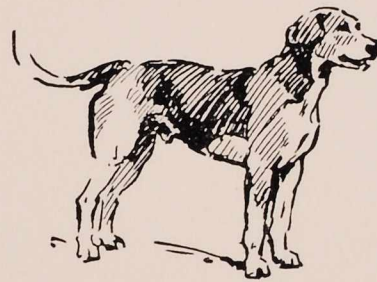


HUNTING COUNTRIES

by

F. A. STEWART



COLLINS FORTY-EIGHT PALL MALL
LONDON

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
COLLINS CLEAR-TYPE PRESS : LONDON AND GLASGOW
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The late Arthur Thatcher

THE ATHERSTONE (SOUTH)

kennels had contributed 20 couple of hounds and with these as a nucleus a pack was speedily got together.

The next item on the programme was to start on the problem of the wire; but even in the first season the country became rideable, which says a great deal for the South Atherstone farmers as well as for the people whose business it became to get the country clear. In the second season the wire became so good that unless there was a red board to indicate wire the fence was safe to jump. In the third season the number of red boards had decreased by nearly half, and this improvement has been steadily maintained.

Naturally the co-operation of the farmers was the most important item, and it was at the beginning of the first season that the Master decided to inaugurate a system for getting into closer touch with them which included the sending of a Christmas calendar to every farmer in the country, together with an invitation to a Prize Draw to take place at his house on Christmas Eve. The calendars depicted a hunting scene in the South Atherstone country (one of them was specially designed and executed by the illustrator of this volume, Mr. F. A. Stewart), and in later years have been specially painted by Mr. Lionel Edwards. At the first of these functions about twenty people arrived. On the last occasion 250 were accommodated in the house and the latecomers had to stay out in the drive. The opportunity which a gathering of this sort, at a festive time of the year, gives a Master for saying a few words on the subject of agriculture and hunting in general, and wire in particular, is obvious. In addition to these festivities and the usual Point-to-Point lunch there have been Whist Drives and other entertainments which have tended to create an interest in hunting and a very friendly feeling between the farmers and members of the hunt. In this way the difficulty

which a virtually new country had to face in having few old associations and very little goodwill was got over, and the fact that nearly all the big estates in the country had been sold or broken up did not constitute the menace that it so frequently does.

At the end of the first season Arthur Thatcher had a bad fall while hunting hounds from which, however, he recovered, and he began the second season in his old inimitable style. About the beginning of November he became ill and shortly afterwards had to give up hunting hounds. He died on the 26th November, 1931. In the meantime the Master had seen Nimrod Capell hunting with the Quorn, being out of a job for that season owing to a change of Mastership and the dividing of the Holderness country. He offered to hunt the South Atherstone hounds during Thatcher's illness and on his death became huntsman. His father, Ben Capell, had been huntsman of the Belvoir for many years, and Nimrod, following in his father's footsteps, had been kennel huntsman of the Quorn for several years, afterwards being kennel huntsman of the Belvoir and later hunting the hounds himself. From there he had gone to the Holderness until that season.

The progress of the Hunt from that time onwards has been rapid. Sport has increased owing to the coverts being put into first-class order, thereby ensuring plenty of foxes, the wire has ceased to be a menace and the fields have increased until the numbers at the Saturday Meets have become almost embarrassingly large for a country with very small enclosures. However, as the pastures are enclosed by some of the biggest and stiffest fences to be found in the shires, the numbers are rapidly decreased once hounds start to run. It is interesting to note that an old customer who, until his untimely death, used to lead the way from Bitteswell, always in the same direction and



"Hounds drew up to within 30 yards of him before he went away"

THE ATHERSTONE (SOUTH)

with unfailing regularity, chose a line of country which is mentioned in Nimrod's Hunting Reminiscences as one of the biggest in England.

During the 1933-1934 season the confines of their own country were found, at any rate on one famous occasion, to be very much too narrow for the South Atherstone bitches, and in this epic hunt they made use of the Pytchley and Fernie countries as well. On Tuesday, March 6th, 1934, a small and select field met at Brinklow and after a quiet morning went to draw the coverts at Newbold Revel. Before hounds had a chance to draw, however, Bert Langdon, ever a good and faithful friend to fox-hunting, came running up to say that he had seen a fox lying in the plough-field behind the Grove. Hounds drew up to within thirty yards of him before he went away. He then ran up over the Harborough Magna-Pailton road over Pailton Pastures and the big 100-acre field by Cestersover, crossed the River Swift by Churchover, and on to Coton, where the first check occurred. After a very welcome rest, which seemed far too short for some people, hounds hit off the line again and ran on into the Pytchley country behind Shawell. Running on through Shawell Wood, they made a great pace to Misterton, where the Whip viewed a fox away but was not near enough to say whether it was the hunted fox or not. The chances were against a change, however, because hounds raced straight through the covert and on by way of Walcote into the Fernie country towards Walton village. At about this

point a most formidable flight of iron railings straight ahead deterred the few remaining members of the field with the exception of the Master, Miss Kidston and Lady Wright. The fox was headed by the village and doubled back and round towards Walton Grange, but turning slightly left-handed again ran his original line towards Bruntingthorpe Holt. He then circled round by Knaptoft Grange, running past the Hall, and into Jane Ball, where he got to ground in an open earth, and had to be left.

This was a thirteen-mile point in two hours ten minutes, and seventeen miles as hounds ran. Two ladies in a little blue car who had followed all the way from Newbold Revel pulled up on the road by Jane Ball. They had covered thirty-two miles. Only ten were in at the finish—the Master, Nimrod Capell and Ted Goddard, and of the field, Lady Wright, Miss Kidston, Miss Standish, Miss Davidson, Miss R. Twist, Mr. Denis Aldridge and Mr. P. Adamson. The ladies certainly held their own on this occasion. During the hunt wire was only seen twice, and apart from the fact that the pilot was not accounted for it was as near perfection as any one could wish.

If the policy which has brought about these changes and improvements in the South Atherstone country is continued then the future seems rosy indeed; for here is that rarity, a country which tends to surpass the glories of its past; those glories which each succeeding generation is told were so much greater than are those of the present.



The late Godfrey Heseltine (The "Bishop").



THE EARL OF BERKELEY'S

From Churchill Covert—making for the Rhine Country. River Severn and Monmouthshire Hills in distance

THE EARL OF BERKELEY'S

PERHAPS there is no hunt in this country whose best features and characteristics have changed less than those of the Berkeley. The advance of industrialism has had nothing more than a trifling effect upon them.

Berkeley itself has stood still through the generations and even the centuries—and still retains its ancient sporting and agricultural aspect.

The Castle Estates and Kennel Establishment are still presided over by the Earl and Countess of Berkeley. The earl in latter years has handed over control of the Berkeley Hounds to a joint mastership consisting of Captain R. G. H. Berkeley, Colonel C. E. Turner and Colonel A. D. Murray. They each possess the keenness and ability to ride up to hounds and are marshmen of the first flight.

Their popularity is a valuable hunt asset up and down the Vale of the Severn, where they, and their respective fields, to-day, as in the old days of the Fitzhardinges and Berkeleys, enjoy great liberty of movement and a welcome right-of-way that has never been challenged.

The Berkeley has ever been a four days a week pack, and there is no deviation from that rule to-day; and things move normally, both in the kennel and in the country.

I have seen many good hunts in the Vale of the Severn. I have seen a few great hunts—gallops that are typical of the marsh—that make history.

One particular run that always comes to my mind takes us back to 1912 when Will Gilbert was huntsman to the late Lord

Charles Fitzhardinge. These were in the pre-war days when every country house was represented and the young bloods of the hunt had strings of accomplished hunters.

It was a Saturday in November and the meet at the Kennels. Hounds were thrown into Hill Wood. They found quickly and broke away into the low country, leaving Scotland Farm to the left. They raced on across the marsh with their sterns clear of the thrusters and went straight through the "rhine" area, leaving Sir George's Withybed just to the left. They "cracked" along to Churnmead, Cowhill, and Littleton. Not touching covert, nor checking for a moment, they had many of the big field in difficulties. There were 13 horses in the main rhine alone, including those of the huntsman and Jack Scarratt, the first whip (who later became huntsman to the Earl of Berkeley). They got accommodated, however, and were close to hounds as they reached Aust Cliff.

The fox was running beneath the cliff at the water's edge. He was unmistakably the very "varmint," and with great difficulty he scaled the rocks. Then hounds, continuing to run with resolution over the Redhill marshes, carried a determined "head" by Heywood and, driving on, ran into their beaten fox not far from that ancient hunting hostelry (that has long been an honoured meet of the Berkeley), Alveston Ship.

This hunt was typical of the marsh with the Severn practically in sight all the way. The point may not have been more than eight miles, but the pace was "a fizzer," and hounds never touched covert over the twelve miles they ran.



A TYPICAL BIT OF RHINE COUNTRY — A JUMPABLE RHINE NEAR AUST.

THE EARL OF BERKELEY'S

Since I never saw a car, nor a strand of wire, and saw the same fox found as I saw broken up (owing to his having lost the end of his brush) I give this as the perfect hunt.

Lord Fitzhardinge at that time was 82 years of age. His second horseman got his lordship there by short cuts of country to see the fox broken up. The noble master dismounted, patted his favourite hounds and lit another cigarette. "The hounds will now go home, gentlemen," he announced, "you may do what you like." His lordship's characteristic brusqueness displeased no one, only those grouzers who were late for the meet.

However, the country is the same to-day. Masters and huntsmen have changed, but the traditions of sport and standards of hunting are being well maintained under the present arrangements in the Vale of the Severn.

In the Berkeley country there are masters and huntsman with a loyal team of helpers and with farmers bred in the country, so that a visitor to the Vale will see hunting as good as delighted his ancestors in the last century.

In the Bristol country, be it Alveston, Almondsbury or Berwick or in the Gloucester Vale, scent may change and be uncertain but the shore of the Severn never will, and we have ever contended that "the nearer the shore the sweeter the scent."

It is the Severn that makes the Berkeley country what it is, and when the visitor arrives at the meet, if he can see the silver streak in the distance, and hounds move towards it, his chances of a day's sport are the brighter on that account.

Coming down to more recent times, with Will Morris, the present huntsman, then new from the Mendip country, we see a fox found at Littlewood, near Wickwar. He ran through Tortworth over by Whitfield, to Eastwood, then across the Rockhampton Valley to Churchill Wood.

With the Severn, away in the distance and the "rhine"

country ahead, hounds break away from Churchill Wood at the brush of their fox. The first flight are in the van as they descend the slope in the wake of hounds.

Captain and Mrs. Berkeley, Colonel Turner, Miss Turner, Colonel Murray, Sir Stanley and Lady Tubbs, Captain Jenkins, the Hunt Secretary with Morris and his first whip, and "Jack Pipes," are up in their places.

There are always a farmer or two to the fore, and away goes the field into the marsh country proper. The bitches hide themselves in the strongly-fenced country, but their cry is good, and we catch fleeting glances of them as they pass in the open spaces.

There is a splash in the gallop, and the bravest, the boldest, seem to meet with the least difficulty.

Hounds are now turning left, and they run up into the grounds of Thornbury Castle, where they kill in the open, after a sixty minutes that enabled riders to indulge in that variety of country of which the Berkeley is built up.

As the end of March approaches, it is customary for the Berkeley hounds to leave the Vale and go on to the Cotswolds for the Spring hunting.

Colonel Sir Percival Marling, who is now the father of the hunt, lives in the centre of the uplands, and twice every season there are "lawn" meets at Stanley Park. Time was when we hunted to kill a May fox, but that custom has fallen through in sympathy with the more modern trend of agriculture.

Given the necessary moisture, hunting can be good in the hill country, where we bound the Badminton. Scent serves amazingly well there on occasion, and big points can be made along the crest and on the table-land of the Cotswolds.

With the Joint-Masters in the picture, in the yellow coats of authority, and leading ladies and gentlemen of the hunt taking



Mr. Hastings Neale



BERKELEY CASTLE & CHURCH — FROM MATFORD MEADOWS .

THE EARL OF BERKELEY'S

their own line, and farmers forging ahead, one gleans some idea of what is weekly happening in some part of the Berkeley country, where the Severn bounds it on the west and north-west for a distance of 34 miles.

The Berkeley Estates claim the shore rights for something like 10 miles, and within the big area, from Bristol to Gloucester, fox-hunting continues to be held in respect, and even veneration.



Sir Lionel D'ARTE



" THE OLD HOUND WAS RIGHT "

THE BLACKMORE VALE

makes a prodigious barking, but chiefly at his master! We wait and the Master keeps on blowing, hoping that Tom Samways will have collected that five couple and join us. At last we see him, he is in full view of us now, when suddenly out comes the fox and runs round two sides of the covert, hounds in full cry, while the missing five couple tear across the intervening fields to join their comrades. A "holloa" over the road and hounds close behind go screaming away. Tom's horse refuses (fancy Dermot refusing!) and Essex Digby takes the fence out of the road in grand style. Hounds race through the orchard and turn right, away from the brook. The Master and I are better placed. We jump the bank on our right as hounds cross our front and go on to the Vicarage. Leaving it to the right, we go over the main road and some jump more fine clean banks and into the lane past Marsh Court, up past Swallows (where I and my horse were nearly swallowed in a rabbit burrow in the ride), up through the Holts and into the main wood, through it, and along the gully to Major Martin's farm, past that and with a great cry on to Lanes covert, but we hardly dwelt here, on and crossed the river (the sun has gone in and scent is better and better) through Stock Withy bed, across the intervening fields to Stock Park, right-handed through the coppice by the Lodge and over the main road and to Rodmore and the "deepest fields in the Blackmore Vale." They were deep, but horses got only a second's respite, and away we went over that delightful line of country towards Pulham and actually to Bulhams. Here hounds dwelt over the earth, but "Charger" and "Craftsman" took the line resolutely out of covert and right through the steaming horses and along the fence to Hill Street Farm, crossing the Hill Street Lane with their hackles up. The Master quickly brought the rest of the pack on to Major Willett's "holloa," and with a united pack

we went at a great pace to the river by Holwell Church, hounds crossing to the right, while we urge our horses through that execrable lane and to the picturesque old pack-horse bridge by the Church, where we turned right-handed through Norman Court Farm, and just beyond the Master's second horseman luckily turned up with the Master's second horse. "Plain Tom" was blowing like fun and it was time for "Barker" to do his bit. Just beyond Mr. Adams' house, hounds paused, the fox had been interfered with, but with a little help they made it out to the big arable field beyond the village. Here he had been definitely headed by some roadmen, but hounds soon had the line again and away we go, rather a diminished field, along behind the village to Caundle Wood, through this, and over the lane, and straight through the main Holts Wood, along the high ground and through the corner of the higher Holts and over the field to Tripp's Lime Kiln and straight down to the kiln itself. Passing this we seemed to have lost all the field. Tom Bunch was on the right of them and the lucky writer on the left. They went on fast to Muse Hill, where they dwelt, and then took the line on through the corner of Hanover, the Master coming down the lane to them, over the Goathill Lane and up through Goathill and down the other side to the big ride, where they marked to ground in a drain, and Major Willett, only, of all the field turned up and was given our horses to hold while Fox and Ben Lane, with spades, dug away the earth, and, lifting a stone, reynard was caught, and the hounds had their reward—a $5\frac{1}{2}$ -mile point and a grand hunt. Our Field Master had had a nasty fall over a gate early in the hunt but pursued as far as the Holts.

