

STAG-HUNTING



HON. JOHN FORTESCUE



JOHN A. SEAVERNS

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STAG-HUNTING ON EXMOOR.

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“ Who loves nature ? Who does not ? Is it only poets and men of cultivation, who live with her ? No ; but also hunters, farmers and grooms and butchers, though they express their affection in their choice of life and not in their choice of words. The writer wonders what the coachman or the hunter values in riding, in horses and dogs. It is not superficial qualities. When you talk with him he holds these at as slight a rate as you. His worship is sympathetic ; he has no definitions, but he is commanded in nature by the living power which he feels to be there present. No imitation or playing of these things would content him ; he loves the earnest of the north-wind, of rain, of stone, and wood, and iron. . . . It is nature the symbol . . . which he worships, with coarse but sincere rites.”—EMERSON, *The Poet*.



RECORDS
OF ✓
STAG-HUNTING ON EXMOOR

BY
HON. JOHN FORTESCUE

WITH
ILLUSTRATIONS BY EDGAR GIBERNE

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL
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1887

PREFACE.

THE source from whence the material for this present volume is mainly drawn is the record of the sport kept from day to day by the late Mr. M. F. Bisset, Master of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds from 1855 to 1881. On his decease this journal came, by bequest, to Lord Ebrington, the present master; and, in deference to the wish of many old staghunters that some portion of it should be made public, it was then suggested that extracts from it should be subjoined to a new edition of Dr. C. P. Collyns's once well-known book, "The Chase of the Wild Red Deer." This, however, was found to be impracticable, and Dr. Collyns's book being now somewhat rare, it was thought best that the ground gone over by him should be traversed anew, and that extracts from Mr. Bisset's record should be added, according to precedent, in the form of an Appendix.

The task of carrying this decision into effect de-

volved upon the present writer, by no means from any claims of his to superior authority on the subject, but because lack of leisure in some cases and the private nature of the journal in others forbade its entrustment to men more competent than himself. The thirteen large and closely written books of the journal have accordingly been sifted, other records both in print and in manuscript examined, oral information gathered and duly noted; and the whole, together with a small modicum of personal experience and observation, wrought up into the present volume.

The writer has throughout looked upon his own commentary as subservient to the records in the Appendix; he is fully conscious of many imperfections in his work, and is well aware that much of it can be interesting only to dwellers in the west country. Nevertheless he has some hope that, with the powerful aid of Mr. Giberne's pencil, he may give strangers some faint notion of what the chase of the wild red deer is, and of the reasons why the west countrymen are so enthusiastic over it.

A word must be said as to the map attached to this book, which those familiar with the country will doubtless criticise as inadequate. It must be explained that the new survey is incomplete, and the old survey hope-

lessly and absurdly inaccurate. The hill ranges are incorrectly laid down; whole valleys with their accompanying heights are omitted with charming effrontery; rivers are traced to wrong sources, and important tributaries left entirely to imagination. In such a case it seemed simplest to sweep away all the hill markings and trace the rivers as fully as possible, leaving the reader to remember that every stream means a deep fold in a steep hilly country, and cautioning him that such folds deepen from the source of the stream downwards.

Finally, the writer has to express his thanks to Mr. James Turner for much interesting information unearthed by him as to the early history of Exmoor, and for other valuable assistance.

October, 1886.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE DOMAIN OF THE RED DEER	1
II. THE FOREST OF EXMOOR	16
III. THE OLD TIMES	25
IV. THE NEW TIMES, 1825—1861	42
V. „ „ 1861—1871	58
VI. „ „ 1871—1881	70
VII. „ „ 1881—1885	91
VIII. STAG, HIND, AND CALF	105
IX. HARBOURING AND TUFTING	131
X. THE CHASE OF THE STAG	149
XI. THE CHASE OF THE HIND	170
APPENDIX A. RECORD OF THE MOST NOTABLE CHASES FROM 1855—1885	189
APPENDIX B. A TABULATED HISTORY OF THE NORTH DEVON AND DEVON AND SOMERSET STAGHOUNDS	284
APPENDIX C. A LIST OF THE EAR-MARKED STAGS KILLED BETWEEN 1855 AND 1885	287

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.



	PAGE
STAG, HIND, AND CALF (HOLLOWCOMB)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THOUGH POSSIBLY THE TRAVELLER MIGHT PREFER TO LINGER IN THE PARK	4
1. SIMONSBATH. 2. THE VALLEY OF THE BRAY	21
MASTER, HIS BROTHER, AND MR. BRUTTON RODE EXTREMELY BOLD	29
THE CLERICAL DIVISION PREPARING FOR ACTION (CLOUTSHAM FIELDS)	39
1. BARONSDOWN. 2. PIXTON	43
AND THERE STOOD THE STALWART FORM OF MR. BISSET	87
THERE ARE SOFT PLACES IN THE MOOR	101
1. BROW, BAY, TREY, AND TWO IN TOP ONE SIDE (see Appendix A, Sept. 17th, 1875). 2. BROW, BAY, TREY, AND THREE IN TOP BOTH SIDES (see Appendix A, Sept. 7th, 1881). One-ninth of natural size. 3. CASTLE HILL (see p. 4)	112
ROUSED IN THE OPEN (BADGWORTHY)	138
AT BAY (ABOVE HOLE WATER)	159
CHALLENGER WARE CALF! (HOCOMBE)	175
THE PACK IS AT HER IN A MOMENT (HORNER WATER)	182
WITH THE PACK AT HIS HAUNCHES ALL ALONG THE BEACH.	212

RECORDS OF STAG-HUNTING ON EXMOOR.

CHAPTER I.

THE DOMAIN OF THE RED DEER.

THE traveller making his journey along the North Devon Railway in search of the lovely scenery of the North Devon coast, can hardly fail to notice that shortly before reaching Eggesford, about midway between Exeter and Barnstaple, the line begins to run along a deep wooded valley, with a river flowing westward down it. There is much crossing and re-crossing of this river between Eggesford and Barnstaple, the stream almost doubling itself suddenly some fourteen or fifteen miles short of the latter town, through the influx of another river, which comes pouring in from a wooded valley on the north side. The combined rivers then flow on in one stately stream, broader and broader as it nears the sea, past the pretty town of Barnstaple, beneath a long bridge of many small arches, to the "golden sands and the

leaping bar" which Kingsley loved so well; just short of which another broad stream comes in from the southward, and the whole lose themselves in the blue waters of the Severn sea.

The river which we have followed is the Taw; the connecting link of the two great watersheds of Dartmoor and Exmoor. It rises high up in the Dartmoor range, and travelling ever north and westward picks up Okement on its way and bears it along, whither we have seen, to meet sister Torridge at Appledore Bar; but first catching up the waters of a stranger river, the Mole, from Exmoor, twenty miles or more to the northward. The great rivers of both watersheds, Exe, Dart, Tamar, and Tavy, run away to the south coast, but the minor streams, the Mole and the Yeo, the Okement, the Taw, and the Torridge, flow into the Bristol Channel.

This length of the Taw, from a little east of Eggesford to Barnstaple, forms the southern boundary of the red deer's domain; and the names of the families that live on its banks are nearly all connected with the ancient sport of stag-hunting. First, there is Eggesford, better known, perhaps, for its fox-hunting under the Wallops than for stag-hunting under the Fellowes's. A little farther down is Umberleigh, the

cradle of the Bassets, among the oldest of Devon families. Lower down the stream, but on the opposite or northern bank, is Hall, the home of one of the many lines of Chichesters. Rather further northward again, in the west valley, is the cradle of the Aclands; beyond that, distant a few miles, is Youlston, seat of another line of Chichesters; and still further northward, on the skirts of the moor, is Arlington, with yet another family of the same house. For there are plenty of Chichesters left in Devon, over and above those that went to Ireland, as so many cadets of the Devon families did, in Queen Elizabeth's time.

But, returning to the Taw, whence come the deer to its wooded banks? Exmoor is surely far away; and, again, what is Exmoor? Let us follow up the Mole from its junction, and that will take us where we want. A merry brawling mountain stream it is, overhung with great woods of oak coppice almost continuously on one side or the other for many a mile. A beautiful valley, too, narrowing sometimes till the woods almost meet on the two sides, but again widening, and always giving space enough for throwing a fly. After some five or six miles travelling up it, always northward, the river splits in two. The left branch as we go upward is called the Bray, the right branch as heretofore the

Mole. But here we will forsake Mole for Bray, and, following the last to its source, shall see whither it will lead us. The character of the valley continues the same, though the woods for two or three miles are more sparsely distributed on the banks, till at last the hills to our left roll back and display a little plain of park land, with a large house wreathed in tall beech-trees looking southward over it. That is Castle Hill, where the stag-hounds were kept from 1812 to 1818, as many a pair of antlers bears witness. There are also antlers of later date, from 1881, namely, to 1885, with probably more coming in the future to bear them company.

But we must follow our merry little river past the little village of Filleigh (the first group of houses worthy to be called a village that we have met), and on into a park of fallow deer, whence we catch far ahead a glimpse of a great hill range, covered with yellow grass as it seems, towering high above us. Still upward (though possibly the traveller might prefer to linger in the park), under a grey stone viaduct (alas! a railway viaduct); and now the great oak coppice woods begin once more to approach the water, till they fairly stride right down to it on both sides. Here we are really in a stronghold of the red



deer, the Bray valley coverts. From them the deer do indeed occasionally stray southwards (in old times, it is true, they were to be found all down the valley), but here they abide permanently. The stream grows narrower as we follow it up the valley, leaving many a little tributary behind us; its colour, too, is changed—"clear amber water," as Kingsley hath it—suggestive of peat bogs and bleak moors.

About five miles above the deer park the river again subdivides itself into East Bray and West Bray. We will take the western or left-hand branch, and follow it, leaving a great heather-clad common, rising purple above the green woods, to our right, and on to a great round-shouldered hill that faces us. On winding through the green combe, seamed by many a cross combe bearing its tiny tributary to us, to the west corner of the great barrier hill; skirting its base, through the little village of Challacombe, with its quaint old church, and on between two farmhouses, rising now higher and higher. The stream becomes a mere torrent, the valley a little narrow combe, with grey rocks everywhere thrusting their heads through moss and fern. Steep climbing is it here; but let us climb on to the top, where at last we reach a plain of red and yellow grass patched with black pits full of

rich brown peaty water, tangled tufts of rushes, mats of warm green moss ; a paradise for snipe and duck. To our right are a few mounds or barrows, one especially higher, broader, and rounder than the rest. Mount on the top and say what you can see all round you, for this lonely spot shows the finest view in Exmoor. The whole of North Devon is spread out before you like a map.

First look to southward. All the steep hilly country through which we have passed seems like one vast green plain, cut by innumerable little valleys and covered with a network of green banks, with the blue hills of Dartmoor rising sturdily behind it. You can see the whole range of the Dartmoor mountain barrier, highest to the left or eastward, where stand the pointed peak of Yestor and the broad round back of Cawsand. Still farther to eastward at some interval are the high downs round Exeter. Now let your eye travel westwards along the Dartmoor hills, and it is stopped by the sea. That low, wicked-looking point which bounds your view is Hartland Point, which was fatal to many a good ship till a lighthouse was set up thereon. Hartland stands at the edge of the Channel, with nothing between it and America to the westward to check the rollers of the Atlantic ; a bleak, inhospit-

able coast, with never a harbour of refuge from a north-westerly gale. Between us and Hartland rises a far grander point, almost perpendicular to the sea, which men call White Cliff, or Gallantry Bower. Clovelly lies close to it on the side nearest to us. Follow the coast line round, and a little to our right front is Appledore Bar, some ten miles distant as the crow flies, though the waves are apparently breaking at our feet. To westward the land falls very rapidly away from the point where we stand, tumbling in huge bounds from hill to hill. You can see the valleys running southward which drain this high land and carry its waters to the sea—the valley of the Bray, which we have followed, and of the Yeo, running parallel to it, past Arlington and Youlston, where the Chichesters dwell, and into the Taw estuary by Pilton. Then, turning round, you can follow the coast round by Ilfracombe, Combe Martin, and Watermouth (home of the Bassets), to Lynton, Culbone, and Porlock, and to Weston-super-Mare for aught the writer knows. The villages tucked under the cliffs you cannot see, but the hills above them you can; ay, and the Welsh coast beyond, with Lundy Island standing stark and stiff in mid channel, as a half-way house to rest the eye on. But this view of wood and hill and cliff and sea is

not to be described in words, least of all on the eve of a storm, as the writer once saw it, when Cawsand was glittering and sparkling forty miles away after the herald shower, and the sea all ablaze with the setting sun; when Lundy stood out purple and purpler in its defiance, and Hartland thrust out its wicked snout sharper and blacker into the sea, and the bar foamed and writhed in the agony of the ground swell; while the green plain was still basking in the few lingering rays, till the clouds broke between sun and sea, and all seaward was hidden behind a rosy veil, under which screen the storm advanced and turned all to blackness and night. But we must get back our eyes from the fifty miles around us to the plain, more or less level, and roughly about two miles square, whereon we stand; for this is the main watershed, whence rise not only the Bray, but the Barle, the Exe, and the Lyn. From this point we can, by following the rivers, give some idea of the formation of this Exmoor mountain country.

First the great barrier hill, which was our point in coming up the Bray, is but the westernmost of a long range, the highest (save only Dunkery, of which hereafter) on the moor; which runs from north-west to south-east, and makes the boundary of Devon and

Somerset for some five-and-twenty miles. Showlsbarrow Castle is the name of this westernmost hill; "Castle" because there is on the summit an old Roman encampment with ramparts and fosses complete, doubtless in communication by beacon with Clovelly Dikes (a still larger camp) forty miles to south and west. Due south of Showlsbarrow, and about four miles distant, is a smaller camp on much lower ground, called Mocombe. This boundary range, the southern wall of Exmoor, bears various names as it trends eastward; Five Barrows (there are five mounds still to be seen—supposed old British tombs), Filedon Ridge, One Barrow Down, Two Barrow Down, then, turning more sharply southward, North Molton Ridge (whereon the Bampfyldes dwell), and, eastward again, Anstey Common and Dulverton Common. All except these two last, which alone are heathery, are clothed with rank yellow sedge-grass, and generally very "wet" on the top.

The rivers rise just behind and to north-west of Showlsbarrow. First the Barle,* trickling away from a pool (artificially made) called Pinkworthy† Pond—a

* Berghel in old records.

† "Worthy"—meadow. Pink meadow, bound to be a boggy one.

very boggy place—bearing somewhat south of east and gradually sinking into a huge deep combe among the yellow hills. Thence, always eastward, past Simonsbath village, which lies some six miles down, to Withypool yet six miles farther; just below which latter hamlet a chain of oak coppice woods covers both banks, almost unbroken except in name for some seven miles or more, past Tarr Steps, Hawkridge, Brewer's Castle, to the little town of Dulverton; a mile below which Barle is merged in Exe.

Thus, then, we have a second great fold formed within and to northward of the great southern barrier, this second fold being again duplicated between Simonsbath and two miles above Withypool by a large tributary of the Barle.

The Exe, rising a mile and a half to northward of the Barle, runs in a course almost parallel to it in the same direction, from north-west to south-east, flowing through a very deep combe (Orchard Combe by name) some six or seven miles to Exford, an old oasis and parish for centuries; thence to the pretty village of Winsford, where the oak coppice once more covers the banks; on under Exton village and by Baronsdown, where the Lucases kept the stag-hounds from 1818—25, to the back of Pixton, home formerly of the Aclands, now

the property of Lord Carnarvon. The Exe, now divided only by the park from the Barle, gradually approaches this last river till it joins it a mile below Dulverton. The Barle is the largest of the two at the junction, but the Exe keeps its name on past Stoodley and Tiverton and Colipriest (where the Carews live), and at last to the sea at Exmouth.

This adds a third great fold to the two already mentioned. The land between Barle and Exe has much of it been reclaimed, with the exception of one grand hill, Winsford Hill by name, covered with tall heather, which separates the two rivers for some four miles from Withypool downwards.

Both Barle and Exe drain little but the land to the northward of their course for some way, the chief tributaries of the former being Kensford (? King's Ford) Water, which seams the main southern barrier for some five miles, between Five Barrows and the Barle; the West water, which rises on Withypool Common, and the Danesbrook, which has its source some mile and a half from the West water; all of them running in from the southward.

North of the Exe there is a great spread of table-land to the sea; table-land, that is, in a modified sense, for it is all deeply seamed by combes taking the water

from a good tract of wet ground to the Lyn. This Lyn rises within a stone's throw of the Exe, and flows almost due northward, forming roughly the western boundary of the moor, to the sea at Lynmouth. But though so far to westward, it drains the whole country north of the Exe, save one corner at the eastern extremity of the moor, which is pretty well bounded by the road running from the Exe at the Warren, about five miles above Exford, to Hawkcombe Head, on the cliffs above Porlock. Between this road and the Lyn (from twelve to fifteen miles) runs the county boundary; the ground to the north-west, or Devon-ward, which is heathery, being named Brendon Common, that south-east and Somerset-ward, which is yellow grass, the North Forest. Both are slashed by steep combs pouring the water into one main stream, which runs from east to west (the opposite direction to Exe and Barle), and is called first Badgworthy Water and lower down the East Lyn. Badgworthy Wood is a small cover overhanging the water high up, and Oare is about a mile and a half below and to east of the wood. The East Lyn flows on past Brendon village through four miles of deep cover to join the West Lyn at Watersmeet, a little above Lynmouth. These woods are known as the Brendon Covers.

North of Badgworthy water the ground is all heathery to the Channel, two deep gorges, Wearwater and Chalkwater, which rise at the north-east corner of the North Forest and run into Badgworthy Water, alone interposing between the table-land and the sea. Between Wear and Chalk, and encompassed by them, is Middle or Mill Hill. The cliffs, from Lynton in the west to Porlock in the east, are covered with short stunted woods, favourite resorts of the deer. Above these woods is a chain of farms, and deep hidden in the midst of them are the houses of Glenthorne, some eight miles east of Lynmouth, and Ashley Combe, some six miles further on towards Porlock. Half way between Ashley Combe and Glenthorne is Culbone Church; the smallest, the writer believes, in England.

East of the road from Hawkcombe Head to the Warren above named there is a great sweep of heather rolling upward to Dunkery, the highest but not the grandest ridge on the moor. Dunkery is mostly covered with heather, and not with heather only, but also with great boulders, which make it unpleasant to ride over. Round its base on the north side run the Horner Covers, sunk deep in a long valley of wonderful beauty. Very extensive covers are these and great favourites with the deer, with, of course, streams pour-

ing down from Dunkery and the combes to westward. Dunkery is the boundary of the high land eastward, the ground all round falling away from it; though there are a few smaller hills rising abruptly in the low land as stepping stones across to the Quantock Hills. Between the north side of Dunkery and the sea is the vale of Porlock, with Holnicote nestling comfortably in the midst of it. The barrier between the vale and the sea is North Hill, which runs from Bossington Point to Minehead: Dunster, Watchet, and the Quantocks lie eastward up the vale.

The south side of Dunkery (called Codsens Moors) is very wet rushy ground, which sends a tributary southward to join the Exe below Winsford, and thus forms the connecting link between Dunkery and Dulverton. The only remaining stronghold of the deer to be mentioned is Haddon, a great heather hill a couple of miles east of Dulverton, surrounded and flanked by enormous woods which stretch down the inevitable stream (Haddeo) almost to the woods of the Exe.

Thus we see that the deer covers lie all round the skirts of this great tract of moorland and watershed: the Bray Covers at the south-west corner, the Horner Covers at the north-east, the Brendon Covers at the

north-west, the Barle, Exe, and Haddon Covers at the south-east. Small wonder, therefore, if there be many a noble chase from refuge to refuge, from end to end of the moor. Sometimes, of course, the deer run clean away from their wild home over the enclosed country, and this more frequently since the Quantocks were included within the range of the stag-hounds. There is indeed more than one line by which deer have crossed before the hounds between the Parret by Bridgwater and the Taw by Barnstaple; but it is on the banks of Barle and Exe, Bray and Lyn, Haddeo and Horner Water, that most of the deer first see the light; and it is in their waters that nine-tenths of them die.

CHAPTER II.

THE FOREST OF EXMOOR.

THE date whereat Exmoor was made a royal forest will probably never be discovered.

It would appear that in Saxon as well as in early Norman times a great part of Devonshire was royal forest, for there is a charter of the 18th of May, 1204, by which King John purported to disafforest all Devonshire up to the metes and bounds of Exmoor and Dartmoor. This charter is the first authentic document wherein the names of Exmoor and Dartmoor are found.

Of the extent of Exmoor Forest in Saxon times we have no knowledge. In the 26th year of Edward I. (1298) a commission was issued by the king to make a perambulation of the Forest;* those chosen for the purpose being Sir Baldric de Nonyngton and Sir Hugh de Popham, Knights, in the presence of Peter de

* There was a similar perambulation of Dartmoor in 1240.

Hamme, deputy of Sabina Peche, keeper of the Forest, Gilbert de la Putte, verderer, and others.

The survey was as follows :—

EXPLANATION.

THE survey began at County Gate, above Glenthorne, and following the present main road eastward, reached "Fistone" (? Finis Stone), where Deddycombe cot stood, and where Culbone parish crosses the main road at its junction with Oare. The boundary then proceeded eastward, but on the south side of the main road to the head of the combe, now known as Lillycombe, where it descended to Wear Water (which becomes Oare Water), fifty yards above Robbers' Bridge. The boundary then went straight up over to Mill or Middle Hill, which it crossed at its ridge to Blackbarrow, thence making a bee line over what now forms part of Porlock Common, till it reached "Alderman's" Barrow.

"Alderman's" Barrow is doubtless a corruption of Osmund's Barrow. Osmund held the parish of Culbone at the time of the Norman invasion, and was then

ORIGINAL.

"FROM a certain place called Cornesyete along a certain road between the King's demesne and the fee of William de Kytemore, to the stones called Fistonies; and so going down by a certain duct called Lillescombe to Ore Water; and thence going down on the further side of the heath ground to a mountain called Blakebergh; thence to Osmundbergh hill;

EXPLANATION.

dispossessed thereof. The site of the present barrow exactly tallies with the boundary of the old survey. Both it and Blackbarrow are ancient landmarks, which still exist. From this barrow the boundary went south-west; Spracombesheved being easily identified with the headland above Orchard Corner; and near the east end of the Warren Allotment, crossing the Exe at the west corner of Orchard Gorse. Thence to *Radstone*, Redstone, a well-known point in the Exford parish boundary, on the present road to Simonsbath. From Redstone the boundary followed the present Simonsbath road (the north hedge whereof is the boundary of Exford and Exmoor parishes) westward to the insignificant water (now probably under the road) which runs down to Radleycombe (Red-de-Combe: compare Short-a-Combe and Small-a-Combe). The boundary then turned south for *Schepecumbeheved*, which is identical with the head of the present Shutscombe, though *Deresmarke* is apparently

ORIGINAL.

and thence to a place called Spracombesheved; and thence by a certain duct to Ex water; and so going up by an old ditch to a stone called Radston; and thence between the fee of John Mohun and the fee of the Abbot of Neth to a ford which is called Reddeford: and so ascending by the heath directly to a place called Schepecumbeheved, as far as a stone known by the name of Deresmarke; and thence going along beyond the heath between the King's demesne and the fee of the Abbot of Neth, to a place called Stonchiste, and so going down to a place in the water of Berghel, where the water of Schureburn runs into the water of Berghel, which place is called Schureburnessete, and thence on the other side the heath directly to a stone called Hockleston, and so going down to a ford called Wylleneford in the water of

EXPLANATION.

a thing of the past. *Stonchiste* is doubtless the spot where Withypool joins at one corner the parishes of Exmoor and Exford.

The boundary then travelled south to the *Berghel*, *i.e.* Barle, where the *Schureburn*, *i.e.* Sheardon, stream joins the main water at Schureburnessete, *i.e.* Sheardon Hutch. From this point to Willingford Water-crossing, now a bridge, the line is easily traceable. Hockleston, between these points, is still locally known. (An aged inhabitant says, "They used to hook their horses to it," but this interpretation is perhaps doubtful.) From Willingford Water-crossing, on the *Dumokesbroke*, *i.e.* the present Danesbrook or Dunnsbrook (the two names, Willingford Water and Danesbrook belong to one stream), the boundary followed the present division of the counties of Devon and Somerset to County Gate.

ORIGINAL.

Dumokesbroke, in the confines of the counties of Somerset and Devon to Cornesyete, the place where the survey was begun."

It will thus be noted that in Edward I.'s time the whole Forest of Exmoor lay within the county of Somerset, though the charter of King John above

mentioned would seem to show that it formerly extended into Devon. On the other hand, the boundary of the Forest to the south and west exactly coincides with the division of the counties; and as the Forest is probably of earlier date than the county divisions, it seems likely that the Forest boundary was adopted as the county boundary.

The Forest included, in 1298, a considerable portion of the parish of Oare, which now lies without it. When this portion was disafforested is uncertain. It is known that the adjoining manor of Kytemore or Culbone was disafforested in this year, and freed from the oppression of the Forest laws: but not so Oare, or that manor would not have been included in the perambulation. With the exception of this one portion taken to create the parish of Oare, the Forest from the time of Edward I. remained intact for five hundred years—a wild and dreary expanse of rough grass, without a fence or enclosure from end to end.

At last, in 1815, an Act was passed (55 Geo. III. c. 138) for vesting in his Majesty certain parts of the Forest, and for enclosing it. Herein it was recited that the total extent of the Forest was 22,400 acres; a figure proved by a subsequent survey to be wrong, but almost tallying with that given by the survey of



Simonsath



J. W. ... 3703

2. G.

Edward I. before the disafforestation of Oare—a coincidence which suggests that the drafters of the Bill had some older record before them.

The Act further stated that his Majesty was seised in his demesne as of fee of a certain farm, called Simonsbath Farm, containing $108\frac{1}{2}$ acres, which farm was enclosed and separated, and divided from the open lands; and also that Sir Thomas Acland claimed to be entitled to all tithes arising within the Forest. His Majesty was to be allotted $\frac{1}{2}\frac{2}{3}$ of the whole in value and quantity, and Sir Thomas was to be allotted one-eighth part of the whole Forest in lieu of tithes. The remainder was reserved as compensation to various adjoining landowners, who enjoyed certain common rights on the Forest. Lastly, his Majesty was given power to sell.

