

FOXES FOXHOUNDS AND FOX-HUNTING



RICHARD CLAPHAM





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**FOXES FOXHOUNDS
AND FOX-HUNTING**





Frontispiece.

FOXES FOXHOUNDS AND FOX-HUNTING

BY

RICHARD CLAPHAM

*Author of "Fox-Hunting on the Lakeland Fells"
"The Book of the Otter" "Rough Shooting" &c*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE

*FORTY PLATES FROM PHOTOGRAPHS
THIRTY-THREE TEXT FIGURES AND A
FRONTISPIECE BY LIONEL EDWARDS*



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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

THERE are many men, and women too, who can say with Whyte Melville "the best of our fun we owe it to horse and to hound." For my own part I cheerfully plead guilty to a keen love of the chase, and have seized every opportunity to indulge in it both at home and abroad.

It was that famous character John Jorrocks who said, "'Unting is all that's worth living for. All time is lost wot is not spent in 'unting. It's like the hair we breathe, if we 'ave it not we die." Alas, the day is gone when hunting was the first thought of "the governing classes," and English country life was in its most picturesque stage. We can look back with a certain amount of envy to the times when men like Mr. Sawyer in "Market Harborough" lived entirely for the chase, but modern political and economic upheavals altogether prevent such a pleasant existence being led to-day.

Whether it be for better or worse we cannot tell, for hunting goes on despite the advent of the motor car, the rush of traffic, and the glass-like surface of the roads. It takes a lot to prevent a keen hunting man from following his favourite pursuit, and so despite the wire, the petrol fumes, and all the rest of it, big fields still forgather at every meet of hounds.

The sporting spirit is still alive, but the motor-cycle and the car vie with the horse and hound for the patronage of present-day youth. The primeval instinct for the chase is somewhere embedded in most Englishmen, and only requires fanning to enable it to burst into flame. In some cases the spirit is willing, but outside influences unavoidably turn it into other channels, and so many a man with a love of sport has to content himself with reading about it, with little opportunity for actual practice. It has been my aim in putting together the following chapters to interest both the naturalist, sportsman, and general reader. My views regarding certain anatomical points of the modern fox hound may be antagonistic to the teaching of modern breeders, but I put them forward because it seems to me that certain points are being unduly intensified, which if carried further will assuredly lead to permanent evil results.

The hunting countries of Great Britain differ very considerably in character, and the type of hound suited to one, may be entirely unsuited to another. I have for instance seen south-country hounds absolutely lost when put to work on the Lakeland fells, and numerous other examples could be given.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

Although a great many people hunt, comparatively few are familiar with the life of the fox, and so I have devoted the first half of this book to the habits and characteristics of this popular beast of chase. Two chapters, viz., "The Ullswater," and "Fox-hunting in May," have previously appeared in the Badminton Magazine, to the Editor of which I express my thanks for permission to re-publish them here.

R. CLAPHAM.

TROUTBECK,
WINDERMERE.

INTRODUCTION

By

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE

MR. CLAPHAM is at once a naturalist and a Foxhunter. He writes of sport with the keenness of a true devotee and of the habits of wild animals with the authority of an acute observer. His book is crammed with information from cover to cover. He begins with a chapter on the history of the Fox family, and from that starting point he treats of almost every aspect of Foxhunting at home and abroad. The only omission that we can discover is the omission of any mention of horses. But he gives us much compensation by taking us into his confidence with regard to hunting on foot, and shrewdly suggests that all boy and girl Foxhunters should at some time be made to run with the beagles, and be thoroughly distressed in the doing of it, in the hope that they may have some sympathy with their horses when they join in the mounted pursuit. It may be added that a salutary lesson in the art of making the most of a horse has been learnt by some of us who have been thoughtless enough to ride a blown horse at a fence with a stiff binder on the top of it. The thud of the horse's knee against the binder, the rapidity with which the earth seems to spring up and hit us in the face, and the sickening sensation of being "winded" are not soon forgotten.

Of all Mr. Clapham's chapters perhaps the most entertaining is his essay on the British Red Fox. The life of the animal from the moment he is born is traced by the hand of one who loves him and all his kind, and understands them. It is refreshing to read Mr. Clapham's disposal of the popular myth, even now believed by many who have hunted for several years, that a white tag to the brush is the distinctive mark of the Dog Fox. It would be rather diverting to put the question "Can a vixen have a white tag?" to each member of the field at a large meet in the Midlands and see what answers one would get. Mr. Clapham says the average number of cubs to a litter is four, but that much larger litters are reported from time to time. When I was a boy I was taken by my father to a marl-pit near Stratford-on-Avon. In the side of the pit was a large hole. A man put his head to the mouth of the hole, and whistled. Out came eleven cubs who all began to lap milk out of a trough, and then turned to fighting desperately with each other over a tempting plate of bones. Those who think that foxes cannot exist on

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anything except such delicacies as chicken and lamb should not miss what the author has to say about the varied diet of the Fox, which includes among other things, rats, moles, mice, frogs, fruit, insects, mussels, and dead fish. This varied regimen is dealt with in a chapter of remarkable insight in which every statement is either highly rational, or else capable of positive proof. Above all the other endowments of the Fox, his capacity to keep his head when he is in a tight place is one that seldom fails him. He never seems to give up hope, however awkward things may look. A Fox is never really yours until you have got your foot on his dead body. Mr. Clapham also mentions the reputation of the Fox for killing rats. I have never had the good luck to see a Fox kill a rat, but there is good ground for believing the story that a tame Fox was a certain professional ratcatcher's best friend. The movements of a Fox are quicker than those of any dog; his pointed muzzle is particularly well designed for seizing and nipping a rat without any mouthing or fumbling. Those who have seen a Fox killing rats will tell you that it is the neatest and quickest thing imaginable, and that he will kill rat after rat without pausing for a second. No mangling, nor worrying. The lightning stroke, the death-nip, and then the next rat. We have heard of Counties where there are too many rats. If in these Counties there are too few Foxes, the method of redressing the balance by giving full play to the chain of nature seems to be fairly obvious.

We must allow ourselves one more word on Mr. Clapham's well-informed chapter on Foxes and cubs. He says he has never seen a wild Fox barking, though of course he has heard them on scores of occasions. One night I was watching a litter of cubs playing round the roots of an old elm, underneath which was the earth. The old vixen was sitting a few yards away in exactly the same position as the Fox in the plate on page 47 of this book. Two of the cubs chased each other down a slope to where I was lying in the grass, and one actually ran over my legs. Then he "got the wind up" and rushed back to his mamma, who dismissed the whole family into the earth with one sharp bark. She could not see me, but she knew there was danger; she remained seated and barked and barked until it was pitch dark, and I went home.

Not only does Mr. Clapham display an intimate acquaintance with the domestic habits of his game, but he also offers some very sound remarks as to the manner in which Foxes behave when they are hunted. For instance, he calls attention to the excellent plan of drawing back over the old ground to pick up beaten or half-beaten cubs, and reminds us that the education

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of a cub soon teaches him to be up and away directly he hears a suspicious sound. Some Foxes indeed after a few seasons may make themselves so scarce as never to be hunted at all. When you do get on to one of these "old customers" he has probably travelled so much that he is in rare condition, and takes a lot of catching. Most game, and indeed all game that is near the ground, relies for its self-preservation on the nose and the ears rather than on the eye. The fact that his hearing will be restricted if he enters a thick place may very likely account in some degree for a hunted Fox avoiding cover.

Mr. Clapham devotes a portion to The Shires, though his heart is on The Fells. He draws some distinction between the Midland and the Northern Fox, but says that "a Fox is a Fox wherever you find him," and that "The Fox is a national asset." He does not offer any remarks about the actual handling of Hounds in the hunting fields of the Midlands, but he rather dogmatically ranges himself against those authorities—and they are many and great—who are in favour of plenty of blood. It is possible that the publication in the newspapers of the number of Foxes killed by various packs, especially when no mention is made of the numbers killed before and after 1st November respectively, might cause an unhealthy emulation between neighbouring Huntsmen: but it is safe to say that the vast majority of Masters and Huntsmen will tell you that there is nothing like plenty of blood for steadying the young Hounds, and for confirming the entered Hound in the practice of killing their Foxes.

Our author now turns to Hill Foxes and Fell Hounds, two subjects in which he is quite at home; he writes about them with a certainty of touch that can only be produced by experience and knowledge. He makes some shrewd and rational observations on scent and pace; he subscribes to the theory that the warmer a Fox gets the more scent he gives out, and that for this reason no Fox is ever in a gratuitous hurry: it may be remarked that part of the reason why a Fox does not generally hurry himself unless he is obliged to do so, may be that his instinct prompts him to husband his strength. But strange as it may seem, there is no Fox so difficult to kill as that Fox who on a moderate scenting day, not only does not think it worth while to get a long way in front of Hounds, but also lies down from time to time. When you hear a view-halloa and the man who has seen the Fox tells you that you are sure to catch him as he "laid" down in the middle of a field, you may also be sure you are up against a difficulty. He will probably beat you.

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This very interesting volume contains a closely reasoned analysis of the make and shape of the Foxhound that all breeders can read with great interest. Mr. Clapham says that different countries require different types of Foxhound. Some critics will disagree with this proposition, and will assert that there is a certain type of Foxhound that will go well in any country. Mr. Clapham, indeed, seems to have such a type in his mind's eye, and to fix it as being not very far from that of the Brocklesby Rallywood, entered in 1843. He would be a bold man who would argue that a Midland Foxhound of medium weight and height, with sloping shoulders, working legs and feet, and quality all over, would not catch a Fox in the shortest possible time in any country. Mr. Clapham deals very severely with the Peterborough Hound Show, blaming it for being responsible for a cumbersome type of Foxhound, knuckling over at the knees. If the Peterborough Show has created a false standard, Hound breeders are not entirely to blame. The Show, rather than the breeder, has created the type in Foxhounds as in many other animals. If any animal, horse, pig, or dog, is exhibited in the Show Ring, bulk as a general rule is sure to tell. Now bulk in a Shire Horse or a hog, or an ox, may be indispensable. But in a Foxhound it is a useless encumbrance. Mr. Clapham is dead against the exaggeration of the thing called "bone." He is quite right. But he may perhaps stretch his antipathy a little too far when he seems to suggest that bone and size are being deliberately bred into the modern Foxhound on account of their commercial value. It is true that Foxhounds, like many other things, are fetching inflated prices at the moment. But this inflation is due to the laws of supply and demand. No Foxhound is bred to-day—or ever was bred—with an eye to his market price. It is conceivable, though not probable, that he may sometimes be bred with half an eye to the Show Ring. But there is no traffic in Foxhounds, and when Foxhound breeding has recovered its balance, there is every reason to hope and to believe that the present prices will be reduced, though a genuine sale by necessity of a pack of Foxhounds will naturally attract money. Why should it not?

It is tempting to continue a discussion of Mr. Clapham's book, but we will now leave the reader to enjoy the interesting papers on other matters, such as the walking of puppies, the holloaing of Foxes, the blowing of Hunting Horns, and above all, the charming pen picture of hunting on the Fells, which could only have been written by one who has true knowledge and love of the chase.

WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE.

THE FOX FAMILY

CHAPTER I

IT was the immortal Jorrocks who said, "Oh, how that beautiful word *Fox* gladdens my 'eart, and warms the declinin' embers of my age."

The words of the sporting grocer do but echo the thoughts of many a keen hunting man to-day, and though it is perhaps too much to expect every one to share the same feeling with regard to the little red rover of the hunting field, there are few who do not show some interest at mention of Reynard, the hero of song, folk-tales, and fable.

Because our own red rascal has taken all the glory and fame to himself, other foxes, his relations are apt to be forgotten. There *are* others, and though the following chapters deal chiefly with *canis vulpes*, the red rover of sportsmen, the foxes of foreign countries will be lightly touched on.

The foxes belong to the family Canidæ, the majority of them being varieties of our British fox. Whilst the interest attached to our own red rover is chiefly centred in his sport-showing qualities, certain of his relations abroad are more famed for their commercial value.

The fox is an inhabitant of North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, but for some reason is absent from South America. The colour of the North American red fox varies from red to black, exhibiting four more or less distinct phases,

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known as red, cross, silver and black. The belly of the red variety is often black, as in the case of Italian foxes. American red foxes vary as much in size as colour, the average animal being heavier than our English fox. While in Canada I handled a fair number of foxes from forest districts, and came across some very heavy specimens. Unfortunately I never weighed any of them, so have no record to refer to. In Virginia foxes run small, but in the wilder forest districts, and on Kadiak Island, very large specimens are to be met with. In the recognised hunting countries of the States and Canada, the red fox is as highly valued for sport as is our own.

The cross fox varies a good deal in colour, a typical skin shows black predominating on feet, legs, and underparts, the rest of the fur being red overlaying black. The change from cross to silver, shows an increase of black, overlaid with greyish white. In the black phase, white is eliminated from all parts with the exception of the tip of the brush. Silver foxes vary from a grizzly shade to pure black. Whilst the red fox is common, and the cross fox fairly so, the silver is scarce, and the black extremely rare. All four phases interbreed freely. Black, silver, and cross foxes are melanistic varieties of the common red fox. No fossil remains of foxes have been found in America.

In his book "Horse and Hound," the late General Roger D. Williams. M.F.H., Iroquois Hunt Club, Kentucky, says :—

"The red fox was unknown in America previous to 1760, at which time a number of them were imported from England and liberated on Long Island. They made their way to the mainland and to-day are found from North Carolina and Tennessee to the whole North Eastern part of the United States, as far west as Montana, and as far north as Alaska."

THE FOX FAMILY

The American grey fox, which is perhaps not a true fox, prefers a warm climate, and is generally found throughout all the Southern States. The colour of this fox is grey, darker on the back, sometimes inclining to black. The tips of the ears are black, the feet, legs and underparts being rusty red. It is smaller than the red fox, being thirty-eight inches long. It lives in stumps and hollow trees, and can climb well. When closely pressed by hounds its agility in this respect is remarkable. Being as much a fruit eater as a flesh consumer, it often climbs trees in search of food. Unlike the red fox, the grey when pursued, never depends on its legs, but twists and circles until under pressure it goes to ground, or takes to a tree.

In Colorado, Wyoming, and the Western Plains, the kit fox takes the place of the grey. It is a very small fox, yellowish grey in colour, with a white tip to the brush. Although a diminutive creature it is remarkably speedy, and is able to run well on ice, the soles of its feet being covered with hair.

Further north, and seldom found below latitude 60°, is the white or Arctic fox. It is smaller than the red fox. In winter the fur of this fox is white, but with the approach of spring, the white fur is gradually shed, and the blue-grey summer coat makes its appearance. Still later the blue fur gives place to a down-like coat of chocolate colour. At this stage the Arctic fox presents a very ragged appearance, its brush being often almost bare. The fur is at its best during January and February.

Owing to the intense cold of the Arctic winter, all animals are compelled to hibernate or lay up a store of food. The white fox adopts the latter

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plan. Lemmings and sea-birds are plentiful in summer, and these it kills, stuffing the carcasses into crannies of the rocks, or burying them beneath a thin covering of earth. It treats the eggs of the sea-birds in the same manner. On the approach of winter, this food supply freezes, and keeps fresh, or at any rate fresh enough to suit a fox's palate. The young of the Arctic fox are born blind, and are covered with greyish-brown fur. Some very large litters have been recorded from time to time. At Winter Harbour, Melville Island, in Lat. 70° north, no less than seventeen were found in one litter. This fox is the only member of the *Canidæ* family which migrates.

Turning from the frozen north to tropical and sub-tropical lands, we find the desert and Indian fox. The former is red, even more rufous than our own red fox, and has a white tip to its brush. It is about the size of the grey fox, measuring some thirty-eight inches. The Indian fox is smaller still, being only thirty-three inches over all, and it has a black tip to the brush.

In Central Asia, Russia, Siberia, and China, the corsac fox makes its home. It is sandy-coloured, with white underparts, and, as in the case of the Indian fox, the brush-tip is black.

The Indian fox leaves no scent, nor does it, or the desert and corsac foxes, provide sport with hounds.

Considering that, with the exception of the otter, the fox is the most widely distributed of the carnivora, it is somewhat surprising that it has managed to hold its own so successfully. It no doubt owes its freedom from extermination to the fact that it is extremely adaptable to changes of food, climate, and surroundings.

THE BRITISH RED FOX

CHAPTER II

HAVING briefly reviewed the foxes found in other countries, we may now devote our attention to our own red rascal.

Roughly speaking, fox cubs are born towards the latter end of March. At first they are covered with mouse-coloured fur. Born blind, it is some time before the cubs open their eyes. I have seen it stated that they remain so for a period of eight days, but in my experience the time varies a good deal. I have reared cubs from the blind stage until they were nearly full grown, and some of them did not open their eyes fully until almost three weeks old. Both eyes do not invariably begin to open at once, development being slow, as in the case of polecats, stoats, and ferrets. At first the cub's eyes are blue-grey in colour, the latter gradually changing until it assumes the amber shade of the eyes of the adult. The coat changes at the same time as the eyes, the brown colour first making its appearance about the face. The nose, which is at first flesh-coloured, gradually darkens until it becomes black. Not until in the neighbourhood of five weeks old does the cub begin to make any real use of its legs. Once it begins to walk however, its limbs rapidly strengthen, and its future bodily development is remarkably rapid. The white tip to the brush is visible in very young cubs. Both dog foxes and vixens may have it, and it

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is no guide to either the sex or age. I am inclined to think that the majority of white-tagged brushes are carried by dog foxes, though I have kept no records of those I have seen killed. The amount of white on the brush varies, sometimes it is barely visible, while again it may be a distinct white band, two or three inches in width.

The colour of the fox is influenced more or less by his surroundings, at any rate as far as the original strain is concerned. In John Peel's time and before, the foxes of the Lake District were much greyer than they are now. The specimens that one sees of these "old timers" under glass cases in the various fell-side farm houses prove this. Although to-day the fell packs often kill foxes with greyish jackets, the inclination is towards a rufous shade in the majority of foxes. The fox whose coat harmonizes with his surroundings, is less noticeable in his travels abroad than one whose body covering is a contrast to the things around him. In my experience, very many of the foxes inhabiting the high fells of Cumberland and Westmorland to-day, are badly off as regards colour concealment. For instance: on April 23rd, 1920, I was returning from an expedition on the fells. Walking along a certain top, from whence I could see into the dale below, a bright yellowish-red spot caught my eye. The sun was shining at the time, and though the object was some two hundred yards below me in the breast of the hill, I could recognize it as a fox lying on a grassy ledge. To make sure however I examined it with field glasses, which left no doubt whatever as to its being a fox stretched out asleep. Had this fox been grey, it would never have attracted my attention, as I was not specially on the look out for



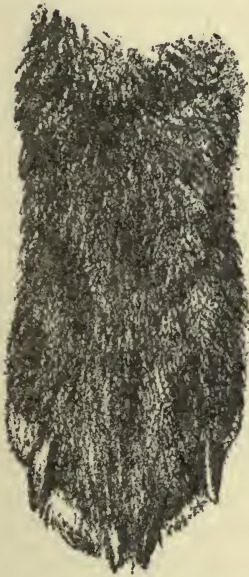
THE BRITISH RED FOX.

(Photo by Sport and General Press Agency, Ltd.)

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foxes at the time. It is I feel sure, owing to the introduction of foxes into districts adjoining the fells, that the old-time grey-colour of the original mountain strain has changed.

Roughly speaking, the colour of the average English fox is reddish-yellow on the back, merging into a darker shade below. Belly, chest, and



LEFT FOREFOOT OF FOX.



LEFT FOREFOOT OF FOX,
underside shewing fur between toes.

underside of legs light grey, shading into white. Pads, ear-tips, and a portion of the lower part of the legs, black. The brush is nearly always of a darker shade than the rest of the coat. The

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underside of the brush often shows a distinct black line from root to tip. In three brushes in my possession, this black line is very decided.

Abnormal colours occasionally crop up. White foxes are by no means uncommon, and black ones have from time to time been reported. The latter probably owe their origin to the introduction into this country of Italian or Sardinian foxes. British foxes vary considerably in size. The largest specimens come from the hill-country of Scotland, Wales, and the fells of Cumberland and Westmorland. An average good fox will measure in the neighbourhood of 4 feet over all, the brush occupying 18 inches of the total length. In "Horse and Hound" General Roger D. Williams gives the length of the American red fox as 40 inches, but this I take it applies to the smaller specimens found in Kentucky and Virginia. Although I have handled a good many foxes killed by hounds, unfortunately I have neglected to take careful measurements. Of ten fox masks beautifully mounted for me by Spicer and Sons, of Leamington, and now in my possession, I can give the following dimensions taken with a steel tape. These measurements, although perhaps not coinciding exactly with those of the living animals, will however give a fair general idea.

From between the ears to end of nose six and one eighth of an inch to six and a half inches. From between eyes to end of nose, three inches to three and three eighths of an inch. From root to tip of ear, three and a half inches and upwards. A fox has large ears, and the above measurement errs on the short side. Of brushes, those I have measured varied from thirteen inches to eighteen inches. The biggest fox does not

THE BRITISH RED FOX

always carry the longest brush. I have one taken from a 17½ lb. fox which measures only fifteen inches, whereas the brush of an eight or nine months old cub is a good eighteen inches long.

The fur of our English fox is at its best in winter. Luckily however the skins have not been considered of much value, although at one time prices rose considerably owing to a demand for the cheaper kinds of fur.

Roughly speaking, the number of cubs to a litter is four. Much larger litters than this are however reported from time to time. The largest of which I have a record is that mentioned in "Reminiscences of a Huntsman" by the Hon. Grantley Berkeley. This litter, consisting of twelve cubs, was laid down in Wiltshire. A litter of seven cubs was taken in the Exmoor country, and other litters of eight and nine are on record. In 1910 a litter of ten cubs was reported from Germany. One of a litter that was taken in the Lake District in April, 1920, had all four of its pads pure white.

The fox arrives at maturity in from eighteen months to two years. A cub which I gave to a friend was a magnificent specimen of a dog fox in his third year. The fox *may* live to twelve or fourteen years, although probably very few if any reach this age. Certainly very old foxes are occasionally accounted for, toothless, grizzled customers, yet nearly always fat. Doubtless such old stagers make up in cunning for their physical deficiencies.

The menu of the fox is an exceedingly varied one, and not as some people suppose limited entirely to flesh. While hares and rabbits, rats, moles, mice, birds and frogs appeal strongly to

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the fox's palate, fruit and insects, more particularly beetles, are regularly on the bill of fare. Anyone who walks far along a sheep-path or trod in hilly country, can hardly fail to discover a certain amount of foxes' excrement. If the latter be examined in the Spring and Summer, it will often be found to consist almost entirely of wing cases and other hard portions of beetles. A species of black beetle is extraordinarily plentiful on the hills in warm weather, and the foxes are very partial to it and its kind. An occasional change of diet is no doubt quite as beneficial to a fox as to a human being, and for this reason foxes show a liking for insects and fruit. They devour frogs greedily, but I think they leave frog spawn severely alone. At any rate I have found spawn lying on hill-paths much used by foxes, and I am pretty sure that this spawn had been discarded by them, after making a meal of the frogs which they had carried to the paths to devour. In the opinion of a farmer friend, foxes devour the big black slugs so often met with, but I have no further evidence to support this statement. The fox will eat fish when he can get it, and the carcass of a dead sheep or other beast often serves him for a meal. Like a dog, he buries food for future consumption, generally leaving some portion of the tit-bit showing above the covering of earth. It makes little difference to a fox whether his food is fresh or distinctly "high." I think it is safe to say that the vixen will not kill in the vicinity of the earth, unless compelled to do so, for fear of exposing the whereabouts of her cubs to prying eyes. Not only has she to feed herself and keep up her strength—the cubs being a great drain on her system at birth and for some time after—but

THE BRITISH RED FOX

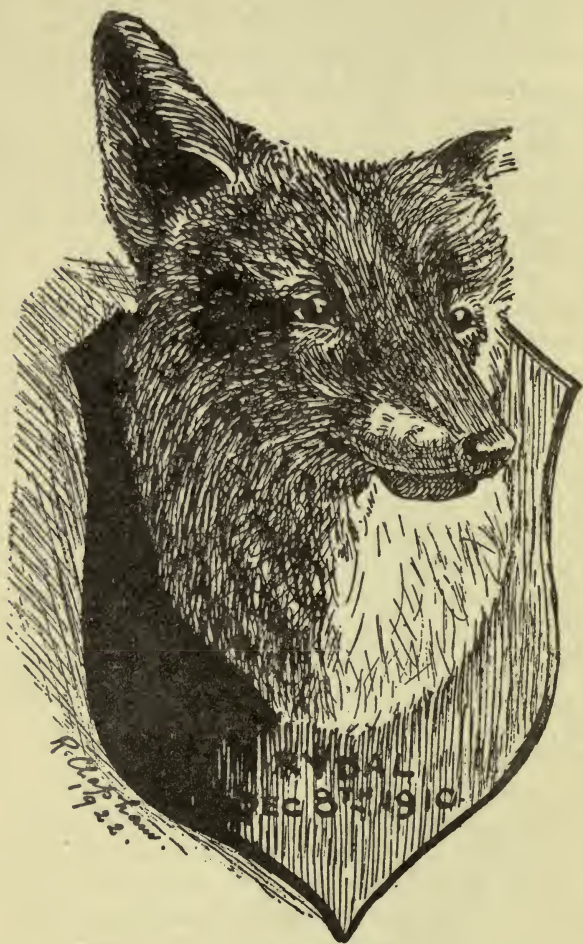
both she and her mate the dog fox, have to supply the demands of their ever hungry offspring. A vixen which is ill-nourished prior to the birth of her cubs is in worse case after the latter are brought into the world, and therefore such an one, owing to her weak state, may be tempted to take food near at hand, particularly should the breeding earth lie in the vicinity of human habitations.

On the bare, open fells, the chief food supply consists of beetles, frogs, mice, and occasional carcasses of dead sheep. In order to capture more substantial supplies in the shape of rabbits, game, or poultry, the fox is compelled to travel long distances to the low ground. Such journeys are very trying to an ill-nourished vixen, though easy enough for the dog fox ; therefore when the young lambs begin to make their appearance, the mother of cubs can hardly be blamed for sneaking off with one occasionally. This habit often leads to her final undoing however, for directly such losses are noticed by the farmer, he promptly sends for the hounds, or takes matters into his own hands. Just before and after the cubs are born, the dog fox constitutes himself bread-winner to his wife and family. Should the vixen meet with an untimely end, he will continue to feed the cubs if they are old enough to eat solid food.

In order to economise labour, the fox has a habit of neatly packing the creatures he kills, for easy transport. Many instances of this habit have been recorded from time to time. On one occasion a woodcock was found near an earth, with two young rabbits tucked under its wing. A hen and several chickens were on another occasion found to have been carried in like manner. Mr.

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Tom Speedy, in his delightful book "The Natural History of Sport in Scotland" gives an instance of a fox bringing food wrapped in grass, for the cubs.



"ONE EAR."

In the breeding—or what was known in the old days as the "clicketting" season—dog foxes

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fight savagely amongst themselves. I have in my possession the mask of a big dog fox, one ear of which has been torn off, no doubt the result of one of these battles. There is a popular belief that a fox when carrying a bird, seizes it by the neck, and swings the body over his shoulder. I have not seen a fox do this, nor have I heard of an authentic case. All the foxes which have come under my observation behaved exactly as a dog does, and seized their prey by the body. The fact, already described, of foxes packing fur and feather for easy transport altogether refutes the theory so often represented in pictures and nursery tales, of a fox with a goose or duck slung over its shoulder.

Although the fox is a member of the family Canidæ, there is not, as far as I am aware, an authentic case of a cross between dog and fox. Instances of this supposed cross have been recorded from time to time, but on investigation have proved doubtful. The wolf, jackal and dog will interbreed, and it is said that certain of the hybrids are fertile, therefore it seems reasonable to suppose that the same thing might happen in the case of dog and fox.

Although the fox belongs to the dog family, it is to some extent like a cat in appearance and behaviour. Mention has previously been made of the change in colour from blue-grey to amber of the fox-cubs' eyes. The pupil of the eye of an adult fox is not round like a dog's, but elliptical like that of a cat. In daylight it shows only as a narrow slit, but at night opens out to its full extent. As the fox does most of its hunting under cover of darkness, its eyes are therefore admirably adapted for the purpose. I have noticed that very few taxidermists put the right kind of eyes in their mounted fox masks.

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The fox is usually provided with a handsome brush, but never have I seen him wag it as a dog does its tail. I have spent many hours with fox cubs in roomy enclosures, and have watched both cubs and adult foxes in a wild state, and in every



FOX WALKING DOWN A FROZEN DRIFT, USING HIS
BRUSH AS A BALANCING POLE.

case the movement of the brush has been the slow wave, or quick whisk, so common with the feline species.

A fox, like a cat, waves and twitches his brush

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when stalking, but though I have seen it stated that the movement of the brush may catch and hold the attention of the creature being stalked, I do not consider the theory tenable. A fox or a cat when near its prey, certainly moves its tail, but I think the latter is held so low and near the ground, that it is entirely hidden behind the body, and even on comparatively bare ground would be out of sight of the animal's quarry. That the brush of the fox is decidedly useful on occasion, I have had evidence. I have watched a fox descend a steep and slippery snow drift, carrying his brush in a perpendicular position. It was quite apparent that in this case the brush was being used as an aid to balance. On many occasions I have seen a hard pressed fox swing his brush to right or left when making a quick turn on rough ground. It may too, help him to suddenly increase his speed, as I once witnessed a hunted fox spring from a slow canter into a fast gallop, whirling his brush round and round as he accelerated his pace.

There is a yarn concerning a fox, which, being troubled with fleas, waded into a stream and gradually immersed his body until all his tormentors collected on the tip of his brush. Giving the latter a smart shake, Reynard consigned his visitors to a watery grave, and then walked ashore. This story must however be taken *cum grano salis*.

I on one occasion had rather startling evidence that a wolf wags its tail like a dog. I was looking at some wolves in an enclosure, one of which walked up to the bars of the cage. It had a benign expression on its face, and wagged its tail exactly like a dog. My brother who was with me at the time, chanced to pull a brightly

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coloured handkerchief out of his pocket, and the change in that wolf was instantaneous. Like a flash it sprang straight at the bars, and I was very glad the latter were sound and strong.

At times the vocal sounds made by foxes, more particularly cubs, are a curious mixture of cat and dog noises.

Although the fox does most of his hunting and wandering about under cover of darkness, it is not uncommon to see him on the move by day. As befits a night prowler, his powers of scent and hearing are very keenly developed, whereas his eyesight is by no means so acute. When out hunting with the fell packs on the mountains of the Lake District, I have often found myself peculiarly well situated for viewing hunted foxes and others which had been disturbed. I have no hesitation therefore in saying that a fox depends chiefly on his nose to warn him of danger, while his ears are almost as useful, so acute is his sense of hearing. His eyesight, like that of most wild animals, is quick enough to pick up a moving object, but if the wind is right, and you sit or stand absolutely still, a fox will pass very near you without being aware of your presence. He acts in exactly the same way as a stag when you are stalking it. So long as you move only when the beast is feeding or looking in another direction, and "freeze" when he turns his gaze towards you, it is often possible to get in, on comparatively open ground.

Mention has previously been made of a fox lying asleep on the breast of a Lakeland mountain. When I first saw this fox, he was stretched at full length on a grassy ledge, enjoying the warmth of the sun. He was some two hundred yards below me, and what little wind there was blew

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in my direction. I was on the skyline at the time, so slid carefully down-hill for a few yards, in order to secure a background. I watched



FOX BASKING IN THE SUN.

the fox, whose eyes were closed, through my field glass, and he lay as if dead. Below me was a scree bed, so I picked up a small stone and threw

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it down the slope. The noise of its passage being slight, the fox apparently did not hear it, but when I followed it with a larger piece of rock, he raised his head like a flash and stared straight in my direction. After a steady look, he dropped his head, but I could see through the glass that his eyes were open. I then threw another stone and got to my feet. Instantly the fox sprang up and vanished round a projecting ledge. When I kept still he never saw me, but directly I moved and became silhouetted, his eyes warned him of danger, and two jumps took him out of sight.

A fox seldom hesitates at a critical moment. He seems to know just what to do on the instant in any emergency. Only once do I remember seeing a fox pause before making up his mind. A fell pack ran a fox to ground, and after a time he elected to bolt under pressure from the terriers. Some of the hounds had straggled off to a distance, and when the fox shot out of the earth, to an accompaniment of halloas from the people present, these hounds at once closed in. Suddenly the fox found his foes on all sides, and for an instant he halted on a jutting point of rock, as if debating what to do. In the end he shook them all off but one, and this hound was waiting at a point where the rocks merged into more open going. When within a few yards of the hound, the fox put on a tremendous spurt, and got safely past; the hound being apparently too astonished to move, although the fox almost touched it.

It is impossible to dogmatise concerning the habits of the fox, for he is, like other wild creatures, conspicuous for his variability. We can, by close study however, learn a good deal about him, and one of the best methods of gaining information is by following his tracks in the snow. If the

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night's trail of a fox be carefully followed, the tracker can hardly fail to learn something concerning the author of the foot-prints.

There are comparatively few people I imagine who can tell the difference between the tracks of a fox and those of a small dog whose feet are no larger than the fox's. There *is* a difference however, which is shown in the stride of the fox being much longer than that of the small dog. In deep, dry snow, the marks where the brush of the fox has dragged are often plainly visible. Some foxes walk in a more slovenly manner than others, and the dragging of the feet is likewise shown when snow is on the ground. The foot of the fox makes a neat, clean impression in thin snow or mud, showing clearly the imprints of the four claws. When two foxes are travelling together, they always leave separate trails. In this they differ from wolves, a party of which may travel for several hundred yards, leaving a trail as if only a single animal had passed that way. This habit, on one occasion that I wot of, nearly led to the undoing of a hunter who tracked what he thought was a single wolf into a narrow ravine from which there was no outlet. He was promptly attacked by half a dozen wolves, four of which he killed after a pretty strenuous encounter.

In build, the fox is admirably constructed for the life he leads. Although he is a small animal, standing from 15ins. to 16ins. at the shoulder, he is remarkably fast, and very active. Although not such a good climber as the American grey fox, he can nevertheless get about in some very awkward places at a considerable height from the ground. In crags and cliffs he is entirely at home, and is often found living on the sea-cliffs, from

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whence he makes foraging expeditions to the shore in search of shell-fish and other marine tit-bits. His feet are of the "hare" type, with hard, shallow pads. Wherever you find him whether on the South Downs or the Scottish mountains his feet are the same, and that he can use them to some purpose we all know. This, to me, appears to be a perfect refutation of the supposed utility of the round, "cat" foot of the modern fox-hound of Peterborough type. A "hare" foot in a hound shown at Peterborough means absolute disqualification, yet the fox—on whom it is a case of six to four in the majority of runs—is a perfect example of the utility of the "hare" foot, for work on the sound grass country of the Shires, or the rocky, scree-strewn slopes of the Westmørland and Cumberland fells.

The fox is usually found abroad between the hours of dusk and early dawn. He is influenced by the weather, as well as the food supply. Except in the breeding season he leads a solitary existence, and if the country is not too much disturbed, he spends the greater portion of his time above ground. In big woodlands, which are seldom sufficiently hunted, and thus form safe and quiet retreats, foxes often collect in considerable numbers. Each adult fox has its own particular beat, inside the boundary of which it knows every foot of ground. Roughly speaking, such a beat may cover a five-mile radius, and a fox driven beyond his boundary, will generally run in a more or less aimless manner, and even when pressed by hounds, will run past places where he could easily get to ground and escape them. The reason for this is I think, because a fox does not see the country as we see it. From a height of little more than 15 inches, the fox

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gets no general idea of the ground, so within the area of his own particular beat he is perfectly at home, because he has gradually come to know the lay of the land in detail. A cursory glance is sufficient to enable us to find our way from one covert to another, or to cross half a dozen fields; not so with the fox however. His horizon is bounded by a rise in the ground, a hedge, or some other comparatively small obstruction, and it is only by remembering in detail the objects which he passes, such as ditches, runs through fences, drains, sheep tracks, etc., that he is able to cross the country at speed, with some particular point in his mind, when hounds are on his line. Should he therefore be driven beyond the confines of his beat, his small stature prevents him seeing open earths, drains, etc., as we should see them, from a distance; and unless he happens to run right on top of some refuge likely to afford him shelter, he trusts entirely to his legs to carry him out of danger.