The schoolboys were all lost at various stages of the hunt. Several were late for classes, but as one said, with warmth, "It was well worth it!"

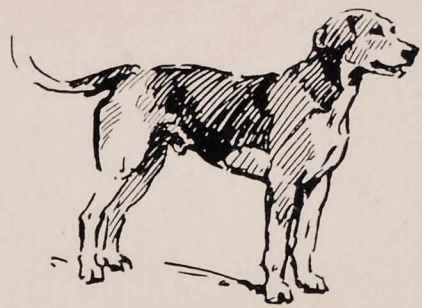


AT COVERT SIDE "LITTLE ASHINGTON"



FROM A MEET AT MUDFORD -

RUNNING PAST LITTLE ASHINGTON



SIRE OF SOME OF THE BEST —



THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH'S

Away from Clarilaw Covert on a hot scent

THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH'S

*And when it is over, we'll drink a blithe measure
To each Laird and each Lady that witness'd our fun,
And to every blithe heart that took part in our pleasure,
To the lads that have lost and the lads that have won.*

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

IT was a long night's ride upon which the Ladye of Branksome sent Sir William of Deloraine, "good at need" on that past St. Michael's night whose happenings are so graphically rhymed in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," and as a measure of the capabilities of horse and rider in those earlier days compared with those of their modern prototypes the performance is of more than passing interest, for the country traversed from Branksome to Melrose and back again was all part of what is known as the Buccleuch Country to-day. Then, and even in Sir Walter Scott's time, the going was no doubt deeper and more holding than to-day, otherwise from the horseman's point of view there is little alteration, and a modern rider wishing to make the same journey as the march-man would probably deviate but little from the route the latter used.

Sir Walter Scott knew the Border Country as well as he knew the powers of endurance of a charger "barded from counter to tail" with a rider "arm'd complete in mail," for, sportsman and warrior-hearted himself, he rode the paths described as well as he wrote of them, and comparing those past days with time present, the task the Ladye set her Knight and his dapple-gray steed, though a formidable one, was yet well within compass.

Presumably they crossed the Aill below Riddell by the ford in a straight line for Melrose and there, encumbered by the

weight of the mail of horse and rider, they had a struggle for it, the gravity of which any one who, albeit unencumbered, has essayed a similar feat, will readily appreciate. However, Deloraine, who had heard curfew rung as he passed Hawick, was in time to hear the sound of the midnight lauds of Melrose, and, shortly after, "He meetly stabled his steed in stall." We may be sure that, as, after gaining the moor at Horslie Hill, he had breathed his steed and drawn saddle-girth and corslet-band, so, now, he slacked both the one and the other, ere seeking the "convent's lonely wall."

For rider and steed had made in four hours a fifteen-mile point as the crow flies and had probably covered some eighteen miles of country in so doing. There was the return journey, too, to be completed "ere break of day" according to his promise to his Ladye, with the second stemming of Aill thereby involved, so the gallant gray had need of such respite as he could gain, what time the warrior bearded the Churchman and braved the terrors of the tomb of the wizard Michael Scott to win the Mighty Book which, or the contents of which, were to aid Branksome's Chief in her need.

So William of Deloraine, with "the mystic Book, to his bosom pressed," was soon fast in saddle again, and off to cover the eighteen odd miles of his return cross-country journey.

Of his second fording of Aill we are not told, and can only



A BURST OVER THE WALLS

THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH'S

hope that by the early morning light it was more easily achieved than the midnight one. Be that as it may, the edge must have been off the mettle of his horse and the rider congratulating himself upon the nearness of the end of his long double ride, when the sight of the crane on Henry of Cranstoun's crest caused even stronger feelings to intervene, and, in short space, brought the dapple-gray steed "dark with sweat, and splashed with clay," with the rider's armour "red with many a stain" in full career against the hated and hereditary foe.

*The meeting of these champions proud
Seem'd like the bursting thunder cloud.*

But, though the success of the stately Baron was essential to the story, and though we appreciate the prayer to his patron saint and his sigh to his Ladye fair, both of which laudable precautions stout Deloraine failed to take, our sympathies must be with the latter in the ultimate issue.

The march-man and the good dapple-gray steed had covered thirty-five miles, or more, of Border country in some eight hours with a double crossing of Aill water thrown in, and it was distinctly hard on them so close to the finish to find themselves pitted in mortal combat against foes of equal merit and fresh and unencumbered with any Mighty Book withal. After all it was the inevitable that happened.

Cranstoun's lance made desperate work. The weary gray stumbled and fell, the girthing broke. (It should not have done. Let us hope William of Deloraine in due course remembered this and dealt faithfully with the delinquent maker responsible.)

It was a sad finish to a memorable ride, but not unworthy of one than whom there was none braver amongst those old-time riders whose word was "Snaffle, spur and spear."

Branksome to Melrose and back again—a fifteen-mile point; say thirty-six miles as ridden—is no mean feat to bear in mind to compare with outstanding performances of more recent days.

*The Knights are dust,
Their swords are rust,
Their souls are with the saints, we trust,*

Yet the Border Country over which they rode and fought remains and provides as of yore a fascinating, variable, and fitting field for the exercise of judgment, skill, and courage on the part of horse and rider as the following performances prove.

In those gladsome days before the War of 1914-1918 the Teviotdale Fox Hunters' Club held a genuine Point-to-Point Race over the Buccleuch Country which was a real test of the riders' judgment and the pace and stamina of the steed. The result proved the Borderer, as of yore, peerless as a cross-country horseman, whilst careful breeding and improved stable management may safely be held to have added to the pace of his horse.

The race in question was held on April 3rd, 1914, over typical Border country, from the starting-point at Huntly Hill, about five miles south-west of Selkirk, to the finish at Whitehaugh, near Hawick, and there were some twenty competitors for three cups—the Club Cup, the Farmers' Cup, and the Yeomanry Cup. George Fothergill, in *Hunting, Racing and Coaching Ballads*, wrote some verses describing the race, of which I venture to quote the following stanzas:—

*Bold yeoman and farmer and member,
Who'd a share in the best of the pace,
Have every good cause to remember
That Border Hill point-to-point race:*

THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH'S

*Of the twenty catch-weights that were started,
Nearly all galloped up at the end,
On cattle well-bred and great-hearted,
With no fear of "bellows to mend."*

*There was Sprot on "The Raider" of Riddell,
And Roberts, and Cheape on "Nightlight,"
And a Cox with his "Fiddler" less fiddle,
And a Douglas astride of his "Knight";
The farmer who figured as winner
A little in front of the lot;
And others to well earn their dinner
Were Caverhill, Turner and Scott.*

The "course" (line would, perhaps, be more correct) was a good six and a half miles as the crow flies from start to finish, and, actually as ridden, something over a liberal eight miles, which was done by the winner, Mr. Thomas Douglas of Gatehousecote, on his own horse "Belted Knight," in twenty-six minutes, as inscribed on the Cup.

The field kept well together, and, considering the country ridden over, there were remarkably few casualties, than which there could be no better tribute to the merit of horses and riders. Crossing the Ashkirk-Borthwickshiels road, some three miles from home, the leaders began to draw away, and, after safely clearing a stiff flight of post and rails out of peaty ground, the race to the finish started in grim earnest. Mr. Douglas, on "Belted Knight," secured the lead above Whitefield, and, gallantly negotiating a series of stone walls, sailed home in front of two Masters of Foxhounds—Mr. T. Robson Scott (Jedforest) on "Alpha," and Captain Gray-Cheape (Berwickshire) on "Nightlight." The runners were all maidens, catch-weights, owners up, and the actual results were:—

CLUB CUP

1. Mr. T. Robson Scott's Alpha; 2. Captain H. Gray-Cheape's Nightlight; 3. Mr. T. Roberts' Seafarer; 4. Captain Sprot's The Raider.

FARMERS' CUP

1. Mr. T. Douglas's Belted Knight; 2. Mr. F. Turner's b.g. The Dale; 3. Mr. G. Davidson's Tagetes; 4. Mr. G. Davis's Dewdrop.

YEOMANRY CUP

1. S.Q.M.S. Caverhill's Glencoe III.; 2. Corporal Fenwick's Guinea Stamp.

*But hark! the din of sylvan war
Is rolling from the woods afar
Upon the peaceful plain;
And hounds and men are flashing by,
Like meteors in a northern sky,
Till riot seems to reign.*

The meet of the Buccleuch on Wednesday, January 16th, 1935, was at the house of Mr. J. B. Stewart at Faughill, where there was the normal field of some 150 riders out to meet the Huntsman, George Summers, with twenty couples of hounds—fifteen couples dog-hounds and five couples bitches—attended by the first Whipper-in, Will White, and the second Whipper-in, Edward Norton, with the noble Master, the Earl of Dalkeith, in command.

On casting off, hounds quickly found in Kippilaw, but this fox almost at once got to ground in a drain at Northfield. Summers then took hounds to the Fox Covert, east of Clarilaw

THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH'S

Farm, and there the gallant fox who was to lead them for the next four hours and save his brush at the finish had kennelled. This was a great dog-fox—probably a veteran in his third or fourth season—who had ranged wild and free all his lifetime over the Hawick side of the Buccleuch country. He had roamed and loved, hunted and been hunted, far and wide, over the grass, plough, and heath of the glorious Border uplands, and the exercise of his faculties thereby involved had strengthened bone and sinew, kept his wind sound and clear, and added courage and confidence to the natural sagacity and adroitness of his species. The time of the year found him in great coat and health, with his blood beginning to stir with thoughts of love, encouraged thereto by the presence of a so-far virginal vixen out Minto Kaim's way, whom he met in hunting forays, when together they sampled the flavour of rabbit, shrew, or beetle and with whom in days to come he looked forward to a still completer intimacy. That night he had hunted alone and a cleverly-stalked rabbit had been the main reward of his labours. So, fed and pleasantly weary, he had kennelled at early morning in Clarilaw Fox Covert, and there he slept till untoward sounds from the Northfield direction roused him to action. Hounds and Huntsman were trotting down the road from Northfield as the fox made up his mind it was time to be moving. From previous experience he knew quite well what enemies were at his gate, and he had no mind to be caught napping. He left his snug lying at the east end of the covert, skirted the northern boundary, and finally broke at the west end with his mask set for the galloping Utopia overlooked by Black Craig and bounded by Ale and Teviot Rivers.

Fit and well, and game to run, the dog-fox knew his country, as well was his need, for his life depended on the use he made of his resources, as twenty couple of the Buccleuch with George

Summers and a galloping field were soon in full career in his wake. Paladin, a first-season hound, was the first to speak to him in covert, and, rapidly joined by his comrades, hunted the line out of it, broke where their fox had broken, and got well away with him. Scent was serving, but hounds did not race, though the pace they went made horses gallop, and kept them on terms with the fox whose strong, though apparently effortless, gallop carried him rapidly from one point to another in the line of his choosing. They passed Cavers Carre Moss, and thence bore away left-handed across the Ale River, which was the first card in the hand at his disposal the fox dealt to his pursuers, and it gained him a few minutes. But neither hounds nor Huntsman hesitated, and, the river forded, his line was at once picked up again. Scent was holding, and they pushed him on over Bewlie Hill, on east of Bewlie Moss, thence right-handed across New Belses, Old Belses, Standhill, up to Minto Kaims. Here hounds momentarily checked; but Summers held them on to the right and forward, and so had hounds going again at the same good gallop past Hassendean Wood as if for the railway station, opposite which they turned right-handed across the big fields of Hassendean, bounded by the Huntlaw Burn, on over Hassendean Common, whence a sharp turn leftwards took them to Moorfield. From Minto Kaims to Moorfield is good grass and hounds had been gaining on their fox, who here had another chance to play from his own hand. By Moorfield there was a fresh fox on foot, who went off as if for Black Craig, and there were also a lot of sheep grazing. Two and a half couples went after the fresh fox, but were immediately stopped by the first Whipper-in, and quickly turned to the body of the pack. Through the flock went the hunted fox and some of the sheep closed up and fouled his line as sheep will. The sheep stopped hounds, who threw up, and there was the



IN VIEW OF THE 'EILDONS'

THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH'S

problem for Summers to solve! It was some six and a half miles to this point from where they found him as the crow flies, and double the distance as hounds had run, and the check was welcome to the field, whose horses had been at a good gallop throughout with plenty of jumping, principally stone walls and timber. The front rank had time for a breather, and those behind took closer order. Summers, on the best of terms with his hounds when they checked, wasted no time. He held hounds on a wide galloping cast forward and left-handed, and shortly after, the whole body of the pack had hit off the line, and were on through Alton Strip to Newton, across the Hawick-Selkirk road, past Boonraw, with the fox's mask set straight for Stirches. Just before Stirches Mains the fox was headed by men working in a quarry, and hounds were again at fault. The men said the fox was ten minutes ahead here. They had overrun the line and it was some little time ere their Huntsman succeeded in setting them right again. Their fox was back and right-handed, and possibly he took advantage of the short respite to lie down. The respite was not for long, however, for the twang of horn and the Huntsman's voice as he encouraged his hounds soon roused him, and he set off again with hounds unpleasantly close through the edge of Stonslie to Heap Hill (whereabouts the first whipper-in got a view of him still going strongly and well, unflustered, and ten minutes ahead), over the grass to Scaw Mill, past Brieryhill, leaving the covert on their left and Wiltonburn Hill on their right, and so to Mabonlaw. Hounds had quickened their pace on the grass below Heap Hill and, thenceforth, were pressing hard on the fox, and as they turned right-handed from Mabonlaw—their farthest point and eleven and a half miles as the crow flies from where they found him—Summers began to think about handling him.