A commission was appointed to survey and value the Forest, which was duly done, and a map (not too correct in some particulars) was also made. By this survey the total acreage was set down at 18,810 acres and a fraction, whereof the Crown share amounted to $10,262\frac{1}{4}$ acres. This last was put up for auction at Minehead, and sold to the late Mr. John Knight. The date of the conveyance is 9th March, 1820. It is perfectly simple and unencumbered, making no reserva-

tion or requirement of any kind save that 10 or 12 acres should be available for the Crown to build at Simonsbath a church or parsonage, if desired. The Forest was soon after made into the parish of Exmoor.

Mr. Knight, it should be explained, was a Worcestershire gentleman who had reclaimed a great deal of land in that county with much success. He made two offers for the purchase of the Forest, both of them very far higher than those of the next bidder, Lord Fortescue, of Castle Hill, an ex-master of the stag-hounds. Mr. Knight also bought Sir Thomas Acland's portion of the Forest, and the adjoining property of Brendon, belonging to Sir Arthur Chichester of Youlston. He soon began the work of reclamation on Exmoor, but with indifferent success and at vast expense. He turned the old imaginary boundary into a reality, by building a stone wall in lieu of the old line of barrows and landmarks. He divided the interior into huge allotments, built farmhouses, drained bogs, all with a result lamentably out of proportion to the outlay; forgetting, perhaps, too often that Worcester and Devon require different management. Thus the old unbroken sweep of the Forest was limited and much of its charm lost to stag-hunters who remembered its old freedom. Still the enclosures are

so large, and the solitude, but for an occasional shepherd or the stag-hunting field, so complete, that Exmoor is still a vast wild tract, little more civilised than before. Around it Brendon Common is still unenclosed, and the miles from Alderman's Barrow to the east of Dunkery unbroken by a fence. There are still rare birds and beasts to be seen there; first and foremost the red deer, which have had a home in Exmoor from time immemorial; polecats are also found, though now more rarely; the Montagu's harrier* is occasionally seen; a snowy owl was shot some few years back, and only two years ago a pelican was found walking about on the North Forest.†

Exmoor Forest knows no heather. The Forest wall seems to be the arbitrary boundary between heather and grass; why, is not very clear. Mr. Knight maintains that originally all the uncultivated districts of West Somerset and North Devon were moorlands of rough grass, and that the Forest has alone preserved this feature because, being Crown property, it was left untilled; further, that efforts were made in the

* *Circus Cineraceus*.

† This bird had probably escaped from confinement, but his owner could never be found. Bewick gives the pelican as a rare visitor. The natives attributed his presence to the cannonading at Tel-el-Kebir!

Middle Ages to bring these moorlands under cultivation, as was undoubtedly the case on Winsford Hill, where the old fences are still visible in the heather ; and that rye was the principal produce, which last is confirmed by the rye straw thatch on old houses round Exmoor. Where the land was thoroughly exhausted, it at once produced heather ; a fact proved by actual experiments of Mr. Knight's. Winsford Hill is certainly a tract of fine heather, but so also is Dunkery, the highest land in Somerset, which can hardly have tempted the labourer of former times. There is, further, one great chain of heather from Dunkery to Martinhoe, including the great tract of Brendon Common, whereof the name, Brown Down,* seems to indicate the presence of heather from the beginning of things. But, whatever the cause, the fact remains that the heather grows luxuriantly without the Forest boundaries, while within them the rough grass alone is found.

* *Ow* as pronounced in Devon rhymes to the French *eu*. *Brown* therefore nearly rhymes to the French *jeune*. But Brendon may also be "*Burnt Down*;" perhaps preliminary to cultivation. There is another Brendon east of Dunkery as well as west. The process of phonetic change is easily understood by those who know the dialect of Devon ; but to satisfy the minds of strangers it may be added that *Redstone Point*, near Porlock, has become *Hurtstone*, and that the two words are hardly distinguishable to one unaccustomed to the language. Moreover there is the old word *brent*=*burnt*.

CHAPTER III.

THE • OLD TIMES.

THERE is no record that any king ever hunted on the royal Forest of Exmoor, but there is some ground for supposing that one or more of the Saxon kings did so. The small oasis of Simonsbath was held, as before stated, by the king as his private property, and existed as such till the time of George III., which seems to suggest a personal occupation at one period or another. The name Simonsbath is of no help in the matter. Simon is supposed to have been an outlaw; and a deep pool in the Barle, a few hundred yards above the village, is pointed out as his "bath." But more probably the true meaning is Simon's *path*, for the old bridle-road from Barnstaple crosses the Barle under the village, and goes up through it; and other paths on the moor have similar names, such as Snow's path and Perriam's path. The ford across the first water, on entering the Forest from the south, is Kingsford, or

Kensford, which also points to royalty; and so it is hardly likely that Simon the outlaw should have hung about the only place where the royal authority was likely to be enforced. In any case, it is not his cleanliness but his route that is immortalised.

In the 9th year of Edward I. (1281) we find that Walter Anngerin held land in Auri and Hole, in the county of Devon, by sergeanty that whenever the king should hunt in the Forest of Exmoor he should find for him two barbed arrows; another instance of personal presence of the king. Where "Auri" lies is not very clear, for Oare lies in the county of Somerset and Hole in the valley of the Bray. In the same reign we find one Walter Barun holding lands in Holecote (? Holnicote), in Somerset, by sergeanty of hanging on a forked block of wood the red deer dying of murrain in the Forest of Exmoor.

It is not till Queen Elizabeth's time that we hear of Hugh Pollard, Esquire, ranger of the royal Forest, who kept a pack of hounds at Simonsbath. His successors in the office continued to keep the hounds after him, and at the end of the seventeenth century we find Mr. Walter, of Stevenstone, in command. Mr. Walter was succeeded by Lord Orford, and he in turn by Mr. Dyke, who (says Dr. Collyns) hunted the country with

great success for many years. From Mr. Dyke the pack passed to his kinsman, the first Sir Thomas Acland, who hunted the country, "in princely style," down to the year 1770, when he was succeeded by his son, the second Sir Thomas, still remembered in the country as "Sir Thomas, his Honour." The name of the Aclands has deservedly been held in high esteem through many generations in Devon and Somerset, not only as large landowners (it is said that at one time the reigning Sir Thomas could ride from Killerton to Holnicote, over thirty miles straight, on his own land), but as good landlords, generous masters, and the friends of all, from the highest to the lowest. Since those times Pixton has passed away from the family, but Highercombe and Holnicote, with a goodly portion of the land between them, are still in the old hands, never, it is to be hoped, to leave them. Of the sport shown by the two Sirs Thomas there is no record down to the year 1780, save the terse sentences of "found" and "killed" under the antlers at Holnicote; but a curious letter was discovered a few years ago in the commonplace book of an Exeter lawyer, which throws some light on the history of those times. The writer of the letter was a park-keeper and the recipient a barber, "well known for his skill in the field as well as in the shop." The

letter itself was found by the lawyer at the bottom of a box of wigs, and runs as follows :—

“DULVERTON, SOMERSET, *Sept.* 4, 1759.

“SIR,

“I am ordered by my master, Courtenay Walrond, Esq., to trouble you with this letter, that you may have the pleasure of hearing of one of the finest stag hunts that ever happened in this kingdom. About one o'clock Monday morning, my master, with his brother and his steward, Mr. Brutton, set out from Bradfield, bravely mounted, attended by several servants which had horses. About ten o'clock they got to the woods and soon after roused a stag at the head of the Ironmill Water, where he took to Stuckeridge Wood and crossed the river Exe, from thence to Exe Cleeve, and after running over Exmoor Forest, on the whole more than seventy miles, he was killed near Lowry Gate; when he appeared to be about ten years old, his brow bay and tree angles having all his rights, and seven on one top and five on the other, and was to one inch fourteen hands high. This noble chase being ended, my master, his brother, and Mr. Brutton, with about twenty gentlemen more, waited on Sir Thomas Acland at Pixton, where each of them drank the health of the stag in a full quart glass of



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claret placed in the stag's mouth, and, after drinking several proper healths, they went in good order to their respective beds at two o'clock, and dined with Sir Thomas next day on a haunch of this noble creature and about fifty dishes of the greatest rarities, among which were, with several others, black grouse. Master, his brother, and Mr. Brutton rode extremely bold, and were in at the death of the stag. They set out for Bradfield to-morrow evening, and as Sir Thomas has given master one haunch which weighs thirty-six pounds and a quarter, he desires you will dine with him on Thursday at Bradfield. I must now conclude, Sir Thomas having given notice of another stag, equally good as this I have described, in Brockeridge Wood, for which place the gentlemen are now setting out, and I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

“J. RICH,

“Park-keeper to Courtenay Walrond, Esquire.

“P. S.—You are desired to bring with you Mr. Brutton, the hatter, and Mr. Drake, a doctor of Exeter. You may invite likewise, if you please, any other friend of yours.

“There were at the chase more than 500 horse and 1,000 foot.”

Here we have a veritable picture of the old days—Courtenay Walrond, Esquire, and his brother and his steward starting off before even the early September day had dawned, in long frock, boot and spur. Did they go to bed on the previous night? Was it their first or twenty-first draught of ale that they drained before they set out bravely mounted, attended by several servants (doubtless all a-yawn), which had horses. What were those horses? Were they for master or men? and why did Courtenay Walrond take nine hours on the road to the woods—not above twenty miles? Did the party lose its way in the darkness? Did they all go to sleep, men from weariness, masters from beeriness? or did they all stop at some half-way house? Alas! history telleth not. But they reached the meet, and doubtless bowed low to the great Sir Thomas when they met him and his pack of tall, solemn, heavy hounds. We can see the couples taken off by an eager whipper-in at Sir Thomas's word; the old harbourer, ragged and mysterious, repeating his tale; the selection of a couple or so of steady tufters; and the harbourer finally showing the slot of the deer. We can hear the great hounds opening on the line, and the ringing "Tally" that greets a view of the finest stag that ever was seen. Sir

Thomas, pleased as he can be, pulls out the harbourer's fee, which is duly anointed and pouched. Then the stag is forced away, to the enraptured gaze of Courtenay Walrond, Esquire, doubtless "so big as a bullock." Then the laying on of the pack, the crossing of the Exe, possibly not without a check, and the rush of gentlemen riding extremely bold up the valley, with the great hounds chiming like bells before them. At Exe Cleeve probably another check, much mopping of red faces and interjections of amazement in broadest Devon. Then on again, and away to Lowry Gate (not to be identified); Courtenay Walrond, Esquire, breathless, his horse quivering; but all, men and horses, roused out of their wits by the mad baying. The foot people plunge in and secure the deer as he stands game to the last in some brown peat stream, with head laid back and fierce clenched jaws, daring his tormentors to do their worst. Then the mort note rises shrill above the deep hound voices, as the noble antlered head sinks down and the wild despairing eyes grow dim in death. The crowd round Sir Thomas grows thicker and thicker. Farmer A (his name probably ending in "cott") thanks his honour for the half-crown due to him for stopping the tufters. Farmers B and C, also assistants, divide the

same sum between them. The labourers or footmen chuckle over their sixpences and shillings, and vow to drink long life to Sir Thomas and stag-hunting. And now Courtenay Walrond rides back proudly to Pixton with Sir Thomas, and many another with him. There is welcome for all there, and a good dinner, to which all will do justice—salmon from Exe river, black game from Winsford Hill, wine from the France against which we are now fighting. For is not the news just come that on the 1st of last month a single line of English infantry broke through three lines of French cavalry on the glorious field of Minden? Perhaps the tidings are not yet come; but we care not for that, for here is the huntsman with the head of our stag; he stumps in and lowers his forelock to his hand; then at a sign from Sir Thomas he solemnly puts horn to mouth and blows the mort note amid wild excitement. The quart glass is tied, not without fumbling, in the dead mouth, and filled, not without waste, for Sir Thomas to drink. Is the stag's health the toast? Then drink it each one as the trophy comes to your hand. O Courtenay Walrond, Esquire, I fear that you were not very clear as to whose health you were drinking; such a meal as this after a twelve hours' ride, a gallant run, and Sir Thomas's present of a

haunch, had tended to confuse you. Are we to believe, too, that you and your fellows, after drinking several proper healths (whereof you have no very distinct idea) retired in good order to your respective beds? Why were you so careful to mention this to your park-keeper when he ran to ask you, "Have 'ee killed the deer, your honour?" Why does your park-keeper describe the deer as to an inch fourteen hands high, as if he had measured him, and found such a monster with a haunch weighing but thirty-six pounds? Whence, too, that notion of 500 horse and 1,000 foot? We can, with an effort, believe the seventy miles' run, for we can match it; but hardly such a gigantic field. Or had J. Rich also been drinking several proper healths in honour of the cocasion?

Well, let us leave this glorious day, not unique during the Acland dynasty. The same hospitality continued throughout the days of Sir Thomas, his Honour; and, indeed, it seems to have been the regular practice for the Master to entertain the whole field, who were in consequence often somewhat tightly packed. Occasionally, at an inn, Sir Thomas himself shared his bed with one of his guests; and the gentleman selected for this honour (whereof he was not a little proud) was a Mr. Henry Karslake, who appears,

from divers sly notices in the Castle Hill records, to have been a sportsman whose keenness sometimes outran his discretion, thus drawing on himself not a little good-humoured banter from the rest. His chief merit in his Honour's eyes was his immunity from the vice of snoring.

In 1775 the mastership of the staghounds passed from the Aclands to another old Devon family—the Bassets. In 1784 Sir Thomas reassumed command; and on his death, in 1794, Colonel Basset again kept them until the year 1801. In 1802 the hounds* were kept by Hugh, first Earl Fortescue, at Castle Hill, for one season, and they then became a subscription pack under the management of Mr. Worth, of Worth House, near Tiverton, until 1810. Lord Graves, of Bishop's Court, near Exeter, then kept them for one season, 1811, and made them over in 1812 once more to Lord Fortescue.

The return of the hounds to Castle Hill was marked by a restoration of the palmy days which the lovers of stag-hunting had enjoyed under the Aclands. But far more important for our present purpose is the

* The pack was sold in 1801, with the exception of six and a half couples, which were handed to Lord Fortescue for the nucleus of a new pack.

journal kept by different members of the family of each day's sport during the seasons of 1812—1818, which, added to a letter from Lord Graves to the then Lord Ebrington, on making over the mastership to him, give us a tolerably clear account of the practices then observed and of the numbers of the deer then in the country. The best preserves were then the North Molton and the Porlock countries, deer being very short both at Bratton and in the Dulverton country. "We have been unpopular for some years at Dulverton," writes Lord Graves, "and the deer have constantly been disturbed and killed in the Hawkridge Bottom and at Bratton; during Mr. Chichester's hostility they had no rest, and great numbers fell victims to that gentleman's resentment." (What the quarrel with Mr. Chichester was about is not recorded, but it was probably one of the feuds which were perpetually recurring between county families in those days, when locomotion was difficult, and folks had little recreation except squabbling with their neighbours.) Then follows a calculation of the number of deer in the country, about two hundred head in all, "perhaps one hundred short of what there was in the old Sir Thomas Acland's time, but still quite enough for sport;" the bulk of them in the Bray, North Molton, and Porlock covers.

Then as to the hunting: "It was the plan last year to begin tufting at *nine o'clock precisely*, if the covert were not a great distance from kennel, in which case we began at ten and tufted till one o'clock, when, if unsuccessful, we run a hind. But never took the hounds out without the determination of running." We wonder how many of the present large fields would appear if the hounds commenced tufting at nine A.M. But Lord Graves is not satisfied even with that. "We should begin tufting at *eight o'clock* instead of ten or eleven as heretofore; at that late hour we have generally missed our deer." The next paragraph will probably excite a smile in those who are accustomed to hunt with the present pack, but it was just enough in the days of the old, heavy, true staghounds.

"If it can possibly be avoided a young male deer should never be run: such a chase kills the hounds and horses, or renders them unserviceable for a fortnight, without killing the light galloping deer you pursue." Lord Graves wrote with some feeling on this point, for the first stag he ever saw killed was of the light galloping sort, and ran from Castle Hill to the borders of Dartmoor, the whole process lasting six hours and a half. The rest of the letter is taken

up with explanations of technical terms, a list of the hounds, a warning against certain “determined rascally deer stealers;” a word in favour of two old harbourers, “though accounted great knaves even by their masters,” and a list of fees, some of them very curious, *e.g.*:—

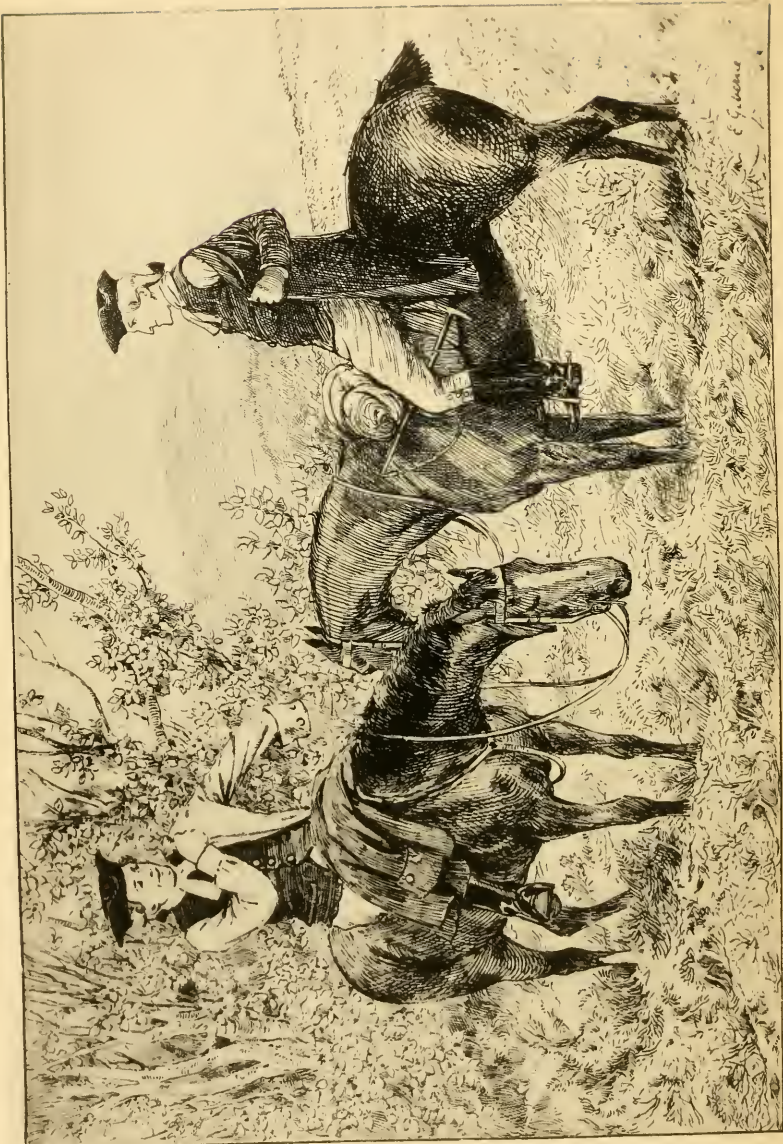
	£	s.	d.
To the farmers who ride the chase and are at the death of a stag	1	1	0
To the farmer who stops the tufters	0	2	6
To the footmen who assist in securing a stag when set up (<i>i.e.</i> at bay)	0	10	6

and so forth. Finally comes the satisfactory sentence, “At present we have the undivided support of every great proprietor in the resort of the deer.”

This was the state of the country when Lord Fortescue assumed command, and in such favourable circumstances it is not surprising that he had very good sport and many good runs, including “the longest chase ever remembered,” from Dunkery to Satterleigh, twenty-six miles as the crow flies. This, however, lasted but six years. The expenses of a general election for the county of Devon made further tenure of the mastership impossible; and the stag-hounds passed away from the Fortescues in 1818 not to return till 1881.

From 1818 to 1824 the pack was kept by Mr. Stucley Lucas of Baronsdown, and the hunting continued as heretofore; but for reasons which the chroniclers of the period were unwilling to record (whence it is probably well that they are forgotten) things did not prosper; and the hounds were finally sold in 1825, and left the country, never to return.

Such was the end of this renowned pack—the last of the true staghounds in England. “The hills and woods of Devon and Somerset will never again ring to the melody of such a pack,” writes Dr. Collyns in his description thereof; and beyond all doubt its departure marked the close of the good old days of stag-hunting. It is curious the history of its doings should have found no record at the hands of the various masters; but it seems that none exists except the Castle Hill MS. already mentioned. The deficiency is, however, filled up by a short journal kept by a dear lover of the sport, one John Boyse, parson of Hawkridge and Withypool, from whence Dr. Collyns drew his account of the sport between 1780 and 1825. There are few now living that remember the said John Boyse; but his portrait still exists, together with that of the master, in a painting of a stag at bay, taken when the pack was kept at Baronsdown. John was a



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light weight and a good horseman ; he knew his way better than any one over the great tracts of moss-covered bog, which existed then to a far greater extent than now on certain parts of the moor, and he was thoroughly familiar with the runs of the deer and their ways generally. Hence his name invariably appears as one of the few at the end of some extraordinary chase, and more than once it is related that "Boyse was the only one with them." For the rest, tradition hints that poor John was a better sportsman than parson, and adds that he was known as "Stag-hunter Boyse." Nevertheless all lovers of stag-hunting are under obligations to him for his chronicle ; and it is not uninteresting to know that the parsons of that time, as of the present, loved a gallop over the forest. According to tradition, the clerical division appeared at the cover side in sober black ; but each several divine had a white flannel jacket strapped on to his saddle which he exchanged for the black one when the pack was laid on. And so the reverend gentlemen rode the chase, changing their coats once more when it was over that they might give offence to no man.

The last of this good old race, the Rev. John Russell, died only a few years ago, and with him perished

one of the last links between the old times and the new. He saw his first stag killed in 1814 under the mastership of the first Earl Fortescue; he saw his last stag killed some seventy years later under a great-grandson of the above—the present master—a feat whereof he was not a little proud. It was from him that the present generation received the oral traditions of stag-hunting in its palmyest days; and hence it is hardly too much to say that two parsons, John Boyse and John Russell—the one in his manuscript, the other in the flesh—alone have preserved for us the history of the old *régime* during the hundred years 1780—1880. There is, however, a third name, perhaps better known than either of the others in connection with the chronicles of stag-hunting, that of Charles Palk Collyns, surgeon, of Dulverton, for forty-seven years of the three score and ten during which he lived the most enthusiastic of stag-hunters. He was further the author of “The Chase of the Wild Red Deer,” a book which is still the greatest authority on all matters touching the sport.

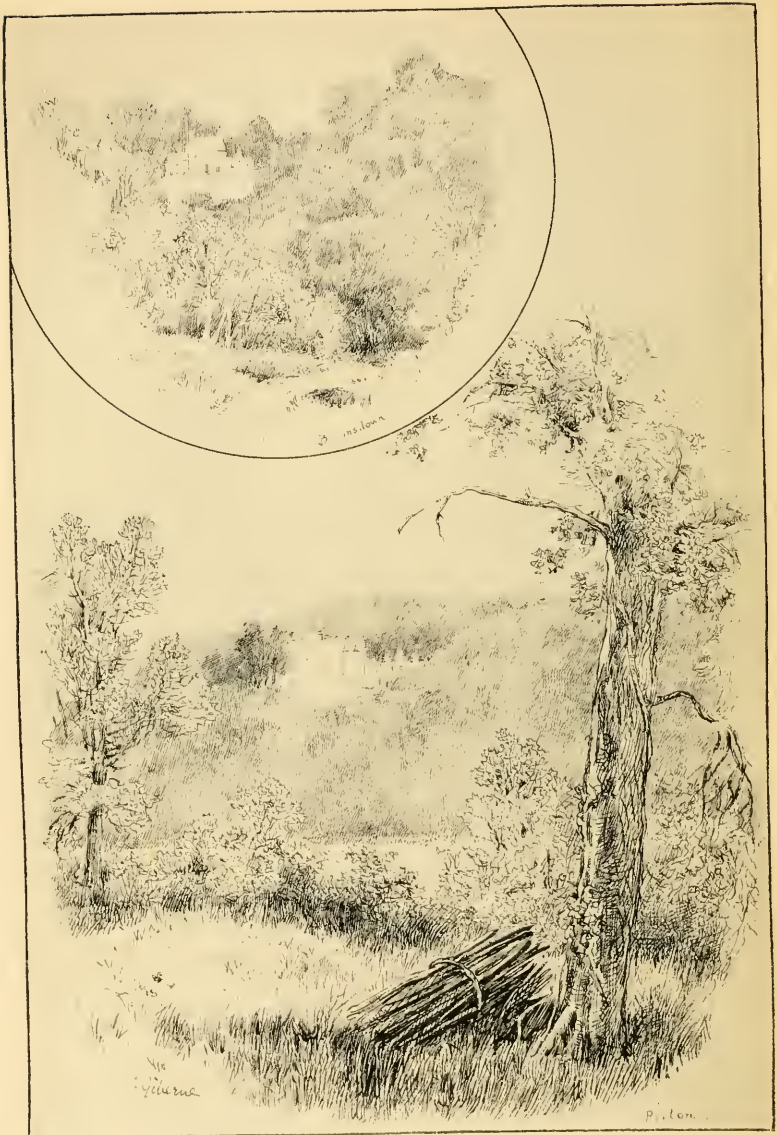
The last survivor was, as we have said, Parson John Russell. There are still one or two left, notably Mr. Knight, of Simonsbath, and Mr. Baker, of Lynton, who as boys rode a run with the old pack; still a select

few who remember the time when there was not a fence between Porlock and Dulverton. But the number of these grows smaller every year, and soon all trace of the old days will have perished, except the antlers that still hang as trophies at Worth and Baronsdown, at Castle Hill and Holnicote and Stevenstone.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW TIMES, 1825—1861.

AFTER the sale of the old pack it seemed as though stag-hunting had perished for ever. Poachers and deerstealers at once set to work to improve the occasion, and the deer were harried in every quarter and driven from their favourite haunts. Further, fences began to spring up in every direction, land was reclaimed, enclosed, or planted, and all appeared to point to the extermination of the sport. In 1827, however, another old Devon house came to the front; Aclands, Bassets, and Fortescues had all taken their turn, and now the Chichesters took theirs. Sir Arthur Chichester got together a pack of foxhounds and hunted the country from 1827 to 1833. He then resigned, and thereupon ensued another relapse until 1837, when Mr. Palk Collyns organised a pack. This in its turn failed from want of funds in 1841, but the gap was stopped by the Hon. Newton Fellowes, who,



however, gave some dissatisfaction by disregarding the established rules of stag-hunting, and hence killing many deer out of season. He hunted the country, nevertheless, till 1847, and showed good sport enough. Then the present Sir Arthur Chichester took command for one season, and was succeeded by Mr. Theobald, a "foreigner" who had hunted the carted deer in the Cheltenham country, but failed to take a wild deer. In 1850 Mr. George Luxton, of Winkleigh, brought his pack of harriers to hunt the deer, but, not unnaturally, with incomplete success, and in 1851 Captain West, another hunter of carted deer, came to the rescue and showed good sport. Then Mr. Carew, of Colipriest, took command till 1853, when Captain West again appeared, and was received with the enthusiasm which his generosity deserved.

