
MONARCHY AND THE CHASE

Books by "Sabretache"

SHIRES AND PROVINCES
MORE SHIRES AND PROVINCES
(*Illustrated by Lionel Edwards, R.I.*)

A GENTLEMAN AND HIS HOUNDS
HUNTING SCENES
(*Illustrated by Cecil Aldin*)

ETC. ETC.

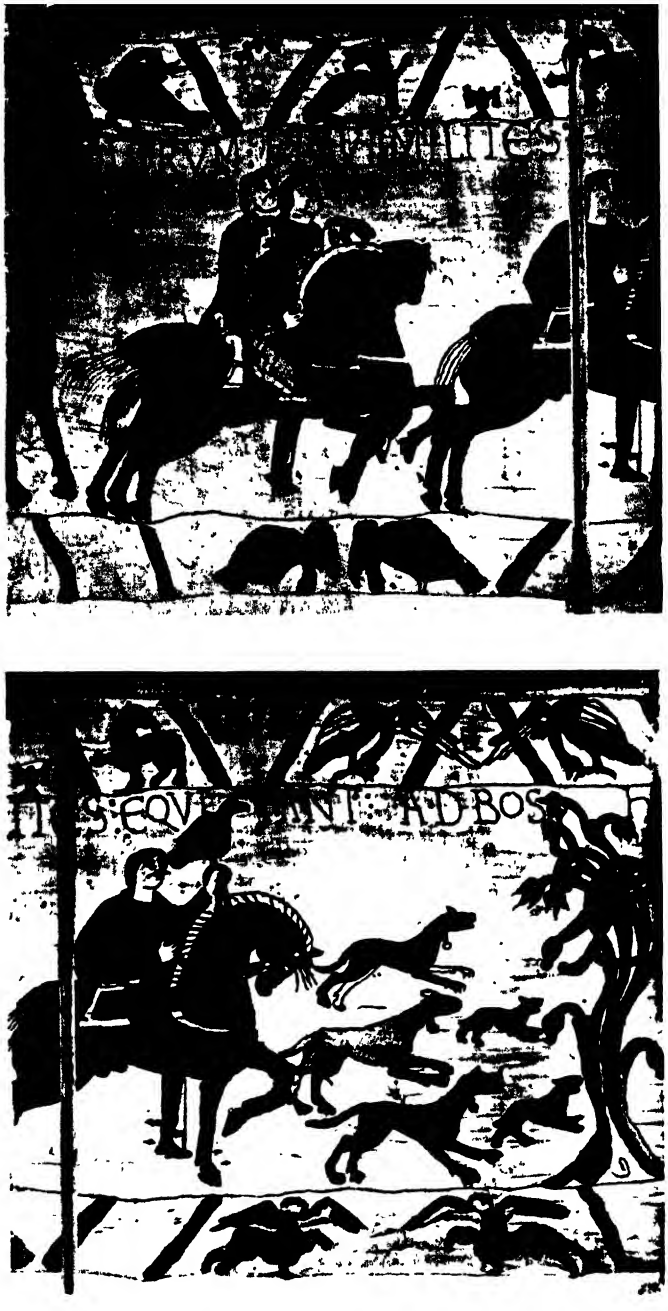

PLATE I. KING HAROLD IN THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY

The upper picture is from the 27th compartment of the tapestry and depicts Harold II of England and his Knights after his return from his visit to William of Normandy, to whom he had sworn fidelity on a shrine of relics (26th compartment). The lower picture is from the 2nd compartment and shows Harold with a hawk upon his wrist (a mark of nobility) with his hound on the way to Bosham. There are 72 compartments in the tapestry, which is 20 inches in width and 214 feet long.

MONARCHY

and the

CHASE

by

"SABRETACHE"

LONDON
EYRE and SPOTTISWOODE

First Published in 1948 and Made and Printed in Great Britain
for Eyre and Spottiswoode (Publishers) Ltd. 15 Bedford St. W.C.2
by Butler and Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

To

His Grace the tenth Duke of Beaufort,

K.G., P.C., G.C.V.O.

Master of the Horse to H.M. King George VI and H.M. King Edward VIII and Master of the Beaufort Hunt since 1924

This Book

is by Special Permission and with

very Grateful Thanks dedicated by

THE AUTHOR

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE author has to acknowledge His Majesty's gracious permission to examine and reproduce, print and publish extracts from the MSS. of the Honourable Robert Fulke Greville, Equerry to H.M. King George III. These documents in the main constitute a hunting diary, kept at Windsor Castle for the period September 1794 onwards, and include reports sent in by Johnson, then huntsman to the Royal Buckhounds. There are also two longer extracts written by Mr. Greville, descriptive of one day's memorable hunt, an accident to his Majesty, fortunately harmless in its results, and the King's narrow escape from the attentions of a Gentleman of the Road when returning from a long day's hunting, which ended up somewhere near the present peaceful town of Uxbridge, and of his anxiety as to what would be the fate of a watch, which he greatly prized, if the command "Stand and deliver!" had rung out on the wintry evening air. His Majesty was returning to Windsor by post-chaise hired in Uxbridge, and some of his suite, following close behind in another one, were, in fact, caught by the gentleman with the brace of heavy horse pistols and duly deprived of any valuables they had in their possession.

The Hon. Robert Fulke Greville was an Equerry to George III for sixteen and a half years, and later was appointed a Groom of the Bedchamber. His diary was deposited more or less recently in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle.[1] The inclusion of these extracts in the chapter devoted to the Georgian period of the Royal connection with hunting, is, naturally, a great embellishment to such other records as it has been possible for the author to collect, and he cannot adequately express his gratitude for the gracious permission accorded him, and also for the opportunity of examining the diaries of King Edward VII as Prince of Wales.

It has been the endeavour in this history of hunting, as it has affected the monarchs of this realm, to approach things from an angle which is new and to incorporate as much detail of a personal nature as possible. It is hoped that the object of avoiding the too well-trodden paths through the forest of History has been accomplished and that, if it has, it may encourage those to whom dates and names have ever

[1] This diary, having been bought by the Librarian, Windsor Castle, at the beginning of the 1939–45 war, was published about 1930.

been so sore a trial that they have only really memorized one name and one date. Therefore, let us hope, that the author may entice the reader to follow him over some of the very big fences which a gallop through history inevitably involves. Many and various will be the people to be met with on this journey. There have been hunting monarchs who were fierce and unfriendly men, and entirely unsafe persons; and there are likewise in this gallery many others who have had hazy ideas as to the meaning of the words Mine and Thine, especially where horses are concerned, and alas that it should be necessary to include in this category the Great Cardinal. Shakespeare, however, points an accusing finger at Wolsey, and since the poet lived far closer to his times than we do, how can we venture to doubt that his accusation was based upon evidence which may not have been altogether flimsy? Seeing that The Bard himself had been arraigned for deer poaching in Charlecote Park in Warwickshire, and haled before the Justice, the Lucy of the day, his intrepidity in bringing a charge of horse-stealing against the Cardinal is all the more astounding.

In another *allée* in this volume is collected what must surely be the record hunting run of all time, Richard I's 108-mile point with a stag taken away from Sherwood Forest and pulled down at Barnesdale in Yorkshire. The actual distance "as hounds ran" has never been ascertained, but this hunt makes such things as the Jericho, the Great Wood, the Waterloo, the Barkby Holt and the Clawson Thorns achievements by the various hunts concerned look very small beer indeed.

Sweet wonder, and, it is hoped, also admiration, may be aroused in the venturesome reader at the record of ten horses in one day's hunting ridden to a tail-quivering standstill by Henry VIII. Surprise may again be aroused by the relation of an incident concerning His Majesty's achievement, after a heavy midday meal, of riding several jousts, and usually smiting his adversaries so shrewdly that he bowled them over, horses and all. If these things should fail to attract, there are ghosts a-many, including that of the execrable Wild Dayrell of sinister Littlecote Hall on the Bath road, hunting his spectral hounds and breaking his spectral neck over a spectral stile. If even these shades should fail to create an urge for knowledge, there can be added that of the "bloody wretch", which still haunts one of the best-known coverts in the Atherstone country, Sutton Ambion, which was a part of the battlefield of Bosworth. There are also less illustrious people, highwaymen in great profusion, including that virtuoso so highly eulogised by Dr. Johnson, "Sixteen String Jack", and also those industrious operators who, in the early Georgian days, made a strong cavalry escort an absolute necessity for the master and hunt servants

of the Royal Buckhounds coming home of a nighttime. There is likewise Claude du Vall, for whom "The Merry Monarch" had a soft place in his heart. The "second conqu'ror of the Norman race" was buried in the old church in Covent Garden. All these persons are linked, some more closely than others, with the huntings of the kings, and constitute a very considerable aid to the composition and atmosphere of the picture which it has been attempted to paint.

The author takes this occasion to thank His Grace the Duke of Beaufort for having accepted the dedication of this book. This seemed to be most fitting, since His Grace is the only surviving master of hounds in the Three Kingdoms with a continuous family tradition. He has been *de facto* Master of his ancient family pack since 1924. Some years previous to that he had hunted the Beaufort bitch pack during the lifetime of his father, the ninth duke.

The family connection with the hunting activities of the monarchs of England is a close one, quite apart from the uninterrupted descent in tail-male from John O'Gaunt.

The actual date when hounds were first kept at Badminton is a somewhat fluid one, but it is virtually certain that Henry, first Earl of Worcester, hunted the fox round Raglan Castle in the latter part of the sixteenth century. The seventh earl, who was the third Marquess and the first Duke of Beaufort, was the founder of Badminton. He was born in 1629, succeeded in 1667 and was created Duke of Beaufort in 1682. The hunting history of Badminton may be said to date from that year. There was a first-class pack of staghounds and a "pompous stable which would accommodate forty horses". The type of hound was most probably very similar to that which Viscount Lowther had brought down from Westmorland to the Cottesmore country in 1666. A kennel book of the Beaufort as a pack of foxhounds, dated 1722, is extant.

The earlier exploits of the House of Somerset where the twin sisters, Sport and War, are concerned, can be traced to the operation which culminated in that picturesque cavalry encounter called "The Battle of the Spurs" (Guinegate 16, Aug. 1513). Charles Somerset, first Earl of Worcester, was an officer in Henry VIII's pursuing cavalry force. Later (1520) Charles Somerset accompanied Henry VIII to that gorgeous pageant, the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and he and his son Henry, later the second Earl of Worcester, were the judges at the jousts, which were upon a particularly lavish and extended scale. Henry VIII took over with him a picked string of horses to make it quite certain that his dearly beloved Brother, François I of France, should not bear away the spoils. Charles Somerset, and after him his son, Henry, were rated the best tilters of their time.

The author further desires to acknowledge with gratitude the

very valuable assistance he has received from Sir Alan Lascelles, Private Secretary to H.M. the King, Sir Owen Morshead, Librarian of Windsor Castle, Miss Mary Mackenzie, Registrar of the Royal Archives, and from Sir Godfrey Thomas, Private Secretary to H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester. Grateful thanks are also extended to Captain George Drummond, of Pitsford Hall, Northampton, for access to his hunting diary for the year 1920-1, the season in which H.M. King George VI and H.R.H. the Duke of Windsor, then Prince of Wales, made their début in the Shires under his highly proficient tutelage. Captain Drummond is a legendary figure in the Pytchley country, which the author has selected as an appropriate starting-point for this history of the Huntings of the Kings of this Realm, for it is there that there are to be found any definite records of a royal hunting establishment under a warlike King of Mercia in the middle of the seventh century.

If a personal note is permissible, it can be put on record that the author felt acutely the incongruity of being compelled to reconstruct the Battle of Poictiers in an atmosphere, and amid the din, of German V-bombs. Poictiers, incidentally, has a particular bearing upon hunting history, since it was there that John de Pelham, ancestor of many Brocklesby masters, took the surrender of John of Valois. The buckles in the Earl of Yarborough's arms are those of the belt and sword-slings of the royal captive, and were awarded by the Black Prince in commemoration of the event.

MONARCHY AND THE CHASE

CHAPTER I

The Kings' Pleasure

THE Recorder of the "Is" and "Is Not" in the general pageant of events in that magic shadow show called History, has ever been compelled to voyage upon a sea, which so often is either completely uncharted, or, if charted, badly so, that his task has necessarily been one studded with many perils. So much that comes into his widely-cast net will not stand up to the cold and quite merciless dissection by the Law of Evidence. The most eminent A. has been flatly contradicted by the equally eminent B.; C. has derided both of them; and D. has ignored all three, thereby, with thinly-veiled innuendo, aspersing the well-weighed deductions, at which they have arrived upon such facts as they may have considered to have been sufficiently established to warrant belief.

Doubts have even been cast upon documentary testimony, for some critics have not been prepared to believe that the compilers have suffered from that taste exact for faultless fact which, as one of England's best humorists (Gilbert) has said "amounts to a disease". When historians have made so bold as to put actual words into the mouths of the characters, who have strutted the stage for their little hour or two and gone their way, they have laid themselves open to an even fiercer fire, and been charged with committing that heinous legal sin of recording what the butler told the cook!

Is there anyone who can impose implicit belief in the story of Alfred and the cakes, or Knut and the waves of the sea, or Bruce and the spider? There may be many who believe the story of Cromwell and the bauble, for they will remind us that the incident occurred in the presence of a multitude of M.P.s, who, of course are quite above suspicion; and there are any number of people who have never questioned the story of George III and the butcher of Reading, but it is the unfortunate fact that a blighting miasma of incredulity hangs over so much that it has become popular to call "Historical Fact", and which obviously can be no more than the finest hearsay on the market.

In only one department of history would there seem to be a firm foothold in this quaking morass, the never-disputed fondness of

monarchs for the Chase. Hunting in sober fact has been an integral part of the ritual of kingship, and possibly, if anyone could be found with sufficient diligence to follow the long trail back to our first ancestor, he would discover that that monarch of all he surveyed was even fonder of hunting than he was of gardening.

In this volume it is not proposed to make any such ambitious attempt, but just to take the rough-and-ready days of the Heptarchy and King Penda as a sufficiently early starting post. The Heptarchy points the path straight to Mercia and Wessex, and thus to a hunting ground of the kings, which, to-day, is known as the Pytchley country and has maintained that anciently won honour by having been patronized by two modern monarchs of the House of Windsor, King Edward VIII, now the Duke of Windsor, and his present Majesty King George VI.

The Pytchley country has a further claim for first selection in any treatise upon the close connection between the Throne and hunting, since it is there that can be found one of the earliest, if not the earliest, instance of a State-employed professional huntsman. There is no trace of Alfred the Great, that *grand veneur* of these early times, having had any official of this description, though it is absolutely certain that he must have had a quite extensive hunting establishment. The same difficulty is encountered where that great hunting man Brian Boru of Meath is concerned, for there are no names discoverable. In Penda's time, however, we have something much more definite which closely resembles the relationship of a modern master of hounds with his huntsmen.

Only a few of the great rulers of the past attained to real eminence in the Chase, and those who could be designated Masters of Hounds, as that term should be understood, can be counted almost on the fingers of one hand.

Penda (*circa* A.D. 642) can definitely claim to have been a Pytchley master, and Æthelstan has an even better title, for he had a much greater knowledge than his savage predecessor, and may possibly be cited as one who best represented English methods as opposed to those which came over with the Normans. In other lands in the pre-Norman epoch Charlemagne stands out alone; and in Ireland Brian Boru and the other kings, who hunted in Meath and elsewhere, have good right to the title of master of hounds. That comely young king, Henry II, must be accorded prominence as a master, for he was the first titular head of the Royal Buckhounds in 1154, or thereabouts, some centuries previous to the long run of Gascon masters of that pack, the de Brocas, from which family, incidentally, a place well known to all wet-bob Etonians takes its name. Edward III most certainly has a claim to have been a master of hounds. He knew a good deal about

hunting, and was, at the same time, a very good horseman. Henry VIII, can only be classed as a "possible," for although he was very "keen on hunting", as that phrase is used, we do not know whether he understood very much about the breeding, the work in the field or the hunting of hounds. I think we may take it, however, that, since he claimed the leading rôle in every walk of life, he was, at any rate in his own estimation, the principal character where the old Royal Buckhounds and the later "Privy" pack were concerned. James I has claims to be considered a master of his own hounds, and, incidentally, of anyone else's that he could borrow. He was full of zeal, but such a poor horseman that he never could have "lived with them" if England had been as strongly enclosed as later it became. His Majesty would never have got over the Belvoir Vale, which was the first region in England over which he hunted on his way to London to be crowned King of this Realm, if it had been enclosed as it is to-day. Both Charles I and Charles II can certainly rank as eminent *veneurs*, though it is not specifically known whether, outside the Buckhounds, they had packs of their own. They both rode very well, especially Charles II, who is the only king to have ridden a winner at Newmarket. Both were much criticized for being out hunting when they ought to have been attending to affairs of state.

It is on record that in 1663 Colonel Robert Kerr received a warrant for £200 for the cost of bringing hounds to Newmarket "for the King's (Charles II's) disport", and further orders were issued that "care be taken that no person should course with greyhounds within ten miles of the town, and that no hounds but His Majesty's be allowed to hunt within seven miles".

It is not very difficult to divine what it was they hunted! We have to wait till George IV for a Royal Master *de facto* of his own hounds, and incidentally, the only monarch who has been a master of foxhounds. This happened during the Regency. A later chapter deals with this king's adventures with the pack of hounds which he obtained from the then Duke of Richmond, the Charlton, descendants in title, at any rate, from the pack hunted by the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth from that "Melton of the South". Few monarchs of this realm, therefore, can be said to satisfy the requirements of what to-day we consider a master of hounds should be, but it is established that every one of them, and even the most unlikely, was smitten with a love of the Chase. It is recorded, for instance, of the saintly Edward the Confessor, who as a general rule of life, eschewed all secular affairs, that "he delighted to follow a pack of swift hounds" (William of Malmesbury). The enthusiasm for the Chase of divers Saxon kings is unquestionable, and the same zeal infected all monarchs who came after them, Normans, Plantagenets, Stuarts, Hanoverians

and those of the present House of Windsor. At the same time it would be equally correct to say that Man, whatever his estate, king or vassal, has been a hunter from the very dawn of time, either to provide himself with food, or to save himself from becoming the food of the lower animal world, over which he by no means held dominion, in spite of the pronouncement made in a famous Garden at the time when the first masterful wife persuaded her husband to do something against his better judgment. The procuring of food was the mainspring of hunting; desire and necessity to rid the world of man-eaters the next compelling cause, and last of all came the thrill and excitement, which man obtained from pitting his wit against that of the beasts of the field, or, in other words, hunting for the sport and also the danger of the thing. This last, as I am convinced, has ever been the strongest urge. Nothing would be worth a rap to many of us into which no danger or mishap could fairly find its way. Of course gallant Lindsay Gordon was right!

As in other terrestrial matters, the original and pure spirit of sheer adventure became at various epochs stained by something not quite so pure. Man began to hit below the belt. He started to kill his quarry by *rélais*, that is to say he did not hunt him to the death with the pack with which he found him; he constructed things he called "Haies", or ambuscades, hedged areas into which the game, deer in this case, were driven. Archers and javelin men were waiting for them. Again there were things called "parks", little better than glorified circus rings, and at various points were "stands", from which the "sportsmen" (and sportswomen) passed their time shooting them with their arbalists, or cross-bows, as they were driven round and round by the highly-expert beaters! Good Queen Bess was one of the worst of offenders in this respect, although it must be placed to her credit that she also permitted herself to enjoy an occasional ride in the wake of hounds legitimately hunting the stag, and was also not above hawking, a form of entertainment which perhaps we of to-day might think rather like watching an aerial dog-fight from the back of a horse. However, this and the sporting predilections of some other Queens, is more amply dealt with in a later chapter. The artificiality which, in the opinion of many of us, the Normans brought over with them, and concerning which Gaston de Foix wrote his amazing book, is dealt with in a chapter headed "Between Two Wars". It may be that French methods have deserved everything that has been said about them on the ground of their "artificiality", but in view of certain methods of a modern period it would seem to a fair-minded critic that here is a flagrant case of the pot calling the kettle "black"!

Our own domestic connection of Monarchy with the Chase,

where regular hunting organizations are concerned, must be claimed to have originated in the times of the Heptarchy.

Many a long year before the valiant Æthelstan, King of Mercia and Wessex of the House of Alfred, fought and won the decisive battle of Brunanburgh, A.D. 937, "where never was yet such slaughter in this island", beating Anlaf the Dane and his satellites, Owen of Cumberland and Constantine of Scotland, there lived a humbler Mercian, one Alwin the Hunter.[1] He was, so far as record and report afford us any aid, the first Royal hunt servant in what is now the Pytchley country, which, even in those way-back days, must have been deemed by the particular monarch of that state of the Heptarchy a sufficiently attractive hunting demesne to merit the establishment of a very considerable organization. Alwin's "country" was not a small one, for it embraced not only the whole of Northamptonshire as we know it to-day, but other counties, such as Rutlandshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and, most probably, a part of Essex. Alwin's exact date is not known, but it is not improbable that it was some time between A.D. 630 and 640, which would place him in about the days of that wicked heathen king, Penda of Mercia, who was a mighty hunter and, like many others of his times, most rapacious and bloodthirsty. He not only swept away Christianity from the Midlands, and from farther north where it had been implanted by the pious King Oswald, whom Penda slew, but proceeded upon an all-round smash-and-grab raid upon all his other neighbours, the kings of the East Angles, whom he also slew, the lands of the Hwiccas (the modern counties of Worcester and Gloucester) and insisted that the whole of the mid-realm should revert to the worship of Wotan and the Thunder God, Thor. How very modern all this reads! The only real difference between then and now seems to be that Penda, besides being so fond of the Chase, was unquestionably a doughty warrior. He was eventually killed in action, a fate which did not overtake his fustian imitator.

Incidentally, Penda married a Christian, and eventually adopted a policy of religious tolerance. If indeed Alwin was Penda's huntsman, and the circumstantial evidence seems to warrant acceptance of the fact, it is not very difficult to conjure up a mind picture of the kind of rugged ruffian he was. He was charged with providing sport for his royal master with the hare and the stag, and with destroying the wolves and the wild boar, which latter, if they were anything like as ferocious as those to be met with much farther east, must in themselves have been a whole-time occupation.

Alwin *per se* would be quite an unimportant figure were it not for the fact that he forms some kind of a link between his times and

[1] *Ref.: The Pytchley Hunt*, H. O. Nethercote (Sampson Lowe, Marston & Co.).

some much later ones. Alwin lived in Pytchley village; Frank Freeman, that famous modern huntsman, in Brixworth quite close—a coincidence worthy of record.

It is virtually certain that although Alwin's main "instruments" may have been the spear, the knife, the bow and arrow and the trap, he must have had hunting dogs of some description to help him bring his varied quarry to book. Wolves, for instance, and the boar would have been difficult without such assistance. A wolf, as anyone who may have tried to ride him down and spear him knows, will outstay any horse, and *pace* those who believe in the cat foot in hounds—the wolf pad is probably the very best for tackling any kind of ground, however rough, for the long pastern must absorb shock far better than the foot which has practically no pastern at all. The stag Alwin probably shot with the bow, but for the hare he must have wanted a small hound with a nose, if he was to show the fierce Penda, or whoever may have been his master, any kind of sport. The methods in any case must have been very primitive and similar to those employed by the gentlemen who ante-dated *Homo Sapiens*. The more elaborate methods of venery arrived with the Normans. Antiquity is really Alwin's only real claim to historical fame.

He was hunting at least a century before Charlemagne (742-814) and about a couple of centuries before that famous hunting man, Alfred the Great (849-901), who, though hardly comparable in this regard with the Frankish Emperor of the West, won no inconsiderable renown in the field. Alfred was said to have been versed in all kinds of hunting from the age of fifteen, and his grandson Æthelstan, son of Edward the Elder, was quite as fully imbued with the love of the chase, for it is recorded of him that he levied, as part of the tribute from a defeated King of Wales, "sharp-scented dogs fit for hunting wild beasts". Æthelstan, likewise, must have been a general of no mean ability, for Brunanburgh, his greatest victory, was some distance from his base in Mercia and entailed a long approach march. Charles Oman, the historian, says that Brunanburgh was probably in Lancashire, but most other people think that Brunswark in Dumfriesshire is the modern Brunanburgh. That seems to me much more probable, for, in the first place, that part of the Scottish coast was a better point of descent for Anlaf from Ireland, and a good concentration area for Owen of Cumberland and Constantine of Scotland. Anyway, wherever it was, it was a long approach shot for Æthelstan, and it is a feather in his cap that he got on the green at all. Hunting and warfare have always been closely linked.

Charlemagne never hunted in this country and so does not rightly come within the purview of this volume. If he had, it is certain that he would have found it a bit dull after what he had been accustomed

to, for we had nothing fiercer than wolves and wild boar to offer him. The Emperor preferred Aurochs. In her very fascinating book *Bridle Paths Through History*, Lady Apsley has expressed the belief that the savage wild oxen may have traced back to the Minotaur. It is highly probable that this was the genesis of the conception. The Aurochs is extinct in Europe. The Caucasian and Lithuanian bison, which are not extinct, are no relations of his, but as the Minotaur was supposed to be half-bull and half-man, dare we be too certain that he is extinct in Europe, or anywhere else? Personally I lack the necessary courage to say that he is! Of only one thing am I certain, namely that the Aurochs may not be extinct outside Europe, for something very like him survives in full force and fury in Burma, Malaya, Siam, Borneo, Java, Bali and they say also in Sumatra. In Tartary there is also a wild ox, who must be a near relation.

In Huc's *Travels in Tartary, Thibet and China* (1844-5-6) he mentions "wild cattle" as being of "frequent occurrence" in the "deserts of Hither Thibet". He lays stress upon their great size and ferocity and describes them as having long black hair and being "remarkable for the immense dimensions and splendid form of their horns". With the exception of the long black hair, the description fits the tsaine of Burma, etc., most accurately. Huc relates how "eight men armed with matchlocks" narrowly escaped with their lives after wounding an enormous bull. The tsaine will charge before he is wounded, and will move to the attack the moment he gets the wind of his pursuers. Here undoubtedly is Charlemagne's Aurochs, Pasiphæ's "indiscretion", who caused so much trouble of old time in Crete. The Burman tsaine would outmatch the ugliest jungle fighter. In other places he is called the Bantin. He is the fiercest, and, I should say, the most completely dangerous thing that roams the forest. Reduced to the hand, by which we measure horses, he stands 17.1, and even more in some out-sizes; is quite fast for his great bulk when he charges, and he mounts a thick horn shield on the crown of his head connecting his horns; widest measurement outside the curve 42⅝ inches. It may not be correct, therefore, to regard the Aurochs as an extinct species, and if Charlemagne, like Thomas the Rhymer, Arthur, Barbarossa, who was only a Hun, and a few more, is not really dead and is desirous of renewing his pursuit of his favourite beast of venery, I dare say that no difficulty would be put in his way by anyone in Burma.

The Royal hunting establishment in Mercia in the days of Penda is not the only one on record in the famous county of Northampton, already sufficiently rich in historic landmarks—Fotheringay is there. A very similar establishment to this Saxon one was in being in the days of the Stuarts in the selfsame spot. Sir Euseby Isham, who built

the Old Hall at Pytchley in the days of Queen Elizabeth, held a Crown appointment as "hunter". The Lords of the Manor of Pytchley in Stuart times held it on the condition that "they did furnishe dogges at their own cost to destroy the wolves, foxes, pole-cats and other vermin in the counties of Northampton, Rutland, Oxford, Essex and Buckingham". There appears to have been no mention of any stipend attaching to the post, as was the case with their predecessor Alwin, and also there seems to have been no subscription. It may be that in both Alwin's and Sir Euseby's cases it was just "or else". They had very uncomfortable ways at both periods. The Old Hall at Pytchley passed through the hands of many celebrities whose names are household ones in the history of the famous white collar hunt: Isham, Lane, Washborne, Knightley and finally the famous George Payne, master of the Pytchley hounds 1835-8 and again 1844-8. It was George Payne, incidentally who pulled down the old Manor House in 1829. Before it was demolished and during part of its career the Old Hall was a club. This was in 1750 when John George, Earl Spencer, the first of the four masters furnished by the House of the Red Earls, took a hand and moved the kennels from Althorp to some new ones built at the Old Hall. The fact of this "official" establishment in the days of the Stuart kings evidences very plainly that old customs die hard. Speaking under correction I think that Sir Euseby Isham must have been the last master of hounds to hold his position under a more or less direct mandate from the Crown. I make no mention at this point of the masters of the Royal Buckhounds, whose long and varied career is dealt with in subsequent chapters.

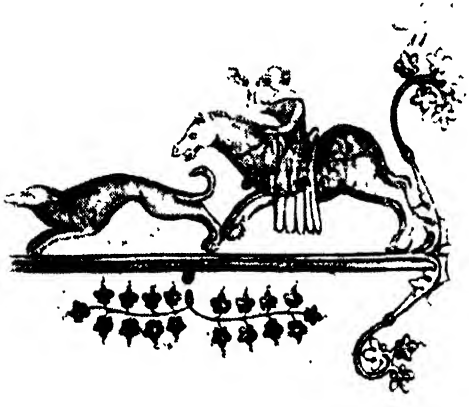
Perhaps if, in any historical review of the connection of Monarchy with the Chase in the pre-Norman era, no mention of Ireland's greatest king were made it would be rated yet "another injustice". It would be insulting to imagine that any conscientious recorder would not refer to one who, in addition to being a good administrator, was a great soldier and almost as renowned in the world of sport, as he was in the more deadly arena of war. The dates of Brian Boru, Boruma, Boroma, or Borhoime, were 924 to 1014 when he died of a wound treacherously inflicted by the Danish Admiral Bruadair, when Brian was seated unarmed in his tent, whilst the Battle of Clontarf was in full blast. The Dane did not live long to revel in his cowardly achievement of having hit an old man of nearly ninety with his battle-axe, for Brian, despite his desperate head wound, sprang to his feet, snatched a sword from the hand of one of his attendants and counter-attacked. With cut one he severed the Dane's right leg, with cut two his left foot and with cut three his head. He then cut the Admiral's follower, his Flag-Captain let us presume, in half with

one stroke. All this effort was too much for even such a Paladin as the Irish king and he succumbed. The Danes were soundly trounced at Clontarf, and it ranked as Brian's twenty-fifth consecutive battle honour against them. He was responsible for their overthrow throughout the length and breadth of the beautiful Emerald Kingdom over which he ruled. They came back to power afterwards as we know, but Brian Boru in his time was one too many for them. Tara, where Brian sate after his defeat of the treacherous Maolmua, who had murdered Brian's brother, King Mahon, is in the heart of what so many think is the finest hunting country in the world, and although the detailed records of Brian Boru's achievements in the field of sport are not available to us, it may safely be inferred that the hunting establishment was in keeping with the rest of things at Teaghmor, the Great House, and the animals hunted much the same as those of the period elsewhere, the stag, the boar, and the wolf. They probably hunted the hare, but not the fox, for he did not attain any measure of popularity until much later. Tara was without any doubt the greatest hunting centre in all Ireland in the days of her warlike monarchs. To-day the Meath hounds claim the "Royal" prefix, which has no reference whatever to any English king.

Brian's hounds must have been of much the same mixed type as those used elsewhere at that period both in England and in France: a powerful and not a little savage hunting dog of size for the boar and the wolf, something of the lymier, bloodhound, type, a hound with a nose for the stag, a *chien courant*, and a smaller type of line-hunter for the timid hare. The Tara establishment was one of great grandeur and magnificence even before Brian Boru, and at one time the Palace covered 900 square feet. Alas, not a vestige remains, for it was not built of durable material and not one wall is left upon which that harp, of which Moore wrote so touchingly, could hang. Anyone hunting in Meath to-day or who had time to tear himself away from the joys of the Fairyhouse Steeplechases (the course is hard by), might, if of an antiquarian bent, find a few circular earthworks on the summit of the Green Hill of Tara, but there is nothing more, other than the ghosts of "chiefs and ladies bright", who once peopled those proud halls in the days of their splendour. Whether the searcher's fancy would bring back the spectres of Conn of the Hundred Battles, Cormac, Niall and the great Brian himself I do not know! Maybe they have dissolved in the *Ewigheit* as completely as Tara's halls themselves.

These Irish kings can claim to have been amongst the earliest of reigning monarchs who supported regular hunting establishments, and were certainly a most memorable link between Monarchy and

the Chase before the advent of the Normans, when the methods changed and, according to Gaston de Foix, became more scientific, a view which is not held by, let us say, the orthodox hunter of the fox. The emphasis is on the epithet.



CHAPTER II

The Huntings of the Kings: The Normans

IN the preceding chapter an attempt has been made to rough in an outline of the hunting activities of the monarchs of pre-Norman times both in England and elsewhere, and, perhaps, enough has been indicated to afford material for disputing an oft-published claim that "William the Conqueror was the father of modern English hunting". This is just not correct, for, as has been set out in the first chapter of this book, hunting, upon much the same scheme as it is known to-day, was fully organized in the seventh century. This is to say hunting an animal by his scent. The system of relais, haies and parks came to us from France, where it was claimed that a far more scientific study of venery had been made than had obtained in the British Isles in Saxon days. Ours—and the word is used in the Saxon sense—were held to be primitive and barbaric ways and to partake of the system of pitfalls, snares, traps, nets and so forth, which Man employed both to rid himself of the menace of the beasts and reptiles of the primæval forests and the swamps and rivers, which then held the upper hand, and to obtain food by which to sustain his miserable existence. Incidentally, these "barbaric" devices, which the reformers condemned, have not been obliterated by the march of time and are still used in India and the farther East. The pit, full of sharp stakes, is far from unknown as a means of destruction of the tiger, the leopard and the rogue elephant, and anything is considered fair and above board against that scourge, the wolf. Any Indian Blue Book, issued by the appropriate department, will supply statistics of the casualties to human life and cattle by wild animals and snakes, which will more than frank the use of any devices, however primitive. Whether these methods are in a very different category to the haies and parks, introduced by the civilized French, is matter for debate! The original plan of campaign against dangerous animals was almost exclusively defensive; there was not much thought of either sport or pleasure. That came much later when Man discovered that there was a zest to be obtained from pitting his skill against the natural cunning of the lower animal world.

It may well be that, where the stag is concerned, the Norman and French methods were more advanced than our own, but the French then, and since, have never even approached us in knowledge of how

to hunt the fox, a foeman worthy the steel of the best huntsman ever born. However, in those early days of the Chase the stag, or harte as they preferred to call him, was considered the only animal of the Chase deserving attention.

Gaston de Foix, de Fouilloux and many other French authors wrote voluminous books upon the subject of the Hunting of the Harte. The timid hare was then even preferred to the fox, and continued to be so until we in England discovered that neither the harte, nor poor Puss, could show anything like the sport to be had with the straight-running fox. The French, no doubt, taught us a great deal about stag-hunting, and their methods remain with us in part even to-day in the only real home of stag-hunting, Devon and Somerset: but they never discovered the fox! The Tufters of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds are the only real survival of French teaching. The French Chiens Courants were presumably the counterpart of the body of the pack, nowadays as then, laid on after the Tufters had put the stag on his legs.

William I, Duke of Normandy, brought with him to England what has been stigmatized as "an inordinate appetite for the Chase" ("Cecil"—Cornelius Tongue in *Records of the Chase*). The Conqueror's love of hunting was no doubt ardent, but was marred by the fact that he not only wanted to keep everything to himself as a royal prerogative, but was ready to proceed to any extreme to ensure that nothing, and no one, should interfere with the sport of the King. The penalty for poaching in the royal forests was death: anyone who killed any of his hounds had his eyes put out by the surgical instrument popular in those days, the red-hot iron. William's forest laws were extremely cruel, and it was truly said of him that "he loved the tall deer as if he were their father" and woe betide the unhappy subject who came between him and his favourite pastime.

England has had worse kings than William the Bastard, but never one who brought her more sorrow, or who was more ruthless in his measures against those who stood between him and his enjoyment of hunting. It was "all his joy and appetite". The New Forest is a standing monument to what he did, for he dispossessed the unfortunate peasant holder right, left, and centre in order to create an arena for the royal amusement. His army being a rabble of mercenaries, he had been compelled to ensure its loyalty to promise its components "land and sustenance" in the conquered territory. Of the reliability of his troops he was so little assured that he burnt his invasion fleet after he had disembarked on the Sussex coast. This was done to prevent desertion. To find the Promised Land for his freebooters he declared, as a preliminary measure, the estates of all who had fought at the Battle of Hastings forfeit to the Crown. This

applied to everyone from King Harold down to the smallest freeholder. It put five-sixths of the countryside in Wessex, Kent, Essex and East Anglia into the Conqueror's hand and these tracts were distributed amongst his followers to be held under feudal tenure of knight service. If he had not done this, it might have occurred to Jacques that he was as good as, or perhaps, a better, man than his master. All these regions, especially Wessex, were what we should call to-day "good hunting country".

This regal forest prerogative, which the Conqueror set up, lasted, with modifications, for nearly 800 years. It is not necessary to enter at great length into all the ramifications of Forest Law, and it is sufficient to put on record that it had its origin with one of the greatest despots who ever sat on the throne of this realm. It has been advanced in the King's favour that he visualized the total extinction of all game unless he instituted some drastic system of preservation, but behind it was his own selfish pleasure. It has also been said, with some show of reason, that the savage nature of the punishments under Forest Law have had their counterparts in the criminal law which ran till a far later date in our history, certainly until the early nineteenth century when crimes which were in fact trivial were punished with a ferocity which was out of all proportion to the offence. Death was the sentence for things, which, to-day, might only earn the transgressor two or three months hard labour. It is therefore contended by the apologists for William I that we have not much justification for criticism of that which was enacted in times when we had not advanced very far along the stony road of progress. Personally, I do not consider this argument sound, for the simple old reason that two blacks have never yet made one white. The facts are not contestable.

Hunting under the Norman kings was the most undemocratic of all sport. To-day the reverse is the case.

It has been argued by those, for whom whitewash holds such an amazing attraction, that William I did not indulge in wholesale eviction and dispossession of the Saxon holders in order to establish his forests, and that all that he really did was to regularize the slipshod methods of the conquered which, if they had been permitted to continue, would have completely denuded England of all wild animal and bird life. The history of one royal hunting preserve, the New Forest, hardly supports this statement. The evictions here and elsewhere were arbitrary and were so with a fully disclosed motive, namely the centralization of all power in one hand. It has also been advanced that William I was merely following the precedent set up by Knut in A.D. 1027, for the Danish monarch enacted that "All men escheu my hunting". I am afraid that the defence of William falls down.

The worst abuses were no doubt committed by the regarders, verderers, foresters and most particularly by the agistors, appointed by the Crown to try offenders against Forest Law. The privileges of forest, which term merely denoted a game preserve, and not a dense and impenetrable aggregation of trees, were then framed to give the sole prerogative of hunting to the Sovereign at the same time reserving power to him, if he so pleased, to vest them in another. This state of things continued to the time of Henry III, son of the worst of all the Plantagenets, John of evil memory. These privileges included up to that time (1216-72) not only rights to all wild animals in the royal forests, but also in forests lying in the domain of a private estate. The forests courts just mentioned, and also most of the royal forests which in Henry VIII's time numbered sixty-nine, remained in being till some period after Tudor days, and it is on record that the most tactless of all the Stuarts, Charles I, endeavoured to revive them in all their evil virility. He declared whole districts of England to be under Forest Law despite the fact that some of these royal reserves had disappeared centuries before, and he exacted heavy fines from the inhabitants to fill the Privy Purse of what was, at that precise period, little else than a one-man government. In 1665 Manwood wrote:

> The newest forest in England, except that of Hampton Court, is in Hampshire and is called the New Forest, and yet that forest was made in the reign of William I and there is no other of which the beginning is mentioned in any history or record. The Forest Laws are likewise as ancient as the forest excepting some few which have been altered and made more beneficial to the subject by Carta de Forestæ and other later Statutes.

This was written during the reign of Charles II. Manwood wrote *Treaties on Forest Law*, which was published at a time when Crown rights were dying out and the barbaric sentences of the days of the Conqueror, and unfortunately of many days that followed, were gradually becoming an unsavoury memory. It is only right, however, to put on record that even in the times when Forest Law was enforced with the rigour referred to, as indeed it was especially in this Norman period, it was not an offence for anyone to hunt and kill wild beasts outside Forest limits with one very important exception: "A royal harte proclaimed" that is to say, a stag, which had been hunted by the King and had run his hounds out of scent, or managed to escape by any other means. These "outliers", as they would be called to-day, were described by proclamation in all districts in which it was thought they might be at large.

The beasts of venery, i.e. venison (*venaison*) which merely signified that they were huntable were these: the hart, the hind of the red

deer, the hare and the wild boar. Wolves, which were practically exterminated in late Saxon days, were a borderline case for protection, and the fox was not so much as considered. It was not until many years later that the best *venaison* of them all came into his kingdom. At the time with which we are dealing he was classed as vermin in the same category with wild cats, pole-cats and squirrels.

Forest Law was the main bone of contention between the English and their Norman conquerors and the dispute reached boiling point in the reign of John Plantagenet. The abuse of afforestation reached its peak in the reign of Henry II, who was a Frenchman by birth, but through his grandmother Matilda of Scotland, a lineal descendant of Alfred the Great and also of that earlier king of Wessex, Egbert (827-39). The oppressions under Forest Law were amongst the main indictments against John at Runnymede. Clause 47 of the Great Charter reads:

> All forests which have been afforested by the King in his time shall be disafforested and the same shall be done with rivers which have been fenced by the King himself.

Before William I there were no forest laws in England, be that for better or for worse. To-day there are virtually none. There can be little question as to the abuses which accrued from these enactments initiated by the Conqueror; but on the other hand it may be true that as things were moving under Saxon rule they were a wise course to pursue. The purpose behind these laws was possibly right; their execution was a standing disgrace.

William the Conqueror reigned for twenty-one years, and for most of the time he was in England, and almost from the very outset he hunted. Whether he brought a pack of hounds with him when he landed with his army of invasion is very doubtful, but it has been suggested that he did actually do so. Having spent a considerable period of my earlier days in the country of the South Saxon I heard much legend "about it and about", and it was claimed by the local inhabitants that the Duke of Normandy did land a pack of hounds somewhere in that tract of country once hunted over by a long-since defunct pack of hounds, the Bexhill Harriers, that is to say all that region lying between Bexhill and Eastbourne. This includes the Pevensey Marshes, and it was claimed locally that the left wing of the Norman army landed somewhere near Pevensey Sluice, a well-known fixture with that ancient Harrier pack. They were owned by an old Mr. Brookes, and it was said that the ages of himself, his whipper-in and K.H. and their horses totalled something only a little short of 200 years. Master, servant and horses looked as if they had walked straight out of a Caldecott picture. These hounds in no way resembled

the present-day harrier. They were said to be one of, if not the only, relics of the ancient Southern hound. This animal must have resembled the lymier as he was in the days of the Conqueror, and later. In colour these Bexhill Harriers conformed exactly to that which this bloodhound type of hunting dog, the lymier, was as hound history hands him down to us. The dog hounds in this pack were at least 25 inches.

The local inhabitants never went so far as to claim that these Bexhill Harriers were the lineal descendants of the lymier that came over from Normandy, but the strange coincidence was stressed that such a pack in the middle '80's should be hunting over the selfsame terrain as that upon which the hounds of the Normans were perhaps landed in the eleventh century. The foxhound of to-day is held to be the direct descendant of the fusion of the old Southern hound, undoubtedly our friend the lymier, who was in fact a bloodhound, and the old Northern hound, who was lighter than his Southern brother, higher on the leg, lighter in colour and not all black and tan. This old Bexhill Harrier pack has imprinted itself upon my memory because it was, whilst hunting with it over the Pevensey marsh country, that I got into my first brook. It is the kind of thing one does not forget. The memory of all the stories is likewise apt to be indelible. I verily believe that at that period the South Saxons retained as lively a hatred of William the Conqueror as the Southern Irish retain of Cromwell—and that is saying a very great deal.

I think it possible that William I brought over a pack of his own from Normandy at some time or other, since he had a very poor opinion of anything Saxon, but there are a number of very good reasons for doubting whether any shipping space was available for a pack of hounds in his invasion force. In the first place, before the Norman fleet and its transports left that dangerous place for the navigator, St. Valéry-sur-Somme, after a very stormy passage up the French coast from its assembly point at Dives, it had lost a number of its units. The tally of available vessels, fighting ships and transports is put by F.-M. Sir Evelyn Wood in his interesting book, *Our Fighting Services*, at 3,000 and the fighting strength of the Norman army at 60,000; but as the total numbers engaged on both sides at Senlac did not greatly exceed 30,000 in all, it is highly probable that the invading army did not number more than 15,000 to 16,000 of which the flower was the Norman cavalry, then, as now, a difficult problem in an overseas operation. William I possibly had a couple of brigades of knights, or, say, at most a weak division. The biggest ship the Normans had was only about thirty tons and of these a certain proportion must have been of the vissier or horse transport class in no way fitted to fight or look after themselves in an emergency.

Surely no room for hounds under such circumstances!

In the next place the Intelligence seems to have been deplorably faulty on both sides, for if William's invasion fleet had not been delayed a whole month on the French coast he would certainly have been fought at sea by the Saxon fleet, the crews of which were undoubtedly of much better quality than his own, which were in a state of almost open mutiny before leaving the mouth of the Somme. The Conqueror did not know that the period of service of the Saxon navy, *post Festum Paschale* till the Nativity of Our Lady (8th Sept.), had expired when he eventually set a course from St. Valéry. It was just a bit of luck for him that the Saxon fleet was not at its war stations. He possibly expected to be opposed and that being so he would not have burdened himself with anything but essentials. On the other hand, there is nothing impossible about the suggestion that he brought a pack of hounds with him, for it has been stated that Edward III took 300 couples of hounds with him on the Crécy campaign. Personally I doubt this just as much as I doubt the Sussex legend about the landing of William I's pack at Pevensey. Nevertheless, had he wanted to land it or anything else Harold gave him plenty of time. The Normans were not opposed on the beaches and did not move off for about ten days.

What the eventual hounds from Normandy were we just do not know, and I agree with Lady Apsley (*Bridle Ways Through History*) that the contemporary artists, including the fair weavers of the Bayeux tapestry, afford us very little assistance, for they were not masters of picturization. It is probable, however, that William the Conqueror's hounds were of the same motley type as those of the times of Gaston de Foix (fourteenth century), lymiers or hounds with sufficient nose to hunt by scent, some animals of the greyhound type to hunt purely by view, since they had, and have, no nose, and another type not unlike the bull mastiff for the boar, the wolf, and included purely for purposes of slaughter. These last can have had very little if any capacity for hunting a line. Few short-muzzled animals have. The cheetah, or hunting leopard, for instance, the fastest thing on four legs, has none; the tiger very little, or else he would detect the man taint as he approached a tie-up, usually an unfortunate goat, whose bleating gives away his position, whereas his scent should do so.

The most surprising aspect of this early Norman hunting is that William the Conqueror found time and opportunity to hunt at all, at any rate upon the scale that undoubtedly he did, for his newly-acquired realm was not one where tranquillity prevailed.

He had not only to contend with the risings of the conquered, but had many anxieties by reason of the turbulence of the followers who came over with him, only one-third of whom were true Normans or

Norsemen. He had enlisted every soldier of fortune and adventurer he could find and his command was by no means a homogeneous one. During those six hectic months of preparation, he was very considerably occupied with shipbuilding, for he had no navy worthy the name, whereas Harold, King of England, had, and furthermore better ships which were manned by fishermen crews, then, as now, the finest seamen in the world. Another anxiety was his rebellious son, Duke Robert, who fought and defeated him at the Battle of Gerberoi (1079), the fight for the dukedom of Normandy, in which Robert went near to killing his own father, not knowing the identity of the man behind the vizor. A modern master of hounds very often does not lie upon a bed of roses, but his state, in the worst conception, is unalloyed peace compared to that which William must have had to face. Yet he carried out a very extended hunting campaign.

Probably the worst of his anxieties was this rabble of mercenaries, French, Flemish, Breton and the other hired assassins who had helped him to win at Senlac. The situation created was not at all easy to control and was one rather akin to what that of a modern M.F.H. would be if surrounded by a ring of hostile farmers, each with a pack of hounds of his own. William I's appendages were by no means of the tractable kind, and were quite ready, as indeed later history showed, to take an independent line of their own and defy the central authority. The Conqueror thoroughly believed in the Chase as a training for war, and he rightly conceived that one of the best means of providing himself with the Cadres for an army, ready at short notice to go anywhere and do anything, was to encourage his soldiers of fortune to hunt and afford them any facilities he could for doing so, and this in spite of the rigid opinions he held about the Royal prerogative to forest lands and the ferocious attitude he maintained towards any form of poaching. This encouragement to hunt undoubtedly made his control of his imported army easier than it might have been had he left these gentry with too much idle time on their hands. They were in a majority, had sold their swords under a very definite contract, and meant to hold the party of the first part to the very letter of it. In this connection it can be mentioned that the finest material for the armies of the Crusaders was obtained from what may be called "hunting people", and the Conqueror was, therefore, very wise in his generation in the method which he adopted to maintain this fine nucleus for a fighting force.

Hunting throve under the Norman kings, most particularly under the first of them, who was probably the greatest royal enthusiast, James I not excepted. Unlike the Stuart king, William of Normandy is handed down to us as a very good horseman, and, furthermore, one who did much to improve the breed of the indigenous horse in

Saxon England. Before the Conquest this animal was for the most part very undersized and somewhat weedy, and the Norman infusion of the blood of the continental horse, Norman, Scandinavian, Flemish and Spanish which the Conqueror effected, resulted both in Britain and in Ireland in the production of a bigger and better animal all round. That which he did with horses William I probably did with hounds, for the one is the concomitant of the other. The Norsemen had been good horse-breeders long before William and his forebears had descended upon the country from which they have taken their name. William the Conqueror may have done nothing to improve what to-day we call blood-stock, and, incidentally, when he arrived in England this was non-existent, but he did vastly improve the breed of what we class as the hunter, even though in much more modern times this animal is very often three-quarters or even clean bred. There are those who believe that that incomparable animal, the Irish heavyweight hunter, owes the excellence of his bone and constitution to this wayback ancestor of Norman times. It may be difficult to prove this, in the case of either the Irish horse or his English counterpart, and we must therefore be content to accept the historical statement that the advent of the Norman heavy cavalry—at that period, the best in all Europe—improved the English horse and at the same time did much good to the Chase.

It is perhaps of interest to mention in connection with the horses that came over from the Continent in the Conqueror's time that the Scandinavians, which were greatly prized, were mostly duns with a black stripe down the spine. The original Gobi Desert horse was of this colour, and the horses of the northern migrating herds, which came westward hugging the shores of the Baltic, are said to have been also of this colour and also with this black donkey stripe down their backs. The Irish dun with that distinguishing stripe is not even now either extinct or forgotten; so that, after all, there may be some warrant for giving William the Conqueror the credit of having laid the foundation stone of a hunter, which for hardiness and handiness has had no rival.

William I met his death as a result of a riding accident. It was when, as a very sick man, he led a punitive expedition against his hated Suzerain, Philip of France, to Mantes that the horse he was riding, singed by the sparks from a burning beam, reared up and fell back on him, the high and very dangerous peak of the saddle inflicting internal injuries, from which he subsequently died in Rouen, whither he was taken after the accident. These dangerous saddles are not extinct and still survive in Mexico and the cattle lands of Texas, so someone has failed to take warning by the Conqueror's death.

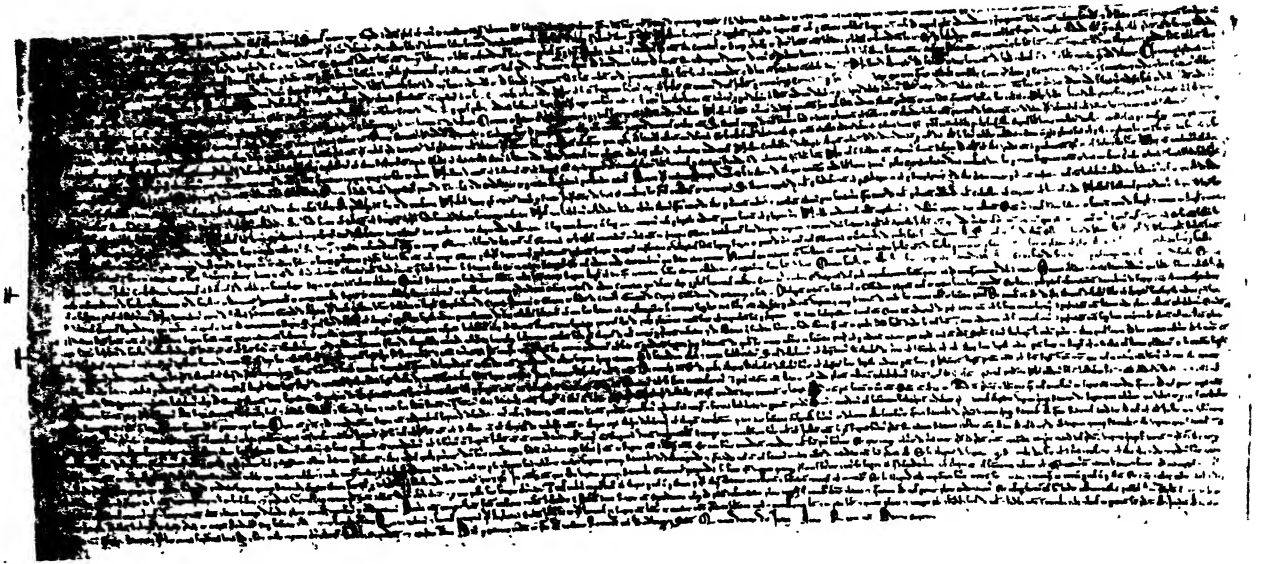
Like his life, William's end was violent, and even his funeral

was lacking in that peace and dignity customary to such occasions, for it is related that when his corpse was borne to the great Abbey at Caen the cortège was opposed by an angry knight, who claimed that as the ground on which the Abbey stood had been forcibly taken from him by the King he would not suffer the burial to take place until the full estimated value of the land had been paid over to him. Be the facts as they may, there was unquestionably an unseemly incident marking the unpopularity of a great Norman, who had achieved more than any of his house, and established a kingdom beyond the narrow seas which, for all its many evil beginnings, did a vast deal to improve the status and power of the conquered realm. It was, in fact, a marvellous achievement in colonization.