His point was now Woollaw Covert, just short of which,

hard-pressed as he was, an incident occurred which probably enabled him to save his brush. He was in sight of Woollaw, with its chances of fresh foxes foiling his line, and safety, and he and hounds were running down the north side of the wall leading to the covert. About a hundred yards short of Woollaw the fox suddenly turned from the covert by jumping the wall from the north to the south side, deliberately turning again in the direction whence he had come. Some eight couples of hounds continued on down the north side of the wall and flashed into covert, where they got on the line of another fox. But the body of the pack, with Florist, Partner, Paladin, and Huntress to guide them, held true to the line of the hunted fox, jumping from the north to the south side of the wall in their turn, and turning their backs on the covert. Their Huntsman instinctively knew they were right, and cheered them on with horn and voice, what time Will White set sail to stop and turn the errant members of the pack in what proved a stern and difficult task, the accomplishment of which was only achieved at the cost of the loss of the rest of the hunt so far as first whipper-in and this part of the pack were concerned.

The great dog-fox had his second wind by now, and, as he settled again into that effortless gallop of his, he made up his mind to make for his home covert. He was going strong and full of running, and the zest of pace and confidence in his own prowess were alike his as he set his mask for his distant point.

Summers realised his thoughts of handling him yet awhile had been premature, so rammed his horn into its case and sat down to ride again in the wake of his diminished pack and minus his first whipper-in. Across Whitehaughmoor, past Drinkstone, Tanlaw, and Boonraw, sped the chase, over enclosures of good sound grass bounded by clean, big stone walls that had to be jumped as they came, with the pace quickening



A TON from Grozbridge Hall.

THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH'S

to such an extent that the Huntsman had to shake up "Rosemary," the good six-year-old dark chestnut mare that he had ridden throughout, until the Hawick-Selkirk road above Newton was again reached and crossed at the same place as on the outward journey. Across the road the fox, who had to put his best foot first to keep out of the way of hounds for the last six or seven miles, ran to sheep again, and hounds were at fault for the first time since he had been headed before Stirches Mains. Summers got his second horse—the light chestnut mare "Milsington," a tried and trusted favourite—and lost little time in vaulting from saddle to saddle and holding hounds forward (it must be borne in mind that he was without his whipper-in and short of eight couples and he needed the one and the others here) and succeeded in hitting off the line at Alton Strip. The time to here was about three hours, and the fox was a good ten minutes ahead by the time hounds had again settled to his line. They hunted determinedly on across Cawfaulds with Dearlyburn Covert on the left, Horseleyhill on their right, just touching Hassendean Common, and so to Minto Kaims once again. Henceforward it was stern hunting with hounds gradually gaining. The brave dog-fox, his mind made up as to ultimate sanctuary, held grimly on his chosen way, whilst his relentless pursuers, on a scent that served but never enabled them to race, gradually but surely reduced his lead as each sternly contested mile was left behind. For from Minto Kaims they hunted back, field for field, and almost fence for fence, the identical line they had previously run; past Standhill to Old Belses, where a woman viewed the fox going out of a field of turnips as hounds were coming in, on to New Belses, leaving Bewlie Moss slightly on the left. Hereabouts the fox's powers began at last to fail. Uphill some two miles away lay Clarilaw Fox Covert whence he had set forth nearly

four hours previously. Since then he had taxed his powers of running, had used every wile known to him and all his cunning, without succeeding in shaking off the menacing chorus in his wake. For many miles gradually but surely the cry of hounds had been nearer and ever more near. He heard hounds rapturously speak to his line again as they clambered out of the field of turnips into grass, heard Summers' hasty colloquy with the woman who viewed him, and realised there was but one chance to save his brush. Summers had "Milsington" hard by the head, and was ramming her on, hounds were running for blood, every tongue giving tune to it!

He turned from Clarilaw and, with every nerve and sinew braced, struggled on to Ale Water which, with one last effort, he swam as he met it just below Longnewton Mill. The cold water revived him and washed him clean, he shook himself on the bank, and, with confidence renewed, and the last remnants of his speed, forged on past Longnewton Place.

Ere they met the river, Summers (what would he not have given for his whipper-in and the remainder of his pack?) took hold of hounds and galloped them to the ford below the Mill. He took every hound up bar "Huntress" (by Hector, 1929, from Hebe, 1927—real Buccleuch bred, with a pedigree that would delight Lord Bathurst), but "Huntress" held to the line of her fox, swam the river as he had, and hit off his line by herself on the opposite side. How the Huntsman cheered the rest of them to her, knowing as well as hounds they had a sinking fox in front, and how first Florist, then Partner, then Paladin and Worcester, Patron's sons, and finally the whole diminished pack together owned the line and spoke to it, can be better imagined than described. Past Longnewton Place hounds were literally straining at his brush, but, a few hundreds of yards on, the long drain just below Longnewton smithy, which had been

THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH'S

his objective since he turned away from Clarilaw, was open, and he just made it in time.

Out of the gay field of the morning only five saw the finish—Lord Dalkeith, who was fortunate to get his second horse, Lord Hugh Percy, Mr. Robert Bruce, the sporting Border farmer of Pinnacle, Ancrum, Captain P. H. L. Finlay, who well maintained his reputation of a bold and untiring horseman, each of whom rode the same horse throughout, and Summers.

From the find at Clarilaw Fox Covert to Mabonlaw is an eleven-mile point, and from Mabonlaw to the drain below Longnewton smithy in which hounds marked their fox to ground is eleven and a half miles as the crow flies. The time was four hours, and the distance as hounds ran must have been a good thirty miles, over some of the best and most sporting country in the Borders, with a preponderance of grass.

Some two hours after Huntress, Florist, Partner, Paladin and the rest had bayed at the mouth of his sanctuary, wherein

he lay on a nice dry shelf well out of harm's way, whilst Summers blew the "Gone to ground," and when Huntsman, hounds and horses were safely home at the Kennels, the dog-fox slipped quietly out again. Possibly he was a bit stiff, but, if so, the plump rabbit he caught on his way to Clarilaw Fox Covert paid dearly for his over-confidence. The gallant hero of the day felt much better when he had eaten him, so much so that, ere entering his home covert, he sat on his haunches and barked—the short, sharp, carrying dog-fox's bark—a challenge to the whole quiet world around him. One of his brethren answered him. He challenged again, sharper, clearer, and longer, and, from the distance below him, came in reply the shriller, staccato bark of the vixen.

Addendum: (From the Buccleuch Kennels.)

And the Huntsman and Hounds hunt the ("their" erased) good fox in their dreams!



THE CATTISTOCK

After a stout hill fox near Lytton Cheney

THE CATTISTOCK

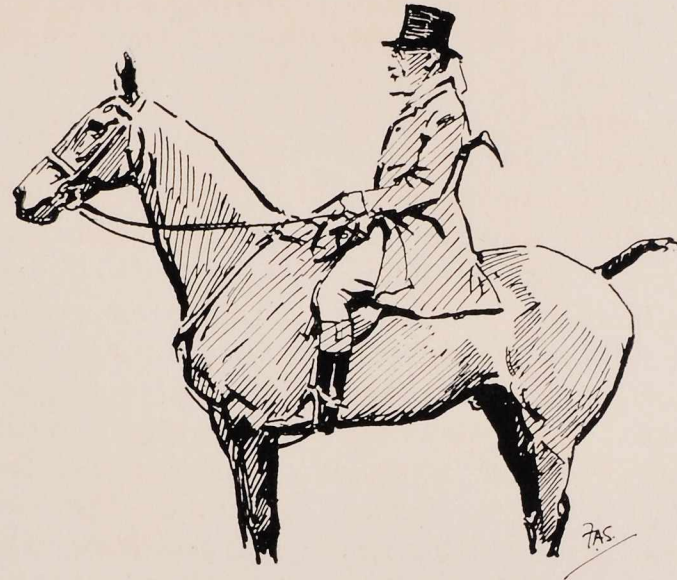
A Cattistock Day

*No matter what the day be,
Fair or foul or rain or shine,
Not the Fates themselves can rob me
Of those hunts, which once were mine.*

M. V. WYNTER.

A MORNING in early December in the little old-world village of Cattistock. The church clock strikes the hour, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine; followed by the chimes which are the envy of every village in Dorset. Pause a minute and listen to what they are playing—"surely not John Peel," you say to yourself. But that is just what it is, and as if in answer to the time-honoured tune there comes the clatter of horses' hoofs on the village street, the patter of hounds' feet, and the occasional rattle of a whipper-in, as the Cattistock hounds come into view on their way to the meet. Parson Milne, who hunted the pack for so many years, no longer rides in their midst, though his well-known figure is often to be seen in the field these days, and the villagers always watch for his cheery greeting as he rides on to the meets, sometimes alone but oftener with one of his daughters or his grandson as a companion. To-day Reg Holland, who has been in the service of the Hunt for many years and has risen to his present position of huntsman through sheer hard work, rides in the middle of the pack behind Jack Hewlett, the first whipper-in, who has also been with the Cattistock for many seasons; for it is the dog-hounds who are out to-day, and the Master's bitch pack are having their rest after a hard day yesterday in the Friday country.

Hounds pass through the village and along the pleasant Dorset roads, going by Wraxall Manor, where Mr. Ruxton, the new American Joint-Master, who has joined his fellow countryman Mr. Higginson in the management of the Cattistock hounds, has come to live with his wife and family; and so out on to the Toller Down road turning right toward Crewkerne on their way to the meet at Henley. Past Ridge and Cox's Gorse, and down the hill at Wynyard's Gap, where the whole of the Axenoller Vale lies spread out below them like a map, they jog, overtaking on their way people who are hacking on to the meet. First the "Die-hards," as the Misses Hall of Frome St. Quentin are affectionately known, then as they pass through South Perrott, that good farmer who always has a fox in his coverts at Picket, and, just before they enter the village of Misterton, Major and Mrs. Hayward of North Perrott, who are hacking on to-day. Misterton lies across the county line and the meet itself is in Somerset, at a lovely old stone manor-house overlooking the valley toward Crewkerne. The stable-yard at Henley is crowded with people, and more are arriving every minute, some coming down the hill from Clapton way, others from Beaminster, among them the Woods (*père et filles*) and General Cobham with his daughter. At three minutes to eleven the Master turns up in his



Capt. Digby.

THE CATTISTOCK

car, and after greeting Mr. Dare, the owner of Henley, and chatting with him a minute, he mounts his horse, looks at his watch, and nods to Holland, who promptly moves off to draw covert.

Henley is a popular meet of the Cattistock and there was a big field out on the day of which I write, as there usually is when hounds come to that part of the Saturday country. As I looked around it seemed to me that the only face I missed was that of old Captain Digby, who, despite the fact that he is well past the allotted span of three-score years and ten, goes as hard as ever, and can always be seen in the forefront of every good hunt. His daughter, Miss Theresa Digby, was out that day, and she told me that her father had had the bad luck to break his shoulder a day or two before, which, of course, kept him out of the saddle for some weeks. It was too bad that he should have missed the day, which turned out to be such a good one. Captain and Mrs. Pass were out too, with a couple of their "young entry," and some hard-riding strangers from over the Seavington border who had come to see what sort of sport the Cattistock hounds were showing. Altogether it was a keen field and they were beginning to fret a bit when the Henley coverts were drawn blank, and hounds moved on to Clapton. There was a fox there all right, but he must have had a bath that morning, for hounds seemed unable to follow his line at all, and the Master in desperation moved on to the Peckmores. They were blank too. Things began to look serious and the Master began to look worried lest the day in the Saturday country with a big field out be wasted.

There is a well-known saying that there is "nothing so uncertain in this world as scent—except a woman," and no better proof of its truth could be asked for than the happenings on the day of which I am writing. There had been no scent at

Clapton and yet from the minute hounds began to draw the covert at Norton's Hill, I felt that we were in for a real hunt. The field sat outside the covert and shivered, for it was a cold, raw day, and we had had not even a five-minute burst to warm us. But as we sat there the tones of Holland's voice as he cheered hounds in covert seemed to change, and as hounds crossed the middle ride they seemed keener than they had been. Jack was at the far end of Swillets', and Puckett, who was acting as second whipper-in that day, was watching the road that separates Norton Hill from the covert beyond. Suddenly I heard his "Tally-ho over," just as a hound whimpered in covert, and an instant later came the long hoped-for "Holloa" from the far end. In less time than I can tell it, hounds came tumbling out of covert and, hitting off the line, they were away down the Axenoller Vale, heads up and sterns down, racing on at a pace that left no question as to whether *that* fox had a scent or not. We were across the road and after them as quickly as ever we could get there, but they were two fields away before we got fairly settled, and a sharp swing to the left across the river after they had gone a mile or so put them still farther in front. The earths in the bank above Ragg were stopped, but this fox knew nothing of that and tried them. Finding no escape that way he ran the length of Ragg, gaining a bit on hounds by the manœuvre. Jack had galloped to the far end and viewed the fox away, but it needed no "Holloa" to bring hounds out on his line, and they came pouring out of the covert hardly a minute behind him, and raced away back toward Seaborough again. They were a good two fields in front of most of us when they reached the road, and only the men and a few of the first flight saw them as they swung sharp left into Swillets' again, most of the field going on toward Seaborough Court without realising that hounds had turned.



57c
COGDEN BEACH

JRS.



near Peckmors
Covert.

