

KENNEL TERRIERS

CHAPTER XIX

IN the old days, and even until comparatively recent times, the professional earth-stopper was a regular member of the Hunt staff. Most hunting people are familiar with the picture by W. Cooper, depicting an old-time earth-stopper, seated on his pony, with his spade, pick, and lantern over his shoulder, and two varminty-looking terriers trotting alongside. As the earth-stopper's duties were mainly carried out at night during the winter months, he was often supplied with—in addition to his tools—a drop of gin to keep the cold out.

When each Hunt had its professional earth-stopper, the work was properly done and very few foxes got to ground. Such a man took his business seriously, and familiarised himself with all the earths and possible hiding places for foxes in his country. To-day the work is relegated to the keepers, and though many of them do their best doubtless to stop the earths carefully, the business is often slurred over and a good many foxes consequently get to ground. In addition to the regular earths there are many drains which afford refuge for foxes, and sooner or later the time comes when a terrier is requisitioned to eject Reynard from his underground retreat. A couple or two of good working terriers are worth their weight in gold to the

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huntsman, particularly in the wilder provincial countries.

Most Hunts have their own kennel terriers, which are led in the field by the terrier-man or the Hunt runner or are carried in a bag slung on



THE HUNT RUNNER.

the back of a mounted man. These kennel terriers are of course tried and trusted performers, any other sort being useless to a huntsman. There are plenty of terriers to be picked up throughout the country, but real good workers

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are by no means easy to get hold of. People who breed terriers solely for work are not very keen on parting with them, while the majority of the highly advertised show dogs are absolutely worthless for underground work. The latter are generally far too big to follow a fox into a narrow passage or crevice in the rock and having been bred for show like their parents before them, they have lost the inherited instinct for work. There are of course exceptions here and there, but taking the show type as a whole, they make no appeal to the man who wants something that will bolt a fox or otter, or lie up to a badger.

The prospective purchaser of a working terrier will be well advised to beware of high flown advertisements extolling the many supposed virtues of other people's dogs. Before buying, always see the terrier or terriers at work first, then you can judge for yourself of their actual capabilities under ground. People have very different ideas as to the qualifications of a working terrier. If a dog barely gets out of sight in an earth and barks, some owners seem to think he is a "worker," and no end of such useless brutes get palmed off on the unsuspecting public.

The make and shape of a terrier have everything to do with the dog being able to perform his work properly. His conformation may vary a good deal, particularly as regards length of leg and width of chest, so that type varies with the nature of the surroundings in which the work is done. For instance, a small, short-legged terrier can easily run a drain or an average earth, but put him in a big rock earth, where there are high ledges underground, and he will be severely handicapped when attempting to go up to his fox, which in-





A LAKELAND WORKING TERRIER.
One of the "Patterdale" Breed.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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variably holds the upper position. Again, ask such a terrier to follow the huntsman of a fell pack over twenty or thirty miles of rough going on the mountains, and the dog will be beat before the end of the day, particularly if there is much snow on the ground. Such a terrier may be quite useful where he is carried on horseback, and so reaches his destination in a fresh condition, but for all round work a terrier is better for a bit of leg as long as he is fairly narrow. The Sealyham terriers nowadays so much advertised, are too short-legged and broad-chested to properly negotiate rock crevices or surmount ledges underground. They are game enough where they can get, such as in badger earths, but for general purposes they are wrongly built. We do not wish for a moment to disparage the courage of Sealyhams or small terriers in general, for many of them are undeniable workers, but in many situations their build prevents them doing their best work. A biggish made terrier is at times very useful, for he can force a fox to bolt or take punishment without getting too much mauled in return, but it is seldom that such a dog can reach a fox in the average earth, owing to his size. What is wanted is an all round type, capable of doing good work under a variety of conditions. If we were asked to give a specification of such a terrier it would be as follows : Weight, 15lb. to 16lb.; coat, thick and wet-resisting ; chest, narrow, but not so much so as to impede the free action of heart and lungs, legs sufficiently long to enable the dog to travel above ground with ease to himself ; teeth level, and jaw powerful but not too long ; ears, small and dropped close to the head, so that they are less likely to be torn by foxes. Breed, preferably

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with a dash of Bedlington blood, courage and gameness of course undeniable. It doesn't matter a jot really what breed a terrier is, so long as he is dead game and will go up to his fox whenever or wherever he is sent in. In the case of a badger, the terrier's job is to lie up close to Mr. Brock, and throw his tongue steadily so that the workers know in which direction to dig. The dog that goes in recklessly to a badger generally learns a severe lesson, and may be lucky to escape with his life. The same thing may happen in a rock earth in the case of a small terrier attempting to reach a fox on a ledge. Every time the dog tries to climb up, the fox chops down on him, and in the end the terrier gets unmercifully punished.

Again, too, a short-legged dog may slide down sloping rocks underground, but be quite unable to make the return journey, whereas a longer legged terrier can surmount such obstacles. Some people appear to imagine that a terrier creeps into an earth on his chest, whereas he always lies on his side if the passage is low, and works himself in with his legs. For this reason a broad-chested dog cannot get into such a small place as a terrier with a narrow chest, even though he may be shorter in the leg. In the same way with an upright crack or crevice the narrow-chested dog has a decided advantage. Sound, level teeth, and a strong jaw are essential to a terrier, because he may corner his fox and have to do battle. The average fox is a determined fighter under such circumstances, and it is hardly fair to ask a small terrier to tackle him alone. A hill-fox of 17lb. or 18lb. not only has the advantage in weight, but has chosen the superior position beforehand, and is thus able to deal out punish-





WORKING TERRIER AND TAME FOX.

(*Photo by R. Clapham*).

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ment to some tune. Where two little 'uns can get at him they can generally force him to get "out of that," or make an end of him on the spot. Cross-bred terriers seem to stand wet and cold better than fox-terriers, though some of the latter are capital workers if they have been bred from purely working parents. In the North, many people are averse to white terriers, considering them inferior to coloured ones. This is probably because the majority of working terriers in the fell country and elsewhere are coloured; but good terriers come in all colours, like horses, and there are plenty of dead game white ones to be found. Many show terriers are really too long in the jaw. An over long jaw, is like a lengthy pair of scissors, difficult to cut with at the points owing to loss of leverage. The fox has a comparatively short jaw, and so has the otter, yet both are capable of inflicting a very severe bite.

Some of the best all-round working terriers to-day are to be found with the fell foxhound packs in the Lake District. They are practically all cross-bred, with Bedlington, Border, etc., blood in them. Joe Bowman, the well known huntsman of the Ullswater, has had some famous terriers in his time, and it may be of interest to review some of these game little dogs and their doings. Probably one of the best known terriers was Corby, by Lord Decies' Sweep out of a Patterdale bitch. Corby on one occasion killed three foxes underground single-handed, the combined weights of the three totalling 62lb. Then there was Turk, a brown, wire-haired dog, weighing 16lb., whose sire Frisk died through continual maulings from foxes. Turk once killed a fox weighing a good

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deal more than himself. A half-sister of Frisk's once bit the leg off a fox, Reynard bolting on the remaining three. Blondin was a dwarf, pedigree Bedlington, famous for hunting a line as well as any fox-hound. A little bitch, named Jenny, met her death in a drain, being found there fast locked to an otter. Corby's sister Brandy, was another remarkable worker, and so was Nancy, who killed a 20lb. fox below ground single-handed. Piper was an exception to the rule that terriers bark and pull when coupled up and other terriers are working. Piper's manners were perfect in this respect, but, once let go, no terrier was harder underground. There are to-day in the fell country many terriers repeating the good work of those enumerated above, for in the land of the dales and the mountains the only criterion of a terrier is working ability, first, last and all the time.

THE PUPPY AT WALK

CHAPTER XX

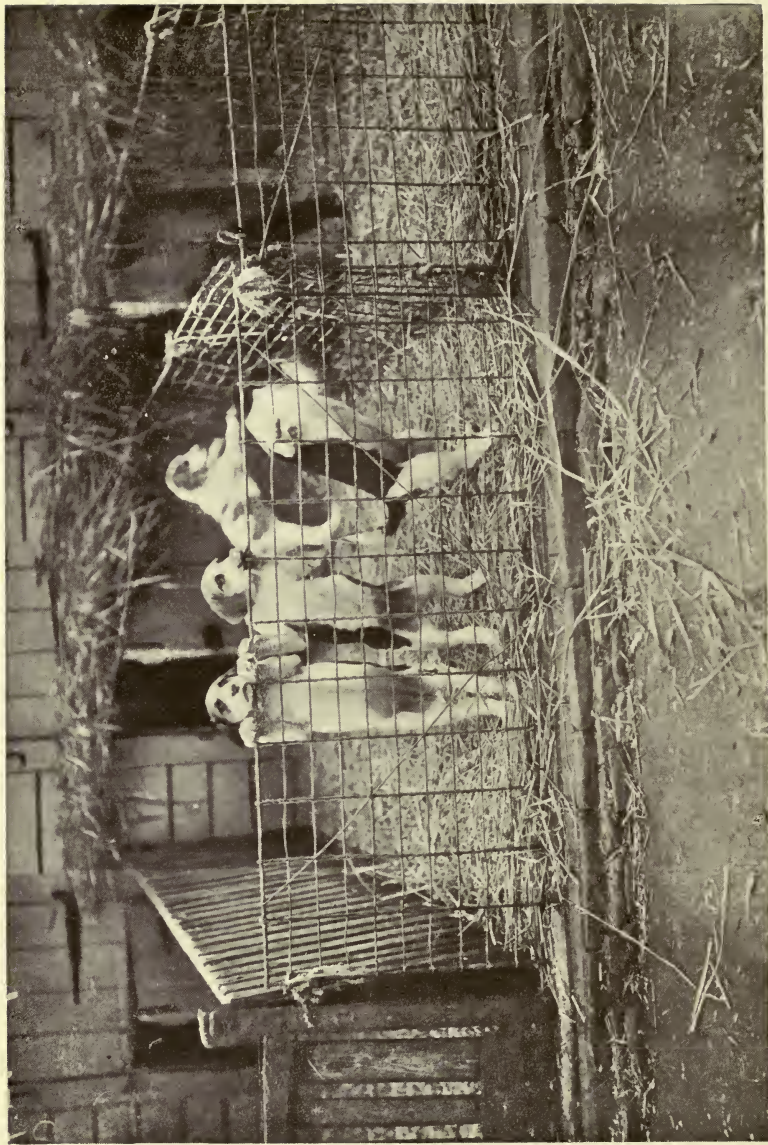
WITHOUT the Puppy Walkers—who deserve capital letters—where would the Hunt be? Why nowhere! The most important period of a fox-hound's life is the time spent at walk. At this stage of his existence he may be made or marred, and to the credit of puppy walkers as a whole be it said the majority of young hounds in their care receive the very best of treatment.

Many men, and women too, who do not hunt, nevertheless walk puppies, and by so doing exhibit a sporting spirit which is extremely pleasing. The hound puppy is sent out to walk in spring, so that in his very young days he gets the full benefit of the warm weather. From the time he is able to use his legs, he is imbued with the spirit of mischief, and nothing left lying about is free from his attentions. At first he will confine his peregrinations within the limits of the house and its near vicinity, but as he grows older and stronger he will enlarge his sphere of operations. During infancy he is like a child, playing one minute, and sleeping the next. For this reason he should be supplied with a box or kennel into which he can easily crawl when he feels inclined for a nap. Good food, unlimited exercise, and fresh air are what he requires, if he is to thrive and do well. Oatmeal porridge and new milk is a good diet for young puppies, but the

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milk should not be overdone, as it is not conducive to the building up of strength if given in excess. Pearl barley, well simmered over the fire until it becomes like a jelly, and then mixed with new milk is a capital diet, particularly in wet weather, for it is soothing on the stomach, and a puppy thrives on it. In the case of weakly puppies, "Lactol" will be found very beneficial. When the puppy is of an age to manage a more solid diet, dog biscuits soaked in thick soup will be greedily eaten. A certain amount of milk is of course good at all times, and a fair-sized bone to gnaw at occasionally will keep the puppy employed, and benefit his teeth. Small bones should not be given, as they are liable to splinter and stick in the puppy's throat. Food should be given twice a day at regular hours, after the puppy can manage a fairly solid diet. When quite young, smaller quantities of food given at more frequent intervals are better. Clean, fresh water should be within the puppy's reach both day and night. He should be housed in a dry place with plenty of fresh bedding, and should be able to go in and out as he likes during the day-time. Whilst at walk he may suffer from simple ailments such as worms, or he may contract the more serious malady, distemper. If the bitch is well treated for worms before she gives birth to a litter, the puppies are less liable to be troubled with these parasites. There are various remedies for worms on the market, most of which are more or less effective. Areca nut we do not recommend, for though certain in its action, it is very drastic on the stomach. Kamala powder is better, and for puppies there is nothing to beat pumpkin seed. The seeds are pulped in a mortar, and then boiled until they become a thick mass.





TWO COUPLE OF MILTON PUPPIES.

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

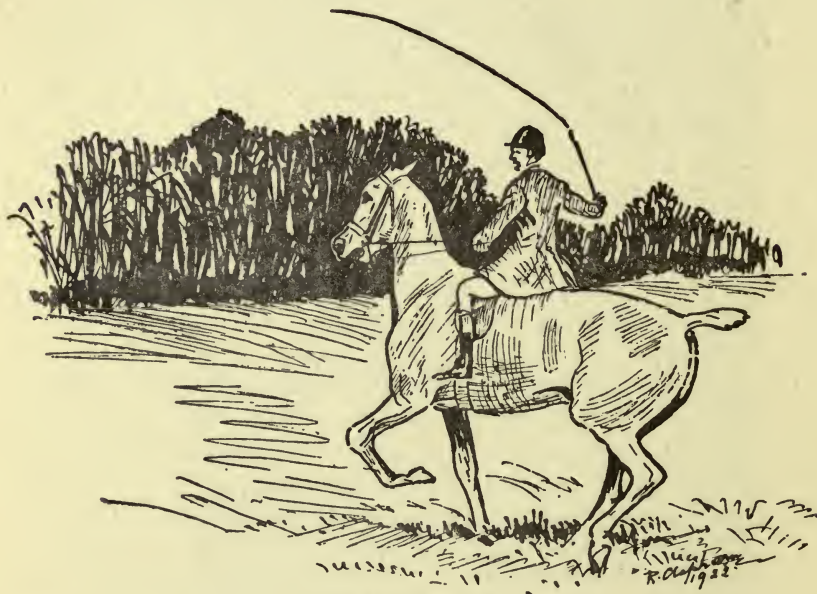
THE PUPPY AT WALK

After removing any of the coarser bits that have not softened, give the puppy a teaspoonful in his food for three mornings. Kamala powder is given in the proportion of one and a half to two grains per pound weight of the dog, the patient first having been starved for twenty-four hours. It may be given in fat, molasses, or made up in gelatine capsules.

As far as distemper is concerned, the first thing to do on observing the symptoms, i.e., loss of appetite, cough, and discharge from the nose, is to at once isolate the patient in a warm, dry building, free from draughts. Provide a good, clean bed of straw, but do not heat the place artificially, unless an equable temperature can be kept up both day and night. As long as the place is dry and free from draughts, and there is plenty of bedding, the patient will be all right. The chief thing is to keep him warm and dry. A dose of castor oil may then be given, followed by one to three grains of quinine and the same amount of hyposulphite of soda three times a day. Two grains will be found sufficient for a hound puppy from twelve weeks to a year old. Wipe away all discharge from eyes and nose with luke-warm water, and when the patient shows signs of improvement, give a tonic. For this purpose we have found Benbow's Mixture a capital pick-me-up. During the initial stages of the complaint the puppy will often refuse food, therefore he should be made to swallow fresh eggs, by breaking the contents in his mouth. Later, when he begins to improve, fresh, lean beef will be acceptable to him. As we have already said, the chief thing is to keep the patient warm and dry, reduce the feverish symptoms, and keep up his strength. We have seen it stated, by an ex-

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perienced breeder of bull-dogs, that brewer's yeast is an infallible cure for distemper. It is given twice a day, in doses from a teaspoonful to a tablespoonful, depending on the size and age of the dog. Never having used it, we can therefore give no opinion on it, but it is a very simple remedy if it does all that it is said to do.



