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THE OLD ENGLISH
COUNTRY SQUIRE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE PARISH CLERK
THE OLD-TIME PARSON
THE MANOR HOUSES OF ENGLAND
VANISHING ENGLAND
ENGLISH VILLAGES
THE CHARM OF THE ENGLISH VILLAGE
THE PARSON'S PLEASANCE
OLD ENGLISH CUSTOMS
THE STORY OF OUR ENGLISH TOWNS
THE CATHEDRALS OF GREAT BRITAIN
THE SYMBOLS OF SAINTS
OUT OF THE IVORY PALACES
THE CITY COMPANIES OF LONDON
BOOKS FATAL TO THEIR AUTHORS



THE OLD ENGLISH COUNTRY SQUIRE.
FROM AN OLD COLOURED ENGRAVING.

THE
OLD ENGLISH
COUNTRY SQUIRE

BY

P. H. DITCHFIELD

M.A., F.S.A., F.R.S.L., F.R.HIST.S.

WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS, OF WHICH
EIGHT ARE IN COLOUR

METHUEN & CO. LTD.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

First Published in 1912

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TO
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE PRINCE CHRISTIAN OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN, K.G.
(BY HIS GRACIOUS PERMISSION)
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
WITH EVERY FEELING OF RESPECT AND GRATITUDE
FOR MANY ACTS OF GRACIOUS KINDNESS

PREFACE

IN the village community the old squire has always played a distinctive part. In his previous books the writer has sketched the characters of the Old-time Parson and the Parish Clerk, and he has thought it well to complete the Trilogy by a study of the Squire, the central figure of rustic life in each age and generation. He trusts that the numerous readers who have shown their interest in his previous portraits of old-world characters, will deign to scan the pleasing features of this "fine old English gentleman," admire his noble qualities, and find some amusement in his humorous whimsicalities and eccentricities.

The race of squires is fast disappearing. Everywhere estates are being broken up and sold to the highest bidder, and the squire is compelled to leave the old manor-house which has sheltered him and his ancestors for many generations. Hence this book appears opportunely, and we are only just in time to catch a glimpse of the venerable gentleman before the auctioneer's hammer falls, and the last load of his old time-worn furniture is carted away.

In the preparation of this book the writer begs to offer his cordial thanks to many friends and correspondents who have been good enough to send him

stories of the squirearchy, and information about individual squires of whose fame and good works he would otherwise have been ignorant. He hopes that he has acknowledged this generous help in the text of this work, but he desires especially to thank his friend Lady Verney of Claydon House, whose Memoirs of the Verney Family are a mine of wealth for the study of the social life of England; Sir George Sitwell, Bart., who kindly placed at the writer's disposal his most interesting privately printed volumes on Letters of the Sitwells and Sacheverells; Mr. J. Fairfax Blakeborough; Mr. Pryce Williams; Mr. W. H. Peet; the Revs. Leyland Baldwin, Canon Jacques, J. H. D. Matthews, W. J. Betts, R. W. Heanley; Mr. George A. Fothergill, Mr. Godfrey, Mr. J. Whitaker, Mr. Ernest Axon, Mr. A. Cochrane, Mr. R. Crosby, Miss Holdsworth, Mr. G. Hulme, Mr. G. T. Cooper, Mr. Stephen H. Terry, Miss Hopton, Mr. J. R. Cook, Mr. R. E. Davies, H. W. Jenkins, and other ladies and gentlemen who have kindly shown an interest in this work by their letters and communications.

P. H. D.

BARKHAM RECTORY

August, 1912

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THE OLD ENGLISH COUNTRY SQUIRE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY TO THE STUDY OF SQUIRES

THE sound of the auctioneer's hammer is heard throughout the land, and everywhere estates are being broken up, divided into lots, and sold to new owners. All this is being accomplished with a rapidity that is amazing. "Going, going, gone," shouts the vendor; the hammer falls, and sounds the dirge of the passing away of a race of country gentlemen who have done good service in the past, and can ill be spared. "Fast are we spinning down the ringing grooves of change." The scene-shifters are busy with their canvas-painted forests and lakes and pastoral symphonies. It may be well to take a last farewell view before the curtain is rung down and a new piece set.

In the foreground stands a fair old manor-house. It is built of light grey stone, with a projecting porch and extending wings, in the style that is known as Tudor or Elizabethan. It is roofed with tiles stained by Time and coloured with moss and lichens. Tall, graceful chimneys, with elaborately designed patterns and twisted shafts crown the building, and picturesque gables, dormer and

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oriel windows, and oak-panelled rooms, testify to the taste and refinement of the builders of this dwelling, which is unequalled in its combination of stateliness with homeliness, in its expression of the manner of life of the men who erected it. Such is the squire's home, recording the memories of sire and grandsire, and retaining vivid recollections of the vigorous old knight and his lady who reared those walls in Tudor days, and carefully saw to the carving of the family arms over the porch with his and his dame's initials—R. D. and E. D., 1595 A.D.

The extensive stabling that adjoins the house testifies to the old squire's love of horse-flesh and sport. He always kept a pack of hounds, and thus contributed much to the general happiness and amusement of those who lived around him. In the distant landscape we see numerous farms and cottages, the inhabitants of which had never known an alien race of landlord or master. They knew him as no factory-hand ever dreamed of knowing his employer. They knew his moods, his tempers, his prejudices. They remembered each kind word and thoughtful act of kindness. They knew him in the coverts, across country with his hounds, on the river, on the course as they cheered his colours. The continuity of things on the estate, the tenants succeeding each other for generations, the villagers whose names run through the parish registers for centuries, are the friendly eyes that look to the manor-house, as the Jews looked towards Jerusalem.

England owes much to the race of country gentlemen, denominated squires, who have left their mark upon English social life, and tried to do their duty in the little world over which they ruled in each age and generation. They have furnished the best of soldiers, statesmen, and divines, and have been the backbone of England. It was everything to the making and upholding

of the country to have in each village and neighbourhood a strong man who upheld the principles his sires had taught him, exercised a powerful influence over the minds and manners of his tenants and labourers, was loved and respected by them, and made his house the centre of old-fashioned English hospitality. A strong sturdy race was that of the squires. They had a marked individuality. They formed a constituent part of the country life of England. The old squire loved his home, which he liked to make as fair and beautiful as his art and skill could devise. He was as well known to the people who lived around him and as welcome as the sun in summer or the full shock of corn in the harvest-tide. In the good old times sons followed fathers in regular succession as holders of the farms on the squire's estate. The labourer had never heard that his father or grand-father had ever worked for any other than some member of the old squire's family. Knit together by the strongest ties of sympathy and affection, of mutual trust, and the recollection of many kindnesses and acts of devotion, both squire and peasant remained loyally attached to each other, and cared not to have their peace disturbed by outsiders. It was well with the village when such a good old squire ruled with his benevolent and friendly though sometimes arbitrary despotism.

It is, alas ! too true that the race is becoming extinct. New times, new manners. Agricultural depression has tried them sorely. The increased burdens on land, the ever-growing weight of rates and taxes that falls with undue severity on our broad country acres, crushing out their very life-blood, have already ruined many an old county family, and the trend of modern legislation is in the same direction. Except in Berkshire, where, according to Fuller, "the lands are very skittish, and have often cast their riders," and that not so much

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through the fault of the lands as the fault of the riders, until half a century ago there were not infrequent instances of lands remaining in the same family for several centuries through every change of dynasty and religion. Sometimes great prosperity dawned upon a scion of the race, and he would build a huge mansion which proved a sore burden to his descendants, requiring vast sums for its maintenance and repair. Political revolutions often further reduced the resources of the estate, and the good simple folk would try frantically to retrieve their fallen fortunes by gigantic gambling in South Sea Bubble schemes, and only succeed in landing themselves in deeper mire. Year by year acre after acre would be severed from the ancestral estate. The bountiful hospitality to tenants and labourers was continued—it was so accustomed that to discontinue it would seem like the approach of the end of the world. Then the burden of increased taxation and the unprofitableness of farming as an industry when the Corn Laws were repealed, added to the misfortunes of the squire's family, until at length he found himself in a ruined hall with a miserable over-cropped farm, a corner of the old deer park under his drawing-room window. There was nothing to be done but to sell the home of his ancestors and migrate to a new land. Such has been the fate of many an old squire's family. Others have brought ruin on their ancestral estates through wild prodigality and reckless gambling, horse-racing and betting combined with an extravagant expenditure and the lavish entertainment of sharks and false friends who, having feathered their own nests, have quickly flown away when the day of doom came. Others again have simply died out. Sooner or later the old and last squire dies and leaves no heir to follow in his footsteps. Although there are numerous instances of families retaining their estates

for long periods, a study of any county history reveals the fact that landowning families, as a rule, retain possession of any given estate for a short time, and that the adjective "old" when applied to them is for the most part a comparative term. Mrs. William Hicks-Beach points this out in her charming book on *A Cotswold Family*, and applies it to Gloucestershire. Atkyns's history of that county was published in 1712, and records about three hundred coats of arms of the nobility and gentry of the shire. Of these we are told that only twenty-eight are in possession of the whole, or part, of their estates, "while the hold of many of these twenty-eight on the land is visibly weakening, and those who seem to be securely seated are so, either because they have married heiresses, or because the property was, in the first instance, so large that the diminishing processes of time have not yet completed their work." One Gloucestershire family, the Cliffords of Frampton-on-Severn, has held its lands ever since the Norman Conquest; but in two hundred years 90 per cent of the owners of land have disappeared from their ancestral acres, and their places know them no more.

The same story holds good in the West-country. In Devonshire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries good families were as plentiful as roses in a garden. In the eighteenth they began to wither and die down, and by the middle of the nineteenth they had vanished. The old order changes, giving place to new. The manor-house which has been in the family for hundreds of years, and sent forth into the world men who have won merit for themselves as soldiers, politicians, agriculturalists, and lovers of literature and art, now knows an alien race, possessing none of the traditions of the ancient stock. Family pictures, old furniture that de-

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lights the heart of the connoisseur, tapestry, and the priceless accumulations of works of art amassed by generations of squires, are sold by public auction. Though such disposals are unhappily by no means uncommon, even the most prosaic individual must experience a feeling of regret when the end comes, and so many old links with the past, which join a house to the brilliant chain of county history, are severed and scattered. It is always pathetic to see the last of an old home, and the extinction of a family that has done good service to its king and country.

And those who come to take its place in the countryside are poor substitutes for the old squire. They are not to the manner born. Though not ill-disposed they are ignorant of country customs and the deep-seated feelings of the country-folk. The old saw *Poeta nascitur, non fit* is truer far of the high-minded country gentleman than of any poet. Money cannot buy the position of the ancient squirearchy. Millionaires have bought up large portions of the country, but I have yet to meet one who ever purchased, with the title, the affections of its inhabitants. When an English squire came into his own, he inherited not merely so many acres, or flocks, or herds, but became the heir to the goodwill of the community, whose eyes would be trained to look at him with a personal relationship. Sometimes these strangers come as a pleasant change when the old squire was not all he might have been, always in need of money with a rough half-educated family of wild, ill-mannered sons and plain supercilious daughters. It is pleasant to have in their place a family of gentle manners, refinement, and culture, who bring sunshine into the village and cheer us by their presence. But oh! the terror of the *parvenu* and upstart. Dr. Jessopp shall tell you of them in his own inimitable way:—

“Town-bred folk who emerge from the back streets and have amassed money by a new hair-wash or an improvement in sticking-plaster. Such as these are out of harmony with their temporary surroundings: they giggle in the faces of the farmers’ daughters, ridicule the speech and manners of the labourers and their wives, and grumble at everything. They cannot think of walking in the dirty lanes, they are afraid of cows, and call children nasty little things. These people’s hospitalities are very trying. ‘Come, my boy, have a cut at the venison. Don’t be afraid. You shall have a good dinner for once; sha’n’t he, my dear?’ and as much champagne as you like to put inside you.’ It was a bottle-nosed Sir Gorgius Midas who spoke, and his lady at the other end of the table gave me a kindly wink as she caught my eye. But the wine was ——’s, and not his best. These are the people who demoralize our country villages. They introduce a vulgarity of tone quite indescribable, and the rapidity of the change wrought in the sentiments and language of the rustics is sometimes quite wonderful.”

They do not love these new people, who are a very disturbing influence in the village. Midas has terrible “week-end” parties when his house is crowded with a mob of folk as vulgar as himself, and all the women in the parish are engaged on Sundays to cater for their wants, wash up plates and dishes, and motor horns echo through the village when the church bells are ringing, and not one of the party ever thinks of attending church, and when the gardeners are getting ready to come they are called off to roll the tennis- and croquet-lawns, and all day the click of the croquet- and the thud of tennis-balls are heard by the villagers, and the quiet rural Sunday becomes a pandemonium. And the old rustic murmurs: “Things be changed since th’ old squire’s time. There

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be shameful goings on up at th' 'all. Them's your gentlefolks ; they don't want no religion, they don't—and we don't want no gentlefolks."

"Things be changed since th' old squire's time." Yes, that is so. Contrast Midas with his predecessor. The old squire was an upright magistrate, a kind landlord, a liberal contributor, according to his means and in later days above his means, to every judicious plan of charity. He was the friend of the poor, the unflinching protector of the oppressed, the firm opponent of the wicked, ever willing to advise, ever ready to help ; bold to warn the profligate, kind to encourage the industrious. He was a very busy man. Chairman of the Quarter Sessions, Chairman of the Board of Guardians, he never missed a meeting, or came late. He devoted a certain part of his day to receiving people who came to him for advice on the many matters that concern rural economy. He was personally active in the promotion of education amongst the poor in the villages around him, and long before the State began to educate the children of the poor, he built a little school and paid the salary of the mistress. He took an active interest in the support of all religious societies in the neighbouring town, and applied his mind to understand all subjects connected with the well-being of the poor, directing the managements of clubs, allotments, benefit societies, etc. He was never absent from his family pew in church either morning or afternoon on Sundays. At home, on the Bench, in the Vestry of his parish, at the Board of his Union, in the cottage of the poor, and at the table of his neighbours, serving on all manner of philanthropic boards, the leader in all social functions and neighbouring sports, he was ever treated with respectful homage.

Such is the picture of an ideal country squire, and

not altogether an imaginary one. There have been many such in England.

One such good squire died in Berkshire not long ago, and an old friend paid the following touching tribute to his memory :—

“ I have been permitted to see the actual and well-weighed and most loving appreciations of Philip Wroughton by his lifelong friends, and I take from one of his most intimate friends, a sentence, which all will recognize, as singularly descriptive of him—‘ He was the most natural man I ever knew, and always revealing a nature superior to others, but quite unconscious in his simplicity of what a splendid fellow he was.’

“ His naturalness and his simplicity were his life’s own revelation of himself. He had no disguises for his neighbours, and no surprises. He was always before them, doing such good as God gave him opportunity and grace to do. Some fires burn up quickly and as quickly die out. Others smoulder, and after a long time, when you look back, you see the flames burst out. His life looked uneventful as he lived it out here in our midst. So punctual, so continuous in service, was he that it was taken quite as a matter of course, that on the same day, at distances far apart, he should have been seen and spoken to, by all sorts and conditions—until the community leaned upon his personality, and used him as a will, scarcely conscious of all that he meant to them.

“ Now the life flames up! Now from long years of devoted service, done with perfect simplicity, done by one who never permitted himself to speak ill of his neighbour ; but who sought peace and ensued it ; whose kindness came not in ready smile or fluent word, but in doing for you, all that he could do, promptly and generously.

“ So in the midst of this community there has lived,

there has passed on, the richest product of this English soil—an English gentleman, passed on, with no proud word on his lips, with a most touching humility, all unconscious of that which our hopes all join in believing he has already heard—that rare ‘Well Done,’ for service meekly rendered, for a long and dutiful continuance in well-doing.”

May such squires long continue. But the race of old squires is a little mixed. They have not all conformed to the type already described. There have been good and bad squires. We have had many roystering, rollicking squires, who lived for their hunting and racing, their cock-fighting and bruising, their drinking and gambling. Of them we shall tell of many examples. Hunting squires have been as plentiful as blackberries. They have been the backbone of English sport, hard-riders to a man, who kept hounds and hunted them, and showed the instinct of true sportsmen. Fighters, too, they have been; the best fighting blood in England flowed in their veins; and they have shown their bravery on many a battlefield, and won for England her place among the nations. Bookworms and scholars have been found amongst their ranks, and statesmen, wise and discreet, who have guided the great ship of the State through many a crisis, and brought her safe to port when storms and tempests, rocks and cross-currents, have threatened her existence.

We hope to discover many such men in the course of our peregrinations, many worthies in several walks of life, as well as many eccentric fellows who will amuse us by their quaintness and curious manners. We shall paint some pleasant pictures of the *placens uxor*, the worthy companion of the squire’s joys and sorrows, a charming dame who seconded her husband’s efforts to relieve the poor, and proved herself a mother of the parish as well

as of her own family. The evidence of a good wife's influence is shown in many a squire's household, the careful rearing of her children in the paths of duty and good manners, the training of her servants, the ministering to the wants of her poorer neighbours, to whom she proved herself no ill physician—the story of a good woman's life is revealed in many a sketch of the lady of the manor.

She helped often to curb her husband's impetuosity of character, his arbitrariness and choleric temper. It was, perhaps, natural that a man who occupied the position of a petty sovereign, whose will was law on his domain, should sometimes become a little arbitrary in his methods. He would quarrel with his parson occasionally over some little question of doctrine or practice, and there would be high words and a little display of temper which the good lady would effectually check and bring peace to the troubled village. You would see the old squire at his best on the Bench of magistrates. He had been educated at Oxford or Cambridge, and had studied at the Bar ; but he knew more of Justice than of Law, and hammered out questions by the light of a sublime common sense. Right was right, and he maintained the right ; and if the law proclaimed a different conclusion, so much the worse for the law. Those who were brought before him knew that they would obtain just and fair treatment, and that if he erred it would be on the side of mercy. But poaching was a crime he could not countenance. It was the seven deadly sins rolled into one. He used to say, " Poaching was the beginning of worse causes, and it was good to nip the evil in the bud." A poacher was sure to turn out a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow, a thief and drunkard, a jail-bird ; and it was only a kindness to check such a disastrous career. But the peasants usually cared not to disturb the old squire's game, as they knew that they

would enjoy a full share of it in due season. He did not slay his pheasants by the thousand, and send them off to the poulterers' shops in the town or to Leadenhall Market. The days of battue shooting had not yet dawned.

In his correction of the manners of men the old squire was often a little arbitrary, especially in dealing with young upstarts whose want of manners he feared would seriously affect the conduct of those living on his estate. You would have been surprised to see him on one occasion quietly dismounting from the cob which he was riding, and lustily thrashing the greatest bully in the neighbourhood, because the fellow did not touch his hat to him. Explaining the reason for his action, he said, "I thought it right to do so, because that lubberly lout is teaching my people to be disrespectful, and when country people once lose respect for their benefactors, the next step is to lose self-respect." It was all very good and reasonable, and if you wondered why some mischievous intermeddler did not take the law of the old squire, you must remember—as his chronicler points out—that "he stood six feet high, and that there was a great pond on the village green, close by the May-pole, and that without a doubt any one who had injured an atom of the old squire's consequence, much less a hair of his head, would have been ducked in it within an inch of his life."¹

The old squire has had his detractors, both in ancient and modern times.

In Graves's *Spiritual Quixote* there is a chapter headed "Armigerorum laudes," which contains the following caricature of this worthy man :—

¹ This is told of Squire Henry Diggory Warter, of Cruck Meole, Salop, born in 1770, who was the hero of *The Last of the Squires*, written by his son, the Rev. J. Wood Warter, the learned and accomplished vicar of West Tarring, Sussex, son-in-law of the poet Southey, whose literary works he edited.

“ A country squire is a gentleman in a remote province ; who resides constantly at the mansion-house of his ancestors, which he keeps in tolerable repair—makes a new pair of gates, and builds a summer-house at the corner of his garden. Relying upon his silver spurs and a tight boot, he makes one attempt towards gaining a rich heiress ; but not succeeding, he marries his maid, gets an heir to his estate, dies, and is forgotten.

“ He visits the metropolis once in his life-time ; and takes up his quarters at the Ram in Smithfield—goes to visit his old aunt, from whom he has great expectations ; who, for the credit of the family, makes him put on a sword, which gets between his legs, and almost oversets him. He, therefore, walks through Fleet-street in his boots ; a sharper jostles him into the kennel—another snatches his whip from under his arm, under pretence of revenging the affront, and makes clean off with it—gives five and six-pence for a pair of buck-skin gloves, double stitched ; returns into the country, with a terrible idea of the extravagance and tricks of the town—and, though a constant dupe to the knavish cunning of his tenants, and the exorbitant gains of a country-shopkeeper, detests everything that bears the name of London, except, the London Evening-post, and the London carrier, that brings him down a barrel of oysters at Christmas. Now this sort of man is your country esquire.”

The squire is a survival of feudalism, says the political oracle of modern times, a creature that must be crushed, starved out, and stamped upon, by every Machiavellian device and political machination. He is a remnant of barbarism who intimidates his labourers and his domineering voice must no longer be heard in the land, and his power destroyed. Whether by this means you will make our villages happier and better places by the removal of squires is a question that is a little open to

doubt. The types of those who have in some cases supplanted them are not encouraging to those who fain would see a happy, prosperous, contented country-side, wherein God is worshipped and men strive to do their duty. Remove the old squire ; dethrone him from his seat, and you may get in his place a worse king, a Gorgius Midas, whom Pleasure owns as lord and in no sense Duty.

“ O knight, O squires, O gentle Bloods yborne,
 You were not borne all only for yourselves :
 Your country claims some part of all your pains !
 There should you live, and therein should you toil,
 To hold up Right, and banish cruel Wrong,
 To help the poor, to bridle back the rich,
 To punish vice, and virtue to advance,
 To see God served and Beelzebub supprest.
 You should not trust lieutenants in your Rome
 And let them sway the sceptre of your charge,
 While you, meanwhile, know scarcely what is done,
 Nor yet can yield account if you were called.”

So George Gascoigne sings in *The Steeple Glass*, a striking passage setting forth well the duties of squires, and the fatal mistake of leaving agents, “ lieutenants in your Rome,” to work their own sweet will, giving them a free hand, and “ scarcely knowing what is done.” The old squire did not employ an agent. He looked after his estate himself, knew every tenant and labourer, nay, every little urchin that made mud-pies at a cottage door and greeted him with glad smiles as he rode past. Thus he won the attachment of his people, and led them as he listed in the bonds of love. You will not do that if you subject them to the petty tyranny of an agent, and never come into personal contact and affectionate relationship with your people.

Other detractors of the old squires have represented them as an ignorant, boorish class, ill-mannered, drunken, and altogether despicable. The greatest sinner in this re-

spect was Lord Macaulay. We shall read presently what he has to say of the squires of the period of Charles II, a parody, a travesty of the real portrait, conceived in malice and produced with venom. The glaring inaccuracies of that unflattering picture will be pointed out later. The squires of England, as a class, never resembled that disgraceful caricature ; and though amongst that large and important body of, for the most part, high-bred gentlemen, there were some black sheep, some wild and wanton ones who were a disgrace to their class and brought an ill name upon a race who never brought an ill name upon themselves, or upon the country they loved with a full and devoted heart, we shall not think hardly of the " fine old English gentlemen " on account of the vagaries of the dissolute and the madmen amongst them. Those that survive we respect and honour, and of those that are gone we revere the memories.

CHAPTER II

THE SQUIRE OF ANCIENT DAYS

IN these democratic days every one, save a peer or a parson, deems himself entitled to be dubbed "Esquire," and is rather offended if a correspondent dares to address him as plain "Mr." In America there are no esquires; every one is addressed as Mr. So-and-so. Matthew Arnold, when in America, wrote in praise of that custom. "You are not compelled whenever you write a letter, to think whether or not you will insult your correspondent. An Englishman, writing a letter, adjudicates the social position of the person to whom he is writing, extending or withholding Esquire as he pleaseth, and thereby enraging those of his correspondents who are, as it were, upon the debatable verge of esquirehood." It will be noted that the great writer propounded this theory in America. It would have been difficult for him to carry it out in England. Those who have an extensive correspondence with all sorts and conditions of men know well the difficulty of deciding in doubtful cases that continually arise. He does not like to disregard the decorous distinctions of human society, but is conscious that he is liable to cause resentment and heart-burnings, if he fails to give this courtesy title where it is expected. He may console himself with the thought that the difficulty is not new. The question and the disputes that arise therefrom are at least three hundred years old. Does not Shakespeare record the embittered feelings of a

would-be esquire in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, when he makes Shallow say :—

“ If he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire, and a gentleman born who writes himself *Armigero* ” ?

Before the general use—or rather abuse—of the title came into vogue, it had a definite and distinct signification which now is entirely lost. The Latin equivalent *armiger*, or the old French *escuyer*, or the Spanish *escudero*, betrays its original meaning, and shows that it was a military office. The squire ranked next to the knight, and acted as his attendant, bearing his helmet, shield, and lance in the tournament or battlefield. But this military nature of a squire's duty did not last long. He was brought up in the house of some great noble, and acquired prowess in knightly accomplishment. No menial tasks fell to his lot and he had no degrading sense of inferiority to the noble and his family whom he served. In many ways he was quite equal to the noble. In blood, in knightly deed and educational culture the squire and the earl or baron were quite on an equality. The squire played an important part in the social economy of the kingdom, and was a connecting-link between the noble and the yeoman who farmed his own land, was independent, but could not have a coat-of-arms, though he was often quite as prosperous as the squire, and lived quite as comfortably. The squire was of gentle blood, and belonged to the rank of *generosi*, or men of family, of worship, and of coat-armour. He did not often aspire to military rank, and monarchs wished to make them all belted knights, but their efforts were in vain. In order to escape from such military burdens squires had to pay fines and take out licences, and thus were enabled to dispense with the ceremony of the accolade, and the kings did not object to this, as the amounts paid into the royal exchequer from

this source were considerable and were extremely useful to the Crown.

Of course the sons of squires often became soldiers and were made knights, but few of those who owned estates aspired to military rank. When wars were constantly in progress, when the stark Edward the First was leading his armies now into Wales, then into Scotland, and when the ever-renewed fights with France were waging, exorbitant demands for military service were constantly being made. These deterred the country gentlemen from joining the ranks of the soldiers, as they could not look after their estates, or perform the many duties that devolved upon them, if they were constantly absent at war.

In the fourteenth century the spirit of courtly chivalry invaded all ranks, when women were raised to an exalted position, and honoured and revered by knights and squires. Knighthood regained something of its ancient character, and became a military rank, and the squire had attained to an equality with the knight and performed many of the same duties. A knight would vow in extravagant language eternal love to his particular lady fair, wear her glove or her guerdon on his helmet, and swear to protect it with his life. Family ties and domestic joys were cultivated. Knightly deeds, knight-errantry, jousts and tournaments, were the order of the day, and severe laws and regulations of chivalry governed the lives and conduct of gentlemen. If a knight was guilty of any impropriety of conduct, he was soundly beaten by the other knights, in order to teach him to respect the honour of the ladies and the rights of chivalry.

The sons of knights and squires were sent to some noble's castle and brought up with his sons, learning the laws of chivalry and good conduct. An ancient work,

L'Ordre de la Chevalerie gives a description of the youth's duties :—

“ It is fitting that the son of a knight while he is a squire, should know how to take care of a horse ; and it is fitting that he should serve before and be subject to his lord ; for otherwise he will not know the nobleness of his lordship when he shall be a knight ; and to this end every knight shall put his son in the service of another knight, to the end that he may learn to carve at table and to serve, and to arm and apparel a knight in his youth. According to the man who desires to learn to be a tailor or a carpenter, it is desirable that he should have for a master one who is a tailor or a carpenter ; it is suitable that every nobleman who loves the order of chivalry, and wishes to become a good knight, should first have a knight for a master.”

Sometimes the young squire served his own father, as the Squire of the *Canterbury Tales*. Thus Chaucer describes him :—

“ With him there was his son, a youngë squire,
 A lover, and a lusty bachelor,
 With lockës crulle¹ as they were laid in press.
 Of twenty year of age he was I guess,
 Of his stature he was of even length,
 And wonderly deliver,² and great of strength.
 And he had been some time in chevachie,³
 In Flanders, in Artois, and Picardie,
 And borne him well, as if so little space,⁴
 In hope to standen in his lady's grace.
 Embroider'd was he, as it were a mead
 All full of freshë flowers, white and red.
 Singing he was, or fluting all the day ;
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.
 Short was his gown, with sleevës long and wide ;
 Well could he sit on horse and fairë ride.
 He couldë songës make, and well indite,

¹ Curled.

² Wonderfully nimble.

³ Cavalry raids.

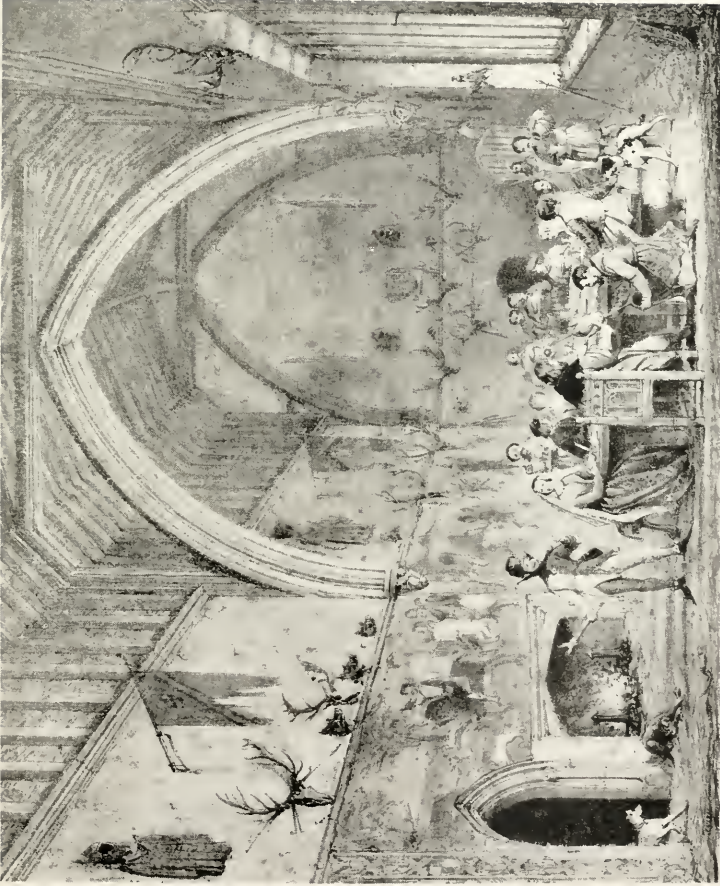
⁴ Considering the short space of time he had served.

Joust and eke dance, and well pourtray and write.
 So hot he loved, that by nightertale¹
 He slept no more than doeth the nightingale.
 Courteous he was, lowly, and serviceable,
 And carv'd before his father at the table."

Such was the young squire of Chaucer's time, who told his tale and those of his not very austere companions during the Canterbury pilgrimage. He seems to have been wonderfully proficient in divers arts and accomplishments. We can trace the progress of his education from *The Babe's Book*, and other mediæval chronicles. At an early age he would leave his father's house and become a page in the household of some great lord, and attend upon the ladies, acquiring the principles of high-bred courtesy and loyalty to the fair sex, which were essential to the devotee of chivalry. He learned Latin, reading, and writing from the chaplain, music from the master of the minstrels, and to illuminate or "pourtray," and other useful accomplishments. His mind was imbued with the spirit of romance, and the jousts and tournaments that constantly occurred taught him the love of arms and knightly prowess, and made him long for the time when he could ride forth as a knight-errant seeking goodly adventures, or go to the wars and win glory and fame.

And soon the time arrived when he was promoted to the rank of a squire and was taught to ride and use his sword and tilting-lance; and enjoyed many a round with his fellow-squires, nothing pleasing the youths more than the practice of arms. In the lord's castle he attended upon his lord, carved his meat and filled his cup, carried his shield or helmet on a journey, gave him a fresh lance at a tournament, raised him up and remounted him when unhorsed, the heavy armour worn necessitating

¹ By night-time.



A NOBLE BANQUETING HALL
(GITHAM MOAT, KENT)

the aid of a friendly hand, or dragged him out of the press if wounded. When war was declared, and the lord was bound to muster his forces and march them to the rendezvous, the young squire followed him and learned to lead a company of men-at-arms to the fight.

When he attained to manhood, if he was not destined for a military career, he would retire to his father's house, attend to his estates, and in due time succeed to them, paying a fine to the royal exchequer for not proceeding to the rank of knight. But in the age of chivalry few young men declined the proffered honour, which was bestowed with much ceremony and dignity. First he was divested of his garments and put into a bath, a symbol of purification; then they clothed him in a white tunic, a symbol of purity; in a red robe, a symbol of the blood which he was bound to shed in the service of the faith; and then in a close black coat, a reminder of the death that awaited him. Then he was obliged to observe a fast for twenty-four hours, and in the evening entered the church, and there passed the night in prayer. On the morrow, after confession and the receiving of the Mass, he heard a sermon upon the duties of knighthood, and then presented his sword to the priest, who blessed it. Kneeling before his lord he was asked, "With what design do you desire to enter into the order? If it is in order to become rich, to repose yourself, and to be honoured without doing honour to chivalry you are unworthy of it, and would be to the order of chivalry what the simoniacal priest is to the prelacy."

His answers being satisfactory, knights, or ladies, advance and clothe him with the equipments of his order: spurs, the hauberk or coat of mail, the cuirass, the vambraces and gauntlets, and lastly his sword. Then his lord gives him three blows of a sword on his shoulder, saying, "In the name of God, of Saint Michael, and Saint

George I dub thee knight," adding, "Be brave, adventurous, and loyal." He then mounts his horse, caracoles about, brandishing his lance, and afterwards in the courtyard he repeats the performances before the people, ever eager to take part in the spectacle.

Thus the squire became a knight, and doubtless played his part manfully in many a joust, and in the French wars, winning for himself great honour and much wealth by the capturing of notable counts and warriors and extracting from them heavy ransoms. Chaucer's knight is a companion portrait to that of the squire. He was

"A worthy man,
That from the timē that he first began
To riden out, he loved chivalry,
Truth and honour, freedom and courtesy.
Full worthy was he in his Lordē's war,
And thereto had he ridden, no man farre,¹
As well in Christendom as in Heatheness,
And ever honoured for his worthiness.

He had travelled far and fought often. At Alexandria in the campaign of Pierre de Lusignan, King of Cyprus, in 1365, and a few years later at Satalie in Anatolia, and Layas in Armenia under the same leader. He had been placed at the head of the table, above the knights of all nations, in Prussia, whither warriors of all nations were wont to repair, to aid the Teutonic order against their heathen neighbours in Lithuania and Russia. He had fought in Spain, capturing Algeciras from the Moors, and fighting in company with the Earls of Derby and Salisbury. His good broad sword was known and dreaded in the region of the "Great Sea," or eastern Mediterranean, in Africa by the Moors at Tremessen; in Palathia, in Anatolia, by the Turks; and whether in battle or in the

¹ Farther

lists he was always victorious. And yet his character remained true and good.

“ And though that he was worthy he was wise,
 And of his port as meek as is a maid.
 He never yet no villainy¹ ne said
 In all his life, unto no manner wight.
 He was a very perfect gentle knight,
 But for to tellē you of his array,
 His horse was good, but yet he was not gay.
 Of fustian he weared a gipon,²
 Allē besmotter’d with his habergeon,³
 For he was late y-come from his voyage
 And wentē for to do his pilgrimage.”

Truly he was “ a very perfect gentle knight,” and there were many like him whose praise Froissart and other chroniclers tell, who bore the fame and honour of English knighthood into foreign lands, and wrought well and worthily in many a chivalrous trial of skill or feat of arms.

We might enumerate many examples of the prowess of these knights and squires. Not the least remarkable were the four gallant squires of the celebrated James, Lord Audley, who fought in the French wars in the reign of Edward the Third, and to whose bravery the victory of Poitiers was mainly attributable. Their names were Sir John Delves of Doddington, in Cheshire; Dutton of Dutton, Foulshurst of Crewe, and Hawkestone of Wrine Hall, all

“ Cheshire born and Cheshire bred,
 Strong i’ th’ arm and weak in th’ ead,”

as the old rhyme saith. They betook themselves to the Continent under the leadership of the gallant Audley, at that time the scene of war and the theatre of military glory. The day of the battle of Poitiers dawned, and

¹ He never spoke anything unworthy of a gentleman.

² A short doublet. ³ Coat of mail which had soiled his doublet.

Lord Audley vowed to be foremost in the fight, and he sealed the vow more than once with his blood. Having obtained permission from the Prince to make the first attack, he began to fight, and "with the ayde of his foure scuyers dyd marvels in arms, and foughte always in the cheyfe of the batayle; y^t daye he never take prisoner, but always foughte and went on his enemye. . . ." At length, suffering from many wounds, he was carried off the field by his faithful squires, and on being brought on a litter into the presence of the Prince at the close of the battle, he was rewarded with a grant of five hundred marks a year for ever, which at once he gave to his four squires, who had shared the dangers of the battle with him. The Prince, upon this, supposing that he lightly regarded the gift, remonstrated with him, to which Audley replied, "Yes, but these men have deserved it as much as I myself, and have more need of it." This generosity so won upon the Prince's heart that he directed a grant of a second five hundred marks to be made to him. Audley, in further recognition of the services of his esquires, directed that each should bear in some part of his coat of arms his own proper achievement (gules, a fret d'or). To this day the recumbent effigy of one of the squires, Sir Robert Foulshurst, can be seen in the chancel of Barthomley Church, Cheshire; and life-size statues of Lord Audley and his esquires formerly existed at Doddington, in the same county.

Another gallant Cestrian was Sir Thomas Danyers, who went to the French wars and fought at Crécy under the banner of the Black Prince. Of all the brave followers of that heroic Prince he was, perhaps, the most distinguished, and in the thickest of the fight, and at the critical moment when the King had bidden the Prince, "his boy, to win his spurs and the honour of the day for himself," Sir Thomas "relieved the banner of his earl, and took

prisoner the chamberlain of France, de Tankerville." As a reward for this service an annuity was settled upon him by the Black Prince until a convenient grant of land could be made, and subsequently the estate of Lyme was granted to Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas Danyers, then the wife of Sir Piers Legh, an estate which is still held by the Leghs of Lyme.

Our knowledge of the mediæval period is vastly increased by the study of manuscript illuminations. The manuscripts of the romances of the King Arthur cycle, the Romance of the Rose in the Harleian manuscripts and others furnish many pictures which tell us of the lives of military knights and squires, their fights and combats, tournaments, and the ordinary incidents of their daily lives. The Romance of King Meliadus is especially rich in sketches of squires attending upon knights. These are evidently not the sons of squires with curled locks and graceful manners, of the class which Chaucer describes; but of a lowlier lot, very different from our conventional idea of a young squire. They are represented as men of mature age, and of rather a heavy type, not at all like the gay and gallant youths our fancy pictures. They are usually represented as unarmed, riding bare-headed with hoods hanging down behind their shoulders, ready for a cold day or a shower of rain; you see them looking on very phlegmatically while their masters are fighting. Sometimes the knight is accompanied by two squires, one bearing his tilting-helmet, and other carrying the knight's spear. In this picture the squire is running to catch the horse of his master, who has been unseated by an opponent; in another illumination he is handing him a new lance, or helping him to rise when the knight has been unhorsed.

From these pictures of mediæval chivalry we will return to the squire who did not set out on knight-

errant expedition, but contented himself with the management of his estates and the duty he owed to his superior lord and the king. He was lord of the manor, or of several manors, and could trace his descent to the time of William the Conqueror, when his ancestor came to help to conquer England and was rewarded with the gift of one or several estates wrung from the vanquished Englishmen. Some squires were of English origin, and contrived to keep their estates when the Normans came. The Coffins believed that they had lived at Portledge ever since Noah's flood, if indeed they had not merely returned thither after that temporary misplacement. They were as proud of their ancient lineage as any noblemen. Then there was that famous trio of Devonshire C's, of whom it is written :—

“ Crocker, Cruwys and Copplesone,
When the Conqueror came were all at home.”

But *Domesday* tells the sorry story of the expulsion of most of the old English gentlemen, and the establishment of Normans on the confiscated estates ; and from these the owners of manors in mediæval times, often allied by marriage to families of English stock, were descended.

Dr. Stubbs, the late Bishop of Oxford, who must have lived in the mediæval period as well as in the nineteenth century, drew a clear and accurate picture of the squire of those days. The squire, who was lord of one manor, used to find employment and amusement in cultivating his estate, and in his work at the County Court, the musters and arrays. He was usually very fond of appealing to the law, and had quarrels with his neighbours over disputed boundaries and other matters. So once or twice in his life he would journey to London to look after his legal business, making many vows before his departure, in order to obtain deliverance from the many

dangers that threatened him on the road. He prayed regularly in his parish church, and therein he was buried when the transitory years of his life had passed away, beneath a fine tomb or well-cut brass, which he had probably purchased in his lifetime, and which only required the insertion of the date of his death, an insertion which his successor often failed to supply.

The Black Book of the Exchequer of the reign of Edward IV reveals the economy of the squire's household. Every day his family and servants required 18 loaves, 8 gallons of mean ale, and cyder without price, 5d. a day for beef, 2d. a day for mutton, 6d. for bacon, veal, venison, lamb, poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, vegetables, wood, coal, candles, salt, and oat-meal—in all, 20d. per day. Of course, money was much more valuable then than it is now. The multiplication of the amount by 20 would scarcely represent a correct price of the commodities used; and as most of the food and drink was supplied by the squire's farm, the cost would be nominal. We gather also that at that period (the reign of Edward IV) the smaller squire spent £50 a year on his household, viz. £24 on victuals, £5 on furniture and repairs, £4 on horses, hay, etc., £4 on alms, clothing and oblations, and 40s. as wages to his chaplain. He kept valletti or yeomen, two grooms and two boys as pages or servants—the wages amounting to £9; livery cost the squire £2 10s., and the remainder was spent in hounds and hay and harvest charges.

But all squires were not of the same degree. Some were lords of several manors. One of these richer squires would have a larger household, a chaplain and a steward to keep his court leet and court baron. He, doubtless, was appointed sheriff of his county, a knight of the shire, and perhaps a belted knight or a banneret if he had been to the wars in his younger days, and been

fortunate in the field, and won for himself honour and renown. He devoted some of his wealth to God, and founded a chantry or built a chapel. He looked out a great marriage for his eldest son, whereby a great increase of wealth might flow into the coffers of his family. Many of these squires were most fortunate in their matrimonial alliances, and he portioned off his daughters into nunneries, or married them to his neighbouring squires. He was something of an adventurer as well as a county magnate. He did not crenellate his house, or make a large park, but he lived on terms of equality with those who did. He might have held the office of steward to a neighbouring earl, who might help him to rise. He kept many servants, but many of them would be poor relations. He paid small wages, but the food was cheap and good. The aspiring cadet of a gentle family of squires by education and accomplishment often rose into the service of a great baron, went to Court and gained a title and fortune, establishing a line of baronial descendants. The Black Book of Edward IV shows how the squire lived mainly on home-grown produce. In the house of a superior squire or knight twelve gallons of beer were consumed per day. It is astonishing the amount of beer that was consumed in squires' and nobles' houses in mediæval times. Of course there was no tea or coffee, and instead of these beverages that "cheer but not inebriate," people, even children, drank beer. The fare of the two elder children of the Earl of Northumberland consisted of a pottle of beer (two quarts!), a chicken or three mutton bones boiled, besides bread. One quart of beer and the same viands were the breakfast fare of two little children and "my lady's gentlewomen consumed a pottle of the beverage."

Besides 12 gallons of beer the household of the richer squire enjoyed a pipe of wine per year, 14 oxen for



TWELFTH NIGHT REVELS
(GADDON HALL, DERBYSHIRE)

beef, 60 sheep for mutton, 16 pigs for bacon, which were all purchased, and from the farm-stock 20 pigs, 13 calves, 60 piglings, 20 lambs, and " 12 head of dear taken by my lord's dogs which cost more than they bring in," besides geese, swans, capons, pullets, herons, partridges, peacocks, cranes and smaller fowls, either kept at home or taken by hawking, and 100 rabbits.

There was no barrier between the grades of the squirearchy. The squire of one manor and the lord of many manors who owned castles, and was a successful courtier and warrior, were equally proud of their ancestry, and there were constant changes. Some squires by good fortune and lucky marriages rose to great wealth and importance, and rich nobles by their extravagance at Court and in their homes lost their land. Estates were broken up then as now, without the machinations of "Form IV" and the Budget. Trading in provincial towns and in London increased and prospered. Merchants became rich and affluent, and were known to purchase the estates of impoverished nobles, and tradesmen ousted the squires from their manors.

The story of the Paston family of East Anglia, as revealed in the famous *Paston Letters*, affords an illustration of the "ups and downs" of social life in the Middle Ages. They were not very great people, not even squires, when we first make their acquaintance; but by their indomitable perseverance and energy they raised themselves to rank and fortune, and have left behind them an amazingly interesting record of their lives and achievements. Though their position in the early fifteenth century was humble, they must have had good blood in their veins, or they could not have so quickly risen to an equality with great personages, nor would the scions of good families so eagerly have sought to wed the daughters of the house. They did not escape

the tongues of calumny or the disparaging remarks of their contemporaries. Thus one of them wrote :—

“ First there was one Clement Paston and he was a good, plain husbandman and lived upon the land that he had at Paston, and kept a plough all times of the year and sometimes in barley-sell two ploughs.

“ The said Clement yede at one plough both winter and summer, and he rode to Mill on the bare horseback with his corn under him and brought home meal again under him . . . as a good husbandman ought to do.

“ Also he had in Paston a five score or a six score acres of land at the most, and much thereof bond land to Gymmingham Hall, with a poor little water-mill running by a little river there. . . . Other live-lode nor manors had he none, there nor in any other place ; and he wedded Geoffrey of Somerton (whose true name is Gould's) sister, which was a bondwoman, to whom it is not known (to the Prior of Bromholm and Bakton also, it is said) if that men will enquire. . . .

“ Also the said Clement had a son William, which he set to school and often borrowed money to find him to school ; and after that he yede to court with the help of Geoffrey Somerton his uncle and learnt the law, and there begat he much good. . . .”

This son William laid the foundation of the fortunes of his family, becoming a judge, “ and a good judge too,” as a modern refrain hath it ; and earning the confidence of his king, Henry VI, who made him one of the Council of the Duchy of Lancaster. He married into a good family, his bride being Agnes, daughter and heiress of Sir Edmund Berry, of Harlingford Hall, in Lincolnshire. He bought land at Paston, and became lord of the manor of Bacton, and also of the manors of Oxmead and Greysam, or Gresham. But in the midst of his prosperity he was much troubled by his enemies, and prayed to be delivered

from three of them: an apostate monk "that cursed Bishop of Bromholm," who claimed to be a relative and called himself John Paston; Aslak of Sprowston, who threatened to kill the judge for deciding against him at a trial; and one Julian Herbord. But the pious prayer of Judge Sir William Paston to the "Holie Trinitie" was granted, and he died in peace in 1444.

Thus the family of Pastons was launched. The sons blossomed out as esquires and lords of manors. John, the eldest son, calls himself esquier, and married a gentlewoman, Margaret Mantby, of Reedham, who made him "gentil cheere in gentil wise." He advanced further the family fortunes, and gained much land and property. He was Member of Parliament for the shire, and supporter of the Duke of York and his favourite when the Duke became King Edward IV. Sir John Fastolfe made him his heir and bequeathed to him Caistor Castle and other possessions. But he had great misfortunes. The times were troublous. The Wars of the Roses were still raging, and people profited by the disturbances to wage their own private quarrels and disturbances. Thus Gresham legally belonged to the Pastons, having been purchased by the Judge. But one Robert Hungerford propounded a shadowy claim to the manor, and during the absence of John Paston, attacked the house with a thousand riotous folk armed with a varied assortment of chance-weapons, and tore up the gates, knocked down the walls, smoked out poor Margaret Paston, and plundered the premises. After three years' litigation and by the grace of the King, Paston regained his own. Nor was this the only forcible eviction that the family had to endure. Caistor Castle, which he loved best, was, after his death, besieged by the Duke of Norfolk for a whole year, and then captured. The Duke was compelled to relinquish it, and then besieged it again, and it required

much expense and much intercession with persons in high places before the family again acquired possession.

These were incidents in the lives of squires in mediæval times happily unknown to-day. The warfare on landed property is conducted on less aggressive methods, but is no less destructive.

The expenses of litigation and other misfortunes landed poor John in the Fleet prison, and his enemies who coveted Caistor arranged that he should be outlawed. He escaped from their tyranny and died, and had a magnificent funeral. The charges of this ceremony have been preserved. The hearse must have been very grand, as £22 was expended on its construction, besides £6 for grey linen cloth and silk fringe for its adornment. The body was conveyed from London to Bromholm Abbey, and wherever it rested expenses were incurred for candles and wax, for wine for the singers at Norwich, for children in surplices for singing, and the Vicar of Dalling received 6s. 3d. for "bringing home a pardon from Rome to pay for all our Friends' sowles."

The *Paston Letters* deal much with romance and marriages, with designing mothers and rebellious daughters. We hope to refer to them later on when we reach that most interesting of all our chapters which deals with the ladies of the manor. We have only space to allude briefly to the subsequent fortunes of the family. Both sons of the deceased John bore their father's Christian name, and were distinguished by the designations Elder and Younger. John the Elder, Sir John as he became, was a gallant soldier who fought in France, the favourite of kings and courtiers; while the younger stayed at home, managed the affairs of the family, because "the beloved Valentine" of sweet Margery Brews, and fared on the whole well. He and his mother Margaret had to defend their Manor of Hellesden against the outrageous

attacks of the Duke of Suffolk, who succeeded in capturing, plundering, and destroying the house. But Oxnead remained to them and Caistor and much else. At the former place Sir Clement Paston, a famous admiral, who captured the French admiral, Baron de Blanchard, raised a noble house. He was the favourite of the Tudor sovereigns, dubbed his "Champion" by Henry VIII, while Queen Mary called him "her gallant seaman," and Queen Elizabeth her "father." Later on, the family gained an earldom, in the time of the Second Charles, who created Sir Robert Paston Earl of Yarmouth. But this carries us far beyond the mediæval period, and we are not, therefore, obliged to follow further the fortunes of the family, to see their rise to power and greatness, their sacrifices for the sake of their loyalty, their triumphs, their magnificence and then their fall. Such is the sad story of most families. We are taking leave of them in their time of ascendancy, when they were marching on to fresh triumph. Their history is given as an illustration of the rise of many families in the Middle Ages from positions of obscurity to squiredom and then to knighthood, from indigence to affluence, from the manor to the Court; while their letters tell of the manners and customs of the age in which they lived, give clear portraits of the writers, and amuse us by their quaintness and by the insight they afford us into human nature.

CHAPTER III

THE SHARERS OF THE SPOIL

A NEW type of squire arose when the mediæval period had passed away, and the plunder of the monasteries and other ecclesiastical property created a race of *nouveaux riches*, who were not the most estimable of men. When the tyrant Henry seized upon the monastic houses with the aid rendered to him by an obsequious Parliament, he was obliged to deal round "blood-money" to his confederates who had helped him to the spoil. Monastic property was lavishly squandered upon the parasites of the Court, "whose importunities never ceased and whose rapacity was never satisfied." What happened to the buildings? The grand minsters, cloisters and chambers of the monks were shorn of their lead, and everything that could be sold, and left to fall into decay, while the abbots' lodgings were left standing for the new occupant. Many of the courtiers, and of those who assisted the King in his work of spoliation, were eager enough to purchase their buildings on easy terms, or acquire them as a gift. They were sold usually at fifteen years' purchase, and the monastic lands at twenty. A housewife received a grant of a religious house for pleasing the King's prelate with a dish of puddings.

A curse is believed to lie on these robbers of Church lands and tithes, and Spelman examines very minutely the careers of the leaders in this nefarious traffic. He has no difficulty in proving that a very large number died

violent deaths, on the scaffold or in other ways; that in many instances they died childless, or their families became extinct in the next generation. More of the nobility and their children were attainted under the hand of justice within twenty years next following the Dissolution than were so during the previous five hundred years, or from the time of the Norman Conquest. "Did these men," asks Sir Henry Spelman, "die the common death of all men, or were they visited after the manner of all men? If not, we must believe they provoked the Lord." As the old rhyme states :—

" For evil hands have abbey-lands
Such evil fate in store ;
Such is the heritage that waits
Church-robbers evermore."

" To them good came from the hardships and misery inflicted upon hundreds of religious men and women and their retainers. They mounted into power and place upon the ruins of the old monastic houses, and laid the foundation of their family fortunes upon wealth filched in the name of the law from the patrimony of the poor."

Many of them certainly did come to a bad end, but it must be remembered that the vicissitudes of a courtier's life in that changeful period were very terrible, and also that the sudden acquisition of wealth usually produces great extravagance, which doubtless contributed to wreck the fortunes of these " new men." But many seem to have escaped the " curse," possibly by devoting some of their wealth to the founding of schools and colleges. Thus Sir Thomas Pope, who gained the Augustinian house of Wroxton and large landed property, averted the doom by founding Trinity College at Oxford. Little Anne Pope, the baby daughter of his nephew, Sir William Pope, was presented to King James I at Wroxton

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Abbey with a copy of these pretty verses in her hand, fashioned by Richard Corbet, afterwards Bishop of Oxford :—

“ See this little mistress here
Did never sit in Peter’s chaire,
Or a triple crown did weare,
And yet she is a Pope.
No benefice she ever sold,
Nor did dispense with sins for gold,
She hardly is a sen’night old,
And yet she is a Pope.
No king her feet did ever kiss,
Or had from her worse look than this,
Nor did she ever hope
To saint one with a rope,
And yet she is a Pope.
A female Pope you’ll say, a second Joan,
No sure—she is Pope Innocent or none.”

Sir John Williams, another spoliator, who gained much Church property at Thame, Oxfordshire, was created Lord Williams, and founded the Grammar School in that town, and his descendants, the Earls of Abingdon, still hold Rycote. Every county tells of the accession to power and influence of these new men. Edmund Harman, King Henry’s barber - surgeon, received a grant of Burford Priory, and George Owen, his doctor, blossomed out into a landed proprietor.

Apart from these “new men,” what was the attitude of the old squires towards the Dissolution of the monasteries and the dispersion of the property? They knew that a feeling was abroad that the monastic houses had had their day, that in many of them the numbers of the brethren had dwindled, that the old enthusiasm of monastic life was dead or dying. They were told strange stories of scandals which they did not much believe. They thought that religion might be better served if

the wealth of these great establishments were directed into other ways. They had little power to withstand a tyrant's decree who had plainly told his "faithful Commons," "I hear that my Bill [for the dissolution] will not pass; but I will have it pass, or I will have some of your heads." What could they do? The spirit of the Reformation was abroad. Many of the best men in the Church were anxious for reform, not on the lines of the foreign reformers, but for the rooting up of errors and the abolition of abuses. The country squires watched the movements that were going on with disturbed and mingled feelings; and then, when the Dissolution became a *fait accompli* and every one was grasping lands and houses, goods and chattels, they, too, shared in the spoil, bought the farms that lay near their own estates, and decorated their homes with the contents of the despoiled religious houses. And thus it came about that "the halls of country houses were hung with altar-cloths, their tables and beds were quilted with copes instead of carpets and coverlids; and many made carousing-cups of the sacred chalices, as once Belshazzar celebrated his drunken feast in the sanctified vessels of the Temple. It was a sorry house and not worth the naming which had not somewhat of this furniture in it, though it were only a fair large cushion made of a cope or altar-cloth to adorn their windows or make their chairs appear to have somewhat in them of a chair of State."¹

It is impossible within our prescribed space to record the countless names of those who enriched themselves out of the spoils of the Church. Sir Henry Spelman furnishes us with a goodly list. We will, however, paint one or two portraits of the men who by their energy and skill advanced themselves during this period of change

¹ Haylin's *Eccles. Restaurata*.

and unrest, when many lost their heads, both literally and metaphorically.

Our first picture is that of William Compton, the builder of the beautiful house, Compton Wynyates, in Warwickshire, of whose family the present Marquess of Northampton is the representative. He came of a good family of plain English squires, but of no great importance or widespread influence. It was his good fortune in his early youth to become page to Prince Henry, afterwards Henry VIII, with whom he was in high favour. He was appointed in quick succession groom of the bedchamber, chief gentleman of the bedchamber, groom of the stole, constable of Studeley and Gloucester castles, and to many other offices. The King gave a grant of arms "out of his own royall Ensigns and Devises." Compton distinguished himself in arms in the French and Scottish wars, and in the mimic battles of the joust and tournament, fighting by the King's side in many a feat of arms. At the Field of the Cloth of Gold he attended on his royal master, while his lady, Werburga, daughter and heiress of Sir John Brereton, watched the spectacle seated among the "knightes wyves." Special permission was given to him to wear his hat in the King's presence. He built for himself a fair house at Compton, having royal licence to impark two thousand acres, and laid the foundations of the fortunes of his family, afterwards considerably augmented by the marriage of his grandson, Lord Compton, with the daughter of the rich London merchant, Sir John Spencer. You will remember the story of how the young courtier, disguised as a baker, carried off the rich heiress in a baker's basket; how her father disinherited her but, by the strategy of Queen Elizabeth, was united again to the runaway couple at the christening of their first-born. Sir William Compton died, at the early age of forty-six, of the sweating



PRACTISING THE TOURNEY AT COMPTON WYNVALES

sickness—the influenza of that period—in 1528, and had therefore no share in the monastic spoils. He was a good type of those who by their skill in arms, their tact, courtesy, and gentlemanly bearing, made their way into the favour of kings, and doubtless thoroughly deserved all that they gained.

The rise of the Russells, Earls of Bedford, is a veritable romance. It commenced in Dorset when some ships conveying the Archduke of Austria, son-in-law of the King of Aragon and Castile, to Spain, were wrecked at Weymouth. Sir Thomas Trenchard, the governor, sent for his young cousin, Russell, an accomplished linguist, to converse with the Archduke. "It is an ill wind that blows nobody profit," wrote Fuller when telling the story, and this storm led to the foundation of the Russell fortunes. The Archduke conceived a liking for him, took him to Windsor, where he captivated the King "by his moving beauty and the comeliness of his mien," and by his varied accomplishments and talents. He became a favourite of Henry VIII, serving in the French wars, was knighted, and in 1538-9 created Baron Russell of Chenies. His rise was rapid. Honours and lucrative appointments clustered thick. He shared freely in the spoils of the monasteries, and continued to bask in royal favour through the reigns of Edward VI and Queen Mary, escorting Philip of Spain to England, and giving Her Majesty away on the occasion of her marriage. Full of riches and honour, he died in 1555 and was buried at Chenies, where so many of his illustrious descendants lie.

Another of our portraits shall be that of two brothers, Sir Philip and Sir Thomas Hoby, whose beautiful home, Bisham Abbey, now the residence of Sir Henry Vansittart-Neale, is one of the most charming houses in the royal county of Berks. They did not come of any exalted family lineage. Their pedigree dates not further back

than their father, who lived at Leominster, though the blood of Welsh princes is believed to have flowed in their veins. They had a coat-of-arms, but Philip was entirely ignorant of it ; as, when he was made a knight, he applied to the Heralds' College for a grant of arms, and received a totally different one from that which his family bore. Philip was born in 1505, and went to Court under the auspices of Charles Somerset, Earl of Worcester. There his talent for affairs of State was soon discovered, and as early as 1538 we find that he was entrusted with important work in the diplomatic service. He was also Master of the Ordnance, a Privy Councillor under Edward VI, and was appointed English Ambassador at the Court of the Emperor. Although his sympathies were strongly with the Reformation, his abilities were so greatly appreciated by Queen Mary and her advisers, that he was employed in different diplomatic missions even during the sway of the Roman Catholic party. He purchased various Church lands in Worcestershire, and in 1552 acquired Bisham Abbey, which, on his death in 1558, without male issue, passed to his brother Thomas. The house had been the residence of Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, after the monks had been driven out. Her arms and those of Sir Richard Pole, her husband, are still to be seen there in the council-chamber window. She was the mother of Cardinal Pole, and was executed in 1541, soon after which year it was granted to Sir Philip Hoby.

The life of this Thomas Hoby illustrates the career of a young man of the period, endowed with moderate wealth, good abilities, and a certain amount of ambition. He was educated at Cambridge, but did not take his degree, and then travelled abroad, in order to study foreign languages with a view to taking up the diplomatic service. He wrote an account of his *Travaile and*

Lief, which abounds in interest, recording his journeys to Germany, Venice, Padua, Naples, Sicily, France, Spain, and elsewhere, and giving descriptions of the cities and towns he visited. He copied epitaphs, described the medicinal qualities of the waters of the Bath of Juno at Caldiero, near Verona, and gives notes on the political affairs of the various countries. This book is an admirable sixteenth-century guide-book, as well as a work of considerable historical value. He also translated Count Castiglione's book, *Il Cortegiano* (the Courtier), and this translation won an assured place among the books of the Elizabethan period, and as its latest editor states, though Thomas Hoby's knowledge of the language was far from perfect, his work was "the book of a great age, the age that made Shakespeare possible."

Thomas was introduced to King Edward VI and his Court in 1550, accompanied his brother, the ambassador, abroad, won golden opinions wherever he went, and married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, of Gidea Hall, in Essex. In 1558 he writes: "The xi of May I came to London, being sent for to set my hand to a recognisance, and returned again the xiii taking my way by Wimbledon, where I communed with Mrs. Elizabeth Cook in the way of marriage." "Whitsunday, the xxix of May departed my brother out of this lief to a better"; so he inherited Bisham, and became Ambassador at the Court of the King of France. His first introduction to the French King was rather amusing. When he presented Queen Elizabeth's letters the Cardinal of Lorraine "smiled and seemed to make scoff," and tried to read the letters over the King's shoulder; but the English knight would not allow this liberty. "I prevented him, and somewhat (as it were unwitting of it) put myself betwixt the King and him to stopp his sight." We wish that the daily doings of the squire

of Bisham were as fully reported in the Diary as his impressions of foreign places. But occasionally we get glimpses of the life he led at the abbey and in the country.