THE CATTISTOCK

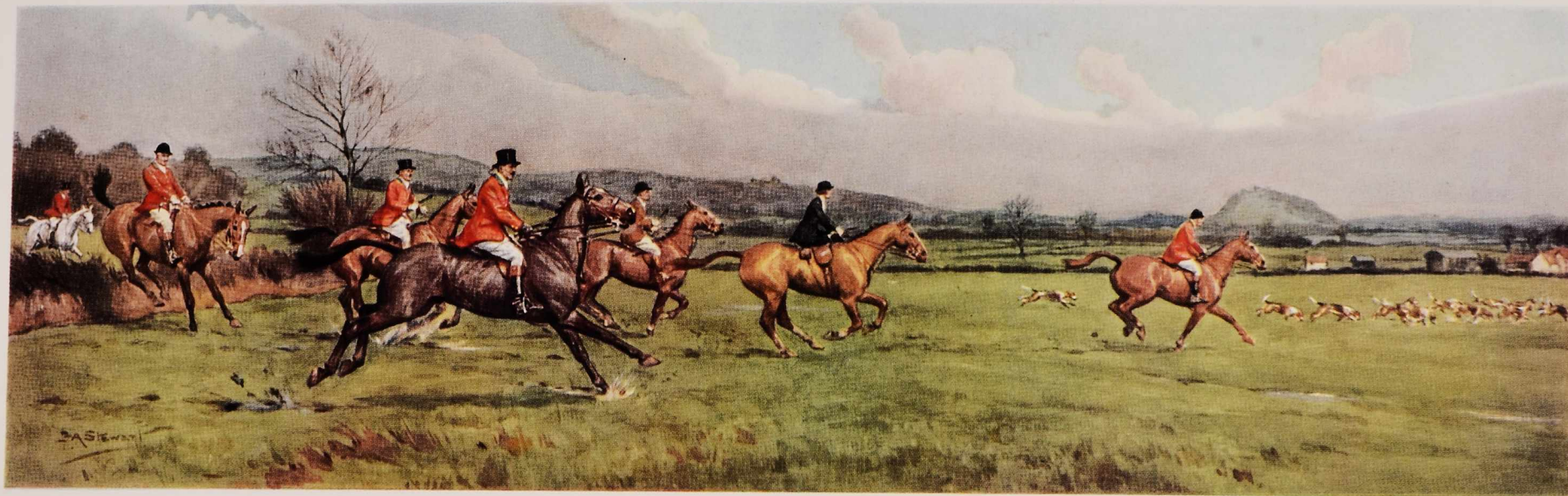
It so happened that day that I had gotten a bit behind, thanks to a singularly nasty ditch near Seaborough Farm, and when I reached the road I hesitated for an instant—as hounds were out of sight and hearing. Up to me at this time came Mrs. Pass, her face aglow with excitement. “Up to the left,” she shouted at me, “up to the left they’ve gone,” and she dashed by me and galloped up the road toward Swillets’. And she was right, for when we got beyond the covert we could see hounds streaming down the vale again with only a handful of people behind them. We jumped off the road over a low bank and set sail after them, and I shall never forget that ride down the Axenoller Vale that day. The going was perfect, the fences could be jumped anywhere, and there, some six fields ahead, were hounds driving on at a pace that made it seemingly impossible to catch them up. We let our horses run all they could, but try as we would we couldn’t seem to get any nearer, till, luck favouring us, they swung a bit right-handed, and crossing the road just below Whetley Cross they headed for Horn Park. The turn enabled us to get on terms with them again, and for a minute or two it looked as if we were heading for Potwell. But hounds swung left again, and crossing the Beaminster road just below the tunnel, they set sail for Buckham Mill. The going, which up to that time had been perfect, was heavier here, the fences thicker and harder to negotiate, and when we crossed the river again not far from Cheddington our horses were a very tired lot. Our second horses were far behind, there was no hope of getting them, and only the lightweights stood much chance of seeing the end if hounds ran on much farther. At least that is

what it seemed to me, and yet a dozen of us managed to get across the river—Mrs. Pass, Miss Cobham, Miss Wood, Miss Hall, a gallant quartet of ladies; Major Hayward, General Cobham, a hard-riding farmer from the Seavington country, the three men and myself—and somehow we managed to keep close enough to hounds as they raced on over the Toller Down road toward Beckham’s, to see where they were going. As they breasted the rise beyond Corsecombe, we were just coming down the other side of the valley behind them, and as they disappeared over the top, I for one thought that we should hardly see them again. But I was wrong, for as we neared the Corsecombe covert we heard that angry, disappointed baying that betokens only one thing, and Holland, slipping off his horse, found them tearing at the open mouth of a main earth where a very tired fox had sought and found refuge.

General Cobham looked at his watch. “An hour and ten minutes, Master,” he said to me, “an hour and ten minutes without a check. I suppose it’s about a six-mile point, isn’t it?” And as a matter of fact it was a half a mile farther than that, and I fancy twice that distance as hounds ran, the best hunt of the season, and I think as good a hunt as I’ve ever had in the Cattistock country. There were only a few of us left, and we’d all had enough, so we called it a day and started on our separate ways for home. And as we came through the village the cottage doors opened, as they always do, and people looked out and said “Good-night, Master, did ’e have a good day?” “Yes,” I answered, “yes, a grand day. Good-night.”



A STAFF CONSULTATION AT THE MEET AT HENLEY



THE CHESHIRE

In full cry from Bath Wood

THE CHESHIRE

This old Oxford toast applies to Cheshire :

*Hounds stout and horses healthy ;
Earths well stopped and foxes plenty.*

FIRST, I must explain that I am not a scholar, my education having been much neglected all for the sake of the Cheshire Hounds. I was born and reared in the dear old land of cheese ; yes, good cheese too, and good strong big foxes, but above all the very best of sporting farmers. Without these three essential things we should never have enjoyed the wonderful sport Cheshire has been noted for for so many years.

Talking of cheese, you remember the saying "To grin like a Cheshire cat." Well, a Cheshire cheese was formerly supposed to be moulded like a cat that looked as though it was grinning ; the explanation is that the cats there know that Cheshire is a County Palatine and that the idea is so funny that they are perpetually amused at it. If it wasn't for the cheese that Cheshire produces with its herds of cows (though now, I believe, there is not so much cheese made there now) we should not have such beautiful green fields to gallop over, with so little plough. Though the fields are not so big as in Leicestershire you want a clever hunter who looks at his fences. Ditches are very plentiful and sometimes rather blind ; as for the gateways, well, my advice is—don't gallop through them or the chances are you will be there for the rest of the day, swimming about in cowy mud like soup. Many a time have I helped to dig out some poor fallen victim.

Pits abound and very often you find them under hedgerows.

I shall never forget pulling Mr. Jimmy Tomkinson out of one near Haughton, looking the image of a drowned rat ; but he never minded anything as long as he was on the top of hounds, a fine hard rider. I hear his sons follow in their father's footsteps, especially General Harry, better known as General "Mouse" Tomkinson, who now manages the King's racing stud.

The Green Collars are of very great antiquity—commenced hunting in 1769—not quite so old as the Duke of Beaufort's Hounds, they hunted the stag in 1740, hence the old picture hanging in Badminton now.

The first Cheshire Master was the Rev. George Heron. Then Sir Peter Warburton was Master about 1820, and his successor was Sir Henry Mainwaring. His Huntsman was Will Head, and his Whip Tom Rance, of whose beauty the poet sang :

*Tom Rance has got a single oie wurth many another's two :
He held his cap abuv his yed to show he'd had a view.
Tom's voice was loike th'owd raven's when he skiocked out Tally-bo !
For when the fox had seen Tom's feace he thought it toim to go.*

Tom stayed in the country till Jack White, cheeriest of sportsmen, took the hounds in 1842, and he held the country, showing great sport, till 1855, when he resigned to Captain Arthur Mainwaring. The latter only stayed three years, and



BEESTON CASTLE

THE CHESHIRE

then the first Duke of Westminster, as Lord Grosvenor, hunted the country until 1866, hunting from four to six days a week.

In 1877 the country was divided between two Masters, that wonderful old man and the very best of huntsmen that ever lived, Mr. Reginald Corbet, who hunted the South Cheshire, and Captain Park Yates, who hunted the North, with old John Jones as Huntsman, so like Jorrocks, quite as fat, if not fatter.

After Mr. Reginald Corbet died his son "Reggie" Corbet became Master of the South Cheshire. It was delightful to see him hunt hounds and taking his father's place—a beautiful horseman. I believe old Mr. Corbet hunted the whole of Cheshire himself five days a week for some years before 1877.

Before I ramble on much more, I must go back to the old days and tell you of a wonderful forty minutes from Wrenbury Mosses to Peckforton Hills with a kill in Pennsylvania.

I will give you a few verses that will explain about this notable hunt :

*There were hundreds at Wrenbury station!
Many a good man and true ;
Scarlet coats by the dozen,
Grey and black and blue ;
But hurrah for the old green collars,
Hurrah for the Cheshire Hounds.*

*Ah, soon that large field sifted,
Some funk, some shirk, some fall ;
But Corbet his good horse lifted
O'er that gate in front of them all,
For none can beat our Master
When he hunts the Cheshire Hounds.*

*We found him in Wrenbury Mosses,
And killed him on Peckforton Hill ;
Good-bye to the funkens and shirkers,
We must ride to be with them still ;*

*Hurrah for the old green collars,
Hurrah for the Cheshire Hounds.*

*We raced him for forty minutes,
And never touched a plough ;
There were many bold men at starting,
But few of them with us now ;
But most of them wear the green collar,
All hunt with the Cheshire Hounds.*

*There's Tollmache boldly cramming,
And Rivers close at his side,
There's many a good man ramming,
And Beatty riding wide ;
Hurrah for the old green collars,
Hurrah for the Cheshire Hounds.*

*There's Cole from the land of Erin,
Biddulph from Watkins Hunt,
Clement Hill from the Shropshire,
All riding up to the front ;
But none can beat the green collars,
So we'll stick to the Cheshire Hounds.*

*Payne¹ may be more clever,
Shropshire may have more luck,
But give me the old grass country,
Cheshire for sport and pluck ;
Three cheers for the old green collars,
Three cheers for the Cheshire Hounds.*

*I can feel my good horse pulling,
And boldly he cocks his ear,
For he sees the wide brook rushing,
And together we land all clear,
In company with the green collars,
Right up to the Cheshire Hounds.*

¹Payne was Sir Watkin Wynn's huntsman.



Mrs POOLE

A MEET AT MARBURY

JOE WRIGHT.

775.

THE CHESHIRE

Take a look at that delightful picture of Mr. Stewart's, "Away from the Bath Wood," and you see the beautiful line of Peckforton Hills and Beeston Castle in the distance.

Rattle the hills twice a week and you are sure of some good hunts from the Vale. Once upon a time the hills were hardly ever hunted, consequently all the good old foxes got huddled up there; then Lord Cholmondeley had a hill pack, and later Mr. Peel, who lived at Calveley Hall, kept a pack with Charlie Garnett as Whip. He hunted the hills twice a week. Sometimes the old Duke of Westminster would invite him over to have a hunt at Eaton. One notable hunt he had from there found in the Duck Wood at once, fox swam the Dee, raced along to Tattenhall Road Station, right-handed up to Bolesworth and was lost behind Rawhead; hounds and horses, dead beat, were taken back to their kennels at Calveley, a real good hunt.

Lady Margaret Grosvenor saw the hunt better than any one. She inherited a name which is inseparably connected with the Cheshire Hunt. Lady Margaret, the youngest daughter of the first Duke of Westminster, well kept up the Grosvenor traditions by her devotion to fox-hunting. Petite, with a slight graceful figure, possessed of undaunted courage and nerve which was unshaken by many a fall, she had excellent hands, together with a firm square seat on a horse, and certainly knew how to gallop. When hounds found, she had a wonderful knack of dropping into her place, going to the front, and taking her own line. Needless to say, she was beautifully mounted on horses far above her weight, which were in fact rather overfed in the famous Eaton stables by the old stud groom, Naylor. To her high spirits and charming manner was added a gracious disposition, while her every action in life bore out the motto of her house: "Virtus, non, Stemma." It is no

wonder she was a universal favourite. Her two daughters are so like her in every way, but what a loss to Cheshire their being unable to live in the old county.

Cheshire has always been noted for the very best of sportsmen. There was old Lord Combermere, who kept Cheshire hunting going for years, and always helped to smooth out, in a gracious and amusing manner, the little difficulties that so often happen in a hunting country. His daughter Lady Alexander Paget, as Hester Cotton, was the best across country Cheshire has ever seen. Riding over the trappy Cheshire fences on Irish four-year-olds, she had wonderful hands and a square seat and could ride anything. The Dowager Marchioness of Cholmondeley, who still lives at Cholmondeley Castle, was another fine rider. I remember seeing her jump a six-barred gate near Haughton when an old farmer standing by turned to me and said, "There goes a beautiful wench o'er the gate, there was no daylight between her and her saddle."

For some years Lord Enniskillen, formerly Lord Cole was M.F.H.

*A great viscount young man,
A jolly and stout young man,
Gallop, following, bucketing, hollowing,
A bright green collared young man.*

Two other good masters Cheshire has been lucky enough to have were Colonel Willie Higson and Colonel Hubert Wilson. They both showed wonderful sport, and I hear Colonel Wilson now superintends the breeding of the hounds with very good results.

There are also the Tinsley brothers, Frank, Jimmy and Hugh, commonly called Jack, who have lived in Cheshire all their lives. One used to run miles with terriers and was as fresh as



VIEW NEAR CUMBERMERE

THE CHESHIRE

a lark at the end of the day ; then there was Mr. Jimmy, who came to the rescue and was Master from 1919 to 1923—what a help to Cheshire he has been and still is. Then, another splendid old sportsman in the South Cheshire Country, Mr. Walter Starkey used to know, like myself, every rabbit hole or drain a fox could squeeze into. He worked hard for years for the good of hunting, but he unluckily broke a leg a few years ago. However, I feel sure he will be out again next season—the farmers love him.

In the old days there were three parson brothers, Henny, John and Willie Armistead. They were three of the very best and rode so well. Then there is a charming Green Collar, Mr. Bow Littledale, though I believe he is unable to hunt now. Mrs. Littledale comes out and does much to keep things going on her side of Cheshire.

It is not an easy thing to follow and take the place of such marvellous masters as the Cheshire has possessed, but, from what I hear from all parts, Mr. Walter Midwood, who is M.F.H. now, is carrying on the old traditions of the country—a real good sportsman, who does so much for the Cheshire. How very grateful Cheshire ought to be to him, and I feel sure they are.

Wardle Gorse is about one of the best fox coverts in Cheshire. I remember when I used to go with my father in the middle of the night with a lantern and tallow dip to stop an old earth in it.