Since early days, fabulists and poets have endowed the fox with extraordinary wisdom and cunning. Granted that he has shown marked ability in avoiding extermination, it should be remembered that in both this and other countries a considerable measure of protection is afforded him in certain districts. In England he owes his freedom from extermination to hunting, and this applies also to certain districts in America. Again, those foxes which are valued for their furs dwell in uninhabited regions, where trappers and hunters are comparatively few and far between, and cannot do more than take a percentage of the foxes which roam through the forests and barrens. Some foxes no doubt fall victims occasionally to wolves, cougars and the like, but I imagine their numbers must be small.

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With the fox it is a case of the "survival of the fittest," for even with the protection that hunting affords him and his kind, the foolish members of the family are soon exterminated.

The fox appears to secure most of his food by stealth. I have no doubt a fox can catch a rabbit in a straight run if he gets away close behind it, but his usual method is to make a careful stalk, and then pounce suddenly on his victim. In the case of hares, he will sometimes lie in wait for them, crouching beside a smoot in a hedge or wall, which the hares use on their journeys to and from their feeding grounds. Mr. Tom Speedy quotes an instance of a fox chasing a hare in daylight, but as both pursuer and pursued disappeared from view, it was impossible to say how the run ended. The fox is fond of young rabbits, and when his keen nose leads him to a nest of baby bunnies, he very soon unearths them.

Although the fox has a wonderfully keen nose, I think he seldom if ever springs at prey when guided solely by scent. In a book* I read not long ago, the author, with the help of diagrams, attempts to show the doings of a fox as depicted by the animal's tracks in the sand-hills. The fox ends his stalk by making a blind-spring at some partridges. I have read in the snow the story of many a kill by foxes, but I have yet to find evidence of a fox having trusted to his nose alone when it came to the final spring. It is always unsafe to dogmatise with regard to the habits of wild creatures, but I imagine a fox usually *sees* his prey before he makes his rush.

In the Canadian woods, the ruffed grouse have a habit of working their way beneath the deep, soft snow, to escape the intense cold of the winter

* "Tracks and Tracking," by H. Mortimer Batten

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nights. The foxes inhabiting the woods are well aware of this, and regularly hunt for, and dig the birds out.

A fox is like a dog in its fondness for rolling on carrion and other rubbish of like nature. The carcass of a dead cat appears to hold special attraction for him, and this fact has been taken advantage of by trappers in districts where Reynard is an outlaw, or is pursued for his fur. In addition to rolling on dead cats, foxes will kill live ones, and they will do the same thing with both stoats and weasels.

CUBS

CHAPTER III

THE supply of foxes in a hunting country depends upon the number of litters of cubs which reach maturity. It was I think the late George Lane Fox, Master of the Bramham Moor, who said "You preserve jam, not foxes." All the latter require in the way of preservation, is to be left severely alone, and the coverts kept quiet. If we want good sport, we must have an adequate supply of wild, healthy foxes, and a killing pack of hounds. Directly artificial means of increasing the supply are resorted to, a marked deterioration in sport and the quality of the foxes becomes apparent. To insure healthy cubs, and a consequent stock of well-doing, adult foxes, the vixens must be left to attend to their family affairs in their own way. Nothing is easier than this in a country where there is mutual good-will between the shooting and hunting fraternity. Unfortunately however there are some countries in which the two interests clash, and in consequence the foxes suffer. The keeper knows of a litter or litters in his coverts, and, instead of leaving the vixens alone, he waits until the cubs are of an age to feed themselves, then quietly puts the vixens away. The cubs

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are then partially or wholly hand-reared, in consequence of which they know no country, and when turned down just prior to a visit by the hounds, on the arrival of the latter they are chopped. Thus the cubs, certain of which under natural conditions would have escaped, to afford sport later on, are sacrificed to the interests of shooting. Again, the keeper really wishing to do his duty, and in perfectly good faith, refrains from shooting or otherwise destroying the vixen, and instead keeps her so well supplied with food that she has practically no need to hunt for herself at all. The result is, with food always at hand, she ceases to travel any distance in search of it, and her cubs, which in the ordinary course of events would have followed her far and wide on her hunting expeditions, know nothing of the country beyond the restricted area in which their mother spends her time. In this way the stock of foxes rapidly degenerates, and in many instances disease makes its appearance, owing to the cubs being kept in uncleanly surroundings. It is the old vixens which are so vital to the proper education of cubs, for they possess the knowledge of country and general experience of life, that is lacking in the younger members of their sex. With their gradual disappearance, maternal duties fall entirely on the younger vixens, which are not half so capable of bringing up cubs in the way they should go.

The vixen generally, but not invariably, lays up her cubs underground. She often enlarges a rabbit burrow for the purpose, or takes possession of a chamber in a badger earth. In some districts, stub-bred foxes are not at all uncommon. Hill-foxes usually resort to rocky cairns for cub-

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bing purposes. In the fell country of Cumberland and Westmorland, these rock earths locally known as "borrans," are regularly used. Very often the fell fox cubs in a comparatively simple earth, though nearly always in rocky ground, and removes her offspring to more impregnable surroundings as they grow older. The fact that the eyesight of fox cubs matures slowly, may be a provision of Nature to prevent the youngsters from crawling out of the earth, and so exposing themselves to danger, as they would be apt to do were they born with their eyes open.

If the vixen has reason to think that the breeding earth has been discovered, she will at once move the cubs to another hiding place. Foxes are not over cleanly in their habits, and what with the excrement of the cubs, plus feathers, wool, and portions of buried and rotting food about a breeding earth, disease would be apt to attack the young foxes, did not their mother occasionally move them.

The presence of a vixen and her family in a badger earth must prove distinctly disconcerting to Mr. Brock, who is scrupulously clean in his habits. That the two do occupy the same earth at times we have ample evidence. Nor is all invariably at peace when this happens. The badger, with his tough hide, weight, and armament of teeth, is powerful enough to kill the biggest fox, all of which seems to point to the fact that as a rule he makes no open opposition to the advent of the vixen. Now and then however, friction is aroused, the result being a slain fox or a murdered litter. The late Tom Firr, huntsman to the Quorn, recorded several instances of vixens and cubs falling victims to the badger. As to



FOX CUBS. "HIDE AND SEEK."

(Photo by R. Clapham).

CUBS

why the latter show lenience in the matter of allowing the vixen to make use of the earth, we have no direct evidence. The mere presence of vixen and cubs can hardly be of benefit to the badger, seeing that their uncleanly habits by no means coincide with his own good behaviour. When food is plentiful, the vixen is well nourished, and being active by nature she may at times bring more food to the earth than she needs, or at any rate more than Mr. Brock thinks she requires. Is it therefore unreasonable to suppose that the badger purloins portions of this food, and that it is for this reason that he admits the vixen and her offspring to his capacious underground abode.

The education of the cubs begins as soon as they are old enough to play about outside the earth. Their natural instinct, coupled with their mother's teaching, gradually fits them for the struggle for existence ; and later these lessons are augmented by contact with their human and canine enemies. The cubs quickly realise that the earth is a safe refuge in time of danger. Their initial attempts at killing take place when their mother brings home alive some creature in fur or feather. As the youngsters gain strength and confidence, they begin to follow the vixen on her hunting expeditions, and by so doing gradually perfect themselves in the art of stalking food. Not only this, but they learn the lay of the land as well, one of the most necessary items of a cub's tuition if he is to prove himself a "straight necked 'un" in the hunting season. It stands to reason that a mother of cubs whose experience of life's battles covers a period of years, is a most valuable asset in the proper upbringing of young

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foxes. A good proportion of old vixens is therefore most beneficial to sport in a hunting country.

The vixen brings her cubs into the world at a season when other furred and feathered creatures are busy with their family affairs. She is therefore assured of a sufficiency of food for herself and her offspring. A healthy litter of cubs have appetites in proportion, and their parents have to work hard to feed them.

It is for various reasons sometimes necessary to take up a litter of cubs, and keep them for a while in captivity. As a rule such litters, when of a suitable age, are turned down where they will "do the most good." Now and then one comes across a fox kept solely as a pet ; but, being a wild animal by nature, the fox does not take kindly to life in captivity. A pet fox may be well doing, and in perfect health, but though he is tame enough with the master or mistress who feeds and handles him, he invariably stands in awe of strangers. He is never to be trusted, even in his master's home, and woe betide the feathered inhabitants of the place, should they come within his reach. Charles St. John gives an instance of a captive fox which deliberately set himself to beguile the fowls within springing distance by leaving certain portions of his food as a bait.

Although captive cubs and adult foxes adapt themselves to circumstances in confinement, a good deal can be learnt about the general habits of the animals by watching them in a roomy enclosure. For instance, a litter which I had under observation for some time never held their heads skywards when barking, although foxes, like dogs, are popularly supposed to do so. They

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invariably held their masks low, with the nose pointing slightly towards the ground, and so marked was this habit, that there is sound reason to suppose that wild foxes adopt the same attitude. Although I have heard foxes barking on scores of occasions, I have never been fortunate enough to see a wild fox in the act.

Although a captive fox trusts no one but the master or mistress who feeds and looks after him, he generally appears to make friends with the cats and dogs about the place. A three-year-old fox, which I secured as a tiny cub, was on quite friendly terms with a terrier. The latter was regularly used for bolting wild foxes, but never appeared to show the least animosity towards the tame fox. This fox died suddenly, after—as far as could be ascertained—scratching himself with a rusty nail when galloping round the stable in which he was kept. I think wild animals in captivity are apt to suffer severely from comparatively trifling accidents, whereas in a wild state they easily recover from much more serious mishaps.

A pet fox is seldom of any actual use to his master, except in the way of killing rats and mice in granaries or wherever else he happens to be confined. Some years ago I remember seeing a photograph in one of the daily papers, showing a rat-catcher accompanied by his terriers and a tame fox. The latter was said to exhibit great aptitude for killing rats when bolted by the ferrets.

In the days when duck-decoys were in regular use, a tame fox was sometimes used to draw the fowl, by showing the animal at the openings in the screens. A reddish coloured dog was however

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in chief demand for this purpose. No doubt the idea of using such a dog originated from some fowler watching a fox playing about on the bank of a river or pond, his antics attracting the ducks to within springing distance.

Once a tame fox escapes, he is likely to celebrate the event by a wholesale slaughter of poultry in the vicinity of his erstwhile home. Nor is such an escaped captive always easy to kill, as many a huntsman has discovered ere now.

Cubs taken young before their eyes are open should be fed on milk. This is best administered by means of a small rubber teat attached to a bottle. As they grow older, scraps of meat may be offered them, a bit of rabbit flesh with the skin adhering to it being as good as anything. At a very tender age fox cubs fight and growl over their food, each one running off to some corner to devour the portion it has secured. In addition to keeping the enclosure in which the cubs are confined spotlessly clean, in order to prevent disease, the food should be varied as much as possible. Cubs can be reared on nothing but dead rabbit and clean cold water, but they do much better if some fruit, such as blackberries, etc., frogs, and beetles are offered them. A species of black beetle is very plentiful in spring, and a large number of them can easily be gathered in a short time. Cleanliness and proper attention to diet is the secret of rearing cubs by hand, although many people entrusted with a litter fail to practise it.

Drastic measures should be employed directly an outbreak of mange makes its appearance. All mangy foxes should be shot or otherwise got rid of, and the earths, both natural and artificial

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be broken up. I have no doubt that disinfection of the earths *might* be possible, but I have yet to hear of any method that is known to be reliable in the case of mange.

The more artificial the existence of the fox is made, the greater likelihood of disease breaking out. The fox is by nature a wild animal, and fox-hunting, properly conducted, is one of our few remaining wild sports. Why therefore, attempt to spoil it by providing artificial earths and importing foxes, when the natural stock, *if left alone*, will amply serve its purpose?

The whole question of healthy foxes in a hunting country depends on the mutual good will of the shooting and hunting people in that country. Unless some arrangement agreeable to both parties is arrived at, the stock of foxes will not thrive as it should, for it will *not be left alone*. I know no prettier or more amusing sight in Nature, than wild fox cubs at play. Even in captivity their antics are most interesting. I have watched cubs at hide and seek in a large enclosure, darting in and out of a packing case, over the open end of which a sack was hung. Their movements were quick as lightning, and remarkably smooth and graceful. Play often ended in a fight however, and then there was an uproar of hissing and growling, while sharp white teeth seized the throat of an opponent, or gripped him across the loins.

Cubs which have been taken up, if intended for hunting, should not be kept a moment longer in captivity than is absolutely necessary. They should be provided with as large an enclosure as possible; and beyond feeding them, and keeping the place clean, they should be left entirely to

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their own devices. When the time comes to turn them down, they should be liberated at night, and the less said concerning their whereabouts the better.



A CUB.

THE CUB AS HUNTER

CHAPTER IV

CUBS which have been mothered by a vixen of experience are well fitted for the battle with life when the time comes for them to go "on their own." Play, in which all cubs regularly indulge, from the moment they leave the earth for the first time, hardens their muscles and keeps them in brisk bodily health. They are ever alert and on the qui vive for anything that moves, from the wind-blown leaf to the crawling insect. They first learn to kill when the vixen brings home a crippled rabbit or some other creature in whose body life is not yet extinct. On these occasions each cub learns to take his own part, and stand up for himself, as the general scramble for the tit-bit often leads to loss of temper and much hissing and growling.

In every litter there is apt to be a ring-leader, generally a cub rather larger and more precocious than his fellows. It is such an one which is first at a killing; and the smaller members of the family suffer somewhat from his bullying attentions. Such a cub develops quickly, and is no doubt of considerable assistance to the vixen in teaching the rest of his brothers and sisters. Should the vixen come to an untimely end—as occasionally happens in spring and summer—the precocious member of the litter may to some extent fill the position of the departed parent.

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There eventually comes a time when the cubs follow their mother on her hunting expeditions. The latter are gradually extended until the cubs are familiar with a considerable area of ground. Thus, hunting in concert, the youngsters perfect themselves in all the tactics that they began in play, and which in the future they have to depend on to enable them to wrest a living from a not always hospitable world. These family expeditions are regularly indulged in, until some fine morning in late August or September the hounds pay a visit to the covert. The vixen, wise to all that is going on, quietly slips away, and in the next hour or so the cubs go through a nightmare of strange and terrifying experiences. One or two of them, generally the least enterprising members of the family, pay the extreme penalty, while the rest, amongst whom is pretty sure to be the precocious one, manage to save themselves somehow. After all the hullabaloo is over, and peace reigns once more, the remaining members of the litter become split up, and begin to go "on their own."

This is no doubt the most trying period of a cub's life, for though he is able to hunt and secure sufficient food his knowledge of the world is as yet quite in its infancy. He is equipped with a keen nose, a quick ear, and average eyesight, but he is as yet lacking in experience. His nose is really his chief asset, for with him it takes the place that speech and reading do with human beings. All the information the growing cub acquires is obtained through his nose. As we learn to interpret what we see with our eyes, so does the fox with the various scents that reach his nostrils. He learns the individual scents of the gamebirds, the hares, rabbits, and other



“HIDE AND SEEK” (ONE CUB IS HIDING INSIDE THE BOX.)

(Photo by R. Clapham).

THE CUB AS HUNTER

creatures in fur and feather. Here and there he "leaves his card," and his nose tells him instantly whether other foxes have done the same thing. Thus night after night he gains fresh experience, until, if he lives long enough, all nature is an open book to him. The various scents around him no



IN THE MOONLIGHT.

doubt convey a vivid image to his brain, and as he stands sniffing the cool night air he obtains a perfect picture of his surroundings. By degrees he learns which scents are dangerous, such as the man or dog scent, and he knows instantly what to do in an emergency.

While he always remembers the earth where he played as a possible retreat in time of trouble, he now has his own private kennel, and a par-

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ticular area of ground over which he hunts, and every stick and stone of which he knows by heart. In his nightly wanderings he comes across drains, rabbit burrows and the like, all of which are indelibly stamped on his mind. The next time he is disturbed by hounds, he may, after covering most of the ground he knows, go to earth in one of his new-found retreats.

The tactics that he employs when hunting often serve to aid him when he himself is hunted. He may on some occasion have accounted for a roosting bird in some ivy-covered tree or wall; and remembering this he is quite likely to visit such spots and ensconce himself above ground when hounds are on his line. Whatever he does, should he escape by that means once, he is pretty sure to adopt the same plan again and again. By degrees he is sure to become acquainted with the spots where other foxes lie, and when hard pressed he may as a last resort turn one of these foxes out and usurp his place. Then, when hounds race up, they are likely to drive ahead on the new line, leaving the tired fox to make his way back later to where he was found.

In his hunting, experience teaches him which are the best tactics to employ. He may try conclusions in a race with rabbit or hare, but sooner or later he finds that a stealthy approach and a quick spring pay much better and call for less exertion on his part. When the coverts are being shot, a certain amount of wounded game escapes, and when the sport is over the fox enjoys a very satisfactory gleaning. It may be that in time he comes to connect the sound of distant shots with a possible food supply, for foxes have been known to put in an appearance during a covert shoot, when at other times they were conspicuous by their absence.

THE CUB AS HUNTER

His hunting varies with the locality in which he resides. If his home is on the sea cliffs, he prowls about the shore in search of shell fish or other marine tit bits. In the same way near a river he learns to visit the shallow pools where the trout can be scratched out, and no doubt on occasion he makes a meal off the remains of a salmon left there by a wandering otter. In spring he haunts the ground beneath the tall elm trees, in whose upper branches the rooks build their nests. After a gale, many half-fledged youngsters are blown out, and these the fox finds and disposes of with relish. During a hard winter, when the countryside is frozen beneath an iron grip, birds and animals are numb with cold, and temporarily tame with hunger, so that the fox has no difficulty in securing all the food he wants.

In early spring another form of hunting—one that appeals to him more than any other—occupies a portion of his time. We all know the old saying, "In spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love," and so it is with our friend the fox. In that oldest of hunting books, "The Master of Game" it says: "And when the vixen is assaute (in heat), and goeth in her love to seek the dog fox she crieth with a hoarse voice as a mad hound doth, and also when she calleth her whelps when she misses any of them, she calleth in the same way." Many a time in very early spring, long before the snow has left the hills have we heard the foxes calling far up the mountain side. At such times love and love alone occupies the mind of the fox. Food and rest are forgotten in the eagerness of courtship, and nothing will drive the dog fox from the vicinity of his inamorata but the advent

FOXES FOXHOUNDS & FOX-HUNTING

of the hounds. Then, if he is forced to fly, he does so on an empty stomach, and his going will be in a bee line, right back to his own country. It is during the mating season, or as Turberville has it, when the fox "goeth a clicqueting," that most of the straightest and fastest runs take place.

THE HUNTED CUB

CHAPTER V

WHEN the cub is equipped with knowledge sufficient to enable him to make a start in life, and is only lacking in experience, he gets his first taste of being hunted. On his return to covert after his night's prowl in company with his brothers and sisters, he finds the entrance to the earth which has been his home blocked. Scratch as he may, he cannot get in, and is uncertain what to do next. There is the aroma of man about the earth, and suddenly the air seems filled with strange and uncouth noises. All the cubs are by this time on the move, for instinct teaches them that danger is abroad.

The wood seems full of hounds, and though the cubs thread the narrow passages beneath the undergrowth, they find it more and more difficult to evade the great blundering creatures which so relentlessly pursue them. Scent improves and the young entry becomes steadier, and our cub realizes that the suffocating wood, foul with strange smells and echoing with appalling noises, is no place for him. His mind reverts to another covert, a mile away across the fields, and with this point in view he slips through the fence and finds himself in the open. The air is sweet and clean, and he strides away across the dew-drenched grass, the sounds behind him growing fainter and fainter in the distance.

FOXES FOXHOUNDS & FOX-HUNTING

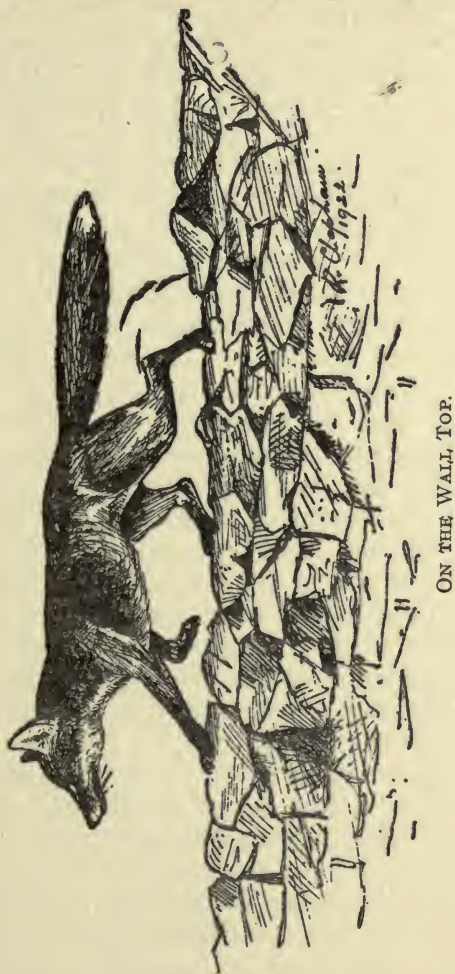
He has learnt by his first experience of hounds that it is better to fly than stay, and so has advanced another step in his education. On his return to the home covert, his nostrils are assailed by an overpowering odour of human and canine enemies, while the taint of blood lingers here and there amongst the undergrowth. It is impossible under these conditions to settle down in his old quarters, so, if the covert be a small one, he leaves it to take up his abode elsewhere. In large woodlands he searches out a fresh retreat, far removed from the scene of his peril.

First impressions are invariably the strongest, so that the cub which escapes by flight, and the one which eludes his pursuers by dodging and twisting about in covert, are both likely to resort to the same tactics when again disturbed by hounds. The former will probably prove his worth to the Hunt as a "straight necked 'un," whilst the latter may develop into a short-running, twisting customer, most difficult to kill.

As we have already seen, the cub's first impressions of being hunted are the strongest, and by whatever method he manages to elude hounds he is practically certain to try the same plan again. In the fell country of Cumberland and Westmorland, hunted foxes frequently travel long distances on the top of the stone walls. Even on a good scenting day this manœuvre delays pursuit, but it is doubtful if the fox adopts it for that reason. In winter, when the snow on the hills lies soft and deep, the fox finds he can get about more easily by following the wall tops, which are often blown clear by the wind. Remembrance of this tempts him to adopt the same plan when the ground is bare. As far as eluding hounds is concerned, the strategy of the fox is inferior to

THE HUNTED CUB

that of either hare or deer. Here again the limitation of his mind is his undoing. I have often seen a hunted hare lie absolutely still, even



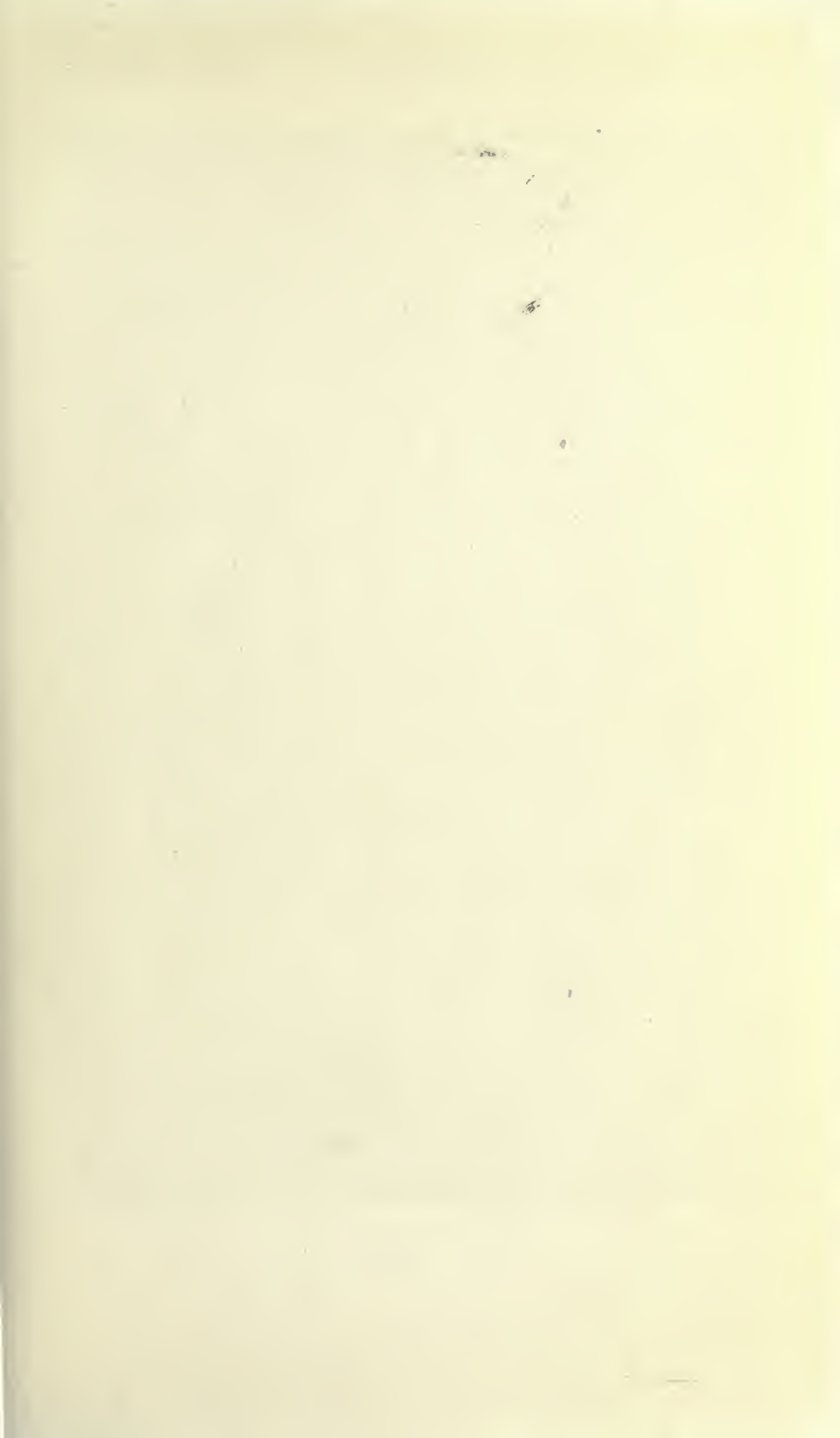
on bare ground, with hounds all round her ; and on one occasion with a pack of beagles, one of the hounds actually trod on the hare. Now a hunted

FOXES FOXHOUNDS & FOX-HUNTING

fox would have failed to brazen it out so well. He would have made the fatal mistake of moving too soon. Many a hare saves her life by squatting and remaining in that position until hounds have left the vicinity. A fox *may* on occasion do this if hounds do not come very near him, but he is apt to get on his legs and attempt to slink off unseen before his enemies have got out of sight. Some sharp-eyed whipper-in happens to view him, and before he quite knows what has taken place hounds are screaming on his line.

A hunted stag behaves after the manner of a hare, and will submerge himself in a stream, keeping absolutely motionless while practically surrounded by hounds. The latter have been known to jump right over a stag, without either recognising him or winding him. Roads and certain stretches of bad-scenting country often aid a hunted fox to escape, and so do cattle and sheep. Once therefore a fox finds he can elude his pursuers on such ground, or by running amongst livestock in the fields, he will repeat the performance at some later date.

The instinct of a hunted cub leads him to return to his home covert after the uproar behind him has subsided. As a rule, too, he is not long in making the return journey. I had an example of this a short time ago. A certain staghound pack came to a fox covert to draw for an out-lying deer. Hounds were thrown into the wood—a larch plantation on the top of a hill—and very soon a halloa from the far side gave warning that the stag was away. Before hounds had been more than a few minutes in covert, five fox cubs made their appearance in the open. Four of them I saw myself, and the fifth was viewed by someone else. Being on foot, I remained on the





TIRED OF PLAY.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

THE HUNTED CUB

high ground near the wood while hounds hunted their stag into the valley below. Within ten minutes, I viewed three of the cubs back into the plantation, and no doubt the other two were not long behind them.

With old adult foxes, the same thing is likely to happen. A fox slips away and hounds run hard for perhaps twenty minutes, then comes a check, and the line cannot be recovered. The Master gives the order to draw somewhere else, and a fresh fox is found. Had hounds been taken back to the covert in which the original fox was lying, in all probability they would have got on to him again. Having shaken off his pursuers, a hunted fox frequently returns at once to his home covert.

The cub which survives his first hunting season may develop into a very clever fox if he keeps his wits about him. His initial experience with hounds has taught him that it is better to at once get "out of that" than stay, and as his mind is constantly sharpened by pitting his wits against those of his enemies and the creatures which he himself hunts, he becomes in time one of those "old customers" which so often escape, and which in the end manage not to be hunted at all. The least suspicious scent or sound puts such a fox on the alert, and he is away at once, long before hounds are in covert or anyone can get a view of him. When he grows old, and his powers begin to fail, his wits remain as sharp as ever; and no doubt his long and varied experience of life enables him to keep fat and well liking, even though he has hardly a sound tooth left in his head. Now and then hounds account for one of these "old customers," and it is surprising in what good condition most of them are.

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With reference to the fox's mind, the question arises, What are the feelings of a hunted fox? We can easily imagine our own feelings, if pursued by a pack of large and noisy enemies, but though our mind and that of a wild animal act on a more or less similar basis, the quality of the mind-matter varies immensely. It is, I think, unreasonable to suppose that the mind of the fox is influenced in the same way as the mind of a human being. We express our thoughts and ideas in words, but the fox cannot do this; and without words, thought cannot advance very far. There is no looking forward in the fox's case, his thoughts are concrete, and his memory is a mass of facts. There is more pain to a human being in anticipating the end than in the end itself. The fox's mind is incapable of realising a probability, and therefore he can have no anticipation of death, until perhaps at the very last moment when his foes are actually upon him. Even then the end is swift, and is the payment the fox is required to make for the protection of himself and his kind. A fox dies fighting, and anyone who has experienced the excitement of the ring or the battlefield knows that in the heat of the moment pain is for the time being obliterated.

In another chapter I have mentioned the fact that certain foxes in the fell country do not assimilate in colour with their surroundings. In the case of a hunted fox, the further he runs and the dirtier he becomes, the less easy is he to see. A beaten fox shows his condition by his arched back, trailing brush, and lolling tongue, and to an experienced observer there is no doubt of his plight. Let such a fox however see you before you see him, and he is likely to straighten up and go away for a certain distance as if quite fresh.

THE HUNTED CUB

For this reason, an inexperienced person may easily imagine that he *is* a fresh one.

Clever as a fox is, his mind is strictly limited by experience. Once he has been to a place, he can go straight there again by day or night, but if he is forced beyond the boundary of his own particular beat, the limitation of his mind is apt to prove his final undoing. We have known a fox, hard pressed by hounds in country strange to him, go past several places in which he could have found sanctuary. It was quite evident that he did not know about these places, and though he could hardly fail to have seen them as he passed, he was apparently unable to grasp the probability that they might afford him refuge from his enemies. The mind of the fox appears to be a mass of facts, garnered during his wanderings and packed away in his brain for future reference. To these facts he trusts, but anything in the shape of a probability is quite beyond him.

One often hears it said that a fox hard-pressed by hounds will run round a covert rather than enter it, because in his heated condition the wood is likely to half smother him. Although hunted foxes often do skirt coverts during the course of a run, the woods are usually small ones, and the fox, having probably often visited them before, knows that they contain no safe retreat, and that the mere fact of running through them would only hamper him in his attempt to reach some definite point that he has in mind. We have on many occasions seen a hunted fox enter large woodlands in preference to skirting them, and as a fox would hardly feel the effects of the heat more in a big covert than a small one, it rather points to our theory being the correct one.

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Of course a hard-pressed fox may skirt a covert if he has never been in it before, because his mind is not open to the possibility of there being a safe refuge in it. The resources of a fox depend on the width of his beat, and his knowledge of the country, therefore when he is driven beyond that beat, he is very much at sea.

IN THE SHIRES

CHAPTER VI

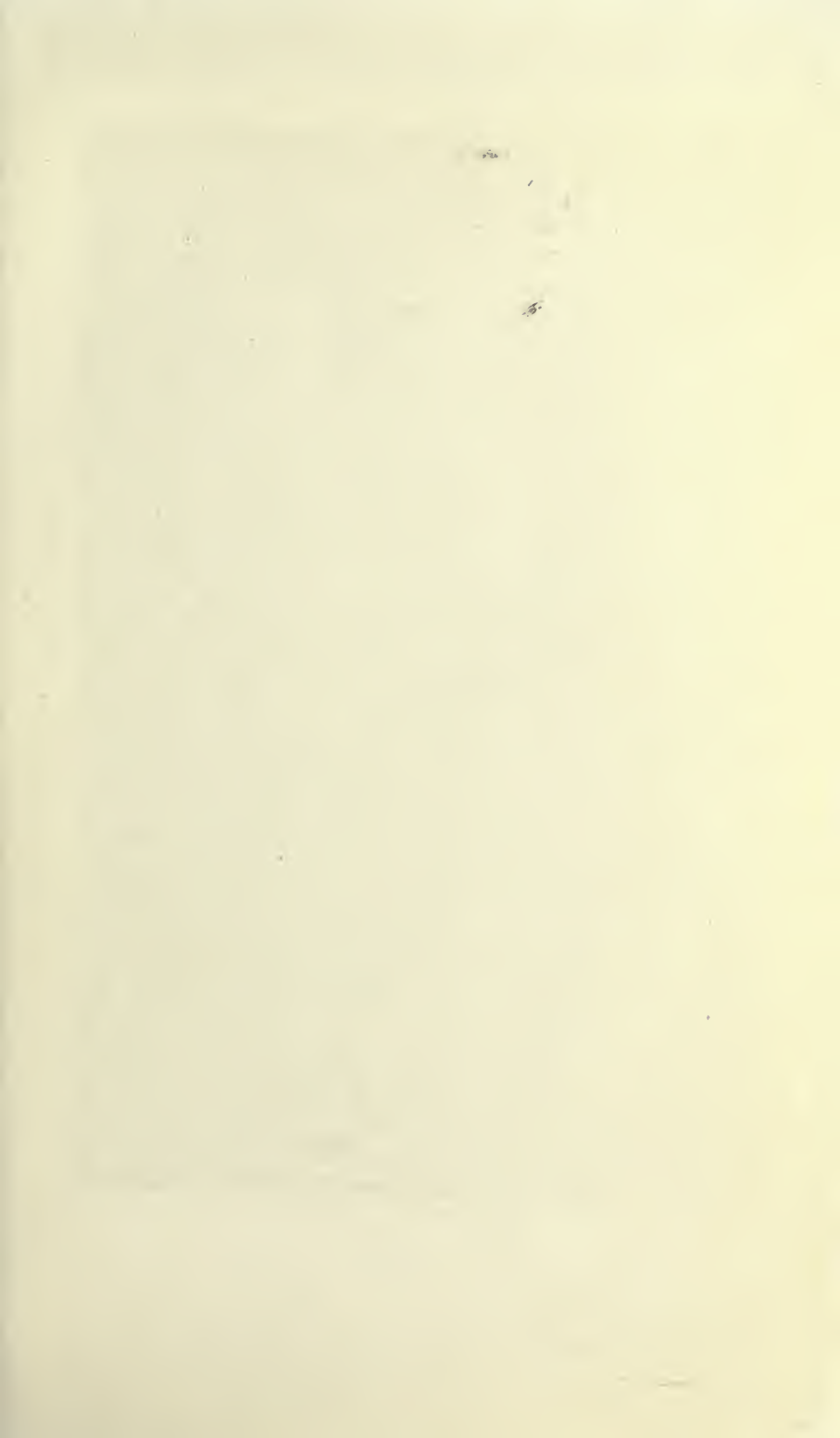
IN the Shires, where the fox is closely preserved, he has few enemies beyond the hounds. Food is plentiful and near at hand, and in spring he has no great distance to go in search of a mate. He is bred and reared within sound of human habitations, and his life is spent more or less in the midst of civilisation. The result is, he shows comparatively little fear of man, and is less easily headed in the hunting field than his relations which inhabit wilder districts. In comparison with the hill-fox of the north, he leads a pampered existence.