GER AWAY BAICK!

Puppies are sent out to different places to walk, some going to farms, others to tradesmen in the villages and country towns, while the members of the Hunt take their share. A farm is nowadays the safest place for a valuable fox-hound puppy, for though tradesmen do their charges very well, giving them plenty of exercise on the roads by letting them follow the carts, there is

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so much reckless driving of motors in these times that a puppy runs great risks on the highway. On the farm, the puppy not only has his liberty, but he learns the rudiments of his future business in life, by chasing the hares and rabbits. He also learns that poultry and sheep are tabu. Although hares and rabbits are not his legitimate quarry, they teach the puppy to get his nose down and hunt. Thus when he goes back to kennels he is more than half made and a morning or two cub-hunting soon teaches him to distinguish between riot and fox.

The more fresh people, sights, and sounds a puppy sees and hears, the less shy will be become, thus he imbibes a spirit of independence and self reliance. In the old days, when hounds were trencher-fed, they lived at their various walks all the year round. Being thus isolated, distemper was unknown amongst them, whereas now when they are herded together in kennel, the complaint is rife every season. In the Lakes, the fell hounds, both old and young go out to walk in summer, thus the kennels get a chance to sweeten.

Whilst the puppy should be well done to when out at walk, he should not be over-cossetted or brought up too artificially. Many puppies are sent in from walk too fat and heavy, and these are the ones which suffer most from distemper. Over-feeding is as bad as under-feeding, for it tends to make the puppy soft, and thus he is unable to combat any complaints to which he may fall heir.

Puppies in from walk are naturally homesick at the kennels, and heart-broken at the loss of their liberty. For this reason where possible it is advisable to have large paddocks in which the

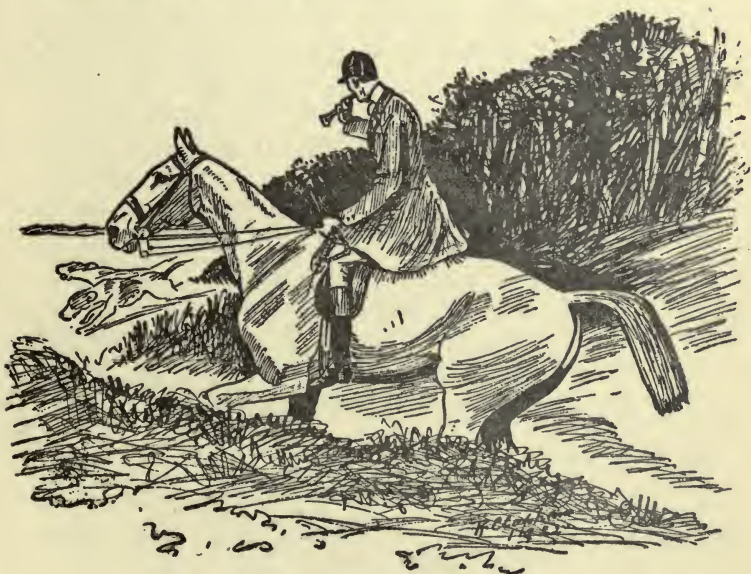
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youngsters can roam about as they please. Their flesh can be given them on the ground, and if they have dry, draught-proof sheds to sleep in, they gradually accustom themselves to the kennel discipline. By adopting such measures, the young hounds are prevented from fretting, and thus laying themselves open to distemper and other complaints. Any which show signs of distemper can be at once isolated, and the germs of the disease are not disseminated amongst the older hounds in the kennels, as would be the case if the young entry came in contact with them. It seems that environment may have a good deal to do with the spread of distemper, and that it is possible where old hounds have access to yards or paddocks which have previously been tenanted by puppies with distemper, contamination from the tainted ground may result in the absorbing of the infection, and thus brood bitches may pass it on to their whelps in embryo. Whatever the real truth of the matter may be, it is safe to say that the cleaner and sweeter the yards and paddocks can be kept, the healthier will the hounds be. This applies strongly to ground on which bitches with young whelps are situated. Generations of hounds bred and kennelled on the same ground, are bound to cause the latter to become foul in time, no matter how careful the supervision, therefore a period of dressing and cultivation should be applied to paddocks at intervals, in order to refresh them, and reduce the liability to infection.

ON HALLOING

CHAPTER XXI

AT the far corner of the covert sits a pink-clad figure, astride a great raking chestnut. Horse and man are motionless, eyes fixed upon the wood inside of which hounds are drawing for their fox. There is a whimper, quickly swelling to a chorus, and there through the fence



GONE AWAY.

slips the object of the quest, black-tipped ears cocked, and white-tagged brush held stiff as a poker. Horse and man see it at the same instant, but nothing happens until the fox has crossed the first field. Then the pink-clad figure suddenly comes to life, and a shrill view halloa rings out.

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More quickly than we can tell about it, hounds are clear of covert and streaking across the open, while round the end of the wood come the field, galloping hard for a start. Of all the throng of horsemen we wonder how many could give a view halloa like Jack the Whipper-in, now striding away not far from hounds, the big chestnut putting the fences behind him as a girl does her skipping rope? Not many we fancy, if the raucous noises one so often hears from amateurs are intended to be copies of the real thing.

Besides knowing how to give a view halloa, the main thing is to know when to give it, and when to keep mute. Irresponsible halloas from excited foot-people, as well as from mounted folk who ought to know better, have perhaps been the means of spoiling more runs than even the ubiquitous cur dog that so often interferes with sport. It was Whyte Melville who said that if the field were composed of individuals from a deaf and dumb asylum, a great many more foxes would be accounted for. It is a true enough statement, even more applicable to the huge crowds which turn out to-day than during Whyte Melville's time.

How is it that so many people when they view a fox must halloa? Mainly we presume through ignorance, or owing to excitement and over enthusiasm. No matter what the motive may be, it does not tend to mitigate the offence, nor do the people responsible realise the amount of harm that ensues.

It is, of course, permissible for an experienced person to halloa at the right moment, if he perceives that by so doing he will be helping to put matters right, but in the generality of cases halloing should be left to the Hunt servants, who





A KILL WITH THE NEW FOREST FOXHOUNDS.

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

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have studied the science of hunting from a professional point of view. Gratuitous halloas not only head foxes but get hounds' heads up as well. Once they are up, it is not always easy to get them down again, particularly when scent is fast failing.

It is customary for a whipper-in to halloa when a fox breaks covert, and both hounds and field know the shrill scream that signals the fox is away. It is a moot point whether on a good scenting day hounds will not hunt their fox out of covert quite as quickly as they will go to a halloa. From small and medium sized coverts there is no doubt they can get away just as quickly if left alone, and what is more they appear to settle better on the line when they get into the open. In large woodlands it is of course a different matter, for in such places foxes are wont to hang about in covert, and thus hounds may not get away with the first fox that breaks. When drawing for a fox at the start of the day, all the foxes are fresh, and therefore any one of them will do, whereas towards the end of a run only one will do, and that the hunted one. A fresh fox will often alter his course but little when greeted with a series of halloas from excitable foot people, especially if he lives in a part of the country which is thickly inhabited, and where halloing is of frequent occurrence. The majority of people however start halloing directly they see the fox, instead of—if they will halloa—letting it get well past them. Halloing right in the face of a fox naturally turns him, and unless scenting conditions are good, the result is a check when hounds reach the spot.

The time however when promiscuous halloing does the most harm is when a beaten fox is in

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front of hounds. Scent is then failing, and hounds know it, and try their hardest to overhaul their fox; but if the latter is constantly headed, confusion only becomes worse confounded, and the fox manages to run hounds out of scent and makes his escape.

Those people who are so fond of halloing just because "they can't help it" should try to remember what the hounds are there for. It is the keen noses of the pack which enable them to hunt by scent, and directly they are interfered with they cannot settle to it again as they did at first. Without canine assistance it is impossible to hunt, therefore the less hounds are affected by outside influences the better. When they do require help, their huntsman is there to give it to them, and he is the only one, or should be the only one, privileged to do so. Even the huntsman may allow excitement to get the better of him at times, especially if he is an amateur keen on his job. For instance, after a fast run, hounds and fox are in the same field. The huntsman—from his superior height in the saddle—sees his fox, and in the exuberance of the moment attempts to give hounds a view by cheering them and getting their heads up. If the field is a large one and hounds are close on their fox, they perhaps view him and after a sharp course roll him over. So far so good, but what is more likely to happen is that hounds get their heads up, fail to see or barely see their fox before he pops through the fence, up or down which he is quite likely to turn sharply. In their excitement hounds flash half way across the next field, and by the time they hit off the line again, the tense thread is broken, and scent fails altogether. It should always be remembered in the first place,

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that a mounted man has a far wider field of view than a hound which stands but two feet or less from the ground. Thus, what the man can easily see, the hounds may not, and an abortive attempt to give them a view only spells disaster. When hounds are using their noses they have no time

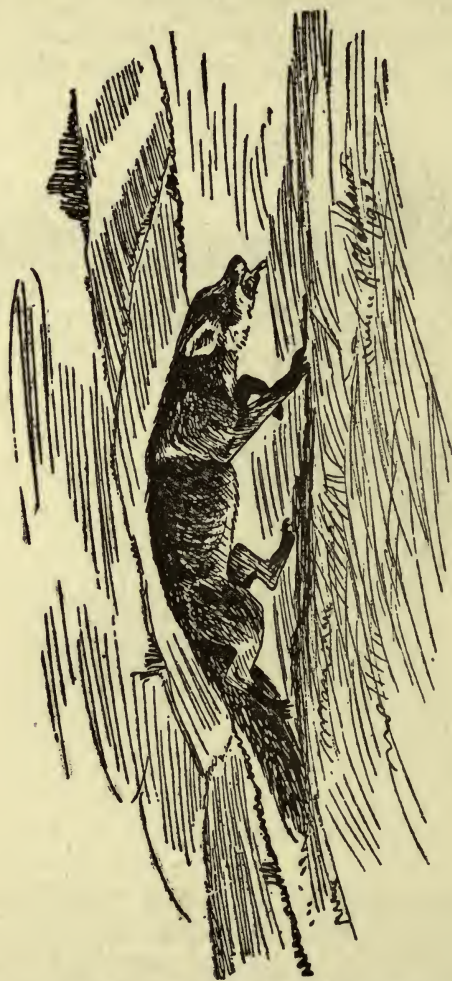


WHO-O-O-OP!

to use their eyes as well, but they know quite as well as their huntsman who sees the fox, how far in front of them he is, and if left alone they will turn with him at a hedge and eventually view him for themselves. The last few moments of a run are tense ones, for hounds are keyed up

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exactly like a billiard player or a trap-shooter when making a long run on the board of green cloth, or at the thirty-yard line. At such a



DEAD BEAT.

time, the least bit of outside interference upsets the balance, and the tension breaks before it has carried through to the end. Thus the thread

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snaps when you cheer hounds to an abortive view, and the ends can seldom be pieced together again. One cannot be too quiet towards the end of a run, for it is the most ticklish moment of the chase.

Of course there may come a time when hounds are fairly run out of scent by a beaten fox. A halloa then may be the means of bringing him to hand, if it is given by a person who has viewed the fox as a beaten fox. Hounds are taken to the exact spot where the fox was last seen, and with luck they may hit him off and eventually gain their due reward. The business of viewing a fox as a beaten fox is not always so simple as it sounds, for if the fox happens to see you first, he will temporarily smarten himself up, and pull himself together so that he appears like a fresh one. Thus, if you get but a brief view of him you may be easily deceived, but if you can keep him in sight for some distance he will give himself away by sagging to earth again with arched spine and dragging brush. In a country where there is a lot of halloing, as in Ireland, a huntsman had better trust to his hounds entirely, and ignore all halloas except those given by the whippers-in or the Master. By constantly lifting hounds to halloas you make them wild and unsteady, and instead of getting their noses down they are always on the alert for the voice of some idiot who thinks it his duty to make as much noise as possible every time he happens to view a fox.

It is time enough to "let off steam" by halloing, when hounds are eating their fox, for you can do no harm then, and may provide some amusement for the field if you are only a mediocre performer. While a halloa may not exert any direct influence on a fresh fox in the way of altering the scent, it acts adversely on a beaten

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fox in this respect. Already weakened, and with failing powers, the fox gives off but little scent, thus the sudden shock of a halloa may serve to still further weaken it, because the fox perhaps puts on a spurt for a short distance, and by so doing takes a lot out of himself. Scent is no doubt more or less controlled by the nervous system, and any sudden and unexpected shock to the latter undoubtedly has an adverse effect upon that aroma which appeals so strongly to hounds' noses.

While even the best of huntsmen and whippers-in may make mistakes at times, being only human, when they do so they are acting in an official capacity, and generally have a sound reason for their actions. Suppose for instance a whipper-in halloas a fresh fox, thinking it is the hunted one, his mistake is covered by the action of the huntsman. Then, if some officious person takes upon himself to inform the man who carries the horn that the fox is not the hunted one, he is likely to be met with the reply, "No? then he d—d soon will be!"

Any sudden shock to the nervous system of a beaten fox, such as being coursed by a cur dog, halloed at, or taking to the cold water of a stream or lake, serves to more or less reduce the emanation of scent. A heated fox entering cold water is on a par with a man taking a cold bath. The shock of the immersion causes an involuntary shrinking from the liquid embrace, so that the pores of the skin close, and in the case of the fox his scent is shut off. At any rate we have known many a hill-fox run hounds out of scent after immersion in the cold water of a mountain beck.

Suppose you view a fox and are certain he is the hunted one, then, if hounds are at fault your

ON HALLOING

halloa may put things right. Remember, however, never on any account raise your voice on high until the fox has got well past you. After halloing, mark the exact spot where you last saw him, so that when the huntsman comes up you can at once point out the place. Every second is valuable at such a time, so you should be brief and absolutely sure in imparting your information.

WIRE

CHAPTER XXII

WITH the cutting up of large estates, the purchase of farms by tenants, and the increase of small holdings, wire has made its appearance in the hunting field where heretofore it was unknown. That the wire question is a serious one in many countries, there is no use denying, yet the evil can be done away with or at any rate mitigated by tactful negotiations with the farmer.

The reason wire is substituted for rails or properly laid fences, is because the incomes of both landlord and tenant have depreciated, thus the former is obliged to sell his timber while the latter cannot afford the requisite labour to keep his fences stock-proof. The tenant therefore turns to wire as affording more or less permanent protection, and requiring comparatively little attention, although the initial outlay in material is somewhat greater. It is of course very easy to condemn a man for resorting to wire, yet it should be remembered that money is "tight," stock will escape, not only causing damage but bad feeling between neighbours, therefore the farmer has but little choice in the matter. Wire difficulties are met and to a greater or less extent overcome by the wire fund which provides money to cover the expense of removing wire at the beginning of the season, and replacing it again at the end. Rails too are supplied by hunting landlords

WIRE

who can afford to do so, the damage fund helping to defray part of the cost. Hedge trimming competitions are inaugurated, with prizes, to encourage the making and keeping in repair of permanent fences, thus making it worth while for agricultural labourers to take an interest in such work. The average farmer, although he may not ride to hounds himself, is a sportsman at heart, and he does not use wire because he approves of it, but because skilled labour is often difficult to secure. With regard to small holdings, the owners of which are prone to fence their ground with wire, these places are usually near towns which provide a market for their produce, and so they do not interfere with hunting to so great an extent as large farms where wire is prevalent.

