COLONEL COOK'S
OBSERVATIONS ON
FOX-HUNTING

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE.

CONSEQUENCES.

With Coloured Plates from rare prints after
Wolstenholme, Alken, and other
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OBSERVATIONS
ON
FOX-HUNTING

THE HUNTSMAN. By C. TOWNE.

Lent By Basil Dighton.

OBSERVATIONS
ON
FOX-HUNTING

BY
COLONEL COOK

H.P. 28th DRAGOONS

A NEW EDITION WITH COLOURED PLATES AFTER PICTURES BY
WOLSTENHOLME, ALKEN AND OTHERS

AND AN INTRODUCTION BY
LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE

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INTRODUCTION

BY

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE

THE work that is now placed in our hands is but little known to the present generation, though a modern Master of Foxhounds would do well to follow every word of advice it contains. The author himself was M.F.H. and carried the horn at the beginning of the last century. A study of his remarkably sound treatise on Foxhunting leaves us with the reflection that the essentials of the sport have changed but slightly since the Battle of Waterloo. He speaks of the excessive preservation of game, of the difficulties of earthstopping, of the jealousy of the riders, in a tone which makes it difficult to believe that a hundred years have glided by since he gained his experience, while his advice on the management of hounds and country at once proclaim him master of a system approved by all recent authorities.

Colonel John Cook was born at Christ Church, in Hampshire, in 1773, a date in the history of England when the patricians were at the very zenith of their power, and in addition to directing the politics, had also placed themselves at the head of the field sports of the country. The era of Squire Western and Tony Lumpkin was passing away; a Foxhunter was no longer a synonym for a sot, a clown and dunce, and had ceased to be the butt of a satirist and the fine gentleman. Lord Chesterfield had died in the same year that our author was born, and his proposition that "Foxhunting was only fit for bumpkins and boobies" had by that time been deprived of most of its meaning. We cannot discover that Colonel

Cook's parents were of the squirearchy, or addicted to field sports; his father appears to have been a merchant in Christ Church, so their son John was probably not "to the manner born," and very likely the first sportsman his family had produced. Like many another Foxhunter, he was first entered to hare, keeping a pack of harriers, and earning considerable reputation as a slayer of hares before he came of age. There was enough family money to send him into the 28th Light Dragoons, but although he advanced to the rank of Colonel, and even obtained in later life a salaried military appointment, it is not as a soldier that he is presented to posterity :—

"Gaudet equis, canibusque, et aprici gramine campi."

We do not know whether the 28th Light Dragoons took part in Wellington's campaigns. If they did, they were unaccompanied by John Cook, whom the call to arms found counting the Foxes' noses on his kennel door, and thinking what a fine amateur huntsman Napoleon Bonaparte would have undoubtedly become, if only the trumpet would cease to blow and the war drum to throb.

His first venture as M.F.H. was in The Thurlow country in the year 1800, when Mr. Meynell was giving up The Quorn after his victorious career of forty-seven seasons, and Mr. Corbet and his Trojans were making the Foxes fly in Warwickshire and Shropshire. He hunted this country for four seasons, and during this time married Miss Elizabeth Surtees, the second daughter of Aubone Surtees of Dinsdale-on-Tees. This family bears the same motto and crest as that of Surtees of Hamsterley, which produced the famous Robert Smith Surtees, the author of the sporting novels which have afforded equal delight to the hunting man and to the student of early Victorian manners and customs. It is needless to dwell here upon the penetration and skill with which his characters are delineated; but the reader of Colonel Cook's work will be

delighted to find the mine from which Mr. Surtees extracted two of his most famous gems, to which he has given such a sparkling setting in the letters of Mr. Puffington to Lord Seamperdale, and of Dick Bragg to his friend Benjamin Brick.

Scarcity of Foxes and subscriptions in The Thurlow country caused Cook to pack his carpet bag and return to Hampshire, where he succeeded Mr. Thomas Butler in The Mastership of The Hambledon Hounds, remaining there for three seasons. It does not appear whether he had his own hounds in these two countries, but it is certain that in 1808 he brought his own pack to Essex, and hunted it there for five seasons in a manner that landed him in the front rank of huntsmen. He now began to pluck the fruit of his apprenticeship served on the ploughs of Cambridgeshire and on the flints of his native county, and he had got a pack of Foxhounds together which must have afforded his followers some rare moments. He enjoyed the not very common knack of combining personal popularity with an unflinching discharge of his duties in the hunting-field, being a prince of good fellows at the dinner table, who could carry any quantity of claret with impunity, and make "the corks fly as fast as the Foxes." He had for his whipper-in one Jack Cole, whose richly coloured countenance bore silent but eloquent testimony to the death of many a bottle of gin, but who was none the less of great repute in his profession. It would be interesting to know what these two convivial souls would have said or thought had they not very long ago seen a modern M.F.H. and his men calling for tea and buns on the way home from a hard day's hunting.

These were brave days in The Roothings when "Old Coeky" steered his hounds to victory by day, and took the chair by night at the Dunmow gatherings; but they were to come to an end all too soon, for his resources not permitting him to continue, he gave up the country and sold his hounds to Mr. Archer Houlton in 1813, after five years of unbroken success crowded with many triumphs. It seems a pity that

such a valuable huntsman should have been lost to the hunting-field at the early age of forty, when he probably had many years of good work in him. Though he might even have hunted hounds for another decade, it was perhaps better for him to retire at the summit of his fame, than to linger too long on the stage and face with declining powers the criticism of a new generation, who knew him not in his "salad days." On leaving Essex he obtained the military appointment already mentioned, and got together a pack of hounds in a corner of Staffordshire, but he soon found he had more children than hunters, and finally retired to France, settling at Honfleur, where he amused himself by trying to teach his new neighbours something about hunting and by writing the valuable pages now offered to us. In the meantime his death warrant had been signed, the fatal malady of cancer having attacked him in the tongue. One remaining fliker must be recorded. "The ruling passion, strong in death" determined the brave fellow, in spite of the acute pain from which he must have been suffering, to return to England and hunt The New Forest Hounds for his friend Mr. Nicoll, who was unavoidably called away from his post. He took the horn, and soon proved that he had not lost his cunning; but it was not to be for long, as he returned to France and died at Rouen in 1829, at the age of 56.

The last fifty years of The Georgian era witnessed a considerable development in the popularity and style of the hunting-field, and The Golden Age of Foxhunting in England could not have been very far distant when Colonel Cook died. His lifetime, roughly speaking, covered a period during which the sport itself came to be carried out in the same manner that is aimed at to-day, however other agencies may in the meantime have operated to alter its external conditions. The abandonment of the slow methods that prevailed in the earlier half of the eighteenth century, and the breeding of hounds and consequently of horses with quality and speed marked the revolution. It was a great discovery that it

was possible to breed and train a Foxhound that could find his Fox at eleven o'clock and kill him before noon, instead of an animal who had to be taken out in the middle of the night all the winter through in order to give him the advantage of finding his Fox asleep with supper undigested. We constantly hear comparisons being made between the modern and the ancient Foxhound, nearly always to the detriment of the latter; but in order to arrive at any real conclusion we must be quite certain with what period of bygone days comparison is invited. To say that Foxhounds in the reign of George V are faster than they were in the reign of Queen Anne would probably be correct; but if we take the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century, he would indeed be a bold man who could look on the elegant heads, beautiful long necks and sloping shoulders portrayed in the picture of Mr. Corbet and his Foxhounds, and assert that our Foxhounds are more speedy than these. Nor can we be asked to believe that Mr. Assheton Smith or Mr. Osbaldiston dared to face the élite of Leicestershire unless they had hounds of superlative quality and speed that could get out of the way of those thoroughbred horses and riders so vividly depicted in Nimrod's stirring chapter on Melton Mowbray. But speed had already begun to be sought after by well-known Masters of Hounds before the year 1800. The long reign of Mr. Hugo Meynell over the Quorn country has set its indelible stamp on the history of the chase. Only one degree less famous is that of Mr. John Smith Barry over his native county of Cheshire, where he inaugurated the sport of Foxhunting, and handed his name down to posterity at large as the breeder of Bluecap, the swiftest, if not the most celebrated Foxhound of the eighteenth century. The match between these two enthusiasts, which took place in 1762 on The Beacon Course at Newmarket, when Mr. Barry's Bluecap and Wanton, trained by the famous Will Crane on a diet of milk, oatmeal, and boiled sheeps'-trotters, accomplished four miles in less than ten minutes, beating Mr. Meynell's hounds, who during

their preparation had been fed entirely on legs of mutton, occupies a page in the annals of hound-breeding too well known to require rewriting in detail, but it is one that may surely be cited to refute the proposition that our ancestors of that generation were unduly addicted to linc hunting. It may be fairly argued that the pioneers of the latter part of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries in attempting to weave elegance, grace, and symmetry into a pattern of just enough calibre to be neither bulky nor insignificant, had hit upon the type that, in addition to being the most pleasing to the eye, was also the most serviceable for all time and all countries.

Colonel Cook's insistence on three postulates with regard to the successful hunting of the Fox, places him among the eritics of the first class. No writer on Foxhunting has ever presented them in so small a space with such concise and unerring precision; they deserve special attention. We will cite them in Colonel Cook's own order; they are indeed paramount in importance; they depend upon each other; though perhaps the last of the three is the most important of all:

1. "Blood is so necessary to a pack of Foxhounds, that if you are long without it, you cannot expect sport; many say that the art of Foxhunting is keeping your pack in blood. All hounds are liable to get out of it. . . ."

How true! The very worst habit that a pack of Foxhounds can contract is the habit of not killing their Foxes. "Hounds," says Colonel Cook, "will not work through difficulties, nor will they exert themselves in that killing sort of manner when they are out of blood." But there are ways and means of keeping a pack in blood. Digging out a Fox is sometimes legitimate. But this consideration brings us to the second maxim:

2. "Whatever you do, never turn out a bagman; it is injurious to your hounds; makes them wild and unsteady; besides, nothing is more despicable, or held in greater contempt

by real sportsmen than the practice of hunting bag-foxes. . . . What chiefly contributes to make Foxhunting so far superior to other sports is the wildness of the animal you hunt, and the difficulty in catching him."

3. "Next to turning out bagmen, lifting of hounds is the most prejudicial. They should seldom be taken 'off their noses.' Nothing is gained by it in the end; hounds that are seldom lifted will kill more Foxes in the course of a season than those that frequently are."

Those who are about to hunt a country, and perhaps are anxious for short cuts to knowledge, could hardly do better than remember these three things: Plenty of blood, no bag-foxes, and as little lifting as possible. If to these three were added the vital necessity of bringing the pack out in the very pink of condition, a young M.F.H. would have on a half-sheet of notepaper a child's guide to knowledge which embraces nearly all the essential conditions of success. He will learn more, and forget much. But these things he must not forget.

It may be objected that Colonel Cook's condemnation of lifting hounds sounds slow and "pottery." But, indeed, he was no advocate of pottering. He expressly disclaims it. The exact phase at which the practice of letting hounds hunt degenerates into the practice of pottering, is one that must be determined by the huntsman. Anything can be overdone. A well-bred, well-conditioned, well-blooded pack of Foxhounds that are accustomed to rely on each other and to kill their own Foxes, instead of having their Foxes killed for them, will never become "pottery" if their attendants ride well up to them in the hunting-field. Foxhounds are curiously jealous creatures, and in a certain sense have a strong dash of vanity; they love to think they are doing it all themselves: but unconsciously they take a great deal from the manner of their huntsman; and if he is near to them, he can, while leaving them quite alone, influence them to score to the cry, and foster the senses of emulation and dash which are the

main characteristics of the true Foxhound. Hounds treated in this manner will strive to help each other on those unavoidable occasions when the huntsman cannot be with them, having regard to the fact that he is generally in his right place.

If, on the other hand, the huntsman is always a mile or two behind, the hounds will presently not think it worth while to persevere, and will lose their dash. But a hard-riding huntsman who never allows his hounds to hunt, may in fact be the slowest in the world, although he may appear to be quick. He will snatch their heads off the ground, gallop them away, and may even cause a lot of diversion and some empty saddles by giving his field a lead over the fences. But in nine cases out of ten, he is bound to get farther away from the line, and in a very short time will ruin his pack. This is the worst kind of slowness.

But now let us turn to Colonel Cook, whose book, containing as it does the considered opinions of one who, without the aid of environment or the spur of tradition, and with a purse by no means too well filled, devoted his whole life and energies to the calling that he loved, must take a very high place on the shelves of a sporting library. One cannot close it without having conceived something like a real affection for this true Foxhunter whose spirit breathes through every line of it; and if it were given to us to ring up the curtain of time, we could not ask for the revival of a more interesting scene than that of Colonel Cook and his faithful Jack Cole cheering their pack to victory over the Roothings of Essex.

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NOTE.—The Coloured Illustrations are from contemporary prints and paintings by WOLSTENHOLME, ALKEN, and other well-known sporting artists, kindly lent for the purpose by Mr. BASIL DIGHTON, of 3, Savile Row, London. The Black and White Illustrations are facsimile reproductions of those in the original edition.

TO

JOHN WARDE, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is now many years since I was first taught to look up to you with pleasure and respect as the first Sportsman of modern times, and the most cordial and enthusiastic supporter of the cause of Fox-hunting; nor have these feelings of respect been in any degree diminished during the experience of so many seasons.

Is it therefore to be wondered at, that on the present occasion I eagerly avail myself of the honor of placing these observations, imperfect as they are, under your protection, with anxious hope, that, though only the hasty production of the moment, they may not prove wholly unacceptable?

I remain,

MY DEAR SIR,

ever yours sincerely,

JOHN COOK.

INTRODUCTION

BY dedicating the following pages to one so far better able than myself to judge of their merit or their incompetence in the harmless celebration of a theme on which so much might have been offered with propriety, though, comparatively speaking, so little has been lately said, I think not to obtrude myself on the public *as an author*, or stand forth a candidate for literary fame; especially, having chosen a topic of lighter interest, connected neither with the policy of governments, the sectaries of religion, or the immediate welfare of mankind. But may we not sometimes be allowed to treat of *the recreations*, as well as *the business* of life? Let it be remembered, "The Chase" has been immortalized by ancient song; nor did Somerville, in modern times, consider it unworthy of his pen. I shall not, therefore, descant on the importance or non-importance of Field-Sports; bearing in mind that common, though just observation, "whatever is worth doing *at all*, is worth *doing well*;" and as my chief object is the endeavouring to convey instruction to the young Sportsman—with now and then a friendly

souvenir for the old—however little the following effort may interest the mere pedant, I rest satisfied in the assurance of my friends, that *I am advocating a manly national amusement, conducive to health, and in unison with gentlemanly feeling.* Hence, if this humble attempt shall in any way tend either to the initiation, the improvement, or even the amusement of a young Sportsman, the end I had in view will have been fully answered, while the time it has cost me from my leisure hours will have neither been thrown away nor misapplied.

Having ventured to say thus much as to the object of this little Publication, I shall conclude my brief Introduction by disclaiming every wish to appear either too sullenly insensible to the voice of censure, or to the smiles of approbation too feelingly alive. I wish not for the praises of a literary chronicle: let the critic lavish his encomiums on the more lengthened and maturer labours of the mathematician, the logician, the poet, and the philosopher; thus reserving his patience and his praise for works of graver interest and weightier materials, to which, so oft and so judiciously,

“Poetic friends prefix each kind address,

While awe-struck nations hail them from the press.”

Observations, &c.

MY DEAR C.

THE present improved system of managing Hounds is so well known, that any thing I may write on the subject you will probably have heard before; nevertheless, if the following desultory hints afford you any entertainment, I shall be satisfied; as to instruction, I am persuaded they cannot. You wish to know my opinion on various points relating to this noble diversion, which contributes so much to the health and amusement of a country life; I have, therefore, put together, in the best manner I could, the substance of my observations on everything relating to Fox-hunting, as far as the experience I may have gained in the kennel and the field enables me.

In the first place, I should recommend you to purchase, if possible, a well-bred, established Pack of Fox-hounds; and it frequently happens that Messrs. Tattersall have one to dispose of in the

spring. The forming such a pack from draughts is by no means an easy task; it requires considerable judgment, with long experience; and you will find great difficulty in procuring even *a few* Hounds to start with that are not either vicious or worn out: it is very certain, no Master of Hounds will part with one which is useful and steady. Huntsmen will humbug if they can about their draughts, but I have very rarely known a draught *entered* Hound good for much.

Hounds have always been much under-valued: we sometimes hear of eight hundred, or even a thousand guineas, as the price of a Hunter, and the sum of three or four hundred is often considered a mere trifle; whereas, till very lately, A **PACK OF HOUNDS**, *on which every thing depends*, was only considered worth a few hundreds. Yet Shakespeare himself appears to have known the value of a Hound; for, in his "Induction" to the "Taming of the Shrew," a nobleman returned from hunting thus speaks of his hounds with delight to his huntsman:

"*Lord. Huntsman, I charge thee, tender well my hounds;*

Brach Merriman,—the poor cur is emboss'd,
And couple Clowder with the deep-mouth'd brach.
Saw'st thou not, boy, how Silver made it good
At the hedge-corner, in the coldest fault?
I would not lose the dog for *twenty pound*.

Hunt. Why, Belman is as good as he, my Lord ;
He eried upon it at the merest loss,
And twice to-day pick'd out the dullest scent :
Trust me, I take him for the better dog."

The sum of twenty pounds for a single Hound in Shakespeare's time (and that not the best in the Pack either), was no inconsiderable price. I am not alluding to "a lot of Curs ;" but surely a well-bred, established Pack of Fox-hounds, including Brood-bitches and Puppies at walk, must be cheap at a thousand or twelve hundred pounds.

I shall first treat on the *breeding* of Hounds.—One of the most essential things to keep a Pack of Fox-hounds effective, is *to breed largely*, if you are fortunate in commanding good walks for your Whelps ; but, without them, you will meet with nothing but disappointment : I have often had fifty couples sent out to *inferior* walks, and not three couples came in again that I could enter. From experience I know it is impossible to bring up young Hounds to any size or shape *in a kennel*, even if they have the good luck to escape the distemper. Every Sportsman must know how necessary it is to have a clever entry ; and if he cannot command good walks himself, he had better engage the unentered draughts from some well-known pack, whose master is enabled to

breed more young Hounds than he requires, and which are generally the perquisite of the Huntsman, or head man in the kennel. If you engage all the draught young Hounds from a celebrated kennel, you have a chance of having nearly as good an entry as the breeder himself. Young Hounds alter so much in the course of a few months, that you would scarcely know them; more particularly *late* whelps, which are often under size when they are sent home from their walks. I have known instances of a Master of Hounds losing nearly the whole of his entry reserved *for himself* by the distemper, while his draught entirely escaped it. With those and the few you breed yourself, it *may thus* happen you may have the best entry of the two; and also, which is another advantage, you are sure to have well-bred Hounds,—nor is it so likely *any tricks* will be played.

I have heard many a young master of Foxhounds say, “I am strong in *old hounds*, I am therefore quite indifferent about my *entry*, I can do well without any young hounds *this* year, and my pack will be much better without them.” I allow he would not feel the want of them the *first* season, but three or four years afterwards how weak the pack would be, and what a loss the senior department would have, as no pack

ON THE WAY TO THE MEET. After D. WOLSTENHOLME.
Lent by Basil Dighton.

can be said to be effective unless *strong in three or four season's hunters*.