Years ago, even the Shires were unenclosed, and coverts were few and far between. Foxes too were much less plentiful, and scattered over

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a larger area. Game preserving was then unheard of, and individual foxes had wider beats, for they often had to travel long distances, both in search of food, and on love-making expeditions in spring. The supply of foxes, meagre though it was, consisted of wild, healthy animals, and disease was unknown. The fox of the Shires was then much more akin to his mountain-bred cousin than he is to-day, and individual foxes often provided extremely long runs.

In the course of time, the country became more and more enclosed. The old, slow style of fox-hunting gave way to the modern, quick method, and foxes were imported to augment the local stock. Coverts were planted for Reynard's special benefit, and everything was done to make the countryside attractive to foxes. The consequence was, the stock increased tremendously, and that dread scourge mange began to make its appearance. This was owing to the importation of diseased foxes from abroad, transported in filthy crates. The original stock of foxes gradually became crossed with the new, to the detriment of their size, courage, and stamina. As the stock increased, in-breeding naturally followed, until to-day the fox of the Shires is a smaller, redder, and less enterprising animal than his relations in the north. With the advent of intensive game preservation, difficulties arose between shooting and hunting interests. Vixens mysteriously disappeared, and cubs were reared by hand, often in extremely filthy surroundings. The result was, the older vixens, so vital to the proper education of the cubs, became practically extinct in certain districts, and to-day there are countries where a genuine wild fox is hardly ever killed. Luckily such countries are few and





MEET OF THE BELVOIR HOUNDS AT CROXTON PARK.

(Photo by Sport and General Press Agency, Ltd.)

IN THE SHIRES

far between, but they *do* exist, and the sport the foxes afford is naturally poor.

With the enclosure of the country, and the appearance of conveniently placed coverts, the fox of the Midlands changed his habits to some extent. In the old days, Reynard usually had to travel far and fast in order to reach some point he had in mind, whereas to-day in certain districts he can run from covert to covert, and hounds find a difficulty in sticking to his line, owing to the presence of fresh foxes. As a well known Midland M.F.H. once said: "If you run a fox more than ten minutes in this country, the chances are that he is another." As far as the riding part of the business is concerned, it matters little how often hounds change, so long as they keep on running, and to-day most of the longest runs are generally the result of one or more such changes.

The more foxes you have, especially in an enclosed country like the Shires, the less ground will each individual fox know, and the less chance you have of bringing off a really good hunt with one fox as pilot from start to finish.

In his general habits, the fox of the Midlands differs little from his cousin of the mountains. A fox is a fox wherever you find him, and he is well able to accommodate himself to his surroundings. In the Shires, foxes are apt to be less wary than those which inhabit a non-hunting country, for, with the exception of the hounds, they have few if any enemies, and do not require to be so constantly on the alert as the hill-fox, against whom continual warfare is waged. The low-country fox leads an easy and somewhat artificial existence, until such time as the hounds catch him, or his cunning enables him to keep

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clear of danger altogether. When the end comes he is but paying the price for the privileged existence of himself and his kind.



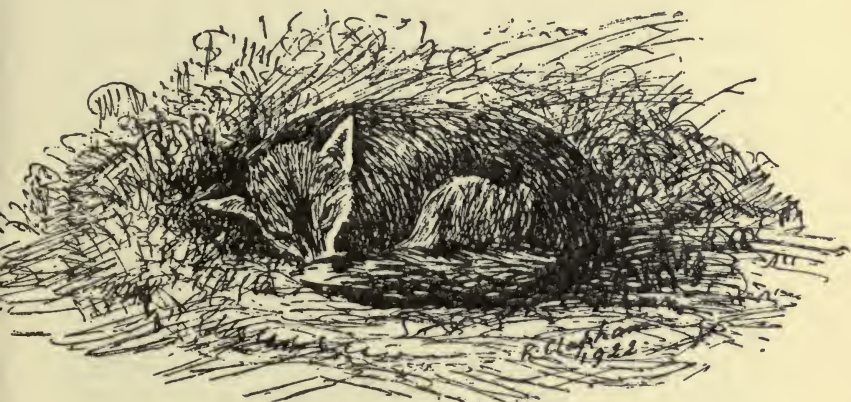
A KILL IN THE OPEN.

In an ordinary enclosed country, the majority of the foxes lie in covert. Occasionally a fox is found in a hedgerow, or in a furrow of a ploughed

IN THE SHIRES

field, but the plantations are the chief harbour. No matter how small a covert may be, so long as it contains snug lying, and is free from disturbance, a fox or foxes will sooner or later take up their abode there.

In the old days, when the country was unenclosed, the woods were generally large and wide apart. To suit modern conditions, more coverts were required, set nearer together and of less acreage. In the Shires, many such coverts were



A SNUG KENNEL.

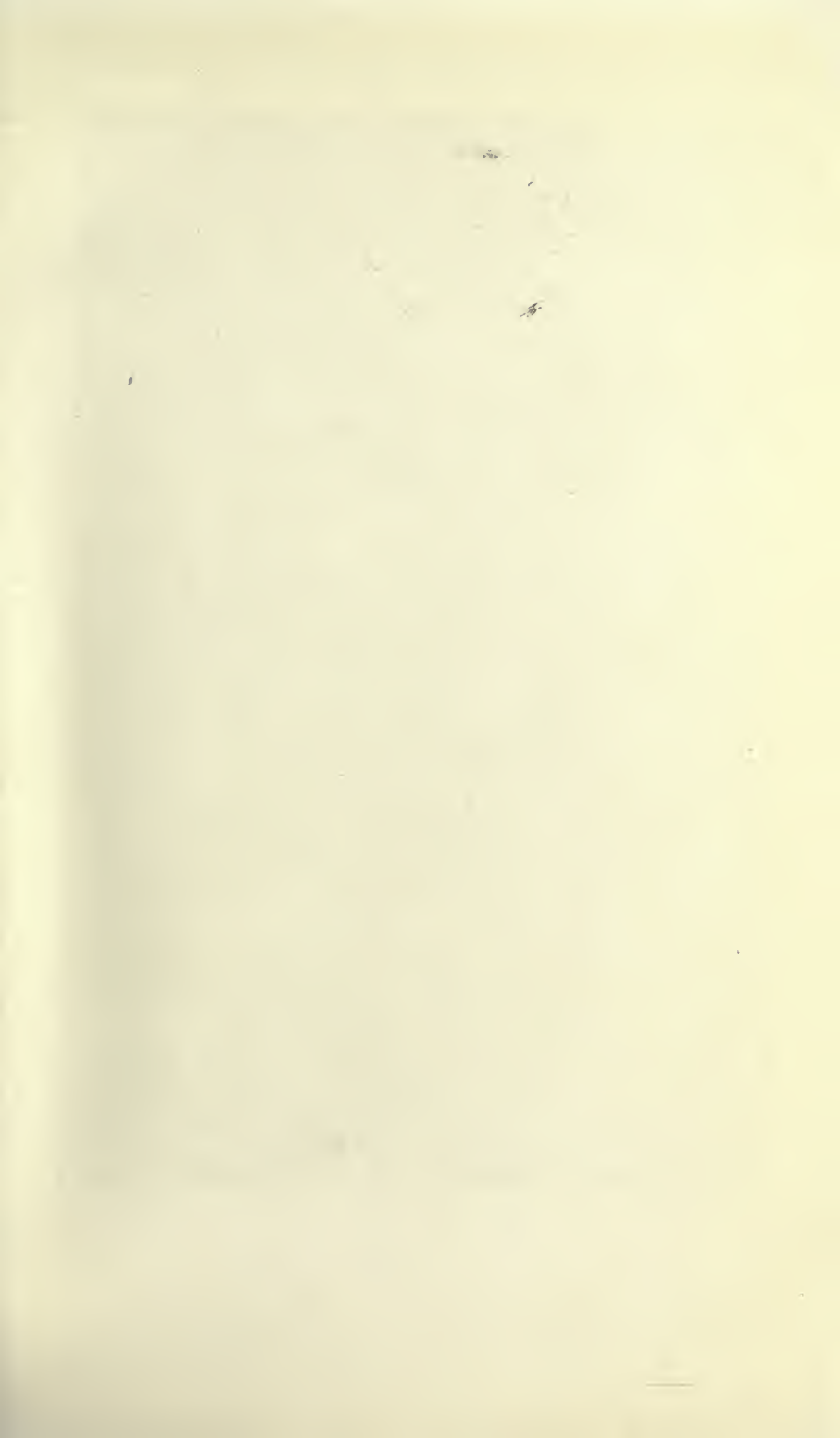
planted for the benefit of foxes. To keep a covert quiet, the fences should be thick and impenetrable, and the under growth of the same nature. A close growing thorn or gorse covert will keep out prowling curs and idle humans, and affords perfect protection for foxes, which can creep about inside it. Neither dogs or men are fond of penetrating thorny growth, and so they think twice before attempting to disturb coverts of this nature. Fox coverts should be carefully looked after, more particularly the fences. Thorns

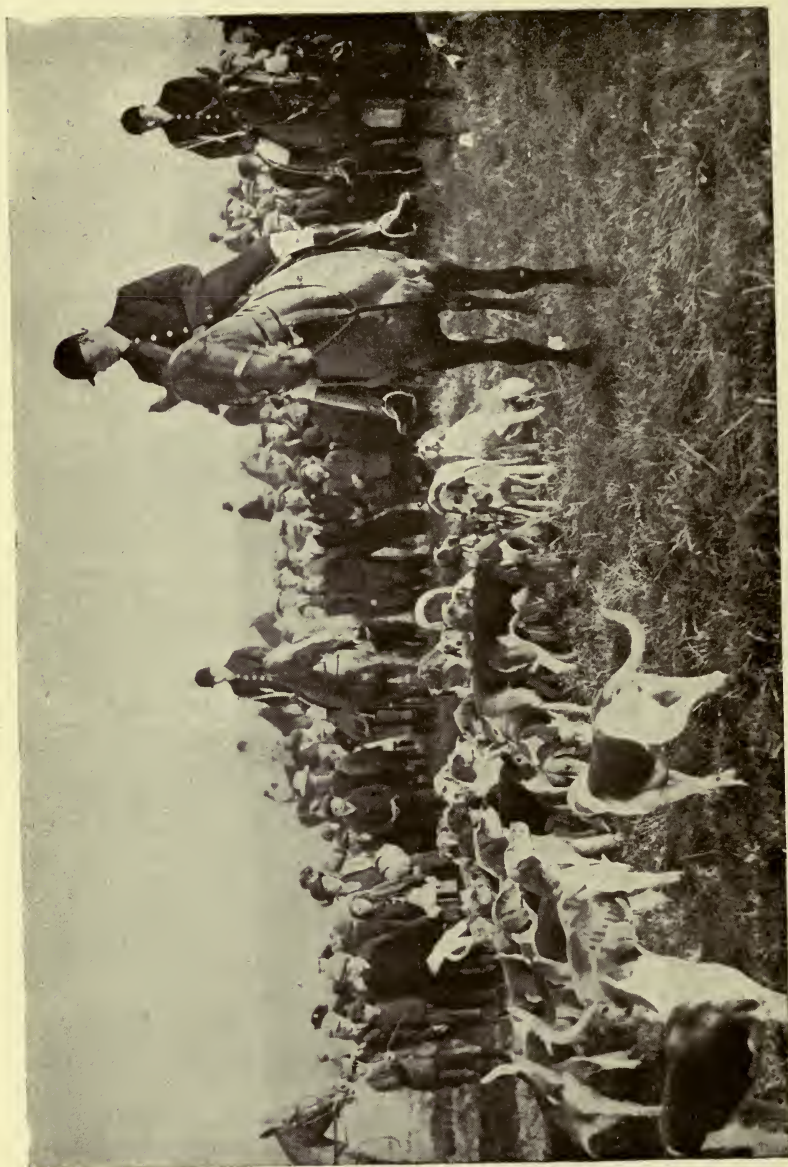
FOXES FOXHOUNDS & FOX-HUNTING

and grass grow well together, and make the best of harbour for foxes, but the sticks should never be chopped down and laid, as this plan leads to quantities of rotten thorns lying about, which are decidedly injurious to hounds' feet. Young thorns should be topped, otherwise they will not grow close. When first planted they take a long time to grow, so that it pays to plant gorse as well, which soon springs up into good covert. Old thorns may be chopped down as they quickly spring up again. In ordinary woodlands, where the timber is grown for its beauty or for commercial purposes, there are usually some snug corners which appeal to foxes. Here again the fences should be as thick and impenetrable as possible, for the interior of the average plantation, when once the boundary fence is passed, is much easier of access than the inside of a thorn or gorse covert.

Furze coverts should be cut about every six or seven years, otherwise they become hollow and gradually die away. In some parts of the North country, foxes lie in the thick juniper growth. Juniper, or "savin" as it is locally known, makes a close impenetrable covert, and on some hill slopes there are large areas of it.

Plantations of young larch, spruce, and fir, make the best of fox coverts, for the grass grows well, and the small, closely set trees keep out the draught, and make the covert warm and attractive. On one occasion I saw four foxes go away from a young larch wood of less than two acres in extent. When larch and spruce begin to reach maturity however, the undergrowth dies away, killed by the pine needles and the drip from the trees. Many larch woods are as bare as a billiard table in the bottom, and afford





OPENING MEET OF THE QUORN HOUNDS AT KIRBY GATE.

(Photo by Sport and General Press Agency, Ltd.)

IN THE SHIRES

poor lying for foxes. Where heath or heather grows naturally, or can be persuaded to grow, it makes capital fox shelter. Foxes often lie extremely close in it, and I have many times seen a fox wait till hounds were almost on top of him.

Foxes, like all other furred and feathered wild things, appreciate sun and warmth. A covert which faces south is therefore preferable to one with a northerly aspect. Here and there, small coverts are situated at no great distance from larger ones, and it often happens that litters are bred in the small places, but the latter do not hold foxes in the hunting season. Attracted by the food supply, or the better lying in the bigger woods, the foxes migrate there. Foxes can of course be restored to blank coverts by turning them down in artificial earths, etc., but if genuine wild sport is the object in view, it is a much better plan to keep the coverts quiet and well fenced from intruders, when the wild stock will resort to them and increase in the natural way.

Big woodlands are resorted to by foxes, because they are less disturbed than the smaller coverts. Woodland hunting affords comparatively little scope for galloping and jumping, therefore the average field looks with no kindly eye on the prospect of a day in the big plantations. The latter should however be regularly hunted, and hunted hard, so as to force the foxes to leave and seek sanctuary in more getatable localities. If this is neglected, the woodlands will be crawling with foxes, and many of the smaller and better situated coverts will be drawn blank.

The fox is of course a national asset, for besides affording sport in the Shires and the provinces, he is the cause of an enormous distribution of money throughout the hunting countries of

FOXES FOXHOUNDS & FOX-HUNTING

Great Britain. From the time that the local Squires kept their private packs until the present, more and more people have benefitted directly or indirectly from the sport. If we leave out those who actually enjoy the latter, there are few tradesmen, dealers, labourers, and the like, who do not derive a goodly portion of their annual income from business connected with the interests of the Hunt. The presence of hunting in the Shires and other fashionable countries brings an influx of monied people who spend freely, and this money finds its way by devious channels into the pockets of those who are in trade or labour with their hands. The Hunt is a going concern in which much capital is invested, and is therefore respected by the community. Since the institution of the recognised county packs, the more fashionable Hunts have attracted larger and larger fields, until to-day they are at a maximum. This, in addition to the enclosing of the country and the planting of conveniently situated coverts, has had its effect on the fox which is the primary object of the whole business.

As we have already mentioned, in the old days the country was much less enclosed, coverts were larger and further apart, while the stock of foxes was a drop in the ocean compared to what it is now. Those who hunted took a lively interest in the work of hounds and the science of the sport, and could sympathise with the huntsman on a blank day, as well as enjoy the perseverance of himself and his hounds when scent was only moderate and difficulties cropped up.

In the more fashionable countries to-day, only a small percentage of the large number of followers are really interested in hound work or know anything of the science of hunting. The chief

IN THE SHIRES

aim of most of them appears to be a fast gallop, with plenty of jumping, and blood at the finish. They have no patience with long draws, or slow hunting runs. Seeing that this is the case, more foxes are necessary to provide quick finds, and so the various hunting countries in the Midlands now carry an enormous stock. It is safe to say that the average fashionable pack kills more cubs before regular hunting begins than would have sufficed our ancestors for an entire season. It is popularly supposed that hounds must be "blooded up to the eyes" before they are properly entered, and so twenty or thirty brace of cubs are accounted for. As a matter of fact, this "blooding" business is greatly overdone, despite what the various authorities tell us. Many provincial packs kill very few cubs, while the fell packs do no regular cub-hunting at all, and never actually break up their foxes. The same may be said of many American packs which seldom get blood, yet all the north country hounds and those in America exhibit the greatest keenness to hunt. It is this enormous increase of foxes that is responsible for the decadence of the Midland fox to-day. Cub-hunting is far more necessary to reduce the stock of foxes than to blood hounds, and even after the cubbing business is over the remaining stock is generally far too big in most countries to provide good hunting runs, apart from the galloping and jumping point of view. One has only to read the hunting accounts in the sporting papers to realize how seldom a really fine hunt with a single fox comes off in the fashionable countries to-day. It is usually a case of one or more changes, with hounds run out of scent at the end, and a trot to fresh covert for another quick find.

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Now that the "hunt to ride" brigade form so large a portion of the field, they have to be catered for, because when all is said and done they are subscribers, and without subscriptions a Hunt cannot carry on nowadays in the style expected in the Shires. Many people who hunt are apt to describe a day as "rotten," when perhaps the work of hounds and huntsman has been of the greatest interest to those of the field who understand such matters. We all appreciate a screaming run when it comes off, but those who expect to do nothing but gallop and jump their hardest every day they go out, should associate themselves with draghounds rather than the legitimate chase.

The increase of foxes in the Midlands has led to a certain amount of emulation and jealousy in the total of kills for the season, and big bags of foxes are the result. The latter act in the nature of an advertisement, just as do the shooting man's on the moor or in covert. Every Master and huntsman of course likes to account for a fair percentage of foxes found and chased, but to-day it would be better if followers hunted more for sport in the strict sense of the term, and a smaller stock of genuine wild foxes was there to provide it.

In the old days people only shot when there was a cessation of hunting owing to frost, whereas to-day the shooting man and the shooting syndicate are a power in the land. There is often a certain amount of antagonism between hunting and shooting interests, particularly as regards the stock of foxes. Game and foxes can be reared together—as has been proved over and over again—without loss of sport to either side, if a tactful attitude is adopted by the devotees of each pursuit. With foxes thick on the ground,

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keepers endeavour to control them, and this has led to the destruction of the older vixens, and the hand-rearing of cubs, often in extremely unsatisfactory surroundings. The more foxes are pampered and interfered with, the quicker they lose stamina, and the less need there is for them to go far in search of food. Consequently they know little country, and it is useless to expect them to show sport in the true sense of the term. So long however as fashionable fields demand quick finds, short bursts, and plenty of galloping and jumping, the stock of foxes must be there to provide them, and people only have themselves to blame if they prefer such tactics to the more genuine form of hunting with fewer but better foxes.

In the Midlands the fox is accustomed to live in more or less close proximity to human habitations, and when being hunted he often has to face large crowds, not to mention motors on the roads. Owing to this state of affairs he has become more or less brazen, and is more difficult to head than his wilder and heavier relations of the mountains. Like other wild creatures he adapts himself to his surroundings, and thinks nothing of making his way past a crowd of halloing foot people rather than be baulked of his point. He has too every opportunity of shifting his responsibility on to other foxes, and thus often escapes pursuit thanks to the fact that there is a plentiful stock of his relations in the neighbourhood.

In a fashionable country, despite a keen huntsman and the modern quick method of handling hounds, a hunted fox stands a better chance of escape than he would in a more provincial district. Hounds are very apt to be overridden by a modern field, and thus checks occur that are all to the

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advantage of the fox. Again, despite the fact that motors are usually sent home at once by those who use them to go to the meet, there are others on the roads driven by people who do not ride, but like to see as much of a run as possible from the highway. Motor-cycles too are everywhere, and these, combined with cars, save many a fox by causing hounds to check at a critical moment. It is bad enough for hounds to pick up a line foiled by a crowd of sweating horses, but much harder for them to do so at a point on or near a road, where the air is blue with petrol fumes from motor cycles and cars. The latter are however part and parcel of modern every-day life, and as they have come to stay, Masters of hounds are faced by the problem of how to control them so that they will interfere as little as possible with sport. The fox has already accepted them as every-day incidents in his life, and no doubt he uses them as he does cattle and sheep or manure tainted ground, as an aid to escape, once he has discovered the fact that by running past or near them the pressure of pursuit is slackened. We have seen a hunted otter jump a wall and dive under a waiting motor-car across a road, so it is not surprising that foxes show little fear of approaching such mechanical vehicles.

Despite the annoyance caused by motor-cycles and cars, we should not forget that many people who use them for hunting on the roads may be really keen on sport. A motor cyclist who cannot afford a horse or horses, and perhaps uses his cycle in his business, can hardly be blamed for following hounds on it rather than on foot. The attraction of riding to hounds—apart from hound work and the science of hunting—lies in

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the pace, and the motorist enjoys this although he cannot indulge in jumping.

To-day as in olden times, whenever you find him, whether in the Shires or the most provincial country, the fox is the cherished object of pursuit, and so we may conclude this chapter with Egerton Warburton's well-known lines.

Since one fox on foot more diversion will bring
Than twice twenty thousand cock pheasants on wing,
That man we all honour, whate'er be his rank,
Whose heart heaves a sigh when his gorse is drawn blank.

THE HILL FOX

CHAPTER VII

LEAVING the Shires for the Welsh and Scottish mountains, and the Lakeland fells, we come across our old friend Reynard again, a much bigger Reynard however, and leading a wilder and more untrammelled existence. Even in Wales and on the fells of Cumberland and Westmorland, where the hill-fox is hunted by foot-packs, he is still something of an outlaw; and in the deer forests of Scotland—many of which are crawling with foxes—*every* man's hand is against him. It is in the countries of his outlawry, that he exhibits that perfection of growth, stamina, and cunning, seldom seen amongst his relatives of more civilised regions.

The big hill-foxes are well able to look after themselves, and their prey includes lambs, young deer calves, dead or dying sheep, wounded stags, and the smaller creatures in fur and feather. On the mountains a fox must constantly have his wits about him, for he is always in danger from hidden traps, ambuscades, or poisoned baits. Wherever he goes he must tread warily, guided by his keen nose and his past experience.

As already mentioned, certain of the Scotch deer forests are literally crawling with foxes, for

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though cubs are destroyed in the spring, and a certain number of old foxes are shot when visiting the dens at dawn or dusk, a wholesale method of destroying them cannot be adopted on account of the disturbance to the forest. In such regions



GOLDEN EAGLE AND HILL FOX.

foxes naturally increase, and their depredations occasionally demand special measures of retaliation. Perhaps a fox drive is organised over a wide extent of ground with guns posted at all the likely passes, or a determined raid is made

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upon all the dens which the foxes are known to occupy. Terriers are employed at these earths, which either bolt the foxes to the guns or worry them underground. A big hill-fox can stand a lot of punishment, and I have known one to kill a small terrier, but if the latter is a sizeable dog with plenty of courage, the fox is doomed unless he gets "out of that." A fox which runs the gauntlet of the guns, stands a better chance of life than one which fights the terriers, for though a running fox offers a fair mark, he is proverbially hard to hit. I once saw a fox bolted from a rocky earth, and get safely away, after six barrels of B.B. shot had been sent after him from the guns of three men who were all good game shots.

Apropos of shooting foxes, I killed a certain number in Canada by stalking them in winter. It needs very careful stalking to "jump" a fox from his bed, and put a bullet or a charge of shot into him as he goes away. This method can only be employed in snow, when the tracks of the fox can be followed. In the woods we often hunted foxes with slow hounds, posting guns on the well known runways. The foxes used to circle round in the vicinity, and somebody was nearly certain to get a shot. As each red fox skin was in those days worth £1, there was a certain amount of incentive to hunt for the pelt as well as sport.

There was and still is some demand for healthy cubs and adult foxes for re-stocking purposes, and if the consequent supply had been confined to foxes from the non-hunting districts of Scotland and other parts of Great Britain we should have been spared the epidemics of mange that have so often broken out. A healthy hill-fox makes a welcome change of blood, and helps to





B. WILSON (WHIPPER-IN TO THE ULLSWATER HOUNDS) WITH A BIG HILL FOX.
(Photo by R. Clapham).

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increase the stamina of his low-country relatives; but the importation of foreign foxes, carried in filthy crates and boxes, is like asking for an outbreak of mange.

Apropos of taking foxes alive for re-stocking purposes, one of the most ingenious methods is by the use of a stone trap or enclosure, known locally as a "kist." When a fox has been tracked into a den, all the outlets but one are blocked up. In front of this outlet, a small stone enclosure is constructed, roofed with slabs of rock. Just in front of the mouth of the den, a wooden, or sometimes an iron, slide is fixed. This is attached to a string which passes over a stick placed across the centre of the trap, at such a height that when the string is pulled, the slide rises and permits free access to the interior of the trap from the mouth of the earth. When the front end of the trap is built, a narrow slit is left in it, of sufficient width to accommodate an ordinary wooden bobbin. To this bobbin the string on the slide-door is made fast, the length of cord being such that when it is pulled tight, and the bobbin is lightly jammed into the crack, the slide is clear of the entrance to the trap.

When all is quiet, the fox leaves the den and finds himself in the walled enclosure. Seeing light through the crack at the far end, he at once investigates, and in scratching to get out displaces the bobbin which flies up and allows the slide-door to fall. Reynard is then a prisoner until the keeper arrives in the morning with a sack for his removal. There are various other methods of bringing foxes to hand, with steel traps, and poison. Sometimes a bait is used, this being partially buried beneath wood ashes or

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earth. As is well known, foxes, like dogs, have a habit of "leaving their cards" at certain spots, and the trapper often takes advantage of these places. Sometimes he sticks a post into the ground on a mound near where he knows foxes pass, and buries several traps, with their chains tied together, round the post. Once in a trap, Reynard in his struggles springs the others, and is thus inextricably held. If a trap is pegged down, a fox will gnaw off his foot, but if the trap is attached to a light clog of wood, he will drag it to a distance, leaving behind him a trail easy to follow.

In America, wolves are killed by putting strychnine inside small balls of lard. These are allowed to freeze solid, and are then scattered about in open places, such as the frozen snow-covered surface of a lake. Into each ball of lard, a black feather is stuck, and when the wolves see these feathers against the white background they naturally investigate them, swallow the lard, and the poison does the rest. Foxes are also taken by this method. The Esquimaux employ a similar method, but instead of poison they place inside the balls of fat, a spring made of whalebone, held in restraint by a length of gut. When the animal swallows the fat, the gut string weakens, and allows the spring to fly open, the poor victim dying a very painful death.

American trappers use a variety of weird and noxious smelling oils and scents for attracting fur bearing animals. In the case of wolves and foxes there is no better bait than a few drops of the urine of the she-wolf or vixen, taken at the mating season. This, sprinkled on the likely "card leaving" places, round which are buried

THE HILL FOX

a number of traps, seldom fails to work the oracle.

A hunted fox is usually pretty good at concealing his movements, but I doubt if he can compare with the big hill-foxes in this respect. Anyone who waits near a den at dawn or dusk, in hopes of getting a shot at a dog-fox or vixen bringing food to the cubs, will quickly realise the difficulty of detecting the approach of their phantom-like forms.

In many districts of Scotland there used to be a local character known as the "tod-hunter," anglicé fox-hunter. His assistants in the work of destroying foxes were a motley canine crew, composed of terriers, hounds, and animals of the lurcher type known as "streakers."

During the cubbing time, the tod-hunter used to visit the earths with his terriers. The latter generally made short work of a litter, after which a watch was kept for the return of the old foxes. Should these have been missed by the hidden guns, the "streakers" were slipped in hopes of bringing them to hand. At other times of year, the fox-hunter used to draw the crags and corries, while men were posted at the various passes with "streakers," ready to slip them at the foxes when opportunity offered.

Colquhoun, in "The Moor and the Loch," gives a good account of a hunt with a big hill-fox. He and his brother were on a roe-hunting expedition with a steady old hound, when the latter got on to a fox. Both sportsmen shot at it, the shots taking effect. Despite its wounds however, the fox afforded an exciting chase ere it was finally run into by the hound. Many a wounded

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stag which is given up for lost, is watched and followed to his last resting place by the fox.

In the old days, organised vermin hunts took place in the fell country of Cumberland and Westmorland. Little in the shape of fur or feather escaped the attentions of the hunters, the bag including foxes, badgers, wild-cats, polecats,



HILL FOX AND DEAD STAG.

pine martens, eagles and hawks. In later times, money was paid for the heads of foxes, ravens and other birds and beasts, this money being in some cases disbursed by the church-wardens who also treated the school-children of their day to "scholars' ale" at the expense of the parish.

I have already mentioned the "streakers," which were attached to the Scotch tod-hunter's

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motley pack. Although these dogs were fast, the fox frequently escaped them in the rough ground. A sharp cur dog can catch a fox if he gets away close to its brush, and a terrier has been known to do so ere now, but once the fox manages to avoid the first rush at close quarters, he can escape anything on four legs on hill-ground.

Even in districts where he is looked upon as an outlaw, the fox receives a certain measure of protection, from the fact that he is more valuable alive than dead. Many a fox in a non-hunting country is taken uninjured, to be disposed of in a district where fresh blood is required. If his value is apparent even in non-hunting districts, how much more so is it in countries where money is disbursed locally right and left in the interests of sport. The economic value of the fox is great, and is increasing yearly ; and without him, the money now distributed in certain channels, would not find its way into the same pockets.

Although in this country the outlaw fox is worth comparatively little to the man who kills him, the reverse is the case in those countries where he is hunted for his fur.

There have been great changes in English country-life of late years, and in certain hunting districts the fox is perhaps not held in quite such high esteem by all parties as heretofore. Still, there is no getting away from the fact that Reynard's economic value is greater now than ever it was. In pre-war days it cost a sovereign to shoot a pheasant, and the price has risen since then, but the value of each pheasant accounted for to-day can bear no comparison with the cost required to kill a fox in the Shires.

In mountain districts, it is not uncommon to

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come across foxes minus a foot. Many a fox gets clear of a trap at the cost of one of his pedal extremities, but despite his loss, appears to fare as well as ever. If this happens in a hunting country however, he will not as a rule last long for hounds soon account for a "three legger." Once a fox has been in a trap, it is a clever man who will get him in another. An adult fox is not easy to trap at any time and his motto is "once bit, twice shy."

True hill-foxes generally show a good deal of grey about their fur, but there are not so many of these "old timers" as there used to be. The Scotch mountains probably harbour more of them than any other district, because, being far from any regular hunting country, the foxes are uncontaminated with foreign blood. In the Lake District a few fairly grey foxes are killed each season, but the old sort—known as "greyhound" foxes—are now practically a thing of the past.

The hill-fox is a true mountaineer. He likes to make his kennel far up amongst the high tops, two thousand feet or more above sea level. From there he makes long foraging expeditions to the low ground, returning to his mountain fastness before daybreak. Instead of lying in a covert, a hedgerow, or the open fields, like his south-country cousin, he chooses some heather-covered ledge on a towering crag, with a wide, panoramic view of the country spread out below him. Under stress of weather, or when danger threatens, he will get to ground amongst the labyrinths of subterranean passages, which ramificate in all directions below the piled-up rocks and boulders.

There is no artificiality about *his* existence. He lives a wild, free life on the open hills, and all



WILD FOX RUNNING ON A WALL TOP.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

THE HILL FOX

men are his sworn enemies. It is a case of hound, trap, and gun against keen nose, cunning and fleetness of foot, and to his credit be it said, the fox often wins.

SCENT

CHAPTER VIII

OF all matters connecting with hunting, scent is the one that we know least about. We can of course tell whether it is a good or bad scenting day, by the way hounds run, but to forecast what the state of the scent will be on any given day, is entirely beyond our powers. Possibly it is just as well we cannot prophesy in this respect, for we should always be picking the good days, and the uncertainty of the sport would be lost to us. If we knew we were going to kill our fox every day, hunting him would very soon begin to pall. Scent of course plays the most important part in hunting, for without it, your hounds—no matter how good they are—cannot run a yard.

Roughly speaking, scent is governed by the nature of the ground and the state of the atmosphere. We know that on the day that a human being can smell the scent of a fox at some crossing-place in a lane or on a road, hounds as a rule cannot own it, because it is too far above them. Beyond this stage of our knowledge, it is difficult to speak with any certainty. Speaking in the vernacular: "There's nowt sae queer as scent." The factors that influence scent are the fox himself, the nature of the soil, the condition of the surface, the temporary state of the surface, and the state of the weather.

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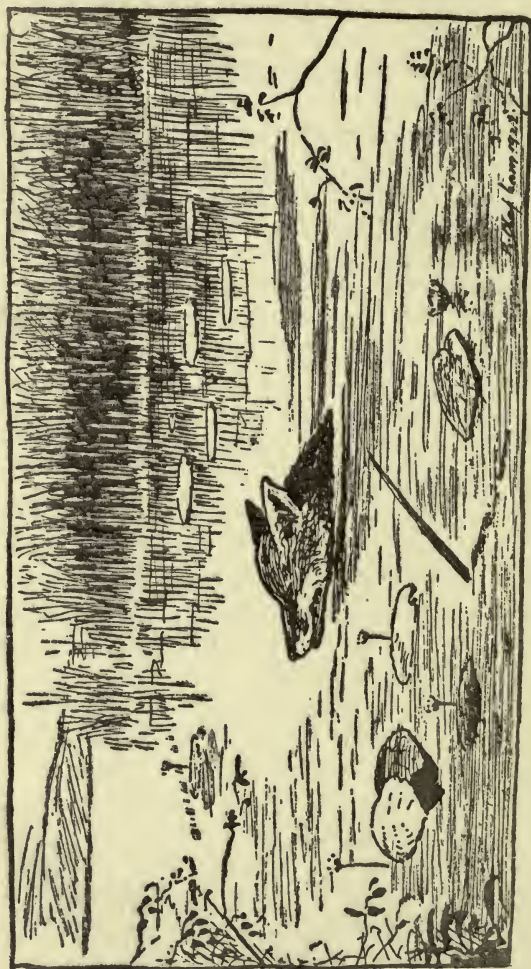
The amount of scent emanating from a fox appears to vary with individuals. Likewise the behaviour of the fox has a good deal to do with the quality of the scent. One that runs straight is nearly always easier to hunt than a short-running, twisting customer. There are two kinds of scent, i.e., the body-scent and the foot-scent. The former is held in suspension in the atmosphere, and when at the right height—"breast high"—hounds can scream after their fox. Foot-scent lies on, or very close to the ground, and hounds have to work it out slowly, as when they are on a cold drag. When scent is "breast high" on a windy day, hounds often run far wide of the actual line, because the scent drifts with the wind. In the case of foot-scent, this does not happen, and such scent leads hounds to the exact spot where a fox has jumped a wall, or crept through a smoot.

Human beings have a far greater capacity for recognising various scents than is generally supposed. Persons who are both blind and deaf sometimes know their friends by their smell, and even go so far as to base their likes and dislikes on the smell of individuals.

Probably the greater portion of the scent given off by the body of the fox, comes from the scent glands at the root of the brush. Scent appears to be closely connected with the fox's nervous system, while the speed at which he travels also affects its strength. A fox lying close in covert gives off little or no scent at all whereas a fox that has got warm with running, leaves considerable scent behind him. I think the nervous system is chiefly responsible for the loss of scent when a fox receives a sudden fright, as when he is coursed by a cur dog. No doubt

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this causes the glands to contract, and scent is automatically cut off. I think the same thing happens when a fox enters the cold water of a



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river or lake during the course of a run, for many a fox is lost after he has been through a stream. As the powers of a hard-run fox begin to fail





THE GELLIGAER AND TALYSONT HOUNDS ON A COLD LINE.

(Photo by Sport and General Press Agency, Ltd.)