Where financial difficulties will not allow of the substitution of wooden fencing for wire, other means must be resorted to, so that the presence of wire can be detected by a rider, and possible catastrophe averted. There are various ways of doing this, such as forming jumping places with posts and rails in a wire fence, erecting danger boards, and marking trees. The trouble with a jumping place is, that it consists of a short length of rail, and as it is perhaps the only means of exit from an enclosure, the members of the field are obliged to race for it, thus increasing the liability to accident, and the ground on both sides of the rail becomes "poached" and soft. The marking of trees is inadvisable because if wire thus advertised is taken down, the marks are difficult to obliterate, and in addition it opens a way for people to mark more trees, rather than go to the trouble of removing wire. Where wire cannot be got down, it must of course be marked

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by danger boards, but if by tactful measures the farmer can be persuaded to do the right thing, the way is clear immediately, whereas if you once erect a danger board it is tantamount to acknowledging defeat, and other boards will almost inevitably have to follow.

Talking of the "ware wire" sign, reminds us of the yarn about the huntsman who was jogging along a road lined with telegraph wires. One of the field was about to jump into the road, when the huntsman, fearing for the safety of his hounds, called out "Ware wire, sir, ware wire!" The horseman reined in, glanced at the fence, then exclaimed, "I don't see any wire!" to which the huntsman retorted, "Look 'igher up, sir, look 'igher up!"

The greatest menace to a horseman in the hunting field is the hedge through which a hidden strand of wire is run. Besides the danger to the rider of a severe fall, the horse gets terribly cut and mutilated if the wire is barbed.

There is absolutely no excuse for using barbed wire for any agricultural enclosure, because, if wire has to be used at all, smooth strands, properly strained up will turn any stock bred in this country. A hidden strand of plain wire will of course bring a horse down, but though he may take an imperial toss, he will not be hideously cut about by the wire. Plain wire is much more easily handled and erected than barbed wire, and will do all that the latter does in the way of keeping in stock. The war saw the only legitimate use for barbed wire, and unfortunately there is still a good deal of war-store wire to be bought cheap, which tempts the agriculturist to use it.

Natural fences, such as hedges, stone walls, posts and rails, or banks are jumpable with a

WIRE

minimum of risk, but the fence containing the hidden wire is a veritable death-trap. Where wire cannot be got down, there is no reason why it should not be made visible, and also be plain instead of barbed. If a hedge has so degenerated that it is necessary to patch it up with wire, an all-wire fence formed of plain strands will afford an equally effective and less dangerous obstacle. A fence so constructed, with the wires properly strained up is perfectly visible to a horse and rider, and what a horse can see, he will usually jump if the height of the obstacle is not prohibitive. In Australia and New Zealand, the majority of the Hunts ride over countries which are fenced with wire, and Colonial hunting men go quite as hard as they do in this country. We have had experience of these New Zealand fences, having helped to put many a one up, and our horses seldom came to any serious grief when jumping them. A loose or slovenly erected wire fence is more liable to cause an accident than one that is properly strained up to stout posts. The latter should not be driven into the ground, but set in post-holes dug for the purpose. Driven posts soon work loose, and the whole fence then becomes rickety. If a horse hits the top wire of a tightly strained fence, he will take no worse a toss than if he hit a gate or a rail, and he soon learns that he cannot take liberties with such fences. There is nothing fearful about a visible wire fence to either horse or rider if the former has been schooled a few times over such obstacles. It is better to be able to jump such fences, than have to go a long way round by road when hounds are racing through the wired enclosures. If barbed wire could be ruled out of court entirely, it would be a very good thing, for as already

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stated, plain wire serves the same purpose equally well where wire is at all necessary. In addition to the hidden strands of wire in hedges, the next most dangerous thing is the single wire set up on light posts a few feet away from a fence. Unseen from the far side, a horse jumps straight into it with deplorable consequences. There are to-day on the market, a variety of woven wire fences, at least one of which is coated with a white, waterproof composition. Any horse can see such a fence, and will jump it readily if it is not too high. These woven fences are stouter than the ordinary plain wire fences, and no more dangerous to jump than a five-barred gate. One constantly reads of the field being stopped by "bird cages," through which hounds run, while followers have to deviate via the nearest road. A Colonial field would take the wire as it came, and there appears to be no reason why the same should not be done in this country, provided of course that the wire is clear and visible.

Whilst we hope it will be many a long day before wire fences are universal in our hunting countries, we nevertheless aver that it is better to jump such fences than give up hunting altogether. What we want is one thing or the other, a clean natural fence, or a clean and visible wire fence, but not the invisible strands of rusty barbed wire which festoon so many of our hedges.

HUNTING HORNS AND HUNTING CRIES

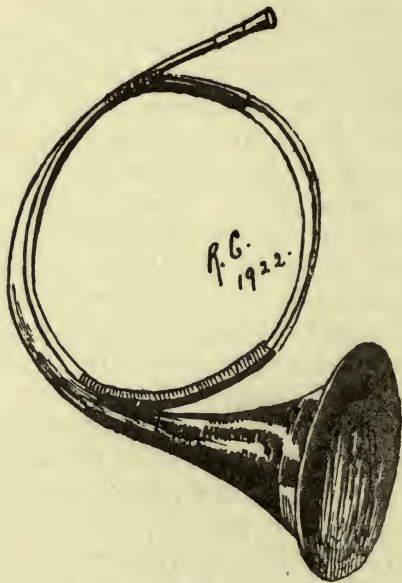
CHAPTER XXIII

TO the hunting man there is no music on earth to compare with the sound of a well-blown horn, and the cry of the hounds as they break covert on a bright November morning. To-day the huntsman usually carries a short, straight, copper horn, ten inches or under, in length. In olden times, however, hunting horns were much more cumbersome affairs, and horn music played a conspicuous part in the chase. In primeval days horns were used for purposes of sport and war. They were formed from the bones of animals, and in the case of coast-dwelling tribes, shells of various kinds were made to serve the same purpose. Animal horns were likewise used, and the porters on safari in Africa to-day often blow antelope horns. The same thing occurs in the southern States of America, where cow-horns are still used by the local fox-hunters. As time went on these crude instruments were improved upon, metal was brought into use, and horns were provided which afforded a wider field for the hunter's musical abilities. Elephant's tusks, often richly engraved and mounted in metal, were regularly used in France, such horns being known as "oliphants." They were in general use until the time of Louis XV., when the circular brass horn was invented

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by the Marquis de Dampierre. These circular brass horns are to be seen in France to-day.

They were introduced into this country about the same period, but being cumbersome they gained little favour with English huntsmen, and the straight horn soon took their place. In "The Master of Game" written between the



FRENCH CIRCULAR HORN.

years 1406 and 1413 by Edward III's grandson, Edward, second Duke of York, there is a chapter describing how a hunter's horn should be "driven." This chapter is most interesting, and therefore I take the liberty of quoting it here. It says, "There are divers kinds of horns, that is to say, bugles, great Abbots', hunters' horns, Ruets (trumpets), small Forester's horns, and meaner horns of two kinds. That one kind

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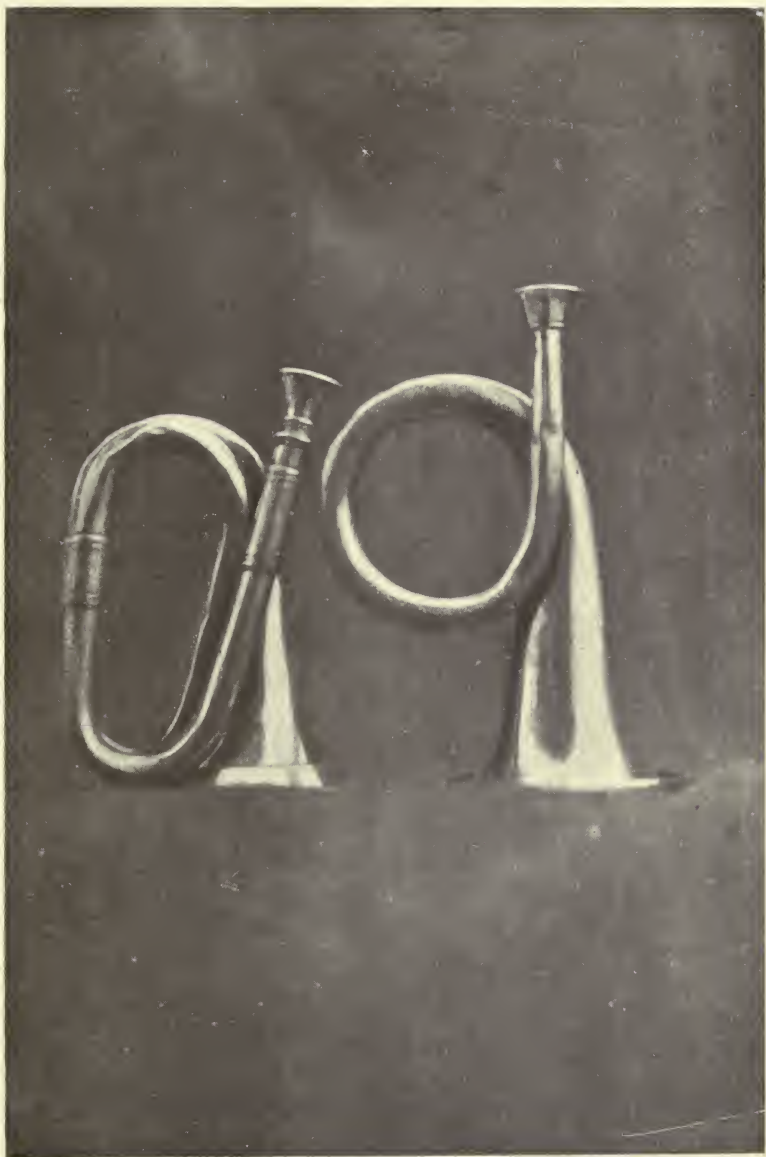
is waxed with green wax and greater of sound, and they be best for good hunters, therefore will I devise how and in what fashion they should be driven. First a good hunter's horn should be driven of two spans in length, and not much more nor much less, and not too crooked, neither too straight, but that the flue be three or four fingers uppermore than the head, that unlearned hunters call the great end of the horn. And also that it be as great and hollow driven as it can for the length, and that it be shorter on the side of the baldric (the belt on which the horn is carried) than at the nether end. And that the head be as wide as it can be, and always driven smaller and smaller to the flue, and that it be well waxed thicker or thinner according as the hunter thinks that it will sound best. And that it be the length of the horn from the flue to the binding, and also that it be not too small driven from the binding to the flue, for if it be the horn will be too mean of sound. As for horns for fewterers (men who hold the hounds in couples) and wood men, I speak not for every small horn and other mean horn unwaxed be good enough for them."

The custom of waxing horns was rather curious, but evidently it improved the sound, as the less important horns, carried by foresters and others were considered good enough unwaxed. The length of a horn, i.e., "two spans" was eighteen inches. The bugle of those days was not the army style bugle now in use, but a plain curved horn. These curved horns survived into the eighteenth century, and in the case of John Peel's horn into the nineteenth. In the eighteenth century small hunting bugles with a single twist were also used. The late Mr. John Foster, Master of the Pen-y-ghent Beagles for over thirty

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seasons, at one time used a small eighteenth century bugle, which had done service for his ancestors before him. As John Peel was born in 1776 his horn was made probably long before that date. At the time of writing Jim Dalton, the Blencathra huntsman, uses a bugle, but it is a comparatively large affair, like the army bugle.

Gradually the circular and curved horns gave way to the straight horn. At first the latter was much longer than it is to-day. The foot huntsman of the Holcombe Harriers, an old Lancashire pack, carries, or at any rate used to carry, a long straight horn. By degrees horns were cut down until to-day ten inches is the average length. Horn-blowing is really more of a natural gift than an acquired art, although constant practice will as a rule enable the novice to become more or less proficient. No two horns are alike, some being difficult to blow, and others easy. If you happen to drop on one of the latter sorts it pays to treasure it. Frank Gillard, the famous huntsman to the Belvoir, tells in his "Reminiscences" how he picked up a horn of this sort from an old man who at one time hunted hounds in the North of England. He says, "It was a longish copper horn, easy to blow, and full of music." Presentation horns are usually made of silver, but neither the latter nor German silver gives as good a note as copper. To blow a horn properly lips and teeth should be perfectly sound. Many people, amongst them some huntsmen, cannot blow an ordinary horn. In their case the best substitute is a reed-horn, which can be sounded with a breath. It produces a slightly tinny note, but this is infinitely preferable to listening to a series of horrible sounds which many amateur huntsmen produce. Noth-



OLD HUNTING BUGLES.

Photo by R. Clapham).

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ing sounds worse in the hunting field than discordant horn music, and nothing looks worse than an amateur blowing himself black in the face, and succeeding only in producing horrible noises, as of someone in his death agony.

Having got hold of a horn that suits you the next thing is to know what calls to blow. At the time "The Master of Game" was written and later, horn-blowing was an art in which hunting people from the nobility downwards prided themselves. In the old days the ostensible idea of horn music was to enlighten the field as to what was going on, and the majority of the calls had no application to the hounds as far as directing the latter was concerned. The country was then heavily afforested, and woodland hunting was the order of the day. The horn was then used, as Twici says, that "Each man who is around you, who understands Hunting, can know in which point you are in your sport by your blowing." The French compassed horn is capable of sounding twelve distinct notes, and on it can be sounded more or less elaborate tunes. The straight horn on the other hand sounds but one note, the different calls being obtained by varying the length and frequency of the note. This can be done of course also with the reed horn, with the exception of the long swelling note to "call hounds away," and for this quite a good substitute can be sounded on the reed instrument.

The chief sounds on the hunting horn were named as follows: a Mote, a single note, long or short. A recheat consists of four notes blown three times with an interval between each four, thus, "Tararara, tararara, tararara." It was also preceded or followed by a Mote or single note. The stag was the premier beast of chase in those

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days, and so when the huntsman viewed his stag he blew a Mote followed by a recheat after which he sounded two Motes to call the hounds. It was something like the present day "gone away," tarara, tarara, tarararararara.

The Parfet was blown when hounds were on the right line, and was a somewhat complicated call.

The Forlonge was a signal that the quarry was far in front of hounds or that a few couple had got away alone with their stag.

The Prise consisting of four Motes was blown when a hunted stag had been killed. Four Motes were first sounded, then a second four a little longer drawn out.

The Menee was blown at the hall-door on the return of the huntsmen. The Master first blew four Motes, after which the field joined in with their horns, keeping time together. Horn music in these modern days has been very much cut down. Sometimes you hear nothing but a single monotonous note blown all day, or a few calls seldom repeated. Hunting in the open there is of course but little real need for a variety of horn music, such as our French friends use in their woodland hunting. In the big French forests it is impossible to ride right up to hounds, but by means of the horn information is conveyed to the followers who are familiar with the various calls. In extensive English woodlands it is quite easy to get left when hounds break covert, and a few simple and easily understood calls would obviate all this, and perhaps revive to some extent an interest in horn music.

Of modern calls we have a single note when hounds are off to draw, and the "gone away" when a fox breaks covert. Then on a scent the huntsman may perhaps "double the horn,"

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and when hounds are eating their fox he sounds the "rattle." At the end of the day he may blow a long note or several short ones followed by a long one, to warn the field that hounds are going home.

Without expecting the hunt servants to be armed with horns to blow elaborate measures such as the French "*fanfare de l'équipage*," there are a few calls that might usefully be added to those now in vogue.

In addition to the old-time calls already mentioned there are others which were at one time in regular use. Of these one or two are suited to present day requirements. There is the "Straking from covert to covert" in two windes, which would let the field know that the huntsman was drawing on after a covert had been drawn blank. The call "For a fox gone to ground; if to dig" also has its place to-day; as well as the "Call for the terriers at the earth." The "Call away; if not to dig" would likewise prove useful.