In 1855 the long interregnum came to an end, and the restoration began with the advent of Mr. Fenwick, a Berkshire gentleman, as tenant of Lord Carnarvon at Pixton House, near Dulverton. He came to the country for the sake of the shooting, and, as he afterwards admitted, had never heard of a "forester" (the local name for a wild deer) in his life; but such experience of the stag-hunting as could be obtained at that desperate state of the fortunes of the sport

seems at once to have made him enthusiastic. The beginning of his twenty-seven years' mastership is told thus in the first words of his journal.

“ The sporting community in the neighbourhood of Dulverton having long felt that their country was not sufficiently hunted, and being possessed with an itching desire to have a pack of foxhounds which they could call *their own*, in the spring of 1855 Mr. Froude Bellew (a nephew of the celebrated Parson Froude) consented to start a pack for their edification. Mr. Bellew had inherited from his uncle a beautiful and unequalled pack of harriers, which up to this time he had himself hunted, aided by the faithful Jack Babbage.* The well-known yellow pied pack, however, being rather on the small side for fox-hunting, Mr. Bellew, in the month of May, purchased the pack belonging to Mr. Horlock, a well known M.F.H. of that day, who was just then giving up a subscription pack in Cornwall.

“ This pack having arrived at Rhyll, Mr. Bellew on the 13th of that month announced in the most liberal and sportsman-like way that if the country thought it desirable ever again to have a pack of staghounds to hunt the wild deer, and any one would undertake the

* Till 1870 huntsman of the Staghounds.

management, he would present them with his large draft.

“ A start having been made towards raising a pack, the next question was how that pack was to be kept up. A meeting was held on the 23rd to consider the subject, and finally, after a vast deal of talk without any substantial support being promised, it was agreed by Mr. Fenwick that he would undertake to hunt the country for one season, trusting entirely to the liberality of the country to supply him with requisite funds, without making any conditions as to amount of support, &c., and that, should the subscriptions fall short of the required sum, it should be entirely at his discretion to give up the staghounds at once. In fact, though there was great plausible support and confident assurances that there would be ample support from those who had been staunch supporters in former years, there were evidently great misgivings as to what support the staghounds of this day might find ; and, as it proved, those misgivings were not without foundation. Thus Mr. Bisset, though but a novice, and with much reluctance, undertook the mastership, and thus were established the Devon and Somerset staghounds.”

It was characteristic of Mr. Bisset (for he soon after

assumed that name in addition to Fenwick) that he at once detected the weak side of the local character. Though himself a Devonshire man, with a firm belief that it is the finest county in England (who does not think so of his own county?), the writer must confess that love of talking is our besetting sin. No one who has shot in Devonshire can have failed to notice the incessant chattering of the beaters, and the writer has remarked the same fault in a man-of-war manned by a Devonshire crew. The blue-jackets were all splendid men, and at least as well-behaved as their comrades from other counties, but they would suspend any work for a conversation.

Mr. Bisset, however, braved this and all other dangers. He took over Mr. Bellew's draft, and with presents of four and a half couple from Captain West and the Rev. John Russell, added to one and a half couple of old hounds and four couple of puppies, which were purchased from a Mr. Pomeroy Gilbert, he made up a pack of eighteen couple of hounds, and duly lodged them in Churchtown kennels. John Babbage, who had been huntsman to Mr. Carew, held the same post under the new master, and Arthur Heal, who had been brought up to hunt the hare, was appointed to be whip.

The season opened on the 21st of August, 1855, at Simonsbath. Two stags and two hinds were found together in the North Forest; and after a fast burst with one of the latter, a stag was forced away and eventually taken. He proved, however, to be a deer that had been turned out by Captain West, so he was spared and turned out again—only to be fired at by poachers, and eventually killed “to prevent his dying,” less than two months later. Such occurrences were only too common at that time, the appearance of a poached deer in Exford village being the signal for general rejoicing among the whole population; nay, it is said (I know not with what truth) that a leading deer-stealer appeared at this meet displaying the slot of a hind which he had shot a day or two before, to encourage the new master.

Mr. Bisset, however, continued hunting, and on the 28th of September killed his first stag in the Haddeo, by *candlelight*, at ten minutes to eight o'clock. The season, however, was not remarkable for sport, and the result of twenty-five days' hunting was that two stags and two hinds were killed and one stag taken and saved. Of the twenty-five days, four were blank, while the weather prevented hunting on two more. It is remarkable, however, to notice how widely the

deer had been scattered by the constant raids of deer-stealers, for within the twenty-five days Mr. Bisset had found deer in the North Molton, Brendon, Dulverton, and Horner covers. The first beginnings of the Devon and Somerset staghounds are rather ridiculous reading at this distance of time, but, as Mr. Bisset justly remarks, "master, men, and hounds were all new to their work," and, to add to the confusion, when the master "knew too little there were many who knew too much." There was, further, only one trustworthy harbourer in the country—one Jim Blackmore, of Haddon, a noted character in his own province, of whom more hereafter. On one day a volunteer harbourer at Slowly Wood said he knew a splendid stag with "six on top," to be lying in the cover, but on being roused the "splendid stag" turned out to be a fallow buck. Still worse was it on another day to find a hind, that had honestly been run to a standstill, stolen just before the hounds ran into her, and "salted in" at a neighbouring cottage. Perhaps worst of all was the discovery that the new pack gave way to the vice which, for some reason or another, has always peculiarly beset the staghounds from the earliest times—that of sheep-killing. A deer had been run from the forest over the "chains,"—that is to say, the worst tract of ground in

the main watershed. No horse, of course, could live with them through it, but on coming up with them beyond “we found them very busy with something which was at once pronounced to be the deer; but deer in this country do not die so easily. Upon getting to them it was discovered to *have been* a sheep, of which nothing but the skin and horns were left. The hounds having thus in some measure gratified their appetite, to the immense disgust (ludicrous as it was) of those who had after great exertions reached them, quietly left the ground in apparent triumph—up went their sterns, and on they went on the line of the deer.”

At the end of the season Mr. Bisset's misgivings proved to be well founded. Little support was forthcoming; the landowners still held aloof, and only a few enthusiastic farmers, together with the few original supporters, remained constant to the cause. It is surprising that in the face of so many difficulties Mr. Bisset did not at once abandon the country in disgust, but, fortunately for those who now reap the fruits of all his hard work, he was a man of extraordinary generosity as well as patience and perseverance. He decided to keep the hounds for another season, drafted the whole of the pack excepting six couple, procured twelve couple of Mr. Petre's staghounds, and, further

reinforced by the loan of six couple more from the ever-generous Captain West, commenced spring hind-hunting in April, 1856.

The new pack was a great improvement on the last, but the sport of 1856 was indifferent and unlucky, though there were two fine runs across the Forest. There were thirty advertised hunting days, and seven deer killed, whereof two were "unwarrantable deer," that is to say, too young to be killed according to the rules of the sport. This last matter was of especial concern to Mr. Bisset, who had determined from the first to stick closely to the old canons of stag-hunting, which had been neglected during the years following the sale of the old pack, and incurred not a little obloquy in consequence.

At last, however, in 1857, things began to look brighter. The season is triumphantly marked in Mr. Bisset's journal as the best on record. Four stags were killed on four consecutive days, a thing unprecedented in the previous forty-five years, and of seven consecutive days six ended in blood. Further, of thirty-three hunting days (the average number from 1812—1818) only three were blank; and there were many very fine runs. Altogether eight deer were taken, of which six were killed and two saved and turned

out again. Master, hounds, and men were now familiar with their work; and the season of 1858 was begun with a very brilliant spring hind-hunting season, including one run, probably the finest ever known, from Cloutsham to Woody Bay, twenty-two miles as the crow flies, in two hours and twenty minutes, without a check from beginning to end.

But before the stag-hunting began Mr. Bisset carried out a project on which he had long set his heart, namely, the introduction of new blood into the herd. With this view he procured, through a friend, two stags, two male deer, and three hinds, from Mr. Legh of Lyme, in Cheshire; whereof one stag and two hinds were turned into Haddon, and the remainder into Horner. These deer were, however, of a different kind to the natives, and met (so Mr. Bisset writes), one after another, with disaster, while he himself met with considerable blame for having turned out such bad-running brutes among the "foresters." It may be worth while here to record the fate (so far as it is known) of these deer. The two hinds in Haddon were killed after good runs in the spring seasons of 1859 and 1860, and the stag after a poor run in the autumn of the latter year. Of those turned out in Horner one stag was barbarously murdered by deer-stealers within three

days after his arrival, one of the male deer was killed by mischance by the hounds in 1860, the other (grown to a stag) was killed after a poor run in 1865. The hind gave good runs, and was spared only to be destroyed by poachers in 1860.

Altogether the strangers were not quite a success, but it was a little hard that Mr. Bisset, who had gone to much trouble and expense to improve the breed, should have received nothing but blame for his pains. Yet this is what a master of hounds must invariably expect in any country; and it is fair to say that he is rarely disappointed.

The season of 1858 was as good as the last. In thirty-five hunting days fourteen deer were taken and eleven of them killed, four stags and seven hinds—good proof that the numbers of the herd were increasing. Nevertheless there was but too good evidence that the poachers were still at work; and, more troublesome still, more sheep-killers appeared among the hounds when drawing an open cover (Shilletts), where the sheep lie as frequently as the deer. The last day of the season in especial was a day of mischance. A dead-beaten hind escaped by running into the herd, and a hind calf was consequently sacrificed. ‘Pilgrim’s’ leg was broken by ‘an underbred brute’

ridden by a sporting farmer; Jack Babbage had a bad fall and “cricked his neck,” in other words, nearly dislocated it; and the master, in going up the long hill from Chescombe Water, came down “an awful smash” in the road, and thought himself lucky to escape with a broken collar-bone.

The season of 1859 opened under gloomy circumstances. Money was still scarce, and the landowners had not yet been won over; and it was somewhat under protest that Mr. Bisset consented to keep the hounds on for yet another season, in the hope that matters might improve. It was, however, encouraging on the first day of stag-hunting to see a little herd of seven stags and male deer together in the Forest—a sight unknown since the starting of the new pack in 1855. Hitherto, in spite of the care taken of the deer by Mr. Knight of Exmoor and Mr. Snow of Oare, the Dulverton country had furnished most sport; and indeed it was not till some years later that the now celebrated Horner covers superseded Haddon. The season was a very fair one, and resulted in the capture of thirteen deer, of which eleven were killed, namely, five stags and six hinds. At its close, however, the usual difficulty of funds cropped up, and it was only with much hesitation that Mr. Bisset engaged to keep

the pack on for one more season, which, unless subscriptions increased, was to be positively the last.

The spring hind-hunting was remarkably successful, hinds being taken in five successive days, and the sport with the stags during the autumn was extraordinarily good; but even so the prospect was anything but cheerful. Six deer had been found dead during the summer on different parts of the moor between Dunkery and Badgworthy, and it was reported that there was but one calf to be seen in the whole of the Forest. Moreover, Mr. Bisset's tenancy of Pixton came to an end, and, owing to want of money, it seemed likely that his mastership would come to an end also. Negotiations, indeed, were actually set on foot to find a successor to him among the leading landowners of the country.

At this juncture, however, two gentlemen came forward, and, by most timely and generous help, averted the misfortune that seemed imminent. Mr. Froude Bellew, who had from the first been mainly instrumental in restoring the sport, placed his hunting box at Rhyll, with stables and kennels, at Mr. Bisset's disposal for the next three years at least. The Hon. Mark Rolle, for some seasons past a subscriber, though living forty miles away from the stag-hunting

country, offered an annual subscription of £100 provided some satisfactory arrangement were arrived at. These two generous offers were gratefully accepted, and from that day the difficulties of obtaining support for the Devon and Somerset staghounds gradually diminished, until, at the end of another twenty years, the subscription, raised without any great difficulty, amounted to three times the sum which in the first struggling years, from 1855 to 1860, had seemed hopeless of attainment even to the most sanguine.

It must, however, be added in justice to the landowners round Dulverton, that they very early gave their support to Mr. Bisset, and it must be remembered that it is round Dulverton only that any great number of country houses is to be found in the stag-hunting country. Lord Carnarvon, of Pixton, Mr. Lucas, of Baronsdown, Mr. Daniel, of Stoodleigh, Mr. Carew, of Colipriest, and, last but not least, Mr. Locke, of Northmoor, all rallied round him, almost from the first, with not a few others. From Dulverton westward there is not a country house except Mr. Bellew's for many miles before reaching Court Hall, whose owner, Lord Poltimore, though then master of the Cattistock foxhounds, was nevertheless one of the first to assist in reviving the older and nobler sport of deer-hunting.

At Castle Hill the man who had practically held the mastership in 1812 was still alive, but gradually sinking under the weight of half a century of active political life, and it so happened that for three years previously to his death in 1861 there were none of a younger generation living there with him. Over and above these houses there was only Holnicote that lay anywhere near the haunts of the red deer, and the many good runs from Horner and the Winsford covers are evidence enough of the help that the Aclands gave.

In fact, the natural paucity of country houses has always been the great difficulty in maintaining a subscription pack in the stag-hunting country. A glance at the list of subscribers at the time when the hounds were sold in 1825 shows that South Devon are almost as numerous as North Devon names. The country was then of much greater extent southward and westward. A stag, for instance, was killed on the edge of Dartmoor in 1805; and a kill in and across the Taw was a common occurrence. As soon, however, as agricultural improvement and the gun of the poacher began to limit the range of the red deer, the range of subscribers became limited also; and hence, until the deer began to spread once more, and strangers began

to flock to the autumn hunting in Exmoor, the re-establishment of a pack of staghounds was a work of extreme difficulty. The pack once established, however, the deer were carefully preserved, and the men of Devon and Somerset began once more to take a pride in the ancient and royal sport. Then strangers, as has been said, came also, to many of whom the hunting country is deeply indebted for support and encouragement. But over and above all the first supporters of the new pack, and the preservers, whether landlords, yeomen, or farmers, of the red deer, the existence of the Devon and Somerset pack is due mainly to three gentlemen; first and foremost to Mr. Bisset, and after him to the Hon. Mark Rolle and Mr. Froude Bellew.

CHAPTER V.

1861—1871.

THE season of 1861 was marked by the removal of the pack from Jury kennel to Rhyll, and by the shortest season known since 1855. In all there were but twenty-eight hunting days, wherein eleven deer were taken, of which nine were killed, four stags and five hinds. In November, however, Mr. Bisset succeeded in carrying a point for which he had been striving ever since the beginning of his mastership, viz. the preservation of the deer for hunting on the Quantock Hills. There were at first considerable difficulties in the way; but Lord Taunton, the chief landowner, entered into Mr. Bisset's plans for increasing the very scanty stock of deer on those hills; and from the year 1862 onward young deer captured before the hounds on the Exmoor side of the country were from time to time transported to the Quantocks and there turned out.

It does not appear from the records that the stag-hounds under the old *régime* ever hunted deer on the Quantocks, though on rare occasions they ran a deer in that direction. In 1827 the new pack ran a deer across to the hills from Haddon, and in 1846 the hounds met once at Cothelstone. How often they may have hunted there in the meantime is unknown; but the Quantocks certainly lay quite out of the range of the old pack, and were only occasionally visited by the new. Mr. Bisset, however, had some reason to wish to hunt there. Through his marriage with the heiress of Bagborough, he was the master of a house actually situate on the Quantocks; and in the autumn of 1861 he had run a stag thither from Haddon, when having been (luckily) the only one that viewed the deer ascending the hills, he was able, by stopping the hounds, to leave at least one addition to the small Quantock herd behind him. Further, the deer in the Forest were still unsafe; a hind was found dead by Horner Water early in 1862 with a bullet in her head; the Luxborough covers had ceased to hold deer, and the Bray covers were still empty. There was therefore something to be said for raising a herd in a country where it would be strictly preserved, and that too in covers belonging to the master himself.

Meanwhile the deer on the Quantocks had never been wild deer as on Exmoor, but simply a small tame herd turned out from some deer park, which had been exterminated and replaced by a few more still tamer. Hence Mr. Bisset had little sport on his expedition to the hills in 1861, though he thereby laid the foundation of the present hunting on the Quantocks.

The season of 1862 was again a short one, but the stag-hunting was unusually good. Ten deer were taken in all, seven stags and three hinds, of which six stags only were killed, the rest being saved and turned out. The attacks of poachers still continued, but less frequently than in former years. Possibly the deer-stealers might have ceased even more from their work, but for the sudden appearance of a Dulverton man from London, who offered £6 for the head of a stag—an offer which resulted in the death of more than one deer and in the dismissal of a keeper. Of all attacks on the deer this kind is the worst, for it not only enrages all who labour to preserve them, but tempts poor men to disobey their masters, disgust their friends, and change honest work for thieving. This season also saw the abolition of spring hind-hunting, of which Mr. Bisset was never very fond, as, in spite of all efforts to single out a barren hind, it too often resulted in the

death of one heavy in calf. Mr. Knight, of Exmoor, also condemned it, and the result of its cessation was a rapid increase in the number of the deer.

Throughout the next two seasons the hunting continued steadily and with improving success, but the sport lost two of its best friends in the spring of 1863 and of 1864, through the deaths of a good yeoman, known to all the district as "Tom Webber," and of Dr. Palk Collyns.

"Tom Webber" had been from the first a staunch supporter of Mr. Bisset, and was very highly esteemed by him, and, indeed, by all that knew him. "He was," writes Mr. Bisset in a page of his journal, "at once a pattern yeoman, husband, father, neighbour, friend. As a stag-hunter he was the best of all patterns. Passionately fond of it, to the exclusion of all other hunting, strictly careful and ever jealous of the slightest infringement of its ancient and time-honoured laws, always in the field and ever at his post and ready to assist, a thorough master of the art, cool and collected, yet modest and unassuming, he was, in short, as he has been truthfully described, the best and truest stag-hunter that ever cheered hound." He lies in the quiet churchyard of King's Brompton, in view of his favourite Haddon. Tom Webber has been dead more

than twenty years, but we have still many yeomen and farmers of the same good old stamp, the most honest, courteous, and hospitable of nature's gentlemen, with whom it is a pleasure to deal in every business of life as well as in the hunting-field.

Dr. Collyns had been a keen stag-hunter for more than forty-seven years. A friend to all sport, he had ever since his migration to Dulverton at the beginning of the century made the chase of the deer and the habits of the animal his favourite study outside of his profession. He had seen the sport in its palmiest and in its most desperate days, had cherished it (to quote Mr. Bisset) in prosperity and shielded it in adversity. In the course of his long experience he had gathered an immense mass of materials on his favourite subject, which after long delay were worked up into his book on "The Chase of the Wild Red Deer." His last public work was to attend a meeting of the Devon and Somerset Hunt Committee on the 1st of April, 1864; and less than a fortnight later he was carried to his grave, followed by a great concourse of people from every rank of life, who knew him not only as a good sportsman, but as a kind, genial, and generous friend.

The accounts of the deer on the Forest during these years continued to be satisfactory; and it was evident

that the herd was increasing from the spread of the deer into covers which had been long deserted. In 1865 Horner had taken the place of Haddon as the main stronghold; and a stag was found for the first time since Mr. Bisset's mastership in the Cutcombe covers. This gain was, however, counterbalanced by the departure of the deer from the Brendon covers, partly, no doubt, owing to the growth of Lynton into a "summer resort" and (hateful term) a "fashionable watering place." The Quantock hunting also became a regular institution in this year, Mr. Bisset killing his first stag there on the 29th of August. A new departure, too, was made by beginning to hunt the Horner covers in August. Hitherto they had not been disturbed till September, but now the farmers of the district were complaining of the numbers of the deer, so Sir Thomas Acland's permission was obtained without difficulty to hunt them earlier. From this originated the opening day at Cloutsham, which, except in one or two years, has been a recognised institution ever since.

In the year 1866 the hinds in Horner began to contract (or rather re-contract) their pernicious habit of never leaving the covers; and it was evident that too much repose had demoralised them for purposes of sport, since not one ran over the Forest for the season.

But, on the other hand, it was plain that the herds on the Dulverton side and on the Forest had united, for three deer ran across from the one country to the other, a comparatively rare occurrence in those later days.

The spring of 1867 opened dismally with the discovery of five young deer lying dead about Oare and Badgworthy, all killed by the severe weather. The hunting season, however, far surpassed any previously recorded. In thirty-three hunting days eighteen deer were taken, twelve stags and six hinds. Not a stag escaped of all on which hounds were laid; and in the majority of cases the runs were far above the average. One from the Shilletts to Loxhore took the hounds to the Bratton country for the first time since 1857, and further to the westward than had been known since a famous day in 1863, when a stag was run from the Hawkridge Valley to Castle Hill.

In the spring of 1868 another link between the old times and the new was broken, through the death of Mr. Nicholas Snow, of Oare, in his eightieth year. "He was a staunch preserver of the deer and an ardent lover of the sport," writes Mr. Bisset; "up to the very last season he had been a constant attendant on the staghounds on his favourite mare 'Norah Creina.' Few went harder, and none knew better how

to go and where to go than he and the old mare." The continued existence of the red deer on Exmoor is in great measure due to Mr. Snow's jealous protection of them, to which the large tract of common, known as the "Deer Park," and still maintained as such, bears standing testimony. The "Old Squire's" mantle descended on his son, the present Mr. Nicholas Snow, Master of the Exmoor Foxhounds, but none the less the best of deer preservers and stag-hunters. With stout moor-foxes, the best scenting-ground in England, and his smart little pack, he shows sport such as any master of foxhounds might envy; but he is generally to be seen at the stag-hunting meets on the Forest side; and if there be a good run he will see it even though no one else may.

In 1868 it became evident that the deer in the Horner covers were really superabundant, and it was actually necessary to hunt the hinds there five consecutive days; this being the first of the "Horner campaigns" which were afterwards to assume important dimensions. Before Mr. Bisset's resignation the Horner campaigns were lengthened out to twenty and thirty consecutive hunting days. As it was, the season of 1868 was prolonged for the first time into the new

year, and the total number of hunting days rose to forty.

The sport of 1869 was nothing out of the common. but that of 1870 again eclipsed all previously recorded. Eight stags were killed in as many consecutive days, a thing almost unprecedented; and the last stag of the season took the hounds from Badgworthy Wood to the hills above Ilfracombe, much farther to the westward than had been known for many years. In thirty-six hunting days twenty deer were taken, viz. twelve stags and eight hinds, of which all but two hinds were killed.

Mr. Bisset's success was now complete. The country was roused from its apathy, and all were loud in praise of the master's perseverance and generosity. For some time past it had been said that some recognition of his services was due to him, and every one agreed that it would be some slight return to present him with a testimonial of the general gratitude. For such matters, however, there must be two consenting parties, the donor and the recipient; and Mr. Bisset went so far as to hint that if the intending donors persisted on their part, he, the intended recipient, would resign the mastership. He had always, he said, set his face against testimonials in general, and the present testi-

monial in particular, and nothing should alter his opinion in the matter. When, however, it was represented to him that the suggestion emanated from the farmers and yeomen, Mr. Bisset relented. He had received too much kindness from these his best friends to refuse to accept their present. And accordingly a fund was raised, to which no fewer than four hundred and thirty persons contributed, the sum total amounting to £757, although the amount of the subscriptions was expressly limited.

It was eventually decided that the testimonial should take the form of a picture representing a stag at bay in Badgworthy Water, with portraits of Mr. Bisset on his favourite grey horse, of the huntsman and whip, and of some few favourite hounds, the places of honour being given to "Nelson," "Finisher," and "Nemesis." Mr. Samuel Carter was selected for the work, which, after receiving a place in the Royal Academy, was duly presented at a great dinner at Dunster on September 14th, 1871. The one note of sadness in the proceedings was Mr. Bisset's hint that he could not hope to keep the hounds much longer, and his reference to the death of Sir Thomas Acland.

For in the month of July, 1870, good old Sir Thomas passed away in his eighty-fifth year, full of age and

honour. To the esteem wherein he was held by the county his statue at Exeter sufficiently testifies, but the full share of gratitude due to him for the restoration of stag-hunting is hardly as a rule accorded to him. "He was," in Mr. Bisset's words, "a most staunch and uncompromising preserver of the deer, and though he took no part in the hunting, and but little in any kind of sport, yet he took pride in having plenty of deer and black game for the amusement of his neighbours, and was delighted to hear that more deer had been killed from his covers than from those of any other landowner."

About this time, too, two lesser lights also disappeared. Jim Blackmore, the old harbourer, had died in September, 1868, and at the end of 1870 John Babbage, the huntsman, resigned his horn to Arthur Heal. The old man had had a severe fall in 1864 from which he never quite recovered, but, still game to the last, could hardly be persuaded to make way for a younger man. He lived for more than ten years after this, and was sometimes to be seen at the cover side, as keen a sportsman as ever. He was a good honest servant of the old stamp, devoted to his master (as indeed all Mr. Bisset's servants were), and much valued by him. As a huntsman he was perhaps hardly

equal to his successor, being inferior to him in quickness and dash, but still no mean exponent of his art.

It may possibly be asked by some of Mr. Bisset's friends, What was his private opinion of the picture given to him? To satisfy any such craving there are here transcribed the only words wherein his journal speaks of it. They are characteristic of a master of hounds who had for so many years to play a disheartening, up-hill game. "Of the merits of the painting each must see and judge for himself. The opinions expressed were as varying and contradictory before the picture was finished, or even *half finished*, as they were after it was finished; and never was there greater proof of the truth that if you try to please everybody you please nobody." In speaking of it he always added, "You may criticise. I am delighted."

If any, therefore, now find fault with the picture, let them beware of throwing the blame on Mr. Carter.

CHAPTER VI.

1871—1881.

HITHERTO the main difficulty with which Mr. Bisset had had to contend was the keeping up of a sufficient herd of deer. From this time forth the question was how to keep it down within reasonable limits. The deer had increased enormously, and were now returning in every direction to their old haunts. They had now, after many years' desertion, begun once again to frequent the Bray covers; and to encourage their preservation in that district the meet, the first for fifteen years, was fixed in September, 1871, for Northmolton. Horner was, however, then as now, the great stronghold; and many days were devoted to the difficult task of diminishing the constantly increasing number of hinds. The season of 1871 included fifty hunting days, wherein thirty deer were taken, of which only four escaped death. "Not so bad," writes Mr. Bisset, "but still the cry is legion. On two occasions

a brace of hinds were fairly taken in one day, but as usual the hinds in the Horner country were the great difficulty.”