A word now on the subject of *Stallion-hounds*. It is the custom to send bitches to the fashionable Stallions of the day; for instance, as formerly, to the late Mr. Meynell's "Gusman," Lord Fitzwilliam's "Hardwick," Lord Yarborough's "Ranter," Mr. Ward's "Charon," the Duke of Rutland's "Topper," the Duke of Beaufort's "Justice," the Duke of Grafton's "Regent," Lord Lonsdale's "Ruler," Mr. Smith's "Champion," Mr. Musters's "Collier," Lord Middleton's "Vaultier," &c.; but it generally happens that your Brood-bitches go to heat much about *the same time*, it is therefore not very probable that *one* Stallion-hound can ward many bitches besides those of the owner; nor is it reasonable to expect in the height of the season that the Dog-hounds can be left at home to ward bitches from other kennels. I would suggest, in order to be more certain of your breed, that you send your bitch to a well-bred dog, *brother, if possible, to the Stallion-hound*; and, to prevent any mistake, order your servant to *see* the bitch warded.

Speaking of shape and make, it is necessary to attend particularly to shoulders, depth of chest, loins, legs, and feet; nor is bone the least material consideration; I hate a weedy animal

of any description, a small Hound, light of bone, is only fit to hunt "a cat in a kitchen."

But let me recommend, whatever you do, to *breed from noses*, as beyond all doubt the grand requisite for a Fox-hound is a good nose. I should prefer breeding from a *perfect* Hound, though I have known some capital ones, the produce of bitches good for nothing themselves, but then they were well bred. The greatest and most particular attention ought always to be paid to the blood of your *brood bitches*. At Newmarket, they will tell you the mare is of more consequence than the horse; and it is the opinion of many that some mares will breed all *runners* put them to what horse you please, of course I mean a thorough bred one. I remember one day, being in conversation with the late Sir Hedworth Williamson (at old Clarke's, the Greyhound, Newmarket,) on the subject of breeding Race-horses; at that time he had not quite made up his mind as to what horse he should put his famous brood mare to, the Dam of Walton, Ditto, Pam, &c., but after pausing a short time, he exclaimed, "it's of no consequence, Sir! whatever horse I put her to she is sure to breed *a winner*." Thus some bitches will always breed good Hunters; a favourite bitch of that description, "Demirep," belonging to Lord Althorp, I believe, never bred

a bad Hound; it made no difference whether she was put to Mr. Smith's "Saladin," the Beaufort "Justice," Sir Thomas Mostyn's "Lictor," or any other favourite Stallion, the produce was invariably good; but the cross with the Duke of Beaufort's "Justice" *I* preferred: and in my opinion a bitch by "Justice," out of "Demirep," put to Mr. Musters's "Collier," would have produced as good Hounds as are to be found at this time, in any kennel. A bitch I had many years ago also never to my knowledge bred a bad hound; her name Desperate. She came with a young unentered draught from Sir T. Mostyn's pack, when Mr. Shaw hunted them. She was got by Sir W. Rowley's Darter, out of Mr. Coke of Norfolk's Rally. I once put her to the New Forest Senator, his dam or gran-dam was got by Lord Stamford's Rattler, a famous good sort. I gave a whelp to the late Mr. Pawlet, of Hampshire, and when at his kennel, a short time before he gave up his hounds, I observed that I thought that a family likeness of old Symmetry, the name of the bitch I gave him, ran through the kennel. He said "it is very true, half my pack are bred from her and Lord Egremont's sort." I know not if the present owner of this pack has any of the breed, as I could not procure his list. Yet we have our partialities, and I confess I was

always partial to *Lord Egremont's sort*, happening to live near the Duke of Richmond at the time his Lordship gave the Duke his Pack, and consequently having frequent opportunities of witnessing their merits. At the time Lord Egremont parted with his Hounds, they were hunted by Luke Freeman, I believe a Durham man, at least he spoke the patois of that country. However, come from what part of the kingdom he might, few men brought into the field a more perfect pack of hounds; and a proof of his entire devotion to his calling, and the little value in which he held all other pursuits, was afforded by the advice which he emphatically gave to one of the sons, then a boy, of his noble master, the course of whose education necessarily interfered with his hunting, “Stoody!—Stoody!—Stoody!—always stoodying at they books—take I say my advice, Sir, and stoody Foox-hunting.” Indeed he gave his whole body and mind to it, and famously he succeeded, as all the country round could testify. A wag, for amusement, and to annoy a musical friend that was present, asked the old Huntsman “how he employed his time out of the hunting season,”—the veteran disdained a reply to a question that showed so little knowledge of the duties and cares of a Huntsman; and the Querist proceeded with “what think you of musick for

JANIER—BRED BY LORD EGREMONT. GRANDSIRE OF THE BEAUFORT "JUSTICE."

an amusement ? ” “ Musick,” contemptuously echoed Luke, “ Aye,—fiddling, Mr. Freeman ? fiddling,—Fiddling,—it’s very well for cripples and such like,—poor things !—I always gives them a halfpenny when I sees them at the fairs.”

When I first commenced keeping Fox-hounds, I was particularly fortunate in getting some good draughts from Tom Grant, his Grace’s Huntsman, at the very time Lord Egremont (as I said before), gave his Hounds to the Duke of Richmond. His Grace possessed an established pack himself, and the Huntsman being naturally partial to his own sort, many valuable Hounds from Lord Egremont’s pack were draughted ; they were capital hunters, and turned with a scent as quick as the animal they hunted ; no hounds were stouter, or better equal to a second Fox. The “ Jumpers,” the “ Sampsons,” the “ Dromo’s,” the “ Ledger’s,” all capital ; so much so, that when they were presented to His Majesty to *hunt Deer*, I thought it a great loss to the sporting world. Mr. Warde, who of course is very justly partial to his own sort, had never any objection to breeding from the *Beaufort* “ Justice,” and he is of Lord Egremont’s blood, got by the New Forest Justice, and Justice by Mr. Gilbert’s Jasper, and Jasper was bred by Lord Egremont. It is almost impossible for me, who have been so many years

vegetating on the Continent, to know the best blood *now* going, except from a chance List which may occasionally be sent me. The Yarborough's however, the Meynell's, the Warde's, the Grafton's, and though "last not least," the Beaufort's, still rank in the first class. Half the hounds in the kingdom are, it must be acknowledged, of the blood of the late Mr. Meynell's "Gusman," and Lord Yarborough's "Ranter." I could name fifty favourite sorts, but as *every thing* is regulated by *fashion*, *you* will of course, in some degree, fall under it's influence.

"Fashion though Folly's child, and guide of fools,
Rules e'en the wisest, and in learning rules."

But never let fashion so completely bias you, as to prevent you from breeding from *good noses*. Those that can turn quick with a scent, be assured, are the sort of hounds to kill Foxes in *any* country.

Breeders are generally too partial to *their own sort*; Philip Payne, Huntsman to the Duke of Beaufort, is reported to be the best judge of breeding in the kingdom; and from His Grace's list I observe he is not bigoted to any particular sort, but sends his bitches to the different Dog-hounds of celebrated packs, all over the kingdom. He informed me if he heard of one that had a particular good nose, and did his work well, he

sent a bitch to him. His sending the Duke's famous Brood-bitch, Gladsome, to that celebrated Stallion Hound, Mr. Smith's Collier, was from the report he had heard of his superior abilities in the field. I have lately seen some of the same blood, in the Duke's pack, work through difficulties, and turn very quick with a scent, which proves the advantage of a judicious cross. They could also go a killing pace, and carry an excellent head across a country, without a single hound in the pack being out of his place, although they were over-ride most shamefully, and often deceived by false halloos. This must surely be considered sufficient to make any hounds wild, at least for the day; but, in spite of every untoward circumstance, they put their noses down, and to my amazement, hunted in the most correct and superior style, as much so, as if their followers had behaved according to rule, and every thing had been done *quietly*.

With regard to the actual setting to work, the sooner you can commence Cub-hunting the better, and the steadier your pack will afterwards be. A friend of mine, an excellent sportsman, for want of Foxes in his woodlands, cannot begin before the end of September, or the beginning of October; but by great attention and perseverance through the summer, he has his pack

steady ; and what makes it the more meritorious, he is always obliged to enter a great number of young hounds, the Forest laming so many every season. Notwithstanding all these disadvantages, his hounds are capital and very effective. His Bitch pack is most elegant, and what is of more consequence, they are perfect at their work. I am pleased to hear you have it in contemplation to *hunt your own hounds*, but I would advise you, not to attempt so great an undertaking unless you can give your *whole* time to it ; at all events, you should never leave your hounds from the first day of *Cub-hunting* until the end of the season. Allow me to observe that Cub-hunting is very necessary for many reasons ; you will gain by it a thorough knowledge of your pack ; and they will know you, obey you, and when you want them, will also carry you through many difficulties they otherwise would not. I always considered the Cub-Hunting season the time when a master of hounds never ought to be absent, whether he hunts them himself or not ; and, to a real sportsman, it is a great pleasure to see his *young hounds enter*.

When regular hunting begins, the laborious part of a Huntsman's duty is over, and the pack may then be said to be formed. If he is satisfied with their performance in covert, there is little doubt

but that they will do well in the *open*; hounds that can kill a Fox quick in covert seldom fail out of it.

I was out the other day in a large woodland in Wiltshire, and very much pleased with a pack of hounds I saw at work; they kept close together at their Fox, and killed him handsomely in forty-three minutes. I only saw them cross two fields out of covert, but it was enough to convince me they could do the thing well over a country; indeed I have heard from an excellent judge, that they are quite as good out of covert as they are in. The pack consisted chiefly of the Beaufort sort.

Sportsmen differ in opinion with regard to *the best way of entering hounds*. A very celebrated one once told me, he thought the most preferable method was to enter them to Hare in the spring: I never could fancy it; although it might be economical to find out their vices, and by that means save the expense of keeping them over the summer. A much better plan I should imagine, if they are well bred, is to put them with some veterans into a covert, not too small or too large, *certain of having a litter of Foxes*; and continue to hunt the different coverts you may happen to have in your Cub-hunting country, thus giving your young hounds plenty of work

and blood ; when, if I mistake not, you will soon find they will “down with their noses” without being *unnaturally stooped to Hare*. If you are strong in litters of Foxes in your Cub-hunting country, you cannot give your *young pack* too much work ; do not regard their being scratched and disfigured ; it is a good sign if they scratch their faces in covert Cub-hunting, and it is the most rational way of entering them.

I remember once coming out of Tattersall’s in company with a Nobleman, a good Sportsman, and a good man ; we were all at once joined by another master of Fox-hounds, who introduced himself by telling us he had found out the only method of entering Hounds, and that was to a *drag-scent*. This is certainly *one* way with a vengeance, but *I am quite sure you will never try it*.

Punishing your hounds before they know what a Fox-scent is, and flogging them in kennel, is an unnecessary severity, but it is almost impossible to break them without punishment. To some people it may appear cruel to have a young hound severely punished, but it stands to reason that one good sound flogging, when he deserves it, is far better than frequently tormenting him, and is most likely to accomplish your wish, that of making him steady and handy. Still I should advise you never to have a young hound punished

unless you are *quite certain he deserves it*. We are often too hasty in draughting young hounds; it is no uncommon thing with the Distemper hanging about them, and when over-worked in hot weather, for them to become noisy, or to find them tire; and when I have seen young hounds do wrong that I knew had no vice in the family, I have nursed and rested them; if afterwards they have continued their bad habits, I of course draughted them. Never be in too great a hurry to draught a *young* hound; but *an old one*, the first fault he commits, condemn him, and never let him go out again if you wish to have a perfect pack and the thing done as it ought to be.

Let me name three vices most common in hounds, and which are considered *incurable*, viz. *skirting*, *running mute*, and *being noisy*; when a hound is in the habit of skirting, draught him immediately, for he will never be better, but get worse and worse every time he is taken out. A mute hound, like a person dumb, never can be cured; on the other hand, it is very unpleasant to hear a hound speak *too much* on a scent, or to find him “throwing tongue to ery.” One that “throws his tongue” where the Fox has never been, like a liar, is generally incorrigible. Hounds ought never to speak but on a Fox scent, and

then we may depend upon their tongues as upon those of a Solon or an Eldon.

Perhaps one of the greatest miseries attendant upon keeping Fox-hounds is *the Distemper*! Can any thing be more heart-rending to a master of hounds, than to have a clever entry taken off a short time before hunting? And, what is very extraordinary, no specific remedy for it, to my knowledge, has hitherto been found out. Calomel and emetics will sometimes do good; and garlic has been recommended, when this dreadful malady first begins to take the animal off his feed; the French apply a blister to his forehead, which they say is a sure cure; if so, the distemper is less violent on the Continent; but Frenchmen, if you believe them, have a cure for every disease in man, horse, or dog.

The following receipt I have sometimes found efficacious for the Distemper:

Calomel	3 grains.
Cathartic Ext.	7 ditto.
Soap	7 ditto.
Emetic Tart.	$\frac{1}{2}$ grain.

Make the above ingredients into three pills, and one should be given every other day.

I have heard *some* medical men give it as their

opinion, that in the distemper *the lungs* of the animal are diseased, *other's the liver* ; I have no doubt myself but that *both are*. The late Mr. Pawlett, of Hampshire, tried the experiment of vaccination on half his young hounds, all of which lived ; this made him very sanguine as to the result, and he fancied he had found out a way of conquering the distemper. The next year he had the whole vaccinated, but had the mortification of having them all die.

It is generally thought best to keep young hounds high in flesh, as in that state they are not so liable to have the distemper, and if they have it, the attack is less violent. I am aware all young hounds which have been fed high, have gone through regular exercise, and in consequence gained strength, when attacked by this horrid malady, are more likely to get over it than those which have not been so treated ; but I never knew a very fat young hound come from his walk and catch the distemper immediately, that ever recovered.

It has often appeared to me a good plan to have them *fed sparingly*, and a dose of physic given them a short time *previous* to their being sent home to the kennel ; but it is most commonly quite the reverse, for every one is anxious to send his puppy from his walk home fat, in order

that he may excel his neighbours. So much for the distemper; which, certainly, next to a kennel lameness, is about the greatest misfortune that can befall a master of hounds.

With regard to the use of *Terriers* in the field; —they are no doubt sometimes of service, particularly when Foxes use drains, but if they are not *perfectly steady*, they will do a great deal of mischief. They should invariably be entered with the young hounds, and *always* be kept in the kennel. As a matter of curiosity, I here give you an instance or two of the extraordinary length of time terriers will exist without food; one occurred the other day. I was staying at a friend's house in Hertfordshire, who had lost a favourite terrier seven days; on going out to look at his sporting dogs near the house, he thought he heard the voice of his lost dog. He recollected the last time it was seen was near the mouth of a drain, upwards of two hundred yards from the spot from whence the sound came. He immediately ordered his workmen to open the drain, and they found the terrier jammed in a narrow part of it; the animal appeared lively, and not the worse for her long fasting, except being a little reduced in flesh, and the next day very lethargic. I heard at the same time a still more extraordinary instance of a terrier remaining

in an earth for twenty days, and I dare venture to vouch for the truth of it. The Hatfield hounds had run a Fox to ground, and the terrier followed it in. They dug many hours without coming up to the fox or the dog; and at last were obliged to give it up as a hopeless job. The terrier was the property of old Joe, the then whipper-in, and a great favourite. He therefore had the earth watched, and on the twentieth day the dog crawled out a mere skeleton, but with proper attention was recovered.

A *healthy kennel* must be one of your first considerations; there is nothing so much against hounds as a damp one;—we all know the danger to ourselves of a damp house; and a kennel in this state causes a variety of diseases—lameness, ophthalmia, liver-complaints, &c., and frequently occasions hounds to become chest-foundered; besides a damp kennel never can be sweet. The Duke of Richmond's kennel at Goodwood is supposed to be the most complete in England. The neighbouring Gentlemen informed me, that it cost ten thousand pounds in building. The lodgings of this, I may almost say, gigantic building, are fitted up with stoves; I never thought them of much use, but no doubt they keep the kennel dry; the Huntsman assured me that after a very hard day and much fatigue, he had found

them of great service, he thought the hounds recovered themselves, and were fit to come out again much sooner in consequence of the warmth arising from them.

Very few masters of Fox-hounds can afford to build so magnificent a kennel; but it is my opinion your hounds may be equally well lodged in one that may not have cost so large a sum. The kennel at Puckeridge in Hertfordshire, which cost about £500 building, is very convenient, dry, and healthy, and the hounds have no lameness. The Hampshire Hunt kennel also cost only a few hundreds, and is as good a one and as convenient as a master of hounds could wish for. The hounds that inhabit these kennels are very sizable, and do their work well in the field, and hunt as Fox-hounds should do. Before you begin to build your kennel, let me recommend you to take a look at one of these. If you should find a convenience in having a kennel in a distant part of your hunt, a roomy barn is the building most likely to suit, and may be converted into one, at very little expense.

Good water is as necessary for hounds as good meal, and the flesh for boiling ought also to be attended to; it frequently happens, that *this* is contracted for, and the contractor, of *whatever disease* a horse may have died, will be too apt

to bring the carcase to the kennel. We know it is commonly said "*any thing will do for dogs ;*" but let me assure you, nothing will put hounds so soon out of condition as bad flesh.

Old *Oat* meal is no doubt the best food for hounds to work upon. I have no objection occasionally to mix a little *old Barley meal* with it, which has been grown on light land, but it must be given with as much caution as you would beans to a horse.

Wheat meal, mixed with oatmeal in equal quantities, is used in some kennels ; but the oatmeal requires the longer boiling. Feeders are often negligent, and in too great a hurry to finish their work, to attend properly to this necessary point. Your meal should be put into the copper when the water quite boils, and then should be boiled up a second time ; you must allow at least an hour and a half from that time to boil it well, and if an hour and three-quarters, it will be none the worse for it ; for nothing will choke hounds so soon as meal half boiled.

In the summer it is of little consequence what hounds are fed upon, provided they have wholesome food ; but in the hunting season, if every thing is not of the very best quality you cannot have them in condition. If there is any truth in the report of flour having been adulterated with

bones, plaister of Paris, &c., is it not natural to suppose that oatmeal also may have it's share of these pernicious ingredients? You ought therefore to be very particular in getting good meal; *the Irish* is the best, and the most likely to be genuine.

It is quite certain a hound too high in condition cannot run a burst, neither can a poor half-starved one kill *an afternoon Fox*; a hound therefore cannot be considered as fit to be brought out if he is either too high or too low. I like to see their ribs, but their loins should be well filled up, and they should be hollow in their flanks: he that is full in the flanks is sure to be fat in the inside, and consequently not fit for work. The feeding of hounds, and the bringing them to cover able to run a burst, or kill an afternoon Fox, is not altogether a thing so very easy as some people imagine; in fact, it requires nearly as much trouble to get *a hound* into condition, as it does *a horse*; and if the greatest attention is not paid to this particular, you cannot expect to catch many Foxes. It is the *condition* of a hound, which gives him the advantage over the animal he hunts. Nevertheless their constitutions differ as much as those of the human species; some require thick food, others thin; the same quantity which may be requisite for Ranter, if

given to Rallywood, would render him unable to run a yard. Sometime before hunting commences (say about three weeks), they should have plenty of walking exercise, and salts given them once a week.

If a hound at any time is very foul, the following recipe is very efficacious :

3 grains Æthiops Mineral,
5 grains Calomel,

made into a bolus ; the hound must of course be carefully kept from cold water.

Should your hounds be troubled with worms, powdered glass sifted through muslin is the best remedy that I know of to remove them. The dose should be as much as will lie on a shilling, and I have seen it cause the ejection of a great quantity of those destructive animals.

