprised to find a Hampshire Down sheep flock on Count Metternich's estate in Westphalia, and this flock was showing signs of deterioration. The regeneration of it was a matter we could discuss in common and I eventually prevailed upon him to let me send him out some fresh blood, the outcome of the arrangement being that I sent him out two ram lambs from my own flock, and one from Major Bland's.

Unfortunately, before we could exchange any correspondence on the result, unfriendly relations

crept in between our respective countries, and put an end to any further arguments on the merits of the Hampshire Down breed of sheep.

Adolf Hitler seemed to be more concerned about the pure blood of his people rather than the pure blood of his flocks and herds. Well, I am not so sure, but my information leads me to think that the people of Germany are more concerned about the regeneration of their flocks and herds. I am sure the people in the country-side are.

The Count and I—by the by he could speak the English language fairly well—had many a political talk on the merits and demerits of the Nazi regime. He was convinced that Hitler was directing the nation to a solution of their economic troubles. I sometimes wonder whether he still thinks so, but at that hour of the day his mind was impregnated with the troubles of 1932-3 when the spiral spin downwards of all economic values had spun its last spin ; those, he told me, were dark days for Germany, and this finally induced him to join the party of the National Socialists as a last hope.

We discoursed on the question of German colonies. His words were these : “ Their return was really of little importance provided Germany could obtain from overseas raw materials to maintain her industries ” ; and then again on the question of the democratic constitution, “ Well,” he said, “ they had tried it, but for the German nation they found it unworkable. The English undoubtedly have made a great success of this form of Government but then you must remember you as a nation are three

hundred years in advance of us." This declaration I took to be a great compliment to my country.

During my week's stay with the Count and his family I came across many others who were of the opposite opinion—indeed were very doubtful of the success of the Nazi regime.

I met a lady visitor staying in the house who, by the by, could speak the English language even better than I could myself, who disclosed the view that there was a large volume of opinion amongst the old ruling classes who were looking for an explosion sooner or later. I remember too the expression on the faces of the peasant classes. On my arrival it was "Heil Hitler!" with lightning speed and a hearty voice, but when they began to realize that I was not a member of the Gestapo, what a different greeting I got when meeting them in the fields or around the farm buildings, and finally when I packed my bag I was besought to come again.

To conclude the record of this pleasant visit I must recount my experience on my way back. When I motored up to Hanover to take the 'plane for England my departure was not quite so pleasant. What a ruthless examination I was subjected to! Every rag in my bag was examined and then when I had carefully re-packed I was tapped on the shoulder and taken into a room for a personal search, not exactly stripped, but every pocket and corner of my clothes turned out.

What a contrast I found on arriving at Croydon! There the Excise officer spotted my Masonic number

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on a small handbag and then said, " Anything to declare ? " " No," I replied, and the whole thing was over in a moment. Can we but believe it, this small act of courtesy, trust and security, is a clear demonstration of the principles for which we are fighting Germany to-day, and may we win ! Indeed we must !

CHAPTER XIV

LAND TENURE

SINCE the opening of the twentieth century landed proprietors have suffered a great deal of regimentation or lack of freedom in handling their estates—that is assuming they have carried on the old method of letting their farms on a yearly tenancy. Some of this regimentation has been helpful to the tenants, but I am not sure that all the clauses of the Act have given results commensurable with good farming. The Game clauses, whereby a “sitting” tenant may lay claim to damage done to growing crops, have been helpful, but evidence still exists that these have had little effect, if any, on the reduction of game or rabbits.

No one wishes to restrict our national sports, but some of these shooting syndicates might very well curb their anxiety to show a heavy bag, and take steps to lower their stock of game. If this were done I feel certain many farmers would reap a real benefit.

There is another side to this limitation of a landlord's right in dealing with his own property, and one which I have always held to be of a very doubtful benefit to the tenant. In many cases I am quite

certain it does not add to the output of produce from many a farm. I refer to that part of the Act which allows a "sitting" tenant to claim a year's rent or more from a landlord should he be disturbed from his holding. This, in my opinion, leads to indifferent farming in many instances. Take the case of a man who gets into a farm, settles down to a policy of least resistance, just looks with contentment on a programme which will bring in a fair living and no more ; as for his obligation to the land, hedges and ditches—well, he neglects them and does not bother, sails along year by year, smiles at his landlord as much as to say, "Well, you can't turn me out. If you do I can hold out my hand for a good-sized cheque, and your buildings too will take another good chunk of cash to put them into tenantable repair when I go out and the next man comes in."

I honestly think this clause of the Act is far too severe. Why should not a good landlord be able to recover his own property from a rascal tenant without giving away a premium to clear him from his property ?

I know it is said that this enactment was introduced to stay the hand of a harsh and aggressive property owner who was lucky enough to have an ambitious and progressive tenant, one who improved the owner's property, and then having spent his money well and freely was asked to leave in order that the rent could be raised to fill the landlord's pocket. That may have been a nineteenth-century trick, certainly a reprehensible one, but is avarice

quite so naked in the twentieth? I hardly think so. If it were, surely there could be some satisfactory machinery set up to correct such conduct without relieving the landlord of so much of his freedom.

The present machinery whereby a landlord can call to his aid a County Council Agricultural Committee and ask them to issue a certificate to say his "sitting" tenant is not farming the land according to the rules of good husbandry, is to some extent clumsy, and it follows it is seldom used, therefore ineffective.

I have often thought about the working of this Act when cases have come to my notice where obviously a little discipline exercised by the landlord would stir up a "sitting" tenant to a little more energy in his farming. Indeed I have often quoted my own case. I pay my landlord £1,100 per annum; if he wished to disturb me it might cost him even more than this amount if you add to the figure a few odd buildings put up with the landlord's consent; it might easily be raised to a matter of £2,000, a costly business to dispose of a family sitting on his doorstep. How quickly can I dismiss a disquieting moment when I am reminded by the Agent that a particular fence should be cut, or a field of thistles attended to because they are ripening unto harvest.

We might well ask: "Have any of us reached the stage of perfection in our farming when we are beyond a mild suggestion that our habits might be cleaner and we should show more regard to meet our farming obligations?"

I am one of those who look with pleasure and approval at our English system of landlord and tenant which, during the past century, or more, has given such a good account of itself. This system has certainly weakened to some extent since the post Great War days, and I should be sorry to see it receive another blow when this present war comes to an end. One realizes of course that to obtain the best return from the soil, landed property should be in strong hands, and by strong hands I mean in the possession of a man or a company who can equip it with modern buildings, and most important of all, be able to let it at a reasonable rent.

Unless this might prompt the socialist to say at once, "Why not nationalize the land right away?" let me hasten to say that I have no sympathy whatever with such a radical change. I do like the personal touch of a landlord, and not only the personal touch, but the keeping of our country units together, preserving that contact of classes which is the charm of rural life and one which we must do our utmost to maintain. We might go further and say at all costs we must hold on to it.

Perhaps someone might be tempted to ask, Why? Well, surely it must be a sound argument to keep all sorts and conditions of men interested in the country-side, to fill it with life and energy. Again, if it is made worth while to keep capital in or to invest it in landed property then we have a larger volume of capital to run the great industry of agriculture. What I am afraid is happening to-day is that those who own land and let it out to some

farmer to make a living, are so pinched at every point that they cannot maintain their property to a state of efficiency which will allow the poor tenant to make even a living.

To me something seems to have gone wrong in our twentieth-century statesmanship which has brought this state of affairs about. Estate Duties are all very well, but surely they should not be imposed to such an extent which will eventually destroy the fabric of the country-side. At the moment of writing my mind travels back to my visit to Germany where I saw reconditioning of farm property going forward in real earnest. When I asked for an explanation of the various schemes in progress, I was informed that money spent on country property did not find its way into the National exchequer, and therefore the landlord got busy on his property.

Let us just look at another object lesson where we see this nationalization of the land in progress. I quote Russia. There we see the State making a very poor effort to increase output by placing the land in direct occupation of the peasant, and a poor job he makes of it. I am not going to suggest that by doing so in England we should suffer such an upheaval as they have in Russia, but I am sure that the less regimentation we receive from officials, which would be the outcome of land nationalization, the more happy conditions of country life shall we enjoy.

I am not so sure that our neighbour France can claim better agricultural conditions than we enjoy

in England, even though the country underwent great changes in the ownership of land during the French Revolution of the late eighteenth century.

Perhaps Ireland can claim improved conditions for her farmer since she has shed her system of landlord and tenant, but then in Ireland the landlord made the fatal mistake of not living on his estate, and thus broke the contact of a sound system of country life. That state of affairs has so far never reached the country-side of old England, and let us hope it never will.

Take another lesson from the pages of history. No one can deny that the high-water mark of production from the farming lands of England reached the ceiling about the year 1875. Under what system of farming did it reach this big output? Was it not the combined efforts of landlord, tenant and employee?

Of the three I am inclined to think that the employee made the greatest contribution to the effort; he worked hard and lived hard on his poor pay. The tenant may have lived plainly, but he at least made a comfortable income, whilst the landlord made a living out of his estate. He may have been inclined to take his pleasures freely, but he died comfortably because he was not conscious that he had committed an offence to the society which surrounded him. Who is to say that he was a misguided individual? I venture to say that he was not. Had he not well equipped his property to house the crops produced by his tenants, and these crops in turn served a rising industrial population?

The evidence of this is still in existence, although the old thatched barn we still see dotted about on the landscape is fast decaying.

It is not in my thoughts that we must expect or desire this state of affairs to return in just the old form, but surely there is no rhyme or reason why the country should not visualize a state of affairs which would continue to give each unit of our country life a reasonable opportunity to live his life in peace and plenty.

The situation in which we find ourselves as a nation to-day surely suggests we must look to a system, modified perhaps, which will capitalize the land, farm it for high production, and at the same time maintain a happy and contented employee population.