But a greater difficulty was now in store for the country. Mr. Bisset's warning that he could not hope to hold the mastership much longer was given in full earnest at the beginning of 1871, and he was now less than ever able to devote his time to it. Further, the expenses had greatly increased; and to make things still more embarrassing his tenancy of Rhyll had but a short time to run on, and there was no other house for himself or other kennels for his hounds. Once again, however, the evil day was staved off. Mr. Bellew again arranged to leave Rhyll to the master, and the subscription was raised to almost double its former amount. Mr. Bisset was nevertheless, as usual, the one who really made the sacrifice. He had for some time been looking to two old Devon houses for a successor, but in neither case was the man of his choice yet old enough to take his place. “The future looked blank, but Mr. Bisset was animated by the same feeling as of old, that no effort should be left untried to keep the staghounds going; that to let them now go to the ground from their high estate, after all his trouble and expense, would not only be a

disgrace to the country, but a heartbreaking disappointment and mortification to himself.”

With his usual generosity and self-denial he consented to retain the mastership, and not content with that, made provision for the future by purchasing a small property at Exford for the erection of kennels and stable, which were duly commenced in May, 1875, and occupied on Lady-day, 1876. Hitherto, owing to the distance of the kennels from the Forest, it had been the practice for the hounds to lie out at Exford and Larkbarrow, and various places.

From 1872 onward the sport grew and continued to grow in popularity. Strangers came in greater numbers than ever for a gallop with the Devon and Somerset; and Mr. Bisset's complaints of the mob at the opening days at Cloutsham and on the Quantocks became concurrently more frequent. The deer, too, had become “seriously numerous,” and “the Horner campaign” of 1872 comprised ten consecutive meets at Cloutsham, during which time the pack was lodged at Holnicote, close to Porlock. On one day, the 29th of November, three hinds were killed, and the total number of deer of all kinds for the season amounted to forty. The Horner hinds, indeed, had become so unmanageable that Mr. Bisset had resolved to hunt

them with relays of hounds—a system which it has been necessary to continue ever since.

In 1873, once again three deer were killed in a day ; and in 1874, for the first time, two stags were fairly accounted for on a single day. On the 24th of April, 1874, Mr. Bisset killed his first stag from the Bray covers, taking him under the railway viaduct in Castle Hill deer park. A train passed over the viaduct just as the deer was brought to bay ; a circumstance noted with horror by Mr. Bisset, as “a clashing of two distinct ages, indicating but too surely what must be ere long—the ancient occupant of the primeval forest being trampled under by the Juggernaut representative of advancing civilisation.”

In 1875 the Bray country came still more prominently to the front. For the first time since the sale of the old pack two deer crossed the Forest between Bray and Porlock, the one being killed in Hole Water the other at Poole Bridge, after two of the finest runs since the restoration. On three days a brace of stags were fairly killed, and during the hind-hunting season no fewer than four deer were killed in one day from Cloutsham. The year, however, brought as usual its death-roll. Mr. Henry Dene, of Barnstaple, known all over the country from Taunton to Launceston, as

“Peter Dene,” died suddenly on the 17th of November. He had long been a great friend and staunch supporter of Mr. Bisset, and had, by his influence and popularity among the farmers, not only preserved many a stray deer in dangerous quarters, but also in great measure contributed to the re-establishment of the herd in the Bray covers. Two months later died George Fewings, the whipper-in, a good and able servant, a keen sportsman, and general favourite.

The sport of 1876 was poor compared with that of the preceding year; the best of it, as often happens, being with the hinds. The hounds met on twenty consecutive hunting days at Cloutsham, which with one meet at Hawkcombe Head and another at Larkbarrow, made up the Forest hind-hunting season of 1876. In these twenty-two days twenty-three hinds were taken, of which nineteen were killed and four saved for the Quantocks; three young male deer and a stag were also killed (by accident, it need hardly be said), and two young male deer were taken and saved. No mean performance; but still the deer increased. In 1877, the season, which had hitherto closed at latest in February, was carried on into March of the new year—altogether sixty-one hunting days, wherein fifty-six deer were killed and four more taken.

At the beginning of 1878, however, came a new trial for Mr. Bisset. While finishing the season with the hinds on the Quantocks a hound was observed to show suspicious symptoms, and the pack was removed without delay to Exford. In a few days it was evident that the symptoms were those of rabies, and the hound affected, with five more that showed similar signs of the disease, were at once shot. The rest of the hounds were separated, and each chained to a box where he could not reach his neighbour. The first case had occurred on the 19th February, and between that date and the 23rd of May six couple and a half either died or were killed, it being now plain that the disease was actually rabies. From the end of May, however, there was no further case till the 12th of July, when a single hound was observed to be looking queer, and on his becoming worse he too was killed. The pack had been separated for ninety-nine days before this last hound was seized, during which time the hounds had never been together except at exercise, when every one was muzzled.

Directly he was sure that the disease was rabies, Mr. Bisset set to work to form another pack, and by the beginning of the stag-hunting season he had got together sixteen and a half couple, of which ten and a

half were old hounds entered either to fox or to carted deer. There were now two distinct packs, the "mad pack" and the "new pack," as Mr. Bisset called them, which took their regular turns out hunting, and were never allowed near each other.

It was in such circumstances that Mr. Bisset began his twenty-fourth season, anxious to hunt three days a week in order to shorten the numbers of the deer, and beset with difficulties at every turn. On the opening day at Cloutsham there was a larger mob than ever ("Cloutsham opening day," he writes, "is becoming seriously too much of a rabble and fair"), and the hounds of the new pack that were entered to carted deer promptly began to run the Exmoor sheep. The new pack did little good until they went to the Quantocks, where in one day they killed two stags and a fallow buck. After this, with the help of much whip-chord, and indeed of powder and shot also, they were gradually knocked into shape. Until this was done there was no end to the worry and vexation of that season, to which the never very manageable field contributed not a little. "The Quantock gathering on the opening day," writes Mr. Bisset, "is becoming worse every year; and the rough and rugged character of the Horner country is here wanting to check the

impetuosity of the ragtag and bobtail who come out for a lark.”

By degrees things settled down, but the sport was not of the best. The old hounds, or “mad pack,” were still kept separate from each other, except when actually out hunting, until the 25th of September, when, on a fearfully stormy night, they were put together into kennel, though of course apart from the new pack. Whether from this or some other cause the rabies broke out again in October, though in the case of one hound only. The sufferer was at once destroyed. But there was another case in December, and three more at the beginning of January, two of them being of hounds belonging to the new pack, which, being not very highly valued, were placed with the “old mad ’uns” as an experiment. There was now nothing to be done except to destroy the whole of the old pack, which was accordingly done on the 21st of January, 1879. Thus was great part of the work of five-and-twenty years undone, and all the trouble and expense incurred to bring the pack to perfection was lost. “It was a bitter pill to swallow,” writes Mr. Bisset curtly, “but there was no help for it.” It says much for his perseverance that he should not have abandoned the work in despair; but it was not Mr. Bisset’s habit to leave things unac-

complished which he had once begun. It is, however, fair to say that his huntsman had his full share of the trouble. He had the work of breaking the new pack into the ways of wild deer hunting, which, as shall be seen, are not to be learned from the chase of the carted deer or fox. A single old hound, "Wellington," had by chance been apart from the old pack before the outbreak of madness; and with "Wellington" alone to teach the young hounds their work did Arthur Heal somehow contrive in a few months to make the new pack almost equal to the old. But there were bitter tears in the kennel when the warrant was issued for the execution of the veterans, and the constant vigilance and anxiety (the risk apparently was never thought of) told not a little on master and men. The season was continued into April, 1879, frost having stopped hunting for nearly a month. In all there were seventy-four hunting days and fifty-six deer killed.

The stag-hunting season of 1879 opened under better auspices, and was made memorable by the visit of the Prince of Wales on the 22nd of August. The whole country was of course extraordinarily excited, and a gigantic field assembled, which seemed to promise little chance of sport. Nevertheless there was, thanks to Mr. Snow, of Oare, a good though not

very straight run, and the Prince was duly in at the death and cut the stag's throat. Mr. Bisset himself was not out on this day, being detained in Scotland by the death of his father, so Mr. Warren, Secretary of the Hunt throughout Mr. Bisset's mastership, took the command.

The hunting continued with good sport to the end of November, when it was stopped for a month by frost. But before Christmas had come, the old trouble, in spite of all precautions of purification and disinfectants, had returned once more. A fresh case of rabies appeared; four hounds were destroyed, the rest were separated, and nothing more could be done till March. Throughout these three months the hounds were regularly exercised in muzzles, occasionally running a crippled deer, of which there were an unusual number in that winter. On one day a herd of hinds passed just in front of the hounds while exercising, close to Hawkcombe Head, and the whole pack broke away in different directions, finally killing two hinds (in spite of the muzzles) at Blackford and Horner, and being with difficulty prevented from killing two more. The streams were very high, and the muzzles did not prevent hounds from drowning their deer when they brought them to the water dead beat. On the same

day over one hundred deer were counted on the hills between Stoke Pero and Porlock Commons (about three miles).

By the time March had come, Mr. Bisset thought it safe, as there had been no fresh case of rabies, to recommence hunting. But luck was once more against him. The huntsman was taken seriously ill, and there being no one else capable of discharging his duties, nothing more could be done till April, on the 29th of which month the season closed. Only sixteen hinds had been killed throughout, though forty would not have been too many, and, as Mr. Bisset wrote, "they have now gained an advantage on the Forest side which it will be difficult indeed to recover."

His forebodings were amply justified, for during the next year the country was simply swarming with deer. The season, though interrupted by the memorable snowstorm of the 18th of January, 1881, was the longest ever known. Hunting began on the 3rd of August, 1880, and ended on the 6th of April, 1881, in all ninety-one hunting days, and seventy-five* deer killed. Thus, by a succession of misfortunes, the pack which used to have the shortest hunting season of any

* Fourteen stags, forty-four hinds, and seventeen young deer, male and female.

in England has come to have the longest. The numbers of the deer made the work of shortening them extremely difficult. On one day the proceedings opened by finding a herd of forty-four deer; on another twenty-three fine stags were seen, on the way home from Culbone to Exford. In a word, the deer had got out of hand, and in spite of great efforts to diminish their numbers it cannot be said that they have been under control since 1879.

With the season of 1880-81, however, the history of Mr. Bisset's mastership ends. The journal stops abruptly in the middle of a sentence describing the finish of the day's sport on the 6th of April, and the records of his last season terminate without the summary and review which is given at the close of every other. His work, however, was now done, and the object for which he had striven for twenty-seven years was finally attained. At a meeting held in December, 1880, Lord Ebrington agreed to accept the mastership; and so the staghounds returned in 1881 to one of the county families.

It would not become the present writer to enlarge on the selection of the new master, but it is fair to say that Mr. Bisset, if left to nominate his successor, would have chosen no other. Ten years previously he had

written in his journal that his hopes for the future lay in two of the Devon houses which had kept the stag-hounds in the old days; and though these hopes were in one case defeated by death, they were in the other fully realised.

With his usual generosity, Mr. Bisset did all he could to strengthen the hands of the new master. He made Lord Ebrington a present of the pack, and gave over the stables and kennels at Exford to the use of the hunt, reserving only standing room for his own horses. He continued to hunt pretty regularly at first, but his attendance became gradually more infrequent, till it finally ceased altogether.

In truth, his health had been failing for some time past, mainly owing to a very dangerous fall from a horse, which reared up and fell back on him, not when hunting on the soft heather of the moor, but on a hard road when trotting out of a dealer's yard. This took place in 1875, and though he continued after that year to ride, yet his injuries were too severe to permit him to hunt much except on wheels during that season.

In 1880 the parliamentary seat for the division of West Somerset fell vacant, and Mr. Bisset was pressed to stand in the Conservative interest. After much hesitation he consented, and though opposed by the

heir of Holnicote and Killerton he was duly elected. It was said, and truly said, that he was the only man who could hope to beat the Aclands in that division; but in his heart he would much have preferred, not only for the esteem wherein he held that family, but for other reasons also, to have foregone his victory. Though very regular in his attendance at the House, the life was distasteful to him and injurious to his health. "I cannot," he wrote in June, 1883, "I cannot attribute my illness to anything else than the confinement of the House of Commons, for though a silent member I was not by any means an uninterested or unobservant one, and in my own peculiar way worked hard." He spoke to the same effect to a company of farmers at a hunt dinner. "I assure you," he said earnestly, "that I would far sooner be anywhere on Exmoor except on the Chains in the thickest fog, than in the House of Commons" (the Chains, be it explained, is the worst tract of bog on the moor), and unquestionably he thoroughly meant it. On his first visit to the House he met Sir John Amory, then member for Tiverton, an old supporter and subscriber to the staghounds. "Come here," said Mr. Bisset in his slow deep tone, "Come here and show me my way, I don't know the country." "Now," he continued,

when the inspection was over, "I know where I am. What's going on now? Do you think there's any occasion for me to stop here?" Sir John, who being a Liberal was politically opposed to Mr. Bisset, replied that he didn't know. "Oh," was the answer; "are *you* going to stop here?" "No, I am not." "Then *I* shan't. I shall go to the Rag." And having thus tacitly paired, to the Rag he went.

His health, however, continued to fail, and though he put in an appearance when the hounds were on the Quantocks in the spring of 1883, yet the autumn found him unable to ride. Throughout the spring of 1884 he grew gradually worse, and on the 7th of July he died at Bagborough.

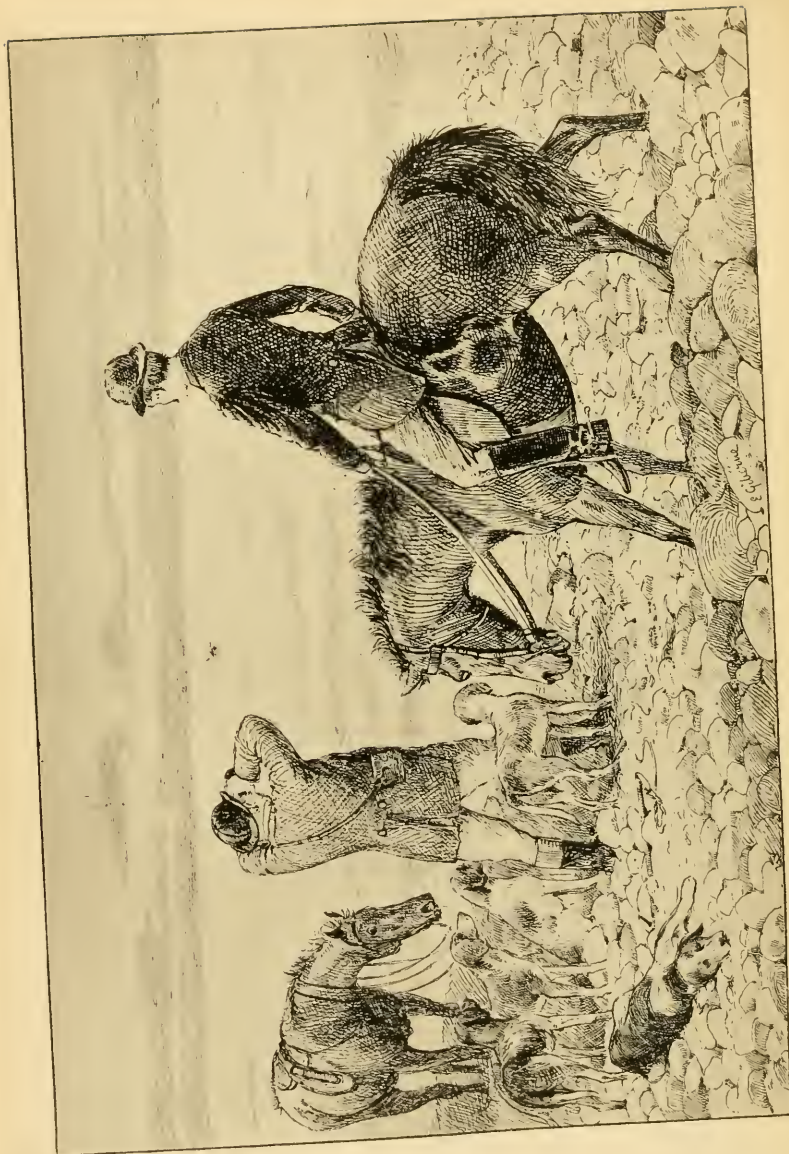
The history of his mastership shows how persevering, self-denying, and generous a man he was; but his journal, though full of detail as regards the sport, contains, characteristically enough, little about the master. Once indeed, at the close of his thirteenth season, after recording the general satisfaction at the extraordinary sport of 1867, and allowing the praise due to hounds, servants, and deer preservers, he observes pertinently, "But surely this is not all. There must be other causes for the general success of the season. Is there no such thing as a master to

conduct the whole performance?" But he ends, nevertheless, by attributing the success mainly to the weather. It is significant that the word "I" never once occurs in the thirteen volumes of the journal.

Physically Mr. Bisset was little short of a giant, considerably over six feet high, broad and large limbed in proportion. It seemed a marvel to many that he could ever have found horses to carry him over Exmoor, but for all his twenty stone he rode, during the earlier years of his mastership, as hard as any one. But the price of one of his horses would probably have purchased the best half-dozen ridden by his field. Whatever the advantages, however, that he lost through his great weight, he made them up by his extraordinary knowledge of the country, the deer, and the sport. Without question he understood wild-deer hunting better than any one else, and but for his weight might have been the best huntsman ever known on Exmoor. He had a marvellously quick eye for a deer, and could tell almost unerringly, even at a distance, whether a deer was male or female, fit or not to be run, fresh or beaten—no very easy matter, whatever the inexperienced may think. There are not more than half-a-dozen men whose word, whatever their good will, may

be trusted on these points, and even then are sometimes deceived. Nay, Mr. Bisset himself was once known, late in his career, to tally a hornless male deer for a hind, whereat astonishment mingled with awe fell on the small field (not above half-a-dozen) that were present.

Not less remarkable was his knowledge of the habits and runs of the deer. The following instance was given by a correspondent of the *Field* at the time of Mr. Bisset's death: "About the year 1873 the hounds drove a stag from Withypool, in the south-eastern corner of the district, far westward from the Forest of Exmoor. The pace was tremendous. On they went from one end to the other, and finally bearing right-handed lost their deer in the sea by Porlock Weir. For over twenty miles the pack had raced without a check, and had at last disappeared from all. One who had struggled to a standstill finally found himself in Porlock village, and there heard that an hour before hounds had passed close by towards the sea. He jumped on a pony to find out the end, reflecting with no little satisfaction that he would get to the finish—never mind when—and that after all there would be no one but himself to determine the time. On he went as fast as he could kick his pony along, scrambled to the



top of the rough beach, and there, a few yards below by the incoming tide, stood the stalwart form of Mr. Bisset surrounded by his hounds, and watching through his glasses the deer swimming safely away in the far distance."

Another instance equally remarkable occurred on the 7th of September, 1875. A stag was found in East Down Wood (Bray) and killed in two hours and five minutes at Poole Bridge, after a run of about twenty miles from end to end of the moor. Only seven were at the end, but among them was Mr. Bisset, who, being unable to ride much, had *driven* by Simonsbath and the Warren, and ridden the last two miles over Lucott Moor. Instinctively he took the chord of the arc, and was in at the end, though without seeing a hound for twelve miles.

Towards the end of his mastership Mr. Bisset could no longer ride as at the beginning, but his keen eye saw much more than did many of the thrusters. While the tufters were drawing, he was always to be seen in some commanding position, standing bolt upright as when he was a subaltern in the King's Dragoon Guards, and watching the proceedings through an opera-glass. This and his brief terse way of giving orders earned for him the name of the

“General;” by which, curiously enough, he had been known in his young days in the regiment.

He spoke little, and then always slowly and deliberately in a deep bass voice. Nothing annoyed him so much as a pushing, chattering stranger; and he would put down such a one with an epigrammatic decision which was peculiarly his own. Frantic people galloping up with reports of deer were often treated somewhat unceremoniously or subjected to a searching examination on minute points which few could pass. Such interviews he generally concluded with an oracular cough of singular vigour, or with the question, “Has any one else seen this so-called stag?” People who have “seen a deer,” and cannot say whether it was stag, male deer, or hind, or indeed whether it was veritably a deer and not a pony, are the pests of a master of staghounds; and Mr. Bisset had been deceived too often to trust to their reports.

From this cause he was often set down by strangers as purposely discourteous; but those who knew him knew better; they were aware what a kind, warm heart there was beneath this seemingly cold exterior, and what a fund of dry humour beneath his apparent solemnity. Some of the conversations between him and excited sportsmen were as good as a play; the wild gesticu-

lations and hurried utterance of the one contrasting strangely with the bland, measured tones, unmoved countenance, and twinkling eye of the other. He liked to see young ones keen, but preferred that all should curb their excitement when they spoke to him. "George, you are excited," he was once heard to say to a man who came to him burning with a red-hot grievance; "go away, and come back when you are cool." This same calm immobility accompanied him on all occasions, and, backed by a very good memory and the soundest common sense, made him a particularly good and clear-headed man of business. But whatever his outward coldness, there was with it no ill-nature, no unkindness, and, most marked of all, no injustice. Hence he was above other masters beloved and respected by his servants, than whom there were no more sincere mourners among the many who followed him to his last resting-place in Bagborough Churchyard.

His generosity did not end with his death. He provided by his will that his small property at Exford, where he had built kennels, stables, and dwellings, at a cost of £7,000, might be leased for a term of twenty-one years by the master for the time being of the stag-hounds and any four members of the committee, so

long as the hunting were continued in the same manner as it had been during his mastership, and during the time wherein Lord Ebrington had held command since his retirement. The rent required was but £70 per annum, practically covered by the seventeen acres of grass land belonging to the Exford property.

The existence of the hunt, nay the very existence of the wild deer in England, is his monument; but he left one more imperishable in the country of his adoption. Mention his name to any of the yeomen or farmers who knew him in the stag-hunting district, and they will say, "Mr. Bisset. Ah! he was a good gentleman." *A good gentleman.* Take the words, as they are spoken, in their fullest sense, and you can add nothing to give higher praise. Such Mr. Bisset was, and as such he is and will be remembered by high and low in North Devon and West Somerset.

CHAPTER VII.

1881—1885.

IF the new master started with great advantages in the shape of a good pack of hounds, a good huntsman, and a country so well disposed as Mr. Bisset's long exertions had rendered it, yet he was confronted at the first with one great difficulty, namely, an excessive number of deer. The whole country, in spite of Mr. Bisset's vigorous campaign of 1880-81, was swarming with deer. Over and above the district which Mr. Bisset had regularly hunted, there was a small herd belonging to the Eggesford covers; and stray deer were reported in the course of the next three years on Dartmoor, in the Blackmore Vale, and in the Duke of Somerset's park at Stover. All of these the new master was expected to come down and hunt, irrespective of the facts that there were far too many deer near home, and that a master cannot always have time, even if he have inclination, to go forty, fifty, or sixty miles from kennels on the chance of finding a

stray deer. Mr. Bisset, it is true, went in more than one year to Eggesford after a wanderer or two, but did not always succeed in finding them. Moreover, he never went there after the year 1872, and previously to that year he could well afford the time, for he could not venture even to kill all the warrantable deer that he took.

It was therefore necessary to prepare at once for a long hard season with the hinds, as the only chance of shortening the numbers of the herd. For deer are not killed so easily as foxes; there is no cub-hunting or other such easy chance (digging for instance), by which foxes when unduly numerous may be easily kept down. Accordingly Lord Ebrington hunted regularly his first season from August 3rd, 1881 to March 1st, 1882, and had extraordinarily good sport both with stags and hinds. Altogether in eighty-nine days the hounds accounted for twenty-six stags and fifty-seven hinds, killed; in addition to which six young male deer and three crippled deer were also killed; the first of course by misadventure before the hounds could be stopped from them, as is always the case when hind-hunting. In addition to these nine more deer also met their death, some having been found dead in the covers, others killed by sheep-dogs

after having been saved from the hounds; others again lost and drowned at sea. Thus one hundred and one deer in all were taken out of the country in one way or another in the course of the season; a number which frightened many stag-hunters a good deal, and led to much indignant outcry that the new master was killing the deer unfairly, and slaughtering them wholesale, young and old indiscriminately. Of course a certain number of young deer were killed, and inevitably so. Even in the old days calves and yearlings, with a much smaller herd of deer, were occasionally sacrificed, and in Mr. Bisset's last season, as we have seen, no fewer than seventeen innocents perished. Mr. Bisset meanwhile himself displayed no surprise when his successor sent him the slot of the hundred and first deer, and ventured to predict that the herd would be found almost, if not quite, as numerous in the next year.

The sport of 1882 was not so good as that of 1881, but still by no means bad. The season lasted till the 5th of April, 1883, ninety-three hunting days, wherein eighty-seven deer were killed and six taken and saved. The best of the sport was with the hinds, though the winter was the rainiest ever known in that very rainy country.

It was necessary in this year to devote no less than a fortnight's hunting to the increasing herd of deer in the woods of the Taw and Mole valleys, some twenty-five miles from the Exford kennels; and even so it was impossible to deal with all the deer in that district, some of them having wandered as far as Crediton. The cry of indiscriminate slaughter was again raised, but with little reason, for the committee were so far from ill-satisfied at the number of deer killed that they guaranteed the master an additional subscription to enable him to hunt stags four days a week in 1883 and kill a few more.

The experiment as regards the number of stags brought to hand was not altogether successful, but in the matter of sport it answered its purpose to perfection. It was found, however, by the end of the season that it could not be repeated. One ex-master of foxhounds, indeed, ventured to predict that four days stag-hunting a week would be too much for human physical endurance, and so indeed it proved. The distances are too great, the hours too long, and the weather too severe. The sport, however, was wonderfully good; few seasons if any can compare with that of 1883-84. The main features of it were a run from the Culbone covers to Castle Hill, another from

Head Wood (close to South Molton Road Station) to Brayford, a third from Hoar Oak Water to Cutcombe, and a fourth from the Quantocks to within a mile of Bridgwater. The hounds ran three times into the Bray Valley during the season; twice from the Forest and once from the Eggesford covers.