William II though left the crown of England under the will of his father was by no means the elected choice either of the Norman baronage amongst whom the Conqueror had been compelled to parcel out the lands of the conquered English, or of the English themselves, and his arrival in hot haste was not greeted with any kind of acclamation.

The barons headed by Odo of Bayeux, the Conqueror's brother, these hostile Masters of Hounds, as it seems convenient to describe them, at once prepared for war; they were mobilized even before Archbishop Lanfranc had safely placed the crown of England upon the new King's head. Odo and his followers openly declared for Duke Robert of Normandy, who, under the law of primogeniture, was the rightful successor. The attitude of these feudal masters was not inspired by any love for Robert, but was the result of nearly twenty years' hostility to the Conqueror, and was likewise due to the knowledge that in William the Red they were getting a ruler with none of the rugged virtues of his father, but with all his failings, in addition to a goodly supply of his own. The barons' sole reason for their support of the gallant and soldierly Duke Robert, was their knowledge of his lack of administrative talent. They thought that he would be a far more biddable chairman of the Hunt Committee than Rufus, in whom they recognized an evil copy of his father.

The barons were perfectly right in their assessment of the new "master", but they had reckoned without their host, for he was one too many for them, and also for his elder brother, Duke Robert of Normandy, whose attempt to dispute the succession by force of arms timed to synchronize with the rising of Odo did not so synchronize and was thus doomed to failure. Whether this failure was good or otherwise for England, it is not the purpose of a work such as this devoted to the hunting predilections of the Kings of England to determine. However unskilful an administrator the soldier Robert may have been, he was an infinitely better man than his younger brother.



¶ Quod obsides *et* carte reddantur que libertate fuerunt Regi in securitatem

¶ Vt illi qui fuerint extra forestam non ueniant coram Iusticiariis de foresta per communes summonitiones nisi sint in placito vel plegii fuerint *et* ut preue consuetudines de forestis *et* de forestariis *et* warennis *et* Vicecomitibus *et* | riuariis emendentur per xii milites de quolibet comitatu qui debent eligi per probos homines eiusdem comitatus

¶ Et omnes foreste que sunt aforestate per Regem tempore suo deafforestentur. *Et* ita fiat de ripariis que per ipsum Regem sunt in defenso

¶ Omnes aut[em] malas consuetudines *et* libertates quas Rex concessit regno tenendas quantum ad se pertinet erga suos· omnes de regno tam clerici quam laici

PLATE 2. FACSIMILE OF THE PASSAGES IN MAGNA CARTA (1215) RELATING TO THE CONSERVATION OF GAME

The two relevant passages are marked and transcribed.

William II, in spite of his promises to the subjects over whom he came to reign, went back on his word almost at once. He introduced no relaxation of the Forest Laws: he imposed grinding taxes: was guilty of many isolated acts of oppression and cruelty, earning a measure of hatred from both the Norman settlers and the conquered population, to which, even in Yorkshire, the Conqueror had never attained. He was a man of bad character in both his public and private life: he was an atheist, an evil liver and a tyrant, and if indeed his death was the outcome of murder, such a happening was not unearned, or outside the bounds of probability.

William Rufus was as great a hunting fanatic as his father, and he met his death out hunting from an arrow. This is the only solid fact known in connection with his end. The stories are myriad. Whether this shaft was fired with malice, an attempt to kill, or whether it was an accident, no one knows. Only one thing is certain, namely, that of three possible verdicts, one, Suicide, is ruled out! No man ever managed to shoot himself with a bow and arrow, or a crossbow! Sir Charles Oman adopts the verdict of Accident and assures us that "after missing a great harte" the King shouted to Sir Walter Tyrrel: "Shoot, Walter, shoot, in the devil's name!" Who can have heard this? The King and his favourite were alone, having outstripped the rest of the "field". The body was discovered by a charcoal burner on the following day. Sir Walter Tyrrel fled in haste, galloping off to Southampton Water and taking a passage to France in a ship, which most conveniently happened to be ready to put to sea. He was out of the country long before the charcoal burner discovered the King's body and gave the alarm! It is intriguing to speculate upon what a modern coroner's jury would have said upon these facts! I doubt whether the verdict would have been "death by misadventure".

An American author of a very interesting book on hunting (Mr. Joseph B. Thomas, M.F.H., author of *Hounds and Hunting Through the Ages*: Derry Dale Press, New York, 1928) has no doubt whatever as to the mode of the death of William Rufus for he writes:

> It will be remembered that William Rufus, son of the Conqueror, met his death at the hand of an enraged peasant whose home had been destroyed in order to make this same preserve [the New Forest].

The evidence such as it is, all points in the one direction. The main fact, as has been said, was that the King was killed out hunting and that England, Norman and Saxon alike, rejoiced at being rid of a man whose reign had been hateful to everyone excepting his favourites, mostly men of as evil repute as the King himself. Walter Tyrrel, for

all we know to the contrary, may have been quite ready to commit murder at a price. Who can know? The circumstantial evidence is absolutely damning.[1]

William II ruled for thirteen years! Was there an evil omen in this fact?

He had all his father's keenness for the Chase but certainly much less knowledge. This hunting ardour may constitute some kind of a redeeming feature, but of any other high-lights in his character there was no trace whatever.

England was rid of a very bad king, but it can scarcely be said that she profited overmuch by the advent of the next Hunting Monarch Henry I, who seized the crown almost before William II's body was cold in its tomb.

Duke Robert, who was still first favourite in the popular choice, was away fighting in the first Crusade: Henry was on the spot and with sufficient money at call to bribe the Great Council. He was not openly as bad a man as his brother, but he was imbued with all the worst qualities of the Conqueror, and with only a very few of that king's good ones. He abated none of the ferocious punishments of those who infringed the Forest Laws and death, blinding and mutilation remained. His other persecutions—one in particular, that of the money-makers at the mint—went beyond any of which his father had been guilty. Because of one offence in base coinage, he ordered the right hand of all "moneyers" in the kingdom to be cut off.

Henry I's interest in the Chase was only tepid, and his chances of indulging it were not a little hampered by the many incidents in his tempestuous reign: one of the earliest, the rebellion of the barons under Robert de Belesme, Earl of Shrewsbury, who headed an insur-

[1] Another version of this occurrence is that William II was riding in some sort of a procession alongside the Mayor of Southampton, when an arrow came out of a thicket and killed him, whereupon everyone else galloped away at full speed, leaving him for dead on the ground. Apparently, a large number of people, including the King himself, seemed to have known that there was something in the wind, and it is said that Rufus very nearly altered the plan for that day's hunting at the very last moment. Tyrrel flatly denied having had anything to do with the King's death. It certainly was no accident, for an arrow, even from a crossbow, would have lost too much velocity after glancing off a tree to kill a man with the accuracy which was displayed upon this occasion. There is not much doubt that Tyrrel was concerned in the murder, even if he did not fire the fatal shot. It is not generally known, even by some famous historians, that Walter Tyrrel was a son-in-law of Richard de Clare; that two of his brothers-in-law, Gilbert and Roger, were at Brockenhurst when the deed was done and that Henry I (brother of William II) promptly made another brother-in-law of Tyrrel Abbot of Ely as his very first act on his accession and gave the See of Winchester to William Giffard, another member of the Tyrrel family. Many members of the House of Clare were in constant attendance at Henry I's court and Guido Dapifer, whose wife was a Clare, was one of his favourites. This does not, perhaps, prove that Henry I engineered the murder, but it is highly probable that he knew all about it. There are a number of other peculiar happenings at the moment, but to go into them at length might make too long a story. *Author.*

rection to depose him and place Robert on the throne. This was but one of the distractions which must have interfered with any operations with horse and hound.

Robert of Normandy effected a landing at the height of the Shrewsbury rebellion, but weakly allowed himself to be bought off for £3,000, a sum of some magnitude in those days, particularly to so impecunious a person as the fighting soldier. If Robert had succeeded, the history of Monarchy and the Chase of those days might have been a pleasanter thing to record than actually it is.

Henry's reign, it is true, was marked by definite progress, so far as the matter of appeasement and fusion between the conquerors and the conquered was concerned, and on the whole he ruled wisely and justly according to his lights, but this course was induced solely by the knowledge that it was good business for himself. He was supremely selfish.

With his wars with the barons, those with his brother, Robert of Normandy, with Louis VI of France, his disputes with the Church, it is not the province of this book to deal, but his private character is in point.

He was only too obviously anxious to be what one of Surtees' heroes described as "an amazin' instance of a pop'lar man". He never achieved this object, but it can be written of him that he tried. He married a Princess of the House of Alfred, Eadgyth (Mathilda), daughter of Malcolm of Scotland and of Margaret, sister of Eadgar, the Ætheling, much as an incoming M.F.H. not sure of his ground, might marry into the "County"; he granted a Charter to the citizens of London in the first year of his reign under which their liberties were considerably enlarged, and it even permitted them to hunt, to own hounds of their own and appoint their own master.

This Charter allowed them "to hunt deer as freely as their ancestors had done in the Chiltern Hundreds, Middlesex, or Surrey and the wolf in Middlesex up to the northern gate of the city".

This last concession cannot have been of much avail to the sporting citizen, for by this period wolves were virtually extinct! However, it is to Henry I's credit that the Common Hunt, as it was called, was established. The Lord Mayor of London was *ex-officio* master, and the appointment carried on well into Elizabethan times when, as we are told, "building encroachment" began to interfere and the hart and the hare were no longer to be seen pursued by the Common Hounds across the fields of Islington and St. Giles!

But the Hunt did not die out until much later in history, for the Epping Hunt, its lineal descendant, was a going concern in early Victorian times.

An entertaining account of its doings was given by a London

correspondent of the old *Oriental Sporting Magazine*.[1] Their quarry was the carted Monarch of the Glen, and of their methods the less said the better, as no doubt the hunting reader will agree after casting his eye over the accounts of their doings set out in Appendix A to this book. Surtees, it may be recalled, makes one of his marvellous characters (Jean Rougier) in *Ask Mama* refer to "the Grand Hont de Epping which rules all the oder honts jost as the Grand Clob de Jockey at Newmarket rules all oder Jockey Clobs in de Kingdom". Surtees was a good historian, in addition to being a magnificent depicter of character.

Whether Stephen of Blois, Henry I's nephew, had much leisure for anything so assuaging to political troubles as hunting, is extremely doubtful, for the nineteen years of his reign were very turbulent. His troubles started from the moment of his election by the Great Council, who were not prepared to accept the rightful claim in tail-female of Henry I's daughter Mathilda. This dispute of the title to the throne was a heaven-sent opportunity for the barons who, though subdued by Henry, had never resigned the hope of an England compounded of little kingdoms—separate "masterships"—with absolute rights of their own, including that of taking no notice at all of the Forest Laws. This they accomplished to the full during this reign and there can be little doubt that, so far as hunting was concerned, they completely ignored the King's claim to a monopoly.

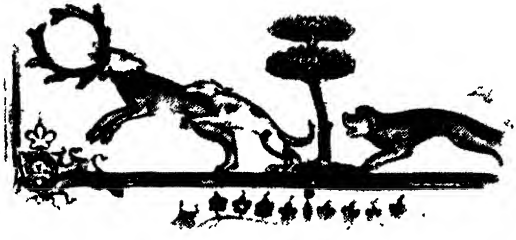
Stephen's reign throughout its length was scarred by practically continuous Civil War, and, as was the case later in history, during the Wars of the Roses, and later again, during the Parliamentary Wars of Stuart times, hunting suffered and dwindled almost to the point of extinction.

King Stephen, for all his weakness and incapacity to deal with the warlike and entirely unruly baronage, was a man of great personal courage, and it is therefore likely that, if ever he got the chance of participating in the pleasures of "the image of war" he did so. Danger is an irresistible magnet to the valiant. There is, however, no direct record of his hunting peregrinations, though there has been a claim put forward in Yorkshire that it was he and not King John who granted their first Royal Charter to the Staintondale Hunt. King John's claim is perhaps the better documented, and must, therefore, be accepted.

All these Norman kings, whatever their misdeeds in other regions, were unquestionably imbued with a genuine love of hunting, the Conqueror being both the most knowledgeable, and, at the same time, the best *veneur*, and, likewise, the man who did a very great deal to improve the breed of the indigenous horse. He knew what to do and

[1] See Appendix A.

he did it. Though the Conqueror did not initiate hunting in England, to his credit it must be recorded that he added a few weighty stones to the foundations laid by the Saxons. It has been said that William I aspired to be a copy of Charlemagne. It is, however, as certain as most things can be, that he copied no one, for that was not his nature, and that he believed that he was a law unto himself both in the hunting field and in the ruling of his kingdom.



CHAPTER III

The Huntings of the Kings: The Plantagenets

WHEN Henry of Anjou acceded to the throne of England he found things in much the same state of chaos as would a master of hounds who takes over after a succession of incompetent predecessors. Such a master as is visualized is a very convenient, and likewise, apposite simile for our purpose, for the state of things both inside and outside the kennel is invariably found upside down. The hounds are bred to no plan for the country over which they are required to hunt, they are all sorts, sizes and shapes; there is no discipline either where they, or the hunt staff, are concerned; all the farmers and landowners and even the neighbouring masters, are in a state of either overt or thinly-veiled hostility, and, worst of all, the cash-box is nearly empty.

This is not an overdrawn picture of the evil results of a period of slipshod management of a hunting establishment, and it is an exact parallel of the state of affairs which Henry II found in England when he succeeded the well-meaning but feckless Stephen, in whose faltering hands the reins of government had been for just nineteen ineffective years. Stephen was not entirely to blame, for, in his turn, he had followed two bad "masters", the execrable Rufus and the by no means admirable Henry I. Stephen had not got the "hands" to hold such a bad "puller" as England was at that period.

The moment, however, that Henry II got into the saddle the "runaway horse" found that the hands of a real horseman were on the other end of the reins. The young king was only twenty-one, but he was wise beyond his years, with a first-class brain, and an equally first-class courage. He very quickly let it be known that he meant to be "master", and that he was in no wise prepared to countenance a bobbery pack of kinglets each out for his own hand, and each quite ready to slaughter his next-door neighbour if Fate afforded him the chance, and he thought it worth while. This was a state of affairs completely akin to that which quite often obtained on that exciting and warlike North-West Frontier of India.

Henry II commenced his reign without having to fight for his crown, for his mother, Mathilda, daughter of Henry I, had ceded all her rights to him, and William of Bologne, Stephen's sole surviving son, never made any attempt to put forward a claim to the kingdom of England.

Henry had other very material advantages, in addition to his own first-class abilities. He was a big landowner, and by no means a pauper. Through his ill-conditioned, and quite amoral, wife, Eleanor, Duchess of Aquitaine, divorced wife of Louis VII of France, Henry obtained more territory in France than he did in England. In France itself he ruled over more of that land than the French king himself. His foreign "country" stretched from the Loire to the Pyrenees.

During his very able "mastership" of thirty-five years, and despite the fact that he spent more time in France than he did in England, and that the affairs of state were for most of the period in the hands of Justiciars the country was better ruled than it had been for a very long sequence of years. It is not, however, within the orbit of this book to detail the operation by which Henry II swept away the rebellious barons or to recount the picturesque details concerned with the demolition of the 375 "adulterine castles", those independent hunting establishments owned by these various local dictators, nor is it demanded in this place to descant upon the King's domestic troubles, mainly set on foot by his unprincipled queen, who, amongst other garboils, was behind the conspiracies of Henry, the eldest son, and Richard (later King of England); his wars with France, the Scots and the Irish; his conflict with the Church, or the deplorable incident of the murder of Becket in the precincts of Canterbury Cathedral; suffice it to say, that this level-headed and able king surmounted them all; but in the end he succumbed to the treachery of his youngest and favourite son, John, who, unhappily for the record of this Realm, was destined to succeed to the throne and prove himself incomparably the worst king that England has ever had. John's high treasons broke his father's heart, and he died at the comparatively early age of fifty-six. He had pulled England out of the morass into which she was rapidly sinking, and he set good government and justice firmly upon their feet.

It is typical of his well-ordered mind that it was during his reign that the pack, then, and for many centuries thereafter, known as the Royal Buckhounds, obtained a definite establishment.

The only reliable list of Hereditary Masters of the Royal pack by tenure *in capite* of Hunters' Manor in Little Weldon, Northamptonshire, is headed by the name of Osborne Lovel, Chamberlain to Henry II. Of the personal hunting exploits of the famous Angevin king in England detail is scant, but of his keen interest and knowledge both of hunting and the breeding of the horse which, to-day, we call the hunter, there is a certain definite accumulation of circumstantial evidence. The regulation of the Royal Buckhounds is a substantial item.

In his most admirable introduction to the late Lord Ribblesdale's

well-known work, *The Queen's Hounds*, Mr. Edward Burrows includes much interesting detail concerning the Hereditary Mastership of the Royal Pack, compiled very largely from the Brocas Papers in that writer's possession. Mr. Burrows being a former Eton "wet-bob", a local euphemism for an Etonian who prefers water to dry land, and believes that more pleasure can be extracted from an oar than from a cricket bat, had therefore a peculiar reason for interest in these masters of the King's Hounds, with which so much of the historical connection between Monarchy and the Chase is interwoven. Probably very few Eton wet-bobs have paused to reflect, as has Mr. Burrows, upon the connection between the royal hunting tradition and such Etonian household words as the Brocas, Brocas Clump, Brocas Meadow and Brocas Lane, or realized that, whilst this strange un-English name persists on the Eton bank of the Thames, it has died out on the opposite side, where once lay the Manor styled until the beginning of the sixteenth century "Brocas in Clewer", or "Clewer Brocas", and where the position of the Brocas Chantry founded by that doughty Gascon knight, Sir Bernard Brocas, whose family came to England with the Conqueror, may still be traced in Clewer Church.

The hereditary mastership of the Royal Buckhounds was held by the family of Brocas for nearly three hundred years from the middle of the fourteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century. Mr. Burrows' list of these early masterships may be conveniently set out in this place since so many of the names are linked with later periods of the royal connection with the Chase which will fall into their places in this volume. Here is Mr. Burrows' list:

LIST OF THE HEREDITARY MASTERS OF THE ROYAL BUCKHOUNDS BY TENURE *IN CAPITE* OF 'HUNTER'S MANOR', IN LITTLE WELDON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

1. Osborne Lovel, Chamberlain to Henry II.
2. William Lovel.
3. Hamon le Venour, by grant from Henry III, in 1216.
4. William Lovel.
5. John Lovel, *ob.* 1316.
6. Thomas de Borhunte, *ob.* 1340, *jure* Margaret Lovel.
7. William Danvers, *ob.* 1361, *jure* Margaret Lovel.
8. Sir Bernard Brocas (1363), *ob.* 1395, *jure* Mary de Borhunte.
9. Sir Bernard Brocas, second of the name, executed 1400.
10. William Brocas (1), *ob.* 1456.
11. William Brocas (2), *ob.* 1484.
12. John Brocas, *ob.* 1492.
13. William Brocas (3), *ob.* 1506.
14. John Brocas, 1508–12.[1]

[1] The tenure of this Master, omitted in the list given in *The Family of Brocas*, has been correctly noted in the *History of the Royal Buckhounds*.

15. George Warham and Ralph Pexall, joint Masters 1512–14, *jure* Ann and Edith Brocas.
16. Ralph Pexall (1514), *ob. c.* 1540, *jure* Edith Brocas.
17. Sir Richard Pexall, *ob.* 1571, son of Edith Brocas.
18. Sir John Savage (till 1584), second husband of Lady Pexall, widow of Sir Richard.
19. Sir Pexall Brocas, *ob.* 1630.
20. Thomas Brocas, who in 1633 sold Hunter's Manor and the office to Sir Lewis Watson, afterwards Lord Rockingham.

I quote Mr. Burrows' explanatory comment upon this list since it has so direct a bearing upon the most famous and most favoured hunting demesne of the Plantagenet kings. Mr. Burrows stands as an unchallengeable authority, for he is a direct lineal descendant of the Brocas masters, and therefore, very personally interested in accuracy. Here is his comment:

From the list of hereditary Masters given above it will be observed that one of the earliest notices of any regular establishment for the Buckhounds is the grant of certain lands in Little Weldon, a manor in Northamptonshire, near Rockingham, to Hamon le Venour, in 1216. It is certain, however, that the Lovels had held these lands at an earlier date, for certain territories and the lordship of the Manor of Little Weldon were granted by Henry II to his Chamberlain, Osborne Lovel, from whom they descended to John Lovel, who died in 1316. Whatever were the original relations of "Hunter's Manor in Little Weldon" to the royal manor of that name, of which it formed a part, it assumed under the Edwards a position so entirely independent of the larger manor, that it is styled in the Brocas deeds and official documents the "Manor of Little Weldon", with "Hunter's Manor" sometimes prefixed as an alias. To this "Hunter's Manor" was attached in Grand Serjeanty for many centuries the Mastership of the Royal Buckhounds. For the ingenious attempt made by the author of a *History of the Buckhounds*, to which allusion has been already made, to throw doubt on the antiquity of the hereditary transmission of the Mastership with "Hunter's Manor"—an attempt apparently based on the fact that the Lovels and de Borhuntes, who held it before Sir Bernard Brocas, were styled custodians instead of masters—needs no further attention than the statement that in the Brocas documents "magister" and "custos" are frequently used as interchangeable terms of the same meaning, and that in an indenture of Elizabeth's reign the phrase "Master or Keeper" of the Buckhounds occurs. Remote from King and Court the situation of Hunter's Manor may seem at the present day to those who forget the central position and historical importance of Rockingham Forest and Rockingham Castle in Norman and Plantagenet times. Here, within reach of the stronghold of Northampton, was the royal residence, fitted for retirement and the pleasures of the chase, until with the increasing necessity of moving the Court nearer to London, Rockingham was superseded by the greater convenience and magnificence of Windsor. A vast extent of country was once covered by Rockingham Forest, which, when reduced to the limits retained almost to modern times, was twenty-four miles long from

Oxendon Bridge to Stamford, and twelve miles wide from Rockingham to Thrapstone.

To the valiant deeds on the fields of battle, Crécy, Calais, Poictiers, Najara, of these Gascon masters, it is not the province of this book to do more than thus briefly refer; but the fact which does concern it, is the considerable knowledge of breeding and training of the light horse and of the art and science of venery which they possessed.

All the members of the Brocas family were unquestionably well fitted by reason of their origin and consequent hunting experience to have charge as Masters of the Horse and the Royal Studs, and as Masters of the Buckhounds of the Royal Hunting Establishment. This fact furnishes one of the earliest and most significant instances of the obligation under which England lay to France in matters of the Chase, and, as Mr. Burrows rightly records, "The striking advantage which, during the Middle Ages, accrued to England from the ancestral possessions derived by her King from Eleanor of Guienne, not only in the graver matter of state and commerce, but in the improvement of the breed of light horses". That is to say, in that class of horse best suited to the Chase.

Both Henry II and his son Richard I, were knowledgeable where horse-breeding was concerned, in marked contrast to that other Plantagenet, the execrable King John, who is stated to have known nothing and to have believed that no horse could be a good one unless he were a black. And yet it is claimed that John was far from being a bad horseman. The facts do not seem to dovetail. If King John had any experience at all it must have taught him that colour is no certain guide to excellence. Henry II, also said to have been a horseman and a good cavalry soldier, is reputed to have preferred to import chestnut and dark brown stallions to mate with the hardy, but often undersized, native English mares and undoubtedly both he and Richard I, who has always been rated first-class when contemporary equitation is mentioned, did a great deal to improve the stamp of horse then in existence in this country.

I am not concerned with what was called the English Great Horse, for however useful he may have been to the heavy cavalry of the times, assuredly he could not have been of much more service to the Chase than to-day would be a Clydesdale in a quick thing with, let us say, the Cottesmore!

The Great Horse eventually became so overloaded with armour that his movement at anything better than a carthorse trot must have been impossible. That pace is of no use for shock tactics. This armour, designed in the first instance as a protection against the bolt from

the crossbow, more or less persisted until the middle of the seventeenth century, when the stupidity of it began to be realized. It is said to have weighed 23 stone, and added to this was the weight of the knight in armour bright.

The saddle and housings of our own Household Cavalry at one time weighed at least 2 stone, and again to this had to be added the probable 14 stone of the six-foot trooper, plus the weight of his weapons.

It was small wonder therefore that when Richard I, that valiant "Core de Lion", went to Palestine in the Third Crusade 1189, and found himself opposed by Saladin's first-class Light Cavalry, superbly handled by a genius in the tactics of the Arme Blanche, his ideas as to the type of cavalry horse which was desirable underwent a change.

Richard, however, was a really good cavalry soldier himself, and also what might be called to-day a good man to hounds, a phrase which means a great deal more than being able to defeat the fences. The accent must, I think, be placed upon the word "hounds". Any "gent with an 'oss to sell" can flash over the fences, but we look for him in vain after hounds have been running for even so short a period as an hour.

Richard I knew a great deal about the Chase, but whether he took a pack of hounds on his penitential Crusade—an act of expiation in some measure for having gone to war against his own father, so it was said—but more probably because fighting was his pet diversion, I much doubt this story. The transport of cavalry is always a very big problem for the "Q" Department in any age. The greater part of Richard I's approach march was by sea. He met his ships at Marseilles and his Naval Intelligence was good enough to enable him to realize that the passage of his transports and their warship escort was not likely to be unopposed. Richard's "principal ships" were of the old Viking build, and therefore good sea-boats. They carried a crew of fourteen plus their officers. The "Rectores" were sometimes even Archbishops. His reverence Girard of Aix, for instance, was one of Richard's senior officers upon this Crusading expedition. In addition these ships were supposed to carry forty knights with their armour and horses, forty foot-soldiers and victuals for men and horses for a whole year. They were naturally bigger than William I's *vissiers*, but even so, I cannot discern much shiproom for packs of hounds, even though it was most fashionable in those times to take a hunting establishment along with you when you went to war. A picturesque idea!

The important matter of water supply for the horses, to say nothing of that for the human element, forbids us to believe that any

luxuries were carried. This, be it remembered, was a major overseas operation and differed very materially from an advance over land.

That some of the Crusaders did go forth to battle preceded by their packs of hounds and with falcons on their wrists, is no doubt perfectly true, but these were the forces which marched through Europe and Asia Minor. Richard's advance was over sea which, no doubt, may have been a less irksome method to one who knew so much about ships as he did and was intent upon speed.

In the First Crusade (1096) the invading army lost all its "noble horse" in Phrygia, and 500 knights died from thirst, the balance of the army being saved only because some hounds discovered water.

In the Second Crusade Pope Eugene III forbade the Crusaders to take any hunting equipment with them, but in the Third Crusade King Philip Augustus of France, Richard I and the companions of St. Louis are all alleged to have gone fully equipped for the Chase. It is, I think, debatable whether the whole of this statement is true. The French king, who advanced over land, may have taken his hounds and his horses, and even Barbarossa, the German Emperor, may have done so, but I still doubt, for the reasons already set out, whether Richard did.

War was his main preoccupation and he wanted his advance to be as swift as possible. The transport of a hunting establishment most assuredly would have hampered this, for his one object was to get into action against the enemies of Holy Cross at the earliest possible moment. At the same time it has to be borne in mind that Richard I had at his disposal a very considerably better and more numerous fleet, of both fighting ships and transports than were available to William of Normandy for a far shorter, and less complicated, overseas operation. This is one which, under the best of conditions, is fraught with a maximum risk and difficulty. Would it have commended itself to the distinguished officers directing the operations on D-Day 1944 to make arrangements to send the Quorn Hounds or the Devon and Somerset Staghounds with his landing parties? F.-M. Viscount Montgomery never even contemplated such an idea! The two situations, I suggest, are upon all-fours. These "Easements" did, in the case of the Conqueror, and may have, in Richard's case, followed the establishment of the bridgehead in the hostile territory, but I suggest that the argument against their having been part of the equipage of war is convincing to anyone who knows what the transport difficulties involved must have been.

Yet, as has been said, Richard I had a very considerable fleet rated by the contemporary standards at his disposal; certainly the best and most efficient in English history up to that date, and he may have listened in the unwise counsel of the young blades of his army, who,

most probably, insisted that war was hardly decent without a first-class pack of hounds and a supply of "noble hawks". I make no claim to know anything about the latter which in any case do not take up much shipping space, but I do claim to know something about the former and about what the transport of horses and hounds by sea entails.

It does not come within the orbit of a hunting book to enter into any detailed description of the various classes of vessels composing King Richard's fleet, excepting in so far as it bears upon the question of the truth, or otherwise, of the statement that he took a pack of hounds and a hunting establishment to Palestine with him. He had many of the class somewhat loosely described as "Dromons", that is, vessels not of the galley type and dependent upon sail power rather than upon oars. They were three-masters, lateen-rigged on the mizzen, and a big advance upon the "one-stickers". They had a much higher seaboard and consequently were more seaworthy than their forerunners. They were bluff-bowed, slow and bulky with plenty of stowage. Richard also had galleases, a larger type of galley, fast sailing and with considerable oar power. He also had esneccas, so called from their snaky appearance, war galleys pure and simple, fast and handy and fitted with iron spurs for ramming purposes. It was his esneccas which enabled him to defeat the giant enemy carak, or dromon, carrying, it is said, a complement of 1500, which tried to intercept his ships after they had set sail from Cyprus. Richard attacked with his esneccas in line abreast and rammed the enemy, after an attempt at boarding her had been foiled by the enemy's use of Greek fire—a concoction of pitch, sulphur and probably some phosphorus.

Thus, besides being a first-class cavalry soldier, Richard displayed himself as no mean sea fighter—a veritable Horse Marine.

Despite the assertions of his critics that Richard I spent far too little time in the realm of which he was King and cared little how it was governed, and was far too much on foreign service and in his French dominions, he was identified very closely with hunting in England and was as great an enthusiast as the Conqueror himself. It is on record that, during one of his periods in England, he brought off a hunt which surely must stand as a record for all time. He took a stag away from Sherwood Forest and ran him to Barnesdale in Yorkshire, a distance as the crow flies of 108 miles. It is to be presumed that his hounds did not pull this stag down, for he was "proclaimed". The meaning of a "royal harte proclaimed" has been set out at an earlier page. The Master of the Royal Buckhounds, when this famous hunt was recorded, must have been Osborne Lovel (Henry II's chamberlain, see List of Masters set out on page 28). I

have failed to find any detail of this hunt, neither has Lady Apsley (*vide Bridle Ways Through History*, p. 102). The Lion Heart, keen as he was upon hunting in the manner which we consider to-day the only legitimate one, that is to say, with a pack of hounds, has been accused of having been prone to the use of a weapon which was not considered *comme il faut*, the crossbow, with which he was a first-class shot. It was by a bolt from one of these unsportsmanlike weapons that Richard himself met his death at the siege of Chaluz in Aquitaine on April 6th, 1199. The primitive surgery of the time, and not the wound in the shoulder, caused the premature demise of a sovereign who, whatever his faults, was a warrior *sans peur* even if not *sans reproche*.

The historians whose task it has been to place upon record the general story of this realm from the political viewpoint, have said all that seems to be humanly possible about Richard I's successor, the monarch called by many the usurper and murderer. Strictly speaking, John was not a usurper, for the Great Council chose him in preference to the little boy of twelve, Arthur, son of Duke Geoffrey, John's elder brother. The other title, however, was very fully earned. The historian's summing up of this king, who sat upon the throne of England for seventeen years, can be condensed like this: he was as hot-tempered as his father, Henry II; as false as his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine; as ungrateful as his brother Henry; as cruel, extravagant and reckless as his brother Richard. The lesser historian attempting to link up the story of the Chase with that of the Monarchy, upon arriving at King John, finds himself faced with a completely dead line. There is not a vestige of scent of a "serving" description! We know, as already mentioned in a previous chapter, that the Forest Laws were put on the Agenda Paper at Runnymede, but we equally well know that John never had any intention of honouring his word under the Great Charter of 1215, and that he did, in fact, break it, and furthermore did his best to "break" his own Archbishop (Langton) and that, so far as any repeal of the clauses affecting the huntings of the kings was concerned, nothing in any way material was done.

We are told that the Staintondale Hunt received a Royal Charter "in the thirteenth century" from King John as a mark of his gratitude to the Dalesman who saved him from a watery grave when he was shipwrecked in Robin Hood Bay on the Yorkshire coast just south of Whitby, but there is no reliable record of the occurrence, and this alleged charter has likewise been ascribed to King Stephen, who, at any rate, was a brave and honourable soldier. If such a thing happened I suggest that the Dalesman of the East Riding may not have done any service to England by rescuing King John.

The King's general character does not encourage a belief that anything so healthy as sport can have held out any attraction to him. His record in this regard is as blank as it is black in every other direction.

John claimed to have been the Father of the British Navy, but, here again, we find him flirting with the facts; for all that he did in actuality was to preserve the good fleet built by his predecessor, and to see that the ships were well found. This naturally has nothing whatever to do with any hunting proclivities, and is merely noted as a solitary gleam in a murky fog. If these ships had not been available, it might have gone ill with the nine-year-old Henry III, who succeeded his evil father, for England would have been invaded.

The next king's record in the realm of sport is not a much more fruitful vineyard than was his father's. This Plantagenet was of a happy-go-lucky and distinctly feather-pated nature in his salad days, but with none of John's evil ways, though in some ways just as easy about the sanctity of his word. That Henry III took an interest in hunting and the Royal Pack is not open to doubt. It was by a grant from him in 1216, the year of his accession when he was only nine years old, that Hamon Le Venour became master of the Royal Buckhounds (*vide* List, p. 28) and so, presumably, whatever may have happened later when he reached the years of indiscretion, he started off on the road which, though it may not lead either to wisdom or wealth, most certainly does so to the third unpurchasable asset of Man's life here below.

Before the great clash with the redoubtable Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, it is probable that, like most of his house, with the exception of his father, Henry III took such ease as was permitted him hunting in Rockingham Forest round and about which, in less stormy times than those through which we have of recent years been condemned to live, people hunted with the Belvoir, Quorn, Cottesmore, and Woodland Pytchley.

Henry III's best contribution to the land over which he ruled not entirely without success for fifty-six years was his son Edward, a gallant soldier, the liberator of Nazareth in the Crusade in which he was still fighting, when the news of the old king's death in 1272 called him back to become Edward I of England. A kind epitaph upon Henry III would be *Et militavit non sine gloria.*

England elected Edward by popular acclamation and all the old traditions of the Great Council were brushed aside. The country knew that she had then obtained the best and greatest ruler since Alfred the Great. Edward's motto was: *Pactum Serva!* and this is a complete index of his character. He was not only a good fighting soldier, but, what is rarer, a good general. He was probably the first

English commander in the field to recognize the fact that shock tactics by armour must be supported by the arm of precision carried by the infantryman—at that period, the longbow, a graceful and beautifully balanced weapon. Sport and war, being so closely linked, it is not surprising to find Edward I encouraging the former by all means at his disposal. The Lovels, William and John, were his Masters of the Buckhounds, and, so far as available records permit us to know, the Royal Pack flourished abundantly. It was this great king who gave to Adam de Everingham a patent Roll in 1279 "To hunt the fox in the King's Chaces and Warrenne of Holderness (except during the fence months)".

Edward I even encouraged the Church to hunt, not that any such encouragement was then, or has since been, necessary, for "The Cloth" has ever been as keen on the Chase as the Crown, and the diligent reader will no doubt be able to compile a list of no mean length from his own personal knowledge of hunting clerics, headed, as I suggest would be meet and proper, by the name of that well-beloved M.F.H. the Reverend E. A. ("Jack") Milne of the Cattistock.

It is on record that Edward I gave the Lord Abbot of Peterborough (the Fitzwilliam country wherein is situated the Judgment Hall of the Fox Hound) a grant to hunt hares and foxes in the demesne adjacent to his charge, and a similar grant to his Reverence of Cirencester, including, as must be the case, the well-known covert in the Duke of Beaufort's country, Stanton Park in the Forest of Braydon. Whether the Lords Abbot hunted their own hounds, history does not relate, but from my own knowledge of hunting clerics I should be vastly surprised to be told that they did not. Abbots did not—and do not—always prefer to ride "ambling pads"—far from it, in fact, many that I have met prefer something which looks class enough to win the Gold Cup at Cheltenham.

Edward I, being mere mortal man, did not avoid mistakes; he violently disliked the Jews, the feeling having been first implanted whilst he was campaigning in Palestine: he fought bloody wars with Llewellyn of Wales, unnecessarily in the view of some, but he repaired any mistake by giving that wild and woolly country its first Prince of Wales. He fought in Scotland, with such doughty warriors as William Wallace, or le Walleys, i.e. the Welshman, or with that other great Scottish chieftain, the Bruce.

England was the poorer when this good king's reign of thirty-five years came to an end, and she was very unfortunate that he should be succeeded by his thriftless, spineless and craven son, Edward of Carnavon, who seemed from the outset intent upon undoing all the good that his father had achieved.

PLATE 3. HUNTING SCENES IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Illustrations from *Livre de la Chasse* (1387), by Gaston de Foix (vide Chapter IV), upon which Edward, second Duke of York, based his book *The Mayster of Game*, adding some chapters of his own upon hunting in England. The Duke of York dedicated his book to Henry IV. The top picture in Gaston de Foix's book bears the title, "How to teach your servant to find the track of the stag." The lower one "How to Hunt the Stag."

Edward II's boon companion was the altogether undesirable Piers de Gaveston, a very different type of Gascon from the gallant De Brocas Masters of the Buckhounds. William and John Lovel were the Masters during the greater part of this reign, but one William Twici or Tweti was "Chief Huntsman" to the King. It is this celebrity who is held to be the author of the earliest treatise on hunting written in English. It has been claimed that *The Red Boke of St. Albans* was by one Dame Juliana Berners, or Barnes, Abbess of Reading, and the date assigned her, in 1486, in the reign of Henry III. In the first place, it is very doubtful whether Juliana Berners ever existed, for no such name is to be found in the list of the Abbesses of Reading, or of any other convent. The name of the author of one chapter only seems more probably to have been Julian Barns, whoever he may have been, but it is amply clear that to Twici, or Tweti, must go the credit for anything earlier and also for *The Red Boke*, which was merely a translation into English of his treatise, which was written in Anglo-French. Twici, therefore, very considerably antedates both Gaston de Foix's *Livre de Chasse* (1387) and Edward, second Duke of York's *Maystre of Game* (1406–13), which latter was, in the main, a translation of Gaston de Foix's book embellished by about five original chapters on hunting in England written by the Duke Edward.

Edward II undoubtedly encouraged hunting, but whether he did much good to the Chase is problematical. The fact that his profitless reign ended in his murder in that famous landmark in hunting history, Berkeley Castle, suggests some index of his popularity.

Edward III was only fourteen when he succeeded to the throne, but by the time that he was nineteen he was sufficiently mature to slay the infamous Roger Mortimer, his mother's paramour, and place his own mother, who was equally undesirable, in safe custody in Nottingham Castle. He was a young man of character, great bravery and considerable personal attraction like his grandfather Edward I. He fought and won the Battle of Crécy in 1346 and he was only sixty-five when he died at the end of the third, and regrettably inglorious, phase of his career. He has been criticized by military authority as being no strategist, but this is a moot point, and I suggest that his approach march to the field of Crécy suggests that he may have known more about it than the pundits have been prepared to concede. He was a first-class tactician and he passed on his soldierly qualities to his son, that romantic figure, and fine fighting man, the Black Prince.

Edward III, like most soldiers, was ardent in the Chase and very generous in affording his friends facilities for similar enjoyment by, for instance, giving them permission to hunt once a year in any of the Royal Forests. Lord Montacute was one of this favoured few. Edward is classed as "a great lover of sport" and as he is reported to

have taken three hundred couple of hounds and a hundred and thirty falcons to France when he set forth to fight the Battle of Créçy, he must have been. Whether it is true that he took this enormous hunting establishment with him I think is doubtful, but it is quite likely that he did for his own delight and amusement, throughout his somewhat protracted operations, transport an establishment to France. It may be regarded as certain that in the first place he took out with him a pack of at least sixty couple of what are called "large hounds", and an equal number of "gray hounds". It is also known that the famous Sir Bernard de Brocas was appointed Hereditary Master of the Royal Buckhounds to keep things going at home. The King cannot have been at all short of hounds whatever their quality may have been.

In this connection the exploits of Sir John de Brocas and of his son Sir Bernard in the Chase and the sterner field of war would in themselves furnish material for a most colourful historical romance. Sir Bernard was rated what would be called to-day a first-class man to hounds, and here undoubtedly it was a case of like master, like man. Sir Bernard was not only Edward III's Master of Hounds, for he was likewise his Master of Horse and his chief Remount Officer. Cavalry were badly needed, and as horse casualties in action in the kind of fighting then in vogue were usually heavy, the supply department could hardly be too well organized or too extensive. A vast cavalry establishment had to be kept at full war strength until the decisive battle of Poictiers had been fought and won. Concurrently the royal hunting stable was maintained on a scale of magnificence which may seem to have been unjustified. Edward III has been criticized for his extravagance in horseflesh for the purposes both of war and the chase; but everything in life is comparative, and as the keep of thirty horses for sixty days amounted to only forty pounds twelve and sixpence, or about fivepence halfpenny per day per horse, we might not to-day deem that very extravagant. I have no doubt that many a master of hounds would feel extremely pleased with himself if he could do things at a hundred times that figure, even taking into account the fact that the multiple for money of this date for the sake of comparison with the present day is, roughly speaking, twenty. John de Brocas paid Master Thomas de Garton for the purchase of three chargers: £120 for a grey named Pomers, £70, for another grey, named Lebryt, and £50 for a bay named Bayard. These, naturally, were all weight-carriers and the prices, even adding the multiple, do not seem excessive.

Edward III's beautiful consort Philippa of Hainault shared all her lord's enthusiasm for the Chase, and is known to have hunted in Savernake Forest, and also somewhere near Cosham, and on occasion to have paid the penalty which falls to the lot of most hunting folk.

In one of her falls she dislocated a shoulder, a painful, if not very dangerous, calamity.

Edward III's reign links up with two important hunting demesnes of to-day: the Beaufort country through John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and ancestor of the present Duke of Beaufort, who is nameable as one of the best amateur huntsmen of modern times; and another famous and ancient hunt, the Brocklesby. It was at the Black Prince's own battle, Poictiers (Sept. 1356), that King John of Valois surrendered his sword to John de Pelham, of whom Mr. Charles Pelham, Master of the Brocklesby for forty-nine seasons (1714–63), was the direct descendant. Sir Roger la Warr has been mentioned as assisting at the capture of the Valiant French king, but John de Pelham took the major part. In commemoration of this event at Poictiers the Pelhams were given an honourable augmentation to their arms, the buckles and belt as badges. In the second and third quarterings in the arms of the Earl of Yarborough are "Two pieces of belt erect argent decorated with buckles and studs or". Those emblems recall John of Valois's sword, belt and slings, and their capture by the fighting soldier, from whom a long and distinguished line of Brocklesby Masters descends. Richard II of Bordeaux has been presented to us by the dramatist as a gallant and romantic figure, such as we should expect the son of the Black Prince and the grandson of the warrior King Edward III to be. Of this prince's personal courage there was never any doubt, and there may be recalled that early manifestation of it when, no more than a stripling of fourteen, he rode out to Aldgate, practically unprotected, to face Wat Tyler and his dangerous mob from Maidstone. The rebels were in murderous mood; they had slaughtered some city merchants and some men of the law in the Temple; they had burned John of Gaunt's great palace of the Savoy, which stood upon a site in the Strand so well known to many, and it was no certainty that they would not kill the King. They had not scrupled to murder William of Sudbury, the Archbishop of Canterbury, so why not the Sovereign? Richard's courage in facing such a rabble was an example of which many of us might be proud. That subsequent events should mar so fair a beginning, and that his not very happy reign should be brought to its close by his murder in Pontefract Castle, contrived by his usurping cousin, Bolingbroke, must ever be a cause of weeping to many good men.

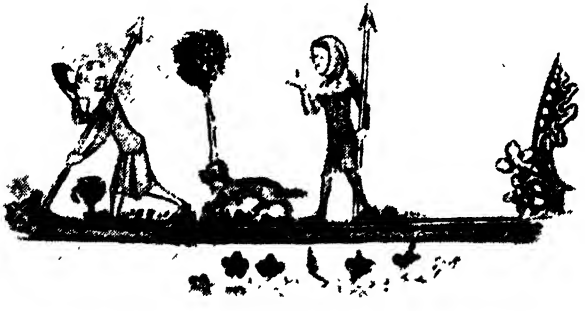
This young king had all the right instincts and almost all the wrong friends. With such blood in his veins it would have been strange indeed if he had not followed in the footsteps of his grandsire and his sire where the Chase was concerned, but no very elaborate detail of that side of his life has come down to us.

It is known that the Royal Buckhounds were kept up in very much

the same state of regal splendour as had prevailed in Edward III's time, and that Richard II was very devoted to the Master, that *preux chevalier*, Sir Bernard de Brocas, but of the King's personal exploits in the hunting field we have virtually nothing to help us.

It is said that Richard II hunted the fox, not then classed as "a beast of venerie", and it is also possible that he hunted in France with his kinsman Gaston de Foix, the comely "Phœbus", but there is no definite record. That the King rode well and owned many a good horse may be taken as certain. It is said that he loved one horse in particular, his Roan Barbary "as an only son".

A lasting memorial of Richard II's devotion to his Master of Hounds may be found in St. Edmund's Chapel in Westminster Abbey where is the stately tomb of Sir Bernard de Brocas, round which runs in curious contracted Latin the inscription: "Hic jacet Bernardus Brocas T.T. quondam camerarius anne regine Anglie cujus anime propiciatur Deus. Amen."



CHAPTER IV

The Huntings of the Kings: Period of The Wars of the Roses (1399–1483)

IN a period which embraced not only a considerable war of aggression against France, but also the fiercest and most merciless civil war in our history, it would be strange if there were much to record where so peaceful a pursuit as hunting is concerned. It was a Lion and a Unicorn epoch: the prize, the Crown of England, and throughout its length monarchs, and the claimants to the Monarchy, were so absorbed in the ugly business of slaughter that little time was left over for anything else.

In dealing with the times in which one man could say to another, his disarmed prisoner: "Thy father slew mine and now will I slay thee," what likelihood is there of any plethora of material appropriate to a book of this description? The words just quoted were those of the rough Borderer, Lord Clifford, to the seventeen-year-old Earl of Rutland at the bloody battle, and subsequent massacre, at Wakefield (December 30th, 1460), the *revanche* for a quite as ruthless Yorkist victory at Northampton in July of the same year, the action at which Henry VI, the reigning monarch, was taken prisoner. Wakefield was the reprisal of that awesome lady, the King's mother, Margaret of Anjou, and this was followed in March of the following year, 1461, by that other battle of extermination, Towton, the decisive Yorkist victory at which toll was taken in full for all that happened at Wakefield. And so it went on down to Bosworth Field, 1485, at which the most contemned and equally much whitewashed Richard III was slain. All this quite apart from such more or less quite legitimate adventures as Harfleur, and the amazing battle of Agincourt, made so famous by Shakespeare and so ridiculous by a film adaptor. How anyone, monarch or subject, could think of such things as horses and hounds defies comprehension, and yet hunting did not stop.

Richard II, having been upon such good terms with his Master of the Royal Buckhounds, and accorded him such marked honour at his death, it may be that the usurping Bolingbroke may have been imbued with suspicion of the loyalty to the Crown of the second Sir Bernard Brocas, whose term of command of the Royal Pack had

commenced in 1395. Henry IV's suspicions were, as is known, only too well founded. The new king was perfectly aware of the fact that the deposition and subsequent murder of his cousin, the luckless "Richard the Redeless", had not earned him by any means a unanimous popularity. He knew that Parliament had acquiesced in his usurpation out of no love for himself, but because the country had suffered too much from Richard's arbitrary methods. The Lords and Commons left him in no doubt that he was accepted purely on approbation. Richard had not been deposed by the united will of the nation but by Henry's personal adherents the Percys, the Nevilles, the Arundels, and the Staffords, and it was, therefore, small wonder that Henry realized that his seat in the saddle was far from secure. He suspected everybody. He had hardly been two months on the throne when civil war broke out, and leading the rebels were Richard's kinsmen, the Earls of Kent and Huntingdon with Montacute, the Earl of Salisbury, and the Lord Despencer, aided and abetted by divers knights, two of whom were Sir Bernard Brocas and Sir Thomas Shelley. How all the conspirators were caught and executed with varying degrees of savagery without trial, is common knowledge. The conspirators, including the Master of the Buckhounds, believed that King Richard was still alive, and had escaped to Scotland, whereas, as a matter of fact, he had been done to death in Pontefract Castle long before the plot had matured.

The noble earls were all beheaded at various places, and the same fate befell the knights, with the exception of four, amongst whom was Sir Bernard Brocas. He and Shelley were sent to London for what was called "trial". They were all sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn, but only Brocas eventually escaped the extreme degradation. Henry IV commuted his punishment to simple beheading and the forfeiture of all his estates, which included Hunter's Manor in Little Weldon, Roche Court in Hampshire and other stately possessions. There was also the attainder.

It must be placed to Henry IV's credit that the forfeiture and attainder of the Brocas estates, and the attendant loss to this renowned family of the Hereditary Mastership of the Buckhounds, were speedily reversed, and the Brocas succession restored in blood and estate. The succeeding Master, William Brocas, No. I, carried on his office until 1456, that is well into the reign of Henry VI, the founder of Eton, and, so far as is known, he and his successors, William Brocas, No. II, and John Brocas, kept hounds impartially for the Red or White Rose, according to which colour was in the ascendant. It is therefore clear that whatever the preoccupation of the various monarchs of the period, the Brocas family saw to it that the hounds were kept going. The task cannot have been an easy one. Hunting

while the conflict is overseas has always had a hard fight to survive: how it was saved from extinction when the war was in the home paddock I do not know. Perhaps the fierce and warlike Owen Glyndower, who was Henry IV's No. 1 domestic care, being a Welshman, and, therefore, in all probability, a keen hunting man, carefully saw to it that his formidable forays did not penetrate farther east than Worcester and Shrewsbury, and so in no way interfered with the fixture list of the Royal Buckhounds! The erudite Mr. Edward Burrows in his Introduction to Lord Ribblesdale's most interesting, *The Queen's Hounds*, to which an earlier reference has been made, ventures the suggestion that the successors of the decapitated Sir Bernard Brocas, No. II, came to the wise conclusion that woodcraft was far safer than statecraft, and that following the Buckhounds was better for the health than following the dogs of war. The matter seems to be scarcely arguable. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that Henry Bolingbroke had every chance to go out hunting if he had wanted to, there is absolutely no reliable record of his ever having done so. He was never very robust, and in his later years suffered from that dire disease leprosy, from which he eventually died in March 1413.

Concerning the execution of Sir Bernard Brocas, Shakespeare is in error. Even Homer, so it is alleged, nodded, and The Bard appears to have followed suit. Not only does Shakespeare tell us that Sir Bernard Brocas's head was sent from Oxford to London, whereas the poor gentleman lost it at Marble Arch (*Richard II*, Act IV, Sc. 6), but he has gone further and grossly caricatured Henry IV's serious and soldierly son, Henry V. The poet was apparently so smitten with the fine acting possibilities of his creation, Sir John Falstaff, that he could not resist the temptation of making him the boon companion of the Prince of Wales. The liberty is hardly forgivable. There is, or there should be, a limit to both poetic and dramatic licence, especially to the latter.

Whatever may or may not have been Henry IV's personal enthusiasm for the Chase, the Royal Buckhounds continued to flourish and the author of that famous treatise, or purloined treatise, *The Maystre of Game*, believed the King to be sufficiently interested in the art and science of venery to dedicate his work to him. The compiler, for that is all that he was, Gaston de Foix having done all the hard work in his *Livre de Chasse* (1387), was Edward, second Duke of York, grandson of Edward III, and son of Edmund of Langley. The translation was begun in 1406 and completed in the last year of Henry IV's reign. The dedication is of some interest by reason of its quaint language, and therefore I quote its commencement.

Unto the wise, excellent, and Christian Prince, Henry the Fourth, by the aforesaid grace King of England and of France, Prince of Wales, Duke of

Guienne, of Lancaster, and of Cornwall, and Earl of Chester, I your own in every humble wise attempt to make a simple book, which I recommend and submit to your noble and wise correction. The which book, if it like to your aforesaid lordship, shall be called and named the Maystre of Game, and for this cause. For the matter that this book treateth of what in every season of the year is most desirable, and to my thinking to every gentle heart the most honest and most disportful of all games, that is to say hunting. For if it be so that hawking with gentle hawks for the heron be noble and commendable, it lasteth but seldom, at the most not passing half-a-year. And if men find game enough from May to Lammas to hawk at, then might they not find hawks to hawk with. But of hunting there is no season of all the year that game may not be in every good country right well found, and eke hounds to enchase it. And since this book shall be all of hunting, which is so noble a game, and eke lasting through all the year to divers beasts, me thinketh that I may well call it Maystre of Game.