SCENT

his vitality weakens, and scent does likewise. Hounds can tell by some subtle change in the scent that their fox is weakening, and certain members of the pack then push towards the front. At such a time they try very hard to catch him, and therefore it is most important not to halloo or otherwise get their heads up when their beaten fox is just in front of them, for once the thread is broken, they may be quite unable to pick it up again.

There is no doubt that the fox himself knows a lot about scent. His nose is his chief asset on all his hunting expeditions, and it is quite likely that he may base his actions in front of hounds on the kind of scenting day it happens to be. In the fell-country, it is often possible to watch every movement of a hunted fox for a long distance. If it is a bad or moderate scenting day, he will potter along, frequently stopping to look back, and sometimes he will even lie down. The slower he goes, the less scent he gives off, and the harder work it is for hounds to hold his line. If he hurried when there was no real need for hurry, he would grow warm and give off more scent, whereas a fox never does hurry until he is absolutely compelled to. Apropos of this, I take the liberty of quoting a passage from Mr. C. E. Benson's book, "Crag and hound in Lakeland," he says:

"Talking of fools and outpost hounds, a fox, for his reputation, is the greatest ass in the animal kingdom. More than once have I known one run itself almost to death, under the impression it was being chased, when the hounds were 'barking up quite a different tree.' I saw an idiot of this brand blunder right on to a couple of outpost hounds, which promptly slew it, the remainder of the pack the while being seated round a 'whoal' three-quarters of a mile off."

With regard to the above, I can quite well believe that a fox blundered on to a couple of out-

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post hounds, for I have known it happen myself, although I should hardly use the word "blunder" in describing it. A fox, coming along through rough ground, can easily get close to a couple of hounds if the latter are quiet, before he realizes their presence, especially if they are above him, and their scent is carried over his head. I cannot however believe that a fox would "run itself almost to death, under the impression that it was being chased." I have seen a good many hunted foxes in front of hounds, and others which had been disturbed by the presence of hounds in their vicinity, but I have never known a fox to go faster than he really need, even when hounds were on his line.

A fox coming round the shoulder of a hill, or travelling in rocky ground, may, if he cannot smell hounds or men standing quietly, almost run into them, for his eyesight is not remarkably acute as far as stationary objects are concerned. Again, what appears to be easily within our vision, may be invisible, or at any rate look very different from the much lower view-point of the fox.

As far as the land is concerned, scent appears to lie best when the ground is in good riding condition, neither too hard or too wet. Poor land carries a better scent than good land, while limestone, unless very damp, is always inimical to it. Wet, soft snow often carries a good scent. In Canada I have known hounds to run well on a line of deer tracks which had thawed out, but when the tracks froze again towards evening, scent appeared to be lacking. There is really no rule to go by with regard to scent, so all we can do is to trust to luck, and, as an old huntsman friend of mine says, just keep on "never minding."

With his keen nose, the fox easily recognises

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the odour of others of his kind. Foxes like dogs "leave their cards" at certain places, and I think the aroma round the latter tell the fox all he wants to know about those which have preceded him. He knows instantly whether a dog fox or a vixen has been there, and in all probability he can tell their age as well. Hounds are less keen to hunt a vixen in spring than a dog fox, and this may be because the scent at that season is weak, or has undergone some subtle change.

The odour of the fox does not cling to his fur when the latter is used for commercial purposes. Certain creatures like the skunk, have to be carefully handled in this respect, otherwise the secretions from the scent-glands would ruin the skin. The skunk's only power of defence is the faculty of being able to expel a fine jet of evil-smelling liquid, which is powerful enough to temporarily blind his canine enemies. If however the skunk is captured young, and the scent sacs are removed, the fur of the animal no longer retains any trace of unpleasant odour.

Strong as the scent of a fox is, it cannot compare with that of a deer. I have seen hounds change during the course of a run from fox to deer, and they could hunt the latter much more easily, as their increased pace and cry testified. This occurred in a fox-hunting district, where an occasional outlying deer puts in an appearance. When hunting deer, staghounds run in file, and do not carry a head like foxhounds. Also on certain days, hounds will run mute or nearly so, while on other occasions every member of the pack will speak to it. Just why this should be we cannot tell, but scent has probably a good deal to do with it. I think the scent of a deer chiefly

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emanates from the metatarsal glands, situated on each hind leg below the hock. The hair around these glands is dark coloured, and the smell is strong.

From time to time, evil-smelling liquids have been invented to prevent foxes taking partridges during the nesting season. At first these were attended with a certain amount of success, but after certain foxes had investigated the new aroma, they discovered the fact of its being connected with sitting birds, and in many instances they were guided by the smell and were thus able to walk straight in and secure a substantial feed. Although the fox is hardly so clever as the fabulists would have us believe, he is no fool, and he can put two and two together with the aid of his keen nose and experience. In the "Master of Game" it says: "The hunting for a fox is fair for the good cry of the hounds that follow him so nigh and with so good a will. Always they scent of him, for he flies through the thick wood and also he stinketh evermore." Again with regard to the fur of the fox, it says: "The foxes' skins be wonderfully warm to make cuffs and furs, but they stink evermore if they are not well tawed."

When hunting with beagles, I have seen a hare roll on manure-stained ground, and instances have been recorded of foxes doing the same thing. Both foxes and dogs have a habit of rolling on carrion and other filth, and when a hunted animal does this during the course of a run, its scent is often obliterated by the smell of the foreign matter.

Foxes often take refuge in queer places when hard run by hounds. I have known a fox to enter a coal-shed, and another climbed on the

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window sill of a cottage. Instances are recorded of foxes taking refuge in chimneys, and Lord Willoughby de Broke, in the *Badminton Magazine*, tells of a fox which ran into a stable-yard, climbed on the roof, and ensconced himself among the works of the stable clock.

Some time ago, there was a good deal of discussion re hounds running from scent to view. Various opinions were expressed, one of which was to the effect that hounds do not see their fox until they practically have their teeth into him. From this view I must certainly beg to differ. On the fells one often gets a panoramic view of the chase, and it is possible to keep close watch on the movements of both fox and hounds. On many occasions it has been perfectly obvious that hounds viewed their fox for some distance prior to overhauling him. When hounds are about to run from scent to view, they know very well that their fox is close in front of them, and I think they naturally look for a moving object, when they make their final spurt. If however, a fox lies down, hounds are apt to flash over him, for they are then still running by scent, and in their eagerness fail to see his motionless form.

A hound's vision is much more acute at picking up a moving object than a stationary one. A hound which I walked for a fell pack, had a habit, after a fox had been run to ground, of taking up his stand on the hill side well above the earth. The instant the fox bolted, the hound was away, running parallel with and above his fox, and there was not the slightest doubt that he could see it below him.

On a real good scenting day, when scent is "breast high," hounds are likely to view their beaten fox from a greater distance than when

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scenting conditions are not so good, and their heads are necessarily nearer to the ground. When a hound puts his nose down and hits off a line, he at once proclaims the fact with his tongue, and at the same time throws up his head as he pushes forward. Thus, the higher lies the scent, the less often has he to get down to it, and the more likely is he to view a moving object in front of him.

PACE

CHAPTER IX

IN order to bring a fox to hand, hounds must press him at some period of the run. It is the pace, coupled with the superior condition of the hounds, that kills.

I have heard it stated that a wild animal which has to work for its food, will always be in better condition than another—such as a hound—which has food brought to it. With this statement I must beg to disagree. Take for instance a carted deer, which is hand-fed on hard feed, and a wild stag which feeds himself. Which of them will be in the better condition? and by condition I mean fitness to stand up before hounds. I think anyone with experience of both forms of stag hunting, will agree with me when I plump for the hand-fed deer. Hounds are fed at regular intervals, usually early on the morning of the day before hunting. The huntsman knows the appetites of individual hounds, and feeds accordingly. By this means the pack is kept in good and level condition. When hounds arrive at the meeting place, they have thoroughly digested their food, and have got rid of all waste matter; thus they are in the best of running order. Also, prior to the commencement of the season, they have been put through a course of slow and fast exercise, that has hardened their muscles and feet, and strengthened their wind.

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In the case of the fox, he often feeds at irregular intervals, particularly in mountainous districts where weather conditions are frequently severe. As a rule he feeds at night, and what exercise he gets is taken on his hunting expeditions. Generally speaking this exercise is not fast, and if food happens to be plentiful, he does



DISAPPOINTED: Fox and Grouse.

not cover a great deal of ground. When he returns, full-fed to his lying-up place, at daybreak or a little before, he is not in the best of shape for hard running. The earlier in the morning therefore that hounds unkennel him, the better chance they have to press him, if scent serves. An afternoon fox is always in better trim than a morning one, and so as a rule is an old dog fox

PACE

which has travelled far beyond his own beat on a love-making trip.

The amount of pressure that hounds can bring to bear on their fox depends of course on the pace, and pace depends on the strength of the scent, for hounds cannot travel faster than their noses.

It was Goosey, the famous Belvoir huntsman, who begged leave to state that the fox was a toddling animal. By this he meant that a fox will keep putting a longer and longer interval between himself and the hounds, unless the latter are able to keep up a sufficient pressure. On a good scenting day, when hounds get away right on the back of their fox, the latter has to run his hardest; and, roughly speaking, the average fox cannot keep this up for more than twenty minutes or half an hour. At other times, when scent is moderate or catchy, hounds push on when they can, and are working and taking so much out of themselves all the time. Not so with the fox however. He moderates his pace, and may even stop or lie down, and by so doing gets his second wind if he requires it, and what to him is most important of all, he gains time. It is ever the fox's aim to do this, for the slower he can go the less heated he gets, and eventually he is able to run hounds out of scent altogether.

The fox is extremely fast for a moderate distance, especially in rough ground where he can easily beat hounds. He is remarkably active too amongst crags and cliffs in mountainous country. On a good scenting day in the fell country, the pace is likely to be very fast indeed. The pace of the modern foxhound of the type one sees at Peterborough is second to none in the estimation of some people, but I am willing to wager a trifle that if field-trials for hounds were

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organised in this country, on the lines of those held in America, some of our hill-country hounds would surprise the judges by their speed.

The fastest runs generally occur when hounds are piloted by a dog fox which is out of his own country. On the hills, dog foxes often travel considerable distances on their love-making expeditions, and when hounds drop on to one of these customers the ensuing hunt is apt to be both fast and straight. The fox sets his mask for his own domains, and goes there in a bee line.

Elsewhere we have said that a fox has his own particular beat, every foot of which he knows, and his instinct is to turn back when he reaches the boundary of that beat. The lure of a vixen may tempt him beyond it, and I am inclined to think that when he returns he follows the same route which he took on the outward journey. Once he has followed a certain line of country, he never forgets it, and every detail of the way is stored up in his memory. Aside from this however, the homing instinct appears to be strongly developed in foxes, for there are many instances on record of foxes imported from distant parts of the country making their way back again across wide areas on which they have never put foot before.

The longest runs usually take place when scent is rather permanent than strong. The longest hunt I ever personally took part in, began at ten o'clock in the morning, and hounds were still running after dark. This was in the Lake District, and it is possible that hounds changed foxes, though I rather doubt it. It was never very fast at any period, and there were a number of checks, still hounds kept going on, their fox being one of the "toddling" sort mentioned by Goosey.



ULLSWATER "CRUEL," A VERY FAST BITCH OF THE FELL TYPE.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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There is I think little doubt that the stamina of the fox to-day—at any rate in the Midlands—is less than that of his predecessors. This may be accounted for by the fact that there are now many more foxes than there used to be, and in consequence each individual fox has a smaller beat and knows less country. Food is likewise easier to obtain, and a fox has not to travel so far to get it, so the exercise he gets does not keep him in such hard condition as was the case in the old days when he and his kind were few and far between, and the country was more or less unenclosed.

We still hear of long runs, but as a rule more than one fox acts as pilot, for with foxes thick on the ground, and coverts planted at short intervals, changes are frequent. The modern quick tactics necessary in the Shires, where hounds are apt to be over-ridden, make for short bursts. In the old days, hounds usually killed the fox they started with, for the supply of foxes was a meagre one. Hounds too could use their noses better than their present-day representatives of fashionable type. They were bred for work, with no thought of show, and when hounds were bought and sold, they fetched prices more commensurate with their ability in the field than is the case to-day.

In an ordinary enclosed country, where hounds are ridden to, a fall of snow may temporarily stop hunting. On the fells, where hounds are followed on foot, snow, if it is not too deep, seldom interferes with sport. In soft snow—which often carries a good scent, particularly when it is damp—hounds, owing to their greater length of leg, can travel faster and more easily than the fox. Thus it often happens that a fox, which under ordinary conditions would go right out to the

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high tops, cannot face the deeper snow on the more elevated slopes, and so hounds, to use a local expression "lay him in," or in other words force him into the low ground. There, unless he goes to earth, his shrift is likely to be short, and a kill in the open is often the crowning event of such a run.

Although the majority of foxes, particularly the hill-type, are more muscular than fat, one occasionally comes across a specimen carrying more than his share of adipose tissue. A fox of this kind probably spends most of his time in the midst of a plentiful food supply, and if hounds happen to get on to him he does not as a rule last long if the pace is fast.

In another chapter I have made mention of a fox which took refuge beneath a patch of blaeberry scrub on a crag-face. Prior to reaching this retreat, he had been very hard run by two and a half couples of hounds, the pack having split. When he was at last evicted from the crag, he made a comparatively feeble effort to escape, and after a short scurry, went to ground under a big stone. It was the pace, coupled with his own fat condition, that killed this fox.

Certain creatures, the heron for example, when pursued, lighten themselves by vomiting up their food. I have never heard of a fox doing this, but in "The Master of Game," the oldest English hunting book, it says, with regard to coursing the fox: "If greyhounds give him many touches and overset him, his last remedy, if he is in an open country, will be that he vishiteth gladly (the act of voiding excrements) so that the greyhounds should leave him for the stink of the dirt, and also for the fear that he hath."

The "Master of Game" was written between



ESKDALE AND ENNERDALE FOXHOUNDS IN FULL CRY.

(*Photo by R. Clapham*).

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the years 1406 and 1413, and from it one soon discovers that the sportsmen of that period were possessed of a very intimate acquaintance with the habits and "nature" of the wild animals they pursued. They were well aware of the necessity for pressing a beast at some period of the run, particularly if the animal was fleet footed. In order to keep up the pressure, they employed relays of hounds. In the chapter on "The Wolf and his nature" it says: "They go so fast when they be void (empty) that men have let run four leashes of greyhounds, one after the other and they could not overtake him, for he runs as fast as any beast in the world, and he lasts long running, for he has a long breath."

At the time the book was written, it was customary to take the fox in coverts, with hounds and nets. In the open he was apparently coursed with greyhounds.

When hounds run together as a pack, the pressure they bring to bear on their quarry is dependent not only on pace, but on the competitive spirit aroused amongst them, what we call drive. When a hound gets his hackles up, and exhibits a keenness to be always pushing on, then he has plenty of drive. A pack, the individual hounds of which are always working at high pressure, is therefore sure to be a killing one.

EARTH STOPPING, ARTIFICIAL EARTHS AND DIGGING OUT

CHAPTER X

IN order that foxes shall not go to ground without providing sport it is customary to stop the earths overnight, in the locality where hounds are to hunt on the following day. A century or more ago, the earth-stopper was a recognised Hunt official, with special duties of his own to perform. In those days, before the era of intensive game preservation, and consequent increase of keepers, the earth-stopper had free access to all coverts which contained main earths. To-day one looks in vain for the picturesque character who made his nightly rounds astride a pony ; equipped with spade, bill-hook, and horn lantern, whilst a good, rough terrier trotted alongside. The old-time earth-stopper was a man fond of sport and keen on his job, otherwise he would never have performed his duties as satisfactorily as he did. For it is no light task to sally forth on earth-stopping bent during the hours of darkness, and to do the job thoroughly regardless of the state of the weather at the time. Nothing however deterred the earth-stopper from performing his task, and he knew every earth and the whereabouts of every litter in the country. He stopped too at just the proper time, so that when hounds arrived on the scene, foxes were out and not in. Hunting was the premier

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sport in those days, and men shot only when there was a hard frost and hounds were confined to kennels. Gradually however the old order changed, and the earth-stopper's duties were merged into those of the keepers on the various estates. As game preserving became popular, the guardians of the woods objected to the presence of the earth-stopper in their domains, and so he and his kind were ousted from their job. The move was a bad one as far as hunting was concerned. The earth-stopper was a specialist, who was all for hunting, and he performed his task conscientiously. The keeper on the other hand, with his multifarious duties, grudges the time spent in stopping, with the result that the work is often shirked, and foxes either get in or are stopped in. Certainly a wet and windy night may hold out little incentive for a walk, at an hour when most folks are asleep in their beds; but if the keeper wishes to do his duty he must ignore both sleep and weather. The proper hour for stopping is between half-past ten and midnight. The fox is not altogether regular in his habits, but roughly speaking he is abroad from dusk till dawn, depending on the state of the weather, and the convenience of his food supply. In mild weather, foxes, particularly those of the male sex, may be found above ground at all hours of the day.

In the new order of things, the head-keeper relegates the job of stopping to his underlings. The latter make a pretence of stopping the main earth, but ignore the large rabbit burrows, which foxes use even more than the earth in time of danger; therefore should hounds find, the fox, if he is a bad one, will go to ground at once. Keepers are only human after all, and have

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small relish for these midnight expeditions, so to salve their consciences they do the job at say five or six on the morning of the meet. This is of course far worse than leaving it undone, for the foxes are stopped in, and they run the risk of being suffocated. Again, the earths may be stopped at the right time, but unless the material used is of the right kind a fox may scratch his way in. The best material consists of a bundle of faggots, known in some districts as "bavins."

Directly the day's sport is over, the earths should be opened again. I am afraid some keepers do not stick very religiously to this part of the contract, the result being that foxes are either suffocated or driven away elsewhere, so that coverts which are known to contain earths do not invariably produce foxes when hounds visit them. Unless the earths are promptly reopened, it gives fox-stealers an opportunity to set traps, and an unscrupulous keeper may be tempted to do the same thing.

In softish ground, a fox will scratch his way out of an earth in time, if his abode has been stopped. If the ground is rocky, or frozen hard, it is possible to keep a fox in without stopping the entrance of the earth. I know of at least two foxes in America, which were kept underground by setting a trap at one entrance, and at two other entrances a piece of paper stuck in a cleft peg, placed about two feet from the mouth of each hole. The foxes uncovered the trap, but were not caught, and the trap being reset, they refused to pass it, or the two pieces of paper.

Where badgers are more or less plentiful, they are occasionally responsible for undoing the earth-stoppers' work. In some large earths, badgers and foxes live together, and both are stopped out, if the



DRAWING A HILL, FOX ALIVE.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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keeper does his job at the right time. Reynard returns and cannot scratch in, but Mr. Brock, armed with his powerful claws, often succeeds in tearing open the entrance, much to the subsequent chagrin of the earth-stopper. Old male badgers are much given to wandering, and others, obliged to leave an overcrowded earth, are forced to seek fresh quarters elsewhere. These outliers draw out new earths, and the latter may be easily overlooked, unless the keeper makes a thorough search for them.

The whereabouts of the earths to be stopped depends upon the probable draw for the day, and the area of ground likely to be covered. The keepers receive notification, and it is then up to them to make all secure. Under modern conditions, it is not a bad plan to stop the main earths permanently until February, after which they should be re-opened in order to allow the vixens to lie up. In February and March, earths should only be lightly "put to" in the morning, the main-earth being left open after the early days of the former month.

While there are in most countries a sufficiency of natural earths in which the vixen can lay down her cubs, it is sometimes thought necessary to construct artificial retreats for the benefit of foxes. Opinions differ considerably regarding the utility of artificial earths, but it is safe to say the less you interfere with nature in such matters the better. It may be said that a well built artificial earth is easy to keep clean, but I have yet to hear of disease breaking out in a natural earth, when the vulpine occupants are wild and healthy. If an artificial earth has to be constructed, the nearer it is in plan to a natural one, the more likely are wild foxes to take to it,

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and the less likely it is to be tampered with if its whereabouts chances to become known.

In most artificial earths there are stone or flag-lined entrances, while the inside ramifications of the retreat are much restricted in the matter of room. Any people of doubtful character therefore can easily bolt or kill a fox with terriers in such an earth. The plan on which it is made is too straightforward and simple, whereas in a big natural earth a fox has several avenues of escape.

The exact location of an artificial earth is usually supposed to be known only to certain people closely connected with the Hunt, but I am afraid information concerning these matters often leaks out through various channels. If an artificial earth is considered indispensable, the stick-heap pattern is as good as any. The method of construction is as follows :

A suitable location is first chosen on dry ground which is unlikely to be flooded. This may be in the corner of a field, or in a small covert. The soil must not be of too sandy a nature, otherwise the foxes will dig out below the sticks, and rabbits will take to harbouring in the earth. The corner of a field is a good place to set to work, because the fences keep the place sheltered, and the entrances to the stick heap can be made on the sides facing the fences. The ground plan should be about 30 ft. x 30 ft., and there should be from 9 ft. to 12 ft. between the fences and the outside of the heap. The walls of the latter are built up with old trees, roots, stumps, etc. These having been built, the middle is then filled in with similar material, laid so that passages are left from the three entrances—at the inside corner, and the two sides—towards the centre. The material

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should be so arranged that "beds" or lying places are left near the middle. Near the entrances the stuff should be laid so as to exclude as much draught as possible, and to keep the interior dark. The walls and interior being completed, smaller logs, roots, etc., should be placed so as to cover the open spaces or "beds," and prevent the next layer of stuff from filling them in. A trench is then dug round the heap, about 3ft. from the latter; and each entrance is temporarily stopped with a block of wood. Strong thorns about 3ft. high are then stuck in the trench all round, and the space between them and the wall of the heap is filled in with thorns or hedge-trimmings. These help to keep out both draught and light. Over the whole thing is next laid a few loads of strong thorns, built up until the heap is about 8ft. or 9 ft. high. After this has been done, the blocks which have prevented the entrances from becoming filled up, may be withdrawn. The heap is then finished, with the exception of fencing it off on the two sides facing the field.

In order to bolt foxes from a stick-heap, a short ladder and some 8ft. poles should be kept at the nearest cottage or farmhouse. If these are left lying near the heap, they may tempt farm hands and others to disturb the foxes. To bolt a fox three or four men mount the ladder, and get on to the top of the heap. They then work in line towards the entrances, pushing the poles down through the thorns, and rattling them against the roots below. Sometimes a fox refuses to bolt at the first time of asking, but a second or even a third prodding generally works the oracle. Should a fox bolt early in the proceedings, the pole-men should at once get off

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the heap, as there may be another fox in the latter, and he may come in useful later in the day. If rabbits get into the heap, as they sometimes do, the easiest way to get rid of them is to set up a fence of wire netting round it, leaving a single entrance. The presence of the netting will make the foxes temporarily vacate their quarters, and the rabbits can then be trapped at the entrance to the wire enclosure. An earth of this description is much better than a piped or flagged one, being more natural, and if well made it will last for quite twenty years, so long as the top layer of thorns is occasionally renewed.

For real sport however, there is nothing to beat wild foxes in a wild country, where artificial earths are unheard of. All you need do with your foxes is to let 'em alone in summer, and hunt 'em hard in winter, taking care to work your big woodlands thoroughly, for they are apt to become fox sanctuaries if left too much undisturbed.

We are all familiar with the outbreaks of mange reported from time to time, and the cause of it is the filthy manner in which both cubs and adult foxes are imported for re-stocking purposes. Fox dealers abroad especially and certain persons in this country keep foxes in dark, evil-smelling holes, where disease is rampant, and the smell would knock you down. Is it any wonder therefore, that such foxes, turned down amongst the wild stock, at once contaminate the latter, and the repulsive disease spreads like wild fire? No one will ever make me believe that over-stocking—if such a thing were to happen—is productive of mange. Certainly foxes are plentiful in some districts, but never so numerous as to cause mange by over-crowding. In the Shires, the

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foxes may to a certain extent be in-bred, but in the majority of countries, the necessary change of blood is generally forthcoming. The habits of the fox, such as travelling long distances to visit the vixen of his choice, preclude any possibility of consistent in-breeding. With regard to over-stocking, a well known M.F.H. once said : " You might as well say you have too much money, as too many foxes."

Once mange has made its appearance, the only thing to do is to destroy the affected foxes as soon as possible, and do the same with contaminated earths. Where there are many mangy foxes, it is useless to attempt to destroy them by hunting, for this only drives them about the country, and helps to further spread the disease. A shot gun, held straight, is the best antidote for a fox with mange.

Harking back for a moment to the subject of stick-heaps and artificial earths, I am inclined to think that quite small gorse coverts are better than either. They are easily made, and if kept quiet, are sure to hold foxes.

All Hunts have a system of payment for earth-stopping, which varies to some extent in different countries. Some pay by the acreage of the estate, others for litters, and some for finds. Payment for the latter however appears to work unfairly for the man who looks after a litter or litters in the small places, for when hounds draw them the foxes which were bred there are quite likely to be lying in the bigger woods adjoining, and the keeper of the latter pockets the " find " money. This system also encourages unscrupulous keepers to show hand-reared or other bad foxes. It is quite easy to turn down a fox before

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hounds come, and even if he is a rank bad one, the keeper is entitled to his emolument for the find. Payment for litters is all right so long as the said litters are seen during the regular season. Many a keeper can show litters when cub-hunting starts, but later on they mysteriously disappear.

Payment by the acreage of the various estates is probably the best, when keepers are responsible for the earth-stopping. Even this plan is open to criticism, for a small place may take as much stopping as a large one, owing to out-of-the-way rabbit burrows, drains, etc., all of which are resorted to by foxes. Again, some coverts are for various reasons more often visited by hounds than others. The system of having a recognised earth-stopper for the whole country is therefore much preferable to relying on the keepers of the various estates, but under present conditions, where shooting interests have to be considered, his presence in the coverts is unwelcome.

An annual dinner or "earth-stoppers' feast" should always be held, with the Master in the Chair, and the huntsman present as well. In case of any dispute, the huntsman can generally settle the debated point, and in order to maintain friendly feelings between the Hunt and the keepers the latter should if possible always be met half-way.

It is occasionally necessary in the judgment of Master or huntsman to dig out a fox which has been run to ground. Perhaps it has been a long, dragging, and disappointing day for hounds, and they thoroughly deserve their quarry; or may be the fox is one of the twisting, short-running sort, and is therefore better disposed of. Unless a particular fox is known to be a determined

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skulker, he is given a fair chance to bolt when the terrier is introduced to the drain, earth, or whatever retreat the fox has sought refuge in.



TO GROUND.

In a hunting country, it is not wise to condemn a fox the first time he goes to ground after a short scurry. He may of course be a bad one, but then

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again he may not, so he is deserving of at least one chance to redeem his reputation. Foxes, like human beings, no doubt have their good and bad days. At any rate, many an one that has taken refuge almost at once, has, on being bolted, got clean away after affording a first rate hunt. There are foxes of course which will not run, but persist in crawling about, and then going to ground. A fox which escapes hounds on his initial venture by adopting a certain plan, will, when again hunted, have resort to the same plan. Short-running, drain-haunting foxes are much better killed, for they afford no sport and are often responsible for a good deal of damage in their immediate neighbourhood.

It is as a rule wise to bolt a fox from a drain, even if he has afforded you a fast, straight run, because certain drains are veritable death-traps to foxes. When hounds have been trotted away to fresh covert, somebody can be left to do the job, and it may mean the saving of one or more good foxes to the Hunt.

Foxes which follow one another into narrow drains often have great difficulty in getting out again. The result is, they either starve to death, or a sudden flood submerges them. I have on several occasions seen two and three foxes bolted from a drain, but there is a record of six foxes making their appearance from such a retreat. In one drain, no less than thirteen carcasses of foxes were found, the animals having perished miserably underground.

As a rule there is little difficulty in bolting a fox out of a drain, for the passage is generally fairly straight, and an opening can be made behind the fox. If however the terrier is unable to shift him, he can generally be dug up to, and so secured.

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In earths, rabbit holes, and rocky cairns, the business of ejection is not always so easy of accomplishment, and it may mean a lot of hard work before the fox is properly located. Again, if the fox is cornered by the terrier, he may have to fight for his life, the odds being decidedly in favour of his canine antagonist.

In enclosed hunting countries, many of the drains are grated, and the earths are stopped when hounds are in the vicinity. On the Lakeland fells, and in other mountainous districts, earth-stopping is impossible, and all drains are usually open. When therefore, a fox is tracked to ground in the snow, or run to earth by the hill-hounds, the subsequent digging operations may last for a period of many hours. It was the immortal Jorrocks who "Allus dug," and we who follow the fell foxhound packs on foot, do the same.

In the olden times, a fox which went to ground often received short shrift. An instrument known as "fox tongs" was used for drawing foxes. These tongs varied in pattern, some of them being in the form of a double cork-screw. The idea of these tongs no doubt originated in the split or notched hazel wand, so often used to twist into the fur of a rabbit. These instruments were used indiscriminately whether the fox was alive or dead. Once the tongs got a fair grip, out Reynard had to come, willy nilly. To-day when the terriers of the fell packs worry their fox underground, and the carcass cannot be reached by hand, owing to the danger of crawling too far beneath the overhanging rocks, a small gaff-hook, known locally as a "click hook" is attached to a walking stick or a long fell pole, and the body is by this means pulled up to the surface.

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Nets are occasionally used in an attempt to take foxes alive, but in my experience they are practically useless.

When hunting on the fells, it is usual for somebody to station himself in the vicinity of any well known earth, in order to prevent a run fox from getting in. Although the big hill-foxes are not quite so brazen in the way of facing people as their low-country cousins, they are often very hard to turn from an earth. I have seen a fox get safely to ground almost beneath the feet of the watchers, despite a volley of whip cracking and halloing. There are days when you do not want a fox to bolt; and on such occasions he is quite likely to disappoint you by suddenly making his appearance. For instance, hounds may have had a fast hunt on the fells in wild, wintry weather, and after running their fox to ground, the day may become much worse. Perhaps it is late and daylight will soon be gone. Then, if your fox bolts, he may lead hounds a wild chase in the dark, with fresh foxes on the move everywhere, and it will be a sorry looking lot of hounds which appear by ones and twos at the kennels next day. Such an occurrence befell us not long ago. Hounds ran a fox very fast from the low-ground right over the top of one of the highest of the Lakeland mountains, where they put him to ground at the head of a lonely dale. It was a day of terrific wind and biting hail showers, so when we reached the spot, to find hounds marking their fox, we determined the latter should pay the extreme penalty. It was a small and comparatively simple earth, so the terriers were put in and began to mark their fox at once. Willing hands shifted the rocks and everything seemed couleur de rose, when out shot the fox, and away

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he went for the summit of the mountain. Off flew the pack in pursuit, to an accompaniment of language more forcible than polite by the members of the small "field" left standing helplessly round the earth. The fox eventually beat hounds, but we luckily were able to stop them and get them home to kennels that night.

On the fells during the daytime a hunted fox usually makes his way out to the high tops and remains in their vicinity as long as he is able. Should hounds however get on to a fox at dusk, and continue to run far into the night, their quarry usually adopts different tactics, often sticking to the low ground altogether, and running through or close past farm yards and human habitations which he would shun in daylight unless very hard pressed. At night too, many foxes are afoot; thus hounds are liable to divide. In certain parts of America it is customary to hunt at night, the field seeing little of the actual chase, the cry of the hounds being their chief reward for an all-night vigil.

With regard to the weights of foxes, these differ considerably in various parts of the country. Roughly speaking the average dog fox weighs about 15lb., and the vixen 13½lb. It is quite safe to say that nowadays there are far more foxes under than over 16lb. The heaviest fox I have a record of, killed by hounds, was one of 23lb, which was run into by the Ullswater on Cross Fell. This fox measured 4ft. 4in. from tip of nose to end of brush, about 4in. of the latter being white. On the Lakeland fells weights of 18lb. and 19lb. are not uncommon, and this season 1921-22 I handled a 19½lb. fox killed by a fell pack. Extra heavy foxes are occasionally accounted for in the Midlands. When Frank

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Gillard was huntsman to the Belvoir, his hounds on one occasion killed a fox of 17½ lb.

In "British Mammals" Mr. Millais mentions a hill-fox weighing 27 lb. Whilst this is an enormous weight for a fox, it is possible that prior to the introduction of foreign blood, certain hill-foxes in remote districts may have reached a weight of 30 lb., or at any rate very near it. Joe Bowman, the veteran huntsman to the Ullswater, says he has never killed so small a fox as one of 11 lb. The smallest fox I have ever seen was run to ground in a drain. It was a little vixen, and I always regret not having weighed it, as I feel sure it was not over 11 lb., if as much. Occasionally a hunted fox takes refuge on a ledge in some crag, or in Lakeland hunting parlance, he "binks." Hounds generally manage to drive Reynard out of such places, but sometimes a terrier comes in handy too.

On one occasion two couple of hounds belonging to a fell pack had a very fast hunt with a fox, which eventually beat them by "binking." When we arrived at the crag, an old hound was marking steadily, but we could not see the fox. Leaving my companion at the crag-foot, I went round and out to the top, and then got into the crag-face. On each side was a blaeberry covered ledge, connected by a narrow strip of rock, below which another small patch of blaeberry hid a crack in the crag-face. The hounds had been on both the larger ledges, and seemed to think the fox was below them. Under the hidden crack there was a straight drop of some thirty or forty feet to the ground. I was looking about for a stone to drop on top of the scrub covering the crack, when my companion threw a terrier up on one of the ledges. The dog at once winded the fox, and

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after hesitating for a second, dropped over the edge, and landed square on top of the scrub-covered crack. As the dog's feet went through the covering, the "fur began to fly." Sure enough Reynard was there completely hidden, and he was not long in letting the terrier know all about it. It happened to be the terrier's first real encounter with a fox, and when the latter sent his white teeth home, the dog drew back. The fox then appeared on a narrow ledge below, from whence he looked up at me, where I blocked his egress from above. He then turned round, and half slid and half fell down the crag-face to the ground. The terrier eventually took the same route, and I ran down by an easier descent and laid on the hounds, as the fox with the terrier not far behind him crossed the rough breast below. The fox was dead beat, the first quick burst in the morning having been too much for him. To cut a long story short, hounds ran him across the dale, and he went to ground under a boulder, from which he was finally ejected and killed. He was a very fat fox, and not in hard condition, as a subsequent post mortem proved.

Some years ago, near a certain Yorkshire village, a fox had been doing a good deal of damage amongst the poultry. One evening, by a lucky chance, the wife of one of the poultry owners saw a fox enter a hen-house, and she promptly dropped the slide-door and made Reynard prisoner. On informing her husband of the fact, that worthy sent for one of his friends, who was the owner of a newly-bought terrier with a great reputation against foxes. Arming themselves with a stout sack, and whistling to the dog, the two made their way to the hut containing the fox. The slide-door was carefully lifted, and

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the terrier pushed in, while the open mouth of the sack was held over the hole. For a few minutes there was a great commotion in the hut, then something bolted into the sack, the mouth of which was promptly tied up. In great jubilation the burden was shouldered, and the two made for home.

Chancing to turn round to whistle for his dog, the terrier owner was much surprised to see a fox disappearing through a nearby hedge. At the same moment a suppressed whine emanated from the dark interior of the sack. Then the truth dawned on them, and, dropping his load, the poultry owner exclaimed: "By goy Bill, we've sacked t' dog." The story leaked out, and it was some time before the two participants heard the last of it.

On another occasion, a fox was run to ground, and after a lot of digging a certain keen fox-hunter crawled into the hole. His companions held on to his feet, ready to pull him out when he collared his fox. Getting a bit impatient, one of them exclaimed: "Has ter gitten hod?" (Have you got hold?) "Aye," came the muffled answer, "We've baith gitten hod!"

THE MODERN FOXHOUND

CHAPTER XI

THE history of the modern foxhound's development has been thoroughly dealt with by many noted authorities on the chase, so we shall only briefly refer to it here, preferring rather to discuss the various points of the present standard type with regard to its working ability in the field. Somewhere about 1750, Mr. Hugo Meynell was responsible for a quickening up of the then slow method of fox-hunting, and in conjunction with Squire Childe and Mr. John Musters, he evolved a proper method of breeding and kennel management. Later, the system of hunting was revolutionised by Squire Osbaldeston when Master of the Quorn, hounds being bred for speed, while quickness and decision played a great part in the successful conduct of the chase by those in authority. It was during the first quarter of the eighteenth century that the foremost breeders of that day established the present shape and character of the foxhound, and breeding on such lines has been carried on until we see its final culmination represented by the type of hound annually exhibited at Peterborough show.