In the summer months I always fed my hounds the last thing in the evening : feeding them late at that season of the year keeps them quiet in the night, and is the wisest method I know to prevent their rioting in the kennel. Servants in general prefer feeding them early, in order that they may have the evenings to themselves.

It appears you wish to be informed of the proper time to feed hounds the day before hunting ; if you were certain of finding at half past

ten, and sure of running a burst, I should say an early hour was best; but to take all chances of finding early or late, about ten o'clock is the hour I should prefer. In feeding your hounds after hunting, that must depend on circumstances; but in the general way I should say feed them immediately on their return to the kennel; and if after a hard day that happens to be late, allow them to eat what they please. And again, the last thing before you go to bed, endeavour to coax the bad feeders. It is a good plan to wash their feet in warm liquor when they return from hunting—what the French call giving them a *bain de pié*; yet some people think it makes their feet tender.

I should advise you in the hunting season, when the frost sets in, to give your hounds some cooling physie, to lower their food, and the more they are taken out on the turnpike road, the better. To my horses also, at that time, I gave a dose of physie each, taking care to give it only to a few at a time in case of a sudden thaw. By paying proper attention to things which some people may imagine of little importance, you will save a great deal of trouble and unnecessary expense.

It is equally advisable to bleed and physie hounds when the hunting season is over, and

GOING TO COVER. After H. ALKEN.

Lent By Basil Dighton.

before it commences. Many people dress them twice a year ; I did it, because it was the fashion ; but, if ever I have the good fortune to keep hounds again, I will not resume the practice. Old Tom Grant, who was a capital kennel Huntsman, told me he never dressed *his* hounds ! and they always looked well in the field throughout the season. His idea was, that dressing them brought off their coats at an unnatural time, and hounds often dressed seldom looked well after Christmas.

The following recipe is frequently made use of upon the Continent, particularly by the French, to remove any redness or scurf from the skins of dogs. It certainly has the effect of making their coats look as fine as if they had been dressed, without taking off the hair, and it will destroy ticks and all other vermin. In short, I have every reason to believe it will answer all the purposes of dressing without it's inconvenience ; at the same time, the *mercurial preparation* in the recipe is so very mild, that the animal runs no risk of taking cold.

Mercurial Ointment $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Stone Brimstone (finely powdered) . . $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

The ingredients should be well rubbed up together, and then thoroughly mixed with $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of hogs-lard.

It is the custom in some kennels to spay all the bitches they do not intend to breed from; but the operation is so very severe, and the sufferings of the animal so great, that I should advise you to avoid it altogether; especially as it is a practice by which very little is gained; while, on the other hand, I have observed, that at the time the bitches *would* have been at heat, they are often sulky, wild, and not the same animals; moreover, if the operation is not performed by a very skilful hand, the bitch will go to heat after all. It has been thought the cutting of dogs strengthens them over the loins; but I must say this also is a practice I do not approve. Why *put forward* a young hound if he is weak over his loins?

You will perceive from what I have already written, that if you undertake the management of Fox-hounds, you will have very little time for any other occupation, provided you pay the attention to it you *ought* to do, and which the Gentlemen of the country you hunt will have a right to expect from you. The great expense you must necessarily incur, accompanied by a perpetual anxiety of mind, will be all in vain, unless owners of coverts are determined in earnest to preserve Foxes. The time is not so long gone by, when it was thought even *dishonourable* to destroy foxes

if hounds hunted a country; but we all know, from an unfortunate exposure in a trial for trespass, that we cannot *legally* claim any *right* to hunt. In the present day, by courtesy alone, it is sanctioned.

The great mania for Game, and the useless quantity of it with which we find most coverts glutted, is a great misfortune to Fox-hunting. For some time (may I be allowed to say) there has been a war between the Pheasant and the Fox; during which period (what may seem not a little extraordinary, and I state it with regret) *the* former has generally been victorious. Still I am no enemy to shooting, particularly to Partridge-shooting, because it is an active amusement, and a healthy exercise, without both of which, to my mind, no sport can exist. I never could make up my mind, to go to any of *their* *Batuës*. I won't say that the danger attending them has kept me away, though it is by no means trifling, for the accidents we read of far exceed in number those which occur in Fox-hunting; and surely a fall from a horse is better than being shot by a friend.

The *feeds* given on these occasions are generally capital, though to a real Sportsman, there is but little amusement.

Happening to be on a journey in a mail coach

one Christmas, as we were changing horses in a small market town in the lower part of Hampshire, I saw an immense quantity of game lying at the coach office to be forwarded to its destination. I enquired from whence it came; and was informed a *grande batuë* had taken place not far distant. Knowing some of the party, I naturally enquired of the landlord of the inn *who* had bagged the most game: "I know nothing about that, Sir," said he, "but *the men who beat for the Gentlemen killed one hundred and twenty head*;" now if the foxes had only taken one-tenth of what the beaters knocked on the head, it would have made a great noise in the country, although a single fox would have shewn a hundred neighbouring gentlemen a day's sport. It would be no very difficult matter to have pheasants driven up so as to shoot them from your drawing-Room window, and thus treat Mamma and the children with a *partie de Chasse*; they may then have ocular demonstration what a good shot Papa is! I hope my brother Sportsmen of the trigger will not be offended; I am as anxious for the preservation of game as any man; my only fear is that it will be carried to too great an extent, and in the end defeat its object. If I were to say a vixen Fox that had cubs would *not* lay hold of the first catable thing she met with, whether

game, fowl, or rabbit, I should be making a false statement; but if there are *plenty of the latter*, Foxes will destroy but little game; and I am certain game preservers may have it *in quantities to their heart's content*, and Foxes also, if they will but pay their keepers' wages in *argent comptant*, and not in rabbits. As a proof of this I will mention an instance which happened to me:—I was requested some years ago, at the time I hunted the Thurlow country, to meet at Chippenham, near Newmarket, the owner of which and his keeper said we might *by chance* find a Fox, but they were certain no Foxes had been *bred* there, as they had not lost a single head of game. I never in my life saw so many pheasants of every sort, and hares innumerable; and, to the astonishment of all present, in the very middle of the preserve, and lying with the pheasants, so near that they must have almost touched each other, we found a litter of Foxes, six or seven in number. We killed the old dog and one of the cubs. I must observe, however, there were plenty of rabbits—but they were not the keeper's perquisite. As we are on the subject of preserving Foxes, I must relate an occurrence which happened some years ago on the borders of the New Forest. An estate had been sold to an East India Gentleman, which had been hunted from the time of

William Rufus, and Foxes strictly preserved upon it. The new owner having taken possession, when the hunting season commenced the hounds came there as usual, but the old Nabob swore he would shoot the men, hounds and all, if they persisted in coming on *his* property. A Right Honourable Gentleman (now no more,) a friend to Fox-hunting, although no Fox-hunter himself, and who was acquainted with all parties, waited upon him, and mildly pointed out the impropriety of his conduct, telling him if he wished to live upon friendly terms with his neighbours, he must act differently. "What," said old Cayenne Pepper, "am I not master of my own property? and am I to be annoyed by the noise of dogs and fellows in red coats?" "It is true," said the Right Honourable, "the coverts are your's *by law*, the game and timber also are your's, but by *the law of honour* no gentleman would prevent his neighbours from taking their accustomed diversion, when the inconvenience would be *so trifling* to himself." The old Gentleman began to cool on hearing *his honour* was at stake, and said, "If they must hunt they must; but I request they will let me know when the hounds come into the neighbourhood, that *I may get out of the way*." At length, however, this hostile disposition gradually wore away, he became friendly to the

hunt, and preserved Foxes with a spirit and an anxiety which did him credit, and materially raised him in the estimation of his neighbours.

A stock of *old* Foxes is as necessary for sport as a stock of old hounds; Foxes of the year are weak, and those of two years old know but little country.

To hunt a country and make the most of it, so as to give general satisfaction, requires some consideration. Supposing you have a thorough knowledge of it, use your own judgment and never be led by others, for you will find they have most commonly some selfish motives, and will often mislead you. In the summer months, if you are with your hounds, and have not gained that local knowledge of your country at all times so indispensable, you will find it useful and agreeable to ride with them early in a refreshing summer's morning. At the same time you can receive information respecting your litters of Foxes; and, besides, if any of the young hounds should happen to be lost in the succeeding hunting season, they will the better know their way home. A country ought to be regularly hunted, the good and *the bad* alternately, to give general satisfaction, and in the long run you will have a better chance of sport. If you are continually disturbing your best country, you may have blank days, and the

foxes will be very shy. Where there are many earths they will lay at ground. There can be no doubt but it must be more agreeable to hunt a good country always, if you have extent enough for an open season. Provided you cannot hunt the inferior one, so as to give satisfaction, it is more liberal to give it up altogether to some neighbouring pack, or even to some one from a distance, who might be glad to hunt it regularly. The keeping a country, and requiring owners of coverts to preserve, without hunting it, is too much to expect, and gives people an opportunity of alluding to the story of the Dog in the Manger. And for another reason, although farmers are liberal, they think it hardly fair play, if they rent a farm in the best part of the hunt for sport, to have their land rode over constantly, whilst in the other less favourable part the hounds never meet. Their conversation at the market dinner, over a bottle, is often upon this subject; whereas if you do but hunt the whole country impartially, there can be no cause for complaint.

It is a very common case for a master of hounds to be requested to draw such and such a covert, merely because it may happen to accommodate some of the gentlemen out, by lying *on their way home*; now, if an acquiescence in this should cause no inconvenience or material altera-

STUDY OF A FOX BY J. BARENGER

tion in the arrangements made for the day, it may be all very well to do what you can to oblige any particular person or set of men out; but it should nevertheless be remembered by all the field, that as people are in the habit of coming great distances, *in every direction*, to the point where hounds meet in the morning, by thus acceding to the wishes of a *few*, you are likely to inconvenience *many*; besides the probability of occasioning yourself, servants, hounds, and horses, (should the draw be *from* home instead of *towards* it,) to remain out late, and undergo the fatigue of creeping home along dark muddy lanes, in a wet December night, without even the moon or stars to guide you. Some men will mislead you to avoid having their coverts disturbed; fearing a tame pheasant may fly away to his neighbour's preserves. After all, it is best to be firm, and never change the plan of drawing which you may have fixed upon, and considered to be the most probable one for sport. You will, no doubt, now and then be requested to meet at a particular place, to oblige a friend who may have a party of fox-hunters at his house; and, provided you can do this without interfering with your arrangements, and that it is not prejudicial to sport in other parts of the hunt, there can be no harm in complying with it.

When I have drawn a covert blank, and have suspected some trick has been played to prevent my coming again that season, I always made a point of taking it in its turn, and drawing very close. Some illiberals I have known, who kill all the foxes, and when the hounds meet at the covert, have a bag-man ready to turn down, taking care to have two or three foot people placed at different parts to halloo at the same instant, that it may appear there are several foxes on foot. This may deceive a young, inexperienced Sportsman; but an old one it never can. I remember, some years ago, a person who I was certain killed foxes, requested me to come when the snow had fallen, to observe their tracks into his preserves: I reminded him of the story in Æsop's Fables, of the answer the Fox gave the Lion, when he endeavoured to entice him into his den—"You will," said the Lion, "run no risk; observe the tracks of many of your species into my den." "Very true," answered Reynard; "I see the marks of those *that entered*, but where can you point out to me a single trace of *one returning*?" I was well assured, if a fox once wandered into my pretended friend's preserves, he would never come out again *alive*. I have always preferred an open foe, in every station of life; for a pretended friend is the worst of

enemies,—and so is that person who promises to preserve foxes, and at the same time gives secret orders to his keepers to destroy them.

If you are invited to hunt a country, with promises of support in every way, it will be a source of great mortification, disappointment, and serious inconvenience, if they are not sacredly fulfilled. You may have various other prospects in view, and other countries may be anxious to have you to superintend *their* hunting establishments; therefore, before you close, I should strenuously advise your having a clear and explicit understanding of what is expected on both sides, that neither party may have it in their power to complain at a future period. The country may probably expect you to do impossibilities, and more than mortal man can perform; and *you* may expect more from *them* than they had any intention of *doing*. The best plan, therefore, to keep all things right, is to have the agreement put down in black and white, and signed by both parties. The deviating from these instructions may be productive of mutual disputes and dissatisfaction.

If you should, after a good day's sport, run a fox to ground in a neighbouring hunt, according to the laws of fox-hunting, it is not correct to dig him. If you run him into a main earth, the

best way will be to leave the place with as little delay as possible, to prevent any misrepresentation that might lead to a misunderstanding; for no people (I will not even except the riders of the present day,) are so jealous of each other as masters of foxhounds. But if you should run your fox into a drain, or any hole that is not a regular fox-earth, it is then thought fair to bolt him in any way you can, except by digging; but on no account must you allow a spade to enter the ground. It may be your hunted fox, or it may not; though, if he goes to ground in a main earth, it is most likely you have changed, as a fox will seldom go into an earth with which he is unacquainted. Under-ground fox-hunting is but poor fun: waiting shivering in the cold for two or three hours is not very agreeable,—and your horses are in great danger of catching cold. If you have no chance of getting him out soon, and the day is not too far advanced, it is far better to draw for another fox, after having taken proper precautions against the probability of his being taken by fox-stealers.

That slow operation of digging for a fox, is only allowable when your hounds are in great want of blood; from experience I know it may be sometimes necessary, and on such occasions it cannot be considered unsportsmanlike. Any thing

may be done, as I observed before, in reason, except turning out "a Bag man."

The simple fact of my having had excellent sport, and having received the greatest kindness and support, *in the counties of Essex and Suffolk*, will, I hope, apologize for my giving you some account of them. The hundreds of Essex, (or what is called Lord Petre's side of the country,) are particularly good for cub hunting, on account of his Lordship having preserved strictly *before* he kept hounds himself. His property is very extensive; the woodlands extremely convenient, and always moist at the bottom in a dry autumn, which is a great advantage; and you can generally begin cub hunting about the 20th of August. For what reason, I never could rightly ascertain, but the foxes in the Roothings or Rodings of Essex and part of Suffolk are certainly stouter than any I have met with in other countries. Stub bred foxes are thought to be the stoutest, and in the former places they are all bred above ground; for from Myless, near Ongar, to Bigods, a covert on the other side of Dunmow, a distance of nearly twenty miles, I do not know of a single earth. The enclosures are large, the country flat, and you can go from point to point, nine miles without meeting with a single covert. From Manwood, one of the best coverts in the Roothings,

to Lord Maynard's High-wood, near Dunmow, a line of country the foxes formerly took, and from the latter to Lord Petre's High-wood, near Writtle Park, are still greater distances. The country is chiefly under plough, but well drained, and it rides light in comparison with other ploughed countries: the ditches are rather wide, but not blind; and the scent, after Christmas, is invariably good. I believe there never was an instance of an old wild Roothing fox having been killed with a hunting scent: if you do not go away *close* at him, at the very best pace, he never will be caught; and if you come to a check with a hunting scent, it is twenty to one he beats you. One thing ought always to be attended to, which is, when your fox is gone, to be as quick in getting your hounds after him as possible.

Leaden-Roothing is thought to be the best covert in the hunt; but I preferred Old Park Coppice, a covert at the extremity of the Roothings towards Chelmsford, probably because I had the best runs from it, and the foxes found in the latter are reckoned the stoutest in Essex. A pack that hunted the Dunmow country before I took it, managed by all the "talents" in that neighbourhood, (nor was their huntsman considered otherwise than a celebrated one,) found from experience that an Old Park fox was not so easily

caught, although they seldom missed their foxes in other parts of the hunt.

A word or two more as to Old Park Coppice as a good covert for sport. I had four very superior runs from it in one season, and killed each day; and it afforded me several good days sport besides; I will mention a few of them. One run of an hour and twenty minutes, and killed at Colonel Strutt's, near Maldon, 12 miles an end at least. Another, with a *Fox of the year*, the quickest thing I ever saw, and killed him a few fields from Takely Forest, the Pack running into him in the open. Again, a run of one hour and ten minutes, ten miles an end and killed. But a run I had from a covert a short distance from Old Park, was one of the most brilliant things I witnessed during the time I kept hounds; when we found him we considered him an Old Park fox; and as he went away, a friend of mine, an old member of the "Talents Hunt," said to me, "there he goes, he is one of the old sort, my Master, he is not to be measured to-day! You will never see him again!" my answer was, "*I hope not alive, Sir.*" My hounds were close at his brush when he broke covert, and they went the very best pace for fifty-five minutes over the open without a check, and killed him at the edge of a chain of woodlands, where we

were certain of changing. Not forty yards from the place where they killed him a fresh fox went away; if therefore he could have held on only that short distance, we should in all probability have changed. The greatest distance *I* ever ran a fox in Essex, was from Hempstead Wood (a covert notorious also for stout running foxes) to between Heddingham and Colne, where we killed him, calculated at 17 miles. But the most extraordinary run for distance was one the Hempstead hounds (termed the Invincibles) had from Great Hayles, a covert near Saffron Waldon, belonging to Lord Braybrook, to within four or five miles of Bury St. Edmond's in Suffolk, near Glemsford earth, where they killed him; I should think the distance 25 miles at least as the crow flies. I could enumerate many more capital runs to prove the stoutness of the Essex foxes, which I had from Manwood, Brickles, Witney Wood, Lord Maynard's High Wood, East End, Leaden Roothing, Matching Park, Row Wood, Marks, and Offrey. All the foxes found in the coverts mentioned are stub bred; I declare to you I do not remember ever finding a bad running fox from Ongar to Haverhill, a distance of thirty miles. The foxes in the Harding-green country in Suffolk, which I once hunted, are also stout, but the enclosures being rather small, and the country

BREAKING COVER. After D. WOLSTENHOLME

Lent by Basil Dighton.

somewhat hilly, it renders it altogether inferior to Essex; but the *gentlemen and farmers of both countries were very civil and obliging*, and that contributes to make a country agreeable, if in other respects it is not quite so good as a sportsman could wish.

During the time I hunted Essex, we had our Dunmow meetings, which I assure you enlivened us not a little; and whilst I devoted myself to that part of the country, which was usually for a week or ten days each time, and perhaps three or four times during the season, I made that place head quarters for myself and hounds, and was attended by many gentlemen of the hunt; the Hertfordshire hounds on those occasions contrived to meet near to us on the alternate days; and the emulation excited on the part of each hunt which should shew the best sport, made it the more interesting; and the dinner at old Maltster's (the Saracen's Head, Dunmow,) who did all in his power to make us comfortable, always went off cheerfully. Taking into consideration the country altogether, it may be ranked as a first rate ruralist.

Artificial earths, I have been informed, if not made in a dry situation, are often the cause of foxes being mangy. I have some reason to attribute it to another cause: I never knew a

mangy fox where the owner of the covert strictly preserved, and have invariably found them in the neighbourhood of those known to be inimical to Fox-hunting, and where the keepers lay poison. If the animal has not taken sufficient to kill him it will produce fever, and nature throwing it out upon the skin, gives a similar appearance to the mange in dogs, and it often happens a poor devil in this miserable situation lingers for months, and at last is starved to death.

The very idea of poison makes me shudder; I have suffered from it both in my house and in my kennel, and it seems to me an omission in the Legislature that dogs were not included in the "Black Act," for I cannot distinguish any material difference between the crime of a person who poisons a horse, and that of one who thus destroys a valuable dog. In my humble opinion, he who has the villainy to do either would not hesitate to give you a dose likewise; and the sooner such rascals are brought to the scratch at the Old Bailey, *tant mieux pour tout le monde*.