But as usual at every opening meet, there was some familiar face missing. Mr. Granville Somerset, one of Mr. Bisset's best supporters, hardly lived to see the pack under his successor's management, and in 1883 three more old stag-hunters were gone, the Rev. John Russell, old Jack Babbage, the huntsman, and Mr. Warren of Dulverton. The last-named of these had been secretary to the hunt ever since Mr. Bisset took command, and continued to hold this post until 1882; being unwilling in spite of failing health to quit it till the new master was fairly settled in his place. As a secretary he was indefatigable in his endeavours, first to establish the new pack (no very easy task), and to uphold it when established; and he contributed not a little to Mr. Bisset's success. His ready tact and courtesy smoothed over many a difficulty, and made him universally popular and respected among all classes. He had a kind word for every one, and every one had a kind word for him. His services were not

left without recognition, which was the more due to him inasmuch as the failure of the West of England Bank had deprived him, together with many others, of the earnings of a lifetime; but in less than a year after his resignation of the secretaryship he was carried to Dulverton Churchyard, there to join, after twenty years, the Dulverton veteran who had shared with him the early difficulties of reviving the ancient sport; and not less regretted than he had been. In little more than another year Mr. Bisset also was laid in Bagborough Churchyard.

The season of 1884 thus commenced gloomily for all; and, as misfortunes never come singly, its opening was further marked by a fresh outbreak of rabies among the young hounds. The first sufferer was a puppy which had only a short time before arrived from a kennel where the disease had appeared a year before and been suppressed; but the symptoms were unmistakable and soon showed themselves in another of the entry. So there was nothing to be done but to destroy the whole of the puppies, seven and a half couples, by which means the disease was fortunately stamped out before it had extended to the old hounds.

Then again on the third day of stag-hunting

four of the best hounds in the pack were killed by falling over the cliffs ; so altogether luck was against the staghounds in the autumn of 1884.

Nevertheless, the season was a very good one for sport, though unlucky in the matter of blood. An unusually large number of hinds were lost for want of a little more daylight, and the total number of deer killed was smaller than had been known since 1879. None the less the deer were still too numerous for sport, and it was plain that they could not be reduced unless the hunting country were not somewhat limited from its present wide range.

In fact very few people appreciate how large the stag-hunting country is. Within one week of the season of 1885 the hounds were hunting deer at Steert Point, close to Bridgwater, and at Martinhoe, places thirty-six miles apart by a straight line drawn across the map, and not much less than fifty miles by road. Moreover, in the same season hounds actually ran across almost this entire space of country, *e.g.*, on one day from Martinhoe to Scob Hill, on another from Scob Hill to Minehead, on a third from the Quantocks to Watchet, and on a fourth from the Quantocks to Steert Point. Thus only the short distance between Minehead and Watchet was left uncrossed in this

single year, and the continuity of the chain is made up by a run from Tivington Plantation to Watchet in 1882. On the south side of the country also deer have been run since 1881 right over the distance between Bridgwater and Barnstaple; in fact from the east of the Parret to the west of the Taw, two points not needing a large scale map for identification, being forty-five miles apart as the crow flies, about sixty by road, and a two hours' journey by rail.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the present master should have urged upon the committee in 1884 the necessity of giving up the Quantocks, which formed no part of the original stag-hunting country, and were annexed by Mr. Bisset in the times when deer were unsafe in the Forest. It has already been shown that the present herd on those hills was raised, so to speak, artificially, and that the behaviour of the field was a constant theme for even Mr. Bisset's animadversion. The truth is that this country is too much civilised for wild deer hunting. There is not wild land enough to give them a fair chance of going where they will, and the result is that they simply ring round and round and about the small range of hills, hustled at every point by an unsportsmanlike field without any hope of fair play. Occasionally, it is true, they cross the vale,

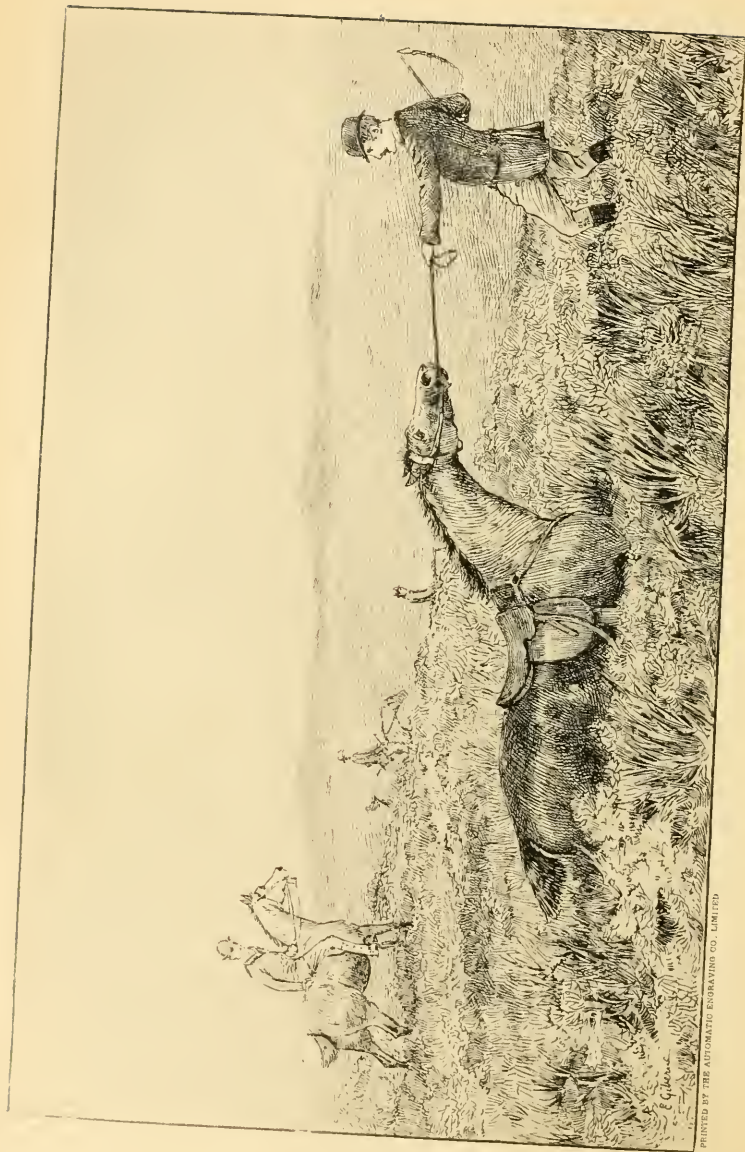
but not often enough to make it worth while to move the hounds thirty miles from kennels, when there are plenty of deer that should be killed within five miles.

With this we have to quit the history of the Devon and Somerset staghounds. The outcry against the so-called slaughter of the deer has died out more or less, but even if it be continued it cannot, with justice to the farmers, be heeded. "Go on, and kill as many deer as you can; never mind what people say." So Mr. Bisset wrote to Lord Ebrington in January, 1883, and he was by far the best judge on the subject. If he had minded what people said he could never have raised the sport to its present level, for he was as bitterly reviled formerly as he is now bepraised.

As regards the future, the writer ventures to say that the prospects of stag-hunting on Exmoor are brighter than those of fox-hunting in many parts of England. The numbers of deer preserved are sufficient proof that the most important and genuine supporters of the hunt—the farmers—are satisfied with the new management. The sport of the last five years, which will compare favourably with that of any other five years, has been good enough to satisfy all but those who are never happy unless they are discontented.

As to the number of deer in the country, it is im-

possible to speak even with approximate accuracy. One thing, however, is certain—that there are still too many of them. This may be denied, but it is none the less a fact. None but those who go out hind-hunting regularly throughout the season have the least opportunity of judging on this point ; and there are not above half a dozen who are so qualified. Some of these, again, often do not see as much as the others, either from want of a second horse or because they do not look. For this latter reason, also, it is not safe to form a judgment too quickly from what is seen of deer when fox-hunting on the same ground. After the oft-repeated tale of slaughter there are, somehow, always plenty of stags forthcoming in the autumn, and plenty of hinds with a very great number of male deer in the winter, to say nothing of plenty of claims for damage done by deer all the year round. If people object to have the deer thinned, they must be prepared to pay more as compensation for damage, and to have less sport with the stags, for where the hinds go thither the calves go, and unless they are well rattled about they will stick to the covers and never leave them. But enough has been said on this subject. Suffice it that there is still abundance of deer, cordial goodwill on the part of the farmers, and encouragement from all sides.



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It may not be amiss, in conclusion, to give a word of counsel which may, perhaps, be of advantage to those who may feel inclined to come down for a week's sport with the Devon and Somerset.

First, it is a fallacy to think that any pony is a good enough animal for a run with the staghounds. There are some ponies, from 14.1 to 14.3 hands high, which will carry a light weight as well as can be desired over the moor; but this is not simply because they are ponies but because they are well bred, being generally got by a thoroughbred horse out of an Exmoor pony. Hounds run both fast and far on Exmoor; and though a little short-legged horse is the best suited for so hilly a country, yet blood is a more important thing than size to ensure speed and endurance.

Secondly, it is a fallacy to think that Exmoor is simply a bog. The owner of the Forest asserts that there are no such things as bogs in Exmoor, and he acts up to this assertion in a way that surprises strangers. There are, however, soft places (as he admits), but (as he is wont to add) the great beauty of Exmoor is that it is like a sponge, for beyond a certain point it can get no wetter. In fact, with the exception of the main watershed (known not quite correctly as the Chains), there are few places which a

man and horse cannot cross even in the winter, though of course one must pick one's way. Hence if a stranger find himself in a bog, there is no occasion for him to walk away with tears in his eyes over the sad fate of his horse. The animal will struggle out as soon as he catches his wind; and his rider will be able to trot him home instead of having to pay a fee to the yokel who brings him home after a day or two, probably minus saddle and bridle, which have been left by the horse somewhere on the Forest. Soft ground is generally to be distinguished by one or more of three signs, which those who would ride over Exmoor would do well to mark, if they be not already aware of them. The first is the presence of the white bog-flower; the second the presence of red grass; the third a mingled growth of grass and heather. The bog-flower is most conspicuous on turf-pits, which are easily avoided; but the red grass and mixed grass and heather frequently cover large tracts, which, however, are rarely impassable, in one way or another. The real dangers on Exmoor are the grips and cart ruts, the latter especially, which require some explanation. Wherever there are turf heaps there must needs be a cart track by which the turf may be removed. In wet weather a cart soon

makes two deep ruts, and has to be taken on a track parallel to the old one, where it makes two more deep ruts, and so on, till, by the time the turf is all carried, there are ten or a dozen deep ruts running parallel to each other, from two to three feet apart. In the summer the heather grows luxuriantly over the new turned soil and hides the said ruts, so that the unwary stranger, galloping best pace at right angles to them, is apt to find himself and his horse suddenly thrown on the ground for no apparent reason.

From these causes one who does not know the country soon finds himself brought to a standstill on Exmoor, unless he take an experienced man for his leader. Ride to a leader the stranger must on Exmoor. But equally he must give him plenty of room in crossing deep ground, for even the experienced sometimes come to grief. For the rest there are no better rules than the two following, laid down by the man who knows Exmoor better and can ride over it better than any one else:—(1.) Take a pull whenever the ground changes colour (as from heather to grass, or *vice versa*), for if the new ground be deep you stand less chance, at a diminished pace, of coming down. (2.) Get to the bottom of every hill at the same time with the hounds, for they can always beat horses going up a steep hill.

Further, remember to keep your horse's head *straight* down a steep hill; for if he slip there will then be no harm done. But if he slip when sidling down a hill he must turn over helplessly and probably roll to the bottom. This is a very old rule but it is frequently neglected, with consequences sometimes fatal to the horse and always dangerous to the rider. Deer always slant a hill up and down unless they are beat, so the temptation to follow their example is great.

Finally, the writer would beg all who have hunted with the staghounds in the past, as well as those who may intend to do so in the future, to remember that they owe their sport (whether they enjoy it or not) mainly to the forbearance and self-denial of the farmers and to the generosity of the landowners in North Devon and West Somerset; to remember also that the hospitality and freedom given them at Cloutsham and throughout the country is theirs not by right but by favour. By just bearing these things in mind they will very greatly contribute, as so many friends from the west, east, and north country alike have already contributed, to ensure prosperity to stag-hunting.

CHAPTER VIII.

STAG, HIND, AND CALF.

THE male of the red deer is called, for general purposes, a stag; the female, a hind; the young, a calf; thus distinguished from those of the fallow and roe deer, which are termed buck, doe, and fawn respectively. The word "hart," however common in books, is one which, so far as the writer's knowledge extends, is never heard in the West Country.

"Generally speaking," to quote Dr. Collyns, "the stag and hind are in colour upon the neck, back, sides, and flanks of a reddish brown, shaded off with a grey or ashen line upon and about the jaws. A dark brown stripe of wiry hair extends from the top of the neck between the ears to the shoulders, and this was sometimes called the mane of the deer. Around and about the short tail (or "single" as it is technically termed) the colour is light brown fading into buff between the haunches and belly. This buff colour is of a lighter

shade in the male than in the female deer." (In the case of the wapiti it is almost white.) "The throat of the stag is furnished with coarse hair, which at the end of the autumn increases in growth, and forms a thick ruff during the winter."

The muzzle of the pure West Country deer is long and taper; and the hair between the horns and over the brow is red and smooth. This is mentioned in contraversion of the theory that the West Country deer* were imported from Germany. The German stags are much shorter and rounder in the snout, and the hair on the brow is curly and shaggy. The colour of this hair is also different, being light brown mingled with black, the whole producing much the same effect in the matter of colour as a larch plantation in winter time. The same distinction appears to hold good, though perhaps less markedly, between the Scotch and the Exmoor deer; it certainly applies in respect to the shape of the head and the shagginess of the hair to the Cheshire deer imported by Mr. Bisset, and a stag turned out by Captain West, as well as to the immediate progeny (probably not very numerous) of these. A Devonshire man may be prejudiced, but the writer

* But the red deer is plainly indigenous to England. See Harting, "Extinct British Animals," pp. 64, 65.

ventures to think that the Exmoor deer have the advantage in this respect, so far as regards beauty.

The colour of deer varies with their age. Stags and hinds alike grow darker as they approach their prime, and sometimes turn almost grey when they grow old. Young stags, the "light galloping deer" against which Lord Graves warned his successor, are described in a similar warning by an older authority as "of a lively red colour."

Hinds consort with the stag in the second year of their age, and as a rule produce but one calf at a time. It was for long an article of belief that the hind only bred on alternate years, but this is conclusively disproved by the fact that a marked hind turned out by Mr. Bisset was positively known to have had calves in three successive years. It has also been several times asserted that a hind never has twin calves; but this again has been decisively disproved. Two cases of a hind with twins are adduced by Dr. Collyns, and one was seen only last year with twin calves at her heels. Further, a hind killed by misadventure on the Quantocks in 1881 was found to have twin calves within her unborn.

Dr. Collyns lays it down that hinds invariably drop their calves between the 7th and 21st of June, and he

can adduce but two exceptions to this rule, the calf having been in both the excepted cases born in the month of September. Later experience shows that this rule is by no means so trustworthy as the good doctor supposed. Two hinds have been found comparatively recently in August and September, which were heavy in calf, the fact being unfortunately made quite certain by the death of both. This occurred, of course, during the stag-hunting season, and the hounds were stopped as soon as it was discovered that a hind was before them, but unfortunately too late to save the deer in their exhausted condition. Again, early in March, 1883, a calf was seen on Brendon Common, which in the opinion of a good judge (Mr. Nicholas Snow) was not more than three days old. In November, 1883, it was found necessary to stop hounds from a hind owing to the extreme youth of her calf. On the 12th of January, 1884, while hind-hunting, the writer, in company with the huntsman, saw a very small calf still white spotted, which in the latter's judgment was not above two months old; and on the 4th of September, 1885, another calf was seen, apparently less than a month old. From all which it may be gathered that calves have been dropped at all periods between early spring and early winter, but that

very late calves are less uncommon than very early ones.

The calf, male or female, is at the time of birth white-spotted like a fallow deer, and remains so up to the age of three or four months, when the spots disappear and the colour of the true red deer asserts itself. Calves remain with the hinds often till they are nearly two years old, though of course they are able to take care of themselves much earlier. Nevertheless, it is extremely difficult to separate a hind and a yearling when hind-hunting; and even if this be accomplished the two will often contrive to join company again unless the young one can run no further. When the calf is very young it cannot of course travel very far, and then the hind contrives in a moment to poke it into some patch of fern or heather or furze, where the little thing lies curled up snug and close. The mother meanwhile waits near it till hounds come up and then leads them off in view from the calf's hiding place. Hounds of course are always stopped as soon as possible from such a pair if the calf be too small to take care of itself; but it is a pretty sight to see the two cantering away till all of a sudden the calf disappears, and the old lady stops to look back on her tormentors. Should she be pursued further, she will continue to circle

round the place where she has left her calf, and this constant returning to the same spot is a sure sign, even if no calf has been seen, that she has left one thereabout. So also when the calf has grown strong and can run some way with a hind she will constantly stick to the paths in the covers where the little one can travel more easily; and if a herd be roused, a hind and calf will always be the first on foot. It is in hinds more especially that the action of the ears as indicative of the temper of the animal may be observed. Hinds (and presumably stags also) are in this respect like horses; they lay back their ears when angry. The writer has seen a hind calf dash at some fallow fawns with which she was kept in a park, with as evil an expression as that of a vicious mare.

There are (or were) in Devon and Somerset, and doubtless in other countries also, peculiar names for the male red deer at different stages of his existence. Thus in his first year he is called a calf; in the second a "knobber," "knobbler," or "brocket" (a two-year-old hind is called a "heast"); in his third year a "spire" or "pricket;" in his fourth a "staggart;" in his fifth a stag or warrantable deer; at and after his sixth year a stag. These names are not so commonly nor so distinctively employed now as formerly, but

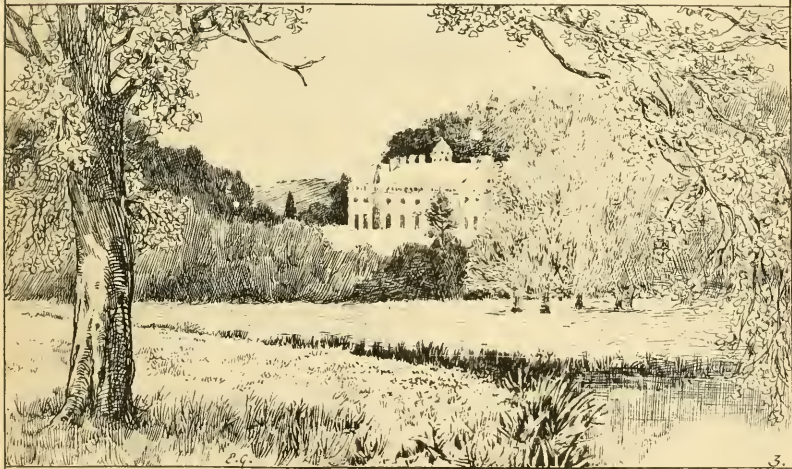
“knobbler,” “spire,” and “pricket” show pretty clearly that they are derived from the appearance of the horns at different ages. It will therefore now be necessary to plunge into the difficult and much-vexed question of the connection between a deer’s age and the state of his horns, or (as these are generally called in the west) his “head.”

First it must be premised that the horns of the red deer differ entirely from those of the fallow. The horn of a stag consists of a single beam with points projecting from it. The horns of a buck are, as is well known, flat and palmated, the main beam or rounded portion being rarely over six or eight inches long. The writer has, however, seen a head of a very old fallow buck which was formed like a red deer’s, and hardly to be distinguished from one. The points projecting from the main horn or “beam” of the red deer bear, in the west, the following names. That nearest the burr (which is described in old books as the round ball of the horn next the head of the hart) is called the brow antler; that generally, but not invariably, next above it, and from one and a half to three inches apart, is called the bez or bay; that next above the bay, and usually at a greater interval than that between brow and bay, is called the trey or tray.

All points issuing from the main beam above the trey are counted as two, three, or four "on top," as the case may be; but one "on top" is described either as "nothing on top" or simply as "upright." The brow, bay, and trey antlers constitute what are called in the West a stag's "rights," a term about which mistakes are frequently made. Thus a stag "with all his rights and three on top both horns" means a stag with twelve points; what is called in Scotland a royal head, though the term is unknown in the west. Brow, trey, uprights, indicates a stag of six points.

Of the "rights," the brow antler is generally the longest and the bay the shortest. The trey is frequently as long as the brow, sometimes longer, but generally somewhat shorter. It is not common for the bay to be longer than the brow, but cases are not unknown. It may be noticed that in the Bara-singh deer of Kashmir the bay is almost invariably longer than the brow, and takes its place as the main fighting antler.

The old west country theory of the growth of the horns is as follows. Until he is one year old the male deer has no horns. In his second year he has a knob of bones, about two inches in height, thrown out on each side of the head; at the age of three a spire or



upright horn, from six to eight inches in length, with brow antler. At four we find the animal bearing the spire about fourteen inches long with brow and trey. At five years old the bay is added to the points found on the four-year-old deer (not invariably, however, for in some stags the bay is never thrown out, and in others it is found on one horn only) and two points or *croquets* on the top of one horn. At six the stag has his rights, and two on top of each horn; at seven the same, with two on top of one and three on top of the other horn; at eight the same, with three on top of both horns. After the age of seven or eight years the alteration in the horn becomes less marked than it was before that age. Generally speaking, however, the beam or main horn increases in size and length as the deer grows older; the horn becomes wider in its spread, and more serrated and gnarled on its surface; the points or rights become longer, and in some very old stags the top of the beam spreads so as to become, to a certain extent, palmated; and the points on the palm or cup increase in number. It occasionally happens that after a stag has passed his prime the horns decrease in size and form. The deer is then called a "bater" (? abater) or "backer."

Such is the theory as enunciated by Dr. Collyns,

which differs from that of Lord Graves only in so far that the latter assigns a brow antler to the two-year-old, and, more careful than the doctor, declines to say anything of the heads of stags over six years old, save that "they differ much in appearance." Either of them will do well enough in default of a better; but in truth any attempt to fix the age of a deer by his horns alone must of necessity fail, for the growth of the horns depends on a great many more circumstances than merely on his age. First and foremost, it is, the writer ventures to think, indispensable to the perfection of a wild deer's head that the animal should live in a wooded country. The deer is a beast of the forest—a denizen of woods, not of open plains; and the advantages that the Exmoor deer enjoy in this respect over those in many parts of Scotland sufficiently account for the superiority of their heads over those of the majority of Scotch deer. Next, the time of a deer's birth, the accident whether he be a late or early calf, and the chance whether the hind that bears him be a good mother or not, have in the opinion of good judges much to do with the later development of the deer, and consequently of his head. The quality of a deer's food, and his immunity from injury or disturbance, have also a considerable influence in pro-

moting or retarding the growth of the horns; and altogether it must be confessed that it is impossible to tell a deer's age accurately by his horns alone. The broad question whether a deer be old or young may often be solved through their means, but by no means invariably or infallibly. Mr. Bisset in the course of his mastership marked and turned out a certain number of male calves taken before the hounds, whereof about one half have since been found and killed; but in hardly one case do the heads of these deer correspond in number of points to those assigned to deer of their age by Dr. Collyns. A list of these will be found in Appendix C for the satisfaction of the curious; but as all the deer therein chronicled were over four years old when killed, it may be as well to mention that there is authentic record of a two-year-old male deer with all his rights (*i.e.* with eight points), and a suspicion almost amounting to certainty of a yearling with trey and upright.

Deer shed their horns every year; in Exmoor between the middle of April and the middle of May, the exact time varying according to the weather and the age of the stag. The old stags are the first to shed their horns, and according to Dr. Collyns rarely carry them later than the end of May; a two-year-old,

he adds, may carry them a month or two later; but this seems to be, perhaps, somewhat of an exaggeration. Before the time of shedding their horns the stags retire, as a rule, to the deepest and thickest coverts, and there wait till the new horns begin to sprout. For this reason little is known of the process of horn-shedding among the wild deer, but from observation both of fallow and red deer confined in parks it is known that both horns are rarely shed at exactly the same time, one often remaining on a day after the other has been cast. This would account for the fact that of the few shed horns that are picked up, still fewer are pairs. The loss of the horn is attended by acute pain for some minutes, and profuse bleeding; then the exposed part scabs over, and the new horn, whereof the presence is already indicated by a swelling at the base of the old one, begins, it would seem, to grow at once. A fallow buck has no sooner shed his horns than he is attacked by the others in the park that still carry them; and should he have shed only one, sometimes has the other knocked away in the struggle. It is hardly probable that wild deer would expose themselves to this danger, since they have plenty of room to keep apart from each other. A shed horn may easily be distinguished from one

artificially separated by the appearance of the bone below the burr, which is slightly coniform in shape and seemingly porous in substance.

The new horn in its early stages has been described as a mass of inflammation; and, indeed, it is so hot that its heat may be felt at a distance of several inches without need of touching it. Not that the tamest deer would permit it to be touched even if that were desired, for the substance is so soft and tender that the lightest contact with anything means pain, and the least blow an injury that will show itself in the developed horn. The growth of the horn (quotes Dr. Collyns) is assisted by a temporary enlargement of the external carotid arteries, which thus carry the great flow of blood necessary for the production of bone. The horn itself is cased in the velvet ("a plexus of blood-vessels"), a substance whereof the appearance is explained by its name. About the end of August the horns attain their full development; and it is rare to see a deer with the velvet on after the first ten days of September. The 20th of August and 14th of September are the earliest and latest dates of shed and unshed velvet respectively in the records of the last thirty years. As soon as the horn is full grown the velvet peels off in strips; and

the deer assists the operation by rubbing his head against a tree-trunk. Such trees are called "fraying-stocks," and, if young, are not unlikely to be killed in the process. Stags, however, have more than once been found by the hounds with the velvet on, and killed a few hours later with a clean head. The old stags are usually the first to lose the velvet, just as they are the first to shed their horns. Under the velvet (the loss of which is accompanied by some slight bleeding) the horn is white, but soon becomes coloured by the weather; and by October, owing to frequent mud baths, is generally quite black. The reader can guess that during the soft stage of the horn the stags lead a miserable life. Flies and other insects worry them incessantly; and they hardly dare move their heads from fear of injury. A twig glancing back in the tender velvet would draw blood, so they dare not go in to the thick covers; and a scramble over a thick-grown bank may, by chance, produce the same result, so even the quest of food, or indeed any movement, is an anxious matter. The full-grown heads of a great many old stags show, if carefully examined, one antler or more that is slightly bent or twisted, evidently the result of some accident during the velvet stage.