The Hobys had also an estate at Evesham, whither he and his brother, Sir Philip, often went. The new buildings at Bisham Abbey, begun by Sir Philip and finished by Sir Thomas, afforded him great interest.

1557. ". . . My brother tooke his journey toward Evesham, and from thens to Bathe. I remained at home to see his new building go forward."

1560. "This yeere was the turret built in Bissham."

1561. "This yere were the new lodgings finished at Bissham."

1562. "This yere were the garden and orchard planted at Bissham, and the gallery made with noble men's armes, etc."

1563. "This yeere was the water brought in lead from Puddings to the house, and the fountain placed in the garden at Bissham."

1564. "Repairing of outhouses and barnes beyond the stable."

Amongst the guests who were entertained at the abbey were "Sir Nicholas Bakon, Lord Keeper of the Greate Seale, Sir Anthony Cooke, my father-in-law, the Lord Marquis of Northampton, the Erles of Arundell and Hertford, Lord Cobham, Lord Henry Seimor (Seymour), Sir Roger Northe, Lady Katherin Grey, Lady Jane Seymour, the Lady Cecil, Mrs. Blanch Apparry, Mrs. Mannsfield, the Queen's maids," and other distinguished company. He often went to London, and remained there "as long as xiii weeks." His good wife bore him a son and heir, and also "a wenche," who was christened Elizabeth, Lady Frances Gresham, Lady Elizabeth Neville, and Mr. John Doyley, Esquier, being the godparents. Later

on another daughter, Anne, was added to the family, and the long gallery echoed with the sound of happy children's voices as they played their games.

According to a legend it once echoed with the sound of weeping and wailing when the Lady Elizabeth Hoby, who, after her husband's death, married John, Lord Russell, struck her child for not writing in his copy-books properly, and the boy is said to have died, and the lady's ghost to walk disconsolately, trying in vain to remove a spot of blood from her hand. Certainly seventy years ago a number of children's copy-books of the time of Elizabeth were found beneath the flooring of a room, and one of these was covered with blots ; but the Bisham registers do not confirm the story. Two alabaster recumbent figures of the two brothers, Sir Philip and Sir Thomas, may be seen in the church, with the following inscription which enumerates their virtues :—

“ Two worthy Knightes and Hobies bothe by name
 Enclosed within this marble stone do rest—
 Philip, the fyrst, in Cæsar's Court hathe fame
 Such as tofore fewe legates like possest,
 A diepe discoursing head, a noble brest,
 A Courtier passing and a curteis Knight,
 Zelous to God, whos gospel he profest
 When grettest stormes gan dym the sacred light,
 A happie man whom death hathe now redeemed
 From care to joye that cannot be esteemed.
 Thomas in Fraunce possest the legate's place,
 And with such wisdom grew to guide the same
 As had increst great honour to his race
 Yf sodein fate had not envied his fame.
 Firm in God's truth, gentle, a faithful frend,
 Wel lerned and languaged ; nature besyde
 Gave comely shape, which made ruful his end,
 Sins in his flowre in Paris towne he died,
 Leaving with child behind his woful wief,
 In foreign land opprest with heapes of grief ;

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From part of which when she discharged was
By fall of teares which faithful wiefes do shead,
The corps with honour brought she to this place,
Perfourming here all due unto the dead.
That doon this noble tomb she caused to make
And both these brethren closed within the same,
A memory left here for vertue's sake,
In spite of death to honour them with fame.
Thus live they dead, and we lerne wel therby
That ye and we and all the world must dye."

CHAPTER IV

THE ELIZABETHAN SQUIRE

ENGLAND awakened from her sleep in the spacious days of the Virgin Queen, and a new era dawned of gallant exploit by land and sea in which the squires played their parts with manly vigour. During the dangerous days of Queen Mary many had sought safety overseas, or rested quietly in their manor-houses, watching fearfully from afar the hateful burnings of English men and women instigated by a cruel and ruthless Spaniard. They considered themselves champions of a purer faith than that which looked to the City of the Seven Hills for its inspiration and control, or found its expression in the horrors and tortures of the Inquisition. A national hate of the Spaniard drove them to scour the Spanish main, to wrest from their old enemy the wealth and glory of the West, to win new lands for the birth of a New England vaster than the Old. Country squires of Western England, gentlemen-adventurers of the Court, the sea-dogs of Devon, as well as the ear-ringed mariners of Wapping, set out in their small vessels as brave as lions to dare the dangers of the deep and to strike terror in the heart of Spain. It was a wonderful age that could produce such heroes.

We will glance at some of the portraits in this interesting gallery. Kingsley, in his *Westward Ho!* has made us familiar with them, and we can easily recognize the faces of Martin Frobisher, John Davis, Thomas Caven-

dish, Sir John Hawkins, Sir John Gilbert, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Richard Grenville. We cannot recount all their gallant deeds, their discoveries, their perils by land and sea, as they sought to gain El Dorado and to singe the beard of the King of Spain. Thomas Cavendish was the son of a Suffolk squire, and when he gained his estates on his father's death, he fitted out a stout bark of 120 tons, and sailed with Sir Richard Grenville to the West Indies and Virginia. The glamour of the West fell on him. Reckless and extravagant at home, wasting his goods in riotous living, he sailed again in 1586, and performed dashing exploits off the coasts of Chili, Peru, and Mexico. He had only 123 men and three small vessels of 120, 60, and 40 tons burden ; but with these he sailed round the world, made many important discoveries, and captured the royal Spanish galleon, *Santa Anna*, laden with valuable merchandise, and 122,000 Spanish dollars. He was away from England twenty-five months, and when he returned a gay company crowded Plymouth Hoe to watch his triumphal return, his men clad in silks, his sails of damask, his topsail ablaze with cloth of gold, and his coffers so full of gold that he was rich enough to purchase an earldom. Queen Elizabeth knighted him ; but " Light come, light go " was his motto. His wealth took to itself wings, and trying to recover it by another expedition, owing to dissensions amongst his crew and the hardships he endured, he died on board his ship at the early age of twenty-nine years. Only twenty-nine years ! There were giants in the earth in those days.

The Hawkinses were a family of heroes. They came of Devonshire stock. William Hawkins lived in the reign of Henry VIII, by whom he was much esteemed, according to Hakluyt, on account of " his wisdom, value, experience, and skill in sea causes." He was of

the earliest adventurers in the Southern seas, and brought up his sons, the more famous Sir John and William, to be expert mariners and scourers of the seas. His wife was one of the Trelawneys, renowned squires of Cornwall, the mother of brave sons. Sir John's name struck terror into the heart of Philip of Spain, and in dispatches which still exist where the name of John Hawkins occurs, "the sprawling asterisks in the margin," says Froude, "remain to evidence the emotion which it produced." Sir John has the discredit of founding the slave trade, of capturing poor natives in Africa and transporting them to America, to work in the plantations; but the spirit of the old Vikings seems to have been incarnate in the old knight, and nothing could daunt his courage. He had five ships laden with slaves and cargo. Violent storms obliged him to take shelter at San Juan de Ulloa. Thirteen Spanish ships of war entered the bay and challenged him to fight. They fired their broadsides into his vessels. Land batteries poured in their deadly shot. On, on he fought. Fire-ships were sent against his slender squadron; but then, with two shattered barks, he managed to elude his determined foe, and then away to England, to home and safety. Gallantly did he fight to save his country from the grip of the Spaniard when the dread Armada threatened her shores, and to Sir John Hawkins and the squires of Devon and Cornwall belongs in a great measure the credit of that wondrous victory.

A fitting companion to the gallant Sir John was Sir Humphrey Gilbert, "the father of Western colonization," who won Newfoundland for the English Crown. He enjoyed the favour of his Royal Mistress, who sent him a golden figure of an anchor guarded by a lady, wishing him "as great good hap and safety to his ship as if she herself were there in person." But misfortune

befell the intrepid sailor and his crew. Storms beset his little fleet. His largest ship went down. His own vessel, the *Squirrel*, was nearly shattered, but for a time recovered, and Sir Humphrey called out to the captain of the *Golden Hind*, "We are as near to heaven by sea as by land." But Sir Humphrey was destined never to see land again. His ship went down in the night. As Longfellow sings in his ballad in memory of the hero :—

" Alas, the land-wind failed,
And ice-cold grew the night ;
And never more, on sea or shore,
Should Sir Humphrey see the light."

Sir Francis Drake, the boldest, bravest, and sagest of that bright band of our naval heroes who baffled and beat the haughty Spaniards, came from a poor parsonage, and therefore we need not here record his exploits that made all England ring with his renown. I know not whether Sir Walter Raleigh belongs to the race of squires. He was born of an ancient Devonian family at Poer's Hayes, now Hayesbarton, and his portrait hangs in my college hall of Oriel, Oxford. He combined the wonderful talents of scholar, soldier, courtier, sailor, poet, and historian. His life of amazing adventures is so well known that I need not here record again his triumphs and his sufferings. England has never forgiven the crime of his murder, which for ever disgraces the memory of King James I.

But there is one family of West-country squires who have proved themselves a race of fighters, and to whom England owes much for their gallantry and bravery. These are the Grenvilles of Stowe, in the parish of Kilkhampton, Cornwall. Both Devon and Cornwall have claimed them as natives, being proud of their achievements. Prince claims them as "Worthies of Devon," and Sir John de Grenville, though residing at Stowe, in

Cornwall, was Sheriff of Devon in 1391, and represented the county in Parliament in 1389, 1394, 1397, and 1402. This distinguished family claimed descent from Rollo the Sea-king, and they have never belied their fierce and adventurous ancestor. The family has produced many renowned in other spheres of life—statesmen, magistrates, and ecclesiastics; but as a rule they were men of the sword, serving their country by land and sea.¹ The manors of Kilkhampton and Bideford were held in fief by Sir Richard de Grenville after A.D. 1107 from the daughter of his elder brother, Sir Robert Fitzhamon, Earl of Corteil and Prince of Glamorgan, as part of the honour of Gloucester, which had been bestowed upon him by William Rufus in return for his conquest of South Wales. She was married to Robert, a natural son of Henry I, created *jure uxoris* Earl of Gloucester, and it was at Bideford that the Grenvilles first lived, procuring charters and other privileges. Their house is believed to be identical with Ford Farm, situate about half a mile above Bideford on the Torrington road, and close to the ford by which the ancient Ridgeway road—mentioned by Robert of Cirencester—crossed the Torridge before the bridge was built. This site is confirmed by a letter, written at Bideford, from Sir Bernard Grenville to his son, Sir Bevil, then living at Stowe, in which he says that he is sending him some live perch for the ponds at Stowe, and describing the places where a change of water is to be given them *en route*. Ford is the only place near Bideford where there could possibly have been anything like a pond from which the perch were taken, and there are the remains of a large lake there. The house, moreover, is quite the oldest in the place.

Kingsley describes Stowe, the home of the family,

¹ We are indebted to the late Rev. Prebendary Granville, Sub-Dean of Exeter Cathedral, a descendant of the family, for valuable information concerning his distinguished ancestors.

on the site of which Charles II built for the heir of Sir Bevil, "a huge Palladian pile bedizened with every monstrosity of bad taste." The old house was "a huge rambling building, half castle, half dwelling-house, such as may still be seen in Compton Castle, near Torquay, the dwelling-place of Humphrey Gilbert. On three sides, to the north, west, and south, the lofty walls of the old ballium still stood, with their machicolated turrets, loop-holes, and dark, downward crannies for dropping stones and fire on the besiegers, the relics of a more unsettled age; but the southern court of the ballium had become a flower garden, with quaint terraces, statues, knots of flowers, clipped yews and hollies, and all the pedantries of topiarian art. And toward the east, where the vista of the valley opened, the old walls were gone, and the frowning Norman keep, ruined in the Wars of the Roses, had been replaced by the rich and stately architecture of the Tudors."

Such is Kingsley's description of the house, of course imaginary, but it is probably as correct as can now be conjectured. And there the Grenvilles lived from generation to generation. Concerning the feats of arms of the immediate successors of the first Sir Richard we have no record; but we hear of their being frequently "summoned to go with the King beyond seas for their honour and preservation and profit of the kingdom." Another Sir Richard was Marshal of Calais, under Henry VIII, and Carew says of him that "he enterlaced his home magistracy with martial employments abroad." His son, Sir Roger Grenville, the father of the gallant Sir Richard, the hero of the *Revenge*, bravely fought against the French off the Isle of Wight in 1545, and then lost his life owing to the capsizing of his ship, the *Mary Rose*, off Portsmouth.

The world knows of the fame of Sir Richard, owing

mainly to the spirited poem of the late Lord Tennyson. But other incidents of his adventurous career may not be so well remembered. He was only two years old when his father perished with his *Mary Rose*. At the early age of eighteen years he sallied forth to meet adventures and joined the forces of the Emperor Maximilian warring against the Turks. There he won fame and honour on many a battlefield, returning to England well skilled in the art of war. He helped to suppress the Irish rebellion, and settled down at Stowe for a time ; but the true fighting blood was in his veins, and again he went abroad and fought with Don John of Austria at the battle of Lepanto in 1572, crushing the Turkish fleet. He received from Queen Elizabeth the honour of knighthood.

Then he turned his attention to the national struggle for the sovereignty of the sea, to wrest the sceptre from the Spaniards' grasp, to win new lands for England, and for himself and his friends wealth and honour. We need not tell how he and Raleigh discovered Virginia, how he boarded the galleon in some cockle-shell boats made of the boards of chests, his own ship's boats having been washed away, and gained £50,000 in prize-money. In *Westward Ho!* we have a good picture of the noble knight. " His face was of a Spanish type (or more truly speaking, a Cornish), rather than an English, with just enough of the British element in it to give delicacy to its massiveness. The forehead and whole brain are of extraordinary loftiness, and perfectly upright ; the nose long, aquiline, and delicately pointed ; the mouth fringed with a short silky beard, small and ripe, yet firm as granite, with just pout enough of the lower lip to give hint of that capacity of noble indignation which lay hid under its usual courtly calm and sweetness ; if there be a defect in the face, it is that the eyes are somewhat

small, and close together, and the eyebrows, though delicately arched, and without a trace of peevishness, too closely pressed down upon them; the complexion is dark, the figure tall and graceful: altogether the likeness of a wise and gallant gentleman, lovely to all good men, awful to all bad men; in whose presence none dare say or do a mean or a ribald thing; whom brave men left, feeling themselves nerved to do their duty better, while cowards slipped away, as bats and owls before the sun." He was ever the same at Court, or in the streets of Bideford, or his own home . . . "ever the same steadfast, God-fearing, chivalrous man, conscientious (as far as a soul so healthy could be conscientious) of the pride of beauty, and strength, and valour, and wisdom, and a race and name which claimed descent from the grandfather of the Conqueror, and was tracked down the centuries by valiant deeds and noblest benefits to his native shire, himself the noblest of his race."

I need not tell again the story of the *Revenge* and its wondrous fight against invincible odds. It is true (a fact which the poet does not record) that he might have saved his ship and his life and the lives of his men, if he would have consented to run before the wind, pass the Spaniards to leeward, and regain the other ships in the open sea. But to pass an enemy to leeward was a confession of inferiority, to which he would not stoop; though his officers and crew begged him to do so, he scornfully and passionately refused, swearing that he would hew his way single-handed through the whole Spanish fleet, or perish in the attempt. We need not tell how—

"Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons
came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with their battle-thunder
and flame,

Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with their
dead and their shame,
For some were sunk, and some were shattered, and some
would fight no more ;
God of battles ! was ever a battle like this in the world
before ? ”

The last words of the dying hero show the true spirit of these Elizabethan heroes who frightened the heart of Spain by their valour that no danger could daunt : “ Here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do, that hath fought for his country, Queen, religion and honour. Whereupon my soul most joyfully departeth out of this body, and shall always leave behind it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier that hath done his duty as he was bound to do.”

It was the dauntless daring of the deed that created amazement throughout the world. Froude tells us it struck a deeper horror, though it was but the action of a single ship, into the hearts of the Spanish people—it dealt a more deadly blow upon their fame and moral strength than even the destruction of the Armada itself, and in the direct results which arose from it it was scarcely less disastrous to them ; and, as Prebendary Granville points out, “ Men may blame Sir Richard Grenville for his obstinacy, and what they deem his false notion of honour in scorning to turn his back upon the foe when the odds were so overwhelmingly against him, but at least it must be conceded that his courage and that of his crew have immortalized his name.”

The same bold fighting spirit was manifested in the descendants of the worthy knight. His son John was drowned at sea, “ his bedde of honour,” and then we come to his grandson, Sir Bevill, who gained as much glory on land as his grandsire on the sea. He joined the forces of Charles I in 1639 in the war against the Scots,

bringing with him a troop of gallant Cornishmen, some of the best fighters in England. Thus did Sir Bevill write: "I cannot contain myself within my doors, when the King of England's standard waves in the field upon so just an occasion, the cause being such as must make all those that die in it little inferior to martyrs. And for my own part I desire to acquire an honest name or an honourable grave. I never loved my life or ease so much as to shun such an occasion, which if I should, I were unworthy of the profession I have held, or to succeed ancestors of mine who have so many of them in several ages sacrificed their lives for their country."

His courage was not tested in the brief campaign, but when the great Civil War broke out no one proved himself more loyal or more able than this brave Cornish squire. His influence in the West was immense. Clarendon says he was "the most generally loved man in Cornwall," and the men of the shire at his bidding rushed to the royal standard, a body fifteen hundred strong. History tells of the fight on Bradock Down and the gallant victory of the Cornishmen. Thus did Sir Bevill describe it in a letter to his wife: "After solemn prayers at the head of every division, I led my part away, who followed me with so great a courage, both down the one hill and up the other, that it struck a terror into them." All the guns were captured and twelve hundred prisoners taken. The fight at Stratton on land seems as wonderful as that at Flores in the Azores on the sea. It took place near to Stowe, the Granvilles' mansion. We have no space to record the full details of that memorable fight when Sir Bevill Granville's force, less than half the number of their opponents, weary, footsore, short of ammunition and of food, assailed a strongly fortified position, and by sheer weight of courage and determination after repeated attacks hurled headlong the Round-

heads down the steep hill, and put them to flight. It was a famous victory which secured the West-country for the King for many a day. The brave Sir Bevill met his death in battle, fighting against Waller at Lansdown, near Bath, when he was struck down with a pole-axe when leading an assault. His young son, John, fired by his hereditary courage, sprang into his father's saddle, and led on his brave Cornishmen, who swore that they would kill a rebel for every hair of Sir Bevill's beard, winning a signal victory.

There are yet other members of this fighting family who proved their courage on many a battlefield, preserving the traditions of the long line of their illustrious predecessors. Sir Bevill's brother, Sir Richard, was as brave and distinguished as any of the race, earning the title of "the King's General of the West." But his career was marred by his insubordination, his jealousy, and overbearing manners, which alienated the friends of the King's cause and ruined it in the Western counties. But Sir Bevill's son, Sir John Granville, maintained the gallant reputation of his race, fought bravely and well in the war, was well-nigh slain at the second battle of Newbury, nursed back to life and strength at Donnington Castle, became Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales, who ever remained his attached friend. He was appointed Governor of the Scilly Isles, which he fortified and held for the King with consummate skill and gallantry, carrying on a guerilla warfare against the Commonwealth fleet. The harbour was full of captive merchantmen, and the islands were enriched with the spoils of the conquered. The story of the defence of the Scillies and of the Jersey "Pirates" is full of the most thrilling interest. Granville was a staunch patriot, and when Van Tromp, the Dutch admiral, offered him £100,000 for the cession of the Scilly Isles, he indignantly

refused, stating he was placed there "to contend against treason, not to imitate it." At length he was forced to yield to Admiral Blake, but obtained from him the most favourable terms.

Sir John, with his cousin, General Monk, took a leading part in bringing about the Restoration. In reward for his exertions he was created Earl of Bath, and received many honours from his grateful sovereign. His sons, too, preserved the traditions of the family. His elder son Charles, Lord Lansdown, sought service in foreign wars, fighting for the Emperor Leopold against the Turks, achieved great glory, and was created Count of the Holy Roman Empire. The second son, John, was a naval hero, saw much fighting, and was created Lord Granville of Protheridge. A grandson of Sir Bevill, bearing the same name, carried on the family traditions, fought in Ireland and Flanders, was knighted by James II in 1686, went over to the side of the Prince of Orange, and not having sufficient opportunity for fighting in England, went to the Continent and distinguished himself greatly at the battle of Steinkirk in 1692.

Sir Bevill's younger brother George, afterwards Baron Lansdown of Bideford, almost the last of his race of the senior branch, shows that he did not lack the family spirit (though opportunity only allowed him to distinguish himself as a politician and a poet) by the inditing of the following letter, wherein he sought to gain his father's permission to fight for King James II against William III :—

"Sir,—You having no prospect of obtaining a commission for me can no way alter or cool my desire at this important juncture to venture my life in some manner or other for my King and my country. I cannot bear living under the reproach of lying obscure and idle in a country retirement when every man, who has

the least sense of honour, should be preparing for the field. You may remember, Sir, with what reluctance I submitted to your commands upon Monmouth's rebellion, when no importunity could prevail with you to permit me to leave the Academy. I was 'too young to be hazarded'; but give me leave to say it is glorious at any age to die for one's country, and the sooner, the nobler the sacrifice. I am now older by three years. My Uncle Bath was not so old when he was left among the slain at the battle of Newbury, nor you yourself, Sir, when you made your escape from your tutor's to join your brother at the defence of Scilly. The same cause is now come round about again. The King has been misled; let those who have misled him be answerable for it. Nobody can deny, but he is sacred in his own person, and it is every man's honest duty to defend it. You are pleased to say it is yet doubtful if the Hollanders are rash enough to make such an attempt.

"But be that as it will, I beg leave to insist upon it that I may be presented to his Majesty, as one whose utmost ambition it is to devote his life to his service and my country's, after the example of my ancestors."

Such is the story of the fighting Grenvilles, a story which I have been enabled to tell with the help of a member of the family. They have left behind them a record of six centuries of stainless loyalty, and are worthy of their motto, "*Deo, patriæ, amicis.*"

CHAPTER V

THE SQUIRE'S RELIGION—RECUSANT, PURITAN, AND ANGLICAN SQUIRES

I N the last chapter we have recorded the memory of some of the gallant gentlemen who fought for their country and saved her in the crises of her history. The Spaniard was hateful to them as the representative of Romanism and the tender mercies of the Inquisition and of the lighter of the Smithfield faggots. There was a pervading sense of relief when Mary died, and Philip and his myrmidons had bidden their fond farewells to English shores. We are reminded of a good squire of Shropshire, Edward Burton by name, who died for joy when he heard the bells ringing out the news of the death of Queen Mary and the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the English throne.

Thus does "Wrekin" (Mr. R. E. Davies) tell the story of his death :—

"Edward Burton, of Longner, near Shrewsbury, was 'a religious assertor of the Gospel' at the time when 'Bloody Mary' and her priests were slaying and torturing the Protestants. 'Confessor Burton' (as this good man was called) by various means escaped the persecutors. He was sitting at home meditating one day, when he heard the bells of all the churches in Shrewsbury ringing, which he concluded was for the death of Mary, and the accession of 'Good Queen Bess.' Anxious to know if he had surmised rightly, he sent his son to in-

quire, telling him if he brought good news to throw his hat in the air when he returned within sight of Longner. Upon the boy giving the desired signal, his father was so overcome with joy, that leaving the window he with difficulty reached a seat, and instantly died. Longner being in the parish of St. Chad, Shrewsbury, his body was taken to that church for burial, but the Popish priest, being yet in power, said Mr. Burton was a heretic, and should have no grave there. He was consequently buried in his own garden, where his altar-tomb still remains. By 1614 it had become decayed, and in that year Sir Andrew Corbet, Lieutenant of the county, being on a visit at Longner, caused it to be repaired, and wrote the following epitaph, which was inscribed upon it :—

*' Here lieth the body of Edward Burton, Esq., who deceased
Anno Domini, 1558.*

Was't for denying Christ, or some notorious fact,
That this man's body Christian burial lack't ?
Oh, no (not-so). His faithful true profession
Was the chief cause, which then was held transgression.
When Popery here did reign, the See of Rome
Would not admit to any such a tomb
Within there Idol Temple Walls. But he,
Truly professing Christianity,
Was like Christ Jesus, in a garden laid,
Where he shall rest in peace, till it be said
" Come, faithful servant, come, receive with me
A just reward for thy integrity."—1614.'

Fox mentions him in his *Acts and Monuments*. It is interesting to note that the family of Burton still resides at Longner Hall, Atcham, about three miles from Shrewsbury, and has had many distinguished members. Sir Edward Burton was created Knight Banneret under the royal standard by Edward IV, and fought for the Yorkists in many battles. The present representative of the family is Mr. Richard F. Lingen Burton.

Though there were many who shared in Edward Burton's joy, there was a large body of country gentlemen who, while hating the burning of "heretics" and the methods of the Inquisition, clung with unswerving fidelity to the "old religion," as they called it, that which existed in England before the Reformers with wise and careful hand had pruned away the clustering leaves of the old ivy that obscured the light of day and darkened the windows of the church, preventing the sunlight of Heaven from streaming through the storied glass and from shedding its rays on altar, rood, and sculptured pulpit, while it obscured the sacred pages of the Word of God and hid from the eyes of men its life-giving influence. This is not the place to discuss whether the Reformers pruned too much and were unwise and revolutionary in their methods, or whether the followers of the "old religion" were bigoted and intolerant, blood-thirsty in their triumphs, cruel and vindictive when they had the power. We are concerned now only in the fact that a large number of squires clung to the faith of their fathers, and had no sympathy with reforming zeal and Puritanical manners.

They were known as recusants, because they refused to attend their parish churches. In King James's time they had to pay £20 a month for their recusancy, and if they attended the parish church and refused to receive the Sacrament at least once a year they were mulcted £20 for the first year, £40 for the second year, and £60 for the third. It must be remembered that the Jesuits and Roman priests who flooded the country preached not only Roman Catholic doctrines, but treason in its worst form. They advocated the dethronement and assassination of Queen Elizabeth, and the Gunpowder Plot was the outcome of their teaching imparted to a few unbalanced minds. The Government can scarcely

be blamed for putting down treason with a strong hand. But many suffered who were entirely innocent of treasonable ideas, who only desired the exercise of their religion, and were ready to accept and to pray for the Queen. The great bulk of the squires were loyal to the core in spite of the preaching of the seminary priests and Jesuits disguised as laymen, and when the Armada threatened our shores, not one English Roman Catholic forgot the duties of patriotism in his zeal for the spread of his religion. We like to think of old Lord Montagu, a staunch Roman Catholic, who protested against the treatment of his co-religionists, but who, when the Armada threatened, brought a troop of horse, commanded by himself, his son, and his grandson, to meet the Queen at Tilbury and offer her their services.

In spite of their loyalty in that great crisis of our national history the recusants received but ill requitment. Recusants were fined as usual, and forbidden to travel more than five miles from their place of abode. Seminary priests were imprisoned and executed. It was the secular arm that inflicted their punishment, but the Church was not altogether free from blame. After the Gunpowder Plot the severities were increased, and rewards were offered for the discovery of recusants who harboured Popish priests. Spies pried into squires' houses. Hence ingenuity came to their assistance, and there were devised those curious hiding-holes and cunningly contrived secret chambers wherein persecuted men, such as Edmund Campion, Allen, Robert Parsons, and others, could lie concealed when houses were searched by the authorities. Such secret places were a common and almost necessary provision of a mediæval house, wherein before the days of banks plate, money, and treasure could be stored, and personal safety sought in times of war or persecution; but they were of great service in sheltering

seminarists, and are popularly known as "priests' hiding-holes." Mr. Allan Fea has written a book upon them, showing the amazing ingenuity with which they were contrived. In Oxfordshire alone such hiding-places may be found at Souldern, Fritwell, Maple Durham, Broughton, Merton, Chastleton, and at Stonor House. In this last-named mansion Campion found a secure asylum. He was a very pleasant person, of great ability, an eloquent orator, a subtle philosopher, and able diplomatist, admired for his talents and also for his amiability. He was a great favourite with the ladies, and Lady Stonor gave him a warm welcome to her house, where in the recesses of the thick walls there was a little secret chamber; and there Campion set up a little printing press, and in 1581 sent forth into the world his book *Ten Reasons for being a Roman Catholic*. This work aroused the admiration of his friends and the wrath of his enemies, who were bent on his capture and condemnation. Just across the border in Berkshire, at Lyford manor-house, he was taken. This was the home of the Yates family, and Mrs. Yates resided there, and sheltered eight feeble old nuns, the survivors of a suppressed Brigittine convent. Thither the Jesuit came to minister to them, and there was a large gathering of Roman Catholics from the neighbourhood. He was persuaded to consent to visit the house on the following Sunday. But the news of his proposed visit travelled abroad, and a man named Eliot, an agent of the Government, resolved to attempt his capture. Skilfully he laid his plans. The house was surrounded by constables, and "Judas" Eliot feigned himself a Roman Catholic and attended the service and heard Campion's sermon on the text, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee." In the midst of this discourse the tramp of armed men echoed through the corridors; the soldiers burst open

the door of the chapel. Every one sprang to their feet. There were the shrieks of the women, the clamour of the soldiers, the excited shouts of "Judas" Eliot, who was ready to seize the Jesuit; but in the confusion he disappeared as if by magic, and could nowhere be found. Eliot was in despair. All day and all night the soldiers and constables ransacked the house, but in vain their efforts. Champion was safe in his hiding-hole. You can imagine the terrible condition of the old Lyford manor-house, the praying nuns, the anxiety of the old lady of the manor, Mrs. Yates, while the minions of the law raged and stormed through the rooms and beat and frightened the servants in order to make them confess where the secret chamber lay. Eliot was wild with chagrin, and went about the house with a pick-axe breaking down panelling, tearing up floors. At last a random stroke with his weapon disclosed a secret cupboard, wherein he found the poor Jesuit, over whose subsequent sufferings in the Tower, where he was the victim of the rack and thumbscrew and other terrible instruments of torture, we will draw a veil. Such were the scenes witnessed in some squires' houses during those days of relentless persecution.

Many of those who clung to the "old religion" liked not these Jesuit emissaries, were faithful to their Queen and country, and maintained that if the seminarists had never come to England the penal laws would have been fewer, the persecution of recusants less severe. But treasonable folk brought discredit on loyal Romanists, and the innocent suffered with the guilty. Amongst the latter was the good Squire Parkyns, or Perkyns, of Ufton Manor, in Berkshire, who, though never involved in plots and conspiracies, did not escape persecution, and suffered from the machinations of spies and informers. These latter "gentlemen," according to law, received half the

finer levied on the accused, and naturally were eager for gain and often anxious to pay off old scores if they bore them any ill-will or spite. A tailor in a neighbouring village was the spy and informer against Francis Parkyns, Squire of Ufton, and told the magistrate that the squire had spoken treasonable words, and that a certain unknown person commonly lodged in a cock-loft or other secret corner of the house, who did not often stir abroad, but when he did appear wore a blue coat. The informer suspected him of being a seminary priest, and had often seen the members of the family on Wednesdays and Fridays and festivals retire secretly to a high chamber in the top of the house, and had heard a little bell ring, which he conjectured to be a sacring bell rung at the service of the Mass. He stated that Mr. Francis Parkyns did not frequent his parish church, nor receive Holy Communion, favoured only Roman Catholic servants, and received into his house many persons who were papists.

Such was the accusation upon which the magistrates, friends and neighbours of the Squire of Ufton, were bound to act. They rode one day to the beautiful old house, which still stands looking very calm and peaceful in its old age, and not finding the squire at home, proceeded to search his study, closet, and all other secret places in the house, perusing books, letters, and writings in divers chests, cupboards, and boxes, but could find nothing contrary to the law and no evidence against him. Moreover, they summoned Mr. Parkyns from Ilsley, whither he had gone, examined him and his servants, took a bond of £500 for his appearance, but nothing was discovered against him save that he was a recusant.

Other informers arose to spy on the good squire and his household. One Roger Plumpton was one of these who reported all the gossip he heard concerning the family,

their sayings and their friends. He said that there was a strange man going about from papist to papist "under collar of teaching on the virginalls, deemed to be a priest so made in Queen Mary's time." Well writes Miss Sharp, the historian of Ufton, "What a picture of the life of the times is here graphically brought before us in this mean man's disjointed jottings! The little society of recusants clinging together, passing the news of the day anxiously from one to another, often by treacherous messengers, the priest by whose help alone they could enjoy any religious services, living amongst them in disguise, or hidden in secret chambers in a cock-loft; not knowing whom amongst their servants or neighbours they could trust, or who might at any time deliver their friends to the scaffold, or themselves to imprisonment or penury."

But another informer discovered that there was something at Ufton even more attractive to a greedy Government than a Jesuit, and that was a great store of gold. It, of course, belonged to some ill-affected persons and was to be employed for some ill purpose. Hence Sir Francis Knollys set out with a company of men together with one Gayler, the informer, and at early dawn entered the house, which was then kept by Thomas Parkyns, a cousin of Francis, who was living elsewhere. A thorough search was made, and at last the secret chamber was discovered, and in it some chests, and in one of them "a pokemantua locked" which was also opened in the presence of Mrs. Parkyns, and therein were found "divers bags of gold, all which, as they were taken out, were laid in her lap, and afterwards carried into a closet in the said chamber and the gold told out upon a table there by Sir Francis in her presence. And further in another chest there were divers parcells of plate." Needless to say, the chests and their contents were carried off, and never re-

turned, and in spite of legal attempts to recover the treasure, the family lost their gold and plate.

To this day the hiding-holes remain at Ufton Manor, witnesses of the trials and troubles of the old squire's family three centuries ago. We have searched for them, but should never have discovered them but for the guiding hand of the chronicler of Ufton. Some are ingeniously contrived under the rafters of the sloping roof; others are trap-doors in the floor leading to small, dark chambers generally constructed against or behind the massive chimneys. They are mostly fitted with wooden spring locks. You can see still the ladder by which some fugitive priest descended into a dark hole, wherein he could lay concealed while the house was being ransacked; and there was another well-like hole which led to the cellars, whence a vaulted passage enabled the fugitive to escape to the meadows and woods surrounding the house. Many of these hiding-places were ingeniously constructed by one John Owen, a lay brother of the Jesuit order, nicknamed from his small stature Little John, who went about the country making these secret chambers in the houses of recusants. At Hinlip Hall he worked so well that "almost every room had a recess, a passage, and a secret stair; the walls were hollow, the ceilings false, and the chimneys had double flues, one for the passage of smoke and a second for the priest."¹

Lancashire was the home of recusants. In *A Cavalier's Note Book* Squire Blundell records the names of over sixty "Popish Recusants of the greatest quality in the county of Lancaster," who were ordered to be banished by Act of Parliament in 1680. This gentleman remained true to his convictions and suffered much persecution, though he was a loyal and honest gentleman, and fought valiantly for the King in the Civil War. He had for his

¹ Foley's *Records*, IV, 211.

chaplains two Jesuits, John Walton and Francis Waldegrave, who when at Crosby lived usually in retirement in an attic or upper chamber. The chaplain was often referred to in letters as "the gentleman at the top of the house," to whom the old cavalier desired to be remembered. His meals were conveyed to him from the squire's table. "In great houses if the priests eat in their private chambers, they must stay till the lady send them from the table, upon trenchers, such pieces as she pleaseth."¹ Sometimes the chaplain grievously offended his host. Mr. Blundell was on one occasion grievously annoyed with his. He desired him to say the service of the Rosary with his family, but the chaplain complained that he was weak in health and found such services very exhausting. The squire suggested that he might be present, but remain silent; but the chaplain said that even the noise of others speaking was often troublesome to him. So the Rosary was said without him on the feast of the Conception of our Lady; but the squire did not fail to notice that, although too ill to attend the service, the chaplain "spent the most part of the afternoon of that holy day in playing at tables and shovel-board² in the dining-room, and at four of the clock and a half retired to his chamber." But the squire's displeasure seems to have been momentary. He had a great respect for the chaplain, and was only a little annoyed by this neglect of the duties of his office, and "for doing things so contrary to my judgment."

The poor recusants all over the country endured much persecution, much suffering, and injustice. Toleration was unknown. They suffered from the relentless pressure of the Government, who saw in every Roman Catholic a conspirator and a traitor, in spite of the fact that in the

¹ Breiffe narrative of Revd. Gilbert Blackhall (Spalding Club, 1844).

² "Tables" seems to have been a species of backgammon, and shovel-board the ancestor of billiards.

time when England was most in danger and Spanish galleons threatened our shores, and when Royalists and Roundheads were ranged in hostile camps, there were no more loyal subjects in the country than the Roman Catholic gentry. It was hard to visit on them the crimes and plots and instigations to conspiracy of which some of the seminarists were guilty; and whatever our religious opinions may be, we cannot but admire the remarkable instances of courage, patience, and firm adherence to the principles they believed to be right, as exemplified in the lives and characters of many recusant squires.

As a contrast to the portraits of these gentlemen we will try to sketch the presentments of some squires who were of Puritan persuasion, and whose biographies possess features of some interest. Foremost amongst these was John Bruen, squire of Bruen Stapelford, in Cheshire. His biography was written by William Hinde and described as "A Faithfull Remonstrance of the Holy Life and Happy Death of John Bruen of Bruen Stapelford, in the County of Cheshire, Esquire. By the late Reverend Divine, William Hinde, sometime Fellow of Queene's College in Oxon, and Preacher of God's Word at Bunb(ury) in Cheshire" (1641). This writer was considered "the ringleader of the Nonconformists" in Cheshire, and proved himself a somewhat prolix and unconsciously amusing scribe. Bruen was a very remarkable man. He came of an ancient family, being twelfth in lineal descent from Robert le Brun of Stapelford, who was living in 1230. His father had fourteen children, and John, the heir, was brought up by his uncle Mr. Dutton of Dutton, who belonged to an old Cheshire family and by charter had the right of control of all minstrels in the county. This right arose because in early times, to be precise, in the reign of Henry III, when Earl Randle Blunderville was warring against the Welsh and was

besieged in his castle of Rhuddlan, he sent for aid to his Constable de Lacy. The great Chester fair was in progress, when the town was full of players, musicians, and other loose persons ; so de Lacy summoned them to his assistance, and started for Rhuddlan with his rabble rout ; and when the Welsh saw a vast host approaching and heard the wild din of " harp, flute, sackbut, psaltery and all kinds of music " they were alarmed, raised the siege, and fled in haste. In gratitude for this timely aid the Earl granted control of trades and mysteries of the curious folk to de Lacy, whose son granted the prerogative of the players and minstrels to Hugh Dutton of Dutton, in whose family it remained for centuries. The future squire of Stapelford lived a gay life in his uncle's house. He was an expert dancer, and loved " the vaine and profane exercises of May games, and summer-greenes, foot-races and horse-races." Pippings and dancings on the Sabbath, matches on the bowling-green, and other rustic sports, occupied his days, and a preacher's voice was rarely heard in those times. Presently John went to Oxford as a gentleman-commoner at St. Alban Hall, leaving there in 1579, and soon entering into possession of his estate. He was fond of hunting and kept fourteen couple of great-mouthed dogs. But his estate was burdened. He had a large family of sisters and brothers to provide for. He was himself married and had children. His means were reduced. So he " laid away hawkes and hounds, and cast off for ever his wide-mouthed dogs, and having a goodly park well stored with fallow deer he killed up the game and disparted the parke and lived prudently and contentedly."

Our Puritan friend, Mr. Hinde, was no lover of sport. " Dogs are devouring creatures," he says, " and so are hawks too. 1. They swallow up a man's best desires and delights. 2. They eat up the best of his days. 3. They

devour the most of his substance. 4. Spoil a man of his fairest and fittest opportunities either to be serviceable unto God, or profitable unto men. 5. Rob wife and children of their means and maintenance, and oftentimes tyre upon the carkasses, and suck the blood of poor tenants, being charged upon them, to ease their good masters of all charge of keeping them; but some may say, will you be so strict as to condemn all hunting and hawking as sinful and unlawful? This is my opinion. I think it utterly unlawful for any man to take pleasure in the pain and torture of any creature, or delight himself in the tyranny which the creatures exercise one over another, or to make a recreation of their brutish cruelty which they practise one upon another."

Such was the opinion of this Puritan divine, and so perhaps, thought good Squire Bruen, though I expect he was grieved to part with his "wide-mouth'd dogs," his hawks, and his deer. He kept a very strict household, composed of sober and pious servants. His butler, "Old butler Robert" (Pashfield), was unable to read or write, but he knew his Bible, and could tell the book and chapter where any particular sentence could be found. He had a leathern girdle marked into portions for the several books of the Bible, and points and knots for the subdivisions. Bruen used to rise at three or four o'clock in summer, and at five in winter, and to summon his household together for prayers twice a day, himself observing the Psalmist's rule of praising God seven times a day. His house was a mile from the church, "the way fair and large, so that he usually went a-foot, calling all his family about him, leaving neither cook nor butler behind him, nor any of his servants, but two or three to make the doors and tend the house until his return. And then taking his tenants and neighbours, as they lay in the way, along with him, he marched on with a joyful and cheerful heart, as a

leader of the Lord's host, towards the house of God, according to the Psalmist's verse, 'I went with the multitude to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day.'" He and his servants used to sing psalms as they went along, especially the 84th Psalm, "which they performed with a melodious harmony." He always came in good time to church and joined in the service "with such a reverent attention and gracious affection, such so holy a carriage, and so good conscience, that as hereby he did much increase his own comfort, so was his godly example a great encouragement to many others, yea, a very spur and goad unto them to be more religious and conscionable in God's worship and service."

Verily our good divine, William Hinde, was a wonderful biographer! Why do not the modern writers of "Lives" imitate such an eloquent and remarkable example of how to record the virtues of the subject of their memoirs without undue praise, with due reserve and real critical acumen?

At the end of the morning service Squire Bruen seldom went to dinner, but remained in the church to bestow himself and this interim to the service of God, with such good people as were willing to stay with him. And this he did by repeating the sermon, which he had taken down very exactly with his own hand, and by singing of psalms, and by holy and wholesome conference in and about good things. And so waiting for the evening sacrifice, and having performed his duty he returned home with his company, discussing the sermon and singing psalms as they went.

Such extraordinary piety attracted many persons to his house, where they sojourned in order to seek better knowledge of God's ways and the practice of virtue. His house became a sort of Puritan monastery where many

scions of gentility flocked to him. His energy and self-denial were worthy of primitive times, but his character was marred by an absurd fanaticism, which cannot but excite a smile. He marred his packs of cards by burning the four knaves. He waged a terrible war against his backgammon table. As we have said, he slew his harmless deer, because he considered hunting inconsistent with a profession of religion. He pulled down "the painted puppets and superstitious images" in the glorious old windows of his family chapel within Tarvin Church because they "darkened the light of the church and obscured the brightness of the gospel." He was guilty of other kindred follies, showing an absence of sound judgment, though he lacked not a genuine and simple piety. He was a loyal member of the Church of England, though he belonged to the extreme party composed of those who sympathized with Puritan notions and the teaching of the most fanatical reformers.

We need not follow further the story of Bruen's life, or narrate how his open-hearted hospitality caused him financial difficulties, how he was compelled to leave his home and retire to Chester, but continued to practise charity to the poor, whom he fed daily. He refused to drink healths, believed in special providences, judgments, and witchcraft, and towards the end of his life, when praying, saw strange visions and ravishing sights. The Harleian MSS. contain some of his writings, "A godly profitable collection of divers sentences out of Holy Scripture and a variety of matter out of several divine authors." These, being fifty-two in number, are commonly called his cards. He died in 1625, and has been well described as the Puritan ideal of a pious layman.

William Bagshaw (1628-1702), styled the Apostle of the Peak, ought to be classed with squires, as he was well born and possessed of a good estate. He was, however,

a minister during the Commonwealth period, and was ejected from the living of Glossop after the passing of the Act of Uniformity in 1662. He lived there as a country gentleman, and his name is still honoured amongst the hills and dales of Derbyshire. He used to attend his parish church, but preached in private houses occasionally during those hard days when the law pressed severely on the holders of services in private conventicles. Once an informer came to spy upon him, but was so impressed by his reverend countenance that he was struck with terror and fled hurriedly. Bagshaw left behind him fifty volumes of manuscripts, including discourses with such titles as "Waters for a Thirsty Soul," "The Miner's Monitor," "Sheet for Sinners," etc.

With this brief record of a good man we must close this chapter on recusants and Puritan squires. They occupied the two extreme wings of the squirearchy in matters religious. The bulk of the squires were loyal members of the Church of England, and were ready to lay down their lives for her sake. "Church and King" were the watchwords of their order, and they were not unwilling to sacrifice their all for their faith. Notable amongst the English squires for sincerity and devotion was Nicholas Ferrar, who with his little band of thirty souls made Little Gidding a sacred spot. There they spent their time in daily devotion and religious exercises and devout studies, in caring for the sick and poor, until they were routed out by a lawless company of Roundheads. The little community was broken up, but the memory of Nicholas Ferrar will ever be revered.

The old English squire was ever loyal to his God as to his King. He always attended the services of the Church on Sundays and holy days. He had a chaplain in his house, when his means would allow, "not only for the Divine offices, but to converse with the whole family for

the purpose of the promoting of Religion, Knowledge and Virtue—and to furnish the young gentlemen of the family with a stock of knowledge and learning, who will not otherwise be at the pains and hard study in an University, or elsewhere to attain the same.” So a charming old volume entitled *Vox Clamantis*, or an essay for the Honour, Happiness and Prosperity of the English Gentry, “by P. A. Gent (printed by *John Playford* in *Little-Brittain* for *Benjamin Tooke*, at the *Ship* in St. Paul’s Churchyard, 1684),” gravely admonishes. And though trencher-chaplains were not always the best clergymen,¹ many excellent men have served that office, and wrought good in many a squire’s household.

The old squire did not trouble himself over abstract questions of doctrine. His religion was simple and practical, and was well summed up by the old poet Tusser in his “Principal Points of Religion” :—

“ To pray to God continually,
 To learn to know Him rightfully,

 To ask His mercy penitently,
 To trust Him always faithfully,
 To obey Him always willingly,
 To abide Him always patiently,
 To thank Him always thankfully,
 To live here always virtuously,
 To use thy neighbour honestly,
 To look for Death still presently,
 To help the Poor in misery,
 To hope for Heaven’s Felicity,
 To have Faith, Hope, and Charity,
 To count this Life but Vanity,
 Be Points of Christianity.”

¹ Cf. *Old-time Parson*.

CHAPTER VI

THE SQUIRE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE seventeenth century opened peaceably enough. With the advent of King James peace reigned with the northern kingdom, and the gates of Janus seemed closed for ever. But the war-clouds were soon destined to lour and bring dire destruction on many a squire's home, his fortune, and his family. We will first visit the home of a country squire in Dorset, Mr. Hastings, who was living in 1638, and was son, brother, and uncle to three successive Earls of Huntingdon.¹

Mr. Hastings was low of stature, but strong and active, of a ruddy complexion, with flaxen hair. His clothes were always of green cloth, his house was of the old fashion, in the midst of a large park, well stocked with deer, rabbits, and fishponds. He had a long, narrow bowling-green in it, and used to play with round sand bowls. Here, too, he had a banqueting-room built, like a stand, in a large tree. He kept all sorts of hounds that ran buck, fox, hare, otter, and badger; and had hawks of all kinds, both long and short winged. His great hall was commonly strewed with marrow-bones, and full of hawk-perches, hounds, spaniels, and terriers. The upper end of it was hung with fox-skins of this and the last year's killing. Here and there a polecat was intermixed, and hunter's poles in great abundance. The parlour was a large room, completely furnished in the same style.

¹ Mr. Gordon A. Lewis, of Kilburn, has kindly sent me this description of the home of this Dorset squire.

On a broad hearth, paved with brick, lay some of the choicest terriers, hounds, and spaniels. One or two of the great chairs had litters of cats in them, which were not to be disturbed. Of these, three or four always attended him at dinner, and a little white wand lay by his trencher to defend it, if they were too troublesome. In the windows, which were very large, lay his arrows, crossbows, and other accoutrements. The corners of the room were filled with his best hunting- and hawking-poles. His oyster-table stood at the lower end of the room, which was in constant use twice a day, all the year round, for he never failed to eat oysters both at dinner and supper, with which the neighbouring town of Poole supplied him. At the upper end of the room stood a small table with a double desk, one side of which held a Church Bible, the other the *Book of Martyrs*. On different tables in the room lay hawk's hoods, bells, old hats, with their crowns thrust in, full of pheasant's eggs; tables, dice, cards, and store of tobacco-pipes. At one end of this room was a door, which opened into a closet, where stood bottles of strong beer and wine, which never came out but in single glasses, which was the rule of the house; for he never exceeded himself, nor permitted others to exceed. Answering to this closet, was a door into an old chapel, which had long been disused for devotion; but in the pulpit, as the safest place, was always to be found a cold chine of beef, a venison pasty, a gammon of bacon, or a great apple-pie, with thick crust, well-baked. His table cost him not much, though it was good to eat at. His sports supplied all, but beef and mutton, except on Fridays, when he had the best of fish. He never wanted a London pudding, and he always sang it in with "My part lies therein-a." He drank a glass or two of wine at meals; put syrup of gillyflowers into his sack; and had always a tun glass of small beer

standing by him, which he often stirred about with rosemary. He lived to be a hundred, and never lost his eyesight, nor used spectacles. He got on horseback without help, and rode to the death of the stag at fourscore.

Such is the picture of old Squire Hastings, which has happily been preserved for us. Old books of the period enable us to understand what was the conception of the gentleman, and what was expected of him. In 1633 was published an admirable work entitled "*The English Gentleman*, containing sundry excellent Rules or exquisite Observations tending to Direction of every Gentleman of selecter ranke and qualitie: How to demene or accommodate himselfe in the manage of publike or private affaires. By Richard Braithwait, Esq., London, printed by Felix Kyngston, and are to be sold by Robert Bostocke at his shop at the signe of the King's Head in Paul's Churchyard, 1633." The engraved frontispiece of this work is interesting. The book shows the high estimation in which the gentleman was held, and how much was expected of him. Though his feet were on the earth, his hope was in heaven. The author discourses on the diversity of Disposition in individuals, all men being not framed out of the same mould; the rewards of virtue and the temptations to vice; on the advantages of Education, "the seasoner of youth"; on the necessity of choosing a vocation; on the benefits to be derived from outdoor exercises—"Apollo does not always keep his bow bent." Recreation only absorbs a portion of his time and is necessary for health and for the promotion of social intercourse which he loves. As Ben Jonson sang the old stave in his masque of "Time Vindicated":—

" Hunting is the noblest exercise,
 Makes men laborious, active, wise,
 Brings health, and doth the spirits delight,
 It helps the hearing, and the sight ;

It teacheth Arts that never slip
 The memory, good horsemanship,
 Search, sharpness, courage and defence
 And chaseth all ill habits hence."

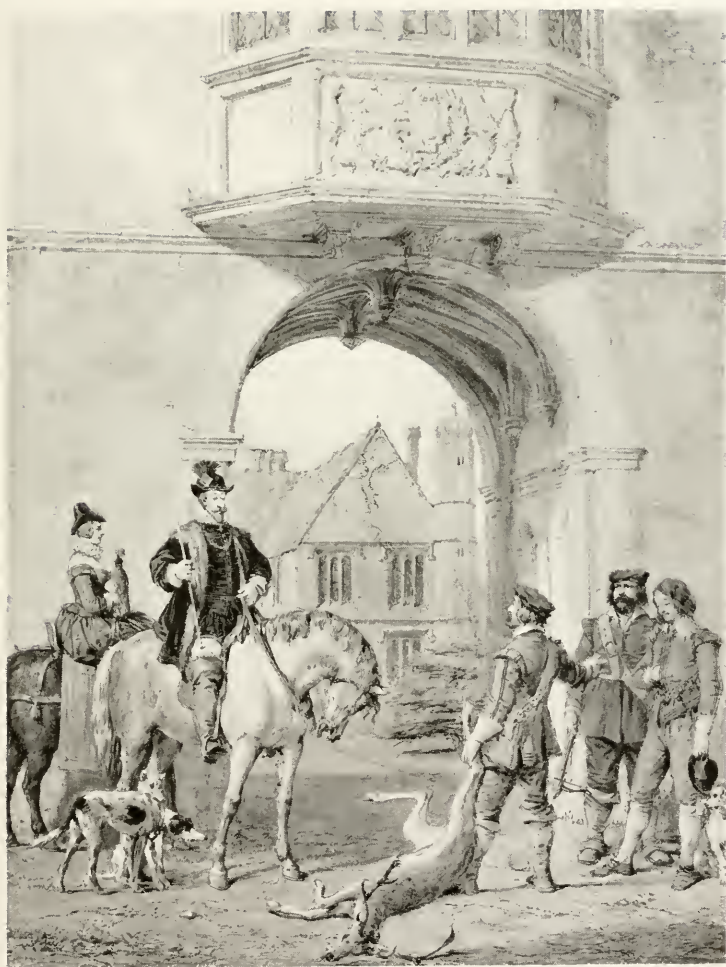
The author of *The English Gentleman* supports his admonitions and warnings with copious extracts from Greek and Latin writers, as well as from Holy Writ. He concludes: "A gentleman is a man of himself without the addition of either tailor, milliner, seamster, or haberdasher. Actions of goodness he holds his supreme happiness. He scorns baseness more than want, and holds nobleness his sole worth. A crest displays his house, but his owne actions expresse himself."

Herein he echoes the sentiments of Spenser, who sings:—

" True is, that whileome that good Poet sayd,
 That gentle minds by gentle Deeds is knowne ;
 For a man by nothing is so well bewrayed
 As by his manners ; in which plaine is shewn
 Of what degree and what race he is growne."

And Chaucer expresses the same idea when he states that it is not "renowne of auncestres," but "gentil dedes" which make the "gentil man."

Another book published in 1555, *The Institution of a Gentleman*, tells how a gentleman by his conditions, qualities, and good behaviour ought to excel all other sorts of men, and by his excellency to set forth and adorn the whole company among whom he shall happen to be. As regards the recreation and pastimes which are proper for his social position the author states that a man cannot be a gentleman who loves not hawking and hunting. Old woodmen assert that he cannot be a gentleman who loveth not a dog, and likewise he cannot be a dog that loveth not a gentleman. The writer advocates strongly the use of the long bow, which



THE DEER-STEALER
(CHARLCOTE, WARWICKSHIRE)

“ We Englishmen may call the honour of our country, for through that goodly defence the Realm of England hath oftentimes won great fame and victory in wars. And it is well known that Englishmen are (and especially have been) the best of all other nations of Europe. Therefore it shall become all gentlemen to use this our English pastime of shooting for their greatest game and disport. . . . This pastime hath in it two singular points which in no other game as yet could ever be found ; that is, it serveth both for pastime, and a defence in the wars.”

The country gentleman had no lack of books to instruct him in what was expected of him. The *Vox Clamantis*, to which I have already referred, *The Gentleman's Calling*, by the author of *The Whole Duty of Man*, Peacham's *Compleat Gentleman*, are only a few that need be mentioned. From these and other similar works it may be gathered that in addition to wisdom and knowledge, to the cultivation of noble qualities, to the study of divinity, morality, and history, and especially of the Scriptures, to the practice of justice and mercy, he was expected to devote his hours of leisure to hunting, hawking, shooting, fishing, heraldry, and other gentlemanly and manly pursuits. He was skilled in the management of goshawks, lanners, and falcons. Hawking was at one time the most fashionable of field sports. A hawk on wrist was the badge of nobility. Every royal palace and nobleman's house had its mews, a name derived from the falconer's cry calling back the flying bird.

The squire and his friends used to sally forth on horseback or on foot ; if the latter, they took with them stout poles for leaping rivulets and ditches. The hawks, before their flight, were hoodwinked with a little cap and hood. They had straps of leather called jesses about their legs, and knots and lunes¹ with tyrrits,² so that they might

¹ Small thongs of leather.

² Rings.

be securely held by the hawker. I need not explain all the paraphernalia and mysteries of the sport, the bells that were fastened to the legs or the tail, the bewits, creance, etc. Milan bells were considered best, and one bell should be a semitone below the other. The old sportsmen were very particular about their bells. A character in *A Woman Killed by Kindness* (1617) says to her host about his hawk:—

“ Her bells, Sir Francis, had not both one weight,
Nor was one semitone above the other,
Me thinks these Milane bells do sound too full
And spoil the mounting of your hawk.”

But hawks peck cruelly; so those who carried them had to be provided with stout gloves. The birds fetched high prices, and required incredible pains for their training. Sir Thomas Monson, in the time of James I, gave £1000 for a cast of hawks.¹ There are various kinds of hawks, and old books on hawking assign to different ranks the sort of hawks proper to be used by them. They range from the eagle and gerfalcon to the sparrow-hawk and kestrel. The squire's hawk was a lanner or laneret, the yeoman's a goshawk.

The squire usually hunted “at large” in the open country, and perhaps did not approve of the more cruel sport of killing game within parks and enclosures, when the deer were shut in by a fence of network, driven past a stand wherein the gallant sportsmen stood and shot at them with bows and arrows. The poor animals had not much chance of escape.

But soon the quiet pursuits and sports of the squires of England were rudely disturbed by the call to arms, when the royal standard was unfurled at Nottingham, and the cry “Boot and saddle” echoed through the land, and “the gallants of England were up for the King.” It

¹ A cast of hawks signifies two, a lese three.

would require a volume to tell at all adequately the trouble of that distressful time. Sometimes neighbours and old friends took opposite sides in that contest, and were obliged to fight against each other. The war played sad havoc with the brave squirearchy of England. Fathers saw their sons struck down in the gallant charges at Edgehill or Marston Moor. Wives and children mourned the death of their husbands or fathers. Their homes were invaded by lawless bands of troopers, attacked, and beaten down with cannon. Everywhere the same terrible scenes occurred. Squires destroyed their own houses lest these should be used as garrisons by the enemy. But a brave heart beat in many a woman's breast, as we shall see presently when we tell of the squire's lady, and women emulated their husbands in bravery, defending their homes and children in the absence of their lords, and enduring all manner of hardships and suffering in the times of persecution that followed the conclusion of the war.

A model squire in those sad days was Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, who led his brilliant life at Great Tew, where he surrounded himself with books and friends from Oxford, who enjoyed the hospitality which extended to unlimited bed and board, and the good breeding which made the guests feel as if they were in their own house. He loved his fine library better than country amusements, and there thrashed out for himself the vexed subjects of the day, learning to distinguish religion from superstition, the primitive foundations of the Reformation from the mediæval accretions of Rome and the modern assumptions of Puritanism, to use reason without abusing it, to reconcile philosophy with revelation. Sadly did he watch the growing storm. He hated the tyrannical acts of the Court, the illegal proceedings, and when he was called as member for Newport in the Isle of Wight to take

his place in Parliament, he saw that he must sacrifice his lettered ease and without hesitation do his duty. He determined to try to save the Constitution, to prevent the King from proceeding further along the fatal road of his Stuart policy, to stem the tide of illegality. But it was too late. All his efforts could not preserve peace. And so, like a brave and gallant man, he threw in his lot with the royal cause, and died in its defence. He was in the thick of the fight at the siege of Gloucester, and served at Newbury as a volunteer under Sir John Byron. Charging in the front rank of Byron's Horse, he observed that his comrades shrank from entering the field which their commander had ordered them to occupy. No doubt he saw the danger as well as they did, but resolving to set them a good example, leaped his horse at the gap in the hedge, and was instantly killed. So perished a brave and good squire, a true English worthy, an independent layman who saw his way in Church affairs better than the bishops ; a Parliament man who did not " love his dinner better than his Church " ; a nobleman who combined a passionate love of literature with military adventure to an extent never, perhaps, equalled, and who set a steady example of self-sacrifice which has already inspired many and will inspire more. Combined with all this he was very cheerful and hopeful. Before his death he had written a bright letter to his wife, saying that the King's affairs were never in a more hopeful condition. As he rode out of the gates of Newbury he extended his sword on either side, touching the ramparts, and jestingly observed that the gate was much too narrow for old Noll and his horns to enter. This incident a young boy witnessed, who told it to a man who lived long and told it to Dr. Routh, who died within this generation—a curious link between the Civil War period and our own day.



THE ATTACK ON THE MANOR HOUSE
(ASTON HALL, WARWICKSHIRE)

Nothing reveals more clearly the minds and feelings of our ancestors than old letters. At Claydon House, the home of the Verneys in Buckingham, there is an amazing collection of papers which have been edited and woven into a charming narrative by Lady Verney in her *Memoirs of the family*. One of the members of the family was Sir Edmund, the gallant standard-bearer, to whom was entrusted at Nottingham the care of the royal standard of England. Like Lord Falkland, he knew well the evils and illegalities of the times and was somewhat of a Puritan; but when all hope of preserving peace was abandoned, he rallied to the cause of his sovereign, and died bravely defending the standard at Edgehill. In 1642, when the civil strife seemed imminent, he writes to his steward:—

“ I pray take upp my mare, and lett her be keppt att house. I shall shortly send for my coach mairs. When I sent for my Arms I forgott to send for one peece as I think, and that was for my gorgett, it is that which goes round the neck, I pray lett Will Browne look for it, and fail not to send it to me to bee heere on Tuesday.” He sends orders about buying another gelding and a saddle. His son Ralph writes for a pair of his father’s “ Pistolls of the Best sort.” Again the old squire writes, ordering carbines to be in readiness for the defence of the house if need be, and “ gett Powder and Bulletts ready, for I feare a time maye come when Roags (rogues) may looke for booty in such houses.” He orders his steward to get all money owing with all speed, “ for we shall certainly have a great war.” “ Have a care of harvest, and God send us well to receive the blessing of a return thanks for it. I can saye no more—your loving master.”