The present ploughing-up programme is again discounting the landlord's position, for DORA is no respecter of persons. Many of these pastures which are being broken will lose their capital value to some extent, but I have yet to find an owner who is not filled with patriotism, and who is against putting his land to the best national purpose.

When the day of reckoning comes, I seem to visualize the landlord holding a very weak hand. When he looks round his estate and finds his pasture tenant muddling on in his effort to tackle a few acres of arable land, he will be forced to the action of again finding the grass seeds to save his land from decay.

CHAPTER XV

WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

SINCE the year 1924, when I received the honour of being elected an Alderman of this provincial parliament, there have naturally been some changes on the front benches where sit the various Chairmen of Committees. Amongst those who still retain their seats—and one hopes they will for many years—are Lord Bath (Chairman) and Mr. Withy (Vice-Chairman).

Since giving some reflection to this chapter I am reminded of the celebrated Frenchman, Jules Cambon, who in his book *Diplomacy* says, “Diplomacy and the Law are poles apart.” When the great Frenchman made use of this phrase he must have had in mind gentlemen of like personalities as our Chairman and Vice-Chairman. For if there were ever men which answer this description, these two surely do so.

Lord Bath uses his faculty as a diplomatist with the voice of an artist, whilst Mr. Withy puts the Law before us with an unerring decision which never leaves us in doubt. What better combination can we wish for to guide the destinies of the Wiltshire County Council !

At the same time I recall an occasion when I think the better judgment of the one was over-ruled by the other. The occasion I have in mind was during the discussion which took place over the building of our new County Council offices. The voting was a very near thing : the point at issue was whether we should erect them at Devizes or Trowbridge, and, as is now well known, the lot fell to Trowbridge, but I am not sure the voting would have gone this way had Lord Bath expressed his leaning for the Devizes site in language a little more definite. At the time I had a feeling he had that leaning, but then Lord Bath is born and bred into an atmosphere of autocracy, and one must admire his effort on all occasions to allow that atmosphere to be penetrated by democratic opinion.

Mr. Withy, a very clever debater, was too preponderant in his arguments in favour of the Trowbridge site. To me his argument of the railway serving the Swindon and Salisbury members in particular was a weak one : even most of these men come by car to-day ; also the suggestion that the staff would be ruthlessly uprooted was really of little importance when we take into consideration the benefits to future generations who will be called upon to serve the County, whether as members of the Council or the staff. Surely radiating from the centre must save time and expense, and perhaps more important than all these facts is the one of invigorating air which is so natural to Devizes. Can the same be said of Trowbridge, a low-lying district ? I hardly think so. The question of transport does

not enter into the argument, or it should not, for to-day where business congregates there will the eagles of transport be gathered in competition.

In support of my argument let me quote a precedent. Somerset, who have also built new offices, moved from Weston-super-Mare to Taunton for the very good reason to get into the centre of the county, which I believe has proved a great success.

In the early stages of the debate I very well recollect the late Lord Radnor on one occasion expressing himself very freely upon the question of finding new quarters for the County Council. His remarks were something like this : " I appeal to the Council not to make a mistake a second time in taking a decision on the site for new County Council offices." One might almost infer from these remarks and knowing also his influence upon many members of the Council, that had his useful life been given a longer span, it is more than probable that Fate would have led us into pastures new. After all, my arguments are mere speculation, and future generations may come to the conclusion that in the day of decision wise counsel did actually prevail.

Having expressed my views somewhat freely on this knotty question, let me hasten to say that when sitting at the quarterly meetings of the Council I have at times been amazed at the most orderly manner in which they are conducted, and the despatch of the business, to me, leaves nothing to be desired. Our Chairman and Vice-Chairman, working from opposite starting-points, meet well in

the middle and bring about this excellent result. At the same time it must be remembered how much of the spade work—in fact all—is done in the various Committees, meeting monthly in many cases, making proposals to administer the law in the county.

When I take a look at the County Council Year Book I note on an average each member of the Council sits on six Committees, but it does not follow that he attends at Trowbridge six days a month. The meetings are so arranged to fit in two a day if possible, a morning meeting perhaps and then another to follow in the afternoon.

What contribution I am able to make in the deliberations is mostly to the Agricultural Committee meetings, of which there are at least six. At the same time my seat on the General Purposes Committee gives work of much interest and at times a certain amount of amusement. Who would miss the days when this Committee sits as a Court to grant or withhold licences for Picture Palaces, or perhaps a Dog Racing track ! To sit, watch and hear the debate coming from both sides is of no small interest or amusement at times. Eminent councillors take the floor to address you with great respect ; with a little imagination one might well think he was sitting in the High Court. Lawyers and witnesses innumerable attend with pomp and ceremony. Not always have I thought our judgment supreme when finally we have to decide for or against the applicant of a licence.

Here, again, the Law is apt to bear a little heavily at times, and the spirit of an Act of Parliament is

sometimes overlooked. We are inclined to forget that public opinion does not stand still. An Act of Parliament does not pass into law unless public opinion demands a change ; this is what I infer when talking of the spirit of an Act. To sum it up, you will never create good morals by coercion.

On Council days, when I look up from the lower benches and cast an eye on the long row of different Chairmen of Committees, I find two at least of very long standing, that is other than the two I have previously mentioned ; they are Miss Stephenson and Mr. Warren. Miss Stephenson is Chairman of Public Health and Housing, also Public Assistance Committees, and as such she has always filled me with admiration and confidence that she will guard, without fear or favour, the interests of that great welter of humanity who come within the orbit of these committees.

Mr. Warren has served the Roads and Bridges Committee as Chairman for many years. I cannot recall any other man filling this post. I often think what labour and time he must have expended in the public interest and service by attending the monthly meetings and touring the country-side for inspection of roads and bridges—indeed the county owes here a debt it can never repay.

One could without effort name many other members of the Council who have done and are doing real hard work in the public interest, but space will not admit ; but I must mention one of the permanent officials who has recently retired, Mr. W. J. Bown. Mr. Withy, in paying a tribute to

Mr. Bown's long term of faithful service, described him as a man who possessed the strong virtue of silence. Why? I will give you the answer : because he never prescribed until he was called in and then was seldom found wanting.

As a farmer it was fitting that I should be given work to do on practically all the Agricultural Committees. Of these I think the one which has absorbed most of my time and thereby my interest is the Small Holdings Committee. Before I became a member of the Council I was invited to be a co-opted member for the Northern Division, but refused on the grounds that I was very doubtful of the wisdom of putting men into small holdings on the very promiscuous prospects of farming following the Great War. But eventually my mind began to revolve in a wider circle and then I soon began to realize that some programme of this nature was a social necessity if the farming community were to keep step with the accepted principles of our Democratic National Constitution.

To-day under our National principles is there not a clear path for the Board schoolboy to reach the university and likewise a possibility of the Army private to wield the field-marshal's baton? If these principles are sound, and I believe they are, then the employee on the land must have his equal chance to reach the heights of a landed proprietor, provided he has the natural ability to do so.

Having these views in my mind it will be difficult to dissuade me from taking every opportunity to work for the Small Holders' welfare and to try to

lessen his working hours, for I am sure he leads a hard life. On the Agricultural Education Committee I am satisfied that we are working steadily along similar lines by our scholarship system of sending boys and girls to agricultural seats of learning. We who represent Agricultural Education note with satisfaction a more earnest disposition on the G.E.C. side to view learning more from the rural aspect and a desire to create a feeling that country work is healthy, dignified employment, a career of real importance. This is indeed a hopeful sign.

In future we must endeavour to co-operate still more by using our Joint Committee to exercise an effort to bring together our somewhat different outlook on life. Unfortunately, it becomes so easy to pick up the habits of the town, but not so easy to take an intelligent interest in the country-side where there is really more life and interest if we can only find it. Having found it we shall have attained real enjoyment.

The other Agricultural Committees do not provide questions of general interest except the Milk Committee. Here we have the authority which has done much to improve the milk supply to the consuming public and at the same time enabled the progressive farmer to obtain a better income from milk production.

Under Mr. R. Stratton as Chairman, with Dr. Tangye and Mr. Price, the operating officials, this somewhat new branch has done its work of re-organizing the milk industry of the county with little friction to all concerned. It is really amazing how

this work has expanded. At the moment we are well past the thousand mark of licences granted to farms where Attested, T.T. or Accredited milk is produced. The Milk Committee of the county can claim to have well launched the Government's scheme for the improvement of the country's milk. Unfortunately the war has interfered with the progress, but we are still active with a depleted staff, and no doubt shall go full speed ahead again when the war is over.

Before I close this chapter of County Council work, more particularly from an agricultural point of view, I cannot refrain from paying tribute to the hard work and long service of the late Mr. Arthur White ; he indeed was a pillar in the service of his county.

Mr. Pritchard followed him as Chairman of the Agricultural Committee and bids fair to emulate the example of his predecessor.

CHAPTER XVI

THE NATIONAL FARMERS' UNION

ONE could fill a volume of the deeds and misdeeds of the Farmers' Union. I include misdeeds because I am conscious that at times they, like our County Council, have not always shown wisdom in their decisions. I believe their prevailing weakness is that they generally overstate their case on the assumption no doubt that the louder you speak, the more you are likely to be heard.

Since I have been one of those who has been on the platform during its life in the county, I cannot sever myself from this criticism. But with all its faults and errors the truth remains that the N.F.U. has accomplished a great work by bringing before the public the needs and "rights of man" in the farming world.

Before its institution there really did not exist any nation wide organization which could focus a united effort to reach the Government of the day, coming direct from those whose business it is to derive a livelihood from the land. Unfortunately, like other organizations we find there are those who are prepared to accept all the benefits an organization can procure, but they are too selfish, too self-

seeking to throw in their lot and make an undeniable appeal for the welfare of the whole industry and incidentally their own. They harbour an idea that they would like a world of their own in which to do their business ; they little think that this is impossible in a well-organized State where all must be served with equal justice. No man can live unto himself as no nation can live unto itself. This is as certain as the sparks fly upwards, and every non-member of the N.F.U. should give thought to this great truth.