The only points which may with certainty be looked for on the head of a stag are the brow and troy. After much examination, the writer has discovered but five cases in the last eighty years of a stag lacking either or both of his brow antlers. In three of them it is wanting on one side only; in the other two cases the horns are absolutely pointless, in fact more like those of a bullock in the matter of growth. The absence of the troy is less uncommon both among young deer and "baters;" but brow and two on top of both sides (like the Sambur deer of India) is very rare indeed.

It is also very rare for brow, bay, or troy to be bifurcated. Occasionally brow and bay are so close together at the root as to present an appearance thereof; but only one instance of bifurcated bay and one more of bifurcated troy on the head of an Exmoor stag are known to the writer. Among German deer the troy is frequently forked, and sometimes bears as many as four points.

As regards the number of points on top, two stags, and two only, of those killed on Exmoor are recorded to have borne seven on one side and six on the other; the first was taken in 1786 under Sir Thomas Acland, the second in 1871 under Mr. Bisset. (Courtenay

Walrond, Esq.'s, deer the writer has not confidence enough to reckon). The former of these was known as *the* old Badgworthy stag, and, though of uncertain age, was known to have been alive fourteen years; the latter was ear-marked, and by positive knowledge not more than eight. Five on top of one side is more common, and four on top of both now of frequent occurrence, especially among the Quantock deer, which have a richer feeding-ground than the rest. It must, however, be noted that we in the West attach more importance to weight of beam, width of spread, and general beauty and symmetry of form than to a forest of points; and these are the features that are to be taken into account in estimating a deer's age. Young stags will frequently carry a great number of points, but the horn is neither heavy nor widespread, nor are the tines long. It is, however, probable that no Exmoor stag carries twelve points before he is six years old, and, if he should, the points will almost certainly be small and not well developed. It has been positively ascertained that a deer has borne the same number of points in two successive years, the difference between the two pairs lying in the weight and spread. A wide span is absolutely essential to the perfect head. More than one fine pair of horns, be-

longing to an old deer, heavy in beam, with points both numerous and long, is spoilt by being "hooped," and sometimes as close together at the top as at the burr.

The age at which the horns of a deer cease to improve it is impossible to fix. Some would have it to be six years old; but this can be easily and overwhelmingly disproved. In fact, the whole matter depends on the constitution of each particular animal, and in divers other questions connected with his diet and general circumstances, which it were at once vain and unprofitable to investigate; for in this as in other questions of the development of a deer's horns an invariable or even approximately invariable rule is impossible. The distinctions in horns generally adduced as conclusive in deciding between old and young deer are as follow:—

First. In old deer the burr is closer to the skull. This holds true in comparison with very young stags, but must not be too much relied on.

Secondly. The horn of an old deer is more serrated and gnarled. The horns of a three-year-old are undoubtedly much smoother than those of an eight-year-old; but very old deer sometimes have remarkably smooth horns. The writer knows of one head (be-

longing to a deer of doubtful age) with wide spread long tines and eleven points, but smooth as if made of wood.

Thirdly. The top of an old stag's horn is sometimes blunt, as if decayed; there is sometimes a knob instead of points, either solid or hollow; or the top is jagged and irregular, with or without a number of little spikes, counted by some as points, but unworthy of the name. There is at Moritzburg the head of a very old stag with fifty-seven such little spikes on the top of his horns; the head has the appearance of a fallow buck's with a hedgehog on top, and is a most unsightly object. This last bunch of distinctions is in great measure trustworthy. A knob has been found on the head of a deer certainly not past his prime; but bluntness and jaggedness surely mark an old deer, or at very least a deer made prematurely old by sickness or injury. Old age brings with it enfeebled circulation. In cases where there is a question between age and injury, it may generally be solved by the general condition of the deer; for a fine head does not necessarily imply a big body, nor *vice versâ*.

The deformities and eccentricities in deer's heads are simply endless. Those curious on the subject would do well to visit the hunting castle of the kings

of Saxony at Moritzburg, where, in addition to a number of magnificent heads, there is a collection of "monstrosities," which exemplify how a red deer's horns can take the form even of a ram's or an antelope's. There, too, may be seen pictures of the great deer battues which were the delight of Augustus the Strong, wherein the representations of beaten stags in the Elbe surrounded with baying hounds, all drawn by the hand of Lucas Kranach, are marvellously truthful and vigorous, a great contrast to those of many modern artists who have chosen the same subject.

These deformities are due either to extreme old age or to injury, for anything that tends to affect the health of the deer, be it starvation, or the breaking of a limb, or the bullet of the cruel clumsy poacher, must inevitably tell on the growth of the horn. Old age and enfeebled circulation are necessarily connected together, and hence the blunt points above mentioned. Castration, says Dr. Collyns, has a certain effect on the deer. If the operation be performed when the deer has no horns he will never grow any; if when the horns are in velvet, they will always remain so unshed; if when the horns are fully developed, they too will never be shed, but remain in the same stage unaltered. Partial castration, he adds, will probably be followed

with the same result on the side where the mutilation is effected, but this is not asserted by experience.

In consequence of this dictum of Dr. Collyns's, there used never to be a one-horned deer killed in the West but injury in the region above specified was assigned as the cause. In one case there was certainly the coincidence, but Mr. Bisset's records upset the theory altogether. One-horned deer are by no means uncommon on Exmoor. Mr. Bisset killed at least seven in the course of his mastership, three of them, curiously enough, in three successive weeks of 1873. Of these seven, three had evidently had the missing horn torn off; and here the writer may perhaps be allowed to put forward the opinion that if a horn be broken or torn off during the early velvet stage, the stump remaining is most likely to become one with the knob of bone on which the horn is fixed, and never be shed again. If a horn be broken off above the burr after the velvet is cast, the stump is shed as if the horn were entire. But in no one of the seven or more one-horned deer does Mr. Bisset mention any defect in the testes, and he frequently speaks of Dr. Collyns's theory as exploded. Two one-horned deer killed by the present master also showed no such imperfection; and though one had a short stump of white bone on the site of the missing

horn (sure proof that the horn had been torn off), the other had hardly a vestige of the knob whereon the missing horn should have grown. More decided evidence than this, however, is the fact that a young male deer taken before the hounds in 1868, and then partially castrated on account of injuries received, was killed in 1872 with a pair of perfectly grown horns. This stag carried all his rights and two on top of both sides (ten points in all); the points were short, but the horns were perfectly even in point of size, and were still cased in velvet, showing that they were newly grown.

But indeed Dr. Collyns is throughout incorrect in this matter. If a male deer be castrated before he has ever grown a horn he will never grow one at all, but if the operation be performed after he has grown his horns he will continue to grow and shed them every year. The real peculiarity of the growth of such deer's horns is that they are never perfectly developed, they are always small, always soft, in fact gristle rather than horn, and never lose the velvet. Further, it appears that the operation may be so modified as either to arrest the growth of the horns or to develop them abnormally. Dr. Collyns himself relates that a park stag which had been emasculated (in consequence of vicious-

ness) and had had his horns sawn off just above the brow antler, threw up after four years a fresh spire about eight inches long from the stumps. Dr. Collyns was inclined to think that the operation had been incompletely performed, but most probably save for the presence of the old stump this deer would have grown new horns in less than four years. The really astonishing thing is that he should have thrown up a new horn on the top of the stump, that in fact the blood should have forced its way up through the fully developed horn in sufficient volume to produce a new growth on the top of it. Unfortunately Dr. Collyns fails to mention whether these short spires were ever shed or not, or whether they ever lost the velvet. It is difficult to understand why a certain mutilation should have prevented a deer from shedding his old horns without stopping the growth of new ones.

There remains yet one eccentricity to be mentioned, that, namely, of "nott" or hornless stags. Two of these (the only ones on record in the West) were killed in 1880. Both were perfect in all respects save that they had no more horns than a yearling, and this too though they were certainly warrantable deer, but not apparently of any extraordinary age. There is said to be another such deer somewhere in the Forest at the

present moment, but the hounds have never been able to find him.

Of the results of external injuries other than to the horn itself, and exclusive of those mentioned above, it may be well to mention one or two instances. A crippled stag was killed in February, 1880, with but one horn. Injuries not specified, but probably broken legged. Another, a very old stag, was found in October, 1881, with one hind leg broken off short below the hock, the stump healed over, and the injury evidently done many years before. He, too, had but one horn. In July of the same year a young male deer was found with the near hind leg broken. The off horn was imperfectly developed and distorted. Yet another crippled stag was found in December, 1883. He had, apparently, fallen over the cliffs, for he was terribly injured, but whether before or since he grew his last pair of horns is not known. He carried both horns, one perfect enough, the other curiously twisted inwards and downwards, but not, strictly speaking, imperfect. In fact, injuries would seem to tend to make horns droop, if they do not check their growth altogether.

The other signs which help to decide a deer's age are the teeth, the slot, and the size of the body. Red deer of both sexes have, up to the age of four,

twice as many cutting teeth in the lower jaw as they number years. Eight is the full number of these teeth; but at five years old (so says Dr. Collyns, though many think earlier) two tusks in the upper jaw are added in the case of stags; and these tusks are sometimes found in old hinds, but smaller and less developed. Thus a stag by the time he is fit to hunt is past mark of mouth; but the state of the teeth often decides in doubtful cases between the old and young deer. The slot or fore foot and the body are signs which are of no use further than to decide whether a deer be fit or not to run, and will therefore be better discussed when we come to speak of stag-hunting. As a rule, the older the stag the bigger are both slot and body; but it is certain that deer as well as human creatures are liable to shrink with extreme old age. Mr. Bisset records the death of a very old hind whereof the frame was very small and the slots worn down to nothing; and recently a very old stag has been killed with a deformed head, the body of a young deer, and the slot of a hind. Altogether it may be said that a stag past his prime tends to return in outward appearance to that which he was before his prime. The colour is apt to become lighter, the horn scantier, and the slot (in rare cases)

and the body smaller ; but the shrinking of age may often be distinguished at first sight from the immaturity of youth ; and if not at first sight, then by examination of the teeth and by a subtle difference between the faces of old and young deer—a difference perceptible by the experienced, but indescribable on paper.

The stag's horns are hardly arrived at perfection when the time comes for using them. About the beginning of October the stags' necks begin to swell ; the animals themselves become restless and savage ; they bell (*i.e.* bellow) continually and soil in every stream or pool that they see. In a word, the rutting season begins. If hinds be plentiful, the stags separate themselves each with his own little following ; and, of course, those that are strongest have the advantage in the gaining and upholding of marital rights. But if hinds be scarce, there is many a fierce and fatal battle. It is said that one-horned stags have an advantage over the others in fighting, presumably because they can get under the guard of their more heavily armed brethren. Certain it is that in 1883 a one-horned stag was seen in undisputed possession of four hinds. The way in which a stag advances towards an intruder before coming to the charge—almost on

tiptoe, with nose in the air and snorting fiercely—is a favourite subject with painters. It is curious that deer entirely desert certain covers during the rutting season and crowd into others. If a stag and a hind be reported together in some remote wood by themselves, it may confidently be asserted that the stag is a young one.

After about a fortnight the stags are worn out by the incessant watching and fighting, and soon after the end of the season they herd together again, lean, ragged-coated, and tucked up, from the effects of the few previous weeks. Altogether the stag's life is not a happy one; no sooner is one trouble past than another is on him. During the summer his horns are growing, and keep him in constant irritation and anxiety. The velvet is hardly shed when the fever of the rutting season is on them. Then there is the hard winter to live through; and with the return of spring returns also the shedding of the old horns and growing of the new. In fact, it is only for a few weeks in every year that the stag is his perfect self; and those weeks, with a small margin before and after, constitute what is called the stag-hunting season.

CHAPTER IX.

HARBOURING AND TUFTING.

STAG-HUNTING begins in the second week in August, and ends about the 10th of October; begins, that is to say, when the horns of the stag are approaching perfection, and ends at the beginning of the rutting season. It was formerly the custom to give the deer a fortnight's respite before beginning to hunt the hinds, but the numbers of the deer have rendered this impossible for several years past, and hind-hunting now begins directly stag-hunting comes to an end. How long it may continue depends on the weather and the number of deer that it is desirable to kill. Formerly hind-hunting ceased in December and recommenced in April, this latter being termed spring hind-hunting; but the feeling against persecuting the hinds when heavy in calf grew so strong that Mr. Bisset, himself one of those most strongly opposed to it, abolished spring hind-hunting some twenty years

ago. Of course, theoretically, barren hinds alone were selected for the chase in the spring, but in practice this was impossible. Nevertheless, before he gave up the hounds, Mr. Bisset was twice compelled to hunt into April; and the present master, including the few by-days always allowed at the end of July, before the season properly begins, was obliged in 1882-3 to hunt in no less than ten months of the year.

The great difference between wild deer hunting and other hunting is, that you cannot hunt any deer as you can any fox (up to a certain time of the year) or any hare. It is not even enough to hunt a male deer during stag-hunting and a female in hind-hunting. Both stag and hind must be above a certain age. In order, therefore, to be sure of a warrantable stag he must be duly "harboured;" and this "harbouring" is one of the most important, interesting, and difficult parts of the chase of the wild red deer.

The deer, as is well known, feeds at night, and about daybreak returns to cover to sleep through the day, and the place where he lies down is called his "layer," or "bed." The harbourer's business is to find out as nearly as he can where a good stag is lying, so as to be able to tell the huntsman where to

draw for him. The main difficulty in this is, first, to be sure of harbouring the right deer, and, secondly, to do so without frightening him away. A very favourite trick with amateur harbourers is to go about the covers and watch the deer into them, with the probable result that the prudent animals, being very quick of scent and hearing, move quietly off and are seen no more for the day. Of course it may happen that the harbourer, on first going out, may see a good stag lie down on the opposite side of a valley; and in such a case his work is done at once, and so surely that he can lay his hand on the deer. But this is not harbouring proper, which is really an exercise of woodcraft. The harbourer's true guide is the slot, or footprint, of the deer, and on this and this only should he depend.

The slots of stag and hind differ very greatly. That of the stag is far rounder and far larger than the hind's. The older and heavier the stag the wider is the spread of the toes, the blunter the toes themselves, and the broader the width of the heel. There is also a difference between the print of fore and hind slots, the latter being smaller and more pointed, with the claws, in old deer, frequently uneven. The slot of a hind or young male deer is narrower and more

pointed; and it is not always easy to decide between the two.

A good harbourer is of course alive to all these distinctions, and armed with this knowledge he goes out (or should go) about daybreak to visit the favourite feeding places of the deer, and see if he can slot one from thence into the cover. He knows the fields where the deer "use" (in West country parlance), and the racks by which they enter them or leave them; and there he will probably find what he wants. If he should not know where the deer "use," he should go where he is required to harbour a stag on the previous afternoon, when he will have time to find out what he wants from the farmers, many of them no mean harbourers, and to make his own observations. A little light rain in the early morning will help him considerably by making the ground soft and favourable for slotting; but pouring rain and extreme drought will baffle any harbourer.

Should he find the slot of the right animal he should follow it into the cover, but as this may from conditions of the ground be impossible, he may have to cast forward and try the various racks leading out of the field or into the cover until he hits it. And here it may be said that an experienced man can often follow a slot as

well on grass, if not too long, as on soil, and distinguish to which sex of deer it belongs. The stag duly "slotted" into cover, it remains to be seen whether he has stopped or harboured there. To do this the outside hedge and its various racks must all be made good, and if no slot lead out of it he may reasonably conclude that the deer is in the cover. But the cover may be some hundreds of acres in extent, and in that case the cross paths may have to be made good, and the deer's whereabouts ascertained if possible more nearly. This must be done with great caution, as if the harbourer goes about a wood before the deer has settled himself for the day (*i.e.* about 9 A.M.) he runs the risk of disturbing him. The restless habits of stags on the approach of the rutting season make nice harbouring then a very difficult matter. Again, the deer may have gone through the wood and out the other side, and in that case it may be necessary to follow him for a mile or two to the place where he does mean to stop, casting forward or around where slotting is impossible. In this way a harbourer may have been steadily at work for four and five hours, and even so not have completed it to his satisfaction. On the other hand he may be able to harbour without difficulty two, three, or four stags in

different parts of the great deer coverts. Patience and sagacity go far in harbouring, but luck is important too.

There are other signs by which a harbourer can tell where stags have been "using." In a turnip field, for instance, a stag pulls up many more roots than a hind, not exactly for the reason given by Dr. Collyns, that the stag takes but one bite and throws the turnip over his head, while the hind eats it down like a sheep. Both sexes of deer bite at a turnip till it comes out of the ground, but a stag with his greater strength, especially in the neck, roots them up quickest. Again, a stag is said to take but half an ear of corn, while the more frugal and less dainty hind takes the whole. The present harbourer, however, states that the only infallible distinction between male and female deer in feeding is the partiality of stags, old and young, for the young shoots on a new-laid ash hedge, or small ash tree. Deer are also very fond of ivy; and Mr. Bisset records a tragic death of a hind in search thereof. The poor thing was found hanged between two branches of an oak-pollard. She had reared up to reach some ivy, and while standing on her hind legs had slipped from the higher ground whence she had attempted to pluck it, and thus caught

between the branches, and unable to regain her footing to extricate herself, had perished miserably. Still deer pay a deal of attention to the corn and turnip fields around the covers, and, it need hardly be said, work therein not a little havoc. Various means are resorted to for excluding them; but if once they grow attached to a particular feeding ground it is difficult to keep them out. There is of course a fund to make good the damage as far as possible, but this would be useless without the goodwill of the farmers, which in almost every case is most freely and unselfishly given.

There is sometimes great difficulty in harbouring a stag, when, as occasionally happens, the deer never leave the cover to feed for days together. This was the case during the earlier part of the hot, dry autumn of 1884, which was enough to break a harbourer's heart. In such circumstances the experience of harbourer and huntsman must make up as well as it can for the deficiency. Stags have some few favourite beds which are occupied by one tenant after another; and these being well known may be tried in default of better information. Mr. Bisset frequently speaks of one such favourite seat, "*the* Oakbush in Haddon Wood." On the open moor a stag with a herd may be seen to lie down in the heather without there being

any fear of disturbing him, and a rouse on the open is a very pretty sight.

The best harbourer in the early days of Mr. Bisset was James Blackmore, of Haddon; a great character, known to every one as "Jim." His father had been a harbourer before him, and he himself had been, as Mr. Bisset writes, bound more or less in an apprenticeship to Haddon all his life. His knowledge of the habits of the deer, of their favourite layers, feeding places, and soiling pits was beyond comparison greater than that of any one else; and when he chose to do his best there was not another man in the country who could equal him in his particular business. He had been at one time a miller and a private in the yeomanry, but, to quote Mr. Bisset, his harbouring propensities far exceeded his military ardour, and he did not remain long in the service. Probably it was also from attending more to the deer than his business that he sank from a miller to an ordinary labourer, and took up his abode on the top of Haddon Hill, doing such odd jobs as were to be had, but still maintaining his character as watcher and caretaker of the deer. Mr. Bisset gives an amusing account of a day when, after the greater part of the Haddon Woods had been drawn blank for a hind, and it seemed hopeless to find one,





“ old Blackmore at last condescends to help us in our forlorn hope. A small three-cornered piece of gorse lies close below the drive by Deer Park (a part of the cover so named). We have been shouting and cheering the hounds, laughing and talking for the last half hour round this spot, and when Jim says that the deer very often lie here, and that we had better try it, we are all inclined to smile. Had it been any other than he who proposed such a thing we should have laughed in his face. But Jim seems to be infallible, he winds them there ; beyond all doubt he knows they are there ; and to make matters more ridiculous, the tufters being tired and shirking the furse, in goes old Jim himself, and before he has gone five yards up jump two lashing hinds from under his feet.” On another occasion it is recorded that “ that wonderful old hound Blackmore ” found a stag alone, without a hound to help him. No deer had been harboured, and the hounds had already drawn a cover apparently blank, when Jim hit the slot of a stag and hunted him straight into his bed. Both these occurrences took place early in Mr. Bisset’s time ; but either might happen again so far as the deer are concerned, for no one who has not experience has any idea how close a deer will lie to avoid hounds.

Unfortunately Jim was not always equally painstaking, and towards the end of his career became slack and lazy; too often the case with harbourers. To the last, however, if properly roused (a work of some difficulty), he could, in spite of age, harbour a deer better than any one. He died in 1868, leaving no one immediately qualified to succeed him in the office. Very soon, however, one was found; and the present harbourer, Andrew Miles, took Jim's place in the cottage on Haddon Hill, with far more deer to look after than his predecessor had, and worthily maintains the reputation of the office. The harbourer's fee was and is £1 for every stag; not too much if the work be properly done, for the distances to be traversed are frequently very great, and the skill required such as is only to be gained by close attention and a real desire to show sport. The writer cannot pretend to have exhausted, even approximately, the intricacies of the art of harbouring: there are signs in the bending of a twig or the cropping of a leaf, from which one experienced in woodcraft can gather information, though probably he could not tell you why. There is a strange instinct in such things which even those possessed thereof cannot explain; an instinct which constitutes the mastery of every art from strategy to rat-catching.

The deer duly harboured, the next thing is to rouse him, and him only, and force him to break cover. But there may be many more deer in the wood which we do not want, that might be roused were we to draw for him with the pack; so to avoid if possible the division of the pack after a dozen deer, two to six couple of hounds, called "tufters," are selected, and the rest of the pack shut up till wanted. The harbourer of course keeps the whereabouts of his stag a secret from all but the huntsman and master, and immediately on their arrival he is, or should be, ready with his report, and advice as to avoiding other deer known to be in the same cover. The tufters are drawn; not necessarily old hounds, or young hounds, or middle-aged hounds. Those which are known to be good drawers and of strong constitution are taken most frequently, but all must have their turn, for the tufters have a longer day's work than the rest. The whip has his orders and gallops off to some well-known point, and away trot huntsman, master, and tufters, with the harbourer at their head. "Here he passed yesterday morning," says the harbourer, showing the print of his foot where he trod out the stale slot, "and here I slotted 'un over the road, and here he came in over the fence into the combe, and I made it good the other side." And

he jumps off his pony, and picking up a stone by the fence he shows on the soft ground beneath it the broad heel and blunt toes which denote the right animal. A warrantable stag should be, with due allowance for the state of the ground, two inches broad at the heel, and this slot is even two and a half. "A heavy deer by the look of him," observes the huntsman, catching sight of another slot in some soft mud where the deer's dew claws are plainly visible. Then without more talking the tufters are laid on the drag, and master and harbourer trot off to different paths. The scent is not over strong, but the tufters carry the line on steadily, and then suddenly one of them speaks and the rest join chorus. But there is no crash and rattle of bushes as when a stag jumps up, and nothing can be seen yet. They run on some little way and turn upward (all covers in the stag-hunting country are on hill-sides), and presently up come a hind and calf close before the master on the path where he is riding. The old lady follows the path some little way and then turns in on a well-beaten track ; it would be no trouble to her to go through the thicket, but then the calf could not keep up. The hounds are stopped without difficulty, and we proceed to draw further on. Again they hit a line and bring it up across the path where the master is

stationed. "Nothing has come up," he observes to the huntsman as they canter on the path together. "Best let 'em go on and see what it is," is the brief and not unexpected answer. But suddenly the tufters are heard turning towards them, and the huntsman, with his eye on the ground stops like a shot and calls the hounds off. Why? He has seen a slot which tells him we are hunting the heel of another and younger stag that came down into the cover some time this morning. Again we draw on where we first began, and at last we hear a single hound speak as if baying, and the rushing of the rest of the tufters as they hurry to the spot; then a chorus and a crash, and for a moment we see a great brown body spring through the air, catch a glimpse of a heavily antlered head well laid back, and hear the rattle of the bushes as he bursts through them. The right animal at last; he is up, and the tufters are running him merrily. But is he away? Not yet. The day is hot and our friend is fat; moreover, he is the biggest and finest stag in the covers. Why should he, the master of the herd, make sport for us? That is the business of the young ones, and he means to find one to do it; and accordingly he proceeds to beat the cover for a substitute.

This is a very frequent and well-known trick in old stags—they will push up deer after deer, and lying close in their bed from which they have thrust them, wait quietly while the hounds press on after the unfortunate substitute. In such cases the hounds must be stopped and taken back to hunt up to the old sinner and rouse him once more. It is astonishing to see the numbers of deer that may be roused in this way; hounds have constantly been known to draw a cover blank which becomes alive with deer directly another deer passes through it. It is fair to say that the substitute roused by a stag sometimes resents the interference. It was my good fortune once to see two stags on Haddon Hill actually turn and fight, with the hounds close to them, to decide which should be the victim; and a similar sight was seen on Lee Hill so lately as the season of 1885.

These old stags take a lot of catching (as the natives say), and by the time they have exhausted their resources in the cover are often too much distressed to show much sport when at last they do go away. Meanwhile the whole field, chafing with impatience, is waiting near the farmhouse or barn where the pack is kennelled for the return of the huntsman to lay the hounds on; and if, as is frequently the case, the old

stag can stand only for a short time before the pack, they are loud in their complaints against the master—more especially if he refuse to give up the old stag to follow one of the young ones roused by him that have broken away. What is an old stag to them? They have condescended to meet the Devon and Somerset staghounds and expect a gallop as their right. Patience, good friends, and think a little. This old stag has been playing mischief in the fields all around: will it be any satisfaction to the farmers who have been patiently enduring his raids all the summer that a young deer should be killed twenty miles away, while the old arch-sinner is left unharmed? Master and men have been working hard all this time in the endeavour to kill him and prevent his spoiling sport another day while you have been smoking and chatting at your ease. It is the privilege of the field to abuse the master; and it is one of the functions of the master to endure that abuse. Mr. Bisset is extremely clear upon this point, and he spoke from an experience such as is accorded to few men. Two things, however, cannot be expected from him: first, that he should always sacrifice the farmers who preserve deer for the whole year round to you who come down for at most a couple of months to hunt them; second, that he should

always have a deer ready for you (as old Jim Blackmore once said) in a bag.