It is probable that only the most diligent students have read Edward of York's translation, perhaps fewer still the original of Gaston de Foix, but a study of them will not be found profitless. An instance: " . . . He shall see which hounds come in the van chase and in the middle chase and which be the skirters." Sound advice for any huntsman? And again: "And then when all his hounds be passed afore him then shall he ride after them . . ." Frank Freeman himself could not tender better advice upon "edging" them in front of you! One more quotation from this extraordinary book will no doubt interest the hunters of the hare. Edward of York (or de Foix) writes: "Ere I speak how the hare shall be hunted it is to wit that the hare is king of all venerie: for all blowing and the fair term of hunting come of the seeking and the finding of her for certain it is a marvelous beaste."

This presented at a time when the King's hounds hunted the hart exclusively, seems to have been somewhat venturesome and for the author, a Yorkist, to have dedicated this book to a Lancastrian king, who, from such facts as are disclosed, was a none too ardent supporter of the Chase, was taking a risk. However, as Henry IV died so soon after the presentation of the book, it is quite possible that he never read it.

The instructions in *The Maystre of Game* upon the appropriate method of breaking up Poor Puss might have been written of the nobler quarry, the fox, for they are practically identical.

The instruction in this ancient treatise upon how the Chase should be conducted is very illuminating reading, and presents an attractive picture of methods then considered quite orthodox, but which to-day might be frowned upon, for we do not, when we hunt the fox or the stag with a pack of hounds, have men with shot-guns

or rifles posted at convenient spots to knock them over if they have beaten hounds. Here is Edward of York's dissertation:

The master of the game should be accorded with the master or parker, whither that it be where the king should hunt such a day. And if the seat be wide the aforesaid forester or parker should warn the sheriff of the shire that the hunting should be in, for to ordain stables [men and hounds stationed at different places to slip the hounds at the quarry] sufficient, and carts eke for to bring the deer that should be slain to the place where the quarries at hunting hath been accustomed. And then he should warn the hunters, and the feuterers [men who lead greyhounds] whether they have men ready to meet with them, that they should come. And the foresters should go no further nor straggle not about, for dread lest they fray the game ere the king come. And if the king's hunting shall be in a park, all men should abide at the park gate save the stables, which ought to be set ere the king comes, and they should be set by the foresters or parkers. And at the morn early the maister of the game should be at the wood to see that all be ready, and he or his lieutenant or which of the hunters that him lust, ought to set the greyhounds, and whoso be teasers [small hounds that "tease" forth the game in coverts] to the king, or to the queen, or to their lesses [attendants]. As oft as any hart cometh out, he should when he is past blow a mote and rechase, and let run after to tease it forth, and if it be a stag he should let pass, as is said, and rally for to make the feuterers advised what cometh thereout. And to lasse [less, smaller] deer he should not let run. And then the master forester or parker ought to shew him the king's standing, if the king will stand with his bow, and where all the remainder of bows shall stand. And the yeomen of the king's bows ought for to be there to keep or make the king's standing, and abide there without noise till the king comes. And the grooms that keep the king's dogs and that chastith [breaketh in] the greyhounds should be there with them, for that belongs to the yeomen's office. And also the master of the game should be informed by the forester or parker what game the king shall find within his set. [That quarter of the forest around which are "set" the men and hounds, or "stables".] And when all this is done then should the master of the game worthe [mount] upon his horse and meet the king, and bring him to his standing, and tell him what game is with the set, and how the greyhounds are set and eke the stable, and also to tell him whether it be better to stand with his bow, or with his greyhounds, for it is to wit that the lesses of his chamber and of the queen's should be best set. And there two feuterers ought for to make lodges of green boughs or trysts for to keep the king and the queen and the gentlemen and the greyhounds from the sun and from evil weather. And when the king is at his standing or at his tryst whichever that he prefers, and that the master of the game or his lieutenant have set the bows, and assigneth who shall lead the queen to her tryst, then he should blow three long moots (motes) to the uncoupling.

The instruction of the neophyte as recommended by Edward of York in his *Maystre of Game* may also, I think, be found to be amusing. Edward (or Gaston "Phœbus") asserts that to do any good with the pupil you must begin on him very seriously at the tender age of eight,

and must on no account await until he has reached the less receptive age of twelve. The eight-year-old's "heart must be busy on the hounds" and the master "must take him and beat him when he will not do that his master commanded him until the time the child to be a dread to fail". The pupil has to be able to write down "all the hounds' names and of the hues" and he must clean the kennels every morning, water the hounds and "once in the week void the kennel and make all clean and renew their straw and put again fresh new straw, a great deal and right thick, and thereas he layeth it the hounds should lie". The little eight-year-old also had to walk out with hounds twice a day, "let them play long in a fair meadow", and when he got back to kennels "comb every hound after other and wipe them with a great wisp of straw". The hints given in the *Maystre of Game* upon the best way to "tame a wild horse" are distinctly precious. Edward of York says this is it: get a saddle and bridle on him somehow, make fast the reins to the "saddle head", presumably to the front D's if any, then tie a stuffed dummy on the saddle, taking care to fill its hosen with sand "and set a pair of spurs on the heels: then turn the animal loose in a closed field and let him gallop himself to death". You then get him in, rug him up, and then lift up his feet "and smite upon them with a stone on every foot" and repeat this process every three days! One must presume that in those times they had never even heard of laminitis! In the meanwhile the brakesman is recommended to starve the animal for at least three days. After all this, presumably, the intrepid rider might venture to get on the horse's back. As by this time he is probably lame all round it would be quite a safe thing to do. These horse-breaking methods have not been copied, however much some of the hunting precepts of Gaston "Phœbus" may have been accepted by those who hunt the stag.

At Henry V's accession England gained a first-class professional soldier, whose handling of troops in the field bears comparison with that of any general in history from Hannibal to Napoleon or, if preferred by the military reader, Alexander the Great to Alexander II! Henry V was only thirty-two when he completely outwitted the Constable D'Albret of France, who was such a muddle-headed strategist and, as a tactician, so much all thumbs, that he could not win in the Harfleur–Agincourt campaign with odds of nearly ten to one in his favour, plus the immense advantage of shorter lines. It seems regrettable in this connection that the modern historian, the Cinema, should have been permitted to present to a gullible public such a ludicrous impression of what actually happened at Agincourt. The French cavalry could not charge. They had to advance over nearly two miles of heavy plough upon horses so heavily armoured that, even in good going, they could hardly raise a trot. The armour which

the Great Horse, the accepted charger for the heavy cavalry of the time, was condemned to wear precluded anything faster. The Great Horse was not very different from the modern Clydesdale and so naturally was completely useless for hunting even, slow as the pace was in those days.

The Constable dismounted all excepting about one regiment of his enormous force, and then, after sending forward this weak cavalry screen, thought that dismounted knights, carrying their lances, swords and shields, and further hampered by the very long spike spurs of the period, could succeed against a strongly emplaced force of sharp-shooters. Henry V made hay while the sun shone. He must have known how things were bound to go when he saw those three lines of cavalry in line of divisional mass, with those futile ground scouts, the split squadrons of a regiment, poked out into the blue within absolutely decisive range of his longbow specialists. Henry V had no occasion to use his small available force of cavalry for the pursuit of the disordered and panicky mass of the French feudal army, since his archers with their axes and maces could go quite fast enough to complete the destruction.

All throughout Henry V's far-too-short reign of nine years, William Brocas I, successor of the hapless, and headless, Sir Bernard Brocas, was Master of the Royal Buckhounds, and though, as is on record, this valiant young king had been a warrior from his youth up —he was first in action at Shrewsbury at the age of fifteen—had little thought for anything excepting his profession, it is difficult to believe that he did not snatch a fleeting moment or two to enjoy the pleasures of "the h'image of war with only twenty-five per cent. of the danger".

Henry VI, the soldier king's son, was under twelve months old when he succeeded, a babe sadly unaware of his heritage of trouble! With the political intrigues which infected the reign, or with the battles of the Wars of the Roses, other than those which can claim any link with hunting history and the monarchy, this book has no concern. Two of these sanguinary engagements have, however, a direct link: Towton (March 29th, 1461) and Bosworth (August 22nd, 1485).

The scene of the former is in the Bramham Moor Hunt country and that of the latter in the Atherstone. By a purely fortuitous circumstance the author was hunting with these packs when operations were confined almost exclusively to these battlefields.

In my humble opinion a battle can never come to life unless you view the "ring" in which it was fought, and I have found this so true of other places than Towton and Bosworth. Créçy, Agincourt, Barnet and Ancrum Moor, Edgehill, Flodden, Killicrankie, Ramillies, Quatre Bras, Waterloo, how helpful they all have been in filling in

the details. It is immensely better than reading about them, or looking at a map, which very rarely gives you a picture. Incidentally, Ramillies was an ideal spot for a cavalry action and pursuit, and if anyone would like to reproduce it in his mind's eye I suggest that he stands at Marble Arch and looks toward Victoria Station and then peoples the scene with the Greys, who had the time of their lives.

Towton should have been called the Battle of Cock Beck, for that was the decisive spot. The day upon which I was with the Bramham, hounds crossed it frequently, we luckily only twice, for the fords did not commend themselves to me. One of them is called to this very day "The Bridge of Bodies", and Towton gave it this name. The deep little river is said to have run red with the blood of the Lancastrian cavalry. The Cock Beck, generally speaking, is not jumpable, and therefore, what can have induced the Duke of Somerset to attempt a cavalry attack across it with his heavily armoured force defies comprehension. The only bridge was one built by the Roman engineers, and even that was in ruins at the time of Towton. In the graveyard of the Little Saxton church, just above this Valley of Death, is the tomb of Lord Dacre, one of the many Lancastrian cavalry officers slain at Towton. He and his charger were buried upright in their full battle panoply. The horse's skull and some bits of the *chanfron*, the neck armour, which had worked above ground, led to the discovery of the rest.

Bosworth is even more interesting so far as its connection with monarchs and the Chase is concerned, for Sutton Ambion, a famous and historical covert in the Atherstone Monday country, was the place where Richard III's cavalry were bogged, either just before or just after the desertion to the enemy of Stanley's troops. Richmond (Henry VII), never in the van of the fray, but in a position which might aptly be termed the back row of the pit, must have been extraordinarily glad to see Stanley come over. The fighting was very desperate and almost exclusively hand-to-hand. The Welshman saw that he was getting the worst of it and his "discretion" is perhaps understandable, knowing what we do of his character. He was a poltroon.

It was in Sutton Ambion where, I am sure, many other people who have hunted in Leicestershire must have been, that Richard had his horse killed under him, and is supposed by William Shakespeare to have offered his kingdom for another one upon which to lead his cavalry out of the heavy Ambion mud, and make a last desperate bid for victory. The "bloody dog" was a fighter, and a very good cavalry soldier. Hard by Sutton Ambion Covert is "King Dick's Well", close to which he pitched his tent the night before the fight, and it is in that tent that Shakespeare makes the King have that terrifying dream of the procession of his numerous alleged victims.

As at Edgehill, the credulous still believe that on the anniversary of Bosworth, if the elements be favourable, the battle picture will re-enact itself for you. In Warwickshire on the anniversary of Edgehill the local antiquarians even go so far as to say that the foxes know, and promptly leave the famous covert in good time, and that, as a consequence of the conduct of the very rowdy ghosts, when hounds arrive, it is invariably drawn blank! I have not heard the same story about Sutton Ambion, but I have little doubt that by the exercise of a tactful lead something equally picturesque could be extracted. It has most certainly been known for Sutton Ambion to be drawn blank, but as Bosworth was fought in August it seems quite improbable that Richard's gory spectre can have anything to do with frightening the foxes away!

At Bosworth Field they will show you the very bush behind which Stanley found the crown, and then made the melodramatic remark about the "bloody wretch", who, whatever his faults, was a finer soldier than he, and a first-class cavalry leader.

Whether Richard was as black as he has been painted by most historians, and also by England's leading playwright, has been widely debated. One erudite author, Mr. Phillip Lindsay, whose book, *King Richard III* (Nicholson & Watson, 1933) has always vastly interested me, declares roundly that Richard was not black at all, and that the real culprit was that "slimy, thin-lipped Welshman", Henry Tudor, whose intriguing to obtain the crown, to which his title was of the slenderest, was well known long before Richard III managed to get it. Richard, according to Mr. Lindsay, was a valiant and honourable man, and never even slaughtered his two little nephews, Edward V and Prince Richard. On the other hand, *The Great Chronicle of London*, which was missing for such a long time, but is now, thanks to Lord Wakefield, in the Guildhall Library, strongly suggests that he did, *videlicet* the following entry (*circa* 1485):

> But afftyr Estyrn much whysperyng was among the people that the Kyng hadd put the Childyr of King Edward to deth, and also that he hadd poysonyd the Quene his wyffe and entend wt a lycence perchasid to have maryed the eldest dowgthr of King Edward.

The last line of this statement is quite definitely untrue.

Whether Richard was even the deformity he is made out to be, is equally open to doubt. He was a first-class man on the back of a horse, and also a first-class swordsman. These facts do not dovetail with the statement that he was a misshapen creature, whose left arm was withered and useless. The left arm is as necessary to the swordsman as the right; it is equally invaluable to the mounted soldier when he proposes to indulge in cavalry combat. The suggestion is that

Richard III cannot have been either a "crook back" or any other kind of deformity. One of his shoulders may have been a bit lower than the other, but then there are many thousands amongst us who find that a broken collar-bone has done exactly the same thing for us—and we are not thereby crippled!

Whatever may be the truth about the last of the Plantagenets, one bleak fact seems to stand out, namely that the Wars of the Roses witnessed the virtual extermination of the flower of English chivalry, for the warring sects had killed each other off almost to a man. Only about seven of the old families survived, and the Old Order gave place to a new, which had not very much to recommend it.

CHAPTER V

The Huntings of the Kings: The Tudors

OF the six Tudor sovereigns who sat upon the throne of England, only two can be claimed as having had any connection, intimate or remote, with the Chase. Henry VIII and his masculine offspring Elizabeth are the two to which reference obviously must be made.

Henry VII was not a patron of sport in any form; a poor horseman, and, as he himself proclaimed, a "weak tilter", possessing little or no knowledge of horses. Hence it was in the last degree likely that he would have ventured to go out hunting, even though the England of his days was hardly enclosed at all, and at any rate, to nothing like the extent it became two or three centuries later.

It is on record of Henry Tudor that he was so timorous that he ordered that the horse selected for him for some ceremonial procession through the City of London should go unfed for twenty-four hours. It is obvious that even the strain of Beaufort, which he had in his veins, had put no courage into him, and this incident, which is quite authentic, dovetails with his conduct in action at Bosworth. Kipling, it may be recalled, makes one of his cavalry heroes suffer from somewhat similar qualms, for "Gadsby" saw to it that his charger had a bucket of water before going on parade, and then proceeded to pull his stirrup-leathers up a couple of holes so as to get his knees tightly wedged under the wallets of his saddle, thus transforming it into some sort of buck-jumping contraption! It seems fair to presume that Henry VII was quite capable of having done precisely the same thing.

Henry VII's mother, Margaret Beaufort, who had married Edmund Tudor was, incredible as it may sound, only fourteen when she gave birth to The Upstart, and whether this fact had anything to do with his lack of physical courage must be left for the Faculty to decide. The Tudors, incidentally, were not fortunate in the matter of their children. Henry VII was only fifty-three when he died; only three children of Henry VIII's six wives survived infancy; the longest lived was Elizabeth, who was seventy when she died; Henry VIII himself was an old man at fifty-six; Mary I died childless at the age of forty-three. By one of his mistresses Henry VIII had a son who died at the age of eleven. Henry VII had three sons in all, and two predeceased him, one at the age of fifteen, the other at fifteen months,

and of his four daughters two died in infancy. The record does not suggest that the stock was very robust, and yet we find two of the line, Henry VIII and Elizabeth, full of courage and character and keen patrons of hunting.

Of Henry VII Mr. Phillip Lindsay (*Richard III*) says he was a murderer; Mr. A. F. Pollard (*Henry VIIIth*) says he was a parvenu, which of course he was, and Sir Charles Oman, the famous historian, says that he was just the king England needed to give her a period of peace after nearly a century of more or less continuous war. The King was certainly cunning enough to keep out of any foreign entanglements, and the internal troubles were not serious, not even the ebullitions of Simnel and "King Perkin Warbeck". How the Irishmen must have enjoyed the joke of that "coronation"!

Seeing that the Salic Law never had been recognized in England, the real heir was Henry VII's mother, Margaret Beaufort, and no king ever ascended the throne of this realm with less hereditary right than Henry VII. His Beaufort lineage conferred nothing; he married Elizabeth of York after he had managed to grasp the sceptre. Since this book is written for hunting people, I venture to suggest that it was fortunate for Henry VII that he was not born a foxhound, for he would never in that case have achieved registration in the very exclusive Fox Hound Kennel Stud Book! The rules are very rigid! He was, without any question, a fine business man, for he filled the Treasury and he kept the peace abroad and at home. During his reign the Brocas family carried on the mastership of the Royal Hounds; John Brocas *obit.* 1492, William Brocas the Third *obit.* 1506, and John Brocas the Second, and they do not appear to have had any trouble with the royal owner, who, most probably, hardly knew any of them even by sight.

The king who succeeded Henry VII was of a very different character. Henry VIII has been called most things by the historians: play-actor, poet, musician, murderer, tyrant, athlete, and hunting man, and by some even a Tony Lumbkin. This last he certainly was not, bluff and hearty as he may have been. It is probable that he was afflicted by homicidal mania, and had a sadistic streak in his composition. He was intensely vain, and this may have accounted for his paroxysms of murder.

Henry VIII was only sixteen when he succeeded, but he was, even at that early age, a more than average good horseman and keenly interested in hunting. John Brocas the Second was Master of the Royal Buckhounds for the first three years of the reign, and it is presumable that he was in the closest contact with the hard-riding young king. John Brocas was succeeded in 1512 by George Warham and Ralph Pexall, *jure* Anne and Edith Brocas, who were the here-

PLATE 4 HUNTING SCENES IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

(*From George Turbervile's "The Noble Arte of Venerie and Hunting"*, 1611)

Left: "How an assembly should be made in the presence of a Prince." *Right:* "The Prince or chief, if it so please them, do alight and take assaye of the Deare with a sharp knife."

ditary Masters. Ralph Pexall was the husband of Edith Brocas. It has never been discovered whether either Anne or Edith Brocas ever exercised their rights of mastership in person, and it has been hazarded that they may have been very well advised to leave the conduct of the pack to their husband deputies, since the attentions in the hunting field of so amorous a sportsman as Henry VIII were quite apt to lead to an interview with the headsman. Both these young ladies are spoken of as having been comely, so the risk, even so early in the reign, must have been known. Henry's relations with his Master of Hounds of the Privy Pack were not later on quite so happy—for the Master!

The King was a most precocious young man, and, unless the contemporary chroniclers were more than usually sycophantic, was "the desire of all eyes", "extremely handsome with an extremely fine calf to his leg", which last, in more modern times was not considered any kind of advantage by a hunting man, or his bootmaker! Henry was undoubtedly very proud of his legs and his personal appearance in general, a pardonable weakness, perhaps, in a much-spoiled youth, and he appeared to have been very jealous in this regard of his "friend", Francis of France, but, if contemporary records are to be trusted, he had not much cause, for the King of France is described as being "tall in stature, broad-shouldered, oval and handsome in face, very slender in the legs, and much inclined to corpulence". He is also said to have been a very moderate horseman. His outline hardly suggests the wasp-waisted, wire-and-whipcord "thruster" as he has been known to us in more modern times! Pasquiligo, the Italian Ambassador, who was "commanded" to dinner at Greenwich on Mayday, 1515, says that when he arrived he found Henry mounted upon an upstanding bay Frieslander, a breed much prized at that time, habited in green, as also was his mounted escort, all armed with bows and arrows. At the alfresco repast Henry closely questioned the Ambassador about the French king's legs, and, upon being told that they were "spare", opened the front of his doublet, and smacking his thigh said: "Look here, and I also have a good calf to my leg!" His jealousy was undoubtedly behind his murder of both Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard.

After this dinner, which I presume we may take it was upon the Gargantuan scale customary to the times, some of these feasts having lasted for seven hours, the King armed himself cap-à-pie, ran thirty courses in the jousts, and in one of them capsized his opponent, horse and all. A pretty good performance on top of a heavy meal! It is not improbable that Henry hoped that Pasquiligo would tell the spindle-shanked, top-heavy French king the next time he saw him the kind of customer his Brother of England was. Henry was unquestionably at that period "a rum 'un to follow, a bad 'un to beat".

The King was, so say all the chroniclers in unison, "a marvellous jouster", and a first-class shot with the longbow. Guistiniani, the distinguished Venetian, "a chiel amang us takkin notes" in the early days of the reign, said that Henry "was a capital horseman . . . very fond of hunting and never takes his diversion without tiring eight or ten horses, which he causes to be stationed beforehand along the line of country he means to take, and when one is tired he mounts another, and before he gets home they are all exhausted". How much truth there is in this, there is no means of knowing, but even in a modern galloping country the hardest man has usually found that it has taken him all his time to get to the bottom of two horses. It is no doubt true that the King could arrange for his remounts to be in the places he wanted them, because the system of haies was still in full force. It may have been workable with the stag: it never could have been with the fox. However, at this time they knew very little about him. If they had, Henry might have needed twenty "second horses"! The pace they went with hounds in the sixteenth century was hardly comparable with that of a modern galloping pack on a straight-necked fox in the twentieth century.

Henry VIII was not a light weight even in those early days, but he was unquestionably first-class and very knowledgeable. He had also, as Sir Thomas More is reputed to have remarked, the strength of a lion. The Spanish Ambassador complained to the King's father-in-law, King Ferdinand of Spain, that Henry had "a strong aversion to business and cared only for the pleasures of his age". The Ambassador obviously had every opportunity to find out, but though the King did not hunt six days a week, he may have filled in any spare time he had with wrestling, jousting, and what not! He was absolutely indefatigable, and there are plenty of records of his pulling out horse after horse at the joust, so he is certain to have done the same thing out hunting—but ten horses in one day's hunting . . .! He also managed to fit in three masses upon every day that he went out hunting. The young King, said a writer of the period (1515), "cared nothing but for girls and hunting". Henry admitted as much in a letter to King Ferdinand two months after his accession. It is more than likely that his earlier years were indeed devoted to "hunting and birding"—his own words—and that he permitted the Cardinal to "run" England for at least ten years of the reign; but he was far too long-headed, for all his love of sport out of doors and frivolity indoors, to permit the reins to be dragged out of his hand even by a hard-mouthed cleric. He was, no doubt about it, at this period of his life bent upon making this country the Merrie England, the spirit of which Mr. Edward German has so melodiously captured for us.

During all this period of hunting, jousting and indoor sport this

man of prodigious energy was not only building a fleet, but learning all about ships and those who had their business in great waters. The King was also, and not unaided by the great Cardinal, who likewise knew a good deal about it, improving the breed of the English horse, particularly of the class which may be loosely described as the "hunter", but which was also of use for military purposes, so soon as someone had the sense to discover that the horse armour of that slightly earlier period was such an impediment to the true rôle of cavalry.

Of Henry VIII's warlike adventures in France, and of his undoubted glee at what happened to the French cavalry at the Battle of the Spurs (Guinegate, August 16th, 1513, in the Thérouanne-Tournai operations) others have written so voluminously and so often that any recapitulation would be tedious. Henry was a good commander in the field, that is to say a brigade commander, even if his record affords him no claim to generalship, for he thoroughly believed in the personal touch, likewise in strict discipline. It is on record that just before Guinegate, he hanged some of his German mercenaries for looting. Since those times the Teuton has not changed his spots and was then obviously just as bad to control as he is to-day, and as he will be to-morrow if the world is so foolish as to permit him to have any to-morrow.

The only other battle of this period, to which it is necessary to refer, is Ancrum Moor, because it was fought in the heart of a very fine hunting country, the Buccleuch, which even in those early times was famous in the annals of the Chase. Henry was present in person at the Battle of the Spurs, but at Ancrum the English forces were commanded by Sir Ralph Eyre and Sir Brian Latoun, and they suffered as bloody a defeat as that inflicted later on upon the Scots at Pinkie, September 10th, 1547 (Musselburgh, where to-day is Edinburgh's well-known racecourse). This was in Somerset's punitive operations against the Lowlands in the first year of the reign of Edward VI.

Henry VIII had made himself vastly unpopular north of the Tweed, and it was not therefore surprising that at Ancrum the Borderers deserted to the Earl of Angus, Scott of Buccleuch, at the very first opportunity. The King had not fought fair according to the unwritten law of Border Rieverdom. Before this time, and from Otterburn onwards, disagreements had been fought out to a finish as between gentlemen and gentlemen. Henry VIII sent the very scum of his mercenaries to the north, Irish, Germans, Spaniards and Italians, and things sunk even lower than at times has been the case on the North-West Frontier of India in the blood feuds, and, alas, also upon other occasions.

Upon Ancrum Moor stands the memorial to the brave Maid of Lilliard. The English had murdered her lover, so into battle she went with the lowlanders. She lost both her legs, and the Border ballad relates how "when her legs were cuttit off she fought upon her stumps". Lord George Scott, brother of the late Duke of Buccleuch, and uncle of the present one, lived at Kirklands on Ancrum Moor, a most appropriate dwelling for a kinsman of the Buccleuch who gave Henry VIII's rabble such a well-deserved drubbing those many centuries ago. The Buccleuch hounds, in whose breeding and general welfare Lord George Scott took great interest, crossed this historic spot quite often upon their lawful occasions. The record of Henry's methods is an evil memory on the Border even to this day.

Henry VIII, as has been already said, seems to have been upon excellent terms with the hereditary Masters of the Royal Buckhounds in the earlier years of his reign, but about 1527 he began to doubt whether this establishment was worth the money, and to conceive that he could do better with a pack of his own. This pack eventually came into being under the title of the Privy, or Household, Pack. The Hereditary Masters of the Royal Buckhounds for some time previous to this had been finding it extremely difficult to collect even the small emolument attaching to their office. In a document preserved in original, as I understand, in the archives of the Brocas family, the fall of the ancient Buckhounds is set out in bitter terms. It is here related that:

> The late King of famous memory, Henry VIII, by the sinister persuasions of divers of these servants of the said King, seeking their own private gains, did erect, make and establish another office called the Master of his Privy Buckhounds, and the same office, together with divers new fees and wages for exercising the same new office did give and grant to divers persons to the great damage, prejudice and disinheritance of the said Sir Richard Pexall [son of Edith Brocas, wife of Ralph Pexall, *obit.* 1540] and of his Manor [Weldon] aforesaid and to the great and extraordinary charge and expense of the said King.

However the birth of the new pack came about, whether by these "sinister persuasions", or of the King's own volition, we find it started in 1528 with George Boleyn, Viscount Rochford, as its first master. It was from this Privy Pack and not from the old Royal Buckhounds that the pack, later known as the Queen's Stag Hounds, descended, at any rate in title. The Queen's Pack was dispersed in Victoria's reign. Henry VIII was the founder.

Whether Henry's decision to start this pack was in any measure influenced by any slackness in the management of the Hereditary Pack we do not know, but if things had declined to anything like the level reached later on in the mastership of Sir Pexall Brocas, "a

ruffling spendthrift and riotous braggart", as he has been dubbed, then it is not surprising that Henry desired an establishment conducted upon sounder lines. For all his fondness for making life "merrie", the King had his head very tightly screwed on, and he always demanded value for money.

George Boleyn held the mastership of this new pack under the style and title of Master of the Buckhounds from 1528 to 1536, when his term was abruptly cut off with his head. He was charged with treason, and with criminal intercourse with his sister, Anne Boleyn, then Queen of England. Rochford, and all the others with whom the Queen was accused of having misconducted herself, Sir Francis Weston, Henry Norris, William Brereton, and Mark Smeaton, were severally condemned for high treason all on the same day, May 12th, 1536. The additional charge against Rochford made his case hopeless from the outset. Anne Boleyn was put on trial on May 15th, condemned out of hand and had her head struck off by a sword by the world's most fashionable executioner, a professional from St. Omer. Rochford and his fellow elegants had to make do with the common headsman's axe. It is more than probable that there was not one word of truth in the more serious count in the indictment against Rochford, and that his execution and that of his sister were brought about by the sadistic streak in Henry's composition and by the fact that he had by then got tired of poor Anne and fallen a victim to the charms of another lady, Jane Seymour—a very plain-headed lady if history is to be believed.

The late Lord Ribblesdale, who was Master of the Buckhounds (the Queen's Stag Hounds) from 1892 to 1895, has little doubt upon the question of Rochford's innocence, for he writes: "Henry VIII had by this time persuaded himself that the masterful Boleyn family compact had become a danger to the state, and that the public welfare pointed out his duty . . .", and he adds satirically: "Before all, the King was a man of conscience, and, in the words Shakespeare put into the mouth of the Duke of Suffolk, his conscience had again crept near another lady." (*The Queen's Hounds*, pp. 228–9.)

George Boleyn was a young man of parts, very good-looking: he could ride, shoot, dance, make love and compose a pleasing, if ephemeral, verse. He had also other literary attainments, for he wrote decent Latin prose when up at Oxford, understood colloquial Latin and Italian, and spoke and wrote French fluently. He was a prominent member of what was then called the Young England Party, and apparently he was far too fond of politics to suit the fickle taste of the monarch. Lord Ribblesdale of course is quite right as to the cause of his downfall. The Duke of Norfolk, Rochford's own kinsman, who also sat in Judgment upon Queen Anne, had sworn for reasons not

unconnected with religion, to break him. Rochford was a Reformationist: the Duke a staunch supporter of the Old Faith. Rochford's sentence, as it originally stood, was that he was to be "hanged, cut down alive, ripped up, drawn and quartered". Henry VIII commuted this to simple decapitation, and he was executed on Tower Hill on May 17th 1536. There was the precedent for this royal "clemency" in the case of that other Master of the Royal Buckhounds, Sir Bernard Brocas the Second, who was granted the same concession by Henry IV.

So ended the career of the first of Lord Ribblesdale's predecessors. None of the other Masters of the Buckhounds was so unfortunate as Sir Bernard Brocas and Rochford, and I am sure that none of them ever deserved such a grim end! At Rochford's trial we are told that long odds were laid on his acquittal, but he had a packed jury against him, and was a dead man even before the proceedings were opened.

After the Boleyn epoch, and during the brief reign of the delicate Jane Seymour, and the birth of his heir, Edward, the King's hunting activities apparently were slightly restricted: and during his unfortunate matrimonial adventure with the lady whom he so rudely called "The Flanders mare", an incident which was the real, though not the recorded, cause of Archbishop Cromwell losing his head, Henry VIII was so disgruntled that he rarely got on a horse at all. His self-conceit was too badly wounded to permit him even to think of those "Merrie England" things, horses and hounds!

It was not until he succumbed to the charms of Catherine Howard, a lady who was not much more of a novice in the lists of love (had he but known it) than the monarch himself, that his ardour for the Chase seems to have revived. He is said to have stated that at long last he had "reached a haven of domestic peace", and though his health undoubtedly had become impaired by his domestic and foreign troubles, and he was no longer the man capable of taking the steel out of nine or ten horses in one day's hunting, or riding six or seven runs at the jousts after an enormous meal, he still believed that the best thing for the inside of a man was the outside of a horse. In the days of this demi-paradise with Catherine, his hazel-eyed, auburn-haired charmer, he started to ride hard again. He was once more in great fettle, and he got up every morning, winter or summer, at 5 a.m. so they say, and rode for four or five hours. It was the eventual shattering of his Arcadia which in all probability put the final stopper on his hunting career and even upon his hacking activities. His severe paroxysms of fury upon discovering the past history of his beautiful Queen finished him off as an active follower of the Chase. During his days with the discreet and managing Catherine Parr, we hear nothing but the tale of an ailing man, a mere wreck of the robust and un-

doubtedly valiant sportsman of those earlier years. It is more than likely that his ill-health was not entirely physical, so, perhaps, it was just as well for those who succeeded the luckless George Boleyn that they saw little or nothing of their royal master in the hunting field. One trembles to think of what the consequences of a blank day with a long hack home in the rain might have been. We, who have hunted, know only too well the depressing effect it can have upon even perfectly normal people. It is doubtful whether at any period of his career this hard-riding king could be fitly described as normal. His love of ostentation, especially before the visiting foreigner, supports the supposition that he must have suffered very acutely from paranoia. A really good man need never jump a fence to show that he can ride.

When in these later years of his reign the King got too heavy to ride or run after hounds, or even to go out "birding", which it was more convenient to do mounted, he turned to that debased form of the Chase, hunting in "Parks", an earlier reference to which has already been made. Whether Gaston de Foix approved of this battue system is doubtful, but he mentions it in *Livre de Chasse* and, as would naturally follow, so does the plagiarist Edward of York in *The Maystre of Game*. This system was the very prostitution of hunting and it is strange to find a man of Henry VIII's sporting instincts and upbringing sinking to such a level, and still more so, to find him using the arbalist, or crossbow, when he was so fine a shot with the sportsman's weapon, the longbow. To chase the deer round and round these parks, or open-air circuses, as I prefer to class them, they used "stable and hartehounds", plus "gray hounds". The hart hound, or *lévrier*, was trained to pin any "harte" that might have escaped the bolts of the crack shots in the pavilions, by the ear and pull him down. Lady Apsley in her book *Bridleways Through History* tells us that this sort of "hunt" was continued at Eridge Park, the Sussex seat of the Marquess Abergavenny, right down to 1914 whenever venison was required, and she opines that the hounds used were possibly descendants of the old breed of Tudor days. I spent a good part of my younger days in that region and hunted, as regularly as school holidays would permit, with the pack then called the West Kent Woodland (later the Eridge) of which Lord George Nevill, son of the then Marquess was Master, and I cannot recall so much as having heard of these hart hounds, but as I was then, as now, only interested in the foxhound and the fox, this proves nothing. Lady Apsley is such a talented and meticulously careful historian that I feel sure that she must have a good foundation for her statement. I merely record my youthful recollections.

These *lévriers* were not greyhounds as that animal is understood to-day, but of much the same breed, and are described as having been

cream or fawn in colour, with dusky muzzles and half-mastiff heads with long ridgy backs. They were very loosely-coupled, high on the leg and by no means straight. They would not have gladdened the eye of anyone who had been brought up to regard the foxhound as the glass of fashion and the mould of form in the canine world. They are said to have had all the speed of the greyhound, and I venture to think that they had just about as much nose. However, as they were only needed to hunt, as the cheetah does, by view, and as their unfortunate quarry had not the slightest chance of escape, nose mattered not at all. They were just part of the entertainment, contrived for old men too fat to ride and gay ladies, who fancied themselves as shots with the Sten gun of the period. It seems to me, possessed entirely of a different perception of things, impious that this was ever called "Hunting"! Even the Electric Hare form of the Chase seems to have a better claim to the title.

Seeing that in this Tudor period, and for the centuries before it, roads were conspicuous mainly by their complete absence, and that even the great strategic highways built by the Romans were often in very indifferent shape for wheeled traffic, it followed that most travellers were compelled to ride, and that the "ambling pad", supposed to be beloved almost exclusively by dignitaries of the Church, was in great demand. The amble or triple, something between a trot and a canter, is the easiest and least exhausting pace for horse and rider over a long distance. The boundary rider on an Australian station, his counterparts in Canada and Argentina, the fat Bunnia in Hindustan, they all can tell us about this useful and inelegant gait, and in Tudor England the "ambling nagg was the one for the old man, the rich man, the weak man", for any man, in fact, who could sit a horse with ease and elegance until he began to move in the paces more usually customary to that animal! The triple demanded no Centaur, and was therefore immensely popular. The class, where this horse and the hunter were concerned at the beginning of the Tudor period, was inferior. Henry VII, knowing next to nothing about horse-breeding and still less about horsemanship, did little to encourage any improvement, but when his son came to the throne, keen as he was to ride and hunt, a vast change began. Henry VIII knew the type of horse needed for the field, for the army and for the less ambitious rider, the traveller, who was often quite pleased with his performance if he could cover nine or ten miles in three or four hours. So the King took horse-breeding in hand quite seriously. The chief defect in the native horse was his lack of size. As a first step Henry VIII made it illegal for anyone to keep stallions under fifteen hands and mares under thirteen, and in due course of time this tended to eliminate a very large percentage of the weedy and undersized animals of little or no use for the

Chase, totally useless for the cavalry and of only moderate service as pack animals. The King went much further than eliminating and restricting breeding from small stallions and mares, for he imported a great many of both sexes of size from Italy and Spain. Was not Francis of France mounted upon an upstanding Mantuan at that portentous deception, the Field of the Cloth of Gold? If we think we know anything of his ever-jealous rival, it is a certainty that Henry was upon something perhaps a bit better, for it is chronicled that upon that great occasion he took to France a string of very first-class horses for the Jousts, and it is said that he "held his own against all comers". His horse-breeding scheme had obviously done something towards achieving its end, for both his cavalry and his own immediate escort are spoken of as being well horsed. Miss C. M. Prior, in that interesting book *Royal Studs*, records the establishment of a stud at Tutbury in Staffordshire in addition to the already successful Hampton Court, and of another at Cole Park near Malmesbury. Henry rarely did things by halves. It is probable that one or other of these studs was reinforced by the twenty-five Spanish stallions Charles V sent to Henry and also by the mares obtained from Francesco Gonzaga, Marchese di Mantua, whose principal stud farm was at Mormolata on Lake Mincio. The Spaniards, however, ran the Italians very close in popularity at the English stud, but whatever strains were used it was in the main entirely due to Henry VIII's knowledge that so much good was done to raise the general standard in size and quality in England.

The King had a very able henchman in his horse-breeding operations in the Great Cardinal. Wolsey not only knew a great deal about it, but, in his younger days and before increasing weight placed a bound upon his activities, rode really well. Would it be too venturesome to cite him as one of the earliest of a long succession of hunting parsons? He certainly followed his royal patron in the Chase.

If Shakespeare is correct the Cardinal was a bit too keen where horse-dealing was concerned, even to the detriment of the monarch, for we find in *King Henry VIII*, Act II, Scene 2, the Lord Chamberlain reading a letter from some person unknown, which runs as follows:

> My Lord, the horses your lordship sent for with all the care I had I saw well chosen, ridden and furnished. They were young and handsome and of the best blood in the north. When they were ready to set out for London, a man of my Lord Cardinal's by commission and main power, took 'em from me with this reason: His master would be served before a subject if not before the King: which stopped our mouths, sir.

Horse-stealing, and even sheep-stealing, in those and in even much

later times, entailed the most uncomfortable consequences to the perpetrators!

Wolsey was far too good a Latin scholar to have been guilty of writing or saying anything but *Ego et Rex meus*, but it would seem that, where horses were concerned, he had a very hazy idea as to the meaning of the words *meum* and *tuum*! Rolf Boldrewood's picturesque hero, "Captain Starlight" (*Robbery Under Arms*) could hardly have surpassed this performance if the facts were as stated. The incident in the play may, however, be just another stage effect comparable to that "cavalry charge" at Agincourt, and deemed permissible by way of spot-lighting the king Cardinal's wickedness.

It would be very remiss upon the part of anyone endeavouring to catalogue the hunting adventures of Bluff King Hal if the incident of the dyspeptic Abbot of Reading were omitted, the more so since it is said upon the unimpeachable evidence of the Oldest Inhabitant that the wraiths of King and Cleric can be seen to this day on the Bath road any cold winter evening in the hunting season. The story still is told, as undoubtedly it was when first set on its course in the days when it was the favourite pastime of the oldest inhabitant and his cronies to sit round on the ingle benches and frighten one another with horrid tales of ghostly encounters, of hair standing on end, of eyes shooting out of their sockets in the approved fashion, and of horses bolting and hounds tucking in their sterns and dropping dead from fright. What happened, or, perhaps, we ought to say happens(?), is, or was, that two mounted apparitions silently emerge out of the mist, the one a fat chasseur, garbed in Lincoln green, the other a pale ascetic, his hands pressed upon the place where his supper ought to have been. They will be seen going towards London, the layman beckoning to the cleric. Then they vanish, only to appear again, but this time in reverse order and going towards Reading, the Abbot's sallow cheek now encarnadined and his once empty cassock changed to a becoming portliness.

The story behind it all is this: that the King, when hunting from Windsor, got completely lost, hounds, huntsmen, whips, everything in much the same way as another historic character did on the Pinch-Me-Near Forest day. His Majesty providentially fell in with the Abbot. The next and obvious thing was to dine and get snug lying for the night. The Abbey was near; the Abbot was a kindly and hospitable soul, so he invited his unknown guest to come in, and not only that, for he produced a lordly sirloin and oceans of sack. The dinner-party was a huge success from the King's point of view, for we are told that he "laid on" with such zest that there was not much more than the bone left when he had finished. His host, who had not the faintest notion of the identity of his guest, and thought that he must be one

of the King's men-at-arms, was amazed at the performance, and broke forth in this wise, or something like it, at least so says Mr. Outram Tristram in his attractive book, *Coaching Days and Coaching Ways*: "Well fare thy heart, for here in a cup of sack I remember thy master! I would give a hundred pounds on condition that I could feed as lustily on beef as thou dost! Alas, my weak and quaesie stomach will hardly digest the wing of a small rabbit or a chicken!" It is highly probable that Mr. Tristram has guessed right where this conversation is concerned: the actual incident, however, is quite authentic.

Came the morrow: the jovial guest departed. A few weeks later the pious Abbot was suddenly borne away from Reading by strong, determined men, who took no notice of his protests, and assured him that he would "know all about it when he got there", and he was finally clapped in the Tower and fed on bread and water for many weeks. The poor Abbot's alarm can be easily imagined, particularly in view of the prevailing and uncomfortable custom of the times where those who had board and lodging in the grim old fortress were concerned. One day without any warning his jailers brought in a magnificent sirloin of beef. The Abbot, by then nearly starving, fell upon it like a hungry wolf, and when he was compelled to stop from sheer repletion, out jumped the King from a closet, roaring with laughter and shouting (again according to Mr. Tristram): "My lord, deposit presently your hundred pounds of gold or else no going home all the days of your life! I have been your physician to cure you of your quaesie stomach, and here, as I deserve, I demand my fee for the same!"

Some say that the Abbot departed rejoicing: others that the shock and the beef killed him, and that this is why his restless shade roams the road with his genial slayer. How much there is or is not in this, it is not for this present deponent to say, and he will therefore content himself with drawing attention to the fact that ghosts appear to exercise a most particular attraction for hunting people. Only a few miles on from Reading along this Bath road, near Littlecote Hall, you may meet that particularly bloody murderer, Wild Dayrell, and his hounds, and watch him break his neck over that stile, driven stark staring mad by the spectre of the newly-born baby he burned to death, crushing its little body into the fireplace in the haunted chamber with his heel. At Kineton where the Warwickshire Hunt kennels are, you can hear, so 'tis said, the fight at Edgehill, the ring of the blades on the headpieces; at Bosworth you may see King Dick's last berserk dash—at the Welshman; on the Border they would rate you deaf indeed if you could not hear the hoof-thuds of the galloping Commandos of the Moss Troopers; there is Herne the Hunter and his hounds in full cry on any moonlight night in Windsor Great Park; and how often, fellow fox-hunter, has not that pack of hounds going

home seen against the skyline in the winter ground mist, seemed to belong to some world other than this? So how dare we blame Reading's Oldest Inhabitant for seeing the King and the Abbot on the Bath road![1]

There is no record of any sporting adventures where the delicate Edward VI is concerned, and this is hardly surprising for he was only sixteen when he died and had a very chequered life under the various "Protectors".

Of Queen Mary I the hunting records are also virtually blank, and again there may be a cause, since the five gloomy years of her reign were packed with incidents that had nothing whatever to do with horse and hound. It may be presumed that the Privy Pack was not completely extinguished, and as regards the ancient Hereditary Pack, we find that Sir Richard Pexall's claim to the mastership was granted by the Queen in Letters Patent. The old pack went on much as usual, and it was not until the next generation that the harm was done by the dissolute Sir Pexall Brocas, who indeed was responsible for its final decline and fall, even though it tottered on for some years after the death of that undesirable Master of Hounds. Queen Mary apparently did nothing to the detriment of either the old or the new packs. Henry VIII's pack was not very much in the picture, owing no doubt to Mary's not unnatural hatred of her father for the wrong inflicted upon her mother, and his attempt to bastardize herself. The opposition of the Hereditary Masters to the upstart pack was still very strenuous, and they did everything to influence the Queen. Sir Richard Pexall was related to the Queen through the marriage of his daughter to Bernard Brocas of Horton, the Queen's kinsman. Sir Pexall Brocas, the issue of this marriage, carried on as Hereditary Master till 1630 when he died. In 1603 he had been pardoned for his many infamies by James I, and six years later, by way of making his passage into a future state less uncomfortable, transferred the greater

[1] *Der Wilde Jäger:* Sir Walter Scott's "The Wild Huntsman" was based upon Bürger's ballad concerning a ghostly apparition who frequents the Black Forest with his spectral pack. The legend is that this huntsman was a Jew, who would not suffer Jesus to drink from a horse-trough, but pointed to some water collected in a hoof-print, and bade Him go there and drink. The French fable "Le Grand Veneur" on similar lines is laid in the Forest of Fontainebleau, and is supposed to refer to St. Hubert. The fable of Herne the Hunter, once a keeper in Windsor Forest, is also supposed to derive from Bürger's original. In Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act IV, Sc. 4, Mistress Page descants at some length upon the "hideous and dreadful manner" of Herne's appearances at the old oak tree, familiar, no doubt, to many a tourist, "with great ragg'd horns, and fearful shrieks and oaths". Henry VIII and the Abbot of Reading, Wild Dayrell, and the rest, therefore, would seem to be but the natural sequence of these various legends.

Lincolnshire, particularly the Fens of the Belvoir Country, is full of stories of the antics of witches and what they have done to horses and their riders. These and others make a winter's evening round a roaring log fire after a hard day's hunting doubly enjoyable to those who may be fond of ghosts.—"S."

part of his estates, including Little Weldon and the Mastership of the Buckhounds, to trustees for divers pious uses, amongst them the erection of a tomb to his own honour in Westminster Abbey and the founding of a College at Oxford, which he stipulated should be called Brocas College. He also did penance for the sins of which he had been formally convicted by the High Commission "of secret and notorious adulteries", standing in a white sheet at Paul's Cross holding a rod in his hand. Whether the sentence of the Church included permission to all and sundry to beat him with it is not disclosed. During Mary's short reign the virtuous Sir Richard Pexall undoubtedly prospered under such radiance as the throne was able to cast upon him. Obviously he was a very wise and discreet gentleman, and he died in the odour of sanctity in 1571.

On the accession of Elizabeth the Privy Buckhounds sprang to vigorous life once more, and though the Hereditary Pack contended very bitterly against the new order, its days were over, though it did not breathe its last until 1633 in the reign of Charles I.

Queen Elizabeth inherited all the sporting instincts of her sire, but whether she either rode as well, or knew as much about hunting as Henry, is open to doubt. In those times the hard-riding hunting woman had not come into fashion, and for this there may have been a very good reason, for the side-saddle was unknown till Henri II's queen, Catherine (Kattrina) de Medici (1519–89) invented a thing with pommels. The leaping head or third pommel was of a very much later origin. This new side-saddle undoubtedly had arrived in England by Elizabeth's time. It might not have been considered quite *comme il faut* in Tudor times, and it was not for many years after, for ladies to ride astride in spite of the ancient precedent set up by the beautiful daughters of Charlemagne, and revived later on by the Maid of Orleans. Some ladies who went out hunting undoubtedly did ride astride, but they were few and far between. The archon, a well-padded roll, upon which Catherine de Medici based her improvement, gave the fair ladies some small assistance, but never, I should say, a seat secure enough for riding over obstacles. This may not have mattered very much, for there were few fences and horses and cattle roamed at will in mobs, much as they still do in Australia and also to some extent in the Argentine. Double-oxers did not come into existence in Merrie England until at least two centuries later. Even Catherine de Medici's new invention did not give the equestrienne complete immunity from disaster. The inventress herself took two very bad falls, and so did her daughter-in-law, Mary Queen of Scots, though her accident had nothing to do with the saddle. She was swept off by a bough of a tree. Throckmorton, our Ambassador in Paris, writing to Queen Elizabeth from Blois on December 27th, 1559, dutifully recalled the beautiful

lady's mishap when out stag hunting in the following picturesque language and spelling of the period.

> The xix of this present there happened a mervailous chance and escape to the Frenche Quene; who riding on hunting, and following the hart of force, was in her course cast of her gelding by a boughe of a tree, and with suddeines of the fall was not hable to call for helpe. And albeit there dyd followe her diverse gentlemen and ladyes of her chamber, yet three of foure of them passed over her before She was espied; and some of there horses rode so nere her as her hood was troden of. As sone as she was reised from the grounde, she spake and said that she felt not hurt; and her self begaine to set her heare, and dresse up her head and so returned to Court; where she kept her chamber till the King removed. She feleth no incommodite by her fall; and yet she hath determined to chaunge that kind of exercise.

That the pace was too good to inquire would hardly, in those days, have constituted a sufficient excuse for such careless behaviour. The "diverse" gentlemen and ladies of the household must have been too busy riding or perhaps flirting.

That elegant courtier, the Earl of Leicester, was Elizabeth's first Master of the Buckhounds and also her Master of Horse, thus enjoying the dual emoluments from the Privy Purse, and is said to have first commended himself to the royal notice when he rode down to Hatfield on a milk-white steed to announce the death of Queen Mary. It is not very difficult to imagine that he was a welcome messenger, since for five years Elizabeth had only kept her head on her shoulders by keeping her head. It must have been a great relief to learn that the shadow of the axe had vanished. From thenceforward Leicester was the Queen's constant hunting companion! There is the story that when the Duchess of Suffolk engaged herself to her equerry, Adrian Stokes, Elizabeth exclaimed with indignation to Lord Cecil: "What! Marry a horse-keeper?" and that Cecil replied: "Yea, madam! And she says you would like to do the same with yours!" This, like so many other stories of "Gloriana" may be apocryphal! Cecil obviously had no appreciation of the brain inside that ice-cool and calculating head. The Queen's vanity was flattered by the adulation of her extremely good-looking Master of Hounds: she was quite ready to let him make her a present of the first wrist-watch of which there is any record, a convenient timepiece to possess when she was making such good practice shooting "hartes" through the head as they were chivvied round and round the Parks; but that she ever had any serious intention of a *mésalliance* with a subject is beyond belief. She had far too keen an appreciation of the main chance. Lord Ribblesdale (*vide The Queen's Hounds*, pp. 229–30) gives us the following excellent little pen-picture of the Queen's and Leicester's hunting activities.

Lord Leicester we all know a great deal about from *Kenilworth*. But a letter of Castelnau's to Henry III of France describes the sort of hunting which Queen Elizabeth and Lord Leicester enjoyed together.

After telling his sovereign that he had received a hospitable invitation from Lord Leicester, on behalf of the queen, to come and stay with him and have a hunt at Windsor, he goes on to relate the pleasures of the actual hunt, which appears to have consisted in driving a number of deer up and down inside a netted space in front of a well-screened butt (*feuillade*), in which Queen Elizabeth was stationed with her arblast. The sport then became varied by some coursing, "Et tout le reste du jour jusques au soir, sortirent des thoilles (toils), ung deux, trois, et à diverses fois, plusieurs grandz cerfs passant par la dicte feuillade, etreprenant deux et trois milles de course avec les lévriers les meilleurs de ce roiaulme, desquelz quelquefois ung, deux et trois portoient un grand cerf par terre." (Chéruel, *Marie Stuart et Catherine de Medicis*, Appendix, p. 227.) He concludes by a tribute to Lord Leicester's able management of everything, the satisfaction of the queen and the company, and the excellence both of the deer and of the hounds.

There is an amusing record of an expedition to Berkeley Castle undertaken by the Queen and her Master of Hounds apparently without any invitation from the noble owner—and in his absence—when they slaughtered twenty-seven prime stags, using the method of screens and arbalists. Lord Berkeley is stated to have been "much annoyed", and threatened to do away with his deer and his park altogether. Hardly surprising!

Whatever the Great Queen may have been in her religious life, she was very catholic in her hunting tastes. The visits of Elizabeth were very numerous and diverse, and not always very welcome. The Royal Parks and their hunting rights often provided a useful return in hard cash, for it paid the Crown to grant leases, or gifts, of forest land upon which the lessee was permitted to impale, i.e. enclose, Parks within the Forest. Elizabeth, who had inherited all the penurious traits of her grandsire, was not slow to perceive this advantage. This of course is common knowledge, but Lady Apsley boldly puts a point upon it. "It paid Queen Elizabeth, ever short of cash, to grant rights of chase to such influential subjects and then invite herself to a 'fortnight's' entertainment! Lucky the noble who had not to keep her longer!" (*Bridle Ways Through History*, p. 242.)

Most of these hunts were nothing more nor less than colossal shoots with the crossbow. Besides the jewelled wrist-watch, just mentioned, Leicester is said to have given his Queen a richly-enamelled crossbow. If the pilot of another hard-riding Queen Elizabeth, much later on in history, had even suggested giving her a gun to shoot the fox, it would have seemed to most properly brought up hunting folk to have been almost equally appropriate. "Bay" Middleton used to find the right horses for the lovely Elizabeth of Austria, so in some wise

he did provide the "implement"! The late Lord Lonsdale bought and schooled the hunters the Empress rode in Leicestershire.

There are many records of the hunting tours of the Queen, and one of the most interesting is extant in the Essex foxhounds country. The Queen hunted from Havering—Atte-Bower—near Hainault over the same country as Edward the Confessor did many centuries before. The Forest of Hainault was also much favoured by William the Norman, and Essex, as mentioned in the opening chapter of this book, was included in the vast "country" assigned to Alwin the Hunter by his Saxon masters.