The Wiltshire office-holders and officials arranged a great drive throughout the county two years ago and raised its membership to 90 per cent. of the whole, and proud of ourselves were we by the effort, but I am afraid that some have since dropped out again through lack of interest. Let me remind these unthinking people how much they would lose if the N.F.U. closed its doors. First and foremost they would lose that united power of criticism which is so necessary in a democratically governed country, that check to injustice which can so easily and quickly be levelled on an industry unless carefully watched by a proper elected authority. Then again, the N.F.U. is able to keep the ordinary farmer well posted on all matters where the law seeks to catch him out and thereby he is saved much trouble and probable expense.

Another and a very great benefit he enjoys is by his Mutual Insurance Company where all profits return to him in various forms. This is a great money-saving proposition to the members of the N.F.U. Let me give an instance where my own

pocket was saved quite a considerable amount. Recently my carter had the misfortune to let a team of horses run away with a waggon-load of hay. It was not his fault or neglect in any way. What actually happened was that the waggon-shaft key came out and the shaft fell on the poor horses' heels, and away they bolted and ran into a motor-car, turning it over into a ditch. Well, within a few days the post brought a letter enquiring the name of my Insurance Company ; if I was not covered by a policy, a request to pay a bill of something like £30. Knowing quite well that I was not insured against anything of the kind I proceeded to write and inform the owner of the car. However, before posting the letter I began to think hard to find a way out of paying such a heavy bill, when I suddenly thought my Insurance Company would at least be the right body to make a settlement. Consequently I tore up the letter and started afresh, acknowledged the letter and simply handed them the address of the N.F.U. Farmers' Mutual Insurance Co., and at the same time writing the company and politely asking them to settle the matter on the best terms possible. This indeed was a lucky move, for it was eventually proved that in law a runaway horse is entitled to his first run in the same way a dog is entitled to his first bite, that is provided no evidence is forthcoming of negligence on the behalf of the owner or caretaker of the animal. Here you see how necessary it is to put your interest into the hands of people who are wiser than yourself.

We in Wiltshire post to our members, monthly,

our local "Record,"—not much to boast about perhaps, but where at least some of us make an effort to put before members topical subjects.

Surely when all these advantages are totalled up an objector cannot lay claim, or plead any excuse to his inability to pay his membership subscription. Are they—the subscriptions—not recognized to be even lower than any Trade Union contributions? Let me quote them for Wiltshire: $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ on acres farmed, or alternately $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ on the farm Assessment B, with a minimum of 6s. per annum, a mere flea-bite to even the small farmer. I must not forget to mention there is an abatement on Downs or rough grazings of the bigger farms.

The local branch secretaries have, I know, a very arduous and thankless task to follow annually the collection of these subscriptions. Success or otherwise depends entirely on their personal efforts, the quality of their appeal and the length of their patience. What I think we ought to do is to take our courage in both hands, raise the subscriptions in the County of Wilts and pay our local secretaries on a good percentage basis. I have always advocated this move since occupying the County Chair in 1935, but the cry is perpetually raised that the farmers' financial position does not warrant such a move. Well, of course, that day will never arrive, and so we go on.

It would be invidious of me to mention personalities in the governing body of our Wiltshire N.F.U. They are many; besides, I have already pulled them to pieces in our monthly "Record." But I must

mention our hard-working secretary, Mr. L. C. Trumper. His office efficiency is incomparable, his quiet manners are so in contrast to the loud speakers on the floor ; what we should do without him I do not know.

Talking of loud speakers I am reminded of an amusing incident which took place at a N.F.U. meeting in which I was taking part. A hot debate had been going forward for some little time as it often does when milk prices are to the fore ; from all parts of the room members were getting up describing their losses in recent months, and their troubles and worries in obtaining feeding-stuffs. There is no doubt at all they had reasonable grounds for doing so. However, when the end came I jumped to my feet to pour a little oil on the troubled waters by saying that Headquarters were doing their best to remedy this state of affairs, and further, we must still support loyally the N.F.U. for the good reason that not only now, but when hostilities ceased, we might very well require their help and protection to avoid being left in chaos as at the end of the last war. A bold fellow sprang up from the centre of the hall and said, " Yes, and you must do something about this income tax. We can't go on paying this seven shillings in the pound."

Milk Marketing Board

Opinion varies as to the value to the farmer of this national organization. I myself believe it to be one of the finest bits of work done by the aid of

the N.F.U., and no doubt this same opinion is shared by the majority of milk producers.

I remind those who think otherwise of their position had not such a market for all comers been instituted. Previous to the Board getting into operation chaos began to reign. The small man in particular was fast being squeezed out of existence, and now under the Milk Board he shares an equal price with all and sundry. The Marketing Board is more or less a leveller of prices, so that all can share equally the demands coming from all markets, whether it be liquid or every conceivable product in which fresh milk is used. There are no favours or perquisites under the Milk Board.

Agricultural County Wages Committee

Having been an employers' representative ever since the Agricultural Wages have come to be controlled, or as in its earliest stages, conciliated, my experience has helped me to form the opinion that on the whole they have worked successfully for the good of the industry, and certainly have accomplished a better standard of living for the employee. We have had our tussles at times, but goodwill and good temper have directed our deliberations on all occasions.

The employers' side have not always entertained the thoughts of the independent members, but with it all, I am satisfied no great damage has been done to the industry in Wiltshire, thanks to our gallant Chairman, Colonel Awdry, who we must say is most

conscientious in his decisions, although we may at times think him impervious to the employers' logic.

I have a vivid recollection of a very amusing scene which occurred at a sub-Committee meeting, one held to grant permits for employment at less than the minimum wage. An employer turned up with his employee, the latter, by the by, being somewhat low in intellect—in fact this inability was the nature of the claim. When we had them quietly seated, the Chairman addressed the employer somewhat as follows: "Now, Mr. —, can you give us your reasons for making this application?" Back came the reply, "Well, Mr. Chairman, this here chap ain't much good; he's one of them as is born in the slow gear, and that you'll find in a minute. You have a word with'en." The Chairman turning to the boy said, "Now, my boy, speak up and tell me how old you are." The boy with a grin on his face replied, "Twenty-one, sir, last apple-picking time." The employer chipped in, "There you are, sir, I telled 'ee he was one of they as be born in the slow gear." After this there appeared no way of escape from an exemption to work for a lower wage.

CHAPTER XVII

FOXHUNTING

LORD LYON, who was British Ambassador in Paris during the nineteenth century, is reported to have said that there were two things which disagreed with him : abstinence and exercise.

The good foxhunter takes the opposite view. He will tell you that hard riding which gives violent exercise is the mainspring of an enjoyable healthy life, and as for abstinence, unless he gives due attention to it, regulates his own food, his horseflesh will cost him more, and again, in proportion as his wine bill rises so will his courage sink. Most likely His Lordship's training provided other means for keeping fit. There are others in Paris, I believe.

It has been my good fortune throughout life to enjoy a long innings of foxhunting. Sometimes I think that perhaps I have had more than my share, and then when I think again I come to the conclusion that if less had come my way, no more would have gone to the less fortunate. This thought reinstates my peace of mind. It is surprising what little it takes to clear your conscience when you have a strong leaning in a certain direction. When you want to do something, a way is generally found to

overcome a few obstacles should they get in the way. I am perfectly sure by getting over these obstacles to hunt and to get over the obstacles whilst hunting, has kept me fit and active.

Throughout my life my wife never ceases to remind me that her new chances in life are extremely small whilst I keep hunting the fox.

Before I make my effort to relate a few incidents that have come my way during my hunting experience, I should like to make a reference to the foundation days of the V.W.H., the pack which has absorbed most of my interest, and to make some allusion to the succeeding Masters who have directed its destiny.

I have been reading again Lord Bathurst's book on the history of the V.W.H. A well-appointed book this, and one that is full of information on many of the surrounding packs of hounds. One gathers from it that the Old Berks is the parent body of not only the V.W.H., from which it was formed in 1838, but many of the present border Hunts as we find them to-day. Let me put it in Lord Bathurst's words : " It is now 102 years ago that the V.W.H. country was carved out of the Old Berks country," and in another passage he refers to this carving process to form some of the adjoining Hunts.

What rather amazes me is that in these early days of which he makes mention foxhunting was not altogether the most enjoyable pastime. Here are his words : " Foxes were few and far between, the country was mostly open fields between large wood-

land or forests, with big boundary fences of neighbouring properties, probably with few gates, so that unless big fences could be negotiated it meant good-bye to hounds for that day. The distances to Meets were enormous and in consequence there were very few days each week that anyone could hunt unless he was prepared to ride twenty miles out and perhaps a much longer distance home again." This story rather suggests to me that if to-day we had to undertake these long journeys, together with a probability of not finding a fox, hunting would very soon go out of fashion in this the twentieth century.

The point I should like to make here is that one often hears a reference to the good old days of foxhunting with no barb-wire, hedges cut and laid, and ditches dug out to keep the land dry and rideable. When will they return, they ask? I am not quite sure that these days ever existed, or if they did could they have had a long innings? Those of us who have never hunted without the knowledge of barb-wire, the bane of the foxhunter, have never faced the rigours of these early days, if we had I rather fancy we should not be looking for their return with any degree of pleasure. I cannot make myself believe that these good old days of which we hear so much were ever half so enjoyable as the ones we get to-day. This not only applies to foxhunting.

But to return to the medieval history of the V.W.H. It is very interesting to read the start of our Cricklade pack. Mr. C. A. R. Hoare hunted the whole of

the two Vales from 1879-86. In this latter year he appears to have found other amusements besides hunting the hounds, which apparently brought him into disrepute amongst the leading members of the Hunt.