Turning back to the past history of the leading English kennels, from which are descended the chief strains of blood of the present day, it will be found that hounds were then much smaller than they are now, and that they differed to some extent in certain points of their anatomy. The

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highest type of foxhound to-day is the Belvoir, and the majority of well known packs are bred and inbred to Belvoir sires, until the type and quality of that famous kennel are to be found throughout Great Britain. In the history of the Belvoir, it is quite apparent that the smaller sized foxhounds have always been predominant in the past, and it is through them that the kennel has achieved its greatness. The Belvoir and Brocklesby have been closely associated in hound breeding, and The Druid tells us that Brocklesby Rallywood, 1843, was the hound which virtually made the Belvoir. Of him Goodall wrote, "He was a most beautiful short-legged dog, exceedingly light of bone, but with beautiful legs and feet. Rosebud, his dam, worked until she was ten years old, and she was never known to do anything wrong. They are perfection in their work, and everlasting."

Rallywood stood 23 inches in height, and judging from a reproduction of a portrait of him painted by J. Ferneley, he was a hound fit to hunt and kill foxes in almost any sort of country. The picture shows a light built, intelligent looking hound, somewhat round in the quarters, standing back at the knee, with fairly long pasterns, and round, compact feet. The Belvoir pack benefitted greatly when Will Smith let Will Goodall have Brocklesby Rallywood, and both Sir R. Sutton and Lord H. Bentinck stated that "his benefits to our packs have been almost incalculable."

Rallywood was the sire of Willing (1857), dam of Wonder (1864) and grand dam of Weathergaze (1876). Frank Gillard pronounced Weathergaze the best foxhound he ever saw in every part of a hunt, and though the hound was flat sided, short



BELVOIR HOUNDS IN KENNEL.

(Photo by Sport and General Press Agency, Ltd.)



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necked, and three cornered he had very deep ribs, and a wonderful voice. His dam Royalty (1871), descended from Rambler (1864), possessed remarkable symmetry and balance, qualities that the son failed to reproduce. Despite this fact however, Weathergage transmitted these qualities to his own son Gambler (1884), a compact, 23 inch hound, 27½ inches in length. It therefore appears that the qualities were dormant in him, and he was able to transmit them to his progeny.

To Gambler very many of the most fashionable foxhounds of to-day trace their origin, and both he and his ancestors were small hounds compared with the modern standard. During the forty years between the time of Brocklesby Rallywood and Belvoir Gambler, we find a very noticeable increase of bone in foxhounds, particularly below the knee. This is plainly evident if we compare the portraits of the above mentioned hounds. The picture of Gambler shows a hound of massive appearance, yet well balanced and symmetrical, with a characteristic and intelligent head, and great beauty of contour. There is great bone, carried right down to the toes, and though the pasterns are short and straight, there is no sign of knuckling over at the knee. The Belvoir kennels have of course produced very many remarkable hounds of the standard type, which would take too long to enumerate here. We may however mention Dexter (1895) whose portrait shows a practically perfect hound of his particular type.

As already mentioned, all the hounds in the most famous packs are bred and inbred to Belvoir sires and to-day the standard type is to be found throughout the hunting countries of the British Islands. Many of the most famous hounds of the

past stood no more than 23 inches in height, and they were remarkable for their working ability and stamina. To them the majority of present day hounds trace their origin. Of the large hounds bred in the past no trace of their descendants can be found to-day, except in a very few cases. This points to the fact that hound-breeders of that time set greater store by small hounds, whereas to-day many Peterborough champions are nearer 25 than 24 inches in height.

Prior to the institution of Peterborough show in 1896, less important shows had been held at Malton, York, and Beverley, the first meeting of the kind having been inaugurated by Mr. Thomas Parrington, at Redcar. This gentleman was also to a great extent responsible for the institution of the now famous annual show at Peterborough. Mr. Parrington had had a very long experience of hounds, and it was his opinion that the hounds of standard type to-day, while superior to their ancestors in conformation, are inferior in the matter of nose, courage, tongue, and stamina. Although there are doubtless many who will disagree with this statement, we are convinced that as regards hounds of the standard type in general, it is perfectly correct. When Peterborough show was first instituted, the promoters no doubt had in mind the attainment of symmetry and balance that would produce not only a good looking pack of hounds, but one suited—owing to the perfect balance of individual hounds—to do the greatest amount of work in the field with the least possible amount of wear and tear. Keeping in mind the fact that the standard type of hound was evolved and perfected by breeders who hunted in the Shires and countries adjoining, we must agree that

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the type is suited for work in such countries, countries which consist for the most part of level grass land or undulating ground. That symmetry and balance have been attained in the past we cannot deny, for the foxhound of standard type is symmetrical and well balanced, qualities which are due to a great extent to the shows. Looks are not everything however in a hound, and working qualities should never be subordinated to appearance. We have already mentioned the opinion of Mr. Parrington that the present day standard type of hound is inferior to his ancestors in nose, tongue, courage, and stamina; and in addition we may also add, he has changed for the worst as regards height, bone, and feet. We have already seen that most of the famous hounds of the past were not more than 23 inches in height, as compared with the 24 or 25 inch hounds of to-day, and with regard to bone and feet, these points are fully dealt with in subsequent chapters.

The three great hound shows, Peterborough, Reigate, and Exeter, have served auseful purpose inasmuch as they *for a time* raised the standard of foxhound excellence. In addition they have tended to popularise hunting and encourage breeders. These are all very laudable attainments, but to-day the shows have gone beyond the strictly utility point of view, and have given undue encouragement towards breeding for certain show points. The same thing has happened, only to a much greater degree, in the case of gun-dogs and other breeds. Take smooth and wire-haired fox terriers for example. At one time they were a valuable working strain, but to-day the majority are useless for underground work. Most dogs of the show type are too big to go up

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to fox or otter, and in the majority of them the inherited instinct for work has been lost. Anyone with a lengthy experience of working terriers will corroborate the above statement. Dog showing is now purely and simply a business proposition, the pecuniary value of the show breeds resting upon the closeness of their approximation to the standard of show points set down and approved by the judges. Working ability has been entirely neglected in the desire to assimilate these show points.

Harking back to hound shows, we find a similar tendency towards breeding for excessive show points. Bone, straightness, "necks and shoulders," and the cat-foot are bred for to so great an extent that the result can but end in disaster if the policy is continued. If we look at certain hounds which during recent years have won honours at Peterborough, we find many of them are in some points quite abnormal. Take feet and knees for example. Instead of a compact, and fairly round foot, we have a contracted, club-like affair, on which it is impossible for a hound to stand squarely. The knees too knuckle over to such an extent that they appear "dicky," and obtain spring in a contrary direction to that ordained by nature. Such a wide deviation from the natural cannot benefit the hound in his work, for knuckling over at the knees is abnormal as any qualified veterinary surgeon will testify. Regarding the club-like forefeet, the consensus of opinion amongst huntsmen, more particularly those who carry the horn in rough, provincial countries, is all against such an abnormal shape, and in favour of the neat, compact, and shallow-padded hare foot. If the fashionable type of foot was all that certain Masters claim it to be, how is



BELVOIR "WITCHCRAFT" AND "WISDOM."

(Photo by Sport and General Press Agency, Ltd).

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it that the hare foot is still universal amongst the fell and moorland hounds in the North? Sidney Tucker, for so long huntsman to the Devon and Somerset Stag hounds, averred that the club-like foot of the modern hound was useless to him in his country, and that the more open and natural foot stood the work far better. Few people were in a better position to express an opinion than Tucker, for he had in his kennels drafts from Hunts in all parts of the country, and was thus able to thoroughly test the wearing qualities of all sorts of hounds' feet. Again, there are certain harrier packs, such as the Cotley and the Axe Vale, composed of light coloured hounds of the old-fashioned breed, with hare feet. These harriers hunt fox as well as hare, and when in pursuit of the former, there are probably few foxhound packs in the country which show better sport, or account for their foxes more handsomely. Here again, if the hare foot does not stand wear and tear, how is it that these old fashioned harrier packs have stuck to it in preference to the more fashionable round foot? In our own experience we have seen hounds of standard type hunting on the fells with the fell packs, and their round, contracted feet were absolutely unfitted to cope with the exigences of the rough going. Again, puppies out of a fell bitch, sired by a hound of standard type, seldom possess feet of hard wearing qualities, the hounds so bred standing far too much on their toes.

With regard to bone, we find the foxhound of standard type possessed of an enormous quantity of it, carried right down to his toes. In the desire to get more bone below the knee, the pasterns have gradually become shorter and more straight, until there is no spring whatever in the

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natural or backward direction. Spring is essential to withstand jar and concussion, and so to gain it the hound knuckles over at the knee, in a quite abnormal manner. Again, why need a hound carry such heavy bone? Bone means weight, and consequent leg weariness, and cannot add to the ease wherewith a hound should travel. In no other breed of dog, as far as we are aware, is spring obtained except through fairly long, sloping pasterns, and in a backward direction. Pointers and setters both do their work at speed, yet they are possessed of sloping pasterns and hare feet. The fundamental principles of anatomy that nature has seen fit to apply to animals of the canine breed are best fitted to aid the breed in the work it has to do. It seems therefore that those Masters who approve of the abnormal in hounds of standard breed are attempting to read Nature a lesson as regards legs and feet, and people who attempt that sort of thing generally come a cropper in the long run. Animals of the feline race, such as the domestic cat, cheetah, lion, and tiger, have round feet with deep, thick pads. None of these animals obtain their prey by chasing it long distances, as do the wild dogs, and wolves; instead they secure it by stealth, or by a short, quick rush, not long sustained. Why then aim at such a type of foot for the hound, whose business is to run far and fast over every variety of country? In the case of the horse which has to cross the same country as the hound, the various breeds have been improved to meet their different uses, but in no single instance has the foot or pastern been shortened, straightened, or contracted. Any horseman knows that a long, sloping pastern prolongs a hunter's life of usefulness, because it

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minimises jar and concussion, and incidentally provides an easier ride for the man in the saddle when crossing a country.

Harking back to bone, and subsequent weight, you do not require the bone of the cart-horse in the hunter, so why overload a hound with it? Light and medium boned hounds with proper constitutions, last quite as long, in fact longer than heavy-boned hounds, at any rate in rough country, and the same applies in an ordinary country like the Shires. The hound has nothing but himself to carry, and it is the small, compact hound, not over burdened with bone, that "stands the racket" best.

We have already mentioned the names of three famous hounds of the past, i.e., Rallywood, Weathergage, and Gambler. Could these three hounds come back to life and be judged at Peterborough, they would be rejected on account of size, and in all probability they would also be passed over as stud hounds, despite their records in the field. As for stamina, Gambler ran with the pack for fourteen seasons, a feat which cannot be placed to the credit of any of the hounds of standard type now. A hound of the Gambler type, while not the sort for a very rough country, is nevertheless suited for work in the Shires, and he and others justified their breeding, by doing their work well in the country to which they belonged.

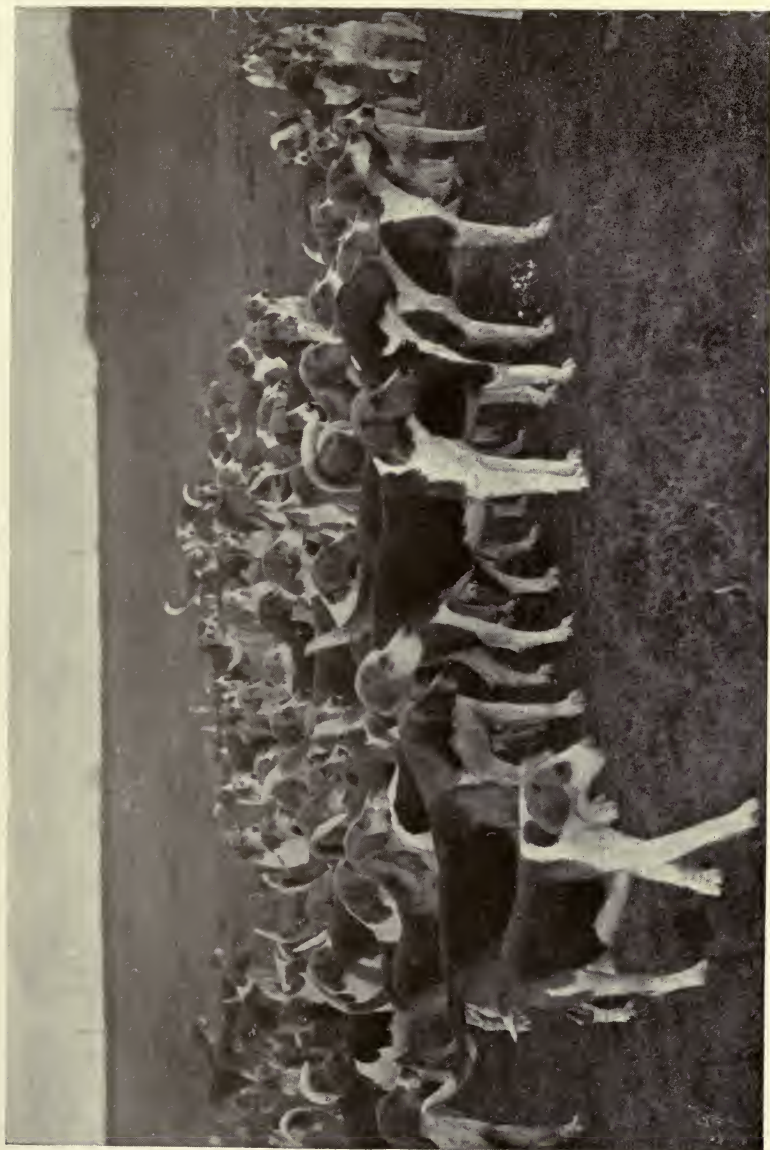
At the present time clean necks are a fetish with breeders of the standard type of hound. John Warde, the "father of modern hunting," always favoured a throaty hound, despite the fact that "John Warde's neck cloth" was used as a term of reproach by fashionable breeders. Now a bit of "neck cloth" is invariably a sign

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that a hound possesses both nose and tongue, two very desirable qualities in any hound, but especially so in those of the moorland and fell type, as well as in those which hunt extensive woodlands. A clean neck is nice enough to look at, but it should be remembered that "handsome is as handsome does," for mute hounds are all too common nowadays, in fact some packs say so little about it that they can barely be heard two fields away. A mute hound should be drafted at once; because he cannot always be watched, and will spoil many a run by getting away "on his own."

As to size, a hound of twenty-three inches or under is, in nine cases out of ten, a much better all round performer than one of twenty four or five inches. It is easier to breed good little 'uns than good big 'uns, and they last longer, as well as being less expensive to keep.

With regard to stamina and constitution, hounds of the standard type appear to compare unfavourably with those in the past, as well as with other types, such as the fell and Welsh hounds, in use to-day. Many hounds are drafted at the end of their fourth season, presumably because they can no longer run up, while abnormal sized litters, containing a preponderance of female puppies, are only too common nowadays. This is a sure sign of weak constitution, brought on by close in-breeding to fix and retain type. At present a hound which wins championship honours at Peterborough immediately becomes sought after as a sire. His reputation in the field has been gained in his first season, after which, owing to stud duties, he seldom appears with the pack. There is therefore no reliable information concerning his staunchness, stamina, and other



THE COTTESMORE HOUNDS

(Photo by Sport and General Press Agency, Ltd.)

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qualities to be obtained, so that if bitches are sent to him, it is pure guess work as to what characteristics he will transmit to his progeny. If you examine such a hound you are no wiser, unless you chance to see him on one of his occasional days afield, and even then his working life has been too short for him to have developed his good qualities. In the case of say a fourth season hound, you know his record afield, and can therefore gauge his suitability to mate with certain bitches.

The trouble with hound shows appears to be this. They have catered so long for the standard type, that the latter now holds a complete monopoly. This type, because it is fashionable, possesses the highest financial value, just in the same way that the show fox terrier valued at say £100 to go to America is superior from a show point of view to the ordinary kennel terrier, despite the fact that the latter *as a worker* is worth his weight in gold. Hounds are constantly sold at inflated prices simply because they are of fashionable type, despite the fact that there are other types in the country which can do the work afield equally well or even better, yet whose financial value is not considered to be a tenth of that of their fashionable relatives.

This, whilst harmful to hounds in general, is obviously unfair to those Masters who wish to breed hounds of a type suited to their individual countries. Should they do so, and enter any of their hounds at the shows, they are excluded from sharing in the awards because their exhibits are not up to the standard set down by the judges. As things stand at present, the average provincial Master must either breed for show alone and thus hunt his country with a type of hound

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which is probably quite unsuited to it, or he must resolutely set his face against the shows and breed for utility and consequent improved sport. Now all this could be very easily altered if the Peterborough standard was expanded in order to cover several types. Three such types would be sufficient to enable provincial packs to be properly catered for, from a utility point of view, and the present inflated prices for fashionable hounds would give way to utility value, based on the suitability of the hound to its particular country. As matters stand now, upon the basis of a single standard of type for the whole of the hunting countries in Great Britain, we find that this type—by actual experience—has been found wanting in many districts. There are hounds, such as the fell and Welsh types, capable of doing the best work in *any* country, which certainly cannot be said of the ultra fashionable sort one sees at Peterborough. If therefore, a single standard was deemed sufficient, such hounds are capable of upholding it, because fell and Welsh hounds can hunt in *any* country, and form a better standard to breed to, from an all-round utility point of view, than the heavy-boned sort one sees at the shows. Although let us say the fell type *is* suited to any hunting country in Great Britain, there are those Masters who would like to keep reasonably near to the standard type, so long as their hounds could do the work required of them. By having say three classes at Peterborough instead of one, these Masters would be catered for, as well as others like them. The monopoly of the shows by the standard type has increased the tendency to in-breeding, because as already mentioned, a few practically untried stallion hounds become champions, and are used almost

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exclusively at the stud. This sort of thing ends in loss of constitution, and necessitates keeping an unnecessary number of hounds in kennel in order that packs may be continually up to strength. Individual hounds cannot do their two or three days per week, so more hounds have to be bred and sent out to walk, and when they are entered they may only last three or four seasons. Kennel and other expenses consequently go up, while the standard of real sport tends to deteriorate. Close in-breeding results in loss of constitution, working ability, and brain power, with consequent irregularity in type. If you want brains, drive, music, and plenty of "devil" in your hounds, never breed nearer than the fifth generation. In "The Foxhound of the Twentieth Century," Mr. C. Bradley says, "The money value of a pack of hounds to-day turns on the formation of the knee-joint to the ground, and however good topped they may be, if light of bone it will avail them little in the eyes of the purchaser who wants the best." He also says "The usefulness of some animals may have been impaired by breeding for points, but the fox-hound has never become 'the sport of fashion.'" Now these two statements can hardly be said to agree. If the value of a pack turns on the amount of bone below the knee, without mention of working qualities, surely it is fashion's dictate that commands the market. In our experience there are few animals to-day, with the exception of show terriers and other breeds kept solely for exhibition purposes, which are more "the sport of fashion" than the type of foxhound now found winning honours at Peterborough. Fashion has been responsible for the club-like foot, and knuckled over knee, as well

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as for the unnecessary bone. The Brocklesby Rallywood was light-boned, and stood back at the knee, and yet we are told he was one of the best in his work, with stamina, courage, and all the qualities that go to the making of a really great hound. He lived in a day when hounds were quite as fast if not faster than they are now, and if he satisfied the great hound-breeders of that time, breeders who knew quite as much about the requisite qualities in a hound as do their descendants, the changes that have taken place in the anatomical formation of the hound since Rallywood's day cannot have had their origin in an idea to improve working qualities; but rather because fashion ordained that certain points as we now see them were simply "more pleasing to the eye."

The same author tells us that when Will Goodall was huntsman of the Pytchley, he borrowed a couple of cross-bred Welsh hounds from Mr. F. Lort Phillips, master of the Pembrokeshire. On the worst scenting days the Welsh-bred bitch Dimple could hold the line and get away in the lead. Here we have a hound that was no doubt lacking in bone, and back at the knee, yet able to go one better than the English fox-hounds of a famous and fashionable pack; yet Mr. Bradley says "but so far as Welsh blood and characteristics of make and shape are concerned, it is not a desirable source for an out-cross, if the beautiful conformation of the English fox-hounds counts for anything." Here we have the modern fashionable breeder's view-point in a nutshell. As long as a hound looks pretty and takes the eye, and has bone below the knee, he is able to win prizes at Peterborough, and when he and his kind are sold they fetch top prices. In the field

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however a little Welsh bitch can show them the way, but her working ability is subordinated to the "beautiful conformation" of the English foxhounds which could not hold the line. And yet foxhounds are supposed to be bred for the express purpose of hunting and catching foxes. With all due deference to the fashionable breeders of to-day, and acknowledging the utility of the standard type of hound in level and undulating grass countries, there are districts such as the fells and moorlands of the Lake country and Yorkshire, as well as parts of Wales in which the local hounds can out-run and out-hunt the best of the fashionable kind that are annually exhibited at Peterborough. A nice looking hound is a pleasing possession if he has all the qualities which go with a first-rate worker, but "handsome is as handsome does" should be the motto, with particular emphasis on the *does*.

THE FOXHOUND'S FEET

CHAPTER XII

NO matter what other good qualities a hound may possess, if his feet cannot stand wear and tear he soon becomes a skirter, and his usefulness in life is therefore at an end. Constant foot trouble amongst hounds is a serious menace to the economical upkeep of a pack, and at the same time greatly increases the labour in the kennel. To counteract it, a large reserve of hounds must be kept to draw upon, or else hounds must be bred with a type of foot to successfully withstand the exigences of the going. Wherever you find hounds suffering from foot trouble, you can rest assured that it is owing to faulty anatomical construction, or lack of condition. In the latter case plenty of exercise, particularly road work, will soon show improvement, but no amount of exercise will fit an ill-made foot to properly withstand wear and tear.

If we examine the forefeet and legs—from the knee downwards—of the standard type foxhound, we are forced to admit that breeders of this type have deviated a long way from the pattern provided by nature. The reader may say, “Yes, but years of high civilization have resulted in great improvement in certain domestic animals when compared with their original form,” and to this we agree, particularly as regards general symmetry and balance. In all animals which have been so improved however, we find that the

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fundamental principles of their anatomy have not been altered; but can we say the same with regard to the forefeet and pasterns of the modern foxhound of standard type? A very slight knowledge of anatomy obliges us to answer the question in the negative, and for those who wish to know why, we will endeavour to explain.

In nine out of ten hounds, such as we see winning honours at Peterborough to-day, we find the pastern short and upright, and the foot round and contracted. In another chapter we have stated that it is an incontrovertible fact that different hunting countries require different types of horses. Seeing that horse and hound are used for the same purpose, i.e., crossing a country at speed, the anatomical requirements of the one are equally applicable to the other. Certainly the hound has only his own weight to carry, whereas the hunter carries a rider, but this does not alter the question.

In the Shires and other hunting countries of more or less similar nature, the hound with short, upright pasterns and contracted feet is in general favour, and its supporters affirm that such feet and pasterns stand wear and tear better than the more open and natural foot, above which is a fairly long and oblique pastern. Bearing in mind what we have said about the horse, let us see what an acknowledged expert has to say in the matter. Mr. T. F. Dale, in his book, "Fox hunting in the Shires," says with regard to the best stamp of horse for the grass countries, "I have myself a great liking for long pasterns, even so long as to be regarded as weak, and an equal prejudice for work in the grass countries against pasterns in the least degree short and upright. I believe that long pasterns, from the ease and

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spring that they give to the action, are amongst the points that contribute to the staying power." Now if the long, sloping pastern aids the horse to so great an extent, as nature intended that it should, why should the short upright pastern be thought superior in the hound? Again too, the horse's feet are practically as nature ordained them to be, whereas those of the hound are unnaturally round and contracted; and, if we add short, upright pasterns, these tend still more to cripple the action, and reduce staying power.

On the sound grass of the Shires, the ground certainly gives to the feet more than it does in rough countries, but this give is not sufficient to minimize jar and concussion in the case of a horse or hound crossing a country at speed. It stands to reason then that if a horse with properly constructed feet and long pasterns benefits by the latter even on ground that gives to the tread, a hound will benefit in like manner, if his feet are also of natural shape, and his pasterns long and oblique. On level or undulating grass land and stoneless plough, the feet of the standard type of hound certainly wear longer than they do in rough and mountainous countries, but even on the grass they do not wear as long as they should, considered from a really economical point of view. We have already mentioned Brocklesby Rallywood (1843), who was one of the greatest all-round hounds of his day, with working ability, pace, and stamina to a marked degree; yet this hound absolutely refuted the maxims of the present day show judges with regard to feet and legs, for he was exceedingly light boned, stood back at the knee, and his feet were compact, but not contracted and unnaturally round. He was a hound that could have hunted and been a runner



A COUPLE OF QUORN BITCHES.

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up for many seasons in much rougher countries than that in which he was used, and it is safe to say that if a pack of hounds of his type were taken to the Shires to-day, they would come out oftener, and last longer than a pack composed of hounds such as we now see exhibited at Peterborough, while as regards pace they would be quite as fast, and in all probability faster.

The hound breeders of Rallywood's time knew quite as much about the requisite working qualities in a foxhound as do present day experts. If therefore they acknowledged that hounds of Rallywood's type were in the first rank as fox-catchers, how is it that the modern breeder's ideas with regard to legs, feet, and bone differ so radically from theirs? Rallywood stood back at the knee and carried light bone, but he was first class in the field, and could stay for ever. Has the introduction of heavy bone, short, upright pasterns and contracted feet, plus a decided tendency to knuckle forward at the knee, been any improvement from a working point of view? We can safely answer no. In this case then, the only possible improvement must be in appearance. Here we must grant that in hounds in general; there *has* been improvement as regards balance and symmetry, but in the case of individual points, such as bone, pasterns, and feet, the tendency appears to be in the opposite direction.

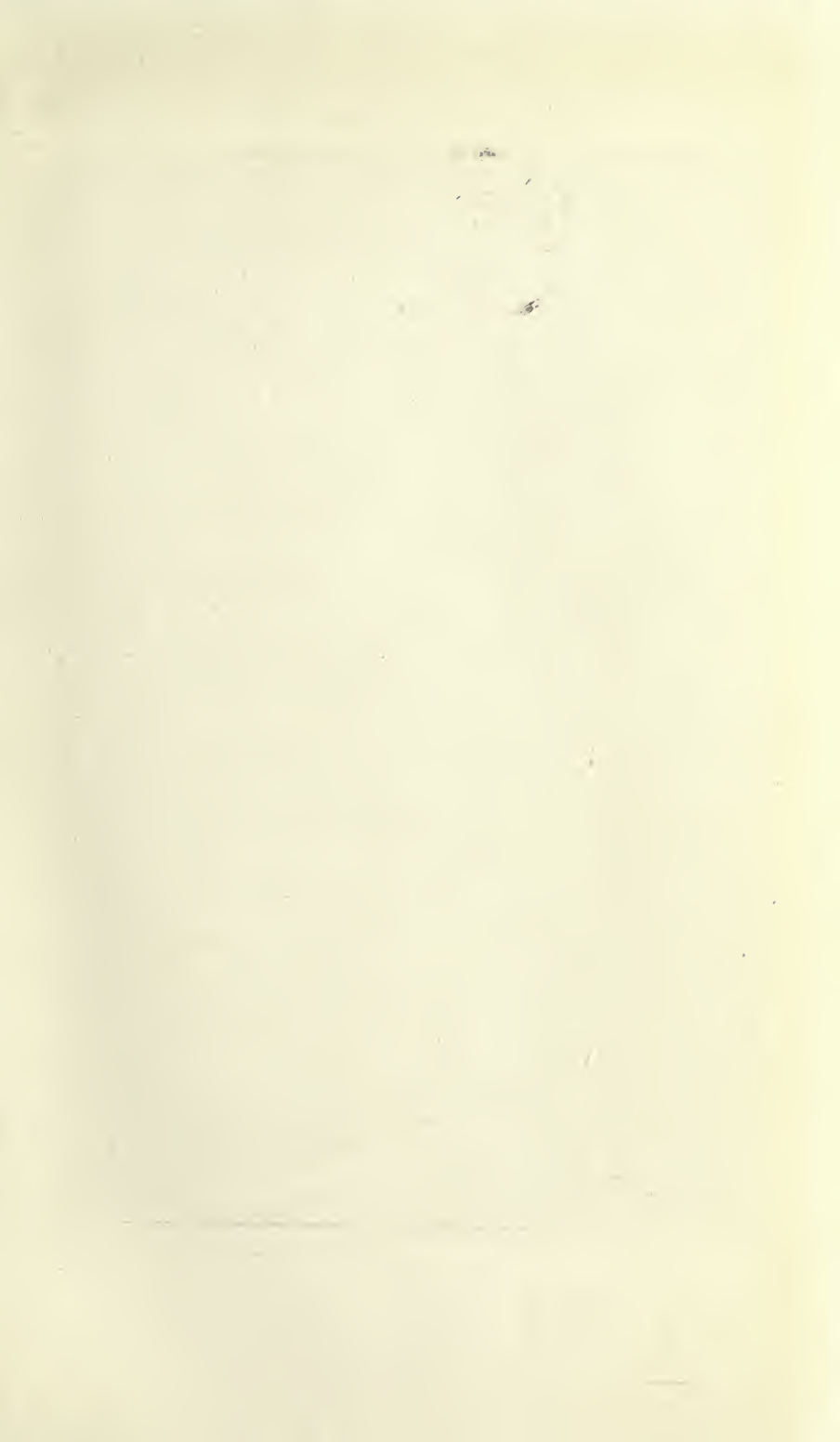
With regard to bone, Lord Macclesfield's hounds were light boned, and when someone "crabbed" them on that account, his Lordship remarked that he "had not noticed thin legs to break easier than thick ones." Lord Yarborough preferred medium sized hounds with no lumber about them, and he used to say that "a little powerful hound could last much longer than a

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big one.” Again, to quote The Druid, Earl Fitzhardinge did not fancy any dog hound above twenty-three inches, and he never cared how small the bitches were. He never liked them shy of tongue, and it was no matter whether they were straight or coarse provided their work was all good. “I don’t care for their looks,” he was wont to say. “Huntsmen forget to breed hounds for their noses, they are all for looks—give me the pack that will kill foxes.”

Here again we have expert opinion from men who were practical fox-hunters, and knew the value of a working hound. With regard to comparison of looks, in hounds of the Rallywood type and those of the present standard sort, this is surely a case of individual opinion. The eyes of those who have been brought up amongst hounds of the standard type have been educated to approve of the heavy bone, round feet and intoed as well as out-at-elbow appearance that such hounds present, whereas those who are used to fell and Welsh hounds, or the old-fashioned harriers like the Cotley, consider beauty lies in the outlines of the light framed, back at the knee sort, with hare feet. The upholders of the latter type have not however bred for looks, but always for working qualities. It is the shows which have been the great incentive to breeding for appearance, and thus we see the standard type of hound has been in many instances practically turned into a cripple, owing to the show judges laying such great stress on certain points which have now been developed in abnormal fashion.

Individual hounds of this type fetch inflated prices at the sales, despite the fact that they knuckle forward at the knee, and do not stand squarely on their feet, but more or less on their





LORD EGLINTON'S HOUNDS.

(Photo by Sport and General Press Agency, Ltd.)

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toes. It is over development with a vengeance, yet fashion decrees that such a type is "it," and the prevailing fashion rules the market. If it were not fashionable, but instead entirely workmanlike, how is it that horses which are used to ride to hounds still retain the long pasterns which experts agree add so much to the animal's ease of motion and staying power? A hunter, with short, upright pasterns, which obtained spring by knuckling forward at the knee, could not cross two fields in safety, and would be laughed at if put up for sale. He would be like the cowpuncher's pony, whose owner said it possessed four gaits, and when asked what they were, replied, "Walk, stumble, fall down, and get up!"

As a hound's life of usefulness depends upon the correct anatomical conformation of his limbs, it may be of interest to discuss the matter here. In the case of the hound of standard type, we find him the possessor of heavy bone, carried right down to his toes. Now bone is practically solid material, and the more of it a hound has, the greater weight will he have to carry. Weight means leg weariness, particularly in deep, soft going, and up and down steep declivities; therefore the less bone a hound has, in reason, the hardier will he be, and the more likely to get to the end of a long gruelling run in rough country. As Lord Macclesfield said, he "had not noticed thin legs to break easier than thick ones," which is perfectly true, so why overburden a hound with bone simply because fashion ordains that it is the right thing to do? A heavy boned hound is analogous to an old-fashioned wooden bicycle as compared with an up-to-date machine. In the former there is considerable weight, while jar and

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vibration are communicated to the rider, owing to lack of sufficient spring in the construction of the frame and wheels, whereas in the latter pneumatic tyres, coupled with spring seat and other devices, to a great extent counteract concussion. The heavily boned hound, with his short, upright pasterns, and contracted feet, suffers severely from jar and concussion, particularly in rough country, because there is no spring in a backward direction at the knee, therefore the jar is communicated viâ the shoulder and the spinal vertebrae to the brain. In the case of human beings, the majority of our best cross country runners have all been light weights, the big, heavy boned men showing to the best advantage at shot putting and the like, where weight and strength are more needful than activity and pace. In the same way for long journeys in wild countries, ponies stand the work far better than big horses, being more active, much hardier, and less clumsy on their feet. In soft, or rough going, it is the light weight that sinks in least, and tackles the steep ups and downs with the greatest ease. We have seen this proved again and again on the Lakeland fells in the case of standard type hounds running with the fell packs. Such hounds are invariably quite outpaced by the light framed local hounds, when it comes to negotiating rocks, screes, and ground lying at a steep angle. In many instances, the fore end of the standard hound exhibits bone in disproportion to that in his hind quarters. Attention has been centred more on the production of bone in his forelegs than his hind, and the same applies to the shape of his feet, the hind feet being still much as nature intended them to be, while the forefeet have been abnormally developed.

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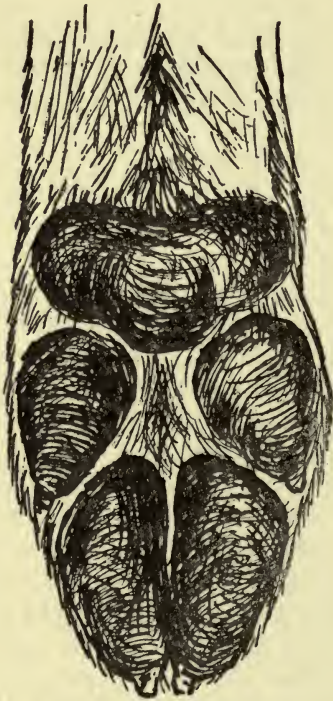
This over-development of the feet is said to withstand wear and tear better than the more open and natural foot, but seeing that it is an indisputable fact that the hind feet of the standard type hound require less attention in kennel than the fore, the evidence entirely gives away the case for the latter.

In order to show how breeding for certain points has altered the shape of the hound's fore limbs, we will glance briefly at the anatomy of those parts as ordained by nature.

Beginning with the shoulder, we have the scapula or shoulder blade. The lower end of this connects with the humerus or arm which is situated below it. Next we have the forearm composed of two bones one behind the other, that at the back being known as the ulna, and the one in front as the radius. The forearm connects with the knee, below which is the metacarpus or pastern, which works in conjunction with the basal phalanges or bones of the foot. In the hare or natural foot, these bones are longer than they are in the club-like foot, while the metacarpal or pastern bones also show length, and lie in an oblique direction. Turning from the skeleton to the foot as we see it on the hound, we find that the pad and heel are thin, flat, and not at all fleshy. The toes, being long, secure a good grip of the ground, are closely knit together with little tendency to lateral strain, and they have in addition a certain amount of play and upward extension. With such a foot, the hound's weight is distributed along a lengthy surface, the animal standing squarely on its feet. In ascending a steep incline or scrambling up rocks, the whole foot comes on the surface, while in descending similar places the foot comes to the

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ground on an even surface. The flatness of the pad tends to minimize jar and concussion, in which respect additional aid is given by the long pastern, which provides spring in an oblique or backward direction.