A lady from near Oxford writes that “ Col. Goldwin’s soldiers have pillaged all the colleges, and say that when they have done they will see what pillage the country has ;

so for ought I see we are like to be undone." Poor lady ! What anxious hearts there were in England then ! When the standard was raised at Nottingham there was a great deal of outward pomp, though flashing armour and bright sword-scarves covered heavy hearts. And then when Edgehill fight came we like to hear the prayer breathed by the veteran Sir Jacob Astley immediately before the advance, " O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me. March on, boys." Nor will England forget the gallant death of Sir Edmund Verney. The struggle around the standard was severe. He was offered his life by a throng of the enemy if he would yield it ; but he answered his life was his own, but the standard was his and their sovereign's, and he would not deliver it while he lived, and he hoped it would be rescued . . . when he was dead ; selling it and his life at the rate of sixteen gentlemen who fell that day by his sword. The standard was taken, and round its staff still clung the hand which had grasped it, faithful unto death. On one of the fingers was the ring given to Sir Edmund by the King, containing his miniature. The ring still exists and the worm-eaten effigy called Sir Edmund's hand—and are preserved with loving care to this day at Claydon House.

Lady Sussex writes to say that " she has made fast her doors and piled them up with wood, so that she believes her house is able to keep out a good many. If we escape plundering I shall account it a great mercy of God. They tell me that something was read out in the church this Sunday that those who did not give to the Parliament must be plundered presently. I cannot believe it is so."

And so the sad times went on. No more faithful picture of the state of the country exists than that which is depicted in these Verney memoirs. At length the tyranny

of major-generals turned out to be as intolerable as that of Charles, and the happy time came "when the King enjoyed his own again," when exiled Cavaliers returned to their plundered and half-ruined homes, though many slept in nameless graves. Royal promises were plentiful with regard to the rewards to be granted to faithful squires for their services and loyalty, but few were fulfilled; and there were many sad and broken hearts in England which mourned over "the terrible days when the gallants of England were up for the King."

CHAPTER VII

MACAULAY'S CARICATURE

THE squire has had many detractors both in ancient and modern times. The most venomous was Lord Macaulay, who being politically opposed to the usual deep-seated opinions of the gentry of England, sought to belittle and defame them. The clergy shared with the squires the attacks of the historian's ridicule, and it was with sincere pleasure that with the assistance of Mr. Gladstone and other eminent writers I was able to show in a former book¹ how groundless and how worthless were the strictures which Macaulay fabricated upon the clerical profession. It will be an equal gratification if we are able to prove that the charges brought against the squires of England by that famous but unreliable writer were alike destitute of foundation. His fulminations against the clergy were based upon the writings of a man named Eachard, whose errors and mistakes were exposed in his own day by the writer of the *Vindication of the Clergy*, to whose criticisms Eachard tried in vain to reply. Macaulay echoed all Eachard's strictures, but never said one word with regard to the disapproval of them. Well did Mr. Gladstone write :—

“ While history, in the form of romance, is commonly used to glorify a little our poor humanity, the illusions of this romance in the form of history go only to dishonour and degrade. That Williams, that Burnet, that Milton, should have personal embellishment much beyond their

¹ *Old-time Parson.*

due is no intolerable evil. But the case becomes far more grievous when a great historian, impelled by his headstrong and headlong imagination, produces alike individuals and orders, and hurls them into a hot and flaming inferno of his own."

The reason of this strange and savage attack by Macaulay on the whole race of squires and parsons of the seventeenth century is not far to seek. They were both unmitigated Tories, and therefore hateful to him. His account of both classes of persons is pure romance, entirely imaginary. We have tried to show the falsity of his charges in the case of the clergy, we will endeavour to do the same with regard to the squires.

Here is the charge set out in full :—

"We should be much mistaken if we pictured to ourselves the squires of the seventeenth century as men bearing a close resemblance to their descendants, the county members and chairmen of quarter sessions with whom we are familiar. The modern country gentleman generally receives a liberal education, passes from a distinguished school to a distinguished college, and has every opportunity to become an excellent scholar. He has generally seen something of foreign countries. A considerable part of his life has generally been passed in the capital; and the refinements of the capital follow him into the country. There is perhaps no class of dwellings so pleasing as the rural seats of the English gentry. In the parks and pleasure grounds, nature, dressed yet not disguised by art, wears her most alluring form. In the buildings, good sense and good taste combine to produce a happy union of the comfortable and the graceful. The pictures, the musical instruments, the library, would in any other country be considered as proving the owner to be an eminently polished and accomplished man. A country gentleman who witnessed the Revolution was probably in receipt of about a fourth part of the rent which his acres now yield to his posterity. He was therefore, as compared with his posterity, a poor man, and was

generally under the necessity of residing, with little interruption, on his estate. To travel on the Continent, to maintain an establishment in London, or even to visit London frequently, were pleasures in which only the great proprietors could indulge. It may be confidently affirmed that of the squires whose names were then in the Commissions of Peace and Lieutenancy not one in twenty went to town once in five years, or had ever in his life wandered so far as Paris. Many lords of manors had received an education differing little from that of their menial servants. The heir of an estate often passed his boyhood and youth at the seat of his family with no better tutors than grooms and gamekeepers, and scarce attained learning enough to sign his name to a mittimus. If he went to school and to college, he generally returned before he was twenty to the seclusion of the old hall, and there, unless his mind were very happily constituted by nature, soon forgot his academical pursuits in rural business and pleasures. His chief serious employment was the care of his property. He examined samples of grain, handled pigs, and, on market days, made bargains over a tankard with drovers and hop merchants. His chief pleasures were commonly derived from field sports and from an unrefined sensuality. His language and pronunciation were such as we should now expect to hear only from the most ignorant clowns. His oaths, coarse jests, and scurrilous terms of abuse, were uttered with the broadest accent of his province. It was easy to discern, from the first words which he spoke, whether he came from Somersetshire or Yorkshire. He troubled himself little about decorating his abode, and, if he attempted decoration, seldom produced anything but deformity. The litter of a farmyard gathered under the windows of his bedchamber, and the cabbages and gooseberry bushes grew close to his hall door. His stable was loaded with coarse plenty; and guests were cordially welcomed to it. But, as the habit of drinking to excess was general in the class to which he belonged, and as his fortune did not enable him to intoxicate large assemblies daily with claret or canary, strong beer was the ordinary beverage. The quantity of beer consumed in those days was indeed enormous. For

beer then was to the middle and lower classes, not only all that beer now is, but all that wine, tea, and ardent spirits now are. It was only at great houses, or on great occasions, that foreign drink was placed on the board. The ladies of the house, whose business it had commonly been to cook the repast, retired as soon as the dishes had been devoured, and left the gentlemen to their ale and tobacco. The coarse jollity of the afternoon was often prolonged till the revellers were laid under the table.

“ It was very seldom that the country gentleman caught glimpses of the great world ; and what he saw of it tended rather to confuse than to enlighten his understanding. His opinions respecting religion, government, foreign countries and former times, having been derived, not from study, from observation, or from conversation with enlightened companions, but from such traditions as were current in his own small circle, were the opinions of a child. He adhered to them, however, with the obstinacy which is generally found in ignorant men accustomed to be fed with flattery. His animosities were numerous and bitter. He hated Frenchmen and Italians, Scotchmen and Irishmen, Papists and Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists, Quakers and Jews. Towards London and Londoners he felt an aversion which more than once produced important political events. His wife and daughter were in tastes and acquirements below a house-keeper or a still-room maid of the present day. They stitched and spun, brewed gooseberry wine, cured marigolds, and made the crust for the venison pasty.

“ From this description it might be supposed that the English squire of the seventeenth century did not materially differ from a rustic miller or alehouse keeper of our time. There are, however, some important parts of his character still to be noted, which will greatly modify this estimate. Unlettered as he was and unpolished, he was still in some most important points a gentleman. He was a member of a proud and powerful aristocracy, and was distinguished by many both of the good and of the bad qualities which belong to aristocrats. His family pride was beyond that of a Talbot

or a Howard. He knew the genealogies and coats-of-arms of all his neighbours, and could tell which of them had assumed supporters without any right, and which of them were so unfortunate as to be great-grandsons of aldermen. He was a magistrate, and, as such, administered gratuitously to those who dwelt around him a rude patriarchal justice, which, in spite of innumerable blunders and of occasional acts of tyranny, was yet better than no justice at all. He was an officer of the train bands ; and his military dignity, though it might move the mirth of gallants who had served a campaign in Flanders, raised his character in his own eyes and in the eyes of his neighbours. Nor indeed was his soldiership justly a subject of derision. In every county there were elderly gentlemen who had seen service which was no child's play. One had been knighted by Charles the First, after the battle of Edgehill. Another still wore a patch over the scar which he had received at Naseby. A third had defended his old house till Fairfax had blown in the door with a petard. The presence of these old Cavaliers, with their old swords and holsters, and with their old stories about Goring and Lunsford, gave to the musters of militia an earnest and warlike aspect which would otherwise have been wanting. Even those country gentlemen who were too young to have themselves exchanged blows with the cuirassiers of the Parliament had, from childhood, been surrounded by the traces of recent wars, and fed with stories of the martial exploits of their fathers and uncles. Thus the character of the English esquire of the seventeenth century was compounded of two elements which we are not accustomed to find united. His ignorance and uncouthness, his low tastes and gross phrases, would, in our time, be considered as indicating a nature and a breeding thoroughly plebeian. Yet he was essentially a patrician, and had, in large measure, both the virtues and the vices which flourish among men set from their birth in high place, and accustomed to authority, to observance, and to self-respect. It is not easy for a generation which is accustomed to find chivalrous sentiments only in the company with liberal studies and polished manners to image to itself a man with

the deportment, the vocabulary, and the accent of a carter, yet punctilious on matters of genealogy and precedence, and ready to risk his life rather than see a stain cast on the honour of his house. It is however only by thus joining together things seldom or never found together in our own experience, that we can form a just idea of that rustic aristocracy which constituted the main strength of the armies of Charles the First, and which long supported, with strange fidelity, the interest of his descendants.

“The gross, uneducated, untravelled country gentleman was commonly a Tory ; but, though devotedly attached to hereditary monarchy, he had no partiality for courtiers and ministers. He thought, not without reason, that Whitehall was filled with the most corrupt of mankind ; that of the great sums which the House of Commons had voted to the Crown since the Restoration part had been embezzled by cunning politicians, and part squandered on buffoons and foreign courtesans. His stout English heart swelled with indignation at the thought that the government of the country should be subjected to French dictation. Being himself generally an old Cavalier, he reflected with bitter resentment on the ingratitude with which the Stuarts had requited their best friends. Those who heard him grumble at the neglect with which he was treated, and at the profusion with which wealth was lavished on the bastards of Nell Gwynn and Madame Carwell, would have supposed him ripe for rebellion. But all this ill humour lasted only till the throne was really in danger. It was precisely when those whom the sovereign had loaded with wealth and honours shrunk from his side that the country gentlemen, so surly and mutinous in the season of his prosperity, rallied round him in a body. Thus after murmuring twenty years at the misgovernment of Charles the Second, they came to his rescue in his extremity, when his own Secretaries of State and Lords of the Treasury had deserted him, and enabled him to gain a complete victory over the opposition ; nor can there be any doubt that they would have shown equal loyalty to his brother James, if James would, even at the last moment, have refrained from out-

raging their strongest feeling. For there was one institution, and one only, which they prized even more than hereditary monarchy ; and that institution was the Church of England. Their love of the Church was not, indeed, the effect of study or meditation. Few among them could have given any reason, drawn from Scripture or ecclesiastical history, for adhering to her doctrines, her ritual, and her polity ; nor were they, as a class, by any means strict observers of that code of morality which is common to all Christian sects. But the experience of many ages proves that men may be ready to fight to the death, and to persecute without pity, for a religion whose creed they do not understand, and whose precepts they habitually disobey."

Such is the indictment. We admire its phraseology, its well-balanced sentences, so judicial in their form, so sonorous in their rhetoric. But it is specious and false. There were, doubtless, some obscure country squires who answered in some measure to this description, some few also were boors ; but to apply this wholesale condemnation to the generality of the country gentlemen of England of the seventeenth century is utterly misleading. We will examine the charges in detail, and in the task of refutation I am greatly assisted by the researches of Sir George Resesby Sitwell, Bart., F.S.A., who has kindly placed at my disposal his privately issued *Letters of the Sitwells and Sacheverells*, which he discovered in the old home of his ancestors at Renishaw Hall, Derbyshire. In an old lumber-room he came upon many strange and dusty relics of the past, the flotsam and jetsam which had stranded there during several generations—old portraits and brocaded dresses, portfolios of eighteenth-century prints, flint-lock guns, rapiers and swords, and most precious of all, a few old chests heaped up with manuscripts, parchments, and books. These shall disclose their treasures, old letters, quaint little almanacs,

bills, wills and much else, revealing the lives of country gentlemen in the seventeenth century.

Macaulay states that the squire was a boor, ignorant, and uncouth, with low tastes, etc. In another chapter we shall survey his beautiful home. Is it likely that a boor could build such gems of domestic architecture as these old manor-houses? Or that the sons of the men who erected them should suddenly have degenerated into such hopeless plebeians? These houses themselves with their gardens are witnesses of the good taste of the squires. But they were poor, and therefore to be despised, according to the historian. But is that so? According to statistics after the Restoration, the average income of knights and squires was estimated at £800 to £400 a year. But the purchasing power of money in those days was at least four times as great as it is now, and you must multiply the above incomes by four, if you would arrive at a just estimate. Mr. Sitwell of Renishaw was fortunate in having an estate worth £800 a year, and also derived another like sum from the iron furnaces and forges upon his property; so he was a very wealthy man in those days when manners were simple and more primitive than they are at the present time. Moreover, we are not reminded by Macaulay of the immense sacrifices which the squires had made for their loyalty. Many of them had garrisoned their houses for the King during the Civil War, and seen them battered down by Cromwell's cannon. They had given gladly to the royal cause, fought at King Charles's side, or with Prince Rupert, at Naseby and other battles, fearless in their charges, losing life and sons and property in that disastrous war. And then, when their homes were ruined and their cause lost, they had to pay vast fines to the triumphant Parliamentarians, were sometimes driven from their estates, which were confiscated and given to some Roundhead, and had to fly

for safety to foreign shores. No wonder that many of the squires of the Restoration period were poor men, but it was a poverty that was honourable to them ; and the faithless Stuart failed in most cases to reward them for their loyalty or to compensate them for their losses. Still, with an income of £1600 (according to the present value of money), they were not exactly the paupers that Macaulay painted them.

The next charge is that they never visited London. Contemporary writers tell us that they were always riding post to the metropolis, and spending their substance there, when they ought to have been occupied with the care of their estates. The most High and Mighty King James I discouraged the flocking together of the gentry in London. Bacon tells us that "he was wont to be very earnest with the country gentlemen to go from London to their country seats, and sometimes he would say thus to them, 'Gentlemen, at London you are like ships in a sea which show like nothing ; but in your own country villages you are like ships in a river which look like great things.' " King James renewed certain edicts of Queen Elizabeth and issued proclamations containing severe menaces against the gentry who lived in London. Doubtless he had ulterior motives, such as the diminution of the expenditure of the Court, and the distribution of political power. Nor did this northern Solomon lack wisdom. His measures were beneficial to the nation. The condition of the country gentry during the period preceding the Civil War was most prosperous. They amassed wealth ; they increased their influence by their hospitality in their homes ; they were known and loved by their dependents, and as David Hume remarks, "Could human nature ever reach happiness, the condition of the English gentry at this period might merit that appellation."

The sons of these men would not readily forego the attractions of London where no proclamations barred the way. And one business invariably brought them regularly to town, and that was their legal affairs. The old squires were very litigious people. They often quarrelled about boundaries, about leases, loans, and everything else about which they could raise a dispute. Hence it was necessary for them to ride up to London to see their lawyers. Few who lived within five days' journey of the metropolis failed to visit it fairly often. Mr. Sitwell of Renishaw used to go up there every spring, usually in April or May, and occasionally visited it again in August. It was no small business going to London in those days. You could not make up your mind at breakfast to go to town by the morning express, and return the same evening. Our Derbyshire friend began his preparations a month or six weeks in advance, and a week before starting a trunk of clothes was sent on by the carrier. He left the hall at 7 a.m. attired in a riding-suit, top boots, a horse-man's cloak, and a "mounteroe" or Spanish travelling-cap of velvet. Pistols were borne in the holsters, as he had to ride through Sherwood Forest, which was a noted haunt of highwaymen; and behind him rode a footman in livery, carrying his portmantle, containing clean linen, a night-gown, night-cap, and a change of clothes, and a hat-case upon the saddle. The first night was spent at Nottingham, the second at Harborough, the third at Dunstable, and the fourth saw him safely lying in bed at the Greyhound Inn, Holborn, next to Furnival's Inn, where he stayed a fortnight or three weeks. He spent his days in seeing his friends, in buying clothes, books, silver plate, and tobacco, attended divine service at St. Andrew's, Holborn, or St. Paul's. He transacted his business, visited Whitehall, and quietly enjoyed his days, eschewing all the attractions of the theatre, cock-pit or

coffee-houses. If all the squires did not frequent London as much as Squire Sitwell did, or as Lord Macaulay desired, the historian must remember that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries London was not the centre of learning and fashion it has since become. Each county town had its "season," as we shall see presently, and county families had their town houses, not in "London-town," but in York, or Reading, or Derby, or Leicester, the capital of the county in which they resided. Civilization was not confined to London, and county towns were more than they are to-day (inasmuch as London tends to absorb everything, and everything is now hopelessly centralized) centres of society, learning, and government. So much for the accusation that the squire was a boor because he never went to London.

But then he spoke like a labourer. He was guilty of speaking the dialect of his district. That may have grated on Macaulay's ears. But in his dealings with his farmers and labourers, in his conduct on the Bench, how was he to make known his commands, examine witnesses, hear grievances, settle quarrels, if he did not know the language of the people? We have known many "a squire of high degree" in the present civilized age who could talk the distinct provincialisms of his county with pride and zest. He was immensely proud of his knowledge. Dialect words afforded him much pleasure, the tracing of their origin and meaning. He could talk as broadly as a labourer in a cottage, and as correctly as a lord in the drawing-room. Railways and the schoolmaster are killing the old dialect talk, reducing the whole of the country to perfect uniformity of speech. But even still a magistrate finds a study of dialect useful, as in a court of law not long ago a witness said that she was "mine deedy," an expression that puzzled every one who was not born in the delectable county of Berks. It was no

disgrace to a squire to be able to address his men in the vernacular, nor any mark of extreme rusticity.

The historian states that the squire in education differed little from his menials, that he had no books, that grooms and gamekeepers were his only tutors, and he could not even sign his name. All this is a gross libel. The young squires usually received their early education from the chaplain, and at the local grammar school. It was not considered more derogatory for a young squire to attend these excellent institutions and associate with the sons of townsfolk, than to go to Eton. This practice of the upper and middle classes meeting together in the local grammar school produced excellent results, and promoted good feeling and friendship between the various members of society. The young squire proceeded to Oxford and Cambridge. He was better educated in Greek, Latin, logic, philosophy, divinity, and law than the country gentlemen of to-day. As we have seen, he was very fond of adorning his house with apt Latin quotations. As to books, there were more private libraries in England than in any other country in Europe, and the country squire was so bad a scribe that he usually kept a diary and recorded the chief events of each day, the money he spent, the expenses of his estate, and not a few of the public events of his age. The muniment-room of his house contains stores of his letter-books, account-books, and memorandum-books, which are a sufficient refutation of Macaulay's charge that he could scarcely sign his name.

Macaulay charges him with being a sportsman. He would have been delighted to plead guilty to the soft impeachment. He loved sport of all kinds, hunting and shooting, though his skill in the latter would not have satisfied our modern gunners with their breechloaders and battues. He could shoot with his old gun a rabbit or

a pheasant if they kindly waited to be shot ; but he could not " shoot flying." As to his want of taste, his " taking no trouble to decorate his house," the accounts we shall publish of the squire's house, of his reverent care of it, will show the falseness of the historian's charges, and how entirely unreliable he is. But he drank beer, says Macaulay. Yes, and he brewed it, too, a good sound beverage, without any modern adulterations ; but that his chief pleasure consisted in drinking himself under the table is another false charge. Excess was the exception and not the rule in the class to which he belonged, and Macaulay would have been pleased to know that the squire did provide wine for his guests, and that his cellars were amply stored with claret and sack, Malaga and Rhenish wine. As to " his handling pigs " and frequenting fairs, he left such tasks to his steward. Not content with maligning the squire, Macaulay dared to attack the ladies, and deserved a good buffeting for his pains at the hands of the outraged females. But they shall speak for themselves presently, though they need no defender. As for his religion, the squire was firm in his attachment to his Church, as he was loyal to his King. In these days of feeble faith and lax practice, of general tolerance and lukewarmness, when every religion is considered as good as any other, it is refreshing to find those who were absolutely true to the faith they believed. They had abundant excuse of so-called " bigotry." They had seen the triumph of the sectaries. They had seen their friends and pastors driven from their rectories, and their places taken by illiterate and rampaging zealots and hypocrites, of humble origin, no education, and worse manners, troopers who had a turn for preaching, or petty tradesfolk. They had seen their own clergymen driven out and starved, and when the child of one of these dispossessed clerics presumed to ask one of these intruding ministers for a

crust of bread, she was told by him that "starving was as easy a road to heaven as any other." No wonder that the squires of England had a bitter animosity against these representatives of religion, and a warm affection for their Church, for which they had sacrificed so much. George Sitwell in a letter to Lord Frecheville, written in 1661, expresses well the current opinion of his class when he states "the late unhappy warr began about disputes in religion," and was the work of "crafty, wicked men," "proud, insolent, factious, seditious spirits," who "finding it best to fish in troubled waters," had made "godliness their game," and "religion a cloake to cover their intentions."

This representative of his class lived in a fine old Jacobean house with mullioned windows protected by string-courses, gables, and cupola tiled with stone and battlemented roof over the hall. It was an E-shaped house with a hall and wings, in one of which were the buttery and kitchen, in the other the great and little parlours. Stags' heads, escutcheons of arms, and maps of Europe and Jerusalem were hung in the hall, a buff coat and some pistol-holsters, and in the window lay the family Bible. The ceiling of the great parlour was graceful Renaissance plaster work, designed with large quatrefoils and diamonds, the points of the latter running into branches of quince, oak, or vine, or large fleur-de-lis of varying patterns. Moulded ornaments of mermaids, dolphins, squirrels, roses, octofoils, and winged and coroneted lions' heads, occupied the centres of the spaces. A decorated plaster frieze ran round the room, which was richly panelled. Some family portraits were hung on the panelling. The furniture was of carved oak, and the oaken mantelpieces showed in high relief the Sacrifice of Isaac, supported by figures of Samson and Hercules. Much needlework, wrought by the deft fingers of the ladies

of the house, adorned the furniture. The bedrooms were furnished with curtains and rugs of green, purple, or "sod colour," the four-posted bed with hangings of needlework, and the walls covered with tapestry or wainscot.

The owner was a widower when our records open, and his children were married or out in the world. Hence a quietude reigned in the house that no longer echoed with children's voices. Mr. Sitwell sat in his study, a pleasant room containing a library of books on divinity, law, and the classics, wrote up his letter-book and interviewed his steward, Thomas Starkey, and his tenants. His youngest son lived at home, and there was a housekeeper, Mrs. Heayes, and several menservants, a cook, kitchenmaid, and other female domestic servants.

We should have liked to peep into the squire's bookshelves, but that would require too long a time.¹ A cursory glance, however, reveals the presence of Homer, Aristotle, most of the great Latin classics, Fox's *Acts and Monuments*, Usher's works, the writings of the Fathers, Tertullian, Polycarp, Eusebius, etc., Leigh's *Critica Sacra*, Jewel's works, Fuller's *Holy War*, several histories, Bacon's *Essays*, Erasmus's *Colloquies*, some works in French, mathematical books, including Oughtred's *Trigonometry*, Civil War Tracts, Evelyn's *Sylva*, which mentions the squire's name, as he supplied the author with information concerning the giant oaks of Sherwood. These are only a tithe of the volumes; but they are enough to show that the owner was a well-educated man, and was well read in classics, divinity, law, politics, and science, a claim that may be borne out by the existence of a Latin manuscript in his own handwriting upon the art of logic.

The gardens were in keeping with the house, carefully

¹ For a full list see Sir George Sitwell's *Letters, or Memorials of Old Derbyshire*, p. 338.

planned and arranged with taste. The south garden had broad walks and flower-beds disposed in Jacobean knots edged with box, and relieved by pyramids of yew. Flowers and fruit trees abounded everywhere. There was a bowling-green, a dovecot ; in the great orchard butts for archery and side alleys bordered with flowers, and a stone-tiled garden house, without which no seventeenth-century house was deemed complete, a sweet retreat for the summer afternoons, set against a grove of ancient oaks and ashes.

This kind of house is somewhat different from Macaulay's imaginary description of a squire's home, deformed by bad taste, "with the litter of a farmyard gathered under the windows of his bedchamber, and the cabbages and gooseberry bushes growing close to his hall door."

Here Squire Sitwell often entertained his friends and relatives. In summer time the neighbouring squires would occasionally ride over to dinner and bowls, and his Yorkshire friends call and refresh themselves, and rest their horses for an hour or two on their way to London. There was plenty of pleasant society. Christmas was kept up with much festivity in the squire's house. It was not unusual for a squire to keep open house for all comers during Christmas-time, when minstrels and dancers flocked to the hall, and crowds enjoyed right good fare. Such a hospitable squire was John Carminow, in the county of Cornwall, who used to entertain all who cared to come during the twelve days of the feast, and provided for their feastings twelve fat bullocks, twenty Cornish bushels of wheat, thirty-six sheep, with hogs, lambs and fowls of all sorts. There was a charming sense of equality in these old-time feasts. All distinctions of rank or fortune were laid aside. The poor shared equally with the rich guest the squire's bounty. Of the

Penshurst feasts in the days of the Sidneys we read that the dishes did not grow coarser as they receded from the high table, and no huge salt-cellar divided the noble from the ignoble guests. The Christmas feast was a bond of union between all classes, and begat friendly relations between lords or squires and tenants and peasants which naught could disturb.

There were plenty of games for the amusement of the company—blind-man's buff and hunt the slipper, and others of a similar character. The mummers performed their old play, and light were the feet of the dancers, as they joined in the old country dances, and anon the carol-singers stood beneath the kissing-bush and chanted :—

“ God rest ye merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For remember Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day.”

At Renishaw the preparations began early in November with the brewing of a couple of hogsheads of “ Christmas beer,” and the making of a huge “ brawne.” Fat hogs were killed and other beasts and birds slain. Each servant had a gift, and money was distributed to the poor ; turkeys, fowls, and brawn were sent to absent friends. The tenants came with rent capons—“ one good Rent Capon every Christmas,” was a usual covenant in the lease—and were regaled in the hall with beer, beef, mince pie, and plum porridge, and a doe was usually sent from Sheffield Park as a present from the Duke of Norfolk. A happy evening was spent in boisterous games, and dancing, and the Chesterfield and Staveley fiddlers came, and some of the guests played cards. Nor was this the only occasion when the hall resounded with merriment. On February 14th there were dancing and drawing of valentines. Fairs at Chesterfield, Sheffield, and Rotherham, races and bull-baitings, bowling-parties, the

wakes and harvest suppers afforded much amusement to all classes.

But these were special occasions. It may be interesting to note the usual events of a squire's life of the period. He and his son breakfasted at seven o'clock upon beer, cold meat, Westphalia ham or neat's tongue, oatcakes, and white bread and butter. After breakfast the son, William, went to study at the Rectory with Dr. Gardiner, the rector, a learned Clergyman, formerly Proctor of Cambridge University and chaplain to the King. The squire rode with his steward to inspect the farms and attend to parochial or county business. At eleven o'clock the servants, headed by the housekeeper, Mrs. Heayes, filed in to family prayers in the hall. The butler then laid the table, with its cloth of homespun linen, pewter plates and dishes, beer and wineglasses, silver salts and spoons, porringer and tankards, for the noonday dinner.

We can picture the old squire and his son seated at the board in the old hall, the butler serving them. The elder wore a long periwig scented with orange-flower water ; he had a slight moustache and tuft of hair under his chin. A grey, broad-brimmed beaver hat lay by his side, and he had large bands of white linen or cambric, a dark grey cloth coat of simple cut, unbuttoned at the waist, and with wristbands turned back to show the soft linen cuffs underneath, and sword-belt and sword, Cavalier breeches open at the knee, riding-tops of wrinkled buckskin, and square-toed shoes with high heels, and tongues to protect the instep from the stirrup. He had strong and clear-cut features, with a good forehead and eyes, and a well-developed chin, giving the impression of force of character, tenacity of purpose, and good reasoning powers. On his left hand sat his son, attired in a grey cloth suit, fine worsted understockings, scarlet silk overstockings and riding-shoes. If we could have listened to their conversa-

tion we should, doubtless, have heard them discussing the son's classical studies, the big trout in the Rother, the flower garden, and the home farm, and the doings of William's brothers—John's last letter from plague-stricken London, Robert's adventures at Aleppo, and George's prospects of making a fortune in Spain. The meal was plain and good—broth served in porringers and eaten with oatcakes, and joint with vegetables, poultry or game, a pudding or tart, cheese and fruit. On Fridays they had only fresh or salt fish. They drank a glass or two of tent or Malaga wine and a tankard of ale, and after dinner smoked a pipe of tobacco in the little parlour or the garden-house. After dinner the squire wrote letters, read the gazettes and newsletters which his cousin forwarded by every post from London. Then he played a game at bowls, walked through the folds and fields, and then came back to supper, and after a pipe of tobacco, a tankard of ale, and a game of cards or shovel-board, the evening finished with family prayers. So passed the quiet day.

On Sundays the old family coach, drawn by two bay mares, was trotted out, and bore the squire and his son to church at Eckington. There they sat in the large family pew by the second pillar on the right of the nave, with the servants ranged behind them, and listened to Dr. Gardiner's learned but lengthy sermons, joined in the beautiful liturgy of the Church of England, only lately restored to its place in the services of the Church, and in singing the metrical version of the Psalms of David, accompanied by the village orchestra of flutes and fiddles. After service he exchanged greetings with the villagers, saluted the learned Doctor Gardiner, and carried him and his wife back to dinner at the hall.

He was a good judge of horses, and bred them. In 1666 he was buying horses for Lord Ogle's troop. He used to

shoot with a fowling-piece, and in 1664 sent a present of four pheasants to the Duke of Newcastle. His letter-book suggests that he kept greyhounds, and doubtless joined his neighbours in hunting with Lord Frecheville's stag-hounds of Staveley Park. Derbyshire squires were ever devoted to sport. Some of their names have been immortalized in Leonard Wheatcroft's *Elegy upon the death of all the greatest Gentry in Darby Dale who loved Huntinge and Hawkinge* (1672), who sang to the cry :—

“ Of great mouth'd doggs who did not feare to kill
Which was their master's pleasure word and will.

ffarewell you Huntsmen that did Hunt the Hare,
ffarewell you hounds that tired both horse and mare,
ffarewell you gallant Falkners every one. . . .”

We shall discuss later the sporting instincts of the squires. Sir George Sitwell's researches and examinations of his ancestor's account-books enable us to form a good idea of the economy of a squire's house of the period. The maids wove the tablecloths, sheets, pillow-cases, window curtains, and woollen blankets in the house, and stuffed the mattresses with feathers from the farmyard. Cloth for the livery of five or six men was bought at Chesterfield and made up at home by the village tailor. Wheat for bread, and oats for oatcakes, were grown on the farm, and ground with querns in the house, as flour was needed. Pickling, preserving and salting, and the making of currant and gooseberry wines were carried on under the direction of the housekeeper, and baking, churning, and cheese-making at the ovens and dairy in the kitchen court. Beer was brewed in large quantities on the premises. In older days meat was salted in November and used all during the winter ; but in the seventeenth century the squire had fresh meat all the year round. The home farm, orchards, and river produced all that he

required: meat, fish, eggs, milk, cream, vegetables, and fruit, turkeys and fowls, and game from the wood and pigeons from the dovecot. Salt fish was brought from Hull for the Friday dinners. A chandler in the village supplied wax candles, but tallow dips were made in the house, and also "washing balls," or soap, at the cost of one shilling a dozen. Groceries were brought by carrier or a groom on horseback from Chesterfield. Nearly all these household necessities were supplied on the spot, but the carriers or pack-horses conveyed many luxuries from London to Renishaw. Amongst them were Westphalian hams, capers, currants, newspapers, books, bottles of cinnamon water, orange-flower water, strong water, *Rosa solis*, tobacco, and various wines. A London tailor made the squire's clothes. Spain sent him barrels of tent and Malaga wine, chests of oranges and lemons, olives and raisins, and sugar he imported from Barbados.

His letter-book reveals that he was in touch with public life in London, with statesmanship and politics. He describes himself as "one of those fooles of the world who love to be busie," and in spite of his age led a very active and useful life. As a commissioner of the royal subsidies, sheriff of his county, a grand juryman, a frequent visitor at great houses, intent upon much local business, the arbitrator of local disputes, the ready helper of those who were in distress, he found many opportunities for the exercise of his faculties and activities. He was, without doubt, a good Christian man, who believed that it was the "duty of every man to be careful in the service of God," but abhorred the cloak and the mask of pretentious piety; supported the institution of bishops, and the "decent, harmless ceremonies" of the Church of England, but "meddled not with controverted points of faith."

Peace to his ashes and to all other good squires such as he. I cannot conclude this chapter better than by

quoting the words of his descendant, Sir George Sitwell : " Such, in real life, were the Tory squires upon whose memory Lord Macaulay has heaped his coarsest epithets of a not very refined vocabulary, the falsest coin of a not very sterling rhetoric ; for I have no reason to believe that the owner of the letter-book was otherwise than an average specimen of the class to which he belonged, neither better nor worse than his neighbours who sat next him at the market ordinary, discussed the Dutch War with him over a quart of sack and a pipe of tobacco at the ' Redd Lyon,' or rode over to a midday dinner and a game of bowls at Renishaw. The impression left upon the mind by such documents as the letter-book is not one of rudeness, but rather of comfort, education, and refinement. Of the ignorance and uncouthness, the drunkenness and pig-handling, the low habits and gross phrases, the oaths, coarse jests, and scurrilous terms of abuse, the vulgar taste which aimed at ornament, but could produce nothing but deformity, there is not a trace ; but instead of meeting with ' the deoprtment, the vocabulary, and the accent of a carter,' and the manners of ' rustic millers or alehouse keepers,' we find a class of men useful in their generation, public spirited and intellectual, courteous in their dealings with each other, and compassionate towards the poor, and better judges of taste in architecture and gardening than at least one of their critics."

CHAPTER VIII

NONJURORS AND JACOBITES

AMONG those many conscientious men, remarkable for their learning and virtue, whose consciences would not allow them to take the oaths of allegiance to William and Mary after the Revolution of 1688, because they had previously taken similar oaths to James II, stands out prominently the good Berkshire squire, Francis Cherry. He belonged to that body of men who have been much maligned. True members of the Church of England, they felt that they could not set aside the principles they believed to be right. Mistaken they doubtless were, but faithful to the Stuart dynasty and to the oaths they had taken to that royal house. Though all nonjurors were not Jacobites, nor all Jacobites nonjurors, most of them were sympathizers with the Pretender, and would have rejoiced to see his line restored. Francis Cherry (1665-1713) was a fine specimen of a country squire. He befriended in early life a remarkable man, Thomas Hearne, the son of the parish clerk of White Waltham, sent him to Oxford, paid for his education, and assisted him in all his undertakings. Hearne was devoted to Mr. Cherry and was enthusiastic in his admiration. He tells us that "my best friend Mr. Francis Cherry was a very handsome man, particularly when young. His hands were delicately white. He was a man of great parts, and one of the finest gentlemen in England. King James II seeing him on horseback in Windsor Forest, when His Majesty was

hunting, asked who it was, and being told, the King said he never saw any one sit a horse better in his life." This was great praise, as His Majesty was a keen sportsman, and knew something of horsemanship. He owned the beautiful Berkshire estate of Shottesbrooke, being lord of the manor, his house standing near the noble church, which was in olden days a collegiate church, wherein the wardens of the college lie buried. Educated at the school at Bray he proceeded to St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, where he applied him to his studies though, Hearne tells us, "he used to complain that he was not so studious in the hall as he afterwards wished he had been." Soon after the Revolution he became acquainted with the celebrated nonjuror Henry Dodwell, whom he entertained for a long period at Shottesbrooke, and with whom he studied and "became well versed in the Greek and Latin authors, as well human and divine." He assisted Dodwell in many of his writings, especially in the elaborate work *De cyclis Veterum*, which was gratefully dedicated by the author to Francis Cherry. In addition to his manly sports—his biographer tells us that he was a "bold rider," and "an elegant dancer," and known amongst his neighbours as "the idol of Berkshire"—he loved learning, collected manuscripts and coins and other antiquities; and above all he was a man of genuine piety, prudence, modesty, and sweetness of temper, never ruffled by persecution and adversity, and always cheerful. Plots and conspiracies were contrary to his nature, but he loved the Stuarts, and was a Jacobite. A story is told of him that when hunting with the Royal Buckhounds in Windsor Forest, he perceived "Dutch William" riding behind him; so he set spurs to his horse and jumped into a frightfully deep and broad part of the Thames, hoping that the "usurper" would follow him and break his neck. But it is only an idle tale, and Francis Cherry would never have done or

wished such a thing, save mentioning it, perhaps, as a joke. It is curious to note that the King did afterwards meet his death when riding, his horse stumbling over a mole-hill. Another royal person he used to meet in the hunting-field, the Princess Anne, afterwards "good" Queen Anne, an enthusiastic huntress, who admired the handsome young squire and bestowed upon him the marks of her favour. When she came to the throne, many nonjurors offered no opposition to her rule, and quietly acquiesced in her claims, regarding her as a quasi-regent for her brother, the Pretender "James the Third." But Francis Cherry and his friend Dodwell had no such illusions. They believed that Charles, the so-called Pretender, was their rightful King, and whenever the Queen was hunting, or driving in her two-wheeled calash, when she was unable to ride, along the grass lanes of the Forest, Cherry carefully avoided her. The Queen understood his avoidance of her, respected his conscientious opinions, used to send him presents of wine, and pointing him out to her attendants declared, "There goes Mr. Cherry, one of the honestest gentlemen in my dominions." He was no half-hearted supporter of the cause he believed to be right. His house became the rendezvous of the nonjurors, was always open to the clergy who had been deprived of their livings on account of their loyalty to their oath, and Shottesbrooke Park became a "complete hotel for friendship, learning and distress." He was able to make up seventy beds in his house. Bishop Ken divided his time between Shottesbrooke and Longleat House. Bowdler and his family were frequent guests, and Robert Nelson would frequently ride over from Lord Berkeley's at Cranford. Dr. Grabe always found a welcome there. Charles Leslie, one of the ablest of the nonjurors, an Irishman, a great preacher and controversialist, who fell foul of the Government and was outlawed, found refuge for six months in a

house belonging to Mr. Cherry at White Waltham, a village close to Shottesbrooke. He used to call it "my Tusculum," and was deeply grateful to his kind host. He was obliged to live in disguise, and sometimes "wore regimentals."

Cherry's friend and admirer, the learned Thomas Hearne, tells us that "during his adverse fortune (for a great many troubles fell upon him some years before he died) he still persisted in the exercise of piety and virtue, and was not at all ruffled or discouraged, but appeared cheerful and behaved himself with admirable courage, patience, and humility, not speaking the least ill word of any, even the most implacable enemy, he being indeed always noted for his singular good nature and extraordinary sweetness of temper." He was buried at Shottesbrooke churchyard at ten o'clock at night on September 25th, 1713, four of the poorest of his tenants bearing the corpse to the grave. He desired to be buried near the place where his friend "Mr. Dodwell lyeth," with no achievements, escutcheons or pall, and to have some brickwork of two or three feet in height raised over him, and a plain black marble laid on it, "without any arms, name, or other inscription but this which followeth :—

HIC - IACET - PECCATORUM - MAXIMUS

ANNO - DOM - MDCC . . .

The year to be inserted."

We do not recognize in this true portrait of a squire any resemblance to the fancy picture of the country gentleman of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries painted by his detractors, who represent him as an ignorant, bigoted, sensual animal, only one degree removed from a brute, and such a slave to field sports that Goliath's curse seemed to have passed upon him, "I will give thee unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field."¹

¹ *Spectator*, Vol. VIII, No. 583.

With regard to Shottesbrooke, it may be mentioned, as a matter of interest in connection with the recent coronation, that the manor was anciently held by a curious species of grand sergeanty, namely, by the service of providing charcoal to make the crown and other regalia for the King's coronation, the sum of 60s. 10d. being allowed for it by the King. In the time of William Rufus the manor belonged to Alward, the goldsmith, whose father held it of King Edward the Confessor. The church built by Sir William Trussell in the thirteenth century contains many memorials of knights and squires, including altar-tombs of the founder and his lady, and of their daughter, Margaret, who married Sir Fulke Pembrugge, with her effigy in brass. Also there is the tomb of Thomas Noke with his effigy in brass, "who, for his great age and virtuous life, was revered of all men, and commonly called Father Noke, created esquire by King Henry VIII. He was of stature high and comely; and for his excellence in artillery, made yeoman of the crown of England; which had, in his life, three wives, and by every of them some fruit and offspring; he deceased, the 21st day of August, 1567, in the year of his age 87." Some ladies were very learned in those days, and Elizabeth, Lady Hoby, whose acquaintance we have already made, wrote a Latin epitaph on him, which is here inserted as a specimen of that lady's composition:—

" O multum delecte senex, pater atque vocatus,
 Vel quia grandævus, vel quia probus eras.
 Annos vixisti novies decem, atque satelles
 Fidus eras regum, fidus eras que tuis;
 Jam satis functus valeas, sed tu Deus alme
 Sic mihi concedas vivere, sic que mori."

The Lady Elizabeth was evidently a little proud of her Latinity, and perhaps some of the learned ladies of to-day might not be ashamed of her accomplishment.

There were other noted nonjurors amongst the ranks of the country gentry. A writer in the *Cheshire Sheaf* states that about one hundred clergy and a much larger number of laymen refused on conscientious grounds to take the oaths of allegiance to William and Mary; the late Canon Overton, who was the great authority on the subject, stated that he was not prepared to dispute the correctness of the assertion. Roger North (1653–1734), youngest son of Dudley, fourth Lord North, lived for thirty-five years as a country gentleman at Rougham, in Norfolk, which is still the seat of his descendants, occupying himself with his literary works, his *Lives of the Norths* and his *Examen* of White Kennett's History, as well as supervising the work on his estate and helping his neighbours with his vast legal knowledge. He had lost several important posts on account of the Revolution, having been legal adviser to both King James and his Queen, and to the Archbishop of Canterbury. His non-juring opinions prevented him from holding any similar office under the regime of the "usurper."

Those who have been privileged to visit beautiful Longleat will remember that large upper room lined with books, still called, if I remember rightly, Ken's Library. There in that stately mansion the deprived bishop found a home and resting-place owing to the kindness of good Thomas Thynne, first Viscount Weymouth (1640–1714). Lord Weymouth was not a nonjuror himself, but he was a strong sympathizer with the opinions of the party, though he had wearied of the policy of King James and was partly instrumental in bringing the Prince of Orange to England. Ken was deeply attached to him, and thus dedicated to his generous host the first volume of his poems:—

"When I, my Lord, crushed by prevailing might,
No cottage had where to direct my Flight;

Kind Heav'n me with a Friend Illustrious blest,
 Who gave me Shelter, Affluence and Rest ;
 In this alone I Gregory¹ outdo,
 That I much happier Refuge have in you ;
 When to my Closet I to Hymn retire,
 On this side Heav'n have nothing to desire."

Many of the country squires remained loyal to the Stuart cause who were in no way nonjurors. The squires of England are not soon shaken in their loyalty, nor are they accustomed to turn their coats. In spite of all the misdeeds of the Stuarts, they continued their attachment to that dynasty. The famous trial of Dr. Sacheverell is evidence of this. In 1709 he preached two remarkable sermons upon St. Paul's words, "Perils from false brethren," containing a violent attack upon the Government and abuse of the Revolution as an unrighteous change. The sermons were printed, and forty thousand copies were distributed throughout the country by the Tories and the High Church party. These found a welcome in many a manor-house and country parsonage. Popular opinion was roused. Dr. Sacheverell was tried before the House of Lords, and beyond burning his sermons and prohibiting his preaching for three years he escaped condemnation, and his sentence was considered an acquittal. He was regarded as the champion of the Church. Bonfires were lighted and rejoicings were celebrated all over England, and when he went down to Shropshire to take possession of a living, his journey was one long triumphal progress. The squires turned out on horseback and escorted him through their counties, and the people cheered and shouted "Sacheverell and the Church."²

¹ Gregory of Nazianzus.

² Sir Walter Scott understood well the spirit of the times when in *Waverley* he makes the poor soldier, who followed his High Church master, shout in his dying moments, "Holy Church and Dr. Sachfred."

Especially in Oxfordshire was Jacobitism rampant. Dr. Brookes, Rector of Shipton-under-Wychwood, writing of the rising of 1745, states that "so strong was the attachment of the great families about this part of Oxfordshire to the Stuarts, that if the Scotch had been able to push forward, and the French Court had sent an army so strong as that which accompanied King William, they would have thrown off the mask, and taken up arms on their behalf.

"Lord Cornbury was the soul of the disaffected in this vicinity; next to him stood Sir Robert Jenkinson, of South Lawn Lodge. He then told me that when the Pretender, as he was called, was in England, incognito, he visited Lord Cornbury. Banbury, a barber of Charlbury, who shaved the Prince and dressed his wig, knew the Pretender by a word which dropped incautiously from Lord Cornbury, and by the extraordinary respect which was shown to the mysterious stranger. I then stated that I had been informed by the keeper of the High Lodge in Woodstock (Mr. Morris) of meetings being held there prior to the Rebellion of 1745, at which Lord Cornbury, Messrs. Jenkinson, Cope, Dean, Basset, and Lacy used to assist, and that these assemblies took place generally in the night time."

At Cornbury there stayed for a night some of the Pretender's followers, who had left his standard after the retreat from Derby and Robert Spendlove, an old man who died in 1822, took bread to these weary warriors. You can still see at Chastleton some of his decanters and glasses specially manufactured for the Jacobites at Derby, with their emblematical figures, a spray of roses, a compass pointing to a star, and the word *Fiat*. The squires of Oxfordshire planted Scotch firs in their gardens with joyful expectations of the fulfilment of their hopes; and the people of Oxford shouted

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the song : " The King shall enjoy his own again," and another ditty :—

" We'll have no Prince Hanover ;
Let James, our King, come over," etc.

while the dons of St. John's College, almost within living memory, held their wineglasses over the finger-bowls and toasted the King over the water.

There are, probably, many counties which possessed some squires who sympathized with the Stuart cause ; especially in Lancashire, where several did not content themselves, like the Oxfordshire squires, with holding meetings and drinking healths over finger-bowls, but actually fought for the cause they loved. Many of the squires of Lancashire were Roman Catholics, and this faith helped to link them to the Pretender. Several were taken prisoners, were tried and found guilty in the rebellion of 1715, and amongst these were Richard Chorley of Chorley and his son. The former was executed and the latter died of grief in prison. Many others could be mentioned. It was the same in the disastrous expedition of Charles Edward in 1745, which caused the death of many a worthy gentleman, including Francis Townley, who came of an old Lancashire stock, and whose head was fixed upon Temple Bar.

Jacobitism died during the reign of George III. It was a hopeless task to seek to re-establish a degenerate race ; though the young Pretender in his early manhood was certainly not degenerate. He possessed amazing faculties, wonderful tact, and the Stuart art of winning the hearts of men and women. He did wonders in his attempt to gain again the throne of his ancestors in '45 ; and must not be judged by his conduct in later life, when disappointment and crushed hopes had reduced him to incapacity and worthlessness. The squires of England

who supported him, who clung to their old faith, and conscientiously refused to violate their oaths, however mistaken they may have been, proved themselves worthy of the respect of all those who value honour and unselfishness above the external advantages of power and place-hunting, and who refuse to point the finger of scorn at the unhappy champions of lost causes.

CHAPTER IX

THE HOUSE OF THE SQUIRE

AS we wander up and down the country we always find in each village two buildings which are conspicuous for their beauty and antiquity. These are the church and the manor-house. The old church with its Norman tower or graceful fourteenth-century spire, speaks of the stability of English life. It has looked down upon generation after generation of the inhabitants and seems to say, "*J'y suis, j'y reste.* All things change but I. I see the infants brought here to be christened. A few years pass ; the babe has grown to be an old man and is borne here, and sleeps under my shadow. Age after age passes, but I survive." It has been the centre of village life for ages, the religious, secular, and social life of the villagers, and shows, writ in stone, its strange and varied history. And close beside the church, nestling amid the trees, we see the manor-house, an old building that has seen better days, and has now often degenerated into a farm-house. Its story carries us back to Saxon times, when on this same site stood the English thane's hall, a barn-like structure built of wood, with a solar, a chapel, and kitchen attached, which has given place to the beautiful Tudor building which now delights our eyes in spite of its decaying timbers and lack of repair.

The old squires took a great pride in their dwelling-places. They built not only for themselves, but for their sons and grandsons. A modern house is built for show,

for the immediate present, for the pleasure of the builder or his architect. The owner has no deep-rooted affection for the soil of his habitation. He will probably sell it in a few years' time ; or his son will prefer to live in London, or in some distant shire. There is no reason why he should obey any dictates but his own fancy and whim or personal liking. With the old squire things were different. He and his fathers before him owned the land and farms and village. It never occurred to him that his family should ever remove from the village. He had his three healthy sons and as many daughters, with a host of nephews and nieces who filled the old manor-house with life and laughter in the summer and at Christmas. There was no fear of the old stock failing for many generations. Hence he built his manor-house surely and well. He built for his sons and grandsons. He lighted what Ruskin calls the Sixth Lamp of Architecture, the Lamp of Memory, and considered it an evil sign of a people for houses to be built carelessly to last for a generation only. The old squires felt that " having spent their lives happily and honourably they would be grieved at the close of them, to think that the place of their earthly abode, which had seen and seemed almost to sympathize in all their honour, their gladness or their suffering—that this, with all the record it bare them, and all of material things that they had loved and ruled over, and set the stamp of themselves upon—was to be swept away, as soon as there was room made for them in the grave ; that no respect was to be shown to it, no affection felt for it, no good to be drawn from it by their children ; that though there was a monument in the church, there was no warm monument in the hearth and house to them ; that all that they had treasured was despised, and the places that had sheltered and comforted them were dragged down to the dust. I say that a good man would fear this ; and that, far more,

a good son, a noble descendant, would fear doing this to his father's house. When men do not love their hearths, nor reverence their thresholds, it is a sign that they have dishonoured both. . . . Our God is a household God, as well as a heavenly one ; He has an altar in every man's dwelling ; let men look to it when they rend it lightly and pour out its ashes."

That is a grand passage by one of the most eloquent and accomplished modern English writers. The feelings, so magnificently expressed, seem to have animated the builders of those precious gems of domestic architecture that adorn our country-side. They stamped their impress upon the homes they reared. They carved their names, or their initials, or their arms over their doorways or mantel-pieces. They adorned them with texts or homely verse, expressions of pious thoughts, or quaint or humorous conceits. They built surely and well, so that their homes might last, not for their own pleasure, nor for their own use, but for their descendants who would thus venerate the hand that laid those stones, and respect the memory of their forefathers, and the honour of their house.

It is not my intention here to tell the story of the development of the squire's house. That I have attempted to do in my book on *The Manor-houses of England*, and there are many other more elaborate volumes dealing with the growth of our English homes, from the large, rambling habitation of a Saxon gentleman, as described by Sir Walter Scott in *Ivanhoe*, to the Palladian monstrosities of the eighteenth century.

The typical manor-house is something essentially picturesque, with pointed gables, carved verge-boards, and clustered chimneys. If it be "bosomed high in tufted trees," in the delightful Miltonic phrase, or if it have pleasantries like the "high hall garden" of Tennyson's poem, in which the rooks were calling "Maud, Maud,"



A GARDEN CORNER
(BINGHAM MELCOMBE, DORSETSHIRE)



so much the more complete the picture. The ideal manor-house we take to be something in the style that prevailed when Henry VII gave England rest after the long struggle of the Roses, and when the first beginnings of the English Renaissance were stirring the architecture, the art, and the social life of our country. Those were the days of a great expansion, when the life of the smaller landowners grew less feudal and embattled, and at the same time more individual. Comfort rather than safety was the first aim. Then arose the more picturesque portions of such manor-houses, for example, as Compton Wynyates, in Warwickshire, Ockwells, in Berkshire, and Dorney Court, in Bucks, making a wonderful advance in the graces of life upon ancient manor-houses such as that still to be seen at Boothby Pagnell, in Lincolnshire, where a stone house built by a Norman lord proves in its careful arrangement for defence and its primitive domestic contrivances that to hold your own was an insistent problem, leaving little leisure for living beautifully. A small Norman building that was perhaps the manor-house may yet be found at Sutton Courtney, Berkshire, in the grounds belonging to a much later residence.

“ In the southern districts of England the old English manor-houses, the houses of the gentry generally, as well as of the better class of yeomanry, were very simple in the plan, and very often exhibited a singular uniformity of design. In the centre was the hall, at the end of one side of which was the principal entrance to the house, a portion of the hall being cut off by a screen, to form a passage through the house from the front entrance to that at the back, which was directly opposite. On the side of this passage (known by the name of ‘ the entrye,’ and sometimes called the ‘ screens ’) and opposite to the screen were generally three doorways, as at Crowhurst Place, the seat of the Gaynesfords ; sometimes, however, there were

but two, as in the case at Great Tangle, in the parish of Wonersh in Surrey. In both these examples the first of these doors opens into a parlour ; at Crowhurst the second leads to a staircase, and the third to the butteries, kitchen, and to the whole of the domestic offices.

“ In the screen were two openings, without doors, through which the hall was entered. Beyond the upper or dais end of the hall were one or several rooms, of a more private character than either the parlour or hall ; the sleeping-rooms were generally in the upper stories. Externally there was usually a recess in the centre of the front, formed by one side of the hall, as we find was the case in the house of Great Tangle, as originally built. At either end of this central recess was a gable projection ; the one forming a porch over the entrance, the other a bay-window to the hall. Beyond these were two larger gabled ends, one enclosing the parlour and offices, and the other the more private rooms before noticed.”¹

It is pleasant to note that the beautiful Crowhurst Place, mentioned by Mr. Baily, one of the most charming in England, a half-timber house rising sheer out of its encircling moat, has lately returned to the family of its former owners, the Gaynesfords, and is being carefully restored.

You will have marked the general plan of the house, as described by the above writer. The hall continued to be the main feature of the squire's home, as it remains at Penshurst, built in 1341, with its fire on the hearth in the centre and the smoke escaping through a louvre in the timbered roof. But gradually it was dethroned from its lofty position, until in the time of Inigo Jones it had become merely an entrance or a passage. The change was not arbitrary, but arose out of altered conditions of life.

¹ *Surrey Archæological Collections*. A paper on Timber Houses, by Charles Baily.

The lord no longer lived largely in common with his household people—"above the salt" it is true, but at the same table. He and his family had retired to their own apartments; and so the old uses of the hall ceased to be. There is a very interesting fourteenth-century house in the parish of Little Hempstone, near Totnes, the original manor-house of the Arundels, now degenerated into a farmhouse. It has three courts. You pass through the garden court to the principal quadrangle, on the right of the passage is the hall; on the left a cellar, and around the central court are grouped parlour, kitchen, buttery and dairy, with windows all looking into this tiny court. Only one window, that of the hall, looks outward. There is a third court, not shown in the plan, for stables and cowsheds. The reason of the scarcity of outside windows is that greater security is thus obtained from the attacks of robbers or armed men.

Many very charming houses—whether built of black and white timber and plaster, as in Cheshire, Shropshire, and Herefordshire, to name no other shires; of flint, as in Norfolk; of red brick, as in Suffolk and Essex; or of stone—were erected in the early Tudor period, which lasted for about a century, ending in 1540. The Wars of the Roses were ended, and the need for fortification seemed past. The country was more settled. Hence the country squires could build houses without much fear of their being attacked and ransacked; though the experiences of the Pastons somewhat belied this feeling of security. As early as the reign of Henry VI we find a squire, one Thomas Tropenell, building his beautiful manor-house at Great Chalfield, in Wiltshire, which we shall visit presently, without considering it necessary to fortify his dwelling beyond giving it a moat.

Moreover, the squire became rich and prosperous. There was a great boom in agriculture owing to the de-

velopment of the cloth trade, and the sale of their rich fleeces brought prosperity to the squires. They set themselves to build anew the ill-planned and inconvenient manor-houses bequeathed to them by their forefathers. A little later the after-gleaning of the spoils of the monasteries added to their wealth and increased their lust for "bricks and mortar."

Then arose (as I have stated elsewhere¹) some of the most perfect examples of English domestic architecture that our land ever possessed. The style was essentially English. Though Henry VIII brought over foreign artificers, who were employed to assist in the construction of his palaces and in designing decorations for the mansions of the great, the native masons and builders were engaged on these lesser houses, and wrought in simple fashion, clinging to the traditional style which they had loved and revered, best suited to the national character and climate. Son or grandson followed their footsteps, preserved the tradition of building, added to the house, making improvements and alterations according to his own taste and ideas. Hence houses arose showing no unity of design with picturesque grouping of portions erected at different times.

Moreover, the squire took a personal and active interest in the work. When Sir John Thynne built beautiful Longleat, he superintended the work with the utmost thoroughness, and kept accurate accounts of the cost of the erection, which can still be seen amongst the muniments of his Wiltshire home. When the Oxfordshire house of Chesterton was built by Squire John Jones, he took infinite pains with the work, which proceeded in the most leisurely manner. The stone was seasoned for three years, first under sheds and then in the open, and when the walls were being reared, after the workmen had departed for

¹ *Manor Houses of England*, p. 28 (Batsford)

the day, the squire used to supervise the work that they had done, and try if he could pick the mortar out with his knife. If he succeeded the work had to be demolished and done over again.

If you had lived in the sixteenth century you would have consulted the book of the learned Dr. Andrew Boorde, *The Dyetary of Helth*, and learnt how to build a house according to the most approved principles.

“ Make the hall,” he says, “ under such a fashion that the parlour be annexed to the head of the hall, and the buttery and pantry be at the lower end of the hall ; the cellar under the pantry, set somewhat above from the buttery and pantry, coming with an entry by the wall of the buttery ; the pastry-house and larder-house annexed to the kitchen. Then divide the lodgings by the circuit of the quadrivial court, and let the gatehouse be opposite, or against the hall door (not directly) but the hall door standing abase, and the gatehouse in the middle of the front entering into the place. Let the privy chamber be annexed to the great chamber of estate with other chambers necessary for the building, so that many of the chambers may have a prospect into the chapel.”

This plan of making bedchambers to have a prospect into a chapel is effectually carried out at Broughton Castle, and caused Bishop Wilberforce, the witty Bishop of Oxford, to remark that until he came to Broughton, he never understood fully the meaning of the verse in the Psalm, “ Let the saints rejoice in their beds.”

From the Doctor’s plan we learn that the idea of the quadrangle still remained, but as the century progressed suites of rooms were added ; the windows became larger ; the H-shaped type of house was evolved, which is only the old plan of the hall in the centre flanked on one side by the family apartments, on the other by those of the servants. Also the E-shaped plan came into fashion,

erroneously supposed to have been invented as a compliment to Queen Elizabeth. It is only the hall with wings projecting on one side only, the central stroke of the letter representing the porch.

Two causes contributed to making the porch an important feature of the house. In the sixteenth century the squires conceived the idea of placing the chief apartments on the upper floor. Hence they needed a stately staircase to lead to these rooms, and in consequence of this a fine entrance to lead to the staircase. The entrance, it was considered, should be made imposing. Over the door the squire placed his coat-of-arms, with mantling, crest and supporters. The porch was increased in size and dignity, and a chamber was placed over it. The squire loved hospitality and to give a warm welcome to his friends. The door was a symbol of hospitality. There he welcomed their arrival; there he speeded his departing guests. He loved to make the entrance to his house fair and pleasant to the eye. From the steps he greeted his tenantry when they came to congratulate him on some happy event in his domestic life, or to condole with him in his sorrows; and there in the proudest moment of his life he stood to present his young son on the youth's coming of age, happy that the old line had not died out, and that his son could maintain the honour of his family and carry on its old traditions. The porch and doorway were associated with many happy comings and goings, and some sad ones too. It held a place of honour in the old manor-house.

The staircase, which you saw in front of you as you entered the house, has much dignity,¹ with its great window on the landing glazed with the coats-of-arms of the family, their friends and connections. It is wide

¹ For an account of the development of the staircase see *Manor Houses of England*.

and comfortable to ascend, with its steps much less steep than you find in a modern staircase, and the tread much broader. It has mercy on old folks, and it is not such a labour to climb to bed as in most modern houses.

Perhaps it may be interesting to visit some of the Elizabethan houses, monuments of the old squires' taste, of which every Englishman should be proud, showing as they do that at one time at least in our history we could produce architects who were the equals of those of any other country. I happened to show the drawings of several of these houses, afterwards reproduced in my book, to a distinguished foreigner who did not know England very well; and he was astonished at the charm and beauty of these dwelling-places, and said, "There is nothing like them, nothing to equal them, on the other side of the Channel."

Evidently an old writer, Harrison, who wrote a *Description of England* (1577-1587) was of the same opinion as this learned foreign gentleman. He says:—

"The ancient manours and houses of our gentlemen are yet and for the most part of strong timber (in framing whereof our carpenters have been and are worthily preferred before those of the like science among all other nations). Howbeit such as be laterlie builded, are commonlie either bricke or hard stone (or both); their roomes large and comelie, and houses of office further distant from their lodgings. Those of the nobilitie are likewise wrought with bricke or hard stone, as provision may best be made, but so magnificent and statelie, as the basest house of a baron doth often match (in our daies) with some honours of princes in old time. So that if ever curious building did flourish in England, it is in these yeares, wherein our workemen excell, and are in maner comparable in skill with old Vitruvius (Leo Baptista) and Serlo."

Where shall we find the best existing example of the home of a squire? That is a hard question. There are so many, built of various materials and born in different ages, of varying styles and in different surroundings. They were constructed of the materials supplied by nature in the place of their birth, and therefore adapt themselves to the surrounding scenery. The frame is well suited to the picture. They stand in secluded villages, girt about by trees, and the motorist passes them by as he rushes along. Guide-books scarcely notice them. They are so familiar to the villagers that the rustics are unconscious of their beauties, and many lie far out of the track of the main roads, and are very humble-minded and retiring. They do not court attention or seek to attract the eye. They seem in quest of peace and to love obscurity, as they stand in the old-fashioned gardens surrounded by rare blendings of art and nature in park and pleasance.