I cannot believe this occurrence is singular to the V.W.H. But it must be a coincidence that good taste should have been outraged twice in so short a period in the history of this famous Hunt. Whenever these times of crisis arrive they must be a disturbing factor and cause sides to be taken. In this case it appears that most of the subscribing members were against the Master. The farming community were out almost to a man for him. They had good reason to be so. He undoubtedly had treated them well, bought from them his corn and hay, took the sporting rights of Webbs Wood, Red Lodge and other covers, gave great shooting parties and appears to have spent money lavishly in their entertainment.

Mrs. Calley tells a good story of Mr. Hoare, apparently the General was invited to a shooting-party at Red Lodge on a certain day and when asked what sort of a day's sport he got said, "Well, I spent most of the day hiding round trees for they were a lively party, one man was armed with a new gun and declared he was out to shoot anything alive." When invited on a second occasion he declared he had a previous engagement, but by some lucky chance he ran into the party on their return from the shoot; when lo! and behold! they were holding up one of the guests in a cart,

covered in blood and bandages. So much for Mr. Hoare's shooting-parties.

Lord Bathurst mentions one Meet of the hounds in particular at South Cerney during the dispute when flags were displayed and notices posted saying, "Stick to Hoare for He's a jolly good fellow." However, it was evident that this was a most irregular way to run a Hunt, which of all sporting fraternities must be forbearing in every direction. The end being that the full country of the V.W.H. was divided in 1886. Charley Hoare (as he was popularly called) came over to Cricklade and built new kennels, which served for many years until the present move was made to Marston Maisey in 1934.

One feature of this change deserves to be recorded, as I see it. Had the whole country remained under one mastership we people living in the south-west, north-west of Swindon, including Burderop, Hay Lane, Wootton Bassett, would never have got any hunting unless by going long distances.

Apparently Charley Hoare hunted his pack but three days a week, when at Cirencester, therefore assuming that no division had ever taken place, a large area of country must have suffered a lack of sport.

Reg Hewer tells a very good tale of the Vale hounds in 1885. The Meet was fixed for Crouch at 11 a.m., and a fox broke away immediately and ran straight for Buscot, where the Old Berks were to meet at 12 o'clock after the Hunt Ball. Col. Campbell—the host-to-be of the Old Berks—ran out thinking his invited guests had arrived and said,

“Come in you good fellows and take some refreshment.” Apparently the Vale members did justice to the Hunt breakfast much to the disgust of the Old Berks people who arrived on the scene just a bit late to meet the full force of a good Hunt breakfast.

I am told that in the day of Charley Hoare the ladies were even more brave and bold than they are to-day. A certain lady (Miss Sumner), who, by the by, eventually became Mrs. C. B. Fry, wife of the great cricketer, who apparently was hunting in the V.W.H. country, was on a visit to a famous Cheshire Pack, and telegraphed down to the Master for his celebrated grey to enable her to have a ride at a popular Meet. Well, the day and the horse duly arrived for this particular fixture. A fox equal to the occasion was quickly found in the surrounding shrubbery and away galloped the field down the drive, not so the celebrated lady, who turned the grey for the iron park railing and then, over a wide brook beyond, and got away with hounds without a follower. Well, we can't always keep pace with the ladies, can we?

In 1888 Mr. Butt Miller took over the Cricklade pack and remained as its Master for twenty-two years. My recollections of him are not very vivid, but when you take a look at the length of his Mastership we must place him well in the list of popular and approved Masters. He showed capital sport, although few would name him amongst the “bruisers” to hounds, this may be a very good reason why he stood up to his job and carried the horn so many years. One feature of his riding lives

in my mind, one never saw him in a boisterous hurry, he never raced at any fence. His usual practice was to trot up and jump it slowly or even walk up and lurch over. I believe his art in hunting the fox was considered even above the average, in any case he was instrumental in building up a fine pack of hounds.

Towards the end of his Mastership rumours began to circulate that he was slowing up in his effort to show sport ; it may have been in response to these rumours or not, but the fact remains that Joe Willis came on the scene as professional huntsman in the year 1908. Joe turned out to be a good huntsman, which was proved by his long service with the pack. I well remember when he joined us a state of nerves occasionally possessed him. Butt Miller kept an eagle eye upon him and Joe in return kept one eye on the hounds, but the other was always on the Master. This naturally distracted him from showing his best art until he got settled down to his job, and then he continued to show good sport for many years under his two Masters.

Butt Miller had quite a pleasing personality, but I rather suspect he entertained a vein of sarcasm. There is a very good tale abroad which lends itself to this characteristic. A visitor from Town appeared one day, one, I should imagine, who was a little lacking in the correct technique of hunting for he had been riding hard all day, and on occasion had over-ridden hounds. Towards the end, having enjoyed himself, he decided to thank the Master for showing such good sport, and rode up to him and

expressed himself in these words, "Very many thanks, Master, for the excellent day. I am afraid I must now leave to get my train at Swindon," and Butt replied in a few words, "I hope you will catch it."

There are other very good stories about Mr. Butt Miller. Before he got well settled into his work, two farmers were discussing the new Master. One said to the other, "I haven't seen him yet, have you?" The other replied that he had, and having been asked what he thought of him he remarked, "Well, if his ears were a bit bigger, I guess he could fairly fly."

I believe there was an occasion when a tall, thin man repeatedly came out hunting with an unmanageable horse and each time with yet stronger tackle; at last Butt said to him, "All you want is an anchor."

It must have been a sorry day for Cricklade when on April 30, 1910, Mr. Miller's term of Mastership came to an end. He must have spent a large portion of his income in the town, seeing that his well-appointed house stood on its border. Not before or since has just this style been kept up. But whatever tears were shed by Cricklade people on April 30, on the going of Mr. Butt Miller, smiles returned on the following day, May 1, when Col. Fuller entered upon his twenty-one years' active and thorough work as a Master of hounds to the Cricklade pack. Col. Fuller, being of a modest nature, preferred not to keep up a large establishment in the town, and selected a small cottage and humble

staff to administer to his wants. Nevertheless, throughout his Mastership he never failed to open his purse to the needy, or give a cheery smile to all and sundry. His charm of manner was evident for all to see, but it was not everyone who knew about the hay-ricks he bought and his horses never consumed, or perhaps a bank balance here and there that he was able to adjust. How does one get to know of these quiet deeds of help? No doubt Col. Fuller himself has forgotten them, but there remains a warm feeling in the heart of the recipient and this warm feeling finds a way out on occasion.

Whilst I have taken this opportunity to mention Col. Fuller's generosity, which he exercised on many occasions, this sense of generosity is by no means absent from the main body of hunting people. Foxhunting creates a friendly feeling, good humour and good-fellowship which no other sport seems to bring about in the life of country people, anyway, not to the same extent. One knows, of course, that cases of bad manners and a certain amount of damage do occur here and there, more often than not it is the invader who is the culprit. I have a thought in my mind that this kind of thing might very well be checked by a reminder by the secretary that his day's sport not only involves an obligation to the Hunt, but careful consideration to the farmer who is his host in chief.

This type of hunting man never sees the local papers, giving an occasional warning about damage to crops, etc., therefore it might be advisable that

some printed matter should reach him by some means.

My experience tells me that much of the real damage comes from the hiring stable. Before I leave this question of damage let us join issue on a few points. The major damage I would say is to the fences, for they do get knocked about a bit on occasion by the indifferent horse and more often than not by the bad horseman, and gates are left open, causing cattle to stray. A gate-shutter following the Hunt does much to check this trouble, but unfortunately he is powerless to repair a broken fence. This, one hopes, will receive some attention next day from the Area Manager. The question of damage to fields and field-crops is undoubtedly more of an eyesore than any real harm, but with due care and attention, particularly in the late spring, we can place this complaint in the minor list. Growing roots of course must be avoided at all costs and, whilst making my complaints against hunting people, there is a vice I would like to mention, one that you so often see. Why does the unthinking sportsman immediately loose his horse for a strong gallop after passing through a gateway when hounds are not running? How often you see damage done in this way, cutting up turf to no purpose, all that sort of thing should be done on some fallow field.

There is yet another misdeed which is rather too often practised I am afraid, again it is done from the want of thought, that is, when hounds are passing through a village or perhaps a farmyard, a

friendly greeting should be quick upon the lips of all hunting people, whether man or woman—I am not sure the latter are not the worst offenders—I presume they find the scandal of the Hunt too engrossing, and thus miss the opportunity to greet their country hosts; hosts indeed they are for every hour you spend in the hunting field, and the hunting person should be ever mindful of it.

When you come to analyse the people who hunt you can put them into three classes. There are those who really enjoy it, they know every fence and usually how to tackle it, they watch every turn of the hounds and their work on the line. They can sometimes anticipate a turn, and thereby save their horse a bit, they mark out well ahead how they are going to get out of a field before they get into it; these are the ones who have the will to get there, and generally do by hook or by crook.

Then you have another class who come out for a little exercise and a friendly chat, jog round the roads and pick up hounds again at a point just to hear a few features and remarks of a good hunt, this enables them to say, “Yes, I was out that good day from so and so.”

Then again you have what I call the friendly class, the stragglers who wind their way slowly up from the rear, putting the finishing touch to a weakened fence. I call them friendly, they really are. How often have they caught a loose horse, and of course they are last through an open gate and their duty is to shut it, and one has a pious hope that they do.

LT.-COL. W. FULLER AND THE AUTHOR.

FOX HUNTING

Well, I must now hark back a bit and get to the tale of Col. Fuller's early days with the V.W.H. He and I seem to have had contact throughout life at many points, soldiering, foxhunting and in later years, public work. I have a clear recollection of a day he spent with us in these early days, before he took over, just to see the country and, I presume, to let us see whether we should like him, or it may be to let us see he could fill the post and act with energy. On that day I was able to compete for a while, and for a while only, for when we came to a brook with a stile and stepping-stones on either side, I found I no longer could and he passed out of sight. But there came a day when I think the boot was on the other leg. I have an idea this day we found a fox in Water Eaton cover and ran across the Vale near Kempsford. Half-way through the ride hounds had a check and no one seemed near to put them right. In my haste I made a very thoughtless remark by saying, "Has anyone seen the Master?" and a voice rang out from the next field. "Here I am, where you ought to be." However, an explanation was soon forthcoming by his saying, "My fault, Charley, I ought to have been up."