Hurleston is, of course, another noted cover, and many a good run up to the hills I have seen, though generally I hunted on my ten toes when I was very brave, and seemed to jump enormous places and nip along the short cuts. I generally knew what line a fox would take, having lived amongst them all my life ; also places where they might tuck themselves into. I remember once poking one out from an old potato hog by

Haughton after a great hunt, and much to Mr. Corbet's delight, he chopped it.

Pool Gorse was another good place to find a fox in, and belonged to Major Billie Massey and his dear old father before him, a charming old green collar and so clever with his brush ! He used to caricature the whole of the Cheshire hunting field. His pictures were very funny sometimes ; sad was the day when Billie Massey sold his place and left Cheshire to be a most excellent secretary to the Fernie, though we still own him as one of our good Cheshire green collars. His wife is one of the best turned out ladies there is to be found in any country, and looks so well on a horse, too ; she and her brother, General Harvey Kearsley, learnt all they knew in Cheshire and were, of course, taught by their father, who knew how children should be turned out.

Will you allow me to say a word on manners in the hunting field ? Cheshire has always been noted for the very best. Look at that fine old Cheshire gentleman who passed away a year or so ago, Colonel Rivers Bulkeley. His manners were perfect in the hunting field. He piloted the Empress of Austria when she hunted from Combermere.

Then, a word for the present-day young ladies. They ride well, go well, and are as brave as lions, though I think sometimes their pluck is greater than their judgment. As the saying goes, " Hunt to ride and not ride to hunt." But why in the middle of a hunt, as I saw one do last year (not in Cheshire) pull up, powder her nose, blood her nails—she never as a child could have been blooded with the blood of a fox, or she would have known better than do these sort of things while hunting. It's bad enough on the grandstand at Hurlingham, but don't do it, my dear young ladies, out hunting ! I expect they would say of me : " She lived a hundred years ago, times have changed."

THE CHESHIRE

But how can hunting manners change, however old? It is the place where the very best ought always to be found.

The Swan at Tarporley is where the Green Collars all meet the first week in November and dine there each night. On the Wednesday they give prizes for the best hunter belonging to a Cheshire farmer, putting them over several fences first. Some of the members look a bit funny walking about in black and white-checked trousers, brown billycock hats, and their red coats. By the way, talking of green collars, at Olympia this year I pricked my ears when I saw three beautifully turned out green collars enter the arena. I thought, here comes Cheshire, but no, it was the old Surrey and Burstow sportsmen, and how well they looked.

I cannot finish without telling you about a most noted old tailor, who lived in Malpas, and made everybody's breeches. He was such a nice old man and his breeches were the most wonderful cut. He used to drive miles round the country in a gig and an old shaggy pony to fit his customers. He always grunted as he was fitting and talked about the ladies' breeches as garments, thinking it was more discreet, I suppose! I remember once finding him tipped over into a ditch, breeches and garments strewn all over the road with the labels on them. He was returning from Stapeley. He was a character.

Here are a few names of the good sportsmen of some years ago—Sir Gilbert Greenall now Lord Daresbury, his two sisters and Mr. Cyril, Mr. and Mrs. Stock, Sir Brian Egerton, Mosley Leigh, the Dixons and the Thorneycrofts, Mr. Egerton Leigh, Colonel Willie Walker afterwards Lord Wavertree, and in old days Mr. Henry Tollemache was a wonderful man over Cheshire, Major D'Arcy Ramsbotham and his sister Ruth, another dear old green collar, Mr. Sandbach of Cherry Hill—he owned Handly Gorse and always had a good old fox there, Mr. Willie Court who was joint master for some seasons, Colonel Jeffery Lockett another good man, brother of the famous 17th Lancer Polo player, the Dewhursts. Now the present day, there is Sir Thomas Roydon a good sportsman, Sir John Dixon who is the excellent hunt Secretary, not an easy job, Mr. John Houghton master of the Wirral Harriers, and hundreds more good men I know there are, but I must leave room for the accounts of the other countries.

*Oh where is the heart that is heavy?
And where is all trouble and care?
We've left them all behind us,
Our only care is to be there
In company with the green collars,
And close to the Cheshire Hounds.*



THE COTTESMORE

From a find at Manton Gorse, running by the Edith Weston Road—Oakham and Lax Hill in background

THE COTTESMORE

Some Account of the Cottesmore Country

IT appears to be fashionable nowadays to write one's reminiscences. Mine being of the kind that would certainly be unreadable and probably unprintable, I have never attempted, and have, in consequence, no knowledge of how to write—besides being of scanty education.

This being the case, to compass an article on the Cottesmore Hounds is to me a pretty hopeless proposition, though doubtless an honour and a privilege.

No one nowadays reads local history. It requires, however, no great stretch of imagination when standing in Exton Park, in the neighbourhood of Fort Henry, to visualise this country as it must have been in the days when Baptiste Noel rode to support his King, "Charles I.," and even further back into the dim ages when King John, that much maligned "diehard," kept hound and hawk at Rockingham Castle and used Lys Lodge and the "King's" House at Braunston for his more distant meets, and likely for other pleasures, when Lys Forest was a forest and not only a name on the map.

The Cottesmore Hounds, in a modern sense, owe their existence to the Noel family, one of whom, together with the third Duke of Rutland (John of the Hills) was mainly responsible in the latter half of the eighteenth century for what are now sometimes known as the "Shires." From that time onwards and up to about sixty years ago the Noel and Lowther families were more or less hereditary Masters, and the Lowthers

have, to an extent, carried on this tradition up to recent years.

One of the Noel family who combined the offices of Master of Fox Hounds and Knight of the Shire, is said to have frequently hacked to London after hunting, in time to vote on a division at Westminster, which is ninety miles or more, a good ride after hunting, with, no doubt, comfortable hacks out at intervals, but unpleasant on a cold February night.

I suppose the great days of hunting and the golden age of sport for the few lay between 1810 and 1870, but it must be remembered that it was for the few and that nowadays hunting has a wider appeal than ever before, at least so it is here.

A friend of mine, after a pretty good evening, was said to have been seen at 9.30 a.m., in evening dress, riding a cab-horse round Belgrave Square, ringing all the bells and inquiring from astonished footmen when and where the meet was, keenness for the chase showing itself in a variety of ways.

A few names that occur to one as past Masters, in more than one sense, are Noel, Lonsdale, Carrington, Kesteven, Baird, Hanbury, Ranksboro, Richardson, Strawbridge and lastly, but by no means least, the present Master, acknowledged to be among the best huntsmen in the country, amateur or professional.

As to those accustomed to the front seats, I think it is safer to say, truthfully, that there are few people, who either fancy themselves or are fancied on a horse, that have not at one time or another had a "dart" over this country, and to single out



MANTON GORSE
LOOKING TOWARDS RIDINGTON.

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THE COTTESMORE

the few from the many would be invidious. But no account could be even partially complete without at least a passing reference to Mr. Henry Finch. Born in October, 1843, and starting his hunting career seven or eight years later, he is still going and out with hounds. Eighty-five years or thereabouts of a fox-hunter's life! What a title for a book! I believe on his first day's hunting he took some note of a particular oak tree and that he finished a day (and at the same time serious competition) over eighty years later under the self-same tree.

Friends have told me that I should waive my prejudice against proper names with regard to Teddy Brook's. This may well be so, for a more accomplished performer over this or any other country can seldom, if ever, have been known. But can the Cottesmore lay claim to him to a greater extent than other countries? Still, the fences he jumped are a legend to this day, and he must have spent many of his happiest days with these hounds. If there is hunting in heaven I expect he is schooling young angels to jump off their hocks.

There is, I think, at the present time a general feeling that the "pack" is too small, and a tendency amongst the younger generation to join in with them, rather than to watch their performance. This, however, applies to all countries and without a bit of over-keenness fox-hunting would not be what it is to-day. Talking of this, I think one of the neatest bits of rebuke ever spoken came from a now retired Master in this neighbourhood to some ladies who were inclined to press hounds unduly: "Hold hard the young ones, please; let the old ones go on."

Is the Cottesmore the best four-day-a-week country in England? Certainly I have heard it called so. There is no day when you may not ride a delightful line, and many when you cannot help but do so. "Better to hack in Leicestershire than hunt anywhere else," said some one, quite possibly truly.

The Cottesmore bitches were always noted for drive and keenness, and some years ago the Cottesmore ladies were known by their own sex in Melton as the "Cottesmore Cats," also presumably full of drive and keenness.

From my father's hunting diary—Tuesday, April 10th, 1877: "With the Queen's Staghounds brought down to Barley Thorpe. Lord Hardwicke came from Pickwell. Turned the stag out at Barleythorpe. After twenty minutes Law laid hounds on, ran towards Langham, then turned up towards Cold Overton, keeping Knossington on the right and Owston Wood on the right to Launde Wood, skirting which over the Hog's Back as if for Belton, there at fault, and a check so long I feared we had lost our stag, but three and a half couples had stuck to him, and so leaving Belton and Allextion on the right close by Wardley Wood through Ayston grounds and I viewed the stag on the road. On we went, leaving Uppingham on the right by Glaston and through Glaston Gorse and at last the stag took to water in the brook at the bottom. Two hours and fifteen minutes. Rather good fun but not as good as a good fox-hunt; hounds seemed to lack a good head and dash. Rode "Falkingham" and "Rob Roy."

During Mr. Hanbury's Mastership a fox was found in Oakham Pastures and a fox was run out of scent somewhere in the Welland Valley, a very long point.

In Lord Ranksboro's Mastership hounds found in Stoke End and killed in the open under Borough Hill Wood, a wonderful hunt and a wonderful line of country and hard on horses, mostly, as the billiards player would say, "against the nap of the cloth."

Of recent years from the point of view of continuous good sport, the season 1931-1932 sticks in my memory.

I suppose no prettier sporting sight has ever been seen than



MOVING OFF FROM A MEET
AT LUFFENHAM



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SOME PERSONALITIES

THE COTTESMORE

Arthur Thatcher and Herbert Norman crossing this country, the latter not always mounted on the best.

The Cottesmore is said not to be a big country, but a lot of loose horses may be seen on a Thursday, and many prefer what is truthfully described as a spin on the Burton Flats on a Saturday. These foxes seldom seem to have straight necks, and looking back in my father's diaries, which cover the years 1860 to 1884, I read this was also the case in his day.

Spread your map, take four points, almost at random—John O' Gaunt, Tugby, Lyndon, Stainby, join your points, and within the rough square so described you will have one of the fairest fields of sport in the kingdom.

No man did more for the Cottesmore country than the late

Mr. W. Baird, who, together with the late Mr. Gosling, found the country in poverty and difficulty and at the end of twenty years left it in comparative affluence and ease. Nor must we forget the Rutland, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire farmer; he may or may not be the world's best farmer but, taken on the whole, he certainly stands level with the world's best sportsman. He deserves better times—may he get them.

Reading back it seems that sport was much the same in our fathers' day as it is now, so it must have been pretty good.

I write this in the comfortable certainty that I shall not be asked to offend again, and I can only hope, should Mr. Stewart decide to publish any of it, his otherwise excellent book may not be ruined thereby.



THE CO. GALWAY (THE BLAZERS)

Running a line towards Ballydoogan

THE CO. GALWAY

The Blazers

*To the Devil I'd fling
Old Runjeet Singh,
He's only a Prince in a small way,
And knows nothing at all
Of a six-foot wall,
Oh! He'd never do for Galway.*

THE man who hunts with the Blazers comes to a country which is different to any other in Ireland. Walls, grey walls, cross and re-cross, tangling in a cunningly raised network of stone. Banks are rare, and only on one side of the country. Walls, erect and naked with light gleaming through them in many places, fence the light pasture land. Stone upon stone causing a stranger to wonder how human hands could have piled the obstacles up. There is nothing to stop hounds, and the man or woman who throws his or her heart over the towering obstacles can always watch hounds working. But one must ride a fast horse to see a hunt, for scent on the light, springy turf is of the best and hounds fairly fly over it. Neither do horses cut themselves much if they hit a fence, for the stones of which they are built are round.

It is not all heaven, of course, at times one must clatter and shatter over crag, and swing to avoid boglands, their pools shining with deep-hued water; but these patches make the good going all the sweeter.

What has been the Blazers' best run of sport? It is hard to say, with records stretching along the backward road of great hunts. But I can pick one week which stands out.

Hounds met on a Wednesday in January at Carrowkeel cross-roads. Mr. Bowes Daly was hunting his bitch pack. Fifteen couple of level bloodthirsty, hard-working varmint. The first draw was Lime Hill, a little gorse set high on a peak of land, from which one can see the country for miles. Walls and walls again, and far away rises Ballydoogan hill.

This gorse did not hold, but a stranger's eyes feasted on the wild lonely countryside, where every fence was jumpable and there was no wire, and where, in the wettest winter, thudding hoofs scarcely leave a print on the short, sweet-grassed turf.

Hollyhill, a star covert, was then drawn, and a big dog fox broke almost immediately. Hounds poured out close to him and raced towards Ballydoogan. Here was Galway at its best. Big walls to jump, light going, and the pace a cracker. And one who had never hunted before with the famous Blazers thought, as he watched hounds tearing on, and as his good Irish horse flew the great cairns of stone, of what he had missed in life. On flying still, to cross the Loughrea Tynagh Road. Here the fox was chased by a dog and the pace steadied as scent failed



R. STEWART

"NEARING THE END"

By DARTFIELD

BALLYDUGAN IN BACKGROUND



MEET AT ATHENRY — THE HUNT SERVANTS
1st & 2^d WHIPS

THE CO. GALWAY

somewhat. But the bitches worked perfectly, running on nearly to Pallas, where the pressed fox swung and crossed the river. He was out of his country now, a gallant fox slugging doggedly on with the death cry of the bitches coming nearer and nearer. He was viewed, close in front, but this great fox just saved his brush and crept into the main earth at Pallas, which being in the East Galway's country, was open.

Shrill notes echo, wistful-faced, disappointed hounds gather round the hole. Hoic Holla Hoic Holloa. Wind him. Wind him—the horn rings out, and a great day is finished. Jump then from beaten horses, and talk of this hunt of two hours and fifty minutes. The point was only eight miles, but quite twenty had been covered.

There was a dance that night at which this great hunt was ridden over again many times.