What particular style do you most affect? What material more especially pleases you? We can still show you examples of all kinds. Stone and timber and brick and plaster and flint—all these have been made to fashion these humbler triumphs of domestic architecture. We are not concerning ourselves now with great mansions, such as Wollaton, or Burghley House, or Longleat, or Haddon Hall, or Audley End, or any other of the gigantic piles that are well known to all, whether they have stayed in them as guests, examined them as architectural experts, or been permitted to view them as show-places in the guise of the humble tourist. We prefer to go outside the beaten track, to forsake the oft-trodden road, and to visit the typical Tudor manor-house, the means of the builders of which, or their good taste, would not permit of a profusion of architectural luxuries. In these humbler dwellings we find a pleasing combination of stateliness

with homeliness, an expression of manner of life of the men who dwelt therein.

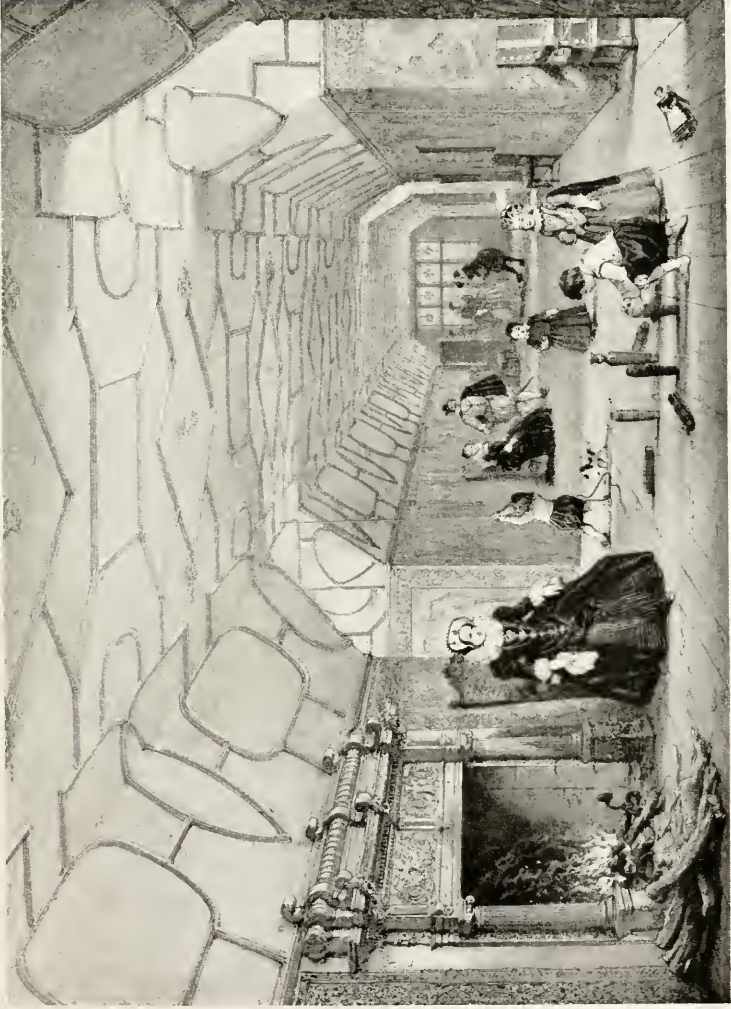
What particular style do you prefer? Of what material do you wish your ideal house to be built? We can show you examples of every kind—stone, timber, brick, flint, or combinations of them. Wiltshire can furnish us with many good stone-built houses of the squirearchy. There is an admirable one at Great Chalfield. The manor-house was built in the reign of Henry VI by Thomas Tropenell between the years 1460 and 1470. Until quite recently it was almost a ruin. Several of its walls had fallen; the roof timbers were hanging disconsolately, and only needed a gale to blow them down. And now it is being gallantly rescued from its sad condition of neglect. There is an imposing entrance-gate, and adjoining it a range of offices. On the other side of the court stands the chapel, still used as a place of worship, and a moat serves as a defence. There is a beautiful hall with solar adjoining, a parlour, kitchen, and other chambers. A bit of old stained glass in one of the windows has survived, and a mural painting, probably representing Henry VI, discovered beneath the plaster. The hall at some later period had been divided into two stories, but the skilled architect, Mr. Breakspeare, has removed the dividing flooring, and made it again one lofty apartment. Two curious masks carved out of stone have been discovered. Through the eyes of these masks the lord could watch the behaviour of his retainers in the hall, hear their gossip, and learn news of secret plots and conspiracies. These have been replaced in their old position. A vast sum has been spent upon this work of restoration. The writer visited it about a year and a half ago, and probably by this time Great Chalfield closely resembles what it was when Thomas Tropenell first built his home.

Not far away is the interesting South Wraxall Manor.

This, too, has been rescued from decay. It was at one time a school where Charles Kingsley received his early education. Then it degenerated into a show-place where tourists and trippers came, and an old dame provided tea at sixpence a head, and showed them over the house and gardens. It has now, by the skill and bounty of Mr. E. Richardson Cox, been restored to its pristine glories, a model manor-house. It is built of stone, like most of these fine Wiltshire structures, and was erected by Robert Long, who died in 1447. The portions belonging to that period are the great hall, with timber roof of the early hammer-beam type, porch, parlour, kitchen with chamber above, and the buttery with drawing-room over it. Early in the sixteenth century the gateway with oriel and porter's lodge and the buildings connecting it with the parlour were erected by Sir Thomas Long, whose badge, the fetterlock, appears over the arch of the gateway. Extensive alterations were carried out in the time of Queen Elizabeth and James I. Some of the fire-places are very magnificent and appear in works on domestic architecture.

Parham Old Hall is a fine specimen of squire's house built of brick. It has a notable history, and was the home of the de Parhams, having been built by Sir Christopher Parham at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It has a broad tree-girt moat spanned by a bridge, guarded by a gateway bearing five coats-of-arms. There stayed the poet George Crabbe, who loved and won for his wife Sarah Elmy, the niece of John Tovell, a yeoman farmer who lived at Parham Old Hall; and there the poet doubtless wrote some of his earlier poems.

It would be a pleasure to roam over England in search of these old houses, to go to Cheshire and see the "Magpies," or to Herefordshire, or Kent—everywhere we should find pleasant homes of past squires. The later develop-



THE LONG GALLERY AT KNOLE, KENT



ment of the manor-house is scarcely profitable to follow. It ran a curious course in which taste degenerated and the beauty of a broken skyline of gables and tall chimneys gave place to a Georgian four-squareness and stolid matter-of-fact. But there was a deeper depth. Manor-houses perhaps were no longer built at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but "country houses" were, and such as then arose lost all Georgian restraint and took on a horrid showiness, like that of the mansions mentioned by Ingoldsby, in contrast with the hoary ruin :—

"Thou art dearer to me, thou ruin grey,
 Than the squire's verandah over the way ;
 And fairer, I ween, the ivy sheen
 That thy mouldering turret binds,
 Than the Alderman's house, about half a mile off,
 With the green Venetian blinds."

It has been reserved for the last thirty years or so to discover a renewed and intelligent interest in the old manor-houses of England. Ockwells has been rescued from the condition of a derelict farm-house ; the old priory at Burford has been restored from a like condition, and the tumbledown East Mascalls, near Tunbridge Wells, has likewise been taken in hand, with many another. It is an altogether blessed thing that this feeling did not manifest itself earlier, for in the terrible ills that of old befell churches in so-called "restoration" we may dimly perceive the atrocities those older homes would have suffered.

But this chapter is growing too long, and we must briefly view the contents of these houses. In the fifteenth century the furniture was meagre. The contents of a parlour of that period contained a hanging of worsted, red and green ; a cupboard of ash-boards ; a table and a pair of trestles ; a branch of latten and four lights ; a pair of andirons ; a pair of tongs ; a form to sit upon, and

a chair. This was all quite simple. But Holinshed in his *Chronicles of Englande, Scotlande, and Irelande*, published in the "spacious days" of Queen Elizabeth, tells of the costliness of the stores of plate and tapestry that were found in the dwellings of the nobility and gentry and also in farm-houses, and even in the houses of "inferior artificers." Verily the spoils of the monasteries and churches must have been fairly evenly distributed. These are his words:—

"The furniture of our houses also exceedeth, and is growne in manner even to passing delicacie; and herein I do not speake of the nobilitie and gentrie onely; but even of the lowest sorte that have anything to take to. Certes in noble men's houses it is not rare to see abundance of array, riche hangings of tapestry, silver vessell, and so much other plate as may furnish sundrie cupboardes to the summe ofte times of a thousand or two thousand pounce at the leaste; whereby the value of this and the reaste of their stuffe doth growe to be inestimable. Likewise in the houses of knightes, gentlemen, merchauntmen, and other wealthie citizens, it is not geson to beholde generally their great provision of tapestrie Turkye work, *pewter, brasse*, fine linen, and thereto costly cupbords of plate woorth five or six hundred pounce, to be demed by estimation. But as herein all these sortes doe farre exceede their elders and predecessours, so in tyme past the costly furniture *stayed there*, whereas now it is descended lower, even unto the inferior artificiers and most fermers (farmers) who have learned to garnish also their cupbordes with plate, their beddes with tapestrie and silk hangings, and their table with fine naperie whereby the wealth of our countrie doth infinitely appeare. . . ."

Much of this wealth has, of course, been scattered. Time, poverty, war, the rise and fall of families, the changes in fashion, have caused the dispersion of their

treasures. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the "empire" style set in, a vile, stiff, affected classicalism, which had its home in France in the time of Napoleon, and perverted the taste of this country, causing squires to turn out their old tables and chairs to make room for these new abominations. The old furniture was given away to farmers and cottagers, and is now being eagerly sought for by collectors. Agents scour the country-side and buy up these old chairs and settees and cabinets, which go to the store-rooms of art dealers, who ask enormous sums for them.

The squire's home of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could boast of much solid old-fashioned furniture. There was a wonderful "drawing-table," with sliding leaves which could be drawn out or replaced with the greatest ease. I have seen several of these in old houses, as at the Priory, Warwick, Storrington Abbey, and in old furniture shops. The method adopted was much better than the modern system of a long screw which you have to turn and turn, when you expect your friends to dinner. Moreover, he loved the polished surface of his table and did not cover it with a white cloth. "Table centres" were then unknown. Happily modern fashions have decreed the exhibition of the old-fashioned highly polished mahogany table, where it exists, and it is not unusual to sit around its inviting, shining surface.

The squire's chairs were models of strength and endurance, and quite capable of supporting his six feet of solid flesh when he came home from his hunting with half a dozen other stalwart companions as burly as himself. What he would have said if he had thrown himself weary into a modern chair, with its spindle legs, only glued to the seat without any braces or supports, perhaps had better not be recorded in print. His chairs were constructed on sounder principles. The uprights support-

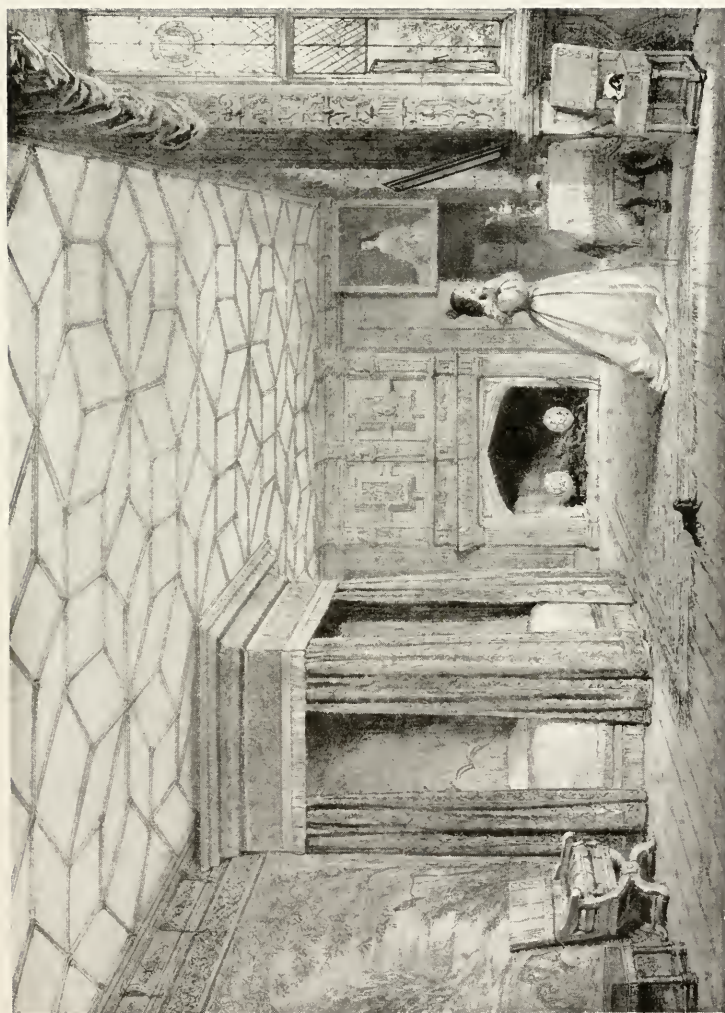
ing the back and the back legs were all made of one continuous piece of solid oak. The framework of the seat was securely tenoned and pinned with oaken pegs into the four legs, and the feet of the chair were securely fastened together about three or four inches from the ground with four strong braces, each brace being tenoned at both ends into the legs of the chair and secured with oaken pegs. Many of these old chairs, constructed on these excellent principles, are now in good condition after two hundred years of daily use.¹

The squire's bed was, of course, a "four-poster," with heavy hangings and curtains, worked by the ladies of his house, to keep out the draughts. The era of open windows and fresh air had not yet dawned, and perhaps the doctors will some day discover that these are all a mistake, and we shall go back to four-posted bedsteads and surround ourselves with hangings. The Elizabethan squire's great bed was often placed in his guest-room. The Virgin Queen, of course, slept in it; at least legend so reports, and indeed she made so many royal progresses that it is no wonder she slept in numerous places. The squire himself often contented himself with a truckle bed, which was rolled up and placed under the big bed. When Hudibras was bent on doughty deeds he

" First, with knocking loud and bawling,
Roused up the squire, in truckle lolling."

It would take long to describe all the furniture of the squire's house, its progress and development. He was very proud of a large looking-glass that he brought from Venice when he made the "grand tour," and was rather annoyed (as many of us have been) when he discovered that he could have purchased a similar one in England, made at Battersea. His lady (or rather his grandson's lady) de-

¹ Mr. W. Bliss Sanders on *Examples of Carved Oak Woodwork*.



THE TOILET
(KNOLE, KENT)



lighted in the marquetry chairs, the back and legs of which were ornamented with a veneer of different woods, forming a mosaic of vastly ornamental design. And then the old house received the treasures of Vernis Martin's painted and polished furniture, and specimens of the wares of Chippendale, Lock, Sheraton, and Hoppelwhite, and a cabinet of satin wood designed by the Brothers Adam.

The home of the squire was richly dight with all manner of pretty things. But he got into difficulties, and had to sell many of his treasures ; and then his son was killed in the French wars, and the race died out, and the land was sold, and the squire's home is now a farm-house much the worse for wear, and all its glory has passed away, and only the memory remains of its former comforts and happiness.

CHAPTER X

THE OLD SQUIRE'S GARDEN

THE surroundings of the old squire's house were worthy of its architectural beauties. Our forefathers did not perch their dwellings, as the fashion is now, on the top of a hill, where they would be exposed to every gale that blew. They liked to be sheltered from the winds, to have shaded walks and terraces, and sun-traps and snug summer-houses where they could enjoy the sun's rays and protect themselves from the cold blasts. They planned their houses for use and comfort, but they did not forget the frame. They did not forget to make the house to harmonize with its surroundings, and to have a garden full of old-fashioned flowers, with clipped hedges and a paved or gravelled walk where the squire and his lady could take the air sheltered from the bitter winds. So they chose a site on the side of a hill, or in the depth of a valley, as at Compton Wynyates, which is surrounded by hills; and around their house they made their garden. And it was fair and beautiful, and had an air of repose and quiet elegance. As Laneham said of another garden, it was not so fair as Paradise for want of the four rivers, yet it was "better a good deal by the lack of so unhappy a tree."

Its secluded nature constituted its chief charm, thereby corresponding to the true meaning of the word. Paradise means an enclosure, and Adam's garden is called in Hebrew *Gan*, which signifies "sheltered." The Greeks

and Latins named that little bit of land which a man secures for himself for his own tilling, *hortus*, meaning "enclosed, secured"; and "the *Jardin, Garten, Garden* of our modern tongues means 'guarded,' retired, secluded, shielded, separate, shut off, a still, removed place, hidden from the day's garish eye, sacred to tranquillity, retirement, repose."¹

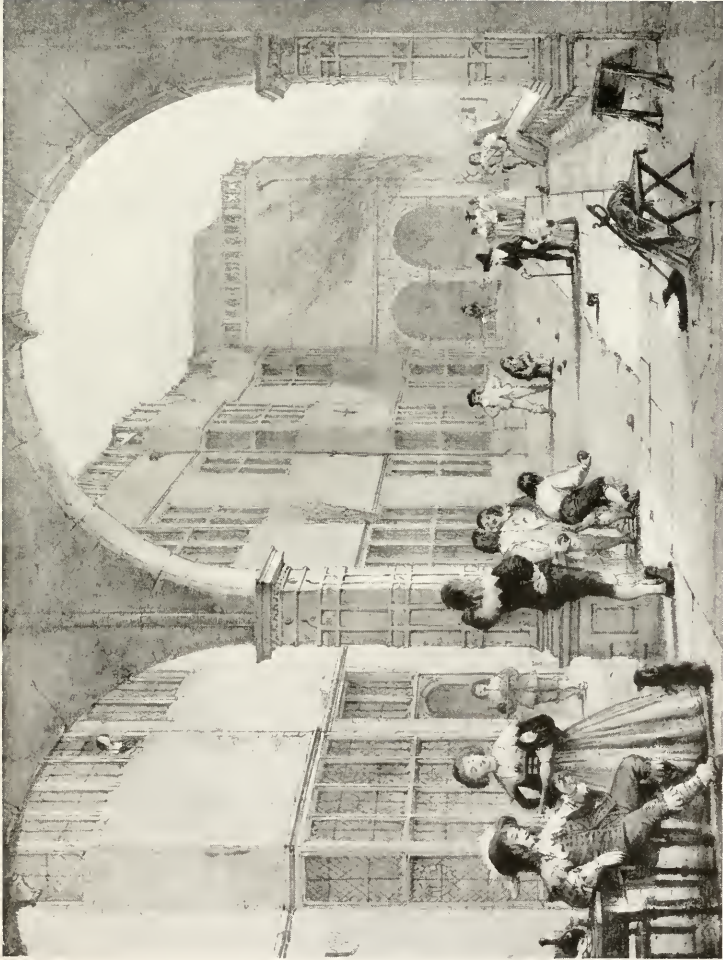
Happily, in the old squire's time, the days of "Capability" Brown had not dawned, which doomed to death many a lovely pleasance, banished the formal garden, and bade their owners return to Nature as their model; Kent, Brown and company pulled down the guarding walls that protected the garden, and invented the sunken fence as a boundary, and the garden was set free from its prim regularity and made to conform with the wilder country outside its bounds. The vulgar deem it beneath the dignity of a gentleman to do good and useful work. On the same principle these people decreed that however beautiful a tree might be, if it bore good fruit, it should be banished from the garden. Hence apple trees, with their lovely blossoms and luscious fruit, pear trees, and other fruit trees were uprooted and sent into obscurity, and dahlias, because they were rare, supplanted the old-fashioned hollyhocks and sunflowers. We need not follow the vagaries of these wreckers of old gardens. In the old squire's time they were fortunately unknown.

We love his garden better than that which later fashions created, and modern taste is returning to the formal garden, and taking for its model none other than that which the squire cultivated. The old walls that guarded it were covered with lichens. There is a terrace in front of the house with a curved flight of stone steps leading to the garden, connecting it with the house and giving to the latter solidarity and dignity. The interstices between

¹ *Tongues in Trees*, by the Rev. W. Tuckwell.

the stones of the steps are covered with moss and daisies and small ferns. The clipped yew hedges are "things of beauty and a joy for ever." They shelter the masses of bright-coloured flower that grow in the borders. Some of these clipped yews assume strange and curious shapes. At Cleeve Prior, in Worcestershire, there is an avenue of them, representing the twelve Apostles and four Evangelists, and are said to have been planted by the monks of Evesham in A.D. 1500. Sometimes the squire's imagination ran riot, and he peopled his garden with curious representations of topiary art, such as at Packwood, in Warwickshire, where yew trees display the Sermon on the Mount. A large yew, generally called "the pinnacle of the temple," symbolizes our Lord preaching to the people; and below are four tall yews and two rows of six other yews, which represent the four Evangelists and the twelve Apostles, while other trees—yews, box, and Portugal laurels—again stand for the multitude listening to the sermon. The group is a curious instance of the fancy which the old formal gardeners sometimes brought into their work.

The squire loved to indulge in a game at bowls on summer evenings, and the bowling-green usually forms part of the garden reserved for that pastime. He liked it to be sheltered from the winds, and planted a thick yew hedge to keep off the cold blasts. We find such a one at Moyns Park. The gardens were often diversified by sheets of water. Many manor-houses have their moats which add beauty now, where in former days they gave security. A book has just been published by Mr. Tristram on the Moated Houses of England, with illustrations by the late Mr. Herbert Railton, which display this charming feature of the old squire's house. The surface of the water was covered with water lilies, and the squire was not so fearful of the presence of a moat, as we in



A GAME OF BOWLS
(BRAMSHILL, HANTS)



these days of sanitary science are taught to be. He had, too, his fish-ponds to provide fish for Lent and for Friday's dinner. Grimsby fishermen and the London fishmongers could not then send him a supply by post for two shillings a week, and Scotch salmon would have become uneatable before they reached his table. So he was obliged to have recourse to his own stew-ponds and to coarse fish which we modern folk despise. Though the fish-pond has lost its utility, it often remains as a thing of beauty, and when water-lilies have been made to grow in it, and all kinds of lovely plants adorn its banks, and when rock-gardens are formed at its head, and a rustic bridge has been made to span it, it becomes a very charming feature of the garden. In some of the great gardens of mansions you find artificial canals, cascades, and fountains, as at Chatsworth, the work of Grelly, the French artist ; but these schemes which caused much expense, and entailed a thorough knowledge of engineering, were too ambitious for the ordinary country squire. He had, however, a playful turn of mind, and liked to contrive cunning devices for the startling and surprising of his friends. Thus, at Chatsworth there is a little fountain and near it a tree stands, and when you are inspecting the little fountain the branches of the tree spout forth artificial rain which drenches you. It is a huge joke which doubtless pleased our forefathers more than us modern folk ! Several other instances of this peculiar form of humour I have given elsewhere.¹ The Dutch taught us these things, and happily they were absent from the old squire's garden.

We give some examples of plans of old gardens. Owlpen Manor, in Gloucestershire, furnishes us with a typical example of a squire's garden, and proclaims the arrangement of velvet lawns and parterres, and the ingenious way in which the garden is divided and arranged. The ap-

¹ *The Parson's Pleasance*, pp. 18, 19.

proach to the house along a sunken path lined with clipped yews awakens expectations which are more than fulfilled when we gaze on the beauties of this charming Tudor dwelling-place.

Chastleton, which has many stories to tell us, has a charming old-fashioned garden with a sundial in the middle, turf walks and formal flower-beds, surrounded by box bushes cut into the fantastic shapes of quaint animal and geometrical forms which now can scarcely be distinguished. A yew hedge girts this circular garden. A forecourt gives access to the house, which is Jacobean, having been built by Walter Jones, soon after the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot. There is a curious story of the rival squires of the village. George Greenwood had a house near the church, and was patron of the living. His garden was in front of the manor-house, which, daily growing larger and larger, greatly offended him. Not wishing to be overlooked he raised his garden wall year by year until it became of colossal height and he could raise it no higher.

Our forefathers loved arbours and bowers overspread with creepers and vines and roses ; and in some few old gardens we find pergolas, which modern fashions have again decreed us to erect. They came to England with the Italian modes, and are named after a kind of grape which was trained over a trellis. We usually clothe our pergolas with crimson rambler. Parterres added diversity to the garden. These were of several kinds, the most common and beautiful being that formed of regular geometrically shaped beds with raised box edging, filled with flowers and separated from each other by little paths. There is a charming example of this at Warbrook, Eversley, a house built by John James, assistant architect to Sir Christopher Wren. The fame of John James is now forgotten. His tomb is in Eversley Church, and epitaphs,

of course, cannot lie. From it we learn that, contrary to the usually received opinion, Sir Christopher Wren did not build St. Paul's Cathedral, London; that he had nothing to do with St. Peter's, Westminster; and that the term "Wren's churches" is a misnomer. This epitaph assures us that John James was the architect of St. Paul's Cathedral, London; of St. Peter's, Westminster, and of fifty-four churches in the City of London; and we learn for the first time that Sir Christopher has wrongly appropriated the fame of a much more worthy and distinguished man.

Revenons à nos moutons, or rather our gardens and our parterres, another form of which was constructed of grass-plots cut into several pieces by intersecting paths. These are described in old gardening books as *Parterres à l'Anglaise*.

The gardens at Swallowfield Park were very beautiful in John Evelyn's time, and are thus described by him: "This house is after the antient building of honourable gentlemen's houses, where they kept up antient hospitality, but the gardens and waters are as elegant as 'tis possible to make a flat by art and industrie and no mean expence, my Lady being extraordinarily skill'd in the flowery part, and my Lord in diligence of planting, so that I have hardly seen a seate which shews more tokens of it than what is to be found here, not only in the delicious and rarest fruite of a garden, but in those innumerable timber trees in the ground about the seate, to the greatest ornament and benefit of the place. There is one orchard of 1000 golden apples, and others cider pippins; walks and groves of elms, limes, oaks, and other trees. The garden is so beset with all manner of sweete shrubbs that it perfumes the air. The distribution also of the quarters, walks and parterres is excellent; the nurseries, kitchen garden, full of the most desirable plants; two very noble

orangeries, well furnished ; but above all the canall and fish-ponds, the one fed with a white, the other with a black running water, fed by a quick and swift river, so well and plentifully stor'd with fish that for pike, carp, breame, and tench I never saw anything approaching it. We had at every meal carp and pike, for size fit for the table of a Prince ; and what added to the delight was to see the hundreds taken by the drag, out of which the cooke standing by, we pointed out what we had most mind to, and had carp that would have been worth in London 20s. a piece. The waters are flagged about with *Calamus aromaticus*, with which my Lady has hung a closet that retains the smell very perfectly. There is also a certain sweete willow and other exotics, also a very fine bowling-greene, meadow, pasture and wood ; in a word, all that can render a country seate delightful."

Such is the squire's garden at Swallowfield, a grander garden than that which falls to the lot of most squires. The owner in Evelyn's day was the Earl of Clarendon ; but it is still loved and cared for by its present possessor, Lady Russell, who has written the story of her home.

Swallowfield garden has a noble entrance-gate, a fine piece of good Renaissance work, which formerly belonged to the house. Entrance-gates are a notable feature of the garden, and often are now very dilapidated, one of their posts shorn of its armorial crest or huge stone ball, and the beautiful ironwork of the gates broken and ready to fall. In the gardens of many a semi-ruined manor-house these gates remain, telling of the skill of the local blacksmith, or of such masters of their art as Jean Tijou, the Frenchman, who worked at Hampton Court, or the brothers Roberts, Robinson, Bakewell and Warren. They also remind us of the old squire, "the fine old English gentleman," who kept

"A good old porter to relieve the poor man at his gate."

The sundial in the pleasance was always there in a squire's garden, with its *memento mori* inscription. He was very proud of his Latin, and loved to quote Horace and Virgil, which he had studied in the neighbouring grammar school and at one of the Universities; and he liked to choose a good motto for his sundial, such as "*Non numero horas nisi serenas,*" and to adorn his mantelpieces within the house with pious or humorous inscriptions. Thus at Chicheley Hall, in Buckinghamshire, some member of the Chester family inscribed on a beam in the hall:

*"Cave ne Deum offendas, cave ne proximum lædas,
Cave ne tua negligentia familiam desecras, 1550."*

At Benthall Hall, Shropshire, we read over the entrance door:—

"Tende bene et alta p̄ete."

Loseley Park, near Guildford, has a fine collection of mottoes. One of the More family plays jestingly on his name, *morus* being the Latin word for a mulberry tree. Hence in one of the rooms there is a mural decoration of that tree with the inscription "*Morus tardi moriens, morum cito moriturum,*" signifying "The mulberry tree slowly dying warns More that he is about to die." In the library we read "*Aversos compono animos, et sæcula cogo*"; and over the cellar door, "*Siti, non ebrietati.*" A moorhen appears as a decoration of the ceiling in one of the bedrooms, and over the entrance door is the motto:

"Invidiæ claudor, pateo sed semper amico."

Again going out of doors we see that the squire liked to have some statues in his garden. They reminded him of Italy, where he had wandered in his youth, and did not my Lord This and my Lady That have many such figures in the great pleasance of their palace? Leaden statues pleased him, as they did the poet Gray, who sang

in prose : " How charming it must be to walk in one's own garden, and sit on a bench in the open air with a fountain and a leaden statue and a rolling-stone and an arbour. A statue that would be tame in stone, or contemptible in marble, may well be a charming decoration if only in lead, set in a vista of a green walk against a dark yew hedge or broad-leafed fig, or where the lilac waves its plumes above them, and the syringa thrusts its flowers under their arms and shakes its petals on the pedestal."

The flowers of the garden were gay and bright. Bacon tells us of them. Roses of all kinds, columbines, lavender, lilies, gillyflowers, poppies, wallflowers, violets, rosemary, tulips, peonies, daffodils, hyacinths, cowslips, honeysuckle, lilacs, bloomed and made the garden gay. But now, alas ! too often we see it in ruins. Like the old squire's family, its glory has departed. It is now a veritable wilderness, and presents a scene of desolation. The yews, formerly well clipped, have grown wild and tangled. That yew tree was once shaped to resemble a peacock, and that box tree was a ship ; but you can no longer recognize them. The bowling-green and the lawns, once kept neat and trim, are now a mass of rank grass. The fish-ponds are overgrown with reeds and rushes. A few flowers, sweet-williams and London pride, which the squire's lady planted with loving care, still struggle through thick masses of weeds. Many of the old trees are dead, and decayed branches have fallen from the stately elms, and ivy thrives everywhere, darkening the windows and smothering the flowers. The house has become a farmhouse. Chickens are reared in hencoops on the lawn. Even these relieve the monotony of the wilderness, and are some evidences of life. Too often the place is entirely uninhabited and desolate, and the garden, no less than the house, is a ruin.



THE GARDEN AT LEVENS, WESTMORELAND

But ghosts still haunt the old domain. The mummers and village players act their quaint pageants in the courtyard. In the window of the hall still sits the young squire writing "sonnets to his lady's eyes," and his learned sister is studying Plato. How many scenes of love-making has that old terrace witnessed! Out of yonder gate the squire and his friends sallied forth to hunt the deer, or go a-hawking, and returned to "feast away the night" when the cooks and servants were busy, and the kitchen was aglow with life and light. Such are some of the ghosts that haunt the old manor-house and its garden.

CHAPTER XI

THE SQUIRE'S LADY

HOW shall I describe the Lady of the Manor? In strict justice she ought to have a volume to herself, but she is of a very retiring nature and so unobtrusive that that is the last thing she would wish for herself. Nevertheless we must dare to draw back the curtain and reveal the squires as she was in the old squire's time. Possibly if she were living now, she might have developed into a militant suffragette, or a bridge-playing gad-about, who lived for bridge and dreamt of bridge and talked bridge and, in fact, was always on bridge and never on good solid earth. Or she might have become a very *gentlemanly* lady, as an American child described a very mannish young woman who smoked cigarettes, rode astride, slapped young men on the back, lounged in inelegant poses, made books on races, and called her male friends "old chaps." There is, of course, no harm in her, but I don't seem to be able to associate the manners of the young lady with the quiet, calm, dignified dame who ruled the squire's household a century ago. We are told that Mrs. Diggery Warter, who was married to the squire in 1805, was the most unobtrusive and single-hearted of women, and are reminded of Landor's lines :—

" Beauty formed her face,
Her heart Fidelity."

" All the neighbourhood knew that in her they had a staunch friend, and one who could set to rights the petty

differences of country places. She was, in fact, the lady of all others to hold a scattered society together, being always affable and courteous, always accessible, and what is more than the most, always the peace-maker. No wonder that every one loved to visit at the old squire's house—no house in the country so sought after ! ”

She possessed that most uncommon of all senses, common sense. Sorrow she knew, and held it but the key to others' hearts still more oppressed, and thus she became the best comforter of both rich and poor in their bereavements ; for she spoke as one not ignorant of affliction, and those who so speak always speak kindly and tenderly. She exercised an immense influence over her husband, softening the natural violence of an impetuous temper, and upon her poorer neighbours, partaking in the joys and sorrows of those around her. She had some practical skill in simple remedies, and a harmless mixture, known as “ the Lady's white medicine,” was in great demand. I know not what fell disease it will cure, but here is the prescription, and perhaps, like many modern drugs, it will cure everything. The reader may perhaps be induced to try it.

“ R. To three half-pints of cold *boiled* water put a dessert spoon of carbonate of soda and another of calcined magnesia. When dissolved, add two wine-glasses full of peppermint water—two table-spoons of Sal Volatile, and two table-spoons full of syrup of morphia, two grains to the ounce. Dose, two table-spoons full. To be well shaken.”

There it is ! It was highly approved by a celebrated medical man, but he does not tell us which of the varied ills of life it will cure. But the squire's lady was not content with dosing her neighbours. She would visit them in their cottages, nurse them in dangerous sickness, and, moreover, accomplished more than all the inspectors and

sanitary officers or even than the sharp orders of the squire, in persuading poor people to cart away their infectious rubbish-heaps and to have their houses white-washed. She waged war against insanitary dwellings, against cottages so small that there could be no decency or purity. "It was utterly impossible," she said, "utterly in vain, to teach decency and purity by book-lessons to our children, while practically the observance of what is decent and pure is impossible in some of the cottages, or huts, those children live in," or as Tennyson says :—

"Where the poor are hovelled and hustled together, each sex, like swine."

"It is well, it is delightful," she would add, "to see a wealthy landowner give £1000 to build a church, or £500 to establish a school; but it would be also well to take care that those by whose labour their estates are enriched have a comfortable dwelling to rest in when their work is done."

Such was the squire's lady, but in contemplating her virtues we have omitted a survey of her distinguished predecessors who ruled in the same old manor long before she was born. In one of the oldest pictures of a manor-house we notice the lady standing by a door distributing loaves to the poor. According to the old interpretation the word lady is derived from "loaf-giver," though I record the fact with fear and trembling, lest new etymologists should declare that I am entirely wrong, and that lady means something entirely different. Charity, then, was one of the duties of the squire's lady even in Saxon days.

But what was the kind of life which the squire's lady lived in mediæval times? Popular imagination pictures her sitting with her daughters and maids in the solar, or in the castle keep, weaving beautiful tapestry, waiting and

weeping for her lord's return, who had gone to the wars or was hunting in the forest, liable to the many dangers of flood and field. It is a pretty picture, but lacks truth. Mediæval manuscripts tell a different tale. The squire's lady was not a sentimental recluse. She was an ardent sportswoman. Sometimes she even donned armour and went with her lord to the crusades or other military expeditions. She loved sport at home and with her own hands would draw her bow and shoot the deer. Hawking she especially liked, and in the twelfth century women excelled the men in dexterity—a proof, says John of Salisbury, that it is an effeminate amusement. They loved to bear their hawks upon their wrists, which were protected by thick gloves, and to cover the bird's head with a fine hood and to fasten its feet with straps of leather called jesses, and to hear the music of the well-toned bells fastened to its legs. Illuminated manuscripts of the fourteenth century show that the ladies sometimes hunted in company with their lords, and often formed hunting parties of their own, in which they pursued the deer mounted astride on fleet steeds, and brought down the game with their arrows. Sometimes they even rode from castle to castle, and from town to town, with poniards at their girdles and javelins in their hands, in quest of adventures like knights-errant.

In the days of chivalry the ladies enjoyed an exalted rank and received the homage of the sterner sex. They were the objects of enthusiastic devotion. Gallantry enthroned them as Queens of Beauty and bent the knee in lowliest adorations. Courtesy to the fair was an active principle of chivalry and knighthood. At festivals and tournaments they crowned the victors, and reigned in hall and bower as despots. Knights showed their lowly homage in the banqueting halls by eating off their lady's plate! They wore her favour in the field, and deemed life

well sacrificed if spent in doing honour to their mistresses. In the theology of castles, though not of cloisters, he who was faithful and true to his mistress was held sure of salvation. Froissart tells of some young English knights who fought in the French wars with a covering over one eye, vowing, for the sake of their ladies, never to see with both till they should have signalized their prowess in the field. The scarves and devices of their mistresses decorated their armour, and to lose a life for love was the ambition of a worthy knight. Loyalty, courtesy, and munificence were the watchwords of chivalry, and the ladies fared well under its benign influence. Nor did they respond ungratefully to the homage they received. They admired a true knight when they saw him in the lists holding his own against the champions. Lord Fanhope, one of the heroes of Agincourt, wedded a princess of the blood royal who, when he was a mere knight had been fascinated by his prowess at a tournament. He was a Cornwall of Stapleton Castle, Herefordshire, and was created Lord Fanhope in open Parliament for his services in France. Drayton, in *The Polyolbion*, describes his valour in the mêlée at Agincourt :—

“ Warwick in blood did wade,
Oxford the foe invade,
And cruel slaughter made,
Still as they ran up,
Suffolk his axe did ply
Beaumont and Willoughby
Bare them right doughtily,
Ferrers and Fanhope.”¹

But life is not all a grand tourney. What else occupied the thoughts of the fair denizens of manors and castellated

¹ His armour and trophies of Agincourt remained at Stapleton Castle for two centuries. When it was destroyed they were removed to Burford Church, and eventually sold to a blacksmith, who used a helmet as a vehicle for carrying ashes. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

mansions? Like their modern sisters they must have frequently discussed the fashions in dress, which were almost as changing and kaleidoscopic as those of the present day. "The love of becoming ornament is not perhaps to be regarded in the light of vanity; it is rather an instinct which woman has received from nature to give effect to those charms that are her defence; and when commerce began to minister more effectually to the wants of luxury, the rich furs of the north, the gay silks of Asia, the wrought gold of domestic manufacture, illumined the halls of chivalry, and cast, as if by the spells of enchantment, that ineffable grace over beauty which the choice and arrangement of dress is calculated to bestow."¹

But the fashions change bewilderingly. Now the hair is all concealed beneath the folds of the *couvre-chef*, or kerchief; now it is plaited and hangs down like that of a modern Swiss girl. Now the sleeves of the *gunna* or gown are long and knotted in a weird-looking fashion, and have cuffs hanging from the wrist to the knees. To prevent their dresses trailing on the ground they were knotted up. Then they adopted a more rational dress, in order to pursue their field sports, and started wimples. They discovered that a woman's hair is her glory, and instead of hiding it beneath a kerchief they enclosed it in a caul of network composed of gold, silver or silk thread, over which they wore a veil, or a round cap, or a wreath of flowers, while a neck-cloth was tied up beneath the chin. Kirtles of light blue silk, mantles of green velvet embroidered with gold and furred with grey fur, girdles of gold, and I know not what else were fashionable when Henry III reigned. And we might go on describing the costumes of our fair ancestresses; but that is not needed. We only wish to conjecture that these constant changes must have afforded much controversy in the ladies'

¹ Hallam's *Middle Ages*, II, 456.

bowers, and much exercised the minds of women as they do to-day.

The mediæval squires did not spend her time idly. Besides the fashions and field sports she was as eager as a modern mother to make good marriages for her sons and daughters, and there were many consultations with the parents of marriageable children over matrimonial alliances, dowries, and settlements. Moreover, the housekeeping was no light task. Each great house provided itself with provisions with little help from the outer world. As Lady Verney tells of Claydon a century or two later, so it was in the mediæval establishment. The inhabitants brewed and baked, churned and ground their meal, they bred, fed, and slew their beeves and sheep, and brought up their pigeons and poultry at their own doors. Their horses were shod at home, their planks were sawn, their rough iron-work was forged and mended. Accordingly the mill-house, the slaughter-house, the blacksmiths', carpenters' and painters' shops, the malting and brewhouse, the wood-yard full of large and small timber, the sawpit, the out-houses full of all sorts of odds and ends of stone, iron, bits of marble, carved woodwork, and logs cut for burning—the riding-house, the laundry, the dairy with a huge churn turned by a horse, the stalls and sties for all manner of cattle and pigs, the apple- and root-chamber show how complete was the idea of self-supply and independence of trade of every kind in the country houses of the time. The stew-ponds provided fish for fast days; a decoy yielded a supply of wild fowl; hunting provided venison, and hawking game-birds. Cattle were killed in the autumn and salted down for winter use.

Much of the superintendence of all this fell to the lot of the lord, save when he was absent at the wars or attending to his county business; but the lady had much to do. The spinning of wool and flax, the fine and coarse needle-

work, the embroidery, the cooking, the curing, the preserving, the distillery, were all superintended by the lady ; and left little time for idle dreaming. The lady of the manor, like her lord, led a strenuous and active life.

Many of these wives were noble women—*maitresses femmes* in every sense of the words. Their husbands were often fighting battles in the long-drawn-out wars of the rival Roses ; while they stayed at home as faithful stewards of the family wealth. " They represented them in their numerous and endless lawsuits, leased their farms, found a market for the crops, kept the money in strong chests concealed in mysterious hiding-places ; they procured their clothes, and got them (often with considerable difficulty) purveyed to them ; they wrote long and interesting letters full of business and news, at times of the greatest importance to their own affairs and those of the King, and ruled their households, sometimes, it must be said, with a rod of iron ; they arranged their sons' marriages and negotiated for suitable ' partis ' for their daughters, without overmuch regard for their personal predilections ; but with minute and painstaking enquiries into the fortunes and 'livelodes' of their prospective sons-or daughters-in-law."¹

So much does a study of the famous *Paston Letters* disclose. The ladies who appear chiefly in those chronicles are Dame Agnes, wife of Judge Paston, who raised the fortunes of the family ; Margaret Paston, *née* Mautby, the wife of John Paston " Esquier " ; Margaret Brews, wife of John the younger ; Elizabeth and Anne Paston, and their cousin, Elizabeth Clere. In spite of the endeavours of the elders to arrange rich marriages, sons and daughters often refused to fall in with their wishes, and preferred the objects of their own choice. A daughter, Margery, is cut

¹ *Memorials of Old Norfolk*, "The Pastons and their Homes," by Miss Julia G. Longe.

off from her family by allying herself with one who, though wealthy, was not considered sufficiently highly born. But the story of the love affairs of Elizabeth, a very self-willed damsel, is sad reading. She would not look at the suitors provided for her, and rejected them wholesale. One Stephen Scrope paid his addresses to her, but she would have none of him in spite of her mother's "labours" to bring about the match. She was held a prisoner in her room, forbidden to speak with any one, even with the servants, while her mother beat her every morning in order to break her obstinacy. A piteous letter is sent by her cousin, Elizabeth Clere, to her brother John :—

"Her head is broken in several places, and she was never in so great sorrow as she is now-a-days. Whereupon she prayeth me that I should send you a letter of her heaviness, and pray you to be a good brother to her." The cousin goes on to suggest that there is a goodly man reading law with John at an inn, who might be a better suitor than Scrope, but advises John not to put off the latter until he is sure of a better, and also to burn her letter lest it should anger his mother.

However, Scrope retires from the field. Another suitor is found, Sir John Oldhall, but again the ungrateful Elizabeth declines, and finally consoles herself with a gallant gentleman, Robert Poynings, but her happiness was brief, as he was slain at the second battle of St. Albans, and their lands were confiscated by the Crown.

A very pretty romance is disclosed in the love affairs of John Paston the younger. He fell in love with Margery Brews, and the affection seems to have been mutual. But her parents were opposed to the match. However, Margery was determined to have her good lover. The opposition was withdrawn, and her mother wrote to John saying that Valentine's day was at hand "when every



TERRACE AT CRANBOURNE, DORSETSHIRE



bird chooseth himself a mate," and telling him that he would not be unwelcome. So John attired himself in his best clothes and rode off to his mistress's house, arriving there on the eve of the "lover's festival." There are several letters from sweet Margery to her "beloved Valentine," in which she declares that she would have married him "had he possessed only half the livelode he had."

And as the years roll on few changes occur in the life of the manor or in the occupations of the lady. More wealth flows in through the hospitable door. The lord's acres have been increased by the grant or purchase of monastic lands. Some old families have died out, and their places taken by rich merchants or Court favourites. But the old life of the house flows on and keeps the even tenor of its way. The ladies at Claydon are very busy "preserving, conserving, candying, making syrups, jellies, beautifying washes, pomatum essences and other such secrets, the making of vinegar and pickles."¹ Lady Gardiner kept a household of thirty persons, but she is excused from writing to Sir Ralf Verney, "being almost melted with the double heat of the weather and her hotter employment, because the fruit is suddenly ripe and she is so busy preserving." Receipts are preserved at Claydon House for the making of "decoctions, infusions, and essences of herbs and simples," and also curiously shaped tin vessels in the still-room, and the methods of making doctor's physic such as snail water, the hiera-picra, mithridates, orbiculi, Bezoartis, and other weird medicines.

But the occupations of peace were rudely disturbed by war's rude sounds, and bravely did the ladies of the manor-houses bear the sufferings of the period of the great Rebellion. No descriptions can help us to realize

¹ *Memoirs of the Verney Family.*

the troubles of that distressful time. Their lords and sons were fighting in the war for King or Parliament, and they had to stay at home, suffer the attack and raiding of their homes, and with a few faithful servants defend them, if they could. Bravely did these women do their duty. Such was Brilliana, wife of Harley, member for Herefordshire, who defended the crenellated house of Brampton Bryan against the Royalists. She was a noble wife, and was worthy of a truer and more manly husband. Harley was amusing himself in Westminster, breaking the windows and ornaments of the London churches that savoured of Popery, showing his "zeal," if not his cowardice, leaving her to defend his home. The siege lasted long and cost the lady her life; but during its progress she had but one word in answer to her gallant besiegers, who almost implored her to surrender: "My Lord bids me hold out." Her portrait is that of a lady *pur sang*, delicate, refined, with a sweet, oval face and an intelligent, lustrous eye; the mouth kind and happy, yet firm; the carriage that of a proud and self-reliant nature. Her letters add a singular pathos and yet lustre to her memory. She writes to her son, an Oxford undergraduate, who became an officer in the Parliamentary army, with all the tenderness of a fond mother, pointing none the less to the calls of duty; now to the same youth when wounded; now to an unworthy husband, in whom she reposed complete confidence. She saw Brampton village destroyed, its church burnt, the park devastated. Her spirit never faltered. Still she "held the fort," until death relieved her. The Royalists were gallant gentlemen. Lord Hertford refused to attack the lady. Herbert had no such scruples. Vavasour tried to coax her; and when she died her neighbour, Lingen, held the command with 1200 men to her one hundred. Yet in the midst of this sore tribulation she could write to her son to tell his father,

"I will be willing to doo what he would haue me doo."

Other ladies endured a siege in those troublous days. The brave Countess of Derby gallantly defended Lathom House in Lancashire. Her neighbour at Crosby, whose acquaintance we have made, wrote, "That heroic and loyal act of Sherlotta, Countess of Derby, in her personal and successful defence of Lathom House against a potent and long siege, deserves an entire history." We mark the unflinching, dauntless courage of the woman, keeping bright the honour of her husband ; the great lady doing, daring, holding all for her lord. She was a French lady of noble birth, Charlotte de la Tremoille, daughter of a French prince with half a dozen titles, her mother being a daughter of William the Silent, Prince of Orange, whose dogged determination she seems to have inherited. We should like to recount the whole story of that memorable siege, but it would take too long. The Earl had been unwisely sent by the King to the Isle of Man. He was almost a king in Lancashire, and if Charles had at first relied upon his aid, had unfurled his standard in Lancashire rather than at Nottingham, the Civil War would probably have had a less fatal termination. So the Countess fought alone. We like to think of the brave lady mustering her friends around her, preparing for the siege with all the forethought of an experienced commander, courteously receiving the rude Rigby and his ruffians, hoodwinking them with fair words, unruffled mien, and gentle sarcasm ; and then, as a queen, dismissing them with the words, "That though a woman and a stranger, divorced from her friends and robbed of her estate, she was ready to receive their utmost violence, trusting in God both for protection and deliverance." It seems almost like a romance to read how three hundred well-drilled soldiers of the Countess withstood and overcame three thousand

followers of the Parliament. In the end the siege was raised. The Countess, with her two little daughters, "Little Mall," and Catherine who stands so demurely between her parents in the portraits of Vandyke, left the castle, which at last by order of the King was yielded up to the enemy, pillaged and destroyed, defaced and ruined by the savage soldiery.

We should like to record the exploits of other gallant women, of Lady Blanche Arundel, who, in the absence of her husband, made a gallant defence of Wardour Castle for five days, and then surrendered on honourable terms; of Lady Wintour and Lady Bankes, who all proved the bravery of women in times of stress. The good Cavalier's wife, Anne Harrison, Lady Fanshawe, must be mentioned as a heroine of this period. A merry child, or as she described herself a "hoyting girl," loving to ride, run, and enjoy active pastimes, she went with her father Sir John Harrison to the King at Oxford, and there met Richard Fanshawe, a comely young man, scholar and poet, diplomat and soldier. They loved and were married quietly at Wolvercot, with an income of twenty pounds, though the lady was a prospective heiress and her lord, as Secretary of War to the Prince of Wales, had an expectation of wealth and promotion. She followed the fortunes of the Royalists and endured terrible privations. Sometimes she is travelling to London from Paris or Holland, seeking money for the exiled King. We find her in Cork when Cromwell took the town. She was lying in bed with a broken arm, but knowing the ex-Royalist Colonel Jefferies, she packed up her husband's papers, a thousand pounds in gold, and her clothes, and at 3 a.m. hired a cart, passed through a tumult of armed men in the streets, and brought her little daughter safe to her husband at Kinsale. We see her on board a Dutch ship in the Mediterranean, with her husband, threatened by a Turkish galley; and

though the women were sent below, Mrs. Fanshawe donned a cabin-boy's cap and jacket and stood by her husband on deck till the danger was past. Fanshawe was created a baronet for his services, but at Worcester fight he was taken prisoner and lodged at Whitehall in a close room. No friend was allowed to see him ; but the faithful wife used to take a dark lantern at 4 a.m. and stand under his window to talk to him and cheer his solitude. She moved heaven and earth to obtain his release, presented petitions, pleading his ill-health, and at last obtained his freedom. Some happy years passed in retirement in Yorkshire. They are again in Paris and soon returning with the King in triumph to England, basking in the smiles of royal favour which by their exertions they certainly deserved. We need not follow her career further. Sir Richard only survived the Restoration six years. His devoted wife spent her widowhood in writing the story of his life. It was intended only to record his merits and services, but unconsciously she reveals herself as a faithful, simple-hearted wife and mother, true to her God and to her husband, brave and resolute in danger and difficulty, a true heroine.

There is a companion portrait in that of Lucy Apsley—Mrs. Hutchinson, the Parliamentary Colonel's wife. She also wrote a memoir of her husband, extolling his valour and prudence, and unconsciously revealing her own character, virtue, and talents, and the sufferings she endured for his sake. He was the Squire of Owthorpe, in Nottinghamshire. Ireton was his cousin and exercised a powerful influence over him, imbuing his mind with Roundhead and Puritanical sentiments. He did not at first take up arms against the royal cause, but he was proscribed and hunted from place to place, and then joined the ranks of the Parliament. His poor wife and children lived in terror at Owthorpe, fearing an attack.

They fled to Nottingham Castle, a dreary abode of which her husband became governor. Mrs. Hutchinson extols "his clear and generous heart, his courage and candour," is indignant at the jealousy of some of his associates and the treachery of others. The castle is besieged. The lady tells of all the night alarms and sallies and skirmishes. She succours and nurses the wounded prisoners. She provides food for the garrison, and so the weary days pass and the war goes on. Hutchinson is returned Member of Parliament, of that sad Parliament that killed the King, and his hand signs the fatal document that ultimately sealed his own fate. He liked not Cromwell, nor did Cromwell like him. So Owthorpe saw the family again, a renewed Owthorpe with all traces of the ravages removed, a new Owthorpe, with a fine park and garden and pleasure, with canals and decoys and shady walks, a pleasant retirement for the repentant regicide. There he lived the life of a country squire, taught his children, exercised magisterial duties, ruled his house well, "of which he was the chief ornament," as his affectionate wife informs us.

The time was out of joint. Lawlessness was in the air. Disbanded soldiers with rough, rude manners sometimes descended upon the house. Servants were often spies, and few neighbours could be trusted. Her courage was tried to the uttermost, especially one day at Nottingham when she found the soldiers and townfolk preparing to settle a dispute by an appeal to arms. Boldly she faced the contending parties, harangued them with an irresistible eloquence, and established peace. But there was always the shadow of coming troubles lurking around the quiet home at Owthorpe; the remembrance of that fatal signature to the death-warrant of the late King. The Restoration came. "The King enjoyed his own again," and vengeance was vowed against all those who had a



THE SQUIRE'S PEW
HADDON HALL, DERBYSHIRE



hand in the execution of his father. What could the brave wife do to save her husband? Weary lay the scheming head on her pillow at night at Owthorpe as she thought and planned. Blame her if you please; but love knows no bars. She wrote a letter to the Speaker of the Commons, pleading her husband's cause, but it was written in her husband's name and signed with his forged signature. Of all this her husband was ignorant, and he was mightily displeased when he learned what she had done. The evil day was only postponed. Misfortunes began to thicken. The estate was crippled by fines, and ere long Colonel Hutchinson was incarcerated in the Tower of London. Thither the faithful wife followed and obtained leave to visit him in his gloomy cell in the Bloody Tower. She moved heaven and earth to obtain his release, drew up petitions, interviewed every one who could aid her, received endless taunts and rebuffs. Nothing could stay her efforts, but they were all in vain. At last, after many months, the Colonel was banished to the Isle of Man. This she deemed a sentence of death, and persuaded his judges to select a different prison, Sandown Castle, a ruinous jail washed by the waves, dark, damp, and comfortless. Not being allowed to share his prison, she, with her family, lived at Deal, spending each day with her husband. So the days passed. There were fears that he might be transported to Tangiers, but the end came suddenly, while the poor wife was away at Owthorpe. Her grief was overwhelming, but his last message comforted her. "Let her, as she is above other women, show herself on this occasion a good Christian, and above the pitch of ordinary women." She did that bravely, though her sorrows were not over. Poverty befell her. Her old home was sold, but she consoled herself by writing the remarkable memoirs of him whom she so devotedly loved, to defend his memory from animadversions and unjust

censure, and thereby revealed her own character as that of true and faithful wife.

It would not be difficult to extend this chapter indefinitely with the records of other brave ladies who in the times of war preserved a courageous demeanour and bore their troubles with Spartan fortitude. Perhaps even the spoilt women of fortune of to-day, leading luxurious lives amidst scenes of constant gaiety and amusement, who seem to live for pleasure, if the time of stress came and war burst upon the nation would show the same nobility of character and rival their ancestresses of the seventeenth century. We hope it may be so. Men who have lived "delicately" have proved themselves capable of enduring hardness, and of bearing suffering, privations, and want and woe with the utmost fortitude. The story of "the Dandy Fifth" has many a counterpart in real life, and without doubt women, however daintily nurtured, would do the same even in this luxurious age. All womanly valour was not concentrated in the seventeenth century.

But we must turn to lighter themes, and try to discover other traits of the squireess. Heiresses were as much sought after for brides as in the present day are the daughters of rich American millionaires, and were "wooded, married and a'" at a very tender age. Weddings were arranged long before the little heiress had arrived at a time of life when she could decide for herself or follow her own inclinations in the choice of a suitable husband. There was the case of young Mistress Mary Blacknall, of Abingdon, whose father had grown very rich from the spoils of the ancient Abbey of Abingdon and his own successful trading as a wool-stapler and clothier or cloth merchant. He was of "an humble, meek spirit and gentle nature; affable and full of clemencie and curtesie." Like many other spoilers of Church property, he had no son to



A MIDNIGHT HOME-COMING
(HARDWICKE HALL, DERBYSHIRE)

bear his name and continue the family, only one little daughter, an unprotected orphan who was placed under the jurisdiction of the Court of Wards. Lady Verney tells the story in the memoirs of her family, how four of her relatives procured from the court a lease of her lands, and the custody of her person, with the privilege, when she should be fourteen, of bestowing her hand in marriage. For this transaction they paid one thousand pounds and gave a bond for another thousand pounds. One of the guardians, named Libb, tried to steal a march on his fellows, and although the child was only eleven years of age, concocted a match with his son. The marriage was nearly accomplished; the licence was signed, the trousseau purchased and the priest ready, but her uncle Wiseman interfered just in time, appealed to the court, and the little heiress was rescued from the Libb clutches and sent for security to the house of Lady Denham of Boarstall in Buckinghamshire, mother of the poet, to be brought up with her daughters. Two peaceful years she passed there, and then her guardians (Libb excepted) suggested to Sir Edmund Verney of Claydon that she should be married to his eldest son. This was considered a very suitable match; so the little bride aged thirteen years, and the young bridegroom Ralph, aged sixteen years, were duly married in the happy month of May, 1629. Lady Verney writes to Mrs. Wiseman:—

“Your niece and my sonne are now marred. God send them as much happiness as I wish them, and then I am sure it will be to all our comforts.”

The first letter of the young bride you will like to read; it is so very proper, so very charming and sweet:—

“Good aunt, besides the desire I have to heare of your health and my uncle’s, I thinck it fitt to acquaint you that now I am married, in which state I hope God will give mee his blessings and make it happy to mee. . . .

As I had your loving advice to it, soe I assure myself I shall have your prayers for the good success of it."

Two years passed before the married couple lived together, Mary returning to her relations, but "Aunt Libb," who wanted the heiress for her own son, was very bitter about the wedding and hoped Aunt Wiseman would repent the "mach as much as anything that she ever did." However the marriage turned out most happily. Mary had the sweetest of tempers and the most cheerful disposition, common sense, spirit, and high principle. In those days married sons and daughters often shared the same roof-tree with their parents and brothers and sisters. It was the old patriarchal system, the advantages of which we should scarcely appreciate in these days. Mary was a favourite with all the family, and her husband was worthy of her. He went to Oxford, as a married man, aged seventeen years. His old tutor, Crowther, gives him excellent advice, and bids him not to neglect his studies during the long summer vacation for Hymen's delights, and tells him that the sweetness of a kiss will relish better after the harshness of a syllogism.

Crowther's advice to the young squire is so excellent that we must quote a few words of his letter sent with notes on logic and astronomy for his pupil's reading:—

"God hath given you sufficient intellectuals, and he then requires that you be not wanting to yourself. You know what honour to his family, what credit to himself (to let goe religious motives) doth a gentleman purchase, who hath not only the outward gifts of fortune, but is fraught with the diviner perfection of mind."

The tutor is pleased that Ralph Verney takes so seriously his advice, which would be distasteful to most of "our gallants," and contrasts the young squire's conduct and discipline of mind with those of thousands of his rank who run on in their sinful vanities.

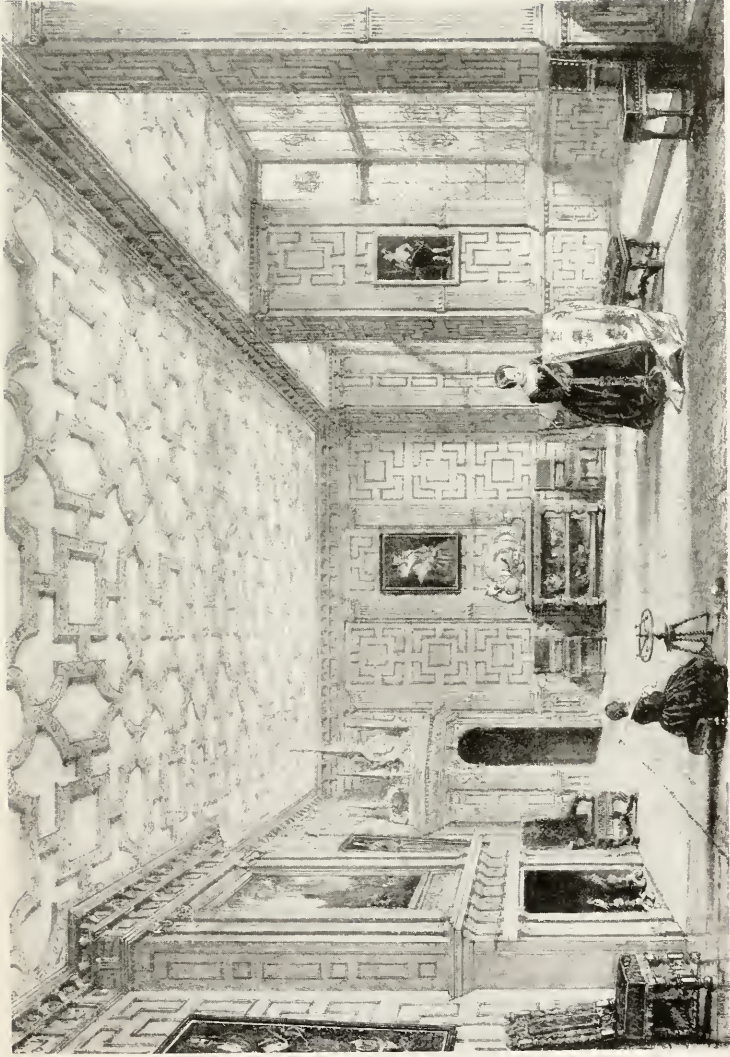
But we are neglecting the ladies. Vandyck painted Mary's portrait in 1636. She is arrayed in a pale blue satin gown, open over white, looped up with pearls, and a string of pearls round her neck, a fringe of light hair curled on each side her forehead. She is styled a Puritan. Her simplicity is not evident in her garb. The Verney Memoirs, so ably written by Lady Verney, abound with pictures of the life of the period. As you read its pages you can almost walk with Sir Edmund, the gallant standard-bearer of the King's army, travel with him to Bath to be cured of his sciatica, hear the bright conversation at the family table at Claydon, watch the laying out of the park and pleasance, and all the ordinary business of estate management. Occasionally a good story crops up, such as Sir Edmund loved to tell. A London merchant wrote to a factor abroad to send him "2 or 3" apes; he forgot the "r," and thus the order became 203 apes. So the factor sent fourscore, and said that he would forward the rest by the next ship. Sir Edmund concludes, "If yourself or friends will buy any to breede on, you could never have such a chance as now. In earnest this is very true."