In the Southern and Western States of America cow horns are still used by the local hunters who own scratch packs. These horns have been handed down from generation to generation and are greatly prized by their owners, particularly as regards their tone and quality. Field trials for hounds are regularly held in America, and one often hears a score or more of cow horns being blown at the end of the day by the owners of the canine competitors. The tones of all these horns are different, and the hounds show no hesitation in going to the calls of their individual Masters.

Closely allied with horn music are hunting cries. The hound language used in early days was much akin to the same terms employed in France to-day. The cry "Tally-ho" is of French origin. At the

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Curee, or rewarding of the hounds, the bowels or guts were held up on a large wooden fork, the huntsman at the same time halloing to the hounds with cries of "*Tiel haut*," or "*Lau, lau!*" The tit-bits were then thrown to them. This practice was called "giving them the *forhu*." Forthuer means to halloa loudly, therefore it is possible that the modern term of giving the hounds the halloa is derived from it. Not until the eighteenth century does the word "Tally-ho" occur at all frequently in hunting literature.

In cheering hounds to one which had struck the right line the cry would be "Oyez, a Ringwood, (or whatever the hound's name happened to be) oyez, assemble a Ringwood," which translated means "Hark to Ringwood, hark, get on to him."

To encourage the limer when drawing for a stag, the cry was "*Ho moy, ho moy*;" while "*Avaunt, sire, avaunt*" signifies "get away forward, sir, get away forward." "*Swef, mon amy, swef*" corresponds to our "Steady there, steady."

In mediæval times the knowledge of venery was as complete as it is to-day, and in some matters connected with the chase, even more so. Huntsmen and others connected with the Hunt prided themselves on their sporting abilities from the proper "undoing" or breaking-up of a deer to the reading of signs and the proper blowing of the many and various calls employed in the chase. To-day hunting is still a popular pursuit, but the majority of those who follow hounds are by no means as well up in the science of the sport as were their ancestors who chased the stag in the old English woodlands.

OLD TIMES AND OLD CHARACTERS

CHAPTER XXIV

FROM time immemorial hunting has been the favourite sport of the Lakeland dales folk, and when "O'er the bottle at eve of our pleasures we'll tell" hunting yarns and anecdotes serve to while away the hours. In John Peel's time conviviality came next to hunting, and Peel himself loved a merry gathering. The old-timers of Ireby used to say "As for his drinking by goy he wad drink wad Peel till he couldn't stand, an' they wad just clap him on t' pony and away he wad gang as reet as a fiddle. Odds-barns! they were hunters i' them days." For many years Peel rode a pony he called "Dunny," and when mounted on his old favourite he was able to keep in touch with the hounds and see a great deal of what they did.

Speaking of drink another well-known huntsman, old Jack Parker, of the Sinnington, once said as he sighed for the good old days, "gentle-folk don't drink nowadays. Ah think they mun a takken ta lappen up t' tooth watter i' their bed-rooms instead." Like Peel, old Jack was always up betimes, no matter how freely he had imbibed the night before, and differed from the sportsman in the song, who said:

"I cannot get up, ye overnight's cup
So terribly lies on my head,
Besides my dear wife says 'My dear do not rise,
But cuddle me longer abed, my dear boy,
But cuddle me longer abed.'"

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Those old-time huntsmen must have possessed cast-iron constitutions to enable them to stand all the hard work and hard drinking that was the fashion in their day.

In the early days of Tommy Dobson's reign with the Eskdale and Ennerdale the Court Leet paid ten and sixpence for every fox-brush produced at its sitting. By this means Tommy collected quite a decent sum each season which, as he said, "came in verra handy for a lot o' laal things about t' Hunt." His disgust was great, therefore, when the custom was finally abandoned. It was Will Ritson, who was huntsman to Mr. Huddleston, of Gosforth, who said that Wastdale boasted "t' heighest mountain, t' deepest lake, t' lahlest church, and t' biggest liar i' all England."

In the Troutbeck (Windermere) valley an ancient custom known as "The Mayor's Hunt" is still kept up. This was originally the principal annual hunting fixture, which combined the day's sport with a lively gathering in the evening. Refreshment in solid and liquid form was provided at the charges of the "Mayor," who was an elected leader of the Hunt. The "Mayor" was usually some fairly well-to-do statesman, keen on sport, and convivial withal. His successor in office was elected by the votes of the company during the progress of the evening's entertainment. On one occasion the honour fell to a member of the fair sex, a Mrs. Backhouse, and she was duly elected Mayoress. In the old days these meetings were often held at Troutbeck Bridge, there being records of the event from as early as 1778. To-day, however, the Mayor Hunt is held in Troutbeck Village. More than eighty years ago a few couple of trencher-fed

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foxhounds were kept in the dale, and long prior to that, in fact before 1776, there was a pack of harriers. The hare was then a recognised beast of chase, whereas the fox had not begun to rise to his present day status.

In the old days shepherds' meetings for the exchange of sheep which had strayed were held annually. It was not until about 1840 that the common pastures were fenced into "allotments," and so it can be easily understood that the flocks got more or less mixed. At the conclusion of the business part of such a meeting the shepherds and dalesmen made merry and indulged in various sports. The latter consisted of running, jumping, and wrestling, and last, but not least, a fox-hunt. In the old days a gathering was held on the summit of High Street, and in addition to other sports, there was fell pony racing. On the top of "t' Street" there lies a mile or more of fairly level ground, and as long as weather conditions were suitable it presented a fair field of operations. Since the common fell pastures have been fenced off, the old-time shepherds' meetings have been shorn of their pristine glory, while some have been done away with altogether.

A convivial meeting after a day's hunting is known in local parlance as a "harvel." The word is derived from the "arvel bread" or small death-loaves—specially baked for the purpose—which were carried home and eaten in company with those who could not be present at the funeral. Another quaint custom at funerals was the distribution of silk scarves to the men. It is said that a certain parson's wife, whose husband was in great demand at burials, secured sufficient bits of silk to make herself a gown. Arvel is an ancient word for funeral. At burials there was

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arvel-cheese as well as arvel bread, and a more or less substantial meal was provided for the company in the form of cheese, white bread, and oat cake, washed down with ale, cold or warm according to the time of year.

The priests of the north-country parishes were many of them quaint characters according to present-day standards. They lived under very different conditions to the modern parson, and were extremely badly paid for their labours. Many of them were very keen on sport, more particularly hunting, and their behaviour at times would have shocked the parishioners of the present-day village. Over a hundred years ago the usual dress of a Westmorland parish priest consisted of a fustian jacket, corduroy knee breeches, coarse grey stockings and clogs stuffed with bracken, the whole being topped off by a brown hat. The priest received ten-pence half-penny per Sunday, and he usually eked out this slender pittance by working at a variety of other jobs. More than one member of the cloth supervised the running of an ale-house, and when forced to leave convivial company would depart with the words: "I will but preach and be with you again." A very noted character once filled the pulpit at Troutbeck (Windermere), by name Sewell. He was priest there from 1827 to 1869. Like others of his school he was devoted to fox-hunting and other sports, and eked out his stipend by farming. It was he who built the "Traveller's Rest" Inn on Kirkstone Pass. On one occasion he leaned over the pulpit before the service, and enquired of a member of his congregation: "Have you seen owt o' two lile sheep o' mine amang yours? They're smitten i' t' ear like yours but deeper i' t' smit." On another oc-





TWO OLD CRONIES, ANTHONY CHAPMAN, EX-HUNTSMAN OF THE WINDERMERE
HARRIERS' AND JOE BOWMAN, THE ULLSWATER HUNTSMAN WHO HAS CARRIED
THE HORN SINCE 1879.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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casion when asked to pray for fine weather, he replied to his clerk : " ' It's nae use, Tommy, as lang as t' wind's i' this quarter." Once on arriving at the church the members of the congregation found the door shut and the clerk mounted on a flat tombstone, calmly announcing " ' This is to gie notice that there will be nae service i' this church for fower weeks, as t' parson's best game hen hes setten hersel i' t' pulpit." At Wythburn, near the head of Thirlmere Lake lies one of the smallest churches in England, and on the opposite side of the road stands the Nag's Head Inn. A certain Wythburn priest had but two sermons which he kept in a crack of the wainscot behind his pulpit. Some wag pushed them down one day out of his reach, and the congregation smiled at the prospect of a shortened service. After fumbling for some time in an attempt to retrieve them, the parson turned round and exclaimed : " ' Brethren, t' sermons are down t' grike, but I'll read ye a chapter in Job worth baith o' them." Very often the parson—owing to shortage of revenues—had to be boarded with his parishioners in turn. On one occasion the good man was rummaging in a small chest which, among other things, contained his sermons. The old dame who was looking on said : " ' Thou mun turn 'em ower gaily weel, they're comin' a bit thick," for had not the parson preached the same sermon for three Sundays in succession !

A certain Gosforth clergyman went about regularly in hunting cap and breeches, over which, when conducting weddings or burial services, he donned a surplice. The latter garment had more than once been used by the old-time parson for purposes of camouflage when tracing hares in the snow. On Scout Scar, near Kendal, is a spot

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called Hodgson's Loup (Leap). It is said that one Hodgson, a hunting parson, in the excitement of the chase, galloped his horse over the cliff's edge. It was this parson who said, "Do as I say, not as I do," when preaching on Sunday observance in the morning prior to an afternoon's hunting.

The parson at Wasdale Head was on one occasion in the middle of the Litany when one of his flock suddenly shouted: "There's t' Ennerdale gurt dog chassing for its life!" In about ten seconds the church was empty of everybody but the parson, and though the latter got a bad start he soon made up lee-way. The "gurt dog" was a sheep-worrier which had been doing a lot of damage amongst the flocks in the district.

On one occasion when a farmer clattered down the aisle in his clogs, the blind parson stopped the service to enquire, "Wha's that come in?" "It's Dan Mossop frae Fell End." "Afoot or on horse-back?" Parsons and laymen alike were nothing loath to take their share of contraband liquor in those early days. Concerning a church by the shore in the cellars of which the smugglers used to store their kegs, a wit wrote the following:

"There's a Spirit above, and a spirit below;
A Spirit of love and a spirit of woe;
The Spirit above is the Spirit Divine.
But the spirit below is the spirit of wine."

Long years ago in Troutbeck, a visiting clergyman came to take the place of the absent incumbent. On entering the vestry he noticed what appeared to be a dirty surplice hanging behind the door. Seeing the direction of his gaze the clerk hurriedly exclaimed, "You musn't put that on, it's nobbut Auld Anne's

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penance sheet." Further explanation revealed the fact that for her frailty "Auld Anne" had been required to do penance by appearing at church in a white sheet and holding a candle in her hand.

In the old days the shepherds brought their dogs with them to church, and the most unruly members of the canine crew were kept from entering the edifice by a dog-gate, specially erected for their benefit. Certain of the ancient village churches were thatched, and it is said that during a particularly severe winter the Herdwick sheep ate away the entire roof of one church. Once, as the parson was saying, "Behold, I come quickly," the pulpit gave way and the good man was deposited in the lap of an ancient dame sitting in the front pew. The old churches were kept in very bad repair, the floors often being of plain earth. Although the old-type of hunting parson has long disappeared there are yet a number of clerics who love the sound of horn and hound. The late Rev. E. M. Reynolds was Master of the Coniston from 1881 to 1908, and was remarkably active despite his seventy odd years, and one of England's premier lawn tennis players and skaters in his day. A well-known and much beloved parson hunts regularly with the Coniston when they are in his neighbourhood, and though beyond "three score and ten," he can still show the way to many a much younger man over rough fell ground. It was he who on hearing hounds running across Windermere Lake jumped into a boat shod only in his slippers, and at the end of the day his foot gear afforded little or no protection to his feet. Well may we say in the words of the old song :

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“ Here’s a health to the parson despising control,
Who to better his parish, his health, or his soul,
On my honour I think he does each,
Five days in the week follows the fox and the hound,
On the sixth duly goes his parochial round,
And on Sunday devoutly can preach.”

When hunting on the fells one sees many curious effects of mist, light, and shade. A similar phenomenon to the “ Spectre of the Brocken ” is by no means uncommon. There is a legend of a curious mirage effect on Southerfell. In 1735 a farm-servant thought he saw troops marching over the mountain summit, but his story was of course ridiculed. Two years later the farmer and his family saw the same thing, and they too were thought to be suffering from hallucinations. At midsummer, 1745, they invited a large party to view the same scene, and they all saw an army with carriages on the top of the fell. On going next day to look for the footprints none could be found. Eventually it came out that the Jacobite Army had been marching that evening away to the north, and it was supposed that their figures had been reflected by some transparent vapour. A similar mirage was seen on Helvellyn on the eve of the battle of Marston Moor.

Mention has already been made of the church by the shore, which was used as a hiding place for contraband liquor. In the later days of the illicit whisky trading, two very famous characters carried on the business in the Lakes. One was “ Whisky ” Walker, of Watendlath, the other “ Lanty ” Slee, of Langdale and Tilberthwaite. Walker was initiated in the working of a still by a Scotch pedlar, and Slee was Walker’s pupil. Walker was never caught by the Revenue Officers, whereas the latter managed to “ land ” Slee.

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Walker's most narrow escape occurred when the Cockermouth Otterhounds hunted a drag up Watendlath Beck. The line led them to a steep ghyll behind the smuggler's house, and there some of the field discovered the still. They promptly helped themselves, not wisely but too well, with the result that they were found lying drunk all the way from Barrow House to Keswick. The authorities got to hear of it, and planned a raid for the following day. Walker was from home on the day of the hunt at a sheep-clipping at Wythburn, but on hearing the news he at once took his departure, and during the night he and his family worked like beavers, and removed all signs of the still, sinking the paraphernalia in Watendlath Tarn. On the arrival of the Revenue Officers the next day they fully thought they had been hoaxed, and of course found no evidence on which to make a conviction. Walker eventually emigrated with his family to Australia. It is difficult to say when "Lanty" Slee's career came to an end, but in 1853 he was caught "red-handed," and fined one hundred pounds. The whiskey, made with large quantities of potato starch, was real "hot-stuff," and anyone who got "tight" on it was generally incapacitated for several days. The dalesfolk are quick witted and good at repartee. Mr. J. R. Ball, of Little Corby, relates a story in this connection. He was on one occasion speaking of the size of his county Cumberland. Quick as lightning came the retort, "Aye, but if Westmorland were rowled oot flat wheear wad yer Cumberland be?"

Mention has already been made of the woman "Mayoress" at Troutbeck. Nanny, the wife of Jack Parker, huntsman to the Sinnington,

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used to help her husband a lot, in the way of strapping his horse and gathering in hounds. On one occasion she was met by a lady of the district leading a puppy and with several couples following behind. The lady on expressing surprise at her job was met with the reply : " D' ye think ahs yan o' them wimmin at sits at yam an leaks pretty all daay lang and diz nowt ? "

Dalesfolk are generally pretty closely related to each other, therefore a stranger has to mind his p's and q's when talking about the neighbouring people. An old verse expresses this :

" It'll save ye neea sma' trouble
If when speakin' ye tak care
To whom ye speak, of whom ye speak,
An' hoo an' when, an' where."

The old homesteads, and the old customs in the Lakeland dales are gradually giving way to more modern ideas. Many of the houses have been so altered as to be unrecognisable. One thing remains, and that is the love of hunting. The cry of hounds is the signal to down tools and join in the chase, and there are few dalesmen, shepherds, or working-men in the fells who can resist it.

A FAMOUS LAKELAND FOXHOUND PACK

CHAPTER XXV

AS you cross the summit of Kirkstone Pass, and drop down the steep descent to Hart-sop, or travel from Penrith via the road which lies parallel with Ullswater, you eventually reach the village of Patterdale, lying snugly ensconced at the foot of the fells. A stranger visiting the place for the first time would hardly guess that situated on the outskirts of the village are the kennels of a pack of foxhounds, and that the high fells all round—including the mighty Helvellyn—are the happy hunting ground of a famous north-country pack.