There is no succinct record of Elizabeth's hunting adventures upon Exmoor, but it is impossible to believe that she cannot have fared forth to this beautiful and historic home of the animal then the most popular of all the "Beastes of Chase". Hugh Pollard, Queen Elizabeth's Ranger, had his hounds at Simonsbath in 1598. At that date her Majesty was beginning to get on in years, but as her ardour for the Chase was undimmed up to the very day of her death at the age of seventy, it is more than probable that Hugh Pollard must have had the honour of showing his Sovereign many a day's sport. He is, in fact, reported to have done so, but as no chapter and verse evidence has been procurable it must be left at that.

In 1508 Henry VII granted a lease of the Forest of Exmoor to Sir Edmund Carew "for his life with the licence for him and all others our lieges . . . to hunt and course the deer with hound, greyhound, bows and arrows and other appurtenances of the Chase . . . but so that in the day of the death of the said Edmund he leaves at least one hundred deer in the said Forest of Exmoor". Carew was killed in action in France in 1513 in Henry VIII's wars, and was succeeded by Sir Thomas Boleyn, father of Anne Boleyn, so here was yet another inducement to Elizabeth to visit what she may well have considered the family pack, even though it was so far away to the westward. And in connection with the west in the Elizabethan period, the fourth Earl of Worcester, noted as a really first-class horseman, was at one time Master of the Horse to the Queen, an appointment which has repeated itself in another hard-riding member of the House of Somerset, His Grace the present Duke of Beaufort.

That Leicestershire, and Rockingham Forest in particular, attracted Queen Bess and Leicester may be taken as read, though again there is no actual record, for the fashionable hunting correspondent, so familiar to us in modern times, had not then been invented. If there had been a "Major Hamstrung" at that period he never would have missed a Queen out of his "amongst those I noticed as I turned round in my saddle", for his modern expression even deigns to mention "Barts", "Sirs", and even an occasional solicitor. The

PLATE 5. HENRY VIII OUT HUNTING

(*From the painting by Gheeraerts at Hampton Court Palace*)

Henry VIII was only sixteen when he ascended the throne, but at even this early age he rode well and was a hunting enthusiast. The contemporary chroniclers said of him: "He is the desire of all eyes . . . extremely handsome with an extremely fine calf to his leg." (Chapter V, p. 53.)

Elizabethan "Hamstrung" would probably have invented a new pet name for the monarch, just as his modern equivalent does for people, whom he hardly knows by sight. An expedition into the opposition hunt's territory would have made an especial appeal, particularly in view of the fact that Queen Mary had favoured the Hereditary Pack and that Elizabeth's sympathies were with Henry VIII's Privy Pack. Rockingham Forest had been in the old pack's country time out of mind.

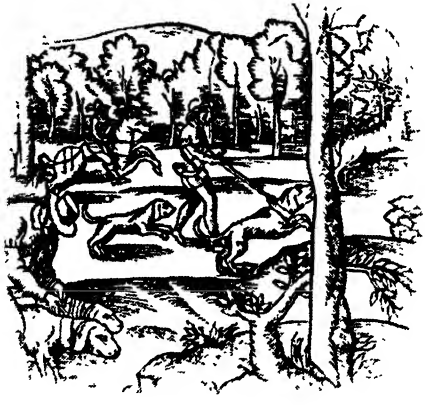
Elizabeth "hunted", that is to say shot, at Windsor, where there were sixty "Parks" full of game. The Duke of Württemberg was one amongst many of her Majesty's guests at one of these "hunts", and his secretary recorded that upon one occasion His Highness "had a capital day's sport". He shot off the leg of a fallow deer with an arquebus, "and the dog soon after caught the animal". Sport indeed! But the Duke was only following his royal hostess's example, for she was very busy knocking them over "as they raced up and down great netted spaces" (de Castlenau the French Ambassador, in a letter to his Master, Henri III). Elizabeth, on her royal progress from Farnham to Cowdray, put in at Liphook (and the royal Forest of Woolmar) where, it is recorded, "she shot the proverbial stag". The red deer then and until a much later period (Queen Anne) wandered at large over the forest. Queen Anne stayed at the famous Anchor Inn, and it is fairly certain that Elizabeth did the same since it was the only comfortable harbourage available. Elizabeth's journey along the Road of Assassination was at high speed, so she may have paused only just long enough to grass her stag. The Anchor housed many wonderful people, and Pepys gave it his blessing. He slept a night there on a journey down the blood-stained Portsmouth road.

Horse-breeding of the class suitable for hunting did not flourish greatly in Elizabeth's reign, at any rate not to the extent it had done in that of her father, for, even though the Queen knew just about as much as King John, she was so fond of riding that she might have been expected to give the utmost encouragement to the provision of the necessary material. It may well have been an outcrop of that parsimony inherited from Henry VII and which impelled her also to starve the Navy, with results which, as we know, very nearly proved disastrous.

Elizabeth for some time maintained her own private pack of "singing beagles", so called because of their melodious cry. They are said to have been so small that any one of them could be put into a gauntlet glove. They were, nevertheless, 18-inch hounds, but as it is said that the custom was to dock their sterns off short, it is not surprising that Selincourt should tell us that a whole pack could be transported in saddle panniers much after the manner that hunt

terriers are sometimes carried to-day by hunt second horsemen. The sporting Frenchman strongly disapproved, because, as he rightly remarks, this docking destroyed all chance of the man hunting hounds seeing them feathering. The modern beagle is between 15 and 16 inches, so Elizabeth's were almost giants by comparison.

Can it be said that in the Tudor period the Chase profited by the lead given to it by the Monarchy? Everyone will have his own opinion. Under Henry VIII in the earlier period of his reign when hunting was more that which it ought to be, a contest of wits, the answer must be "Yes"! Under Elizabeth, when this battue system, which had begun to gain popularity in Henry VII's reign, and seemed to be at its peak during her reign, it is suggested that the answer should be an emphatic negative.



CHAPTER VI

The Huntings of the Kings: The Stuarts, 1603–1714

"THE King of England is merciful excepting hunting, where he appears cruel when he finds himself unable to take the beast, he frets and storms and cries: 'God is angry with me, but I will have him for all that!' When he catches him he thrusts his whole arm into the belly and the entrails of the creature up to the shoulder." So wrote a contemporary chronicler (Scalger) of James I of England and VI of Scotland, who rode all the way down from Edinburgh to London to take the place upon the throne to which his descent from Henry VII entitled him.

Whatever has been said in his despite, and a good many people, in addition to poor Guy Fawkes and his principals, disliked James with a vivid hatred, his character as a devotee of hunting has never been assailed. His love of the Chase amounted almost to a mania, and perhaps exceeded even that of The Conqueror and Henry VIII.

James I was only thirty-six when he acceded, and much has been made of his election to come south overland instead of taking ship from Leith and making the distance under, probably, much more comfortable conditions, for in July the North Sea is not as a rule too tempestuous even for a bad sailor. But there was a very strong reason why this somewhat corpulent, ill-made and weak-kneed young man selected the land route: he wanted to hunt anything he could find on the way to Westminster—in spite of its being only the month of July. He was only too glad, so we are assured, to shake the dust of his native land from off his feet, for, as James VI, he had been severely buffeted by unruly nobles, and even more so by domineering ministers of the Scottish Kirk. England, he conceived, would give him a holiday, and it is obvious that he intended that it should begin from the very moment he set his face towards the south. Too much credit ought not to be accorded to James I for having elected to ride, since at that period it was largely a case of Hobson's choice, the roads being in the appalling state for wheeled transport that they were. It has been advanced in the King's favour that, being so poor a horseman and hardly the figure of a man for the strain of so long a cavalry march, it was "very sporting" of him even to attempt it. If James was half as ungainly as he has been represented to be, it was indeed an ambitious effort; but he and his numerous retinue had no intentions of doing

the distance by forced marches; they meant to have a pleasant summer ride with as much hunting thrown in as could possibly be arranged. There was no particular reason for haste, and the King meant to go slow; he was in the very midst of the very best of the English summer; the escort was strong enough to cause any of the High Toby Brigade to think twice about embarking upon anything in the way of a "Pincher" attack: in fact all seemed well in the very best of all worlds. The King wrote from Berwick, his first long halt, ordering that "coaches, horses, litters, jewels and a Lord Chamberlain", should be sent north to meet him. In this connection, if James had only known at the time that a member of the lower order of the Fraternity, a very expert cut-purse, had attached himself to the royal column of march at Berwick, he might have thought twice about ordering the Great Council to send the Crown Jewels to him so that his Queen (Ann of Denmark) might suitably bedeck herself for the state entry into Newcastle, York and so forth. This industrious cut-purse was not caught until the King reached Newark and was just about to arrange a week or two's hunting. The delinquent operator was found to be full of money, so James promptly hanged him and escheated his profits. He was full of Scottish thrift!

The royal progress appears to have been quite uneventful before Newark; but there things brightened up a bit, for, in addition to the hanging of the light-fingered gentleman, the monarch was able to commandeer a pack of hounds belonging to Sir John Harrington, and with these he hunted the timid hare all the way to Belvoir Castle, which stands sentinel over a stretch of vale which would, I opine, make the mouth of any *chasseur à cheval* water. Although this halt was only a short one, James displayed a nice discrimination in his selection of Belvoir Castle as a hunting-box. What fairer prospect to the eye of the hunting man, who, if he is worth his salt, also hungers for a man's ride to be thrown in, than the Belvoir Wednesday country, which is the region over which James I must have hunted during his sojourn at the ancestral home of the House of Manners? It is a hunting paradise, an undulating slice of high-lying land extending from Melton in the south to the Belvoir Woods in the north, and from Sproxton and Buckminster in the east to Scalford and Holwell in the west; a sea of grass, and such grass, always light to ride, fences fair, and not a strand of wire! Naturally I speak of what it was before the Second German War, since which we hardly dare think of grass, or even of hunting as some of us were lucky enough to know it. Melton Spinney, Freeby Wood, Newman Gorse, Sproxton Thorns, Clawson, Coston may have been only names to James I, just as now they are only a cherished memory to some others these two or three centuries later. This Belvoir Wednesday country probably did not

present the above picture to James I in 1603, for undoubtedly it was more thickly wooded, and there were no fences of any consequence. If there had been His Majesty would never have seen the way hounds went or, to quote a contemporary writer taken "great leisure and pleasure in the same". This king was a faint-hearted horseman, a quality no doubt inherited from his ancestor, Henry VII, certainly not from his lovely and wayward mother, Mary Queen of Scots. During this short period of James I's hunting adventures we are told (by "Cecil"): "train scents were prepared and live hares conveyed in baskets were turned down on the heath, which afforded excellent sport for His Majesty." Bagmen are almost as bad as the Elizabethan "parks" and the crossbows.

Speaking of this episode in the royal hunting career, "Cecil" writes in *Records of the Chase*:

> The contrast (with more modern times) is amusing to contemplate when we consider the style of riding which the royal James was accustomed to enjoy on steeds highly broken, and so subservient to the hand, that going with their haunches well under them, they never exceeded three parts speed. The hounds therefore must have been equally slow, or the stately Sovereign could not have enjoyed them.

This means that the horses were what, to-day, we should call "over bent", just as it was found were most of the German cavalry horses, which fell into our hands after the First German War, 1914–18. As to the hounds, whatever they were, it is certain that they were "lawed", i.e. deprived of a toe. This had happened earlier in hunting history and it happened again later when the first of the Georgian monarchs ventured to go out hunting. No doubt both horse and hound, these "trains", bag hares and so forth, amply sufficed to meet the aspirations of their followers. James I evidently asked for nothing better, and appears to have had the time of his life! The King took a heavy fall on the flat during these Belvoir operations, and it is said that it made his temper worse than ever. He was a nervous person and the cut-purse incident, coming on top of his being decanted, may have greatly perturbed him!

Bad horseman though he was, with a seat called "indifferent good", I do not personally concur with the critics who have girded at him for asserting that "a horse never stumbles except when it was reined", for I believe, and I have found from experience, that it is a very good thing to compel a horse to take care of himself, as usually he will, when he finds out that he is not to be spoon-fed all the time.

There would have been many more broken bones over that rough Kadir country (near Meerut in India), if the sense of individual responsibility had not been encouraged in the pig-sticker. It is no doubt

true to say of James I that "his horse carried him rather than that he rode". Cattle-truck passengers were not a monopoly of those times.

What with borrowing a pack of hounds, free bed and board at Belvoir, and the large number of knighthoods he bestowed at £200 a head the King's hunting tour must have shown a good business profit. As to these knighthoods there were 31 at York, 18 at Worksop, 8 at Newark, 4 on the road to Belvoir, 45 at Belvoir and 28 at Theobald's Park during the time he wished himself upon Lord Cecil. These take into no account the ones he handed out after his arrival at Charterhouse, where a further large but unspecified number of "distinctions" were conferred. They probably totalled 200 and as the King could not be refused, the recipients naturally had to pay up and look as pleasant as they could manage.

This Belvoir hunting interlude was not the only sporting incident in the King's *safari* southward, for, as he drew nearer to London, and met the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, tastefully arrayed in scarlet robes, he thought that the occasion called for a celebration. What more fitting than a hunt with an antlered monarch of Stamford Hill? Here is a précis of the "great hunt" which ensued: "From Stamford Hill to London was made a train with a tame deer, that the hounds could not take faster that [*sic*] his Majesty proceeded!" What exactly the hunting correspondent intended to convey is not very clear. Does it mean that the King finished a good second to the carted deer, and that the hounds were so slow that they could not even catch his Majesty—or what? Again, what hounds were they? History does not relate, but as the Lord Mayor of London was there, and as he was by right of his position *ex-officio* Master of the Common Pack since the time of Henry I, it seems to be almost a certainty that the animals employed must have been a draft from that establishment. Stamford Hill was too far off the beats of either the Privy Pack or the Hereditary Royal Buckhounds. It must have been an amazing hunt and no doubt the simple folk of London were suitably impressed, which was obviously what James I hoped that they would be.

It is recounted of this king that "he hunted in the most ludicrous attire: a ruff and trousers breeches, and in this respect he did not sin alone". His apparel does not sound very workmanlike for such a rough-and-tumble pursuit as hunting, even over a country not intersected by obstacles! A bullfinch would have made a sorry mess of the ruff, to say nothing of the "trousers breeches".

The King was frequently upbraided by the Commons for neglecting the affairs of State for the pleasures of the Chase, but he took no notice whatever, not even of the famous Remonstrance, which reached him during one of his many sporting expeditions to Newmarket, a place in which he took "great delight" by reason of both its hunting

amenities and the racing. Incidentally, the King was vastly unpopular with the tradesmen in the racing capital of the world, for he never paid their bills; with the servants of the Household, who rarely got their wages; with the Court by reason of his pronounced favouritism to his Scottish entourage; and socially by reason of his most uncleanly personal habits. It has been said of him that he never washed his face or his hands, and that he slobbered and dribbled over his food. It is hardly surprising that he earned a most uncomplimentary sobriquet.

The King, to add to his unpopularity, incensed the Puritans by an order that the Book of Sports should be read in the churches on Sundays. This, in fact, was not a book at all, but a pamphlet written by the King himself to encourage the populace to play games on the Sabbath because, as he said, unless they took exercise on their one free day in the week, they could never hope to make themselves soldiers in case of war. Sound sense no doubt, but the Sabbatarians disapproved most vehemently, and let him know it.

James I "discovered" Newmarket in 1605 and there is the following entry in the Fordham Parish register made on Wednesday February 27th of that year when he was on the way to Thetford:

> The high and mighty Prince James by the Grace of God King of Great Britain, Defender of the Faith, etc. did hunt the hare with his own hounds in the Fields of Fordham and did kill six near a place called Buckland.

These hounds were obviously some private pack of harriers. The hare seems to have been the King's favourite animal of chase. There is nothing of any value concerning the King's doings with the Royal Buckhounds, beyond the general fact that they flourished exceedingly during his reign. Perhaps they went a bit too fast for him. The incident of the pardon which he extended to the wicked Sir Pexall Brocas, Master of the Hereditary Pack, confirms his interest in it and reference has already been made to it.

Captain Frank Siltzer in that admirably written book, *Newmarket, Its Sports and Personalities* (Cassell, 1923) has a good many things to tell us about James I in that pleasant little town, and one of them in connection with this royal voyage of discovery in 1605 is that his Majesty was so delighted "with the little village that he created 99 knights". Again at £200 per head? It would seem to be a pity that the King did not make it round figures and thus collect a cool £20,000, a lot of money in any days! Captain Siltzer says that on these early visits the King lived at an inn "known by the sign of the Griffin, which he eventually purchased, but as he became more attached to the place, and was there so constantly, it became necessary to have a Royal residence of sorts, and a Palace was built on the site of a house

which had been either sold or given to the King by Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury".

Busy as the King was hunting the hare, taking the bustard with greyhounds and hawking, he took a keen interest in racing. In a footnote to p. 14 of *Newmarket* Captain Siltzer writes:

> The diversion of horse racing took on fresh significance with the accession of James. He came new from Scotland bringing with him Scottish nobles and Scottish tastes. There is a tale accounting for the growth of racing in that country (Scotland) by the fact that some Spanish horses of "great speed and swiftness" had been washed ashore off the coast of Galloway in the wreck of the Armada. It is, however, a yarn that rests upon very slender evidence.

Captain Siltzer, we may be sure, is quite correct in his deductions. James, however, was a patron of the turf only when he could tear himself away from hunting. When there was a frost, and hunting was impossible, he filled in some of his time writing verse, some of which has survived; but when away on any of his jaunts and jollities attend to business he simply would not. There was, as is common property, a good deal to which he ought to have attended if he had been wiser. It is probable that the King felt much safer at Newmarket, but even the erudite Captain Siltzer does not seem to know whether he left off his dagger-proof jerkin. It is said to have been thick enough to stop the keenest blade. The fear of assassination made this nervous king far worse than even Nature had created him.

Whatever were James I's failings both as a monarch and as an individual he is to be eulogized in hunting history for that he set his face firmly against the unsportsmanlike "Park" form of it. He wanted to hunt his quarry with hounds, and he wanted to ride and not run on foot, or sit in a draughty pavilion with a crossbow and knock the deer over as the poor caged things waltzed round the circus. James I may not conform to later conceptions of what a man who hunts because of the love of the Chase should be, but he had some perceptions which were correct, and it is even possible that, though eaten up with self-conceit, he knew what a shockingly bad horseman he was, and tried to improve himself, for we find him visiting William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, owner of Welbeck, famous for that big riding school which probably had, and certainly has, no rival in the world. The object of the very vain King's visit can only be presumed, but if it was to try to improve his imperfect knowledge of equitation, he could not have selected a better preceptor, for William Cavendish was brilliant with a reputation which might almost be claimed to be world-wide. It was nevertheless somewhat late in life to attempt any improvement in the case of King James, for he had long passed the pliant age, had increased the spread of his ungainly figure, and, worst of all,

believed that he knew everything, this last failing begin fatal to progress in any form of education. It is improbable that James knew anything at all about the "aids" and the most important of them, the body sway, the use of its weight for both control of a horse's balance and as a leading item in the steering mechanism. The reins and legs are of almost minor importance by comparison with the use of the body. How many falls both out hunting and in steeplechases might not be saved were this major aid better comprehended! James could never have been sufficiently supple or fit enough to be able to apply any of the aids, even if he had had any knowledge of them.

Both Charles I and Charles II owed much of their proficiency as horsemen in the true sense to this Duke of Newcastle, but then he had a chance to catch them at a younger age than that of their self-opinionated father and grandfather. It is easy to bend the twig: impossible to bend a gnarled trunk.

James I must be given credit for having done much to improve the breed of the native English horse and in this he had the great benefit of the advice of the Duke of Newcastle, and the not quite so great aid of the impious Duke of Buckingham. Both believed in the Eastern infusion, the Arab and the Barb, the foundation stones of the thoroughbred as we know him to-day. It was due to Buckingham that the first Arab ever brought to this country was purchased for James I. This was an undersized bay horse imported by a Mr. Markham, who "traded in Constantinople", but who, by reason of this fact may not have been much of a judge of a horse! This animal was called "the Markham Arabian". The Duke of Newcastle had nothing to say in his favour, and his Grace was proved to be quite right, for when raced against the English horses, even such as they were, he was handsomely beaten and he was a complete failure at the stud. We had to wait for the Darley Arabian, the Godolphin Barb, the Byerley Turk and others, before the beneficent effect of the Eastern blood began to make itself felt. The consensus of expert opinion at the time of the purchase of the Markham "Arabian" was that "the wisest fool", James I, and his friend Buckingham, had been handsomely done by the gentleman who traded in the East. The intention was good and the instinct was right, as history subsequently proved. Racing did, in fact, start upon some organized plan under the Stuarts, and to James I is due the credit of having given it the first impetus.

Newmarket has much for which to thank James and the successors of his House. The Duke of Newcastle's ideas as to what a "running" (race) horse should be he summarized in these words for the unearthing of which we are indebted to Lady Apsley:

> You want mares as light as possible, large and long but well shaped; a short

back but long sides and a little long legged; their breast as narrow as may be, for they will gallop the lighter and nimbler and run the faster. For the lighter and thinner you breed for galloping is the better. Your stallion should be a Barb and somewhat of the shape of the mares . . . for a Barb that is a jade will get a better running horse than the best running horse in England. Sir John Fenwick told me, who had more experience of running horses than any man in England, for he had more running horses than all England besides, and the most part of all the famous running horses in England that ran one against another were of his race and breed.

With everything here said it is possible to agree with the exception of one thing, namely, that I do not believe that anyone is fond of any horse, be he for the turf, or otherwise, that is at all inclined to be "on the leg". Few Arabs are. The most beautiful outline of a pure-bred Arabian I, or anyone else who can remember, ever saw, was the grey pony "Blitz", owned by Mr. Beddy, who won the Civil Service Cup in Lucknow in 1886 and 1887. He was perfection, a model of the thoroughbred horse as he should be. Every pure-bred Arab is the same. These earlier horses brought to England, "the Markham Arabian", and later "Place's White Turk", also bought by James I, cannot have been of the *sang bleu*.

James strove his best in his horse-breeding operations, and the fact that he had no great success was more his misfortune than his fault.

Though a comparatively young man when he died, for he was only fifty-nine, he was much older than his years, owing to his over-indulgence in both meat and drink. Even his addiction to hunting did not counterbalance the inroads made upon a never very robust constitution by his excesses in the directions just named—and there were others. As to his gluttonies, there is a record in a letter written to the Earl of Arundel of a feast given in November 1617 at a farm-house near Newmarket to celebrate the birthday of the Prince of Wales (Charles) and to which each guest had to make a contribution. The King brought a great chine of beef, but the real success of the party seems to have been Sir George Goring's "fore huge brawny pigges, pipeing hott, bitted and harnised with ropes of sarsiges all tyde in a monstrous bag pudding". Even hunting hard six days a week would hardly suffice to ride off this sort of thing. There is also a mention of a monster carousal at Theobalds in honour of Christian IV of Denmark. Both the royal guest and his host had to be carried to bed and all the rest of the dinner party "wallowed in beastly delights; the ladies abandoned their sobriety and were seen to roll about in intoxication". A saintly cleric averred, most loyally but it is to be feared mendaciously, that James died from eating too much green fruit!

We then come to the reign which must be prefaced by the word

"if", for there were so many! If Charles I had not been present in the Houses of Parliament when his father gave utterance to one of the most foolish and intemperate of speeches of the many which he delivered; if Charles had never come under the influence of the incompetent and most undesirable Duke of Buckingham; if he had been born a peer instead of the heir to a crown; and finally, if he had been killed at Naseby, as obviously he desired to be when he made ready to lead that forlorn hope, the charge of his own cavalier bodyguard, one of the most deplorable chapters in English history would never have had to be written, and this nation would have escaped the *tâche* of regicide.

"If" indeed is your only peacemaker! But alas! Charles did hear that one sentence in his father's maladroit oration: "Kings are justly called gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of Divine power on earth." This coloured the new king's policy until bitter experience revealed to him the fallacy of it. This speech was the root-cause of all Charles I's errors, and in particular for the grievous eleven years of sheer tyranny, which resulted eventually in the fratricidal war. Even the speech might not have worked all the mischief which it did, had Buckingham died before Charles came to the throne. He was the King's evil genius—even in horse-dealing as has been demonstrated by his foolish purchases for the royal stud. It is practically certain that if Charles had not had this charlatan at his elbow, youthful and inexperienced as he was, he would not have committed one of his major indiscretions, the revival of the Old Forest Laws at a moment when "Forests" had virtually disappeared some centuries before. Charles, similarly impelled, revived the old law of Edward I, under which all owners of an income of £40 a year from land were compelled to receive a knighthood, and pay heavily for the honour. James I drove a thriving trade in titles, but he never sheltered himself behind that old Plantagenet enactment.

But for the evil shadow of Buckingham no king could have started his reign under fairer auspices. He was young, only twenty-five, most attractive in appearance, deeply religious, impeccable in his private life, and, in other regards, a really first-class horseman, thanks to the Duke of Newcastle, fond of all that sport which was the life-blood of Yeoman England and of the landed proprietors whom, to-day, we might call the hunting world, and, most favourable of all omens, he succeeded a king of whom the whole nation was thoroughly tired, and who had left it with an overdraft of at least £800,000 and the immediate necessity of finding another £1,000,000 to finance a Spanish war already badly bungled by Buckingham, the incompetent. Thus, money once again proved itself to be all that those who want it badly have discovered that it is. Buckingham told the King that he must get it at all costs.

To descend to a few details unimportant perhaps in themselves but cumulative in their evil effect, one of Charles's earliest mistakes was committed against Newmarket, whither he had intended to take his pretty and very diminutive bride, Henrietta Maria, daughter of Louis XIII of France, as a part of the honeymoon. Buckingham, being afraid in his own person to go to "so unguarded a place", knowing how much hated he was, persuaded the King to postpone his visit till the spring of 1627. The Duke had every cause for fear, but the King had none at all at that time, and his visit unquestionably would have been not only very popular but a great political success. It was not until later on, when he was persuaded not merely to tighten up the laws against poaching, which was very rampant, but to go much further and command that the nobles and squires, who lived within the precincts of the Royal Chace, a verge embracing a circuit of twelve miles round Newmarket Palace, should under severe penalty constitute themselves some sort of super gamekeepers. The enactment further commanded that every tavern and innkeeper should be bound in a sum of £20 not to dress, or sell, any venison, red or fallow, or any hare, pheasant, partridge or heath poult. This enactment (April 1636) likewise affected the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Justices of the Peace of London, for it required them to stop the sale of all game whencesoever coming. This extraordinary and autocratic injunction, coupled with the Forest Law extortions, to make no mention at all of many other things, which did not touch the very class most favourable to the monarch, sowed not a few dragons' teeth.

Charles also contrived to upset a section of the horse-breeding industry, for, following the policy of his father, he lent great patronage to Light Horse Breeding to the detriment, as a petition averred, of the Great Horse, the animal supposed to be the only one "fit for the defence of the country", but which was so slow and overloaded with armour as to be of no use at all in any cavalry operations demanding that high speed which is the very essence of the cavalry spirit. Charles took no notice of this petition, in which course he was probably right, for something much better than the lumbering Great Horse was emerging. The King might, however, have temporized and maintained the support of these worthies, for their horse had his uses, even though mounting hard-hitting cavalry was not one of them. The King had an absolute talent for rubbing fur up the wrong way. And all the time trouble, which so easily might have been avoided, was brewing, and all the time the King was either hunting hard, racing or playing tennis, or Pall Mall, that game of French origin. We find Conway writing to Secretary Coke complaining that he could not persuade Charles to attend to business of State "by His Majesty's being either upon his sports abroad or tennis at home". A difficult situation, and,

as was eventually proved, a very dangerous one. Charles was immensely popular with the bulk of his subjects, particularly so after it became apparent that his great opponent, good as his intentions may have been, was intent upon setting up a Military Dictatorship upon lines which are familiar enough to those of us who have lived through two German wars. The Hereditary Pack of Buckhounds, then moribund, as well as the Privy Pack, received the King's full support, and difficult as was the situation between the rival factions, the old masters never wavered in their loyalty to the Throne. Thomas Brocas in the year 1633 sold the Hereditary office of Master to Sir Lewis Watson for £3,000 together with the Manor of Little Weldon, held by his ancestors for three centuries. Beaurepaire, the ancient seat of the Brocas family, was one of the last houses in Hampshire to hold out against the Roundheads, when the war was virtually lost. The Brocas troop was hopelessly surrounded by a strong Roundhead force which advanced from Abingdon and, after throwing into their moat the last pieces of family plate which had not been melted down for the King, cut their way through to Basing House in an attempt to reinforce the gallant Marquess of Winchester in his final stand. To quote a member of the family, Mr. Edward Burrows, who wrote the introduction to Lord Ribblesdale's book :

> There for a few desperate months the descendants of the faithful Masters of the Buckhounds fought on under that Paulet motto which might well have been theirs also, *Aimez Loyauté*. For not many families can boast, as can that of Brocas, that thrice in their history, once in Gascony and twice in England, their fortunes have been ruined by devoted loyalty to their King.

It was from this class, the hunting men, that the King's fine cavalry was recruited. They all rode well, shot well, and for the most part were in that condition best described as hard as nails. They constituted the very finest material for the *arme blanche*, and if there had been a cavalry soldier on the Royalist side of the natural genius of Cromwell for training, and also for handling the mounted arm in action, they would have proved completely invincible. The Royalist cavalry more or less trained itself in action. It was most gallantly, but most inadvisedly, led by that picturesque and very valiant Prince Rupert, nephew of Charles I, third son of his sister Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, wife of that very rash Frederic of the Palatinate. Elizabeth herself was outstanding as a horsewoman in those times when the hard-riding Artemis was not so often met as she was in the years which are still within the memory of hunting men. Rupert inherited his riding talent, and he evolved a love of fighting on his own account. He had plenty of opportunities to improve his knowledge of cavalry warfare in the operations undertaken to try to recover the Palatinate

for his brother. It was in the main due to the unsuccess of this campaign that he came to England, at first to hunt with his uncle, and then, when the war cloud filled to bursting point, to train the gallants of England to be cavalry soldiers. Rupert had no military genius, but he was a first-class regimental officer. He is claimed to have been the first cavalry leader, since the introduction of firearms, who recognized the value of shock tactics, a cavalry charge at the highest speed of the slowest horse. Before him, even the finest cavalry on the Continent, that of Gustavus Adolphus, were so paralysed by the "arms of precision", that they only advanced at a trot, stopping to reload their pistols after each discharge. Rupert altered all this; he saw the advantage of high speed and cold steel even against infantry armed with these "lethal" weapons, which were not of exactly magazine or machine-gun velocity. They took a lot of time to reload.

Rupert proved the correctness of his theory time and again, and only once did he fail, namely at Marston Moor.

If bravery had been linked with discretion, or if a real general had been directing at Edgehill that first battle of the Civil War might well have been the last. Rupert knocked out Essex's cavalry at the first impact; there was no necessity to pursue the "tapsters and serving men" on horseback for miles beyond the Warwickshire Kennels at Kineton. The Round-head infantry attacking the centre might have been pulverized if Rupert had gone squadrons left about, re-formed and come in at full speed on the enemy's rear. However, there it was: the Cavalier horse got galloping, and they would not stop. Practically the same thing happened at Naseby, where, incidentally, Cromwell did exactly what Rupert ought to have done at Edgehill.

Rupert was the *beau ideal* of a cavalry soldier, and the pity of it was that his military knowledge did not match either his tactics or his horsemanship. In the early phases of the Civil War, though their infantry was fairly good, the parliamentary cavalry was inferior, many of the men were city-bred and could hardly ride at all, many more were just wastrels, who had enlisted because the cavalry pay was better, but they had no stomach for discipline, still less for fighting. Cromwell denounced them to Hampden as "mostly old decayed tapsters and serving men; how shall such base and mean fellows be able to encounter gentlemen of honour, courage and resolution!" Cromwell was quite right, for they soon showed that they could not stand up to the hard-riding and well disciplined Cavalier cavalry. All the greater credit redounds to Cromwell that, in the end, he managed to turn this rabble into some of the finest cavalry of the day. He must have put them through it very severely; he certainly saw to it that they were well mounted. The troop horses of the Ironsides were mostly

black, hence the colour in the Blues, their descendants, and also perhaps in the Royalist regiments, the Life Guards.

Rupert's cavalry were unquestionably better mounted at the outset on the animal we of later times call the Hunter, and the men rode well.

Eliot Warburton in his *Prince Rupert & the Cavaliers* (1849) gives us a good portrait of the man who led them in these words:

> But there was one pleasure cultivated by the King, into which Rupert entered with enthusiasm: Charles enjoyed hunting with hereditary zest, and had sacrificed to this passion the long-sacred immunities of British property. He enclosed Richmond Park with as little ceremony as the first Norman conqueror showed to his Saxon slaves, for the greater convenience of having red as well as fallow deer so close at hand. The hunting, whatever was its style in England, seems to have been then as now pre-eminent, and was the attraction from which our Prince perhaps parted with the most regret. In a letter from Mr. Garrard to Lord Wentworth, dated July 1637, we find that "both the brothers (Palatine) went away unwillingly, but Prince Rupert expressed it most, for being ahunting that very morning with the King, he wished that he might break his neck so he might leave his bones in England." (Strafford Papers.)

From contemporary accounts Rupert looked the *beau sabreur* to the life: he was very tall, lean and handsome, and when he died in England in 1740, he left amongst other bequests "a pack of hounds, a favourite old blind mare and a hunting mare". Of this romantic character's artistic and scientific attainments and of how he became a first-class Horse Marine when fighting for the Netherlands, where he also raised some cavalry regiments, other chroniclers have spoken at great length. This one is concerned only with the princes of the blood, the hunting man and the cavalry soldier.[1]

[1] The following is taken from the Appendix to Vol. I of *Prince Rupert & the Cavaliers* by Eliot Warburton.

This extract is from a document headed "The Life of Prince Rupert", which was written before 1678, and it is presumed by Colonel Benett, Rupert's secretary, after his release from three years' imprisonment at Linz—which was only granted on his word of honour not to fight against the Emperor again:

"His Highness's word was taken, and upon his parôle, giving the Emperor his hand, according to the usage of the country, he was set at liberty.

"The Emperor returning now to Vienna, Sir Thomas Roe carried the Prince thither, where he was entertained with great joy and esteem. His Imperial Majesty having appointed an extraordinary hunting in the Lower Austrian country, the Prince was at the chase, and meeting with the Emperor, as by chance (though it was looked upon to be so designed by the Emperor), the Prince presented himself to his Imperial Majesty, and having kissed his hand (which signifies enlargement) he was thereupon finally released.

"At this hunting it was his Highness's good hap to kill the first boar with a spear, an exploit that is highly accounted of in the Empire."

• • •

"After a week he took his leave and got his pass, with a very hearty recommendation to the Archduke Leopold, who was then in Brunswick with an army against the Swedes; the Emperor

So far as hunting is concerned in general and the fate of the Royal Buckhounds in particular during the ten years (1649–59) of the Protectorate, called to this day by many the Regicide Régime, what is there that can be said? From that moment after Naseby, when, after sitting on the fence in London to see in which way the wind was going to blow, till he galloped into Newmarket on that flea-bitten grey, hunting, racing, and all other sinful pleasures of the flesh were made taboo by Cromwell. Not that the great Roundhead was not as fond of these things as the next man, and enjoyed a good hunt on a good horse in the wake of a good pack of hounds, but that he feared that any assembly might be a cloak for Royalist plotting to dislodge him from a saddle in which he was by no means secure. He was cute enough to perceive that the revolutionary thrust, which had thrown him up, might be strong enough to unhorse him. He galloped to Newmarket after he had made it quite clear to such tattered remnants of the Commons as remained at Westminster, that he did not care a fig for it and its baubles, and that he was convinced that the only kind of government likely to be able to put things in order was an Ironside one. Cromwell went to Newmarket to fetch his army to displace the Parliament; and he started his One Man Government, the very thing against which he professed to have been fighting from Edgehill to Naseby. Charles I at that moment was a prisoner in Newmarket with

being in hope that he might have continued with Leopold; but he went to France, and so to Hamburgh, where he found the grandfather of the present Danish King lying before Hamburgh, upon the same pretensions as now, and from thence to Bremen, and so to the Hague, where the Queen of Bohemia was at that time, the Prince Elector being with the King in England. Our Prince was always temperate, even among the greatest examples of the contrary. Being in his passage at the Elector of Saxe's, and desiring to be excused from drinking up at the rate of the company: 'What shall we do for him then?' (says the Elector) 'if he cannot drink', and so invited him to the entertainment of a hunting."

This further is taken from MS. of Captain Pyne, who was probably a commander of one of the Prince's ships in his Corsair days:

"Being a child he was well grounded in his religion, while the subtle Jesuits, with whom he hath been much conversant, could never make him stagger in. Also, in the mathematics and languages, but his chief delight was in military discipline, wherein he perfected so much under . . . . . , his tutor for the infantry, and Monsieur . . . . . , his tutor for the cavalry, that at the age of fourteen years he was judged capable of a regiment, which he commanded in Westphalia, at the battle of Flota against the Austrians, whereby the wilfulness of his brother, the Prince Elector, the treachery of General King, who served little better at Marston Moor, they lost the day, his Highness Prince Rupert, the Lord Craven, and divers others were taken prisoners. My lord, and most of the rest, were in a short time ransomed. But his Highness Prince Rupert was sent into the city of Linz, lying upon the banks of the Danube in the land of Trent, where he was kept close prisoner above two years in that castle. The third year he had some enlargement, being now and then permitted to hunt both the stag, roe, wild boar, hare, fox, etc., but always with a good guard, in which time there happened many reasonable passages, one amongst the rest, as it is there curiously reported, was at the hunting of a fox, which took the earth, a dog, which the Prince loved, followed him, but returning not presently, his Highness being impatient of stay, crept in after and got hold of his leg, which he could not draw out by reason of narrowness of the hole, until Mr. Billingsby, who waited always on him, took hold of his Highness's heels, so he drew out the Prince, the Prince the dog, and the dog the fox."

PLATE 6. SIR WILLIAM CAVENDISH, AFTERWARDS DUKE OF NEWCASTLE

(From the painting by Vandyk in the Welbeck Galleries. Reproduced by kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Portland, K.G.)

This Duke of Newcastle was a horseman with a world-wide reputation and the riding preceptor of Charles I. Prince Henry, his brother, Charles II and James II, the sons of Charles I, and Prince Rupert, their cousin, may have come under his influence. All the Duke's pupils were very good horsemen. Charles II was his favourite and probably his best pupil, but they all rode very well.

something like a brigade of Cromwell's cavalry as his warders. Things began to move fast from the moment the Protector arrived at Newmarket and put himself at the head of the Military Government, with an Upper House and a Senate all complete, and with the Lord's Anointed in its hands. Charles in fact was no longer the prisoner of Parliament, but of Cromwell's army. He had been brought to Newmarket from Holmby House in Northampton by way of Trumpington instead of through Cambridge, where it was known to his captors that the loyal inhabitants had prepared a great reception for him. He is reported by Sir Philip Meadows to have been the only really cheerful person in the little racing village during this uneasy period, and obviously had no premonition of his impending fate. He was in a place associated with many pleasant hunting and racing experiences; he was being well and even courteously treated by the officers of the Rebel army: he was allowed to ride on the Heath: he was attended every morning by his own chaplain: the gentry of the neighbourhood waited on him frequently to do him homage, and he was cheered by the people of Newmarket upon every occasion when he made an appearance in their midst. He may have believed that, now that the fighting was all over and things had gone smoothly more or less for about two years, some accommodation between him and his Parliament was not only possible, but likely. Whether he continued in this belief after the arrival in hot haste of the man on the flea-bitten grey, and the subsequent arrangement for his removal under strong escort to another less pleasant spot, is extremely doubtful. The long imprisonment which followed; the partial success of the Royalist risings; and the eventual indictment for treason, the guiding spirit behind which was Cromwell's and Cromwell's alone, are all part of general history; but during this time when Charles was in his once happy hunting-ground at Newmarket his chequered life was more or less tranquil.

Cromwell and his officers at heart were no more Puritans or Presbyterians than the man in the moon; but it suited their leader to let the populace believe that they thought sackcloth and ashes were the most suitable attire; that a cockfight was a breach of the peace and a horse-race an insurrection, so he banned all racing in 1654, and it is not, therefore, difficult to imagine what happened to hunting. The Protector was by no means averse from racing, because he recognized its value for keeping up the standard of the breed of horses. He had a first-class army, of which his cavalry was the flower, and he was fully determined that its quality should be maintained. He owned a stud at which stood that "Arab", called "The White Turk", already referred to, and a very good-class brood mare, later on called "The Coffin Mare", because in a search made at the Restoration her

skeleton was found in a vault. Cromwell knew what he was doing where horse-breeding was concerned and besides being a first-class horseman and horse-master, as all cavalry soldiers should be, he knew as well as did the fabled jockey that you could not come without the horse, and therefore he continued to breed him to as great a pitch of perfection as possible. It seems a pity that he should have allowed his good sense to be overborne by a sect which pretended to believe that, if you wanted to be good, you must be gloomy! What a fillip might not have been given to an ancient British sport by a man with Cromwell's knowledge and energy, and probably no one would have minded very much if he had given all his hounds biblical names! The Puritan *en masse* was not quite as saintly as his name; he loved a lewd story, especially if it began and ended with a text; he was often a heavy drinker; he was mercenary and was quite as ready to betray a friend as he was to cheat an enemy.

Cromwell's "Court" was not renowned for seemliness; it was in fact very rowdy. It was considered funny to spill posset over the ladies' dresses, and to drop live coals into an officer's boots; yet they pretended to consider hunting and racing the works of the devil! Cromwell abolished the Tutbury Stud, and the sires and mares were distributed throughout northern England, not without advantage, but he kept horse-breeding going everywhere else with an eye always fixed on the main chance, the military one, and the horse of good bone and substance fit to carry a fighting man over or through anything. This had a felicitous result.

CHAPTER VII

The Huntings of the Kings: The Restoration Period, 1660

WITH the marked exception of the first of the Stuart Line and the two Queens, whose reigns brought the dynasty to a close, all the monarchs were in the front rank as horsemen, and all of them very ardent followers of the Chase. Charles I knew more about hunting than his father, but whether he rode better than his son, Charles II, or than his elder brother, Prince Henry, who died in 1612, is open to question. Charles I not only did what is called in hunting jargon to-day "go well to hounds", which means finding the way with the least possible exertion at the highest possible speed, but he was a good "school" horseman, which means that he knew a great deal about the "aids" and the art of balance. If more people, who aspire to ride well "to hounds" and between the flags, took a leaf out of Charles I's book, not only would they get fewer falls, but they would win more races. It may be that it was the spectacle of James I's ineptitude that induced King Charles not to follow his example, and to put himself under a preceptor, who had taken an Honours Degree in equitation. The Duke of Newcastle taught Charles I; also, so it may be adventured, his brother, Prince Henry, and both the sons of the murdered King (Charles II and James II). Whether their cousin, Prince Rupert, ever came under the Duke's skilled tuition is not certain, but he must have met him, and probably hunted with him. Rupert was a first-class horseman and, therefore, cannot have been too conceited to go on learning.

Charles II, like his father, knew the "indoors" and the "outdoors" of equitation—Newcastle saw to that—but, like most young men who attain proficiency in the hunting field, aspired to ride races, and he is, in fact, the only monarch who has steered a winner on Newmarket Heath. There have been stories told of how Richard II also rode winners in matches, but the evidence upon which they are based is very flimsy. The same story-tellers also allege that the picturesque Richard of Bordeaux "loved well to have a horse of pryse", and add that "he was not too particular how he got him".

Of Charles II's race-riding exploits there is no doubt, for the records are quite succinct: as witness this short précis of information given in *Ye Olde New Markitt Calendar*, which was compiled by Mr. J. B. Muir:

His Majesty rode his horse "Woodcock" on October 12th, 1671, in a match against Mr. Elliott, a gentleman of the Bedchamber on "Flatfoot", and was beaten, but on the 14th, the King won The Plate, the Duke of Monmouth, Mr. Elliott, Mr. Thomas Thin [as ancestor of the Marquess of Bath] being amongst the other "jockeys" who were riding, and in 1674 His Majesty won the same race again. Sir Robert Carr made a note of it at the time and wrote: "Yesterday His Majesty rode himself three heates and a course and won The Plate—all fower were hard and neer ridden, and I doe assure you the King wonn by good horsemanship."

The Duke of Newcastle thought very highly of his pupil's promise as a horseman from a very early moment in their association, for speaking of Charles II as he was at the tender age of ten, he says: "His Majestie's capacity was such that he would ride leaping horses, and such as would overthrow others, and manage them with the greatest skill and dexterity to the admiration of all who beheld him." The young Prince was a great credit to his instructor, and although the course of his education was unhappily interrupted by what happened at that "Crowning Mercy" battle (Worcester) it was a case of *quo semel est imbuta testu* . . .! It is the sowing of the seed that counts.

Prince Charles was very fond of his tutor, for we find him writing, when about ten years old: "My Lord, I would not have you take too much physick, for it doth always make me worse, as I think it will do the like with you. I ride every day and am ready to follow any other directions from you. Make haste to return to him that loves you."

What a pity it is that youth's sweet-scented manuscript should sometimes never reach publication, and that the full-grown plant should bear such a faint resemblance to the early budding shoots.

The good Duke, who had taught the boy to cultivate good manners, ride, fence, dance with good grace and imbued a love of the arts, strove hard to maintain his guidance after his pupil had become King of the Realm. The following is from a catalogue of letters and other historical documents exhibited at Welbeck:

Itt maye please your Ma^tie^ nowe lente growes on and I shoulde wishe your Ma^tie^ to goe to newe Markett which Is the sweeteste place In the worlde and beste Ayre and no place like itt for Huntinge, Haukinge and Coursinge, and Horse Races. . . . Ande your Royall Father sayde he did always furnishe him selfe·ther with Horses and Houndes for Sumer Huntinge. . . . Ande to thatt purpose your Ma^tie^ will bee pleased to Invite the Northerne Lordes and Genterye thatt hath the beste Horses and Houndes as also frome other partes . . . Butt theye must have longe warnings to provide leaste theye make Excuses, Butt sertenlye when Itt Is Knowne your Ma^tie^ will bee ther and the time greate store off the beste will wayte off you . . . ther Is onlye one thinge att Newe-Markett thatt I wishe mighte bee mended, and thatt Is ther are so manye Hye wayes together and Ruttes made by abundance off wagens and Cartes thatt Coumes thatt waye, thatt

when a sente lies cross those wayes Itt Is most dangerous Ridinge. . . . Indeed a Horse att full speede naye uppon a Gallope Can Nott possiblye holde his feet butt must faule, as the Earl off Hollande did over those wayes most dangerouslye and had much adoe to recover itt, though hee had the beste Petitians and Surgions thatt weare att Courte butt this is Easeleye remedied S[r] for Itt Is butt plowinge them Eaven and All Is well, and no danger att all nor no hinderance for the wageners or wagens. Itt weare well iff your Ma[tie] made little wagers; with houndes one agaynste an other, which beste both for sente and vewe and then theye muste bee markte with severall Coullerde Ribans, or else with Tarr, and oker which are red and black thatt theye maye bee distinguishte this puttes life In the Huntsmen and masters and heates them to greate Mettle, whose Dogges shall Conquer thatt Daye . . .

Your Ma[tie] beinge att Newe-Markett you are so neer Cambridge as the Chanselor and the Universetye will invite your Ma[tie] thether where they will moste Royalye Entertayne Your Ma[tie] Everye waye, besides their orations, and Comodies, and Everye Sundaye sende your Ma[tie] most Exselente Prechers to Newe-Markett . . .

The above was part of a document which his Grace called "A Treatise on Government". It contained much sage advice, but history would seem to indicate that whatever "His Ma[tie]" may have done where "horses, houndes and sumer huntinge", and the "ruttes" round and about Newmarket were concerned, he took very little notice of the rest of it, which was a pity. The Duke could not teach him everything.

Charles had a very chequered career in the period immediately before and after the defeat at Worcester, especially when he was a hunted animal, perched one moment in the great oak at Boscobel, hidden the next in the cheese-locker at Pendrells hard by; flying and hiding where he could, nearly caught when in the stable yard of the George at Bridport, when recognized by an ostler, who promptly informed against him, and a similar escape at Charmouth, where a blacksmith, who would not have discredited Sherlock Holmes, noted that the King's horse was wearing three shoes, set in three different counties, and that one of them was a Worcestershire shoe. Seeing that the battle was in everyone's mouth, that village blacksmith deduced that the cast shoe might also be "Worcestershire". Charles, sensing the man's suspicion, lost no time in getting to horse, and eventually, as is known, managed to reach the coast at Brighton and get a ship to France. All these adventures must have been unsettling, especially to one of the King's temperament.

Charles II must have been born with excellent hands, for all horses are said to have gone kindly with him; he never overmarked them, and this may have been an aid to the happy result. It is obvious that he was a very good judge, for he never would buy a horse with bad shoulders or mean quarters.

The story of Charles II's famous Newmarket hack, "Old Rowley", after whom the famous Mile has been named, has been told so often that it is only necessary here to mention the fact for the sake of continuity. The King himself has been quite incorrectly called "Old Rowley", and the steed a "race-horse". He was nothing of the kind. Charles may have galloped him in a match against some of his friend's hacks, but there is no evidence at all of his having been anything but a hack.

Lord Rockingham was Master of the Hereditary Royal Buckhounds at the time of the coronation of Charles II. The ancient pack was then but a name, but there was still the matter of the right and title to the manor of Little Weldon and the right to some position at the coronation ceremonies. Lord Rockingham had acquired the position and its rights by purchase. He presented a petition to the King claiming that, as he was "Seised of Little Weldon", he was thereby a Master of the Royal Buckhounds. The petition was not granted, and the reason no doubt was that the King saw no profit in supporting an empty office, and conceived that it was better business to support the Privy Pack, which even the ten years' rule of the Soldier Saints had not completely obliterated.

Charles II built the kennels at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Park, on the site of an old keeper's cottage, described in Norden's Survey (1607) as Haman's Lodge, and the new buildings were everything that we imagine a royal hunting establishment should be; beautiful surroundings, fine kennels and living quarters, good stabling, spacious lawns, but—and this seems to be the only drawback—not much grazing land. The Queen's Staghounds, the descendants, did not thrive particularly well whilst they were there, that pest, kennel lameness, not being entirely averted. At the time when these Cumberland Lodge kennels were built, Colonel James Graham, or Grahm, was Charles II's master and Lieutenant of Windsor Forest, and besides showing his royal patron some marvellous hunts, he is said to have been a highly successful amateur gardener. The two pursuits do not invariably go together.

As to the hunt horses during this heyday period, there appeared to have been a good many Spaniards among them, and their popularity as hunters seems to have persisted up to the year 1650. One Don Diego Salgardo, in a book dedicated to the King extolling their excellencies, said that they were "incomparably nimble and pretty"! I think most of us would find ourselves quite able to dispense with the "prettiness" in a hunter, provided that he was "nimble", and knew his job. However, these horses seem to have given satisfaction, and that is all that really matters. They must have been pretty good, for during Colonel Graham's régime, there were many long and trying

PLATE 7. THE "HORSE MATCH" BETWEEN CHARLES II AND HENRY JERMYN AT NEWMARKET, 1684

(*After Francis Barlow*)

Barlow is first heard of as a sporting painter in the reign of Charles I. Charles II is the only English king to have ridden a winner on Newmarket Heath. The match depicted above was not his only success. (Vide Chapter VII, p. 88.)

hunts. There is a record of one which eventuated in 1684, but which the King did not see, though his brother, the Duke of York, did. It was said that they went away on a "wild" deer found at Swinley, and that they ran him all the way into Essex,[1] and finally pulled him down at Thorndon Hall, the seat of Lord Petre. The line lay through Amersham and Chesham in Buckinghamshire, Redbourn and Hatfield in Hertfordshire and thence to Brentwood. There was a very large field out, but only five got to the finish, the Duke of York being one of them. The gallant survivors enjoyed Lord Petre's hospitality for the night. Since the distance as hounds ran must have been well over 75 miles, they must have needed some comforting, and getting back to kennels the same night was, of course, quite out of the question. Colonel Graham was in command upon this occasion and it was a great feather in his cap.[2]

Graham was a great deal more than just a Master of the Royal Buckhounds; he was the close and personal confidant of Charles and of the Duke of York, before, and after, he succeeded to the throne as James II, and he played no unimportant part in high policy and intrigue; so he was far from being just a simple-minded gardener.

[1] The following extract from *The Autobiography of Sir John Bramston of Skreem in the Hundred of Chelmsford MDCCCXLV*, refers to the hunting adventures of James II in Essex:

"King James II being invited by the Duke of Albemarle to hunt some outlying red deer went to New Hall this 3rd of May 1686, and arrived for supper at 9 o'clock at night. A table was prepared for His Majesty, and others for the Lords and gentlemen; but the King would have his fellow hunters sup with him, and about a dozen sat down with him. The next day he hunted a stag which lay in New Hall Park, and after a round or two, he leaped the pale, took the river and ran through Broomfield Pleshy and so to the Roothings and was killed in Hatfield Regis (a 12 mile point). His Majesty kept pretty near the "doggs", tho' the ditches were broad and deep: but most of the Lords were cast out and amongst them the Duke of Albemarle. The Lord Dartmouth advised to send to Copt Hall, near Epping, to the Earl of Dorset, that the King would come and dine there and despatched a groom to give his lordship notice, and so rode easily on. The messenger came and found Lady Northampton and the Lady Dorset, her daughter, in a coach going abroad on a visit, the Earl being at dinner that day at Sir W. Hick's. The Countess was much surprised. Her cook and butler were gone to a fair at Waltham; and would have excused it, her Lord and servants all from home, but a second messenger coming, she turned her coach and went home, and sent her coach to meet His Majesty, and by breaking open locks and doors and with the help of the maids, by such time as His Majesty arrived, had washed and viewed the gardens and house, a very handsome collation, was gotten for him. Extremely well pleased with the treat he came toward London, and on the road met the Earl of Dorset returning from the Rookeholts. The Earl alighted, and, coming to the coach side, bemoaning his ill fortune and making excuses, the King replied: 'Make no excuses, it was exceeding well and very handsome!' And as His Majesty came safe and well to London, and well pleased with his sport."