His second season was a good one, it followed a dry summer and I remember the going was really fine.

These three seasons before the Great War I believe will be recorded amongst his best. Joe Willis tells me that in 1910 62½ brace of foxes was the record, although following the War sport

again became good, but I fear the war period made many changes, faces were absent and money short for some little time in those post-war years. Whilst the war was in progress hunting kept going throughout—old Ted Brown and Tom Freer Meade were acting Masters, and they and Joe Willis carried on making a good effort to keep down the foxes. I remember going out a few days during the first winter, but eventually all our riding-horses were either commandeered or bought up, and then it was impossible. I, for one, had to stop.

It is rather amazing how you lose your nerve when absent from the hunting field for long. I found myself quite useless to follow hounds until I was able to regain a little confidence by judicious riding and what I call a nursing of the nerve. It only shows how necessary it is never to slacken off, if you do, you must call “finis,” and I am not particularly anxious to do this just yet.

I have very little knowledge of how the finances were found to keep going during those war years. Col. Fuller and others I have no doubt were generous donors, but I do know that Lord Banbury generously contributed £100 per annum during these years, and what perhaps is even more generous, continued his subscription right up to the date of his death in 1936.

After the war period I became a member of the Hunt Committee, of which Lord Banbury continued to be Chairman; although active, hunting he rather avoided during his latter years.

He really was a most efficient Chairman, but like

all men of forceful nature liked his point of view to carry the day if possible, and when other opinions crept into the discussions the Committee were often treated to some amusement. I rather think the first tussle was over building some further accommodation at the Kennels, when Capt. Colville came in as Joint Master. A new cottage was required for his stud groom. Well, His Lordship thought this a great extravagance, but eventually it passed the Committee and a sub-Committee was appointed to carry the project into execution. By and by settling day came, and we found the amount expended had gone beyond the maximum allotted—it generally does—but in this case I believe there was an oak fence put around the garden ordered by the new-comer, Capt. Colville. His Lordship's remarks were something like this : “ You know, gentlemen, I was never in favour of this new outlay and now the Committee are faced with all these extras, what are we to do about it ? The only right and proper course is for our sub-Committee, who luckily are all wealthy men, to pay for these extras. You know who they are, General Calley, Captain Dennis and the farmer Charles Whatley.”

Unfortunately this was not the end of the cottage trouble. A few years later, when Col. Fuller's term of office came to an end and Capt. Kingscote came on the scene, this addition was not required and then the Chairman thought we ought to dispose of it. However, other views were before the Committee. Some thought the cottage a very good

investment and further at some future date might again be required, therefore why sell it?

His Lordship proceeded to put the point before his Committee and then looked round the room, counted the votes and said, "There you are, the cottage must be sold." Someone ventured to say that they did not think he was right. "What," he said, "put your hands up again," and another count was obtained. "Right," he said, "the cottage must be sold," and began entering it in the minutes. This I could not stand, knowing it to be contrary to the majority of the Committee, and immediately jumped to my feet and said, "My Lord, I challenge the voting."—"What," he replied. "Can't I count? Please put up your hands again," and when they were carefully counted the voting showed a majority against selling the cottage. The scene was really most amusing.

On another occasion we were discussing the advisability of calling a general Hunt meeting. Mr. Robert Horton, quite innocently and with the sole object of helping things on, made a comment on the Duke of Beaufort's Annual Meeting. There was a pause for a moment and then His Lordship pushed back his chair and exclaimed, "Mr. Horton, I haven't been fifty years in the House of Commons unless I know how to conduct a public meeting."

You can imagine how we all flattened out, and as far as I can remember this incident brought the meeting to an end. However, the General Meeting came off. His Lordship took the Chair, made his own statement, and never another word was

spoken by anyone present, and away we slunk to chase the fox. But with all his imperial make-up, the Committee were very much indebted to his directing influence. He had certainly guided them through many a difficult period and indeed we had much to thank him for.

When we were in the throes of selecting a successor to Col. Fuller I recollect one morning several members of the Committee going down to Warneford Place to discuss with him the suggestion of inviting Capt. Kingscote to fill the post. He was most anxious for us to make a good choice and would go thoroughly into every detail. Finally he said, "Stay and have lunch, gentlemen, and let us have another talk about it."

To find his successor as Chairman of the Hunt Committee much anxious thought was required. We had several members who undoubtedly could prefer their claim as such, and some of us had an idea the voting might go very close, and voting by show of hands might very well make a mess of things. Therefore I advised our Secretary, Mr. John Thornton, to have ready slips of voting paper, and warned him that he as Secretary would be expected to open the meeting and as soon as he had done so I would jump up and propose that we should make a decision by paper vote. The whole Hunt I am sure agreed that on that day we made an excellent choice by electing Mr. W. M. Goodenough to fill this most important post.

Before I proceed to give an account of the doings of our new regime, I must refer back again to the

old days. Towards the end of Col. Fuller's Mastership his health was none too good and in order to reduce the strain he invited Commander Codrington to accept the position of Joint Master. A very gallant fellow to hounds was he. Being a heavy man circumstances compelled him to select horses with plenty of bone, real weight carriers, this type if you push 'em along a bit too fast are apt to get you into trouble if you are not careful, but I must say that he stood up well to a few knocks and bumps, his big frame encased the heart of a lion, to this all will pay tribute.

When this partnership broke up Capt. Colville came along to take a share in the responsibility of keeping us out of mischief. He filled the post quite successfully and thus enabled Col. Fuller to ease off on certain days, but like all these joint affairs they are very good up to a point, but to join a Master who has run a country successfully for so many years, is a very difficult task. I am sure I should not like the office. I call it a painful process to learn the art of foxhunting, but how else can you do it?

READING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

MR. W. M. GOODENOUGH, CAPT. KINGSCOTE, MR. H. NELL, LORD CADOGAN.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NEW REGIME

MR. W. M. GOODENOUGH as Chairman, and Capt. Kingscote as Master, I think is very well described as the Olympians working their art in double harness, the one directed the Hunt finances to expand sufficiently to build new kennels at Marston Maisey, and the other built up his art of hunting the fox to a very high degree during his five seasons.

Speaking of Hunt finances I very much doubt whether the V.W.H. would have ever ventured on the ambitious programme of building new kennels had it not been for the very generous offer of Capt. Sydney Dennis to provide the land free of any expense. This, indeed, was a handsome gift to the Hunt, and one which will be handed down to posterity for many years to come let us hope.

When very careful reflection is given to those difficult days at the end of Capt. Kingscote's Mastership, I very much doubt whether ambition would not have prompted him to make a bid for the Shires at some early date. How well we know do we not, that art is ever seeking new fields to conquer?

Capt. Kingscote possessed the true instincts of a Master of Hounds. He never missed an opportunity to entertain the farmers. He could always strike the right note when opportunity presented itself. At the Wire Ball he and Mrs. Kingscote played their parts well. I take off my hat to Mrs. Kingscote, for no one knew the technique of foxhunting better than she. The Wire Ball evening was the moment to play host and hostess to the farmers, who usually turned up in good numbers. Were they not the most important part of the Hunt? Right royally did she and Capt. Kingscote do their entertainment at this annual function. I think I am expressing the opinion of the farmers when I say that expressions of regret were many when they in their turn passed on.

These extraordinary men like Capt. Kingscote we do meet now and then. They seem to possess what I call for want of a better expression, "the Nelsonic touch," the ladies just cannot resist them. I remember one day we were hunting at Bassett Down and he said to me, "You go along the bottom Charley and see that the fox does not break away below, and I will put hounds in on the top." Well, in carrying out my orders I ran into the lady of the house, Mrs. Arnold Foster, whom I found was not too pleased to see hounds, she was afraid that they would damage her flower borders, and I found that I was quite unable to assure her that they would not. Thereupon the Master appeared and I proceeded to introduce him. He, of course, taking in the situation at a glance,

took off his cap gracefully with a smile and immediately the scene changed. "Oh, I am so glad to meet you Captain Kingscote," said Mrs. Arnold Foster. "Are you having a good season? I do hope so, I really am pleased to see you. I have been hoping that I should get this opportunity of meeting you. Now will you come in to tea, later?"—"Yes, I shall be delighted," said Capt. Kingscote. "May I bring Mrs. Kingscote with me."—"Oh, do." There you are. I was perfectly useless, but he carried all before him, he could and he would. How are you to explain it?

In February 1936 the Hunt Committee were again seeking a new Master and they found, as most Hunts to-day do, that the task was a very difficult one. The cost and responsibility of running a pack of hounds is a continually rising one. Consequently prospective Masters are not so easy to find, and taking a look into the future unfortunately there appears no escape from a continuation of this state of affairs.

The day has gone, I am afraid, when we can expect to hold two Masters for a period of forty-three years—Mr. Butt Miller and Col. Fuller, 1888-1931—since this good record we seem forced by circumstances to take a line of short periods, and if we can only continue on this basis, we, like other Hunts, must consider ourselves fortunate.

All realize that foxhunting of the future is in the lap of the Gods, but I have an idea that it will not fade away as a game of the past generation, traditions of sport, love of the chase, and this great

spectacle of the country-side will not pass in a night as some seem to think. We house in England all the great sporting artists of the world and these men will attract the cash from quarters where it is assembled when the war is over, and with that comforting thought we must leave it.

To continue my tale of February 1936, the Committee received several offers to take over the hounds and eventually invited Lord Cadogan, in conjunction with Mr. H. Nell, to hunt the hounds. This proved quite a useful combination. His Lordship, on resigning from the army, was anxious to try his hand at the game, and I must say liberally subscribed to all functions in connection with hunting and thus played his part well.