Athenry next day, with the memory of the dance in many an aching head. Time to recover was given, for Caheroyan was blank. Graig Abbey made up for it, a stout fox going away over one of the best bits of Galway. Light going, clean walls with no bushes on them, so that if a wrong turn was taken, one could always see where hounds were, and with luck and pace, could make up lost ground. But pace was the main point, for the dog pack never even dwelt. They raced him through Knockbrack, and he set his mark for Monivea, after wheeling toward Ballydavid. Hounds were flying and very few could keep in the same field with them. Rattle of stones as blown horses hit the walls, but ever that light springy going and that wave of white and tan and brown in front. The pace had told, the fox, within half a mile of Graig Abbey, twisted sharply, to be bowled over in the open by the Athenry road. A really glorious flying gallop had ended well for hounds and huntsmen.

A fox got in at Knockbrack, which was the next draw, and we went on to Monaghans, where we found another good fox. It was a wonderful scenting day, and the dog pack ran as if tied to their quarry. This fox made a wide circle through Coffey's Gorse, and across the line into Belleville, then coming through Knockbrack, he tried to make Graig Abbey, but he had been too hardly pressed and was pulled down in the open a field short of where he had started from. The time was an hour and forty minutes. Horses and riders had had enough and to spare, and cars were eagerly looked for.

Another good day was over, but good luck was about to tread on its heels.

The next meet was at Castle Hacket, a house which crouches at the foot of a hill, which is five hundred and fifty-feet high. This towers up, its rugged sides covered with scrub and heather. It is full of woodcock, but no fox-hunters' heaven.

After some hunting in the demesne, Dennistown, which is at the foot of the hill, was drawn, and away went a fox. But he turned up the hill, taking us through scrub and over rough going. The bitches stuck to their hunted fox, but there were so many on foot that the Master stopped hounds. Mountaineering did not allure him! So he went to Kilcurrif Gorse and found there at once, running fast towards Cummer, and passing Kilcurrif into Castle Hacket. A wild rough country it was, lonely and desolate, with scarcely a house to be seen. It took wits to keep up, but it was a beautiful bit of hound work and worth every step on rock, or bash from boughs. Hounds were beaten once, but Mr. Bowes Daly viewed his fox, and gathering his bitches galloped to him. We had been going then for two hours, and hounds had worked so wonderfully that it was as enjoyable as the flying gallops I had ridden. Beaten as he was,



WHERE THERE'S A WILL
THERE'S A WAY —

THE CO. GALWAY

our fox made for the sanctuary of the towering hill, which loomed up, dark and sinister in the failing light. The Master stopped his hounds, it was too late for the Alps. This was a fine hunt of two and a half hours. Not the racing glory in it of those others, but those who like to see hounds work liked it well.

This is one week of the Blazers, could any glutton ask for a better one!

Where hounds are always welcomed by the farmers, and where the covers, as a rule, are so small that a fox must leave or die—go and see these Blazers some day and learn to be “the man for Galway.”



THE HEYTHROP

In the stone wall country—with Stow-on-the-Wold in the background

THE HEYTHROP

The Meon Hill Hunt

CADLEY HILL, hitherto unknown to history, is an eminence some 750 feet above sea level, forming a miniature spur of the Cotswold Hills near Moreton-in-Marsh. From the hilltop, if one faces north-east looking along the line of the old Fosse Way and surveys the terrain with the eye of a fox-hunter, one is confronted with a panorama of infinite variety. Behind us, and to the left, the ridge on which we stand is continued far into the wilds of the Cotswolds, not the usual tract of bare stone-wall country, but at this point covered with frequent strips of plantation and a considerable woodland known as Bourton Wood. The high ground appears to end far away on our left-front in the grassy slopes of Ilmington Hill. Immediately on our right the ground falls away to Moreton-in-Marsh and the head of the Evenlode valley, a country of grass fields, with a lot of hedgerow timber, flanked by another big stretch of woodland—Wolford Wood. On the right-front the only notable landmark is a dome-shaped hill with a small clump of trees on the summit—Brailes Hill. But in the foreground—below the escarpment at our feet—a real grass country is unfolded, strongly fenced and undulating; beyond lies the Red Horse Vale of Warwickshire, and though we are almost in the middle of England, by this route it would be possible to gallop on grass-land to the Wash.

It is therefore with high hopes that successive generations of the Heythrop field have taken post on Cadley Hill, while the

little ash spinneys below them and the adjoining gorse are drawn—but with high hopes that are seldom realised. At the best a good fox may set his course right-handed to join his numerous relatives in the recesses of Wolford Wood; but more probably he will turn left at once to the nearer refuge afforded by the bad scenting slopes of Bourton Wood, and the strong probability of open earths in the north Cotswold country beyond it.

On the 29th of March, 1933, there was no reason to expect any departure from established practice. It was a fine spring day, practically windless; the ground was dry, and the general conditions all against scent on the shallow soil of these uplands. So that when the bitch pack drew the ash spinneys and gorse, and found their fox in the farthest hedgerow, the veterans of the Hunt experienced not the slightest tremor of excitement. Indeed several of them jogged gently along the ridge to Bourton Wood, not half a mile distant—only to discover that at last the unexpected had happened, and that they had put themselves out of action for the rest of the day. For though the fox started as usual towards Bourton Wood, he ran down the hill for one field, then deliberately turned his back on the obvious refuge afforded by the hills, and set off right-handed along the grass fields below the escarpment, and parallel to it, with eighteen and a half couples of the Heythrop bitches on uncommonly good terms with him. These were followed by a few enthu-



Running by Churchill

THE HEYTHROP

siasts, who doubtless felt that this unprecedented manœuvre was too good to last, and that they had better make the most of it while it did. Lovers of the middle course cantered pleasantly over the high ground to their right, with an admirable view of the spirited events in progress two or three fields below them, waiting for the fox to turn uphill, as indeed he did. He ran through Brown's gorse on the lower slopes of the hill, out on the top side, and the bitches hunted him steadily over the light ploughs of Dorn Hill Farm into Rook Hill, a narrow strip of covert on the eastern face of the high ground. Here the field was divided into two sections, one going through the covert after hounds, and the other following the second whip round it, to view the fox away in case he had waited there. But he had done nothing of the sort: the bitches hunted straight through the covert, and down the grass slopes beyond it to the Great Western Railway (Worcester main line) and dwelt for a moment at the earths on the railway embankment. But the huntsman had spotted a couple of them already racing up the opposite slope, and in a very short time the pack was running through the Warwickshire covert of Aston Hales, and never touched Heythrop territory again in the course of the hunt.

Outside Aston Hales hounds checked, but cast themselves and hit off the line close to the road bridge over the single-line railway from Moreton to Shipston-on-Stour, which was subsequently to play an important part in the hunt. They hunted steadily over the grass fields towards Wolford Wood, a nice country to ride over, and checked again for a few minutes near Lemington Grange, where a team working in a field had apparently headed the fox. So far it had been a pleasant and unexpected hunt. The pace had not been severe nor the fences formidable. Wolford Wood was just in front, and that would

probably be the end of it. Members of the field were able to compare notes, and even to gossip with a prominent member of the Warwickshire Hunt, who had stopped his car in the road. He remarked that he was responsible for that particular bit of country, that—as the Warwickshire hounds had now stopped hunting—all gaps had been repaired and other damage made good, and he appeared to regard without particular enthusiasm the spectacle of an eager and competitive field testing the results of his labours. He even expressed the hope that they would not do much damage.

Meanwhile the huntsman had made the road good, and cast left-handed beyond Lemington Grange, where hounds hit off the line again, crossed the road from Moreton to Todenham, and ran at an improved pace down the grass to Wolford Wood. But once again our fox made it clear that he was no slave to tradition. Instead of making straight for the heart of this almost impenetrable woodland, he cut through the corner of it, and threaded the straggling Lemington spinneys on the north side. Here a single old bitch, Comfort, diligently worked out his line and led the pack, emerging—*mirabile dictu*—into a fine wild fox-hunting country, practically all grass and with no big coverts, over which hounds at once began to run. The first plough brought them to their noses, but they were able to hunt on up to the road from Todenham to Great Wolford, where they checked, and the body of the pack swung to the left. However, two couple of bitches, followed by the hard riders, were able to make out a line across the road over a field of beans, and some good staff work by the first whip put the united pack in action on the Todenham pastures. But here, for some reason, hounds could only hunt slowly, and they presently made a very disconcerting turn over the road through Todenham village, which threw the field into some confusion; people were scattered



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Col E.P. BRABBY M.F.H. & JACK LAWRENCE

THE HEYTHROP

up and down the village, and the Incumbent of Bourton-on-the-Hill led one contingent into the Vicarage garden, from which they extricated themselves with difficulty. Beyond the village hounds got on to typical Warwickshire grass, sound old pasture, which generally carries a scent, and ran fast down to Timm's Mill, where they turned left-handed along the Knee Brook; this enabled some of the field who had lost themselves in the village to recover their place.

The Knee Brook is no asset to any hunting country. A sluggish, wide, and muddy stream is disclosed, flowing between high banks overgrown with bushes. It generally looks unjumpable, and the fact that the fishing has a commercial value conveys an additional warning to any prudent fox-hunter. Bridges exist only at infrequent intervals. But happily our huntsman combines a natural eye for country with a retentive memory, and as soon as he saw his hounds cross the brook he recalled a timely warning given to him by the senior Joint-Master when he first came to the country: "Never have anything to do with the Knee Brook, Lawrence; Lord Southampton and I once spent the best part of a day in it." With brilliant inspiration he made for the point where the Shipston railway crosses the brook, jumped on to the metals, rode over the bridge, slid down the railway embankment on the other side, and thus conducted his followers into the same field as hounds. These ran briskly over the big grass fields of Lower Ditchford, and reached the Fosse Way just three miles north of the point where they had first crossed it at Aston Hales, and here they checked again. Three people standing near the road had not seen the fox, but probably he had seen them. No doubt a Warwickshire huntsman would have cast forward on the right of the Fosse towards the well-known fox covert of Golden Cross; a visiting huntsman was fain to leave his hounds alone, and they cast themselves

left-handed over the road towards the village of Stretton-on-the-Fosse. And at this moment the village postman on a bicycle met us, and remarked that he had just seen a travelling fox on the other side of the village.

The hunt had now become an adventure; we were, in fact, explorers of unknown territory, the wild country hunted in alternate months by the Warwickshire and the North Cotswold Hounds, and like all explorers, we looked to friendly natives for guidance. By great good fortune the field included a lady who actually lives in this country, and knows her way about it better than most. She interpreted for the postman, the pack was collected and started by road towards the point indicated, but the bitches hit off the line before they got there, and ran through the small fields round Stretton-on-the-Fosse, while the more prudent members of the field followed their guide through the intricacies of the village. Beyond it they were rewarded by a good field road leading in the right direction, with hounds running well on their right and the huntsman in close attendance. But this interlude had sadly reduced the number of the field. A couple of hounds had actually taken a line on to Golden Cross, and perhaps on this account several of the field got too far to the right, found the Shipston railway interposed between themselves and the body of the pack, and were unable to recross. Others stopped to render first-aid to a lady who had a bad fall on the slippery road. Shortly afterwards another lady fell over wire. She had been gallantly carried up to this point by a twenty-one-year-old horse, and deserved a better fate. Fortunately she is constructed of the same enduring material as her horse, and whereas the first casualty was what used to be termed a "stretcher case," she would have been officially classified as "walking wounded."

The fortunate few who remained with hounds found things



FAST GOING OVER THE WALLS

7/15

THE HEYTHROP

comparatively simple, until they were confronted with a chained-up gate and an unpleasant-looking post and rails which the huntsman jumped; but the gate was taken off its hinges and the hunt proceeded. Perhaps from a riding point of view this was the best part of it, big grass fields with fair cut and laid fences, quite substantial enough for tiring horses; the light-weights were having all the best of it, and at one point the huntsman's only attendants appeared to be half a dozen hard-riding young ladies. Hounds hunted steadily on, turning slightly left past Compton Scorpion, and checked for a moment as they reached the lower slopes of Ilmington Hill. Here again the huntsman was saved by not knowing his country. We were close to the big badger earths in the open field below Ilmington Gorse; the native huntsman would have realised that the fox must have got in, and as there would always be a fox inside, hounds would certainly have marked.

But, fortunate in the absence of local knowledge, the bitches cast themselves beyond the earths, picked up the line of this remarkable fox—who must have been by this time as completely lost as his pursuers—and hunted very prettily up a steep hillside covered with dead bracken—Ilmington Gorse. To reach them the huntsman jumped a deep, awkward-looking ditch, with a straggling fence on the far side; his horse dropped its hind legs, but a gallant scramble and good horsemanship saved him. The rest of us turned left on sounder going: the steep hillside reduced horses to a sobbing walk, and hounds and huntsman disappeared round the shoulder of the hill. But near the top a friendly lane got us up to them again, and we found ourselves once more riding a hunt over jumpable fences round the upper slopes of Ilmington Hill, with the hilltop on our left. Somewhere about here a third lady fell, and another humanitarian sacrificed her place in the hunt.

As the chase led upwards, we found ourselves in the road which leads from Ilmington village to the hilltop, nearing the 800-foot contour line, and beyond it were confronted with something like a Devonshire coombe. Into this hounds ran, and we essayed to follow. But it was difficult to find a place to jump out of the road, and the next fence was wired. Down below us at the farm of Lark Stoke the farmer, who had heard hounds and hastily pulled out his cob, was waving directions. The huntsman and a few followers were able to cross the coombe at the farmhouse, while other adventurers found a way over higher up. But as we joined forces only a single hound was to be seen disappearing over the shoulder of the opposite hillside, and from this point we lost the pack. It had, in fact, divided. Six couple swung off right-handed, and were seen later by a farmer with a fox just in front of them, which got to ground on the banks of the Stour near Halford Manor, some seven miles outside our boundary in the Warwickshire country. The senior Joint-Master, who was not hunting, was returning that evening from Warwick Races when he noticed a nice-looking couple of foxhound bitches tied to the A.A. box at Tredington cross-roads. On investigation he was surprised to find that they belonged to him, and the other five couple were recovered in the neighbourhood.