[2] In 1684 a Swinley deer led the Duke of York and his suite a tremendous dance through Beaconsfield and Amersham right away into Oxfordshire. Very few besides the Duke and Colonel James Graham got to the end. Somewhere about this time Colonel Graham, or Grahm, was appointed Master of the Buckhounds and Lieutenant of Windsor Forest by Charles II. There is a tablet in Charlton Church, near Malmesbury to his memory. He is set forth as 'a faithful servant of King Charles and King James II, who lived and died an unworthy, but true, member of the Church of England, faithful to both his master, and a sincere lover of the Monarchy'." *The Queen's Hounds*, by Lord Ribblesdale, Master of the Buckhounds from 1892 to 1895 (Longmans, Green & Co., 1897).

In addition to the Royal Buckhounds which, as we see, were liberally patronized by the King and his hard-riding Court, Charles had that private pack already mentioned, based on Newmarket, that most favoured hunting demesne of Jacobite times. These were the hounds that Colonel Robert Kerr was commanded to produce. They were not the only new pack at the Restoration, for hounds seem to have simply sprouted out of the ground at this period, so great was the relief from the austerity of the one which preceded it. It is probable that the King's pack was reserved for the hunting of the hare, for although the fox had been discovered as a doughty opponent in 1666, when Viscount Lowther brought his northern hounds down from Westmorland to Leicestershire, and other masters in various parts of England had found the swift and straight-running animal preferable to a ringing one, the old love died hard, and the stag also continued to hold his own in popularity. The hunting hound had begun to take on some uniformity, and packs were not quite what a misinformed American author has called "Barbary". The word is "bobbery", and has come to us from Hindustan, where the enthusiastic exile has been wont to collect anything from a terrier and a dachshund to an Airedale or a Borzoi to chase the scavenging jackal. To kick up a "bobbery" means to make a noise, and this these "hounds" undoubtedly do.

By Jacobite times the northern and southern hunting dog, the latter, the unquestionable descendant of the lymier, had produced something bearing resemblance to our modern foxhound. In most of the packs of these times the practice was to sort them out into three sizes, the big ones for the stag, the medium ones for the fox, and the small ones for the hare. They were entered quite promiscuously to all three animals, and we are asked to believe that they faithfully maintained to whichever taint came first on a fine hunting morning! *Credat Judæus Apella!*

"Trojan" Corbet (1760 and before) and also some other masters, even John Warde, certainly entered their hounds to hare, and the great Trojan himself was more harrier than foxhound. Research in venery since those times has impelled us to believe with the poet Somerville:

> A diff'rent hound for ev'ry diff'rent chase
> Select with judgment; nor the tim'rous hare
> Oer-match'd destroy . . .

Running ryote (hare) is severely discouraged in any foxhound, but the persevering harrier has no objection at all to a turn with the fox if the chance offers itself, provided the "gentleman" is not of the real galloping kind, who will laugh at the currant-jelly dog, and give him leg bail without any difficulty.

These hounds which Graham had at Cumberland Lodge, and

which hunted their stag from Buckinghamshire into Essex, cannot have been of the tag-rag-and-bobtail order.

Charles II, his hunting apart, did much good to racing and horse-breeding. The Duke of Newcastle had a high opinion of the King's judgment, and even went so far as to say that very few knew as much, and that now they had got rid of Cromwell, who concentrated on the cavalry troop horse, there was "the probability of getting good breeds again". Coming from such a source this was praise indeed. Charles II was fully alive to the virtues of the Eastern infusion for the breeding of the racehorse, while at the same time concurring with Newcastle, that "the best English horses make perfect horses for hunting and riding to hawk", and he added that the best places to buy this stamp were Melton or Ripon in Yorkshire. The Duke's pronouncement remains true to this day. Personally I should like to add Ireland to the list, and particularly recommend to the hopeful purchaser any horse that has been hunted in Meath or Kildare. This is a purely personal predilection.

Racing, as opposed to the matching of one horse against another, took on a more definite shape under Charles II and so did betting. The Court at the Restoration went just as much gambling mad as it did hunting and other things, not half so healthy, mad, but racing, and what we know to-day as the blood horse, owed a great deal to the Merrie Monarch, who, for all his faults—and a-many they were—and despite the utterly profligate period in which he reigned, was highly capable in many things, however rash and intemperate he may have been in most. The drama of the period is a mirror of the reaction from the one which had preceded it and black austerity was succeeded by licence, which has few, if any, parallels in history, and it therefore follows that anything and everything that happened must be viewed from an eccentric, and, it might be said, peculiarly unwholesome angle. Even highwaymen were exalted to the stature of almost national heroes! Charles would have saved Claude Du Vall from Tyburn Tree if he could. Whether this was because the picturesque highwayman bore a striking resemblance to His Majesty, excepting that he was much better-looking, or because the Duke of Richmond's valet was a man after the King's own heart imbued with all the "virtues" of the period, history does not relate. The judge decided that the accomplished Claude should be hanged! The bards and fable manufacturers have done their best to place a halo of romance around the "greatest of all highwaymen", and have even invited us to believe that he was a French nobleman who had taken the wrong turning. Nothing could be further from the truth; for Du Vall's father was a miller and his mother a tailor's daughter! Quite early in life he was wanted by the French police; at the Restoration, conceiving that the atmosphere

was favourable to his mode of life, he came to England and took service under the Duke of Richmond, with whom he remained a short time, until, in fact, his gambling and drinking and other gaieties landed him heavily in debt. He then turned footpad, and finally joined the mounted branch of the profession. Two lines upon the marble stone under which he lay in the middle aisle of old Covent Garden Church are a fair index of the attitude of Restoration society towards him and his like:

> The second Conqu'ror of the Norman race
> Knights to his arms did yield and Ladies to his face.

Nine-tenths of the mourners who attended the obsequies were women! And why not indeed, since he could almost claim to have been under royal patronage. This little diversion, it is suggested, is an illuminating sidelight upon the times under reference.

Newmarket, as the most favoured hunting and racing centre of the gay Court, saw most of the scandal, for there were collected so many of the seductive ladies with whose names its history is interwoven. They were a very numerous and decorative body, but as this record is mainly concerned with the hunting field, it is proposed to single out only one for particular mention, Frances Teresa Stuart, "La Belle Stuart", daughter of Walter Stuart, son of Lord Blantyre. She was renowned as a horsewoman, and this fact may have contributed in no small measure to the attraction which she exercised over a king who rode so well himself. Later on she was appointed a Maid of Honour to Queen Katharine (of Braganza, daughter of the King of Portugal). Though Charles at the time when he met her was deeply enamoured of the Duchess of Cleveland, the beautiful equestrienne found no difficulty at all in cutting out her predecessor. We are perpetually reminded, even to-day, of this hunting lady, for she was the model for the Britannia on our pennies, the sculptor, Philip Rôtier, having made his first sketch of her when she was riding a race on Newmarket Heath. "La Belle Stuart" was as fickle as she was fair, for she left Charles lamenting, and one stormy night in March 1667 "eloped" with the Duke of Richmond, who had already had two wives, and eventually married him at Epsom. She and the Duke galloped all the way from Westminster in fear of the King's wrath, and were united in the bonds of holy wedlock by the Duke's own chaplain, who providentially happened to be in the little Surrey village, whether for medicinal or racing purposes we have no means of knowing. Charles was so upset by this desertion that he abandoned his visit to the Newmarket Spring Meeting. Everything, however, comes to him who waits, and it is said that he obtained compensation later, for the new Duchess was appointed a Lady of the Bedchamber

to the Queen and allotted special apartments in Somerset House. Nothing is recorded of the Duke's feelings in this matter, and probably he considered it more politic to keep them to himself.

The only other "huntress" of the period, to whom it seems necessary to refer, is the lady who has been dubbed one of the greatest political spies of all ages, Louise Renée de Pénencourt de Querouaille, later, and better, known as the Duchess of Portsmouth. All spies, by the very nature of their calling, are compelled to "hunt", but their quarry is man. This witty, and transcendentally beautiful, "lymier" was planted on the English court by the cunning and quite unscrupulous Louis Quatorze with orders to enslave the susceptible King of England at all or any cost. As a preliminary, she became Charles's mistress, and is said to have "participated" in all the royal sports and pastimes, so presumably she went out hunting with the King's private pack at Newmarket. The detail is left to our imagination.

Sweet Nell of Old Drury, the little orange girl, for all her humble origin, was the best of Charles II's "misses", but she never had anything to do with hunting; their son, however, who was created Duke of St. Albans, was made Hereditary Grand Falconer, so here again, is some connection with the Chase.

The Rye House plot to assassinate Charles II and the Duke of York has no direct connection with the hunting history of the period, beyond the fact that the deed was to have been done while the Royal brethren were on the road from Newmarket. The murder was set for March 22nd, 1683, but the scheme was thrown out of gear by the Great Fire at Newmarket on March 14th, in which the Royal residence was destroyed and so Charles and his suite put their journey forward by many days. The motive was anti-Papist, Charles being suspect, and his brother well known to be an adherent of the Old Faith. The object was "to destroy these Papists", and place the Protestant Duke of Monmouth, the King's natural son by Lucy Walters, on the throne. Poor Monmouth, of whose fox-hunting career at Charlton more presently, was the best-looking of all the Stuarts, even than Charles I. Rye House in Hertfordshire is still in existence, but has come down in the world of romance from a conspirators' den to a peaceful roadside tea-house. Captain Frank Siltzer, Newmarket's most talented chronicler, unearthed the following from the *Hatton Correspondence*, Vol. II, 1683, and whether it is supposed to relate to the informer, Howard, or to some more humble person, it is interesting by reason of its quaint verbiage:

It's probable y^r L^d has ere this heard some thing of the discoverie of a new Presbiterian fanatique plot, no lesse then to murder y^e K^g and y^e Duke and destroy y^e Govmt. There is an oylman who lived neere Smithfield (by name Keeling), by religion, as he told y^e Councell, he has bine of all sects, at last an

Anabaptist and a mighty boutefeu in all ye seditions and commotions of ye citty, is ye person at whose suite ye Lord Mayor was arrested. This man came to Mr Se: Jenkins and told him ye Kings person was in danger of an assassinate, yt he was touched in conscience to give him notice to prevent it; wch Mr Secre:, giving no greate credit to, seemed to slight. So he came 2 days after and soe pressed the eminent danger the Kgs life was in, yt Mr Se: enquiring more strictly into ye matter, had from him a very large discovery of a most dangerous hellishe conspiracy to murder the King and ye Duke, as they were to come last from Newmarket, at a place neerei Stansteed; and wch was prevented only from taking effect, without God's infinite providence, by ye fire wch happened in Newmarket, and so hindered ye conspirators from being ready to assemble (they being to bee 40 in number) and put theyr damnable mischief into practisse, wch yet he sayd they pursued the same design as he shd passe between Windsor and Hampton Court; but he said they waited till ye King and Duke shd come together, for they durst not attempt on him alone, because the Duke wd be left alive to revenge it. He frankly told all the conspirators names. . . [1]

James II, who ascended the throne in 1685 was a close companion of his brother in all his hunting and racing adventures. He was every whit as good a horseman as Charles, and, as is evident from his performance in the great Swinley to Thorndon run of the Royal Buckhounds, a man who could find his way to the end of a long hunt. Anyone who gets a good start on a good horse can ride a spurt, but it demands something less flashy to stay with them to the end, when the miles begin to run into double figures with anything above a two as the initial one. James was intensely keen on hunting and some said, Pepys amongst them, over-fond. The Secretary to the Admiralty complains more than once in his own "literary" style that even the routine business fell sadly into arrear, because the Lord High Admiral was out hunting. When Duke of York, James II was absent on hunting and racing leave far more often than when he was king. After his accession he hardly visited Newmarket at all, but he maintained the closest connection with the Buckhounds and their master, Colonel Graham. Under James II Graham had added to his employment the appointment of Master of the Privy Purse. After the Deposition he was the King's most trusted agent. He and his Sovereign corresponded in cipher, James being "Mr. Banks" and Graham "Sir H. Paulsworth", and the code was very cleverly contrived. Graham was a most extraordinary man; a first-class staghound master, a gardener of the class that wins prizes at Kew, and an *intriguant* and spy, whose cunning outmatched that of the very wishful and numerous body of anti-Papists, who would have given their ears to catch him, or anyone else, suspected of being in communication with the hated Jacobite. "Sir H. Paulsworth's" secret correspondence was so skilfully worded that, even if it had fallen into the hands of the enemy, it would have

[1] *Hatton Correspondence*, Vol. II, 1683.

left him confounded. It puzzled even his own side, for the Duke of Hamilton complained in a letter to Graham that it put him in mind of both the peace of Ryswick and the peace of God, because "it passed all understanding". Graham was nearly caught upon one occasion, and completely so upon another; on the first he escaped to France only just in time; on the second he was thrown into the Fleet Prison on suspicion of being concerned in the Fenwick plot, but he was such a master at trimming the sails to catch the prevailing wind that he managed to become the favourite *veneur* of Orange William, and was reinstated in the office of Ranger of Windsor Forest. He is said to have been a man with a dry humour all his own. He must have been, to survive all that he did. His daughter married the Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire, and he lies buried at beautiful Charlton, that family's seat. He was eighty-one when he died in peace: a marvellous performance, for so many would have lost their heads in such a tornadic world as that in which he lived.

Though James II virtually deserted Newmarket, it is hard to believe that he severed his connection with the "King's Pack", with which he had hunted so much when Duke of York; he was very keen on both the hounds and the country and he grudged every day when frost or other things held up operations. In a letter of October 19th, 1683, to his niece Lady Lichfield, daughter of Charles II by the Duchess of Cleveland, we find him writing: "The weather while we were there (Newmarket) was dry, but very cold, so that there was but very bad hunting." He says, however, in the same letter that the racing was excellent, so the frost cannot have been so bad after all.

It was the very irony of fate that the first challenge to the title to the throne of a hunting man should have come from another hunting man. It was the totally unprepared, and quite amateurish, invasion by James, Duke of Monmouth, in the summer that followed James II's accession that provided the challenge. Monmouth claimed, and fully believed, that he was no bastard, and that Charles II's marriage to his mother was legal. It seems a flimsy idea, for at the alleged date the rightful Queen was alive. Monmouth and the Duke of Argyll's spies had told them that the No Popery feeling was so strong in England that a devout Protestant claimant had only to show his face for the populace to rise *en masse* and turn out the Roman Catholic king. The Rye House Plot may have lent some encouragement to this supposition, but to take such a risk as Monmouth did when he landed with a handful of men at Lyme in Dorsetshire, with no assurance that the very considerable standing army at the King's disposal would at once mutiny, was plain suicide. Sedgemoor proved this most disastrously to the misguided, but no doubt loftily inspired, youth who was so certain that he was the rightful King of England.

If by some freak of the god of war the Battle of Sedgemoor had gone the way the luckless Monmouth hoped that it would, it is impossible not to believe that instead of being "Ducal", Goodwood would have been "Royal", like its sister meeting not so far away. When Monmouth was hunting the fox with the then Lord Grey round about 1679, he said to the man, who later was his second-in-command at Sedgemoor: "When I am King I will come and keep my Court at Charlton!" This gives colour to the statement that James Monmouth fully believed that Charles II's marriage to his mother was legal.

At that time no one had heard of Goodwood, but everyone knew all about Charlton, which was later to become the "Melton" of the south. In those times and even seventy years later, Goodwood was described as "somewhere near Charlton". To-day who has ever heard of Charlton? Some may know that it is a tything of the Parish of Singleton in some valley north of the Goodwood hills, but that is all! Charlton is dead and buried so far as most people are concerned, but when Monmouth, Grey and Squire Roper were hunting the fox in Sussex, and Sedgemoor had yet to be fought and lost, no one had heard of Goodwood. In an account of the judges' progress to Chichester in 1749 to try some particularly murderous smugglers, they are described as "being entertained by the Duke of Richmond at his hunting home near Charlton". No word of Goodwood, be it marked. The inference is that, if the writer had said Goodwood, it would have conveyed nothing. Its glories were then slumbering in the womb of time, and though the Goodwood hounds were the next-of-kin, as might be said, to Monmouth's, Grey's and Roper's, and afterwards incidentally were given to George IV, Goodwood was not as much on the map of England as was Charlton. It is possible that no one at that time thought that it would be the site of one of the prettiest and most restful racecourses in the world.

If pitchforks and blunderbusses, and a number of gallant, but untrained, men had been able to stand up to the muskets and artillery of James II's army, Monmouth would have kept on his hounds, and, with his sporting proclivities, have established a royal racecourse. I wonder whether he would have chosen Goodwood? Being a man with, presumably, a good eye for a country, it is almost any odds on it that he would have done exactly as the third Duke of Richmond did in 1800–1, and it would have been a King's racecourse. Monmouth would have been extremely stupid if he had not picked on "Harroway near Goodwood" for his racecourse! It is somewhat fascinating to shake hands with all these old ghosts, especially as we meet amongst them the original "Polly Peachum" of "The Beggar's Opera". This was the lovely Lavinia Fenton, the second Duchess of Bolton. That

Duke took over old Squire Roper's Charlton hounds,[1] when that great old M.F.H. died out hunting near Findon in 1715. Incidentally Roper was somewhat lucky to escape the attentions of Judge Jeffreys, and after Sedgemoor he thought it wise to vanish into thin air on the Continent and not return until after the Battle of the Boyne and Orange William was firmly seated in the saddle. The Duke of Bolton was so occupied by his lovely Duchess that he had not a lot of time for any sporting avocations, and, eventually, he gave his hounds to the second Duke of Richmond, and it is this Duke to whom probably Goodwood, as a great centre of sport, really owes everything, even though it was the third Duke who made the racecourse. It is related of the second Duke and his coadjutor, the then Lord De La Warr, that they had "a hundred horses out every day": that the hunt livery was blue, and that the hunt servants had gold cords and tassels to their caps—and Tom Johnson, a celebrity of the times, hunted hounds. This was round about 1732. The first Duke of Richmond had bought Goodwood as a hunting-box from the Compton family in 1720, but though his Grace and his Duchess and the young Earl of March were all keen on sport and hunted with the old Charlton hounds, it was the second Duke who really set the ball of sport rolling. His Grace died in 1750 and the Goodwood (Charlton) hunt ceased to exist in 1813.

The story of what happened after Sedgemoor has been told many a time and oft, but I do not think that the picture of Kirk and his "Lambs" and their man-hunt, and the butchery of the Bloody Assize, quite comes home to anyone until he has visited the actual theatre of operations. The author did so, not with the specific object of historical research, or to see Jeffreys' lodgings in Dorchester, but to hunt the fox and to visit Beckford's tomb at Stepleton, a pilgrimage which appeared to be seemly.

Monmouth, Grey and Buyse were caught not far from the once famous old inn at Woodyates. Their horses were ridden to a standstill; the whole region was alive with James II's cavalry patrols; there seemed to be only one thing to do, namely, to turn their spent and foundered animals loose, bury the saddles and bridles, exchange their battle-dress for rustics' smocks, and trust to making their way to the coast on foot. It was a very slender chance, and Monmouth himself was taken on the Woodlands Estate near Horton. Some of the King's troopers found him crouching in a ditch, a miserable, half-starved figure, with a beard of many days' growth and prematurely grey hair. The ash tree marking the spot of this occurrence can still be seen by the curious.

From the moment of his capture Monmouth completely lost his

[1] See Appendix B.

nerve, but not so Lord Grey, who is said to have kept up "a cheerful chatter" about horses, hounds and hunting all the way through the melancholy journey from Guildford and Ringwood to Vauxhall—and certain death. There was an officer in the coach with them under orders to stab Monmouth if he made any attempt to escape. It would have been quite futile, for there was a strong cavalry escort. And so ended the first master of the Charlton Hounds, a young man who believed that he was born to be a king, and who might, perhaps, have proved as good a one as his uncle.

Jeffreys' lodgings in High West Street (Duffall's glass shop) in Dorchester present an exterior which is a contrast to the bloodthirsty monster who sojourned therein, and doubtless drank bumpers of brandy with gusto after sentencing 292 prisoners of Sedgemoor to death, and poor old Lady Lisle to be burnt at the stake, a sentence "mercifully" commuted to beheading. It is difficult, when in the heart of a pleasant hunting country, to bring yourself to believe that such things could have happened in such peaceful surroundings. The memory of Jeffreys is still an abiding and hateful one with those who live in them to-day, and this, despite the various attempts to white-wash this judicial murderer. Although many other events in James II's ill-starred reign were contributive causes to his deposition and the invitation to his sister Mary and William of Orange to take over the kingdom, there is no possible doubt that the savagery of one hunting man to another was an important nail in the King's coffin. England might have forgiven him the execution of Monmouth for high treason, but the wholesale slaughter of his peasant soldiers she would not forgive.

It may be merely a coincidence that James II's last battle was fought in one of the finest hunting countries in the world, Meath, for the Boyne flowing diagonally across the land divides the two spheres of this famous hunt. There was no more popular victory after the black doings of the fugitive English king at Derry, Enniskillen and elsewhere, and no one was overwhelmed with grief when he fled, panic-stricken, without firing a shot in the defence of Dublin, and got away in a ship to France and made way for his brother-in-law.

William III was imbued with all the right instincts where hunting, fox-hunting as it had generally become by his time, was concerned. There is evidence of his preference for the wild animal in the fact that he is known to have gone down to hunt at Charlton, attracted no doubt by the reports of the excellence of the hounds (Monmouth's, Grey's, Roper's) and the fine sport they showed. Upon one occasion the King is said to have taken the Grand Duke of Tuscany, probably as great a novice as himself, to hunt the fox at Charlton. The narrators of fables would like us to believe that Charlton was then what Melton

PLATE 8. GEORGE I AT NEWMARKET IN 1722

(From the painting by Peter Tillemans (1688–1734))

George I, in spite of his scorn for everything English, including the oaks at Windsor, did shed the light of his countenance on Newmarket and hunted from Windsor Castle with the Royal Buckhounds, but never really enjoyed himself despite the fact that a string of first-class hunters, as they were then understood, was collected for him.

PLATE 9. FREDERICK, PRINCE OF WALES, OUT HUNTING
(From the painting by John Wootton (1686–1765))

is, but it is very doubtful whether any Leicestershire man has ever believed this statement. Having sampled both regions, I am in no personal doubt: the two countries are so diametrically different. However, in these Stuart times, Charlton, thanks to Monmouth, had established itself, and Roper, having returned to this country after a discreet absence abroad, was showing good enough sport to attract Royalty. He and Colonel Graham of the Royal Buckhounds surely could have given even that clerical hero, the Vicar of Bray, a start and a handsome beating. They were only excelled in finesse by one other person, John Churchill!

William III has been rated a good horseman; we know that he was a good soldier, and it is, therefore, a fair presumption that the Chase was in his blood. Besides his fox-hunting predilection Orange William took a keen personal interest in the Royal Buckhounds. Graham, as already recorded, had managed to wriggle back into favour after the Revolution, even though his "conversation with the enemy" (James II) had been discovered, but William did not at once reappoint him Master. Baron de Hompesch held that office, but when a present of 108 head of deer was sent to the King from Germany, he ordered the Master "to confer" with Graham about their disposal, so that it is obvious that he fully realized to whom it was best to go for advice in the management of the affairs of the Royal Hunt. William III died as a result of an accident in Richmond Park when hunting from Hampton Court. He broke his collar-bone when his horse fell over a molehill, and the shock upon a constitution which was enfeebled by previous illness was too much for him. He was only fifty-one, and though there is no knowing what any shock may do to anyone, this is, probably, the only case in which death has been ascribed to so simple a fracture. So many hunting people have broken their collar-bones more than once without any such disastrous results! A leading case amongst monarchs in history is King Edward VIII, who broke his collar-bone twice, not out hunting, but riding in point-to-points.

It was during the reign of William III that we first hear of those famous foundation stones of our English bloodstock, "the Byerley Turk" so called, because he was owned by a Captain Byerley, who rode him as his first charger, and "the Darley Arabian", imported by Mr. Darley of Aldby Park, York, and the portrait of this little bay horse still hangs in the hall. William of Orange was no stranger to Newmarket, where he hunted and raced and also gambled very heavily when he came home from either hunting or racing, and, so it is said, lost with none too good grace. He did, however, restore some of Newmarket's somewhat bedimmed glories, and the occasion of his first visit as King of England developed into something like a pageant, with the Court and the local denizens all in their gayest and gaudiest

attire, and a detachment from one of the Life Guards regiments to lend an added note of colour to the scene. The fox-hunting squires from far and near, likewise a strong detachment of gypsies, were in great form. The morose King is said to have almost enjoyed himself. Cock-fighting, of which his Majesty was very fond, was another item in the general festivities and, apparently, a good time was offered to all and it was no one's fault if it was not enjoyed.

The last of the House of Stuart, the second daughter of James II, the pious and domesticated Anne, inherited all the love of sport of her forebears, but it never urged her to take any active part in hunting so far as riding was concerned. She was a very moderate horsewoman, and preferred the four wheels of a pony-chaise to the four legs of a horse, fond as she was of that noble animal, especially in his variant of the racehorse. She founded Ascot, and might be said to have been in some measure responsible for the tasty garb of the "regulars", the little black riding wigs, cocked hats, scarlet coats, muffs, quizzing glasses, and long, clouded canes with amber tops. Queen Anne was very fond of Newmarket, and of that great turf celebrity, Tregonwell Frampton, Keeper of the Queen's Running Horses, or, as we should say to-day, manager of the Royal Racing Stables. The Queen frequently ran her horses in Frampton's name, but much oftener in her own. She was very generous to Newmarket, giving £1,000 towards the fund for paving the streets, and she endowed two schools, one for boys and the other for girls. In the last weeks of her life two of her horses won races at York, and when the news of her demise came, the whole sporting world was genuinely grieved.

It was Queen Anne who established the Royal Buckhounds Kennels at Ascot, and during her reign Sir William Wyndham was master. Her Majesty did much for the hounds, but had no ambition to jump into every field with them and out of it with the tail one. She was a lady of a gentle and unsophisticated nature, and her Consort, Prince George of Denmark, was the most appropriate husband she could have found. His uncle, the somewhat caustic Charles II, is reported to have said of him: "I have tried him drunk, and I have tried him sober, and there is nothing in 'im!" George did whatever Anne told him, and Anne did whatever the masterful "Viceroy Sarah" (Lady Churchill, later Duchess of Marlborough) told her, and this state of affairs seems to have suited all parties for a considerable period. Although Queen Anne's hunting with the Royal Buckhounds was confined to following on wheels, she did a good deal for the country generally, especially for the Swinley and Bagshot sides of it, where she had new rides cut in the Forest and many of the bogs drained.

Whether Marlborough himself, even when Blenheim, and the subsequent victories in the Low Countries, absolved him from further

seeking that bubble reputation in the cannon's mouth, took any personal interest in the Chase is doubtful, and I have been unable to find any record of it; but his masterful Duchess undoubtedly did so far as the Royal Buckhounds were concerned, for she was instrumental in the carrying out of additions and improvements to the kennels at Cumberland Lodge. This was during the period when she held the Rangership of Windsor Great Park. She is probably the only woman to have held that office, but, seeing that she was the female counterpart of Pooh Bah, it is somewhat surprising that she did not in addition to this appoint herself Mistress of the Buckhounds. Marlborough was commander-in-chief over the British Army, but Sarah was commander-in-chief of the Queen and also of Marlborough.

There was, however, another outstanding figure in this reign, who was very near the throne, and who was very intimately connected with the Chase, in fact, was the owner of his own pack of foxhounds. This was Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, who managed to get the Schism Act on the Statute Book, supplanted Harley and became the "King's Chief Minister", or, as we should say today, Prime Minister. But for the more or less unanticipated death of Anne, which occurred a few days after the formation of the Bolingbroke Cabinet, it is fairly certain that this deeply-scheming politician would have succeeded in putting James III on the throne instead of George of Hanover. It was at Bucklebury on the Bath road, hard by Theale, where the unamiable Pope is said to have written "The Rape of the Lock", and created "Belinda" (Arabella Fermor), that Bolingbroke had his pack of hounds. It has been called his "Sabine Farm", where he led the life of the country squire, and in this compartment of his vivid career it is said of him that he presented an admixture of Horace and the elder Pitt. It was his wont to gather round him many of the literary guns of the day, and prominent amongst them was Dean Swift, a close friend of Pope. It is said that the author of *Gulliver* was astounded when he was told, in response to a question, that Bolingbroke knew the names of every one of his hounds! Whether the Dean got the same answer from the M.F.H. as did Mr. Marmaduke Muleygrubs from Mr. Jorrocks, has never been put on record. Dean Swift wrote of Bolingbroke's sylvan retreat: "His house is just in the midst of three thousand pounds a year he had by his lady, who is descended from Jack, of Newbury: and there is an old picture of him in the room." It is certain that Bolingbroke spent happier hours at Bucklebury than he did whilst plotting for the Jacobite succession. Well he might!

CHAPTER VIII

The Huntings of the Kings: The Hanoverians

THE fine hunting and racing tradition set up by the House of Stuart between 1603 and 1714, the date of the death of Queen Anne, one of the most ardent of her line, undoubtedly would have continued uninterrupted if James Stuart, son of James II and brother of Anne, had been ready to foreswear his religious beliefs and come to England as a Professor of the Reformed Church, for this country had as little liking for the descendant of Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James I and consort of Frederic, the Elector Palatine, as he had for England.

Up to her last moments Queen Anne had hoped that her brother "would not let his religion stand in the way" of preserving the direct line of succession, and was vehement in her dislike of the son of "the Electress". But the Prince, later to be known as "The Old Pretender", was not prepared to do violence to his religious conscience, and furthermore, believed that England could be restored to the Church, to which she had cloven until the great upheaval in Henry VIII's day. Whether James was right or wrong, whether he would have made a better king than the most unwilling and most un-English George I, have been matters of acute controversy from that time onward.

England was not then ready to welcome a Roman Catholic king, but unquestionably she would have preferred one that had not been "made in Germany", and who professed no love for her and could neither speak nor understand the English language. George I never settled down in England, and he never really wanted to; his ideas in everything were German, and this included hunting, for he believed that a gun was a far better instrument of the Chase than a hound. He never quite realized the reason for the existence of the Royal Buckhounds, and the name of the pack's huntsman, Ned Finch, was transmogrified to "Finsch"! A fair index! The King is known to have gone out hunting in Windsor Great Park and at Bushey, but upon each occasion he is said to have soon got tired of trying to ride, and sent for his fowling-piece. He then killed a few brace of partridges, and was quite ready for home, and a seat in a soft chair. He never enjoyed himself, and is said never to have lost an opportunity of drawing a disadvantageous comparison between everything English and his beloved

Hanover. He even went so far as to say that his lime trees at Herrenhausen were finer than the oaks at Windsor.[1]

Efforts were made to break his Majesty into English ideas of sport, such as hunting, and in 1724, ten years after he had been on the throne, a stud of really good hunters was collected for him at Windsor for his stag-hunting. He may have looked at them, but there is no record of his ever having ridden any of them.

In this reign and the two which succeeded it, hounds were lawed, and, if that did not take the pace off them, stopped so that the royal pursuers should not be hopelessly outdistanced. After a little of this sort of thing most hounds would have refused to hunt at all. At the time of George I's accession the Royal Buckhounds, the veterinary operation quite apart, were said not to be renowned for speed, whatever may have been their excellencies so far as nose and cry were concerned. They are spoken of (by "Cecil" amongst others) as having been coarse and heavy of the bloodhound type. And yet from their records in the previous reign, and in Charles II's in particular, they cannot have been as bad as "all that". Obviously they must have marked very strongly to that ancient lymier type, great line-hunters and just fast enough for a man in top boots!

It is quite possible that George I patronized the Common Hunt in its various adventures in Epping Forest, for one Humphrey Parsons, twice Lord Mayor of London, and thus *ex officio* Master of this picturesque hunt, was wont to present himself at Windsor for an occasional day with the Royal Pack, and, unless things were very different from what they subsequently became, he cannot have failed to suggest to the monarch that, if he wanted to see how the thing should really be done, he should come down Epping way. As a matter of fact this particular Lord Mayor of London was rated what to-day would be called "a bit of a bruiser", for it is related of him that, when hunting with Louis XV's hounds in Fontainebleau, he cut down the royal master and hung him up to dry. The French king was not a bit angry, but after the stag had been killed, wanted to buy the Lord Mayor's horse, and asked him to put a price on him. His Worship, who was a brewer by trade and had always an eye to business even when on pleasure bent, replied with a grace that it would have taken a Chesterfield to outvie, that the animal was "beyond any price other than Your Majesty's acceptance!" Naturally the Lord Mayor went

[1] To anyone fond of antiquarian research when out and about on his, or her, lawful occasions on the Dover Road, there are three ancient sites in peaceful Sittingbourne which may commend themselves: The Red Lion, still an inn, and two others, one a shop the other a lecture hall. Upon each of the two last in days gone by stood very famous inns and posting-houses. The George was where the shop is, The Rose where the hall is. Henry V on his way home from Agincourt fared most sumptuously at The Red Lion for *6s. 9d.*, and both George I and George II dined and slept at The George and The Rose when *en route* to Hanover.—"S."

back to England with a most remunerative contract to serve the whole French nation with his famous London stout! The story makes us think at once of the renowned fox-hunting tea merchant of Great Coram Street!

The Lord Mayor, however, was not the only keen hunting man with whom George I came into close contact, for Walpole, his own Prime Minister, was an enthusiast, and it is one of the few points in his favour that he preferred the fox. We may take it as certain that he never persuaded his Royal Master to sample that form of the Chase, seeing that even the Buckhounds were far too fast for him. Walpole and the King were forced to converse in Latin, which both spoke very ill, for the former knew neither German nor French and the latter no English. Talking hunting and horses and hounds, even if the King had wanted to do so, might have been a bit difficult even in Dog Latin!

Sir Robert Walpole, who was as hard working as he was politically corrupt, took only thirty days' holiday in the year, ten in August and twenty in November, when it was his practice to entertain "a large hunting party at Houghton" in that excellent hunting country, Norfolk.

He was master of the West Norfolk foxhounds from 1702 to 1745, the year of his death, but if, during the period of his political escapades, he only went to them for three weeks in every year, he did not quite reach the accepted standard of what an M.F.H. should be. He was not a son of whom Eton is very proud. He was eventually created Earl of Orford. Horace Walpole, his son, author of the famous "Letters", hunted with his father's hounds, and probably saw more of them than the M.F.H. Horace Walpole was a great friend of Gray of "Elegy" fame right up to the end, in spite of the acid quarrel which for a period intervened. They were at Eton together.[1]

George I was not exactly fond of Walpole: George II loathed him and would not have kept him in office one instant after his accession if it had not been for the intervention of his Queen (Caroline of Anspach) who, longer-sighted than her peppery little husband, recognized that the Prime Minister was a necessary evil, and that it was stupid to change horses when crossing a stream, especially if it should happen to be in flood.

Walpole also had his own pack of beagles, and these no doubt gave even this fox-hunter some occasional relaxation. He also patronized the Buckhounds, and at one period of his career acted as field-master. It may be gathered in the slow, dragging hunts made to suit the early Hanoverian monarchs, that he was more or less a front-rank man. They say he rode right up to the sterns of hounds—not a very difficult feat in view of the pace!

[1] See West Norfolk Masters, Appendix C.

As to George I's patronage of racing it was as lukewarm as that of hunting. He paid a few casual visits to Newmarket between 1716 and 1718, always arriving with a large suite, almost entirely German; the racing, however, did not greatly intrigue him. Tregonwell Frampton was retained in his appointment as Keeper of the King's Running Horses, and the royal stud at Hampton Court was "maintained", which is not to say that the King took any personal interest in it. One of George I's racing "achievements" was that a statute of Charles II against heavy betting was made more restrictive and under 18 Geo. I, c. 34, any race for a prize over £10 was illegal. Whether the King did this *suo motu*, or not, it needs hardly be said that racing received little encouragement during the reign. This new law was naturally very adverse to the breeding of good horses.

Few of the historians, and eminently Thackeray, have had anything very complimentary to say of these earlier Hanoverians, but they have been concerned mainly with their capacity as administrators and their characters as private individuals: here we are only very aloofly concerned with the former, and with the latter, only where it introduces characters on to the stage who were linked with the sporting activities of any particular sovereign.

George I and his son George II never professed either interest in or love for the country which they were called upon to govern, and, therefore, never really entered the arena with which we are here concerned. Thackeray's *Four Georges* lays about each and all of them with vehemence, and probably justifiably where the first two of the line are concerned, but not everyone shares the scholarly author's diatribes against the other two. Thackeray tells us that when Walpole arrived at Richmond to acquaint the Prince of Wales with the fact that, owing to the demise of his hated sire, he had become George II, the choleric little gentleman flew into a paroxysm of rage and yelled: "Dat is von big lie" (*Four Georges*). The King certainly may have "das ist"; but let it pass.

George II was a better horseman than his father, but it is very doubtful whether he knew any more about hunting or racing, or took any greater interest in them. The unkind have said that he was too busy with his mistresses, and his frequent trips to Hanover, to have any time left over for anything else excepting soldiering. In this latter regard he was more of a man than his father, and Dettingen is a tribute to his personal courage.

So far as the turf is concerned, whether George II had anything to do with it or not, one of the earliest statutes of the reign (13 Geo. II, c. 19) repealed the foolish and restrictive enactment 18 Geo. I, c. 34, which did so much harm to racing, and directed that no race was to be run for a prize of less value than £50. The effect on bloodstock

breeding was almost electrical. It is highly probable that the Duke of Cumberland ("The Butcher") the King's younger son, had a big finger in this pie, for he was a keen breeder of bloodstock and a good friend to racing. Cumberland bred Eclipse, who was never raced until he was five. He also bred Marske, son of Eclipse, and also Herod. "The Butcher" was also very keen on hunting; an outstandingly good rider, and he "betted like the devil", according to one chronicler, but lost like a gentleman. The Duke is said to have taken a pack of cards out hunting with him, and to have played with anyone he could find whenever hounds checked! He was, in this respect only, the very antithesis of his unpleasant father and even more unpleasant grandfather.

George II must have taken some kind of interest in the Royal Buckhounds, or at any rate, in the masters when he appointed on his accession Colonel Francis Negus, judging by the amount of work he piled on to him. In addition to the job of looking after the hounds, Negus had to distribute the King's Plates at race meetings; see about the feeding of the King's wild turkeys in Bushey Park, and the King's private tiger in Hyde Park, as well as keep a book in which all the falls out hunting of notable people were entered, plus the nature of the injury sustained—and all this for the beggarly stipend of £2,341 per annum. That of course was better value than it would be to-day, but to expect a Master of Hounds to be poultry-keeper, menagerie attendant and hospital orderly, in addition to bringing hounds to the meet, and supervising the hunt stud, was asking too much. George II, however, knew just as much about Masters of Hounds as do some moderns, who are inclined to class them with the head-waiters of smart West End hotels.

Hunting had an added risk about this period (1733), the highwaymen, who claimed "territory" between Windsor and London. Horse-stealing was a leading "line", though money, jewellery and so forth, were not despised. Colonel Negus's successor in the mastership of the Royal Pack, Lord Tankerville, had a strong guard of retainers and troops to see him out in the morning and bring him and his hounds home in the evening, so the appointment was hardly a sinecure. Lord Tankerville only managed to stand things for a few years, for in 1737 he was succeeded by Mr. Ralph Jennison, M.P. Whether it was the wild turkeys, the tiger, the highwaymen, or the fact that Walpole took upon himself to recommend Lady Tankerville to the Queen, of all people, as "a most suitable, decent and obliging woman" as the King's mistress, in preference to Lady Deloraine, we do not know. It was probably a combination of all these circumstances which influenced his lordship. Probability, amounting almost to certainty, suggests that that famous practitioner, Dick Turpin, was one of Lord Tankerville's anxieties, for he was then at the very peak of his career. He was hanged

in York in 1739: the charge was horse-stealing. Turpin's theatre of operations included Hounslow and Windsor, likewise Epping Forest. The author, during an expedition to the Essex hounds, had the "honour" of sleeping in the bedroom at the Old Green Man at Harlow, which was just above the hide-out in which the highwayman bestowed himself when George II's C.I.D. were too unpleasantly close on his tail. All I could think after inspection of this cramped space, was that the owner of Black Bess must have been amazingly uncomfortable.

George II was renowned for his rudeness, especially when out hunting. It is related that upon one occasion, when he was with the Buckhounds near Bushey, a horse ridden by one of his grooms took fright at a swan and bolted, finally impaling itself upon some spiked railings, and of course had to be destroyed. Upon Lady Suffolk, daughter of the famous Colonel Graham, ex-Master of the Buckhounds, remarking that it was lucky that the man was not hurt, the King rounded on her, saying: "Yes, I am very lucky! Where is the luck? I have lost a good horse, and I have got a booby of a groom still to keep."

This king is reported to have declared that no English horse was fit to be either ridden or driven, and no English jockey could ride. Whether a German yardstick is the best one by which to measure these things is open to question. If no English horse was worth anything, why was the King so rude to Lady Suffolk?

George II knew nothing at all about hunting, and once told the Duke of Grafton, who was a very heavy man, that it was "a pretty occupation for a man of quality and of your age to hunt a poor little fox"! His Majesty obviously did not know that it is necessary to employ a pack of hounds for this purpose! His Grace of Grafton is said to have walked 20 stone, so he must have ridden at least 25 stone or more, heavy saddle, hunting coat and boots included.

Living so much out of England as did both George I and George II, it is scarcely remarkable that neither of them acquired any real knowledge of our traditional sports and pastimes. George II, who had many of the attributes of the drill-sergeant, thought that hunting was part of "the exercise", and so put it in orders that Wednesdays and Saturdays were "the King's hunting days" with the Buckhounds in either Windsor Forest or Bushey Park. In actual fact the King was too much preoccupied with his warlike preparations for the then inevitable conflict with France to concern himself with anything else.

It is not, therefore, surprising that his Majesty never saw the Great Charlton Hunt from Halnaker Hill on January 26th, 1738, but his Master of the Buckhounds did and was handsomely defeated by the speedy foxhound, having only been used to the slow and heavy

staghound. Upon this occasion the Charlton Hounds went away on a vixen at 7.45 a.m., and she stood up before them till 5.50 p.m.; the distance as hounds ran being claimed as 57 miles, and as one chronicler thoughtfully adds, 2 furlongs 10 yards! What a grand thing is accuracy! Anyway, it must have been a good hunt, and Jennison, M.P., and his horse were completely beaten off. (For details of the Charlton Hunt see Appendix C.) When this long hunt took place George II was only fifty-five, quite young enough to participate if he had wanted to do so. He died suddenly in his seventy-eighth year.

George III, his grandson, in strong contrast to the two Hanoverians who had preceded him, was even more English than the English themselves. He gloried in his British birth. He was born in London. George II had hated the new king's father and when the ineffective Frederic, Prince of Wales, died, the old king transferred his dislike to his son's widow, Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, and to his grandson. The Princess of Wales returned George II's feelings with interest, and brought up her young son to do the same. George III was only twenty-two on his accession. He loved everything English, especially Eton and hunting, two most pardonable weaknesses! Etonians consecrate the 4th of June to his memory, because that is the date of his birth. Non-Etonians frequently tell us that George III founded Eton, but that honour belongs to a much earlier king, Henry VI, and Eton celebrates "The Fourth" merely as a friendly gesture to a friend. That often highly-tried article of attire, the Eton top-hat, has a direct connection with George III, for it was originally worn as a mark of mourning, and, let us hope, much as some people, including the young wearers, sometimes contemn it, will long remain as a landmark of mutual esteem. The unkind and captious have said that George III only visited Eton "to curry favour with the young generation"; but this was not so. He went there because he liked the place and also liked talking to the masters and the boys. William IV, the King's son, was even fonder of the old school, and it is related even to-day, when so few people know any history, how in the words of the popular ballad "the air went blue for miles" with nautical oaths when a Westminster crew beat Eton. The author has failed to unearth a record of this event in that compendious volume, *The Eton Book of the River*, but he is well content to believe that William IV did say all that he has reported to have done. Naval officers are such very warm-hearted people!

In spite of the King's fondness for doubtless elevating converse with the Eton Beaks and learned Tugs, he was not much more of a highbrow than George II, who so cordially hated "Boetry" and "Bainting", and he made the hair of the *literati* of the period resemble "the fretful porpentine" by declaring that the works of Shakespeare

were "sad stuff", and he neither knew nor cared anything about pictures. He was bucolic and benevolent, religious and respectable, stubborn and very often mistaken. If Calais was engraved on the heart of Mary I, surely Boston ought to have been on that of George III. The King had no "hands", either actually or metaphorically. Actually no horse ever ran away with him, for he rode 19 stone, but he never found the right bit to hold either America or the Prince of Wales (George IV). The King never realized that, if you compress a spring too hard, something must eventually happen. Two striking examples of this were furnished during this reign!

George I and George II confined such hunting as they did to the Parks, not quite those old enclosures already referred to, but Windsor Forest and Bushey, but, to their credit be it said, they did use hounds and not crossbows. George III was different: he went for the open either with a "bagman" (carted deer), an outlier, or the genuine wild animal, and also, in spite of his weight, ventured forth with the speedier foxhound. Lord Ribblesdale has given the following account of one of George III's hunts with the Buckhounds in 1797 (*The Sporting Magazine*) and it seems to fit into its place in this part of this strange eventful history:

> Lord Sandwich and his "Prime Minister" (meaning Johnson the Huntsman) on October 1st, 1797, afforded such a specimen of his superiority of stag hunting as can scarcely be found in the records of Sporting History. Upon his Majesty's arrival at Ascot Heath on the morning already mentioned, the deer Compton, was liberated below the Obelisk, and going off with the most determined courage and inexpressible speed, bid a seeming adieu to all competitors. The hounds were laid on with only five minutes law, and the scent laying (!) well they went away breast high in a style that beggars all description: eight of the fleetest horses only out of at least one hundred being enabled to lay (!) anywhere by the side of them till headed in absolute racing by Johnson, the Huntsman, assisted by Nottage and Gosden, two of the yeoman prickers. They brought him to view at Black Nest; here he repeatedly endeavoured to leap the high paling of Windsor Great Park, but without success, and the deer, hounds and horsemen were all intermixed in one general sea of confusion, when by a most wonderful exertion the deer reached the Park by the haw-haw through the shrubbery and plunging into the immense sheet of Virginia Water passed entirely through it. Here His Majesty entered most energetically into the spirit of the Chase, absolutely assisted in getting the hounds forward, laying them on where the deer left the water and speaking to them in a sporting like style.

The facts are interesting, but even "The Bloomer" herself could hardly have surpassed the rest of it (*vide Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour*). The point cannot have been a long one, and if these slow hounds were on terms with their deer at Virginia Water, "Compton" cannot have

been much of a flier, so we must take the "racing" with a large pinch of salt.

George III preferred blue as the uniform of the Royal Buckhounds, and has been depicted in a light blue coat with black velvet cuffs, a tricorne hat and top-boots, but in 1786 he had discarded the hat for a black velvet cap of a pattern similar to the one of to-day. Whether the light blue coat and black facings had anything to do with his fondness for Eton, has never been disclosed. Later the King invented and adopted the Windsor uniform. This very English king did his best to popularize hunting, and it is related that he even encouraged large crowds on wheels on his stag-hunting days, and that ladies "of the highest distinction" were the occupants of the various tasty equipages, which found no difficulty in keeping up with the Chase. This sort of thing is not so popular with the modern master, who has no fancy at all for seeing his fox mobbed, or the line interfered with by petrol fumes. But all the Dianas of the period did not go out on wheels, for some of them rode as hard as it was then necessary to do. Lady Mary Wortley-Montagu, for instance, was an enthusiast, and continued so to be till long after her sixty-fourth year. Lady Shuldam and Lady Lade were two others, the latter, possibly, the inspiration for Surtees' "Lucy Glitters", though some may say that "Skittles" was the model. Apparently nothing stopped Letty, and the artists suggest to us that she preferred five-barred gates and stiles! Perhaps, however, we ought not to take the artists too seriously, for they had an over-fondness for depicting people jumping the most impossible places, and brooks wider than the Liffey at the Four Courts.

Every eye shapes its own beauty, but gazing upon Sir Joshua Reynolds' portrait of the dashing Lady Lade, I confess that I do not understand why she made so many hearts beat so fast. There is also an equestrian picture of her by Stubbs, which is in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle. Before she became the lawful wedded wife of Sir John Lade, an intimate friend of the Prince of Wales after he had broken the parental leading strings which chafed him so sorely, Letty Lade had been the *chère amie* of a celebrity called "Sixteen String Jack", a most popular highwayman in a very large way of business. He was called "Sixteen String" because he wore that number round his breeches, eight on each side, where, to-day, we wear a garter strap. Jack, unfortunately for himself, but perhaps fortunately for the lady, ended his career dancing on the end of one string at Tyburn. His name was John Rann, and Dr. Johnson said that he towered above the average run of highwayman just as much as Gray's poetry towered above the ordinary run of verse. He must have been a superlative artist in his own line to evoke such praise from the great man.

Letitia Darley, better known as Letty Lade, was of very humble

origin, but of considerable charm. John Lade was of the Regency Buck order, a pretty good gentleman-rider, and a first-class four-in-hand whip, and so good that he eventually turned professional and was hailed as "The Prince of Jehus". George IV, who gave him employment as his private coachman after he came out of the Fleet Prison, granted him a pension, and this carried on through the reigns of William IV and Victoria until the gay old gentleman died in peace at the age of eighty. Letty was undoubtedly the best woman to hounds of her day, and there is one record of her performance in 1799 when she went top of the hunt with the Buckhounds from somewhere near their kennels to Hackett Lane; time 2 hours 40 minutes, and though the exact line is not traceable, it is marked as one of the notable hunts in the records. The contemporary hunting correspondent says, "Lady Lade kept up the whole time . . . her fleet courser never failed"; which is all very well meant.

George III believed in the punctuality of princes, especially out hunting, and it is said that he rode up on his hack at eleven o'clock to the second at every meet and waited for no one. His Majesty was an unquestionable enthusiast and never went home before his hounds if he could help it. There were times of course when he got left out and the record of his return to Windsor in a butcher's cart when his hounds had run clean away from him to Aldermaston, some miles beyond Reading, is generally accepted as authentic. He is said to have been able to tell that butcher more about beef and mutton than that gentleman had ever known before. The butcher did not find out that his passenger was the King until the journey's end!

There are various other records of George III's hunting adventures, and for those which are now subjoined the author acknowledges with deep gratitude the gracious permission of H.M. King George VI to publish extracts from the diary of the Hon. Robert Fulke-Greville, equerry to King George III, the MS. of which is now in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. Greville, a close kinsman of the Earl of Warwick, was an equerry for 16½ years from September 1781. Upon his marriage to Louisa, Countess of Mansfield, in 1797, he was appointed one of the Grooms of the Bedchamber, a position which he held until the spring of 1819, the year before the King's death. The earlier extracts concern the year 1794, and are from returns sent in by Johnson, who was then huntsman to the Royal Buckhounds. The King was present upon all the occasions mentioned, but it is proposed only to select some entries, which record particularly long hunts. Here are just a few of them:

Tuesday, Sept. 30th, 1794.

Turned out a stag at the Blackbirds—saved at How—Run three hours forty-five minutes.

Saturday, Oct. 4th.

Turned out a stag at the Blackbirds—saved at Southwater, Bucks—run near four hours.

Saturday, Oct. 18th.

Turned out a Hevier at Maidenhead Thicket—drowned at Bone (?Bourne) End near Cookham in Catching. Ran two hours forty-five minutes.

Tuesday Oct. 21st.

Turned out a Hevier at the Blackbirds—run one hour and thirty minutes—Came to Swinley—were at fault upon the Heath for some time—His Majesty went home—afterwards recovered the deer and saved him near Bagshot Park.

Tuesday, Nov. 25th.

Turned out a Hevier at Salt Hill—Saved at Wink Field Row near Swinley—run three hours and forty-five minutes—went through Clifton by Marlow etc.—crossed the Thames three times.

Saturday, Nov. 29th.

Turned out a Hevier at Slough. Saved between Cranford Bridge and Hounslow near the Horse Barracks—run three hours and fifteen minutes—The Waters much out.

Tuesday, Dec. 2nd.

Turned out a Hevier on Iver Heath—Saved at Greenford—run two hours and forty-five minutes—the flood was very great.

Saturday, Dec. 13th.

Turned out a Hevier at Tower Hill—run one hour and forty-five minutes—came in to Mr. Crutchley's Park at Sunning Hill—went from water to water and at last was drowned.

Tuesday, Dec. 16th.

Turned out a stag from the Paddock at Swinley—ran twenty minutes—let in again—then turned out a Hevier—a very sharp hunt for thirty minutes when it was drowned in a pond at Mr. Walsh's—went back to the Paddock and turned out a stag—saved near Sandpit Gate Windsor Great Park—ran two hours and thirty-five minutes—these three chases the same day.

There are records of twenty-six days in all in this abbreviated form, and upon most of them there was a hunt of well over an hour, so that at that time there must have been a fairly good hunting pack in the kennel even slow as it may have been.

The two following extracts, which are from the Hon. Robert Fulke-Greville's hunting diary, are much fuller and more interesting, especially so, as in one of them it is recounted how narrowly the King escaped the attention of a Gentleman of the Road, when returning in a post-chaise from a hunt, which ended up somewhere near Uxbridge, and how his Majesty was somewhat concerned as to what would happen to a watch which he greatly prized. The guess is not a difficult one! It would seem that the precautions taken during the previous reign of having armed escorts for the hounds and huntsmen had been

relaxed a bit too soon. Here are the two stories which make interesting reading, one of them referring to a quite harmless fall which the King got.