Mr. Nell very kindly put his great knowledge of hounds and the general technique of the chase at the disposal of all concerned. The combination was completed by these two gentlemen engaging Gilbert, a professional huntsman. The latter I always thought gave a good account of himself when in charge of the pack. Unfortunately he was out of the saddle for a few odd periods and then things did not go so well. But on the whole this arrangement worked all right and so we carried on for two seasons.

When this short period was over the Committee were still able to hear of others who were prepared to take the country over. This time the choice fell on Mr. D. E. C. Price, who had been hunting the Black and Tans in Ireland. Previous to this I fancy he hunted a pack of hounds in the North of England.

This most useful experience, his reputation and his kennel huntsman, Charley Hoare, who he brought with him, added to his own natural ability to carry the horn—except one day when he dropped it—has served us well during his first season. A good horseman with plenty of courage, and several memorable days we must put in to Mr. Price's credit.

His policy of introducing Black and Tan hounds, which he brought with him from Ireland, were of great interest and some speculation amongst various members of the Hunt. Some thought them quite an acquisition to the scenting power of the pack, another opinion one heard expressed was that they possessed too much of this power of scent, the result being that on a good scenting day one was never quite sure what they were hunting. That thought may have arisen from lack of hound knowledge and therefore may be quite erroneous. But I rather think general opinion would sum them up by saying they may have their qualifications and some good ones, but whatever good points they possess, they have not come to stay in the English packs. One thing I am certain about them is that they cannot be so easily picked out a field or two ahead when you are riding to catch them, and that makes me think ill of them, but then I may be wrong.

This hunting phase of some fifty years would not be complete unless I introduced a few outstanding characters who have hunted with the V.W.H. during these many years of my pleasant contact

with the Cricklade Pack. During the time many lasting friends have I made ; I am quite sure never an enemy, and to my good fortune it must be attributed, I have broken very few bones.

Amongst my earliest recollections I seem to see the face of Jethro Coleing, he was one of our hunting farmers and many years did he hunt. A long, heavy man, it always amazed me how he could nearly always see the end of a long run, and on an average put in three days a week. I remember riding one of his horses in a Point-to-Point, but either I or the horse was too slow. I never could ride big horses, they never seemed to respond to my movements, consequently I did not win him the race. This reminds me of another hunting farmer, Andrew Chillingworth, who, by the by, had great success in winning Points-to-Points with an old favourite called "Prime Dutch," ridden by his son Charles. I should not like to say how many races this good horse won, but it must have been many.

The sons of these two farmers are hunting to-day, bred in them it must be ; may they still ride on and serve the Hunt as their fathers did. Then in the list of a few farmers who have turned an honest pound by selling a horse now and again we must place Jack Dibble and Victor Arkell, both good horsemen ; the latter won more of our farmers' races than perhaps any other.

Victor certainly had an eye that could pick out a winner when he went to market.

On the other side of our country we have George

White, who perhaps has seen more foxhunting than most men in the Vale of White Horse. His son John I place well in the list of finished horsemen, he has such a beautiful seat and setting.

Reg. Hewer, who tells us the tale of the Charley Hoare days, no doubt thinks of many others when he reflects on his long life in the hunting field. I have often heard him sing the praises of Dudgrove in the old days of his father. What a sporting centre for game of all description it must have been in the days of profitable farming !

Amongst the heavy-weights no one would deny Nipper Sutton a good place in his best days. Well up and well over one usually found him when hounds were running.

For many years Cecil and Mrs. Wilson were keen followers of the Vale Hunt. No two people ever kept such close contact in the hunting field, they were both bold and brave, and the Major loved a foxchase up to the very end, but their following of hounds had a technique of its own. One often saw them turn from the wake of the Hunt and take off to what appeared to be the opposite direction. This has been described as "skirting." As we all know, this type of hunting followed to its ultimate conclusion can leave you wondering what to do next, and you finally decide you must jog off home. On the other hand you may, if lucky, have a wonderful time on your own. This, I feel, describes the riding to hounds of these lovable people.

A friend of all in the Hunt was Dr. Powell, of

Highworth, a real good fellow to hounds all his long life, a real handyman was he, one who lost many a ride by having to stop to bind up a broken limb. A kind friend he was to me on a certain day in the Water Eaton Vale when I broke a collar-bone over some iron railings going up into Hannington out of the Vale. He possessed a keen sense of humour and just loved to pull your leg. You were never quite sure whether he was serious or not, even his wife often misplaced his intentions. What a laugh he created one afternoon at Can Court—I am very much afraid at Mrs. Powell's expense. One hopes she will not mind the tale being repeated. It was a bitter cold afternoon and we were all standing about getting a fox out of "Titcombe's Drain." Mrs. Powell said, "Well, I am going inside by Mrs. Titcombe's fire and get a warm up with a drink," and thereupon handed her horse over to the doctor. However, it was not long before a few more of us thought the idea a good one and proceeded to join her, including the gallant doctor. When we got inside, Mrs. Powell exclaimed, "Oh, Jim, what have you done with the horses?"—"Turned them loose," says Jim.—"Well, how are we to get home then?"—"Walk," says he, "it's capital good exercise."

On another occasion we were all standing in the road waiting developments of a draw. Mrs. Powell got very impatient and said, "Oh, where are we going, Jim?" and the reply from the doctor was, "We aren't going anywhere, we are just standing still."

George Higham was another man who displayed great skill in crossing a country ; his experience and knowledge of hunting was great, all of which he gave freely for the good of the sport.

Another pillar of the Hunt one cannot leave out is John Faulkener ; he must have served on the Hunt Committee more years than many, or even any. He still lives to dream of the good old days and no doubt takes a stroll out to the garage to have a look at his old Ford car, a friend of long standing.

The great Hooper Deacon, who served as Hunt Secretary a term of years too long to calculate, followed into office by John Thornton, who always keeps a smiling face even though he lost heavily when the great Russian Empire fell in 1917, so it is reported.

A face we all miss is Col. Lawrence of Kempsford ; a charming man is he, and although he seems to have retired from hunting, sweet reflections on the past, we hope, still bear him company. And here I must end my few comments on the gentlemen in pink. No, there is one more, last but not least, General Stephens, Hunt Secretary for several years. In fact he it was who carried the Hunt to a successful close of its long life at Cricklade.

Could I venture, I wonder ? the danger is great, I know, but I will risk just two of the ladies. Mrs. Calley of Burderop Park gave chase to the fox in the days of Charley Hoare and still leads the van of the ladies under the Mastership of Mr. Price. Can any mere man beat this record ? Only a few, I think.

The other I have in mind is Mrs. Wendy Jones, who came amongst us in the days of Col. Fuller and still wipes the eyes of the younger generation when a good fence presents itself.

A Few Memorable Hunts

How many are my regrets for not keeping a hunting diary. I know men who do and it may be in the near future we may get a full disclosure of the valiant deeds in the Vale of White Horse. Major Charles Briant does, I know, but then he will never record how well he leads the van when opportunity presents itself.

It has never been my lot to participate in many of the great runs, or so it seems to me. There are days one gets on occasion which need no recording : they live in the memory. These are the days when your experience—or is it your cunning—which has put you in for a favourable turn when hounds are running, and then you just lead for a few brief moments. No fences seem too big or ditches too wide, but alas this is a fleeting moment and you quickly find that a better man than yourself takes the front rank, or is it that he too has taken a favourable turn? Well, it may be either, but my point is : these are the moments which bring a sense of satisfaction when the day is done. On the other hand how unhappy and disagreeable is the man when he gets home in the evening and reflects on the day's sport. "Ah," he thinks to himself, "had I taken that stiff fence I should have been better

placed to enjoy that real good hunt.”—“He who hesitates is lost,” counts for much when you are out for a ride.

It just occurs to me that I have not proceeded far in recording memorable runs of the V.W.H. Well, let my mind carry me back to several in Col. Fuller’s time. One in particular I can see starting from somewhere in the Hay Lane district, most probably Saltrop, and hounds giving us a good ride across Chaddington Vale, leaving Wootton Bassett on the left and running into Great Wood.

On another day I remember arriving at Basset Down a few minutes late on a horse, which I had earlier taken two hours’ farming previous to a hard canter to the Meet, and when I arrived, the horse I had sent on was not to be found, and to my amazement hounds got on to a fox in a few moments and left cover at the far end of Bynoll, and then what a good ride we were in for, out towards Wootton Bassett, and then a sharp turn up the Chaddington Vale nearly to Swindon and back again to pull up on my farm hack to watch hounds stream by, entering Bynoll at the spot they had left it. That farm hack, whose name was “Bones,” was a real good one, all blood, no bone and as thin as a hurdle; finally we buried him with full honours a few years later.

It is too often said no good fun emanates from Burderop. I can recall a real good run taking place late in an afternoon about March time. Joe Willis was in charge of the pack and we got a fox away from the bottom end, taking a line over the railway, leaving Badbury and Medbourne on the right,

straight for Wanborough Church, where he thought to enter an earth ; being foiled he turned left, passed Lower Wanborough and right away to Acorn Bridge on his way to Warneford Place. How many were up ? A few farmers and Joe Willis as far as I remember, for I believe it was Cheltenham Gold Cup Day.

I have distinct recollections of a fast and reckless ride in Capt. Kingscote's days. Hounds met at Cricklade and proceeded to Keylocks Drain. When I arrived I found myself behind 150 people waiting in a narrow road to hear the view-hollo. No chance here, I thought, to see either a fox or a hound. I pulled my good horse "Wideawake," round in the opposite direction ; he was one of the finest timber jumpers I have ever ridden. We shot round a back lane and over a couple of gates, and found hounds were just in front of us. Then all out for a few miles, to end up by jumping into a pond, an unfortunate finish to a good ride of not more than thirty minutes, probably less, but it was worth it. Good fortune—or was it Joe Willis?—directed me to Capt. Oxley, whose butler produced the whiskey. Poor old "Wideawake" was a bit lame for a few days, but he soon got over it. Report has it that this was the day of the season ; well, it may very well be a true report, but I only saw half of it, but what I saw was good : I make no complaints.