Meanwhile it is a mystery where some of the old stags manage to secrete themselves during the autumn. Some think they contrive to hide in ledges inaccessible to hounds, on the cliffs; but though there may be some truth in this, other reasons may be found to account for it. One thing is certain, that stags know their season. Many more are seen in winter than in autumn, and they behave during the hind-hunting season, unless hounds be actually on their line, with the greatest composure. Mr. Bisset records that one day three stags watched the process of hunting a hind on Haddon Hill with utter unconcern, and that one of them actually lay down three yards in front of the whip's horse, and refused to get up. The writer himself has seen four stags stand for an hour on Dunkery Beacon contemplating, apparently with some enjoyment, the chase of a hind on the hillside below them. The most probable reason for an occasional blank day in favourite covers is that the stags are lying close in some thicket within them all the time. All deer (except hinds with calves), and especially old stags, will lie like stones. More than one has received a nip in the haunch before it would rise, and once a young male deer was actually

chopped. For instance, in November, 1883, hounds hunted up to a hind, after a long check, on a very boggy patch of ground. She lay fast till they were on her back, and being unable, though quite fresh, to keep clear of them in the soft ground, was pulled over at once. A still more curious scene was witnessed later in the same year. A hind much distressed, and but a short distance before the hounds, lay down in a patch of thick low gorse. Just as she did so a stag rose up close to her, and about ten yards from one of the sportsmen who was watching her, and made as though to drive her off; but catching sight of the hounds working through the furze close by, he at once dropped down again with his chin pressed tight against the ground and his horns flat on his back. While looking at him the man who was observing this little scene saw a second stag lying down still nearer to him, but peering cautiously over the top of his hiding place. Hearing a hound speak, this stag too pressed his head down; and so the three lay fast until hounds were within a few feet of them, and one of the deer was bound to move. The victim, needless to say, was the hunted hind, and though the hounds crashed after her in view the stags never moved, and were still lying in the same place an hour later. Stags will often hurl

themselves by one gigantic bound far into some almost impenetrable thicket, and there lie where hounds can never wind them and hardly reach them. Further, a stag will not always move before a single hound, but will stand and bay him till other hounds come up and force him out. But the reader has been kept too long tufting; let him, therefore, imagine the stag fairly forced away, topping the cover fence as only a deer can, standing with open mouth and chin aloft for a moment on the top, and then after a glance at[†] his pursuers setting his head straight for his point, and disappearing with that lurching, easy canter which has tempted so many foolish men to think they can catch him themselves. The tufters are stopped, the huntsman gallops back for the pack, a moment's feathering, a whimper, and away they go.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHASE OF THE STAG.

IT is not the intention of the writer to follow this stag over the moor; so it will be sufficient here to point out the leading incidents that distinguish the chase of the deer from that of the fox.

The first thing that strikes the fox-hunter is, that the staghounds run in long drawn file instead of carrying a head like foxhounds; and that they do not run at first so savagely, as if after a natural enemy. The reason of this is the difference in the scent of the two animals. That of a deer is sweet, as of a "beast of chase," and not of vermin; and the difference in hounds running deer and fox is precisely that of terriers after rabbit and stoat. Staghounds strive for the lead just as foxhounds do; but the hound that, whether by nose or speed, or combination of both, has slightly the advantage of the rest, will lead the whole day up to a certain point, the rest close at his

stern, but each enjoying the scent for himself. This was the case with the old true staghounds, and has been found the same in all packs used to hunt the wild deer. It is said that a deer always goes as straight as a line from end to end even of a field, while a fox pursues a slightly devious course, like a human creature; as may be seen from every foot-track between two stiles, for instance. Hence, a hound after a fox has not the same chance of keeping the lead as a hound after a deer. The "certain point" mentioned above is the moment from which the deer begins to fail. Then the old hounds, which have been hitherto content to see the young ones outstrip them, suddenly dash to the front: sure sign that the end is at hand. The same peculiarity is noted in the case of harriers by Joseph Addison, of all persons, in one of the papers concerning Sir Roger de Coverley.

The course of the deer in a chase over the Exmoor country invariably leads him across a certain number of streams. He could not avoid them if he would, and he has no desire to avoid them. The effect of water on a distressed deer is extraordinary: he or she will come to it with drooping head and lolling tongue, apparently in the last stage of exhaustion, and leave it as if endowed with new life, to all appearance fresh

and strong as when roused. They will frequently "beat the water" (as it is called) for a long distance, and they have been known to follow it for over three miles without touching a bank. It is on these occasions that a huntsman shows if he knows his work or not. The old rule was that he should always cast up stream first, as the water may carry the scent down; but it is doubtful if water does carry scent except when the deer is actually lying in it. Hounds following a deer at sea invariably give up the chase when they lose sight of him, and the same has been observed in fresh water also. The huntsman should in this, as in all cases, be guided by his hounds. If the deer enters the water pointing down stream he has probably gone down, and *vice versâ*. Of course, this is not invariably the case, and even one so experienced as Arthur Heal is frequently deceived; but as a general rule it holds good. If the deer be not far ahead the huntsman, by keeping his eye up or down the water, may frequently make pretty sure where the deer has *not* gone; but on the steep descents to these streams most men are inclined to look rather where their horses are treading. There are not many who will go down the Devil's Path, in Horner Wood, at something between a fast trot and a canter, and keep their eye on the water

below the whole time: Arthur Heal will do so, and reach the bottom before any one else, but a great many horses decline to go down except at a slow walk, and a great many more riders refuse to go down it at all.

Sometimes a splash on a stone will tell the huntsman what he wants, and this is anxiously looked for when the deer, at the junction of two streams, has had the choice of going up which he will. Some of my readers may remember a beautiful bit of hunting in September, 1884, when a stag followed the river Bray for three miles, in spite of bars, bridges, and flood-gates, without leaving an atom of scent behind him. At the junction of a tributary stream, just below a bridge, where a deer might have been expected to get on the bank for a moment, there was still nothing for hounds to acknowledge; but there was a splash on a pole hung on to the bridge (to keep the cattle back), and one of the hounds, after vainly trying to walk along it, Blondin-wise, swam out to see if his nose would tell him anything. This was enough, and after another mile and a half they ran up to the deer in the water. In truth, the sagacity of hounds in this water work is marvellous. Even without bidding they will, on reaching the water, divide themselves into two parts, each

taking charge of a bank, while some, if the water be not too deep, will splash along the middle, winding every stone and blade and twig. They will rear up to try overhanging branches, and swim out to any rock or stone which the deer may have touched in his passage; as wise as Christians and far more industrious. There are few prettier sights than a check at the water to one who is fond of hounds and likes to see them work.

Sometimes a deer will go up stream, jump out on the bank, follow it a little way upwards, and then once more jump in and go down. This is highly disconcerting, and has snatched more than one from the jaws of death. Sometimes deer will sink themselves in a pool under the bank, throwing their heads back with little but their muzzle above water, and in such cases hounds will pass right over them without winding them. The writer remembers seeing a hind do this, and the embarrassment of the hounds, sure she was close by (within a yard of some of them), and yet unable to make out where, was very comical to witness. They kept passing her and coming back again; then again repassing, stopping, and applying themselves diligently to the bank, till at last one caught a view, and with a triumphant note plunged into the swollen

stream above her, and thus, carried almost on to her back, roused her effectually.

But the tricks of deer are not confined to the water alone. Sometimes, and this is especially true of old deer of both sexes, they will double and dodge like rabbits, in and out and round and round, with all the old tricks of lying down and pushing up fresh deer. Hinds especially will hang about the covers for hours, and refuse, in spite of all endeavours of hounds and huntsmen, to leave them. If they want to go to a place they will go. A hind has been forced out of cover and headed back seven times from re-entering it, but she has tried again an eighth time and succeeded. If you want to head a deer from some point, as, for instance, the cliffs, you will almost invariably fail; but if you want him to go away over the open, and he is "blanched," or headed, by some one who has no business to be in his way, he will turn back; and in this way many a good run has been spoiled by a loafing tourist, who cares not whether the deer have a fair chance for his life, or whether those who subscribe to the maintenance of the pack have their day's sport made or marred, so long as he, the irresponsible, sees a deer.

Of course it not unfrequently happens that after a

long check and a false cast a deer may be an hour or more ahead of the pack ; and the same may be the case if it be necessary, as it sometimes is, to fetch the pack three or four miles from the place where they have been kennelled to lay them on. This would be fatal to fox-hunting, but it is not so with deer. The scent of the deer is naturally stronger and more lasting ; and the animal itself, finding itself unpursued, will generally, unless otherwise disturbed, loiter after going a few miles. Young deer, however, cannot be depended on to stop, and will frequently keep on travelling for any distance. But in a great many cases a deer even two hours ahead may by patience and perseverance be gradually hunted to his resting place and fresh found ; and there is no better lesson for young hounds than this. The great rule of deer-hunting is “Persevere.” Stick to your hunted deer, for you cannot as a rule go and find another as you can another fox. In the hot autumn days the scent of a deer far ahead may be bad, the impatience of an imbecile field, careless of hounds and many of them never near the pack except on such occasions, may be aggravating ; but the day will grow cooler and the field thinner as time goes on, and perseverance will be rewarded by a fresh find, a racing gallop, and a kill. A

run so begun has lasted for six or seven hours, the first part very slow, and the last part fast enough to satisfy any one. The distances traversed are of course very great, and few riders last to the end; only, in fact, those who love hunting for its own sake and delight to see hounds work as well as race. In some heartrending cases the select few are sometimes grievously disappointed. In September, 1884, a stag was run for two hours with wretched scent, from the cliffs above Glenthorne to the Chains. When the hounds reached this point it seemed hopeless to recover the deer; and a bare dozen, or fewer, of a field of three hundred, alone stuck to the hounds on this wretched boggy tract; the rest turning homeward. The deer was presently fresh found in a bed of rushes and went back over the same ground to the place where he had been found in thirty-three minutes, right in the line of the home-goers, who of course had the best of it, while the persevering had to cross a network of combes and bogs, and with difficulty recovered their places. But if the last were not sometimes first, there would be few indeed at the death of a deer.

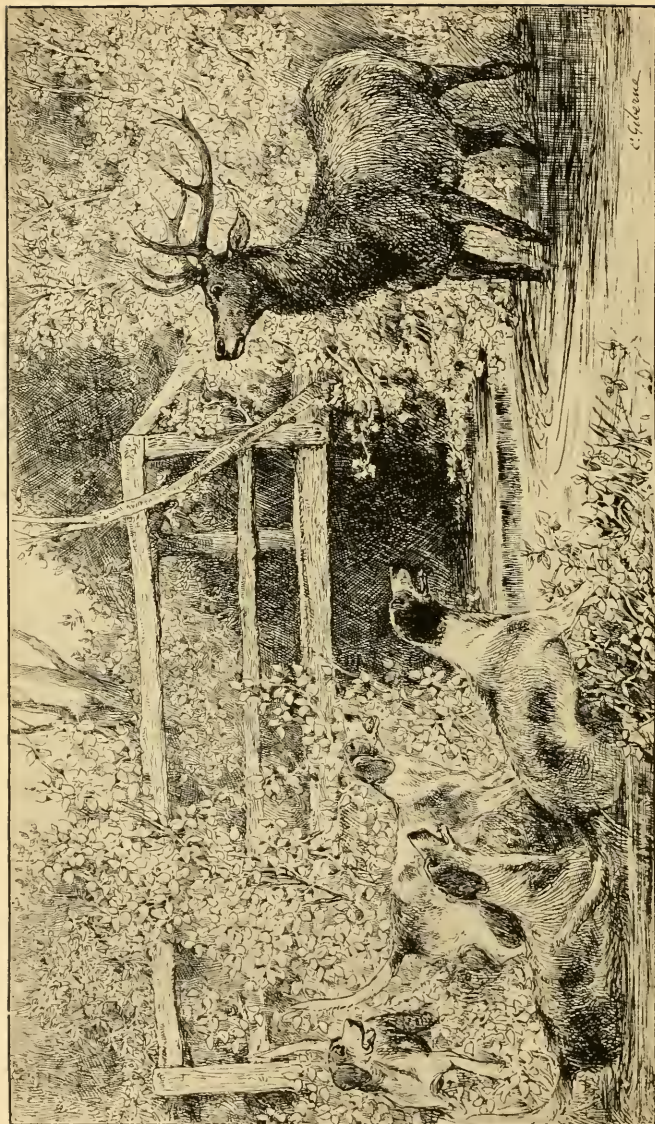
It is rare to kill a warrantable deer, stag or hind, in less than an hour from the find. A fat heavy old stag may, if pressed throughout, be brought to bay in half

that time ; but in that case he will be blown, not beaten, and will defend himself for a long time. Other deer one can hardly expect to kill in less than two hours, and it is imprudent to allow less than two hours and a half to run a hind to death. It is not implied that they have never been killed in less, for a stag, old but not heavy, has been raced to death in fifty-five minutes over the open, and a hind in an hour and a half, without a check ; but one cannot reckon on this. Some deer, particularly hinds, are marvellously tough ; and there is no saying how long they may last. It is of no importance that hounds are close to them, for deer will go on for miles only three or four hundred yards ahead with hounds racing all the way. Still pace is bound to tell, and pace it is that marks the great difference between the old and the present pack. The "light galloping deer," which in Lord Graves's time led the hounds a dance which upset them and horses for a fortnight, are now killed in two hours or thereabouts, if scent be good and the pack laid on close to them.

Deer are, as a rule, killed in the water, stags and hinds alike. Water is always the refuge in the middle of the chase, and it is also the last refuge. There are instances of both stags and hinds being rolled over

in the open, and it sometimes happens that a good number in some seasons are killed on dry land; but while a hind, being defenceless, is sometimes killed before she can reach the nearest water, a stag can generally fight his way down to it. A hind has usually little strength left in her by the time hounds run up to her, but a stag, especially an old stag, often keeps some in reserve for the final struggle. There are signs by which it may be known when a deer is failing—the slot shows the claws wider spread and the print of the dew-claws, and the tracks show that the animal is reeling. Again, a deer always ascends a hill slantingly, and it is only when they have not strength to go to the top that they try to climb straight up. It is when they are thus pressed that they make those marvellous leaps, even to fifteen feet high, to escape from their enemies. As a rule a beaten stag blunders on as far as his strength will let him, but a beaten hind is apt to turn back at the last.

A stag, and particularly an old stag, makes, as a rule, a desperate fight for his life, and it is then very dangerous to get too close to him. Hinds also will turn and butt, but they of course are not to be dreaded like stags. A stag at bay stands with his chin high in the air, like the noble beast he is, not with his nose



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on the ground like a bullock, as some artists are fond of representing him. His mouth, open while he was running, is shut when he is beat. A splendid sight he is in the clear brown water of the moorland streams, with a background of oak coppice or heather to set off his noble form and bearing, and the ring of baying hounds round him. He chooses, if he can, a spot where he can stand and the hounds must swim, and then woe betide the hound that comes within reach. Quick as lightning he rears up and plunges down, and if he misses him by an inch that hound may thank his stars, for the wound of a stag's horn is a very dangerous one. If a stag can get his back against a rock or other place inaccessible to hounds he can set any number at defiance; but if they can get all round him the question is simply how long his strength may last. If he should get into deep water, where he must swim, the hounds will get on his back and drown him; death in this case is to all appearance almost instantaneous, owing to the exhaustion of the deer. It need hardly be said that every effort is made to shorten the final scene as far as possible, and keep the hounds clear of the deer, both for his sake and their own. Occasionally a stag is lassoed, and so taken, but as a rule some one or two men go up to him in the water when his attention is

distracted by the hounds, and take him literally with finger and thumb. Like everything else, this is not very difficult when you know how to do it. The stag must of course be approached from behind, as it would be certain death to attack him in front. His horns must be seized *when his head is laid back* and jammed down on to his shoulders. He is then powerless, and may be dragged ashore if there be men enough for the work, or thrown and stabbed to the heart there and then. But if a man catch hold of his horns when his head is thrown forward, as when threatening a hound, he will find himself sent flying away heels over head. The strength in a stag's neck is enormous, and a very old stag has been seen to hurl two strong men, who handled him injudiciously, far in front of him. It is rare for men to be hurt by a stag, though two men were roughly handled by a very savage one in 1883. In October of 1885 the hounds broke away after one of the park stags at St. Audries, and set him up against the park palings. The whip galloped up and got them away, and the stag at once charged him and drove one antler deep into his horse's chest. Had it not been that he drove his forehead against the man's knee, the brute would probably have killed both. As it was the horse was unfit for work for a month. This stag was

known to be very vicious, and killed a valuable brood mare in the park shortly after. He was a *stag*, be it observed, not a fallow buck. Hounds take not the least notice of fallow deer, and will carry the line of a stag right through a herd of them.

Hinds give no trouble at all of this kind, and have been pulled down by a single hound; though here again hounds are kept, if possible, from touching them. In any case, being almost invariably killed in water, they are drowned. It is remarkable to observe the difference between hounds in their handling of deer. Some will have a hind down in a moment unaided; others will not attempt to touch even a calf. A hound has been known to run up to a calf in the middle of a field and simply stand and bay it. Mr. Bisset records the fact that a yearling hind and a hound were found lying together in a road comfortably curled up in perfect amity. On the opening day of the season of 1884, the hottest hunting day on record, a single hound drove a stag to water and lay down by him there, both utterly exhausted from the heat. The hound recovered himself first, drove the stag out, and continued the chase. As a rule, however, hounds do not hesitate long about tackling a hind or young male deer, and, if many hinds have been killed in the

winter, they are apt to become overbold when they come to tackle the stags. Mr. Bisset never lost a hound killed by a stag, though he had a certain number injured; but the present master lost one if not two in 1881, and no fewer than five in 1882. In the season of 1885 a stag turned to bay in the doorway of an outhouse and no doubt thought himself unassailable, but the hounds went straight at him and pulled him out like terriers drawing a badger—a thing quite unprecedented, and not it is to be hoped to be repeated. But indeed hounds are apt to develop a marvellous contempt for their game; an old hound has been seen to catch a view of a stag before the rest of the pack, go right up to him and try to head him, as a sheep-dog would.

The odd places in which deer have been killed are many and various. More than one has jumped on to the roof of a house lying under a hill and thence set all at defiance. Once one managed in this way to get into a first-floor bedroom. But, as we have said, deer generally die in water, and the most troublesome form of water is the sea. Deer swim with marvellous ease and buoyancy, and will go out many miles to sea: some of the best runs on record have ended in the Bristol Channel. This, however, is very troublesome: the deer must be taken if possible when they go to sea,

or they will go there every time they are pursued. So a boat has to be procured, the deer captured, blind-folded, and taken to the shore, whether fit or unfit to kill, to scare them from taking to it again. Not unfrequently the deer beat the boat; sometimes they beat the right boat and are captured by some Channel craft. One deer so captured off Porlock was carried alive to Appledore, where the Receiver of Wreck (!) declined to allow her to be sent anywhere without the permission of the master. Mr. Bisset thus recovered her and turned her out once more. Hounds often follow the deer a long distance out to sea, and on a fine autumn day it is a very pretty sight to see deer and pack swimming in the blue water some hundred feet below, little specks amid the glorious scenery of cliff and sea and mountain. But it is a very doubtful pleasure to wait in a westerly gale on a bitter January day watching a hind till the boat, sent for from three or four miles away, appears on the scene. Still less pleasant is it to scramble up and down perpendicular cliffs, where hounds and even deer find themselves occasionally on ledges whence they cannot move. Deer have frequently turned the cliffs to good account, and made a practice of standing on the edge of a precipice where men dared not let the hounds

approach them. Sometimes they have been driven headlong over great heights with too often one hound or more to share in their death. Marvellous as it may seem, hounds and deer have so fallen a height of fifty feet and landed below uninjured. Thus the pack is in constant peril from antler, cliff, and sea. The cliffs being wooded, it is not always possible to stop them, and so more than a few gallant hounds have perished. At sea they will sometimes overtake a deer and drown it, but here again they have been the victims. Mr. Bisset gives a piteous account of one hound so lost, when several of the pack had gone to sea after a hind. "For some time it looked very doubtful whether any of them would get back, and when at last they did they were in some places unable to get out of the water on account of the precipitousness of the rocks; and where they could be got at and pulled out they were unable to stand, and had to be hand-rubbed and carried to the path above. A boat arrived and was sent round the rocks to pick up stragglers, and three were found and saved that would otherwise have perished. One, a most promising hound of last year's entry, and one of the last to leave the hind, never returned to shore. Though the sea was quite smooth he was observed for a long time struggling, evidently

thoroughly exhausted, and meeting more of the strong current than the others; but still he kept his head above water, and there seemed to be yet a chance of saving him if the boat should arrive soon. But on hearing the horn once or twice he seemed, poor creature, anxious to obey the summons, and his last effort apparently sealed his doom and deprived him of the last remnant of that life which was till now hanging by a thread—a few more vain struggles and ‘Chanticleer’ was no more; nothing but a lifeless body floating to westward with the ebbing tide.” There were tears on the beach that day over “Chanticleer,” and who shall say they were foolish tears? It is true that once or twice a man has swum out to a deer, but not a mile from the shore on a November day; only a gallant hound would do this.

And here it may not be out of place to say a few words about the hounds generally. Mr. Bisset early made up his mind to have none but big hounds in the pack; hounds, that is to say, from twenty-five inches upwards. In this decision he was probably influenced by the tradition of the old pack, but not less by the necessity of having hounds big enough to stride over the high heather that covers so many parts of Exmoor. The pack is kept up by drafts from all the kennels in

the United Kingdom, and this is sometimes mentioned as a reproach against it. But as was said by a recent writer in *Baily's Magazine*, many a hound is drafted from the best kennels merely because he is a beautiful giant; and most of these find their way to the Devon and Somerset. Some say that smaller hounds would go faster, and possibly, over an enclosed country, they would; but over the Forest the writer is inclined to doubt it—from experience of foxhounds on the moor, very much inclined to doubt it. In any case, when there is a scent (and with a deer there generally is, even on days when foxhounds cannot run a yard), they go fast enough to please those who have to follow them; and it would be regretted by all were those great hounds, all the more imposing for their unrounded ears, to be supplanted by a smaller pack.

As a rule the staghounds run mute, or nearly so, over the open; but there is always more music in winter than in the hot autumn, and on some days they speak as merrily as harriers. It may be mentioned here, speaking of harriers, that the staghounds in the course of a run once crossed a pack of them in full cry, and, charging them in flank at best pace, hurled the poor little things sprawling in all directions. Of the long-drawn file in which the staghounds usually

run, and the cause thereof, mention has already been made, but it is not invariable. On one occasion, for instance, the pack was laid on a hind that had been gone half an hour (the field numbered three on this occasion), and raced away with an extraordinary scent in compact order just as when they first hit the line. Not one of the sixteen couples could gain an inch on his neighbour, and so they strode away as if going by clockwork. A mile or two on the hind had jumped a gate, and every hound took it flying—a very pretty sight.

The long days, immense distances, severe weather, and water hunting tell very heavily on hounds, and but few outlast their fourth season, many succumbing even after the second. Great physical endurance is necessary in hounds, horses, and men to chase the wild deer to death, and the weak points of all three discover themselves only too readily under the test. Hounds are frequently running hard for four, five, and six hours; the huntsman frequently traverses fifty, sixty, and seventy miles in the course of a day, sometimes, though not of course every day, not much under a hundred. On September 10, 1883, hounds started at 8 A.M. from the kennels to meet at Haddon, fourteen miles away. They drew those enormous

covers, in pouring rain, till 5.30 P.M., finding nothing but hinds and young deer up to that time, when four stags jumped up together. The pack was laid on one and ran hard down the valley of the Exe till they were stopped at 8 P.M., through want of light, to kill the deer that was known to be dead beat close before them. Twenty-six miles to go home, and kennels not reached till midnight. In February of the next year they left the kennels at 7.30, and killed their deer at 7 P.M., when the tufters had been running seven hours and the pack about an hour less, continually changing deer. They reached kennels a little after 9 P.M., hounds, horses, and men all about dead beat. The latest time at which the pack is recorded to have returned to kennels is 2.30 A.M., after running a deer from Haddon to the Quantocks.

The huntsman and whip have of course two horses apiece every day, and could often find work for a third during the hind-hunting season. It is the rule rather than the exception to get wet when hind-hunting; and when a westerly gale is tearing over the high ground unchecked straight from the Atlantic it is often, literally, hard to avoid being blown off one's horse. Yet hunting is never given up except for fog and frost, and the deer will run dead up wind in the teeth of the fiercest

gale, leaving a rare scent behind them. So also hounds will run desperately hard in three inches of snow, when crossing a patch of deep ground on a horse becomes a very ticklish matter. It needs a strong man to stand the severe weather and hard work during the hind-hunting season, but Arthur Heal has kept on at it for thirty years as whip and huntsman, and will still ride away from any one on the moor. In the old days the name of Joe Faulkner was celebrated in the country as the best huntsman ever known with the staghounds; but though poor Joe, if he could rise from his grave, would probably dispute the point (for he was a bibulous little man with the temper of a fiend), men are now inclined to give the palm to Arthur. It is true that Joe never had so much practice as Arthur, but at the same time he had fewer difficulties from fresh deer to cope with. Experience, knowledge of the country and the deer, are the reasons generally assigned to account for Arthur's superiority, but these give place to his quickness, and above all to his patience. Those who wish to see him and the staghounds at their best should go out hind-hunting, for in spite of all drawbacks of weather and fresh deer, hind-hunting is at present the finest sport on Exmoor.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHASE OF THE HIND.

THE great difference between hind-hunting and stag-hunting is that any hind from three years old and upwards is a fit hind to be run. Hence there are no such difficulties in the way of harbouring as with stags, there being generally some one living near the covers who can say where there is the best chance of finding some deer, or better still a single hind. It is in the winter that the gregarious propensities of deer are really brought home to one, for it is rare to move less than half-a-dozen or a dozen deer in the course of a day's hind-hunting. In fact the only deer that can be depended on to be alone are the sick or broken-legged, of which last, owing to wire fences and in some instances foul play, there are generally two or three, if not more, killed every year. These poor creatures are always driven away by their brethren, who will have nothing to say to them. Shakespeare's "poor seques-

tered stag, that from the hunter's aim had ta'en some hurt," and came down alone to "soil," is a strictly accurate picture as to his solitude and refuge to the water, though the "big round tears" are of course a fanciful error.

The great difficulty of hind-hunting has always been the constant liability to change deer, and this difficulty has during the last ten years been enormously increased by the numbers of the herd. Mr. Bisset once found himself hunting a compact body of forty-four, and the writer has seen hounds divide into four parts after four herds of from fifteen to twenty deer apiece. It is heart-breaking work, after running a hind hard for an hour or more, to find the pack going away in view after a fresh one, or for that matter after a fresh dozen. Sometimes it is only possible when three or four hinds have been run to a standstill to get eight or ten couple of hounds together and kill one of them. Towards the end of December the deer leave the covers, and may be seen in great numbers on Dunkery Hill, though why they should choose that most exposed spot at that most inclement season is a mystery.