A remarkable day's Sport.

A Stag was turned out at The Crooked Billet near *Bulstrode.*

The Chace began smartly and in the direction of *Beaconsfield* & in sight of the residence of Mr. *Edmund Burke* near it.

The Deer was taking his course gallantly through that country when a Farmer's Dog pursued & turned Him. He now ran towards Windsor, & crossing the Thames at Surley Hall. He then made the best of his Way by Winkfield Plain to Ascot Race Ground & from whence finding out his Old Pastures he hung upon the Paddocks at Swinley & into which He was let in.

This run from near Beaconsfield to the Paddocks at Swinley was very rapid & without a check, the consequence of which was that it was over about mid-day.

A Fresh Stag was turned out from the Paddocks and Lord Hinchinbrooke the Master of His Majesty's Stag Hounds, & some of the Yeomen Prickers with Johnston [Johnson] the Huntsman profiting by the advantage of being now at home, got *fresh* Horses, & a few couple of *fresh* hounds, releived those which had most suffered in the late severe burst. Lord Spencer Hamilton who at this time resided near Swinley in the Forest got also a fresh Horse from his Stables.

His Majesty & his Attendant Grooms riding horses ready to relieve his, should change become necessary, continued on to this fresh Sport—By accident, (not frequent with me) I went out from Windsor this morning without one *Good Hunter*, & without my Groom. I was thus left to *the stoutness* of my *well tried Chestnut Hunter*, & I rode Him *Singly* throughout this *very trying day*, and He kept me always in my place.

This fresh Deer from the Paddocks at Swinley (*bred in Richmond Park*), thus suddenly turned out, led us a *very trying* & *severe chace*, taking the Country towards Okingham, & by Reading. In the course of the Chace, He then went through the Old Roman Works *at Silchester* & beyond it late in the evening. He was stopped by a Farmers Dog, who seized Him in a deep Mirey Lane.

I had much pleasure during this severe Chace, to see several Horses which had begun it *fresh* from Swinley completely knocked up, & *left behind.* Amongst these were Lord *Hinchinbrooke's* [Hinchingbrooke], Lord *Spencer Hamilton's* and *Jewel's* The Yeoman Prickers.

His Majesty attended by myself, his Old Groom *Smart* & two Grooms made for Hertford Bridge after the Stag was taken, & which was a few miles distant. On our arrival a Hack Chaise & Four, was instantly ordered, & off His Majesty went in it, attended ONLY by me his Equerry for Bagshot. At Bagshot we changed Horses & Chaises & proceeded on from thence to The Queen's Lodge at Windsor in a dark night & where we arrived late in the Evening without check or interruption.

In these times His Majesty frequently returned home after long chases & at a distance from home, in *Hack Chaises*, & with no other attendance than His Equerry in Waiting. In latter periods, two of H.M.'s Grooms mounted on Post Horses attended the Carriage on these occasions, but this *never* occurred in my time.

This new regulation was *certainly* a very *prudent* one, on many accounts, & especially when Accidents or interruptions were not out of fair calculation. Nor indeed was an occasional Visit from a *Highwayman* in these parts quite out of the Question. On one occasion I remember this event was very near happening. His Majesty took a Post Coach & Four from Uxbridge after a long & late chace, for Windsor. In the Coach was His Majesty, The Duke of Cambridge, His Aide de Camps, Wangenheim & myself.

Another Carriage with some of the sportsmen followed us *soon* after from Uxbridge, & which was stopped by Highwaymen on Langley Brown, a very *short time* after His Majesty's carriage had passed it.

When going from Bagshot to Windsor after changing Horses there from Hartford Bridge I heard His Majesty busy about something but as it was quite dark, I could not ascertain what occupied Him. It was not long e'er He told me what He had been doing. He happened at this time to have with Him a *favorite Watch* & which, on considering possible chances *on the road.* He was concealing in a safer place, than that, which usually secured it in his Fob.

An extraordinary circumstance which occurred at the close of a Stag Chace, & at which I was present in attendance on the King as His Equerry. After a smart Chace the Stag came towards *Marlow*, & very near to that Town it leapt into Mrs. Freeman's Gardens, when following the gravel Walk, it was checked by The House at the end of it, & which had a flanking Wall on each side of the Steps of the Entrance into the Mansion.

The Huntsman & Hounds pressing on brought the poor animal to instant decision to save his life. He leaped over one of these flanking Walls which was *seven feet* high & disappeared on the other side. His down drop was deep, and into a paved Court near the Kitchen.

No fracture was the consequence of this fall. The Stag moved on, & creeping under the return of a Staircase, there laid down & quietly awaited its fate.

Many soon crowded to the Spot wondering at the Stag's escape, after such a fall. Immediate calculations were made as to the height of the Wall *on this side.* H.M. said nothing but I observed He was paying close attention to its height. Although He said *it was above 15 feet.* A line was instantly procured & H.M.'s calculations proved correct.

In his ride home to Windsor The King told me how he had made his calculation. He had counted the *courses of Brick* and as He knew the usual breadth of a Brick, He had thus made a very close guess.

This Stag from this extraordinary fall became famous in latter history for the many gallant Chaces He afterwards attended under the name of *Marlow Tom.*

Often Stags kept for His Majesty's Hunts obtained names & celebrity from particular events connected with the Chace. Besides *Marlow Tom* there were now *High Flyer*, *The Popham Lane Deer*, Moonshine &c.

High Flyer was so called after the remarkable leap He made into the *Home Park* at Windsor over the Park Wall near Datchet Bridge, when after crossing this Park He leaped out of it again & extended the chace into The Great Park & Windsor Forest.

The Popham Lane Deer was so named from his having been taken after a very long & severe chace near Popham Lane.

PLATE 10. GEORGE III HUNTING IN WINDSOR GREAT PARK

(From a painting by Pollard)

George III was genuinely fond of hunting and many authentic records of his adventures and achievements will be found recorded in Chapter VIII of this book. His Majesty was far from a bad horseman, and rode well up to the sterns of the slow and plodding Royal Buckhounds.

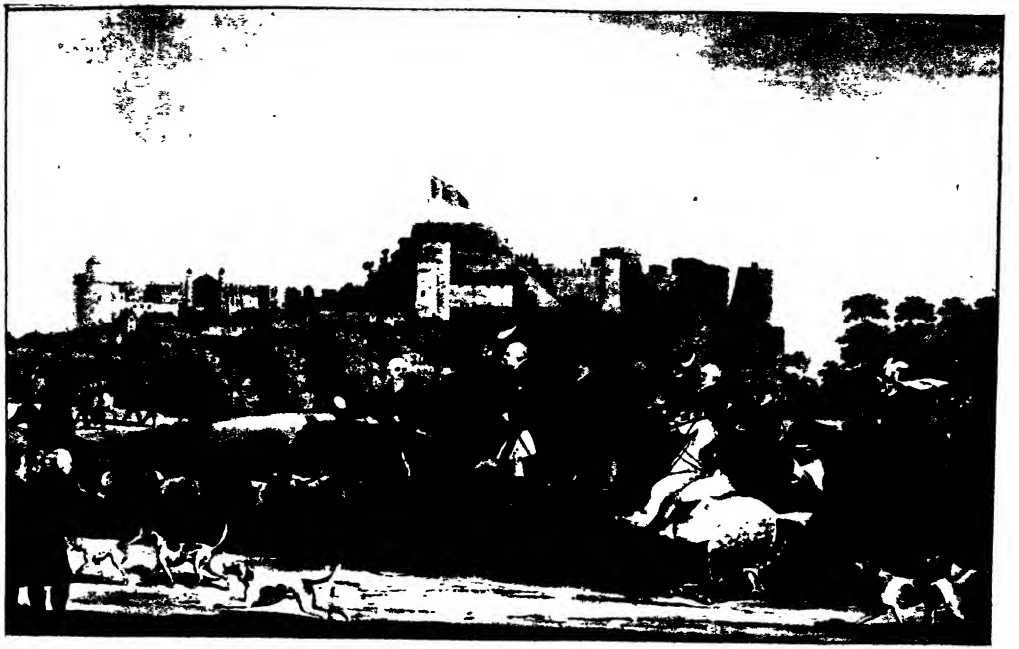


PLATE II. GEORGE III RETURNING FROM HUNTING

(From a painting by Pollard)

Moonshine obtained this name from its persevering chace & which He extended till He outran the day & was taken by *Moonlight.*

His Majesty's Fall.

In the many years I had the honor of attending His Majesty (*sixteen years & a half*) as His Equerry, I had the good fortune never to see Him thrown *but once*, and that was, when He was on his Way from the Queen's Lodge to Amersham, near which place The Stag was to be turned out that morning. The County at this time was very deep & dirty after continued rains. Near the Windmill at Salt Hill His Majesty then proceeding on his road at a hand gallop, attended by myself as His Equerry, & his Grooms only, His Horse by chance threw forward at some dirt which I splashed in some water on the road before Him. The King's Horse startled, & suddenly checked in his pace, hung back; By this H.M. was somewhat thrown out of his Seat, & his chances of recovering Himself were interrupted by his having at the moment accidently touched his Horse with his Spur & who instantly made a smart jerk forward, & by which H.M. having completely lost his balance, fell on the road, but fortunately quite clear of his Horse I was at this time immediately behind the King who instantly got up, & *assured us all He was not in the least hurt*, & therefore He gave the strictest injunction, that none of us should mention that He had had a fall. On this he remounted his Horse and observing that He was above Himself said he would settle Him by a smart ride to Amersham, which He did & at this place He mounted his Hunter and he particularly enjoyed the good sport of the day. The Chace over His Majesty made back to Windsor.

When I was dressing The Queen's first Page Mr. Albert came to my Room at The Queen's Lodge with a command from Her Majesty to wait on Her in Her Apartment. I obeyed this command as expeditiously as I could, when on entering Her Majesty's Apartment she thus addressed me, "*Sir I hear The King has had a fall today and I wish to have your account of it*". With the full recollection at this moment of His Majesty's very *strict injunction* not to mention to anyone his having had a fall I own I was not a little puzzled with Her Majesty's question & which she had now addressed to me with much earnestness. Prompt decision inclined me not to be influenced on this occasion by the Old adage viz: "That truth was not to be spoke at all times." Off hand I therefore answered that I perceived Her Majesty had been informed that The King had had a fall that day but as He *truely* was not hurt He had given a very *strict injunction*, that the circumstance should not be mentioned to anybody but that now from what Her Majesty had said, I was ready to obey Her Commands. The Queen then desired me to mention accurately how it had happened, & the particulars. All this I did and to which I expressed the satisfaction I had, in being enabled to make the further statement that The King *in real truth* had *not* been hurt by his fall & that I had never seen Him enjoy the after sport of the day with more pleasure than he had done.

Her Majesty was pleased to express her satisfaction at the account I had thus given & in this manner this Interview was concluded.

I had no opportunity but by guess to calculate how the Queen had obtained her information but all things considered I had but little doubt *that she had it from the King himself.*

His Majesty at another time had an accident more alarming. During a Stag Chace & when attended by Major Price at that time one of his Equerrys & at this time in Waiting. When crossing the Mill Dam at *Black Water* His Majesty's Horse frightened at the rush of Water, gave a sudden and violent start & threw H.M. into the Pool. Tho' not out of his depth H.M. in the first instance disappeared under the Water. His faithful Equerry Major Price [1] instantly dashed in & laying hold of the King supported him not however before He had swallowed some water and was become a little confused. No serious consequence however ensued & thus so promptly extricated His Majesty was very *soon Himself again.* He remounted his Horse and rode Home.

Some time after when I had the honor of attending H.M. in Waiting in the course of the Chace, the Stag at one time seemed intending for Black Water, but afterwards slanting from it He took another direction.

The King in the course of the day told me, He had had a glimpse of *Black Water* and *added "that He did not like it."*

In spite of his great weight the King went very well upon occasion, but he did nothing to improve the kennels, in fact the Buckhounds went down the hill very rapidly especially after his illness which eventually resulted in the loss of his reason. Even before this they had become almost useless: the constant stopping to let the King come up, and the inbreeding were hardly calculated to improve them. In the end it is said that they would not hunt at all. Personally I am inclined to believe that they could not do so.

George IV must have been very glad to see the last of them, when in the third year of the Regency (1814) they were sold to a Colonel Thornton, who took them to France, where, so it is said, he had a customer ready waiting for them. Colonel Thornton was rated a first-class hound man, but how he managed to get anyone to buy George III's Buckhounds, if even one-quarter of what is said about them is true, is sheer prestidigitation, to put it no higher! It was no wonder that the Prince Regent was prompt in supplying their place with something very different. "The Something" was the Charlton Pack, which he got as a present from the Duke of Richmond. The Duke in his turn had had passed on to him the old Monmouth-Grey-Roper strain. He called them the Goodwood. Lord Cowdray's hounds hunt over the old Charlton country to-day. It is doubtful whether the Regent turned all these Charlton hounds over to the Buckhounds, and more than likely that a number of them were sent to reinforce the pack of foxhounds he had in Dorset, those he got from Mr. Sturt, and which he hunted from Critchel in the heart of John James Farquharson's wide domain. It has to be borne in mind that this

[1] Major Price was nephew to The Bishop of Durham an excellent & most Worthy man. He was one of my Four *Bosom* Friends through life. The other three were Lord Heathfield, Colonel Newton & Genl. Cartwright & these three Bt. Officers of mine in the 10th Dragoons.

Charlton pack was composed of genuine foxhounds with the right mixture (Yorkshire) in them, transmitted by the northern hunting dog in the same way as Viscount Lowther's Westmorlanders, the foundation stones of the Cottesmore, and that they might not have taken very kindly to hunting the carted deer after having been entered to the genuine wild animal, the fox. The Regent, who knew what he was about, may have hesitated to waste their goodness upon what was, after all, a somewhat artificial form of the Chase. The new owner wanted high speed instead of a funeral procession, and these Charlton hounds were the very thing to give it to him. They were undoubtedly the best foxhound pack in the south at that time. With them the Regent got Sharpe, their huntsman, and Charles Davis, later to become a very famous staghound huntsman. No doubt when the royal master and his friends wanted a ready-made gallop the Buckhounds were as good a way to get it as any other. At the time when H.R.H. assumed command of the Buckhounds kennel lameness was even more rampant at Ascot than ever, and as no one had then, or has since, discovered a cure for this pest, other than removal to some other place, this fact alone should have made the Prince think twice about risking ruination to a first-class pack. He would not, however, listen to his huntsman and Charles Davis when they blamed the Ascot kennels and their surroundings, and he said that a trip to Brighton and some sea bathing would soon put everything right. Of course it did nothing of the sort, for the root of the evil was in the kennels, and the only logical way would have been to put them and not the hounds in the sea. The talented author of *Notitia Venatica* (Vyner) wrote: "No artificial means can make a lame kennel a sound one. You may build it with marble and alabaster and heat it with fire: all won't do." A hound may recover in a fresh place: he certainly will not if left where he is. The sea bathing at Brighton may have been very pleasant, and, no doubt, Sharpe and Davis enjoyed it! The Ascot kennels were not purged of the scourge until the yards and houses were torn up. They then put concrete over a thick layer of dry rubbish, and on top of the concrete a thick layer of asphalt. All the benches in the living-room were raised two feet. To send good hounds to Ascot, as it then was, was the crudest of folly. As to how many of these converted foxhounds survived, and for how long, there is no record. Any that went to Dorset were of course pursuing the legitimate calling for which they had been bred, and I have no doubt that they reinforced the Sturt Hounds very considerably. This Ascot incident must have made the headless corpses of Monmouth and Grey turn in their graves, and old Roper, also defunct, believe that another man who hoped to be King, had lost his head. It is possible that many hunting folk will be able to call to mind two famous modern kennels, in which

methods quite as drastic as those just mentioned would seem to be eminently desirable. Kennel lameness, yellows, brood bitches slipping their whelps, were constant and deplorable occurrences in the times when the author knew them—not so very long ago. The best V.S. in the profession is powerless in such circumstances, and I feel that the only real cure would be a V.2.

In the Buckhounds kennels, as later reformed, there was excellent drainage, all sewage being carried to a small "farm"; the water supply was pure and good; the kennel and whelping houses were spacious and faced south-east by east; and there were large grass yards affording excellent playgrounds for the young entry. Kennel lameness was unknown. In the Georgian period, however, these most necessary amenities were conspicuous only by reason of their complete absence.

George IV was far more of a fox-hunting man than a carted stag addict, and though he did his best to put the Royal Buckhounds on their legs again after the state of coma into which they had sunk in the later years of his father's reign, and though he availed himself of the certainty of a gallop which staghounds provide, there is not much doubt as to where his heart really was. He was an intimate, as has been said, of John James Farquharson, who has been dubbed "the Meynell of the West", and he could not have been in association with such a great expert without imbibing his principles. In his speech at the Farquharson Presentation Dinner, at which a portrait by the then P.R.A., Sir Francis Grant, was given to the famous Dorset M.F.H., Mr. Farquharson said that the first person with whom he had hunted had been "George IV then Prince of Wales when he lived at Critchel and bought Mr. Sturt's hounds".

The Farquharson country was originally the whole of Dorset and embraced the region now known as the Portman, Cattistock, Blackmore Vale and South Dorset. The old "True Blue Hunt" (Portman) started by the Reverend J. Phelips towards the end of the eighteenth century, was taken over by Farquharson in 1806 and he kept on for fifty-two years. It had been suggested by some commentators, that the title "True Blue" was assumed by Mr. Phelips as some kind of indirect compliment to George III, who frequently visited Weymouth and had an occasional day with the Portman; but there is no confirmation of this, and even that diligent delver after fact, Mr. Scarth Dixon, seemed to have been defeated, for he will go no further than say that it was "highly probable".

In an old diary in the possession of the present Lord Digby, who was joint Master of the Cattistock with the late the Rev. E. A. ("Jack") Milne (1926–30), and which was kept by his forebear Admiral the Hon. Robert Digby, who lived at Minterne in 1768, there is this entry dated the 8th November, 1797:

The gentlemen all went out to see the Prince of Wales' fox hounds throw off at Sydling Wood, where they killed a fox.

The covert is within the borders of the present day Cattistock country not far from their kennels, which are at Cattistock near Dorchester. It is a bank and ditch country, but not quite of the same pattern met with in Ireland; a very sporting region, well-foxed and one that demands a stout horse. The fact that George IV selected it, when, probably, he could have taken his pick, is strong evidence in support of the submission already made. The hunting admiral, whose diary has been quoted, was succeeded at Minterne by his nephew, Captain the Hon. Sir Henry Digby, who commanded H.M.S. *Africa* at Trafalgar. She was the flanking patrol of the weather column led by Nelson in H.M.S. *Victory*. Sir Henry Digby was the great-grandfather of the present Lord Digby.

"The First Gentleman" also hunted from Newmarket, but there is no record of which were the hounds he patronized. Charles II's old pack must have died out long before, but there were plenty of others within reach, and as the King was very fond of the Racing Metropolis, until the "Escape" incident he is certain to have availed himself of any chance that offered. That unfortunate racing incident cost Newmarket one of its most ardent racing and hunting supporters. The facts in connection with this affair are no doubt familiar to all students of turf history, but as most hunting people are not so, and prefer one day with hounds to ten days' racing, it may be apposite to recapitulate them very shortly. They do, after all, form a part of the story of the sporting adventures of a fox-hunting monarch. The facts are quite ordinary. Escape, who was about the best horse of his day, ran on two consecutive days of the Newmarket October meeting in 1791. On the first day he started a hot favourite and was beaten; on the second day against very much the same company, he started at 5 to 1 and won easily, the little difference being that in the first race the distance was two miles and in the second four miles. In both races he was ridden by the redoubtable Sam Chifney, the crack jockey of the day, and an artist of the first water.

There was the uproar customary to such happenings, and Sir Charles Bunbury, on behalf of his fellow-stewards of the Jockey Club, sent H.R.H. a message saying that, if he allowed Chifney to ride his horses in future "no gentleman would start against him". The Prince took this to mean a direct aspersion upon himself, and, so far as Bunbury was concerned, this was exactly what it was intended to be, for he was a bitter enemy and very jealous of his royal rival on the turf. The stewards did not deprive Chifney of his licence, and made no move to investigate the case. The demand came from the

owner, who insisted upon an inquiry. This disclosed that Chifney had advised the Prince not to back Escape in the first race, and had £20 on for himself in the second, and that no one else made any profit out of it. Jockeys are not supposed to bet, and usually get into trouble if they are caught doing so. Chifney did not even then lose his licence. He published a pamphlet, priced at £5 a copy, exonerating himself, and it sold like hot cakes, but even this did not cause fire to descend upon him from the powers above. The general tenour of the jockey's argument was that Escape was an in-and-out runner. H.R.H. was so incensed over the whole business that he never ran a horse at Newmarket again, and only once more set foot in the town. Escape was one of those animals which it is difficult to train and was furthermore indifferent honest. On the bare facts there is ample ground for H.R.H.'s indignation, and none upon which to base a charge of misconduct against the jockey. If there had been a tittle of evidence that Chifney had pulled Escape in the first race, surely the stewards would have charged him with it at once, but they did nothing beyond insulting the owner. Two miles never have been the same as four! That was a sufficient answer to the innuendo. The whole affair simply reeked of personal malice and jealousy of the most popular man on the English turf. The stewards ought not to have allowed Sir Charles Bunbury to get away with it. Some kind of half-hearted attempt at an apology was made very tardily in 1805. The stewards asked H.R.H. to consider the affair "buried in oblivion". They got the polite snub they so richly deserved. There may have been the customary cause behind all this.

Lady Sarah Bunbury was formerly the beautiful Lady Sarah Gordon-Lennox, second daughter of the Duke of Richmond, and she married the dashing young officer who owned Diomed, winner of the first Derby in 1780, attracted no doubt by his handsome person. George III, before he was decorously married to the Princess Charlotte of Mechlenburg-Strelitz, had fallen head over ears in love with the beautiful débutante, and had, in fact, asked her to be his queen. She accepted him, but the Diplomatic Hierarchy considered that it would not "do", and so the romance came to nothing, and eventually to Sir Charles Bunbury. The Bunbury alliance lasted exactly five years and then Lady Sarah left him for the protection of Lord William Gordon. There was no duel, only an undefended action for divorce, and eventually after the Gordon episode she married the Hon. George Napier. She presented her husband with three generals, Sir Charles, Sir George and Sir William, but their histories do not concern a hunting book.

Sir Charles Bunbury in his jealousy of the Prince of Wales's racing successes and his great popularity in the hunting field, may have

allowed these happenings to rankle. Lady Sarah, incidentally, rode as hard as the next hunting woman of her day, and was immensely keen on racing. The Bunbury Mile at Newmarket is named after her good-looking and quarrelsome first husband. But for those unromantic diplomats she might have been George IV's mother! The Prince of Wales had a considerable success on the turf, and apart from the many races his horses won at Newmarket, his Sir Thomas by Pontiac won the Derby of 1788 (two years before his accession). The royal colours were not again successful in the great race until 1896 when another Prince of Wales (Edward VII) won it with Persimmon, first of a trio of winners in the purple and scarlet, the other two having been Diamond Jubilee in 1900 and Minoru in 1909.[1]

Not even the deplorable *tâche* of George IV's treatment of Queen Caroline bedimmed his popularity in the world of sport, and particularly in that of the Chase. His dissolute acts are not of course defensible, but these again were more or less the product of his time. It has been charged that George IV was stony-hearted and selfish. It is however on record that he broke down and wept when the news of our heavy casualties at Waterloo was brought to him. Thackeray's general condemnation of all four Georges is not very well balanced, to put it no higher.

William IV's connection with the Chase should not demand much space for its recording. Like every other sailor that anyone has ever met, he was extremely fond of a horse and still fonder of riding him whenever and however he got the opportunity. The first, and almost the only record of a "hunting adventure", was that when he was a midshipman and was on leave from his ship at Portsmouth he went post-haste to Windsor to have a day or two with the staghounds. The huntsman, Sharpe, mounted him on a pony, and during a hunt rendered hideous by the large contingent of French *émigrés* and their noises on their horns, the Prince and his pony were engulfed in a deep ditch and did not see much of the battle. It is said that Sharpe tried to take all their funny curly horns away from the French visitors, but that they would not give them up, or refrain from blowing them whenever they felt like it. It is small wonder that between the midshipman and the "Mounseers", as he dubbed them, the unfortunate huntsman was driven nearly frantic. During part of William IV's reign Lord Maryborough, afterwards Lord Mornington, was Master of the Buckhounds, and he is said to have had the prettiest seat on a horse ever known. After Lord Mornington came Lord Lichfield, who was another great success. It has been said that to see him cross a country in the wake of hounds was a liberal education for any aspirant. Lord

[1] In 1822 Moses, owned by Prince Frederic, Duke of York, younger brother of George IV, won the Derby and probably carried the royal jacket.—Author.

Lichfield was equally good with the crack foxhound packs. There is no record of William IV having evinced any desire to emulate the performances of his hard-riding masters; not that the King was lacking in that dash and courage which are such useful components in the general structure of the horseman. Far from it!

So far as racing was concerned William IV was not exactly knowledgeable, but he was all for supporting the turf, and the hoof of the famous Eclipse, bred by his ancestor, mounted on a gold pedestal, is one of the most treasured relics of the Jockey Club, and was presented to it in May 1832 by the King. William IV took over many of the horses in training which had been the property of George IV, but it is extremely doubtful whether he knew one of them from another, or cared in which races they ran. The story goes that, when asked which animal he favoured starting for a certain race at Ascot, he replied: "Run the whole fleet of them, and let the best horse win."

Greville, as famous as a diplomatist as he was for the production of graceful prose, has nothing favourable to say of the personal stable establishment of the King; in fact he says that there was no discipline, much drunkenness, and therefore, of course, no efficiency at all; a happy-go-lucky state of affairs all round. Writing of the Ascot week 1833 Sir Charles says: "His household is now so ill managed that his grooms were drunk every day, and the only man of them that was sober was killed going home from the races." The famous memoir writer was much criticized for his excess of candour in the first of his series dealing with the reign of George IV and William IV, and told very bluntly that he should have drawn a veil over the foibles and vices of kings. His strictures upon the laxness of the stable management of William IV may well have been actuated by the fact that he himself knew how things ought to be done, for he was a very keen racing man. His Alarm was a very good horse even though he never won a classic. Greville won the Leger of 1837 with Mango, having won the One Thousand in 1835 with his filly Preserve. He also went out hunting, and possibly found that it did less violence to his finer feelings than did racing, which he said had a dram-drinking effect on people and was, in fact, rather an undesirable pursuit, because it compelled people to tell untruths to and win money from their friends. He was on the very closest terms of intimacy with George IV, whose extravagances in dress for the Chase, and otherwise, he rather admired, even if he did not copy them. The Sailor King was far from dressy, in fact very untidy. He was a very well-beloved king and a supporter of all the traditional sports of the land over which he ruled, even though he attained to no great eminence in any of them. Hawking seems to have attracted him most, and his sudden command to the Duke of St. Albans, the Hereditary Grand Falconer, to put things in train for a

resumption of this ancient sport at Windsor, is said to have been in the nature of a thunderclap to that nobleman, who was at that moment busy taking the waters at Cheltenham, and, so the wicked ones say, had never been out bird-catching in his life. The inevitable punster said it was "most h'awkward", because he could not muster even so much as a single feather! The Duke, however, did make an effort, forgot his gout for the moment, and hied him to Cumberland Lodge to see what could be done. Let us hope that at least he found a barn-door fowl.

England's second professional sailor king—to Alfred belongs the honour of having been the first—was seventy-one when he died after only seven years of unruffled popularity on the throne.

CHAPTER IX

The Huntings of the Kings: The Victorian Era

IF Victoria the Good had been a hunting lady, she would have at once recognized the fact that when she came to the throne her country was little short of a hunting paradise. Hounds had improved out of all knowledge; the well-bred hunter was in similar profusion; the country had been enclosed with discretion and no small measure of skill; road communications were much better, even if far from perfection; there was no tarmac, so aptly called "black ice"; there was no wire; there were no motors with their scent-destroying petrol fumes; and, best of all, there were no "Anti's", and very few Leftists, those people who hate the fox-hunter on sight by reason of the fact that he is not one of their own kidney. Even Mr. George Stephenson's dangerous invention, which hurtled along at the breakneck speed of 35 m.p.h., covering its intrepid passengers with red-hot cinders, had not managed to get such a firm footing as to convince the nobility, gentry and simples that it was ever likely to supersede the post-chaise and postilion and such flying machines as the Galloping Beaufort, the Old True Blue, and their sisters, who did their honest 9 m.p.h. from the White Lion at Bell Suavage on Ludgate Hill, the White Hart at the White Swan, Holborn Bridge, and Three Cups in Bread Street, to Bath in two days, one whole day quicker than their immediate predecessors. The steam engine, much disliked as it was, did not seem to be a serious menace to hunting whatever it may have been to the coaching industry. The moans of the latter were heard throughout the length and breadth of the land, but the hunting folk were more or less complacent.

Mr. Outram Tristram, in his *Coaching Days and Coaching Ways*, makes one of the great Whips exclaim: "Them as 'ave seen coaches afore rails came into fashion 'ave seen something worth remembering! Them was 'appy days for old England afore reform and rails turned everything upside down, and men rode as Nature intended they should on pikes, with coachmen and smart active cattle and not by machinery like bags of cotton and hardware. But coaches is done for ever, and a heavy blow it is! They was the pride of the country; there wasn't anything like them, as I've 'eard gentlemen from furrin parts say to be found nowhere, nor never will again."

Despite this Jeremiah, whose name, Mr. Tristram says, is unfor-

tunately written in water (with some rum and sugar in it) there were many, particularly amongst the early Victorian hunting folk, who were quite firmly convinced that, although railway trains might do between Stockton and Darlington, they would never have the audacity to invade the hunting domain, and that all right-thinking people would still remain faithful to the four spanking horses and the right man on the box-seat. They thought the railways just a new toy of which people would soon grow tired! All of them were wrong, and Mr. Tristram's Jehu was right, but poor old Peter the Waiter at the Fox and Hounds Inn and Posting House at Hinton, patronized by Sir Moses Mainchance, M.F.H., and the Hitim and Holdimshire Hunt for their ordinaries (*vide Ask Mama*) was not! Peter was convinced that railways had sounded the death-knell of fox-hunting, and that, because Sir Moses and his fellow fox-hunters rang for tea, when in the days of Lord Martingale and Mr. Customer and Mr. Crasher they would be ringing for magnums and just beginning the evening, Old England had completely gone to the devil, and that Sir Moses, and all others like him, were "a set of wesher-women". Yet again, he and the rest were wrong, for railways were nothing like the menace to hunting, which tarmac, motors and electrification have since become. There were also very few "wesher-women"! It was, in fact, a very hard-riding age, and the "Cut 'Em-Down Captains" were not such a very gross caricature. They may even have said "clar't", as Surtees makes them do.

When Queen Victoria's reign began, in the Quorn country there were, in succession, Mr. Errington, Lord Suffield, and Mr. Hodgson, and very shortly after, Sir Dick Sutton, who banished his son to the south, the Billesdon part, where the fences were so forbidding that not even young Dick could override hounds as he had done so disgracefully in his father's country. In the Pytchley country was Lord Chesterfield, Master of the Buckhounds at the time of her Majesty's coronation, elegant in dress and manner, and a beautiful horseman; in command of the Cottesmore was the first Earl of Lonsdale (his second mastership); in the Belvoir they had Lord Forester (1830–57); Colonel Anstruther-Thomson was at about his peak in the Atherstone country at a time when "the Orange Men", so called from the tinge of that colour in their coats, were somewhat fond of saying that they could teach the rest of Leicestershire how to ride; Mr. Granville, Mr. Barnard (later Lord Willoughby de Broke) were in Warwickshire! None of them were very like "wesher-women", and in that carefree period were able to go where they liked and as hard as they liked with no risk of hearing that hair-raising ping of wire.

Her Majesty never hunted, but what a chance she had! The fact that the Queen never actively participated does not mean that she

turned her face away from it, or failed to recognize hunting as one of the things that has done so much to improve the breed of men, to say nothing of hounds and horses; it was only that her Majesty was born into that era which was to give us the pure and unadulterated English Miss, when fainting was one of the finer arts, when later "Dizzy" was busy writing *Endymion*, *Lothair* and *Tancred*, and in which still later on, Miss Braddon was to influence the love lives of the sentimental to the length of three volumes from Mr. Mudie's famous library, and the sophisticated, and rather shocking, "Ouida" was to try to persuade her gullible public that she knew all about steeple-chasing, rowing and young officers of the First Regiment of Foot Guards! Young ladies rode just as much as it was considered genteel that they should, and those who, like the hard-riding Lady Stamford, the fair but rather frail "Skittles" (Miss Walters) and Miss Gilbert, of whom, however, even the stately and highly respectable Charles Davis, huntsman to The Queen's (Royal Buckhounds), approved, were not considered "quite nice".

Fond mammas did not approve of their offspring scampering over the double oxers and timber and through the bullfinches all amongst those rough, hard-riding, hard-drinking men with faces as red as their coats. Even that large-hearted nobleman the Earl of Ladythorne, after his misadventure with the lovely Miss de Glancey, fully made up his mind that, "women had no business out hunting"; so how can we blame the Victorian mammas, who, no doubt, had heard all about Letty Lade and "Sixteen String Jack"? It was much better for the real Young Lady to stay at home, learn the harp, read Mr. Tennyson's *Maud*, or his *Idylls of the King*, and work things called samplers. It was a most elegant age. The saying prevalent at the time, at any rate in one part of the kingdom, was a very true one. Leicestershire, it went, is inhabited by the hardest men and the softest women. This only remained true for a comparatively short time, but was never completely reversed. But in these early-Victorian days, even such a cut-throat thruster as Squire "Gumley" Wilson, so called because his seat was at Gumley in Northamptonshire, was definitely of the opinion that hunting was far too dangerous a pursuit for women. In "Gumley" Wilson's interesting Memoirs, *Green Peas at Christmas* (he was a most extravagant person), there is this mention of hunting ladies, and, in view of what happened later, it may be found both interesting and amusing:

> In those days [the period between 1839 and 1847 or thereabouts] few, if any women, hunted, and the Shires are certainly not, in my opinion, adapted to female equestrianism, to coin a word! A woman may ride over the country with some safety, but riding through it is quite another matter. Bullfinches, which close up after you pass through, are ugly customers for a woman on a side saddle, especially

with a ditch on the far side, and I have seen more than once a woman pulled off her saddle and deposited in the ditch, and in some cases, with the horse on her. The fact is, I hate to see a woman ride to hounds in the Shires; I know the danger which few women realize. The only woman riding in the Shires then was Nelly Holmes, who afterwards married Horace Pitt of the Blues and died his widow as Lady Rivers a few years ago. She was the best horsewoman I ever saw before or since—hands, seat, judgment and resolution perfect. Since those days fields have been full of riding women, and some have come to grief the result of which they will no doubt feel for years.

Such was the atmosphere in those early and mid-Victorian periods. "Gumley" Wilson, though a Pytchley man by right of birth, was Master of the North Warwickshire for two seasons, 1843–5. He was formerly in the 3rd Dragoon Guards. He was unquestionably right about hunting women in the days of that death-trap, the long trailing habit. It was many years before the neater, and safer apron skirt came into vogue, or before the ladies adopted the male impersonator style—so becoming to the very few, and quite impossible to so many. The lady puncher *en masse*, the lady M.F.H. and the lady of the show ring at Olympia, Richmond and elsewhere, who has proved herself such a formidable opponent to mere man, was yet to come.

Squire "Gumley" Wilson, incidentally, was a constant, if not a very enthusiastic, patron of the Queen's Staghounds, for there is the following mention of them in his Memoirs:

I lived at Olton till 1844 when the Clives determined to sell the place. Alston of Elmdon bought it as it adjoined his property. I left it in the autumn of 1844 for London, where I took a house in Wimpole Street for the sake of the girls. I had a very good five-stall stable, in which I placed a brougham horse and four hunters, with which I hunted with the Queen's Staghounds, the Surrey and sometimes Selby-Lowndes [in what to-day is the Whaddon Chase country.—Author]. It was slow work after the Shires or even the North Warwick, but it was exercise.

There were some people living until quite recently who could recall having done the same thing, notable amongst them that distinguished veteran Colonel Smith, who used to hunt with the Belvoir, and went so well in spite of having only one arm.

Though the Royal Pack came to the end of its long and picturesque career just before the Queen's death, it enjoyed a considerable popularity for the greater part of the reign, and numbered amongst its keenest patrons, in addition to the young Prince of Wales, many notable figures in history, outstanding amongst them the great Iron Duke himself, who had hunted with these hounds since certainly before 1831, and had divided his patronage fairly equally between them on the Hampshire side, the Garth foxhounds and the Vine. A well-known

writer in the old *Sporting Magazine*, a Mr. "Nim" Smith (a pseudonym) is uncomplimentary to the Duke both as a horseman and as to his turn-out in the hunting field. The first aspersion seems wholly unfounded, for his Grace rode well according to all other contemporary evidence, and Mr. "Nim" Smith may not have been a very good judge! He may even have mixed Wellington up with his great opponent, who rode *affreusement mal*! The Duke had his own pack of hounds in Portugal during the Peninsular War, and the Pau claim to be their descendants. As to the Duke's hunting attire, this, after all, and up to a point, is a matter of personal taste. However, this is what this critic has to say about it: "His dress consisted of a plain scarlet frock-coat, a lilac silk waistcoat, kid gloves, fustians (as to his breeches) and boots, which we call Wellingtons." By Victoria's time the Duke of Wellington was getting on in years, and the fact that he went out hunting at all redounds greatly to his credit. He was eighty-three when he died in 1852, so he was sixty-eight when the Queen came to the throne, an age at which many have taken to a Bath-chair. If the Duke of Wellington's hunting raiment was a bit unusual, it was nothing compared with that of the poet Bryon, who used to hunt with the Buckhounds during the reign of George IV. According to Lady Blessington, who also patronized these hounds, he wore: "A short-waisted nankeen jacket much shrunk and very narrow at the back, embroidered with three rows of buttons; nankeen gaiters, a black very narrow stock, and a dark blue velvet cap with a rich gold braid and a tassel and blue specks." Poetic licence, let us presume, but a bit outrageous *even* for the author of *Don Juan*! No one could ever have accomplished anything quite so fantastic.

Her Majesty is not recorded as having been very enthusiastically interested in the Royal Pack, but she did, in fact, pay occasional visits to the Ascot kennels, and Frank Goodall, who had been huntsman since 1870, makes special mention in his notes of one notable occasion. He writes: "And now a red letter day (March 23rd, 1875). Her Majesty went all over the kennels, taking great interest in the hounds and in every detail." It is not stated whether the famous huntsman gave the Queen a long and detailed dissertation upon the performances of every hound in the pack, but he would be very unlike most huntsmen if he did not! Goodall's name is a legendary one in hunting history, and he was probably at the very top of his riding form when he was with Mr. Tailby in the Fernie country from 1856 to 1872, when he went to the Queen's. Goodall had a regular panorama of royalty passing before him in those times, for in addition to regular attendants like the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Connaught, the luckless Prince Imperial was one of his patrons. Goodall mounted him more than once, and he is said to have gone very well.

It was during Goodall's reign that the Queen's Staghounds were taken to Barleythorpe, the famous Lonsdale hunting-box in the Cottesmore country, but not to hunt the fox. This was in 1877 when Lord Hardwicke was master, and he took his own deer with him, and after an enormous breakfast, provided by the reigning Lowther (Henry, brother of the late Lord Lonsdale, the famous Yellow Earl), the wild beast was uncarted at Knossington, and a long and very damp hunt eventuated, for the whole country was hock-deep. The stag was taken somewhere near Wing. What Goodall thought about it has never been recorded so far as I know, but I have a very shrewd idea. It was the first time since James I's day that a carted deer had been hunted in the Midlands, and I hope, and believe, that it will remain the last.

It would be quite impossible to catalogue all the celebrities who were either masters, huntsmen or distinguished patrons of the Queen's during these concluding years of their existence, besides Mr. J. P. Hore in his *History of the Royal Buckhounds*, and Lord Ribblesdale in his not quite so voluminous *The Queen's Hounds*, have done it so admirably already; it may be helpful to touch very lightly upon some of the leading lights of the earlier part of the period. Lord Chesterfield, as already recorded, was Master at the time of Queen Victoria's coronation. He was the son of the famous statesman, orator and man of letters, and inherited these graces in some minor degree, adding to them a talent for riding very straight across country. He was very well known in the Shires, especially with the Belvoir, and he drove four horses amazingly well. There was Lord Kinnaird, another hard-riding Meltonian; Lord Rosslyn who was said never to have suffered a loss upon any horse that he sold; there was the quite intrepid Lord Clanricarde, who, upon one occasion when he had been mounted by Lord Bessborough (the Master), and told that the horse was no "timber merchant", straightway rode him at a new five-barred gate, and miraculously survived. Most notable of all masters in realms other than that of hunting was Lord Granville, who in 1851 was Foreign Minister under Lord John Russell. Granville was a Pytchley man, which is tantamount to saying that big fences held no terrors for him, and when he had the Queen's, he was outstanding in their annals for the resolute way in which he put along. He was said to have been one of those who made even a moderate horse look good. Lord Granville was a graceful, if not a great, orator, and possessed of a dry humour which had a fragrance all its own. He was a striking contradiction in terms of the oft-repeated assertion that all hunting people are brainless and quite illiterate! There was Lord Hardwicke, whose expedition with his circus into the Cottesmore country has already been mentioned. His term of office was marked by much magnificence and some almost blood-curdling hard riding. There was Lord Suffield,

who was said to go top pace between the fences, and then jump them almost from a stand. Most eminent of all was the renowned Lord Coventry, whose fame is writ large in the records of his family pack, the Croome, that small but quite delightful country, which includes parts of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Gloucestershire. His lordship was a great success and everyone loved him. Hunt with the Croome and listen to what they still say. Hunting apart, Lord Coventry had a great record on the turf under both sets of rules. He accomplished that which had never been done before, and is quite unlikely to be done again, namely, win the Grand National with two sisters, Emblem in 1863 and Emblematic in 1864. They were both chestnuts, and George Stevens was the jockey in each case. Last of all, and perhaps it is taking the list of these famous masters of the Queen's far enough, was Lord Ribblesdale, into whose scholarly pages it has been the author's privilege to dip in the course of this present narrative. He was Master from 1892 to 1895, and his term was marked by brilliant sport and a great deal of hard work in and out of the kennel. By his intimates Lord Ribblesdale was always known as "The Ancestor", and he certainly looked the part. He was a very fine performer over any country, and, what is much more, a really finished horseman. He married Charlotte, a daughter of the late Sir Charles Tennant, and was thus a connection of another Victorian hunting notability, the late Countess of Oxford and Asquith, who, as Margot Tennant, was well known in the Shires in the later Victorian period and in the Edwardian one also. She hunted with the Belvoir in the exciting times of Frank Gillard! Lord Ribblesdale died in 1925 leaving no male heir but three daughters as popular as he was himself, the late the Hon. Lady Wilson, who married Sir Mathew Wilson, "Scatters" to most people, formerly 10th Hussars, Lady Lovat, widow of the late Lord Lovat of the famous Scouts, and Lady Westmorland, wife of the hard-riding sailor, who was so well known in the Beaufort country, and was "Burghey" to everyone in those parts. Lord Westmorland not only went very well to hounds, but rode a good race in point-to-points. The hunting tradition in this family was therefore well maintained.

Of celebrities very nearly connected with the Royal Pack in Victorian times it would be remiss indeed not to mention that very famous huntsman Charles Davis, who only resigned from his post in 1866, when he got a very bad fall damaging one of his legs. He never rode again, and died a year later at Ascot of bronchitis at the ripe old age of seventy-nine. He was huntsman of the Buckhounds for forty years, and was first inducted to hunting by George III, so his name has much claim to a prominent place in any record of the huntings of the Kings of England. Davis was born in Windsor in 1788 and his father was for some time huntsman to a pack called the King's Harriers, who

THE DEATH

PLATE 12. HUNTING SCENES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

(*From pictures by Henry Alken, circa* 1842)

PLATE 13. THE QUEEN'S STAGHOUNDS

(From a painting by R. B Davis)

This was probably painted early in the reign of Queen Victoria, who lent her countenance to the Royal Pack and visited the Kennels at Ascot, but never went out hunting with the Buckhounds, which in this reign changed their title to the Queen's Staghounds.

confined their operations principally to Windsor Great Park, and, if truth must be told, were not averse from a turn with "something out of a box". The little boy was sent to some school in Windsor or Eton, it is not certain which, and it was when on his way home one day that he encountered George III in the Windsor Castle cloisters. The King was taken with the boy's appearance, and for no particular reason asked him what he was going to be, and whether he would not like to go out hunting. The King did not know that he was talking to the son of the huntsman of his own harriers. When he found out, he appointed him a Whip under his father, but insisted that he stuck to his books, and he made him an allowance of £1 a week out of his own pocket, provided that he kept on with his studies. It was quite a large sum in those days. Charles Davis was then only twelve. He did stick to his books, but also to hunting, and he eventually reached what must have been the summit of his ambition when, in 1826, he became huntsman of the Buckhounds. That was in George IV's reign. Few people can claim to have been a hunt servant through four reigns, for he served under George III, George IV, William IV and Victoria.

There are still many of us alive who can beat this purely as units of the field and who have hunted in the reigns of Victoria, Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII and George VI.

Since, under the new policy of appropriation, hunting and many other things, not understood by the class initiating it, is certain to come to an end, facts such as these would seem to be worthy of record. Hunting and racing and many other things were abolished during the Regicide Régime, and the wheel would appear to have come full circle. Charles Davis, though a staghound huntsman all his days, is said to have preferred fox-hunting. This is strange since the two techniques are so widely divergent. A carted deer enthusiast is said to have laid it down thus: "The science of stag-hunting lies in the management of the deer; the rest is a matter of a bold, fast horse and an adhesive buck-skin." Davis, and other staghound huntsmen, are said to have favoured uncarting upwind, and facing the wild beast into it. No fox in his senses will go upwind for one moment longer than he is compelled to do so, and will even avoid giving his pursuers any side-wind advantage if he can help it. This, of course, applies to all wild animals. It is recorded that with the Queen's Staghounds it was the custom for the first Whip to be told off to "ride" the deer for the first few hundred yards, to head him in the desired direction. With the wild deer the tufters seem to be employed for much the same purpose, though once fairly on his legs, the quarry is not shepherded in any way by the hunt servants, or anyone else. Were this procedure adopted with the fox, half those found would most certainly be chopped, instead of, as at present, beating hounds more often than hounds beat them. However, *chacun*

à son gout! It is probable that it was because Queen Victoria believed that stag-hunting with the carted animal was cruel, the Royal Pack eventually came to its end. The belief in cruelty in this case is quite erroneous. On the other hand, hunting a bag fox is, in my opinion, extremely cruel and only worthy of a sportsman of the type of which unfortunately there are too many records.

Where racing was concerned Queen Victoria had definite views. It was in the 'fifties that the old Palace at Newmarket was put up to auction by order of the Queen and the Prince Consort, who, so it is reported, "dreaded any return of the days of the Royal Turfites". Her Majesty no doubt had heard of George IV's serious disagreement with the Stewards of the Jockey Club, but possibly never had a very clear understanding of the facts, for if she had had, it would have been realized that there was no cause for "dread". In any case her Majesty's pious hope was never realized, for the Heir Apparent raced under both codes of rules, and thereby added great lustre to the turf. This patronage was continued by the grandson and great-grandson of Victoria the Good. The Royal Palace at Newmarket, the hunting-box and racing *pied à terre* of so many of England's monarchs, was not in fact a great loss, for its value was mainly sentimental. Architecturally it had none. At the auction an enterprising buyer got it cheap; he pulled it down and sold it to the Congregational Church, whose edifice now occupies the site where so much that was quite unclerical had happened aforetime. Hymns now fill the air, which formerly resounded to the laughter and silvery voices of so many famous and often frail Hers. Those fond of pointing a moral to adorn their tale will no doubt cite it as a brand saved from the burning. The old Palace had been patched and plastered, altered and added to so often, that there cannot have been much of the original left at the time of its demise. However, those as fond of signposts on the road of life as is the author, cannot but regret the disappearance of any of them, especially one which had so many tales to tell as this old hunting lodge of the kings.

As to the general progress of horse-breeding during the reign the well-bred hunter improved out of all knowledge, as it was very necessary for him to do if he was to enable his rider to keep the much faster foxhound in sight. As to the racehorse it is informative and not a little amusing to quote some extracts from an article in *Baily's Magazine* of July 1869 by an unknown writer, who is very far from being complimentary, and also, as I think, from being correct. However, it is as well to hear all sorts and conditions of opinions, so here is this gentleman's:

Under the head of "Literature" in a paper of world-wide celebrity the following was announced:

"Aperçu Historique sur les Institutions Hippiques et les Races Chevalines de la Russie. Par J. Moerder. St. Petersburg, 1868." And it was remarked: "It will be flattering to our countrymen to read the following amongst other observations: 'Nous allons maintenant passer à l'examen des types de chevaux de haras. La première place est occupée par le pur sang Arabe et le cheval de course Anglais. Ces deux types servient à la formation de toutes nos meilleures espéces.' And again: "When speaking further on of the purity of the blood of English horses, he states: 'Le cheval Anglais, dans sa forme primitive, était remarquable par sa haute taille, sa belle tête, qu'il tenait du cheval Arabe, ses petites oreilles, son cou long et gracieux, son dos court, sa croupe haute et droite, sa queue bien adaptée, ses jambes fortes et bien formées, son allure ferme.' "

These quotations appear to me to be very significant. It might be sufficiently flattering to the Arabs, if they cared about other people's concerns, to know that their horse had given such excellence to ours as we find by the description above he formerly possessed; but we can hardly congratulate ourselves, when we compare our "cheval de course" of the present day with the animal M. Moerder shows him to have been, "dans sa forme primitive". The passage "Dans sa forme primitive", with the following était, strikes a different chord to my mind. Formerly he was distinguished by his fine carriage, by his beautiful head of the Arabian type, his small ears, his short back, his long and elegant neck—"gracieux" well expresses it—his high and straight croup, his well-set-on tail, his strong and well-formed limbs; and "allure ferme" may be translated, I think, as good, true action.

All these are eminently the attributes of the pure Arabian, and, according to M. Moerder, were to be seen originally or formerly in a modified degree, I think, must be understood—in the breed of horses we have derived from him, and which we call thoroughbred.

Do we see all these points, as a rule, in the modern racer? A great admirer of our horse, for myself I cannot but say emphatically we do not. The grand carriage of the Arabian is not seen; the head is often, very often quite the reverse of the Arabian; he has often long and large ears instead of small ones; his neck, though sometimes long, is as often short, and very seldom "gracieux"; his back has certainly become elongated. Alas! what shall we say when we come to the high straight quarter, such as is seen among Arabians? Ours is but very drooping. Instead of the well-set-on tail he has often one set on rather low, and not often carried; and instead of well-formed and strong limbs, do we not too often see badly-shaped and very weak legs? His action is not always good all round, nor is his gait always bold and steady.

I think any one who has examined and does study attentively our blood stock will allow that these changes and modifications do exist in our modern racer, and that I have not drawn an unfaithful picture.

The modern racer does not show the fine points and attributes which were formerly seen in horses of an older date, imprinted upon them by their Arabian ancestry. In other words, the English thoroughbred horse has failed to hand down to his descendants the primal characteristics of the pure Arabian, or, indeed, the modified points which were formerly observable. Can this be flattering to our countrymen?

Now the question will naturally arise, Why have not these points been perpetuated? Believing firmly, as I do, that it is owing to one grand cause, or, to

speak more correctly, to one simple fact, I hope I may be pardoned if I again draw attention to it. Our horse is not really thoroughbred; i.e. he is not of pure race. Thoroughbred is a term applied to any horse in the Stud Book. A gentleman giving me his definition of the term a short time since said "he should call any animal thoroughbred which reproduced himself". I would rather say any breed was thoroughbred which did invariably reproduce the distinctive characteristics of its race. Pure Arabians (horses and mares) do hand down and have perpetually handed down the same type, the same form, the same beauty, and the same character; whereas our horse has changed and lost many of the attributes he did formerly possess, and that were for a time imprinted upon "Le cheval Anglais" which "dans sa forme primitive", not now, but in his first or former estate, was distinguished by these several points spoken of before.

So again, referring to a letter entitled "The Turf", written as a protest against the alleged deterioration of the English racehorse, which the motion brought before the Jockey Club, by Sir Joseph Hawley, was intended to counteract the statement that the racehorses of the last century were small, does not prove them to have been bad or even inferior to those of the present time we read—

"The advertisements in the old Calendars early in the last century show that the horses of that day were very small, some of them describing 'that fine horse so and so, full 15 hands high'. Gimcrack, the best four-mile horse of his day, stood 13 hands 3 inches; and the same great authority states: 'The slowest 3-year old I ever tried was a magnificent animal 16 hands 1 inch, by The Flying Dutchman—Virago.' "

These remarks would rather confirm the opinion I have ventured to state on former occasions that height has nothing whatever to do with excellence in a horse. Gimcrack could run long distances; and although I have heard he was 14 hands 1 inch instead of 13 hands 3 inches, which does not much matter, he was a good racehorse; and the tall son of The Flying Dutchman and Virago does not appear to have had any claim to that distinction.

Gimcrack was foaled in 1760, and was 13 hands 3 inches, or 14 hands 1 inch.

King Herod, foaled in 1758, only two years before, was 15 hands 3 inches.