One gets a deal of fun and quite good hunting, for the going is good around Eastleach, the Cricklade border on the north side of the country. Fred Honour would seem to farm most of the land in that

area. Nash's Gorse is a cover of good repute for a fox. When you get away you soon come in contact with the stone walls. Has anyone seen a bad fall over a wall? Of course there must be some spills when facing these formidable obstacles, but I cannot recall ever seeing one. The lesson one learns here is, Never be too anxious to ride at the spot where the main body have weakened the fence : if you do, trouble will be your lot sooner or later. Your horse will make his best effort when he is quietly taking a fence on his own and not fussed by the crowd. I once heard a man say that those who ride at post and rails will come to grief sooner or later. I cannot subscribe to this theory. Provided they are not too formidable and you ride carefully I believe you are safer by taking the rails. You are pretty certain to find the going is better and the landing sound. My motto is, If you cannot steer, well, don't come out hunting. Most of the accidents one sees are invariably to he or she who is an indifferent pilot.

Real good fun is sure to follow a Meet at Lotmead Gate. Capt. Kingscote was the first Master to hunt this side of the country regularly ; whenever you go there a fox seems to spring from nowhere, and a good run is assured.

Two good days came from this Meet last season ; the first we took a fox well into the Old Berks country to finish at Wanborough ; finally a great gallop back to Swindon to pull up at the Lawn. But the great day followed a few weeks later when our second fox of the day took us just short of

Kingston Lisle. What a day ! I have made an effort to put it into rhyme :

T'was at Lotmead Gate
They met their fate ;
Vale warriors old,
And women bold,
So soon to leave the plate.

Oh, David Price-less Master
Not you to lose your plaster,
Your heart was good
Your horse just stood,
You must be mounted faster.

To Ding Dong Farmer Bell,
That long and heavy Swell,
The Wanbro' Brook,
Is a cosy nook,
He knows so well.

Bad luck to Charlie Briant,
Whom we left to save the Giant,
The lion bold,
From water cold,
Oh, Charles, you are reliant.

Of the lass who rides a grey,
There really is little to say,
She thinks it fun
To water a run,
Was it—three times that day ?

Let's tell the truth,
Of a damsel Ruth,
She entered the flood
And drew the blood
Of " Excusable " by " Youth."

THE NEW REGIME

The end of the day
Brought Barker to bay,
Up White Horse nook
He scrambled to look,
For the tireless grey.

Let's drink to the few,
When rein they drew,
At Kingston Lisle,
To rest awhile,
Historic hunts to chew.

P.S. Apologize to Farmer Cook,
Whose cows their meads forsook,
You hunting fellow
In pink and yellow,
Or in a Court you'll look.

From those up we can name the Master, Col. Fitzgerald, Major Bond, E. K. Nesbit (who I remember was making enquiries on the miles to Kemble), Capt. Dalgety, Sydney Maundrell and a few others. Charley Hoare, the first Whip, I can see stone cold, or rather his horse was making an effort to walk to the finish.

Another capital run came from the same Meet, again this year of Grace 1939. Barker leading the way from Lotmead to Swindon. I have already mentioned that good sport started in this area by the coming of Capt. Kingscote, but no one will deny that the credit of these lively days is almost entirely due to the amount of energy and time put in by two farmer friends to the Hunt, Billy Gibbs and Percy Godwin. They have opened up this good country and made it rideable, and to them I

pay tribute. Col. Lawrence, late of Chiseldon Camp, also rendered valuable assistance on the New Cover side. The romance of hunting is in his blood, he just could not help doing it ; and then last but not least, in fact a host in himself, has been Edgar Prescott Barker of King Edward Place. He being Field Master in the Old Berks country has considerably eased the situation. What a difference it makes when a man like this brings an influence which is irresistible where hunting is concerned ! Many a good ride have I had in company with my friend "Gar" Barker, but at times he is far too fast and furious for me to bear company.

Riding in Point-to-Point is a fascinating game, but only a few riders have a long innings. My courage never rose to this pitch except in a few years preceding the great War. I have a few nice cups to adorn my sideboard, one I notice given by the Officers 18th (Q.M.O.) Hussars in 1913.

I shall never forget one race which I took part in about the year 1900. We were all lined up in a field just off the Marston Road and told to ride to a flag waving on the hill between the "Black Horse," Wanborough and Little Hinton. The first obstacle was the Marston Brook, and very luckily for me I was drawn on the extreme right, the remainder of the field either got in or were turned out by refusing horses going down the line. When I got clear I took a look back and there was not one coming, and I thought to myself I shall surely win this race now, but no, Good Luck refused

my company a few fields from the finish, for I got laid out over a new cut and laid fence in the Wanborough Bottom. I was conscious that my good steed was tiring and this just finished her off. I have an idea that the race was won by Ernest Retter of Overtown. Well, he deserved it; he was a struggling farmer like myself. Unfortunately he had but a short innings at the business, for he died a comparatively young man.

A few years back it became my lot to take part in a talk on Farming and Foxhunting at Broadcasting House. It was during Anthony Hurd's run, "Farming to-day." He approached me with an idea of giving a little talk on something of interest about Christmas time, and we finally agreed on the subject "Farming and Foxhunting." He, while not opposed to hunting, indeed far from it, took the line that hunting people were not over careful in avoiding damage, etc. etc., and then our talk broadened out to say that some hunts were not pulling their weight in subscribing to the R.A.B.I. Being an honorary Secretary to this most excellent Institution for bringing relief to broken-down farmers, I was anxious to awaken a little more energy into the work of those responsible for the collection of annual subscriptions and Hunt caps. Our efforts in this direction, whilst they may or may not have borne fruit, certainly raised a certain amount of protest in some quarters. I understand that the matter was brought to the notice of Sir John Reith, the Director of the B.B.C., who put the matter in order, since they are very particular

at the B.B.C., and cut out anything which may give possible offence. I had worked into the talk something about celebrated men who had joined in the sport of foxhunting in years gone by, and mentioned one in particular, the Duke of Wellington, who was a real sportsman, for did he not conclude peace terms with the French after the Napoleonic Wars which had never been broken?

What might have happened at Versailles Peace Treaty had Mr. Lloyd George been a foxhunter, we never can tell, can we? This little interlude, of course, was eliminated. For you must not take liberties at Broadcasting House.

INVITATION MEET AT POPES' SEAT, CIRENCESTER PARK.

CHAPTER XIX

FARMING AND FOXHUNTING—1938

IN this final chapter I want to set out my ideas about the true relationship of farming and fox-hunting. I cannot do better than quote the broadcast talk which I had with Mr. Anthony Hurd.

A. H. : Well, I hope you have all had a good Christmas. Those of us who live in the country or in many of our provincial towns were reminded of foxhunting on Boxing Day, and to-night I think we are still sufficiently full of Christmas not to want to discuss the weather, or foodstuffs, or quotas, so Mr. Charles Whatley and I are going to have a little discussion about farming and foxhunting. Mr. Whatley is a well-known farmer in my part of the country, and he hunts regularly—or as regularly as business allows—with the V.W.H. (Cricklade).

Whatley, you have been both farming and hunting for many years?

C. W. W. : Yes, it must be something like forty-five years—nearly half a century. Perhaps you think it about time I gave up both.

A. H. : No, no, I would not say that. I am

sure you would find an idle life boring and certainly not very profitable.

C. W. W. : Yes, I believe you are right. Both occupations are very interesting, provided of course you have an iron frame and good health. A farmer has every opportunity to furnish himself with a good constitution, and, if he can't plough in his troubles, he has at least a good opportunity to hunt them away, and I might add at little cost.

A. H. : Yes, the hunting farmer is generally a cheerful sort of fellow, but most of us can't afford the time or money to hunt to-day. Now apart from keeping the farmer fit, what benefits would you say come to farming from foxhunting?

C. W. W. : Well, foxhunting and farming fit in very well together. Foxhunting does bring many benefits to the farmer, direct and indirect. Sometimes I think the benefits are overlooked, but that, of course, is only natural. The non-hunting man does not sum up the situation. If he did he would be amazed at his good luck in farming in an area where hunting is a tradition of long standing.

A. H. : That is a bold statement to make. Why do you say that this hunting game is so good for the farmer? There are plenty of poultry farmers and some others who say that they would rather be without foxes and without foxhunting.

C. W. W. : Well, I must take up your challenge. First think of the picturesque and the social side of foxhunting. No one can be insensible to that fascinating picture of a village or lawn Meet. Here you get congregated the high and the low,

the rich and the poor, yes, and even the man on the dole. How often have I seen these men spending an hour of real enjoyment following the hounds on a bicycle or on foot. Then take a Boxing Day Meet. Our late Master, Col. W. Fuller, in real good humour used to describe it as a great Christmas party, and he was not far wrong. The roads are blocked with motor-cars, cyclists and people on foot in countless numbers, all full of life and excitement, and if they can only catch a glimpse of a fox, they go home and talk about it for months, and this just keeps them from brooding over the failings of the politicians to put the world right. Grand, isn't it?

I have just been reading the life of Parnell, and it can't be disputed that the troubles of Ireland have been due to nothing more or less than the fact that the Irish landlord did not live in the country. Is this not an object lesson for us? I say, discourage hunting and our village life would be the poorer, and rural population become yet more scanty. The privilege of foxhunting has prevailed for about two centuries. Is it not amazing how the last phase of the Feudal System has lived through so many changes? Surely it has been nourished by the real good-fellowship which exists between the farmer and the hunting man, and it will be a sorry day should the rural areas lose that bond of friendship.

A. H. : Yes. This old country of ours seems to stand up against these international shocks better than most. Is it not partly that our standard of life is good and our people have healthy amusement?

We have hunting, racing, football, cricket and sport of every description and to suit all tastes. This sport makes life worth living, and must act as a safety-valve. It is said, I know, that the country spends too much of its resources on sport. That's as it may be.