You ask my opinion as to the method of establishing earths in a country. The best I know is to procure two young badgers, a male and female, they will breed and make you plenty of strong *healthy* earths; many other modes are adopted, but I think them all bad.

Having established a sufficient number of these earths, your next consideration must be the appointment of careful earth-stoppers, as their duty extends to the taking care of the litters of foxes, as well as to the stopping of the earths; and in order to be certain of having them *well stopped*, you will find it safest to pay for each time of stopping, and agree with the people who perform this necessary service, that if the earths are not stopped at the proper time, and as they ought to be, *they will not be paid for that day's stopping*.

If, after this notice, you run to ground in any particular man's stop, you had better discharge him immediately. It is nothing more than fair that the keepers should stop the earths in their own manors, it may be the means of saving a litter of foxes. Keepers in general will not refuse a sovereign, so that if you make it answer *their* purpose they will not destroy your foxes, unless they have secret orders from their masters to do it. Earth stoppers that are paid *annually*, if it happens to be an open winter, and they have to stop often, think it a hardship: whereas, the man who is paid *every time he stops*, takes pleasure in doing it, knowing he will be recompensed for his trouble. It is his *interest* also to look after the foxes, for the more he has in his district, the oftener the hounds will be there.

As the subject of making coverts is one of much interest to the sportsman, I shall say a few words on the different methods of employing land for this purpose.

A fine gorse covert is a thing by no means so easily acquired as some people are inclined to imagine. In the first place, great attention is necessary in the preparation of the ground. Whatever portion you may think of devoting to this purpose should be trenched all over to a considerable depth (say 18 inches, or at the very least 14). You should be exceedingly particular in the choice of *seed*, as there is much sold of a very inferior quality.

I once remember a rather amusing circumstance occurring to a gentleman, who took it into his head all at once to make a chain of gorse coverts on his estates; he spared neither trouble or expense, the ground was carefully dug and trenched, and in every way properly cleaned, and the tenacious roots of that odious weed, the couch grass, having been eradicated, *abundance of gorse and broom seed was sown all over it*, but to the surprise of every one, none of the seed took root, and at the time the young plants should have made their appearance, nothing was visible but weeds. This however was not very wonderful, as it turned out, for either in a mischievous frolic,

or with malice *prepense* to fox-hunting, some one had dried, or rather baked, the whole of the seed in an oven, previous to its having been committed to the ground.

It should invariably be remembered, that for months after the first tender shoots of the gorse have made their appearance above ground, you must employ hands to weed it as attentively as if the whole were a garden bed containing so many choice flowers, the hopes of the Florist; for I am clearly of opinion, it is the neglect of early weeding which ruins more than one half of the gorses that are made. There is, I am told, a *new* method of making a covert *sufficiently thick to ensure its holding foxes*, or as the term is, to be full of “good lyeing,” in an almost incredible short time after it has been made. This mode, I must confess, appears to me *very novel*, and I cannot be answerable for its success, but here you have it as it was given to me. Fence out a certain quantity of land (waste, of course, if possible,) and merely stick up a number of faggots endways, at certain distances from each other, perhaps a couple of yards apart, taking care that the points are stuck deep enough into the ground to prevent all danger of the wind blowing them down. In the course of a very few months, or a single summer, the rank

grass, and long weeds growing between the faggots, will make the whole an almost impenetrable mass; whilst the long weeds, partly *supported by the sticks and faggots*, are enabled in a great measure to resist the effects of a winter's frost and snow, or at least if killed, do not fall to the ground, but continue to afford dry lodging for a fox.

But I trust you will have a country that will require no such contrivances to give you sport, for one good natural covert is worth twenty artificial ones, and more likely to hold stout foxes; for the old ones are shy fellows, and particularly nice in their choice of habitation; indeed it even requires judgment to manage your coverts so as to get runs from them.

If you should hunt a country that may have a large woodland, in which the foxes commonly hang, and seldom go away, it is the best plan to hunt it often and kill a fox in the covert, and be sure to give him to your hounds in the very heart of it. When I first commenced, in rather a woodland country, several of the members of the hunt said to me, it is useless your going to a certain covert, you never will kill a fox or make him break,—“*The devil I won't; I shall meet there every Monday,*” was my answer, “*till I diminish the foxes;*” the first day I met happened to be a good scenting day, the last day

in October. The hounds held well to their fox for two hours, and killed him in the centre of the covert, and eat him; the consequence was, the next time we met at the same covert, the animal broke as soon as the hounds were put into it; and we had from thence seven good runs over a country, and killed each time, in the course of the season. In coverts or gorses of a moderate size, known to be good for sport and certainty of finding, you must act quite the reverse; and not only avoid drawing them, or disturbing them as little as possible, but if you should have the misfortune to kill a fox in either, get the fox out as soon as possible, and on no account allow the hounds to eat him in it. I have known instances of hounds killing and eating a fox in a favourite covert, the consequence of which has been that they have not found there the whole season afterward. Nothing is so prejudicial to sport as meeting too often at favourite coverts, or disturbing them unnecessarily. A fox is a shy animal, and if he is not allowed to remain quiet, will often lie in drains and in the fields, and of course get killed by greyhounds; and if you disturb your best coverts on bye days, you are not acting fairly to the people who hunt with you, as you cannot expect to find in a covert so recently drawn.

I have frequently been requested to give my opinion on the subject of countries being *kept together as they were originally hunted*. In part from my own ideas, formed early in life, and in part from those of experienced sportsmen with whom I have conversed upon the subject, I will endeavour, in the clearest manner I am able, to lay down what appears to me to be the *law* on this important, though delicate case; and which, in my humble opinion, if rigidly attended to, would be most beneficial to the cause of fox-hunting. If at any future period you should be in treaty for a country, (which from political disputes, or other causes, has not been kept entire, and other hunts have taken the advantage during the interregnum, of drawing those coverts most convenient for them to reach from their own kennel, or those they may have known to be the best situated for sport,) before you arrange to hunt it *as a country*, it is nothing more than common justice, according to the laws of fox-hunting (as far as I always understood them,) and to prevent future misunderstanding, that the coverts so drawn should be restored, and the hunt given up to you *entire*.

It is a very bad precedent for any one to accept of a covert (which he knows from time immemorial has belonged to another hunt,) be-

cause the master of the hounds who happens to hunt it at the time is not approved of by the owner of the covert; the same sort of prejudice might be taken against him in his own hunt, and he may likewise have a misunderstanding with some one who will easily find an excuse to warn him off his property, and at the same time make a proposition to some other pack to hunt it. What would be his astonishment if a neighbouring pack should come into the heart of his country, and into one of his best coverts, find a fox, have a good run, and kill him?

If customary laws are to be invaded to answer the caprice of individuals, the confusion and anarchy that would naturally occur in a short time would set a whole country together by the ears, and threaten the very existence of fox-hunting. A master of hounds is as liable to the misfortune of having a misunderstanding as other people—therefore when a covert is offered to another under such circumstances, he ought politely to refuse it. We all know, by *law* the owners of coverts can allow whom they please to hunt them; if, therefore, the boundary of a country is not held sacred, it is impossible to say what will be the consequence, or how it will end. I mention this subject of course in a way which I hope will not be thought offensive or personal

towards any one ; I have no motive but to give you my observations and opinion formed from experience.

I remember an anecdote related of a friend of mine and his neighbour, not many miles from Blandford, in Dorsetshire, which happened some years ago, both parties, alas ! are now gone to that bourne from whence no traveller returns. My friend was fond of shooting, and had a tolerable domain, and preserved strictly ; his neighbour also was partial to the trigger, his property was the most extensive, he therefore had less excuse for sporting on that of *another*. One day, after my friend returned from hunting, he was informed that in his absence his neighbouring friend had been shooting pheasants in a distant part of his manor. Instead of shewing any hostility, the next morning, about 11 o'clock, he went to his neighbour's preserve, near the mansion, and began shooting the pheasants right and left, having sent his servant on before with his clothes, and desired his best compliments ; adding, that as the gentleman had done him the honour to shoot on *his* manor the day before, *he* was come to-day to return the compliment, and to take a family dinner with him ; of course an explanation took place, and they lived on friendly terms ever afterwards. I must in justice say, of both

these gentlemen, although they were strict game preservers, I have seen more foxes on foot at one time in their coverts, when the hounds drew them, than I ever have seen in any other country after regular hunting commenced. I will relate to you another anecdote, bearing upon this point. Being a good deal annoyed by some hounds, which often disturbed a covert belonging to the late Lord Maynard, I mentioned the circumstance to his Lordship, who was a strict preserver of foxes, and one of the best of men; he said, "if you insist upon it I will send them a written discharge; but I, as an old sportsman, would advise you to arrange with them in a milder way; it is a bad precedent, and they may retaliate by instigating persons to send you a similar discharge in another part of your hunt, and annoy you very considerably."

A man may have too great an extent of country for his establishment, and so give permission to another pack *for a time*, to draw some of his distant coverts. It may happen at a future time he may want them, or another person who succeeds him, with a larger establishment, may hunt oftener, and require the coverts to be returned; in that case the person who has had the temporary enjoyment of them has no alternative but to give them up quietly.

The giving up a certain part of your country, held by the concurrence of the neighbouring gentlemen, without their sanctioning the measure, is by no means the same thing as only allowing another hunt to draw some of your coverts, when you can do without them.

“It needs no ghost to tell us” that Leicestershire stands pre-eminent for fox-hunting; but I have heard from some old sportsmen, the foxes do not run so straight as formerly, owing to canals, and so many new gorses. I met, the other day, some Leicestershire men, who told me, (what all the youngsters of the day had told me before,) that such sport never was known, nor such riding, and that Melton never was so full. A good pack of hounds will always show sport in any country; and it cannot be denied, but a very superior one now hunts the country, and the owner spares no trouble or expense to show sport. I have no doubt the Meltonians over a country are very superior; but if the young men of the present day ride more scientifically than they did in the time of the late Mr. Meynell, they must be very good indeed. I was pleased to hear Melton was so very full; no doubt many go for the sake of hunting,—and it is said, many go also for the sake of playing *Short Whist*, and that fascinating game *Ecarté*. For many

THE DEATH. After D. WOLSTENHOLME

Lent by Basil Dighton.

reasons, men at a certain time of life are fond of their own fire-side, and it is not convenient for every one to leave home to hunt "in the great countries;" but is that any reason they should be deprived of their amusement, because they live in a country less favourable to fox hunting? I have not patience to hear men (who formerly, when in Leicestershire, never saw a hound after they had found) say, "no other country is fit to hunt in!"

I have seen very good sport *out* of Leicester-shire, and I hope I shall again. If gentlemen would preserve foxes more liberally in the rural countries, people would hunt and reside more at home; and, in consequence, more money would be circulated in their own neighbourhood, the agriculturist benefited, the lower orders employed, and the poor rates reduced. I remember an instance in a parish of some considerable extent, where only *one* gentleman kept an establishment, the poor rates were double what they were in a neighbouring one of the same magnitude, where *several* gentlemen resided.

I was very much surprised to hear of a bill being brought into Parliament to make *game private property*, and by a Yorkshire-man too! Formerly, a Yorkshire-man and a Sportsman were synonymous. If the bill passes, it will annihilate

fox-hunting! Is it likely a *marchand de gibier*, (of which, no doubt, there will be many,) will allow hounds to draw his coverts, or even a gun to be fired, or a dog to enter his premises? No more elevated barrels or percussion locks will be necessary, and the name of a sportsman in a few years will be forgotten.

The game laws in France are not clearly understood by the lawyers: the old despotic law is done away with; and the new ones, made since the revolution, are so very indefinite, as not to be understood. I had the misfortune to be prosecuted for a trespass by an old Countess who lived at Harfleur; and having consulted my solicitor, he advised me to wait on the lady, and acquaint her that she had been misinformed by her "*Garde*," that I had not committed a trespass on her land. She received me very graciously, but made some unpleasant remarks on the conduct of the English—one of which was so very absurd, that I could scarcely refrain from telling her she was a silly old woman. She accused the English of causing Louis the 16th to be beheaded! The process verbal was brought into court, not to be decided by a jury, but by an old worn-out judge, who determined on the declaration made by the *garde de chasse* who swore I was shooting in a turnip field, the property

of Madame la Comtesse, though at the same time I had a respectable witness, the son of an English clergyman, to prove to the contrary; they would not, however, allow him to give his evidence, but without hesitation fined me, and I had all the expenses to pay.

Again, I cannot resist relating what seemed a flagrant instance of illiberality and oppression. I went out one morning with my dog and gun, to endeavour to kill a bird for a sick father-in-law. I did not leave home till after eleven o'clock. On my way I met the keeper, and informed him of the country I was going to beat; he answered, "*fort bien, Monsieur.*" Shortly afterwards, in a small field of beet root, I killed an unfortunate quail: some people were at work at the very time on a public road near the spot, and a shepherd was keeping some sheep *a mile at least from* the field. The next morning, I was informed by a friend a *procès verbal* was made against me, that I had killed a doe hare with young, close to the proprietor's chateau. I answered, "it is impossible; I am not aware I was on his land; and as to a *beau lièvre*, I did not see one the whole day." Still, however, the shepherd, a perfect stranger, and a mile off at the time, swore to my person, and insisted that I had killed a hare with young. Thus I had no alternative but

either to go into court, or to compromise the matter; and from what I experienced on a previous occasion with the Countess, I had no wish for the former,—knowing to a certainty I should be beat. It was therefore agreed to compromise; and the mean wretch took 75 franks to settle the affair, although he was a man of large fortune in France.—This is behaving towards Englishmen with gratitude and liberality, and a kind return for our generous conduct to the unfortunate emigrants during the revolution! But these are not every-day instances; nor would it be difficult to enumerate French families that are in the habit of showing many kind attentions to the English; but as the saying is, “*On trouve des bons et des mauvais par tout.*”

Having before stated the necessity of keeping your *kennel effective*, I must now tell you it will be necessary to keep your stable effective also; for if your men are not well mounted, they cannot be of much service in the field, and you are well aware, if you have not good hunters for your own riding, you never can be with your hounds at a time when you may be most wanted. One thing is certain, a man cannot ride over a country if he is not *well mounted*, neither can he show sport if he has not a *good pack of hounds*. Horses and hounds, if good in nature, are animals that

will do wonders, if common sense will but assist them. If you have not the opportunity of purchasing horses that the late Mr. Corbet had, I should advise you to procure them from the dealers in London, where you will have a better chance than in the country: the great breeders generally sell their young horses in one lot to the London dealers, they are brought to town untried, and they know no more of them than the purchaser: if the latter buys an ill *shaped* horse, he has nobody to blame but himself. That flourishing and brilliant capital, London, is the place to get the best of every thing; for where the highest price is given, superior things of every description will be taken.

If you wish to give a large price for what is called a *well known made hunter*, from one cause or other, there are always, every spring, some such valuable horses to be purchased at Tattersalls, which has been the rendezvous of sportsmen from time immemorial, arising from the civility of the late Mr. and the present Messrs. Tattersall to all ranks. I sincerely hope they will ever continue to meet with the encouragement their meritorious conduct so eminently deserves. It is the fountain of all sporting information; sporting men could not exist in town in the spring, if there was no "Tattersalls." Independent of its

great utility, it is a lounge three times a week, where you are sure to meet your friends, and can listen with pleasure to their reports of the achievements of the different packs of hounds the season past, and the arrangements for the future.

Suppose you purchase half a dozen young horses, at a hundred guineas each, to carry fourteen stone; if two out of the six turn out well, you ought to be satisfied, as there is every probability of your selling the remaining four for fifty each, barring accidents. Many fox-hunters prefer thorough-bred horses, others cock-tails; I always gave the preference to the former, if it was possible to get them. It is the general opinion, that thorough-bred horses cannot leap so well as "cock-tails:" I think otherwise; and if you will try the experiment, by taking ten young horses of the former, and ten of the latter sort, I am convinced you will find the thorough-bred ones to have the advantage, and naturally to clear their fences with more ease to themselves. Horses that have been in training for years cannot be expected to make hunters; but, nevertheless, what superiority a thorough-bred one has in every respect,—above all, in speed, bottom, and wind? It often happens, when a cock-tail is at the height of his speed, a thorough-bred

horse is only at three-quarters, and the latter will always *go through dirt* (as the term is) best. I have been very much astonished in hearing men whom I have known to be good sportsmen, and who were in the habit of riding well to hounds, argue in favour of the former; but some persons, for the sake of argument, will even attempt to lay down positions at variance with their own opinion. Many also differ about turning horses out for what is called a summer's run: I did it, because I could not afford to do otherwise. I always thought my horses in the best condition when I left off hunting; the turning them out to cat sour grass not only puts them entirely out of condition, but very often injures them materially. I am all for dry food, given in a straw-yard, where the animal can have a barn or open stable to go to, and plenty of good water. By this means how much sooner your horse will be in condition, and what an advantage it will give you before Christmas! Horses that have a summer's run at grass, seldom are in condition before January. I shall not here trespass upon your patience, by enlarging upon a topic which from time to time has been treated upon in the *Sporting Magazine*, by one of its ablest writers.

Of course you will be aware that I am alluding to those well known articles on the condition

of hunters, by “*Nimrod* ;” in favour of whose system and ideas I have ever most perfectly coincided. Another advantage will be gained by it, your horses will be less likely to be *stolen*, and from what we read in the public papers, horse stealing is now so very common, and the *rogues know the trick so well*, that it has become one of our greatest evils, and I hope the police will take it into their serious consideration. During my sojourn in France, in the neighbourhood where I resided, I never heard of a thief of any description. The reason given is, when a person is robbed, he has nothing to do but to make his declaration (as they call it,) before a magistrate, which is merely the particulars of the robbery. The king’s attorney general then carries on the prosecution *at the expence of government*, and with the assistance of the police, the culprit seldom escapes. The person robbed is at no expence, nor has he the odium of bringing a man to justice. I believe there lies the great secret, and the cause of there being so few robberies on the Continent. When a poor Englishman is robbed of his horse, if *he* prosecutes he must pay all the expences himself, which will very probably amount to more than the value of the horse, should he be so fortunate as to recover him.

Another proof of the superiority of the police

on the Continent is, that the Estafette, who daily carries the letters and other valuables for the merchants from Havre de Grace to Paris, and from Paris again to the sea-coast, is nothing more than a common post-boy on horseback, with a portmanteau strapped behind his saddle, in the same way that our letters were formerly conveyed in England before mail coaches were established. These boys at times carry immense sums, and have nothing to defend themselves with but their whips, which they are continually smacking, yet it is confidently asserted by the merchants, there never has been an instance of any of them having been robbed, or even attempted to be stopped. If a similar Estafette, or express, was established by the English merchants between London and Liverpool, do you suppose it would arrive at its destination unmolested?—Query, would it ever pass beyond Finchley Common in safety?

Mr. Corbet thought it necessary to bring forward a certain number of young horses to keep his establishment effective in that department; his plan was to purchase in their raw state the promising young horses of four and five years old, bred in his own country (Shropshire), celebrated at that time for its excellent breed of hunters, particularly those from the Bridgenorth

Snap, which were pleasant horses to ride, free at their leaps, but always collected; with excellent constitutions, fine action, and no tire in them; they would have thought themselves disgraced to have been dismounted after a twenty minutes burst over any country. When broke, and made handy with hounds, they were turned out for twelve months, and then taken into the hunting stable, to supply the place of the old worn out horses, which time had incapacitated for active service.