Meanwhile the body of the pack had run on in the direction indicated by the single hound. The soundest maxim for the fox-hunter on these occasions is to get forward, so the survivors made their way into another shallower valley and struggled up the opposite slope. From this ridge the ground sloped away northwards to a good-looking grass country with big, uncut hedges, in which there was little hope of seeing hounds, though a few cattle running in the distance suggested that they might be running towards Admington, where there is a small fox

THE HEYTHROP

covert. But just as the pursuit was launched a couple of hounds were spotted on the left, and to them we turned—only to find that they were not hunting a line, and seemed to be as completely lost as ourselves. However, a lane led towards Admington, and on it we found a man who had heard hounds running in that direction and turning left to Meon Hill in front of us. The huntsman turned up the hill, whence at any rate it should be possible to see something, but what remained of the field had not got far up when the cry of hounds was heard apparently coming towards us. It appeared that the bitches had turned in front of us away from Admington on to Meon Hill, swung round it in a left-handed circle, and a moment later came into view behind us, running hard for the broken hill country from which we had come. Once more we were with our hounds, or what was left of them, but only to see them disappear into another straggling coombe, parallel to the one in which we had lost them. Fresh foxes were soon in evidence, hounds again divided, and it was not without a certain feeling of relief that we found some of the bitches marking a fox to ground.

This at least provided an opportunity to rally our scattered forces. The first whip had cast up just when he was wanted, on the opposite side of the coombe: the second whip had been lost in Wolford Wood. A few members of the field, who had doggedly followed the line, joined the select few who had been on Meon Hill. From a farmer, who had joined us, we learnt

that we were in Hidcote Coombe, and that there was a road at the head of it which might help us. From the road we could make out on a distant ridge the round tower at the top of Broadway Hill—a well-known landmark, but hitherto observed by the Heythrop Hunt from quite a different angle. We were able to get chilled water for the horses at Ebrington, where the green coats of the Hunt servants had not been seen before, and from that point it was a matter of fifteen miles back to kennels.

If hounds had been able to kill their fox, this might well have ranked among the great hunts of our day. Most of it took place in a completely strange country, and in a fine, wild country. It was real foxhunting with a touch of adventure added. The point from Cadley to Wolford Wood is four miles, and from Wolford Wood to Meon Hill is eight miles. It is impossible to measure the hunt as hounds ran, because no one knows exactly where they did run after Lark Stoke, but the distance was anything over 20 miles. Most of it was on grass, with enough jumping to satisfy everybody. The going was always good, and though hounds never ran really fast, they ran quite fast enough. The time occupied was two hours and fifteen minutes. The hunting was practically continuous, and though there were half a dozen places where we might have changed foxes, there was no evidence that we ever did change. It was a hunt which will not be forgotten by any of those who had the good fortune to see it from start to finish.



THE MEYNELL

From a meet at Sutton Crossroads. A find at the Spath

THE MEYNELL

FEW names, if any, are more familiar in the hunting world than that of Meynell. Not only does Fred Cotton's popular ditty "The Meynell Hunt Song" share with "John Peel" the honour of first place in its class, but the art of modern fox-hunting goes back to the great Hugo Meynell in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The present Meynell Hunt cannot, however, claim direct descent from the "father of fox-hunting," though he lived for a time at Bradley, in the Monday country, and had a pack there. It was his grandson, also a Hugo, to whom, in 1816, the foundation of the Hunt was due. He was followed by his son, Hugo Francis, who added Ingram to his patronymic. His reign lasted to 1871, after which the designation of the Hunt was changed from that of "Mr. Meynell's Hounds" to "The Meynell Hunt," and the present excellent kennels were built at Sudbury. In the early days there was also a family tradition in the office of huntsman; until 1898 a Leedham had always ridden in the middle of the pack.

Since Mr. H. F. Meynell-Ingram's time many changes of both Master and huntsman have occurred. Lord Waterpark ruled for a decade, Colonel Chandos-Pole for seven years, Mr. Hamar Bass for twelve, Mr. Gerald Hardy for eight, Mr. R. Fort for two periods of five and three years respectively, Sir Harold Nutting for nine. Mr. Fort's second mastership, during the war, had a tragic end. Hounds were running hard near Shardlow when the cry of "'Ware wire" went up. "Damn the wire," shouted the Master and put his horse at the fence. It was in

keeping with his adventurous spirit, but this time he had dared fortune once too often.

Of the huntsmen, the one to carry the horn longest after the Leedhams' time was Peter Farrelly, who left in 1929, when Sir Harold Nutting went to the Quorn country. Then came a revolutionary change. Never before had the Meynell been hunted by an amateur, except for one season by Sir F. Milbank, and on rare occasions by Sir Harold Nutting, who on one such occasion handled a leash of foxes. "Amateur" seems a misnomer to apply to the brilliant galaxy of Master-Huntsmen who have held office since. Mr. C. Hilton Green, coming with a great reputation from the North Cotswold, increased it with the Meynell before he went on to the Cottesmore, Sir Peter Farquhar built up a pack which seemed to hunt with equal drive on good and bad scenting days, and a worthy successor to these arrived in 1934 in the person of Captain H. A. Jaffray. Through nearly the whole of this régime Sir William Bass has been Joint-Master. No small credit for the success of the Meynell in the last forty years must go to Mr. Edwin Caldecott, who was secretary from 1897 to 1927, and to Major G. Thompson, who succeeded him.

The Meynell country lies partly in Derbyshire, partly in Staffordshire, about half and half. The superb grasses, intersected by brooks, of the Derbyshire side, are only inferior to those of high Leicestershire in the size of the enclosures. They contrast strongly with the Staffordshire side, which includes all that is left of the great Needwood Forest, and is famous (or



AWAY FROM RADBOURNE ROUGH —

LOOKING TOWARDS SUTTON

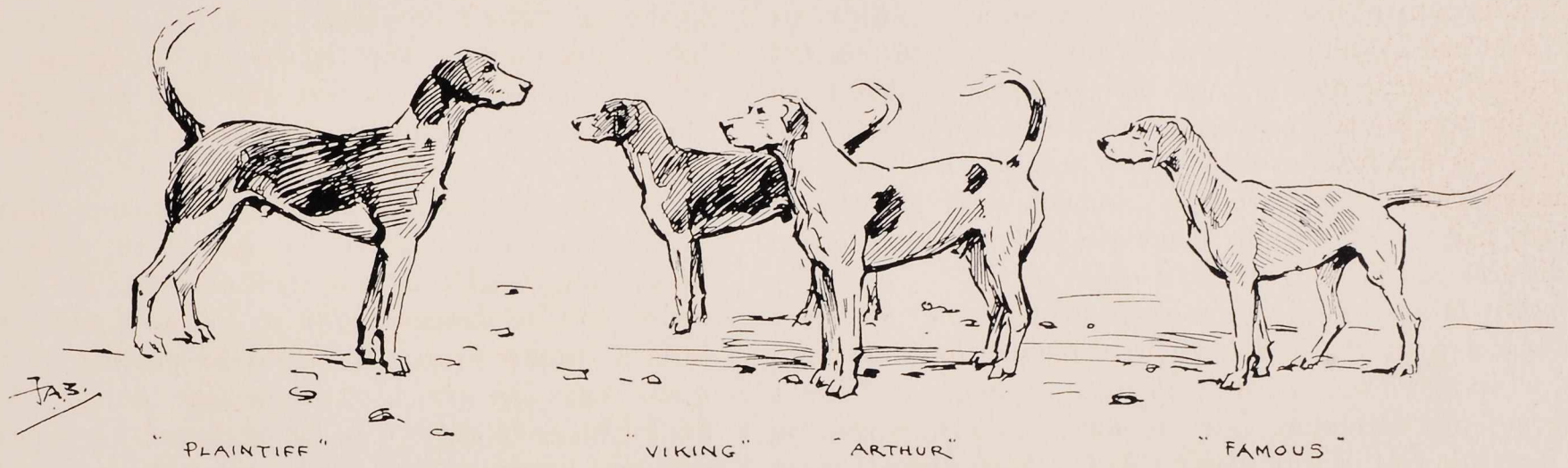
THE MEYNELL

notorious) for the many pit-holes, overgrown now with vegetation and bushes, a legacy of Crimean days, when the farmers dug marl to spread on the land for corn-growing. There are, however, some nice grasses in Staffordshire, notably west of Blithfield. For generations the hunting days have been Monday and Thursday in Derbyshire, and Tuesday and Saturday in Staffordshire. Since George III.'s reign the opening meet has always been at Sudbury; the other fixtures of the opening week are always Blithbury on the Tuesday, Radburne on the Thursday and New Inn on the Saturday. There are few hotels and fewer hunting-boxes in the country; nearly all Meynell followers hunt from their homes. This means conveniently small fields, seldom numbering much more than a hundred.

Good, wild foxes are typical of both sides of the country, and volumes could be filled with the historic runs which have taken place. One of the longest was in February, 1862, when a fox from Foremark, near Repton, took hounds far into the Quorn country and was eventually killed at Ulverscroft after making a 17-mile point in two hours. In 1894 and 1896 there was a remarkable series of hunts from the Ednaston and Bradley coverts into the foothills of the Peak district. Three of these hunts, if not all, are believed to have been in pursuit of the same fox, the "Peak fox," as he was called. On the last hunt he was shot as he lay on a stone wall near Winster, by a farmer who had no idea that hounds were within twenty miles of the place. In 1928, after a hard day at Foston, the body of the pack got away unattended and were heard hunting at night near Bradbourne, 14 miles away.

The remarkable sport shown by the three gifted amateur huntsmen of recent seasons is best represented by taking a typical day from the mastership of each. On a foggy morning

in February, 1930, there had been some doubt whether hounds would hunt at all, and a smaller field than usual met Mr. Hilton Green and the bitch-pack on the broad green at Twyford cross-roads. A few minutes past eleven found the company jogging up the lane past Stenson Lock to Hell Meadows. Here a fox at once jumped up but it was soon apparent that scent was poor. This, however, is a circumstance which has never been allowed to discourage Meynell followers in recent seasons, and soon horses were crashing down the muddy lane which borders the covert, and over the grasses by Bakeacre Lane, where the pack were running hard into the teeth of a nor'easter. The fox was headed at the Derby-Uttoxeter main road, but Mr. Hilton Green's uncanny prescience of a fox's movements put hounds right at once and most followers never knew they had checked at all. Through the grounds of Pastures and alongside Mrs. Kirkland's farmhouse they ran, and thence to the southern outskirts of Derby, to lose their fox in some complicated allotment gardens at Sunny Hill. Next came a fast twenty minutes with a fox from some kale of Mr. Preston-Jones at Mickleover, straight to Burnaston and back to the big mental hospital, grass all the way. This fox literally escaped among the inmates of the asylum. Another short fast hunt followed from the Four Acres to Burnaston, the fox getting in near Etwall. Then came the turn of Radburne Rough. This renowned covert, always associated with the great squire of Radburne, the late Colonel R. W. Chandos-Pole, raises a feeling of tense expectancy whenever hounds draw there, so numerous have been the great runs from this covert. On the day in question there was silence for ten minutes, broken only by an occasional quiet cheer from the huntsman. Then a hound threw her tongue, then another, then a third, soon there was music from the whole pack. It was plain that there were three or four lines, and when Frank Freeman,



Some "MEYNELL HOUNDS"

THE MEYNELL

enjoying a busman's holiday from the Pytchley, halloaed a fox away, hounds were so divided that they did not get the best of starts. Still, they ran very nicely in a big right-handed ring by Lees Green, Haunted Hollow and under Radburne Hall to the Rough again. This time the fox did not linger and was viewed away by Jack Sturman, formerly huntsman of the Heythrop, to Dalbury Hollow. With a glorious cry the pack swept over the two brooks and through Captain Buckston's snug covert, Sutton Ash Gorse, in a beeline for three miles to cross the Hilton brook, below the well-known gorse, at the spot featured in Cecil Aldin's picture. Hounds flew on, bearing slightly right-handed, over the hill for Foston. Through the length of the top covert they went, and down by the old mill to Sapperton. Fresh foxes caused trouble here and after running a left-handed circle back to Foston, hounds were stopped at dusk. They had scored a 7-mile point in a little over two hours and hardly touched a ploughed field.

When Mr. Hilton Green went to the Cottesmore, Sir Peter Farquhar came from the Tedworth to maintain the same high standard of sport. There were many days of longer and faster hunts during his triennium, but for sheer thrill it would be hard to beat his first opening day. A big field turned up at Sudbury, and hounds, after marking their first fox to ground, found several more in Brocksford Gorse. Within half an hour the keen bitches had hunted a brace of these to their doom; they returned to the gorse for a third and went straight away through Hare Park to the River Dove. There had been heavy rains that autumn and the river was in full flood. However, the fox swam across at once into Staffordshire and the pack followed suit. There are no bridges between Sudbury Station and Uttoxeter, both four miles away. The foremost riders were Mr. Tom Pearson, Sir Peter Farquhar, Captain Luke Lillingston

(now Master of the North Atherstone) and Mr. Bob Goodall, a well-known sporting farmer. These four at once plunged in. All went well until they reached the steep and slippery bank on the far side. As they were slithering up here Mr. Goodall's horse slid and forced Sir Peter's into the water again. The Master was unseated and his mare swam back to Derbyshire. Mr. Tom Pearson rose magnanimously to the occasion and mounted Sir Peter on his four-year-old. He soon overtook hounds by the railway, and they ran on fast by Woodford Rough to the Uttoxeter racecourse. Here the fox turned back and with remarkable cunning kept recrossing the railway. Hounds were much handicapped by passing trains and were eventually stopped and taken back to Sudbury Coppice, and after another enjoyable hunt, marked a fox to ground.