The dreary days of the Commonwealth are past, and the Restoration has brought back gaiety to England. Moralists tell sad stories of the frivolities and licentiousness of the Court and of London society; but life flows on quietly and evenly in the country manor-houses, and is little disturbed by the vagaries of courtiers. Exiled Royalists return to their homes and find them in a much worse condition than when they hurriedly left them. The squire sets to work to replant his garden and pleasance and to repair the ruined walls. His wife resumes her wonted avocations, looking after her household, caring for the villagers, who rejoice to welcome back their old lord and lady, educating her children, and seeking suitable

suitors for her daughters and wealthy brides for her sons.

Sometimes the course of true love does not run quite smoothly. There are such terrible things as settlements, and these require endless negotiations and lawyers' fees and entail quarrels and disputes and hard bargaining. John Verney, who was seeking the hand of Elizabeth Palmer, was a somewhat close-fisted gentleman, and objected to paying five guineas to greedy Sir John Coell, his lawyer, and so enraged his sweetheart's father that he was forbidden the house. It is all very sad. He writes a piteous farewell letter to his mistress, aged fifteen, signing himself, "Your Ladyship's Passionate Lover and most unfortunate servant." His mocking sister, Nancy, tries to cheer him by telling him that his fair lady, Elizabeth Palmer, "has ferret eyes and a thousand pimples"; but John fires up so fiercely in defence of his lady's complexion, that the calumny is withdrawn, and peace is concluded on the understanding that the lady has but three small spots on her face, which are common after an ague, and that her eyes are of unusual size and beauty. Moreover, she is so accomplished that she "playes on the Espinetto and Organs and Gittarr and danceth very well." Her portrait by Sir Peter Lely shows her as a fair and comely dame, of a somewhat determined character, who would doubtless keep her husband, John, in due subjection. For in spite of all obstacles they were quietly married in London in the Chapel of Henry VII, in Westminster Abbey, on May 27th, 1680. The wedding feast took place at the "Rummer" in Queen Street, and here is the bill of fare, which may be considered fairly ample for seven persons:—

Beer-ayle	.	.	.	0	3	0
Wine	.	.	.	0	11	0
Orings	.	.	.	0	1	0



A QUIET AFTERNOON
BROUGHTON CASTLE, (OXFORDSHIRE)

A dish of fish	1	0	0
2 geese	0	8	6
4 fatt chickens	0	8	0
2 Rabets	0	3	0
A dish of peese	0	6	0
8 hartey Chokes	0	5	0
A dish of strabreys . . .	0	6	0
A dish of chereys	0	5	6
	3	17	0

Servants 1s.

The marriage, though brief, was a very happy one. She was always his "Dearest Joy," and the tenderest letters passed between them when they were absent from each other. When she died the light of his eyes had gone out, but he struck another match, even two matches, before his course was run.

The ladies of those days were very skilful with their needles and fashioned tapestry and those curious curtains that hang round the great four-posted beds, beloved of connoisseurs. We read in the Verney Memoirs of Mary Verney being hard at work embroidering the hangings for a big green bed; Doll busying herself with sorting silks and crewels. Patterns are sent to London to be matched, and Mary learns the intricacies of the "rosemary stitch." Mary likes her task very well, but Doll considers there is too much work in it, and complains that she knows not "the birds and flyes and other crepers," and does not like the fruit represented on the canvas. Mary's father often chaffs her about her big piece of embroidery and says that if his business in London is like to take as long to finish as her "wrought sheete," he shall not expect her speedy return.

If we were to discuss all the accomplishments of the ladies, their amusements, their dress and changing

fashions, and tell of their varying characters and dispositions, this chapter would have to be indefinitely extended.

A kind friend tells me of a little book, a dog-eared manual bound in shabby calf, which must not be passed over. It is called "A concise English Grammar . . . with many examples of Composition on interesting subjects expressive of the True Sublime, extracted from the best English Authors. To which are added a short compendium of Logic and Rhetoric, and a sketch of the Constitution of England, by Benjamin Rhodes, 1795." The flyleaf contains the name of a little maiden destined to grow up beautiful, and to have many suitors, but who was then pricking her fingers over a sampler, on which she stitched her alphabet, and rows of numbers, and marvellous birds and stags and other animals impossible to classify. This book of the little maiden describes to us the sort of accomplishments which were expected of a young lady of the eighteenth century. To be a dexterous needlewoman, to have a smattering of French, to be read in the homilies of the old divines, to know the history of England's glories, and to have a fair acquaintance with the exploits of the heroes of Greece and Rome, to be proficient in the rules of etiquette and deportment, to speak the English language accurately, "modestly," and "tastefully," to have a ready appreciation of the "true sublime" in poetry or prose, to maintain an attitude of veneration towards the British Constitution—such were the attainments required of our great-grandmothers in

"That past Georgian day
When men were less inclined to say
That time is gold, and overlay
With toil their pleasure."

Idling over this old book of grammar, logic, rhetoric and the graces, one is transported from our eager, restless age into the days of minuets and buckled shoes, stage-coaches, hair-powder, and highway robbery. We should like to wade through the philosophy of my Lord Chesterfield, who is one of the authors quoted, and disclose how a handsome address and graceful conversation are the sure means of engaging the affections of men ; and how we ought to read, speak, and write according to the Chesterfieldian standard ; but " Tyme flyeth awaie," as the old sundial tells. We are glad that our friend has preserved the little lady's book which recalls the grace and fragrance of a bygone age, and the conditions of life now passed away for ever.

The lady of the manor has been in all times the fitting mate and counterpart of her husband, the squire. She has been the inspirer of his noblest thoughts, the encourager of his endeavours, the guardian of his home, the gentle and loving mother of his children, the peacemaker of the parish, the comforter of the mourners, the consoler of the sorrowful, the helper of the poor, and the succourer of the needy. When she departs from the manor no one will be missed more. The wife of the *parvenu* who has in many villages replaced the squire, may be kindly disposed, but she has not the natural gift of being graciously kind. Her charities ruffle the feelings of the partakers of her bounty, who resent her superior airs and inquisitorial ways. Her condescension lacks reality, and the poor are very shrewd and can easily detect the difference between the born lady and the counterfeit. When the old squire dies, his lady does not long survive him :—

" He first deceased ; she for a little tried
To live without him, liked it not, and died."

And the words of the wise man shall be her epitaph:—

*“ She openeth her mouth with wisdom ; and in her tongue
is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways
of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.
Her children arise up, and call her blessed ; her husband
also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have
done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour
is deceitful, and beauty is vain ; but a woman
that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.”*

CHAPTER XII

SPORTING SQUIRES

A CENTURY ago sport was more barbarous than in our present age of refinement, when twenty thousand people assemble to watch a gladiatorial exhibition of football, and the yelling crowd, eager about their bets, do not afford a most pleasing specimen of the best view of English life. To-day the law forbids several of those sports which were in vogue a hundred years ago. Pugilists have to go to America to fight with their naked fists. Cock-fighting, dog-fighting, have happily gone the way of bear-baiting and bull-baiting. We no longer patronize cruelty. But we are a softer race than our forefathers, scarcely able to defend ourselves if we be attacked ; and if any one insults us, we do not thrash him, but sue him for libel. We will try to recall some of the sports that pleased some of our country squires a century ago.

As an example of the country gentleman of sporting proclivities we may instance Major Wheble, of Tockenham Park, and Bulmershe Park, near Reading, who was an enthusiastic supporter of all kinds of sport—hunting, racing, shooting, cocking, and bruising. He was a burly, jolly-faced type of squire, a familiar figure at the cockpit, on the race-course, and by the ring-side. He had an active and powerful man in his service, one Harry Flowers, who came of a small yeoman family of Dunsden, the son of Harry Flowers, a village blacksmith, whose muscles rivalled those of the smith immortalized by Longfellow, being “strong as iron bands.” All the members of the Flowers family were strong, athletic, stalwart men, who

loved fighting either with backswords or cudgels, or with their fists. Harry, junior, developed into a famous boxer, and became Major Wheble's coachman, his master encouraging his "noble art of self-defence." He never knew defeat. He fought with many of the champions of the day—Black Jem, the gipsy fighter; Sweet, the Somerset champion; Rossett, the sawyer; and other noted fighters of his age, defeating them all. Major Wheble was proud of his performances, and extolled his prowess before his friends.

Being fond of cock-fighting the Bulmershe squire paid a visit to the home of the sport, Cheshire and Lancashire; Chester and Preston being the principal centres. Amongst the patrons of the sport in those northern shires were Lord Sefton, Mr. Price of Brynprys, Captain White, Mr. Bold Haughton, Dr. Bellyse, Lord Derby, Mr. Legh of Lyme, the Cholmondeleys, Egertons, Warburtons, Cottons, and the Roylances. The most famous cocks were the White Piles, which carried an amazing spur that was fatal to many antagonists.

In those days there were race-meetings at most of the county towns throughout England, important affairs, whither all the country squires of the neighbourhood flocked with their wives and daughters; and there were plays in the theatre performed by London actors, and balls in the town hall, and much amusement for both "the quality" and the townfolk. Chester was always famous for its races on the Roodee, and cocking was quite as popular in the morning as the racing in the afternoon. The Earl of Derby was there in his family coach, drawn by six horses, attended by a large retinue of servants. He was a great sportsman, ran the horses that he had bred, carrying his black and white colours, and cocked with his famous Knowsley breed of black-breasted reds that never failed to crow their song of triumph over a prostrate foe.

It was said of him that he was the greatest cocker that ever lived. Another notable sportsman was Dr. Bellyse of Audlem, who used to appear every year at Chester clad in his blue dress-coat with brass buttons, light-coloured kerseys and gaiters, buff waistcoat, snowy frill and a pig-tail just peeping from beneath a conical, low-crowned hat. He had a wonderful knowledge of the pedigrees of horses, the rearing of greyhounds, and the breeding, training, and feeding of game cocks. Squire Legh of Lyme, used to breed cocks and mastiffs; each squire had his favourite breed, black-reds or birchen duckwings, or Sledmen Leicesters, or Melton hunters. The usual stakes were two guineas a battle and two hundred the main; and often after the races were finished in the evenings a main would be fought at night by candlelight, giving rise to scenes of wild excitement and tumultuous shouts.

A great match was arranged in 1809 between the gentlemen of the North and the gentlemen of the South, the stakes being large and the contest keen, and this event attracted Major Wheble to Chester.¹ The northern squires won; and perhaps a little chagrined by this victory, Major Wheble contended that however successful the northern gentlemen were in cocking, the South was the true nursery of British boxers, and that the North had never produced a really great fighter. Squire Legh of Lyme dissented from this statement, and hearing that Major Wheble had an invincible coachman, offered to bet a thousand pounds that the Cheshire squires would find a man within three months who would thrash the Major's champion. So the matter was arranged, terms settled, and in six weeks' time William Keate of Chester was ready to fight the unconquered Harry Flowers.

¹ I am indebted to Major Wheble's grandson, who is also Major Wheble, for the loan of a type-written account of the battle, which follows, extracted from an old number of the *Licensed Victuallers' Mirror*.

Bulmershe Park, near Reading, once the property of Reading's famous Abbey, was the scene of the conflict. The Major hospitably entertained his Cheshire friends, among whom were the Earl of Grosvenor, Lord Penrhyn, Peter Legh of Booth Hall, his brother Tom Legh of Lyme, Sir Oswald Moseley, and Mr. Egerton of Tatton. Crowds flocked to Reading for the night previous to the encounter, and found poor accommodation. Amongst the Berkshire squires who drove over to see the match were Sir Francis Sykes of Basildon, Mr. Richard Benyon of Englefield, Mr. Charles Fysch Palmer of Luckley, Squire Brummell of Dorington Grove, the Marquess of Blandford of Whiteknights, and Viscount Folkestone of Coleshill House, Charles Dalbiac of Hungerford Park, and Lord Craven of Benham House. I need not enumerate the Wiltshire gentlemen who were there in goodly numbers, farmers and tradesmen and labourers flocked in crowds, conveyed to the spot in vehicles of every kind. A huge breakfast, consisting of mighty joints of beef, chines of pork, and towers of brawn and veal pasties, washed down with the famous Kennet ale, was prepared for the squire's hundred aristocratic visitors, and their ladies were there, though not, perhaps, to witness the contest in the prize-ring. Three thousand persons ranged themselves round the ring in stands or wagons. Two London professionals had arranged the ring and wooden stage according to the correct principles of the science; and presently the champions appeared attended by their supporters, Keate by the Cheshire veterans, Isaac Bittom and Jacomb; and Flowers by Gibbons and Joe Ward. Everything was arranged in due order. Mr. Paul Methuen was referee, Mr. John Isherwood of Maple Hall, Chester, was umpire for Keate, and Mr. Charles Dalbiac of Hungerford Park, for Flowers.

I do not propose to describe the fight. It is not pleasant

reading ; but the two men were brave and " good pluck'd uns." They fought round after round. The Cheshire man's eyes were nearly closed owing to the blows he had received, and were then lanced. For seventy minutes the battle continued, and the wildest excitement prevailed ; and in the end the Cheshire man won, much to the disappointment of the Berkshire squires and the vast majority of the spectators, but both victor and vanquished were heartily cheered, and the squire shook Keate by the hand and said, " You're a game man and a good fighter, and you've beaten my man fairly." Loud cheers greeted this manly speech, and the great crowd dispersed.

Such were some of the sports that pleased the old country squires a century ago. Our own age is less brutal, perhaps, so some may think, over-sentimental. The old lady who wrote to the Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals might be deemed somewhat inclined that way, when she strongly protested against the brutal practice of scratching horses before a race. A horse had actually been " scratched " on the very day of the race ! It was too bad, too barbarous for words ! How could a horse run well when it had been " scratched," doubtless with some cruel knife or other hurtful weapon ? An esteemed clergyman was once preaching at Kinlet church on the subject of " the Vine," and went into some details of pruning and grafting. The squire's head-gardener was present, and had a habit of thinking aloud. Waiting till the graphic details were finished, he thought thus to himself (and at the same time to the vicar and congregation), " Yer know nothin' at arl about it ! " Perhaps the same might be said of the old lady who objected to scratching.

One of Nimrod's heroes was Mr. Leech, " one of those characters of which the breed is nearly lost, and which, when gone, will never be again seen in this country—the plain, unadulterated English country gentleman, who,

possessing full ten thousand a year, never left his seat, except he was called to his country town or went to visit his friends.¹ Being a single man he did not even keep a carriage of any sort till far advanced in years ; but the whole pleasure of his life was centred in the enjoyment of field sports in the morning, and the society of his friends at night. The real critics of the sport used to say that, though he kept fox-hounds, and hunted them himself for a long series of years—possessing also abilities quite above the common standard—he knew very little about fox-hunting. As Cicero says of Antony, “ he had a witty mirth which could be acquired by no art.” Every one sought his company, and he was the life and soul of every party. Though naturally abstemious, he used to drink more than was good for him in company. He used to attend church, but was obliged to own that “ he was no church glutton.” He had a strong constitution, rose very early in the morning, followed the hounds, was usually temperate, and lived to the age of eighty-six. This type of country gentleman disappeared with him. He spent his money in the shire in which he received it ; he kept a most hospitable house ; was a sincere friend and a most entertaining companion, and he never spoke ill of any man ; he was ever in good humour, and in all his jokes he never forgot the wholesome lesson of the satirist :—

“ Who, for the poor renown of being smart,
Would leave a sting within a brother’s heart ? ”

Another of Nimrod’s men was Captain Bridges, of the Hermitage in Hampshire. One day an irate farmer tried to stop the hounds from running over his fields. A huntsman told the Captain that the farmer had threatened to

¹ This reminds us of the squire of a Staffordshire village who died as recently as 1877, and used to boast not only that he had never been to London, but that he had never slept a night from under his own roof. Mr. J. Penderel-Brodhurst kindly informs me of this.



A MOONLIGHT HUNT
DRAWN AND ETCHED BY H. ALKE



murder any man who attempted to ride through his gate. "Here goes then, life for life," said the Captain, and immediately charged him. The farmer aimed a murderous blow at his head with a heavy stick, and then fled, the Captain pursuing him, and crept for safety into a large, uncovered drain. "Whoo-whoop!" shouted the Captain. "I've run him to ground; I've run him to ground! Whoo-whoop." He was one of the best tandem-drivers in England, and used to bet that he would throw any man out of the carriage without being himself thrown out; but strange to say, no one ever accepted his offer. He rode a race well, and inspired unlimited confidence in his powers to win, whatever steed he rode. He kept harriers and hunted with fox-hounds. One day, being attacked with gout in the night, but determined to hunt, he took two strong calomel pills, sixty drops of the gout medicine called colchicum, and on the top of this a glass of hot gin and water "to keep things in their places."

Mr. Apperley tells of the fame of Mr. Corbet of Warwickshire, the owner of a fine estate, and a good type of a gentleman of the old school. He was always dressed very neatly, and in private life or when hunting was always civil and obliging to the whole field, particularly to the farmers, by whom he was so much respected that the destruction of a fox by foul play was never heard of in the county during his time. He was always a cheerful and entertaining companion. An anecdote was told in his presence of a squire who purchased a pack of fox-hounds; but when the hounds arrived his wife went into fits, and would not be pacified till they were sent back to their former owner. "If my wife had done so," said Mr. Corbet, "I would never have kissed her again till she took off her night-cap and cried Tally-ho!"

There is a good portrait of the squire mounted on his favourite grey. He looked best, however, in the midst of

his hounds when they were worrying their fox after a good run :—

“ High waving the brush, with pleasure half mad ;
Roaring out, ‘ Hoicks, have at ’em, we’ve killed him, my lad ! ’
In a state of delight far exceeding all bounds—
See the Veteran Squire in the midst of his hounds.”

Apperley concludes his sketch : “ As an example to sportsmen—as an example to gentlemen—as an example to all men—Nature should have gone out of her way ; John Corbet should have been immortal ! Death should have had no dominion over him—a whoo-whoop should never have been heard over his grave ! ! ”

Extraordinary feats of horsemanship some of these old veterans accomplished. Squire Lockley accomplished some wonderful exploits. Three times a year he rode the same horse from Newmarket to his own house in Shropshire in one day, a distance of 104 miles ; and on another occasion he rode to Northampton and back in one day, covering 120 miles. When he was seventy-three years of age he left his own house at noon, was at the fight between Spring and Neate by one o’clock on the following day, rode to a friend’s house after the contest, and then to London on the next day, covering 162 miles in fifty-two hours on the same horse. His achievements, observes “ Nimrod,” are a striking instance of the good effect of a life spent in temperance, early hours and field sports, contrasted with the softness of modern manners.

Our forefathers were very fond of curious wagers, backing themselves to ride long distances, or devising all kinds of amazing and absurd objects on which to bet. The old squire of Kinlet, Childe by name, early in the last century undertook for a wager to ride from London to his home within a specified time. All went well till he came to Bewdley, six miles from his goal ; but there he found that one of the arches of the bridge that spanned the Severn

had collapsed. There was no other bridge nearer than Bridgnorth, nine miles beyond Kinlet. He turned his horse round, put him at the threatening, yawning gap, cleared the breach and won his wager.¹ Many instances could be quoted of the extraordinary distances that were traversed by our sires for the sake of winning wagers. Squire Osbaldiston undertook to ride two hundred miles in ten hours for one thousand guineas. He made use of twenty-eight horses, and accomplished the task in eight hours and thirty-nine minutes.

The bucks and sporting men who frequented Newmarket, Brighton, and the London clubs used to arrange all kinds of foolish wagers. Some one would trundle a hoop a given distance ; another would ride a long distance with his face to the horse's tail ; others would race on donkeys, or back a flock of geese against an equal number of turkeys, or even wager on the speed of rain-drops that ran down the panes of their club windows on a wet day. Nothing was too ridiculous for a wager, as Mr. Ralph Nevill has sufficiently recorded in his entertaining book *Light Come, Light Go*. A kind correspondent tells me of one squire who with a friend one wet day, having nothing to do, procured a couple of wood-lice and raced them across the dining-room table. The one which was leading suddenly stopped, when its backer touched it with his finger to set it going again ; but the creature immediately curled up and refused to move, the backer losing one of his best farms.

“ It was a mad world, my masters,” and many were the votaries of hazard and chance. Many wagered away their estates, and wagering sealed the fate of many a county

¹ His descendant, Major Childer, was killed on the eve of Spion Kop during the South African War. He had a peculiarly strong presentiment that he would be killed in the fight, and asked his brother officers to place on his grave the verse from 2 Kings iv. 26, “ Is it well with the child ? It is well.” And this accordingly has been done.

family at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. One squire wagered away his house room by room, and when it was pulled down wagered away the bricks. Another squire lost at hazard his ancestral home, and hanged himself in the attics, and his ghost haunted the staircase, because his widow married the man who had won from him his house and property.

A typical country squire and sportsman was Mr. Joseph Whitaker of Ramsdale House in Nottingham Forest, who, on account of his gigantic strength, "all muscle and bone," was named "his grace the Duke of Limbs." During the thirties he was a familiar and popular figure with the South Notts hounds, and is immortalized by Mrs. Musters in her hunting song :—

" See Rolleston ! you'd think he is in a chair ;
 Old Musters, a man of ten thousand, is there ;
 There Great Duke of Limbs,
 Man of muscle and bone,
 On Shamrock is taking a line of his own."

He had a fine, open, handsome face adorned with a pair of huge whiskers clipped till they looked like a great hair-brush on each cheek. Though endowed with immense physical strength, and bluff in manner, he was one of the kindest of men, and is described by his contemporaries as " a bluff, hearty, happy, genial squire, with a detestation of sham in any guise, and above all a thorough gentleman." He prided himself upon being an all-round sportsman. He rode 15½ stone, and later on in life close on twenty stone, and went straight and hard, one of the best heavy-weights in England. He would often ride twenty-five miles to a meet, and then, with a change of mounts, put in a dashing day. Even among the hard-riding Nimrods of Melton, there were not many who could get in front of him, and when in his prime he set all the

hunting world talking by his taking the Decoy Brook at Bunny towards the close of a tremendously hot run of twenty minutes. He knew the country so well that he could ride anywhere in the darkest of nights. His horses were as unique as himself. "Four-legged fiends in disguise of horses," were they styled by those who ever had the evil fate of getting on their backs. Two of his favourites were described as "a mare of a curious blue-black colour with a white star on her forehead and a wall-eye, and a great brute as high as a house, and who would stand on his forelegs for ten minutes at a time trying to get rid of its rider." They were named "Blue-eyed Maid" and "Great Tom of Lincoln." Other horses in his stable were "Hell-fire Jack" and the "Splasher." In the politest of manner he would offer some quiet guest a mount. "You ride, of course," his grace would say. Assuring his host that there was nothing he would like better, the luckless guest saw the gallant steed led forth, and barely was he astride one of these gigantic demons when Mr. Whitaker set spurs to his own horse and led him a fearful race across country. To watch the terror of his trusting friend was far better than paying to go to a circus, he used to say.

He had a strong vein of eccentricity, and some people deemed him as mad as a hatter. Something of the wild spirit of Jack Mytton haunted him, but he was less reckless and more considerate for others than the strange squire of Halstead. His eccentric ways were, however, somewhat trying at times. He was very hospitable, and hard drinking was the custom and disgrace of his age. He had no mercy on those who failed to comply with this custom, and to do justice to his excellent port. On one occasion some guests escaped from the room and took refuge in the coach which was drawn up horseless in front of the house, and there went to sleep. "The Duke of

Limbs" searched for his retreating guests, found them sleeping, backed the coach into the fish-pond, where it rested with the water up to the step. Some time later one of the gentlemen felt cold, opened the door, but instead of stepping out on to the hard gravel, found himself immersed in cold water among the carp and eels. His shout aroused the others, who immediately followed him into the water, whilst a stentorian view-halloa greeted them from the house. Dripping and shivering they scrambled on dry land, where they were met by the squire, who impressed upon them the iniquity of leaving his hospitable board.

Mr. Whitaker was a great fighter, his strength being prodigious and his skill not to be despised. He was a great admirer of the celebrated bruiser Bendigo, with whom he used to have many private spars, and was always ready to back the great pugilist against all comers. On one occasion he found his skill very useful. In the first quarter of the last century highwaymen and footpads rendered travelling dangerous, but those in the neighbourhood of Ramsdale were very shy of the noted squire. However, one night four of these gentry were waiting to attack a gentleman whom they had planned to rob, when Mr. Whitaker was returning from Nottingham market. The night was dark, and they did not recognize their proposed victim. They seized his horse's bridle, and were preparing to drag him from the saddle, when the squire immediately became the assailant. He struck one of them on the head a heavy blow with his whip-stock, the head of which consisted of a solid silver fox and heavy as a sledge hammer. The ruffian fell, and having settled with him the squire charged another with his mad mare "Blue-eyed Maid," who kicked and crushed the wretch with her mighty hoofs. The others, catching a glimpse of the squire's face, shrieked out in terror, "By — it's

Whitaker ! Run for your life," and away they fled into the darkness. Whitaker was never molested again, and as a proof of his good nature it may be mentioned that he ordered his men to convey the injured robbers to an inn and look after them well until they recovered, refusing to prosecute them.

Whitaker was a great patron of cocking and had a noted strain of duckwings which won for him many victories. A great battle once took place between his birds and Lord Derby's highly bred black-breasted reds. The scene of the battle was at the cock-pit in Tufton Street, Westminster, in a building that had been a chapel. There, outside, were assembled a crowd of thieves, roughs, and blacklegs ; within there was a select company of dukes and lords and squires, including Sir William Wynn, Ralph Benyon, Sir Benjamin Graham, Dr. Bellyse, Colonel Mellish, Dick Thornton, and Captain Barclay (the hero of the wondrous walk of a thousand miles in a thousand successive hours, on which exploit gigantic bets were laid), and other notables. Colonel Mellish came of an ancient race, his father being the owner of Blythe Hall, near Doncaster. A volume might be written of his gallant deeds, his recklessness, his gambling, which lost him his estate, his bravery as a soldier, his conduct as the Squire of Hodsock Priory, his fortunate marriage and his early death. Few men have crowded into a life of thirty-seven years such a variety of strange experiences.

Such was the company assembled at the cock-pit, and presently there was ushered in the First Gentleman in Europe, the Prince of Wales, with his brother the Duke of York, Beau Brummel, and other favourites of the Prince. It was a weird scene, the huge building dimly lit by flickering tallow candles, and the crowd of figures grouped around the stage, shadowy and indistinct. There was a roar of voices, men shouting their bets on the rival birds.

It were vain to try to describe the mains that were fought ; but the Duke of Limbs triumphed in the end over Lord Derby's champions, and His Royal Highness, who had backed the latter was much inconvenienced in finding the requisite coins to pay his debts.

Mr. Whitaker died at Ramsdale in 1876 in his seventy-sixth year, closing an eventful life after having made a host of friends and no enemies, not even the gentlemen whom he had placed in his fish-pond. In spite of his eccentricities he may be reckoned as a typical country squire of the sporting school, and was much beloved by both the poor and the highest and noblest in the land.

Not long ago there passed away a fine old English gentleman, a man greatly beloved by all who knew him, Squire Garth of Haines Hill, in Berkshire. His mansion has an interesting history. A great portion of it is Elizabethan, and it was the home of Sir Francis Winderbank, Secretary of State to Charles I, a warm friend of Archbishop Laud, who often stayed at Haines Hill, and preached in the neighbouring church of Hurst. Thomas Colleton Garth was the Master of the Garth Hunt which he established in 1851, and rode to hounds until he was over eighty years of age. He earned the respect of every one who knew him. Courteous and kind to rich and poor alike, he was a universal favourite. Masters of fox-hounds and their followers are often deemed by the ignorant to be cruel and inhuman, delighting themselves in the pains of animals. An anecdote may be told of Squire Garth which proves the falsity of such conclusions. One day the hounds were running well, when Mr. Garth perceived a poor squirrel that had been caught in a trap. He immediately stopped the hounds, ordered his huntsman to release the unfortunate little animal, and then proceeded to set his hounds again on the scent, and pursue his hunting.



AN ANCIENT PASTIME.
DRAWN AND ENGRAVED BY L. R. AND G. CURLIERSHANK



But we have overrun the scent and must hark back. The old country squire used almost invariably to keep a pack of hounds, harriers, or beagles. His father or grandfather had done so before him, and he was only keeping up the family tradition. He loved the sport. Mr. Frederick Gerrard, Master of the Aspull Harriers, once said to a friend of my boyhood when his hounds were running well, "There is no music like that, except Charles Hallé's band," wherein he used to figure as the only amateur and play the bass fiddle. The old squire used to love the music of his cry of hound without pleading any exception, not even Hallé's orchestra, and he kept his pack not because he liked to see the pleasing M.F.H. after his name, but because he enjoyed the sport from the first time he rode his pony to the meet until he was almost too old to climb into the saddle. Hunting was conducted on quite different principles in the old squire's day than it is at present. In the eighteenth century hunting-men rose from their bed when it was yet dark and were at the covert-side at peep of day. Not until the close of that century did the meet take place as late as nine o'clock, and now we meet at eleven. Beckford says that he never used to draw for a fresh fox after one o'clock. Moreover hunting was not conducted on so great a scale a hundred and fifty years ago. Sport was diffused amongst many smaller establishments instead of being concentrated into a few large ones. Each squire had his own cry, which hunted either fox or hare, and resembled the "fine old English gentleman"

"Who never hawked nor hunted but on his own ground."

His hounds used to give a good account of themselves, even better than those belonging to the kennels of rich sporting peers. A pack of fox-hounds was once kept at Cruxeton, their master being known by the name of Dick Smith. Near at hand was the costly establishment of William, Lord Craven. One day his lordship was

hunting in Highclere Park, and having lost his fox asked a rustic whether he had seen it. The man, being a wag, replied, "O aye, I seen 'un, and he stopped and had a bit of chat with me."

"Indeed," replied Lord Craven, "and what did he say to you?"

"Why, he axed me if I could tell 'un whether it was my lord's hounds or the squire's as were a'ter 'un; so I told 'un it was most likely my lord's, because the squire was out yesterday. 'Ah!' says he, 'I thought so; that's just how 'tis; that's the reason why I can stop and have a bit of chat with you; because, you see, when the squire is a'ter me, I never have no time to spare.'"

But his lordship got the laugh on his side at last, for he killed the fox, and on his return home through Highclere Park told the labourer that his friend had stayed chatting with him too long.¹

Moreover, in those days the squire used to own the pack and do as he pleased. He did not advertise the meets, but was delighted to welcome his near neighbours and his tenant farmers. Sometimes he used to take out his hounds without giving notice to any one. It is on record that on one occasion Mr. Chute, Master of the Vine Hunt, took out his hounds to oblige a young gentleman who had ridden over expecting a meet when there was none, and found a fox for his express delectation. Boundaries, too, were very elastic. The squire took his hounds wherever he pleased, and did not scruple to invade a country which might be hunted by a neighbour's hounds.

Amongst the mighty hunters of the past was the venerable founder of the H. H., Squire Ridge, who kept hounds for forty-six years, from 1749 to 1795. A famous hunter and well-loved man was William John Chute, Master of the Vine, whose character was a singular mixture of

¹ *Recollections of the Vine Hunt*, p. 18.

shrewdness and weakness. He had a vein of original humour, high animal spirits, and a perfect temper, all combined with the manners and good taste of a true gentleman. His face beamed with good humour and intelligence, and he had great bodily strength and activity. The historian of the Vine Hunt, Mr. Austen Leigh, wrote :

“ I wish I could make others see him as I can fancy that I see him myself, trotting up to the meet at Freefolk Wood, or St. John’s, sitting rather loose on his horse, and his clothes rather loose upon him—the scarlet coat flapping open, a little whitened at the collar by the contact of his hair-powder and the friction of his pigtail ; the frill of his shirt above, and the gold watch-chain and seal below, both rather prominent, the short knee-breeches scarcely meeting the boot-tops. See ! he rides up ; probably with some original, amusing remark, at any rate with a cheerful greeting to his friends, a nod and kindly word to the farmers, and some laughing notice of the schoolboy on his pony.

“ Or I could give quite a different picture of him in his parish church—standing upright, tilting his heavy folio Prayer Book on the edge of his high pew, so that he had to look up rather than down on it. There he stands, like Sir Roger de Coverley, giving out the responses in an audible tone, with an occasional glance to see what tenants were at church, and what school children were misbehaving ; and I am sorry to add sometimes, especially when the rustic psalmody began its discord in the gallery, with a humour that even church could not restrain, making some significant gesture to provoke a smile from me and other young persons in the pew.”

This is such a pleasant description of the squire that I make no apology for so long a quotation. Mr. Chute was educated at Harrow and Cambridge, and spent some time in France, at Angers, where he acquired a good

knowledge of the French tongue. He inherited his family property in 1790. The Vyne was built in Tudor times by Lord Sandys, and was purchased by Chaloner Chute in 1654, and has been in the possession of the family ever since. Mr. Chute, on succeeding to the estate, also entered Parliament in the same year, sitting as a Tory with his colleague, Sir William Heathcote, having successfully opposed Lord John Russell and Mr. Clarke Jervoise of Idsworth House. With some vicissitudes and a few intervals he was member until 1820, a fairly long record. He was not a bookworm and cared little for literature, but he continued to write Latin verse until the end of his life, though the grammar and prosody became a little faulty. His light and joyous manners made his home life bright and cheerful. He loved to extract amusement out of the daily occurrences of life and to diffuse cheerfulness around him. He was a very temperate man, liked a glass or two of the best old port, but despised claret, declaring that his butler, Bust, could make as good stuff as that out of the washings of his port wine glasses.

An instance of his humour may be quoted. He had for his neighbour Sir John Cope of Bramshill, that most charming of houses near Eversley village. Sir John was a Radical and informed the Tory squire that he had a litter of five dogs and had named them Placeman, Parson, Pensioner, Pilferer, and Plunderer, all names having much the same meaning. Mr. Chute retorted that he, too, had five pups whose names were equally synonymous, Radical, Rebel, Regicide, Ruffian, and Rascal. The Tory scored! As an instance of his ready retort we may mention that when complaining to his coal-merchant at Basingstoke one day at the high price charged, the good man replied:—

“Well, sir, you must remember that coals *is* coals in these times.”

“ Indeed,” replied Mr. Chute, “ I am glad to hear you say so ; for what you have sent me lately have been mostly slates.”

In spite of his great popularity, his brightness and good humour, he was not very successful. His attention was always fixed upon little rather than upon great matters. Though fond of hunting, he was never a good rider, nor yet a good sportsman. He followed Beckford’s advice, and whenever he came to a slightly difficult jump he would quickly dismount, lead his horse over the obstacle, and then get into his saddle again. He had no pretence of equality with the best master of hounds, with the famous Assheton-Smith, or the other Thomas Smith of Craven and Hambledon renown, or other skilled leaders ; and yet his friends used to say that they would rather have middling sport with Chute than better with any one else. In his parliamentary life he never showed much statesmanship and was a very poor speaker. He was a poor business man, mismanaged his estate, was always in want of money. And yet, in spite of all this, he won the affections of all who knew him. He was the personification of cheerfulness and friendliness. He never uttered an ill-natured remark or a coarse expression, and the whole country-side mourned their loss when he passed away from earth. Such is the record that the memory of Mr. Chute left in the mind of the author of the *Recollections of the Vine Hunt*, whose good opinion of the Squire of Vyne many others have endorsed. Such men—manly, honourable, straightforward—were the pride of the country-side and of England. The Duke of Wellington attributed the success of the army in Spain to the gallantry which English gentlemen had acquired in the hunting-field (did not Mr. Jorrocks describe the chase as the image of war without its cruelty and only five-and-twenty per cent of its danger ?). And Mr. Chute and other men of his stamp

were the direct antitheses to the feeble, effeminate exquisites of the Horace Walpole variety, who regarded field-sports as low pleasures suitable only for bucolic minds.

Sir John Cope of Bramshill did not belong to this effeminate fraternity. Fox-hunting was the passion of his life. He was originally a lawyer in the Temple, London, in partnership with Mr. Gerard Wharton, and when he received intimation that he had inherited the property of Bramshill, he closed his law books with a bang, and shouted, "Hang the law! and now for fox-hunting." It is interesting to note that his first list of hounds is written in a legal ledger. He bought Mr. St. John's hounds in 1816, and hunted the pack until 1850. Mr. Thomas Smith, Master of the Craven, testified to its merits and called it "one of the most dashing packs in the kingdom. Sir John Cope was a fine specimen of an English squire and was deservedly popular with the members of his hunt. He rode hard, but was very short-sighted, and his friends used to wonder that he did not break his neck. A story is told of another short-sighted squire who, one day when the hounds checked, galloped on, leaped a flight of rails, and when a whip rushed wildly after him and asked where he was going, roared out, "Going! Don't you see the hounds in front of you?"

"Sure, Sir Harry, them's not hounds; them's a flock of sheep!"

One of Sir John Cope's followers was Colonel Blgrave, a very daring rider, for whom no timber was ever too big. The chroniclers narrate that he jumped a spiked gate at Stratfield Saye Park which was nearly seven feet high.

Another great sporting squire was Mr. John Warde, Master of the Pytchley and then of the Craven. He had an old-time courtesy of manner and ruled his field with good humour, checking unruly sportsmen by caustic wit

rather than by abuse or strong language. He kept hounds so long and in so many counties, and with so high a reputation, that he was sometimes called the "father of fox-hunting," and by his brother sportsmen "Glorious John." He kept fifty couple of hounds, which were of great size and beautifully formed, and were remarkably steady from riot, never taking the slightest notice of deer or hares. His huntsman's name was Neverd, a name which became a prolific source of jest. "Never-right" and "Never-ride" were the names suggested for him by Berkshire wits; though he was a good rider, knew his work, and was never very far from his hounds.

Fox-hunters a century ago used to have a happy facility for concocting hunting rhymes and jingles which were sung with much zest at hunt dinners. Thus is Mr. Warde immortalized by the "poet":—

"Here is health to John Warde, and success to his hounds :

Your Quornites may swish at the rasper so clever,
And skim ridge and furrow, and charge an ox fence ;
But will riding alone make a sportsman ? No, never !

So I think we'd just send them some tutors from hence.

In the van place Charles Warde, Fulwar Fowle, you'll accord,
With Villebois and Wroughton, might teach them the ground ;
And if they'd be ruled, or deign to be schooled,

They might yet take some hints from John Warde and his
hounds."

The famous Mr. Thomas Smith occupies a distinguished place in the annals of the chase. His book, *Extracts from the Diary of a Huntsman*, contains more wisdom on the art of fox-hunting than can be gleaned from any other books of his time. What Tom Smith did not know about hunting was certainly not knowledge. He was a clever draughtsman, and gives in his diary some characteristic sketches of foxes and hounds. When he took over the Craven Hunt the hounds were rather partial to deer, and

when being exercised chased them in Tottenham Park. The master took strong measures, chaining the hounds to the railings of the park and thrashing them severely while the deer were driven past. At the opening meet the members of the hunt spoke satirically to Mr. Smith of the haunch of venison which they hoped he would send them as a trophy of the day's sport. He offered them a haunch of fox, and declared that they should eat it. A bold and fearless rider, he once leaped the wall of Elcot Park, six feet two inches in height ; but his horse's legs gave way on reaching the ground, and the master was discovered in an unconscious condition. In three weeks' time he was in the saddle again, chasing foxes with accustomed zeal. His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester once asked him how many falls he had in a season. "About twenty," he answered. "Thank Heaven I'm not a fox-hunter," replied the Duke. Of his skill in killing foxes all his contemporaries speak most highly. Mr. Codrington used to say, "Were I a fox, I would rather have a pack of hounds after me than Tom Smith with a stick in his hands." He exercised great tact in dealing with men, as with foxes, and was always, as "Nimrod" tells us, "firm without being offensive."

Famous amongst Nimrods of the past was Squire Forester of Willey, in Shropshire, who lived in the dawn of the golden age of fox-hunting. He was born in the year 1739 and died, aged seventy-two, in 1811. Lord Wilton tells us that the first real pack of fox-hounds was established in the West of England about 1730, though Lord Arundel kept a pack sometime between 1690 and 1700, and Sir John Tyrwhitt and Charles Pelham did so in 1713. Those were the days when there was a battle royal between the exquisite and the manly sportsman. A country squire of Mr. Forester's day pithily expresses the difference between the habits and customs of the

divergent schools. " Those useful hours that our fathers employed on horseback in the fields are lost to their posterity between a stinking pair of sheets. Balls and operas, assemblies and masquerades, so exhaust the spirits of the puny creatures over night, that yawning and chocolate are the main labours and entertainments of the morning. The important affairs of the barber, milliner, perfumer, and looking-glass are their employ till the call to dinner, and the bottle or the gaming-table demand the tedious hours that intervene before the return of the evening assignations. What wonder, then, if such busy, trifling, effeminate mortals are heard to swear they have no notion of venturing their bodies out of doors in the cold air in the morning ? I have laughed heartily to see such delicate, smock-faced animals judiciously interrupting their pinches of snuff with dull jokes upon fox-hunters ; and foppishly declaiming against an art they know no more of than they do Greek. It cannot be expected they should speak well of a toil they dare not undertake ; or that the fine things should be fit to work without doors, which are of the taylor's creation."

Forester belonged to a different school. Four o'clock on a hunting morning usually found him at breakfast, and the day was never too long for him. The accounts of runs are somewhat monotonous, unless you know the country and have ridden over the same ground, drawn the same coverts and negotiated the same brooks and stiff fences. On one occasion Squire Forester and his friends diversified the usual programme by having a hard run by moonlight, when there were many falls, the squire's horse rolling over into a sandpit ; but the fox was run into in the moonlight among the ivied ruins of Buildwas Abbey.

He took great care in the breeding of his hounds and strongly developed their speed and scent. He knew each hound by name and could tell its pedigree. Portraits of

these still exist, with quaint rhymes beneath them, recording their excellencies. Here is Pigmy's epitaph :—

“ Behold in miniature the foxhound keen,
Through rough and smooth a better ne'er was seen ;
As champion here the beauteous Pigmy stands,
She challenges the globe, both home and foreign lands.”
(1773.)

The poetry is none of the best, but the hall of Willey used to echo with the voice and verse of the famous Dibdin, the author of “ Tom Bowling,” who in “ Bachelor's Hall ” recorded the hunting exploits of Squire Forester and his friends, and we can imagine the strenuous chorus of the hunting squires as they sang :—

“ Hark away ! Hark away ! all nature looks gay,
And Aurora with smiles ushers in the bright day.”

He wrote a famous song on Tom Moody, the squire's whipper-in, describing the details of his funeral, which was conducted in accordance with the old man's wishes :—

“ Six crafty earth-stoppers in hunter's green drest,
Supported poor Tom to an earth made for rest.
His horse, which he styled his ‘ Old Soul,’ next appeared,
On whose forehead the brush of his last fox was reared ;
Whip, cap, boots and spurs, in a trophy were bound,
And here and there followed an old straggling hound.
Ah ! no more at his voice yonder vale will they trace !
Nor the welkin resound his burst in the chase !
With high over ! Now press him ! Tally-ho ! Tally-ho !

“ Thus Tom spoke his friends ere he gave up his breath :
‘ Since I see you're resolved to be in at the death,
One favour bestow—'tis the last I shall crave,
Give a rattling view-holloo thrice over my grave ;
And unless at that warning I lift up my head,
My boys, you may fairly conclude I am dead.’
Honest Tom was obeyed, and the shout rent the sky,
For every one joined in the Tally-ho cry.
Tally-ho ! Hark forward ! Tally-ho ! Tally-ho ! ”



THE M.F.H.—“ONE, CHEER MORE.”
DRAWN AND ETCHED BY H. ALKEN

The squire gave Dibdin a hundred pounds for the song, and when it was first sung by the composer at Drury Lane Theatre some Salopian fox-hunters went to hear it. It was a grand success, but Dibdin was not a fox-hunter and was unaccustomed to shout Tally-ho to the satisfaction of his critical knot of country squires ; so they climbed from the pit to the stage, and astonished the cockney audience with a specimen of what Shropshire lungs could do.

The old Hall, where

“ Salopians every one
Of high and low degree,
Who took delight in fox-hunting,”

used to forgather, was a grand old place, its walls hung with grim old portraits of the squire's predecessors with stiff-starched frills, large vests, and small round hats of Tudor times, and pictures of favourite hounds and horses, horns, antlers, and other trophies of the chase, old guns, specimens of rare birds, ancient time-pieces, one of which on striking twelve o'clock set in motion figures with musical instruments, playing a miniature orchestra. Long were the sittings at the dinner-table. The company usually sat down to dinner at four o'clock and many did not leave the unusually festive board until they mounted their hunters in the courtyard ere the next day dawned to ride to the meet.

Squire Forester did not neglect the duties of his position. He entered Parliament as Member for Wenlock, occupied the position of Chief Magistrate and Justice of that borough, and when the danger of invasion threatened England in the days of Napoleon, he raised a stalwart force of volunteers with an energy and success of which few men could have been capable, and spared neither money nor trouble to make it efficient. The men responded gallantly. The squire was their natural leader ;

they would follow him—as a tradesman said—to hell if necessary. He was not a great orator, but he was direct and hit hard, and here is a specimen of his speechifying, which contains much good sound sense, and is applicable to these days when the danger of another invasion is not beyond the bounds of probability.

“Gentlemen, you know very well that I have retired from the representation of the borough. I did so in the belief that I had discharged, as long as need be, those public duties I owe to my neighbours; and in the hope that I should be permitted to enjoy the pleasures of retirement. I parted with my hounds and gave up hunting; but here I am, continually on horseback, hunting up men all round the Wrekin. The movement is general, and differences of feeling are subsiding into one for the defence of the nation. Whigs and Tories stand together in the ranks; and as I told the Lord-Lieutenant the other day, we must have not less than four or five thousand men in uniform, equipped, every Jack-rag of 'em, without a farthing cost to the country. There are some dastardly devils who run with the hare but hang with the hounds (d—n 'em) whose patriotism hangs by such a small strand that I believe the first success of the enemies of the country would sever it. They are a lot of d—n Jacobins, all of 'em, whining, black-hearted devils, with distorted intellects, who profess to see no danger. And the more plain it is, they less they see it. It is, as I say, put an owl into daylight, stick a candle on each side of him, and the more light the poor devil has the less he sees.”

“Bravo! hurrah for the squire!” shouted the crowd. In conclusion he called upon the lawyer, the ironmaster, the pot-maker, the artisan and the labourer to drill; and prepare for defending their hearths and homes; they had property to defend, shops that might be plundered, houses that might be burned, or children to be saved from being

brained, and wives and daughters to protect from treatment which sometimes prevailed in time of war.

It was the lead the men of England wanted, and from such gentlemen as the squire of Willey they got that lead which saved England in an hour of danger, when Napoleon was assembling his forces at Boulogne and meant to conquer us. Everywhere the patriotic sons of England were drilling and arming. Napoleon liked not the tone and temper of a nation in arms, and turned his legions eastward to try to subdue the rest of Europe. It is not too much to say that in that time of stress and danger it was the squires who saved England, and it is not comforting to reflect that when similar invasions threaten our shores there will be in the future few representatives of this class of country gentlemen left to rally their countrymen together to resist oppression, and to take the lead when the call is necessary for the loyalty and patriotism of Englishmen.

In that time of storm and stress Squire Forester and many other squires did their duty, and marched at head of the citizen army ready to repel invasion. Their example and their efforts contributed to produce a patriotic ardour and feeling among the people, and laid the foundation of that spirit which ultimately enabled Great Britain to appear as principal in the contest and to beat down the power of Napoleon. Squire Forester had an immense influence over the rough miners who, in the years 1774 to 1782 on account of the scarcity and dearness of food, were in a constant condition of riot and disturbance. Sometimes the cavalry were called out, and fierce battles fought in the iron districts. No one was more active than the squire in trying to remedy the evils. He readily advanced eight hundred pounds for the purchase of corn to be sold to the people at a reduced and reasonable rate. On one occasion when a riot threatened he purchased all the coal

he could get, all the butter in the market, all the bread and meat in the town, and told the colliers to take what they wanted, and to go home with the provisions he gave them. He kept open house at his hall, and any one who came there could have bread and cheese, cold meat, and a tankard of good ale for the asking.

Squire Forester had plenty of wit and humour, and was a match for most people ; but he was once scored off by a sweep. Having been caught in a storm he took refuge at an inn, and was warmly welcomed by the company. He stood near the fire and was drying himself when a sweep, in his garb of black, came to the door. "What news from the lower regions?" shouted the squire. "Oh," replied the sweep, "things be going on there, sir, much as they do here—the gentlemen are nearest the fire."

The squire never married ; he had been jilted in his youth, but unhappily his immorality was notorious, and a veil must be drawn over his scandalous amours. He died in 1821, and in his will directed that his favourite chestnut horse should be shot as soon as possible after his decease by two persons, one of whom should fire first and the other to wait in reserve and fire immediately afterwards, so that he may be put to death as expeditiously as possible, and that he be buried with his hide on, and a flat stone without inscription placed over him. The squire's estates were left to his nephew Cecil Forester, who was created Lord Forester by George IV. He, too, was a noted horseman, and is credited with being the first who instituted the present system of hard riding to hounds. He and his successors have all been good sportsmen. Willey Park is still in the possession of the family, the present representative being Lord Cecil Theodore Weld-Forester, sixth baron. The family have the privilege granted to them by Henry VIII of remaining with head covered in the presence of royalty.

No list of sportsmen of ancient days would be complete without the name of another squire, Thomas Assheton-Smith, who died more than half a century ago. A friend of mine remembers well the last meet that Mr. Thomas Assheton-Smith ever attended, when, though very ill, he insisted on riding, and had to be lifted on to his horse. That must have been in 1856. He was born in 1776, and lived until September, 1858, and therefore exceeded his four score years.

The home of the Assheton-Smiths was formerly Cheshire. The Asshetons were a far-spreading race, from whom Ashton-under-Lyne, in Lancashire, takes its name. There is a very interesting diary in existence, to which we shall presently allude, of one Nicholas Assheton of Downham. They were a knightly family of ancient descent, and Ashby Hall came to them by the marriage of Ralph Assheton of Middleton, to Katherine, daughter of William Brereton, a good old Cheshire family. The name of Smith was assumed by Thomas Assheton, grandfather of the famous fox-hunter, on the death of his uncle, Captain William Smith, son of the Right Hon. John Smith, Speaker of the House of Commons in the reign of Queen Anne. But genealogy is dull work, and I prefer fox-hunting and its records. Every hunting man has probably read *Reminiscences of the late Thomas Assheton-Smith, Esq., or the Pursuits of an English Country Gentleman*. It was compiled by Sir John E. Eardley-Wilmot, Bart., and published by Mr. John Murray in 1860. "Tom Smith," as he was familiarly called, was a hero, a man of iron nerve and constitution, by universal acknowledgment the best and foremost rider of his day, a model of the British fox-hunter. The charge is often brought against the lovers of sport that they are so absorbed in the pursuit of their favourite recreation that they are sportsmen and nothing more. Such accusations are usually unjust. Mr.

Assheton-Smith, in addition to his prowess in the hunting-field, was a most useful country squire, a good classical scholar, an excellent man of business, and warmly devoted to science. He was much interested in the promotion and improvement of steam navigation, and was one of the pioneers of the science of building vessels propelled by steam. His first ship, the *Menai*, cost him twenty thousand pounds; he built seven others, and was the practical inventor of the hollow water-lines for ships of great speed. Moreover, he was the originator of the gunboat for naval warfare. In those days, as in these, the authorities at the War Office and Admiralty were not very speedy in taking up suggestions submitted to them. The gallant Duke of Wellington was a warm supporter of Mr. Assheton-Smith's theory, but the Admiralty was slow in availing itself of his ideas. However, they were at length adopted. Ten years after his conversation with the Iron Duke a fleet of our "vixen craft" was at sea, and few of those who witnessed that wonderful naval review on the occasion of the Coronation of George V were aware that the original projector of the gunboat type was a fox-hunter, and that to a fox-hunter's clear head and far-seeing eye the nation is indebted for this useful branch of the service.

Fox-hunting did not prevent him from becoming a Member of Parliament. He represented Andover for several years, until the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832, and subsequently sat for Carnarvonshire. Oratory was not his forte, but he did not fail to perform his parliamentary duties. In those days of few railways it was not easy to travel to London and live in the country; but the squire used to hunt at Tedworth in the morning, post off to London in his light chariot drawn by four horses to Westminster, and be at the covert-side next day at noon. On one occasion he was asked to stand for Nottingham.



SQUIRE MYTTON'S FAMOUS LEAP

Nottingham "lambs" are somewhat rough in their play. They placarded the town with "No Fox-hunting M.P.," and when he tried to address them greeted him with yells and hooting and refused to listen to a word he said. At length he shouted out, "You won't hear my words, but listen to this. I will fight any man, little or big, directly I leave the hustings, and will have a round with him now for love." He was then greeted with rounds of cheers, and never had any more trouble with the "lambs."

His hunting career is known to the world, how he succeeded Lord Foley as Master of the Quorn in 1806, hunted in Leicestershire, followed Mr. Osbaldeston as Master in Lincolnshire, created a new country between Andover and Salisbury Plain, rebuilt Tedworth House, and hunted the Tedworth Hounds until a short period before his death. He owned a fine estate in Wales, Vaenol (or Vaynol, as it is now written), which Queen Anne had granted to his ancestor, the Speaker of the House of Commons, together with the slate quarries, which were a productive source of wealth. It stands opposite Plas Newydd, the seat of the Marquess of Anglesey, where King George and Queen Mary recently stayed, and where Princess Victoria, afterwards our beloved Queen, for whom he always had the most loyal affection, sojourned and visited the squire at Vaenol. He took great pains to add to the comforts and improve the conditions of his Welsh labourers in the quarries. Did space permit I should like to dwell on his deeds of prowess as a mighty hunter, but we may recall the words of a former editor of *The Field*, who observed that it is only by such enthusiasm in the pursuit of fox-hunting as Mr. Smith evinced "that, with the improved state of husbandry, and the increasing system of inclosures, added to the large field of thoroughbred horses pressing upon hounds, it is kept from degenerating into a second-rate sport. If hunting or any other diversion is

really useful in a national point of view, it is of the utmost importance that it should be vigorously carried out, and that a few of the leaders in it should devote their time, their minds, and their fortunes to render it something more than a gentlemanly amusement, although to the great bulk of mankind it presents no other feature whereby it may claim their attention."

Some hunting men have carried their sport to their graves. Here is the epitaph of John Charlton, once Master of the Wheatland, who lies at Morville, near Bridgnorth :—

"Of this world's pleasure I have had my share,
A few of the sorrows I was doomed to bear.
How oft have I enjoy'd the noble chase
Of hounds and foxes striving for the race !
But Hark ! the knell of death calls me away,
So sportsmen, all, farewell ! I must obey."

CHAPTER XIII

SOME LANCASHIRE SQUIRES

LANCASHIRE is popularly supposed to be the shire of *nouveaux riches*, but this is entirely a misconception. Few counties can boast of more ancient names and good families, and the squirearchy is well represented. Moreover, they were well learned in letters, and, more important still for our present purpose, they kept diaries, which enable us to obtain glimpses of the daily life of a squire and his people in that part of England during the periods which the diaries cover.

The first family with which we will concern ourselves is that of the Blundells of Little Crosby, near Liverpool, of Norman lineage, which was settled at Crosby in the twelfth century. The early history of the Blundells would form a good illustration of the lives of mediæval squires which we have attempted to describe in an earlier chapter. They were warriors, and fought with King Edward I in the Welsh wars, and they had their little difficulties with their neighbours which were not unusual, the powerful family of Molyneux being especially troublesome to them. After the Reformation they adhered to the "old Religion" and did not sympathize with the reformers, who had purged the doctrines of the Church of England from errors and superstition and released her from the thralldom of Roman pontiffs. In another chapter we alluded to the recusants and their ways and the sufferings they endured for conscience' sake. Although they were badly used by

the Government, nothing could shake their loyalty, and when King Charles needed the services of all his loyal subjects no one came more readily to his standard than Richard Blundell and other Lancashire recusants. He received a commission as captain and marched with Lord Derby to besiege Lancaster, held by the Parliament. The town was taken by assault, the charge being led by the gallant Earl of Derby, who bade his company of Lancastrian gentlemen to follow him in the attack. All was successful, but alas, we read: "Mr. Blundell, that gallant, loyal and worthy gentleman, was wounded on entering the city." He received so bad a wound that his life was despaired of, and he remained crippled for life. In spite of his misfortunes and great sufferings he maintained a cheerful spirit, and was a great favourite with his friends. The Talbots nursed him back to health; but he dared not to remain at home for fear of capture. His house at Crosby was left to the care of his poor wife and sister Francis. They had a terrible time. Almost daily the wretched Roundheads paid them visits, and carried off everything that they could lay their hands on. The poor ladies were forced to bury their bread from meal to meal lest the wretches should carry it off. When the King's cause failed, a hunted fugitive, wounded and disabled, he could do nothing to help his royal master, and papist recusants fared ill at the hands of triumphant Puritanism. He was frequently imprisoned, and was prevented by law from regaining his estates by payment. He thus describes his unhappy condition:—

"The war between Charles I and his Parliament began A.D. 1642. That year, March 18, my thigh was broken with a shot in the King's service. A.D. 1643 all my goods and most of my lands were sequestered for being a Papist and delinquent, as the prevailing party call the King's partakers. In the year 1645 my wife farmed my desmesne

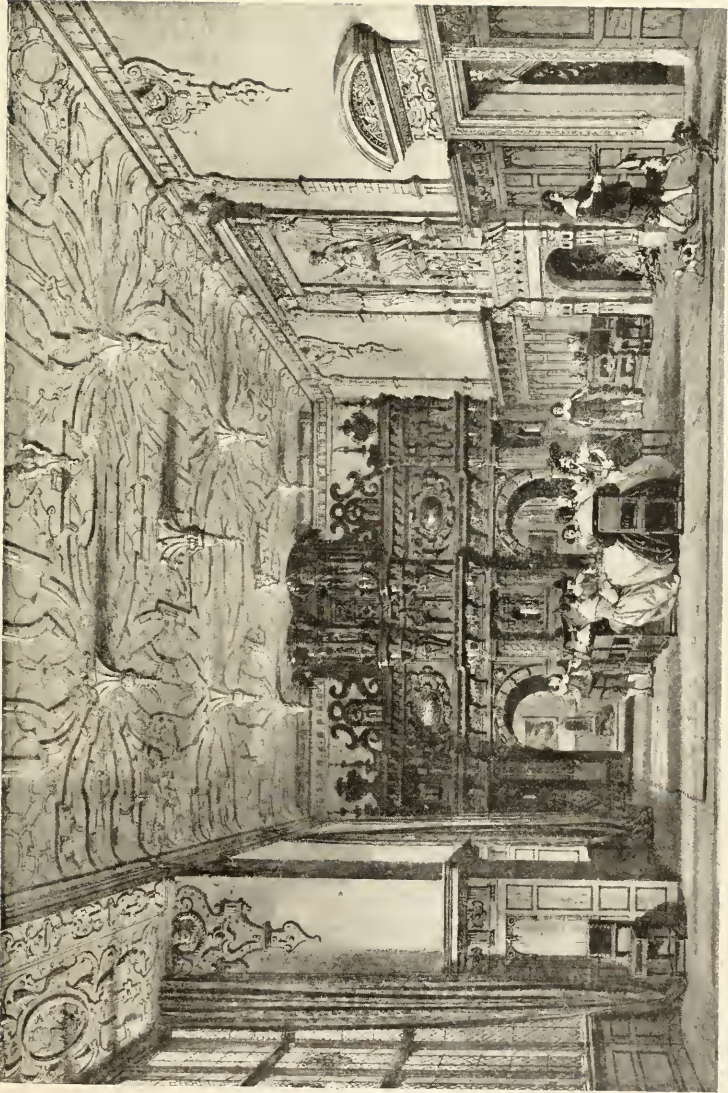
at Crosby, and all her quick goods were lost, she bought one horse and two oxen to make up a team. A.D. 1646, November 13: I valued all my goods, and comparing them with my debts, I found myself worse than nothing by the whole sum of 81l. 18s., my lands being all lost. A.D. 1653: Till this year, from 1646 inclusively, I remained under sequestration, having one-fifth part allowed to my wife, and farming only from the sequestrators my demesne of Crosby and the mill. About midsummer 1653 my whole estate was purchased and compounded for with my own money, for my use, so that in the month of February, 1653-4, I was indebted 1,100l. 7s., after which time I was overcharged with care, debts, business, and imprisonments, that I think I took no account of the value of my goods till 1658."

Such is the bare outline of a sorry tale, a life of hardship and misfortune. Then our friend went abroad and joined King Charles II at Breda, accompanying him back to England, when every one was throwing up his cap and welcoming the royal exile back to the throne of his ancestors. Charles interviewed the old Cavalier, made many promises; but the Restoration brought little gain to the recusants, and the infamously fabricated Titus Oates Plot made their position very insecure. In an indignant letter Blundell contrasts the conduct of himself and his friends with that of the rebels and traitors, and the rewards they had received. Not a single Catholic had proved disloyal to the King during the war; whereas Prynne, who in "a villainous book" had counselled the killing of kings, was rewarded with a place of trust at the Restoration, and Milton and others who had declared that the murder of the King was just, were pardoned and lived in security. He himself had lost his limbs, his lands, his liberty for acting against the rebels in the King's behalf, and had never countenanced rebellion or invasions

whether made by Catholic princes or even by the Pope himself.