C. W. W. : I have not much in common with people who hold that view. I say, take the cash and let the credit go. I know you are quite a reader, Hurd. You surely can recall why the great Duke of Wellington was so successful in the Peninsula. Was it not because he kept a pack of hounds in Spain just to amuse the troops during the off days ?

Then just look at the many social activities these hunting people share with us farmers. To mention a few : hunt balls, wire dances, support for local agricultural shows. Again, who would miss the annual Point-to-Point races ? They cost nothing except to the man who is lucky enough to own a motor-car. But no farmer ever pays anything that day. No, he gets everything free and in most cases a free lunch.

A. H. : Yes, that is a courteous repayment of the hospitality that the farmer freely gives to hunt over his land. If foxhunting is to go on, and it would be a bad day for the country if it were stopped, there must be the spirit of give-and-take between farmers and the Hunt. I have no grievance against the Hunt in my part of the country, but you do hear of cases of rank bad manners, and quite unnecessary damage is done to farm property,

fences broken, young wheat ridden over, gates left open so that stock stray and so on. It's ignorance I know, and not malice. *You get more people out hunting to-day who don't know much about the country.* They seem to forget their manners and that they are the farmers' guests. It might be all to the good if the M.F.H. made an example occasionally, and sent one or two flagrant offenders home. Correct manners are just as important as correct dress in the hunting field.

C. W. W. : I agree that there's got to be a spirit of give-and-take. There is in most Hunts. You know how at N.F.U. dinners the members will drink heartily to the toast of foxhunting. You know you have joined in singing "He's a jolly good fellow" when the Master of the local Hunt rises to respond. I have very vivid recollections of a certain Master of Hounds who couldn't make a speech, ordering a dozen port to the table, just to oil the throats of the company. Yes, it's no good being a poor man if you have any ambition to hunt a pack of hounds, or even to hunt at all. Does it not cause money to be spent on horses, corn, hay, straw, servants of every description? Local tradesmen, such as the blacksmith and the saddler, come in for a large share of the business, in fact the whole country-side shares in the distribution of wealth made most likely in our great cities. Take for instance the country around Exmoor and the New Forest. Why, the farmer could not live on the land if it were not for the invasion of the hunting man with his cash, womenfolk and horses. In

these poverty-stricken areas the farmer lives on the fat of the hunter. Have you any idea of the cash expenditure it takes to run a pack of hounds for a season?

A. H. : No, I can't say that I've ever thought much about it.

C. W. W. : Well, to make a start. To run a pack of hounds with horses and servants complete for one day's hunting a week during the season costs £1,250 per annum. In England and Wales we have about 150 packs of fox- and staghounds. To run these packs during the hunting season means an outlay of about half a million pounds. Add to this the expenditure of the countless numbers who hunt, we get a total calculated expenditure of about 12 millions per annum, not all of which finds its way to the pocket of the farmer, I know, but I estimate he gets the lion's share of it.

Now here's another little incident where a farmer benefits when he is in contact with the hounds. Some few weeks ago I happened to be out cubbing, and riding up to a friend I said, "Good morning, Mr. —, how are you?" He turned round and replied, "Good morning, old boy. I am all the better for seeing you. How have you summered? Here, have you got any old oats?"—"Yes, just threshed out 50 quarters of old grey winter."—"Right you are, send 'em up when you like." I am convinced that many of our young farmers to-day do not take advantage of the business possibilities of foxhunting. They should always be on the look-out to buy a good promising young

hunter. I stress the word “good,” because many are apt to buy something cheap and hope for the best. This invariably leads to disappointment and perhaps loss. They ought to buy, or breed, something of good quality, break it with care, ride it with courage, and then a good profit is assured. Remember that the standard of hunting, like every other standard to-day, is on the up grade, and the successful man is the one who can find the goods.

A. H. : Well, you have painted a rosy picture of the benefits of foxhunting. What about the damages done by some of these large fashionable packs? These are hard times for farmers, you know.

C. W. W. : Well, take damage done to fences first ; most Hunts are paying out a bonus of 2s. 6d. per chain to the farmer who is willing to get on with his hedge cutting. This disposes of any little difficulty about fences. The question of poultry losses is, I am afraid, a little more serious. The poultry side of farming has increased very much of late years, and bills which are sent into the Hunts for losses keep mounting up and up. I know the Cricklade country pay out about £450 a year in poultry claims. Let's assume this is an average payment for all the various Hunts in the country. If this is correct we have the good round sum of £67,500 paid out annually to the poultry farmer. I know all Masters of hounds are very anxious about this increased destruction by the foxes. I am hopeful myself that, in time, as the poultry farmer reconditions his equipment, he will adopt the modern principle of fox-proof housing. I honestly

believe this will prove an economic remedy in the end. Now it is very curious how the population of foxes has increased since the development of the poultry industry. Another case of Nature correcting the balance. Is not that so?

A. H. : No, if that's a fact, I would rather say that the Hunts are not doing their job as efficiently as they were. Talking about poultry claims, there are a good many of us who never put in a claim for poultry losses. I haven't calculated just how many birds I lose by foxes in the course of the year, but I know that some years ago I had to put up a 6-ft. wire round my hen houses to stop their daylight raids and give the hens a quiet time. I remember the M.F.H. was rather taken aback when I told him that I had just given the Hunt a handsome subscription of £40. What would you say to the man who wrote me this letter the other day? He says : "I would like you to call attention to the damage done by foxes in this country. I am a lover of hunting and have often ridden to hounds when farming was a different proposition than it is to-day. I agree that rabbits do unspeakable damage to crops, but when war is raging and our food supplies are limited we can then fall back on rabbits, but would you care to eat Mr. Reynard? He has a strong scent when alive and I think the flavour would be rather gamey. Foxes, like everything else, are all very well in their place. There are far too many in this district. They should all be confined to enclosures and one let out a few days before the Hunt comes over the district, and a

forfeit should be imposed on the Hunt if they failed to catch the fox. It is not only what foxes kill, but they do so much harm in frightening the rest of the poultry. Rabbits should be their menu. I am unhappily fixed in my land as to be between two Hunts, and not either will accept claims for damages or pay up." There are others who are much less tolerant and who seem to cherish a bitter resentment against the local Hunt.

C. W. W. : Yes, I know there are people like your correspondent who are very bitter against Mr. Reynard and often make suggestions for his extermination, but as in the case of your correspondent these suggestions are often more romantic than practical. I wonder if they have ever looked at this question from another angle. You know it's not very difficult to establish a good argument that foxhunting is a great *assistance* to the poultry farmer and not a menace.

A. H. : Oh, how do you make that out? I begin to think you are romancing a bit now.

C. W. W. : No, not at all. Listen for a moment. Some few days ago I was looking up the Meets in *The Times*, and in doing so I made a calculation of the advertised packs. I find 131 packs of foxhounds destroying foxes. Give each pack a kill of 100 for the season and I think you will find a total of 13,100 accounted for. Just imagine for a moment the damage another 13,000 foxes could inflict upon the poultry keeper if foxhunting were not kept going in full swing. Steel traps are horrible things, and illegal, and poisoning is also against the

law, and now we come back to my earlier suggestion that the best remedy is a modern type of fox-proof house.

A. H. : Well, what about damage to growing crops?

C. W. W. : This again is exaggerated. I am very definitely of the opinion that there are few farmers who can honestly claim they cut a ton of hay or grow a sack of corn less, owing to the visitation from the Hunt.

A. H. : I think you are right. Foxhunting does not really conflict with good farming—that is if the Hunt behave themselves as they should. When there is trouble it is, as I said before, generally due to lack of manners and consideration for the farmers' property. Most of us are glad enough to see hounds on our land, they are our guests and we don't grudge hunting people their fun. At heart I know hunting men are good fellows and will do all they can to help farmers. I remember you and some others made a special appeal for the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution a year or two ago. You had a good response from hunting people, didn't you?

C. W. W. : They came out most generously and without much effort I got contributions of £50 down to £5. I am glad you mentioned the R.A.B.I. because that is one way the hunting man can return the hospitality extended by the farmer to the man who hunts. Some of the packs are not very generous in their response. Have you ever taken a look at the R.A.B.I. year book?

A. H. : No, I can't say I have. What do you find there?

C. W. W. : Well, I find there that some Hunts are quite liberal in their subscriptions and some are very thin in their efforts, but there is a good deal of money that comes from the hunting man which does not find its way through the Hunt collections.

A. H. : Yes, perhaps you are right. What do you suggest?

C. W. W. : Well, Hurd, I *hesitate* to make any suggestions. This is really a matter the M.F.H. Association should handle. However, I notice the Wylde Valley Hunt are proposing a 5 per cent. increase in subscription, and the amount to be sent to the Institution. They, at least, should be congratulated upon making this move; perhaps they wouldn't mind my suggesting they should embody in this condition a minimum of a guinea. I hope the example set by the Wylde Valley will be taken up by the M.F.H. Association and the principle adopted as a national one.

A. H. : Yes and more farmers themselves ought to subscribe to the Institution funds. It's not only a personal insurance against bad luck but it gives a helping hand to those who have fallen by the way. What you have said may set hunting people thinking. We have all got to realize that new relationships have grown up in country life since before the war. Often the big landowner or the Squire of the village has disappeared, and if he is still there, his influence is not what it was. Farmers are more their own masters now, whether they are big men or small. I

think very few would really like to see hunting abolished, but some of them are not in the mood to subordinate the interests of farming to the interests of foxhunting. In this world whether you are farming or whatever you're doing, there must be a good deal of give-and-take. With goodwill on both sides, hunting and farming can get along well enough together.

C. W. W. : You and I agree. We are I know both anxious that foxhunting and farming shall continue in an atmosphere of peace and goodwill, and that the happy relations which have always existed between the farmer and the foxhunter will go on for many years to come.

Well, as it is Christmas time :

“ Here's to the Pink, Black and Blue,
The farmers and poultry keepers too,
And Listeners, to all of you.”

4.3

See
Furnings & Fox-hunting
W. R. L. B. 1911