Certainly the mountainous character of the district hardly fits in with one's pre-conceived idea of a hunting country, and as a matter of fact riding to hounds is out of the question, the pack being followed on foot. This chapter therefore will appeal more to the man who is genuinely fond of hounds and hound work, than to him who "hunts to ride."

Leaving the village by way of the lane which leads past Patterdale Hall, the residence of Mr. W. H. Marshall, the present Master of the pack, a short but somewhat steep ascent brings you into view of the Ullswater kennels, lying at the lower end of the wild and picturesque Grisedale valley. Here from October to the middle of May are kept some thirteen couples of hounds, whose business

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it is to account for the stout hill-foxes, a plentiful supply of which is to be found on the neighbouring fells. The pack serves a dual purpose, i.e., to keep down foxes in the interests of the flock-masters, and to provide sport for local hunting people.

A big hill-fox, one of the kind described by an eminent naturalist as "fierce as a tiger, long as a hay-band, and with an admirable cast of features like the Chancellor of the Exchequer——," can do a lot of damage amongst the lambs in spring, when there is a family of cubs to feed. Hence the Ullswater are in great demand during the Spring season, and they account for many a May fox. Hounds are kennelled early in the year, but in summer they are sent out to walk on the fell farms, a couple or two generally going to augment one or other of the neighbouring otter hound packs; for many of them can give quite as good an account of themselves when hunting the "sly goose-footed prowler" as they do when in pursuit of their legitimate quarry.

A visit to the Ullswater kennels, in the company of Joe Bowman, the veteran huntsman, who has carried the horn since 1879, is an education in itself; for what Joe with his long experience of hounds and foxes does not know about fell hunting is not worth knowing. As hounds come down off the sleeping bench, and parade in the kennel yard a hunting man from the Shires may be forgiven if he shows some surprise at the type on which he is setting eyes for the first time. They are a very different stamp from that to which he has been accustomed in the low country.

To begin with, hounds are light built, and hare-footed, otherwise they could not travel at speed over their rough country; they are light-



JOE BOWMAN, THE ULLSWATER HUNTSMAN.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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coloured as well, or they would not be easily seen at a distance against a dark background of heather or rock. Added to the above they possess capital noses—for they hunt the drag of their fox in the old-fashioned way—and they give any amount of tongue. The latter quality is very desirable in hill-hounds, for when they get far out of sight they can still be heard. Self-reliance is also one of their qualifications, for being on foot the huntsman can seldom be with them at a check, and they must therefore put things right for themselves.

A peculiarity of these fell hounds is that they do not break up their foxes. They are content to kill, and let it go at that. Perhaps this is just as well, otherwise there would be few trophies collected, seeing that huntsman and field are afoot, and often do not reach the spot until long after a fox has been rolled over. As an example of "hounds for countries," the Ullswater are an object lesson, for their average of foxes killed each season is thirty brace or over, truly a wonderful record considering the mountainous nature of their country and the difficulties under which both hounds and huntsman have to work.

The pack was founded in 1873 by the amalgamation of two old local packs, the Baldhowe and the Patterdale. Mr. J. E. Hasell was Master from 1880 to 1910, in which latter year the present Master, Mr. W. H. Marshall, took over the reins of office. The country, which lies in Cumberland and Westmorland, adjoins the Blencathra on the North-west, and the Coniston Hunt on the South.

As may be imagined in a wild mountainous region, the foxes are tough and hard to kill. During the war they increased tremendously in the fell country, and though the huntsmen of the

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five Lakeland packs did their best to keep them within reasonable bounds, they were severely handicapped by the absence of many regular followers, who are of great assistance when hounds are out.

Although the average hill-fox to-day is not exactly "as fierce as a tiger, and long as a hayband," some hefty specimens are brought to hand every season, and weights of 18lb. and 19lb. are still by no means uncommon. The heaviest fox killed by the Ullswater was one of 23lb., accounted for on Cross Fell. This fox measured 4ft 4in. long, and had 4in. of white on the end of its brush.

In the old days, foxes were much fewer on the fells than they are now, and blank days were not at all unusual. Which reminds me of the yarn concerning the old sportsman, who when asked what were the three most enjoyable things on earth, replied, "A good day with hounds," pause, "A bad day with hounds," further consideration, then "Damn it all sir, a *blank* day with hounds."

Joe Bowman has told the writer that in his younger days a total of six and a half or seven brace of foxes for the season was accounted good; now as noted, Joe annually kills his thirty brace or more. The so-called "greyhound" foxes, once common on the fells, were not a distinct variety, but being indigenous to the hills, and uncontaminated with foreign blood, they were more protectively coloured than their present day descendants. They were big, lean foxes, grey of jacket, and always in hard condition. Big, greyish foxes are still sometimes accounted for, but the real old "greyhound" sort are now chiefly to be seen reposing under glass cases in the fell-head farm houses. With the gradual



ULLSWATER FOXHOUNDS.
The Pack in Kennel.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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importation of foreign and other foxes into countries adjoining the fells proper, the true hill-breed has been contaminated, until to-day there are more red foxes than grey-jacketted ones, and weights are more often under than over 16 lb. In the old days, with fewer foxes, long runs often took place, and hounds usually killed or ran to ground the fox with which they started. Now—however, with a much heavier stock of foxes, hounds are apt to change, or the pack gets split up when several foxes are afoot. Sometimes a single hound gets away with a fox “on his own,” and every one of the Lakeland packs has a hound or hounds which have accounted for foxes single-handed. This tends to show of what stuff our Fell hounds are made; for in order to find, hunt and kill a fox “on his own,” a hound must possess nose, pace, drive, stamina, and self-reliance to a marked degree.

In the Ullswater country—and the same in other countries hunted by the fell packs—earth-stopping is impossible. Cairns and rocky earths—known locally as “borrans”—are everywhere scattered about the hill sides, and a fox if he is so minded can get in almost anywhere. To the credit of the breed be it said however, they seldom do so until hard pressed by hounds. Under such conditions, terriers are of course a necessary adjunct to the pack. Joe Bowman, the huntsman, always has a few couples of real good working terriers, “hard bitten” customers which he can rely on to bolt a fox, or make an end of him underground if he refuses to face the open. These terriers of the “Patterdale breed” have a good deal of Bedlington blood in them, and weigh from 14lb. to 16lb. Joe likes them a bit “on the leg” so that they can surmount the ledges under-

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ground, and thus reach their fox without getting unduly punished ; and at the same time they can travel over any sort of rough ground without tiring during the course of a long run. Their ears are better too if dropped close to their heads, so that they can afford less temptation for a fox to " take hold."

To see sport with the Ullswater hounds one has to be in hard condition, for the hills run up to a height of 3,000 ft. and over, and the ground has sometimes to be covered at a pretty fast pace. Having unkennelled their fox far up the fell side, hounds at once leave the field far behind, and one then has to make for the nearest point from which a view of the chase is likely to be obtained. A knowledge of the country and the run of the foxes is naturally a great help, and a stranger will therefore be wise to attach himself to some local hunter who knows the district.

There are times, however, more particularly at the beginning of the season in October, when many a run can be viewed without stirring far from the level of the dales.

There is no regular cub hunting, but in October there are plenty of well grown cubs about, and as these usually know little country, and therefore do not run far, they provide entertainment for those who through age or infirmity cannot tackle the high ground. The covert known as Low-wood, on the hill-side above Brotherswater, has been the scene of many a scurry with the cubs, and from the fields below it is possible to see all that goes on. At that time of year too, the weather is usually fine, but later in the season one experiences all sorts of climatic conditions, including mist, rain, and snow. In April and May, early morning meets are the rule, to enable hounds to be out before the dew is dried up by the sun.



ULLSWATER "CRACKER," A HOUND WITH A FINE RECORD IN THE FELS.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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TAKING OFF THE BRUSH.

B. Wilson, Whipper-in to the Ullswater Hounds.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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The present huntsman of the pack, Joe Bowman, has carried the horn since 1879, and is still hale and hearty. He comes of a long line of hunting ancestors, many of whom have been huntsmen, and he himself began following hounds as a boy at school often "playing truant" in order to have a day's sport. It is not every huntsman's gift to be as good in kennel as he is in the field, but without undue flattery it may be said that Joe "kills his foxes in the kennels" and handles his hounds in the field equally well. He is ably assisted by Braithwaite Wilson, the whipper-in, a "lish" and active traveller, who gets over the rough country in a marvellous manner. Owing to his abilities in this respect, he has received the nickname of "The Flying Whip."

There is no pageantry about sport with the Ullswater. The huntsman is the only man who wears a scarlet coat, the field being clad in anything from knickerbockers to corduroys. If you are fond of hounds and hound work however, and love sport for sport's sake, then I advise you to have a week or two on the fells with the Ullswater and Joe Bowman, and if you don't repeat the visit after your first experience, I shall be very much surprised.

FOX-HUNTING IN MAY

CHAPTER XXVI

AT one time with many packs the killing of a May fox formed a fitting wind-up to the season. Nowadays, however, hunting comes to an end much earlier, particularly during a forward spring, the late sport being confined to a few packs in Wales, the West Country, and the North.

In a wild, provincial country it is nearly always possible to arrange for a few meets in May, and in some districts it is compulsory to do so, in order to account for lamb-worrying foxes. Farmers are long-suffering and willing to overlook minor depredations, but when a fox or foxes take to killing lambs the hounds are in immediate request. While late spring hunting entails early rising, which may not sound attractive to folk accustomed to eleven o'clock meets, it pays to be at the scene of operations before the sun has had time to dispel the dew. This is particularly applicable where hounds hunt the drag, and work up to their fox before unkennelling him. This style of hunting is still necessarily practised on the Lakeland fells, where the foxes usually lie at a high elevation. To the lover of the out o' doors, the early hours of a spring morning are the best of the day. Everything seems clean and fresh then, from the dewdrops sparkling on the grass to the scent of the earth and the clear blue of the sky above.

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In winter it is often a hardship to leave a warm bed, and breakfast by lamp-light in order to reach a distant meet, and you sometimes mentally ejaculate, "Is it worth it?" It is generally worth it, however, and so in May the preliminaries to a day with hounds on the hills do not daunt you, seeing that they can all be performed in good daylight. The first three or four hours are worth all the rest when it comes to finding and hunting a wily lamb-killer. Hounds soon pick up the overnight drag on the dew-drenched grass, and they can often rattle along with it and make a quick unkennel.

The line may prove to be that of dog fox or vixen, though you cannot be sure which until you view your fox or judge by the route taken.

It may sound very unorthodox to hunt the mother of cubs, but you have no choice if she is thought to be responsible for sundry losses in the dalemen's flocks. Dog or vixen, one or both must pay the penalty of their misdeeds, and the price of their existence and that of their kind. The average vixen in May, although not in the best of fettle, is nevertheless quite able to run, and many a one beats hounds as the ground dries and the sun grows warmer.

Sometimes hounds drag up to the place where the litter is hidden, and there then ensues some strenuous digging until the youngsters are cornered and brought to light. From the earth far up the mountain-side they are carried down to civilisation, a home being found for them until they can be eventually turned down, or sold to improve the stock elsewhere.

While the vixen may be in the earth, she is quite as likely to be above ground not far away. If hounds hit off her line she may afford quite a

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decent run, and will probably try to get to ground in some safe retreat if hounds don't overhaul her in the open. I well remember a May hunt, in which it took three men all they knew to prevent a vixen getting to ground in a disused quarry. She ran the rock ledges like a cat, and almost beat both hounds and men, though the former eventually rolled her over. Half an hour later the dog fox bolted from an earth in the quarry, and he stood up for a fast sixty minutes before hounds pulled him down in the open. After hounds left the dale there was no more lamb worrying, so there was little doubt that the two foxes killed were the culprits.

It is often said that a dog fox will try to lead hounds away from the vixen when the latter is lying up, whereas on occasion he will do exactly the opposite. Towards the end of March, 1921, we had a very fast hunt with a dog fox, which eventually got to ground just in front of the leading hound, and later it was discovered that the vixen was in the same earth. When a fox kills a lamb the carcass of the latter is often found minus head and tail. This does not invariably happen, however, as it is not uncommon to see whole carcasses of lambs lying in or about a breeding earth.

While a fox has no hesitation about eating carrion above ground, or digging down to the body of a dead sheep which has been buried, it prefers I think to do its own killing. In the case of lambs it may take one which has just died and is still warm, but though on the hills one sees lots of carcasses laid on the tops of walls, or hung in low thorn trees, etc., by the shepherds, I never remember any such carcasses having been removed by foxes.



CONISTON FOXHOUNDS RETURNING TO KENNELS AFTER A HUNT ON THE
FELLS IN MAY.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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FOX-HUNTING IN MAY

In late April and May, hunting on the hills is a much less strenuous undertaking than in winter. There is no snow or ice on the rocks, and even on the high tops the air is often comfortably warm while visibility is generally good. Scent, too, usually serves during the early hours, and sometimes long after the sun has begun to exert its power hounds can still run hard.

Speaking of scent reminds me that I saw a statement the other day by a well known shooting man, to the effect that a setter or a pointer can often wind birds two hundred yards away, and though the scent is perfectly plain to the dog it cannot be detected by a human being. This was apropos of people often being able to smell a fox—or rather the place where a fox has passed—and yet perhaps ten couples of hounds fail to hold the line. In the first place I grant that the sense of smell, and the knowledge of differentiating between the body-scent and foot-scent is more highly developed in the pointer and setter than the hound, but it should be remembered that the two animals have for generations been worked along totally different lines. A setter is used to find stationary birds, or birds which at any rate are moving within a small area of ground, whereas a hound is expected to follow the twists and turns of his fox closely, and he seldom has need, in fact practically never requires, to wind his quarry at a distance.

A man can smell a fox only when the scent lies high, and on a day of this kind hounds can seldom run because the scent is too far above them. When scent is low, or even “breast high” to a hound, a human being cannot detect it; if he could, there wouldn’t be much need to use hounds. As a matter of fact, I have often

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seen hounds on the hills wind a fox at a long distance. Only the other day I saw two or three couples wind a fox lying motionless in a crag, and there was no breeze blowing in their direction at the time. A few years ago I walked a puppy for a certain Hunt, and when he was two years old that hound could find grouse, or perhaps I had better say wind them, at considerable distances. He was a particularly sensible hound, and though a grand worker at his own job I verily believe I could have trained him to be a useful gun-dog. The writer aforementioned says: "Did a man ever smell a partridge or grouse, except when served up with bread sauce?" This is rather a difficult question to answer, but speaking personally, as one who lives in sight of a moor, and is constantly on it at all seasons, I think I have smelt grouse on more than one occasion. Under certain conditions of weather the various scents in the open are more noticeable than at other times, and on one occasion at least I am convinced I could smell grouse. I do not, however, state this as an undeniable fact, as I may have been mistaken, but I made a note of it at the time, and referred to it after reading the statements made by the aforementioned writer. The latter also says: "Can birds consciously or unconsciously withhold their scent?" Here again one cannot give a definite answer, though a bird sitting close with feathers held tight, probably gives off little scent except from its breath. Anyhow, both dogs and foxes can find sitting partridges and pheasants, which seems to point to the fact that birds cannot entirely withhold their scent.

In our Lakeland country hunting generally ends somewhere about the middle of May, and

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both puppies and old hounds go out to their various walks, the kennels being empty during the summer. I suppose very few people have seen a fox hunted in June, but on one occasion I joined a huntsman on a fishing excursion to the hills, and he brought two couples of hounds with him. We made a very early start, found a fox directly, and eventually ran it to ground, after which we travelled on, and returned in the evening with a good bag of trout.