But the worthy squire had some relaxations, and was not altogether debarred from amusements. He used to hunt with his neighbours and relatives, Sir Roger Brads-haigh of Haigh and Squire Lawrence Ireland of Lydiate, and bowling was a very popular amusement. There was a club at Sefton, where the neighbouring squires used to meet for dinner, and then spend the afternoon in their favourite pastime. Amongst the company were "My Lord Molineux" and his son, Sir Edward Stanley, "my Cousin Scarisbrick," and many other gentlemen; and on several occasions the notable and frail beauty Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland and Countess of Southamp-ton, when staying for some weeks at Maghull, honoured the bowling-green with her fascinating presence. The old squire liked her not. He says, "I was so sour myself, that I saw not so much as a brace of rubbers on the green during the whole play." He abhorred, too, the vice of drunkenness which seems to have been very prevalent at that time, and to which he attributed the deaths of many of the gentry in that neighbourhood.

He was very much attached to his home and his estate, and in a petition to the King, which was never presented, he boasts that his small township had not a beggar, nor an alehouse, nor a Protestant in it. Thirty years ago, when the Rev. T. Ellison Gibson edited Squire Blundell's Note-book, the learned editor states that after a lapse of two centuries a direct descendant of the Cavalier owns the mansion and estate, and that the village still lacks a beggar, alehouse, and Protestant. Squire Blundell might be quoted as an example of the educated and learned country gentleman satirized by Lord Macaulay and accused by him of lacking all the advantages of refinement and wisdom. In spite of all his hardships and mis-





fortunes he showed much literary activity, and devotion to study. He comforted himself in his sorrows during his chequered career by his studious avocations. After he had passed his fourth decade he began to make notes on the books he devoured, and styled his notebooks, "Historia," "Adversaria," and "Hodge-Podge." He was well acquainted with Latin, and placed a heading in that tongue at the beginning of all his notes. He studied carefully the writings of Bacon, Ben Jonson, Sidney, and books of travel. He taught his young grandsons Latin and French, and used to read Plutarch with them. He wrote a history of the Isle of Man, and a treatise on the Penal Laws, with which he was rather too well acquainted. Moreover, a playful humour and general light-heartedness are evident in his notes, and especially in his letters, of which a good number remain at Crosby. And this good humour carried him through all his troubles, and endeared him to his friends. His sound judgment made him a good arbiter, and his neighbours often brought their disputes to him for settlement. He seems to have been a man greatly beloved, who faced his dangers and difficulties with a brave heart and a firm adherence to the faith which he believed to be right. We should like to open his notebook and pick some plums therefrom, but that is not possible within the limits of our space, and the curious reader will find all that he needs in the *Crosby Records*, a book to which we have already referred.

William Blundell's eldest son only survived his father four years, and in 1702 was succeeded by his son Nicholas, whose diary affords a faithful record of the life of a Lancastrian squire in the reign of Queen Anne and the early Hanoverian kings. This diary has been printed but not published, and we are indebted for the succeeding notes to a paper on the subject appearing in *Memorials of Old Lancashire*, from the pen of Mr. Ernest Axon. Nicholas

Blundell adhered to the faith of his fathers, like many other Lancastrian squires, but he lived in less perilous times, and the storm of persecution did not rage so severely as before, though he was disqualified from serving as a magistrate. His estate was worth £482 12s. 2½d., not a very princely one, but sufficient for his needs, though he desired to increase it by a good marriage. He had made the acquaintance, or heard the fame, of a fair Gloucestershire lady, Frances Langdale, daughter of Lord Langdale of Hatherop. So he dispatched a letter to his lordship, and presently received an intimation that he might "wait on Mistress Fr. Langdale as soon as he pleased." He was very soon "pleased," ordered a fine new coat for the occasion of his courting, and after a tedious journey of five days arrived at the house of his lady-love. Here some formality had to be gone through. He discoursed with Lord Langdale in his chamber and with Lady Webb (possibly his lordship's sister or mother) in the dining-room, and then was permitted to converse with his adored one in the kitchen garden. We are not told what passed between the lovers, the words that were said, the vows that were uttered; but everything seems to have been satisfactory, as the squire gave his lady a "diamond ring." Having arranged matters satisfactorily he went by coach to London, where he enjoyed himself amazingly, and then journeyed back to Hatherop, spending several happy days "walking with Mrs. Fr. Langdale," watching race-horses, and visiting the lady's friends. A second visit to London was necessary for him to purchase the wedding-ring and to provide himself with clothes for the approaching marriage. Back to Gloucestershire he flies on the wings of the wind, and soon the wedding-bells are ringing, and Mr. and Mrs. Blundell are travelling in their coach to their northern home.

Nicholas Blundell does not seem to have been such a

learned man as his grandsire. He occupied some of his leisure time in reading, especially when he paid a dull visit to Lady Gerard, spending the days in walking in the garden and in reading most of the time. When he was abroad in France he purchased many books, including the *Lives of the Saints*, Masaniello's *Revolution at Naples*, and *Ye Prognostications of Esquire Bigerstaff*, but these were cruelly confiscated by the Custom-house officers on his return. He bought some books from a neighbour's library, spent some time at "Mr. Eaton's auktion of books" at Liverpool, and welcomed the visits of a travelling bookseller, named Steward, "who opened his pack in the squire's hall," and did good business with the master and servants.

The political troubles of the time naturally affected him. It does not appear that he took part in the Stuart rising in 1715, but being a Roman Catholic he was under suspicion, and was compelled to remain in hiding, during which period he read *England's Jest*s, Burton's *Unparalleled Adventures*, and *The English Rogue*. He sometimes journeyed to London, had visited the Continent, and seems to have been a well-informed man upon many subjects. He could transcribe music, was fond of "Simpling" (botanizing) on the sand-hills, drew plans for a house and a church, and collected prints, pictures, and medals. Such theatrical performances as came in his way he frequently attended, at Liverpool and elsewhere. Sometimes a company of strolling players would perform in his hall pieces such as "The Soldier's Fortune," by Otway, or Farquhar's "Recruiting Officer," "Don Quixote" (Quixote), or a local fair, or an inn-yard would provide an opportunity for witnessing the efforts of barnstormers. He loved also to see giants and dwarfs and monstrosities and "strange creatures," such as a tiger, elephant and civet cat. All that was abnormal, curious,

or interesting attracted him, and he carefully described these sights in his diary. He notes also some astronomical wonders, an "Eclips of the Sun," and a "Strange Starr" (meteor).

He paid much attention to the working of his farm, and records the prices of corn and fruit and beasts and wool. He kept a large poultry farm, sending as many as five hundred eggs at a time to market. He had several hives of bees, and grew potatoes, barley, flax, and beans. He tried many experiments in order to improve his crops, such as dressing barley "with oyle and other ingredients as powder of cole seed, etc.," and discoursed much with his chaplain about "Fatoning of Kattle and Sheep after y^e Beyond Sea manner." He was very proud of his maize, the stalks of which, nine feet long, he hung in his hall, but was disappointed with his "Tulop Roots dressed with ink after divers manners in order to change their cullor."

His diary tells us of his varied accomplishments. He took the house-clock to pieces, but he does not tell us whether he made it go again; and put a new rope to the house-bell; whipped the dogs for taking a shoulder of mutton off the spit; mended the smoothing-iron; took the coffee-mill to pieces; made milk punch; made his own ink; baked his own clay pipes; tried chalk for cleaning windows; made punch, and math, or mead, but did not mix the honey and water in proper quantities; grew eyebright as a substitute for tobacco; mended the spinning-wheel; helped his wife to make York gingerbread. He was his own doctor and the physician of the family, trying various remedies which did not always succeed. Bathing the feet in hot whey for two hours proved ineffectual for the curing of corns. He and his wife were blooded, and their teeth drawn by mountebanks.

He kept many servants, who were often troublesome;

therein he will earn the sympathy of modern householders. As a good Roman Catholic he had a chaplain, who, besides his regular duties, used to shave the squire's head, help him to make a sledge, and proved himself a better shot than the squire. He was very fond of sport of all kinds. Bowling was as favourite a game as it was in the time of his grandfather. The contests were even continued with enthusiasm by the light of the moon and "one candle." Cocking and horse-racing afforded much amusement. There was a race-course at Crosby, jointly owned by the squire and Lord Molyneux, and there were other race-meetings at Aughton Moss, Wallasey, Childwall and Liverpool. In his early days he used to hunt the deer in Lord Gerard's park and join in the chase of fox and hare; but in later days he grew too stout to ride and could only look on from the leads of his house.

It is interesting to catch a glimpse of the squire's hall on a winter's evening, and see how the company disported themselves. Sometimes there was dancing, but always much card-playing. The favourite games were trente-et-quarante, loo, whisk, brag, and piquet. Backgammon was often played, there being two kinds—tick-tack and tables. The squire mentions two cronies playing the latter all the night through until eleven o'clock on the following morning. The squire rather prided himself on his conjuring tricks, especially his achievement of making an egg stand on a looking-glass. Chess and dice were in constant use, and also the company found amusement in "discoursing of Learning and solving Enigmas," or in trying to open a cunning purse. On one occasion the squire recorded: "We toosed Wm Roostick in a blanket."

The squire and his lady always took part in the sports and pastimes of the villagers. On one occasion he records the presence of sixty-four young people playing in a ring on my green and about twenty spectators. They had

“ Merry nights ” at fairly frequent intervals in some barn where a rustic ball took place to the cheerful tune of pipe and fiddle, and games were played: “ chasing the whistle,” and stool ball. The prize of the victors was a tansy, a dish made of eggs, sugar, sack, cream, and the juice of tansies fried in butter. There were also grand festivals on the occasion of the flax-breaking and the flowering of the marl-pits. These were arranged by the squire himself and his family, when he entertained his men and took infinite pains to make the affairs pass off with *éclat* and enjoyment. On the occasion he tells us that he had a great breaking of flax, he gave a good supper to his own breakers and swinglers. Tatlock played to them, and they had “ four disguisers and a garland from great Crosby and a deal of dancing.” But that was a poor affair compared with the marling in July, 1712. The squire invented a sword-dance and took great pains to teach his company of eight sword-dancers. He enlisted the services of the young women of the village to make caps and dress garlands. His marlers attired themselves in wondrous headgear and carried a musket or gun. Six garlands were carried by young women in procession, and the sword-dancers followed, and doubtless danced to the squire’s complete satisfaction. Then there followed a grand bull-baiting, the bull playing to admiration, and the squire giving a collar to the best dog. On the concluding day of the festival his neighbours and tenants dined with the squire at noon, the company having brought to his lady presents of sugar, chickens, butter, etc. All his marlers, spreaders, “ water baylis,” and carters dined at the hall, and then the may-pole was fetched from the marl-pit, and the sword-dancers performed again, and a very merry night passed in the hall and in the barn. Such were the amusements of “ Merry England,” of squire and tenants and labourers at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The diary



"BULL-BAITING"
BY J. CLARK, AFTER HENRY AUBRY

tells in a remarkable manner the ordinary life of a country squire of moderate means at that period. Though Squire Blundell was a Roman Catholic there seems little evidence of bigotry or intolerance. He did not refuse to act as churchwarden of his parish church, discharged his duties very conscientiously, and was on very friendly terms with the neighbouring clergy, frequently dining with them most amicably.

Another diary of a Lancashire squire of the early part of the sixteenth century presents us with a portrait of a character somewhat dissimilar to Squire Blundell. This gentleman was Nicholas Assheton of Downham, near Clitheroe, a young sporting squire whose diary only covers about one year of his life, his twenty-seventh year, his notes having been jotted down during portions of the years 1617 and 1618. He came of an ancient family who gave their name to Ashton-under-Lyne, where they were seated shortly after the Norman conquest. Several of the members of the family did well for themselves, married heiresses with large properties, became knights of the shire, while Richard Assheton, a lawyer, married the rich widow of a London merchant, found favour with the great Lord Burleigh, became Receiver-General of the Duchy of Lancaster, acquired great wealth and purchased extensive estates. Amongst them was Downham, which passed to his son and heir Nicholas, the writer of this journal, which shows plainly the life of a Lancashire squire of the period, his business, sports, bickerings, carousings, and his religion, such as it was. He records unblushingly his bouts of intemperance, which were numerous and apparently unrepented. Eleven times he tells us he was "merrie," sometimes "verie merrie," or "more than merrie," or "merrie as Robin Hood," or "plaid the Bacchanalian," or "foolish," or "fooled this day worse." He attended church with much regularity, but sometimes as a relief

after his religious exercises spent the Sunday evening in an alehouse and was "merrie." The diary, covering about a year, is not complete. There is a gap of three months and other chasms ; but we gather that he listened to forty sermons, three of them by bishops, and attended Holy Communion once. Squire Nicholas was a mighty hunter, rejoicing in the possession of "leathern lungs and nerves of iron." He was skilled in hunting, shooting, racing, coursing, hawking, fishing, and other sports. His diary records sixteen fox-chases, ten stag-hunts, two of the buck, and as many of the otter and hare. He went grouse shooting, and hawking, and fishing in the Ribble and Hodder. He shot with the long bow and crossbow, attended horse and foot-races ; and dancing, masking, shove groat (staying up all night for this amusement on one occasion) and dice were his favourite diversions indoors. He was no boor, this Downham squire. We find him associating with the highly educated and most aristocratic Lancashire families, with many of whom he was connected. He was on familiar terms with the Earl of Derby, Sir Cuthbert Halsal, Mr. Standish, the Pudsays, Tempests, Listers, Westbys, and Lamberts. He attended King James I at Hoghton Tower. He was employed by his neighbours on important matters of public business, and went twice to London to settle some matters with the Court of Wards and Star Chamber. He assisted in quelling a private war in Wensleydale, the account of which is so remarkable, revealing the wildness and lawlessness of the times, that we must give some account of it.

It appears that on June 4th, 1617, Sir Thomas Metcalfe, a brutal and ferocious man of Nappa, in the county of York, who had lately been knighted by the King, came at sunset with a company of forty men to Raydale House, in Wensleydale, with guns, bills, picks, swords, and other warlike provision, and besieged the house of Assheton's

aunt, Mrs. Robinson, who resided there with three of her little children, her husband being absent in London. The journal proceeds :—

“ My aunt left ye children and went to Sir Tho. desyring to know the meaning of that force ; if for possession of the house and land and by what authoritie, and if better than her husband’s, whoe was now at London, she would avoyde with all hers quietlie. Hee answered that hee would not soe much satisfie her : his will was his law, or authoritie for that tyme ; so they would not suffer her to go into the house for her stockings and head-dressing and shoes, which she wanted ; but she was forced to goe a long myle with her little children to a towne called Buske, and thence a foote to Morton (? Worton) two miles hence. —This nyght was the house shott at manie tymes and entered, but rescued.”

The poor lady applied to two justices, but could obtain no remedy ; and then hastened to York to the council. In the meantime the house was gallantly defended by her three sons, seven servants, and retainers, against “ a lawless, rude and unruly company, desperate and graceless in their actions and intents.” Nicholas heard of his aunt’s plight by letters, and hurried to the rescue with his armed servants, marching a distance of fifty miles. He tried to get speech with Sir Thomas, but in vain. There was much shooting about the house, and Squire Assheton apparently overcame a party of the enemy who were the worse for drink. Mrs. Robinson was caught by the lawless foe and “ unmercifully used.” In the end the sergeants and pursuivants came from York and captured Sir Thomas and some of his company, the rest dispersing “ every one a sundry way.” So ended the latest private war which ever took place in Great Britain south of the Tweed.

Assheton was soon back at Downham, “ trying for a

fox, found none ; rayne ; wet through. Home agayne." We need not follow him further in his strenuous and active open-air life. He appears in Harrison Ainsworth's famous novel, *The Lancashire Witches*, and the dark shades and fierce sunshine of his diversified life were doubtless depicted by the author after a perusal of the squire's journal. Thus does the novelist describe him :—

" A very different person from Sir Ralph was his cousin Nicholas Assheton of Downham, who, except as regards his Puritanism,¹ might be considered a type of the Lancashire squire of the day. A precision in religious notions, and constant in attendance at church and lectures, he put no sort of restraint upon him, but mixed up fox-hunting, otter-hunting, shooting at the mark, and perhaps shooting with the long-bow, foot-racing, horse-racing, and in fact every other kind of country diversion, not forgetting tippling, dicing and singing, with daily devotion, discourses and psalm singing, in the oddest way imaginable. A thorough sportsman was Squire Nicholas Assheton, well versed in all the arts and mysteries of hawking and hunting. Not a man in the county could ride harder, hunt deer, unkennel fox, unearth badger, or spear otter better than he. And then as to tippling, he would sit for a whole afternoon at the alehouse, and be the merriest man there, and drink a bout with every farmer present. And, if the parson chanced to be out of hearing, he would never make a mouth of a round oath, nor choose a second expression when the first would serve his turn. Then who so constant at church or lecture as Squire Nicholas ? though he did sometimes snore at the long sermons of his cousin, the rector of Middleton. A great man was he at all weddings, christenings, churchings, and funerals, and

¹ The novelist here follows Mr. Whittaker, the historian of Whalley, in deeming the squire a Puritan ; but his character, opinions, mode of life, and other peculiarities certainly are opposed to this theory.

never neglected his bottle at these ceremonies, nor any sport indoors or out of doors meanwhile. A good-looking young man was the Squire of Downham, possessed of a very athletic form, and a most vigorous constitution, which helped him, together with the prodigious exercise he took, through any excess. He had a sanguine complexion, with a broad, good-natured visage, which he could lengthen at will in a surprising manner. His hair was cropped close to his head, and the razor did daily duty over his cheek and chin, giving him the Roundhead look, some years later characteristic of the Puritanical party." Such is the novelist's description of the squire in *The Lancashire Witches*, and probably it is a fairly correct portrait, if we allow something for the writer's imaginary details.

Nicholas Assheton's journal introduces us to another family of distinction in the county, the Hoghtons of Hoghton Tower, who have been lords of the manor from A.D. 1290 to the present time, the present owner being Sir James de Hoghton, eleventh baronet. The writer of the journal, when King James I visited Sir Richard Hoghton in 1617, stated that he was willing, as the custom was, to wear the livery of his host, though "not in the sense of servitude." We should like to tell the story of this distinguished family, but the records of the squires grow apace, and several volumes would be needed if we attempted to write all their chronicles. The grand old house was built in 1565 by Thomas Hoghton. The family abandoned it about the year 1710 for Walton Hall, and the house was left to ruin and decay, divided into tenements for industrial folk, who tore down the wainscot for firewood. Dickens was here in 1854 and made it the scene of one of his stories, *George Silverman's Explanation*. But it has been now, happily, restored, the work having been completed at the beginning of the present century. The

Hoghtons were recusants until the time of James I, when they became Church of England men, entertained their King most royally and sumptuously, and fought for the royal cause in the time of the Civil War, their house being besieged, and after the capture Captain Starkie, the Parliamentary leader, with about a hundred of his men, was blown up by gunpowder by accident or design. We cannot describe the splendid reception of King James, the masks and feastings that were held, the games, sports, dancing and merry-making. It was very costly, this entertainment of royalty, and good Sir Richard Hoghton never recovered from the financial burden it entailed. He was imprisoned for debt, and had to sell some part of his estates. Perhaps he would have been wiser if he had imitated the example of another Lancashire squire, one Richard Shuttleworth of Broughton, who, when he heard that the King was about to honour him with a visit, burned down his house, as he thought the cost of rebuilding it would be cheaper than to entertain the King and his lords. Happily Sir Richard did not have recourse to these drastic means ; hence Hoghton Tower is spared to us as an example of a Lancashire squire's home of Elizabethan times. Hoghton Tower is said to have been the house where King James knighted the loin of beef, a similar claim being made for Pimp Hall, in Essex. The records of this period make no mention of this important ceremonial. The word surloin, or sirloin, was in existence long before King James came to Hoghton. Indeed we hear of a "surloyn beef" in the time of Henry VI, a word derived from the French. But it is quite in character with the Northern Solomon, who loved a joke, but like his countrymen "joked with difficulty," that he should have made a pun and called out, as Roby in his *Legends of Lancashire* suggests that he did :

"Bring hither the surloin, sirrah, for 'tis worthy of a

more honoured post, being, as I say, not surloin, but *sirloin*, the noblest joint of all ! ”

Curious stories are told of Squire William ffaringdon of Worden Hall, near Leyland, who died in 1837. My friend, the late Vicar of Leyland, the Rev. Leyland Baldwin, is my informant. The Baldwins have held the living of Leyland for almost as long a period as the ffaringdons have held the manor of Worden. Though my friend wrote, in response to my request, “ Story ! God bless you, I have none to tell, sir,” his account of the old squire is graphic and amusing.

“ He seems a fair type of the sporting squire of the early nineteenth century. As sportsman he, to quote his own words, ‘ shot three days a week, hunted three days a week, and picked the thorns out of his legs on Sunday.’ Yet, says another account, when with his brace of pointers and his flint fowling-piece he had bagged four brace, he shouldered his weapon and went home to his accounts. Like Tennyson’s Sir Aylmer Aylmer, he seems to have been an almighty man, in his own idea, claiming all for the lord of the manor ; even to this extent, that to this day in Leyland churchyard we have many gravestones with inscriptions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but wherever unclaimed, they have in sharp, well-cut letters, ‘ W. F. Esq^{re}, No. 17,’ or whatever the number may be, up to seventeen. Let us be fair ; possibly he thus claimed gravestones (of what value could they be to him, for he did not remove them ?) because about 1820 my great-uncle, Nicholas, built new stables, and their floor is largely composed of old gravestones—one with the inscription still uppermost ; and our best mediæval cross, a large Wheelton stone slab, was reversed and used as a footbridge till ten years ago, when I turned it over, found what it was, and brought it back to the churchyard. I will tell you one anecdote, often told me by the

Rev. C. E. Kendal, the old Rector of Brindle, illustrative of the drinking habits of the Regency and later periods. It seems to have been about 1835. A Standish of Duxbury Hall, Chorley, Lancashire—I think not Frank Hall Standish, who left his pictures to Louis Philippe, but his predecessor—had been one of the Regency beaux and inherited their traditions. My father's fame as having a strong brain, never shrinking from and never the worse for his liquor, had got abroad, and Standish and sundry boon companions from the Preston barracks conspired together to drink the vicar under, or suffer themselves in the attempt. Dining one night at Duxbury, undeterred by the motto over the dining-room door, 'Plures crapula quam gladius,' the bottles circulated, one after another subsided, some under the table, some across it, till host and guests, all except one, were alike asleep. The liquor must have been good then, for in two hours the squire awoke, looked dreamily round, pulled the bell, 'Where's the Vicar of Leyland?' 'Rang the bell, ordered coffee and his carriage, and went home, sir, an hour ago.' 'Nought could be done, nought could be said,' and the Church once more scored over the laity."

Canon Jacques, who married Miss Caroline Baldwin, tells me that in the leases of farms on the Worden estate the tenant agreed to keep a hound puppy and a game cock. Squire ffaringdon's huntsman, William Cunliffe, lived to the age of ninety-four. When my informant was curate of Leyland, 1861, the old man would bring out his horn and hunting-crop and tell of good runs he had shared in. In Baldwin's *African Hunting* allusion is made as to the reason why the author, then a small boy, was early in life sent to a school.

William Charles, the second son of the vicar of the parish, clad in a scarlet coat made by the village tailor from a portion of his uncle's (Major Baldwin's), uniform and mounted

on his pony, was, on an eventful day to him, following the hounds, when the hare crossed the brook, over which there was only a slender footbridge, and over this crossed the brave little lad and had the hounds to himself, as no one dared to follow him. As soon as the hounds could be stopped the squire went to the vicarage and told the vicar that unless the lad were sent to school he should give up hunting, for he did not know what the boy would do next. Well, amongst other things William Baldwin did were to find the Victoria Falls from the east side, to explore unknown portions of Africa, and to establish his fame as one of the earliest and best big-game sportsmen in the world.

It would be a pleasant task to prolong this chapter by telling of the stories and legends of other Lancashire squires and their old halls, of such noble names as the Earls of Derby, the Dukes of Devonshire and Westminster, Lord Ellesmere, and of the plain, untitled gentry who can trace their ancestry back hundreds of years. I may mention the Towneleys of Towneley, near Burnley, whose records go back to the time of King Alfred ; the Starkies of Huntroyde and formerly of Hall-i'-th'-Wood, near Bolton ; the Hultons of Hulton, and many others. And if it be asked in this utilitarian age, "What is the good and advantage of old families ?" I would answer in the words of a good bishop, "I do conceive that the pride taken in an old family is very important in this respect—that if the living representative of the family looks upon it as an honourable trust transmitted by a long line of ancestors with a fair name, he will endeavour to keep that trust sacred, with integrity and honour and unsullied in any way, so that it inspired the man to do what is right for himself, his king, and his country."

SOME OTHER NOTED SQUIRES

It is beyond the scope of this book to record the names of noted squires county by county, but I must append some of the foremost, whose names are not forgotten. Mr. Richard Fothergill of Lowbridge (born 1789) was a typical Westmorland squire, who combined the qualities of a good agriculturalist, a cultivated gentleman and sportsman, and took a keen interest in county affairs. The family has been long resident in Westmorland. He was an enthusiastic disciple of Isaak Walton, would ride for miles on fishing expeditions, and his book of flies made by himself is still preserved by a member of the family. Like many old squires, he used to keep a diary, a custom followed by his son and grandson, these books covering a hundred years of rural life, and forming an interesting chronicle. Amongst other noted squires of whom I am reminded, I may mention Squire Tailby of Skeffington Hall, near Leicester, formerly M.F.H. ; Squire Wharton of Skelton Castle, Skelton-in-Cleveland ; Colonel Kemys-Tynte of Cefn Mably and Holswell, a great squire of the old school who was senior claimant of the Barony of Wharton, Squire George Lane-Fox of Bramham, and Mr. Cradock of Hartford, Yorkshire, M.F.H.

CHAPTER XIV¹

THE YORKSHIRE SQUIRE

READ the history of sport at whatever point you choose and it will be found that the great county of York has had an important and abiding influence. Analyse that influence and you will find it is the squirearchy who have been in the main responsible for it. To speak of the broad-acred Shire is to suggest the horse, the hound, and the gun, and simultaneously the squirearchy of the three famous Ridings, whose affection for the trio created the reputation. It has ever been the case and even today, when so many family properties have had to be sold and are now in the hands of the *nouveau riche*, one finds the old names figuring prominently on race-cards, hunt committees, and the events which go to make up rural life. Social evolution and change in times and manners have not been without effect ; but in Yorkshire there are still scores of localities where the king, the squire, and the parson are looked upon as the great of the earth, together with the local M.F.H. It is not unnatural that in such districts the *personnel* takes its cue from the hall or manor-house ; it thinks with it, it has such faith in and admiration for it, that it reflects the thought and aids the interests of the squire and his family. The Socialist defines this as serfdom. We who are more conversant with cause and effect know the explanation lies rather in tradition and an hereditary knowledge on the part of those living under the shadow of the hall that their

¹ This chapter was kindly written for me by Mr. J. Fairfax Blakeborough, whose knowledge of the county and of sport in general renders his work valuable. I am deeply grateful to him for kind help.

happiness, contentment, and well-being have ever been the first concern of those upon whom they are more or less dependent. No, it is not serfdom, it is affection and absolute faith.

The fact that the Yorkshire squirearchy have during all time been so prominent in the world of ventry, on the Turf, and in other pastimes, such as cock-fights, badger-baiting, and so forth, which belong to an age that is past, has created for them a proud position in this connection and distracted public attention from their many noble qualities, their prowess in the field of battle, their loyalty to king and country, their never-failing interest and support of the Church, and their constant concern for, and knowledge of, every man, woman, and child who lived around them. In the history of England, and especially the northern portion of it, the Yorkshire squires have played an honourable part, credit for which is all too frequently lost in the invariable readiness of the world to dub them as merely men given to and accomplished in woodcraft, horsemanship, and attendant sports. Certainly literature does not do them justice, and this volume will probably show that the squirearchy were something more than mere authorities and votaries of horse, hound, gun, field, and bottle, or so boorish as the lines by Young would make them out to be :—

“ The Squire is proud to see his courser strain,
 O'er well-breathed beagles sweep along the plain.
 Say, dear Hippolitus (whose drink is ale,
 Whose erudition is a Christmas tale,
 Whose mistress is saluted with a smack,
 And friends received with thumps upon the back),
 When thy sleek gelding nimbly leaps the mound,
 And Ringwood leaves each animal his own,
 Nor envies when a gipsy you commit,
 And shake the clumsy bench with country wit.
 When you the dullest of dull things have said,
 And then ask pardon for the jest you made.”

It is difficult, indeed well-nigh impossible, to write of the Yorkshire squire in general terms. To deal accurately with his idiosyncrasies and characteristics, or even personal appearance, one would have to deal with epochs. Social evolution has influenced his habits, his speech, his attitude towards life, and consequently his bearing, his physique, and his very facial expression. The following lines might be true of one age and are the general conception of the squire, but the word-picture has considerable limitations :—

“ A great, broad shoulder'd, genial Englishman,
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
A Quarter-Sessions Chairman, abler none.”

Equally untrue is it to describe the Yorkshire squirearchy—so far as the coveted title has been applied to country gentlemen estate owners—as hard-drinking, hard-swearing, hard-riding, red-faced sportsmen with no interest above horses, hounds, and shooting dogs, and no soul beyond the pastimes of the field. True, sport has ever characterized the rural landed proprietor in the County of Broad Acres as it does to-day, and because they have always played a prominent part in all its several branches, because it has been a legacy and become instinct with them, the world has refused to take them seriously. This affection for sport one readily admits, possibly with a certain amount of pride, is inseparable from any reference to the squirearchy of this great county in which, it is claimed, hare-hunting, fox-hunting, and horse-racing all had their birth. Apart from the enjoyment, exercise, and excitement obtained therefrom, however, the sidelights of the field were employed to cement social life and a good understanding between those who

were a sort of princes in their own domains. Witness the following drawn up in 1772 by the local squirearchy when forming "The Cleveland Friendly Society":—

"Whereas the happiness of all countries does chiefly consist in a correspondence and friendship of one neighbour with another, and nothing contributing so much towards it as the frequent conversing of the gentlemen together, who may thereby squash all idle stories that are too often spread about the country to the disuniting of some families and the great prejudice of others. And we having our forefathers in this neighbourhood as a pattern, who did formerly live in the most intimate and amicable manner, open, friendly and obliging to each other, and being desirous to imitate so good an example, have therefore mutually agreed to meet weekly on Tuesdays at some public house, as shall be agreed on from time to time, and to conform ourselves to the following rules."

The first of a number of quaint regulations deals with the admittance of members who had the following obligations:—

"That no person be admitted to be a member of the Society but such as shall publicly lay his right hand upon a hunting-horn and declare himself no enemy to cocking, smoking, fox-hunting and harriers, and shall endeavour to discover all poachers and shall conduce to the utmost of his powers to promote the interest of the Society."

There was an age when our Yorkshire squirearchy gave themselves up almost entirely to the bottle in the evening and to galloping off the effects thereof with their hounds during the daytime, but this was only an age and was in keeping with the customs of the times. An old song tells us something of this epoch:—

“Awak’d at six, the squire cries,
 ‘Well, Robert, what’s the weather?’
 ‘Oh, sir, it rains,’ the man replies.
 ‘Then draw the curtains together;
 For if I can’t hunt I’ll sleep again,
 So shut the door, and call me at ten,
 For anything’s fun in the country.’

“O’er spavins and windgalls they gravely discuss,
 To pass the time away.
 ‘Shake up the litter, Tom, under yon horse;
 Not that, I mean the bay;
 Reach me the scissors, Jack, down from the shelf;
 This grey horse wants trimming; I’ll trim him myself,
 For anything’s fun in the country.’

“After dinner, the bottle goes quickly round,
 Madeira, Port and Sherry;
 Without the roof, the tempest roars,
 Within, each heart is merry;
 Then who would be puzzled to pass time away,
 Or want a resource ’gainst a cold windy day,
 When anything’s fun in the country?”

The squirearchy have ever more or less reflected the prevailing atmosphere of the Court. I have referred to our Yorkshire squires as occupying the position of princes in their own principalities.

Washington Irving refers to this in *Bracebridge Hall* and tells us of a Yorkshire squire to whom the little village near the hall “looked up with almost feudal homage.” They lived with the times and were probably no better than the epoch, but criticism should, as I have already urged, be of epochs rather than the type. One writer, speaking of Yorkshire squires, says:—

“The common failing in 1700 was their addiction to the bottle. They spent their leisure hours, which were many, in the alehouse. Almost every night most of them

went to bed more or less muddled, and sorely needed next morning a hair of the dog that had bitten them. Joviality, degenerating into senseless brawling, rude hectoring, and outright homicide occasionally, was a prominent feature of country life under the Merry Monarch, and for a long time afterwards. They were sudden and quick in quarrel, and had never been taught or never even tried to govern their tempers or curb their humour."

The "bottle-age," when a squire's trustworthiness was sometimes defined by the expression, "I could drink with him in the dark and know he would drink fair," lasted but for a season and the squire returned to his wonted position of respect and affection. This feeling is not yet altogether obsolete. In some parts of the county the villagers still form a sort of human avenue at the church doors on Sunday mornings and, hat in hand, await the arrival of the party from the hall. This is civility, not servility. Years ago the service never commenced till this party had become hidden from view in their box-like pew. In connection with this custom there is an old Yorkshire song, a portion of which is well worth giving here. It dates from about 1800 and has particular reference to the ancient Sinnington hunting country :—

" But of all that could happen to make us good sport,
 After t' brush, t' pads and t' mask's gi'en to t' winner,
 Is for t' parson and t' squire t' ane t' other to lip (scold)
 Sikan's mainly good friends, but ours don't sip
 From t' same bottle now after dinner.
 This wise they fell out : every year before t' Mell¹
 T' parson thought up a sermon right new,
 And t' squire, his missus, an' all up at t' hall,
 With his bairns, and his servants, t' job lot big and small,
 On Mell Sunday fair filled t' family pew.

¹ The "Mell" was the harvest thanksgiving supper.



THE FIRST STEEPLE CHASE ON RECORD; THE LAST FIELD NEAR NACTON HEATH

And never a word from t' parson's lips came
Till t' squire had settled him down ;
For he thought more of him than the Lord a gay bit,
But one time we sat, we should have been sitting yit,
It's as true as the Lord's up aboon,
But just as we'd gitten to t' very far end
Of our manners and aimed we'd away,
One of t' grooms oppened t' door, flang t' curtains apart,
Shoved his head through and shouted : ' You'd best make a
start,
T' squire's not coming hither to-day.
We've gitten three pups, and t' bitch isn't well
(They're bonnily marked, mostly white),
He's fair setten up, and begs you'll pray t' old bitch
Will pull through all right, if not he swears t' witch
In t' horse pond he'll duck before night.'
Then t' parson jumped up, and fairly striked out,
' Go back to your master man man,
And tell him from me, I shall never more wait
For his dogs or his horses, should he come soon or late,
You can pull back that curtain and gan.' "

With us in the North Countree, in cases where the title of squire has been handed down from father to son, it has lost nothing of its prestige. Socialism may have had its baneful influence, but "the squire" is *still* "the squire," and the name is still suggestive of the country gentleman and sportsman, the friend and adviser of those dependent upon him and the leader of the thought and attitude of the locality to burning questions. We venerate the title, it is pregnant with much that is poetic, much which savours of a past when merry England was at her best—before these days of American hustle. Unfortunately not a few of the old families have found themselves compelled to sell or lease their estates. In many cases they have fallen into the hands of the *nouveau riche*. They may live at the hall, they may be equally as generous as their predecessors, but they have not the wealth of family tradition,

and the villagers cannot bring themselves to give them the designation which meant so much to them—"the squire."

I have before me as I write some pictures of old-time squirearchy—men with evident breeding and culture, fine and regular of feature, of high and aristocratic mien, with blue blood circling through their veins. The names borne by these old-time gentry are writ large upon the history of the county, their armorial bearings are in themselves redolent of deeds of prowess on the battlefield and on the field of sport. The finely chiselled nose, the refined mouth—how dissimilar to the somewhat bovine type which the man in the street fondly imagines represents the heads of the county families. Their conception is probably drawn from the stage and townsman's novel, both of which make the idol of the parish preside at the market ordinary, be boisterous in speech and laughter, and possessed of little knowledge of literature beyond that dealing with horse and hound. This volume will no doubt deal with all manner of esquires and will show us that it is impossible to take an isolated example from any one age and say, "This is your squire." It is perhaps to be regretted that the greater portion of tradition handed down regarding our Yorkshire landed gentry has reference either to their amours, deeds of daring in the hunting-field, or other sporting feats. Take Osbaldeston, Sykes, Thornton, Hill, Draper, the Wentworths, Fitzwilliams, Gascoigns, Bethells, Lister-Kayes, Foulis', Chaloners, Stapletons, Huttons, Turners, Shaftos, Constables, Whartons, Cholmleys, Daltons, Egertons, St. Quintons, Stricklands, Tophams, or any of the others, and the fact is made patent. It would be but gleaning up ancient history to include any of the well-worn family stories here—utter the words Yorkshire squire and you at once suggest the St. Leger, the Ebor, the horse, the hunting-field, the gun and the dog. Mr. Rider Hag-

gard in his Yorkshire tour some years ago discovered something of this and wrote :—

“ Another advantage is this universal love of sport which keeps many of the squires on their estates and helps to bind the farmers and the yeoman to the land. Perhaps owing to its remoteness from London, in the more rural parts of the great county of Yorkshire still live a number of gentlemen of small or moderate property which has been held by their forefathers for generations. These men know every field they own and are often on terms of intimacy with every tenant. Unfortunately, under pressure of the bad times many of them are now being bought up by the rich manufacturers of the cities.”

The squirearchy of Yorkshire have abundantly recognized the fact that the ownership of an estate has its responsibilities as well as its privileges.

CHAPTER XV

SOME SUSSEX SQUIRES

SUSSEX is a somewhat isolated region. It possesses an individuality of its own, which produces "a type of mind and manner which refuses to be absorbed," as Mr. Belloc tells. From the Reformation to our own time Sussex ceased to be a thoroughfare. The Weald cut off the people of the county from their neighbours on the north. The stiff clay of the Weald is not good for travelling. Until "the First Gentleman in Europe" made Brighton popular, there was no great road from the Sussex coast to London. The tide of traffic ebbed and flowed through the hop-lined roads of Kent, or along the Portsmouth road. There were no navigable rivers connecting the coast-line with great inland towns. Communication with the outside world was difficult. Hence the Sussex folk in former days, before railways opened out the country, lived a secluded life, "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife," developing their own characteristics and traditions, little influenced by the general life of England, and maintaining their own manners and customs.

The Sussex squires, therefore, have a peculiarity of their own, and approximate to Macaulay's idea of a country gentleman more than any other representatives of their class. They were devoted to sport. Hard riding and deep drinking, rather than high thinking, were their characteristics.

A certain Dr. John Burton, who was born in 1696, was a don at Oxford, elected Fellow of Eton College in 1733, Vicar of Mapledurham in Oxfordshire in 1734, where he found Mrs. Littleton, the widow of the former vicar, with her three daughters, in residence, and they were compassionately allowed by him to remain. This intimacy, after one of his visitors, a neighbouring clergyman, had found the lady acting as his barber and shaving him, soon resulted in his marrying her. We need not trouble ourselves with his career, save to notice that he was a very remarkable man, a scholar of great reading and wonderful facility in composition, both Greek and Latin. He published, among other works, his *Iter Sussexiense*, in a volume entitled *Opuscula Miscellanæ Metricoprosæica*, 1771. His journeys into Sussex arose on account of his visits to his mother, who had married Dr. John Bear, Rector of Shermanbury. It may be imagined that the scholar had little taste for ordinary country society. He had been visiting his scholarly friends at Oxford before plunging into Sussex mud ; and the unpleasant contrast between the society of his old comrades and that of the Sussex squires and clergy, made him dislike the company of the latter and called forth the bitterest irony. This is what he says of them :—

“ Behold these enviable ornaments of the country, the squires ! (*illa ruris decora invidenda, Armigeros*)—not indeed such as your female assemblies admire, dressed up like monkeys, and talking nonsense, nor such as you might fancy flourishing in literary leisure, studious both of civil law and divinity, but unpolished and simple, skilled like the Patriarchs in Bucolics and Georgics alone, rustic both in their manners and arrangements and works—wholly ignorant both of academic discipline and your London courtesies. You should observe that the farmers of the better sort are considered here as squires. These men

boast of honourable lineage, and, like oaks among shrubs, look down upon the rural vulgar. You would be surprised at the uncouth dignity of these men ; and their palpably ludicrous pride ; nor will you be less surprised at the humility of their boon-companions (*compotatium*), and the triumphs of their domineering spirit among the plaudits of the pothouse or kitchen ; the awkward prodigality and sordid luxury of their feasts ; the inelegant roughness and dull hilarity of their conversation ; their intercourse with servants and animals so assiduous, with clergymen or gentlemen so rare ; being illiterate, they shun the lettered ; being sots, the sober (*sobrios bibaculi*). Their whole attention is given to get their cattle and everything else fat, their own intellect not excepted. Is this enough about the squires ? Don't ask anything further about their women. They who understand will feel that these remarks do not apply to them ; they who do not, I need not dread their abuse."

Dr. Burton seems to have been very polite to the ladies, and admires them at the expense of their lords and masters. He says of them, " You would probably admire the women if you saw them, as modest in countenance and fond of elegance in their dress, but at the same time fond of labour and experienced in household matters ; both by nature and education better bred and more intellectual than the men." He is certainly not very complimentary to the latter, the Sussex squires of 1751.

Sydney Smith did not mislike the Yorkshire squires of the period, who were of a different stamp. He wrote, " I am exempted at present from residence ; had it been otherwise, I could, I think, have lived very happily in the country, in armigeral, priestly, and swine-feeding society."

Dr. Burton did not enjoy the hospitality of his Sussex neighbours, and bursts out into poetical scorn. His verses

are thus translated by Mr. W. H. Blaauw, F.S.A., in the *Sussex Archæological Collections* :—

“ Among an earth-born herd my time I pass
 With parson-hating farmers, and alas !
 With clownish squires, smeared with no bookish dust,
 Merry or sadly patient, dwell I must.
 At times these Sussex boors my laugh provoke,
 At times in frowns my deep disgust I cloak.
 Wearied with these, my tedium to beguile,
 My friends the clergy do I seek awhile,
 Join in their jokes, their wisdom praise, while they
 Groan o'er small livings or a curate's pay.
 Much of their talk, while o'er their wine they sit,
 Of tithes and sheaves, were more for silence fit.
 ' The Church for ever ! hip, hurrah ! ' they shout,
 While I with cheers mix in their joyous rout.”¹

The worthy Doctor visited the Lewes races, a great resort of Sussex squires. “ To these races,” he tells us, “ do all the people of the country flock from every quarter, and there is much competition among the fashionable, both the lookers on and those looked at—at night balls for the dancers and other pleasures. That assemblage is indeed very famous for the number and splendour of the company, and principally because of the high-born

¹ “ Sussexienses agricolas ego
 Inter virorum terrigenum pecus,
 Infensa clero corda et inter,
 Proh pudor ! armigeros colonos,
 Illiterato pulvere sordidos,
 Labore fungor, pol neque serio,
 Sed nec jocosus, nempe risum
 Sæpe movent mihi, sæpe bilem.
 Ergo iste fallo tædia clericos
 Fratres revisens ; hic sapientiam
 Laudo facetam, vel severam :
 Et *Decimis* super atque *Garbis*
 Sacro loquentes digna silentio
 Admiror ;—heus ! *Ecclesia floreat*
 Propino et applorans minoris
 Jura queror violata cleri.”

Pelhams presiding there, who, as stewards, direct everything in the most sumptuous manner."

But all the Sussex squires were not boors and uncouth even in the critical eyes of Dr. Burton. He visited the "happy mansion" of Henry Campion, the owner of Danny Park, and thus expresses his feelings: "Oh! how especially I congratulate myself and exult, whenever I have chanced to see any head of a family of ancient repute and of the best times, truly the gentleman in fortune, manners and learning, such as this day brought before me, at once the glory and the reproach of country squires. Never did any one more elegantly than he chequer the intervals of rustic operations with lettered ease, ever busily occupied as he was, to his own great praise and to the benefit of all belonging to him, between the studies of agriculture and literature and the duties of friendship." It is pleasant to read this eulogy after the former ridicule and condemnation of the Sussex squires.

That the strictures of the learned Doctor were not entirely unwarranted may be shown by dipping into the diaries of the Stapleys, squires of Hickstead Place, in the parish of Twineham, Sussex. The county is fortunate in its diarists. There are extant the diary of a clergyman, the Rev. Giles Moore, Rector of Horstead Keynes; of some squires, the Stapleys; of a yeoman, Thomas Marchant of Little Park, Hurst; of a schoolmaster, Walter Gale of Mayfield; of an ironmaster, Leonard Gale of Worth; of a general shopkeeper, Thomas Turner of East Hothly; and of a town councillor, Thomas Burrell of Cuckfield. These diaries throw much light on the domestic life and manners of the age of the writers, as well as on their peculiarities, their failings and foibles, their peccadilloes and prejudices, which are not without interest to the student of human nature.

Our subject limits us to an examination of the diaries

of the squires of Hickstead Place. It seems to have been a tradition in the family to keep a diary, and their memoranda, account-books, and journals extend from the year 1607 to 1743, a period of 136 years. The first of these worthies was John Stapley, who was Squire of Hickstead Place and a train-band captain in the days of Queen Elizabeth, and in the early years of her successor; but only one item of his writings, relating to the repair of the churchyard fence, has survived. So we will open the diaries of his sons, Richard Stapley and Anthony, which extend from 1657 to 1738, a very interesting and important period in English history. And yet life passed so quietly and uneventfully in the little Sussex homestead, that nothing is recorded of the great events that were happening in England. The death of the Protector, the Restoration of the monarchy, the rule of the second Charles, the plots and conspiracies, the Rebellion of Monmouth, the accession of James, his flight and the Revolution, Jacobite risings, etc. etc.—all these were of no account to the Stapleys. Their home and village were separated from the great world by impassable roads. They spent their lives in tending their cattle, looking after their farms and their families, and troubled themselves no more about the political events of far-reaching importance than if these had occurred in another country or another planet.

The only evidence of external affairs are the records of the payments of taxes, which indicate the rise and fall of kings and governments. The following items tell their tale:—

“ 1644. To the King, £1 4s. 2d. To William Dumbrell for tax, £1 15s. 2d. To the Parliament, £1. To Goodman Erle for a six months' tax, £2 7s. 6d.

“ 1645. To the Parliament, £1 7s. 6d.

“ 1646. Taxes for the Parliament, April 8th. To Arthur Luxford for four months' tax, 10s. To William

Dumbrell for eight months' tax, £1 os. 4d. To do. for twelve months' tax, £1 10s. 6d.

" 1649. To William Dumbrell for a tax, 13s. 5d. To Thomas Averie for a do., 14s. 6d. To Thomas Marchant, of Hurst, for a tax for the Parliament, £3. To Arthur Luxford for the use of the King and Parliament, 14s. . . . For the King's Provision, 14s. 6d."

The Stapleys' contributions seem to have been fairly equally divided, as were their sympathies. They do not seem to have cared much who ruled over England, though one member of a branch of the family was a friend of Cromwell, and had the disgrace of being a regicide. The Twineham family only wished to be let alone.

The diaries do not tell us much of the daily doings of the family. There is a great deal about buying and selling, the cost of provisions, etc., items which are valuable to the economist, but do not immediately concern us. We gather that the Stapleys were great sportsmen. There are very numerous entries concerning dogs, guns, foxes, and hawks. In 1642 Squire Stapley "bought a hawk for £2," and in the following year he purchased another at the same price. He kept a pack of beagles, and with great satisfaction he records, "Paid to William Ashford for two beagles which make my cry complete, £4 15s." But a sad calamity happened in his kennels on October 5th, 1739, which is thus recorded: "I had a mad dog in my kennel, and was obliged to kill all my hounds. Six of them were all hanging at the same time." This must have almost broken the squire's heart, as he was much attached to his animals, and when his old white horse was too old for hunting he gave him to James Matthew "to keep as long as he should live, and when dead to bury him in his skin, and not to flaw him or abuse him in any way." Subsequently the squire records the old horse's death and burial at the ripe age of thirty-five

years. The stables at Hickstead Place contained some good horses, though the prices paid for them would make the hunting-men of the present day somewhat envious. In 1737 Anthony Stapley bought a mare from one Chowne "which cost me £10 10s., and I gave him 1s. for bringing her." In 1739 he records, "Bought a black mare for John Stapley to ride; she cost £5, with bridle and saddle in." In the next year. "Bought a mare of John Daulton, for which I gave him £5"; but in 1741 he had to pay £15 to John Lindfield of Dean House for a mare.

The diaries show that for the use of the house the squire killed in one year (1642) "4 calves, 20 sheep and 45 lambs," and that the squires and farmers of the neighbourhood used to exchange joints of meat. Thus if one farmer killed an ox, he would send joints to his neighbours, who, when they killed, would repay the loan in beef. Ale was brewed in large quantities at the house of the Stapleys, and wine was consumed also, claret and sack being the favourite beverages. The squire writes, in 1646, "I had from Cleer of London one runlet of sacke and 3 runlets of claret"; and again we read, "For sack, when strangers were here, 12s. 6d." "Had a dozen of white wine and one gallon of sack, which cost me £1 17s. 4d."

Anthony Stapley had a household of three men and three women servants. They did not cherish the love of change which characterizes our modern domestics. They did not say they "wanted a change" after one or two years' service, nor require endless "evenings out" or continual excitements, and were content with very moderate wages. There are constant references to the employment of servants in the Stapley diaries. Thus we read:—

"1730. Mary White began her year May 1st and is to have £1 5s. if she stay until May 1731. Hannah Morley

came, and is to have £2 if she stays until Lady Day next. Paid Edwd. Harland and George Virgoe $\frac{1}{2}$ year's wages each £3 5s. James Hazelpore came to live with me at £6 5s. per annum."

Sometimes the squire has to complain of a servant who left him after a year's service having just received "a coat, waistcoat, breeches, and hat and 3 shirts which cost me £5 1s."

Education was cheap and somewhat indifferent. In 1731 the squire sent his son Anthony to Thomas Painter to learn to write and read and cast accounts; but this instructor of the three R's only received 6d. a week for his pains. This youth had been to a boarding-school at Brighton, as his father records the payment of £7 6s. 10d. to Grover and Browne of that fashionable resort. It seems to have been the fashion to send children to board at some house, and to be taught elementary schooling at some day school. Thus Anthony's sister Sarah went to board at William Best's at a cost of 3s. 6d. per week, and attended Miss Leach's school, who received 6d. per week. The squire seems to have had a nice little family. Besides Anthony and Sarah there were Jane and John and Samuel. He had a wife, too, but we gather little about her, save that there is a curious record of her death conveyed in the words, "Struck with the dead palsy from head to foot, in a moment of time."

As we have said, the diaries do not reveal very much concerning the daily life of the Sussex squires, but Mr. Turner, who edited them for the *Sussex Archæological Collections*, draws a fairly faithful picture of the style in which Sussex gentlemen lived two centuries ago:—

"They dined at one or two o'clock, and many now do the same; the only difference between them and us being, that what they called dinner we call luncheon. They sat down to a substantial meal at half-past seven or eight

o'clock, and so do we ; and this they called supper, but we call dinner. And as soon as supper was over the squire sat down at the shovel-board table, with his canine pets about him ; and his tenants and retainers being called in, they smoked their pipes and quaffed their grogs—unless any of the party preferred instead potent home-brewed October ale—discussing all the while the business as well as the passing events of the day. And this continued—varied, perhaps, with now and then a hunting song, in the chorus of which all heartily joined, or with a game played with cards—until it was time to prepare for bed, which, in well-regulated families, was seldom later than ten o'clock ; while in another part of the hall, if it was spacious enough to admit of it, or if not in some adjoining apartment opening into the hall, sat the lady of the house, with her family and any female friends that might be staying with her busily engaged in spinning. Pianofortes, now to be found in every tradesman's and farmer's house, were unknown even in the houses of many of the gentry in those days. The drone of the spinning-wheel was the music they most delighted in ; and singing, or, as one of my church choir used to call it when he was in a grandiloquent humour, ' the tuneful music of the vocal voice,' was all the melody that arrested the ear within the substantial walls of the Place House ; and profitable music it was, for all the linen of the house, body, bed, and table, was, for the most part, thus supplied ; the menservants as well as the mistress of the house, her daughters and her friends, employing all their not otherwise occupied time in the same way. Tea was a repast not then much appreciated, even if it was known ; the article itself—from a decoction of which the meal took its name—being far too costly during the period under consideration to be much used in a common way, even in the houses of the better class ; though it appears to have been occasionally in-

dulged in at Hickstead ; the price given for the article thus consumed being charged, according to the accounts, at 25s. and 30s. per pound. The family breakfasts at this date were upon the substantial Elizabethan scale. They consisted for the most part of hot meats, with a liberal supply of well-matured nut-brown malt liquor. A hot beef steak, with no scant measure of two-years'-old ale, was no unusual thing for the lords and ladies of Queen Elizabeth's Court at breakfast to indulge in, and her most gracious Majesty did the same. And at Hickstead this meal was taken at a somewhat unusually early hour, so that by eight o'clock the squire was ready either for business or pleasure. If during the hunting season—

“‘A southerly wind and a cloudy sky
Proclaimed a hunting morn,’

the hounds were unkennelled, and every servant that could be spared from his customary duties in and about the house, each with a hunting pole in his hand, attended his master to the cover, and the welkin soon rang with the music of their tunable voices ; for game was far too plentiful in the Hickstead Woods and hedgerows in those days to be long in being found. Or if the day was better adapted to shooting, the old Sussex spaniels, for which Hickstead was then famous, were brought out, and the squire spent his morning in trying either the covers for pheasants or the stubbles for partridges ; and by twelve o'clock he was able to return home with a well-filled bag.”

So life flowed on placidly in this quiet corner of England. As we have said, Sussex had no great thoroughfare until the Prince Regent discovered Brighton and made it an attractive watering-place, and the notes of the merry post-horn awoke the echoes in the slumbering villages that lay along the Brighton road, and startled the slumbering squires from their

sleep. Hence Sussex was left lonely and forlorn, and the life of the county was very self-contained, and the Sussex squires, cut off from external intercourse, lived their own lives, followed their own devices, and were somewhat less learned and refined than the representatives of their class in other parts of England. In their seclusion they formed their own traditions, possessed their own special characteristics, and rejoiced in an individuality of which time and change have hardly yet succeeded in robbing them. But the world has discovered the attractions of the shire. Sussex houses and manors are eagerly sought for, and an alien race is fast driving out the old squires, whose lives in olden days we have endeavoured to describe.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SQUIRE IN LITERATURE

THE squire is frequently immortalized in literature. In novels, plays, and poems he appears, sometimes touched by a satirical pen, but usually with an affectionate and respectful regard, and represented as an impersonation of John Bullism, a much-loved and honoured country gentleman. We can only take a few examples of his appearance in letters, and naturally turn to the pages of the *Spectator* to renew our acquaintance with the immortal Sir Roger de Coverley. Many conjectures have been set afloat with regard to the original of this celebrated character. Tyers, in 1783, boldly asserted that Sir John Packington, Bart., of Westwood, in Worcestershire, was the prototype of Sir Roger. A comparison between the lives of the two gentlemen scarcely warrants this conclusion. Sir Roger was a disappointed bachelor; Sir John was twice married. Sir Roger was not an ardent politician; Sir John Packington was Member of Parliament for his shire from the time of his majority to his death. He was a lawyer, too, whereas Sir Roger abhorred litigation. It is safe to conclude that Sir Roger had no actual prototype. He represented a class, a race of men. The *Spectator* always avoided personalities, and is not likely to have drawn a portrait of any individual squire. Nor must we associate with the worthy knight, though the story tells us that "his grandfather was the inventor of that famous country dance called after him," the joyous conclusion of every ball. That dance was originally

called "Roger a Calverley," and Sir Roger of Calverley lived in the time of Richard I at Calverley, in Yorkshire, and the imaginary connection of our Sir Roger with the dance was the merry invention of Swift.

Sir Roger was not the invention of one writer. His finished portrait was painted by several hands, each of which added deft touches, until we have before us the correct presentment of this warm-hearted country gentleman of the reign of Queen Anne, which rivets the interest and excites the affectionate smile of all readers in all time. Amongst these various artists who contributed to the success of the portrait were Sir Richard Steele, who drew the main outlines of the character ; Joseph Addison, who supplied the main colouring and general features, while some of the background was painted in by Eustace Budgell and Thomas Tickell. The whole history of the hero is contained in thirty numbers of the *Spectator*. Addison wrote twenty, Budgell two, and Steele eight, and possibly Tickell was responsible for a disfiguring section, not usually published in the collected editions of the several papers.

The old knight is a popular acquaintance of every lover of English literature and needs no introduction. We meet him first at Coverley Hall, and admire the affectionate regard bestowed upon him by his servants. He seldom changed them, and they considered him the best master in the world, and had grown old in his service. Great was their joy when they welcomed him home from London. Some of them could not refrain from tears at the sight of their old master. He was at the same time father and master of his domestics, and his humanity and good nature engaged every one to him. He was somewhat of a humorist, too, and the *Spectator* observed that "his virtues as well as his imperfections were tinged by a certain extravagance which made them particularly *his*, and dis-

tinguished him from those of other men." His selection of a chaplain was akin to his character. He wanted a clergyman rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, and sociable temper; and if possible a man that understood a little of backgammon. He did not wish to be insulted with Latin and Greek quotations, which he could not understand, at his own table. He preferred the masterpieces of divinity rather than the compositions of a simple parson; so he presented his chaplain with sermons by Tillotson, Saunderson, Barrow, Calamy, and other divines then living, which were delivered in turn on the Sundays throughout the year in such an admirable manner that the *Spectator* deemed that one of these discourses was "like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor."

In the opinion of the writer the general corruption of manner in servants is owing to the conduct of masters, a view that subsequent observation has seen no cause to contradict. Things were better in the old squire's house. Servants did not fly from his presence, or try to avoid him, but rather industriously placed themselves in his way. He lived rather as a prince than a master, his autocracy being founded on benevolence preserved by respect, and his orders received as favours rather than duties. As was usual with many squires, his tenants were the descendants of those who had served his ancestors.

The portrait of the "hanger-on," the luckless younger son of a baronet, a man bred to no business and born to no estate, is drawn with a commendable touch of satire, the type of man that is not yet quite extinct. Will Wimble seems to enjoy life. He hunts a pack of hounds better than any man in the country, makes a mayfly to a miracle, and furnishes the whole country with angle-rods. He is a welcome guest in every house, makes himself tremendously useful, presents Sir Roger with a jack, and

makes a lash for his whip. At dinner he describes at full length the story of his capture of the fish, and discloses his latest invention for the improvement of the quail-pipe. The *Spectator* may well moralize on the uselessness of his career, and the waste of such qualities which might have made him a good trader or merchant.

The squire's picture gallery is worthy of description, especially the portraits of his ancestors in the time of Henry VII, attired in the uniform still used by the Yeomen of the Guard, and of that other worthy who, clad in full armour, was the last to win a prize in a tournament in the tilt-yard. The lady who eloped with a villain, the soft gentleman with the small buttons, little boots, laces and slashes, who never said a rude thing in his life, but ruined every one he had to do with ; the gallant Sir Humphrey who thought himself as much undone by breaking his word, as if it were to be followed by bankruptcy, and the noble ancestor who narrowly escaped death in the Civil War by being sent out of the field the day before the battle of Worcester. A very representative collection of family pictures.

As a churchman the squire shone. He beautified the church with illuminated texts of Scripture of his own choosing, provided rails for the sanctuary, and hassocks for the people to kneel on. During service he suffered no one to sleep save himself ; and if he should awake, he stood up, examined the congregation, and if any one else was nodding, he sent one of his servants to them. The clerk of a later period would not have dared to treat Sir Roger as he treated a less important squire. This later squire, observing that the clerk, or sluggard-waker, was very busy arousing children if they slumbered during service-time, said, " Thomas, I think you ought to attend to the elders, as well as the youngsters. Sometimes I see the farmers dozing. I will give you five shillings if you

rap them on the head with that cane of yours." Next Sunday afternoon was hot and the church stuffy; the squire slept, and was rather surprised to receive a sharp tap on the head, and to hear Thomas calling out:—

"Squire, I'll thank you for that 'ere crown."

Such a thing could not have happened to Sir Roger. He used to stand up in the middle of the prayers and count the congregation to see whether any tenants were absent, or openly reprove any one who was inattentive or misbehaving. At the close of the service he walked slowly down the aisle between a double row of his tenants, who bowed to him as he passed, while he made inquiries about their relatives who did not happen to be at church. At the catechizing, if a boy answered well he ordered a Bible to be given to him, and probably a fitch of bacon to his mother.

We must draw a veil over the sad story of the squire's courtship of the fair widow; but we must picture him in the days of his early manhood, when he became high sheriff, tall and handsome and well dressed, riding before the whole county, with music before him, a feather in his hat, and his horse well bitted, when bright eyes looked out on him from balcony and window, as he rode to the hall where the assizes were held. As a sportsman, too, he was indefatigable. His hall was adorned with the horns of the deer he had slain. His gun-room was an arsenal. Noses of foxes killed in the merry hunt were nailed on his stable doors. When too old for fox-hunting he bought a pack of stop-hounds, and was very careful about their notes, so that their cry might be in complete harmony. He was obliged to reject a very fine hound because its note was bass, and he required a counter-tenor. He was greeted with the utmost benevolence by the neighbouring squires and farmers, whose sons were delighted to open the gates for him.

In politics he abhorred Whigs, and a gentleman of that persuasion received scant courtesy from Sir Roger and his neighbours. Christmas was kept up merrily at Coverley Hall. The whole village rejoiced in the grand old kitchen, and open house was kept for the twelve days' festival. When in London he naturally frequented Squire's coffee-house, and sat in state, calling for a clean pipe, a paper of tobacco, a dish of coffee, a wax candle, and the Supplement. There we must leave the delectable old man. The picture of him is a faithful likeness of a genuine old country squire of the reign of Queen Anne, with all his weaknesses, foibles, and peculiarities, as well as his sturdy uprightness, honesty and truth.