And Eclipse, some 16 hands 1 inch, was foaled in 1764, or four years after Gimcrack; so in a space of six years we have three famous horses of varied height; one approaching to the maximum and another to the minimum standard; and yet it is the *little* horse which is described as being the best four-mile horse of his day! Firetail is *reported* to have run a mile in 1 min. 40 sec. in 1772. There were four of that name. If the date be correct this must have been the one by Squirrel, foaled in 1769; consequently, then, three-year-old colts were trained and ran 100 years ago.

In the same letter it is stated:

"On the question whether racehorses have degenerated let us appeal to facts. A 50 1. plater goes to Cairo, and before the Prince and Princess of Wales, like Moses, spoils the Egyptians, &c. When men talk of Arab horses as racers they make me sick. A bad two-year-old will beat the best Arab in the world at even weights. The tide has turned. 170 years ago the Arab horse sent our old English racehorses to the plough; now it is the Anglo-Arab which rules the equine world."

But the question is not so much if they be racehorses as whether they be

capable of founding a breed of racehorses. "170 years ago the Arab horse sent our old English racehorses to the plough." Just so. Speed and everything good in our present racehorse has been derived from the Arabian. During 170 years a greater average height has been gained, and it is supposed a higher rate of speed has been attained than was exhibited by the Arabs who wrought this great change. So the Arabian horse is capable of begetting a line of racehorses, even by the grafting of his blood upon a stock that was proved to be worthless in comparison with his own. How much greater, then, would have been the speed with the retention of all other good qualities if the Arabian blood had been perpetuated in a pure state (at all events one would be justified in saying the speed would have been at least equal). And the natural inference is that if that plan were adopted now the breed so established must of necessity be far superior in every respect to the one we can now call thoroughbred.

Were the public once thoroughly convinced that our racehorse is not really thoroughbred, and therefore incapable of reproducing, not himself individually as he is at the present time, but the attributes of his progenitor the Arabian, which he ought to do, and would if he were of pure breed, I should conceive there would be no longer any objection to the use of Arabian blood.

It is I think sufficient refutation of this critic's remarks, to quote the following names and dates: Winners of the Derby: 1864 Blair Athol; 1865 Gladiateur; 1866 Lord Lyon; 1867 Hermit; 1868 Blue Gown; 1873 Doncaster; 1875 Galopin. Need one go any further? The writer in *Baily's Magazine* can never have heard of any of these great horses, all of whom trace back to an Arab tap-root. It may be said without much danger that the breed of horse in every category advanced during the reign of England's greatest Queen, despite the fact that she had no expert knowledge and took only a placid interest in the great and profitable national industry.

CHAPTER X

The Huntings of the Kings: Edward VII to George V

THE sporting aspirations of H.R.H. Albert Edward Prince of Wales did not tend towards the turf until long years after he had reached man's estate, but both he and his brother, the Duke of Connaught, like most young men of spirit, were very early on attracted to hunting. The Prince of Wales was never what is known as a first-class horseman, a term far too often used about people who are merely average good riders, but in his twenties H.R.H. was unquestionably extremely keen, and very often went boldly with hounds of all descriptions, including the Queen's, especially during the seasons that Lord Rosslyn was master. Like most of the Royal House he made his début with what may be fittingly called the home pack, the ancient West Norfolk, whose country it is suggested provides such an excellent preparatory school, a fact of which more people might become aware to their advantage and enjoyment.[1]

The Prince hunted with the Burton, and later, as was only natural, he went to that highly-delectable region, the Shires. It has been frequently asserted that the Prince of Wales never hunted in Leicestershire, because he was not a sufficiently good rider to be able to stay with hounds at the pace they go in those parts. This is quite erroneous, as will presently more definitely appear from the chapter and verse provided by such a famous witness as "Brooksby", the late Captain E. Pennell-Elmhirst, for so many years the brilliant hunting correspondent of *The Field*. H.R.H. never attained to the exalted stature

[1] The Prince hunted very little in West Norfolk after he was grown up, and one of the yeoman farmers on the Sandringham estate, now of the ripe age of eighty-nine, is the author's best witness on this point. The following extracts from the diary of King Edward VII when Prince of Wales are preserved in the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle: "1854 Feb. 16. Went out hunting with the Royal Buckhounds [Windsor]. Oct. 12. Out with harriers [Balmoral]." 1857: Description of the activities of the year: "Hardly a day passed that he did not ride: hunted with the Prince Consort's harriers." Extract from *Edward VII: His Life and Times*, by Sir Richard Holmes. "In this home in the Scottish Highlands [Balmoral] encircled by splendid hills, in the middle of a great deer forest, through which ran a fine salmon river, King Edward first learnt to enjoy himself, and it was there that the love of sport was born in him. Though the Prince Consort was never, like his son, an excellent shot, he was a thorough sportsman, and very patient and painstaking in the pursuit of game; and, happily, he encouraged in all his children a love for life in the open air. King Edward was only a child of seven when he was first taken out on a deer-stalking expedition, and taught the various methods of successfully approaching the wariest of quarry."

As a matter of fact the diaries so far as hunting is concerned are not of much aid as to this early period, for the entries are few and far between and of no leading interest.—Author.

of a front-rank man over the ridge and furrow, to say nothing of the intervening obstacles; but he went very bravely, especially in season 1871 and in some years after. It was in 1871 that he was first inducted to Leicestershire, and it is on record that he acquitted himself at any rate as well as any other novice who has had similar ambitions. Of this, however, more presently. At first it is desirable to record the Prince's exploits with the staghounds, and to quote the words of some of those who were eye-witnesses. He began his patronage of the Queen's in about 1864, and he hunted with them fairly regularly until well on into the 'seventies. Lord Ribblesdale reproduces an extract from a report which he had from Lord Colville in 1866, when that nobleman was Master, and Harry King had succeeded Charles Davis as huntsman. It reads as follows:

On March 2, 1868, we had a meet at Denham Court. It was late in the season, but the country was dry. The Prince of Wales was out and we had a remarkable run. From Denham Court we ran past Pinner to the foot of Harrow Hill. [This was after the unfortunate dispute with the farmers in the Harrow country had been settled by Lord Colville's tactfulness.—Author.] The deer went right up to the top of the hill, and I believe passed through the churchyard and down the other side of the hill into what are called Duckpuddle Fields, and thence to Wormwood Scrubs, where I well remember seeing the Duc de Chartres, his horse bogged with a wire fence twisted round his legs. We took the deer at Paddington Goods Station, and accompanied the Prince of Wales to Marlborough House, riding through Hyde Park and down Constitution Hill in hunting dress.

And that was a mere seventy-eight years ago. Hounds and pink coats may be as great a rarity all over England seventy-eight years hence as they were then in the West End of London.

Here are some more of Lord Ribblesdale's records of the Prince's exploits, based upon the information given him by Sir Nigel Kingscote, who was present at any rate upon one of the occasions.

The Prince of Wales summers his hunters at Cumberland Lodge, and in the days when H.R.H. kept harriers (which he afterwards gave to the farmers of the Queen's country) the harriers were kept there. In the good time when H.R.H. hunted frequently with the Queen's Hounds, that is, in from about 1864 into the beginning of the 'seventies, he saw some excellent runs and owned some capital horses. Lord Colville has already told us of one great run. I believe only three really saw the end of that one—Colonel, now Sir Nigel Kingscote, King the huntsman, and Mr. Sowter, the well-known Haymarket saddler; but the Prince, Sir Nigel tells me, went at the top of the hunt as far as Harrow, when with the majority of the field he made a bad turn in the lanes. On this occasion the horses were sent home by train to Windsor, and the Prince's horse, a very favourite mare named Firefly, caught cold and died within a day or two. Another run in which H.R.H. rode "hard and well"—terms which are not always synonymous—and to the end, was from Taplow to St. Albans. Sir Nigel instances another, when the deer was taken near Tring—which must have been a long point—where they had

mutton-chops and poached eggs so well served that they merited and received very special attention and commendation from the Prince. Some of his best horses were Firefly, Paddy, Thornton, Rural Dean, Q.C., Lockington, and Charlie, and they were all ridden regularly with the staghounds. Though all were well-bred, high-couraged horses, Thornton, Firefly, and Paddy were perhaps the special favourites. Q.C. was a grey; the Prince was mounted on him by the Duke of Beaufort when he was staying at Badminton, and liked him so much that he persuaded the Duke to sell him. "Paddy," Sir Nigel writes me, "a chestnut horse which I bought out of the sale of the present Duke of Westminster (then Lord Grosvenor), was, take him all in all, the horse H.R.H. liked the best for many years; and once when staying at Badminton we had quite a good run over the Dodington Vale up on to the high country toward Badminton. I well remember the Prince riding Paddy over a stile first, that, with horses having come so far and so fast, very few indeed would have looked at."

During these earlier days with the Queen's the Prince of Wales was frequently accompanied by his brother, the Duke of Connaught, who was always the better rider, and there may be some still alive who saw him in much later life, when he had the Bombay Command, and will recall his graceful seat on a horse.

The Prince of Wales, although he may have deserted West Norfolk after his novitiate, never quite forsook that hunt, and remained as constant to it as indeed have all his successors. When the Royal Buckhounds were distributed after their demise, the King as he then was, presented Colonel C. D. Seymour with the pick of them, and I heard, when hunting in that country, that they did not do too badly, despite the obvious handicap of the change of the taint and the method of handling; but it is quite easy to believe that they were a little difficult at first. Colonel Charles Seymour's connection as Master with the West Norfolk dated back to 1889, but long before that he had hunted in the country, and he told the author that he could recall the Prince Imperial (killed in the Zulu War, 1879, when attached to the British Army) hunting with them from Sandringham. The gift of these Buckhounds was made long after increasing weight, and the responsibilities of State, had caused King Edward VII to relinquish any active participation in the Chase, but both he and Queen Alexandra, whenever they were in residence at Sandringham, never failed to put in an appearance at all fixtures within reasonable distance, and the royal interest never flagged. The Household naturally took their cue from the King, and Sir Dighton Probyn, V.C., hunted with them regularly in his younger days and remained a liberal subscriber until the day of his death.

The Prince of Wales was thirty when he made one of his first expeditions to Leicestershire, an age somewhat later than that which some consider the best for introduction to those happy hunting-grounds, which Mr. Bromley-Davenport has so poetically told us are

capable of providing glory for the young, consolation for the aged and the "sublimest of ecstasies under the sun" for both! Speaking personally, the author makes so bold as to say that actual age does not matter very much, so long as the nerve has not degenerated to that "last scene of all". But to the young enthusiast his first taste of the Shires is indeed marked with the whitest of stones. There is a magic in it all, which no actual words, written or spoken, can ever adequately convey. The poet has abjured us that "If your horse is well-bred and in blooming condition, well up to the country and up to your weight, Oh, then give rein to your youthful ambition, sit down in your saddle and keep his head straight!" All very excellent advice, with just one small emendation: "If *he* is worth his salt he will not let you sit down in your saddle for at any rate the first two miles, and that if *you* are worth your salt, you will not do so, but turn yourself into a bit of indiarubber and thus take the weight off!" At the time when the Prince went to Leicestershire, going where you liked and as hard as you liked were possible in almost any country, for wire was the exception rather than the rule. That happy state of affairs only lasted a comparatively short time, and then only in hunts sufficiently rich to be able to afford the heavy expense of getting the wire down in the hunting season. In other countries it was "flagged", and jumping places were established in the fences, somewhat of a deterrent to those fond of taking their own line and riding with an intelligent appreciation of what was going on in front of them. In the countries free from wire it is still a joy to give rein to your ambition, even if it does not happen to be very youthful. In those happy times when the Prince went to Leicestershire it was possible to throw your heart over any fence, and follow it as fast as you wanted to.

Though H.R.H. had been to the Belvoir in the preceding season, for, I think, one day's hunting, and had luckily dropped in for a first-class gallop from Hose Thorns, he was still very much of a stranger to the Flying Shires when he arrived at Melton on March 14th, 1871, as the guest of Sir Frederic Johnstone, accompanied by Colonel Kingscote, Master of the Horse, Colonel Ellis an Equerry, and Mr. Knollys (later Sir Francis), his private secretary. The elements were most definitely unkind: to the south there was snow: in the Belvoir country to which the Prince went on the 15th, it was as hard as the high road with frost. Naturally there was not a vestige of scent, and not even all the huntsman's (Gillard's) wiles could produce even the semblance of a hunt. The Prince, we are told, was vastly disappointed and filled in his time jumping any timber he could find, a poor substitute for the real thing.

On the 16th March, however, in spite of the snow, the Quorn thought that it was just possible, for there was a partial thaw. Snow,

even when it is not on the thaw, will carry a scent, and anyway upon this occasion it was decided to risk it, and so obviate the royal visitor returning to town without having witnessed a real Leicestershire burst, which was what he had come forth to see. Accordingly, Mr. Coupland, who was then Master of the Quorn, arranged a special bye-day. It is now desirable that "Brooksby" (Captain Pennell-Elmhirst) should take up the narrative, which he does in his own very best style in *The Cream of Leicestershire*, a book long ago out of print. This somewhat lengthy extract is set out, not only because it is so cognate to the present volume, but because it gives such an excellent picture of the Meltonians of that period:—

Go, get me hither paper, ink, and pen, and let me tell of the screaming burst that the Prince has seen with the Quorn. To meet his wishes for a gallop over Leicestershire without the crowd of an advertised show meet, a quiet by-day was arranged for Ragdale on Thursday, March 16, and the fixture kept so snug and secret that even the select received the notice only as they woke to gaze doubtingly on the snow-covered pastures. Spite of the drifts of snow that filled the furrows and the ditches, a small body of true royalists had collected at the venerable manor house by one o'clock; but Mr. Henton's old cellar was the only morning draw, while a chain of vedettes was thrown out to give notice of any approach from Melton. The solitary horseman who at last was seen spurring on amain over the white-sheeted plain from Shoby came only to tell that hosts and guests had agreed that the country was at present unrideable. The hounds were to remain in the village till another hour or two of Sol's influence should mend matters; and a time was named for throwing off that would have made John Peel jump out of his grave had he heard that hounds were fixed to meet when he would have been toasting at dinner "the fox he had killed in the morning". "Hope deferred makes the heart sick"; so even the most loyal yielded to the pressure of hunger and hail-storm, and dispersed, some to return no more, but most to lay in a foundation for a second pilgrimage in the afternoon. The hours passed by, and Time, that turns our hair to snow, in this case worked the part of Mrs. Allen's Zylobalsamum to the green sward, restoring, at least in part, its natural hue; and soon after three the Prince and his Melton train had arrived, and men were again jogging into Ragdale from all sides. Nothing could possibly be more picturesque than the scene, as one looked down from the Hoby road, where it overhangs the village, on the gay-coloured group clustered in front of the quaint old manor house (once the seat of part of the Ferrers family, but now a farmer's homestead), the hounds dotted about in the centre, and a string of carriages with brightest burdens in the road alongside. An enthusiastic photographer was on the spot, and if he succeeded in reproducing but the leading features of the picture his sale should indeed be a ready one, though the photographic art must have made great steps of late if that impatient toss of his horse's head does not transform his Royal Highness into a Centaur, and Mr. Henry Chaplin is not looming over the whole background like a huge spectre horseman. Beside these there were standing (or, in most cases, moving) Colonel Ellis, Lady Catherine Coke, Lord Grey de Wilton, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Coupland, Macbride, the whips, and the hounds; and on foot, by

the Prince's horse, stood the farmer, with mouth, eyes, nose, and every nerve expressive of intense delight, while some fifty horsemen gazed on the operation.

This process—one to which royalty probably becomes hardened by almost daily experience—being ended, the pack were taken to Thrussington Wolds, and all the polish of beautiful garments and undeniable "get ups" at once smothered in the mud and slush of the lanes and rides.

"Brooksby" then proceeds to tell us all about the class of horse that everyone seems to have pulled out for such an auspicious occasion, quite unmindful apparently, of the risk of over-reaches, which must have been present with the going in such an uncertain state. The Prince, he says, was on a nice-quality dark-brown horse, but none of the royal stud pleased him very much, for they lacked that hard look of the Leicestershire hunter who has been doing his regular turn. However, now let us follow "Brooksby", a first-class pilot, through the surprisingly good gallop which, for some unaccountable reason, they got from Cossington Gorse, the sun having obligingly turned the snow into slush:—

But before going further let me not omit to speak of the grand horseflesh that greeted one's eyes at the meet and in the field. Surely so many glorious cattle (the number of riders being considered) never turned out together as now appeared to do honour to our future king, and credit to the gallop in store. Each man had brought his best horse, or horses, for the occasion; and when we consider that the pick of Sir Frederic Johnstone's, Mr. Gilmour's, Messrs Behrens', Lord Grey de Wilton's, Mr. Coupland's and half a dozen other crack stables (with Captain Boyce's Waterloo, showing money's worth at every point), had been saddled, no eulogium can be thought extravagant. The royal horses were shape and quality itself, the Prince's mount to-day (a dark brown) being to all appearance as perfect a specimen of a high-bred weight-carrying hunter as could be seen; though, as the event proved, they naturally lacked the forward condition of horses who had been taking their weekly turn all the winter. Indeed, it is a fact one cannot help noting, that even in Leicestershire, and in studs that have never been allowed to remain idle when they could be worked, horses are only now beginning to assume the real hard state of condition when they can gallop through a quick thing without being blown, and jump fence after fence without distressing themselves. The broken winter and the lengthened frost have put them where we should expect them to be about Christmas in ordinary seasons, and only the extreme paucity of severe runs since the frost has prevented the fact making itself more unpleasantly apparent.

The fox from Thrussington Wolds was far more selfishly concerned for his own safety than sensible of the honourable task he was called upon to perform, for he slipped through the New Covert, leaving the field to follow through two boggy ploughs, and doubled under the hedge at the road. Unable to make out his line, the hounds were trotted three miles back through this benighted region; and Cossington Gorse, the hope of the day and the anxious master's last support, was reached. Had the Prince now gone home, what a notion would he have carried away of our boasted Leicestershire! And could not the Burton Master have jeered

at the green pastures and flying fences of which we talk so much, relating to them in Lincolnshire how he had found only rotten sport and sticky plough; or Col. Kingscote have bid the men of Gloucestershire hug themselves over their Great-wood run, telling them that in the Shires in the present day they might live with hounds on foot!

By a happy stroke of genius the hounds were thrown into the gorse (without regard to wind), so as to cut off any outlet on the side of the dread district where precious time had already been spent; the field were drawn up in the road well clear of the covert, and there were none of the usual crowd of foot people to mob poor Reynard at his first attempts. Scarce a cheer had broken the stillness ere there came travelling down the wind a clattering, happy chorus, a message of hope and promise. No need of cheer or holloa to press them to the cry; every hound had it, and every hound meant business. But so did their gallant quarry, caring not to hide or twist, but ready at once to accept the challenge. Taking his path straight through the thicket, he arrived at its edge before the noisy throng he appeared to despise were half-way across its breadth, trotted quietly over the road before the horsemen, looked round as if to take stock of the company, whisked his white tag in the face of Royalty, then turned out of the road, and cantered quietly away over the grass. Not a single holloa marked his exit; the body of good sportsmen were too intent on a run to imperil their chances by a noisy exultation that too often nips sport in the bud, and only a low murmur of satisfaction broke the stillness. But, Reynard once clear of the road, the master was on his track in a moment, cheered the hounds to the spot with voice and horn, and one on the top of the other they came dashing forth, open-mouthed and bristle-backed. No restraining voice was wanted with the choice little field so eagerly burning to be away; the gate out of the road was quickly pitched out of its fastening, and one and all waited for the opening note that should give the word "Go". Half a dozen couple burst out together, summoned sisters and brothers to the call, fairly crashed down the open slope, and gave the signal for a start. Like the torrent from an opened floodgate came the keen horsemen in pursuit. The first fence was a stake-and-bound, with a drop beyond, but this was taken almost without a pull. The perils of an anthill-covered field never diminished the pace, nor did the thick bullfinch taken side-ways to the left. With a scent that seemed to madden them, the hounds breasted the steep hill in front. "Oh, what an accursed gate!" in a fence that might defy the charge of an elephant. "Lift up the latch, sir, while I push! lift it, for Heaven's sake, lift it!" Half a second seems an hour as the pack bound over the crest; but never was gate swung quicker. Lord Calthorpe strides up the hill on a grand bay horse, that a slack rein would scarce stop from winning the Liverpool; Mr. Knollys sits back and pounds away alongside, determined to see all he can on his one mount with the Quorn (and for many a year will his dreams of glory contain a picture of Sir Frederic's hog-maned chestnut); Lord Grey de Wilton and Captain Coventry steal quietly along a length or two behind, with Captain Johnstone settling down as if he had been for weeks in hard training for the event. Now they were pointing straight for Rearsby, as if the Wreake and its repellant stream were meant; but so good a fox had no intention of dealing unfairly by his field, and, with a nobler purpose, fixed upon such a line as raised his followers to the seventh heaven (or in individual cases lowered them to the snow). The village of Thrussington bothered him for a moment, and he was forced to turn along the road for a

few hundred yards before striking off again for his point. The body of the pack were over it in a second, with Mr. Henry Chaplin jumping into the road at their heels. Their noses were down immediately, and as they wavered here and there Macbride took hold of them for a cast forward; but meanwhile two couple had turned under the hedge, never leaving the line; when fairly satisfied with themselves caught the ear of Col. Kingscote, who was riding on the left; and a holloa brought up the huntsman and their comrades, with the loss of no more time than served to make it a five-and-twenty minutes' burst instead of twenty. Quick and eager, they dashed away into the valley beyond Thrussington Brickkilns, and struck into the stiffest part of the Quorn country, running straight and hard as when they started. The country rode safely and well on the low ground, though the hills were still deep in snow. A new plashed fence, laid towards you as only the cunning of a Leicestershire hedge-cutter can devise against a boring fox (and with a wide-cut ditch beyond), seemed but a bit of by-play to Major Paynter's loan pony, that could scarce have held his chin over it. Capt. Molyneux and the half-dozen on the right got over with a sense of satisfaction, and galloped hard to join the more fortunate body whom the hounds had favoured. The next field put all the leading lot on equal terms; for one of the bugbears of the hunt (known as the Ox Brook) interposed a stoppage to the direct route, and necessitated a hundred yards' scurry round to a bridge. That it was practicable was proved by one to whom ignorance of the danger was bliss, and who hit off a place where he got safely over, and tailed up the hill after the hounds. On the summit there were twenty men almost abreast, and widely spread, as they flew down over the well-known Hoby bullock fences. May I live to carry age and be as quick and hard as Col. Forester, who was about the "top o' the hunt" at this point. "Forrard! you beauties, forrard!" as they chatter gaily through the very fences that brought such grief in the famous "Bobtail run of '68" (53 minutes without a check, and a kill in the open). Sir Frederic Johnstone on his little brown horse clears the first oxer in the true style that no man in England can beat; the hog-maned chestnut is over close beside him; the Master knees the rail beyond and comes down a cracker; while Lord Grey de Wilton rolls over close after him, his brilliant chestnut having the misfortune to pitch just where the post had been knocked out. Crash! bang! on the right, like the bursting of a 68-pounder, comes Macbride; the dark red chestnut is a bit blown, but he has got his forelegs over and staggers up again to do the same at the next fence. Of the rest, some get over, some get down, while others thrust through the holes that have been made for them. Col. Ellis is well up; but the Prince's horse feels the pace terribly, shows a latent temper of which he has given signs before, sticks his head out, and refuses obstinately. The ugliest line in the three counties would not stop Captain Riddell; but the horse of one equally hard has broken down some time ago, and Mr. Chapman is leading him along and cursing his luck a mile behind. Two more "storming" oxers *in succession* still further thin the field; the forty-acre grazing grounds of ridge-and-furrow call for steeplechasing condition; and as they enter the Hoby and Ragdale road, the company is choice indeed. Was it due to failing breath or shaken legs that one noticed three instances of doubling an oxer? A hundred yards down the road the leading rank pull up short for half a moment, then sharp through the thick thorn fence, which the customers bore at once in half-a-dozen places. What music rings out as the charmers close up and race over the turf, eager for the blood they feel

to be just before them! Scarcely so musical, but none the less excitedly, comes the fierce yell of the huntsman as he cheers them to the head, and with still increasing pace they strain over the broad pastures. Following the valley, they head straight for Shoby Scoles, Capt. Coventry, on a horse of Mr. J. Behrens', sailing along on the right in the cool, determined style which has placed many a good steeplechase to his credit; Macbride is close behind him, while just to the left are Sir Fred. Johnstone, Mr. Ernest Chaplin, Capt. Barclay, Col. Kingscote, and Lord Calthorpe. Half-a-dozen others are lying handy on either flank, but one ought to be furnished, like a Chinese god, with eyes all over one's head, to see everybody at such a time, when, too, it takes more than any ordinary mortal's discrimination to spot the weak place in each fence. "Who's your hatter?" yells Sir Frederic, as a man comes piecemeal through a thick old blackthorn, with his hat flattened on his head like a mortar-board. The retort follows in a practical form from an unexpected quarter. Had he been able to see what those behind him could, he would have known that the little brown horse, who had been galloping and jumping better than the biggest, was now doing as much work with his tail as his legs, and scarce were the words out of his rider's mouth ere he rose too soon at a stake-and-bound, and landed the worthy baronet on his own Lincoln and Bennett.

The fox had kept close along under the hedge that borders the little brook leading down from the Scoles, and, with no room to spread, half the pack were left without other part to perform than to echo doubly the noisy testament of the leaders to the burning scent. Could the sceptics who say that the high-bred hounds of the grass countries run mute have heard the rolling chorus, as the Quorn went at top speed close behind their fox, surely they would never dare to give tongue on the same subject again.

Just before reaching the covert, Reynard took a sudden twist to try the earths in the little spinney above; but this hope failed him, and he was fain to thread the nestling nook of Shoby Scoles. Fox and hounds were in together; Col. Kingscote, who had galloped round the top, viewed him attempting to make his exit and being headed back almost into the mouths of the hounds. But he slipped past them, found refuge in a rabbit hole, and saved his noble brush from hanging to the Prince's saddlebow. "Five-and-twenty minutes as good as it could be," was the verdict, approved by heaving flanks of steeds, and in many cases breathless condition of riders. The cast round the hill to make all safe, before the huntsman was assured of the "gone to ground", gave the needful few minutes to those whom mishap had detained on the way. The Prince was one of the first to appear, his horse showing palpable signs of the energetic influence that had been brought to bear upon him. Even Col. Jervoise's finished skill had been insufficient to turn one of Mr. Westley Richard's young ones into a practised hunter, though he had wasted no time in making up lost ground. Capt. Boyce, of course, was on the spot, for no man turns to hounds quicker than he does; and Capt. Norton, too, had done full justice to his cloth. Another "soldier officer", Capt. King, had ridden the run conscientiously on a draught from the late Atherstone establishment; Lord Dupplin had gone well throughout; and if there were others—and there *were* several—whom the excitement of the burst and anxiety for his own well-being prevented the historian from noticing, let them receive his apology in good part, and drink with him a bumper to the health and happiness of the Prince

who enters so eagerly into our glorious pastime, and to the success of foxhunting in Leicestershire and elsewhere.

This amazing hunt, which I am convinced "Brooksby" has not touched up, as a predecessor, who had such an over-weaning fondness for blue blood certainly would have done, was not the last of H.R.H.'s adventures upon that particular flying visit, for on the 17th March, 1871, the Master arranged something in the nature of a lawn meet at Baggrave, then, as later, the seat of a Burnaby (Col. A. E. Burnaby, father of the late and deeply-regretted Major Algy Burnaby, Master and joint-Master of the Quorn, 1919–32). Again "Brooksby's" account of the proceedings is the only one extant, and, therefore, no excuse is offered for its preservation by theft from *The Cream of Leicestershire.*

Friday, March 17.—Baggrave Hall was the place chosen by the Master of the Quorn where all due honour should be paid to the Prince; and a right royal reception was prepared by Col. Burnaby. The preparations not only included such a *déjeuner de chasse* as would have done credit to Francatelli's overseeing and made the gourmands pocket the bills of fare for home discussions, but boasted of a completeness which only genius and good taste could have accomplished between them. At the entrance to the park was a triumphal arch, on which were inscribed the names of every master who has reigned over the Quorn for the last hundred years (Mr. Coupland, Mr. Musters, and Mr. Clowes—who were present—occupying the most prominent positions), and of all the chief coverts of the hunt; with, overhead, a loyal inscription. The door of the hall, too, was decorated much in the same way. The mob were kept back by a strong force of police in such a manner that they could see and cheer to their hearts' content, and could neither grumble in consequence, nor make themselves intrusive.

The hounds were parading in front of the house shortly before twelve, and the Prince was well up to time, for he drove up very soon afterwards, amid such a demonstration as nearly made the horses jump out of their skins, and the pack disperse all over the place in a state of excited bewilderment. What with the crowd cheering, grooms hallowing at their charges, the huntsman blowing his horn, and the whips rating, there was a Babel that would have stunned one who could not find relief in laughter. After H.R.H. had spent a quarter of an hour among the party assembled in the hall, he was called upon to perform a duty that must have been much more congenial to him than laying first stones or opening buildings for learned societies. This was sowing the first seeds of a new covert, which Col. Burnaby's liberality had prompted him to present to the hunt in commemoration of the occasion. The initials "A.E." were cut out in the turf, and the ceremony was gone through with all due solemnity. May many a good run in the future recall the natal day of the gorse, and the breath that screams the who-whoop shall mutter fervently, "God bless the Prince of Wales!"

Having given such a welcome to his royal guest and a large field, the sporting host made all complete by finding a fox for them in one of the little plantations at the back of the house. The high ground of Baggrave and Lowesby was so choked with snow that riding was impossible—even by the Rugby division, who don't

come all that way to go through gates. Otherwise, for point, distance, and country, and at times for pace, the run was a very sporting one. They kept going on continually, the line was straight and open, and under other circumstances a great deal of enjoyment might have been gathered. The course pursued was for a few fields towards Lowesby, then direct between Twyford village and Ashby Folville, round Thorpe Trussells to Great Dalby village; and leaving the latter on the left, past Gartree Hill, near which the fox was lost. He was dead beat in front of the hounds at Dalby village, and must have lain down in a hedgegrow or got into a drain. At any rate he lives for another day. Ashby Pastures and Cream Gorse contained two vixen foxes, who were only saved from the pack by immense exertions on the part of Mr. Coupland and his men. The Prince stayed as long as there was any hope of another gallop, returning to London with his suite by the 6.40 train; and 'tis to be hoped that the reminiscences he carried away were at least pleasant enough to induce him to let us see him ere long again in Leicestershire.

These two occasions above catalogued do not quite exhaust the Leicestershire record, for the Prince's appetite grew upon the thing it had tasted, and for some years, into his late thirties and early forties, he hunted from London, boxing the horses in the Hunting Special to Melton, and taking with him, in addition to his suite, some favoured personal friends. Among these was Edward Askew Sothern, the famous actor, who made his name by his playing of the small part of Lord Dundreary in "Our American Cousin", a play which had a tremendous success in New York, and afterwards at the Haymarket in London. Sothern rode well, and was likewise a hunting man in the better sense, in that he understood what it was all about and did not go out just to gallop and jump. Unless history lies, he was a bit too keen when it came to a deal, but there is no corroborative evidence, and we all know what almost any buyer will say about almost any seller.

H.R.H.'s hunting jaunts from London are said to have been on a somewhat luxurious scale, and quite unmarked by the Spartan simplicity of the hunting sandwich and the flaskful of sherry, the drink of the more genteel fox-chaser of that period; but there can be no doubt that, whether the Commissariat Department was on a lavish scale or not, the Royal Sportsman's ardour was very great. Increasing weight alone set a limit to the Prince of Wales's activities. He never lost interest in the West Norfolk and that was only one instance of many.

His Majesty King George V never claimed to be known as a hunting man, but he did go out hunting when in residence at Sandringham and he was always a firm supporter of the West Norfolk, that ancient pack whose birth-date is 1534.[1] When the author was hunting in West Norfolk between the two wars, it was related to him by one of the fathers of the hunt that there was at one time a very strongly-

[1] See Appendix D.

PLATE 14. EDWARD VII (WHEN PRINCE OF WALES) HUNTING WITH THE QUEEN'S STAGHOUNDS

(Reproduced by kind permission. From the painting by G. D. Giles in "The Queen's Hounds", by the late Lord Ribblesdale)

PLATE 15. EDWARD VII (WHEN PRINCE OF WALES) HUNTING IN LEICESTERSHIRE IN 1871

(From the painting by John Sturgess in "The Cream of Leicestershire", by the late Captain F. Pennell-Elmhirst ("Brooksby" of "The Field"))

"Brooksby's" caption to this picture reads

"Sir Frederic Johnstone on his little brown horse clears the first over in the true style that no man in England can beat. The hog-maned chestnut is over close behind him: the Master [of the Quorn, Mr. Coupland] knees the rail beyond and comes down a cracker, Grey de Wilton rolls over close after him. Crash! bang! on the right, comes Macbride [the huntsman]. Of the rest, some get over, some get down, but the Prince's horse feels the pace terribly, shows a latent temper, sticks his head out, and refuses obstinately."

expressed desire in the hunt that his Majesty should be petitioned to take over the mastership, so popular was he. I gathered that the scheme never advanced much beyond that, mainly because there was no recent precedent of a ruling monarch having attached the magic letters M.F.H. to the many others behind his name. There was surely no lack of precedent. George IV was *de facto* a master of hounds during the Regency, and also for a short period after his accession; Charles II and Henry VIII, it is suggested, also furnished precedents to any stickler for them. However, unfortunately, as I take leave to think, it never materialized in H.M. George V's case, for even if he had never jumped into every field with his hounds his personality would have assured success.

Sandringham is not in the best part of the West Norfolk country from a purely riding point of view, but hounds have never been known to draw the home coverts blank, and they have always provided an especially valuable asset for cubbing operations. Seeing that all the recent royal owners, including his present Majesty, were and are keen shooting men, the fact that foxes and pheasants have always been in equally plentiful supply rebuts the statement, so often made, that you cannot have both. This has never been true. King George V was never a great horseman, but he rode quite as well as the next man in the general run of things, and in his younger days, when a junior naval officer, he played quite a lot of polo in Malta. This was in the years 1887 and 1888 when H.M.S. *Dreadnought*, in which he was serving, produced a team of her own, led by the Commander, Prince Louis of Battenberg, who was later to become First Sea Lord. The other two members of the side were Lieut. Colin Keppel, later Admiral Sir Colin Keppel, and Lieut. Thomas Troubridge, later Admiral Sir Thomas Troubridge. King George V was also in the team fielded by the flagship H.M.S. *Alexandra*, and there are records of his having played "good hard polo" against various regimental sides, and prominently against a team from the Gordons. In view of all these facts, it would be unwise to discredit the story that West Norfolk thought that the King would make a very good master of hounds. His Majesty never fared forth to the wide green pastures of the Shires as his father had done before him, but, if he was a good enough man to get over the West Norfolk country with credit, there was nothing in Leicestershire or Northamptonshire that would have stopped him. It remained for the next generation of the Royal House to register a return to the Galloping Shires.

CHAPTER XI

Between Two Wars (1918–1939)

THE period between the First and Second German Wars was a notable one so far as the main target of this book is concerned, the connection of Monarchy with the Chase. Very soon after the last round was fired in November 1918 the sons and daughters of King George V and Queen Mary took the field with avidity. His present Majesty, then Duke of York, the Duke of Windsor, then Prince of Wales, the Princess Royal, then Princess Mary, the Duke of Gloucester, then Prince Henry, and the late Duke of Kent, then Prince George, each and all went out fox-hunting with a verve as great as, but much more seemly than, that of James I. The Duke of Kent did not get a chance to take to the Chase quite as soon as his royal brethren and sister, for he was still being trained up to be a naval officer, but, as soon as it was possible, he developed all that keenness on riding and hunting which has ever characterized those who plough the billowy deep. As related in an earlier chapter on the West Norfolk Hunt and its connection with the present Royal House, all the family had made their début to fox-hunting under that famous master, the late Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Seymour, in that fascinating region for a ride over a country that is no funker's paradise. After the First German war was supposed to be over, and as soon as ever the sadly-depleted packs in the grass countries were able to effect some kind of recovery, the three elder princes elected for what are called The Shires, that great region of grass grazing land, quite biggish fences, galloping foxes, galloping hounds with naturally the very necessary galloping horses to match such an environment. It is a praiseworthy ambition to want to see and experience everything at its very best, and though some may dissent and aver that better fun can be had outside Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Rutlandshire and Warwickshire, I am bold enough to claim that, by and large, it would be difficult to find any region in the blessed British Isles where the pace that puts life into the Chase can cause the weight of the unrelenting years to grow so palpably lighter, at any rate upon those all-too-rare occasions when there is the right fox, the right scent, the right country and the right start upon the right horse. The obvious retort of the critic of course will be that, given all these things, anyone who could not enjoy himself anywhere would be very hard to please. That is

quite true in the main, and I do not say that I, personally, have not had a grand time in many places outside the Shires, particularly in Ireland and Yorkshire, but as an unfailing all-round recipe for the "glory of youth, consolation of age" and a taste of the sublimest of ecstasies under the sun, I think T.R.H. made a discriminating selection. Both the then Prince of Wales and the Duke of York made their first bow to the galloping grass in that historic and very ancient royal hunting demesne, the Pytchley country, and almost upon the very spot where the wild and warlike Penda, some of whose adventures are referred to in the first chapter of this book, and later the more desirable King Æthelstan, hunted and where even Alfred the Great himself may have adventured. The Duke of Gloucester, then a young cavalry soldier, found Melton an irresistible lodestone, as later did his eldest brother, but our present King ever remained a faithful adherent of the white collar hunt, with occasional perambulations to Leicestershire, and particularly its southern and stiffest part, the Fernie country. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales was an almost equally faithful Meltonian, though he, too, at times, was given to migration, in his case principally to that wide domain hunted by the Duke of Beaufort. The Prince had a hunting-box there for a short time. H.R.H. the Princess Royal, considered by many, including this author, the best exponent of equitation of the Royal Family, has hunted principally in Yorkshire since her marriage to the Earl of Harewood, whose family connections with the Bramham Moor are so close and of such long standing. H.R.H. the late Duke of Kent's all-too-short hunting career included expeditions to that great country the Buccleuch, over which he performed with much courage and credit. H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester likewise was not exactly unknown in this Border region, and has every reason to shower blessings upon it, for, though he went there thinking mainly about hunting the fox, he found something beyond all price, his Duchess, who was destined to win all hearts in Australia as completely as she has done in her own land. The Tynedale country has been called "the Belvoir of the north", and deservedly as I am persuaded, but the Buccleuch must surely claim an equally resounding title, though exactly which one I am at a loss to designate—possibly the Pytchley, with the added adornment of stone walls. There is every imaginable type of obstacle—timber, the "flake" gates, that do not open and have to be lifted bodily out of their sockets unless you decide to jump them, the sizeable walls, ordinary flying fences, everything, in fact, excepting brooks. I speak from pleasurable personal experience. It was, therefore, to no "baby" country to which the Duke of Kent went. To the great loss to the nation, and his service, H.R.H. was killed when on duty during the late war. If he had lived to see the piping times of peace come again, it is certain that he would have found it impossible to

resist a lure which, once encountered, is absolutely compelling. There is another member of the Royal House, who between two wars had her first experience of hunting the fox, the Heiress-Presumptive, H.R.H. the Princess Elizabeth, and it is of coincident interest that this also happened in the Pytchley country, whose claim to be a hunting ground of kings is thereby reinforced. Her Majesty, the present Queen, and Princess Elizabeth achieved that which was, I verily believe, a world's record. They both got away in front of a very hard-riding field, on foot and a small pony respectively, upon the very last day upon which the distinguished successor of Alwin the Hunter brought his last Pytchley fox to hand, for it was Frank Freeman's last appearance as huntsman to that pack. A note upon this accomplishment were written by the author based upon information supplied by Captain George Drummond of Pitsford Hall, Northampton, who was responsible for the Queen and the Princess getting away in front of the whole Pytchley field. This is the note: "Her Majesty the Queen is the only monarch in history who has ever led the whole field of a crack pack out fox-hunting on foot, and, what is more, done it across a heavy plough. The beautiful Elisabeth of Austria, as is hunting history, went top of the hunt in Leicestershire, Cheshire, Ireland and so forth many a time, but she was mounted on some of the best horses that ever looked through a bridle. It is therefore quite safe to claim this record for our King's Consort because I am sure that even the farouche Boadicea can never have done anything like it during the time she ruled over that hard-riding tribe, the Iceni, who lived where the place now called Exning is, hard by Newmarket. It is also possible, I think, to claim a world's hunting record for the Heiress-Presumptive, for she rode the pony which the Queen (then Duchess of York) led across that plough on April 18th, 1931.

"At the time of this occurrence H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth was three days short of being five years old, and so the recently recorded incident was not the first time she ever went out hunting."

The recorded incident was when Princess Elizabeth, during this war, went out with the Duke of Beaufort's. The facts were rather mixed up by some of the chroniclers, and so it is a good thing to have the correct one straight from the mouth of someone who was there on that April 18th, 1931, and was responsible for the Queen and her daughter getting that start of the whole Pytchley field. Here is the text of the information given me by Captain Drummond, than whom few better men have ever crossed the Pytchley country:

"What happened was, the Princess Elizabeth with her mother holding her pony was in a corner of Boughton Covert and the fox which was there found could not have given a better performance even if commanded or, as Frank Freeman said, 'if we had had him on

a string', for after he went away he passed right under the nose of the Princess's pony and jumped on to a wall and after giving his royal audience the once-over, made straight across the middle of the adjoining ploughed field, circling to the right before disappearing from view. Freeman laid his hounds on in a flash, coming straight to the royal and other holl'as. When the field debouched from the covert they saw to their amazement and probably to the annoyance of the hard thrusters that they were being led by a small child on a pony, going best pace across the plough in the wake of hounds. The occasion was also in a way a sad one, for this was the last time that Frank Freeman ever hunted a fox and it marked the retirement of the finest huntsman probably of a century and the initiation of our most important little lady to the joys of the Chase. Memorable happenings in the annals of fox-hunting."

The young Princess and her sister, Princess Margaret, enjoy the incalculable advantage of having been set on the right road at an early age, and if things had been in any way normal and the world, and their own country in particular, had not been racked by war, would have had chances of which undoubtedly they would have availed themselves. There is no such tutor in equitation as the hunting field. Some of the royal ladies in past history have been held up to us without a shadow of justification as "horsewomen", a term which means something more than "good riders". Queen Elizabeth is known to have been "fond of riding", and of hunting somewhat after our modern method, but to her discredit she descended to the "Park" method, by which presumably people of those times thought that they enjoyed the maximum of thrill with the minimum of risk. Reference is made to the Battues with their arbalists in previous chapters. It has been recorded by an anonymous poet that Henry VIII's

Man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five

a testimony to the Royal enthusiasm, but the country over which Chasseurs à Cheval had then to ride is no yard-stick by which to measure their equestrian talent, for it was hardly enclosed at all. The lovely Mary of Scotland has been handed down to us as a very moderate performer. Catherine de Medici, her mother-in-law, invented the side saddle, and, so they say, was the first advocate of women riding to hounds. Catherine had the courage to back her own opinion as to its efficacy, for she tried it out hunting, of which she was very fond, and paid for her experiment upon one occasion with a broken thigh, and upon another with a fractured skull. Mary Queen of Scots, feeling bound, let us suppose, to give the new-fangled invention a trial, and discarding the old and insecure cushion pad, likewise had no luck.

Queen Anne, about whom the most popular remark is that she is dead, was no horsewoman, fond as she was of horses and racing in particular. It is also said that she was a third-class shot with an arbalist, so cannot have had even so much "sport" as her royal predecessor, Elizabeth.

In the kind of hunting which we of a much later period believed none of these royal ladies would have shone, and I think that it is very probable that not one of them would have been in the first two hundred with the Dianas of to-day, or perhaps it would be nearer the mark to say of the immediate yesterday, for the Temple of Artemis has been closed for so long. It is to the future, therefore, that we must look, and if opportunity offers I am sure that there is no likelihood of our being disappointed. So much for the royal ladies of the House of Windsor and their equestrian talent, as compared to that of some other royal ladies who preceded them in the realm of the Chase. Now for a short, and I trust discreet, note concerning the horsemanship, and knowledge of how to keep with hounds of the Royal Princes.

H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester had probably had the best elementary education, for it included something that is sometimes voted dull, the Cavalry Riding School. Whether the student's ambition be to ride well up to a galloping pack of hounds, to ride steeplechases or play polo, the days spent in the manège are not wasted, and it is regrettable that this fact is not more generally appreciated. To become what is called a "good man to hounds", that is to say to acquire the knowledge of how to get as far forward as possible with a minimum expenditure of energy, is an entirely different matter. A very centaur may never see the way they go! Many a first-class horseman never sees the end of a long hunt, though luck, combined with his equestrian talent, may serve him when it is merely a question of a short burst, in which he gets the start he wants. Courage is not all-sufficing, either out hunting or steeplechasing. A knowledge of pace, plus first-class ability and valour, is, perhaps, the nearest possible description of the "good man to hounds". This paragon never jumps an unnecessary fence, but never lets a necessary one stop him, if he can help it. On the other hand that arch-coper "Major Hamstrung", that extraordinary individual who knows more people by their Christian names than know him by his surname, will always jump a big place when the hunt is standing still, and if he has an audience, in the hope of putting another ten guineas on to the price of the animal he designs to sell to some confiding person, but when hounds really go he is seen no more. No one, so far as I know, has ever seen him at the finish of a good hunt and experience has always told me that I never should. Experience is the only real tutor. I suggest that of all the princes of the House of Windsor the Duke of Gloucester has advanced the farthest along this

difficult road. H.R.H. the Duke of Windsor would probably have done the same, if he had never been fired with the ambition to ride steeplechases. No one was bolder than the former Prince of Wales out hunting, but there was something wrong somewhere, for most of his horses seemed to pull hard with him, and that is not a good sign. Captain George Drummond may claim to have had most to do with the early adventures and equestrian education of the former Prince of Wales and his present Majesty, and it is with his permission that I purloin the following extracts from an article written by him in the Coronation Number of the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* (May 7th, 1937) in which he is far more candid than I have the courage to be. Captain Drummond writes:

It was on December 17, 1920, that I was asked by the Duke of Windsor (then Prince of Wales) to lunch at York House, as he said his brother would be there, and that he also wanted to hunt. Next day we all motored down to the late Mr. Bishop's place at Winslow, and his Majesty gave a practical demonstration that he had done very little riding.

That evening I remember thinking of Castor, the groom in Jorrocks, "who sat on a horse with firmness, ease and grace until he began to move, when he generally tumbled off". This is more or less what happened, to the great delight of the Duke of Windsor, who roared with laughter, as we all do whenever we see anyone else "take it".

I did not know quite what to do, but I remember I said: "You wait, Sir; he will make a better rider than you." The Duke of Windsor looked a bit old-fashioned at me, and on his asking why, my answer was: "He has a better seat, Sir."

I thought that his Majesty what is called "sat into his horse" and that was why, after the contretemps, I thought of Mr. Castor; but I remember feeling quite happy about it all, because I was sure that he had that "good seat".

I heard no more until January 3, when the Duke of Windsor rang me up from Sandringham and asked me to send two more horses, and on my enquiring for what purpose, he said, "For Bertie". I asked him why he wanted *two*, and he replied, "Oh, he's going to hunt."

I said, "But he must not do that, Sir. He will 'take it' for certain." The Duke replied, "Oh, he won't hurt himself here. It's all plough!" So, with fear and trepidation, the horses were despatched.

In ten days' time his Majesty arrived back with the inside of his knees quite raw, and he told me he had been riding for hours every morning, and the next day I could see that a miracle had taken place, for he could *ride*. Somehow, in ten days, he had acquired as much knowledge of "balance" as it takes all but the born horseman years to get hold of.

I maintain that the word "balance" covers all that need be said about horsemanship. There is nothing else to it. A horseman or horsewoman is one who goes with his or her horse; that is, they put their weight where it will best help the horse, and this, of course, varies with every stride. If you do it instinctively you

have been born with it, and I believe few people ever really learn this so that it becomes automatic.

I think that anyone who is instructed to put his weight in different places at various phases of trot, gallop, etc., or when the horse takes off or lands, has a very small chance of becoming a horseman. Again, he has my sympathy if he is told that he must ride shorter or longer, according to the whim of his instructor.

A horseman has the length of his irons according to the way he feels most comfortable to enable him to have his horse balanced, and to assist him best to re-balance when either gets unbalanced. I never forgot two other things I heard years ago, one from wonderful old Sam Hames: "When in doubt, chuck 'em the reins," and the second from Mr. Bert Drage on why horses refuse: "Because most of us stop riding just when we ought to begin."

This is the sort of stuff I tried to hold forth on. From the results, their Royal Highnesses must have speedily found out what was right and wrong about it, because it is impossible to jump successfully all sorts of fences just as they come unless the rider is on pretty good terms with his horse.

Such a great deal of nonsense has been written about the horsemanship of H.R.H. the Duke of Windsor, that I should like to take this opportunity to state at least the following. He never had a single fall with the Pytchley when he hunted from Pitsford, and of the two that he had, in his first season in the Shires, one was entirely my fault.

The photograph that had such wide publicity of his "calling a cab" when Pet Dog jumped the open ditch at Hawthorn Hill was a marvellous performance. The horse took off yards before the ditch and changed his feet on the top of the fence. Judging from the photographs, most present-day jockeys would have come a "purler" when the horse banked the fence, but nearly all of them would have thrown their horse *into* the fence by not chucking him the reins as the Duke did.

To get back to his Majesty: in a month he was regularly hunting and thoroughly enjoying it. I have seen many men who were star turns in their own country unable to get near hounds when they have had a day in the Shires. It is the crowd and the pace that kills them. I have therefore always marvelled that his Majesty and his elder brother could hold their own practically right away in any hunt, and all fox-hunters will agree that for anyone unable to ride before Christmas to be able to go top of the hunt not only on his own horses, but on other people's, before the end of that season, is quite unique.

Believe it or not, that is what his Majesty did, as all who hunted with him can testify. I asked Major Burnaby if he would send his recollections of the King as a fox-hunter, and he kindly enclosed the following:

"It must have been at the end of the season 1920–1 that he had his first day with the Quorn. The Duke, I know, had had very little experience with the packs that hunt over the grass countries of Leicestershire, where, judging from my own experience of fox-hunting in England and Ireland, hounds run faster on account of the grass and small coverts in their so-called top countries. Furthermore, there are, out with hounds, bigger fields, and consequently more 'thrusters' and naturally quite a number of both men and women who, having been brought up to fox-hunting, are extremely good to hounds.

"With all of these the Duke of York held his own. He rode quietly and with judgment and decision. Consequently he was able to enjoy all the sport, which,

during the huntsmanship of Walter Wilson with the Quorn and Frank Freeman with the Pytchley, was fully up to the standard of the sport shown in both the Quorn and Pytchley countries, and which has since continued to be shown. His Majesty had very few falls; only one that mattered, on the Fosse Road, then a dangerous highway on account of the slippery surface. I was able, in consequence, to get the powers that be in Nottinghamshire, where they have excellent roads, to ameliorate this road, and ever since the surface has been safe for both horse and rider.

"I am glad to think that our present monarch held his own with the best that England can produce, and we treasure the memories of the days he had with the Quorn.

ALGERNON BURNABY,
Late M.F.H. Quorn Hounds."

Captain Drummond is bolder than even the plain-spoken Mr. Jorrocks, whose famous remark about the sensitiveness of most people concerning the quality of their horsemanship is too well known to demand quotation. King George VI always rode horses that suited him, light-weight blood ones, of the same type as a charming little bay mare The Duchess which, no doubt, many others besides the present deponent will remember quite well. She was eventually sold to a hard-riding lady in Warwickshire whom I will call "The Widow of Welles-bourne" (Mrs. Caversham Simonds) and carried her gallantly in that strongly enclosed country. His Majesty learned one thing at any rate from his preceptor—elasticity. Experience has taught me that the most serious enemy to high competence is rigidity. A good gun emplacement makes for good shooting: a secure and elastic seat for good hands. Rigidity creates the inclination to hang on by his head. Shakespeare, for whom it has never been claimed that he was any sort of a horseman, keen as he was on "stag hunting", phrased it well when he talked of Marcus Antonius being "encorpsed and demi-natured with the brave beast". "Real hands" are born, but the teaching of elasticity can improve even the most primitive ones. A graven image is as exasperating on a horse as it is off it, and it is rarely that anything can be done with it.

The following extracts from his hunting diary for 1920–1 have been very kindly placed at my disposal by Captain George Drummond, late 1st Life Guards, who was the guide, philosopher and friend of H.R.H. the Duke of Windsor (then Prince of Wales) and of H.M. King George VI (then Duke of York) in their first season in the Shires (with the Pytchley), and I venture to think that the vivid details constitute a little volume of history:

It was on January 30th, 1920, that the Prince of Wales had his first hunt in the Shires. It was due to a promise that he had given to the late Lord Annaly. He had put this off until the last possible moment, as, with his usual diffidence he was,

with his lack of experience, rather reluctant about making the plunge into the fashionable Shires. The meet was at Holdenby; it was a poor day, but owing to Freeman's perseverance we had quite a nice hunt from Harlestone with a kill, appropriately enough, in the gardens at Holdenby.

The Prince of Wales did not intend hunting in the Shires again, but that evening at tea at Holdenby he was persuaded to come and have another day before he sailed for Australia, I undertaking to mount him. Altogether he had five days, the fifth being due to influenza on the *Renown*, and this was a very good day, which I think really made him decide to take up fox-hunting in the Shires. Anyhow, he wrote me from Australia suggesting I should get him some horses and asking if he could come to hunt at Pitsford. This, of course, I was very proud to do, and I think the Prince thoroughly enjoyed his first season in the Shires. With the Pytchley and surrounding packs he had twenty-eight days hunting, nine with the Pytchley, five with the Warwickshire, four with the Fernie, three with the Quorn, two with the Cottesmore, two with the Grafton, and one each with the Belvoir, Whaddon and Bicester.