PAD OF THE NATURAL,
OR HARE FOOT.

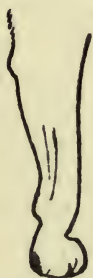


HARE FOOT AND
OBLIQUE PASTERN.

Any vibration there may be is taken up by the strong ligaments at the back of the leg, which eventually lead to the shoulder. If the latter is well sloped, the muscles surrounding it take up the concussion in their turn, and it is neutralised before it can reach the brain viâ the spinal

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vertebrae. It will be easily understood that the shorter and straighter the pastern, the more jar will there be, and the quicker will it be carried to the knee, and so upwards. Also, the heavier the bone, the greater the concussion, while the muscles will have more work to do to neutralise the vibration. Seeing that the nervous and muscular systems are closely connected, strain and vibration are conveyed by the former to the brain. Thus, a heavy boned hound with short pasterns soon becomes of little use in rough country, although he can work with comparative ease on level, sound going.



ROUND FOOT AND
KNUCKLING
FORWARD
AT KNEE.



FRONT VIEW OF LEGS AND FEET,
shewing turning in of toes and
placing of weight on centre
and outer surfaces.

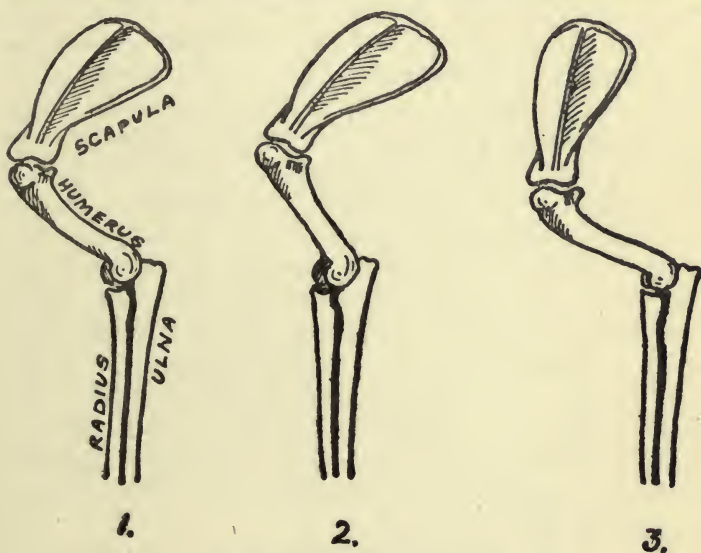
Turning to the club-like foot, we find it an axiom of the show judges that the leg must form a straight line downwards from the chest, and that the shorter the distance from the elbow to the pastern, the better. Also the forearm should connect with the knee joint and pastern in such a manner, that instead of having its flexion in a posterior direction, it should exhibit a tendency to knuckle forward. A limb so formed

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causes the weight to fall upon the fore part of the bones of the foot, so that the hound stands on his toes. In order to increase the power of resistance, and bring the weight into line with the leg, the foot must be shortened. When this happens, the pad is deepened, becoming thick and fleshy, in order to afford sufficient surface to support the weight. The joints of the foot being short, there is no play or spring, thus the toes have a tendency to expand in a lateral direction. In order to save himself sore heels, the hound uses the fore and inner portion of the toe pad, which causes the toe to increase its lateral expansion. The result of this is the muscle controlling the toes breaks down, and the weight falls on the nails which soon become tender. The hound is then compelled to use the heel alone, which likewise soon becomes bruised and sore, and eventually the whole foot flattens out and becomes practically useless. The breaking down of the muscle controlling the toes affects the band of muscle round the knee, slackening it, and thus allowing the joint to knuckle forward. When this happens the bearings of the joint become rough, thus greatly handicapping movement, and causing pain or at any rate severe discomfort to the hound. Seeing that both muscles and bones are reduced to an abnormal state, the nervous system suffers in like ratio, and the hound's brain is affected by the concussion. With such formation below the knee, even the best of shoulders are unable to counteract the jar and vibration, so the hound becomes a skirter, and is thus valueless as a member of the pack. On the sound, level grass of the Shires, he may run up for three or four seasons, whereas in a really rough country such as the fells he will do well if he gets through one season without endless foot trouble.

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Given feet of natural shape, on which he can stand squarely, and above which are fairly long, oblique pasterns, a hound is more than half equipped towards negotiating rough going with ease to himself. If in addition he is the possessor of a well formed shoulder, he will be able to hunt and run in any sort of country. On the formation of the shoulder depends speed, and to a great extent minimization of concussion. Many of the standard type hounds have a tendency towards



THREE TYPES OF SHOULDERS.

1. Normal Shoulder. 2. Racing Shoulder. 3. Upright or Loaded Shoulder.

upright and loaded shoulders, which means loss of reach, and consequent lack of pace. In what we may term a normal shoulder, the scapula or shoulder blade is laid back at a fair angle, while the humerus or arm, inclines towards the horizontal. With such a shoulder, there is less jar at the point where the humerus joins the ulna and radius, or in other words the top of the forearm

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than is the case when the humerus is more upright, and the scapula laid further back. In the latter case the humerus is more nearly in a straight line with the ulna, and there is more jar where the scapula joins the humerus, but as the scapula is very well laid back, the top of it joins the dorsal vertebrae at a point far from the head, and thus jar or concussion is taken up before it can reach the brain. In this form of shoulder, which we may term the racing type, the top of the scapula lies more directly over the ulna, thus increasing the spring, and reducing the jar on the humerus. In addition, there is a greatly increased capacity for pace, because the humerus being nearly in a straight line with the forearm, the leg can be thrown well forward, and thus has a long reach when the hound is galloping. In the ordinary shoulder there is more muscle and tissue lodged in the space formed by the scapula, humerus, and ulna, all of which tends to resist forward movement of the leg, while the leg itself is set further back, thus militating against reach and pace. As the top of the scapula is the chief point where jar should be avoided, the further it is laid back the better, thus leaving a greater distance between its junction with the dorsal vertebrae and the head.

The anatomical construction of a hound's hind-quarters is even more important than that of his fore limbs, particularly as regards jumping ability, so we have devoted a subsequent chapter to the discussion of that part of his anatomy.

With regard to the wearing qualities of the club-like foot of the standard hound, it is safe to say that the great majority of huntsmen, if asked for their candid opinion on the matter, will without hesitation affirm that such a foot requires far





CONISTON "STORMER," A FELL HOUND WITH PERFECT HARE FEET.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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THE FOXHOUND'S FEET

more attention after hunting than the more natural hare foot. As mentioned in another chapter, the real hare foot is not a splay foot as some people suppose, but a fairly long, closely knit, shallow-padded foot, akin to that of the wolf, coyote, and fox. Any one who takes the trouble to examine the feet, legs, and shoulders of a fox, will find these parts of the animal's anatomy most perfectly adapted for the work they have to do. It is safe to say that if the average hound of standard type possessed as good feet as the animal which forms his quarry, foot trouble would be conspicuous by its absence in most kennels.

In "The Foxhound of the Twentieth Century," Mr. Bradley says, "Legs and feet in the foxhound have been brought to the highest state of perfection during the last quarter of a century. Bone and muscle have been consolidated and will measure against that of a previous generation of hounds; for there is an increase of weight and size to meet extra wear and tear. The modern foxhound has the forearm of a lion, and shows short, solid, good bone from the knees to the toes." With all due deference to the author of the above, it is doubtful if the heavy bone and modern foot wear half so long as the light bone and natural foot did in the case of Brocklesby Rallywood and hounds of his time. The aim of the modern breeder appears to have been to increase the amount of bone in succeeding generations of hounds, the increase in weight and size being supposed to meet the extra wear and tear. As a matter of fact the increase of bone, weight, and size is the cause of the extra wear and tear; for the heavier a hound is, the more will he knock himself about, particularly in rough country. If

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“ the forearm of a lion ” is necessary to a hound, how is it that the light built hounds of the North and West run up for many seasons, and kill their share of the stout hill-foxes ?

Speaking of the North Cotswold country, Mr. Bradley says, “ The rough going and stone-wall jumping does not favour a heavily-built hound, shaking their knees and damaging their toes.” If this is the case, then how much more forcibly does the same thing apply to many other countries which are far rougher than the one mentioned. Even if we take it for granted that a pack of hounds of the standard type, the individuals of which may weigh from 80lb. to 90lb. or more apiece, is suited to a level or undulating grass country such as is provided by the Shires, surely the upholders of that type of hound cannot seriously believe that it is equally well suited to rough countries such as are to be found in parts of Yorkshire, Wales, or Cumberland and Westmorland. If a heavy hound is unsuited to an ordinary provincial country like the North Cotswold, how would he fare if asked to hunt a fox over Helvellyn in company with a fast, racing pack of fell hounds ? He would, we are afraid, be last, and a long way last, when the fox was finally run into. This is of course taking an extreme case, but there are plenty of hunting countries, in fact it is pretty safe to say that the majority of provincial countries, are too rough for the big heavy hound such as we see winning honours at Peterborough.

That the standard type is used in such countries we cannot deny, but is the result satisfactory from an economic point of view ? To take one example. We have in mind a certain provincial pack which was at one time trencher-fed, and

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showed capital sport. Hounds ran up for many seasons, and were seldom sick or sorry. Eventually kennels were built, and the breeding of the pack was improved, until certain members of it made names for themselves at Peterborough. The result of this "improvement" in breeding necessitated big entries, for four seasons proved to be the limit of the average hound's working capabilities. Can anyone say that these hounds were genuinely improved, simply because they won honours at a show, yet deteriorated in stamina and economic usefulness? This is not the only pack which has undergone a like metamorphosis, with similar results. There must be something radically wrong with hounds that cannot run up for more than four seasons; yet we see such hounds exhibited at Peterborough, presumably representing the standard type to which breeders should endeavour to attain. On glancing over the hound lists to-day, we find that anywhere from forty to sixty five couples of hounds are deemed necessary for four days a week, and from thirty to forty couples for three days. These hounds are bred on the lines of those exhibited at Peterborough, yet we can point to half a dozen or more packs, of from ten to sixteen couples, which do their three days a week regularly, show capital sport, and are seldom sick or sorry.

Fox-hunting to-day is hard hit in the matter of expense, not the least item of which is the upkeep of hounds. From an economic point of view therefore, is it not better to get away from the heavy type of show hound, and breed something which will last longer, and be more suited to its particular country; even though it may chance to offend the eyes of those who appraise show points more than stamina and working qualities?

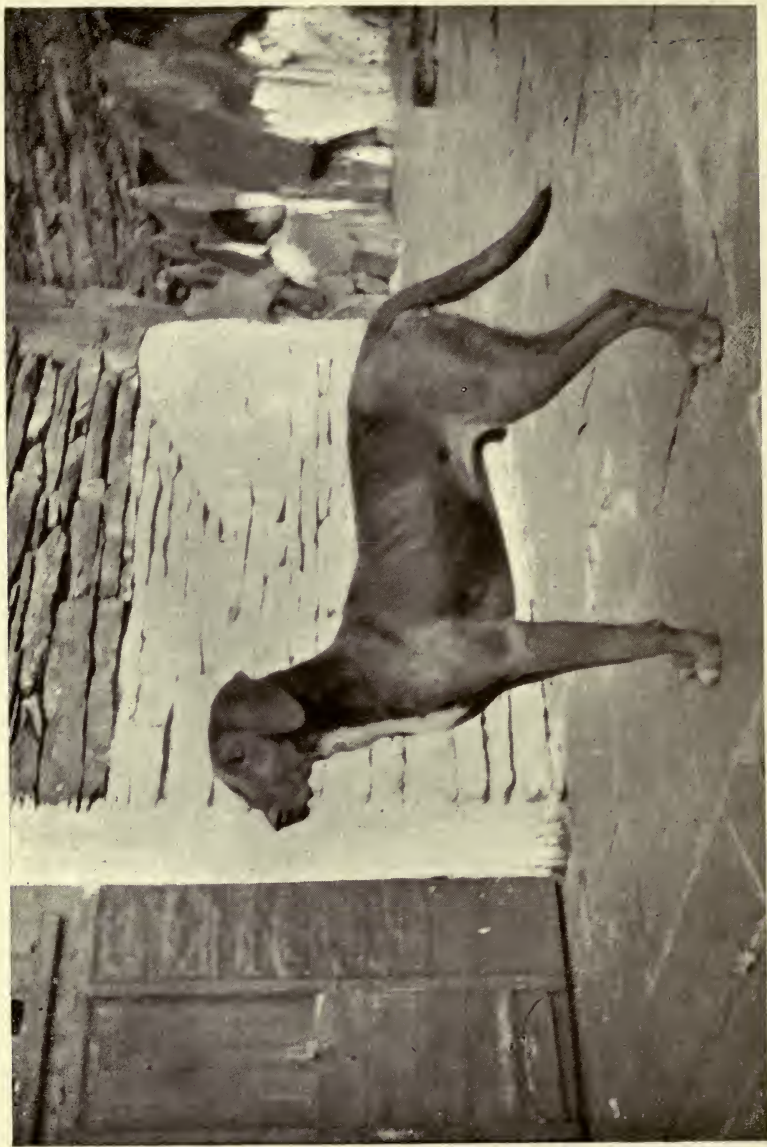
NOSE AND TONGUE

CHAPTER XIII

NOSE, or scenting-power, is undoubtedly the foxhound's most valuable quality, for no matter how good he may be in other respects, he cannot hunt a fox unless his olfactory powers are of the best. Closely connected with nose is tongue. The hound uses his voice when he hits off the line of his fox, thus proclaiming the glad tidings to other members of the pack who immediately fly to him, and make the welkin ring with their melody. To the fox-hunter there is no music on earth like the cry of hounds. It appeals to his ear and sporting instincts, and warns him what hounds are doing and in which direction they are running when they are in the big woodlands, or racing over the open moor.

The power of smell being one of the senses, any impression made on the olfactory organs is conveyed by the nerves to the brain. The undue employment of any individual sense is apt to cause deterioration in one or other of the remaining organs. In the greyhound for instance, we find the power to run by sight highly developed, whereas scenting power has deteriorated, owing to the fact that the greyhound has not been allowed to use his nose. With hounds on the other hand, sight is subservient to nose, because they have been bred for generations to hunt solely by scent. As all the senses are intimately connected with the brain, which is contained within the skull,





CONISTON "COMRADE," A DESCENDANT OF THE OLD TALBOT TANS.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

NOSE AND TONGUE

it may be of interest to discuss the various points of the foxhound's head.

Although scenting power is the hound's most valuable quality, a tender nose is of little use unless the brain is there to guide its employment in the right direction. The development of the brain is controlled by the shape of the head, and this will be found to vary somewhat in different types of hounds. In the fell and other northern packs, the head is longer and more pointed, with a higher occipital than in the fashionable packs, where the muzzle is deeper and broader. What our American cousins describe as "fox-sense" in a hound, is the capacity to use the brain in the control of the senses in the right direction.

The hound which puts the pack right on a bad scenting day, draws the most likely spot in covert, and turns short with a beaten fox, uses his brain, and thus he is a valuable addition to the pack, and has a warm corner in his huntsman's heart. The head of a hound should therefore exhibit plenty of room for brains. The development of the occipital bone varies considerably in different types. It is highest and most prominent in the blood-hound, whilst fell and other northern packs, as well as the Kerry beagle exhibit the occipital strongly developed. Descendants of the old southern hound also show it, but in their case, as well as with the blood-hound, there is an accompanying wrinkling of the skin on the forehead, and great depth of flew, which is absent in the Border types and the Kerry beagle. Determination in man is usually exhibited by a square jaw, and the same applies to the hound. Some lines of blood appear predisposed to overshot or undershot jaws, this state of affairs often appearing in hounds whose heads have little "dish" in the

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forehead, or in other words where the point of the occipital bone is nearly in a straight line with the tip of the nose.

The hound's nasal cavity is more or less elliptical in shape, and varies in size according to the type of animal. The nasal cavities lead into the throat, and are lined with sensitive mucous membrane, through the upper portion of which spread the olfactory nerves. As the cavities lead into the throat near the vocal chords, and also in close proximity to the Eustachian tube which goes from the throat to the middle ear cavity, any irritation or inflammation to one of these parts must necessarily affect the others. For instance, in human beings a sore throat often produces temporary deafness.

A shortened head means that the nostrils are near the nasal cavity, and therefore the olfactory nerves are more exposed, and thus liable to damage by the entrance of irritating matter. On the other hand, a narrow nose without contraction of head, means freedom from nasal disease, and acute scenting power. In a hound with an over-dished or pug-like nose, the free passage of air is retarded, and there is consequent loss of scenting power, as well as liability to nasal complaints. The flews or lips are longest in the blood-hound and blood-hound crosses, whereas the northern hounds, descendants of the old Talbot tans, are shallow flewed.

The hound's ears, like those of a human being, are extremely sensitive, and any irritating matter finding its way into them is liable to set up inflammation, the result being partial or total deafness. The lobe of the ear differs in thickness in individual hounds, but it is safe to say that the happy medium should be aimed at, as

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a thick lobe is susceptible to disease such as canker, while a very thin lobe is often a sign of close in-breeding. In most kennels hounds' ears are rounded, and while this may save the outer edges from being torn to some extent in thick covert, the operation deprives the ear of much of its natural covering, and thus exposes the inner portion to the ingress of irritating matter. It is generally understood that throatiness in a hound denotes plenty of music as well as a sensitive nose. A hound breathes to a considerable extent through his mouth, but unless the nasal cavity allows the free passage of air, the hound cannot breathe through his mouth alone and throw his tongue at the same time. If air does not properly reach the nasal cavity, the hound soon becomes exhausted, and in order to save himself, he either runs slower or ceases to give tongue. If music and pace are desired therefore, the hound to select is the one whose nasal organs are properly developed. Now and then we find instances where the tone of a hound's voice changes. This is generally the result of some ear affection. Tone varies with the amount of air passing through the vocal chords. Deep-toned hounds like otter hounds have plenty of heart and lung room, with a full throat. Light built hounds of the racing type have less well-developed throats, and their tone is high. The deep-toned hounds are heavier and slower. Tone and other characteristics, such as the high occipital, help to indicate the origin of individual lines of blood.

The eyes of a hound, like those of a human being, indicate by their colour and expression both character and stamina. The blood-hound's eyes are dark coloured, and deep-set, with heavily developed haw, while the eyes of many of the

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northern hounds are yellowish-brown. Deep-set eyes are often liable to trouble from ingrowing eye-lashes.

It will thus be seen what great importance must be placed on the proper development of the foxhound's head, for, besides containing that wonderful substance known as the brain, it is also the seat of the olfactory organs, which mean so much to an animal that pursues his quarry by scent.

In the hound, which depends on brain power, stamina, and sense of smell, the brain cavity is large, whereas in the case of the greyhound, dependent on sight and pace, the cavity is considerably less. Speaking of the hound's quarry reminds us that in the fox both brain and nose are highly developed, as an examination of the skull of a fox will testify.

Remembering what has been said regarding the nostrils and nasal cavity of the hound, it can easily be understood that injudicious feeding may have a very serious effect upon those extremely sensitive organs. When hounds are given sloppy food, they shove their muzzles into it in search of the more solid portions of meat, and when at last they turn away from the trough with stomachs distended like drums, they begin to sneeze. This sneezing is caused by particles of food getting into the nostrils where it at once arouses irritation. If therefore hounds are continually fed in this manner, the irritation is liable to be increased, and it stands to reason that the scenting power is consequently weakened. It is pretty safe to say that many so-called bad scenting days would be turned into good ones, if hounds, instead of being fed on slop, were provided with food as thick as it could be made. The quality of the food too is of far





THE GELIGAER AND TALYBONT HOUNDS.
A mixed Pack of English and Welsh Hounds.

(Photo by Sport and General Press Agency, Ltd.)

NOSE AND TONGUE

greater importance than the quantity if hounds are to be kept really fit. The diet of individual hounds of course requires regulating, and in the case of hounds which have passed say their fifth year, they should be fed lighter, and with non-fat-producing material, because at that age they put on fat internally rather than externally. This internal fat chokes their pipes and prevents them running up in a fast burst, although it may not affect their endurance to a like degree. By feeding an old hound lightly, his years of usefulness may generally be prolonged, and this of course means that his intelligence and experience are an enormous asset to the pack in the field. Whilst on the subject of tongue and nose, we are reminded of a yarn concerning the old Hurworth huntsman who had very bowed legs. On one occasion he was photographed, and when the shutter had clicked, the operator remarked, "Well, we've got you inside the camera, Tom, but we can't make you straight." To which that worthy replied, "The year I was whelped, they thought more about tongue and nose." It is safe to say that the modern fox-hound of fashionable type, compares none too well as regards nose with his ancestors or with other present day hounds of different type.

Whilst modern breeders have concentrated all their efforts upon producing a hound perfect in conformation, they have apparently in many instances overlooked those very necessary qualities tongue and nose. Stamina too has suffered, else why are so many hounds required to keep the fashionable packs up to strength? It is doubtful if hounds now do more—or even as much—work in a day as they did in years gone by when the country was unenclosed, and much

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rougher than it is now. Countries then were far more extensive, and there were no trains or hound-vans to lighten the labour of going to the meet and returning after hunting. Foxes too were far fewer, and there were more blank days. A blank day or a bad scenting day is harder on hounds than any number of short, fast bursts now so common in the Shires. Nothing tires hounds more than a long day spent in fruitless search for a fox.

The modern quick system of hunting in the fashionable countries does not of course give hounds a chance to use their noses properly, for they are over-ridden at nearly every check. The majority of the field are out to gallop and jump, or show off themselves and their horses, and they do not care a jot about hound work. Foxes too are thick on the ground, and if one is lost another is quickly forthcoming. Opinions naturally differ concerning the scenting power of the fashionable type of hound, as compared with other types, such as the fell and Welsh hounds. Adherents to the fashionable sort say that hounds of that type have too much dash ever to settle to a cold line or quest for the drag of a fox. Any excuse is of course better than none, but we are afraid this one will not hold water. We have seen hounds of the heavy-boned Peterborough type hunting with the Ullswater, and other fell packs, but we have yet to meet one of that sort that is worth his keep for work on the fells. Setting aside such a hound's unsuitability as regards feet and weight, his nose cannot compare with the scenting power possessed by the local hounds. Time and again have we seen the latter absolutely outclass the fashionable sort in this respect. As for dash being incompatible

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with nose, here again we expose a fallacy. To hunt and kill the stout foxes on the fells, hounds must possess nose, drive, pace, and courage to a remarkable degree. That the fell hounds possess such qualities is amply attested to by the number of foxes they account for each season, yet these same hounds are equally good at questing for a drag, or hunting a cold line.

THE HOUND'S HIND-QUARTERS

CHAPTER XIV

THROUGHOUT the course of a run, a hound has not only to gallop, but take his fences as they come. It stands to reason therefore that the best fencers lose the least time on the journey, and keep up the greatest pressure on the fox. We have seen it stated that "jumping fences is very much a matter of drive, and has very little to do with size in a hound." With all due deference to the author of the above however, our experience leads us to believe that size has a great deal to do with a hound being a good fencer, particularly in a stone wall country. We can say without the least hesitation that a small, compactly built hound will invariably beat a big, lengthy hound when it comes to negotiating all sorts of fences. As it is not much good making such a statement without giving a reason for it, we will therefore endeavour to explain just how it is that the small hound proves such a brilliant performer.

The modern foxhound of Peterborough type has been bred much bigger than his predecessors of years ago, and with this increase in height has come undue length of body and waist. Beginning with the ribs, of which the hound possesses thirteen pairs, we find nine of them are true ribs, and four false. The true ribs are joined in a solid framework, and are thus fixed, whereas the first three false ribs are connected by cartilages





CONISTON "CHANTRY," AN EXTRAORDINARILY FAST VELL HOUND AND ONE WHICH NO FENCE COULD STOP.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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THE HOUND'S HIND-QUARTERS

to the ribs in front of them, and the last pair are floating. The latter end in the abdominal wall, from which point the lumbar region begins. Below this again there is the diaphragm, which separates the chest from the abdomen. If therefore there is undue lengthening in the lumbar region, the power of the diaphragm is weakened, and the increased strain is inimical to the weight carrying capacity of the other organs.

Modern hounds, bred with an eye to pace, often show considerable reduction in spring of rib. As the ribs contain heart and lungs, any tendency to flat-sidedness means unequal expansion of these organs. Well sprung ribs on the other hand allow of free expansion without liability to strain. If heart and lungs are at all cramped, they quickly become unhealthy, and so reduce the working life of the hound.

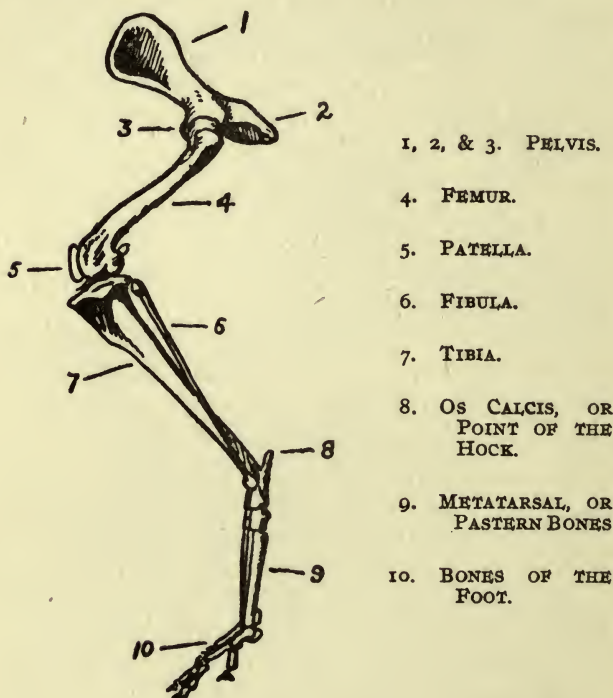
The longer the body, the greater is the call upon certain muscles such as the broad dorsal muscle, which begins below the shoulder and spreads over the back and sides of the chest, until it tapers towards the loin. With increased length of loin, the hound is unable to get his hind legs well under his body, and the internal organs being spread over greater length, the strain in a downward direction is likewise increased. Thus, unless the muscles of the big hound are abnormally developed, he suffers from loss of power and endurance. The muscles of the loin are connected with those of the hind legs, so if there is any weakening of the former, the hound is unable to use his leg muscles properly.

When we consider that driving power and jumping ability are derived entirely from the hind-quarters, any weakness in this direction must prove a serious drawback to a hound when he is

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fencing. In order to jump properly, a hound must get his hind-legs well under his body, and here is where the short-coupled hound scores over his long-waisted relation.

The chief bones of the hind-quarters are those forming the pelvis, the femur, tibia, and metatarsal or pastern bones. On the length of the latter



depends the height from the point of the hock to the ground. The hind pasterns are always longer than the front ones. The pelvis forms a fixed point for the vertebrae, as well as for the leverage power of the hind legs. Any deviation from a straight line between the Os calcis or point

THE HOUND'S HIND-QUARTERS

of the hock and the ground, results in a hound being what is familiarly known as "cow-hocked." This means that he lifts his hind legs higher than he should when travelling at speed, and cannot get them well under his body. Owing to this deviation, the power of the toe flexors is lessened, and there is therefore less spring in the feet in both a forward and backward direction. A hound so formed lacks speed and jumping ability. The longer the femur or first thigh bone, the lower the hock, and the greater the speed. Likewise the more obtuse the angle between them, the greater the power to throw the legs in either a backward or forward direction. The tibia or second thigh articulates with the lower end of the femur, forming the stifle joint. The patella or knee cap, is a small bone attached by ligaments to the lower front of the femur. The more prominent the point of the patella, the slower the hound, because the angle between femur and tibia is in this case acute, and so reduces the length of stride. The muscles of the hind-quarters, particularly those of the second thigh are of great importance, because on them depends power and endurance. It is these muscles which enable a hound of correct anatomical conformation to go the pace, and take all kinds of formidable obstacles at speed. It will thus be seen that the small, compact, and short coupled hound, which has full use of his hocks and can get his hind-legs right under his body, is enabled to fence with far greater ease than the big hound with lengthy body and waist. In addition to having less weight and lumber to lift in an upward direction when fencing, the compact, light boned hound suffers much less from jar and concussion when landing.

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Show judges are apt to pay more attention to the fore-end of a hound than to his hind-quarters, but this is a great mistake, for it should always be remembered that pace and jumping ability are derived solely from the hind-quarters. With regard to the hound's hind feet, these are still much as nature intended them to be, and the judges show no objection, which seems rather curious when we think what great stress they lay upon the abnormal roundness of the fore feet.

Nowadays hounds of 24 inches and over are the first to catch the judge's eye at the shows. Is it really necessary to breed hounds nearly as big as yearling calves, to bring to hand a fox which seldom weighs over 16lb., and stands about that number of inches at the shoulder? There are few packs of foxhounds which can kill foxes better than the 21 inch harriers in the Cotley, and Axe Vale kennels, or the fell hounds whose height limit is about 22½ inches. All these hounds are hardier, last longer, and cost much less to keep than the big hounds of Peterborough type, and in these days the matter of expense is a very serious one in many Hunts, so that one would think that the smaller and more hard-wearing hounds should by now begin to make some sort of appeal to those Masters whose aim is to show sport at reasonable expense, rather than go in for the show type. The latter of course bring the highest prices in the market, for fashion decrees that they are the one and only standard type. Seeing, therefore, that the tenure of office of the average Master in these days is comparatively short, owing to expense, he must breed to that type, otherwise when his time comes to sell, he will be considerably out of pocket. Talking of jumping ability in hounds,

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not long since we were out with a fell pack, and when going to open a gate for the huntsman, which formed the entrance to a covert fenced by a huge stone wall, a little bitch stepped quietly out and flitted over the said wall like a swallow. The huntsman evidently divined our feelings, for he turned with a grin and said, "There's nae wall going to stop *her*." Now this particular bitch is under 20 inches, and of a truth there is no fence in the country that will stop her, nor several of her relations either. Bone, weight, height, and a lengthy body, never yet helped a hound to surmount obstacles at speed. In actual practice it is always the small, compact, short-coupled hounds which fly over the walls, and return to kennels with their sterns gaily carried. Granted that drive is a very necessary quality in a pack of hounds, it alone will not carry hounds over big fences. The correct anatomical conformation must be there to enable hounds to use their limbs properly, and this conformation is more often found in the small hound than the big one. Absolute freedom of action is what is required for quick fencing, and the more perfectly built a hound is the greater freedom in the above respect will he possess.

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CHAPTER XV

IT is a well known and incontrovertible fact, that each variety of hunting country requires its particular type of horse. The same truth is therefore equally applicable to hounds. For many generations it has been the aim of leading hound breeders to produce the perfect type, and the culmination of their efforts is to-day represented by the stamp of hound annually exhibited at Peterborough show. Owing to the great importance placed upon the shows, this type has come to be recognised as the one and only standard, and the majority of Masters do their best to attain to it.

Granted then that this standard is admirably suited to the country for which it was originally intended, i.e., the Shires ; and keeping in mind what we have said about the horse, is it not therefore reasonable to suppose that a deviation from this type is essential in the case of hounds required to hunt in countries of a very different nature ? Take for example the packs which hunt the fells in the English Lake District. Their country is the antithesis of Leicestershire, with its flat and undulating grass-lands. Instead of sound grass fields, hedges, and conveniently placed coverts, we have a land which looks as if it had been thrown up on end, and then adorned with crags, scree-beds, and a heterogeneous collection of rocks and stones. For generations the hounds

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hunting the fell country, have been bred to a type which long experience has proved to be the best, and though hounds of what we may term the Peterborough type have over and over again found their way to the kennels in Lakeland, when tested in the field with the local hounds they have never yet proved themselves worth their keep as fox catchers. There are five packs of hounds kennelled in the Lake District proper, and anyone who doubts the above statement can easily verify the truth of it by questioning any of the professional huntsmen who carry the horn with the fell hounds.

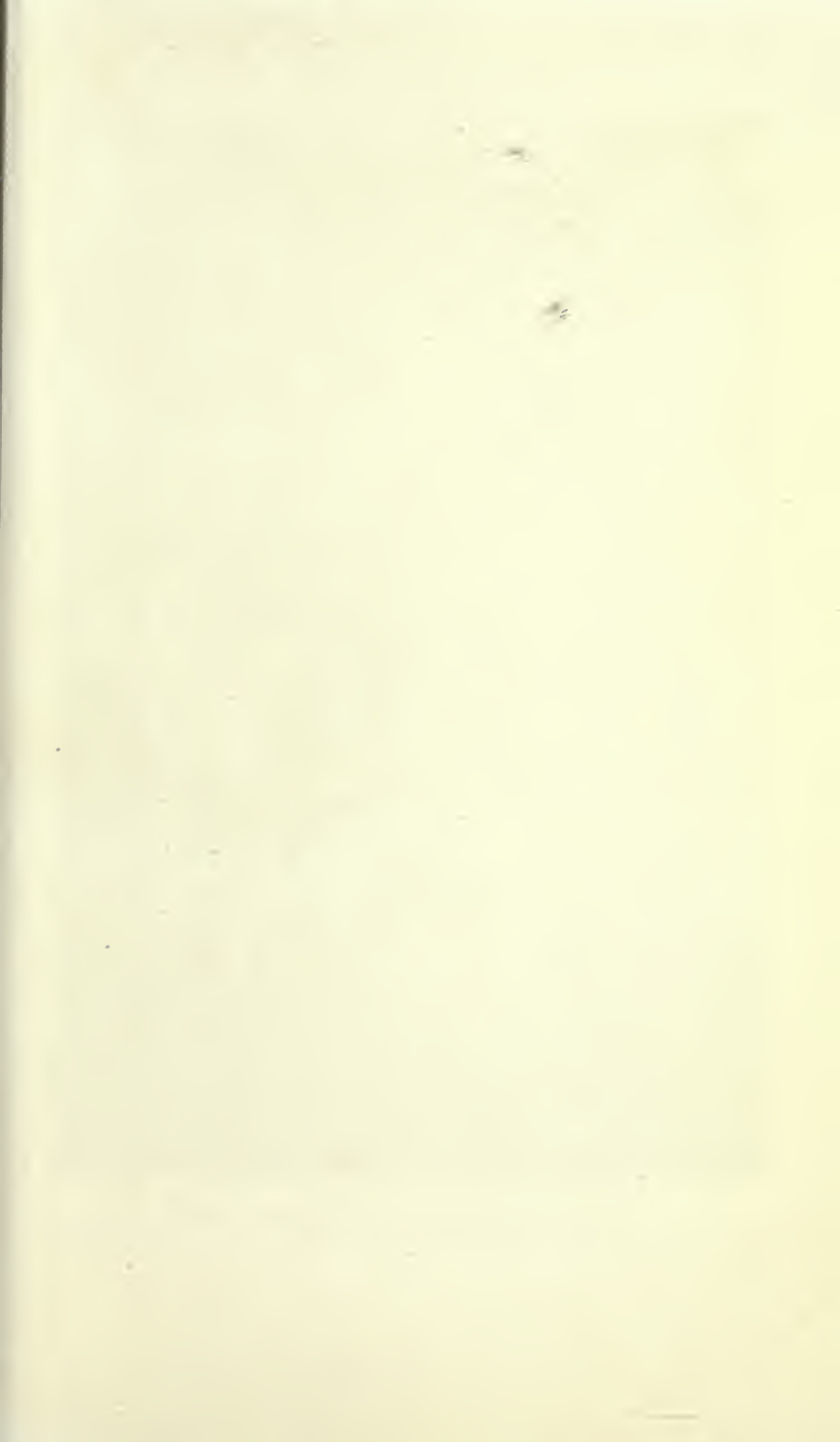
In comparing the Leicestershire country with the Lakeland fells, we are of course dealing with two extremes, the former being the cream of the going to be found in Great Britain, while the latter is the wildest and roughest district over which hounds are used in the pursuit of the fox. In between these two extremes, there lies a very varied area of country, in some parts of which the standard type of hound is almost as much at sea as he is when he finds himself attempting to cross the Lakeland fells. That a well-bred hound of the standard type will do his best in any country in which he may find himself placed, we do not for a moment wish to deny, but in a rough district like the fells, his best has never yet proved good enough when compared with the working ability of the local hounds. It is a case of "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," because certain points in connection with the make and shape of the hound of standard type seriously handicap him in his efforts to do his best in the field.