HUNTING IN THE SNOW

CHAPTER XXVII

IN an ordinary enclosed hunting country, the advent of snow conjures up visions of horses with "balled" feet, slipping and slithering all over the roads, or else eating their heads off in the stables ; while their masters tap the glass, and anathematise the vagaries of our changeable climate.

We who hunt on the fells, however, have no such misgivings, for unless the snow is very deep, or the crags heavily ice-bound, hounds can get through it all right, although following them on Shanks's Pony is a more or less laborious undertaking. As Jorrocks says : "'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" ; so snow or no snow, we generally have a go at it.

Hunting under such conditions, the odds are all in favour of the hounds, for the fox is short-legged in comparison, and he makes " heavy weather " of it as he ploughs through the soft white drifts. It is then that reynard learns to travel the wall-tops when the icy blast has blown them clear of snow, and having learnt it, he often adopts the same means of locomotion again, when the ground is bare. This running of wall-tops is a trick that always slows the hounds, for scent is too far above them to reach it from the ground, the consequence is they jump up and go in single

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file, until they reach the point where their quarry has again descended to terra firma. Sometimes a hound will race ahead if near a corner, and perhaps strike the line ; when the procession on the wall top dissolves, and away they go again full cry. The most dangerous time is when a frost comes after a slight thaw. Then, the snow-filled ghylls and gullies are veritable death-traps, with a hard, glassy surface, inclined at a steep angle. A slip at such a place may precipitate man or hound beyond recovery. More often, however, the snow is soft and damp, or soft and dry. In the latter case scent does not as a rule lie so well as in the former. In soft, wet snow there is often a capital scent, which, coupled with the bad going, lessens reynard's chance of escape, Seeing that as a rule the chances are six to four on the fox, it is only fair that hounds should have the advantage sometimes. When hunting in the snow there is one consolation, i.e., if hounds run clean away from you, it is always possible to follow their footprints. As you toil along, the tale of their doings gradually unfolds. Here they have been bunched together, driving ahead like mad. There they have spread for a moment like a fan, only to rejoin, and continue the chase. Amongst the larger imprints you can sometimes distinguish the smaller tracks of the fox, particularly when hounds have run a bit wide of the line, as often happens on a windy day. Should hounds descend into a dale, your field glasses will pick up the distant tracks, and instead of following them, you can slip round the head of the valley, and pick them up again where hounds have gone out. So you go on, cutting corners, and dodging over towards all the likely vantage points, until at last you find hounds marking their

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fox in a rocky "*Biold*," and with luck, you know the end of the chase is then in view. In go the terriers, a few minutes of excited barking on their part ensues, then, like a shadow, a tired fox slips away. Hounds get a view, and pell-mell down the snow-clad breast they go. The fox does his best, but he cannot pull clear, so instead he sinks his teeth into the shoulder of the fleet-footed bitch which rolls him over, and it is Who-Whoop ! Sometimes a fresh fox will bolt, and away go hounds with their new quarry, while the terriers are tracking the run fox underground. If you stay where you are, they may bring him back, I have known it happen ; although the chances are he will seek refuge elsewhere when hounds begin to press him.

In January and February, where there is one fox, there will generally be another, for it is the period known to our ancestors as "clicketting" time, when the dog fox goes in search of a vixen. Then you will see two lines of fox tracks running side by side, and sometimes jumbled together, but never do two foxes step exactly in one another's footprints, leaving what appears to be a single line of tracks, as do the American timber wolves.

At night, when the moon shines down from a star-lit sky, or the wind drifts the eddying snow-flakes, and whistles amongst the crags, you can hear the foxes barking and calling far up the fell-side. If you wander that way in the morning, the tale of the night's doings will be plainly printed in the snow. Then is the time to study the habits of your quarry. You will learn more about foxes by following their footprints in the snow, than by any other method, and the same applies to otters, as well as other wild four-footed



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George Chapman, the Coniston Huntsman, calling Hounds away
near Langdale Pikes.

(Photo by R. Clapham).

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creatures. On a non-hunting day you will get plenty of healthy exercise by so doing, for hill-foxes often travel long distances at night. You will also probably discover hidden drains, gaps, smoots and the like, which you knew nothing of before, all of which discoveries may help you to account for a fox on some future occasion when you are hunting.

Lots of other tracks will be met with, in addition to those left by Reynard, but none of them will lead you astray, unless you happen to strike the footprints of a small dog. On the fells at any rate, these would probably be accompanied by the imprints of a human being, and the tracks of the shepherd's collie are bigger than those of even a large fox. A dog spreads out his toes wider apart than a fox, and he generally trots, whereas the fox will walk for long distances. You may run across cat tracks, but these are very much rounder than reynard's footprints, and they never show the marks of the claws, except when a cat has perhaps made a sudden spring. The cat's claws are retractile, whereas those of the dog and fox are fixtures. A small dog, such as a terrier, which has a foot about the same size as a fox, nearly always trots sometimes on three legs; and if you follow the tracks for a bit, you will soon discover what made them. A fox has his regular runways, and you will find out just where he leaves a wood, goes through a fence, or jumps a wall. He will do the same thing when he is hunted, so it will pay you to remember all these places. When he gets to the boundary of his own particular beat, he will generally turn back, though in "clicketting" time, dog foxes often go far beyond such bounds. Here and there on a hillock, beside a post, or against a

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bush, you will find where reynard has "left his card," and all other foxes which chance to pass that way will do the same. Their noses tell them who has gone before, for to a fox his nose is the same as speech and writing are to us.

In an ordinary way, foxes are not very liable to accident, but where snares are set for rabbits a fox occasionally gets caught. He pulls the snare-peg up, or breaks the string, and goes away with the wire embedded in the flesh. The copper tends to induce gangrene, and the accident generally means the loss of a foot. If found by hounds, a "three legger" has little chance of escape. As a rule he is mighty chary of traps, especially if he has been once nipped. Sometimes he may take refuge in a drain, and if the latter is narrow, he may not be able to back out, especially if another fox or foxes come in behind him. In case of a sudden flood, he may quite likely be drowned in his underground retreat. The most curious accident to a fox, that I ever heard of, occurred in a certain Lakeland plantation. A fox was found with his neck fast between two saplings growing close together, and he was quite dead. How it happened, one can only guess. Possibly he had attempted to jump through the narrow space, and had slipped down between; or perhaps he had sprung at something and jammed his head through the opening.

When you can't ride, owing to deep snow, it is a good plan to take hounds into the big woodlands, and stir the foxes up a bit, on foot. Big woods seldom get sufficiently hunted, and foxes, finding them quiet, are inclined to congregate in them. Anyway it exercises hounds, and they like it much better than monotonous road work.

On the fells it is bad travelling in snow, and I

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have often wished for a pair of skis, or even snow-shoes. In places where when the ground is bare you have no hesitation in walking, you may think twice before you tackle them in winter. Spots like Striding Edge on Helvellyn, and Cofa Pike, between Fairfield and St. Sunday Crag, look very different on a wild blustering winter's afternoon from what they appear on a hot day at mid-summer. On the high tops, the wind is often so strong that you are forced to lie down or be blown off the fell, and it drives the particles of snow before it, which cut your face unmercifully. On a fine early spring day, with snow on the hills, and a bright sun overhead, the glare is sometimes acute, almost enough so to cause snow-blindness.

Hunting on the high tops in winter, you see little wild life, with the exception of ravens and buzzards, occasional snow buntings, and perhaps a stoat in its white coat and black tail-tip. Ravens often swoop down at foxes, although I have never heard of them really molesting a fox. In the season 1920-1921, I saw two ravens circling round a fox on the sky-line of Pavey Ark, near Langdale Pikes. Hounds had disturbed him, and he was making off to safer quarters.

On the fells in winter you often see very beautiful snow and ice effects. The snow gets blown by the wind sometimes till it resembles waves of the sea, and strikes curious shapes and patterns where the gale has plastered it against stone walls. On the crags huge icicles form and hang in festoons, to drop with a rattle and smash when a thaw commences. At such a time it is wise to keep a good lookout when standing beneath a crag, as loose stones, and sometimes huge chunks of rock, have a habit of breaking loose from their moorings; and they whiz down with a very unpleasant

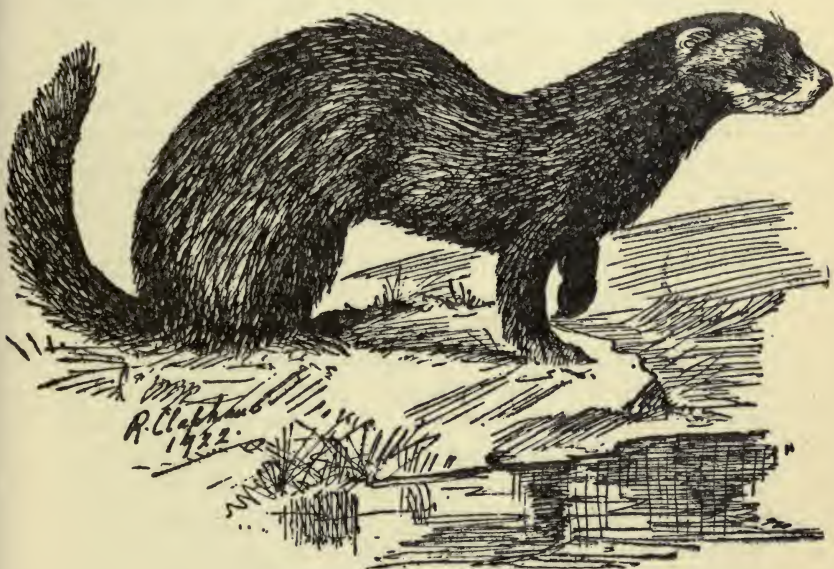
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sound, to crash on to the screes below, and go rolling down the fell side. A very small stone falling from a height is sufficient to put a man out of action, therefore it is as well to keep a wary eye open when scrambling about. The views in winter are often magnificent, and those who imagine that the fells are only beautiful in summer are sadly mistaken. I have seen far finer effects in winter than anything summer can show, effects in many instances both beautiful and awe-inspiring. Yes, both in sunshine and storm, the Lake country is hard to beat, at any rate for those who are not afraid to tackle it in its ever changing moods.

MARTS AND MART HUNTING

CHAPTER XXVIII

WITHIN the memory of many of the older inhabitants of Lakeland small packs of hounds were kept specially for mart-hunting. In local parlance and speaking generally the term "mart" was applied to both pine-marten and polecat. When differentiating between the two, however, the pine marten was known as the "sweet mart," and the polecat as



THE POLECAT OR "FOUMART"

the "foul mart" or evil-smelling marten. Most local people shorten the polecat's name still further and call it the "foumart." We will devote the first portion of this chapter to it, beginning with a brief description of the animal and its habits.

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The polecat belongs to the Mustelidæ and is a true weasel. It is a small creature: a big dog founmart—in the vernacular a “hob”—will not measure more than two feet from nose to tail-tip, while its weight may be about two and three-quarter pounds. The female is smaller still, and will weigh perhaps a pound less. Most people are familiar with the big, dark-coloured ferrets, known in some localities as “fitchet” ferrets. A wild polecat is not unlike one of these ferrets, being marked practically the same, but the coat is much darker and the animal itself is an altogether finer creature than the domesticated ferret. The colour of the polecat’s coat is dark brown, merging into black on the legs and underparts. The muzzle is white and a band of white crosses the face above the eyes, while the ears are tipped with white. Like the American skunk, the founmart is provided with a sac beneath its tail from which, when annoyed, it emits a greenish fluid of a most repulsive odour. Anyone who has had dealings with a skunk will have reason to remember the frightful stink—there is no other word for it—which the pretty black and white-striped animal pours forth, when cornered by a dog or caught in a trap. We have seen a dog practically blinded by a charge from a skunk’s “battery,” and have recollections of certain of our own garments which had to be burnt after coming in contact with a few drops of the skunk’s defensive spray. It is only as a last resort that the polecat emits its odour. When first alarmed it arches its back and fluffs out the fur of its body and tail, until it looks twice its size, accompanying this action with a hissing sound. In a wild state the founmart is really a very cleanly animal, and in its bield, or lair, it has three apartments where

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it sleeps, eats, and stores its food. The latter consists of rabbits, hedgehogs, birds, frogs, eels, etc. There is a story to the effect that when a party of hunters were digging to a fougart they found some live eels in the earth, which they promptly took to the nearest inn, and had them cooked for breakfast, after which they returned to the mart's lair and eventually dug him out. The fougart's hunting ground was usually amongst boggy land or heather-covered wastes. The animal lays up in old barns, stone heaps, and drains, though it is also found in earths of its own. Like the dog-fox, the "hob" wanders considerable distances in spring, and some long runs have been recorded at this season of the year.

After making exhaustive enquiries we have arrived at the conclusion that the polecat is now very rare indeed in Lakeland. We have recently heard of a specimen being seen locally, but it is safe to say that there are more pine martens than fougarts in the fell country to-day. Not long ago a gentleman sent us a polecat from Wales where the animals are still quite plentiful. On his estate the keeper secured no less than forty within a period of twelve months, one of which was a "freak," its coat being of a brownish shade, something like that of a pine marten. A fougart will work great havoc if it has access to a rabbit warren, and it will kill poultry as well as rats. The wild polecat will mate with the domesticated ferret, and the cross-breds prove excellent workers, being much quicker than ferrets, and not half so liable to lie up with a dead rabbit. The hybrids are also fertile. A friend of ours has bred polecat-ferrets successfully, a "hob" being mated with a white ferret, the ensuing litter being all dark-coloured like their male parent. Most of

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the fougarts captured in Wales are taken in the neighbourhood of water, for the polecat is of a thirsty nature, and has a partiality for frogs which inhabit damp places.

The fougart is easy to trap, and it is owing to its unsuspicious nature that it has been exterminated in many English districts where once it was plentiful. In France polecats are common, and when in that country we saw a fair number of specimens which had been trapped on the farms. The French keepers whom we met in Nieppe Forest told us that both martens and polecats were quite common there. Likewise near Fort Mahon on the coast we came across an old keeper who said that he often trapped them. In pre-war days large quantities of polecat skins from the Continent reached the London fur sales. In the trade polecat fur is known as fitch. Occasionally ferrets escape and lead a wild existence. Some of the so-called polecats reported from time to time are really nothing more than feral ferrets of the dark fougart colour. The fougart breeds in May or June, having from three to five young ones in a litter. The young are generally laid down in some rabbit hole, or amongst rocks and crevices. Being quite a good swimmer the polecat has no hesitation in crossing rivers.

In the old days fougart hunting was a popular sport in Lakeland. At one time quite a number of packs of fougart hounds were in existence. One of the most widely known establishments was the Rev. Hilton Wybergh's of Isel. Other packs were kept at Wigton, Aspatria, and Carlisle. The late Mr. James Fleming Green kept a pack at Grasmere with Anthony Chapman as his huntsman. Otter hounds were used for hunting fougarts, but the old Lancashire fougart hounds

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were a smaller and more active type than our present day rough otter hounds. In the Otter Hunting Diary (1829-1871) of the late Mr. James Lomax, of Clayton Hall, there is an illustration of a couple of fougart hounds. Mr. Lomax used them in crossing with his otter hounds. The picture shows two rough-coated, active-looking hounds in full cry. An old Lakeland dalesman told the writer that one of the packs with which he hunted years ago was composed of quite small, rough-coated hounds, not much bigger than Irish terriers. About eight couples of hounds was the average number to a pack, though some authorities declared that two couples were really sufficient. In addition to hounds a couple or two of really good working terriers were indispensable. The season for hunting the fougart extended roughly speaking from January to about the middle of May; March, April and May being the best months. Hounds met very early in the morning, in fact as soon as it was light enough to see. The scent of a fougart was strong, and if hounds hit off a line at once the pace was liable to be hot. The pack was followed on foot, and one had to be in something like training to keep in touch when hounds ran hard. As already mentioned the fougart was fond of haunting the vicinity of water, so hounds were generally taken to the boggy country adjoining the fells, such ground as lies not far from Skiddaw, or that between Wigton and the Solway.