This great sportsman had in consequence a stud of very superior hunters. I cannot say I admired his hounds *in kennel*; it was nothing but "Trojan," "Trojan," "Trojan." We always drank, at his hospitable mansion at Sundorn, "to the blood of old Trojan," and yet he did not *even know how this famous hound was bred*. I was informed he was a stray hound, that either joined the pack hunting, or else came to the kennel by accident. I liked the appearance of Sir Richard Puleston's hounds better than those of his father-in-law, Mr. Corbet; they were a powerful pack, with a great deal of bone, and very clever. Mr. Corbet himself was extremely popular in Warwickshire, and gave general satisfaction; his sport was excellent, his natural good temper and condescending manners to every

description of people gained him the esteem of all parties; and during his reign such a thing as a blank day was totally unknown.

The subject upon which I am now about to treat is, I am well aware, a very delicate one; but as you have requested me to give my candid opinion upon *every thing* which relates to fox-hunting, I should consider myself remiss if I did not do so.

Gentlemen should recollect, let their situation in life be ever so exalted, if they condescend to hunt their own hounds, that when in the field they are *huntsmen*; a huntsman is a public character, and as such is liable to have remarks and criticisms made by the Field (who it is always to be remembered *are but lookers on*, and as such, are *apt to flatter themselves they know as much of the game as the actual player*,) and to be spoken to by farmers and others on the occurrences which commonly happen in the day's hunting; if things go on well, and the sport is good, the master of the pack is no doubt the person *most* pleased, feeling conscious that his exertions contribute much to the amusement of the day; and there is certainly no pleasure more gratifying to ourselves than that of pleasing others. On the contrary, if every thing should go on untowardly, which will frequently happen

on a bad scenting day, he ought to be mindful that the Field likewise participates in his disappointment. There is not a greater misery than returning home after bad sport; every thing appears to go wrong; but suppose the hounds to have done their work well the whole day, having no wild horsemen to over-ride them, and you kill your fox handsomely after a run of an hour and a quarter; then I can imagine I hear you talking to your hounds on your way home,—"Justice, old fellow, *you* made a capital hit when the sheep brought us to check; and Will, did you see Gamestress turn like lightning with the scent, when the fox was headed? the young ones too, they began to work and enjoy a scent; and old Sophy, she was at the head of affairs when the fox was sinking." With happy thoughts like these, when you sit down to dinner, every thing goes right, the soup is excellent, the fish delicious, the venison of the highest quality, and the wine of superior flavour. The Ladies too appear more than usually fascinating, and every thing they do pleases you.

It is said a master of fox hounds should be possessed of the patience of Job, but even if he were, it would too often be put to the test. For instance,—to have your hounds over-ride by some jealous horseman, who pays no attention to their

work on a bad scenting day, when unable to go the best pace, but brings them to a check, and by incautiously riding amongst them disables many, is unhappily a circumstance but too well calculated to ruffle and derange the best of tempers; for who could refrain on such an occasion from speaking rather warmly? "So jealous are some men (said a distinguished huntsman to me the other day at the covert side,) that they will not even allow my Lord's hounds to work with a hunting scent, although they have every disposition to do so." When such an incident occurs, the Field, as a body, ought to interfere, and not suffer the sport of the day to be marred by the malevolence or ignorance of every individual who chooses to over-ride the hounds. And is it not rather too much to expect a master of hounds, on *all* occasions, to be under the disagreeable necessity of calling to account every stranger, whose too great eagerness and want of patience, renders him a nuisance in the Field? Many, many a day's sport is spoilt by the sole circumstance of hounds being over-ride.

Much mischief is also often done when a fox first goes away. All crowd to the spot where he is halloo'd, before the hounds can possibly get there; every one being anxious for a *good start*, fearing Jack so and so will have a better

than himself. They are not aware of the injury they are doing by riding over the scent and foiling the ground. It frequently happens at these times the hounds never run him a single yard. If people would only have *a little* patience, and be cautious where they ride, first allowing the pack to settle to their fox, they would have every chance of sport.

A misery of this sort once happened to me; a fox was halloo'd away at the farther end of the covert to that where the hounds were, by a man at work, whom I knew. I got to him with as little delay as possible, and naturally said, which way is he gone? "I zee'd um, Zir, where them there gemmen are; they be all over the zcent; and I could zee um no varder than where thick mon is on a grey horse; I telt im you would be angry, and they swear at me unmarcifully, but as I noo some of them there red coats can boxy a little, I heeled my tongue till your honour came up." The hounds in consequence could not hunt him an inch. Many said "make a wide cast down wind; he is gone to such a covert;" another, "to such an earth;" "no, Gentlemen," I replied, "I shall do no such thing, I will not spoil my hounds to please any man's fancy, by galloping over a country, the Lord knows where, on almost a forlorn hope;

you have spoiled your own sport, and must suffer for it. Foxes are scarce in this part of the hunt; there is but very little chance of finding again!" This was the case: we did not find afterwards, although to please them (which was more than they deserved,) I drew till very late. It is nevertheless a bad plan at any time to draw late in the day. I know many masters who make it a rule not to go on after three o'clock, which is a very good one; in the middle of winter a great deal of misery is often caused by finding too late. You will almost to a certainty be beat, and the pack will not be very easily stopped in the dark. It once happened to me to lose my whole pack; it was a good scenting day; we found early, and had a sharp thing of one hour and five minutes without a check; and as a good deal of it was in covert, I found another fox, had a long run over a country, and run our fox, quite beat, into a small covert, where I thought they were catching him every moment; but unfortunately another fox was in the same covert, and the hunted one laid down; it was nearly dark, and I fancied him our own; but to my great surprize, a fresh one broke away with the hounds close at him, over a difficult country to ride; they killed him by themselves, after running him several miles. The consequence

was, most of the hounds remained out all night, and I did not get them right again for a length of time.

The *method* of riding to hounds is so much altered within the last few years, that you will have no small trouble in preventing your Field from getting *too* forward. Most men of the present day, if they can find cash to purchase a good hunter, have nerves to ride him. The first two requisites in riding to hounds are, *a good eye*, and *a good hound*; a man that rides close at the tail of the pack (as the term is), and follows them *every where*, may have the name of a bold rider, but never that of a good one; he must naturally ride over a great deal of unnecessary ground, and in consequence will the sooner tire his horse. If you observe a good sportsman in the field, he will ride a little to the right or to the left, so as to command the pack, with his eye on the leading hounds, and take every advantage of ground when they turn with the scent on either side. Of course, I do not mean to recommend skirting; for a skirting rider is as bad as a skirting hound, and will often do as much mischief. How valuable, therefore, is a horse with *a good mouth*; a hunter cannot be said to be perfect without it. When the pack comes suddenly to a check, if a sportsman has

FULL CRY. After D. WOLSTENHOLME.

Lent by Basil Dighton.

his eye on the leading hounds (which he ought to have), he will in a moment see the event, and of course halt short of the spot to which they brought the scent. When I make use of the word halt, I don't mean that every man should go to drill; but I know this, if many that call themselves sportsmen had a *little drilling*, it would do them a great deal of good! It is the general opinion that when hounds check, the fox is forward; and the first cast a huntsman ought to make is a forward one. I cannot say I think so; on the contrary, if there are no sheep, deer, cattle, &c. to foil the ground, and the fox has not been coursed by a cur-dog, why should they check if he is gone on? The greatest probability is, that he has headed, or made a short turn to the right or left; therefore, if you *cast at all*, a forward one is the least likely to succeed. There is one rule however, from which you should never deviate,—let your hounds try first before you attempt to make a cast yourself; hounds that are not accustomed to be “lifted,” will make a superior one to any human being. It is very extraordinary, yet nevertheless true, that many people go out for the sake of the riding part only; the hunting is a minor consideration; and if the hounds do their work well or ill, it is of little consequence to

them ; and their conversation after dinner usually turns to the subject of *riding only*. To such as these, I have often thought a few couples of curs, running the drag of a red herring, (care being taken that a tom cat should be turned out at the end,) if they only went *the pace*, would answer quite as well as the finest pack of fox-hounds.

An anecdote, related to me by a friend, who hunted constantly with the late Mr. Meynell, is very apropos to some riders of the present day, and I give it you in his words.

“Many years ago, I recollect a gentleman who kept ten horses in Leicestershire, and who had been riding near me often in a very fine run, in which two of the most interesting and beautiful things happened that I ever remembered to have seen, and on remarking them to him when the run was over,—‘Good God ! Sir,’ said he ; ‘I saw nothing of them !’” This was a hard rider, who, from his own account saw *nothing*, while riding his horse as hard as he could go, and as near the tail of the hounds as he could possibly get ! And how should he ? For a man behind the hounds cannot be a judge of what is going on in front ; and is the principal cause (by pressing upon them,) to bring them to a check.

But still, as I have above stated, great as is the mischief done by persons who over-ride your

hounds, you may even put up with it, although very annoying, if they will but refrain from hallooing. There may be some faint hope of improving a field that ride too forward, but a noisy one you can never mend. To prove it, in some measure, I will relate the following fact,—it happened some years ago. I was out cub-hunting, and had found a litter of foxes in some small coverts detached as much as a field or two from each other; a farmer joined us whom I knew to be free with his tongue, and when the hounds were holding merrily together on one fox, and had nearly beat him, he was sure to halloo them to a fresh one, and swear it was the same we were hunting. After begging him to desist without effect, I rode up and spoke to him in any thing but gentle language; when he instantly got into a violent passion, and declared, nothing on earth should ever make him halloo another fox for me! I thought, for once, he was silenced; but before the words were scarcely out of his mouth, a fresh fox crossed the main ride in the covert, and the moment he viewed him, he was at it again,—“*Tally-ho! Tally-ho! Tally-ho!—I will be d—d, Sir, if that is not the hunted fox!*”

In a country that shall be nameless, where every one not only fancied himself a huntsman,

but would on some occasions put his fancy into practice, a farmer actually came out one day with a horn, and began blowing when we found. The manager was also a good deal annoyed by a hound named "Thunder," a great favourite in the hunt, before he had the management of the hounds; and to do him justice, he was a good finder, steady from hare; and when he threw his tongue, (which he was very free with,) it was so singular a one, the whole neighbourhood knew it,—and he was a most determined skirter. Now, in the country alluded to, there is a long succession of small coverts, and a fox generally visited them. "Thunder" had a trick of going *alone* from one covert to another *down wind*, after the hounds found, and of throwing his tongue either on the hunted fox or a fresh one; and at most of these little coverts *there was a skirting rider*, who, the moment he heard "Thunder's" voice, began hallooing and cheering him; so that very often it was nothing but "hark to Thunder" the whole day through. On one of these occasions, the Master's patience was quite exhausted, and the prospect of a good day's sport totally lost. Returning home not very well pleased, in conversation with the whipper-in, he said: "What do you think of Thunder?" "Why, I think, Sir, we shall never kill a fox 'till he is

hung!" "I am of your opinion," answered he; "and you may have his skin." Will was so anxious to get him out of the way, fearing his master might change his mind, that when he went out to feed his hounds, a few minutes after his return home, "Thunder" was no more! The next hunting day, when the hounds found, many exclaimed, "it cannot be a fox, it is only riot,—for we do not hear 'Thunder's' voice!" "Indeed," said the Master; "and what is more wonderful, you never will again." It was soon whispered about, that poor "Thunder" was dead,—so many long faces were scarcely ever seen before. One gentleman was observed going up to a rich farmer,—“What do you think has happened?” “What?” answered the farmer, with the greatest anxiety; “have any more banks stopped?” “No,” replied the gentleman; “*worse than that*—poor ‘Thunder’ is draughted, and we shall never have any sport again.” The means taken had the desired effect for a time; but a subscriber was lost,—who coolly observed, he never would go out hunting again, if he was not permitted to *halloo to the hounds whenever he pleased*.

It gave me much pleasure to find from your last letter, that you had decided upon hunting your own hounds; I can see no great crime in

a gentleman performing the office of huntsman,—and no reason why a man with a good education should not succeed in every thing he undertakes better than a person who has had, comparatively speaking, but an indifferent one, or perhaps none at all. A distinguished nobleman in Yorkshire has hunted his own hounds uninterruptedly for thirty-eight seasons, with high reputation to himself, and satisfaction to the sportsmen who hunted with him.

A gentleman who hunts his own hounds is sure to be fond of the sport, and he will do all in his power (for his own credit) to show it. On the contrary, servants hunt hounds for their livelihood; and I have seen some of them, now and then, more anxious to go home to a two o'clock dinner, than to find a second fox.

The noble successor to Mr. Corbet, in the Warwickshire country,—a good sportsman, and always anxious to show sport,—would sometimes say to his huntsman, “Harry, Harry, you are thinking more of your *mutton chops*, than of your *hunting*!” It is very difficult to get a good huntsman, such as Tom Rose, or Sam Lawley,—the former, the Duke of Grafton’s, the latter, the late Lord Vernon’s; Charles King, also, who hunted Lord Althorp’s hounds, and Mr. Shaw, were excellent sportsmen. If you could be sure

of meeting with such men, it would not be so indispensable for you to hunt your own hounds ; but huntsmen, generally speaking, are conceited, headstrong, and ignorant,—and fancy they know better where the fox is gone than the hounds do ; although a very clever man, and an admirable judge of hunting, assures us,

“ That foxhound never yet could tell,
Unless he took the pains to smell,
Where Reynard went ! ”

Many servants think lifting hounds, hallooing, and blowing the horn, are the only qualities requisite for a huntsman.

A system once followed by a huntsman (now gone to ground), is so very bad a one, that I anticipate it will not for a moment meet your approbation ; it was always condemned by me, and quite different to the one I practised. The hounds were never permitted to hunt through difficulties ; the moment they came to a check they were galloped away to some earth or covert, either with the false notion of “ giving him a meeting ” (as they termed it,) or else to take the chance of his having gone into the wood, or finding a fresh fox, which of course was always claimed as the hunted one. I was informed the pack were so accustomed to it, that the moment

they came to a check their heads were up, and they were ready to start with the huntsman wherever his genius might direct. This beautiful pack, in consequence, never put their noses down; they had been so well disciplined, that the words "heads up" were unnecessary, but to get them down again was impossible.

Another wild system I witnessed in a rural country: the hounds were running their fox well, he was viewed by the huntsman, who set to riding and mobbing him, and the consequence was they came to a check; however, fortunately getting the scent again, they had one of the best runs of the season, but did *not* kill. In my opinion, if this unsportsmanlike act had not taken place at so critical a moment, the hounds would in all probability have killed their fox.

Some people think it fair to mob and ride a fox, and fancy it takes something out of him, and that the hounds will sooner run into him; but nine times out of ten it is the means of his beating them, as it bothers the hounds, foils the ground, and it frequently happens when a fox has been rode, the pack cannot hunt him afterwards. When before speaking of servants, I should have observed, that I was formerly an advocate for cap-money, thinking it did no harm, saved a little in servant's wages, and, hunting my own

hounds, I took care no unfair advantage of this privilege should be taken; but we "live and learn": I have seen so many days sport marred by it, that I now disapprove of it, and think it better to allow your servants to take Christmas boxes, a thing in the end perhaps more beneficial to them; but you will have some difficulty in persuading them to it. I have heard, with some packs near London, on a Saturday ("*Le grand jour de la Chasse*,") the huntsmen will occasionally turn down a bagman (of course unknown to their master); they cannot resist the temptation, when they are certain of a large Field, and *the cap-money on those days amounts to something considerable.*

A good-tempered sensible *first whipper-in*, that *will obey*, and has the sport of the day, and his master's interest at heart, is not very often to be met with. I have had some very good ones, and some very bad; of the latter, the very worst tempered man I ever had, although a good sportsman, was at the very time I was in the greatest need of a good one. I was commencing making a pack from draughts (not an easy task I can assure you); we were going on as well as we could possibly expect; the hounds were getting handy, and to know each other, and we were beginning to place some confidence in them;

but what was of the greatest consequence, they had got into blood, and we fixed to meet at a good covert likely for a run. The hounds immediately found, and were going away well with their fox, when my malevolent fellow stopped them, and halloo'd them on to hare: but, unfortunately for him, a friend of mine saw the whole transaction, informed me of it, and I of course turned my man away. He owned afterwards he did it to spite some gentlemen who were out, and were anxious to have a run, *because they did not "cap" for him the day before*, after killing a fox with a short run. This is another instance of the bad effects of allowing servants to take cap-money. I have had other whippers-in of a different character, men who were good sportsmen, fond of the thing, attentive, and good servants in every respect. For instance, Will Neverd, now Mr. Warde's huntsman; Jack Cane, Abraham Farrow, Zach. Goddard, the latter many years whipper-in to Lord Middleton, and now with Mr. Boycot; old Jack Cole (not a bad one), now living with Mr. Conyers; and John Neal, an excellent servant. The best groom I ever had, who took a pride in his master's horses being in condition, was William Tompkins, now I believe head groom in the hunting stable of the Duke of Grafton. It often happens as soon

as a whipper-in knows his business, he wishes to be a huntsman; and will take every opportunity of getting alone with the hounds, in order that he may hunt them himself. One of the best men in the field I ever knew was Richard Bennet; he lived with the late Lord Stamford, afterwards with Mr. John Calcraft, and lastly with his present Majesty; he was quiet with hounds, and always in his place; a capital horseman, and what is a great virtue in a whipper-in, *he never wished to hunt the hounds himself*. I have often heard him say, if he were offered a huntsman's place he should hesitate before he accepted it.—“I know, Sir, said he, I understand my business as whipper-in; if I take a huntsman's place, I may not succeed, and it would be hard to go back into my old situation again.” He died at the Six-Miles Bottom, near Newmarket, where he lived very comfortably, having been well provided for by His Majesty. A *good feeder* is very rarely to be met with; he ought to obey very exactly the orders given him, and on no account should he be absent without leaving some steady person in the kennel. I will relate to you an unfortunate accident, which happened in consequence of the absence of a feeder. I was staying at a friend's house who kept hounds, the men had been out early with

the young ones, and returning home very hungry to their breakfasts, forgot to uncouple them, in consequence they began to fight, and although the servants were only absent ten minutes, three were killed, and several severely bitten. It is necessary a feeder should be cleanly, active, and good tempered; the keeping the kennel, coppers, troughs, &c. clean and dry, will contribute not a little to the health of your pack; it is needless to say he ought to be trust-worthy. A man of a good disposition will much sooner make young hounds handy than one with a different temper; coaxing and encouragement are far better than severe discipline, and in the breeding season much depends upon the feeder's attention to the bitches when they are going to heat; and about the whelping time. It is a mistaken idea to suppose any hard working man will do for a feeder—it requires a diligent person, *with some head*.

In reply to your enquiry regarding scent. It is so speculative a subject, and governed by such an apparent contrariety of circumstances, that I am more at a loss what to say upon it than upon any thing I have written on the score of fox-hunting. We all know Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Rutlandshire, and Northamptonshire, to be the best scenting counties in England, and where hounds have a greater advantage over a fox than

in any other; for in almost all kinds of weather (I mean of course frost excepted,) there is a sufficient scent for hounds to hunt, and you are sure of some sort of sport if you will but have patience. In what are called *the rural countries*, unless you have favourable weather, it often happens you cannot run a yard; therefore a pack of hounds that can kill their fox in good style in a "plough country," must be still more brilliant in a grass or better scenting one. The last two or three seasons have been very open, and scarcely any stop put to hunting; but I have heard great complaints of the badness of scent from various parts of the kingdom. Query, whether an old fashioned winter, with a fortnight or three weeks frost *only*, about Christmas, is not desirable? The weather in general then becomes moderate, less boisterous, and more favourable to scent. In corn countries, it is usual for managers of fox-hounds to call out ("ware wheat!") meaning, beware, don't ride over the wheat. It has however been often proved, that riding over wheat does it little injury, and farmers never have the least scruple in galloping over it themselves. An instance happened much to the credit of the parties, which was told me by a friend, whose veracity I never had reason to doubt. Lord Derby's stag-hounds *came up with the stag* in a

fine field of wheat, where he was taken; it was so trodden that the next morning not a blade of wheat could be seen; upon which his Lordship, with his usual liberality, ordered his steward to have the supposed damage valued, and to send the farmer the amount of the valuation; at the harvest time, the latter waited on his Lordship to return the money, having housed the best crop of wheat he ever had in his life. Lord Derby was so pleased with the conduct of the honest farmer, that he begged his acceptance of the money. This is as it should be!