FIELDING'S SQUIRES

From the essayists we will turn to the novelists, whose school was rendered possible by the efforts of the former. The eighteenth-century squires have found other chroniclers, first in the person of Samuel Richardson, and then in that of Henry Fielding.

In 1740 appeared a novel entitled *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, by Richardson. The story is of a virtuous waiting maid, Pamela Andrews, who by carefully guarding herself against the advances of her young squire and master, is eventually rewarded and secures him in marriage, living happily ever afterwards. A parody on this novel appeared entitled *Shamela*, which Mr. Emanuel Green proves to have been written by Fielding, who also introduced Squire Foxchase and Squire Tankard into his play *The Virgin Unmasked*. He also presents us with two types which could not afford a greater contrast. We are first introduced in the pages of *Tom Jones* to a very worthy specimen of his class. Squire Allworthy, a portraiture of Ralph Allen of Prior Park, near Bath, lived in

the western county of Somerset, "a favourite of both nature and fortune; for both of these had contended which should bless and enrich him most. In this contention nature may seem to have come off victorious, as she bestowed upon him many gifts; while fortune had only one gift in her power; but in pouring forth this, she was so very profuse that others may think this single endowment to have been more than equivalent to all the various blessings which he enjoyed from nature. From the former of these he derived an agreeable person, a sound constitution, a solid understanding, and a benevolent heart; by the latter he was decreed to the inheritance of one of the largest estates in the county."

Such was Squire Allworthy; but "pale death knocks with equal foot at the door of palace or cottage," and in spite of all his good fortune he had the great sorrow and misfortune to lose his beloved wife, "a very worthy and beautiful woman," and his three children. He was lonely but not miserable, as he tells us "he looked upon himself as still married, and considered his wife as only gone a little before him, a journey which he should most certainly, sooner or later, take after her; and that he had not the least doubt of meeting her again in a place where he should never part with her more." We may conclude that he was a deeply religious man, that he had a kind and benevolent heart, that he was rich and bountiful, kept a good house, entertained his friends, and never turned away the poor man from his door. And yet, as Mr. Austin Dobson has truly remarked of him, "he remains a little stiff and cold in comparison with the 'veiled humanity' around him. We feel of him as of another impeccable personage that we cannot breathe in that fine air, that pure serenity of perfect light. . . . Allworthy is a type rather than a character." Fielding united in his person an immaculate and imperturbable philosopher

with a somewhat spiritless country gentleman.¹ The eighteenth-century literature loved to depict its good men as upright, benevolent, amiable, and gullible, and the novelist of the period liked to make a good contrast between his characters. Allworthy with his guilelessness was an admirable foil to the hypocrites and knaves by whom he was surrounded.

He was certainly a remarkable contrast to Squire Western, one of the class of boisterous, brutal country squires, whose low vices doubtless Fielding exaggerated somewhat, in order to bring out the perfections of Allworthy. He tells us that "contiguous to Mr. Allworthy's estate was the manor of one of those gentlemen who are called preservers of game. This species of men, from the very severity with which they revenge the death of a hare or a partridge, might be thought to cultivate the same superstition with the Bannians in India; many of whom, we are told, dedicate their whole lives to the preservation and protection of certain animals, was it not that our English Bannians, while they preserve them from other enemies, will most unmercifully slaughter whole horse-loads themselves, so that they stand clearly acquitted of any such heathenish superstition.

"I have, indeed, a much better opinion of this kind of man than is entertained by some, as I take them to answer the order of nature, and the good purposes for which they were ordained, in a more ample manner than many others. Now, as Horace tells us, that there are a set of human beings, *Fruges consumere nati*, 'Born to consume the fruits of the earth'; so I make no manner of doubt but there are others, *Feras consumere nati*, 'Born to consume the beasts of the field'; or, as it is commonly called, the game; and none, I believe, will deny that those squires fulfil the end of their creation."

¹ *The Good Man of the Eighteenth Century*, by C. Whittuck.

Fielding had had some experience of country squires, and perhaps was a little jealous of them. When he married Miss Craddock of Salisbury, a "belle" who possessed a *dot* of £1500, and inherited a small estate in Dorset at East Stour, he and his bride went to live there, and dazzled and out-braved the squires of the neighbourhood by setting up a magnificent equipage, dressing a numerous retinue of servants in yellow plush, and dispensing an open-handed hospitality. In this way his own and his wife's fortune soon disappeared, and he may not have retained very pleasant recollections of his country neighbours who ate his dinners, scoffed at his yellow-clad menials and his gorgeous coach, drank deeply, and talked of game and bullocks.

Squire Western was a specimen of a brutish squire. He had an estate of £3000 a year, was absorbed in country pursuits, full of rough, noisy manners, who saluted all company with a view-holla, and his household every morning with a horn under the windows. After dinner he was not to be hurried, as he sat and made a libation of four bottles of wine and then went to sleep. According to the novelist, he used to get drunk every afternoon, and in that condition loved to hear his beautiful daughter play on the harpsichord. He was a great lover of music; and if he had lived in town, he might have passed for a connoisseur, as he raved against the finest compositions of Handel. He only liked light and airy music, his favourite tunes being "Old Sir Simon the King," "St. George he was for England," "Bobbing Joan," and such-like melodies. It is doubtful whether a creature so brutish as Fielding represents him, who used to get drunk every day, so blind drunk at night that he could not see his wife, and whose conversation was nothing but oaths and blasphemy, halloing, singing, telling his sporting adventures and talking unblushing immorality,

could have retained the affections of such a charming daughter as Sophia Western, or have been conscious of the beauties of music. However, that is the type that Fielding gives us, and doubtless there were some like him. As a tenant farmer once said at a rent audit when proposing the landlord's health, "If more squires 'ud dew as our squire dew, there 'ud be fewer squires dew as they dew dew."

Fielding often repeated his characters. In his play *Don Quixote in England* (1734) he makes the Don mistake a country squire at the head of his hounds for a giant at the head of an army. This was converted into a burletta called *Squire Badger*, with music by Dr. Arne. The squire swills tankards of ale and sings "A hunting we will go." The author changes Squire Badger into Squire Savage, and his play becomes *The Sot*, but the words remain the same. Fielding's characterization is rather poor stuff. His realism is the realism of foulness. Some of his works are clever enough, but little benefit can be derived from them, save some knowledge of the sort of people, the squires and parsons, who were living in his age, and these are in part caricature.

Goldsmith gives us some sketches of mid-eighteenth-century squires. There is the charming portrait of "Mr. Burchell," *alias* Sir William Thornhill, the "most generous, yet whimsical man in the kingdom, a man of consummate benevolence," who half ruined himself by his generosity, paid three guineas to a beadle to spare an old soldier from a whipping for dog-stealing, and then had no money to pay his reckoning at his inn. The whole story of the *Vicar of Wakefield* proclaims his good qualities, and discloses the rascality of the young Squire Thornhill, who desired to know little more of the world than its pleasures, a heartless rake whose arts no female virtue could resist. But the best of the Goldsmith squires is

Mr. Hardcastle of *She Stoops to Conquer*, a charming sketch of a country gentleman with old-fashioned whimsicalities drawn true to nature. The squire objects to his wife and daughter going to London "to rub off the rust a little," wonders why London cannot keep its own fools at home, and loves everything that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine, and even his old wife, who objects to be included in this antiquarian category. His eccentricities are overdrawn and exaggerated for the sake of stage effect and to bring out the broad farcical humour of the plot. He is always amusing when he is drilling his awkward bumpkins, being insulted by his guests, telling his old stories about Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough, or showing his admiration for his pretty daughter. It is all very delightful fooling, and the portrait of the squire is drawn by a skilled hand.

And then let us open Washington Irving's *Sketch Book*, and transport ourselves to Bracebridge Hall, and renew our acquaintance with its famous squire who resided there at the beginning of the last century. He was, as his son informs us, "a bigoted devotee of the old school, and prided himself upon keeping up something of old English hospitality," and the customs that existed before the strong, rich peculiarities of ancient rural life had been almost polished away by the intrusion of London fashions. He was much looked up to and beloved by his tenantry, and was known simply as "the squire," a title borne by the head of the family from time immemorial. The Hall was surrounded by a park enclosed by a wall, and the gate was in a heavy, magnificent old style of iron bars, fancifully wrought at the top into flourishes and flowers. The huge square columns that supported the gate were surmounted by the family crest. The mansion was irregular and of different periods, one wing being ancient

and the rest in the French taste of Charles II's time. The garden was laid out in the old formal manner of artificial flower-beds, clipped shrubberies, raised terraces, and heavy stone balustrades, ornamented with urns, a leaden statue or two, and a jet of water. The squire was extremely careful to preserve this "obsolete finery in all its original state. He admired this fashion in gardening; it had an air of magnificence, was courtly and noble, and befitting good old family style. The boasted imitation of nature in modern gardening had sprung up with republican notions and did not suit a monarchical government; it smacked of the levelling system."

In the servants' hall, during Christmas-time, old-fashioned revelry was encouraged, and the old games of hoodman blind, shoe the white mare, hot cockles, steal the white loaf, bob-apple, and snap-dragon. The Yule log and Christmas candle were regularly burnt, and the mistletoe, with its white berries, hung up, to the imminent peril of all the pretty housemaids. In the hall itself the squire's family and his connections were engaged in many amusements, and he himself sat in his hereditary elbow-chair, by the hospitable fire-place of his ancestors, looking round him like the sun of a system, beaming warmth and gladness to every heart.

I need not describe the Christmas morning service, or the village orchestra, save to note that the vocal parts generally lagged behind the instrumental, and occasionally some loitering fiddler made up for lost time by travelling over a passage with prodigious celerity, clearing more bars than the keenest fox-hunter to be in at the death. The anthem was scarcely a success, as the musicians became flurried, and everything went on lamely and irregularly until they came to a chorus beginning "Now let us sing with one accord," which seemed to be a signal for parting company; all became discord and confusion;

each shifted for himself, and got to the end as well, or rather as soon, as he could, excepting one old chorister in a pair of horn spectacles, bestriding and pinching a long, sonorous nose, who happened to stand a little apart, and being wrapped up in his own melody, kept on a quivering course, wriggling his head, ogling his book, and winding all up by a nasal solo of at least three bars' duration.

The churchyard was a scene of animation after the service had ended. The elder folks gathered in knots, greeting and shaking hands, and the children ran about crying "Ule! Ule!" and repeating some uncouth rhymes. The villagers doffed their hats to the squire as he passed, giving him the good wishes of the season with every appearance of heartfelt sincerity, and were invited by him to the Hall to take something to keep out the cold of the weather; while the blessings uttered by the poor proved that in the midst of his enjoyments the worthy old squire had not forgotten the true Christmas virtue of charity.

We need not follow the squire back to his ancestral hall, nor join him at his Christmas dinner, nor watch the maskers in their frolics and the quaint antics of the Lord of Misrule. It was all in true keeping with the rest of the customs of Bracebridge Hall. Such is the picture which Washington Irving draws of an old English squire, perhaps a little post-dated, but not unfaithful in its delineation of "a fine old English gentleman, one of the olden time."

George Eliot gives us her conception of a squire in her *Scenes of Clerical Life*. In *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story*, which is dated back to 1788, we make the acquaintance of the charming Cheverel Manor and its owner, Sir Christopher Cheverel, "as fine a specimen of the old English gentleman as could well have been found in those venerable days of cocked hats and pigtails."

But we might fill this volume with the records of squires

in fiction. The novels of Sir Walter Scott might be laid under contribution, and the pages of Dickens, Thackeray, and Trollope searched for characteristic descriptions.

In *Barchester Towers* there is an amusing scene depicted of the good lady Mrs. Lookaloft and her daughters elbowing their way from the tenantry on the lawn to the swells in the drawing-room of a great house. We are told that "it was a great point gained by Mrs. Lookaloft, and it might be fairly expected that from this time forward the tradesmen of Barchester would with undoubting pens address her husband as T. Lookaloft, Esquire."

As an illustration of the misuse of the title we may mention that preposterous tale recorded in Allingham's diary, setting forth how on one of his early visits to London in company with the two Rossettis, and Woolner and Buchanan Read, he heard the title of "an Elegiac Poem to N. P. Rogers, Esquire, in Heaven."

The squire is so essentially a feature of English society in the past, that no novel dealing with country life can venture to ignore his existence. Sometimes he appears in sombre colours, as in Fanu's *Wyvern Mystery*, tall, grim, handsome, old, marching slowly, toppling along his terrace, surveying the long-familiar scenes which will soon bloom and brown no more for him, to be succeeded by a worthless son, a shrewd dealer in horses who made love to barmaids and affected the conversation of dog fanciers. Or he shows himself as the charming old squire of Henry Kingsley's *Rokeby*, against whom fortune levelled many darts, but in a new country triumphed over fate and restored the fortunes of his house. Charles Kingsley, too, knew his squires well, but there are few better or manlier descriptions of the character than that given in *Rokeby*.

It is time for us to turn from fiction to real life, and to note other portraits in our gallery of squires.

CHAPTER XVII

THE OLD ENGLISH COUNTRY SQUIRE IN VERSE

WHEN walking down Piccadilly I always stop at the attractive window of Messrs. Hatchard's bookshop, and my mind being bent on squire-hunting, I was delighted to see a charming old book, entitled *The Old English Country Squire*, by John Careless, Esquire, 1821. Entering the friendly portal, I discovered that it was very rare, and the cost somewhat prohibitive, but Hatchard's maintains its reputation, extending over a hundred years, for hospitality to book-lovers, and in that delightful room upstairs I was soon devouring the contents of the book in comfortable and pleasant surroundings.

I do not know the identity of Mr. Careless. He, or his hero, resided in Buckinghamshire, at Baconsfield (Beaconsfield), so called "because for ham, chines and bacon the hall was long famed," and over the stables was some carving, but it was not certain whether it represented a ham "carv'd, sculptured, and rampant, or a bird with a shield and sword; but people called it a ham, and so reckoned that Roger Bacon lived there." The poem is not a very perfect production, and the author tells us that it was written at intervals, in order to pass the long winter evenings, that it was much admired by his wife, who was a great reader, but that the parson never says much, and, therefore, was reckoned a very clever man. As a specimen of the author's Muse we will quote the description of Baconsfield Hall:—

“ The house was capacious, old, gloomy and grey,
 The rooms in and out as if dancing the hey ;
 The floors of dark oak that were well rubb'd with wax,
 Which by slipping and sliding serv'd to twist people's backs.
 The walls of brave wainscot were well hung about
 With beauties of antediluvian cut,
 With judges and parsons and well-wigged squires,
 Of the present Squire Careless the grandma's and sires.”

Then there were the stables and the kennels, whence only a few hounds sent forth sweet sounds, as the squire's pack was trencher-fed, the tenants keeping a hound or two apiece, and bringing them to the meet. The squire had no huntsman. He always hunted the pack himself.

The poet is very fond of describing Gargantuan feasts, and that held on the occasion of the christening of the squire's son and heir was indeed a ponderous affair. To enumerate a few only of the delicacies, we may mention : Soup à la Flamaux, salmon, haunch of venison, lamb's feet with asparagus, fillet of veal with kidney beans, mutton pie, potatoes, haunch of lamb larded with cucumber, chickens with celery, venison pasty, cod-head and shoulders dressed à l'Italienne, mutton chops, green peas, tongue and udder, ox palates, stewed ducks, and a lordly baron of beef. I thought that I had come to an end of Bill of Fare ; but no, there are two or three pages more ; and then a second course ! Jerusalem artichokes, pheasants, partridges, apple pies, teal, woodcocks, goose, tarts, trifles, and pastry. The wine was “ ruby bright.” Many healths were drunk, including the King, the Army, and the Duke of York, the Duke of Clarence and the Navy, etc. etc. etc., and, last of all, the health of the new heir with “ Hip ! hip ! hip ! boys, hurra ! ” nine times repeated.

The poem goes on to describe the life of the young squire, and therein is of interest to us, though the poetry

is bad. He was well beloved by the people of every degree :—

“ For none that called at his paternal home
Were stinted in forage or sent fasting home ;
As a squire or a hedger were equally treated,
When each in the parlour or kitchen were seated.”

The young man goes to college, but he does not seem to have set fire to the Isis ; and then sets off to London on some legal business, the miller having purloined the water supply of the village. The appearance of his valet must be described :—

“ Old Roper array'd in a livery new
With facings of buff on a coat of sky blue,
Inexpressibles red, and a jolly red face,
Yellow waistcoat of plush, and a hat with gold lace,
Look'd most consequential, prepar'd to attend.
He thought himself less of a servant than friend.”

A wagon was dispatched to convey the young squire's luggage :—

“ such a ponderous load,
And was only three days and two nights on the road.”

He shared the fate of most country bumpkins on arriving at the metropolis, and was quickly robbed by a flashman, who claimed acquaintance with him and cleared out his fob, while some urchins rummaged his pocket.

He buys some books, including *Every Man his own Lawyer*, an excellent volume for the lawyers, I am told, bringing much grist to their mill, a *Gardener's Calendar*, *The Young Man's Companion*, and a *New Ready Reckoner*. He tries to learn dancing from Monsieur Le Clerc, but—

“ he oft tried in vain.
To bend the monarch of the plain
Were easier far than to give young Careless
The power to dance or move with grace.”

Then he has his portrait painted, adding one portrait more to the family stock at Baconsfield Hall, a true chip of the block.

He saw many sights, went to a dance and a gay reception, to the opera, and then to a picture sale, where many old masters were displayed. He considered that—

“ The most pleasing picture was Solomon’s judgment,
Where a sentinel held a fine babe o’er the pavement
By one heel in the air, and ready to sever
The infant in two to please the false mother.”

He bought an historical picture, St. Anthony preaching to the fishes, but he thought it a very strange production, as his observation taught him that fishes could not hear. At the back of the picture he found the actual sermon, so he caused it to be translated and printed, and it edified all except the fishing fraternity.

The young squire at length returned to his ancestral home, and was welcomed with becoming rapture. We have an insight to a sporting breakfast at Baconsfield Hall, consisting of—

“ Rich potted lobster, seasoned high,
Salt salmon and a pigeon pie,
With pickled herring—still the worst
Provocation of mighty thirst—
Cold round of beef, oysters and ham,
Eggs, honey, marmalade and jam,
Coffee and tea for free diluting
With rum and milk, known good for shooting.
The dogs stood by, a steady band,
Fed with odd bits from every hand.”

Two cousins come to visit the young squire, cockney-fied sportsmen, with fine blue coats and jockey boots, a great contrast to the young squire, clad in a short shooting coat of dark green, with “ strong shoes, woollen stockings, and leggings well mill’d.” The cockneys are quite

ignorant of rural affairs and sport. They shoot at mushroom-rooms, thinking them rabbits; they frighten the birds, but do not kill any, and have sundry mishaps and dire misfortunes.

It is curious to note that the young squire was engaged in shooting grouse. Grouse in Buckinghamshire! It sounds improbable; but perhaps some of my readers may discover that a hundred years ago the bird that delights us on the Yorkshire and Scottish moors then flew and flourished on the Chiltern Hills.

And then we come to the wedding of the young squire, who had won the heart of a fair lady of Bucks. There were great festivities.

“ Each house in the village that morn was forsaken,
To the hall or the church each their way had been taken.
With bright cheerful faces they hurried along,
For the mansion was open'd to all who could come.
The old spake with glee of the times that were gone;
The young talk'd in rapture of pleasures to come.

.

All the villagers met in the large servants' hall,
And concluded the revels at night with a ball.
For the squire ever liked all around him to see
With broad happy faces and hearts full of glee.”

He was blest with a large and healthy family of five girls and as many fine boys. He lived much beloved by the people in the neighbourhood:—

“ His benevolent heart and affectionate cares
Secur'd for him all their good wishes and prayers;
And none, though their station in life might be higher,
Liv'd more lov'd and esteemed than the old English squire.”

So ends this veracious and poetical history. The poetry is not of the highest order, but the record doubtless reflects the spirit of the age, and may be a not untrue picture of country life a century ago.

As a contrast to this somewhat inferior poetry, I am permitted to republish the verses of a modern bard, Mr. Alfred Cochrane, which tell of the characteristics and humours of the old squire.

THE COUNTRY SQUIRE

- “ Exactly two-and-sixty years
 Have passed since some old stable crony,
 Obedient to his childish tears,
 Placed him upon a Shetland pony,
 And bade him show himself a boy
 Moved by hereditary forces,
 Fit son of those whose chiefest joy
 Was ever horsemanship and horses.
- “ A squire himself and born of squires,
 He bears, to Domesday-Book appealing,
 A name well honoured in the shires
 For centuries of upright dealing ;
 His battlemented towers command
 A stately pleasaunce, iron-gated,
 Where, at a former owner’s hand,
 Good Queen Elizabeth was fêted.
- “ Here are his grandsires on the wall,
 Deaf to the summons of November,
 And some were short and some were tall,
 And one, I think, a county member ;
 And one declined on personal grounds
 A peerage of Lord North’s persuasion,
 And one and all they rode to hounds
 On every possible occasion.
- “ Each season at the covert-side,
 A shade more grey, a trifle thinner,
 Sees him, his good bay mare astride,
 As keen as any young beginner ;
 And in a fast thing over grass,
 I’ll lay long odds that you will find him
 With two or three, perhaps, to pass,
 But a good many more behind him.

- “ With perfect seat and perfect hands,
 He flashes past you, like a vision,
 While no surveyor understands
 The country-side with more precision ;
 He knows where every fox will break,
 He knows where every brook is shallow,
 The line that every run will take,
 And every inch of plough and fallow.
- “ When frost his favourite sport prevents,
 He makes the circuit of the stable,
 Then, with contented sentiments,
 Betakes him to his study table ;
 For literature he reads *The Times*,
 Jorrocks, of course, and Scott and Lytton,
 Whyte-Melville, Lindsay Gordon's rhymes,
 And lives of famous men like Mytton.
- “ His politics, I fear, are gone
 To pieces, never to be mended ;
 He tells you that with Palmerston
 The race of English statesmen ended ;
 Though now and then, in language terse,
 He owns, when new ideas are busy,
 That matters would be none the worse
 For half an hour or so of Dizzy.
- “ He never brought his youthful lore
 To swell our over-stocked professions,
 But he's a County Councillor
 And Chairman of the Quarter Sessions ;
 Indeed, he does with average brains
 Good service to his Queen and nation,
 And neither asks for nor obtain
 A sixpence of remuneration.
- “ Living beneath the open sky,
 With rustic rest and peace around him,
 The world has somehow passed him by,
 And left him almost as it found him ;
 He does not know what others know,
 He shuns advancement like a bogey,
 So that young folly calls him slow,
 And fancies him a dull old fogey.

“ Yet, though he never goes to town,
 The thoughtful critic, standing sentry
 Over old virtues, writes him down
 A bulwark of the landed gentry ;
 He does his feudal duties well,
 Just as his fathers did before him,
 And, though a stranger in Pall Mall,
 His loyal tenantry adore him.

“ And when the summons comes at last
 His meetings and his meets to cancel,
 When, with the Nimrods of the past,
 He gathers underneath the chancel,
 Some will regret, in all the stress
 Of theory new and practice newer,
 One gallant fox-hunter the less,
 One fine old gentleman the fewer.”

In 1838 appeared “ The Old English Squire, a Song,” written by Stephen Oliver, set to music by D. Blake, and published by William Spiers at the office of the *New Sporting Magazine*, 399 Oxford Street, London. The book is illustrated with drawings by “ Phiz,” and dedicated—

TO THE
 COUNTRY GENTLEMEN OF ENGLAND
 THE
Old English Squire
 IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
 BY
 THEIR FELLOW-COUNTRYMAN
 STEPHEN OLIVER

We are unacquainted with the fame of Mr. Oliver as a poet, or of Mr. Blake as a musical composer, but the

illustrations by H. K. Browne are excellent, and the poem describes with fair accuracy the life and death of the country gentleman of the end of the eighteenth century.

“THE OLD ENGLISH SQUIRE

“ About fifty years ago, when old George the Third was king,
And the Prince, the star of fashion, brightly shone in pleasure’s
ring,

The English Country Squire was a man of great renown,
He’d an old hall in the country, and a modern house in town ;
A justice of the peace he was, and also an M.P.,
But was fettered to no party,—his principles were free ;
He courted not the Premier, though his son was in the Guards ;
With Fox he sometimes voted, but much oft’ner played at
cards.

“ He kept a stud of racers—’twas his joy to see them run—
And his side-board was well covered with the gold cups they
had won ;

To the town he represented every year he gave a plate,
And to the course in coach-and-six he always came in state ;—
Six goodly nags they were indeed, though fat and rather slow,
Their manes were decked with ribbons, and their flowing tails
also ;—

His lady sat beside him, tall and upright as a wand,
And the people loudly cheered them on alighting at the Stand.

“ He kept a pack of fox-hounds too, of pure old English breed ;
Most musical and staunch they were, but not much famed for
speed ;

His hunters were enduring and could go a decent pace,—
To suit his hounds he bred them, not to ride a steeple-chase.
He boldly went at hedge and gate, nor stopped at ditch or
brook,

And many a Melton-Mowbray swell might shy the leaps he
took :

’Twas a pleasant sight to see him through a bullfinch make a
gap,

With his pigtail, like a drumstick, cocking out behind his cap.



BEFORE BRECHLOADERS

“ On the first day of September, as the season still came round,
With his pointers in the stubble he was certain to be found ;
Though his gun was like a musket, an old-fashioned flint-and-
steel,

Wide-muzzled, and a kicker,—she was heavy in the heel,—
Yet, birds then being plentiful, he brought down many a brace ;
And if he found them sitting,—why he showed them little
grace :

Few thought of shooting flying about fifty years ago,—
‘ Kill when you can,’ was then the word, and ‘ Surest shooting
low.’

“ On his rent-day—’twas at Michaelmas—within his oak-roofed
hall,

Where portraits, arms, and horns of deer bedecked the panelled
wall,

“ ’Twas his custom, and a good one, with his tenantry to dine,
And the first toasts that he gave them, in a gold cup filled with
wine,—

Were ‘ The King and Royal Family ! ’ and ‘ God speed the
Plough ! ’

‘ Amen ! ’ exclaimed the Vicar, to his Patron seated near,
While the farmers drank their bumpers off and gave a hearty
cheer.

“ ’Tis now thirty years ago,—the sad time I well remember,—
On a dull and cheerless day in the dark month of November,
The good Old English Squire, aged three score years and ten,
Was gathered to his fathers, to the grief of all good men.
In the village church he’s buried, scarce a mile from the old
hall ;

His heir was the chief mourner,—six old neighbours bore the
pall :

His memory is cherished yet ; and many people say,
‘ With the good Old English Squire good Old Times are gone
for aye.’ ”

Amongst the many poetical eulogies of old squires, we
must not forget the famous old ballad of “ The fine old
English gentleman, one of the olden time,” which is
here set forth :—

"THE OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN

- " I'll sing you a good old song, that was made by an old Pate,
Of a fine old English gentleman who had an old estate,
And he kept up his old mansion at a bountiful old rate
With a good old porter to relieve the old poor at his gate,
Like a fine old English gentleman,
All of the olden time.
- " His hall so old was hung about with pikes and guns and bows,
And swords and good old bucklers which had stood some stout
old blows,
'Twas there his worship sat in state in doublet and trunk hose,
And quaff'd his cup of good old sack to comfort his old nose,
Like a fine old English gentleman,
One of the olden time.
- " When winter old brought frost and cold, he opened house to all,
And though three-score and ten his years he featly led the ball,
Nor was the houseless wanderer e'er driven from his hall,
For while he feasted all the great, he ne'er forgot the small ;
Like a fine old English gentleman,
One of the olden time.
- " But life, though sweet, is fleeting fast and years roll swiftly by,
And autumn's falling leaves proclaim this good old man must
die ;
He laid him down right tranquilly, expired without a sigh,
A solemn silence reign'd around and tears bedewed each eye
For this fine old English gentleman,
One of the olden time.
- " But times and seasons though they change and customs pass
away,
Yet English hands and English hearts will prove old England's
sway ;
And though our coffers mayn't be filled as they were wont of
yore,
We still have hands to fight if need, and hearts to help the poor ;
Like the good old English gentleman,
All of the olden time."

Kingsley sadly sang the lay of the bad squire and the poacher's wife. The picture is painted in dark and sombre colours. No one will deny that there have been bad squires, and poachers who have met with accidents in the course of their devotion to sport ; but the story of the poem is imaginary, and the portrait can scarcely be said to be characteristic or typical. Here it is :—

“THE BAD SQUIRE

- “ The merry brown hares came leaping
 Over the crest of the hill,
 Where the clover and corn lay sleeping
 Under the moonlight still.
- “ Leaping late and early,
 Till under their bite and tread
 The swedes and the wheat and the barley
 Lay cankered and trampled and dead.
- “ A poacher's widow sat sighing
 On the side of the white chalk bank,
 When under the gloomy fir-woods
 One spot in the ley throve rank.
- “ She watched a long turf of clover,
 Where rabbit or hare never ran ;
 For its black, sour haulm covered over
 The blood of a murdered man.
- “ She thought of the dark plantation,
 And the hares, and her husband's blood,
 And the voice of her indignation
 Rose up to the throne of God.
- “ ‘ I am lost, past wailing and whining—
 I have wept too much in my life ;
 I've had twenty years of pining
 As an English labourer's wife.
- “ ‘ A labourer in Christian England,
 Where they cant of a Saviour's name,
 And yet waste men's lives like the vermin's
 For a few more brace of game.

“ ‘ There’s blood on your new foreign shrubs, Squire,
 There’s blood on your pointer’s feet ;
 There’s blood on the game you sell, Squire,
 And there’s blood on the game you eat.

“ ‘ You have sold the labouring-man, Squire,
 Body and soul to shame,
 To pay for your seat in the house, Squire,
 And to pay for the feed of your game.

“ ‘ You made him a poacher yourself, Squire,
 When you’d give neither work nor meat,
 And your barley-fed hares robbed the garden
 At our starving children’s feet ;

“ ‘ When packed in one reeking chamber,
 Man, maid, mother, and little ones lay ;
 While the rain pattered in on the rotting bride-bed,
 And the walls let in the day.

“ ‘ When we lay in the burning fever
 On the mud of the cold clay floor,
 Till you parted us all for three months, Squire,
 At the dreary workhouse door.

“ ‘ We quarrelled like brutes, and who wonders ?
 What self-respect could we keep,
 Worse housed than your hacks and your pointers,
 Worse fed than your hogs and your sheep ?

“ ‘ Our daughters with base-born babies
 Have wandered away in their shame,
 If your misses had slept, Squire, where they did,
 Your misses might do the same.

“ ‘ Can your lady patch hearts that are breaking
 With handfuls of coal and rice,
 Or by dealing out flannel and sheeting
 A little below cost price ?

“ ‘ You may tire of the jail and the workhouse,
 And take to allotments and schools,
 But you’ve run up a debt that will never
 Be paid us by penny-club rules.

- “ ‘ In the season of shame and sadness,
 In the dark and dreary day,
 When scrofula, gout, and madness
 Are eating your race away ;
- “ ‘ When to kennels and liveried varlets
 You have cast your daughter’s bread,
 And, worn out with liquor and harlots,
 Your heir at your feet lies dead ;
- “ ‘ When your youngest, the mealy-mouthed rector,
 Lets your soul rot asleep to the grave,
 You will find in your God the protector
 Of the freeman you fancied your slave.’
- “ She looked at the tuft of clover,
 And wept till her heart grew light ;
 And at last, when her passion was over,
 Went wandering into the night.
- “ But the merry brown hares came leaping
 Over the uplands still,
 Where the clover and corn lay sleeping
 On the side of the white chalk hill.”

CHAPTER XVIII

STORIES OF SQUIRES

THE personality of the squire in ancient and modern times has made a profound impression upon the young people of the village. He was often much beloved by the children, who frequently were regaled with apples or sugar-plums from the squire's capacious pockets, when he took his walks abroad through the village. He founded a Sunday-school for their benefit. There was one in my own village in the early part of the last century, founded by a good squire and his lady, Mr. and Mrs. Clive, and for many years Mrs. Clive taught the children herself every Sunday morning, being very careful that they should march in a very orderly manner along the village street to church at the close of her lesson. The kind lady lost her husband in the 'fifties. They had been a devoted and affectionate couple, and the pain of parting was bitter, and for thirty years Mrs. Clive was a widow, caring for the villagers, teaching the children, and helping the sick and aged with her words and her bounty. When her husband died she provided a singular mourning for the boys of her Sunday-school. They had to wear a new smock-frock, a tall hat, and black handkerchiefs around their necks. In church during service they sat on the steps before the altar rails facing the congregation, and great was the commotion and dire the punishment when one of the boys drew out a pocket-knife and quietly cut out the crown of his neighbour's hat.

Squires have not infrequently thought it their duty

to teach in Sunday-schools. We know one who does so at the present time, but we fear he has not many imitators. Dr. Warter's hero, "The Last of the Squires," Sunday-schools being then in their infancy, and needing encouragement, chose to teach the children himself, in conjunction with the clergyman of the parish. Within a little time his example spurred on many, and, as he foresaw, his inefficient service was soon dispensed with—but he had the satisfaction to know that he had set the machine in motion. There is still living a dear old man, paralysed and helpless, but for many years an active squire and Chairman of the Bench of Magistrates. For at least thirty years he used to take a class in the Sunday-school in the morning, and taught the lads well. But it was not uncommon to hear him roar out at the top of his voice, "D——n you, you young rascal, you want a dog-whip about your back ; you haven't learnt three words of your Collect to-day !"

As a remarkable instance of the awe with which children regarded the squire, I may mention the story of the late Squire Biddulph, of Aberavon, in South Wales, uncle of the present Lord Biddulph of Ledbury, Herefordshire. Mrs. Biddulph, a very smart lady, was taking a class of boys at the Sunday-school, and asked them :—

" Well, boys, can you tell me who is the prince of this world ? "

A long pause ensued, and then a dirty little hand went up, and a feeble little voice answered :—

" Please, mum, Mr. Biddulph ! "

This story was kindly sent me by Mrs. Benyon, of Windsor, a niece of the lady who asked the question.

A squire in a country parish was a regular attendant at church, and often remarked that when Psalm civ. occurred in the service, the clerk, when he came to the twenty-sixth verse, always read it, " 7 here go the ships,

and there is that Levi Nathan whom Thou hast made to take his pastime therein." So one day the squire asked him who Levi Nathan was, and what the clerk supposed the verse meant. This was his reply :—

" Well, sir, I don't hardly know what he had been up to ; but I expect David had catched him in some of them crimp's tricks. They Jew crimps be tarr'ble hard on the sailors when they comes ashore at Portsmouth."

The squire was also much amused at a little dialogue which took place in the little church of Burgh-le-Marsh, in Lincolnshire, one Christmas morning, between the vicar, one Parson Barnes, and old Johnny Kelk, the clerk, who was very proud of his really fine alto voice. The weather was very cold and raw, and when Parson Barnes gave out, " Let us sing to the praise and glory of God, ' Christians awake, salute this happy morn,' " Johnny Kelk roared out from the singing gallery at the west end, " Noa us woan't." Parson Barnes replied, " Yes, we will." " Then you may set un yoursen," returned the clerk ; " us ain't a-going to crack our voices this cold marnin' o'er them high notes." Those who know the extended compass of notes required for that hymn, so great a favourite in northern choirs, but seldom sung in the south, will sympathize with the irate clerk.

Clerks are very prosaic and materialistic in mind. A squire some years ago wandered into the churchyard of Thorpe St. Peter, near Wainfleet, in Lincolnshire, and found the quaint old clerk sitting meditatively on a huge square tombstone. The squire asked him what he was doing, and this was his reply :—

" Well, sir, I was thinking as how if I was a moneyed man I would have one of these heavy stones set over me when I die. I've dug so many folks' bones up in my grave-digging these forty years, I would like to make myself safe. But I hain't got the brass, and never shall.

And I reckon I'll have got a matter of three mile or more start in the air when we all rises, afore the angels get this one rowled off him as lies beneath ; and wherever they'll get picks enough to do th' job here, let alone Wainfleet, caps me wholly, that it do."

So the squire left him meditating.

THE LEARNED SQUIRE

There have been, and still are, many cultured squires who have kept up their classics, and whose libraries are not left to dusty oblivion to mourn their neglected state. One of these squires was in the habit of quoting Horace in season and out of season, and delighted to puzzle people whose Latin was a little rusty. There came to live near the squire a very pleasant old gentleman, who had not had the advantage of a University education, and knew not a word of Latin. He had amassed a good fortune by clever trading in South America, where he had lived a long time. He was very proud to dine with the squire—or shall we say the neighbouring magnate?—now and then ; but the latter would quote Horace to him, as was his wont, not having the delicate sense which he ought to have had with regard to the non-classical training of his guest. But the guest was quite equal to the occasion. The Latin lines were quoted as usual. "Exactly so, sir," he replied, "just as we used to say in South America," and then he would let off a long quotation or speech in Spanish (of a sort), to the great amusement of the rest of the company. The learned squire is often a very formidable person. He knows more than any other gentleman in the county. He is omniscient. He knows more theology than any parson ; more law than any lawyer ; more medicine than any doctor—in fact, there is nothing he does not know,

and what he does not know is not knowledge. His theological attainments are prodigious. On Sunday mornings he always takes his Greek Testament to church with him, and carefully studies the text in the original; and if the vicar's interpretation of the passage does not conform to his own, he invariably enters the vestry after service, and expostulates with the parson for his errors, and generally puts him to rights. His poor clergyman finds him a terrible trial.

As a contrast to *armiger studiosus* we will take an example of *armiger irascibilis*. He has been immortalized in print. He usually comes to church when the service is half over, and sits and stares at the vicar during the sermon with a sardonic grin on his pleasing countenance. He has a very pleasant property on the banks of a stately river, which invite with seductive voice boating parties to land and picnic. It is said that he has a telescope in his house, and is constantly on the look-out for such pleasure parties, and that nothing gives him greater satisfaction than to rush down upon them and eject them from his domain. One day he spied a boat drawing near to his land. He was furious, but managed to restrain himself until the company had landed and was preparing a comfortable tea. The kettle was just boiling, and the ladies were looking forward to the grateful beverage, when the squire burst in upon them. He upbraided them in no measured terms, and finally, overcome by wrath, flung their crockery into the river. The leading lady of the visitors preserved her composure admirably, and when the squire had exhausted himself and de-fer-vesced, rose and said, "Good day, Captain —. Please thank your wife for having so kindly asked us to come here to-day, and especially for having been so kind as to *lend us all the cups and plates.*"

When an English squire goes abroad and mingles with

foreign sportsmen, he is sometimes warranted in his insular belief that everything English is far superior to continental products. An acquaintance told me that on one occasion he was a member of a shooting party on a German baron's estate. The pheasants were flying high, and my friend was shooting well ; he killed many birds, and was rather surprised to hear that his neighbour on the right was also having good sport, and was firing repeatedly. Imagine his wrath when he discovered that this noble sportsman was firing at his birds when they were falling, afterwards claiming them as his own. This conduct was almost too outrageous for the equanimity of the squire, who liked not foreign manners.

The Duke of Wellington, when ambassador to King Louis XVIII, was invited to shoot at Fontainebleau, where the party consisted of the Ducs de Berry, d'Angoulême, and de Grammont, with the Iron Duke and his attaché, Lord William Lennox. Wellington had with him his English gamekeeper and a groom to carry his ammunition. The former was mightily pleased at his master's shooting, and looked with disdain at the royal sportsman, observing, "That old Dan-goulem knows as much about shooting as my old missus. He has only killed four brace of pheasants, and he might have doubled the number if he'd a done what his keeper told him, and pulled when he was told to pull." "What do you mean by pull?" replied his friend. "When he cried pull, he didn't mean pull : pull (*poule*) in their outlandish gibberish means hen, and he mentioned it so that his master shouldn't shoot the hen-pheasants." "Who's to understand their parlyvous?" growled the other. "I heard one fellow call a boot-jack a turbot (*tirebotte*), and a horse a shovel (*cheval*)."

An excellent story is told of old Sir William Yea, who lived at Pyrland Hall, near Taunton, about the year 1770. He was a powerful and muscular squire. Requiring the

services of a new gamekeeper, he gave notice that only a strong man need apply. Shortly afterwards a suitable man appeared and sought the situation. He resembled "His Grace the Duke of Limbs," and was all "muscle and bone." The squire accepted his services upon certain conditions, and gave him the following directions:—

"Now, mark; there is a blacksmith fellow who often crosses the park without my permission. He is a very strong and determined rascal. Turn him back, and then I know you will suit me very well, and I will give you £1 for your trouble."

The gamekeeper said he would do his best. About a week later he called at the Hall, and claimed his reward; but Sir William was ill in bed and could not see him. He called again, a week later, and Sir William, who was still rather weak, ordered him to be shown in. The squire gazed admiringly at his stalwart keeper, and then said:—

"We met on the last occasion in the park, about ten days ago. I was the blacksmith, and I have not been quite fit since our meeting; but I ought to have thrashed you. However, I think you will suit me very well, and here is the sovereign I promised you."¹

Another story is told of this redoubtable squire. Sir William Yea and his nephew were having supper one evening at Pyrland Hall, when six men entered the room, admitted by a servant. They rushed at Sir William, and contrived, by their overwhelming strength, to overpower him, and tie him with strong cords to his chair. The nephew managed to effect his escape, jumping out of the window and running to Taunton for help. The robbers then set to work to collect all the old silver and other treasures that the hall contained. During these proceedings Sir William was struggling to free himself,

¹ The story was kindly sent to me by Mr. W. H. Morley, whose grandfather was first cousin to this redoubtable squire.

and using his gigantic strength he managed to escape from his bonds. He seized a large carving-knife from the hall-table and fought with his enemies, defending himself for more than an hour until help arrived. The nephew had returned with a posse of constables, who captured the robbers, whose ringleader was executed at Dodhill Green in the presence of thousands of spectators. ¹

Squires are usually staunch members of the Church of England, but occasionally they wander into other folds. When Methodism made a stir in the world one of the race joined its ranks, and used to preach himself or make his coachman hold forth. The efforts of the latter were not always very successful. One day he delivered himself of the following somewhat mixed statement: "If we only had a mustard tree full of faith we should move the kingdom of the devil into the middle of the sea." In response to his prayer, "Let Satan as lightning fall from heaven," the congregation replied, "Turn him out, O Lord, with the pole of Thy love."

About eighty years ago some districts in Essex were much disturbed by poachers, and Mr. John Wilkes, the squire of Lofts Hall, suffered much from their depredations. Langley in 1828 was the centre of a desperate gang of night poachers, sheep-stealers and robbers, who carried on their nefarious work from Scales Park to Audley End. Mr. Ashford of Ansley Hall, who cut the rides through Scales Park, had a conflict with them, and then Mr. Wilkes determined to try to stop the gang. His gamekeepers, watchers, and men from Elmdon met them below Pond Street Wood, and a most desperate affray took place, in which the poachers had the best of it. One man turned King's evidence to save his own skin, and another, who could neither read nor write, concocted the following "Ballad," which was taken down, about

¹ *Ibid.*

fifty years ago, by a Poor Law Guardian, Mr. Basham, from one Ben Bentley, who was probably one of the gang.

“ It was just before one Christmas time
 We started for a spree,
 There were nine and twenty of us, my boys,
 No danger did we see.
 We all charged our guns, my boys,
 And unto Thorney Wood did steer ;
 It was then from there to Pond Street Wood
 We marchéd full a mile.
 We had men to carry our game, my boys,
 And our guns all charged in stile ;
 It was then from there to Abram Wood
 We marched two by two,
 We had not long got to the woods
 Before we had something to do,
 For there were six and seven come into the woods,
 And with their hearts content
 They said, draw out you night shooters
 And show yourselves like men.
 Soon as we got out of the woods
 They drew on to the ground,
 And soon after they had a civil fight
 The time they did think long ;
 For some lay wounded on the ground,
 And some thrown in the pond.
 Then we picked up our bags of game
 Which they might seek to-morrow,
 And with broken heads we marched away
 Saying none shall us dare follow.
 Oh ! it was on a Friday night,
 We heard a bitter cry,
 For the gamekeepers upon the ground
 Were wounded dreadfully.
 But it was worse on Saturday,
 Which was the worst of all,
 For there was one man who turned ‘ snitch ’
 And told them of us all.
 Transported many good fellows
 And caused their friends to cry,
 And gave a many a broken heart
 ‘Twill last until they die.”

Such is the sorry tale. Mr. John Wilkes, of Elmdon Bury, who sends me this curious specimen of rustic verse, tells me that his grandfather, the Rev. Robert Wilkes, succeeded the above John Wilkes in 1858, who, in order to stop the poachers, set a wire gun in one of his woods. A man was injured, and brought an action for damages against the squire. The squire won the case, but afterwards paid all the costs of the trial and compensated the man. This is of general interest, as the direct result of the case was the introduction of a Bill prohibiting the setting of man-traps and spring-guns.

Old Squire Wharton of Skelton-in-Cleveland was a noted Master of Foxhounds, who was flourishing about the middle of the last century. By his special wish, his only grandchild (the only child of his only child) was christened "Winsome," "after one of my hounds," as the old man expressed it.

Many of my readers will remember the squire's pew in our churches before the days of "restoration," cosy, sleep-provoking structures, curtained off, wherein was often a special fire-place, the pew being furnished like a drawing-room. If the clergyman was rather too long preaching his sermon, the squire would poke the fire somewhat impatiently and vigorously. It is reported that sherry and biscuits were sometimes served by a livery servant, and that the squire used to have his letters and newspapers delivered to him in his pew, and to read them during the sermon. When Bishop Wilberforce was shown a luxurious squire's pew, with a special fire-place, arm-chairs and "every convenience," and when the clerk asked if the bishop could suggest any improvement, or the addition of any furniture, Wilberforce quietly whispered to the clergyman by his side, "A card-table"!

The squire's pew at Felbrugg, Norfolk, the former home of the Windhams, was large enough to seat fourteen

persons. It stood just west of the chancel screen. During the service Squire Windham stood up in the corner of his pew, rested a large Prayer Book on the pew side, and repeated the responses loudly with the clerk. A similar pew on the opposite side of the central aisle was for the rector's family, while the servants of the two households sat facing each other in the chancel. Lady Sophia, the wife of the squire, bought and played a harmonium, which was placed in her pew. The squire was a son of Windham, the great statesman, and brother of General Windham of the Balaclava Charge notoriety. It is said that he came into an impoverished estate, and spent his life in restoring it to prosperity. He pulled down an old cottage in the park, and an ancient dame, who had lived there all her life, cursed him to his face. The curse seems to have taken effect. His only child was "Mad Windham," who married a depraved, "common" woman, and spent all that his father had saved. There was a sensational trial in lunacy, but he was not pronounced insane, and the property was sold. My friend, who tells me these details of the breaking up of an old family, sat beside "Mad Windham" when he was the driver of the Norwich-and-Cromer coach.

The chronicles of Great Milton, Dorset, record the strange story of the wiping out of a good old town with all the traditions of its ancient life preserved in its buildings, and its transference to an entirely new site. This was the act and deed of a tyrannical old squire, Joseph, Lord Milton (afterwards Earl of Dorchester), about the year 1780. There was an old grammar school in Milton, and the boys were a continual annoyance to his lordship, as they stole his fruit, disturbed his game, took his cucumbers and his game-fowl eggs to rear good cock-fighting champions. This was very trying, so he resolved to transplant the whole town, bag and baggage,

with fine quarter-deck high-handedness. This raised a loud outcry. But he had to buy up all the houses before he could pull them down, and it took him twenty years. A local solicitor refused to sell his lease, though he was offered three times its value. Lord Milton tried to turn him out by turning on to his house the water from a pond ; so the lawyer brought an action, and won it. A few days later, when his lordship was driving to London, the church bells burst out in a joyous peal. They were only ringing for Guy Fawkes' Day ; but the squire thought that the people were ringing a peal to express their joy at his departure, and at his defeat by the lawyer. So the tyrant doomed the sale of the bells, and the people wept when they were carted away. He also removed all the headstones in the churchyard, converting it into a lawn, and irreverently treated many bones of deceased parishioners.¹ No wonder that, according to the superstitious tradition of the villagers, he died of a gruesome disease. In attempting to offer some excuse for Lord Milton's tyrannical conduct, it must be remembered that he had recently lost his beautiful and loving wife, and that his eldest son, the husband of the famous Anne Seymour Damer, had committed suicide. Hardened by his troubles, instead of being softened by them, and worried by the grammar-school boys, he was guilty of this strange act, which has few parallels in the stories of squires.

¹ *Memorials of old Dorset. Milton Abbey*, by Rev. H. Pentin.

CHAPTER XIX

SOME POPULAR SQUIRE

A VERY popular squire was Mr. Whitmore Jones of Chastleton, in Oxfordshire. He succeeded to the property on the death of his cousin Squire John Jones. The beautiful house and estate had been purchased by the Jones family from Robert Catesby, one of the conspirators of the Gunpowder Plot, who needed the purchase money in order to forward his evil designs. John Jones held the property at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and lived as a recluse in his charming domain. It appears that he fell in love with Miss Barbara Ingram, the beautiful daughter of the Rector of Chastleton ; but he was not the only squire who fell a victim to her charms. Squire Chamberlayne of Mangersbury and Squire Dickens of Cherington were also smitten, but the cruel Barbara (like her namesake Barbara Allen of the old ballad) would not accept any one of them, and this so soured the poor squire of Chastleton that not only did he remain a bachelor, but he withdrew himself from all society, shut himself up in his house, and devoted himself to the improvement of his estate. He was much beloved and respected, and very kind-hearted and charitable ; but he was a very keen upholder of his manorial rights. His descendant, Miss Mary Whitmore Jones, gives some amusing instances of this. He used to exact the formal fee of one halfpenny a year from a neighbouring landlord for the privilege of crossing

his field on his way to church. A lady dared to trespass on the road in rebuilding her garden wall just four inches beyond its proper line. The squire made her take down the wall and rebuild it. Having no son, the property passed to Mr. John Whitmore, in 1828, who took the additional name of Jones. His wife was Dorothy, daughter of Colonel Clutton of Pensax Court.

A new era dawned for the old house of Chastleton. Instead of a recluse the owner was now a fine, active squire who entered upon the duties of his station with a whole-hearted zest and enjoyment, and with the aid of his dignified and clever wife, made the mansion the most attractive in the neighbourhood. His descendant thus describes his activities :—

“ He farmed part of his land, he hardly ever missed a day of his magisterial duties, and, above all, he was an ardent politician—a red-hot Tory in the days of the Reform Bill, when the fortunes of the party were at their lowest ebb. And whether he was canvassing from morning to night, as if his very existence depended upon the fortunes of his friend ; or tramping over his turnips at five o'clock in the morning on the first of September ; superintending the planting of his trees ; or being the centre of a laughing group at the cover-side, he did it all *con amore*. In short, he lived the ideal life of a country gentleman, looking on its duties as pleasures, and its pleasures as duties.”

A remarkable instance of his popularity was shown on one occasion. It was in the year 1850. He had given up farming and sold all his stock, his ploughs and cart-horses, some years before, when a farm was thrown on his hands by the death of a tenant, and he knew not how to tide over the difficulty and keep his land in cultivation. He mentioned the matter to one or two neighbouring farmers, and they immediately offered to give him a

“love hawl,” if he would provide the seed corn and some bread and cheese and beer. The day was fixed for the work to be done—April 6th. The squire went up the hill to see the men at work, expecting to see a few plough teams. Imagine his surprise when he saw sixty-eight, and ten of them double teams! The horses were decked out in ribbons, and the men wore clean white smock-frocks; altogether the scene looked like a gigantic ploughing match. One hundred acres were ploughed, harrowed, and very nearly sown in one day; and great regret was expressed that the “love hawl” had not been more widely known; if other farmers in the neighbourhood had heard of it, twice the number of teams would have been there. This is a notable instance of the popularity of a good squire, and of the kind-hearted, affectionate regard of Oxfordshire farmers for one whom they had learnt to love and to respect.

There are few who know more of country life than Mr. J. K. Fowler, who in his *Recollections* tells us much of the condition of affairs in the fair county of Buckingham. His acquaintance with squires was extensive and intimate, and he had a great admiration for the distinguished family of the Drakes of Shardeloes, near Amersham. They acquired the manor by marriage in the reign of James I, and the estate is still in their possession. You look out from the windows of the house over a splendid lake forty acres in extent, artificially formed by the widening of the river Misse, and admire the splendid woodland. Though the house is mainly modern there are some fine family portraits and also pictures of Queen Elizabeth and her “dancing Chancellor,” Sir Christopher Hatton. The Drakes have left many memorials of themselves. The old Town Hall at Amersham was built by Sir William Drake, who died in 1690. The almshouses were also built by him, or his predecessor, in 1617, Sir

William Drake; and the church has a Drake chapel, where we find many monuments and tombs of the members of the family, and also in the church itself, which is a veritable Drake mausoleum. That is a very touching little memorial brass of a youthful scion of the house, one John Drake, who died aged four years :—

“ Had he lived to be a man,
This inch had grown to be a span ;
Now he is past all fear of pain,
'Twere sin to wish him back again.
View but the way by which we come,
Thou'lt say he's best that's first at home.”

Until the year of the Reform Act of 1832 Amersham always returned two members to Parliament, and was always represented by a Drake. They were not remarkable for their oratory in the House. No great speeches are recorded as having been made by them; but they were remarkable for their sturdy independence. The Drakes were never to be bought by any bribing minister, and no more independent members ever entered the House of Commons in the close borough days than Thomas Tyrwhitt Drake, the squire of Amersham, and his brother Colonel Drake, who fought gallantly at Waterloo in the “ Blues.”

The members for Amersham had, however, one formidable task at election time. The women-folk of the town used to take possession of the inns, the ladies selecting the two principal ones. The election took place in the Town Hall with closed doors. When this was over the members marched in procession to the inns, formally entered each inn, where the women, old and young, married and unmarried, were waiting, and very deliberately and demurely kissed them in turn. After this performance was over, the young men of the town rushed

into the inns and amidst much laughter and screams followed the example of their newly elected members.¹

Mr. Fowler, who tells the above story, states that his family had been tenants of the Drakes for over a hundred years, and he had heard his father and grandfather say there was never a bad man in the whole family. His own squire was Thomas Tyrwhitt Drake, who died about 1889. He was twice Master of the Bicester Hunt and a famous rider. He was often urged to stand for parliamentary honours. A vacancy for the shire having occurred, Mr. Fowler and the Clerk of the Peace for the county rode over to the meet at Ham Green to ask the squire to allow himself to be nominated. He strongly refused. Again they urged their request, promising him that success was certain. After listening to all they had to say the squire replied :—

“ You two fellows have known me all your lives, haven't you ? ”

“ Yes,” they answered.

“ Well, you know I have always associated with gentlemen ? ”

“ Certainly,” they replied.

“ Then why in the world do you want to send me to the House of Commons ? ” He then spurred his horse, galloped down one of the rides of Tittershall Wood, and viewed the fox away, and that was the last attempt made to nominate him to Parliament. It is possible that the constitution of the House in this year of grace 1912 might have proved even less tempting to the Buckinghamshire squire than it was in the 'eighties. He was a good landlord and very kind to his tenants. He had some estates in Cheshire, and when the cattle plague broke out there and his tenants suffered heavy losses, he refused to receive any rent for his farms. Now that estates are being broken

¹ *Echoes of Old Country Life*, by J. K. Fowler.

up and tenants have been encouraged to purchase their holdings, it may be wondered what the poor men, who have invested their all in the land, will do in similar cases of loss and misfortune. They will have no kind landlord to help them ; the cost of repairing buildings, fencing, etc., will all fall upon their shoulders, and we may anticipate that they will wish for the return of the old friendly relations between a genial squire and themselves.

It has been my privilege to be entrusted with the manuscript diaries of the late Stephen Terry, the squire of Dummer, in Hampshire. These old books are absorbingly interesting, and I spent hours in reading them and made but slow progress with my writing. I am indebted to the kindness of his grand-daughter and grandson, Mr. Stephen Harding Terry, for the loan of these diaries. The old squire was a keen sportsman with an ideal sense of true sport, and a good rider, who followed the hounds until he was ninety years of age. Dummer was held by the Terry family for four hundred years, and Mr. Terry was a true country squire of the old school. He was captain of Eton about the year 1780, served in the army on foreign service, and towards the end of the eighteenth century succeeded his father as owner of Dummer. He was an excellent landlord, and greatly beloved by his tenants. In conjunction with his eldest son he founded the Royal Agricultural Society of England, and was one of the chief prize winners in almost all classes of exhibits. He was famous as a fox-preserve and fox-hunter, and although he was chiefly known in the H.H., Vine and Sir John Cope's counties, he was also well known in the shires, and was a friend of Jack Musters and of Mr. Assheton-Smith of Tedworth and Vaynot. He was a good classical scholar, having been educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge, before entering the army, and his diaries abound with specimens of good Latin verse, as well as

of rhymes and jingles, in the art of fashioning which he seems to have been a past master. His diaries record all manner of interesting and curious facts. He tells of noted runs, minutely describing the course taken by Reynard, the checks and other incidents, the state of the weather, the doings of the family, and important public affairs. The Crimean War, the Palmer murders at Rugeley, the poisoning of race-horses, interesting cases at the Bench, the pursuits of farming, the planting of trees, and all the varied events and incidents of country life. I should like to quote extensively from these books, but I scarcely know where to begin, and if I once begin I am sure that I shall never end. Now we read about the death of some sheep, of large American foxes turned down which killed sheep, the arrival of three beautiful black pigs from Farmer Sparsholt at Weston, and then we are transported to Corfu by means of Latin verse :—

“Littore Graecorum, Corfu tetigit Relativa,” etc.

where his grand-niece, “Adolescens in primævo flore juventæ,” has gone to be married. And then we read, “Hounds could not come Thursday to Nutley for frost. I am quite with their huntsman ; he was howled over in the papers for ungentlemanly conduct and smoking in the railway lately.” Sometimes he is very severe on un-sportsmanly sportsmen, as in his verses on :—

A NOVEL WAY OF SHOWING SPORT WITH FOXHOUNDS

In the month of November, the year fifty-nine,
Bright Phœbus was up, and the weather was fine,
Such a pack as then seen on Candover green.
It was stout, it was healthy and even, I mean.
And well they might be so, for look ! Thorny Down
Was staring full at them with woods of renown.
The Huntsman is fearless and sanguine to kill,
His men are well mounted and fly to his will.
The foxes are plenty, so give them fair play,
No vermin are stronger to show them the way.”

He then goes on to criticize the foolish fondness for swift hounds, which never stoop to a scent, are hunted by horn and hark halloo. The pack become a mere "murderous band."

" To number the scalps on the main kennel door,
The pride of their calling, they want nothing more :
No talent of Huntsman or hounds is there shew'd,
Foxes bullied to death as soon as they're viewed."

These indifferent sportsmen proceeded to kill a Bagman in a few minutes, but when they tried to hunt a real bold Reynard he laughed to scorn such poor hunting ways. The old squire was right, and modern huntsmen can often learn something from his merry but cutting verse. With such recreations of rhyming and noting the affairs of the country did the old squire of Dummer amuse himself, and he has left behind a valuable record of many interesting events which are now almost forgotten.

A very popular squire was Sir Brook Bridges of Goodnestone, Kent, whom one of my correspondents¹ knew in his youth very well. He always dressed in the style of the squire of the olden days, exactly as we are accustomed to see that worthy depicted. A blue cutaway, double-breasted coat with solid brass buttons, leather breeches, and top boots, and a low-crowned beaver hat, sometimes white. He generally travelled on horseback, and was a generous, kind landlord, and a warm-hearted, good man, much beloved by not a few. He was M.P. in the Conservative interest for East Kent for many years, until his elevation to the peerage under the title of Baron Fitzwalter in 1868.

To the squires belongs the credit of introducing many improvements in agriculture. In improving the breeds of cattle, sheep, pigs and horses, in inventing and perfecting

¹ Mr. Francis Henson

agricultural implements, and in introducing better methods of cultivation, the squires led the way. Foremost among these is an almost forgotten worthy, Jethro Tull, of Berkshire, who was born at Basildon in 1674. He could scarcely be called a popular squire in his own day, as he fell foul of his county neighbours who refused to accept his theories, and of his labourers, who, fearing that his drills and other machines would diminish their labour, struck work and smashed his inventions. Tull was a gentleman, educated at Oxford, a barrister, and he tells us in his own books that agriculture was not his choice but forced upon him by necessity, when he succeeded to the estates of his father at Shalbourne. He applied his mind, trained in other pursuits, to the industry and startled his bucolic neighbours by his discoveries, which few at the time refused to accept. This is not the place to describe his struggles and achievements,¹ but we cannot omit his name from our list of squires who have wrought well and worthily for the advancement of the science they loved.

Of the same family was Edward Tull, of Peasmore, in Berkshire, of whose life some picturesque details have been supplied to me by his daughter, Mrs. Flemyng. This lady asks us to excuse "the garrulity of an old squire's old daughter," but her story is so graphically told, that it must be given in her own words:—

"My father farmed his property of some 1000 acres, was a J.P., a Poor Law Guardian, and a most zealous Tory. At one stormy election meeting in the early thirties he was beset by an angry crowd, and in order to escape their fury was dropped out of window, and fell on a low roof, happily without any injury to himself. He worked day and night when Mr. Pusey, one of the

¹ Cf. *Agriculture in Victoria History of Berkshire*, II, p. 351, by P. H. Ditchfield.