During the hunting season the fougart was usually found in rocky cairns, stone drains, and old barns. In France the marten, called by the locals *martre*, resorts to barns in like manner. In Normandy the farmers tie up their hay in small square bundles, and stack it in the granaries,

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and it is in the latter that the marten is often discovered, driven out, and shot. Apropos of the fougart's habits of haunting old buildings, Edwards, the Scottish naturalist, relates the story of a fight he had with a polecat. Having lain down to sleep in the vault of the ruined castle of the Boyne, a fougart was attracted by the scent of a water-hen which he had in his pocket. The fougart attacked, and when Edwards attempted to drive the creature away, it renewed the assault, shrieking ferociously. Eventually Edwards gripped it with his hands and put an end to its further mischief by chloroforming it with the contents of a bottle which he used for asphyxiating butterflies and moths.

The fougart's scent being strong, hounds could own the line long after the animal had gone. This often led to the pack striking the drag heelway, and after a long hard run the field found themselves at the beginning instead of at the end of the hunt. On one occasion hounds hit off a drag directly they were unkennelled and ran it for a long distance after which they ran it back again, and marked their fougart to ground under the very building from which they had been released earlier in the morning. On another occasion a fougart was marked in a stone heap. The animal bolted—a rather unusual occurrence by the way—and was at once rolled over. Directly after, away hounds went in full cry for some four miles or more, and, returning on the same line, came straight back to the same stone heap. The fougart was therefore killed first and hunted afterwards. Occasionally hounds picked up the drag of a stoat, but the latter ran with many twists and turns whereas the line of the fougart was more or less straight, so that there was little

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difficulty in telling which quarry hounds had got on. It was of course essential that hounds should mark properly, for when a fougart went to ground in a big earth, it was impossible to know where to dig unless you had one or two good marking hounds.

On one occasion the Master of a certain pack ran his fougart to ground, and hounds marked steadily. On digging operations being started the owner of the land appeared on the scene, and asked, "who was going to mend them dykes?" The Master, feigning deafness, replied, "Nay it isn't train time yet!" The proprietor getting annoyed repeated his question, but the Master, putting his hand to his ear, said, "I think we'd be better for a sup o' rain." This went on until the fougart was got out, when hounds rolled him over after a short scurry. The owner of the land was as excited as anybody, and at once forgot his grievance. After the kill, the Master went back to the earth and prepared to mend the fence. The proprietor told him by signs that he need not do this. "But," said the Master, "if I don't do it who's to mend them dykes?" Looking greatly astonished the landowner exclaimed, "What, thoo's not deaf then?" Explanations of course followed, and the Master was cordially invited to come again and have another hunt on some future occasion.

It was the custom to present the fougart's skin to the poorest man in the Hunt, the value of the pelt being half-a-crown. No doubt at times there was a certain amount of "fratching" as to who was entitled to the honour. Occasionally very long hunts were brought off, and there are records of runs which lasted for seven or eight hours. No doubt the large number of packs

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kept for fowmart hunting had something to do with the eventual disappearance of the polecat in Lakeland, but we imagine the increase of game preservation rang the animal's death knell. There were many local characters famous for their love of hunting the fowmart and otter in the old days. One of these was a shoemaker named Kew, who was of rather a fractious disposition. In an old hunting song are the following lines :

While Jack Dockray was fratching with Shoemaker Kew
The otter shot off and again was in view.
Hark forward, my lads !

Turning from the polecat to the pine marten or " sweet mart," we have another animal belonging to the weasel family, although it is not a true weasel. Viewed at close quarters it has a decidedly foxy appearance, as it carries a bushy tail about a foot long. In size and weight martens like foxes vary considerably. An old ex-huntsman of mart hounds told us that in his day, it was a good Lakeland marten which weighed four pounds. A specimen killed in Ireland in 1918, a female, pulled down the scales to exactly this weight, its length from tip of nose to tip of tail being two feet, seven inches. The head is broad and the muzzle pointed, while the ears are well developed ; being broad and rounded at the ends. The feet are large and powerful, with considerable fur between the toes. When descending the trunk of a tree the marten turns its hind feet outwards exactly like a squirrel. The colour of the coat when the latter is at its best is a rich sable brown with an under fur of reddish grey. The hairs of the outer coat are of considerable length and are glossy. The throat shows a patch of lemon or orange colour, the shade of which varies considerably in individuals. On



YOUNG PINE-MARTEN FROM THE LAKE DISTRICT.

(Photo by R. Clapham).



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the Continent, the beech-marten—hardly distinguishable from our pine marten—has a white or cream white throat in many instances, and this is usually given as one of the characteristics which distinguish the pine from the beech marten. It is, however, unreliable, for the colour is extremely variable, the only sure means of identification being the teeth, and the width of the skull. The eartips are white. The pine marten is also a dweller across the Channel, but its *confrère*, the beech marten, does not extend its range to Great Britain. Speaking of the beech marten reminds us of an incident that happened in France.

Not far from a stream were two large concrete tanks, sunk level with the ground. Each held two or three feet of stagnant water, inhabited by numbers of frogs and newts. The frogs spent much of their time sitting about on bits of wood which were floating on the surface of the water. On our second visit to these tanks we found the freshly drowned body of a beech marten in one of them. Apparently what had happened was this: The tank, some six feet deep, and not quite half full of water, had proved a death trap to the marten, which, attracted by the frogs sitting on the floating debris, had attempted to reach them, and had fallen in. None of the pieces of wood floating in the water were sufficiently stable to afford the marten a footing, so it was unable to spring to the top of the tank and thus had perished miserably.

In the Lake District the marten's average litter number appears to be three. Pine martens are still to be found on the fells, and we imagine that there are probably more of them in Lakeland than elsewhere. In Scotland the marten is

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much rarer than the wild cat, while in Wales it is equally uncommon, whereas polecats are still plentiful in certain Welsh districts. The last Lakeland pine marten that we personally handled was taken in 1915. But more recently we saw marten tracks in the snow. By nature the marten is a tree dweller, but the gradual disappearance of the timber has forced it to take refuge on the open fells. There is a saying that in the Troutbeck valley, near Windermere, a squirrel could run from the fell head to Windermere Lake without once touching ground, so closely forested was the countryside; but such a feat is impossible to-day. The marten's present home is amongst the crags and rocky earths or borranas which bestrew the fell sides.

Some authorities say that the marten breeds twice in the year, i.e., in February and June; but the writer cannot vouch for the truth of this statement. As already mentioned, three is the average litter number, though as many as seven young ones have been found in one "nest." On the Lakeland fells the marten breeds among the rocks, but in woodlands it uses an old squirrel's "drey" or the deserted nest of a crow, hawk, or magpie. The gait of a pine marten consists of a series of bounds, the space between the imprints in snow often being of surprising length. It also affects a sort of bounding gallop, while its slowest pace is a walk. The tracks in snow may be mistaken for those of a hare, but if they are followed the trail sooner or later shows the walk and thus sets all doubts at rest, as a hare never walks. A marten does not run, as a ferret or a polecat will. In its movements the marten is a real "live wire," which is not surprising when we consider the fact that it can catch a

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squirrel in the timber. Where it inhabits woodlands it is the squirrel's deadliest foe, and thus does good in keeping down those animals which are so destructive in young plantations.

The marten is of course a flesh eater, but it also has a fondness for fruit of various kinds, as well as eggs. It disposes of an egg by neatly biting the end off and then lapping up the contents with its tongue, holding the egg meanwhile in its paws. The marten captured in the Lakes in 1915 greedily ate small trout which were offered to it. No doubt when the hill streams are dead low at mid-summer, it succeeds in catching trout in the rockbound pools.

We have seen it stated that the marten's greatest enemy is man with his guns and traps, but of this we are doubtful. Years ago martens were extremely plentiful, while foxes—the real, old-fashioned hill sort—were comparatively scarce. As the foxes increased, the martens grew less; and many of the old-time dalesmen have expressed the opinion that the foxes were responsible for their disappearance. The late Tommy Dobson, the famous Master of the Eskdale and Ennerdale Fox-hounds, always said that the foxes killed the martens; and he had a long and wide experience of both animals.

Only the other day we were discussing the same subject with Anthony Chapman, ex-huntsman of the Windermere Harriers, who, in his earlier years hunted a pack of mart hounds owned by the late Mr. John Fleming Green of Grasmere. He quoted an instance which came to his knowledge which rather points to the truth of the statement. On one occasion he hunted a mart which eventually beat hounds and had to be left in an impregnable position. A day or two after,

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happening to pass near the same spot, he found the tail of a marten—quite fresh—lying on the ground. Quick as a marten is, a fox can easily outstrip him on open ground ; and seeing that reynard will kill both cats and weasels there is every reason to suppose that he would do the same with marts when opportunity offered. In the woodlands a marten can seek refuge in the timber, but when foraging at night on the open fells it would be at the mercy of any fox which chanced to strike its line and follow it up.

The famous sable is of course a marten. In the forests of Northern Europe and America where the stoats, hares, etc., turn white in winter, the marten retains its dark brown coat. Living amongst the branches of the evergreen firs it there harmonises perfectly with its surroundings and has no necessity to change the colour of its pelage. Although the pine marten has a personal odour of its own, it cannot emit a horrible stench like the polecat does when alarmed. Martens thrive in captivity, and become very tame. A friend of the writer's kept one for four years, during which period it was perfectly healthy and well. At the end of that time, however, it suddenly exhibited a curious penchant for biting its own tail. Despite all that could be done for it, it practically ate its brush entirely away, and then "turned up its toes." To all appearance it was in perfect health, and it is hard to discover a reason for its strange behaviour, unless over feeding had something to do with it.

Martens are inimical to game, for their agility on the ground coupled with their climbing powers enables them to account for both furred and feathered creatures. In woodland districts the increase of game preservation naturally reduced

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the stock of martens, until to-day they only inhabit the wildest and most out-of-the-way parts of the country.

An old dalesman who lives in a part of the fell country where marts are still to be found assures the writer that he can remember the time when marts were regularly responsible for lamb worrying in spring. His statement is upheld by other old farmers and shepherds. A marten is certainly powerful enough to kill a lamb, and there seems no reason to doubt the stories one hears concerning the animal's evil-doing in this respect. In Thompson's "Mammals of Ireland" a case is quoted where in 1851 no fewer than twenty-one lambs were killed by a pair of martens in a couple of nights. Full-grown sheep have also been reported as killed by martens from time to time. When seizing a lamb or a hare, the marten's point of attack is behind the shoulder. From the hole thus made it sucks the blood. A polecat on the other hand, kills a rabbit by biting it across the eyes, while the stoat and weasel seize their victim behind the ear. The marten is easily trapped, but frequently dies, even if in no way injured by the trap. Other animals of the same family resign themselves to the inevitable in like manner. When angry or excited the marten growls, chatters, and hisses.

The Greeks and Romans domesticated the beech marten and used it as we do the cat to rid their houses of rats and mice. This was before the domestic cat was universally known. The pine marten was hunted in the same way as the founmart, and though the drag afforded the chief sport, a "sweet mart" could stand up before hounds for some time in rough ground. It is a more active beast than the polecat, and can

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climb with the greatest ease in crags and among timber. Anthony Chapman, who hunted Mr. Green's hounds, told the writer that on one occasion hounds threw up, and eventually the marten was discovered sitting on the limb of a tall birch tree, looking down at his pursuers. A marten has an intense dislike to smoke and will bolt directly the first whiff of burning grass or bracken reaches it.

In Vyner's "*Notitia Venatica*" it says regarding the marten, "our forefathers were used to enter their hounds to him as by his running the thickest brakes they were taught to turn quickly with a scent and run in covert without skirting. Although in the constant habit of climbing when hunted he will stand sometimes for half-an-hour before hounds with a good scent before treeing, when the following method of dislodging him is frequently practised:—A man climbs part of the way up the tree and holds under him some damp straw or hay which is lighted, immediately on his perceiving the smoke he darts out of the tree and so great is his agility that he will more frequently than not escape through the legs of the hounds that stand baying at him and eagerly watching his descent." The marten affords the best hunt in open country, and for this reason the sport was good on the Lakeland fells. A year or two ago the Coniston hounds marked a fox to ground and on the terriers being sent in a marten bolted. There ensued a brief scuffle, but the mart eventually beat hounds in a nearby crag. The martens which occasionally come to hand nowadays are generally accounted for by shepherds' dogs, or by the terriers of some hunting dalesman.

FOX-HUNTING ABROAD

CHAPTER XXIX

THE hunting man who leaves England on a visit to the Colonies or other countries abroad, naturally wonders if he will still be able to follow his favourite pursuit. In many instances he will find himself almost as well off in this respect as he was at home, for there are numbers of foreign packs which show capital sport.

It would, of course, require more than one volume to describe all these Hunts, so we can but touch on the fringe of the subject in the space of a single chapter. Beginning with the United States, there are 39 or 40 American Hunts, the majority of which devote their attention to fox. Hunting has been held in more or less high esteem in America, particularly in the Southern States, for a great number of years, and some of the more fashionable Hunts are conducted on up-to-date English lines. In quite early times English hounds found their way to the States, and a number were imported from France. The first pack of French hounds was sent over by Lafayette, and to-day one still sees native-bred American hounds which greatly resemble the French breed. As far back as the Revolutionary War, gentlemen in the Southern States kept their own private packs, and though they were of the rough and ready sort, they seem to have enjoyed much good sport.

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The old-time native-bred foxhounds were in all probability blood-hounds or at any rate hounds of that type, and it was not until the introduction of English and French blood that an improvement in type took place. There is still a good deal of controversy as to the respective merits of English and American-bred hounds, some people favouring the one and some the other. In the majority of recognised packs, the American hounds appear to find most favour, while others are composed of cross-breds. The Hunts, which use English hounds are decidedly in the minority. Much of the country hunted in America is wilder and rougher than in England, with large coverts, and dry and rocky ground. The States of course cover a vast extent of territory, so that in addition to the extremely provincial types of hunting countries, there are many others eminently suited to fox-chasing.

The methods and customs of hunting in America, differ considerably according to locality. In the South fox-hunting has always held first place, whereas in the East drag-hunting is frequently indulged in. In some districts a good deal of hunting by scratch packs is done at night, the field enjoying the cry of hounds rather than an actual view of the chase. This night hunting is indulged in because scenting conditions are then much better than during the heat of the day.

The first properly organised Hunt Club in America to be run on English lines was inaugurated in 1877 on Long Island. Ten couples of hounds were imported from England, and a drag was run. Being then a new thing, the members of the Hunt were held up to ridicule and caricatured in the Press, but by degrees the idea

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took firm root, and to-day the Meadowbrook, started in 1881, and kennelled on Long Island, is the most fashionable Hunt in America. In addition to the recognised Hunts there are many scratch packs throughout the country.

Many of these packs are followed on foot, or ridden to in a perfunctory manner. Very often several owners of hounds join forces for the day, and so get together a sizeable pack. A good deal of competition takes place under these circumstances, for individual owners are jealous of the reputation of their local hounds.

In 1894 the National Fox-hunters' Association was organised, with a membership extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It has done a great deal of good for American hounds, by starting a stud book, and organising field-trials. The Brunswick Hunt Club was started in 1889, annual trials being held at Barre, Mass. This organisation has done much towards encouraging hound breeding in New England. In the South, too, there are many Clubs which hold field-trials, giving awards to the best working hounds in the various classes.

It is here that English Masters would do well to take a leaf out of the Americans' book. If annual field-trials for hounds were held in this country, there would be a cessation of the present inflated prices for hounds of show type, for in order to win trials in hot competition, hounds must be bred more for work than for intensified show points. If such trials ever were held we venture to think that the upholders of the Peterborough stamp of hound will receive rather a rude awakening, when it comes to allotting the awards for nose, tongue, drive, and pace.