The hunt club dinners are of great service; they keep up the spirit of the thing. Those country gentlemen who are liberal minded, fond of Society, and favourably inclined towards the noble science, although from some cause or other they do not hunt themselves, like occasionally to meet Sportsmen from different parts of the country. The meeting of gentlemen of landed property together at these dinners, shews a cordiality in the support of fox-hunting; and it often deters the illiberal from destroying foxes. They will reason thus,—“I hate the sight of a hound, and it annoys me to see people riding over my land; yet, if I act contrary to the wishes of so many of my neighbours and friends, and endeavour to thwart their favourite amusement,

I shall be looked shyly upon by all; no, I will join the hunt, and if I cannot attend them in the field, I will at the club dinner. It is only the sacrifice of a pheasant or two, and a few rabbits, and I shall then be on *friendly terms* with the whole neighbourhood." I also am a great advocate for a ball and supper, to please the ladies, being convinced things cannot go on right unless they are in good humour; and I am certain nothing on earth is more gratifying to a good sportsman than to give pleasure to the fair sex. I have known it the means of saving many a fox from being trapped; for instance, a known *vulpicidal* character, who had three or four daughters that were "come out," and Mama, wishing to introduce them at the hunt ball, aware of the awkwardness of the case, begins the attack at breakfast,—“Sure, Mr. B——, its very hard our poor girls cannot go to the hunt-ball because of your nasty pheasants! You can’t refuse them, when I inform you that the eldest son of Sir G. R——, Bart. M.P. is to be there; and you know he has lately paid some attention to our dear daughter Charlotte!” Miss also says, “Papa cannot be so unkind as to prevent his Charlotte from going to the only ball this winter.” Then Sophia, the second daughter *has at him*,—“My own dear Papa always said he was delighted

when he saw his children happy; pray, pray, my own dear Papa, grant your affectionate child one great favour, and that is to order *old Killfox*, the keeper, not to destroy any more foxes. We then can go to the ball like our neighbours, the Miss C——'s." The father was a short time undecided, and at first wished the ball and the hunt at the Devil; but his natural affection for his children prevailed over every other consideration, and *old Killfox*, to his great amazement and mortification was sent for, and ordered to stay his hand and slay no more. The ladies went to the hunt-ball in great glee, and Miss, in a few months after, was married to the son of the Baronet! So far all was right, and the advantages of a hunt ball very conspicuous.

It will add much to your sport and your own peace of mind if your Field consist of *real* sportsmen. They will make every allowance for accidents and bad weather, and give you merit where merit is due. "The would-be Managers," on the contrary, make no allowance whatever for unavoidable circumstances; I mean those who do not enter into the spirit, and have no knowledge of hunting, but at times are ambitious to be at the head of affairs, and they are the greatest tormentors a master of fox-hounds can encounter, always finding out some cause for complaint;

you are "*too late*," or "*too soon*," at the covert ; you never draw to please them ; your meeting-places are wrong ; even if the weather is unfavourable, they will endeavour to make it appear *your* fault ; and every untoward circumstance is attributed to your bad management. When you are established in a country, never interfere with politics ; when you turn politician, give up your hounds. If possible, be on terms with all parties, and if they have liberality they will preserve foxes for you ; but you must in return do all in your power to oblige *them*, consistently with the general good of the hunt. You should also endeavour to gain the good will of *the farmers* ; if any respectable body of persons suffer from hunting, it is them ; and I think it not only ungentlemanly, but impolitic, to treat them in the field, or elsewhere, otherwise than with kindness and civility. They have a great deal in their power, and if once you gain their respect and esteem, whilst becoming popular amongst them in general, it will save you many a litter of foxes, and you will go on pleasantly without any grumbling.

I considered the hunt giving a farmer's "silver eup," to be run for either at the hunt races, or at the annual county meeting, as one of the most popular things they could do ; and I know

from experience, nothing pleases the yeomanry so much. No doubt it is often won by trick, I mean by a horse which belongs to some one out of the hunt, that has been a winner *before*, and is named by some obscure farmer; and the cup frequently ornaments the sideboard of one who is the least deserving of it; but that is no reason at all why it should be discontinued. It is the *intention* of the thing which pleases, as a sort of grateful return for the supposed injury done to the farmer. I am confident, that by this means, I have gained the good will of many an opulent yeoman, who was before inimical to fox-hunting. I have heard them say to each other, "it is very kind of the gentlemen to think of us." I remember a farmer coming up to me at one of our hunt-races, whom I before suspected of killing foxes, and addressing me thus,—“My woodman, Sir, told me, he thought an old vixen would lay up her cubs in our home-wood; if it should so happen, I give you my word, Sir, not one of them shall be destroyed.” The woodman was right in his conjecture; my friend kept his word; we found a litter of foxes in the home-wood, and the honest farmer ever afterwards was a sincere well-wisher to the hunt.

I have avoided as much as possible writing on subjects unconnected with fox-hunting, but I

cannot resist saying a word or two in behalf of my friends, the farmers, arising from the experience I have had in France. I am fully convinced if the ports were open at home, it would be a great hardship upon *them*; for they cannot possibly afford to sell their grain at so low a price as the growers on the Continent can export it. The latter have so great an advantage in having neither poor-rates or tythes to pay. I have read, among the advertisements in the English papers, of farms to be let *tythe-free*, but never remember having met with one that was *exempt from poor-rates*.

Another great advantage a farmer has on some parts of the Continent over the agriculturist here is that the land is divided into small farms, seldom exceeding one hundred acres, and the greatest part of them are under fifty; a farmer and his family will therefore almost have it in their power to cultivate the land without hiring labourers. Supposing he has a wife, three sons, and two daughters, and rents a farm of fifty acres, the females will do as much hard work out of doors as the men, and the whole of the business will thus be carried on by the family, except threshing out the corn, which they think beneath them. And their manner of living too is so different to that of our yeomanry, that the

expense of the table is a mere trifle. The paupers in any poor-house in England would fancy they were going to be starved if only allowed the same food upon which many of the farmers in France live. I am here speaking of those parts of Normandy which, for a length of time I was in the frequent habit of visiting. In Lent, their chief food is beans, with a little butter and a few onions (if the latter are not too dear), and sour milk curds, with very coarse brown bread, which they eat in large quantities. The ordinary beverage is weak sour cider. At other times of the year they certainly have some boiled beef once a week, but their general food is vegetables. When labourers are employed, they work very hard, and continue at their labour the whole day, with the exception of one hour allowed for dinner. Our farmers, thank God! live better, and have more of the enjoyments of human beings, and many of them occasionally indulge in hunting, the only desirable recreation they can enjoy. From this it will appear, that under all circumstances, the English farmer cannot possibly sell his corn at so low a price as the foreigner.

But now to my text; formerly, in the New Forest, it was the custom in the spring for the hounds to meet at break of day, to enable them to find their fox, with what is called a drag. No

doubt it would be gratifying to sportsmen and masters of hounds to see them work on this drag, if it could be done without a great destruction of vixen foxes. But if you should happen to get upon the drag of a wet vixen, or one heavy in cub, what chance can she possibly have in that state? The New Forest is a peculiar sort of hunting; sportsmen that are accustomed to it prefer it to any other. In no country can you see the work of hounds so well, although the riding to them is thought nothing of.

Leicestershire-men are often at a loss here, as much as Foresters would be in that great country. I have frequently seen in the Forest brilliant and gratifying things to a sportsman, in which hounds that were perfect at their work had an opportunity of showing themselves to the greatest possible advantage. Formerly, when the New Forest was hunted by the late Mr. Gilbert, there certainly were no inclosures. To those who have never visited the New Forest, it may be here necessary to explain these inclosures. His Majesty's Government thought proper to fence in a certain number of acres, in different parts of the forest, which they considered the most eligible for planting, as nurseries for the growth of young timber, which were called "The New Inclosures;" but I am informed they are no

impediment to sport. The great bogs are so generally known, and bridges or "bog passages" made to cross in every direction, that no one has any thing to fear on that head; the lesser ones are of no consequence, and a knowledge of them is soon acquired.

We all know the Forest is very extensive, stocked with animals of every description; in a still morning, meeting there at break of day, has a fine effect. I sometimes hunted with the hounds when Mr. G. managed them, and I perfectly recollect the impression made on one of these occasions: old Tom Scabright, the father of Lord Fitzwilliam's present huntsman, hunted them; the sound of his melodious voice cheering the hounds when they first challenged on the drag,—the red deer and other wild animals passing,—the sun rising, and dispersing the morning mists, and gradually disclosing the more distant and varied objects,—altogether produced such an exhilarating scene, that I could have wished for the talent of a poet or a painter.

I have seen great sport in the Forest,—hounds running the best pace 13 miles an end. In crossing the heathy part, it was beautiful to see the energy of the pack, flinging to catch the scent where the fox had made his turnings; and if they came to a hunting scent, (as I said before,)

in no country can you see their work to so great an advantage, or the cunning and tricks of the hunted animal. Another superiority the New Forest possesses; that is, you can very often hunt there when you cannot elsewhere.

I remember once leaving Staffordshire, at a time when the frost had stopped hunting in that county for at least a fortnight; having some business in the Forest, I took the opportunity of going there, when, to my great surprise, I found on my arrival there was no appearance of frost, nor had the hounds been prevented hunting a single day. I of course returned home as quickly as possible, thinking I should hunt immediately; but the difference of *climate*, in the short distance of 140 miles, was so great, that no hounds were able to hunt in less than ten days after my return. In dry easterly winds, when hounds in other countries cannot run a yard, in the lower part of the Forest they often have good sport.

There is one serious objection to the New Forest: experience has proved that the country at times brings on an incurable lameness; and no master of hounds, to my knowledge, who has ever hunted it, could find out the real cause. It has been attributed by some people to the kennel,—but why should all the kennels in the

Forest lame hounds? It is well known, that, when kept by the late Mr. Compton, in a kennel built on an eminence, they had the lameness to a great degree. In the present day, it is the same in a kennel built some distance from it. There are persons who have attributed it to the "foot furze," a plant peculiar to the Forest, and which I have seen prick hounds' feet so severely, that it prevented their carrying that head they were in the constant habit of doing. Others fancy it is owing to their jumping the high paling surrounding the new inclosures: it cannot be that; or why should the lameness have occurred before the new inclosures were made? If I may be allowed to hazard an opinion, I should say it was occasioned by the hounds crossing the cold black bogs, when heated by their exertions in the chase, which in some places will not bear their weight, and which they must wade through: the sudden chill appears to me likely to cause this horrid calamity; for I have seen them return from hunting shivering with cold, from the black bog dirt sticking so long upon them.

I cannot quit the New Forest without once more mentioning Mr. Gilbert. He was a man that loved fox-hunting, a good sportsman without conceit; but yet *the sporting world formed a good*

opinion of him. He had a natural genius particular to himself: I have seen him often recover a fox in a wonderful way, when all chance of hitting him again appeared hopeless. But, alas! he is no more. His great friend and ally, thank God, still remains, and shines a brilliant star in the Forest,—and that he may continue so for many, many years, is the wish, I need not add, of all who know him. If you wish to draw for so worthy a character,—a straight-forward, staunch, good man,—you will be sure to find at Fritham any hour of the day.

The late Sir Edward Littleton, of Teddesley Park, Staffordshire, whom we may be allowed to call the last fox-hunter of the “*old school*,” regularly was out at “pceep of day.” An old friend of mine often used to hunt with him in the morning, return home to *breakfast*, and take a fresh horse and hunt with another pack at the usual hour, half-past ten. On one occasion, two gentlemen who were not acquainted with the baronet’s early hour of hunting, called at Teddesley, to inquire what time the hounds went out that day, as they wished to join them: the answer was, “they *had* been out and were returned, had had a good run, and killed their fox.”

An eccentric sportsman (Old Land), who formerly kept some hounds adjoining what was the

then Duke of Richmond's hunt, always met at break of day, that he might find his fox by the drag of him. He often threw off at his kennel, it being no great distance from large woodlands on either side. Foxes will sometimes prowl about a kennel at night, probably attracted by the smell of horse-flesh, &c.; and the hounds frequently hit upon the drag of one immediately. It is told of this *radical* sportsman, (who often bivouacked the night before under the covert he was to meet at the next morning, if at any great distance from home,) that he was in the constant habit of disturbing the Duke's country, and drawing his best coverts, if he could not find elsewhere. On one occasion, the Duke sent a messenger, requesting him to forbear, and to keep within a certain line of country: the person was received with great hospitality, and after a long conference, in the course of which many bumpers were drank, and no arrangement made, old Land sent the messenger back to Goodwood, a little the worse for liquor, with the following laconic answer, (*not very respectful, you will say,*)—"That he had hunted the country before his Grace was born, and he hoped to do it after he was dead and d—d." Mr. L. was, however wrong in his calculation,—as the Duke outlived him many years.

In modern times, hunting early is *unnecessary*; the breed of hounds, the feeding, and the whole system is so much improved, that the majority of foxes are found and killed in the afternoon, (I mean after twelve o'clock). In former times, the only advantage of finding a fox *early* must have been that his belly was full; for perhaps he had scarcely finished *his repast* by that time in the morning. In the present day, we are anxious to find a *stout* fox; and, instead of his being full, we wish him to be as empty as possible, and to stand one hour and twenty minutes, the best pace, before the hounds.

A celebrated writer on fox-hunting, the late Mr. Beckford, (if I remember right, not having read his book for many years,) is of opinion that break of day is the most desirable time to hunt, and that you have a better chance of sport early in the morning. For the reason I before stated, there is certainly a greater probability of killing your fox; and in cub-hunting, in the end of August and beginning of September, the weather is often so warm, you cannot hunt after ten o'clock; but if it is not too hot, and the ground too dry, I never thought there was any great advantage gained by hunting so very early.— Sometimes the scent is better early in the morning, but very often it is worse; and, on

an average, it is better *after* nine o'clock than *before*.

In cub-hunting, the great object is to get blood for your young hounds. If you find a litter of cubs, the stouter they are and the longer they run the better, and the more good will be done to your hounds; you are sure of killing, if you will but have patience and perseverance,—two necessary virtues, with which a huntsman above all men should be endued.

I never found any benefit in getting up in the middle of the night, which you must do if you have any distance to go, and purpose *meeting at day-break* in the beginning of September. At the same time, I do not approve of *working hounds in very hot weather*: I know from experience, it is sometimes attended with fatal consequences,—I once suffered very severely from it. I had killed a cub early, and it being a good seenting morning, I allowed the hounds to try for another; we unfortunately found *an old fox*, and as he did not attempt “*to break*,” we fancied it was a cub. The hounds ran him well for two hours, and I expected every moment they would kill him; being over anxious, we were not aware the day was getting warm. The hounds at last killed their fox; but I lost three valuable dogs, which died in convulsions, in consequence of their great

exertions; they were three dog-hounds that I prized very highly, bred by Lord Althorp, and got by the Duke of Beaufort's "Justice," which made me regret their loss the more. I must own, this unfortunate circumstance caused me ever afterwards to pay double attention to that most material point, *condition*.

A pack of fox-hounds formerly was quite a different thing to what it is now-a-days; nor was one tenth part of the money expended on the establishment. The breeding of hounds, comparatively speaking, was very little attended to; and the servants were mounted on horses of inferior value. Few packs hunted oftener than three times a week; they certainly had long runs, and, (if you believe the stories of old sportsmen,) killed their foxes at great distances from the places where they found them,—but they all allowed it was often tedious; and about St. Thomas's day, Reynard commonly escaped in the dark.

In modern times, the system of hunting is so much improved, so much more attention is paid to the condition of hounds and their style of work, that, in this enlightened age, a master of hounds thinks it a reflection on his judgment if *one* hound in his pack is detected in a fault. The men, too, are well mounted; and none but

servants who conduct themselves in every respect properly are retained in a hunting establishment. The expense, however, is considerably augmented ; but *in what way can a man spend his money with more satisfaction to himself and friends ?*

If fox-hunting should be annihilated, our superior breed of horses would degenerate ; the farmers would give up breeding, if the chance of selling a horse for a hunter, at a profitable price, was hopeless : the consequence would be, the country in general would suffer ; it would be impossible to procure horses for His Majesty's cavalry, and the present very expeditious mode of travelling must naturally be retarded, for want of the superior animals we now have, (unless we go by steam). Can it be expected farmers will be at the expense, trouble, and risk of breeding, if they have not a chance of selling their horses occasionally for hunters ; the inferior price given by government for horses to mount the cavalry, and the low price coach-masters purchase their's at, would be very little encouragement to a breeder to select well-bred mares, and put them to strong thorough-bred bony horses, and pay that attention so necessary to put forward a clever four years old, if they have not the chance of being remunerated. The breed of men also would degenerate, and the characteristic of the

THE MEET. After D. WOLSTENHOLME.

Tent By Basil Dighton.

nation would be changed : instead of the hardy, open-hearted, liberal-minded Briton, you would see nothing but an effeminate race, that would only meet once a year at a *grand battue*, to shoot a tame pheasant, and that would be the only *chasse* in England. Amongst a thousand other advantages belonging to fox-hunting, the bringing together the different ranks of society is not the least : you can see a great deal of life,—and it is no bad school to study mankind in. The emigration to the continent is very great at the present day, but in general confined to people who have small incomes and large families,—education being much cheaper, and no taxes to pay, are the principal inducements ; but if the national amusements are done away with, more particularly fox-hunting, which affords enjoyment to all ranks, and the utility of which to every grade is so very conspicuous, not only the needy will emigrate, but the opulent and even the higher orders, for they will be deprived of their chief amusement in the winter.—But let us leave such sad forebodings and get on the line again.

There are those who think hounds go too fast, and fancy a fox has no chance with them. How is it, then, he so often beats the pack ? No doubt, if hounds, on a good scenting day, go away close at his brush, they have every prospect

of killing him, if they do not change, which will often happen where foxes are plentiful. In the long runs we read of, an end, when hounds are beat, unless they have gone a very slow pace, to a certainty the pack must have changed foxes; and nothing disheartens hounds so much as changing. Perhaps no fox can stand more than an hour the best pace before hounds of the present day, except in the Roothings of Essex, and in some parts of Suffolk, where I have seen them often run an hour and twenty minutes. Some sportsmen have an idea that particular breeds of foxes are better than others, and there is some reason in the observation; every one must allow they differ often in size, colour, and shape; you may probably smile, and call me too fanciful, yet I certainly have observed that the best runners and the stoutest, are the *long dark coloured foxes*; but I beg to be understood that this depends chiefly upon *their age*.