M.P.'s for Berks, joined Mr. Cobden in the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and was the means of his being turned out at the next election. He was always in the saddle and often tired three and four horses a day, as he started out before six and saw that the men were properly at work, and then came county business, markets, etc. His temper was fiery and his tongue sharp and cutting, but he had no enemies, and his own men would do anything for him. During the riots when machinery was first used and many farms were set on fire, he never stopped his threshing machines, though the rioters passed quite close, as they said, 'he was a good master and just to his labourers.' The young unmarried men who were hired by the year at the fairs were always engaged to go to church once every Sunday, Christmas Day, and Good Friday, and on the two latter days all labourers were paid full wages, and in return they attended a service though most of them were Ranters. My father's attitude to Church matters was, like himself, eccentric. The rector, one of the most excellent of men, was not ready and quick in thought and speech, and suffered much from the squire's 'baitings,' very often made as jokes, but in his secret heart the rector's Puseyite ways were admired by the squire, and many a less advanced and earnest parson was told of the Prayer Book rubrics about Daily Matins and Evensong. He was most regular in church on Sundays, and was the last to appear, preceded by boys who hoped to escape his hawk's eye. His *reason* was that he was on the watch for tramps among the barns, ricks, and certainly he often found them and sent them running. He was the people's warden and was called by Bishop Wilberforce 'the fidgeting churchwarden,' as during the Bishop's first visitation charge at Newbury, which lasted a very long time, he kept tapping his boots with his riding-whip. The Bishop never charged again at such

a length. He always wore breeches and Wellington boots, and was a member of the Craven Hunt, but never really hunted after his marriage, and though he could always give his friends a good day's partridge shooting, he never fired a gun in his life, which fact our rooks were perfectly aware of, as they did not move for him and his gun, but were away in a body when the gamekeeper appeared. He 'showed' at all the county shows—pigs, sheep, and horses—and took so many prizes that he latterly did not compete. The fat pigs were scrubbed daily, and their pens were marvels for those days, and the squire was very proud that some were generally bought by the Queen's purveyor at Windsor. There were five teams of horses (four to a team) at the several farms—each team of one colour—and it was pretty to see the wagons starting for market, and to hear the bells as the horses shook their heads. The cottages of the people were in good order for those days, and lodgers not allowed. Wages were low, but he gave the most he could without being unfair to the tenant farmers around. Hay and corn harvests were paid by 'piece work,' the whole family helping the father, and the 'gleaning' was very useful and profitable towards making the 'standard loaf' of those days. Then a young pig could be bought out of the squire's stubble herd in the autumn and fattened up to pay the rent. He rarely left home for more than a few days at a time, and then carried his farm with him, as it were. Once when we got him away to Edinburgh, the first thing he did was to write to the bailiff and tell him to go to a certain part of a field and pull up a dock which my father had forgotten to do. Nothing escaped his eye and docks were his special enemies. In those days women worked in the fields a great deal, picking off stones, etc., and if they thought the master was safely away there was more gossip than work going on. Nothing delighted him more

than to change his plans and see them with their heads together from a distance and rush on them—they heard some strong language and worked the harder for some time.

“ The squire was a clean-living Englishman who seldom used a bad word, neither drank nor smoked, feared God, honoured the King and hated the Pope, the French, and Mr. Cobden. He drove to market in a gig and often stood up in it to look over the hedge at some crop in the field—more than once he was jerked out, and on one occasion had the reins in his hand and was dragged a short distance, but escaped with a few bruises. He was very slight, and never had a serious hurt from the numerous falls off his pony. Once he came in with one side of his face yellow and the side whiskers singed, and said quite calmly that he had had a narrow shave, as a flash of lightning had struck his stirrups. Another escape he had when opening the door of the mule’s shed; the beast kicked out and hit him on the forehead—he was able to get away out of reach of another kick and beyond a black hoof-mark was none the worse—the mule being so near he could not get a full blow. One habit of his would be thought irreverent now. He sat at church in the first seat, and during the Psalms stood facing the congregation to see who were absent; it was not pleasant for the next pew people and quite as annoying was the squire’s sneeze. It was a long time coming, during which he sat with his handkerchief in his hand and his head well thrown back; when it arrived the noise was alarming. The rector, poor man, was always fascinated by this, and the threads of his sermon used to get very entangled till the explosion came.”

Squires have trials as well as other folk. At Patching there lived a charming old squire, Sir John Kirkland, a courtly gentleman who was much beloved by all the

tenants and villagers. He had made arrangements with a tenant farmer to take over the land occupied by the latter in order to farm it himself. The matter was fully settled, and compensation given, when the farmer changed his mind and wished to continue his tenancy. This Sir John refused to permit, and the farmer thirsted for revenge. He fixed up a post with an elaborate signboard in front of a cottage—on one side was painted a man's face with the inscription "Lying Jack," while the other side bore the legend "Jack, the lying Scotchman." Everybody was furious, and a company soon collected armed with saw and hatchets to destroy the offending object, which was speedily smashed into fragments.¹ The same old knight was churchwarden and discharged his duties very faithfully. One day the family of a sporting farmer came to church and spent the time in talking and giggling. Sir John was annoyed, but bore this unseemly behaviour for some time, and then walked across the aisle and remonstrated with them. They were startled into silence, but not subdued; and soon the disturbance began again. The old knight again quietly crossed the aisle, opened the door of the pew with a polite bow, and stood there until they left their seats and went out of the church. A very pretty bit of discipline! Of course a row followed, and the poor rector had to bear the brunt of the angry complaints; but the offenders were taught a lesson which they did not readily forget.

If I were to attempt to give a full list of all the popular squires in England, many volumes would be needed to record their excellencies. In our own county of Berkshire their names are numerous. There was Mr. Richard Benyon of Englefield, the most generous of benefactors; Mr. Garth of Haines Hill, the founder of the Garth Hunt, who hunted till he was eighty, and was the best of land-

¹ *Old Times and Friends*, by the Rev. E. L. H. Tew.

lords ; the Palmers of Holme Park ; Mr. John Walter of Bear Wood ; the Hunters of Mortimer ; the Thoyts of Sulhamstead ; the Mounts of Wasing ; the Ferards of Winkfield, and many other honoured names. And every other shire has its roll of famous squires who have left their impress on the sands of time and done good in their generation. Many villages possess relics of their bounty in the beautiful old almshouses they built for their poorer neighbours.

“ Oh, the good old times of England !

When her gentlemen had hands to give, and her yeomen hearts
to feel ;

And they raised up many a bede-house, but never a bastille ;

And the poor they honoured, for they knew that He, who for
us bled,

Had seldom, when He came on earth, whereon to lay His head.”

All honour, then, to the good old squire, the last of the old type of the landed gentry, the good landlord, true friend, the great-hearted, pure-minded, real old English gentleman. England will be the poorer when he passes away.

We should like to have devoted a separate chapter to the “ Squarsons,” the race of squire-parsons, who have left an honourable record. They are becoming extinct in these days. It was not unusual for the heirs of property to be ordained clergymen, to hold the family living, and in course of time to succeed to the estates of their ancestors and become squires. They usually combined the characteristics of the old English gentleman with those of the parish priest, and were much beloved. They were imbued with the spirit of country life, understood the people, mingled with them in their amusements ; but never forgot their sacred office as well as the duties they owed to the tenants and labourers on their estates. Such a family of good “ squarsons ” were the Hoptons. The Rev.

William Parsons (born 1749) took the name of Hopton when he inherited the estate of Canon ffrome in 1819. He it was who saved Lechmere's Bank, in Tewkesbury, during a panic, that exciting scene being depicted in Mrs. Craik's *John Halifax, Gentleman*. His son, the Rev. John Hopton, was also a "squarson," a most liberal-minded man, a true friend to the poor, whose "charity knew no other limit than that of human sorrow." One of the Hoptons, a "squarson," was captain of a local company of Herefordshire yeomanry, which was raised at the time of Napoleon's threatened invasion. It would be possible to extend this record of the good gentlemen who have combined the duties of squire and parson with excellent results for the benefit of their people, and "squarsons" have not been the least popular among the squires of England.

CHAPTER XX

ECCENTRIC CHARACTERS

AMONG the ranks of the squires there are some whom eccentricity and even madness have marked for their own. As a rule, they were steady, grave, and reverend seigniors, good husbands and fathers, who quietly did their duty in the little world over which they ruled; but there were some exceptions, and foremost amongst these we must class the famous John Mytton. He was a strange and curious character, half madman and full of impish mischief, utterly lawless and unrestrained, and yet his biographer, the sententious "Nimrod," found something in his character to admire, and numbered him among his friends.

John Mytton was the squire of Halston, Shropshire, M.P. for Shrewsbury, High Sheriff of the county of Salop and Merioneth, and major of the North Shropshire Yeomanry Cavalry. He came of good family. His ancestors had for many centuries represented the borough of Shrewsbury in Parliament, commencing with Reginald de Mutton, or Mytton, in 1373. Thomas Mytton, High Sheriff in 1480, won the favour of Richard III, who calls him his "well-beloved squire," for arresting and leading to execution the Duke of Buckingham, receiving as his reward the Castle and Lordship of Cawes. The old hall of Halston came to the family in the time of the sixth Edward. In Jack Mytton's days the mansion-house was, according to "Nimrod," "without pretensions to mag-

nificence, replete with every comfort and convenience for a country gentleman's establishment." A large park—Halston Woods were famous for their timber—beautiful gardens, plantations, a rookery, a heronry, made up an "earthly paradise," and the sportsman could revel in shooting, fishing, and hunting with foxhounds and harriers. Unfortunately, the young squire lost his father when he was very young, and had no one to restrain him, while his fond mother spoilt him. When a boy, a neighbouring squire christened him "Mango, the King of Pickles," and he well earned that title. He was expelled from Westminster and Harrow, knocked down his Berkshire tutor, was entered on the books of both Universities, but did not matriculate at either, and "finished" his education with the grand tour of the Continent.

Then he entered the army as a cornet in the 7th Hussars, and was just in time to help to occupy Paris after the defeat at Waterloo, but when all fighting was over. But he found many opportunities for the exercise of his peculiar talents. He rode in races, borrowed money, lost it in a gambling hell, and as some consolation smashed the table to atoms. Leaving the army in 1818, he married the daughter of Sir Tyrwhitt Jones, Bart., of Stanley Hall, when there was a very fashionable assembly, and spent his honeymoon at Blenheim Palace. But, perhaps happily for her, the lady died a few years after her marriage, leaving one daughter, who survived him.

If you would like to know the appearance of this extraordinary man, his biographer tells us that he was not handsome, but had a pleasant countenance, the air and character of a gentleman, prodigious muscles, and a bull-dog courage and amazing strength. "There were giants in the earth in those days." It is amazing to read of their exploits in the saddle. Mytton, when his hounds hunted the Albrighton country, used to ride several times

in the week to coverts nearly fifty miles distant from Halston, and return thither to dinner, thus covering a hundred miles in addition to his hunting. Scarcely a day passed in which he did not endanger his life. His escapes were almost miraculous. Horses would run away with him when he was driving. Unable to swim, he would plunge into deep water. He was mixed up in countless street broils at race-meetings. No fence was too high for him to attempt—and then there was his mad intoxication. He drank like a fish, and when drunk he used often to fall off his horse, and yet never received serious injuries. A friend was driving with him one day in a gig, and congratulating himself that he had never been upset in one.

“What!” replied Mytton, “never upset in a gig? What a slow fellow you must have been all your life”; and so, running his near wheel up the bank, over they both went, fortunately without either being much injured. In order to see whether a new horse was a good timber-jumper, he put him as leader in a tandem, and charged a turnpike gate. The leader cleared it beautifully, but the other horse and dog-cart, Mytton and the horse-dealer from whom he was buying the horse, were left all in a heap on the other side of the gate.

His courage was remarkable, and his power to endure pain without showing it. With dislocated ribs he would hunt, and be in at the death. Of course, he was reckless and extravagant, borrowed money wholesale, and spent or lent it with equal readiness. When the Jew money-lender delayed an advance, he hired two coal-heavers to knock at his door every second hour throughout the night until the money arrived. He borrowed £10,000 at a high rate of interest, and immediately lent £9,000 to a friend, who at once bolted to the Continent, and was never seen again. He was the prototype of another

modern young man, who showed an equal skill in getting through his thousands and succouring worthless friends.

His impish spirit prompted him one night to play the highwayman on two departing guests, a doctor and a clergyman. He kept a tame bear, and rode it into the drawing-room at Halston, attired in full hunting togs. When Underhill, the horse-dealer, came to Halston to present his bill, he was much surprised to receive a letter addressed to Mytton's banker, which Mytton told him was an order for full payment. The banker was, however, a governor of the lunatic asylum, and the order for payment ran thus :—

“ Sir,—Admit the bearer, George Underhill, into the Lunatic Asylum. Your obedient servant,

“ JOHN MYTTON.”

And yet, amid all his wild conduct, his careless habits, and unrestrained licence, he was immensely kind and charitable to the poor, very forgiving to those who injured him, honourable in his dealings, no backbiter or slanderer, while his good-humour and affectionate simplicity rendered him a great favourite among his neighbours. He contrived to spend half a million of money in fifteen years and must have emulated the skill of the gentleman in the modern play who, under his uncle's will, inherited the property on the condition that he spent a million in one year. He kept a pack of foxhounds, a racing establishment, preserved game, dressed extravagantly, was the best customer of the postboys throughout England, and always scattered his money freely, especially when he was one night asleep in his carriage, and a gale sprang up and blew the several thousand pounds' worth of notes, won at Doncaster races, out of the window. He had the restlessness of a hyena in the pursuit



SQUIRE MYTTON'S BANK NOTES FLYING OUT OF HIS CARRIAGE WINDOW
AFTER DONCASTER RACES

of pleasure, and yet seemed not to derive any gratification from it, save a little passing excitement.

There seems to have been much mutual affection between Mytton and his chaplain, who appears to have been a witty, easy-going person, but suffered somewhat from the pranks of his patron. One day, on the way to church, Mytton contrived to purloin his sermon, and substitute the *Sporting Magazine*, with dire results to the parson and his flock. Another day wires were laid across the cleric's path, connected with a gun, which went off with a loud report when the parson's foot tripped over the wire. The squire complained loudly against the parson shooting his pheasants on a Sunday. After the break-up of the Mytton establishment, the chaplain asked his bishop for a living, preferring an English benefice, and not one in the wilds of Wales. The bishop demanded the reason for this preference, and the chaplain replied :—

“ I should prefer an English living, as my wife does not speak Welsh.”

“ Your wife, sir ! What has that got to do with it ? She does not preach, does she ? ”

“ No, my lord,” replied the parson, “ but she lectures.”

The parson got his living, but it was in the wilds of Wales.

It is curious that a man of Mytton's mode of life should have cared to enter Parliament. He spent £10,000 on his election, and once took his seat for half an hour ; that was his longest and only sitting. Perhaps it would be well for the country if some of those who now grace the House of Commons would practise the same self-denial. Mytton was devoted to sport. He kept two packs of fox-hounds and a stable of twenty-five hunters. He hunted the Shropshire and Shifnal country. He was one of the best crack riders in England, and the most daring. Deep ditches and blind gaps had no terror for him : his prowess

with the gun was almost unrivalled, and he was equally distinguished as a winner of cups at races.

But the pace was too great, and it is the pace that kills. Debts accumulated ; duns pounced down upon Halston. Everything that could be sold was put up to auction. Pictures, horses, hounds, furniture—all shared the same fate, and passed into alien hands. A bloated, disreputable, old-young man, once the gay young squire, crossed the Channel and took up his abode at Calais, out of the reach of duns and bailiffs. His mind became disordered. Returning to England, he was sent to Shrewsbury jail. Then he was in Calais again. We like to recall that redeeming feature of his tragic story. A French soldier came into a silversmith's shop with a watch which he wanted to sell for the benefit of a sick comrade. The silversmith declined to give the price demanded, when Mytton threw down the money and took up the watch. The soldier expressed his gratitude, and then Mytton gave him the watch also. "Ah, Monsieur Anglais ! que vous dirai-je ?" exclaimed the man. "*Rien*," was poor Mytton's brief reply.

We need not follow Jack Mytton through the last sad days until his end in the King's Bench prison. Those were the days of great and pompous funerals. In spite of his miserable fate and misspent life, he was still squire of Halston, and had to be buried with befitting dignity. As an example of a squire's funeral, the following description of the procession may be quoted :—

Four Trumpeters of the North Shropshire Cavalry.
 Capt. Croxon and Capt. Jones.
 Thirty-two Members of the Cavalry.
 A Standard of the Regiment covered with Crape.
 Forty-two Members of the Cavalry.
 Adjutant Sirley and Cornet Nicholls.
 Mr. Dunn (undertaker) and Mr. Gittins.
 Two Mutes.

Carriages of the Revs. W. Jones and J. D. Pigott.
Two Mourning Coaches and Four, with the
Pall Bearers.

Hon. T. Kenyon.	A. W. Corbett, Esq.
R. A. Slaney, Esq., M.P.	J. R. Kynaston, Esq.
J. C. Pelham, Esq.	Rev. H. C. Cotton.

The Hearse, drawn by Four Horses, with
THE BODY

In a Coffin covered with Black Velvet, with massive
Handles, richly ornamented, with Plate inscribed :—

“ John Mytton, Esq., of Halston,
Born 30th of September, 1796 ;
Died 29th of March, 1834.”

(The Hearse was driven by Mr. Bowyer, the Deceased's
coachman, who, with Mr. McDougal, another servant,
attended him in his last moments.)

Then followed a long train of mourning coaches and
private carriages, and about one hundred of the tenantry,
tradesmen, and friends on horseback closed the pro-
cession. The office of mutes seems to have been an
hereditary duty. They were old men, John and Edward
Niccolas, of Whittington, brothers, who had acted in the
same capacity at the funerals of the squire's sire and
grandsire. The *Shrewsbury Chronicle* informs us that
everything was done with the greatest order.

From this account of the spendthrift squire we will
turn to a miserly one, John Elwes, Esq., who was a most
extraordinary and singular character. Member of Par-
liament, keenest of fox-hunters, the most reckless of
gamblers, he was nevertheless one of the most notorious
misers that ever lived, who would starve himself to save
a penny, and yet squander hundreds of pounds on a
gaming-table. His miserly character seems to have been
hereditary. His mother, though she was left one hundred
thousand pounds by her husband, starved herself to death,
and his uncle, though rolling in riches, was nearly as

penurious. The miserly squire's original name was Meggot, and he was the son of a brewer of Southwark, and the grandson of Sir George Meggot. He was the heir of his uncle, Sir Harvey Elwes, the miser of Stoke, in Suffolk, and in order to please him, he used to doff his fine raiment at an inn at Chelmsford, when he was going down to visit him, and assume plain worsted stockings, plentifully darned, a worn-out old coat, a tattered waistcoat and breeches, and a pair of small iron buckles, which dress pleased his uncle mightily. Uncle and nephew were a saving pair. They used to sit together with a single stick upon the fire, one glass of wine between them, and retire to bed when the darkness of night set in, in order to save candle-light. But John had an excellent appetite, which he did not know how to satisfy without offending his miserly uncle. So he used to slip away and pick up a dinner at the house of some friendly neighbour, and then returned to please his uncle by the smallness of his power of eating.

This Sir Harvey had only one passion, the hoarding of money. Entering upon an impoverished estate, he found that economy was for him a necessity; but the habit grew upon him, enabling him to rescue his paternal estate at Stoke from debt, and to save one hundred thousand pounds. He was delicate, timid, and shy, and had not a friend in the world. He loved to count his money and to set partridges, on which he and his household lived. Partridges were plentiful in those days, and Sir Harvey and his man, during the season, always sallied forth, and, aided by a good breed of dogs, returned home with a heavy bag. He wore a black velvet cap, a worn-out full dress-suit of clothes, and an old great-coat, with worsted stockings drawn up over his knees. He rode a thin thoroughbred, and the horse and its rider looked as if a gust of wind would have blown them away. He

thought a fire in his hall a great extravagance, and used to keep himself warm by walking up and down the chamber. If any one called, he used to light a single stick in the grate, and when that had nearly burnt out, add another. A gang of thieves once robbed him of two thousand seven hundred guineas. He sometimes used to meet two neighbouring baronets, at a club in Stoke, equally rich, and, like him, very parsimonious. The reckoning was always a little difficult, and on one occasion a fellow-member of the club called out to a friend who was passing: "For heaven's sake step upstairs and assist the poor! Here are three baronets worth a million of money quarrelling about a farthing!"

So lived and died Sir Harvey Elwes, "unwept, un-honoured, and unsung." His nephew, John Meggot, entered upon the vast fortune of the miser, and blossomed out into John Elwes, Esquire, having been ordered by his uncle's will to assume the name and arms of Elwes. He was a very different man from his uncle. He was admitted into the best society in London. His manners were courtly, gentle, and engaging. No rudeness could ever ruffle or disturb his equanimity. He was a member of Arthur's, and other select clubs, and in spite of his miserly nature, was a keen gambler. He once played two days and a night without stopping, and lost some thousands of pounds, the discarded cards being up to the knees of the players, amongst whom was the Duke of Northumberland. When his companions lost they often paid in IOU's, and forgot to redeem them. "It was impossible to ask a gentleman for money," he used to say, and was, therefore, much the poorer. He would sit up all night, playing for vast sums of money with the beaux and dandies of the age, and then in the cold morning sally forth to Smithfield Market to meet his cattle, sent up from his Essex farm, and barter with a butcher for a shilling.

The house he inherited from his uncle was in a ruinous condition, and his own, at Marcham, in Berkshire, was no better, the rain often pouring through the roof. A guest, on one occasion, was compelled to move his bed several times, and at last contrived to find a dry corner, wherein he finished his night's repose. Elwes often travelled about the country, always riding on horseback, as coaches and post-chaises were too expensive for him. He used to content himself with very frugal fare, a couple of hard-boiled eggs and a few scraps of bread sufficing him for the longest ride.

The only extravagance, besides gambling, which the miser allowed for himself was hunting. He was one of the best riders in the kingdom, but his pack of hounds was managed upon the most economical principles. No hounds could kill their prey better than his. "It must be so, or they would have nothing to eat," the wits used to say. He had a wonderful huntsman, who was the "Admirable Crichton" of servants. He milked the cows at 4 a.m., then prepared breakfast for the squire and his guests, then, slipping on an old green coat, hurried off to the stables, saddled the horses, and got out the hounds. He hunted them all day, refreshed himself by rubbing down the horses on his return, laid the cloth for dinner, waited at table, again milked the cows, fed the hounds, and littered down eight horses for the night. And yet Elwes used often to call him "an idle dog, who wanted to be paid for doing nothing." The whole hunting establishment did not cost the miser three hundred pounds a year.

Though so economical in his household expenditure, he was a ready prey for knaves and sharpers, who extracted from him vast sums for fraudulent and imaginary schemes in America and elsewhere. But, in spite of this, his wealth was enormous. He had considerable property in London, about the Haymarket, Marylebone, Portland

Place, and Portman Square, where he built extensively, employing one of the brothers Adam as architect. If any of his houses were unlet when he came to London, he used to move his scant furniture and his old house-keeper into it, and settle down there until a tenant was found. Then he used to migrate into another of his empty houses.

His parliamentary career is interesting and curious. He represented Berkshire in three Parliaments. His only election expense was the cost of a dinner at an ordinary at Abingdon, amounting to eighteen pence. He was sixty years of age when he entered Parliament, and was remarkable for his honest independence. In a corrupt age, when every one was scrambling for places and power and grasping after loaves and fishes, Elwes, who hoped for nothing and desired nothing, was entirely indifferent, and voted only as his judgment and conscience dictated. He supported Lord North in his disastrous policy during the American troubles, and then followed the party of Fox, and the unhappy Coalition Government, until Pitt, whom he greatly admired, came upon the scene ; and then the expenses of a contested election in Berkshire frightened the miser, and he withdrew from political life. He found the society of M.P.'s a little expensive, as some of his colleagues borrowed extensively from him, and never thought of repaying him. But such was the character of the man. He would squander thousands, and yet deny himself almost the necessaries of life. He would risk his neck by riding along a dangerous road in the dark in order to avoid the payment of a turnpike, and yet venture thousands of pounds on wonderful ironworks in America, which might have been situated in the moon for all he knew about them.

After his retirement from Parliament his penurious habits grew upon him, though he sometimes lost heavily

at piquet at a card club at the Mount coffee-house. A final game cost him three thousand pounds; he never played again. His last years were spent miserably in his tumble-down old house, the broken windows of which were mended with brown paper, with never a fire to warm him. When the harvest had been gathered he used to glean in his tenants' fields, and they would leave little heaps of corn to please the old gentleman, who was as eager after it as any pauper in his parish. One day he was observed robbing a crow's nest for firewood. When he rode he used to keep on the soft turf on the side of the road, in order to save the expense of shoeing his horse, and he did not allow his own shoes to be cleaned, lest they should be worn out the sooner. He died the 26th of November, 1789. A poet sang his virtue and his vice in an epitaph which is truer than most:—

“ Here, to man's honour, or to man's disgrace,
Lies a strong picture of the human race
In Elwes' form ;—whose spirit, heart and mind,
Virtue and vice in firmest tints combined.

.
Meanness to grandeur, folly joined to sense,
And av'rice coupled with benevolence :
Whose lips ne'er broke a truth, nor hands a trust,
Were sometimes warmly kind—and always just ;
With power to reach Ambition's highest birth,
He sunk a mortal—groveling to the earth ;
Lost in the lust of adding pelf to pelf,
Poor to the poor—still poorer to himself.”

A study of the life of Elwes shows some redeeming qualities, but little can be said in favour of another miserly being, who lived (we can hardly say flourished) about the same time. This was Councillor Lade, who owned Cannon Park, near Kingsclere, Hants, a cold, rabbit-warren kind of house, that knew little of old-fashioned English hospitality. It was Lade's ambition

to shine as a great supporter of the turf. He bought and bred many race-horses, but he starved them so abominably that they never did themselves justice, though he managed to secure some minor triumphs in local race-meetings. He deemed corn too great a luxury for his steeds, which (poor things!) had to content themselves with a few mouthfuls of hay, even when going on long journeys. Lade was not a very reputable person, and unworthy of his class. Another miserly squire was Squire Tomlinson of Wensleydale, who used to sit in the fire-light on winter evenings in order to economize candles, and left a fortune of forty thousand pounds.

Mr. Baring-Gould tells an amazing story of the last representative of an ancient Devonshire family. The tale vies in interest with that distinguished author's most exciting novels, and concerns a family upon which he has bestowed the appropriate name of Grym of Grimstone. There was a Brigadier Grym, a gallant soldier, who had a weakling son, and being uneasy about him, married him to a strong-minded lady, who ruled every one with despotic power. She lived till 1835. She was very proud and ambitious, bought up land which she could not pay for, had lawsuits with her neighbours, borrowed money, and got into difficulties. Fearing arrest for debt, she built a house near her hall, wherein she contrived a secret chamber, in which she hid herself when danger threatened. Finally, she fled to London, and died there, her body being conveyed back to Grimstone in a piano-case, lest it should be arrested for debt. But that was not all. The family troubles did not end with her death. She left two sons, John and Ralph. They hated each other, and Ralph was very bitter, brought a chancery suit against his brother, and when shooting with him one day, contrived to let his gun go off, and shot John's cap, just escaping his brother's head. It was evidently a deliberate

attempt at murder. Ralph then left the neighbourhood, went to London, and, being of good family and well connected, and, moreover, a fine, handsome man, he entered the best society in town, and married a charming girl with a fortune of six thousand pounds, much against the will of her relatives. He contrived to get hold of half the money, which he quickly spent, but could not touch the remainder. The lady wisely retained her hold on it, in spite of cajolery and threats, and pistol-shots discharged by her affectionate husband when she was asleep. Fortunately for her, he was sent to prison, and on his release went to Grimstone and threatened his brother, saying that his hand was very shaky, and that his gun might go off if John ever came within view. We need not follow his extraordinary career. At length John died, and Ralph became possessed of the estate, suddenly raised from penury to affluence. Before this he was a reckless spendthrift; he now became a miser, and the hardest of landlords and masters. He had a daughter, and vainly, by all manner of evil devices, did he try to gain the three thousand pounds which her mother had settled on her. He lived to a miserable old age, and died hated and abhorred. With him his family of squires became extinct, and the old acres and manor-house passed away into new hands—a sad and deplorable story of degeneracy and ruin.

An extraordinary man was Mr. John Samuel Wanley Sawbridge Erle Drax, who had five country seats, Charborough Park, Dorset; Olanleigh Towers, Kent; Ellerton Abbey, Yorkshire; Holnest, near Sherborne; Cæsar's Camp, Wimbledon, besides a London house in King Street, St. James's.¹ Volumes might be written about this eccentric squire. His original name was Sawbridge. At a race-meeting he saw Miss Erle Drax, and a friend

¹ My thanks are due to Mr. Frank Pearce, of Prospect House, Woodford Green, Essex, for his kind information.

suggested to him that he should marry her, as she was a great heiress. He took the hint, and effected his purpose, assuming her name in addition to his own. It was a fortunate marriage for him. The Dorset property alone amounted to twenty thousand acres. He visited Charborough one month in the year, for the shooting, and my informant, Mr. Pearce, and his father, the Rector of Charborough, used to shoot with him. They had an army of beaters. The squire breakfasted at one o'clock, started shooting at two, and shot for two hours.

In the park he kept Indian cows with humps on their back (called buffaloes by the rustics), red deer, fallow deer, and kangaroos, and in the neighbouring park at Morden wild boars, one of which cut up a horse. He used to shoot the Indian cattle, and nearly lost his life from the attack of a wounded bull. On one occasion the Hon. G. Berkeley wagered that two of his Scotch deerhounds would pull down one of the red deer, but the dogs came off second best. He used terribly profane language on all occasions. Mr. Drax was member for Wareham, Dorset, and generally contested the seat with Mr. Calcraft. On one occasion he was beaten at an election, and he stood outside the "Red Lion" and cursed the voters indiscriminately for some time. At Olanleigh Towers he had a fine collection of Old Masters, which has been recently sold, and the armour used at the Eglinton Tournament. When he was an M.F.H. he wore a yellow coat with black collar and cuffs. He was of tall stature, with an astounding presence, a good shot and horseman, but lacked self-control, and could never restrain his temper. On one occasion a tax-collector was so indiscreet as to ask him and his friends for their game licences, when they were shooting, but Mr. Drax's forcible expressions made him fly for his life. Mrs. Drax, at her death, left two daughters, and her husband did not approve of their marrying, as that would

have lost him part of his estates, and kept them in seclusion. However, love knows no locksmiths. The son of an admiral, when out shooting on one occasion, feigned illness, retired to the house, made love to one of the daughters, and she eloped with him. The squire is said to have rehearsed his own funeral, and was buried in a magnificent mortuary chapel built by himself at Holnest. He planned that a red cross stained window should be erected to throw a reflection of the cross on the sarcophagus, but I know not whether the design was ever carried out. Such is the life story of this extraordinary man, who certainly deserves a place among eccentric squires.

An old Norfolk squire, in the first half of the last century, had to live abroad on account of his debts, but he risked imprisonment every year at Christmas, and used to return regularly to the old home and family, somehow or other, in time for the festivities of the day. He would be brought in a wagon covered over with straw or turnips—but no matter how, come he would. The old man always insisted on his grandchildren eating the stones of the cherries, and always on Christmas Day gave each child a glass of wine, and bade them drink the toast, standing, "Damnation to the French." Evidently the old man did not love the land of his exile. A little Christmas story might be made of his affection for his home and his weird appearance with the turkey and plum-puddings.

SQUIRE HOSKING "OF ECCENTRIC MEMORY"

(1772-1824¹)

When we speak of the old squires—by which we mean those born in mid-eighteenth century and living on, perhaps, till after Waterloo—the mental image called up is

¹ These dates are approximate. The date of birth might be verified by writing to the Rector of Ludgvan, but I doubt this because I have an idea that James Hosking was born away from home.

of a bluff and jovial race, illiterate, irascible, and frankly insular; mighty hunters most of them, and lovers of quaint oaths and deep potations; addicted oftener than not to drinking the King's health in port or claret which had escaped the vigilance of the King's Customs. Such being the habits of so many country gentlemen, it will be interesting to give a brief sketch of a country gentleman who neither drank excessively nor hated foreigners, nor swore, nor scoffed at learning, nor revered the King; a man who in each principle and prejudice—no less than in his actions—set up heterodox opinions in fierce opposition to the standards of his class. In his native Cornwall, "Squire Hosking of eccentric memory" is quoted still, and travellers by road from Penzance to St. Ives will sometimes turn aside to climb the hill of Castle-an-Dinas, where they can see the tomb of this erratic personage, who in a fit of rage declared that rather than have the Burial Service read over him by the rector, whom he bitterly despised, he would deliberately choose to rest in pagan ground near the old Roman camp; the ancient Romans being the gods of his idolatry. The choice caused wonder at the time, and even now is wont to rouse some curiosity in those who study character with sympathetic interest.

Mere inconsistency is far too common to demand commemoration, but the inconsistencies of Squire Hosking of Treassowe were so individual as to secure for him a place among the gossiping traditions of old Cornwall.

Hating shams, distrusting all conventions, flouting custom, and believing decorous hypocrisy the meanest of all vices, his was a character in which revolt against the dull complacency of mediocre minds becomes at last inflamed into a fierce misanthropy. His insults to the parson (to whom he sent in a farm cart the tenth part of a cabbage to denote his scorn for tithes), and his refusal

to be buried in the churchyard, single him out from his associates ; and when it is further added that he talked with eloquence of liberty, fraternity, equality, but disinherited his eldest son for venturing to differ from him on a question of theology, we have some notion of the domineering temper which accompanied his philanthropic theories.

This haughty temper was, as we shall see, combined with enterprise and vigour of no common sort, and the restricted life of a gentleman farmer was insufficient to allay his restless energy. Not only did he take frequent trips to London, which in the late eighteenth century was a long, dreary journey from the regions near St. Michael's Mount, but in his discontent against the corruptions of his native land, he yearned to see America, the land of liberty and hope. A voyage to America then seemed scarcely less dangerous and venturesome than a South Polar expedition seems to-day, and when Mr. Hosking set sail from Penzance in a hundred-and-one-ton schooner, the *Packet of Boston*, he was regarded by his neighbours with a degree of respectful awe which we can scarcely realize, for crossing the Atlantic is easier to us than a journey from London to Leith used to be to our great-grandfathers ; in nothing has the world more vastly changed than in this matter of locomotion.

The *Packet of Boston* left Penzance on the 28th of December, 1810, and after battling through innumerable storms at last came in sight of New York on St. Valentine's Day in the following year.

The cargo of tin and iron was unloaded, and the traveller landed at Virginia Island—"a heap of yellow sand, covered with trees as is all America." He put up at "Dr. Spalding's Tavern, a handsome house," as he relates, "with good entertainment and accommodation," and in his journal he mentions that the tavern-keeper was a

doctor of medicine, a Justice of the Peace, and—incidentally—a gentleman. It is amusing to observe that Hosking, the professed admirer of Mr. Thomas Paine and of *The Rights of Man*, indulges now and then in sentiments not proper to an advocate of universal equality, and he remarks with satisfaction and surprise that many of the colonists have quite the air of “Ladies and Gentlemen.”

Having left England in a fury of disgust against the fret and jar of European wars and politics— inveighing against rotten boroughs, heavy taxes, jobbery and privilege—he landed in the United States in expectation of Utopia. But after some months’ experience, he was not unwilling to remember that his “family and property” necessitated his return; and though he had sailed 150 miles up the Potomac, and had ridden through the States of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Delaware, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York, meeting with kindly reception from all sorts and conditions of men, he did not discover in America any attraction strong enough to make him join the colonists.

He bursts into enthusiasm over an idyllic log hut, the happy inmates of which had no artificial wants—“no cares about large sums of money”—but he was extremely shocked to see Mount Vernon, the former home of the great Washington, ill-kept, “most slovenly and pitiful, much of the land between the house and river being left in the same state Columbus found it; and the whole of it not ten acres.” Such a place could obviously ill compare with the estates of the St. Aubyns, Bassets, Rogers, Prices, and their kind at home.

The “President’s Palace” at Washington pleased him better; he thought it “very magnificent,” with each of its square sides showing a “handsome front of white stone, with projecting columns and carved cornices. I

was shown the inside by a Gentleman of the Household ; it is lofty and elegant." But the grounds disgusted him. "The small park round the house is badly laid out . . . the ground is not levelled, and in a prime part of it is a Kitchen Garden, divided with a wooden rail"—which, well enough in its proper place, was most disfiguring to the park and lawn.

He is better pleased with the state of cultivation of the land between Frenchtown and Newcastle. "I was delighted with it. It appeared like the good lands in Berkshire. . . . The hedges are many of them after the English fashion . . . a bank two feet high and planted with white thorns, which grow here strongly—I believe six feet in three years—and make a durable and beautiful fence. The roads are wide, and the farms large, with well-laid-out fields ; and so many trees growing on the borders that they look like a gentleman's seat or plantation in England."

Hosking's "Narrative"¹ is written without any pretence at literary style—"I have neither the wish nor the qualifications to become an author," he remarks, in his brief preface—but it is of interest, not only for the sidelights it affords on the America of just one hundred years ago, but for its indications of the whimsicality which ran like a thread through the common sense of its writer. It was privately printed for distribution among his friends, and his name upon the title-page appears as "Hoskin," the "g" in use among his forbears having, as he said, "an ill look." So obnoxious was the thought of kingship to this sturdy Republican that the hated syllable of "king" in his own patronymic had to be curtailed. He describes himself in 1813 as "a Farmer," and desires no

¹ "Narrative of a Voyage from England to the United States of North America, with travels through part of eight of the States, and remarks on the soil, produce, prices, and agriculture in general in the year 1811" [Penzance, 1813].

prouder title; but how limited was his humility, how autocratic was his temper, and how impatient of all opposition, we shall shortly see.

His wife, Elizabeth Vinicombe (cousin of the beautiful Juliana, Lady St. Aubyn), had been brought up, like her husband, in the English Church; but both she and her son William felt considerable sympathy with Wesley's followers, denounced as "whited sepulchres" by Squire Hosking. Stern to all the world, James Hosking was respectful to his wife, and listened with what tolerance he could to her attempted vindication of the detested "class meetings." But when his eldest son presumed to argue in a similar vein, this was beyond the powers of endurance of the infuriated squire. The son had too much of the father's spirit not to hold his own opinion with considerable firmness. An acrimonious theological discussion was followed by the squire threatening to disinherit William for presumption, disrespect, and lack of reverence for his father. That very day the angry parent rode into Penzance to see his lawyer, and did not return home till he had made a will in which his younger son Richard was constituted heir in place of William.

After a while, however, the squire—who was as generous-minded and warm-hearted as tyrannical and hasty—repented of this ill-judged ebullition of parental dogmatism, and one evening he acknowledged to his wife that he had acted in a towering passion when he made this arbitrary will. The very next morning, he assured her, he would ride into Penzance and see the lawyer who had charge of the offending document. Without delay it should be burnt, and in its place a will should be drawn up which reinstated William. The squire ordered that his best horse should be saddled first thing in the morning, and that he should be called betimes. But when the horse was brought round to the door it waited in vain for its

rider, who had gone a longer journey than to Penzance, or even to "the States of North America." While dressing to set forth upon his errand of atonement, he had been smitten with an apoplectic seizure, and he never spoke or stirred again.

On the way from Penzance to St. Ives, the great granite range which extends from Dartmoor to Land's End is broken up into a number of detached groups, and one of these hills is Castle-an-Dinas, now celebrated variously as a Roman encampment, a noted fairy locality, and the burying-place of Squire Hosking. A square enclosure of large rough-hewn blocks of stone does duty for the ornate mausoleum then in vogue. No "chaste memorial urn," no decoration, lessens the grim severity of this strange tomb. Only the name and dates, and, carved in straight, unornate letters, the defiant sayings: "*Custom is the idol of fools,*" and "*Virtue alone consecrates the ground.*"

The country-side thronged one and all to witness this unprecedented burying; and the dispossessed son, William, walked in the procession, with his little son aged five years old.

And so the squire was laid to rest in the unconsecrated lonely place which he had chosen many years before—a place but little changed within the last half-century.

No Hosking rules at Treassowe now; but the eccentric squire's tomb can still be seen on the hill of Castle-an-Dinas—a desolate spot, not altogether lacking in a wild, rough beauty, with its granite boulders, clumps of furze and brambles, and its little moorland pools, which mirror the red-golden splendour of the sunset. There no sound disturbs the loneliness, except the yellow-hammer's song, and the faint rustle of the wind among the bracken; but carved deep on a lichen-covered stone, we still can trace the scornful and defiant motto: "*Custom is the idol of fools.*"

CHAPTER XXI

A GERMAN VIEW OF THE ENGLISH SQUIRE

IN the year 1861 Professor Von Holtzendorff paid a visit to England in order to attend a Social Science Congress. There he met an ideal country squire, Mr. Barwick Lloyd Baker of Hardwicke Court, Gloucestershire, who, in the language of the Professor, "united in his person a natural progressive tendency with the tenacious attachment of the genuine Tory of the past." On his return to Germany the Professor wrote an account of his study of the English squires who gave their own colouring to English society, and could not be found anywhere else in the world, a race he deemed worthy of the highest respect and imitation, for which he conceived the highest admiration.¹

Ignorant of the modes of English country life, he arrived one evening at Hardwicke Court, in the lovely region of the Cotswolds. Their first greeting over, the squire pointed out to his guest a secluded apartment, the one which he thought it most important for a German to know—the smoking-room. He had a notion that every German had three national characteristics—smoking, singing, and Sabbath-breaking; the first and only idea the Professor found him led astray by an abstract theory. Wishing to know the mode of life of an English squire's

¹ This work was written in German and translated into English by Miss Rosa Gebherd. The book has been kindly lent to me by the present squire of Hardwicke, who has followed in his father's footsteps and done strenuous work for his county and neighbourhood.

home, the Professor followed Goethe's advice, always to take the ladies into his counsel. So after breakfast on the following morning he took a walk in the park and pleasure with the squire's lady, and begged her to instruct him as to his privileges and duties as a guest. Mrs. Baker told him that the squire was accustomed to read the newspaper in the morning before nine o'clock, and then the bell called to the breakfast-room, where morning prayers were said, the servants and as many guests who wished to attend being present. This somewhat astonished the Professor, who had just followed the little service with the greatest attention, and not without some little surprise, as it was not customary to have family prayers in his own country, and he feared that he had shown himself somewhat awkward during this spiritual exercise. The breakfast menu interested him, tea and coffee, hot and cold meat, brown and white bread, toast, honey, orange marmalade, eggs, now and then an omelette, more rarely fish, but always bacon. After breakfast the guests amuse themselves as they please. The squire retires to his room, confers with his steward on household affairs, and receives people from the neighbourhood—farmers, tenants, and labourers who may wish to see him. After that he inspects the stables and horses, and then sits down at his writing-table. The squire's wife has her own duties to perform. At ten o'clock she leaves her guests, and goes into the kitchen or house-keeper's room, to give her orders for the day, to settle disputes between the servants, and make provision for the reception of fresh guests, of whom there is never any lack during the autumn and winter seasons. Then follows the hour for receiving the poor women of the neighbourhood, who come to make their complaints, to give some information, or to beg for something, such as old clothes for sick children, or simple medicines, which the lady

dispenses to them. Her next duty is the instruction of the children of the family, which must be superintended. The number of domestic occupations in a squire's household had decreased considerably before the year of grace 1861. Some time before every country house and estate were almost self-contained, and supplied all the needs of the establishment. Soap, candles, malt, and other requisites were manufactured at home; but at Hardwicke, as late as the Professor's visit, beer was brewed, cider made, all the bread baked, and laundry-work performed.

The luncheon bell sounds at 1.30 p.m. The afternoon is spent in riding or driving or shooting. Tea is at five o'clock, and during summer is served in the garden, where the ladies of the neighbourhood visit each other, and a large party often assembles. In winter the guests usually retire to their rooms to read or rest, if they have been hunting. Dinner at 7 or 8 p.m., and in the evening there are rubbers of whist or cheerful round games to be played. The ladies retire at eleven o'clock, and the men finish their day's work in the smoking-room, or enjoy a cigar in the billiard-room. In the sixties the rules with regard to smoking were very strict, and no one was allowed to smoke except in the rooms set apart for that purpose. How heinous a crime in some houses smoking used to be regarded until much later than the sixties, and how sadly have we been dragged off to an uncomfortable kitchen to sit in very uneasy chairs, in order to be able to indulge in what the Oxford University statutes style *noxia herba nicotiana*!

The delights of the county balls when Hardwicke and other great houses were full of young people were pointed out by the squires, and the charms of riding to the meet on a clear, frosty winter morning, cantering to covert by the side of the squire. Unlike the modern Dianas,

the lady of Hardwicke thought it well for ladies to renounce all claims to rank as first-rate riders, and to return home when the hounds have "gone away."

Such was the simple picture of daily domestic rule at Hardwicke Court. But the Professor was destined to encounter during his visit something, the approach of which filled him with dismay, an English Sunday! He had no sympathy with it, until he was converted by the gentle arguments of the lady of Hardwicke. She maintained that all, whether masters or servants, should have a day of rest. How can the servant who has worked for six days to supply our wants, find blessing in the seventh, with extra strain upon his powers to meet the additional festivities of the Sunday?

"For us the matter is very simple. We go to church twice on Sunday, and we wish that our servants should do the same. We walk to church, which is at some distance, for if we were to use the horses, what rest would the coachman have? And if we have large dinner-parties on a Sunday, what rest would the cook have? You must not count on a menu such as you have to-day, and on Sunday content yourself with what we may call Old Testament fare—Roast Beef and Plum Pudding—national standing dishes, at least in the country."

The good lady deplores the diversions and amusements of a London Sunday, the dinners at Richmond and Greenwich. "Do these cheerful Sunday guests consider that they deprive the hotel servants and their own coachmen of the day of rest?" she asks. "They laugh off the whole question until, at a later period of life, they become more thoughtful, and observe that London, Greenwich, and Richmond are only regarded as exceptions to England as a whole. It really seems as though London, during these last few years, has approached more and more the mode of life in continental towns. We can only

deplore it, and shall not be able to prevent it, but we must urge our disapproval whenever the opportunity offers."

What would the mistress of Hardwicke have said if she had prolonged her life another fifty years, and seen the utter demoralization of Sunday, the rushing of motor-cars along all the main roads, the revels at the riverside resorts, the excursion trains, the crowded golf-links, the week-end parties, the Sunday dinner-parties? England has made rapid strides since 1861 in the dethronement of Sunday as a day of worship, a day for rest and sweet refreshment for all classes. But English people are becoming a little uncomfortable about all this, and the founding of the Imperial Sunday movement for the safeguarding of the English Sunday may do something to restore a more worthy observance of the day.

The Professor was much interested in the migration of the family to London for the season. "It is to your great advantage, madam, that the squire regularly divides his time between the country and London; and it is to the great advantage also of the Metropolitan Bench and Bar that they can regularly every year spend a few weeks in the houses of their country friends. It is just that which gives such wonderful unity to the nation; just that which first creates the possibility of a public opinion which is something more than a phrase." He contrasts this English practice of the gentry moving to and fro from country to town, with foreign modes, and observes how the *doctrinaire* of the large cities in continental countries, in spite of all his official learning, is unable to distinguish an oak from a lime tree, the blade of the oat from that of the wheat, and has not an idea upon country affairs; while, on the other hand, the large landed proprietor is often incapable of looking out beyond the limited horizon of respectable, no doubt, but at the same time one-sided agricultural interests, over the free and surging ocean

of a life agitated by noble impulses and hurried onwards by the current of great ideas. "You manage things better in England," the Professor thinks, and the lady was delighted to hear that by going to London for the season, she was thereby unconsciously rendering a service to the State.

The Professor is now introduced to the more serious work of the squire's life. He is escorted into the smoking-room, and playfully notices that even the keyhole was stopped up, in order to preserve the ladies' delicate nerves from every disagreeable sensation. The squire shows him his list of engagements: September 18th, meeting of the Board of Guardians, which always takes one day a week and a very hurried breakfast. September 20th, Grand Jury and Quarter Sessions, lasting two days: on the first day Police business; matters connected with the erection of a new bridge, and the repair of the highways; on the second day, Criminal business, which this time includes some bad cases of larceny. September 22nd, inspection of the County Prison and Lunatic Asylum. September 23rd, meeting to discuss the steps to be taken against the pollution of a tributary of the Severn. September 28th, onslaught on the worst cases of crime at the Assizes, and a visit to the Coroner and Coroner's Jury. The squire adds, however, that "on the whole, there is not much to do at present."

"Little to do?" says the Professor in astonishment. "You call it doing little, if you sacrifice three days or more every week gratuitously to public service?"

The squire modestly said that was nothing compared with the engagements of his friend and neighbour, who happened to be county chairman. Here is a list of this gentleman's occupations, for the benefit of the public and his country:—

"Taking the chair at the Pauper Lunatic Asylum, and

at the Barnwood Lunatic Asylum, forty-eight Mondays every year, necessitating a journey by train from home at 9.30 a.m., and a return between four and five. Every Friday, Petty Sessions at Stroud, at 11 a.m. At 2 p.m., meeting of the Board of Guardians, and after that the Local Board of Health, and occasionally a meeting of the Highway Board. Four times a year on five successive days, Chairman's business at Quarter Sessions. Besides all this there is a large amount of miscellaneous business, sundry visits to the County Prison, meetings of the Hospital Committee every week, and visits to the Workhouse. Every quarter, a visit to the Reformatory School, which occupied a whole morning. Four days a year this squire had to sit as a Commissioner of Taxes, and for the assessment of local burdens, or appointment of collectors. A few days were required for visits to the Elementary Schools, and for the Treasurership of three Parish Schools. Once every quarter a meeting of the School Committee. A few hours occasionally for the Savings Bank, Artisans' Building Society, Provident and Friendly Societies, and Secretaryship of the School of Art. One evening every week was required for supervision as officer of the Volunteer drill; one afternoon every week for the supervision of the Rifle-shooting during the yearly period of practice, and one week every year in Camp. Total: three full days every week, exclusive of correspondence, which is very considerable.

A fairly good record! Sometimes ignorant folk speak scornfully of the "Great Unpaid." We often notice that such critics usually demand high fees for any work they undertake. Patriotic service, the duty they owe to their country, voluntary work, do not appeal to them; and for such men to criticize and hold up to ridicule gentlemen who receive neither fee nor reward save that which the sense of duty faithfully performed inspires

in their own minds and consciences, is a little ridiculous. Since these reflections of the German Professor were penned, the work of the "Great Unpaid" has in no way diminished, but rather, owing to the establishment of County Councils, has vastly increased, and the list of engagements of many a country squire in the present day will compare not unfavourably with that above recorded in regard to the time and attention given to public service.

I will not enlarge upon the splendid work accomplished by the establishment of the Hardwicke Court Reformatory. Mr. Baker's work was greatly assisted by the devotion of another young squire, George Bengough, who was heir to a fortune of ten thousand pounds a year, and although only twenty-four years of age, threw himself heart and soul into the arduous task of reforming young criminals. In 1852 he selected three of the worst young criminals in London, and added to them a few accomplished thieves from Cheltenham. For two years, until his health failed, this young squire lived at the Reformatory, and worked amongst them in the ranks, as a school-master. "Well," said the Professor:—

"I am inclined to believe that you would have to return to primitive Christianity to find a second example of such devotion; perhaps, even then, it would be in vain. It is a trifle in youth to hide a despairing, broken heart in a convent, or, in later years, to give one's fortune to a Church, or to be burned as a martyr for some dogma—a trifle in comparison with the example of this young man, who retains his wealth, and then for years brings daily to the stake his own patience, and his enjoyment of life, by associating, early and late, single-handed, with the dregs of human corruption. This deed seems to me so prodigious that civilized people of our country will see in it nothing but the first indications of insanity."

The Professor was delighted with the squire's library,

two of its walls lined from floor to ceiling with books in antique bindings. The third wall was broken by two large windows, and between them stood a venerable bookcase. In the fourth was a fire-place of gigantic size; the fire blazing; the armchairs round it in a semicircle. He could never forget that library as it appeared on an autumn evening, with lamps burning, and a bright company scattered about the room in groups, some listening, others talking in a lively strain, laughing, cheerful, or in repose, all lifted into a higher state of enjoyment by unaffected, hearty hospitality.

“So stands the library at Hardwicke Court before my eyes,” he observes, the pleasantest house he ever knew.

He tried to find the secret motive that induced the English squires to play so prominent a part for the sake of their country and their county. In addition to patriotic notions and a keen sense of duty, the Professor discovered that the honour of the family influenced each scion of the ancient stock to do his duty in his generation. To do honour to the house is each son's anxious desire. Each eldest son strives to do his duty to the State and Shire, as his father had done before him. There is a tradition to be kept up, and handed on from generation to generation, a tradition of the duty of service for others, and not for self, or for the accumulation of riches, luxury, and self-gratification; and so long as the old squire's family remain on their estates, in most cases that tradition will be maintained as a family heritage.

The Professor was led to contrast the country gentlemen of his own country with those of England. The former were able, gallant, unsurpassed military officers, good fathers of families, and often intelligent agriculturalists. But at every inconvenience which oppresses them they appeal for help to the law. During the centuries of absolute monarchy they forgot the habit of

personal sacrifice to public service, and complain of unbearable inconvenience when they are summoned once in every two years, for a fortnight, to serve on juries. The course of events in Germany was thus : the political selfishness of the ancient legislators led to absolute monarchy ; absolute monarchy to the centralization of a bureaucracy which crushed and destroyed all action, and this bureaucracy to the selfishness of agricultural interests. Only since he came to England did the Professor understand the historical connection between self-government and public spirit, working unselfishly and unpaid. A long time must elapse before there will be found in Germany any considerable number of squires who think for themselves, act for themselves, and give themselves trouble.

“ Do we not furnish you yearly,” said the Professor, “ to meet your deficit, a certain number of young foxes from Germany, which are turned out on English ground ? How would it be if you transported to Germany a number of young squires to show your gratitude for those foxes which are so essential to your sport ? ”

“ I am sorry,” replied the squire, “ that this exchange cannot be carried out. Your German foxes, which may be more diplomatic than ours in robbing a hen-roost, prove themselves exceedingly stupid in England when they have the misfortune to be hunted. They do not know how to behave, and are real blockheads in comparison with our native fox, to whom it is frequently a delight to outwit the whole pack. As your foxes fare in England, so our young squires would fare in Germany. They would be distanced by the sons of your privy councillors in Latin and Greek grammar. Your professors would be indignant at their youthful self-sufficiency and still more enraged if they commenced to row, to box, to ride, to shoot. The young squires would be expelled

from school, in case they did not prefer to run away, which they most probably would."

The education of the young squire interested the Professor, in order that he might compare the German and English methods. The squire replied thus to his interrogatives :—

"How was I educated? As long as I remained in the country, in my father's house, the pointers, setters, and retrievers were my favourite companions, and much of my time was spent also in the stables. Is not the society of dogs and the training of horses very instructive? I am certain that I have thus in many ways learned how to manage uneducated clowns. My father was not bent upon making me a drawing-room lounge. We did not discuss the latest fashion as we rode to the meet or went shooting together. In his conversation he led one to consider how we might best eradicate vagrancy, or how criminals ought to be treated. So, after spending my youth riding across country, how could I, later on, reconcile myself to the loafing life of a fashionable gentleman? It is not the case that boys learn everything by sitting still. We learn most in active life, and all learning should tend to intellectual activity." He was educated at Eton and Oxford, where he did not distinguish himself. He declared himself a man of very ordinary abilities, but he was a man of deep religious feeling, and that it was a Power other than his own which had enabled him to perform his duty and accomplish so much. He said, "I believe, without any reservation, in the doctrines of our Established Church, which probably represents the purest and most genuine form of Christianity. But far more strongly than in these Church dogmas do I believe in my heart in that which my most inward voice preaches to me as the most essential in all undertakings, in the help and presence of God, the All Wise, the All Good, and the All Mighty. It was not an

Epicurean God who created the world, who put it in motion like a machine, and then returned to his Olympic heights, to leave it to itself. No : He is ever living and ever present, seeing and knowing, guiding and preserving, and even now working His miracles everywhere, although in His wisdom, the depth of which no sounding-lead of human investigation can fathom, He keeps His hand concealed. However could I have worked without faith ? Think of a number of men who are striving for a prize in the same art, in painting, sculpture, or wood-carving. Each one brings the best tools and implements to the contest. But suppose one of them has discovered that he is far more skilful than the rest. Can you not fancy him, thus gifted by nature, choosing a blunt and weak tool, and then executing a masterpiece merely for the purpose that all might learn how this work has been executed, not through the excellence of the tool employed, but through the skill of the master's hand ? *I am this blunt tool in His hand.* Do not say that this is modesty. Quite the contrary. It is my highest pride. If it could be proved that Shakespeare had written one of his splendid pieces with a certain quill, this quill would certainly realize a high price at a public sale. Now if this pen had any soul and feeling, might it not be allowed to feel grateful and proud ? If, on the contrary, this quill should say : I am the author of the sublime work, it would thereby prove that it was not only part of a goose, but also as stupid as a goose. But if it were to say : Although I am only a worn-out quill, still I am the pen with which Shakespeare wrote his immortal plays : I am grateful and proud to have been used by him : that would be just pride. Therefore, I argue like this pen. Whatever good I have done comes from an impetus external to myself."

The squire spoke these words in a solemn tone, which

was in striking contrast to his usual mode. The sportsman who had begun by asserting that setters had been his early teachers, had fallen into a serious contemplation of the Divine Being. The Professor was seized with awe, and remained silent.

I need not record much more of the conversations that passed between this English gentleman and his German friend. Just one more theory of the squire's may be mentioned. The Professor ventured to think that the law of primogeniture pressed rather hardly on the younger sons of squires whose estates were entailed. This the squire declared was not the case. Though both his sons were equally dear to him, nevertheless parental affection submits to the requirements of our historical life, clearly recognized for centuries, and which devolves upon them by inheritance. "With us the younger brother looks without envy up to the elder. Our eldest son, after the death of his father, inherits the property, and with it the goodwill of our tenants, whose forefathers have been also on the Hardwicke Court estates. Because he is better off than his younger brother, he is bound by honour and conscience to do the more for him. The elder brother's house remains a place of refuge in a case of extreme need, which it is to be hoped will never arise, as we pay the fifth part of our income to a life assurance company, so that in case of our death, a respectable capital may be insured to the younger. To do honour to the house is the anxious desire of the younger sons. Let them divide in the towns as much as they please. The landed estate must preserve the character of a monarchical constitution, through the principle of indivisibility, for the welfare of the family. This is no party question in my eyes, but a question of life and health for the English nation."

With this expression of the sense of the responsibility of the English squirearchy we will bid farewell with the

Professor to Hardwicke Court. A London barrister asked his opinion of the place, and of the class of country squires to which Mr. Barwick Baker belonged.

“ Does this class of men seem to you to be already out of date, or has it any claim on the future ? ”

The German Professor's answer is worthy of record.

“ You might yourself have answered the question, my friend. But if you wish to have it confirmed once more, be it so. If in every English county there were three men like Barwick Baker to be found, I should envy your country far more on that account than for those gigantic golden millions that are hoarded up in the vaults of the Bank of England.”

And with that opinion of a learned foreigner we are more than content.

L'ENVOI

THE squire grows old and the squirearchy too. He has had his day, and he knows it. An old sportsman sings:—

“ 'Tis something to sit and think,
To be thankful for days that are past ;
To look forward to those that will be ;
And the present is only a link.
I shall hear the who-whoop ! someday,
And I must then be in at the death ;
Once more ' Tally-ho ! ' with my feeble breath,
And I shall be ' gone away.' ”

Perhaps he has an heir to follow him. We hope so. It is sad when the old line dies out. But the new squire, when he comes to his own, belongs to a newer school. He likes hunting and sport generally, but he does not care to sacrifice his days to presiding at tiresome meetings, to have the constant drudgery of being the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, to attend to his duties as a magistrate, to promote benevolent objects and institutions. He does not recognize his duty of living amongst his people, and prefers society in London, his clubs, his visits to country houses for shooting and hunting, and likes travelling and big-game shooting. The dull, dreary routine of country life is not for him. The rustics bore him and weary him. He is impatient with them, and cannot enter into their joys and sorrows. Estate affairs he leaves to his agent, whereas the old squire always attended to each detail himself, thereby winning and retaining the respect and

affection of his people, both of the tenants and labourers. In the library there is a great store of old books, the accumulation of generations of cultured people, some dull and dreary travel-books, which might well come under the condemnation of Lord Rosebery as "superfluous books," but many treasures breathing of old-world manners, some rare classics and first editions that would please the connoisseur in the auction-room; but the young squire knows nothing of them, and never takes them down from their shelves, where they repose in dusty oblivion. The walls of the house are lined with quaint portraits of his ancestors.

" They look from their panelled pictures,
 Warrior and cavalier,
 With their lovely dames, in their gilded frames,
 And their eyes speak loud and clear;
 ' We did our best for the old home,
 We reared this roof-tree well,
 And we trust that you will be strong and true
 To the home where we loved to dwell.' "

But he scarcely knows their names, and heeds not their message. However, in spite of all this, he is a good fellow, this young squire, a good sportsman, keen, eager to do the right thing, a generous-minded Englishman. Only rural affairs are not his *métier*. He has a sweet wife, and a charming little son, who is destined, perhaps, to succeed when his sire's race is run.

But will that be possible? As we have said, owing to the trend of modern legislation, the increased duties levied on the land, the attempts that are being made to stamp out the landowning class, and to substitute peasant proprietorship, small holdings, and the like, the race of squires appears to be doomed. It will be a sad day for the country when they entirely disappear, as many already have done, from their old manor-houses, and their

place knows them no more. It is a Revolution, quiet, peaceful, with no outward signs of violence and disturbance ; but it is no less a revolution. We who live in rural England know well the resulting evils. The uncertainty of securing labour, the feeling of insecurity and distrust, the passing away of the guiding hand that has steered the village community through times of stress and difficulty, the dread of future troubles, all this is sorely felt in the agricultural parts of the country to-day. The future is in the hands of Him who guides the destiny of nations and empires, and we must be content to leave it there.

It has been a pleasure to paint the old squire's portrait in succeeding ages, and whether clad in armour, ready for the tourney or the fight, in jerkin and trunk hose, in buff coat or cavalier finery, in jack-boots and periwig, or in hunting garb, he is always a striking figure, and an interesting personality. He is somewhat of a humorist, and his company has not been without diversion ; but while we amuse ourselves with his eccentricities, his whims and fancies, his quaintness, his conceits, and his old-time manners, we shall not forget his sterling goodness, his lofty patriotism, his manliness and straightforwardness, and all that is suggested by the good old title The Squire.



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