Sir Peter Farquhar went to the Whaddon Chase in 1934 and was succeeded by Captain H. A. Jaffray, who had previously hunted the Brocklesby and the Cotswold. He soon showed his ability and his determination to follow in the steps of his two brilliant predecessors. It would be possible to write of many grand days on the Derbyshire side during last season, but Staffordshire ought not to be neglected. A typical day on that side was February 23rd, 1935, when the meet was at Six Lane Ends, in the Needwood Forest country. From the Greaves, a big, hilly covert, a fox was quickly forced away to the notorious plaster-pits at Fauld, which have witnessed the sad end of many a hunt. Patience and determination, however, on the part of various people had proved that the earths there were not unstoppable, and the fox turned back by Cupandition and Hanbury nearly to the Greaves, before again investigating the Fauld earths. Hounds did not allow him to do this for long, driving him down the rugged hillside to the Dove. At first he seemed inclined to cross but after running the bank for a mile



John M. ARTHUR BAILEY

THE MEYNELL

or two turned back to Fauld and got into a hollow tree. On the arrival of hounds he quitted this refuge and they rolled him over in three fields, after hunting without a check for fifty-five minutes. The next hunt began at Needwood Gorse, hounds taking a bee-line past Stockley and Bushton Bridge to Rolleston Park, once the residence of the late Sir Oswald Mosley. Being headed on the Tutbury road, the fox ran right-handed towards Burton-on-Trent and got to ground short of the Henhurst after covering six miles in forty-five minutes. Knightley Park, one of the famous Rangemore coverts, provided the next. Hounds raced through Higgs' Hill and over Lady Burton's park to Bannister's, then bore off through the Deanery and Scotch Hills to the old, wild park of Yoxall. Here the fox made a loop through Brankley and hounds checked awhile. Recovering the line before there had been time to make much

difference they raced up the Lin Brook to Sir William Bass's park and rolled their fox over in the Laurels at Byrkley after a grand hunt of 80 minutes.

Whether one considers the country itself and the great traditions it holds, the sterling qualities of the hounds and the rare sport they show, or any other aspect of the Meynell, it would be true to say that here is fox-hunting at its very best; and it is not perhaps inappropriate to end with the refrain from Fred Cotton's song :

*Hurrah for the hounds of the Meynell ;
The world cannot boast such a kennel ;
And a man must ride straight,
If he'd not be too late
To see Reynard rolled o'er by the Meynell.*



THE NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND

From a meet at the Kennels—always a sure find

THE NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND

THE North Northumberland country was for various periods prior to 1906 incorporated with the Berwickshire. During those times the Hunt was known as the Northumberland and Berwickshire. Since 1906 the Masters have been:—

1906-07—Mrs. Burrell.

1908-10—Committee.

1911-15—Mr. John Clay.

1915-19—Committee.

1919-20—Mr. John Clay.

1920-27—Colonel the Hon. H. E. Joicey, D.S.O.

1927-29—Mr. Alvery Hall Watt.

1929 to the present time—Miss Annette Usher.

Colonel Joicey's Mastership was the rebirth of the country after the dreadful years of the War. Faced with the shadow of a pack, neglected coverts, an increase of wire and a shortage of foxes, he set himself the task of rebuilding the fortunes of the Hunt and met with the greatest success.

The country over which these hounds hunt is extremely varied in character. It is bounded on the south-west by the wild magnificence of the Cheviot Hills and on the north by the River Tweed—as famed for its salmon as for its beauty. On the east the boundary at high tide is the North Sea. Not many packs can claim that they have killed a fox at over 2000 feet as well as at sea level, or that they raced with the tide for their fox.

Much of the country is pasture, famous for the breeding of cattle and sheep, but infamous for scenting conditions. Hounds have consequently many difficulties to compete with, and,

except on the moorlands, everything is in favour of the foxes, which are of a much larger and stronger breed than their cousins in the South.

The type of hound for the country is a light, wiry animal, built to gallop, and must possess the best of noses.

Many remarkable hunts have been enjoyed, with their usual accompaniment of amusing incidents. The River Till, which winds its twisting course through the centre of the country from Wooler to the Tweed at Twizel Bridge, is almost as inadequately supplied with bridges to-day as it was at the time of Flodden. The fox and the hounds are always on the other side of the river, and the fords take a good deal of learning—as one gallant follower discovered after he had taken three successive duckings in one day.

On another occasion a fox climbed up Norman Castle and appeared sitting on a jutting stone twenty feet above the ground. How he got there remains a mystery. He jumped down amongst the pack and escaped, only to be killed later.

Another happy memory for any hound lover was the sight of an old bitch making her way unsteadily for a hundred yards or more along the top of a wall, throwing her tongue until she reached the point where the fox had jumped down.

Once at the end of a good hunt to Barmoor Castle, the tired fox was, to every one's amazement, seen to be running in the middle of the pack, a fresh fox having jumped up in front of the leading hounds.

Taken at random from a Hunting Diary, the first six weeks



- MINDRUM CRAGGS -



By FLODDEN FARM — LOOKING TOWARDS RABBIT BRAES

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THE NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND

of 1930 give a good idea of North Northumberland sport, the most outstanding runs in that period being :—

January 1st.—“ From Berrington an 8-mile point to ground by the sea at Chesterhill, out of our country, so had to leave him.”

January 3rd.—“ A real good day, the bitches went like smoke.”

January 6th.—“ Three hours from Mindrum, with a kill in the dark.”

January 13th.—“ From Tillmouth 45 minutes, a hard 8½-mile point, nine as hounds ran, and a kill.”

January 21st.—“ From Pawston, three hours, and ran into him near Carham, stiff as a poker—an old dog fox.”

February 3rd.—“ From Melkington two hours, and a kill.” Culminating in what was probably one of the best runs ever enjoyed with this pack—on February 7th, from Ord House near Berwick to the Akeld-Commonburn march in the Cheviots, where hounds were stopped. A sixteen-mile point being made, and thirty-five as hounds ran, in three hours. The point was from the north-east to the south-west corner of the country, and the run is one which will be remembered by all who had the good fortune to take part in it as one of the most thrilling and pleasurable events of their lives. Only two besides the Master and Hunt servants saw the end of it.



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VIEWED NEAR MINDRUM CRAGGS — LOOKING TOWARDS SCOTLAND



THE TIPPERARY

Away from Tullamaine Gorse—with Slieve-na-Man and Tullamaine Moat in background

THE TIPPERARY

A Great Day with the Tipperary Hounds

ON Saturday, January 12th, 1935, these hounds met at Knockeevan. As we waited in front of the empty, shuttered house for hounds to move off, we thought with regret and gratitude of the late Master whose home it was when he hunted the Tipperary Hounds. Before he came to live at Knockeevan it was a rare event to find a fox in the Screens, but during and since then they almost invariably hold.

This Saturday was no exception. Hounds found immediately in the Screen. Breaking covert at once, they crossed the Clerihan road near the front lodge and hunted on through Mr. Smith's farm almost to Donoughmore Church. Turning right-handed, our pilot went on through Pass, recrossed the Clerihan road into Pass-over-the-road, through Ballyveelish and to ground in the winning field of Giant's Grave Point-to-Point course.

After the rains of the week before, scent throughout was good, despite a thin white frost and no wind. This was an interesting little hunt and a nice curtain-raiser for the dramatic chase which was to follow.

Hounds jogged on to D'Arcy's Cross and finding an outlying fox in Mocklerstown they got away on good terms. With a screaming scent they ran very hard over the Moyle river, through Mocklerstown Stud Farm, bearing as if for Coleman. But some distance short of this point their fox turned right-handed over the D'Arcy's Cross road and ran on through Ballybeg almost to Ballycornane. Bearing ever so little to the

right again, he crossed the Clerihan road and hounds, hunting with a grand cry and spreading themselves on a wide front, won all the way from the Field. Let it be said, from all but one. And this one, besides being a special artist, was just a bit quicker off the mark and a bit luckier than most people to-day.

So the chase went on, by the old Church of Clerihan and Ballyclerihan, dipped for a moment into the northern end of Lavally bogs, and still hounds had the best of it as they raced their hardest through Ballyhimican, and with Decoy hard on their right went on to, and through, Springmount to Graigue.

Here hounds checked for the first and only time, allowing the sadly depleted field to get on terms. Our huntsman cast to good effect, however, and hounds hunted on through Poulmucka, where a fresh fox ran back within fifty yards of the pack. But, fortunately, hounds never viewed him. Unhappily for themselves some of the field did. Later in the day, when their ardour had a little cooled, they pondered, perhaps, the subtle difference between a fresh and a hunted fox.

Hounds pressed steadily on until another fresh fox from the Screen at Barona looked like complicating matters. However, a "holloa" proclaimed our hunted fox away on the Woodrooff side of the Screen, and hounds tumbling out of covert got away on level terms.

Leaving Woodrooff on the left, the line now led on through Currenstown and thence by Poulmucka village and Westgrove to Donegal. Scorning the open earths here, this good fox went



- A TYPICAL TIPPERARY BANK -

THE TIPPERARY

on over the wide pastures of Shanballard and Maginstown—where the big banks took heavy toll of the fast-dwindling field.

Hounds were now running almost mute, driving their hardest, so that it seemed this good fox must die. Yet all through Ballynattin and over the road to Moorstown he struggled on, to save his brush by getting to ground in the big breeding earth at Mr. Frank Quirke's.

Although hounds were cheated of well-deserved blood, no one who saw this hunt could help a feeling of secret gladness that such a fox should live. The time was fifty-five minutes. The best point six miles—ten as hounds ran—and all over the cream of the Tipperary country.

And what a country this is at its best only those who have hunted here can rightly know. Every country has its drawbacks and nobody is going to say Tipperary is perfect or that it is still the Tip it was in those gorgeous pre-war days the Solons of the Chase tell us about, before there was a strand of wire to be encountered, or the growth of the blackthorns had made some fences so unrideable that not even a good blackbird would have a hope of getting through them. But, though no one will deny that there is a certain amount of wire and the bushes in some districts are damnable, equally no one who knows Tipperary of to-day can deny that it is one of the most thrilling and interesting countries in which to pursue the chase.

Unless youth and ardour are on one's side there is hardly a country in Ireland where one is not happier when really well mounted, and this may be said without hesitation of Tipperary, where a bad or a cowardly horse is very nearly useless. The

fields are big enclosures for the most part, and hounds fly on a good scenting day. So to ride a horse that gallops is nice, but to ride a horse that is a good jumper is essential. For what with the bushes and the intimidating height of the stone-faced banks (and they did build many of them with stones to the top), not to mention the width and depth of not a few ditches, one would do much better to stay at home than come out on a poor performer.

But given a good horse (and it may be said that Tipperary abounds with such, for if a horse calls himself a seasoned hunter here he practically must be a good hunter or dead), there is indeed no place like Tipperary—that great grass plain where the going is almost universally perfect—and the ideal condition “on top of the ground” is practically a permanency the season round; where, as we go a-hunting, the mountains are on our west and east and north and south—Galtees, Knockmealdowns, Conmeraghs and Slievnamon; where the gorse coverts are well preserved and outliers are found in the bogs; where every farmer, poor as well as rich, has a welcome for the hunt.

Tipperary is a lovely country to hunt in, and a happy country for strangers. The writer of these notes is not an enthusiastic native so he may be allowed to pay a passing tribute to the charm and friendliness extended by the hunting folk of Tipperary to the stranger in their midst. And in how many hunts is this so? Are not spleen and venom more often the stranger's portion? Or that icy ignoring which does so little to improve a good or bad day's sport.



A KEEN FOLLOWER OF THE 'TIPPERARY'

A Stern Chase with the Clonmel Harriers

NO account of the chase in Tipperary can be complete without mention of the Clonmel Harriers. A grand little pack of hounds that, under their Sporting Mastership, hunt outlying foxes more frequently than they pursue hares, are hand in glove with their neighbours the Foxhounds (and of how many harrier packs in Ireland can this be said?) and show such marvellous sport that an account of their best day during the season 1934-35 must be written before this Tipperary tale is over.

They met on Tuesday, January 22nd, at Loughkent. This meet always draws a big crowd as, not only is it right in the best of the Tipperary country but the first draw—Mr. Hally's snug bit of gorse—always holds a fox and generally one of the right sort.

To-day, however, the draw was changed and the honour of giving this pack the best hunt they have had for ten years lay with Kelly's Bog.

Ryan's Bog, the first draw, did not hold and hounds went on to Kelly's Bog. Soon a whimper in covert proclaimed a fox at home, and the music, growing to a crescendo, told us there was going to be one of those blazing scents, unhappily so rare.

A leash of foxes broke covert simultaneously. Fortune favouring us, the pack went left-handed with an old grey fox who doubtless was paying his court to the brace of vixens that went right-handed. Straight into the light wind that was blowing went this gallant fox. Barely a field behind hounds were running their hardest. This was the start of an epic fox-hunt.

Hounds were running so fast that very little music came down the wind to help the field to keep in touch as, leaving New Inn

village on their right, hounds raced on through Marlhill to the covert-side of Rockwell.

To the surprise of all and to the confusion of some (notably the two clever girls who thought to think a field ahead of the fox and found themselves in the melancholy solitudes of Rockwell lakeside covert), hounds turned away left-handed in the covert-field, crossed the road by Boytonrath (where the National winner, Tipperary Tim, first saw the light), turned left-handed again through Garronlea Bower and raced on through the thickly-fenced enclosures of Masterstown.

Hounds had now run for twenty minutes without a semblance of a check. They certainly had the beating of us through this closely-fenced country, and horrid visions of losing touch with them altogether possessed us when the briefest of brief checks at Masterstown (where our fox tried an earth on the old fort) gave us that moment's respite which just put things right and made all the difference between a glorious chase and a stern contest.

Our fox, however, did not get in here and a forward cast had us merrily sailing away by the moat of Knockgraffon, that well-known landmark—sometime home of a King of Munster—which towers out of the plains of Tipperary, and from which the wide grasslands sweep on every side back to the wild heights of the mountains, Galtees, Knockmealdowns, Slievnamon—those distant guardians of the loveliest country in Ireland.

The hunt has gone down now on to that paradise of grass fields and fair fences. Hounds are driving their hardest through



TO THE MANNER BORN

THE TIPPERARY

Mr. Hennessy's farm and Outeragh Bog. Crossing the main Cashel-Cahir road near the Glebe, hounds ran on through Whitelands. Bearing a little right-handed here, still they gave us no respite. Tiring horses and empty saddles told their tale of the pace as still hounds drove on by Mortlestown, almost to the boundary of Knockfea Wood. Scorning the open earths of this covert, our fox went on through Keylong and Kilemnee, through Barnora and over the main Clonmel-Cashel road to the Screens at Loughloher.

Here hounds were stopped and surely robbed of well-

deserved blood, for their fox must certainly have died had he not gained the refuge of these big coverts, abounding in foxes and open earths. All horses were done and hounds would have got clean away had the chase continued.

The pace, the line and the state of the going were all factors in making this one of the best hunts seen of late years in Tipperary. Point, seven miles—twelve as hounds ran. Time, one hour and ten minutes. Hounds were handled only once during this hunt and to them belongs the credit of making it an unforgettable day in the annals of the Clonmel Harriers.



A WELL KNOWN PAIR