With regard to naming your hounds, it strikes me to be of little consequence what names you give them; some prefer words of *three* syllables, others *two*; the latter are thought to be the easiest to halloo to. The dog hounds are generally named from heroes, ancient and modern, and there is scarcely a pack in the kingdom that does not boast its Wellington. As to the colour of

hounds, I was always partial to the badger pied ones, or indeed any except *yellow*, till the descendants of the Beaufort "Justice" put me in conceit with even *that* colour. And you will allow when hounds are going well together over a country, no one pays any attention to their colour. The dress of yourself or servants is of little consequence, whether pink, yellow, or blue and buff: Charlemagne says "it is not the dress of a man I look to, but his actions."

Should you happen to keep hounds at no great distance from London, you will find many of the inhabitants of that capital (cockneys if you please), *good sportsmen*, well mounted, and riding well to hounds; they never interfere with the management of them when in the field, contribute liberally to the expense, and pay their subscriptions regularly. The sum of fifty or a hundred pounds is nothing out of an individual's pocket; but to a manager of a subscription pack, the fact of *twenty subscribers*, each paying his fifty to a day, is a thing of no small consequence, as he is required to pay for almost every article in advance, old oats, hay, meal, &c. and the *interest of the money* amounts to one subscription at least. Whenever I went to town I received the greatest kindness and hospitality from these Gentlemen; capital dinners, and the choicest

wines. We occasionally went "the best pace over the mahogany," and often ran the *Portuguese* a sharp burst, and whoo-whooped many a long corked *Frenchman*!

Blood is so necessary to a pack of fox-hounds, that if you are long without it, you cannot expect sport; many say the art of fox-hunting is keeping your pack in blood. *All hounds* are liable to get out of it; even in Leicestershire I *have* heard of such things. I remember being once with a pack, which had been out of blood for some time: it was a good scenting day, they found their fox well, and went away close at him; the owner observed to me, "*Now* look at them,—do they appear to be out of blood?" Very true, I answered, but it won't last long; they soon came to a check, which brought them to a hunting scent, then to difficulties, and at last they lost their fox. If they had been *in blood*, it is my firm opinion they would have killed him.

Hounds will not work through difficulties, nor will they exert themselves in that killing sort of manner when they are out of blood. If after all you should, owing to ill luck and bad weather, be in want of it, the best way is to leave an earth open in a country where you can spare a fox, and where you can, without much trouble

dig him, give him to the hounds on the earth, and go home. But whatever you do never turn out a *bag-man*; it is injurious to your hounds, makes them wild and unsteady; besides, nothing is more despicable, or held in greater contempt by real sportsmen than the practice of hunting bag-foxes. It encourages a set of rascals to steal from other hunts; therefore keep in mind, "if there were no receivers there would be no thieves." What chiefly contributes to make fox-hunting so very far superior to other sports, *is the wildness of the animal you hunt, and the difficulty in catching him.* It is rather extraordinary, but nevertheless a well known fact, that a pack of hounds, which are in sport and blood, will not cat a bag-man. I remember hearing an anecdote (when I was in Shropshire many years ago), of the late Lord Stamford's hounds, which I will relate to you as I heard it. The present Lord Forrester and his brother Mr. Frank Forrester, then boys, were at their uncle's for the holidays. A farmer came to inform them a fox had just been seen in a tree. All the nets about the premises were collected and the fox was caught; but the Squire of Willey, a sportsman himself, and a strict preserver of foxes, sent the fox immediately to Lord Stamford by one of his tenants, that he might be informed of the real circumstance. The next

day the hounds were out, and also the Squire's tenant; they had drawn some time without finding, when the farmer reminded his Lordship of the fox caught; "do you think, said he, I will allow my hounds to hunt a bag-fox? I should never be forgiven by my huntsman!" At last, after drawing several coverts without finding, his Lordship gave his consent (but it was to be kept a great secret), and the bag was to be touched upon the ground in a line for a covert they were going to draw, to have the appearance of a disturbed fox, and the fox to be turned down in it.

On going to covert, a favourite hound, called Partner, feathered on the scent. The huntsman exclaimed in extacy, "old Partner touches on him; a fox by G—d! we shall certainly find in the next covert;" they found the bag-man, and had a tolerable run; but when they killed him, not a hound would eat him! "Now, Sir," said his Lordship to the farmer, "*you have deceived the huntsman and the field, but you cannot deceive my hounds.*"

Next to turning out bag-men, lifting of hounds is the most prejudicial. They should seldom be taken "off their noses," nothing is gained by it in the end; hounds that are seldom lifted, will kill more foxes in the course of a season than

those that frequently are. Some years ago, when hunting with the Duke of Grafton's hounds in Suffolk, they came to a check all in a moment at a barn near some cross roads; they were left alone, and made a fling of themselves, in a perfect circle, without hitting the scent; many gentlemen exclaimed "It is all over now, Tom; the only chance you have is to make *a wide cast*." "No," answered the huntsman, "if the fox is not in that barn, my hounds ought to be hung."

Dick Foster, the whipper-in, now huntsman to Mr. Villebois (and a very good one he is), was ordered to dismount and see if he could discover the fox; he returned and said he was *not* there." Tom Rose still was positive; at last he was viewed on a beam in the barn, and they killed him, after a further run of about a mile. I mention this trivial circumstance to shew you clearly, that if the hounds had been hurried up either of the roads on a wild cast, made by an ignorant huntsman, the fox would inevitably have been lost. They say changing countries is much against hounds; from a good scenting country to a bad one certainly is against them, but from a bad one to a good one I should imagine to be quite the reverse. Sam Lawley, at the time he hunted the late Lord Vernon's hounds, when he went into the Bosworth country, had nothing to do

but ride as fast as he could; it was all racing, heads up and sterns down; but when they returned home to an inferior scenting country, it was some time before they settled to their usual way of hunting. I knew a pack that went from Hampshire to a good scenting part of Suffolk and Essex, where the cubs were all taken or destroyed, it not being known any one would hunt the country; notwithstanding these disadvantages, subsequent to the first of November, they killed 14 brace of foxes successively, and most of them with good runs. I attributed their great sport to a favourable change of country, but they were a gallant little pack, and three parts of them were of Lord Egremont's sort. Hunting too late is attended with great destruction of foxes, and in consequence you often pay dear, the next season, for your spring hunting. About the second week in March I was always in anxious doubt *on finding*, to know whether it was a vixen fox; on those occasions there is generally some quick-sighted fellow, who volunteers his opinion one way or the other (which alarms you the more); and I have seen hounds by mistake stopped from a dog fox, and halloo'd to the scent of a vixen. A friend of mine, who was a strict preserver, and took pleasure in seeing other people amused through his means, used to

exclaim, "if you hunt late, and kill my old bitch fox that has bred you so many litters, I never will forgive you."

I have no doubt you will think it a bold assertion on my part when I say, I have seen hounds *hunt too much*; what I mean to infer is, they never ought to hunt when they can run. I have known hounds from custom reduce the scent to a hunting one, after running a few fields the best pace. No man is fonder of seeing hounds hunt in a fox-hunting style than myself, but I cannot say I approve of *pottering*, "Bellman, well hit, he is come so far, old fellow;" then, "Thunder," makes another hit, a few yards further on; *that is not the way to kill your fox*. I like to see, the instant a hound makes a hit, the whole pack join him like lightning, and guide the scent with energy; *no flashers or dashers*. In some play Bannister acted the character of a servant to a sick gentleman, who was dangerously ill,—his nephew called to inquire after his uncle's health, when the servant informed him, he had no time to lose, as *Lawyer Dash* was up stairs making his will, "and he will dash you out or dash you in in the twinkling of an eye." Now, if you have any dashers or flashers in your pack, they will lose your fox for you "in the twinkling of an eye." For my own part, I am never pleased

with a run, unless the hounds do their work well.

Were I to have some sporting friends coming to see my hounds in the field, I should prefer going away *close at him* for twenty minutes, then a short check, to bring the hounds to a hunting scent, and a quick thing at last, and run into him, in order that my friends might be convinced the hounds could *hunt* as well as *run*; for of this I am certain, if they cannot do *both*, they merit not the name of fox-hounds. It is a mistaken idea to suppose that a southern hound, or any other species, has a better nose than a fox-hound. I once had some dogs to hunt *hare*, they consisted of every description,—the rough tanned and blue mottled harriers, and among them a few fox-hounds from George Sharpe, his present Majesty's huntsman at that time; the fox-hounds always showed a *superiority of noses*, and it is my opinion no animal of the canine race has so fine a nose as they have. A pointer, with a cross of a fox-hound, (in short, he was got by one,) was the best I ever had. Often in bad scenting days I have known him find game, which other pointers had passed by without winding.

Now that we are upon the subject of what is called winding game, let me observe, that it is a great advantage to hounds to *draw up wind*;

but if you meet at the furthest end of your hunt up wind, you may lose half the morning in trotting down wind to begin drawing; therefore, when I have been *obliged* to draw down wind, it was not from choice, but from necessity.

The number of days you intend to hunt must be regulated according to your establishment, the extent of your country, and the stock of foxes you have in it. I should say four days a week, *for a pack of fifty couples*, will keep your hounds and horses in regular work. You had better divide them into two separate packs; for hounds that are hunted together will give less trouble, be more handy, and not so jealous of each other. It is decidedly a bad plan to take out too many hounds, and never by any means take out one that is not quite fit and in condition. If you can muster twenty or one-and-twenty couples in each pack, all effective, it is as many as you ever ought to take into the field. On no occasion rob either pack to make up the number of the other; even sixteen couples, that know each other, will do the thing better by themselves, and, if well matched, will carry a good head across a country, and not appear contemptible either. How disgusting it is to see a large pack out, and only a few couples at head! In a run across *the open* nothing has a more unsightly appear-

ance than detached bodies of hounds scattered all over the country, some here and some there; and in woodlands, with several foxes on foot, there is a still worse prospect, and less chance of their again uniting: the division of hounds on your hunted fox becomes weaker every minute, your cars are annoyed by tongues on a variety of scents in every direction, whilst your head of hounds dwindles away to nothing, and you are left at last “tooting” your horn without three hounds upon the line. I have known a few hounds, kept by some farmers, (not exceeding sixteen couples,) that *seldom missed a fox*,—they were named “the Invincibles;”

“There was
Invincible Tom and invincible Towler,
Invincible Jack and invincible Jowler.”

Although they were occasionally a great annoyance to me, and disturbed the cream of the country formerly hunted by the late Mr. Panton, I could not be displeased with them; the farmers who managed them were respectable people, fond of the sport, and had as much right to hunt as I had. I *could* set the conduct of an individual on that occasion in no very favourable light; but, as we are taught by the moralist to “forget

and forgive" I shall bury the circumstance in oblivion.

An Irish gentleman, a friend of mine, sent me a Limerick Paper containing the following description of a late "fox chase" which, being in a different style to what we are accustomed to in England, may probably be amusing to you; I have therefore copied it for your perusal.

"On Wednesday last, the Ormond hounds had another brilliant heading run of thirteen miles from point to point, in an inconceivably short time, over a most sporting country. Having drawn Milltown and Glasshouse without finding, intelligence was brought that a fox had been seen near Skinsmore.

"Men, boys, and girls!
Desert the unpeopled village, and wild crowds
Spread o'er the plain, by the sweet frenzy seized.

The intelligence wanted but confirmation. *Harmony* and *Merlin*, the heralds of the pack, soon proclaimed the joyful ridings—

"They cheer the pack,
Opening in concerts of harmonious joy,
But breathing death.

The fox had gone a considerable time before to Cangort Wood; but it is not for time or distance

to silence these sons of *Harmony*, *Handel*, *Highlander*, and *Harper*; in a dreadful crash,

“The pack wide opening, load the trembling air
 With various melody;
 The forest thunders, and the mountains’ shake,
 The chorus swells:
 and now
 In vain each earth he tries,—the doors are barr’d
 Impregnable; nor is the covert safe,—
 He pants for purer air.

This pack and game cannot be partners of the same wood, though boundless the extent. The horn calls, the *Captain* harks, *Tony halloo’s*; he breaks!—and at his brush fly eighteen couples of this unerring pack, of *Tony’s* own, for twenty generations. In *Cangort Park* he seeks for safety from his fleet pursuers; to them the walls, though ten feet high, no barrier prove,—they take them in their flight, *Tamerlane* and *Telegraph* at the head, and all the kindred blood; then across to *Quakerstown*, through the demesne of *Coralauty*, along the banks of the Brusna the scent lay burning.

“Tumultuous soon they plunge into the stream,
 and, in greedy joy,
 From shore to shore they swim; while clamour loud
 And wild uproar torment the troubled flood.

Here he showed himself most sporting fox :
 passing the earth of *Sharavogue* untried, he crossed
 the race-course ;

“ Now far behind
 The hunter crew, wide straggling o’er the plain ;
 The panting courser now with trembling nerves
 Begins to reel.

Now to *Rathmore-hill*, by the *Castle* ; here there
 was a disposition to stop the hounds, when *Tony*
 swore ‘ His Majesty’s guards could not stop them ! ’

“ And leaves the lagging multitude behind.

From *Rathmore* he inclined towards *Golden Grove* ;
 then changing his route, he made for *Knock*, over
 a continuation of the most beautiful country,
 by the *Leap Castle*, through *Ballybut*, when, the
 hounds being very near him, he crossed the
Roscrea road, and made directly for the moun-
 tains, leaving *Summer Hill* to the right,—

“ And o’er the plain, and o’er the mountain’s edge,
 Away he flies ; nor ships with wind and tide,
 And all their canvas wings, went half so fast.

Now to *Cashrow Glen*, where taking leave of the
 lowland country, he made for the *Gap of Glandine*,
 where the hounds were with difficulty stopped,
 and life given to one of the most sporting foxes
 this country or perhaps any other ever produced.

—Considering the great number of sportsmen in the field that day, it may be remarked as extraordinary, that only the four following rode through, and were at the end of the hunt: Mr. *M. H. Draught*; Mr. *Richard Hammersley*, riding *Coriolanus*; Mr. *J. Doolan*, on *Paddy from Cork*; Mr. *P. Chadwick*, on his famous chestnut mare; and *Tony*, though last, not least, riding *Kate*, the best mare in Ireland.”

It gave me great pleasure to find from this animated description, that they keep up the spirit of the chase with unabated ardour, and fox-hunting still continues the most fashionable amusement in the sister country. In Scotland several new packs have been recently established. Wales, too, can boast many very keen lovers of the sport; though *there*, I am told, the management of a pack of fox-hounds is conducted in rather a different manner to what it is with us. The neighbourhood of Usk, in Monmouthshire, I believe, has claimed, almost from time immemorial, a very excellent pack; and the attention paid to the breeding, and the judgment shown in the field, have reflected equal honour on the possessors. The persevering style in which this indefatigable pack stick to their fox, through those truly “*areful woods*,” denominated “*Wert-Wood*,” (in comparison of which, a friend of mine fancied

even the "*Forêt d'Orleans*" would appear small,) is actually beyond all praise. When such strict attention is invariably paid to the main and essential points in an establishment, we willingly pass over the more trifling peculiarities or omissions, which prejudice or chance so long may have encouraged; and he indeed must be extremely prone to cavil, who seriously objected to these hounds, merely because their master tenaciously adhered to the antediluvian long-eared custom of not having them "*rounded*."

The French emigrants who were in England have endeavoured in many places through France to introduce the English mode of hunting, but in general without success; although their king, Charles the Tenth, and most of the royal family, are particularly fond of it. The farmers have no idea of people riding over their land, or what they call "*chasse à cheval*." In some places, even if you attempted riding partridge shooting, the whole country would be up in arms. Several English and French families were anxious for me to establish a subscription pack on the Continent; but, after the experience I had had in shooting, I knew it was impossible to have procured leave, either from the owners of coverts or the farmers. I never could convince a Frenchman, who had not been in England, that it was practicable to

make hounds sufficiently steady to hunt nothing but a fox-scent; they fancy if a pack were to enter a covert, they would destroy every living animal in it.

As a proof of what I have stated, I had about ten couples of old fox-hounds sent to me from a friend in England, to forward to a gentleman who was in Paris. As they were not sent for immediately after their arrival, I thought I would endeavour to kill a French fox with them. I requested permission of several owners of coverts to hunt but was refused, on account of the hares and rabbits, which they said the hounds would kill; I however got permission of the Duke de Albufera, (Suchet), at Tankerville; our turn out was not very splendid, I was mounted on a Norman mare, and borrowed a cow's horn from a farmer; Mr. A—— and Mr. C—— were my whipper's-in. At the covert we were met by the Duke's keepers in their state liveries, and we began immediately "yoiks, wind him, my boys." It being a cold dry March day, and the earths imperfectly stopped, we did not find, although I knew there were plenty of foxes. Every time a hare or rabbit got up before the hounds, the keepers exclaimed "*Sacre bleu, les chiens Anglois* are good for nothing, they will not hunt either hares or rabbits!" To give you a further idea

of the notions of a Frenchman with regard to fox-hunting, I will relate to you another circumstance which I know to have occurred, but it was in England. A French gentleman being out one day, when several coverts having been drawn without success, the master of the hounds, to the great joy of the field, trotted off to a piece of gorse in an open country, at a great distance from any other coverts. They found, but unfortunately Reynard was immediately headed into the mouth of the hounds;—when the Monsieur riding up to the gentleman, and taking off his hat, exclaims, “Sir! I congratulate you on catching him so soon, and with so little trouble.” I have been informed an English gentleman has established a pack of fox-hounds near Tours, to hunt wild boar; and for that description of hunting has excellent sport, and kills every season a great number of these animals. He being well known in England as a good sportsman, I have no doubt the thing is done as well as it can be.

Now for the *Chapter of Accidents*, so often quoted in the drawing-room and boudoir, against our noble sport. Doubtless casualties will happen in hunting, but not more frequently in the pursuit of that than of other sports; and they most commonly occur to men attempting to leap large fences *when their horses are blown*. How much

oftener do we hear of *accidents* happening on *the road*, and what numbers also to *persons* shooting! When you take into consideration, that on a moderate calculation, at least ten thousand people hunt constantly throughout the season, with fox-hounds only, and many of them young men full of emulation, no judges of what sort of cattle are proper for their weight, and all anxious to be first, riding at every thing that comes in their way; you cannot but be surprised that so few accidents happen. During my sojourn in France (now a number of years), I of course have had to lament the loss of many of my friends and acquaintances; I scarcely ever take up a newspaper but it contains the death of some one I have known, yet although the majority of my friends are fox-hunters, it is not a little singular, that I have only lost *one* of that description, during the whole period of my absence. This fact speaks forcibly for the healthiness of our amusement, so stick to it, if you wish for longevity.

We read in history, that young ladies of the highest quality and greatest beauty spent much of their time in the chase; so strong and universal was the passion for hunting among our ancestors; and I was gratified when you told me that in your part of England the fair sex

still sanction hunting, and occasionally grace the field with their presence. Although I confess they appear more in their element in the drawing-room or in Kensington Gardens, than in the kennel or the field. Still I must say it looks well, and shews a disposition to promote their brother's or their husband's amusement, and in consequence contributes much to domestic happiness. This the wife will find is the surest "way to keep him," and prevent the husband running riot. A man naturally expects his wife to humour him a little, and allow him occasionally to ride his *hobby*, provided it be a rational one.

A certain late great potentate, who was very inimical to the chase, wished also to make it appear "cruel, and no occupation for the mind." The *first* of these ideas came with a bad grace from this great man (but hunting was not his taste); and as to the "occupation," I think I may venture to affirm, if there be one out-of-door amusement which employs the mind more than another, it is fox-hunting; and men of the first rate abilities keep their hunters, and indulge in this noble diversion. I have occasionally read in the newspapers insinuations against fox-hunters; for what reason I am at a loss to know; I see no just cause why a fox-hunter, if he conducts himself as a gentleman, is not as respectable a

character as one who follows *other* pursuits less manly and more enervating. Whenever I hear persons of either sex repeating *stories* unfavourable to the lovers of the chace, the following lines always occur to me,—

“ Believe not each aspersing tale,
As most weak people do ;
But always think that story *false*
Which *ought not* to be true.”