As comparatively few hunting people are familiar with hounds of the fell type, it may be of

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interest to compare a typical member of a fell pack with a hound from one of the crack Midland kennels. Taking the standard type first, we find that colour does not count when the judges are summing up a hound's merits. A good hound can never be a bad colour, so the specimen of standard type under discussion may be black, white, and tan, probably with a black saddle-mark, and "Belvoir tan" about the head, shoulders, and quarters. Certain champions have been light coloured like the badger-pied Milton Rector (1910). As regards conformation, the hound will show fine quality, with tremendous shoulders and forearms, and heavy bone carried right down to his toes. He will stand twenty-four inches or over, with plenty of heart and lung room, though his ribs will be without any great spring. He will have a certain amount of length behind, and will stand forward at the knee, so that when viewed from the front his toes will be seen to turn in, the weight being placed on the centre and outer surfaces. If his forefeet be examined, the pad or heel will be found thick and deep, the entire foot being contracted, thus bringing the weight of the body upon the toes. Such a hound gives the impression of size, power, and weight, rather than activity and pace.

Turning to the fell hound, we find a very different type before us. Such a hound is light-framed all round, 22½ inches or thereabouts in height, with hare feet as opposed to the round, club-like feet of the fashionable sort, particularly well let down and developed in the hind quarters, short coupled, the ribs being carried well back, good shoulders, and long, sloping pasterns. Instead of knuckling forward, he stands back at the knee, the sloping pastern affording plenty of





ESKDALE AND ENNERDALE "KISKIN" and "JOVIAL,"
TWO SMART FELL HOUNDS.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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spring in the right direction. The general impression afforded by a fell hound is a complete antithesis of that provided by a hound of Peterborough type. Instead of size, weight and power, we have lightness, activity, and pace, coupled with wonderful stamina ; in fact exactly the type required to cope with the steep slopes—from 45° to 70° —and the dangerous crags and general rough going to be found on our Lakeland fells.

There is some slight variation of type in fell hounds in general, chiefly noticeable in an increase of height and bone. From time to time outside blood from south-country and other packs has been requisitioned for the purpose of increasing bone, and this out-crossing has in some instances tended towards the production of darker colour in individual hounds. Our fell hounds trace their origin back to the old Talbot tans, while later they acquired a certain infusion of pointer blood. The latter was introduced in order to make hounds carry their heads higher, and to give more scope for liberty of limb, and a consequent increase in pace when running trail. In the fell type of hound white is the predominant colour, added to which we find lemon and white, black and white, badger pie, hare pie, and black and tan. The latter constantly recurs in different fell packs, being a throw back to the rich tan of the original Talbots. Although these tan-coloured hounds come of a capital hunting strain, too many of them in a fell pack are not desirable, inasmuch as they are difficult to see at a distance against a dark background of rock or heather.

On the fells, the ground is chiefly composed of steep slopes, interspersed with deep ghylls, crags,

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scree-beds, and a general confusion of rough going. When descending such gradients at speed, it stands to reason that a hound must suffer severely from jar and concussion unless his conformation is such as to minimise the shock as far as possible. The heavier a hound is, the more will he knock himself about in such a country, and if, added to weight, he is the possessor of unsuitably made feet and pasterns, his life of usefulness will not be long.

In previous chapters we have dealt more or less fully with anatomical details in connection with hounds, so we need not discuss the matter at any great length here. Suffice it to say that the hare foot, with its shallow, hard pad, has invariably been found to withstand the exigencies of the going on the fells, far better than the round club-like foot of the standard type, with its thick, fleshy pad. There appears to be some misapprehension with regard to the real meaning of the expression "hare," when used in connection with a hound's foot. Some people appear to think that a hare foot is like that of say a St. Bernard dog, i.e., large, and inclined to spread, while others seem to imagine that such a foot is flat, or in other words is wooden and without spring. Such ideas are altogether erroneous, for the real hare foot as possessed by the wolf, coyote, fox, and fell hound, as well as the shepherd's dog, is admirably fitted by nature to withstand the exigencies of any kind of going, from the plains to the mountains. The hare foot proper possesses fair length, is neat and compact, the toes having little inclination to spread, while the pad is shallow, and becomes hard and wear resisting. The foot stands squarely on the ground, and gains spring in the direction designed

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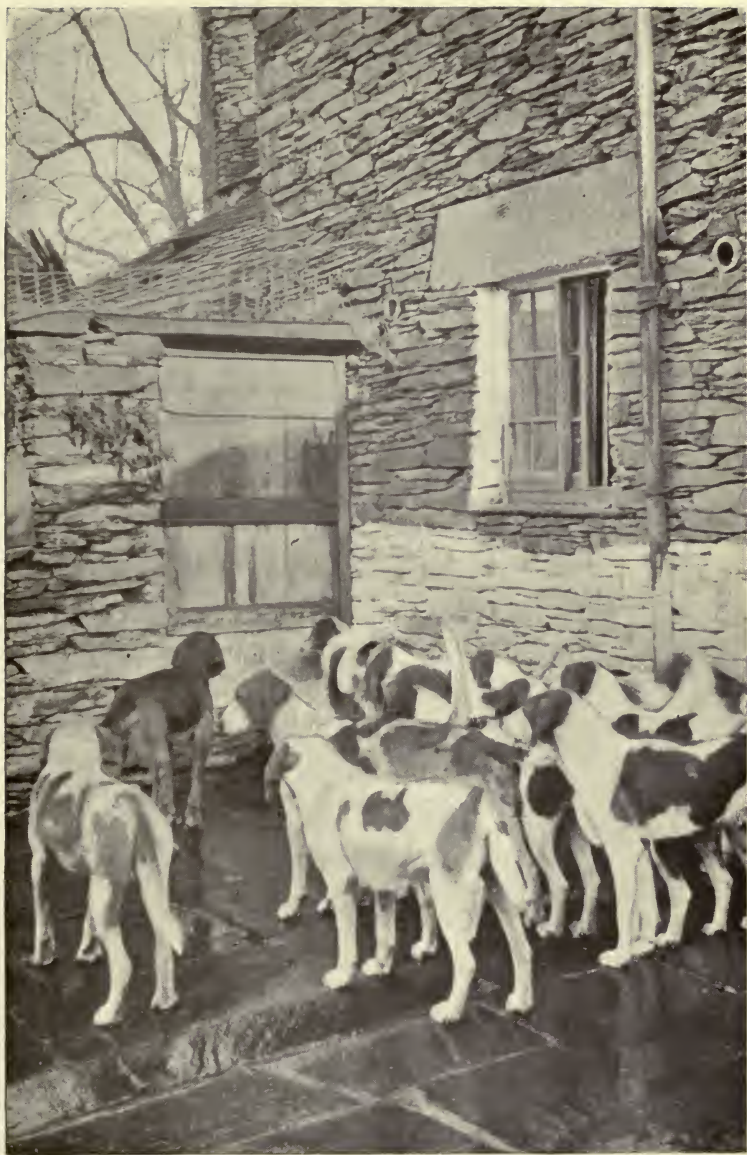
by nature, i.e., backwards, by means of the fairly long, sloping pastern. We have heard certain Masters of hounds express the view that the round, club-like foot of the standard type wears better than the hare foot, for work in an ordinary enclosed hunting country. This seems rather an extraordinary statement, when we consider the fact that for many generations the hare foot has been universal in fell hounds, and has been proved by years of actual test to be the only one to stand the wear and tear of hunting over the roughest country in England. A hound is a dog, bred and trained to hunt certain quarry, and the best type of foot is that which nature has provided the animal with. There are few if any dogs which work longer, faster, or over such rough ground as the shepherd's curs in Lakeland; yet one seldom sees one with sore feet, even after several days of hot-weather work on such ground as say Helvellyn, or any other of the high fells. The best of these cur dogs possess most excellent hare feet, and if you ask any experienced fell shepherd he will tell you that they are the best type of feet for the work the dogs have to do. Now a true fell hound stands on exactly the same kind of feet, which are admirably suited to the work the hound has to do. A shepherd's dog works quite as well in an ordinary enclosed country as it does on the fells, and so do the fell hounds, for all the Lakeland packs have a certain amount of low country which they hunt every season. One could give endless examples of hare-footed hounds whose feet were as sound as ever after years of work on the fells. One example will suffice however, and that was a hound of the heavier fell type, which ran up for nine seasons. This hound never had a day's sickness in its life,

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until it was attacked by an internal complaint necessitating its being put down, and during the entire nine seasons of mountain hunting it never once suffered from sore feet. This hound's feet were of the typical hare type, neat, compact, and with pads as hard as iron. He was a wonderfully fast hound for his size, and ran just as well in an enclosed country as he did on the roughest hill ground. Considering the long record of the utility of the hare-footed hounds in Lakeland as well as other moorland countries, it seems surprising that certain Masters should have found them wanting in respect of their feet in ordinary enclosed countries. All we can think is, that those Masters must have got hold of hounds with feet of very inferior hare type, for if the real hare foot will stand nine or ten seasons on the Lakeland fells, it will stand an equal if not longer term of service in any other hunting country in Great Britain.

Looking at a pack of fell hounds, a hunting man from the Midlands would probably consider them a very unlevel lot. They certainly do vary in size to some extent, and are not so sorty looking as those in more swagger establishments, but they possess nose, cry, pace, and stamina, and are determined fox catchers as their long record in the fell country amply proves. In a riding country, a level lot of hounds of more or less equal pace are desirable. Hounds can always beat horses on a good scenting day, but on the fells it does not matter how fast hounds travel, in fact the faster the better, for it is impossible to ride to them, the field being content to watch the run from some convenient vantage point.

As previously mentioned, the fell type of



CONISTON HOUNDS IN KENNEL.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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hounds vary to some extent in the matter of size and bone, but the latter is never more than light or medium, for heavy bone means weight, and handicaps a hound on rough ground. The majority of fell hounds throw their tongues freely, a very desirable quality on the hills where hounds are often out of sight for long periods. They have capital noses, which enable them to hunt the drag of a fox before unkennelling him. They are noted too for their courage and stamina, as the many records of long runs amply testify. When it comes to pace, the speed of the fell hounds on a real good scenting day must be seen to be believed. Many of the bitches are remarkable for their pace, and the same applies to the smaller and lighter built dog hounds. There are usually a few extra fast hounds in a pack, and it is these that lead the way when scent is breast high. These speedy hounds are not always as keen on hunting the drag as they are at chasing a fox after he has been unkennelled, although many of them show marked ability in both respects. The older and more experienced members of the pack do the main of the work on the drag, and though perhaps not quite so fast as the leaders in actual chase, they are generally there or thereabout at a check, and soon put matters right. A four or five season hound is at his best on the fells, whereas a hound belonging to a fashionable pack may be drafted at the end of his fourth season. Being on foot, the huntsman can only give very occasional assistance to his hounds, therefore they depend on their own initiative and are very keen and persevering.

In a riding country, the huntsman has the assistance of two whippers-in if hounds divide, and it is seldom that a single hound gets away

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“on its own.” On the fells however, this not infrequently occurs, and every season finds one or more individual hounds famous for having hunted and killed a fox single-handed. It sometimes happens that a hound which will run a fox with the best, refuses to roll his quarry over when he overhauls it. During the early part of the present season (1921), two of the Ullswater bitches led throughout a very fast run in the neighbourhood of Howtown, overtaking their fox and holding him there until the rest of the pack gave him his quietus.

Hounds which mark well are most valuable in fell hunting. Should hounds distance their field and run a fox to ground, the music of a few staunch markers lets the huntsman know in which direction to go. When following a fox amongst the ledges on the crags, hounds run the risk of slipping and meeting death on the rocks far below. Hardly a season passes without a contretemps of this nature, but considering the dangerous character of the country, fatal accidents are remarkably few. Twenty-two and a half inches is about the most useful height for a fell hound. Small, compact hounds can jump the big stone walls and get about the crags more easily and quickly than the heavier type, and they wear better and last longer. Harking back for a moment to hounds' feet, the fell hounds have the dew-claw properly developed, and it is an aid in climbing as well as descending steep places. The hare foot and long pastern are equally useful in both respects, as they enable a hound to get a better grip than the contracted foot and the short, upright pastern, more particularly when scrambling up steep ledges, or jumping to the tops of the high stone walls. The

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ears of a fell hound are never rounded, but are left in their natural state. In our opinion a hound with rounded ears looks less hound-like than one whose ears have not been tampered with. In *The Field* of Oct. 8th, 1921, there is a note by Sir Ian R. Amory, Bart., Master of the Tiverton, which we take the liberty of quoting here. He says, with regard to the rounding of hound's ears, "When I took the foxhounds eleven years ago, I was warned that an unrounded hound might do for stag-hunting, but that he would not do for fox-hunting. He does all right and takes no harm, he even catches foxes sometimes. Years ago people used to cut the ears of their horses; such a practice seems about as sensible—and about as foolish—as to cut the ears of hounds. If uniformity is what is wanted why not cut their tails too, they are not all the same length."

In the old days, when the fell hounds were trencher fed, distemper was quite unknown amongst them. Of late years however they have suffered to some extent from this complaint. Trencher fed hounds led a free and untrammelled existence, whereas hounds in kennel are necessarily herded together, and once a complaint of any kind breaks out amongst them, it has every opportunity to spread, despite care and isolation of the patients. A number of years ago bloodhound blood was introduced into some of the Northern kennels, in consequence of which distemper soon made its appearance. The bloodhound is a delicate breed with a poor constitution, and is therefore very susceptible to disease. In the same way in more recent times, south country hound blood has been used occasionally to improve bone, and seeing that hounds of the standard type

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are usually much in-bred, while many of them possess poor constitutions, it is probable that such out crosses have resulted in an increased tendency to distemper. No complaint causes more anxiety or is responsible for greater mortality than distemper. Various serums and other remedies have been tried, but so far no infallible cure has been found. A note in the "Pharmaceutical Journal and Pharmacist" of Oct. 8th, 1921, by Mr. H. Sawyer, pharmacist, of Carlisle, a member of the British Bulldog Club, reads as follows, with regard to a cure for distemper: "If he is a dog owner I would advise him to try brewer's yeast. I have never known it to fail, and I have kept dogs over fifty years. Give a small dog a tea-spoonful; a good sized terrier a dessert-spoonful; and a collie a table-spoonful twice a day. Do not trouble him with food; he will eat when he is ready. Do not put him beside the fire where he will be 70 degrees Fahr. at 9 p.m. and 35 degrees Fahr. at 6 a.m. Give him a good bed of straw, and if you think fit put an old blanket or coarse bag over the top. Unfortunately this is no good for business, as you cannot put it up for sale."

We have not tried this cure, but it appears to be a very simple remedy, and should prove a boon to hound men and dog owners in general. With regard to the isolation of distemper cases, artificial heat is better dispensed with. Unless the greatest care is taken to keep an even temperature both day and night, artificial heat does more harm than good. All a hound wants is a dry sleeping place free from draughts, and a good bed to lie on. The place should be properly ventilated from the top, so that the patient breathes pure air instead of an overheated at-

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mosphere. An important point to remember is not to let the patient go out too soon after recovery, even though the hound may appear perfectly healthy and well. When you do let him out, choose a fine day for the purpose.

Until recently the hound show was an unknown quantity in Lakeland. Years ago the exigencies of the country called for a special type of hound, and that type has been preserved until the present. That it can do the work for which it was intended—not only in the wild fells of the Lake District, but in ordinary enclosed countries as well—has been proved up to the hilt again and again. Seeing that the show business is a new thing in Lakeland, we may perhaps be forgiven for offering a word of caution with regard to it. Hound shows are all very well if not carried to excess, or in other words, if exhibitors continue to breed solely for working ability, and do not let the idea of winning prizes run away with them. We all like to see good looking hounds, but unless their working qualities are fully developed, good looks do not help to catch foxes. The purpose of a hound show is or at any rate should be, to encourage the breeding of “hounds for countries,” and to preserve or improve balance and symmetry. As far as the fell hounds are concerned, they are of a type admirably suited to their country, as their long record as fox catchers undoubtedly proves. The trouble with hound shows in general is that they offer insidious encouragement towards breeding for certain points upon which undue stress is laid, to the neglect of such qualities as nose, cry, and stamina. The first show for hounds confined to the five fell packs was held at Applethwaite, Windermere, in 1919, and it was

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repeated in 1920, and 1921 at Rydal. At the 1921 show the quality of the hounds exhibited—particularly the bitches—was very good indeed. So far of course the show has not affected fell hounds one way or another, and we can only hope that in the future working ability will not be sacrificed to exhibition points.

To make a success of breeding hounds, proper pedigree lists should be kept. Then if things go wrong at any time you can turn up the required pedigree and see at once where the mistake in breeding has been made. Pedigrees of Lakeland hounds appear to have oftener been handed down by word of mouth than on paper, which is a great pity, for complete records would have been most interesting and instructive reading. In breeding fell hounds, or any other hounds for that matter, make up your mind what strains you will depend on. No matter how good looking a hound may be, or what honours he has won at shows, have nothing to do with him if he comes of a strain you do not approve of, or have reason for doubting. Chance breeding is no good, for though you may strike a "plum" now and then, such a one is useless for stud purposes, as he is pretty sure to reproduce the faults of his ancestors in his progeny.

Concerning the pace of the fell hounds, the late Joe Dawson who was huntsman to the Patterdale hounds before they became known as the Ullswater, was once asked if his hounds were in good "fettle." "Aye, mi' lad," he replied, "they can kill owt but fleein things, an' they hev to be a gey bit off t'grund."

Apropos big south-country hounds, the late Tommy Dobson, for many years Master of the Eskdale and Ennerdale, was more than once

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presented with hounds of that type. Tommy liked hounds of the true fell sort, and on one occasion being asked what he was going to do with a big gift hound, promptly replied, "Cut it i' two, cut it i' two."

On another occasion a hound unfortunately took to sheep worrying. One of the field, noting the absence of the hound on the next hunting day, asked Tommy where it was. That worthy tersely replied, "Mutton, mutton."

There is no denying the fact that fell hounds on a good scenting day get up a tremendous pace. Pace is, of course, difficult to judge exactly, but we doubt if many south-country hounds can equal them in an ordinary enclosed country. On the fells the average fashionable hound is nowhere when it comes to travelling, although one meets with exceptions here and there. What one would like to see is a trial between a few couples of fell hounds and an equal number of south-country hounds, the test to take place first in the Shires or one of the provincial countries, and after that on the fells. If such a trial is ever held, it is quite probable that the upholders of the fashionable sort will have their eyes opened, both as regards the working ability and the pace of the fell hounds.

A peculiarity of the fell hounds is that they do not break up their foxes. At times, if they are a bit above themselves, or have had a sharp scurry after a bolt from an earth, they will tear and eat a portion of their fox, but usually they are content to kill, and let it go at that. This trait is no doubt the result of inherited instinct, for in the old days when the northern hounds hunted mart and hare before the fox became an accredited beast of chase they were not allowed to break

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up their quarry, as the hare when killed was distributed between the occupiers of the land on which the kill took place, the members of the field, and the huntsman.

It is perhaps just as well that the fell hounds refrain from breaking up their quarry, for if they did mighty few trophies of the chase would be secured, seeing that the field are all afoot, and the hounds often kill long before anyone can get to them. As it is many a fox is run into on the fells without a soul being there to see, and after waiting about a bit hounds either turn their heads homewards, or get on to the line of a fresh fox. We recently witnessed an incident which showed how easy it is for hounds to kill and nobody be any the wiser. After an early morning meet hounds struck a good drag which they quickly worked out until they unkennelled their fox, the latter jumping up close in front of them. The fox struck straight down hill with the pack running in view. We expected a kill at any moment, but the fox drew clear and unsighted his pursuers just before he reached the bank of a rocky beck. The bed of the stream was full of boulders and the fox jumped in and turned sharply as he did so. The pack, all but one hound, flashed over the beck, and checked well beyond the further bank. The single hound met the fox in the river-bed, promptly rolled him over, dropped him, and went on after the others. Eventually the pack cast back, and found their fox in the river-bed, where it was lying dead, half under water. Had there been nobody there to see, hounds would soon have been on the line of a fresh fox, and there would have been one mask less to go towards the season's total. By using

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horn and voice freely one can get hounds to break up nearly any sort of quarry, but even amongst south-country hounds there are certain of them which take little or no interest in the final "worry."

In some hunting countries both at home and abroad the huntsman and his whippers-in may experience considerable difficulty in preventing hounds from running riot. Where there are big woodlands it is often quite impossible to get at the offenders and administer the necessary "hiding." On the open fells of the north, hares or an occasional deer may tempt certain hounds from the line of their legitimate quarry. When this happens the whip is promptly administered to the culprits with the result that their infatuation for fur generally ceases. There are times however, luckily few and far between, when hounds suddenly run riot amongst the little Herdwick sheep which are scattered about the hills. A disaster of this kind is the worst that can happen to a fell pack, for once a hound or hounds take a fancy to mutton on the hoof, death is the only cure for the offenders. Should the huntsman or any other responsible person witness such a contretemps, he will recognise the actual ring-leaders, but there are times when hounds run riot and no one is near, so making it extremely difficult to convict all the culprits. Stern measures are necessary, and the innocent may suffer with the guilty, but it is better to do away with any suspects rather than let the entire pack become imbued with an unholy taste for mutton. The majority of puppies belonging to the fell packs are walked on farms, where they very soon learn that sheep are tabu, and so when

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they return to kennels they can generally be trusted. There are times, however, when even the older hounds show a tendency to riot, especially if they happen to be a bit above themselves, or the weather is rough and windy. The average fell hound does his three days a week and sometimes four during the regular season, and in early spring he may do five or even six days if the foxes are troubling the lambs. As far as a tendency to riot among sheep is concerned hounds are much better to be in real hard work than too fresh and "kittle." It takes a mighty lot of work to kill a well-bred hound, and it is therefore better to risk over-working him than run the chance of having to foot a heavy bill for mutton. Hounds are like human beings in some respects, and may suddenly "turn queer" for no apparent reason. We know of an instance where one of the best working hounds in a pack suddenly took to running riot, finally ending up by pulling down a sheep. This hound had been accidentally hit over the head with a stick, and there is no doubt that the blow affected its brain, with the result above mentioned, for prior to the accident the hound was a capital worker and absolutely true to fox.

Deer are always a great temptation to foxhounds, especially in big woodlands, although hounds soon learn to disregard them and stick to the line of their legitimate quarry. The Ullswater is probably unique in one respect, inasmuch as it is the only pack in Great Britain whose country includes a recognised deer forest. The forest of Martindale, owned by the squire of Dalemain, and now leased by Lord Lonsdale, whose own ground practically surrounds it, is one of the





CONISTON "COUNTESS," A SMART BITCH OF THE FELL TYPE.

(Photo by R. Clapham)

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last haunts of the wild red deer of Lakeland. The Ullswater hounds hunt the whole of it, and will run a fox through deer as if the latter did not exist. Incidentally Martindale is the only English deer forest, if we except Gowbarrow which harbours some deer on the opposite side of Ullswater Lake.

We have already mentioned the fact that an outbreak of sheep-worrying is the worst thing that can happen to a fell pack. The reason for this is because the fell packs are small to begin with, and if many hounds have to be put down it takes a long time to get the pack up to strength again. No outside packs can supply hounds suited to the fell country, so that breeding operations are confined to the five Lakeland packs with an occasional cross of outside blood.

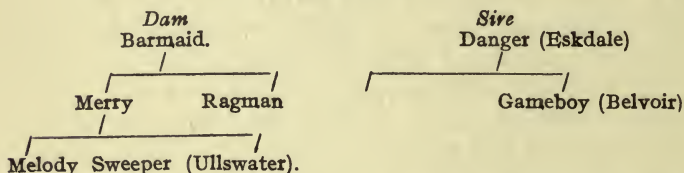
Although packs are small, individual hounds come out three and four times a week, which means that the cost of their upkeep is comparatively trifling compared with the enormous expense attached to a fashionable pack. In these days when hunting expense is such a serious consideration in the Shires and provinces the fell Hunts afford an object lesson as regards the worth of "hounds for countries," not only in the matter of sport but also with respect to the very moderate sum expended in the kennels. When we consider that individual fell packs average about twenty-five brace of foxes per season, it is plain testimony that hounds are suited to their country, a country, too, which is the wildest and roughest of all the British Hunts. If further proof were needed we have but to turn up the records of individual hounds which every season find, hunt, and kill foxes entirely "on their own."

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A single hound to do this unaided must possess nose, drive, pace, and stamina to a marked degree, qualities which are inherited in the fell type.

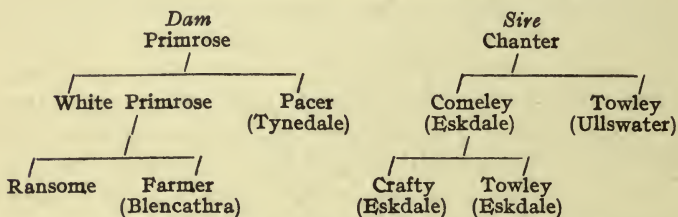
In order to give the reader an idea of how fell hounds are bred, I append one or two pedigrees of hounds which were prize-winners at the fell hound show in 1919 and 1920.

MELBRAKE "RAGMAN," born April, 1917.



Ragman was placed first in dog hounds at Troutbeck in 1919, and at Rydal in 1920. At the Loweswater show in 1920 he was placed third. He is good in his work and has killed a fox single-handed.

CONISTON "PROXY," born April, 1914.



The Coniston Proxy won first in bitches 1919 ; and was second in 1920.

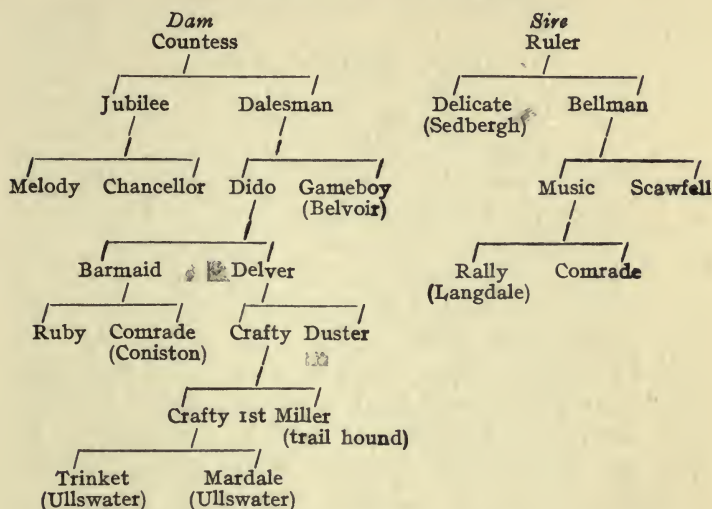
The Tynedale Pacer was a wonderfully active hound for his size with a good nose but practically mute.

The bitch Proxy is a "nailer" in her work, with a good nose, gives plenty of tongue, has pace, and is a useful colour, being practically white.

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ESKDALE & ENNERDALE. First Season, 1920.

Kiskin & Jovial (Litter brothers).



Kiskin and Jovial won first in couples class at Rydal in 1920, and first in couples' class in 1920 at the Loweswater show, where they were placed first and second in class for dog hounds. In 1921 at Rydal, Kiskin was placed first, and Jovial third in class for dog hounds, and they won Major David Davies' cup for best couple. Both these hounds have black backs profusely ticked with white. This ticking is not unusual in fell hounds, and it is also common in hounds bred at Belvoir. As will be seen from the pedigree, Countess their dam is by Dalesman by Belvoir Gameboy out of the Eskdale Dido.

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CHAPTER XVI

LONG years ago in feudal days, the hills and dales of Lakeland resounded to the cry of hounds and the horn of the hunter. In those times the stag was the premier beast of chase, and hunting was regularly indulged in by both clergy and laity. The fox, along with the wild cat, the badger, eagle and raven, was looked upon as vermin and had a price upon his head. The deer, descendants of which are still to be seen in Martindale Forest, were preserved for hunting in certain Chases, the most famous of which was Inglewood. It was customary for tenants to attend their Lord's hunt once a year, this being known as a "boon hunt." Each tenant had his allotted station on the boundaries of the chase in order to prevent the deer escaping.

In Martindale Forest, then known as the "Chace of Markendale," these stations, so Clarke tells us in his "Survey of the Lakes," were at two places, i.e., Bampkin (Rampsgill) and Bannerdale "where the deer chiefly lye, and where the tenants stand with their dogs to prevent the deer escaping to the mountains." For his services each tenant received his dinner and a quart of ale. It was also the custom that the first person who seized the hunted deer had the head for his trouble.

"What shall he have that killed the deer?
His leather skin and horns to wear."

As You Like It, iv., 2.

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The Hasells of Dalemain kept hounds, and one Edward Hasell, who owned Dalemain from 1794 to 1825 assisted in the capture of the last stag in Inglewood, as well as in the taking of the last stag on Whinfell. The Squires of Dalemain owned the Forest of Martindale where they continued to indulge their love of hunting long after Whinfell and Inglewood were disforested.

By degrees the old order changed, and with the gradual disappearance of the deer, hunters turned their attention to the chase of the hare, mart, and fox. To-day in Lakeland the fox is the premier beast of chase, and five packs of hounds are devoted solely to his pursuit. In the old days hounds were trencher-fed, but now the fell packs are kennelled during the hunting season, hounds going to their various walks in summer.

The Lake District which lies in Cumberland, Westmorland, and part of Lancashire, hardly fits in with one's preconceived idea of a hunting country, but for all that it provides capital sport for those who are willing to forego riding and take to the hills on foot. From a tourist point of view the district is well-known, and it is hardly necessary therefore to describe it in detail. Suffice it to say that certain of the hills, such as Helvellyn and Scawfell, rise to a height of over 3,000 feet, while many others are well above the 2,000 feet mark. Five packs of hounds, i.e., the Ullswater, Coniston, Blencathra, Eskdale and Ennerdale, and the Melbreak hunt the district, full particulars of which packs will be found in Baily's Hunting Directory.

The fells proper compose the chief hunting ground though each of the five packs has some low country, where a mounted man who knows his way about can often see something of the

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sport. It is, however, impossible to ride right up to hounds, so mounted followers who are unfamiliar with the by-roads and bridle tracks are naturally somewhat handicapped. Even in the low ground where in places there are many coverts a man on foot can see a good deal of sport, but to enjoy foot-hunting at its best one should follow hounds on the open fell. Fell hunting affords far more opportunities to the average follower of seeing hound work than he would experience in a riding country. Likewise it is often possible to watch the movements of a hunted fox for a considerable distance.

On the fells proper coverts are conspicuous by their absence and the foxes usually lie far up above the dales. For this reason the old-fashioned method of hunting is still employed, i.e., hounds quest for the drag of a fox which has come down from the hills during the night, and returned to his kennel before day break. Having struck the drag the pack work it out until they approach the spot where their fox is lying, and when he finally jumps up the real business of the day begins. The drag may of course be cold or hot, depending upon the length of time that has elapsed since the fox passed that way, and the condition of the atmosphere. If the fox has run his return journey rather fine hounds may strike his line whilst he is still on foot, and he will then be forced to put his best leg forward. If on the other hand he has been long gone, it may take hounds all their time to own the line, and progress will be slow. A stranger paying his initial visit to one or other of the fell packs will be well advised to follow the huntsman or stick to some local hunter until he gets to know the country and the possible run of the foxes.

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After his first season he should be able to get about by himself provided he has the bump of locality at all developed. The fell country consists of many deep valleys flanked by towering hills,



A FIND IN A CRAG.

and the foxes lie in the crags and rough ground near the heads of these valleys. When, therefore, a fox is unkennelled he usually makes his

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way out to the open fell top, from whence he may visit several other dales. Once a fox is on foot it is generally not long before hounds push him out of his home dale, and though he may return, the chances are that he will not. In order to keep in touch with the pack one must follow on guided by the distant music, or make for some point which may afford a view. On a good scenting day hounds travel at a tremendous pace, so that by the time you reach the fell top your only chance—if you cannot hear them—is to visit some likely earth where they may have run their fox to ground. Here is where local knowledge comes in handy, for unless you are familiar with all the earths or “borrans” you may entirely fail to locate hounds.

As a rule there are a fair number of local hunters scattered about the fells when hounds are out, some of whom are pretty sure to have seen or heard something of the flying pack. If you are with the huntsman and he espies a distant figure he will quite likely awaken the echoes with a stentorian shout of “What wa-a-y?” Anxiously you watch for the tiny figure across the dale to stop. It does so, and a faint cry comes back, “Whoaled!” which being interpreted means “gone to earth.” Round the fell head you then go and arrive at a well-known borran where hounds show plainly that their fox is below, and one or two locals who have arrived before you are discussing the situation. At other times you shout and get no reply, so have to plod on and trust to luck and your own initiative. If you know the country and the weather be tolerable, it often pays to start out early and make an easy ascent of the fell before the hounds leave the kennels. You can then pick a sheltered spot

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amongst the rocks commanding a good view and await events. If you carry field glasses you can watch everything that goes on below you, and if hounds find you are more than likely to get a good view of the fox. Then when the pack comes in sight running hard you can follow on and being already close to the fell top, you have a good start and should be able to keep in touch. Should the fox pass close by you keep quiet and don't move, for if hounds are on his line, and you jump up and halloa, you are sure to turn him and cause a check when the pack reaches the spot. Even on an occasion when a halloa at the right moment may do good, always let the fox get well past you first.

On most occasions it pays to climb out to the tops, because once up there you can generally command several dales without travelling very far. Sometimes the people who elect to stay below see more sport than those above, though as a rule the reverse is the case. There are places, however, where a main road runs along the foot of the fell from which one can often view practically the whole of the run. Such a place is the Thirlmere Valley, where a road borders both sides of the lake. An occasional day only, with a fell pack, is apt to prove rather hard work, for unless one is in something like "fettle" hill climbing soon tells a tale. If you hunt fairly regularly you soon get into trim, and the rough going presents no difficulties provided you are suitably shod. Boots should be stout and well nailed to prevent slipping, while the clothing should be fairly thick and warm, in order to resist the exigencies of the weather. As one never quite knows how long the day is going to be it pays to carry a substantial lunch,

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for the average man cannot travel very far or fast on an empty stomach. People, of course, vary in this respect, but a bite of something in the middle of the day does more good than going without until the return home. There is no pageantry about fell fox-hunting. The huntsman's coat alone lends a splash of colour to the scene, for the field are clad in a variety of mufti garments, from knickerbockers to fustians. It was the immortal Jorrocks who said, "I never see a man with a pipe in his mouth and a thick stick in his 'and without thinking there goes a chap well mounted for 'arriers." Had the sporting grocer ever visited the fells, however, he would have found that a pipe and a stick usually accompany the local fox-hunter when he sets out for the meet. The huntsman is assisted by a whipper-in who makes his way out to the fell top, taking with him a hound or two and some terriers. These hounds are usually some of the fastest members of the pack such as will "sharpen" a fox should the whipper-in get a chance to "lowse" them. If there be more than one fox afoot the pack may divide. In this case the whipper-in will follow one lot and the huntsman the other.

Most of the dalesmen, shepherds and quarrymen are keen hunters, and delight in a good fox chase. They are often of the greatest assistance to the huntsman, both during the course of a run and when hounds have put their fox to ground in some strong earth. In the Shires nine-tenths of the field "hunt to ride," and if you asked the average member to tell you the names of any hounds in the pack he could not do so. On the fells the reverse is the case, for people go out to hunt, and the locals know the names and idiosyncracies of every hound.

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In the old days when packs were trencher-fed, each man who walked a hound considered it his privilege to "man on" or "harden on" his own particular charge. Very often this led to some confusion as a favourite name was often given to more than one hound. For instance there might be half-a-dozen Rallys in the pack, and in order to distinguish them each one was known by its colour, such as White Rally, Black Rally, etc.