Some seasons ago, in pre-war days, Mr. Harry

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Worcester Smith, then Master of the Grafton hounds near Worcester, Mass., brought his pack of American hounds over to Ireland. These hounds were not unlike our fell type, and looked like killing foxes in any sort of country. Being less under control than English hounds, and not so used to disregarding riot, they took some time to settle down in a strange country, and unfortunately they were not long enough in Ireland to show what they could do. The best American hounds have wonderfully good noses, are self-reliant, persevering, give plenty of tongue, and are extremely fast. There are no better hounds to be found than the Walker breed, which is about the best known strain in America to-day. A good many English hounds have been imported from time to time, in order to increase the bone of the various American packs. Both fell hounds and hounds of Peterborough type have been sent out, the majority of American breeders much preferring the former, as they cross well with the native-bred ones.

In the majority of American hunting countries, earth-stopping is not done, nor are foxes dug when they go to ground. For this reason the average of kills is not high. The American red fox is a very tough customer, and takes a tremendous lot of killing ; for he leads a purely wild life, with no hint of artificiality about it, and has any amount of stamina.

In the wilder forest districts of the States and Canada, foxes are hunted by hounds to guns stationed on the various passes or runways. In Maine there is a special breed of hounds used for this purpose, known as the Buckfield Blues, from their blue mottle colour. We have often indulged in this form of fox-hunting in the dense

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woods of Ontario, where it is impossible to kill foxes in the ordinary way with a pack. One or two steady hounds with plenty of tongue were employed, the foxes circling round the woods without going very far away.

A good many foxes are killed in winter by tracking and stalking in the snow. Where the country is rough and there are no hounds, it is quite good fun. You pick up the overnight tracks of a fox, and follow them until you eventually unkennel your quarry, or "jump" him, to use the American expression. One has to use great care, otherwise the fox takes warning, and slips quietly away without offering a shot.

When we were living in the Canadian woods, every good fox skin fetched a matter of \$5.00, about £1, so there was some incentive to combine sport with business in the matter of pelts. We have shot foxes from a canoe when duck hunting in the marshes through which a river ran. The foxes used to prowl round the reed-beds and banks of the stream on the look-out for wounded wild fowl.

Crossing from the States into Canada, we find four Hunts, i.e., the Montreal, London, Ottawa, and Toronto. The Montreal is the oldest Hunt in North America, having been established in 1826. The hounds hunt fox on two days per week from mid-September until stopped by frost. Cub-hunting begins in August. It is a country of small enclosures, fenced with rails and stone walls. There is a good deal of woodland, and some wire in parts. The London Hunt, established in 1884, at one time hunted fox in Middlesex county, but owing to the spread of wire they now run a drag. The Ottawa, established in 1906,

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hunt fox from September to December, in Gloucester township, and part of Gower and Osgood east of the Rideau river. The Toronto hounds are a drag pack, meeting two days a week in the vicinity of Toronto.

In India, there are some ten or eleven packs of hounds which hunt jackal and fox. The Indian fox does not afford much sport, as it leaves little scent, and is very difficult to keep above ground for any length of time. The jackal on the other hand leaves a good scent and being possessed of great endurance will stand up well before hounds. He is a bigger animal than our English fox, but his brush is not to be compared with Reynard's

The recognised Indian Hunts of course use foxhounds for chasing the jackal, but in some parts of the country he is coursed with greyhounds, or hunted with a "bobbery" pack. Greyhounds are generally too fast for jackal, but a good deal of sport can be had with a "bobbery" pack composed of hounds, terriers, and a mixture of other breeds. In India, the jackal is the hero of fable and folk-tales just as the fox is in this country. Like the fox too, the jackal is a cunning beast, and will "play possum" in order to save its life. We have often seen an apparently dead fox get on his legs again and attempt to make off, and a jackal will do the same thing. Having a very tough hide, hounds have difficulty in breaking up a jackal, and though they may shake him and leave him for dead, it is no unusual thing for the supposedly defunct quarry to come to life again.

Like the fox, the jackal has his own particular beat, and usually turns when he reaches the boundary. He is very partial to coverts, and

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during the course of a run will try to evade hounds by making use of all available cover. Once in covert, a dead-beat jackal is not easy to bring to hand, for he is an adept at twisting and crawling about. He is harder to kill than our English fox, owing to his stamina, and the fact that hounds cannot be got into the same hard condition in India as they can in this country. Owing to the heat, hunting in India is an early morning sport. Most Indian packs are kept up to strength by annual drafts from England, and owing to the climate hounds require careful management in kennel.

The oldest Hunts in India are the Madras, Ootacamund, and Peshawar Vale. The earliest records of the Madras hounds date back to 1776. The hunting countries in India vary from grass downlands and woodland to irrigated fields with ditches, and mud or stone walls. Scenting conditions of course differ as they do in this country, some land being better in this respect than other parts.

The visitor to Australia can enjoy sport with three Hunts, i.e., the Adelaide, Melbourne, and Oakland. The Adelaide originally hunted carted deer, but now they are a drag pack. The Melbourne hunt fox in the country round the city of that name, and the Oakland hunt fox and hare. The fences in Australia consist of stiff posts and rails, some hedges and walls, also wire fences.

In New Zealand there are some fourteen or fifteen Hunts. There are no foxes, so hares are hunted, with an occasional drag. The fences consist chiefly of wire and post and rails, Australian and New Zealand horses are schooled to jump wire. In some districts there are gorse fences and banks.

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Turning to Africa we find four Hunts, i.e., the Cape, Gwelo and District (Rhodesia), Masara (Nairobi), and the Salisbury (Rhodesia). The Cape Hunt was founded in 1820. Hounds hunt jackal from May to September in the district round Durbanville. The Masara hunt jackal and duiker. Hounds are kennelled at Masara, near Nairobi. The Salisbury likewise hunt jackal in the district from which they take their name. There are no fences in the above countries, the going consisting chiefly of heath, grass, and sand, with watercourses, or bush and open veldt. Parts of the countries are hilly.

One of the oldest Hunts abroad is the Royal Calpe, established in 1813. The hounds hunt fox in the neighbourhood of Gibraltar, from November to March. The going consists of cultivated hills, gorse and cork woods. There are no regular fences, but some streams and open ditches.

One of the best known of the foreign Hunts is the Roman. These hounds hunt fox in the Campagna Romana, within a radius of some 35 miles of Rome. The going is practically all grass, with some large woodlands. The fences consist of stiff timber, and high and wide stone walls. A well-bred horse is necessary to negotiate the country.

Another well known Hunt is the Pau. These hounds hunt fox three days a week within a radius of 25 miles of Pau. The going consists of gorse, bracken, small enclosures, and big banks. The Hunt was established in 1847.

Probably few people realize that our French neighbours are a really sport-loving people, and that hunting is very keenly indulged in across the

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Channel. Just prior to the beginning of the war, there were some 330 packs of hounds in France with recognised establishments, and no doubt several private packs could be added to that number.

Although France is a Republican country, there are still some hundred or more of the old nobility who maintain packs of hounds on their own estates. Much of the going is of a woodland nature, and the pomp and ceremony of the chase is still religiously kept up as in the days of old.

French sportsmen have six recognised beasts of chase, i.e., the red deer, roe deer, wolf, boar, fox, and hare. Some Hunts devote their attention solely to hare, these being in the majority. Fifteen or sixteen packs hunt red deer, and about twice that number devote their attention to wild boar. Other packs hunt hare and fox, red deer and roe, or deer and boar alternately, while others hunt anything that turns up from hare to boar. Wolves are now scarce in France, and only some seven or eight packs hunt them in addition to other quarry. The wolf is one of the hardest animals in the world to run down with hounds in woodland country, the chase lasting anywhere from three to seven hours.

French hounds have less dash and drive than English fox-hounds, but they are renowned for their nose and determination in sticking to a line. The fox does not of course hold the same position in France that it does in England, being more often shot than legitimately hunted. Still, it finds more favour in that country year by year, and there are some thirty or more French packs hunting fox in alternation with other beasts of chase. As most of the hunting in France is done

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amidst extensive woodlands, it is necessary for hounds to throw their tongues freely. Horn music too is much indulged in, in order that followers shall be able to keep in touch with the chase and know what is going on.

FOX-FARMING

CHAPTER XXX

WHILE the value of our own red rascal lies in the sport he affords, many of his relations abroad are more sought after for their fur. In the palmy days of trapping, when beaver, buffalo, and Indians were plentiful, the pursuit of fur-bearing animals was a hard, but paying business. It is so to-day in certain districts of America, and both white men and Indians annually repair to the northern trapping grounds. Both prospector and trapper are ever urged to greater exertions, the former by the lure of gold, the latter in the hope that he may secure the chief prize of the woods, i.e., the skin of a silver fox in prime condition.

The more common furs, such as coon, skunk, civet, red-fox, and the like, can be secured in almost any district, but the valuable furs consisting of marten, beaver, silver fox, and lynx, are only found in out of the way places, where the forest primeval is their home. The lure of the silver fox is strong, for a thousand dollars is, or perhaps I had better say was—the present slump in the rarer furs having brought down values—a very ordinary price for a good black fox skin. In 1907 as much as two thousand seven hundred and forty dollars was paid for such a pelt at the London fur sales.

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Trapping is a lonely business, even when two men share the work. Snow lies deep on the ground, and under the intense cold of the northern winter, the trees crack like pistol shots. The trap line may cover a circle of from twenty to sixty miles, and cabins have to be built at each end of the route, with smaller shacks in between to serve as all night shelters in time of storm.

The trapper goes scuffling over the snow on his webbed snowshoes, leaving behind him a broad trail; and where the trap line is a long one, he often employs a dog-team to haul his outfit and the furs he secures. Many prying eyes of the wild things follow his movements, and on his return journey he will often find the tracks of the gaunt, grey timber wolves, where they have followed his trail out of curiosity. With the coming of spring, the trapper packs his winter's catch of furs, and turns his head in the direction of the settlements. On his arrival in civilization, he exchanges his catch for a goodly wad of "greenbacks," of which every single note has been hardly and honestly earned.

Considering the hardness of the life, and the infrequent chance of securing the coveted silver fox, it is not surprising that the idea finally originated of breeding these rare animals in captivity. It eventually struck a man of the name of Oulton, that "Two foxes in the pen were worth ten in the woods," and so he set about putting his theory in practice.

The following notes, culled from a rough diary which I kept in Canada, as well as from Bulletin No. 301, of the United States Department of Agriculture, will give the reader some idea of the commercial value of the fox in America.

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The man Oulton, with his partner Dalton, had been professional fox hunters, and bought and sold fox pelts as a business. Oulton once killed a silver fox, the skin of which netted him one hundred and thirty-eight dollars. Seeing the possibility of domesticating such a valuable animal, he and his partner set about experimenting. They built fox-proof enclosures, and studied the feeding and breeding of foxes. In 1894 they built a ranch, and stocked it with two pairs of silver foxes. This was the first fox-ranch started on a commercial basis, and the forerunner of what was to eventually become a thriving and lucrative industry. In those days, skins of the black fox were more valuable than those of the silver variety and so the firm of Oulton and Dalton kept their darker foxes, and gradually eliminated those of a lighter shade. As a result of his careful method of selection, they sent, in 1910, to the London fur sales, the finest collection of silver fox skins which had ever appeared there. The twenty-five pelts averaged one thousand three hundred and eighty-six dollars each, the best specimen selling at two thousand six hundred and twenty-four dollars. The ranch from which these fox skins came was situated on Prince Edward Island, a Canadian Province in the St. Lawrence Gulf. In the meantime other small fox ranches had been started in Ontario, Maine, Alaska, Michigan, Newfoundland, and the Maritime Provinces. The Prince Edward Island breeders intended to monopolise the business, and in order to keep their methods secret, they sent off their skins in small parcels, to distant post-offices, the reports of the sales being received in code. They agreed to sell no live silver foxes,

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and had secured the best that there were to be had.

Naturally, as the business thrived, the financial status of the partners improved, until it was no longer possible to "hide their light under a bushel." Friends and neighbours soon wanted to participate in the "good thing," and when the results of the 1910 sales were made public, there was a general rush to start in such an apparently profitable industry.

People with capital invested it in foxes, while others mortgaged their farms to enable them to follow suit. Others wanted foxes, taking a share of the sales' profits. Prices of breeding stock advanced rapidly, one ranchman selling his finest pair of cubs for seven hundred and fifty dollars, and other pairs for three thousand, twelve thousand, thirteen thousand, and fourteen thousand dollars. In the autumn of 1913, ranch-bred silver fox cubs six months old were selling at from eleven thousand to fifteen thousand dollars a pair.

The enormous inflation of prices was maintained by stock companies originally formed by individuals who for financial reasons were unable to enter the business alone. Companies were then formed for those who had foxes to sell. Dividends of from twenty to five hundred per cent. were paid, the stock being sold through brokers. Prices of twelve thousand to fifteen thousand dollars in the open market were capitalized in companies at eighteen thousand or twenty thousand dollars. Brokers and promoters found a means of livelihood in the industry, which naturally led to an increase of fox companies.

With the outbreak of war in 1914, the palmy days of speculation came to an end. In 1916,

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ranch bred foxes were selling at one thousand five hundred to two thousand dollars a pair. In certain territories where only foxes which have been kept for twelve months or more in captivity are allowed to be exported, prices of wild, half-grown silver cubs were from one hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars each. In 1914 silver fox skins fetched about one hundred and eighteen dollars each at the London fur sales, and there were indications that the prices would fall even lower.

In the early days of the fox breeding industry a certain number of people came to grief over it, through lack of knowledge in handling their stock. Now that there are a large number of silver foxes in captivity, a steadier and more healthy development of the business may be expected. In 1913, the number of fox ranches on Prince Edward Island was two hundred and seventy-seven. To-day there are ranches in nearly all the Canadian Provinces, Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. In 1914, the number of ranch-bred silver foxes on Prince Edward Island was two thousand six hundred. The value of these foxes was estimated at fifteen million dollars. Prices of both live foxes and skins are now far below their original value, and in the future the prices of breeding stock will bear a more approximate relation to the market value of their pelts. The following notes, culled from my diary of some years ago, relate to the construction of enclosures, etc., for keeping foxes in captivity.

A wired-in enclosure on land similar to that in

FOXES FOXHOUNDS & FOX-HUNTING

which the animals are accustomed to run wild, will be found quite suitable. A few shrubs and trees are necessary for shelter, and the enclosure should be as secluded as possible. Wire fencing, with a two inch mesh, ten feet high, let into the ground for eighteen inches, with an over hang of two feet at the top, is perfectly fox-proof. Inside the enclosure barrels or dog-kennels are distributed, which the foxes make full use of. Unless these are supplied, the foxes dig their own earths, and the litters suffer in consequence.

The average silver fox is omnivorous in his diet. Beetles, grasshoppers, rabbits, chickens, etc., are all greedily eaten; feeding a variety of food also lessens the expense considerably. Horse beef is fed at intervals, about a quarter of a pound of beef and a few scraps being sufficient for each fox per day.

If over-fed, the foxes become fat and lazy and breed badly. The average weight of a silver fox in good condition is about ten pounds. The cubs are born in April and May, and average five to a litter, though the numbers vary from two to eight. Disease is rare amongst them, and they live peaceably together. The attendants should make it their entire business to look after them. The fur and the disposition of the foxes can be greatly improved by judicious breeding.

Sufficient has been said to enable the reader to get some idea of the enormous value of the business in America to-day. Important as Reynard is from a hunting stand-point, he is of much greater value as a fur-bearing animal, though possibly few people realise his worth in this respect.

The market value of fox skins of different

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phases, depends upon the relative scarcity of the animal. The price of black skins fell below that of the silver variety, owing to the fact that furriers successfully imitated the former by dyeing ordinary red-fox skins black, and were thus able to put them on the market at cheap rates.



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