But I am “ *skirting* ” a little, you will no doubt say ; I told you before that my observations would be desultory, and you to your cost find them so ; however, you asked for them, and must pay the penalty of patience for putting a pen in my hand.

To return, therefore, to the subject of accidents ; those to our horses frequently arise from their being out of condition, and too fat. We all know it is not an uncommon thing for a horse to get too full of flesh, and out of wind after long rest, during frost, or from any other cause ; and grooms will give their horse the usual allowance of corn, hay, and water, without due attention to their necessary exercise ; although in frost you cannot gallop them, you may lengthen their walks as much as you please, and at the same time do not omit a dose of physic, or the conse-

CONSEQUENCES. Engraved by H. ALKEN. After W. P. HODGES.

Lent by Basil Dighton.

quence will be they will get fat in their insides, and the first hunting day, if the hounds go the pace, and your horse is not rode with great judgment, he will soon have the "puff" out of him; and if forced on, and put to a fence in this state of exhaustion, he is almost sure to fall, and will probably break a blood-vessel, or injure himself so seriously, as not to be worth five pounds afterwards.

I am convinced that most accidents happen to both man and horse from the unfortunate animal being thus urged on (after he is blown), by an injudicious rider, one who will not condescend to "drop a stern" for a few seconds to give his horse wind, even to save the life of a valuable hunter. To prevent the possibility of so much cruelty on the part of my boys, if I thought they had ever any chance of fox-hunting, I would send them out on foot with the harriers; that when they got blown in running, they might at a future period have compassion for their horses in a similar situation.

Horses, according to the present system of riding, unless it should be a very long day, have little to do, not sufficient to keep them in wind; *la mode* is, to have two or three out each day. Light weights can have no excuse for this practice, unless they have some bad ones which

they wish to sell. A horse that is in good condition, and cannot go for an hour the best pace with twelve stone upon his back, is not worth the corn he eats,—and in a long *hunting* chase he likewise ought not to tire. What merit is there in being with the hounds, if you have a fresh one to mount every fifteen minutes? In my opinion, a man who sees the most of a run of an hour on one horse, and is in when the hounds kill their fox, deserves the most credit as a rider to hounds. If my memory do not fail me, I believe Lord Sefton was the first person who introduced a “second horse”; and very properly so, his lordship riding a great weight.

One of the most material things in a hunting establishment is, to have hounds perfect at their work, with no vice; and the being as near each other as possible during the chase is indispensable. It is certainly very pleasing to the eye to see a pack equal in *size*, but it is of more consequence to attend to their *shape*. How often do we see at Newmarket a large horse and a small one run a dead heat? I have seen “Violante” and “Metœora” run with large horses, and beat them: the former was beat by “Currycomb,” but she made a proper example of Mr. Shakespear’s “Brainworn,” not only at short distances, but over the “Beacon Course.” Shape

and blood are what should chiefly be attended to. The late Mr. Meynell, (the so long celebrated master of the Quorndon hounds,) never cared about the size of a hound; the last time I was at his kennel in Derbyshire, the dog hounds were powerful, the bitches small, but very clever and possessing plenty of bone. When I here say *small*, I would have it understood that small *in height* is meant; for, as a very excellent sportsman observes, when speaking of a hunter, “the *height* of a horse, Sir, has nothing to do with the *size* of him.”

A veteran sportsman, a friend of mine, well known in the sporting world, who for many years was intimate with the late Mr. Meynell, and who hunted in Leicestershire nearly the whole of the time that great fox-hunter kept his hounds there; and as no man now living, with the exception of Mr. Lorrain Smith, can be better informed, or give so correct an account of every thing that relates to this inimitable sportsman, I have inserted, verbatim, a few anecdotes which my friend has been so kind as to send me, thinking they may be interesting to a young beginner.—He commences his letter by informing me, that he spent twenty years of the most pleasing apprenticeship to the late Mr. M.; whom he speaks of as the “Primate of Science,” and declares his

equal never was, and he is inclined to think never will be.

“The life of Mr. Meynell was spent in contemplating the characters of all and every animal and thing that came under his observation: his first object was to ascertain the probable cause that produced the various effects in man, animals, &c. such as perfection, defects, and propensities; hence he had an analysis of most things which he had to encounter. His perception was so quick, and his judgment so strong, that he seldom erred in his decisions; and thus, through the whole of his kennel, he could discover and fully explain the distinct character of every hound. To their health, condition, legs, and feet, he was particularly attentive, and watched them with strict attention; as he found by experience, that a defect in any one of them made a material alteration in their performances in the field,—observing, drily, that you could not play upon an instrument out of tune. Perfect legs and feet, with tolerable symmetry, were his great objects to begin with; he was rather partial to large hounds, but he never drafted a small one that he liked, which made his pack less sightly than was generally admired; but as he built all his foundation of merit upon power, he was less anxious as to appearances. In the latter years

PORTRAIT OF THE LATE MR. MEYNELL WHEN YOUNG

From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

of his life he always saw the pack drawn out for hunting; and on his return in the evening, he generally (even if he had company) went to see them fed before his dinner. He observed, how necessary it was in man to guard against propensities; and although *too much refinement* was dangerous, he was often obliged to make sacrifices to it. Yet to him there was no real pleasure without it: such sentiments could only emanate from a superior and refined understanding.—Mr. Meynell was a second son. His father having disinherited his elder brother, he came into a fine estate at an early age, and soon had the good sense to discover that he had not made the best use of his education to qualify him for the proper enjoyment of fortune; and he immediately engaged a clergyman, a Mr. C——, as his tutor and companion, and studied diligently under him two or three years. This speaks volumes!—I remember Mr. Meynell first setting out with a pack of *hounds to hunt fox*, and often met him in Staffordshire hunting them himself; he was then, according to my recollection, the worst sportsman and wildest huntsman that I ever saw out with hounds. That wildness he soon restrained to proper eagerness, keeping in bounds the finest spirits and energy that perhaps man ever possessed. His voice and articulation

were delightfully harmonious and energetic,—his view-halloo thrilled every one near him,—and his language was too pertinent to be misunderstood. His indignation in the field was sometimes excessive; frequently expressed by looks, sometimes by deputies,—but when by words, he seldom or ever degenerated to rudeness. After rebuking a man once or twice, he would tell him he was incorrigible, and it was of no use to admonish him. He complained of having to find fault with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, for disgorging annually such a parcel of fools to torment him; to whom, if they attempted a vindication of their riding, or being troublesome, he would courteously reply, ‘You may be perfectly right, gentlemen, and I may be wrong; but there is gross ignorance on *one* side or the other.’ As a zealous and steady friend and a sportsman, Mr. Meynell’s memory will ever rank with the highest *characters on record*; he was a man to whom I feel much indebted for his friendship and the benefits I derived from his experience. His life was replete with anecdote in the field and in society, some of which do not exactly appertain to fox-hunting.”

It occurs to me, that you may expect that I should give you my idea of *perfection in a run*, and my memory furnishes me with the following.

Imagine all at once in the middle of a thick brake that you hear Wellington challenge,—“Wellington has found him!”—and before the huntsman has time to say, “Hark to Wellington, my brave fellows!” the whole pack joins him in an instant, the fox is halloo’d, and they go away close at his brush. It is indeed a glorious sight to see one-and-twenty couples of powerful animals going with velocity, “best pace,” over a country, all crowding a-head and exerting their energetic powers to the utmost, not a hound out of his place, like a Lacedemonian phalanx, all intent on victory, and so steady that nothing can take off their attention,—five-and-fifty minutes, without a check,—and then, whoo-whoop, they “kill him.”

The annual meeting of the masters of fox-hounds, I always considered, if followed up with spirit, as likely to be of great advantage to the sport, from the rank, fortune, and respectability of those gentlemen. I was indeed in hopes, at some of those meetings, a plan to prevent the great destruction of foxes might not only have been proposed, but carried into execution. At the agricultural meetings “breeding” is encouraged “in all its branches,” and prizes given to the breeders of the best animals. Why not encourage the breed of hounds? At the annual meeting,

if a prize were given to him who bred two couples of the cleverest young hounds, a couple of dogs and a couple of bitches, it would create emulation; and after the decision, the hounds should be allowed to be *shown* at Tattersalls for three or four days, for the benefit of *the feeders*; I write in *their* behalf, because they have no chance of presents from the field, “cap money,” or draught hounds; and a great deal depends upon their attention to the bitches and their whelps before they are put out to walks. If such a thing were accomplished, what a treat it would be to a sportsman to see thirty or forty couples of the most perfect young hounds, selected from the best packs in the kingdom! Such a sight would afford me more gratification than to have witnessed the coronation of Charles the Tenth of France,—“*Chacun a son gout.*”

Unless I have been misinformed, the B. D. C. have a fund to relieve superannuated coachmen, and those with families, who from accidents or sickness are obliged to “lie still,” (that, I believe, is the dragsman’s term.) A similar one for huntsmen and whippers-in, of good character, you would, I am sure, be friendly to, knowing your charitable disposition.

A friend of mine, the other day, who had some thoughts of taking rather a confined country,

which would only allow of being hunted twice a week, requested me to give him my opinion what number of hounds, horses, &c. he should require. At the present rate of taxes, supposing the price of corn, meal, hay, &c. to be what it is now, I should say, for twice a week only, twenty-five couples of *effective* hounds would be sufficient; and, supposing you hunted your own hounds, and had only one whipper-in, five horses, and a hack for yourself and servant, would be quite enough. You must also have a groom, helper, and a feeder: making in the whole, four men, five-and-twenty couples of hounds, five hunters, and a hack. The earth-stopping expenses will depend upon the country. The calculation I have made is as follows:

The expenses for twice a week.

	£.
Six horses, including groom and helpers,	300
Hounds' food, for 25 couples,	150
Firing,	30
Taxes,	80
Whipper-in and feeder,	140
Earth-stopping,	50
Sadlery,	40
Farriery, shoeing, medicine, &c.	50

	£.
<i>Brought over</i> . . .	840
Young hounds purchased, and expenses at walks,	60
Casualties,	100
	<hr/>
	1000
A second whipper-in, and two horses in ad- dition,	170
	<hr/>
	£1170

Expenses for three times a week.

	£.
Twelve horses, groom, helpers, &c.	600
Hounds' food, for forty couples,	220
Firing,	40
Taxes,	100
Two whippers-in and feeder,	210
Earth-stopping,	65
Sadlery,	80
Farriery, shocing, medicine, &c.	80
Young hounds purchased, and expenses at walks,	80
Casualties,	150
	<hr/>
	£1625

Expenses for four times a week.

	£.
Fourteen horses, &c.	700
Hounds' food, for fifty couples,	275
Firing,	50
Taxes,	120
Two whippers-in and feeder,	210
Earth-stopping,	80
Sadlery,	100
Farriery, shoeing, medicine, &c.	100
Young hounds purchased, and expenses at walks,	100
Casualties,	200
	<hr/>
	£1935

If you do not attend to the kennel department yourself, but keep a huntsman, the expense will be at least £300 more. I have no hesitation in saying either four times or twice a week are preferable to three times; either of the two former will keep your horses and hounds in regular work. I have only made my calculation on the number I think necessary; too many horses would be an useless expense, and they would be continually laming themselves, from their being too fresh and above their work. Too many hounds, also,

are an useless incumbrance ; for they never can be worked often enough to keep them steady and in wind. And if you have too many servants, they will be continually quarrelling, for want of something better to do.

Earth-stopping is very expensive in some countries, and it may amount to more than I have calculated. There is also another expense, which I cannot estimate ; that is, money paid to keepers and others for the preservation of foxes : a few pounds occasionally given with judgment, will often be of great service ; but a large sum, given indiscreetly, will do more harm than good.

I subjoin a list (with the local names or those of the masters) of the numerous hunts in the kingdom, to which you may sometimes find it useful to refer, and which proves the high respect in which this grand national amusement is held throughout the kingdom, and how popular among the different ranks of society it *has* been, *is*, and (I trust, for the honour of our country,) *ever will be*.

Bedfordshire.

The Oakley, Marquis of Tavistock.

The Marquis of Salisbury.

Berkshire.

Mr. Harvey Combe.
 Mr. Horlock, late Mr. Warde.
 Sir John Cope.

Buckinghamshire.

Duke of Grafton.
 The Old Berkeley, Mr. H. Combe.
 The Oakley.
 Sir Thomas Mostyn.

Cambridgeshire.

Mr. Hurrell.

Cheshire.

The Delamere Forest Hounds, Sir Harry Mainwaring, Bart.

Cornwall.

Sir Rose Price, Bart.

Derbyshire.

Mr. Meynell.
 Sir George Sitwell, Bart.

Dorsetshire.

Mr. Farquharson.
 Mr. Yeatman.

Durham.

Mr. R. Lambton.

Lord Darlington.

Essex.

Lord Petre.

Mr. Conyers.

Mr. Charles Newman.

Mr. Hanbury.

Gloucestershire.

Duke of Beaufort.

Colonel Berkeley.

Hampshire.

Mr. Villebois.

Mr. Nicoll.

Sir John Cope, Bart.

Mr. Beevor, late Mr. Chute.

The Hambledon Hounds, Mr. Smith.

Mr. Thomas Asheton Smith.

Hertfordshire.

Marquis of Salisbury.

Mr. Hanbury.

The Old Berkeley, Mr. Harvey Combe.

Huntingdonshire.

Lord Fitzwilliam.

Kent.

Mr. Oxenden.

The Old Surry, Mr. Haigh.

Leicestershire.

The Quorn, Mr. Osbaldeston.

Duke of Rutland.

Lord Lonsdale.

Lord Anson.

Lincolnshire.

Lord Yarborough.

Sir Richard Sutton, Bart.

The South Wold, or Gillingham.

Duke of Rutland.

Middlesex.

The Old Berkeley, Mr. H. Combe.

Monmouthshire.

The Llangibby Hounds, Mr. Williams.

Mr. Morgan.

Northamptonshire.

The Pytcheley, Mr. Musters.

Duke of Grafton.

Lord Fitzwilliam.

Sir Thomas Mostyn, Bart.

Northumberland.

The Northumberland Hounds, Sir M. W. Ridley,
Bart.

Nottinghamshire.

Mr. Foljambe.

The Hon. and Rev. R. Lumley Saville.

The Quorn, Mr. Osbaldeston.

The Duke of Rutland.

Oxfordshire.

Sir Thomas Mostyn, Bart.

Duke of Beaufort.

Mr. Harvey Combe.

Rutlandshire.

Lord Lonsdale.

Shropshire.

Sir B. Graham, Bart.

Mr. Boycott.

Sir Richard Puleston, Bart.

Somersetshire.

The Somersetshire Hounds.

Mr. Farquharson.

Staffordshire.

The North Staffordshire, Mr. Wicksted.

Mr. Meynell.

The South Staffordshire, Mr. Chadwick.

Lord Anson.

Mr. Boycott.

Suffolk.

Mr. Charles Newman.

Surry.

The Old Surry, Mr. Maigh.

Colonel Jolliffe.

The Union, Mr. Boulton.

Colonel Henry Wyndham.

Sussex.

Lt. Col. G. Wyndham.

Colonel H. Wyndham.

Major Carter.

Warwickshire.

Mr. Hay.
Mr. Chadwick.
Lord Anson.

Wiltshire.

Mr. Codrington.
Mr. Horlock, late Mr. Warde.
Mr. T. A. Smith.

Worcestershire.

The Worcestershire.
Mr. Chadwick.

Yorkshire.

Lord Harewood.
Sir Tatton Sykes, Bart.
The York and Ainsty.
The Badsworth, The Hon. E. Petre.
The Holderness, Mr. Hodgson.
Lord Darlington.
The Sinnington.
Mr. Foljambe.
Richard Hill, Esq.

I cannot pretend to settle the nice point of which is the oldest or the father pack ; but from

what I have heard, I should think either Lord Fitzwilliam's or Lord Yarborough's was; the former has been in possession of the noble owner fifty-three years, and were purchased of Messrs. Crew and Foley, who hunted Warwickshire or Oxfordshire. I remember having heard, when I inspected the yeomanry of the North Inland District, at one of the hospitable chateaus of a Mr. Noel, who monopolized, if I may be allowed to make use of the expression, as it was not possible for one person to hunt the whole,—Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Rutlandshire, and Nottinghamshire,—it was called old Noel's hunt; I therefore conclude, whosoever had his hounds must have had the oldest in the kingdom.

Since writing the above, I have received the following information. Lord Yarborough's hounds have been kept in a straight line since the year 1700 *certain*; but they *think considerably longer*, (more than 120 years.) The present Smith, Lord Y.'s huntsman, his father, and his grandfather, have hunted the hounds in succession "*from generation to generation.*" The father of the present Smith hunted them fifty-five years without interruption.

The Hertfordshire (Mr. Hanbury's) lay claim to considerable antiquity, with justice,—as an earth-stopper has lately proved his grandfather's

employment with the pack, then Mr. Calvert's, so far back as 1727.

In answer to your observation, that the pack of hounds that kill the greatest number of foxes are considered the best, I acknowledge they are, if you make a fair calculation of the number of days they hunt, and the stock of foxes they have,—but no fox should be counted before the 1st of *November*, or after the 10th of *March*. I remember one season being very successful in cub-hunting; this was reported to the invincible huntsman, (Mr. J. A.) who was a little *jaloux*,—his answer was, “I never kill them while they suck.” There is certainly no merit in killing CUBS; a pack of beagles, if there were no hares, would seldom miss one.

A most extraordinary instance of discipline in hounds occurs to me, which I ought to have mentioned when speaking of that unrivalled sportsman, the late Mr. Meynell. He met in the *Harborough* country, at a small patch of gorse on the side of a hill, in a very large pasture field: the hounds feathered as they went in, and found instantly. The covert being only about two acres, and open, Mr. Meynell immediately saw that the fox was in danger of being chopped; he therefore called out to Jack Raven, the huntsman, “Jack, take the hounds away;” and at

one of his usual *rates* every hound stopped, and the pack were taken to the hedge side, when Mr. Meynell called out three steady hounds and threw them into the cover. The fox was so loath to break, that the three hounds kept hunting him for ten minutes, in the hearing of all the pack, who lay perfectly quiet at Raven's horse's feet till the fox went away over the finest part of the country; and the moment Mr. Meynell gave his most energetic thrilling halloo, (which has been noticed before,) every hound flew to him,—the burst was the finest that any sportsman ever beheld, and after an hour and ten minutes they killed their fox.

I think you will already say that my observations are sufficiently protracted; yet the hunting recollections, that your questions have given rise to, crowd upon my memory, and I could certainly give you several anecdotes of the principal huntsmen in the kingdom, as you require; but, they must be reserved for a future time, when, after a day of sport, you give me a corner by your fireside,—both of which I think I deserve from you as a grateful pupil, after so long a lecture; in which I doubt not, long before this, you must have thought me, like “Old Thunder” and “Bellman,” *pottering on the scent*; I therefore candidly tell you I am “*beat*”; and as the time is almost

at hand when you will meet your brother sportsmen in the field, where you will be much better amused than by reading my dull observations, I shall bid you farewell,—wishing health, happiness, good sport, “and long life,” and

remaining, my dear friend,

Ever yours very sincerely.

Uniform with
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