He only had two falls, one of which was my fault, one with the Fernie and one with the Quorn, both at blind ditches. The fall with the Fernie was a heavy one.

March 2nd. At Long Buckley. Nice hunt from Watford and Winwick. His Royal Highness went the best on Kathleen's grey and jumped a bottom at which she and a farmer counted fifteen falls. The fifth and last one on March 10th, South Kilworth. This was due to a very fast ten minutes from South Kilworth Covert to ground by Shawell. Only Freeman and Charles Lowther, His Royal Highness and myself with them. This was due to our going into the covert, and not standing outside upwind with the rest of the field.

The *second* hunt was due to Freeman working up to a fox from Stanford Park, and they ran just as fast by Shawell to Misterton Covert. Practically the same thing happened as we were all having lunch, but I saw Freeman jump out of the road by Gainford village and he and I got another flier and nobody got near us. In the evening, we had another very fast twenty minutes; only about twelve people it in. No one jumped a fence in front of us in any of these three hunts. In these five days the Prince only had one fall, off his own horse "Manners", over a stile. When he came back from Australia, Lord Annaly and I had a lot of trouble getting him to lengthen his irons two or three holes, and not to hang on to their heads. He had picked up these bad hunting habits by riding Walers, and he unfortunately went back to that style of riding which was why he had so many falls like all do (bar the late Teddy Brooks) who ride in this way.

On the 9th December we rode back from Shuckburgh to Weedon when His Royal Highness insisted on jumping all the Weedon Schooling obstacles. Our six horses did the lot without making a mistake, which greatly pleased his Royal Highness and, of course, myself, as it showed us that we had the right cattle, and that he could sit on them more or less correctly.

He had three rides in point-to-points:

(1) He won the Pytchley light weight on "Rifle Grenade". This horse was a remount, which His Royal Highness got out of the Army and on which Major Walwyn had won many jumping competitions. It was a great race

and His Royal Highness rode right well. He very nearly lost, as he never saw General John Vaughan coming up on his right when he thought he had won. However, he got "Rifle Grenade" going again just in time to beat the General by half a length. As everyone knows, General Vaughan was a first-class horseman and winner of innumerable point-to-points.

(2) In the Grafton, where four miles and a heavy going were too much for his horse, but both horse and rider pluckily completed the course when most people would have pulled up.

(3) In the Welsh Guards Point-to-Point, and after a fall, being six lengths behind, he finished third in the Welsh Guards' team.

At Hawthorn Hill when he won the Welsh Guards Chase he rode a very good race. He went round practically unattended, the three other competitors all falling out early on. It was a wonderful performance by horse and rider, as we all like companionship, nobody more so than horses. Neither horse nor rider had ever been over a regular Steeple Chase Course before.

Prince Henry won his Point-to-Point the day before the Prince of Wales won the Pytchley Point-to-Point, and both his brothers were greatly delighted, but surprised when they saw it in the papers, as they had no idea that Prince Henry was riding in a Point-to-Point.

There were various views, of course, as to the advisability of Their Royal Highnesses riding in Point-to-Points, but the Duke of York, as he then was, was persuaded not to do so, and it speaks volumes for his strength of mind and good sense in not doing so, especially after his two brothers had both won a Point-to-Point. I happen to know how keen he was to have a shot at one himself and I am convinced that he would have brought it off.

The Duke of York in his first season (1920–1) hunted eight times in the Shires, two with the Cottesmore, two with the Quorn, one each Grafton, Whaddon, Bicester and Fernie. His first day was on the 11th February with the Grafton at Culworth Cross Roads. A very fast twenty minutes from Allithorn to Brackley. Colonel Piers-Legh also came with us, and I think he paid me one of the few compliments I've ever had, by remarking that evening after dinner, "Well, I can't see why you all make such a fuss of this hunting; it all seems very easy to me." I don't think he had ever ridden to hounds before, and he went top of the hunt on our horses.

It was later on in the hunting careers of the three eldest princes that they were out upon the day when the Belvoir put up that memorable performance from Clawson Thorns on Saturday, the 9th January, 1926. It is an interesting, historical coincidence that the cream of this gallop was over part of the selfsame country, the Belvoir Vale, as James I traversed in 1603 when *en route* from Scotland to be crowned King of England. There have been many disputations about this Clawson Thorns hunt between both the people who were there and got the kind of start they wanted, and those who were not there at all, or got no start, whether they wanted it or not. The scoffers said it was nothing like so far or so fast as was claimed. No long hunt can possibly

be fast all the way, but if anyone wanted anything faster than it was over the grass parallel with the Harby-Redmile road, then I should think that he had much better stick to hurdle-racing than dabble with fox-hunting. This is not hearsay evidence, for I happen to have been one of the lucky few who managed to get away, and as to the 35-mile-point claim, I am not prepared to contradict it, but it was certainly well over 30 miles. Why I saw this hunt was because I was out on a "War Correspondent's" job, for I was then very busy on one of my previous books, *Shires and Provinces*, so I had to pretend to be intrepid, not that there was much need for courage, for the then M.F.H. had kindly lent me one of the best performers in all Leicestershire. There was never one anxious moment. This hunt is descanted upon because not only was it notable, but because two future kings and their brother were out.

The huntsman, Nimrod Capell, said "they found" their second fox in Clawson Thorns. I do not think they did, for it is certain that he was a "traveller" from Holwell Mouth, where they had just put their first fox in, and left him for hounds ran straight through the Clawson Covert without dwelling, and most people were cantering on from "Hell's Mouth" (Holwell). It was then that the fun really began. The cream was all skimmed by the time Muston Gap and the L. & N.E. railway were reached, and the rest was just an amble, and no one quite clear as to what was happening. Hounds were certainly not running bristling for blood! It gave the rearguard plenty of time to join up, and to go on to Staunton Hall to get themselves "mentioned in despatches". That first burst, however, was worth a lifetime. The rest really did not matter. For the sake of completeness it is only fair to set out the huntsman's report rendered to the master, the late Captain Marshall Roberts. It reached Woolsthorpe, where I happened to be staying, shortly after 11 p.m. and here it is:

Saturday, 9th January, 1926. Landyke Lane, 11 p.m.

The Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, and Prince Henry were out. Old Hills was blank. Found in Holwell Mouth, but the fox was repeatedly headed in all directions and eventually went to ground. Found in Clawson Thorns, and hounds settled to run at a great pace over Mr. Silcock's farm, as if for the Harby Hills; turned right-handed, and ran to Landyke Lane; on, still running at a great pace in the direction of Holwell Mouth, where the fox was headed on the road. Going away from Clawson Thorns he ran down to Clawson village; turned right-handed over Mr. Silcock's farm again straight on to Piper Hole Gorse, and away as if for Goadby Bullimore; turned left-handed and ran straight to Harby Wood. Here there were several foxes on foot which caused complications. Went away down the Vale in the direction of Harby village; crossed the Eastwell and Harby road, leaving Harby village on the left as if for Granby Gap. On reaching the canal he turned right-handed and ran over the Plungar road as if for Barkestone.

Just before reaching this village, turned right-handed over the Harby and Redmile road as if for the Belvoir Woods. Short of the woods he turned left-handed, and if we changed foxes, ran on over Bissel Hill, straight through Muston Gorse in the direction of the Stainwith. Turning left-handed, went on towards Easthorpe. Here we made a sharp right-handed turn, leaving Muston village on the left, ran down the ironstone railway to Muston Gap, over the L. & N.E. Railway, through Debdales, and on as if for Moss and Plumbs. Leaving this covert one field on the right, raced on past Normanton Big Covert, straight through Staunton Hall grounds, leaving Staunton Grange just on our right, ran on through Shelton Whin and Portland Covert, and away, leaving Hawksworth on the right, on towards Bingham. Here we made a left-handed turn, and ran straight on, leaving Tythby on the right, to Langar village, where we lost.

It was a most noteworthy hunt, which lasted for five hours, with a 14-mile point, and over 35 miles as hounds ran.

The disputes over the distance as hounds ran and the point do not really matter. It was eventually recorded, more or less officially, as: "Point:—Thirteen miles; distance, as Hounds ran, 29 miles: time 4 hours and some minutes."

It was not all with the same pilot, for it is certain that the fox from Clawson handed over his responsibility just before that railway crossing near Staunton. The only value of the incident, as far as this book is concerned, is that Monarchy *in posse* saw the Chase at its best. Whether any future monarch of this Realm is likely to be as fortunate as were King Edward VIII, and King George VI, I think is open to doubt for many reasons, some of which are discussed in the next and concluding chapter of this book. Fox-hunting, and that for which it is supposed to stand, has many acid critics, who condemn without knowledge, and also, as is to be feared, from another and most unworthy motive, that abominable thing called Class Hatred, which has its origin in the unalterable fact that A never has been B and never will be. Racing would be a very dull and monotonous pastime, it all horses were of equal excellence, for then every race would end in a dead-heat. I think with poor Adam Lindsay Gordon, that

> . . . if once we efface the joys of the Chase
> From the land, and outroot the stud,
> Goodbye to the Anglo-Saxon race
> Farewell to the Norman blood.

CHAPTER XII

The Future

IS there a future for fox-hunting, and if so, what? These are the questions asked very often by those who have been born and bred, also brought up, in the Sport of our Ancestors. You can find as many answers in the affirmative as you can in the negative, for, obviously, there is plenty of material to supply both. The rabid enemy of any form of relaxation, excepting the kind in which he may imagine that he himself excels, and which is foreign to the class in which he has lived and had his being, will say that the Chase, and all for which it stands, is a relic of barbarism, and that the sooner it is abolished, lock, stock, and barrel, the better. You cannot eat foxes, so why hunt them, and that if you must have pheasants, partridges, grouse and hares, why not snares and traps instead of wasting ammunition on them? If you simply must shoot, why not clay pigeons? If you must ride, and are such a misguided fool as to like horses, what is the matter with the Row, or a paper-chase over a set course on the breezy Brighton Downs, or the uplands of Hampstead, or even Exmoor? There is no profit to be gained from arguing with a crank, particularly one deeply impregnated with class hatred, and who is convinced that, because he himself has never been inducted into the joys of riding over a strongly-enclosed country, and equally, has never been taught how to hold a gun straight, that these things must be bad, and therefore should be banned if necessary by a Statute of the Realm. These gentry, incidentally, can never hope to change the instincts of the whole creation. Every animal, Man included, is a hunter, or is hunted, and, probably, if we penetrated into the secrets of the inner life of our vitriolic critic, we should find that he, willy-nilly, is compelled to conform to an unalterable law of nature. It is quite probable that he is following the spoor of someone in Threadneedle Street, or The Poultry, and in turn is being stalked by someone from Moorgate or "Simmery Axe". The urge is inescapable: it is merely the form and the method which differ. There are those, also, who have had their day, and who, having seen possibly the very best of it, take the view that that which is yet to come, so far as the Chase is concerned, can be of small moment, and that the generation which has never known it will, therefore, never miss it and, quite possibly, never want it.

This is a selfish and quite unworthy attitude, and emphatically is

not the one which is adopted by the best of "the Ancient Top Sawyers"; for he knows, none better, that the vigour of our race, that spirit which said, "Fight on!" when all around were crying, "Give in, the day is lost!" was built up by the very same process as that by which the fighting man has been manufactured all down through the pages of our history. War and Sport are twin sisters. The best material for the one field has always been recruited from the other. William the Norman was one of the earliest discoverers of this truth, and one of its most renowned exploiters. The general mechanization of every implement of war, and of so many of those of peace need not, and I am certain has not, eliminated the love of man for the non-mechanical. No one, so far, has expressed any desire to shoot pheasants with submachine guns, or to kill his salmon with an asdic-controlled fly. The ancient methods survive. We have seen petrol-propelled steel take the place of the arm which charged the guns at Balaclava: we have seen the motor oust the covert hack, but nothing has dissipated the spirit behind it all. There are, admittedly, many obstacles in the path ahead which are new ones and more formidable than many that have been met in the past.

The tactical weapon in war is the only thing that changes with the times: the fundamentals of strategy are constant and immutable. Hunting may not die the death as a result of what has happened during the five years of bitter warfare, but it would be very foolish to believe that it can at once return to the *status quo ante bellum*, as it did in a very short space of time after the last round had been fired in what it is convenient to call the First German War. That was then called the Great War. The Second German War has deprived it of that title. The new post-war conditions are diametrically different. In the period 1914–18 the conflict was fought out upon foreign soil: in 1939–45 it was fought upon our doorstep and also inside our houses. In 1914–18 the British Isles were not the forward operational base: in 1939–45 they were not only that but, and this is the important point to be remembered, they were turned into a mammoth unsinkable aircraft carrier. Aerial warfare was in its infancy in the First German War by comparison with that which happened in the Second. In that earlier conflict, huge and bloody though it was, the decisive effect of the aerial weapon had not been as fully recognized as is now the case, with the result that England was not armour-plated, with landing strips and aerodromes as it was vitally necessary that she should be in the war that has just ended. It will be argued that this state of affairs, affecting such a big expanse of country over which we used to hunt, will pass: that tarmac can be torn up and turned again into glorious grass or arable, and that, after all, aerodromes are not absolute stoppers to a pack of hounds, and those who follow it. This is only true in part,

but we shall be living in that delectable region, a Fool's Paradise, if we imagine for one moment that the most necessary safeguard of all, air power, could be discarded the moment that the bugles blared forth the "Cease Fire". We know full well from our bitterly bought experience that the risk of hanging up our bruisèd arms for monuments is too hideous a one to contemplate. Our country must perforce remain one for a very different kind of "Flyer to Cross" like a bird on the wing until such time as war as a method of elaborating policy can be banished from the face of this fair earth. He would be a bold man indeed who would venture to predict the date of the arrival of that Arcadian epoch. He will be a criminal lunatic who follows in the footsteps of those who disarmed Britain in 1918.

The most recent development in aerial weapons from some of which we, in these islands, have suffered so greatly and whose potentialities have by no means been exhausted, should give even the flaming optimist pause and compel him to realize that this most vulnerable country can never cease to be a great aerial arsenal as ready for defence against the deadliest of modern weapons as it is for attack against a foe of whose craft and ingenuity we ought not to need any telling.

In my personal and most carefully weighed opinion, the astounding developments in aerial and mechanical warfare, of which we are the witnesses, have completely changed the outlook where British field sports, and especially fox-hunting, are concerned. The emphasis is on Field Sports, as opposed to Games, which are not so much affected by the cataclysm of war. This aircraft carrier base, which Britain perforce must be, is not the only deterrent, for there are many others, but protection from invasion and all that we know it would have meant in 1940–1, is the chief. I am not indulging in pessimism, but merely endeavouring to face facts which are based upon first-hand evidence. Tracts of country, where we used to find our fox and follow the flying pack that hunted him, have been changed utterly, and no touch of a magic wand can bring them back to what once they were. Prince and Peasant, Peer and Ploughman may all be equally anxious to see our land once again meriting the title of "Merrie England", with all her ancient sports preserved, but something has snapped, and has gone from us, possibly for ever. Whether it can be recaptured is a question to which at present I can find no answer. The grass with its ridge and furrow to a very large extent has been turned over to plough to grow those necessities of our very existence, of which we were within an ace of being deprived, for it is now no secret that a far thinner sheet of paper lay between us and starvation by blockade than was the case when the U-boat had gained the upper hand in 1917. The grazing countries, the ones in which fox-hunting, and all the best for which it stood and which were the backbone of the whole

PLATE 16. EDWARD VIII (WHEN PRINCE OF WALES)
OUT WITH THE PYTCHLEY, 1921

In the foreground is Captain George Drummond of Pitsford Hall, who was responsible for introducing the present Duke of Windsor and His Majesty King George VI to The Shires.

structure, have to a large extent gone. Good plough countries of course there are, but the grass set the standard. There is this further, the matter of roads built for strategic needs. These may be multiplied, if it is agreed that the 1918 disarmament cannot be risked yet again. The general picture is one of an almost completely changed countryside. There is another, and perhaps the greatest obstacle of all, our old enemy £ *s. d.* The old landed gentry class is rapidly disappearing, indeed it might be said to have passed away: incomes have shrunk to less than half their size; no one will have much money for cakes and ale and still less for the corn and for the oil and the wine that maketh glad the heart of man. Even Sir Gorgius Midas is not as plentiful as he used to be, and even if his desire to climb the social precipice viâ the hunting field be as strong as ever, he may not be attracted if there is a decrease in the pomp and panoply of the Chase. That is certain. Hunting establishments of the four days a week type, with anything from sixty to eighty couples of hounds in kennel, and hunt studs of between forty and sixty first-class horses must vanish, for no one will have the money to keep them up. No one will be able to afford the subscriptions.

There is another matter which deserves consideration by those who think that, because hunting is supposed to be the pleasure of the few it should be done away with; the large employment which it provided to such a varied number of people. If hunting is abolished this must disappear and both the farming and the horse-breeding interests will suffer. Under normal conditions hunting gave employment to half a million persons at a very conservative estimate. If hunting is to continue we cannot hope for normality for many long years to come. Even in the period between these two wars, when hunting effected a most surprising recovery, things were very stringent indeed, far more so than the majority of people, who just "went out hunting", ever knew. Sole masterships were infrequent, long masterships few and far between; expenses upon an ever upward grade, and "natural" obstacles, the electrification of railways, the motor menace, tarmac and wire increased year by year. The difficulties were stupendous, yet they were borne by a courageous few, who believed that it was good for the national fibre that the most ancient of British sports should be preserved. Names which spring readily to memory include those of the Quorn masters, Captain Frank Forester, Major Algernon Burnaby, Mr. Edmund Paget, Sir Harold Nutting; the Cottesmore, the late Lord Lonsdale and Mr. James Baird; the Belvoir, Major Thomas Bouch, Captain Marshall Roberts, Mr. Charles Tonge and Lieut.-Col. Gordon Colman; the Pytchley, Sir Charles Lowther and his brother, Col. J. G. Lowther, and later Col. "Peach" Borwick; the Fernie, Lord Stalbridge, Sir Harold Wernher and Mr. Charles Edmonstone; the

Beaufort, His Grace the Duke; the Atherstone, Mrs. Inge; the V.W.H. (Bathurst), the late Lord Bathurst and in other regions Mr. Ikey Bell, one of the greatest pillars of fox-hunting, and master at various periods of the Galway Blazers, the Kilkenny and the South and West Wilts; Major Dermot, MacCalmont (Kilkenny), Captain Harry Fowler (Meath), the late Lord Yarborough (Brocklesby); and Sir Watkyn Williams Wynn (his own). These are outstanding names, picked almost at random, but by no means claimed to be comprehensive. They were, generally speaking, men who could afford to do that which they did. Where are we going to find their counterparts in this post-Armageddon world? The question seems to me to be a very difficult one to answer. "Sir Gorgius Midas" and his inexhaustible sheckles is not the answer.

Next let us look at some of those unpleasant things figures, and then ask ourselves what are the chances of any return to even the between-wars standard. I will not mention any names, but here are the actual costs of a crack four-days-a-week pack in Leicestershire: Kennels upkeep only, £3,734 7*s.* 7*d.*; stables, £3,490 1*s.* 6*d.* These figures exclude capital outlay on hunt horses or the M.F.H.'s own stud, or his general expenses, which, in this case, left him very little out of £10,000 a year; or the wire fund which could add something like £2,000 a year.

In a well-known three-days-a-week provincial country the joint masters, both wealthy men, were given a guarantee of £3,000. It cost them about £7,000 between them to bring hounds to the meet, apart again from capital outlay on horses. Let us look back a few years, for I think that it may be enlightening to do so because of the certainty that if we want to carry on at all the clock will have to be put back. Here are Squire "Gumley" Wilson's figures for his Atherstone mastership (1849–50), that is to say, round about the Anstruther-Thompson epoch: Expenses for 4 days a week, 50 couples of hounds, 26 hunt horses and hacks including taxes, £2,104 7*s.* In 1850 "Gumley" Wilson realized £2,502 at the sale at Tattersall's of 21 hunters and 3 hacks. This is what it was possible to do, roughly speaking, about 100 years ago. Does anyone suggest that such an achievement can be repeated, no matter how cleverly we may try to cut our cloth to suit our coat? Any four-days-a-week hunt which could do it for three times the money "Gumley" did, would I think be credited with a conjuring feat. Yet, if we want to carry on, something like this has got to be done. We shall be compelled to revert to the simpler methods of our ancestors, who had no hound vans, motor horse-boxes with trailers and very few second horsemen.

In many other ways also there will have to be a different approach to fox-hunting. A repetition of what happened immediately after the

last war will be highly undesirable. Some of us may consider that "Haies", "Parks", rélais, battues with crossbows, which came to us with the Normans, carried on all through Tudor times, and only began to be succeeded by what we consider the more orthodox method in Stuart days, were artificial, and savoured strongly of hitting below the belt. I suggest that the pot may be calling the kettle black. It has been contended by even some of the most modern of "hunters", that the system upon which Gaston de Foix descanted so voluminously in his famous *Livre de Chasse* (1387) was neither "artificial" nor unsportsmanlike, since the main object of all hunting is supposed to be to catch the thing you hunt, and that the *veneurs* of his times, and those which preceded and followed them, had to do the best they could with the "implements" they had, some of these "implements" being very slow horses, and hounds which were not much faster, and which when too fast, for their followers, were "lawed", that is to say deprived of some of their toes. Hence, in view of the artificiality of a much later date whether we have any right at all to gird at these ancient methods of bringing the hunted animal to book, is very debatable.

After the First German War there was a certain amount of indiscipline in certain countries, for which only a small minority too full of spirits, and mad keen to ride, was responsible. It was a bit difficult to control in some cases and caused not a little anxiety to many a hard-pressed master. It also drew down a bit of comment from masters in other countries.

Mr. Joseph B. Thomas, the well-known American M.F.H., in that important book *Hounds and Hunting Through the Ages*, which was published in New York in 1928, the very period under reference, wrote as follows:

> In Britain hunting to ride is now all the vogue as opposed to riding to hunt: quick bursts lifting hounds to holloas and over numerous foxes have played havoc with veritable hunting in the old sense. . . . The deliberately dishonest huntsman is inexcusable, he ruins hounds and he deceives his followers. Cheering hounds to a false line, laying drags, dropping foxes at the end of a drag line, making his field believe hounds are hunting a fox when they are in reality hunting the huntsman, expressed mildly some of his wiles. Unfortunately there have been several huntsmen in America who regularly practised such buffoonery. In England, where a huntsman's tips depend largely on his reputation as a "smart" huntsman giving the riding contingent many short quick gallops, it is also a great temptation for a huntsman to be euphemistically speaking a faker.

To carry the comparison between the old and the new a little bit farther, we have not, as a matter of fact, left the "Haies" system entirely behind us, even though it is not applied to fox-hunting. What else is the khedda scheme for catching wild elephants in India and Burma than "Haies" on a large scale? The animals are herded by

trained tame elephants into *allées* of strong palisades ranging over a vast expanse of country, into stockades. It is true that in this case there are no bowmen or javelin men lying in wait to slaughter them, for elephants are of too great a commercial value, but in the main the method is the same. What difference again is there between Queen Elizabeth with her crossbow, seated in a comfortable stand in one of her "parks", round which the deer were chased, and the man who sits up in his machân over a kill, near which he has placed an electric bulb, the switch of which he holds? The tiger arrives, up go the footlights and down goes the tiger! Ringing the royal beast with elephants till they have him in a small arena is just as artificial, and quite as bad in my opinion, as anything Frank Gillard did with that mixture of his. So what right have we moderns to say anything about what de Foix or de Fouilloux did? They, at any rate, never "painted", and it is certain that the Preux Chevalier Charlemagne never even contemplated trying it on with his Aurochs. He was a very brave man, but he was not a fool, devoid of an appreciation of the better part of valour.

The worst results of this undisciplined state of affairs, purely the fault of an ignorant minority, was that it furnished a ready-made handle for the fomenters of class hatred. There was a full-throated chorus from those who are so fond of deriding a thing they call the "Old School Tie". We heard a great deal about the decadent idle rich, and the "huntin', shootin' and fishin' " brigade. A vast amount of sheer nonsense was talked, written and produced on the stage. These foolish Young Brights represented no one excepting themselves, and most certainly not the real hunting world.

In a minor degree it was the same as the reaction after the Restoration. This sort of thing is inevitable: it is just the releasing of the compressed spring.

It is only fair to say that this period of mental aberration was not permanent, and that thanks to the efforts of many masters, and also, in part, to the tuition imparted by the Pony Clubs, which then began to spring up all over the country, knowledge was imparted, and, in even the most unruly region, the Chase began to be that which it was intended to be, a fair duel of wits between the Hunter and the Hunted. If there is to be a reversion to the artificial, and hunting is to be used purely as an excuse for galloping and jumping, and showing off, then it will not deserve to survive. Captain Crasher is no doubt very gallant, but however good he is over a country, he cannot hope to usurp the place of the hound. Quite often he seems to think that he can. Let us hope that a generation can be re-created with an intelligent comprehension of the science of venery, as well as a knowledge of equitation, and that we shall thus retain a good forcing-bed for the human material necessary for the insurance of the national existence, for that is what

field sport has done, and will always do. We want the man who has had to take on the rough with the smooth, and who has learnt to look after himself in circumstances of difficulty and danger. It has been proved to be a sovereign recipe in the past, and it is a good one to follow in the future.

APPENDIX A

The London Hunt

THE following intriguing account of the operations of the London Hunt, the direct descendant of the one established by Henry I, and then called the Common Hunt, appeared in the *Oriental Sporting Magazine* of October 1828.

" *The Epping Hunt*

"April 7th (Easter Monday) was the day on which, according to annual custom and immemorial usage, the great London Hunt took place in Epping Forest: and most unquestionably nothing could be like it—or, as the post says—

"Nothing but itself could be its parallel.

"The day opened rather inauspiciously for hunting, insomuch that the landlords on the Forest—old Tom Rounding, and he of the Baldfaced Stag, especially —began to look rather lackadaisically at their larders, in a well-grounded fear that *no cockneys would come to consume the many fair rounds* of beef and portly hams, cooked purposely for cockney consumption. But at one o'clock the rain blew off, the sun broke out, and the cockneys came flocking down the road by hundreds—nay, by thousands; and old Tom Rounding's rounds of beef were speedily converted into cockney chyle. Old Tom, be it remembered, is the Master of the Hunt; for though the renowned William Tilney Long Pole Wellesley has the credit of the thing, yet old Tom rules the roast—and the boiled too; and many a gallon of *Old Tom* does he get rid of, at a pretty considerable profit, in consequence thereof. Consequently 'the Hunt' did not begin till *two o'clock in the afternoon*; for old Tom is decidedly of opinion that it is bad to hunt upon an empty stomach. 'Hunting,' quoth he, 'is sport—sport is a joke, and there is no joking with an empty stomach.'

"At two o'clock in the afternoon, then, the hunt began; at which time there was as pretty a field of sportsmen assembled at the top of Fair Mead Bottom as a body would wish to see on an Easter Monday. None of your Melton Mowbray concerns—four-and-twenty scarlet coats all in a row; but two or three thousand regular-bred cockneys; some on horseback, some on assback, some on *drags*, some in *rattlers*, some in Captain Abbott's *cabs*, and some in nothing at all, and all mixed higgledy-piggledy together, so that no man amongst them could say, 'Here am I,' with any chance of being owned by anybody else. Indeed, we heard one gentleman call out, 'Where the d—l are you, Jack?' To which Jack replied, '*Cuss* me if I know"; and no doubt there were a vast many others in the same predicament. At two o'clock, as aforesaid, a fallow deer (of the softer sex) was brought from old Tom Rounding's stable in a cart, after having been shown at threepence a peep, as long as anybody could be found to pay threepence for peeping at it. There was

at least nine couple of hounds brought with it; somehow or other, they got lost among the carts, cabs, and coaches. A ring was formed round the cart, and the lady deer was pushed out of it, *vi et armis*, into the middle of the ring. And such a shout was set up at the sight of her, as might well have quailed the heart of the proudest in the Forest.

"The sportsmen soon rallied, and beset her to such a degree that she did not know which way to run; but went wandering in and out among the coaches and things seemingly quite bewildered, until a vary valiant cockney, on a horse at least eleven hands high, gave her such a cut across the nose, with his hunting-whip, as sent her off right an end into a fold-yard hard by, and there they crowded upon her so fast, that in the scuffle they succeeded in breaking her leg. Of course she was put completely *hors de combat*, as the French say, and no doubt she was speedily converted into vension, for they took her away in the cart more dead than alive.

"It was now after three o'clock, and as the sportsmen had not had sport enough, the managers gave notice that they would bring them another deer. Accordingly they went back to old Tom Rounding's, and about four o'clock they brought down another—a more sprightly one than the first; and one that seemed to have been 'trained up in the way he should go'; for he was no sooner out of the cart than away he went with a bit of a circumbendibus towards old Tom Rounding's stable again. Everybody—except the hounds—followed him at the top of their speed; but he would have got safe into the stable nevertheless, if some two or three hundred of them had not faced him, by a short cut; which he perceiving, he very unfairly ran up to his knees in a horse-pond. Though some two or three of the foremost tumbled in after him, he did not take the least notice of them. A consultation was then held as to what should be done with him; and at last, by general agreement, it was settled that he should have another start. So the managers got him out of the horse-pond at last, and he ran about in the wood a good deal, until everybody was very hot, and then he was lost. However, just then a nice cooling shower came on very providentially to cool the heat into which everybody had got himself, and so they all, as usual on this occasion, betook themselves to their heels —or the heels of their horses and asses—with all convenient speed."

APPENDIX B

Charlton and The Charlton Hunt

(*By an Anonymous Author*)

"WE have all heard of Goodwood; but where is Charlton? and what of it? A little more than a hundred years ago these questions would have been exactly reversed; then all the world had heard of Charlton, while the glories of Goodwood, now become a household word among us, slumbered in the womb of time. In an account of the Judges' progress to Chichester in 1749, they (judges) are described as being entertained by the Duke of Richmond 'with a dinner at his hunting house, near Charlton'. The writer evidently either did not know the name of Goodwood, or considered it would give no information to his readers; 'near Charlton' was quite sufficient guide as to its locality.

"Charlton was the Melton Mowbray of its day, and the Charlton Hunt the most famous in England; the resort of the great and wealthy, eager to participate in our national sport of fox-hunting. King William III and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, then a guest in England, are recorded as having been down to Charlton to witness a fox-chase; and even the softer sex joined in the hunt, held their assemblies in the village, and probably participated in the pleasure of eating a Charlton pie—a dainty then well-known, though now entirely forgotten—forgotten as Charlton itself now is: the very traditions have nearly died out; scarcely a villager can now tell of its former renown, or talk of the 'good old times'. But to keep these in remembrance, to commemorate something of the glories of Charlton, the writer of these few pages has collected such information as may interest those acquainted with the neighbourhood, or loving the sport Charlton was so famous for; for much of which he is indebted to the courtesy of Charles Dorrien, Esq., of Ashdean House, who possesses a curious MS. account of the Hamlet and the Hunt.

"Charlton, a tything of the parish of Singleton, lies in the valley north of the Goodwood hills, and about a mile east of the high road from Chichester to Midhurst. It is now principally remarkable for its 'Forest'—a large wood, extending over 800 acres, belong to the Goodwood estate, but formerly the property of the Fitzalans, Earls of Arundel, where this great family enjoyed the pleasure of the chase, having a hunting-seat at Downley, on the verge of the forest, of sufficient importance to be used as an occasional residence; indeed, two of the Earls are stated to have died at Downley—Thomas in 1525, and William in 1544.

"From time immemorial, therefore, it appears that the woods and pleasant down of Charlton have been appropriated to the enjoyment of hunting and the chase; of later years more exclusively to fox-hunting; and from this circumstance only, Charlton derives its celebrity.

"As long as the pursuit of the fox has existed as a national sport, it is probable

there was a Meet at Charlton; but it was first brought into notice from its being the favourite resort of the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth, who probably owed his acquaintance with Sussex to his friendship with Ford, Lord Grey (afterwards his second in command at Sedgemoor), who was seated at Up-park, in this neighbourhood. Monmouth appears to have had a peculiar love of Charlton, saying jestingly, 'When he was King, he would come and keep his Court at Charlton.' So early, too, were his hopes of a future crown alluded to. On one occasion he was so entertained and made so much of by the citizens of Chichester, being received by crowds, welcomed by bonfires and ringing of bells, and subsequently taken in state to the Cathedral, that Bishop Charlton thought it necessary to write apologetically to the Metropolitan to excuse the apparent want of loyalty to the reigning Sovereign. This letter, still extant, is dated February 17th, 1679. Amongst those who paid their respects to Monmouth at this time were Mr. James Butler, of Amberley, M.P. for Arundel, and Mr. Edward Roper, of Eltham, who afterwards married his second daughter, and whose connexion with Charlton, as subsequently alluded to, is probably accounted for by this relationship.

"Two packs of foxhounds appear to have been kept at Charlton at this time (1679) belonging to the Duke of Monmouth and Lord Grey, the master and manager being Mr. Roper, the before-mentioned Kentish gentleman, a great lover of the chase, and possessing great knowledge of hounds and hunting. He was sufficiently intimate with Monmouth to be obliged to leave the country on the unfortunate termination of Monmouth's attempt to seize the throne, taking refuge in France, where he made acquaintance with the celebrated St. Victor, and enjoyed in the forests of Chantilly the sport he was debarred from pursuing at home. On the accession of William III and Mary Mr. Roper returned, and resumed the management of the hounds, which appear to have become the property of the Duke of Bolton and himself, and had soon the satisfaction of seeing a noble party of lovers of the chase around him. Among the earliest names mentioned were the Marquis of Hartington (afterwards Duke of Devonshire), whose daring exploit of riding down Leven Down, one of the steepest hills near, and leaping a five-barred gate at the foot, was long remembered; the Earl of Halifax, General Compton, the Dukes of Bolton, Grafton and Montrose, Lord Nassau Powlett, Lords William and Harry Beauclerc, Forester, Hervey, Harcourt and others. How these noblemen were accommodated with lodgings is a wonder to the present generation. Some of them had (probably built) houses of their own—the Dukes of Devonshire and St. Albans and Lord Harcourt amongst them; and every cottager, both in Charlton and the adjacent villages, had a lodger in the hunting season; a golden harvest for them. To add to the importance of the Hunt, the Earl of Burlington, the Vitruvius of his day, designed them a banqueting-room, where these votaries of Diana feasted after the fatigues of the chase, and talked over the feats of the day. This building was popularly known by the name of Foxhall, from the gilt figure of a fox surmounting a tall flagstaff, erected in front of it, to show the "southerly wind", so dear to fox-hunters; a gift from Henrietta, Duchess of Bolton, the daughter of the Duke of Monmouth, who seems to have inherited her father's love of Charlton. Both she and her youthful son, Lord Nassau Powlett, were constant visitors there.

"The fame of Charlton had now reached other countries. St. Victor came from France to return his friend's visit, and both that country and Germany sent

admirers to the sport to Charlton, with probably half the Aristocracy of England, amongst them the first Duke of Richmond, who had purchased Goodwood of the family of Compton in 1720 as a hunting-seat, and from thence brought both his Duchess and the youthful Lord March to the Meet at Charlton, while Her Grace, with her daughter, Lady Ann Lennox (afterwards Countess of Albemarle), held assemblies in the evening at Foxhall, countenanced by the presence of the Duchess of Bolton, Lady Forester, and other ladies whom the attraction of the chase had brought to Charlton—a love of hunting being by no means confined to the nobler sex.

"The success and importance of the Hunt appears now to have provoked the envy of the then owner of Petworth, the proud Duke of Somerset, who, accustomed to be paramount in West Sussex, could not brook the sight of horses and hounds riding over his estate. His Grace's ire is amusingly described as inquiring first of his neighbour, Sir William Goring of Burton, 'whose hounds they were, so frequently coming near his house?' and on being told they were the 'Charlton Pack, Mr. Roper's,' cried out, stammering with anger, 'Who is he? Where's his estate? What right has he to hunt this country? I'll have hounds and horses of my own,' and, in spite of Sir William's remonstrances, his Grace had kennels and stables built on the Downs, near Walton, called Twines (afterwards used by Lord Egremont as racing stables), and even condescended to send down first-rate cooks to tempt the Sussex gentlemen with a sumptuous breakfast; but they were faithful to their allegiance to Charlton, and after a few years' vain endeavour to carry his point, His Grace gave away his hounds, and left the field in disgust.

"We have now to record the death of the old Squire, Mr. Roper, who so long had had the management of the Charlton Pack, and had brought it to such perfection: sportsman to the last, he had (in April 1715) ridden with the hounds to Findon, but just at the find dropped down lifeless on the field, at the advanced age of 84. By his death, the hounds became the sole property of the Duke of Bolton, who for a short time devoted himself to Charlton; but the attractions of his second Duchess, Lavinia Fenton (the original Polly of the "Beggar's Opera"), eventually drew him away from Charlton altogether, and on his retirement, he gave the hounds to the second Duke of Richmond, who assumed the entire management, assisted by Lord Delawarr, and having for huntsman the redoubtable Tom Johnson, so well known with the Pack. The Hunt, in their hands, assumed an importance and regularity scarce before known: every morning a hundred horses were led out, each with his attendant groom in the Charlton livery of blue, with gold cord and tassels to their caps. Lords and Ladies continued to flock to Charlton in the hunting season; and the new Master, the Duke of Richmond, in 1732, built the house, still remaining, where he and the Duchess slept, to be ready for the early Meet (eight o'clock in the morning). The walls of the principal room are ornamented with paintings relative to the chase, and stand almost the sole relic of the "Charlton Hunt". About this time occurred that famous Fox-chase, even now remembered in the County of Sussex, lasting ten hours: an event of sufficient importance to cause an account of it to be written and hung up in many of the houses about, where the names of both huntsmen and hounds are carefully preserved.

"The Hunt continued to flourish during the life of the second Duke of Richmond; but at his death, in 1750, his successor, the third Duke, though a

sportsman, was probably not so *devoted* to the chase as his forefathers. He, indeed, caused splendid kennels to be built for the hounds at Goodwood; but it is probable that the removal of the Pack from Charlton detracted somewhat from its general popularity, and accordingly we are not surprised to find, in a list of the "Goodwood Hunt", as it was then called, years after, that the members of it were very much confined to the County of Sussex. On the fourth Duke of Richmond going to Ireland, as Lord-Lieutenant, the Hounds were presented to King George IV, and soon after, symptoms of madness showing themselves amongst the Pack, they were all destroyed.

"So end the glories of Charlton and the Goodwood Pack. Foxhall was pulled down; the residences of the various Noblemen in the village have disappeared (the Duke of Richmond's lodging only remaining), with all vestiges of the Charlton Hunt, once so famous; and the villager, as he hears the distant cry of Lord Leconfield's Hounds occasionally in the neighbourhood, may wonder at those changes in the world which have given to that nobleman, what all the rank and power of his great ancestor could never command—the privilege of hunting West Sussex.

"Old Harry Budd, of Charlton, gamekeeper to the Duke of Richmond, who died in 1807, at the age of 94, was one of the last who remembered, personally, and could talk of the frequenters of Charlton. He had heard his grandfather speak of Monmouth, whom he had conversed with; and Harry had either seen himself, or heard from his grandfather, the names of the following noted personages, as visitors of Charlton:—Duke of Monmouth, Duke of Devonshire, Duke of Kingston, Duke of Montagu, Duke of Montrose, Duke of Grafton, Duke of St. Alban's, Dukes of Richmond, Earl of Pembroke, Earl of Lincoln, Earl of Sunderland, Earl of Kildare, Earl of Dalkeith, Earl of Halifax, Earl Delawarr, Viscount Downe, Viscount Harcourt, Lord Ussulstone, Lord Hervey, Lord Walpole, Lord Ravensworth, Lord Nassau Powlett, Lords William and Harry Beauclerc, Lord Robert Manners, Viscount Dursley, Lord Lifford, Lord Cowper, Lord Bury, Lord John Cavendish, Count La Lippe, Baron Hardenberg, Mr. Watson Wentworth (afterwards Marquis of Rockingham), Hon. I. Dormer, Hon. C. Bentinck, Hon. G. Bennett, Hon. Colonel Waldegrave, Hon. General Brudenel, Hon. John Boscawen, Hon. Captain Legge, Sir Wm. Corbett, Sir Matthew Fetherstone, Sir Cecil Bisshopp, Admiral Townsend, General Honeywood, General Hawley, Mr. Percy Wyndham, Mr. Ralph Jennison (Master of George II's Buck Hounds), Brigadier Churchill, &c., &c."

The following narrative is copied from an old MS., framed and hung up in an ancient farmhouse in Funtington, nearly illegible from age:

"A Full and Impartial Account of the Remarkable Chase at Charlton, on Friday, 26th January, 1738

"It has long been a matter of controversy in the hunting world to what particular country or set of men the superiority belonged. Prejudices and partiality have the greatest share in their disputes, and every society their proper champion to assert the pre-eminence and bring home the trophy to their own country. Even Richmond Park has the Dymoke. But on Friday, the 26th January, 1738, there was a decisive engagement on the plains of Sussex, which, after ten hours' struggle, has settled all further debates and given the brush to the gentlemen of Charlton.

"PRESENT IN THE MORNING:—

"The Duke of Richmond, Duchess of Richmond, Duke of St. Albans, the Lord Viscount Harcourt, the Lord Henry Beauclerc, the Lord Ossulstone, Sir Harry Liddell, Brigadier Henry Hawley, Ralph Jennison, master of His Majesty's Buck Hounds, Edward Pauncefort, Esq., William Farquhar, Esq., Cornet Philip Honywood, Richard Biddulph, Esq., Charles Biddulph, Esq., Mr. St. Paul, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Peerman, of Chichester; Mr. Thomson, Tom Johnson, Billy Ives, Yeoman Pricker to His Majesty's Hounds; David Briggs and Nim Ives, Whippers-in.

"At a quarter before eight in the morning the fox was found in Eastdean Wood, and ran an hour in that cover; then into the Forest, up to Puntice Coppice through Heringham to the Marlows, up to Coney Coppice, back to the Marlows, to the Forest West Gate, over the fields to Nightingale Bottom, to Cobden's at Draught, up his Pine Pit Hanger, where his Grace of St. Albans got a fall; through My Lady Lewknor's Puttocks (paddock), and missed the earth; through Westdean Forest to the corner of Collar Down (where Lord Harcourt blew his first horse), crossed the Hackneyplace down the length of Coney Coppice, through the Marlows to Heringdean, into the Forest and Puntice Coppice, Eastdean Wood, through the Lower Teglease across by Cocking Course down between Graffham and Woolavington, through Mr. Orme's Park and Paddock over the Heath to Fielder's Furzes, to the Harlands, Selham, Ambersham, through Todham Furzes, over Todham Heath, almost to Cowdray Park, there turned to the limekiln at the end of Cocking Causeway, through Cocking Park and Furzes; there crossed the road and up the hills between Bepton and Cocking. Here the unfortunate Lord Harcourt's second horse felt the effects of long legs and a sudden steep; the best thing that belonged to him was his saddle, which My Lord had secured; but, by bleeding and Geneva (contrary to Act of Parliament) he recovered, and with some difficulty was got home. Here Mr. Farquhar's humanity claims your regard, who kindly sympathized with My Lord in his misfortunes, and had not power to go beyond him. At the bottom of Cocking Warren the hounds turned to the left across the road by the barn near Heringdean, then took the side to the north-gate of the Forest (here General Hawley thought it prudent to change his horse for a true-blue that staid up the hills. Billy Ives likewise took a horse of Sir Harry Liddell's); went quite through the Forest and run the foil through Nightingale bottom to Cobden's at Draught, up his Pine Pit Hanger to My Lady Lewknor's Puttocks, through every mews she went in the morning; went through the Warren above Westdean (where we dropt Sir Harry Liddell) down to Benderton Farm (here Lord Harry sank), through Goodwood Park (here the Duke of Richmond chose to send three lame horses back to Charlton, and took Saucy Face and Sir William that were luckily at Goodwood; from thence, at a distance, Lord Harry was seen driving his horse before him to Charlton). The hounds went out at the upper end of the Park over Strettington-road by Sealy Coppice (where His Grace of Richmond got a summerset) through Halnaker Park over Halnaker Hill to Seabeach Farm (here the Master of the Stag Hounds, Cornet Honywood, Tom Johnson, and Nim Ives were thoroughly satisfied), up Long Down, through Eartham Common fields and Kemp's High Wood (here Billy Ives tried his second horse and took Sir William, by which the Duke of St. Alban's had no great coat, so returned to Charlton). From Kemp's

High Wood the hounds took away through Gunworth Warren, Kemp's Rough Piece, over Slindon Down to Madehurst Parsonage (where Billy came in with them), over Poor Down up to Madehurst, then down to Houghton Forest, where His Grace of Richmond, General Hawley, and Mr. Pauncefort came in (the latter to little purpose, for, beyond the Ruel Hill, neither Mr. Pauncefort nor his horse Tinker cared to go, so wisely returned to his impatient friends), up the Ruel Hill, left Sherwood on the right hand, crossed Ofham Hill to Southwood, from thence to South Stoke to the wall of Arundel River, where the glorious 23 hounds put an end to the campaign, and killed an old bitch fox, ten minutes before six. Billy Ives, His Grace of Richmond, and General Hawley were the *only* persons in at the death, to the immortal honour of 17 stone, and at least as many campaigns."

APPENDIX C

Masters of the West Norfolk Foxhounds

(*By the Author*)

THE founder of the West Norfolk in 1534 was Sir Thomas Le Strange, of Hunstanton Hall, and though there are no records of what exactly his hounds were—and it is possible that they were of the harrier type, and that the hare, and not the fox, was then the fashionable quarry—there are some old kennel accounts extant in the Muniment Room at Hunstanton which shed a faint, and rather insufficient, light on his operations. To read some of them would make all modern M.F.H.'s mouths water, for most of the items of expense are set down in shillings! Even allowing for the fact that the sixteenth-century shilling was worth more than the twelve pence of to-day, an item like this is rather tantalizing:

> Barley for the Hounds: 1538
> Itm. Receyved the xiiij of Marché of my Brother
> Hastyngs the x combe barley at xvij^{d} the combe . . . xv^{s}

Sir Thomas Le Strange was master for six years after he started his pack, and according to *Baily*, was succeeded by Sir Nicholas Le Strange, who again, according to *Baily*, was Master from 1641 to 1686; but according to Mr. Raymond Carew, who wrote the West Norfolk record in *The Foxhounds of Great Britain and Ireland*, Sir Nicholas was not born till 1661. This must be an error, and *Baily's* dates seem to be nearer the truth, but are not correct all the same, even taken in conjunction with what Mr. Raymond Carew has to tell us about Mr. Richard Mason, of Necton, who had his own pack going at about the same time and was the third master of the West Norfolk (1696–1792).

Mr. Raymond Carew has written: "It is a far cry from the year 1540 (the date of the termination of Sir Thomas Le Strange's mastership. 'S.') to that of 1681 (*Baily*, it will be observed, gives the next master, Sir Nicholas Le Strange's date of commencement 1641, a whole century after Sir Thomas. 'S'), but there is no available record of any mastership between these dates, and the next master of the West Norfolk of whom any trace exists is Sir Nicholas Le Strange, the seventh in descent from Sir Thomas of that ilk. Sir Nicholas was the fourth baronet of the Hunstanton line and was born in 1661. (*Baily* says he was a master of these hounds in 1641. 'S.') Five years is the quoted length of his mastership (*Baily* says he was forty-five years master of these hounds, 1641 to 1686. 'S.'), but though his memoranda stop short, unfortunately, in 1689, there is no reason why he should not have gone on hunting his own pack, while Mr. Roger Mason (who succeeded him) hunted another pack at Necton, which place is quite 30 miles from Hunstanton."

Baily says that Mr. Mason's name was "Richard", not "Roger", Mr. Raymond Carew also quotes some notes written by Sir Nicholas Le Strange in the period 1669–1724 "for my son's profit". If Sir Nicholas was born in 1661 he began writing about fox-hunting at the early age of eight. Mr. Carew says that Sir Nicholas gave way to Mr. Mason in 1686; *Baily* gives Mr. Mason a date ten years later, and says that the next master, Sir Robert Walpole, of Houghton, took on in 1702. Upon this date Mr. Carew and *Baily* are agreed.

I venture to think that both Mr. Raymond Carew and *Baily* are in error, and I base my belief on Burke plus the College of Arms, to the latter of whom I tender my thanks for giving me some very useful information.

Here are the facts: Sir Thomas Le Strange, the first master of the West Norfolk hounds (1534–40), was born in 1494, so that when he took on the mastership he was forty. His eldest son, Sir Nicholas Le Strange, also a knight, whose birth date is not ascertainable, died on the 19th February, 1580: and the next knight, Sir Hamon, died on the 7th October, 1580, leaving two sons—Thomas, who died in 1581 without issue, and Sir Nicholas, a knight, who was married in 1582 and died in 1591. Then came Sir Hamon Le Strange, son of this last-named, who was knighted in 1604 and died in 1654 at the age of seventy-one. He was succeeded at Hunstanton by his grandson, Sir Nicholas, the first baronet, who was born in 1604 and died in 1655. This gentleman, undoubtedly, was the second master of the West Norfolk, who, according to *Baily*, had them from 1641 to 1686. This is manifestly impossible, since he died in 1655. He was succeeded by his son, the Sir Hamon, born 1631, died 1655, the same year as his father, and was succeeded by Sir Nicholas, the third baronet, his brother, who was born in 1632 and died in 1669. No Le Strange can, therefore, have been master in 1686, the date *Baily* gives us! The baronetcy became extinct in 1762, the last baronet having been Sir Roger Le Strange.

Sir Robert Walpole, father of Horace Walpole, who hunted with his father's hounds, was master from 1702 to 1745. After him there is another hiatus of ten years, till the joint mastership of Mr. William Mason, of Necton, and Mr. H. C. Henley of Sandringham (1755–73), and then the former alone till 1807 hunting only one side of the country, Mr. George Townshend, afterwards the fourth Marquess of Townshend (1756–72) the rest. The dates then go on thuswise, but again are a bit involved, and we have Mr. William Coke, of Holkham (afterwards Earl of Leicester) (1772–1810), when Mr. Wilson, of Didlington, took on, but for how long there seems to be no record; and then Sir Jacob Astley (the sixth baronet and afterwards the sixteenth Lord Hastings) (1823 to 1830), when Sir Jacob was joined by a Committee—Lord Sondes (Chairman), Mr. R. Hamond (father of a subsequent master, Mr. A. Hamond) (1856–83), Mr. Coldham and Lt.-General Fitzroy—which carried things on till 1843 when there was another break in the record, because it is not until 1856 that we hear of the next master, Lord Suffield, who went on till 1859, and is said to have "restarted" the hunt; so it must have been in abeyance in the intervening years. Then came the famous Mr. Villebois' first mastership (1859–64); he was formerly five seasons with the V.W.H. (Cirencester), and, apparently, he was not a big success; then Mr. Anthony Hamond, as just mentioned; Lord Hastings hunting part of the country (1766–72) and Mr. Villebois part (1875–7); so that three masters were going all about the same time. Then we arrive upon more solid ground: Mr. Algernon

Fountaine (1883), who bought Mr. Anthony Hamond's pack at Tattersall's. Mr. Fountaine's dates are 1883–95, but during this time Mr. (now Colonel) C. D. Seymour was hunting part of the country (1889–92), and when Mr. Fountaine retired, in 1895, Colonel Seymour took on the whole country till 1902, when he gave way to Mr. Albert Collinson, who brought William Thompson with him from the Warwickshire as his huntsman. Mr. Collinson had them for six successful years, and was succeeded by the Earl of Romney (1908–10), who, in turn, was followed by Captain J. F. Champion (1910–13), in which latter year Colonel C. D. Seymour came back and started his second and very memorable mastership. The present pack may be said to have originated in the purchase of the South Devon hounds in 1895, the date when Colonel Seymour first took on the whole of the West Norfolk country. Owing to the reduction of the pack during the war and the loss from distemper in 1919 of the whole of the young entry, a draft of eight couples of unentered hounds was purchased from Lord Berkeley for £100 per couple; and later, Colonel Seymour, on behalf of the Hunt, bought an unentered Fernie draft in 1921, when things began to take the shape the master desired. Since this time the West Norfolk have sent principally to the Fernie, the Brocklesby and the Meynell, and there has also been a slight infusion of the late Sir Edward Curre's blood, which, I think it is necessary to emphasize, is not pure Welsh, as some people imagine but has, nevertheless, a strong Welsh strain in it. A small pack with half-Welsh blood was purchased by Colonel Seymour in 1928, a few couples being retained. The experience gained in this country where these half-Welsh hounds are concerned is that they are first rate on a fair, or good, scent, but rather inclined to hang on a weak one. They do not, in a general way, however, continue to do this when other hounds have pushed on and opened ahead of them and the majority are ready to go to cry. These only, of course, are retained. Opinions, of course, differ as regards this blood, but so many packs in the United Kingdom appear to be keeping a few couples, even if they do not breed from them, that there must be some definite virtue in the blood. Colonel Seymour himself is a staunch believer in the best lines of English blood, but he, none the less, greatly appreciates the good qualities transmitted through the Welsh cross. In his opinion—owing to the fact that the Welsh packs, as a whole, have always taken the greatest care to breed first of all for work, which has not been the case with some English packs—heredity in them can be more safely trusted. When the Royal Buckhounds were broken up in 1901, H.M. King Edward VII presented Colonel Seymour with the pick of them.

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Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London