Though inevitable in these modern days, the passing of the trencher-fed hound is to be regretted. Under the new regime sport has certainly improved, for hounds are now much more evenly conditioned than was possible in their trencher-fed days. Still, want of uniformity in feeding and exercise does not make so much difference as some people imagine, while trencher-fed hounds were wonderfully free from ailments, and they remained as runners-up for many seasons. When farmers and tradesmen walked hounds all the year round—even if they themselves did not hunt—they took a keen interest in the pack, and had its honour and welfare at heart. The democratic interest in sport that existed in the old days was more or less lost when hounds were put in kennel, and the status of the Hunt increased. Hounds had been walked at certain farms from generation to generation, and the various families took a pride in their own particular charge. While we still have farmers' packs, and in many countries the farmers are still good men to hounds, the old interest has evidently dwindled since newcomers have taken to fox-hunting, a sport which at one time was peculiarly that of the agriculturalist.

In the Lake District much of the old interest remains, for although hounds are kennelled during

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the hunting season, they are sent out to their various walks in summer. Where packs are kennelled all the year round, unentered puppies only go out to walk. In this case the puppy walker may win a prize at the puppy show, but if he himself does not ride to hounds, he cannot take the same interest in his charge as he would if the hound was returned to him summer after summer.

In the old days after a kill with a trencher-fed pack a bit of fox skin was tied round the neck of any hound which was walked by a family not represented in the field. Sometimes a note was added giving brief particulars of the run. To-day if a fell hound gets away and kills a fox on his own, someone usually sends a wire to the kennels. On the return from hunting trencher-fed hounds dropped out one by one as each passed the point nearest to its home. The fell hounds, after a long run, occasionally return to their summer walks if the latter are nearer than the kennels.

In an ordinary enclosed country the earths are stopped—or at any rate are supposed to be stopped—within the area of the day's draw. In the fells it is impossible to do this owing to the nature of the ground, for a hunted fox can get in almost anywhere. There are many well-known borranas from which a fox can hardly ever be persuaded to bolt, and others in which it is unsafe for terriers to go. Although the earths are anything but few and far between on the fells, the Master of a Welsh hill pack whose country includes Snowdon, informed us, while having a few days with the fell hounds, that in his district the borranas were quite as big and that they lay much closer together. Certainly parts of Wales are tremendously rough, and although we have never hunted there we can quite imagine the

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character of its hill-country. Such well known strongholds as Birkfell Earth overlooking Ullswater Lake, High Holes Earth on Harter Fell, Dove Crag borran, and Broad Howe in Troutbeck, have harboured many a fox, and been the scenes of countless underground battles with the terriers. Certain quarry "rubbish heaps," such as that at Petts' Quarry on Red Screes, Applethwaite Quarry, and Park Quarry are difficult and dangerous places to work, often more so than a natural earth, as directly the stuff is at all undermined the overhanging material is liable to slip and rush in at any moment.

If an earth is not altogether impregnable and the fox is not too hard run, he may elect to bolt directly the terriers bring pressure to bear. At another time he may pick his position, generally on a ledge, and give battle to the terriers which are forced to meet him face to face. Sometimes he will creep into a crevice or "clink" where the terriers cannot get at him, and if the rock is solid, no amount of work with hammer and bar makes any impression on his stronghold, and the workers are fain to acknowledge themselves beaten. Occasionally, however, if a fox in a crevice is beyond reach, he will come out of his own accord if hounds are taken some distance away, and everybody keeps perfectly quiet. Sometimes, too, but not often, he will get "out of that" if a boulder is sent crashing down across the earth. It is not always the biggest earths which give the most trouble when a fox gets to ground. All the well-known strongholds have been worked time and again, but a fox may elect to creep into what on the surface appears a simple spot, but on close investigation proves practically impregnable. It is seldom possible to unearth a fox without the aid of tools, and as a rule it

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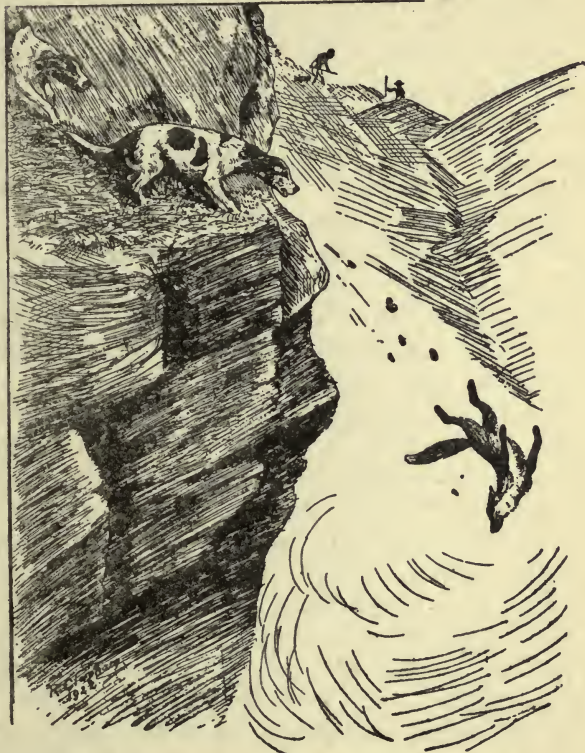
means a long walk for somebody before the implements can be requisitioned. Most of us who follow the fell packs have at some time or other volunteered to go for tools, but once you have "had some" you don't exactly relish the idea of repeating the performance. It is an easy enough business jogging down a couple of thousand feet to the nearest farmhouse, armed with nothing but a walking stick, but quite another matter climbing back again with a heavy bar, cowrake, and hammer over your shoulder. Usually someone who has remained at the earth will come to meet you and relieve you of part of your load, though you cannot always reckon on such good nature. It may happen that whilst you are away for tools the fox will elect to bolt and you have had your journey for nothing. On one occasion we went to the nearest farmhouse, luckily not far off, and on our return we were informed that the fox had taken its departure. How it happened was as follows: The pack had divided, one half running a fox to ground, and while the huntsman and some of the field were waiting for tools, the other half of the pack ran their fox close past the earth, and the hounds round the borran joined in the chase. In the excitement the holed fox was temporarily forgotten, until someone happened to see it making off. The hounds had all gone so the fox had a clear field of escape.

If a fox refuses to bolt he generally pays the penalty underground. It may then require much strenuous work ere the carcase is brought to light. If it can be seen but not reached in the ordinary way, a "clickhook" on the end of a stick will generally enable it to be dragged out. Should the carcase be far in, the workers may have to tunnel for a considerable distance. In

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doing so they often run a good deal of risk, particularly the leader, who may be quite out of sight. When working underground a candle or flash lamp comes in handy.

Occasionally in a big earth the terriers may fail to return, despite strenuous efforts on the



WHAT SOMETIMES HAPPENS ON THE FELLS.

part of willing workers to release them. Generally, however, they are safely rescued, though it may take several days of hard work. When forced into the low ground a fox may go to earth in a drain or a rabbit hole, but the majority of

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hill foxes seek refuge in the rocky borrens which so plentifully bestrew the fell slopes. Just as the terriers run risks underground, so do the hounds often face danger on the crags. Many of the latter such as Dove Crag, Dow Crag, Greenhow End, etc., are desperate looking places, where a slip means death on the rocks far below. When we consider the rocky nature of the fell country, it is surprising how few really serious accidents happen to the hounds in the fell packs.

The fells may be said to carry a good scent during the regular hunting season, but in April and May it is necessary to meet early in the morning before the sun has dispelled the dew. All the fell packs continue to hunt until the middle of May in order to put an end to any foxes which are responsible for lamb-worrying. Never a season passes without certain foxes becoming notorious in this respect.

As may be imagined the exigencies of the weather on the fells have a considerable influence on sport. In April, for instance, while the dale are bathed in warmth and sunshine the high tops may still be in the grip of winter. The weather has to be pretty severe before it stops hunting, but when the snow-filled gullies become frozen and the crags are sheathed in ice, it is time to have a turn in the low country where conditions are less Arctic. In soft snow hounds are often able to run well, and owing to their length of leg they have their fox somewhat at a disadvantage. The average tourist visits the fells in summer, but there are days in winter when the views are equally pleasing, and the air more bracing. Wind and rain can be very trying on the fells at times, particularly in combination. Getting wet is nothing to anyone accustomed to an out-door life,

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but when the wind is powerful enough to knock you over like a ninepin and you have to lie or fall down and hang on by your eyelids, it becomes rather too much of a good thing. Nor is this an exaggeration, for on many occasions we have been obliged to lie down to avoid being blown over the edge of the fell. The gale stops your breath, and whips you about anyhow, so that it is the greatest relief to reach the shelter of a wall or pile of boulders.

If in summer you follow a wall such as that which leads across the top of the High Street range you will find for a distance of a hundred yards on each side of it pieces of stone which have been blown about during the winter gales. Many of these stones are quite sizeable and give an idea of the power of the wind which carried them. When you are hunting on a windy day you will probably hear people say that the fox will not face the gale on the top. Don't you believe them, however, for if a fox makes up his mind to reach a certain spot no wind which blows in this country is going to stop him. A wind which will lay a human being flat has little or no effect on a fox, because the latter stands only a few inches above ground and thus offers a small surface for the wind to act on. Wind, in addition to making travelling difficult, obliterates all sound of hounds, and if anything tends to make a man use worse language than a gale on the tops we have yet to hear it. Although wind is bad enough mist is even worse, for when enveloped by it you cannot see more than a few yards in front. Still we have often thought that a quiet misty day is less trying than a clear day with a gale blowing. You can't see far with your eyes watering, and you can hear nothing for the shriek of the blast, so you

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are quite as badly off as when the mist swirls round you.

Mist can at times behave in a most vexatious manner. We have, for instance, been on Fairfield when both it and the head of Deepdale were black with mist, whirling and twisting like the steam from a boiling pot, while St. Sunday Crag and all the country beyond, including Helvellyn, were bathed in clear summer sunshine. The most annoying part of the business was that hounds persistently remained in the mist, and it was ages before it lifted and allowed us to locate them. At another time we crossed Fairfield in bright sunshine, only to be enveloped in mist when we climbed Dollywaggon Pike. Such are the vagaries of mist on the high tops in Lakeland. Although the hill foxes chiefly lie in the crags and rough ground far up the fell side, there are places where they resort to coverts as well as to the large patches of juniper, known locally as savins. The larch woods bordering Thirlmere Lake hold foxes and so do such coverts as Lowwood in Hartsop, while the savins in Caiston are a fairly sure find. The visitor who wishes to see a brace or two of foxes killed without walking himself to death, will be advised to arrive on the scene in October. There are then a fair number of well-grown cubs knocking about, which do not run very far but yet provide a lot of sport, most of which can be seen without leaving the low ground. A day in October with the Ullswater about Hartsop will afford the visitor plenty of entertainment.

After a kill with the fell hounds, which do not break up their foxes, the carcase is usually slung on a stick and carried to the nearest inn. It is then transferred from the stick to a

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crook in the ceiling of the bar-parlour, and sufficient ale is ordered to alleviate the thirst of those who have taken part in the day's hunt. As the jugs circulate the run is discussed from varying points of view, until someone remarks: "Now then, So-and-so, what about a song?" The person alluded to probably deprecates his ability in that direction, but is at last persuaded, and the house echoes to the chorus of some well-known hunting ditty. In olden times drink played a prominent part in these northern hunts, for potations were deep and a convivial gathering not infrequently extended over a couple of days. Fell hunting certainly engenders a considerable thirst, but a modern sing-song after a kill is brought to an earlier conclusion than was the custom in John Peel's time.

In local parlance such a gathering is known as a "harvel," the word being derived from the "arvel-bread" or death loaves which in the old days were distributed at funerals, to be taken home and eaten by those who were unable to attend.

The average meet of a fell pack may perhaps attract a score of people, but not all of them will finish the day. On holidays and festive occasions, however, a field of two or three hundred is not unusual. A Boxing Day meet is always well attended, and at an annual gathering like the Shepherds' Meet in Mardale, the fell is often "fair black wi' folk." Too many people are apt to interfere with sport, and many of the best runs come off when there is only a small field out. On big days there is sure to be a lot of unnecessary noise, for everybody seems to be seized with an irresistible impulse to halloa as soon as ever they

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catch sight of the fox. The average fox by no means appreciates such attentions, nor is the huntsman too well pleased when his hounds are interfered with. If a man has a sound constitution to begin with, and follows the fell packs regularly, he is likely to live to a good old age, for fresh mountain air and plenty of exercise are the best antidotes for "evil humours." In that quaint old book "The Master of Game" it says "Yet I will prove to you how hunters live longer than any other men, for as Hippocras the doctor telleth a full repletion of meat slayeth more men than any sword or knife. They eat and drink less than any other men of this world, for in the morning of the assembly they eat a little, and if they eat well at supper they will by the morning have corrected their nature for then they have eaten but little, and their nature will not be prevented from doing her digestion, whereby no wicked humours or superfluities may be engendered. And always when a man is sick, men diet him and give him to drink water made of sugar and tysane and of such things for two or three days to put down evil humours and his superfluities, and also make him void. But for a hunter one need not do so, for he may have no repletion on account of the little meat, and by the travail that he hath. And, supposing that which cannot be, and that he were full of wicked humours, yet men know well that the best way to terminate sickness that can be is to sweat. And when the hunters do their office on horseback or on foot, they sweat often, then if they have any evil in them it must away in the sweating; so that he keep from cold after the heat. Therefore it seemeth to me I have proved enough. Leeches ordain for a sick man little





A KILL WITH THE ULLSWATER IN GRISEDALE.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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meat, and sweating for the terminating and healing of all things. And since hunters eat little and sweat always, they should live long and in health, and in joy, and after death the health of the soul. And hunters have all these things. Therefore be ye all hunters and ye shall do as wise men. Wherefore I counsel to all manner of folk of what estate or condition that they be, that they love hounds and hunting and the pleasure of hunting beasts of one kind or another, or hawking. For to be idle and to have no pleasure in either hounds or hawks is no good token. For as saith in his book Phœbus, the Earle of Foix, that noble hunter, he saw never a good man that had not pleasure in some of these things, were he ever so great and rich."

We can look back—and no doubt many other fell hunters can do likewise—to occasions when we have "eaten little and sweat often" as we toiled across the hills in the wake of the hounds. There is nothing like it for keeping a man in "fettle," yet in these degenerate days half the young fellows we meet vote fell hunting too hard work. In 1406, when "The Master of Game" was written, foxes were looked upon as vermin, just as they were until a much later date. In the chapter on the fox and his nature, it says, "Men take them with hounds, with greyhounds, with hayes and with purse nets, but he cutteth them with his teeth, as the male of the wolf doth but not so soon (quickly)."

Where much rabbit-snaring goes on foxes occasionally get caught in a wire, and go off with the latter drawn tight on a leg. Subsequently the circulation of the limb ceases and mortification sets in, thus there is another "three-legger" to fall an easy victim next time hounds visit the locality.

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Considering the large number of earths available to a hunted fox, one might imagine that the majority of runs would be short. Such, however, is not the case, and it is to the credit of the hill foxes that they often provide long runs, and in a good percentage of cases are fairly rolled over in the open. The longest runs are apt to come off in January and February, when dog foxes are travelling. Once hounds get on to him, one of these customers will make a bee-line back to his own country, and followers will have to exert themselves to be in at the death. In spring, too, a fox may travel a long way in order to worry lambs, often preferring to commit such depredations out of his own country, with the result that the local foxes get blamed for his misdeeds.

When talking of fell hunting John Peel's name naturally crops up, although that famous Cumbrian Master and Huntsman did not hunt the fells proper, but the country adjoining, in the territory now covered by the Cumberland hunt. John Peel was a plain Cumberland yeoman, who hunted hounds at his own expense for half a century. Seeing that his income was less than four hundred pounds per annum, his establishment must have been managed on a very primitive scale, yet for all that he showed good sport, and his hounds must have been of the right sort in order to kill the stout hill foxes. Although of course famous in his own country Peel was little known beyond it until the song "D' ye ken John Peel," became popular. Peel died in 1854, and the spirited verses had little vogue until after that date. A quarter of a century after John Peel was finally "run to earth" in Caldbeck Churchyard, another famous Cumbrian was beginning

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to make history in the Ullswater country. In 1879 Joe Bowman became huntsman of that well-known fell-pack, and he has carried the horn with one short interval until the present. Like Peel he is the subject of a song, "Joe Bowman," while he is well-known to a large number of hunting people far beyond the confines of his own country. It is not given to every huntsman to be as good in the kennel as he is in the field, but we can safely say without being accused of undue flattery, that Joe's knowledge of kennel lore is quite equal to his ability when he is carrying the horn. No man without keenness and a real love of hounds and hunting is going to last long as a huntsman on the fells, so that it is easy to see that Bowman has been the right man in the right place, otherwise he would not have stuck it for over forty years.

A fell huntsman's life is no bed of roses, for he has to face long days in all weathers, and when the members of his field are perhaps safely at home, having got there by car or cycle, he has to trudge back to kennels on foot, and his hounds have to be fed before he himself can sit down to a well-earned meal. His emolument is not altogether in proportion to the amount of work he has to do, but his own keenness and love of hunting make up to him for that. In summer the huntsman often turns his hand to shepherding and thus keeps himself "fit" for another season. As hunting lasts from October to the middle of May there is only a brief interval of four months and a half. In August there is the annual Hound Show which brings together a representative gathering of hunting folk, so that the time soon slips by, and before you know where you are horn and hounds are again awakening the echoes on the fells.

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A few couple of fell hounds generally find their way to one or other of the adjoining Otter Hunts during the summer months. Many of our fell hounds are quite as useful for the chase of the "sly, goose-footed prowler" as they are for hunting fox, and so certain of them are eagerly sought after by Masters of Otter Hounds who know their value. A fell hound can own a drag and swim an otter with the best of the rough otter hounds, and though he may not throw his tongue in quite so deep and sonorous a manner as the true otter hound he suffers less from the effects of the long immersion in water, and kills his otter more quickly than his rough-coated cousin. Rough otter hounds most certainly provide a "band of music," but you want something more than noise to kill an otter. The rough sort are always inclined to "babble" and dwell on scent, whereas the foxhounds push on, and as you have to find your otter before you can hunt him, the sooner your hounds come to a solid mark or put him down the better. In the old days when Bobby Troughton hunted his famous pack it was customary to get away early in the morning, so as to be sure of striking a warm drag. Although the scent of an otter lies for a long time in damp, shady places, it will, like the scent of the fox, disappear under the drying influence of the sun. The man who makes an early start will find his otter more quickly than he who meets at nine or ten o'clock, and he will kill more otters, and show better sport. People tell you that as many otters are killed nowadays as when it was the custom to meet early, but there are many more otter hound packs than there used to be. Time and again have we heard hounds speak to an occasional touch here and there, and

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the drag has ended without finding, whereas had hounds been out three or four hours earlier a good hunt would probably have resulted. *Autre temps, autre mœurs*, however, and nowadays people seem to go in more for the social part of otter hunting than for the sport itself.

Talking of early morning meets the fell packs are often out at day-break in May. Perhaps the pack is kennelled over night at some outlying farmhouse, where a fox or foxes have been interfering with the lambs. At peep o' day the shepherd takes a walk round the sheep and catches sight of a shadowy figure moving off in the half light. He knows a fox when he sees it, and so at once breaks the stillness of the early morning with a shrill view halloa. Up at the farm the signal is heard and the huntsman promptly throws open the door of the hounds' temporary kennel. Out they surge and fly across the dew-laden grass in the direction of the sound, the meaning of which they know so well. Down go their noses, a hound speaks, then another, and with a crash of music they are away with a screaming scent, rattling along in the wake of their fox. If the latter has fed not wisely but too well he will be unable to stand the steady pressure of the pursuit, and after trying all he knows to gain a lead, will seek refuge underground. He will gain short respite there, however, for a lamb worrier is a criminal, and he will have to get "out of that" or die in the midst of a subterranean *melee*. If the subsequent unearthing operations offer no difficulties, hounds may be back at kennels before most folk are out of their beds, though on some occasions the best part of the day may pass before the carcass of the "thief o' the world" is brought to light.

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There is a charm about these early morning hunts that the "lie abeds" know nothing of. As you leave home the air is still and cool, and the dew lies heavily upon the grass. The birds are singing as if they would burst their throats, and there are rabbits hopping about where you would never dream of seeing them later in the day. Everything has a feeling of freshness, and the clean scent of the earth seems to permeate the air. Feeble as are our own olfactory organs as compared with those of a hound, an early morning walk will convince anybody that the various scents of a countryside are more apparent before the sun rises than after. It must be obvious, therefore, than an early morning meet is an advantage to hounds, and must result in a quicker find, and better sport. The work is less tiring, too, to both men and hounds, for after sunrise the air becomes close and hot, and although as "The Master of Game" tells us, "hunters eat little and sweat always," perspiring up a steep fell breast on a warm spring morning is not exactly an enticing job. Any animal passing through the dew soaked grass in the fields leaves a plain trail behind it, and we have more than once seen the broad furrow made by an otter in the long grass, showing where *Lutra* had cut across a bend of the river. When you see this hounds can run the drag like smoke, and yet folks tell you that there is no advantage to be gained by foregoing the late "love and lunch" business and substituting for it an early meet.

Turning to the more sordid side of fell-hunting, i.e., the expense, which in these days of strikes and heavy taxation has to be considered by everyone who is not a profiteer, a man who is content to turn out on foot, and who really loves hounds

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and hound work, can hunt more cheaply in Lakeland than in any other country with which we are acquainted. The Hunt expenses are a drop in the ocean as compared with the huge sums expended in the fashionable Hunts, and subscriptions are within the reach of the poor man's pocket. There are many worse hunting countries than Lakeland despite its rugged nature, for the foxes are wild, the hounds adapted to their work, and the sport has no taint of artificiality about it. Nor is sport interfered with by railways, motors, or unmanageable crowds, such as greet the eye in a fashionable country. The country is little different to-day to what it was in John Peel's time, and from a fox-hunting point of view, long may it remain so.

HARRIERS AND FOX-HUNTING

CHAPTER XVII

IN the North, and the West country, the local harrier packs often have a turn up with a fox. Such well known packs as the Cotley, and the Axe Vale, can hunt and kill fox quite as well as foxhounds. The same could be said for the Windermere harriers, a pack of 18 inch hounds, which have now unfortunately been given up. Harriers of the old-fashioned type are descended from a long line of keen-nosed ancestors, whose hunting ability and cry are undeniable. They draw thick covert more closely than foxhounds, and are first rate on a cold line. Whilst 18 in. harriers are not perhaps as fast as foxhounds, they are quite speedy enough in rough country where it is not always possible to ride right up to hounds. Those judges who advocate hounds of 24 in. and over for fox-hunting would, we imagine, show some surprise if they had a few days with some of the harrier packs which hunt fox.

On the Lakeland mountains we have often seen harriers hunting fox, both as a pack and in conjunction with fox-hounds. In the latter case the harriers were always there or thereabouts when Reynard was rolled over or put to ground, despite the fact that some of them were a good deal smaller than the foxhounds. Some years ago, we whipped-in for a good many seasons to the Pen-y-ghent Beagles, a pack of 15 in. hounds

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which hunted a grass and stone-wall country in the West Riding of Yorkshire. These little hounds were wonderfully fast, and accounted for some thirty or more hares per season. Foxes were then very scarce in the district, and though we were always hoping to find one in order to see how the pack would perform, we only once hit off Reynard's line. Hounds settled to it at once, but after running some distance a hare jumped up, and the pack turned their attention to their legitimate quarry. This brief experience of hunting fox with beagles did not of course afford much of an object lesson, and unfortunately since then we have had no further opportunity of repeating the experiment. It was with great interest therefore that we read an article by Mr. George A. Fothergill, in Baily's Magazine for April, 1921, on "Fox-hunting with Beagles—at Aldershot." We always cherished the idea that a pack of 15 in. beagles could hunt and kill a fox if given a fair chance to do so, and Mr. Fothergill's article proves that this assumption was correct. The account of the work done by the Aldershot Command Beagles is so interesting, that we take the liberty of quoting from it. It was during the season of 1916-17 that these beagles started hunting fox one day a week, in order to provide sport for slightly disabled officers, and also because foxes were numerous and hares scarce. Hounds had previously killed a fox in 1899, when they ran a four and a half mile point. Again in February, 1913, they ran into a fox after a fast thirty-five minutes. In the season of 1918-19, they accounted for 4½ brace of foxes before the end of December, and though some if not all of these foxes may have been young, it was a capital performance nevertheless.

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So keen were the hounds that they would not look at a hare if one jumped up in view when they were hunting fox. On two occasions they got on the line of a roe-deer, and Mr. Fothergill says, "I can assure the reader that they didn't let the grass grow under their feet." In the thirty-three seasons that their huntsman, Eli Cranston, has been with them, these beagles have killed $11\frac{1}{2}$ brace of foxes. The height of the pack is dogs $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches, bitches 15 inches. When fox-hunting, 10 couples of hounds were taken out, and about 14 couples for hare hunting. Seeing that 15 inch beagles can kill a fox, it is not surprising that 18 inch harriers give a good account of themselves. A pack of hounds of from 18 in. to 21 in. can kill foxes handsomely in any sort of country, which makes us wonder whether there is any real advantage in breeding foxhounds of 24 in. and over, such as we see exhibited at Peterborough? Beagles are at first a bit doubtful about killing an old fox when they run up to him, but once they have rolled a fox over there is no further difficulty on that score.

The Cotley Harriers are descendants of the old English Staghouuds which were used for hunting deer in the West. These staghouuds, it is said, were sold to go to France, and when the famous parson, Jack Russell, heard about it he followed them across the Channel, where he was able to secure a dog and two bitches which he brought back with him. It was from this nucleus that the present Cotley Harriers were bred.

Comparatively few people have had experience of hunting with Kerry Beagles, so it may interest the reader to hear something about the breed, which is equally good in the chase of deer, fox, or hare. The typical Kerry, is a tall, light-

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boned, black and tan hound, showing the long ear and the high occipital, but without the deep flews or wrinkling of the skin on the forehead, so noticeable in the blood-hound. He is hare-footed, well let down, extremely fast, and a beautiful fencer. His staunchness, dash, and drive are undeniable, and unlike the blood-hound he is fearless and does not sulk under correction. He has a wonderful nose, and the most glorious voice, in fact a pack of Kerries in full cry is a veritable "band o' music." Independent and persevering, he will hunt entirely unaided in rough country where his huntsman cannot always ride up to him. He is a good feeder, and thrives on the coarsest food, nor is he prone to suffer from complaints, for his constitution is sound.

The above may perhaps sound rather a high-flown eulogy, but we can assure the reader that a pack of pure-bred Kerry Beagles will provide more real sport than any foxhound pack in this country, barring perhaps those hounds which hunt the mountains in the Lake District. The Kerry is probably descended from the old Talbot tan, and he is not unlike certain black and tan hounds belonging to the fell packs which are certainly the descendants of that ancient stock.

The origin of the breed is, however, uncertain, though there are several traditions concerning it, one of which is as follows. It is said that when the galleons of the Spanish Armada set out on their ill-fated expedition towards British soil, they carried on board a number of sporting dogs which the Dons hoped to make use of, once they had gained a foothold in this country. As everyone knows, the Spanish fleet came to grief in a terrific storm, and some of the ships ran ashore off the Irish coast. Amongst the wreckage some

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of the dogs found their way to land, and from them in a direct line have descended the Kerry Beagles of the present day.

In 1906, Lord Ribblesdale and Mr. Peter Ormrod founded the Ribblesdale Buck-hounds, to hunt wild fallow and sika deer in the Ribble valley and moorland country adjoining. Mr. Ormrod was a great believer in the Kerry beagle, so he set about forming a pack of hounds of that breed.

At that time there were two packs of Kerries in existence, one of which belonged to Mr. Ryan, of Scarteen, county Limerick, the other being the property of Mr. A. Wallis, of Drishane Castle, Millstreet. The latter pack had been bred entirely from Scarteen hounds, which had been in the Ryan family since 1735. Mr. Ormrod purchased the pack from Mr. Wallis, and by degrees augmented it. These hounds showed wonderful sport in the Ribblesdale country, and in memory we can still hear their glorious cry as they raced over the fields in pursuit of their deer. Later, Mr. Ormrod introduced Belvoir blood, in order to increase bone, his method of mating being to put a Kerry bitch to a fox-hound stallion, and from the litter a bitch was mated with a stallion out of a litter by a fox-hound dam and a Kerry sire.

Kerry Beagles were used in Ireland for hunting fox, hare, and deer, and in England the Ribblesdale Buck-hounds showed what the Kerries could do with fallow and sika buck. The Ribblesdale are now disbanded, but there are still a number of wild deer in the country. In 1913, Mr. A. Wallis took his pack of Kerry Beagles from the Four Burrow country to the Woodland Pytchley, where he showed capital sport for several seasons.

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The black and tan hounds, whether of the Kerry or fell type, possess great hunting qualities, and remarkable stamina and constitution. Their dark colour is slightly against them in a rough, moorland country, for they are rather bad to see, but their grand cry makes up for this, as it advertises their whereabouts from a great distance. There is nothing like the old strains for nose, tongue, and all-round hunting ability, despite the fact that they stand no chance in competition at the shows. When all is said and done, hounds are ostensibly bred for work and not to look at, yet there is as much beauty about a well made Kerry Beagle as there is to be found in the modern foxhound with his abnormal feet, and out-at-elbows appearance, to say nothing of the absurd knuckling over at the knee.

THE TRAIL HOUND

CHAPTER XVIII

THE trail hound is a product of the North Country, whose ancestry dates back to the time of the old Trail Hounds, which were originally bred from the earliest existing type of fox-hound. He is bred and trained specially for racing, and is a light-boned hound of the fell type. His business is to run a drag in competition with other hounds, and the sport is known as hound trailing. His master is usually a working man, for comparatively few of the sporting "gentry" go in for keeping trail hounds.

Hound trailing, or hound racing, is a summer sport, which helps to tide over the time between one fox-hunting season and another. Hound trails are held at most of the local shows and sports meetings, and it being then the "season" in the Lakes, tourists and visitors are more familiar with this branch of sport than they are with winter fox-hunting.

While the majority of trail hounds are bred with the object of producing a real "flier" on the drag, occasionally one or more of a litter refuse to run it, and may find their way to the fox-hound kennels. Every owner lives in the hope of breeding a prospective champion like the late "Wyndham," a hound famous in the annals of Lakeland sport. A trail hound is nothing more than a well put together fox-hound of the fell type, light of bone, with hare feet, and well let





"MOUNTAIN," CHAMPION TRAIL HOUND OF 1921, WITH HIS OWNER,
MR. JOSEPH KITCHIN.
(Photo by R. Clapham). [To face p. 211]

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down and strongly muscled behind. As he is used solely for racing, he should possess plenty of stamina and courage, and as much pace as possible. His nose is not called upon to any very great extent, for the drag, consisting of aniseed, turpentine, and paraffin is strong, and generally lies breast high so that hounds can run with heads up, and sterns down.

The speed at which trail hounds run is remarkable, when one considers the rough country and the steep gradients over which the average trail is laid. Hounds have been timed to do $15\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, on a course which rose to 1,250 feet in the first mile and a half, after which came a steep descent, and then another rise of 400 feet, followed by the long run downhill to the winning point. A fox-hound bitch drafted from a Midland pack as being too fast, could not come within three minutes of the trail hounds over a distance of six and a half miles.

Except for puppies, no trail shall be less than eight miles, the trail being laid as near as can be estimated of half an hour. Should the trail be under 25 minutes or over 40 minutes, the prize money may be withheld according to the decision of the Committee. The sport is held under the auspices of the "Hound Trailing Association." All hounds are registered in the books of the Association, while the men who lay the trails are licensed annually by the Committee. Where practicable, all trails are required to have a straight run in of not less than a quarter of a mile for the finish. All sorts of out-crosses have been tried in an attempt to improve trail hounds. Pointer blood was at one time resorted to, in order to make hounds carry their heads higher. Greyhound, blood-hound, and even Russian re-

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triever has been used, the latter however proving a rather expensive failure, as the hounds so crossed exhibited a decided penchant for mutton on the hoof. This fault is of course fatal in a district where Herdwicks swarm all over the open fells. As a trail hound does not do his three days per week like the fox-hounds, his owner has therefore to keep him in condition for race running. His condition depends on the amount of time his trainer can devote to the business. Proper feeding, plus practice trails and road-work keep him right inside, open his pipes, and harden his feet.

Owners and trainers have their own pet methods of getting hounds fit, some of which are rather carried to extremes. It is seldom one sees a trail hound with a really good coat, many of them having the appearance of being hide-bound. This is to some extent the result of clipping hounds, under the fond impression that by so doing they will run faster. As a hound sweats chiefly through his tongue, and the hair cut off weighs practically nothing, clipping simply has the result of ruining the hound's appearance, for a coat once clipped, and often very badly clipped at that, never grows to its original perfection again. Condition does not mean a tight skin and a skeleton appearance, as some folk seem to imagine. More than one Waterloo Cup winner—to turn for a moment to coursing—has been fed on “'taters and buttermilk,” and a well known trainer who adopted this diet said that when a dog was fit, he should feel as if he could turn himself inside out when you picked up a handful of loose skin. Common sense applied to the feeding and training will get any hound fit to run for his life, and the harder and less pampered his surroundings, the better he will be. Depriving a hound of his

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natural body covering by clipping exposes him to wet and cold, and necessitates his wearing a rug when standing about during inclement weather at a meeting. Stimulant in various forms is sometimes administered to trail hounds just prior to the start of a race, but it is a practice that should be severely condemned, as if persisted in it utterly ruins a hound's constitution. If a man cannot get a hound fit by means of common sense training, he had better turn his attention to some other job.

A trail is laid in a wide circle of from eight to ten miles, two men going out to the farthest point, where one turns right and the other left. Each drags behind him a bunch of material soaked in the ingredients constituting the drag. The state and direction of the course depends on these trailers. They can for instance cross scree-beds or very rough ground, or make the going easier by avoiding such places. By choosing rough ground the trailer makes his own job harder, and lays the hounds open to injury in the race. Again, it is useless to lay the trail at a turn, in a circle of small radius, for hounds will shoot straight across, the scent of the drag being strong. A hound that cuts corners is liable to gain a lot of ground in this way during the run.

Just prior to the arrival of the trailer at the starting point, the canine competitors are lined up, and on the signal being given they are slipped. The start is generally in the bottom of a dale, from whence the hounds can be viewed over a greater portion of the mountain course. For the last few miles they may be out of sight, and excitement waxes high amongst the spectators as to which hound will be the first to appear. The finish is generally at a wall or a fence, the first

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hound to drop into the field on the near side being declared the winner. The trainers stand together, and as soon as the hounds appear in view, they set up a chorus of shrill whistles and halloas. A hound trained to such sounds will come straight in, in an "all-out" finish. This practice of whistling and shouting is an objectionable one, but it occurs at most meetings. Far better is it to let hounds run the trail fairly to a finish, and keep quiet. Hounds give more or less tongue on the trail, and the trainers can of course recognise the voices of individual competitors.

At one time hounds were often trained over the actual course before a meeting. The trailer would pick up the drag at some unseen spot, and travel some distance before he put it down again. On the day of the trail, the local hounds, wise to the trick, would shoot straight ahead, leaving the visiting competitors searching for the lost line.

There are usually several judges at the finishing point, as the race is often very closely contested. The prize-money and trophies are found by entrance fees and subscriptions. Prior to coming under a recognised association, hound trailing was in none too good repute, for it attracted the undesirable element at meetings. A lot of money changes hands at the various hound trails, for betting is really the chief incentive on the part of many people. This at times lends to malpractices, no matter how careful the supervision. From a purely sporting and spectacular point of view, a hound trail is an exceedingly interesting sight. Being a summer sport, the weather is generally fine, while the surroundings at many of the Lakeland meetings are extremely picturesque. Last year (1921),



THE START OF A TRAIL AT AMBLESIDE.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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an innovation in the shape of a straight-away trail was run from the head of Thirlmere to Rydal Park. As the trail was in full view from the road over Dunmail Raise and through Grasmere village, the highway was thronged with cars and motorcycles, carrying crowds of enthusiastic spectators. Lord Lonsdale is a patron of both hound-trailing and fell fox-hunting, one of the principal meetings being held at Lowther. Lord Lonsdale is always the central figure at the Patterdale gathering, where he judges the young entry of the Ullswater Hunt, and officiates as starter and judge of the hound trail. The other chief hound trail fixtures are held at Grisedale Hall, Mr. Harold Brocklebank's place near Hawkshead-in Furness, and at Grasmere sports.