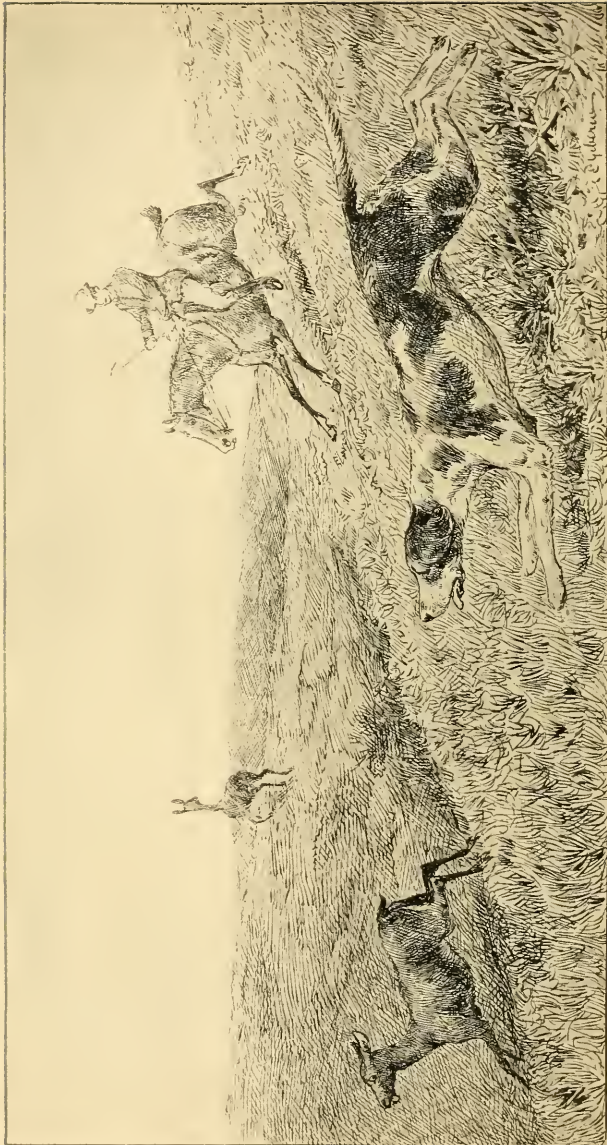
The hounds meet at 10 A.M. throughout the short days from November to February, to gain time enough (though often it is not enough) for a chance of killing

a deer. The field rarely consists of more than a dozen persons, frequently of less than half that number, but these are all of the right sort, very much unlike the hundreds that appear in the autumn. The following account of a run that took place a year ago may give the reader some notion of a day's hind-hunting.

Time, 11 A.M. on the 9th of February. Place, "Two Gates" on Brendon Common, that is to say at the gate (formerly a double gate) in the fence that divides the North Forest from Brendon Common, and the county of Devon from the county of Somerset, on the Queen's inhospitable highway between Simonsbath and Lynton. Present, the master and another from his quarters, Arthur Heal and seventeen couple of hounds, the whip, two second horsemen, each riding one horse and leading another, and the local shepherd. Not a soul more seems to be coming, so as the wind is blowing somewhat keenly from the west a move is soon made to the shepherd's cottage in the "Doone" Valley, as the most insignificant of the combes running off the common has been since the last ten years re-named. Here we meet the field, six in number, two ladies from Glenthorne, two brothers from two different districts, both fourteen miles away, a veteran who from love of deer-hunting forsook his native York-

shire for Exmoor twenty years ago, and Mr. Nicholas Snow. The shepherd has told us that there is a herd of about a dozen deer of all kinds lying in the "wet ground" on Brendon Common (they always do lie on the "wet ground" somewhere), so we shall want only a few tufters to single out a good hind. Arthur shuts up the pack in an outhouse adjoining the cottage, and having exchanged a few last words with the shepherd, opens the door with a "Stand back all of ye," and looks at the sea of eager upturned faces. "Barrister," he says, and the old hound who is waiting close by the door elbows his way out in the matter-of-fact way of an old hand. "Restless, little bitch—back puppy—Romulus," Arthur continues, and a pair of bright eyes hurry out of the gloom, and "little" Restless slips out, while "Romulus" hustles a noisy puppy aside and bounds over the backs of the foremost. "Challenger" is then taken, and the door is shut amid the howls of the disappointed. The whip gallops off into the next county, a few hundred yards distant, the field go across Badgworthy Water and wait to look out for any deer that may come that way, and the master with his companion and the huntsman move off in the opposite direction towards the wet ground. Ten minutes or so bring us in sight of the deer lying down com-

fortably on the sheltered side of the combe; we are moving dead up wind, so they do not perceive our presence till we and hounds are quite close. Then up jumps a hind and yearling, then a stag; and with a yell the tufters catch a view, and away the herd goes, hinds leading, stags in rear, the tufters racing, but soon dropping a little back, for they cannot go as fast as a deer. Now you can see the difference in the action and appearance of hinds and male deer. You can only see two of the dozen that have horns, but still the rest are not all hinds. Note that one behind the leading hind, his neck is shorter and thicker than hers, and he carries his head back as if he had the finest pair of horns in the world on them. Now look at the old stag that is last of all, his action is higher than the hinds and he seems to go more clumsily. Look, and look your last, for now we are on the wet ground, and you must mind your ways or you will go wrong. Pull up to a trot when you see red grass ahead, for the ground where it grows is never very sound. It is unpleasant work for the inexperienced this dodging round turf-pits and splashing through soft places, but the three now at it are accustomed to it. Very soon hounds and deer have disappeared before us, but when we emerge, after a mile or more of wading



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through the bog, on to the road we can see them running below and turning back towards the two gates where we met. Here they come up, a stag and hind, close by the fence, not far apart, but still separate, with a hound hard after each. "Romulus" is stopped from the stag and transferred to the line of the hind with "Barrister." The stag not knowing of the change hurries on full speed, and Arthur, looking at him, critically remarks, "He couldn't go on much longer at that pace with the old hound so close to him." But we are not concerned with stags now, and can let this flurried old gentleman make his way to the water in peace. What we now want are the rest of the tufters. Here come two more hinds and a male deer, but no hounds; then a single hind with "Restless" in hot pursuit; and a little to the right a yearling, evidently distressed, with "Challenger" running in view. Oh, Challenger, Challenger, you hoary-muzzled old sinner! you, who have been spared to your sixth season, know perfectly well that is a yearling you are hunting, and that you have no business to hunt yearlings. The truth is you were hoping to pull down that little thing in the next stream and have a venison feast. But it won't do. The old hound is stopped, and "Restless" also; and hearing the horn as Arthur gallops after

the leading tufters they make off to him, and catching the line race away again best pace. Now we must get on after Arthur ourselves, or he will have the pack out and laid on before we reach him. The ground is sticky, some would call it boggy, but the old man is galloping hard, and getting on to firmer ground scuttles away harder than before. The reason is apparent; if he do not reach the bottom of the hill before the tufters he will not be able to stop them, and there is no one of those on whom we relied to do this for us in sight. Gallop as he may, "Barrister" and "Romulus" are not to be caught; and though Arthur finishes brilliantly down a place where most men would sooner walk, they beat him by a short head. No chance to catch them now, and the master at once turns for the Doone Valley close by to get the pack. But then, blessed sight! appears suddenly one of the two sporting brothers straight in front of the two hounds; he cannot see them under the hill, but some unaccountable instinct has brought him there in the nick of time. "Below 'ee, sir, below 'ee," shouts Arthur; and though our friend has not heard a word he gallops down, and catching sight of "Barrister" is ahead of him in no time. "Barrister" promptly takes the hint and sits down, inwardly hoping that he will presently be left alone, when he

will go on as if nothing had happened. But in two minutes Arthur too is up to him, and the hound knows all is right. "Hold hard, old man," says Arthur, for "hold hard" is Arthur's word for stopping hounds, and many of them will obey it even when enforcement thereof is impossible—across a valley for instance—for they are wise enough to know that a fresh deer will take longer to kill than a tired one, and have known a deer of the wrong kind saved out of their very jaws. The majority of the hounds are not very hard to stop, unless they are close to a deer, but some are hardly to be stopped by Arthur himself. It must be very bewildering for them to hear "ware stag" one day and "ware hind" the next, but somehow they seem to understand it, and it is only after being stopped a dozen times in quick succession that they sometimes grow disgusted and decline to draw for a fresh deer.

But here is the master galloping up with the pack and the remainder of the small field after him, having hardly lost five minutes. Arthur draws hounds across the line: they feather for a moment and dash away best pace, "Telegram" striding away at their head, but with much ado to keep his place. In three hundred yards we meet the whip, who having viewed the hind, was on the spot in case the tufters should give us the

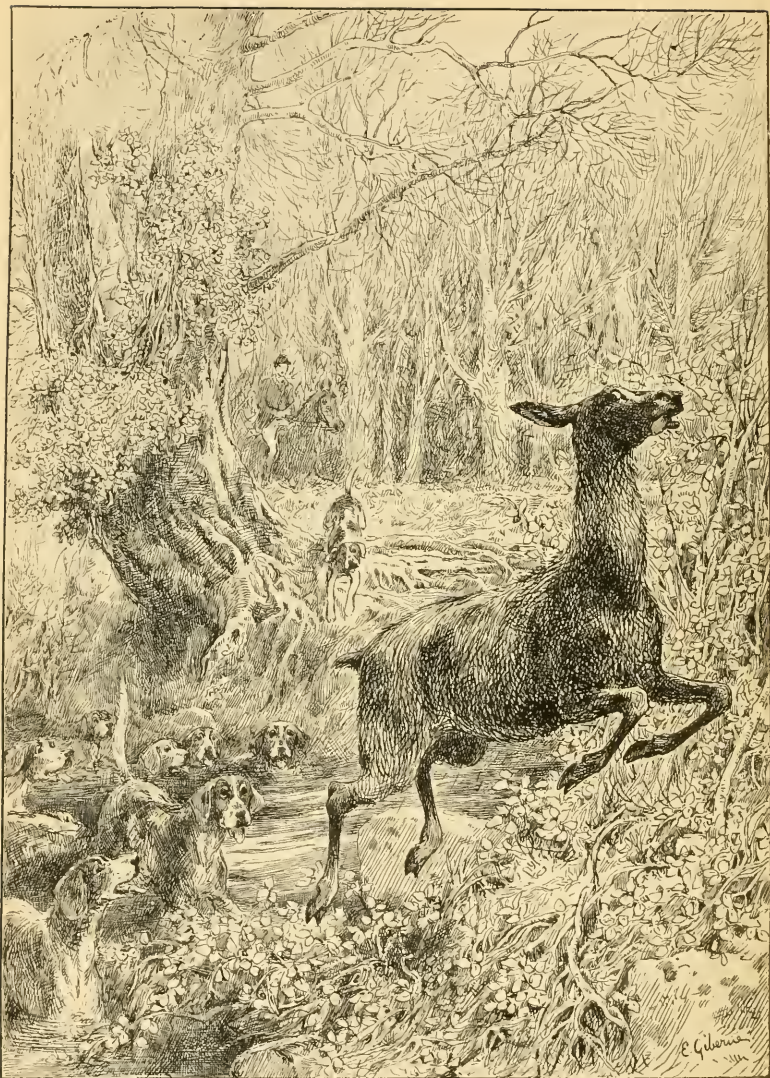
slip. But we have no time to think how he managed to get there soon enough, nor does he care to say more than that it is a pretty good hind, but not an extraordinary big one. Away through the tall heather and tangled grass of the "Deer Park," over the wet ground at the top, with a murmured thanksgiving when it is past; a faster gallop over firm ground beyond, not slackened down the steep hill, to the first stream we cross—Chalk Water. Arthur is across it first, but the rest are not many yards behind, and all on good terms with the pack. A scramble through wet ground again, then again a return to sound turf under a friendly fence; still on over the yellow grass of the edge of the King's Allotment, and again through the tall heather of Porlock Common and into the oak coppice of the deep combe called the Shilletts. We gallop along the top with hounds still running hard below us; then suddenly a crash of music, and the hind, or *a* hind, comes up in view to the common once more. Still straight on pointing for Horner, and after such a race Arthur looks hard up and down a stream (Nutscale Water) which we are now approaching. No! She has turned back in the direction from which we have come, and is not bound for Horner. Never mind, it will do as well to kill her at Badgworthy. Alas, for

the vanity of human wishes! We become suddenly aware that hounds are not running so fast as they were; and that we may be at no loss for a reason, a storm of sleet, backed by a heavy squall, sweeps into our faces, almost blinding us. "I depended it would come," murmurs Arthur, as he pulls up to a trot and watches the hounds now puzzling the line slowly over the fence that divides the sound heather of Porlock Common from the wet ground where Chalk Water has its source. Still they can carry it on to the stream itself, where at last they are brought to a real check. There is a floodgate a little above, but Arthur is for some reason disposed to cast down. "Best make it good upward first," observes one of the field to himself, but Arthur casts steadily down. A little way down there is a hurdle across the stream with a bank fence running down to it; it is nothing to stop a deer, and some hounds have already cast down below it, but "Bar-rister" is very busy by the fence, and though he cannot acknowledge the scent he will not leave the spot. Arthur calls the rest back and casts up under the fence, and presently they hit the line, but can hardly hunt it; so they hold it patiently on, unravelling two or three doubles over the rank yellow grass, and at last bring it fairly down once more to Badgworthy

Water, a mile above the place where they first crossed it. We have taken the opportunity to change horses during the slow hunting, but there seems little prospect of our wanting them. Still, patience. After casting down some little way they hit the line out, and carry it slowly up a combe towards the Deer Park. Another hundred yards of slow hunting, and then a loud tally proclaims a fresh find. In a moment the pack is racing once more after our new-found hind, away on almost the same line as in the morning, to the Shilletts. A mile before reaching it, however, the old hounds cease of a sudden to run with any spirit. Arthur notes the fact and shakes his head. "There is more than one deer in front of them," he says; "I can tell that by the hounds;" and looking forward we catch sight of our hind now in company with two stags. A curse on all stags rises to the lips of every man, presently turned into a sigh of relief as two pair of antlers are seen disappearing on the sky line, and a dark body turning away from them. But hounds have divided before we can catch them, and those after the stags are only caught by taking advantage of a lucky turn. By the time we have got them together again the horses of the field proper are about beat. Mr. Snow left us when we fresh found; he has enough work for his

horses hunting with his own hounds. The two brothers reluctantly turn their heads homewards; the one towards Dulverton, the other towards Minehead. The two wonderful ponies from Glenthorne have for once in a way had enough, though their two riders, rarely absent from the end even of the longest run, are keen as ever. The veteran trots gently along the top of the hill, and we who have second horses alone plunge into the wooded valley after the hounds. Small blame to the rest if they cannot follow us after two such bursts as we have had. Our hind has taken advantage of the shilley ground to double about a good deal, and it is only after much twisting and turning that the line is finally carried to the stream at the bottom, some way down the valley. Here, as we are casting down, there comes suddenly from a little way below us a frantic yell of "Down the water, Arthur!" in broadest Devon. It is the sporting farmer of Porlock who, always on the look out for hounds, has heard them in the bottom, and riding up to meet us has viewed our hind in the water. Arthur lifts the pack and hits the line, and so the pack runs slowly (for another squall is on us) across a deep combe and over a broad-shouldered hill, carpeted with gorse, into the Horner covers. Now or never we shall kill her in Horner Water, where

so many deer have perished. But what is this? Hounds are divided, and bring two lines down to the water about eighty yards apart. Arthur's eyes are on the ground. "Doubling toad," he says, "she's come down here and doubled back, and come down again higher up. These be the tail hounds here; they others have cast themselves forward and hit her beyond." He trots quickly up to "they others," but has hardly reached them when the sporting farmer, who is standing at the spot which Arthur has just left, gives a stentorian tally. The hind has just come down the water in front of him, screened from the sight of all others by the thick growth on the bank, but detected through an opening by his keen eye. The pack is at her in a moment. We have got her at last. Not a bit. She bounds up the precipitous hill on the other side, seemingly as fresh as paint, and disappears. The farmer is half inclined to fear he has tallied a fresh hind, and as we scramble up after the hounds we too are not without a similar dread. At the top we find the whip (Lord knows how he got there!) in a state of feverish anxiety. "Another hind came up not two minutes ago," he says, "close where this one passed. 'Tis a chance now if they don't change." So on again, not without misgiving, for another mile through thick



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gorse and plantation, and on to the boulders and heather of Dunkery. "They haven't changed," says Arthur exultingly, for "Telegram," who has led throughout, has now given place to "Druid;" the old hounds are striding away in front, and the end is at hand. "Tally ho!" They have caught a view, but she turns down into the short plantations below us, and in the thicket she has by sheer weight the advantage of the hounds. And now every hound is speaking as the pack struggles mad with impatience through the tangled underwood. She is heading back for Horner, but will never reach it. A road runs down through the middle of the plantation with a deep watercourse alongside. We push on as we hear them approaching it, and trot down to meet them as they cross. The chorus swells louder and louder, and suddenly a brown body crashes with the strength of despair through the thicket into the watercourse, blunders down to the bottom, and staggers down the stream. In a moment the opening is filled with old "Druid's" white body, "Brusher" and "Barrister" tumble over him to the bottom, the rest over them, and in ten seconds more the hind, drowned and dead but unbitten, is hauled out from the middle of them, the water having swept the leading hounds over her

and past her. A strange exultant smile lights up the faces of the little group on the road, a smile such as men wear only amid the maddening clamour of baying hounds. The excitement finds vent in loud "Who-hoops!" and Arthur proclaims his triumph through the shrill notes of the horn; but voices and horn are alike inaudible as the carcass is solemnly borne across the road into a field for the final obsequies. The fatal stab to the heart was dealt as soon as our hind was taken, and now the hounds must be given their portion. "Look at that!" exclaims the sporting farmer as the body is turned over and the legs are seen standing stark and stiff in the air. "Ay, properly runned up, poor thing," answers Arthur, who is busy anatomising. "Brisher," he adds, suddenly turning round, "Brisher, bother your old head, you'm always after the venison." And Brusher, who has stolen forward and begun licking the haunch, with a specious appearance of the most innocent intentions, beats a hasty retreat, not without a taste of whipcord. Then the hounds' portion is made over to them and speedily demolished, and Arthur proceeds to look after his own—namely, the head—which is deftly severed, and promptly seized, but as promptly dropped, by an adventurous puppy, under an awful reproach of "Rooman,

Rooman, what be you 'bout?" The venison is then made over to a farmer, who undertakes to send it to Holnicote for distribution; for though the deer by right belongs absolutely to the master, custom has deprived him of all save the heads of stags, and the slots (which are always distributed if there is anybody that wishes for one) of both stags and hinds. The huntsman's perquisites are the heads of the hinds and the hides and inwards of all deer; but here again custom steps in, for the liver is shared by the farmers at the death. The venison is distributed among the farmers of the district wherein the deer was found, the apportionment being generally undertaken by one of themselves. The master never sees a bit of venison from year's end to year's end.

The obsequies are soon over, and we move homewards, though not without a pressing invitation from the most hospitable of farmers to "come into my place and take something for yourselves and your horses." But we are little more than seven miles from home, and loth to increase the distance to nine, so the good fellow, who has often been our host before now, rather reluctantly wishes us "Good night;" and as we wend our way through the dark cover towards Cloutsham there arises the momentous question, "Did we change hinds, or have we been hunting the same deer all day?"

Arthur is appealed to, and is sure he can't tell. "It might have been the same hind, but it might have been a fresh hind we brought away from Shilletts. If 'twas the same hind, 'twas a wonderful strong hind, for they was racing her hard for more than an hour before scent grew weak, and they can't have been running much less than four or five hours." Then the watches are brought out and the exact time given. Found the herd at 11.15, laid on the pack at 12, killed at 4.15. "Ay, I'll be bound 'twas all that; but I've known hinds stand as long as that. Some of these hinds will go on most so long as they've a mind to. We was lucky with these storms to kill her as 'twas. I wouldn't say 'twas not the same hind. She was properly bate when we killed her, poor thing."

Poor thing! The words sound strangely in the mouth of the man who has done more than any one else to do the "poor thing" to death; but they are not hypocritically spoken. We are silent for a few minutes, and remember that all sport is cruel. But still we should be terribly depressed if our hind had beaten us; and as it is, wet and tired though we be, we are going home joyful. Is it simply because we have killed something, which is supposed to be the daily object of all true Englishmen? Or is it that, in spite of all her wiles and stratagems, we have fairly driven by honest

hard work the pluckiest of wild animals to the end of her resources, and only killed her not to disappoint the hounds? Neither of these two explanations is of itself satisfactory. All we know is that on the next hunting day we shall be galloping away with the same fierce enjoyment at the beginning, and walking home (if we kill) with the same feelings of mingled triumph and remorse. I fear if Ferdinand had been an Englishman, Ariel might have led him by the cry of hounds.

But the silence is broken, as we emerge from the cover once more on to the open common, by Arthur's warning to the whip that one deer or more is very likely to have crossed our path, and that we must take care not to let the hounds break away from us. Almost as he speaks they make a sudden dash to one side, but are at once stopped. "Now," says Arthur reproachfully, "haven't you had running enough?" This naturally brings up the question, How far have we run to-day? No one can tell, but all are agreed that the distance cannot be much less than from thirty to thirty-five miles. The furthest points that our hind touched are eleven miles apart as the crow flies, and we have traversed two-thirds of the distance three times over, though never on quite the same ground. "But the hounds," adds Arthur, always jealous for his darlings, "have been a deal further than we have, poor things;

and see how many times we run all so far in and out of the covers, and don't kill our hind at the end." Further, it must be remembered that the crow has a great advantage in a hilly country, being able to fly over steep combs and deep valleys, where we must go down one side and up the other, a fact which must always be borne in mind in reckoning distances by the map, * which casually omits a range of hills here and an odd half-mile there with delightful simplicity. For the present, however, we busy ourselves with historical parallels, which are not exhausted by the time we reach Exford village. "Have 'ee killed the deer?" comes a voice, male or female, from every doorway. "Pretty good sport, my lord?" inquires a farmer who passes us on a pony. (No true native of the West ever ventures to hope your sport has been better than pretty good.) And so we pass through the running fire of questions to the house which Mr. Bisset made the master's residence at Exford. "Good night, Arthur." "Wish you good night, gentlemen." We watch them for a minute till the last hound is out of sight, and then human nature, recalled to itself by the aspect of a blazing fire, breaks out with, "Dinner in half-an-hour, and the bootjack at once."

* Ordnance survey of 1803.

APPENDIX A.

[*The accounts of the following runs are taken, with some abridgment, from the journals of Mr. Bisset and Lord Ebrington.*]

September 28th, HADDON.—The old stag had been famously har- 1855.
boured with another by Blackmore in Huscombe Wood. The
tufters went in, and in one minute or less spoke; and in a little
more time there broke from the cover in the grandest style one of
the finest stags that ever were seen. Upon being viewed across
Hartford Cleeve the pack was laid on at 12.50. Running through
Haddon Wood, the deer crossed through Bury Castle and Pixey
Copse, thence across Perry Meadows to New Bridge, and up through
Ellas Wood; across Combe and Gilmore to the Red Deer and on to
Spurway Mill. Here he was viewed about half a mile ahead in the
Iron Mill water. Upon reaching the Exe he turned up stream by
Oakford and Heightley (nearly two miles in the water) to Grant's,
whence he turned up across the turnpike road to High Cross by
Combe Head; where was a long check, scent becoming bad and
uncertain. Hit it off again over Birch Down to Morebath village,
where another long check; scarcely able to hunt now at all. Still
persevered in hopes of fresh finding him in Haddon, which he was
now evidently making for; went on over Birchleigh to South
Haddon, where nearly all the field pulled up, looking upon Haddon
as fatal to their sport. Two or three hounds carried the line, though
barely able to hold it, to Hadbarrow, under which our stag had been
viewed by Blackmore. Getting the body of the pack together, but
off the line again across the Mill path, and with much fresher scent,
went across the Cleeve to the river at a good pace; time now nearly

6 p.m., and beginning to get dusk. Tried all down the Haddeo, without success; only one stout heart left on reaching Clammer, who was ready to bet any money the stag was then between the hounds and Bury. Tried on, and had almost tried all the ground, when a slight whimper showed that something was up, and in another second the whole pack was in full chorus, and we had fresh found our deer. It was now dark, but there was no chance of the deer leaving the water, so we persevered. The stag, skirting a bit of Haddon Wood on the way, beat the water to Hartford, then turning down again the hounds hunted him backward and forward, he frequently foiling them and making us fearful each time would be the last of it. Finally at Clammer Water hounds came to a check, and we feared we had hopelessly lost him. The hounds, however, found him in the deep weir below, from which after turning twice or thrice at them he started upward, and beating the water, hounds could hardly hunt him. Dr. Collyns' horn in the distance was heard up the valley, and the pack was taken to him. The deer was said to have been viewed by James Gage at the ford into Haddon under Webber's Copse, two miles from where the hounds had lost him. Perfectly incredible. Tried up the water to the Bridge; no find; all sure it was perfectly impossible for the deer to have come the distance in the time. Old Gage was confident, and the water was tried again; and within twenty yards of the ford the stag was again fresh found under some bushes in the river. Hounds now never left him again; ran him down to Clammer, and killed him there by candlelight at 7.50. Seven hours from the lay on; the last hour and half entirely in the water and dark. Eight only at the finish.

1856. *October 14th*, CLOUTSHAM.—No stag has been yet killed on the Forest, so though rather late in the season it was advisable if one could be found to run him, and if possible kill him. Found in Hollowcombe at once and laid on the pack on the ridge opposite

Cloutsham Ball. Ran him round the south side of Dunkery, and over the Common to Larkbarrow and the North Forest. Here the stag was seen to start a hind and lie fast. The pack ran the hind over Badgworthy and Brendon Commons to water under Brendon Church. (Very fast to this point. Sixty-five minutes from the lay on.) From this she beat down the water nearly to Watersmeet, and then turned up over the Common to Countisbury. The hounds ran her down to the sea and then round the cliffs for some time, till finding them drawing too closely round her in some furze where she lay fast, she jumped up in the middle of them, went over the cliffs, and was smashed to pieces. Four hounds which were on her haunches were pulled over the edge, but miraculously saved themselves by some ledge, a few feet from the top. This was decidedly the fastest thing of the season.

May 4th, SLOWLY WOOD.—Speedily found a hind, which contrary 1857. to custom broke out over the top of the hill for Longwood. Laid on the pack and ran into Longwood, where a long check among some thousand sheep. News was brought that the deer had been viewed half an hour before going towards Avill Wood. Hit off the line by the new stone fence and carried on a cold scent over the heath to the oak coppice, where they fresh found her. Skirting the western side of Blackhill she went through Slowly down the water into Langridge Wood; then up by the slate quarries and Treborough Church, over Brendon Hill, through Cornish's farm, and across Holworthy Bottom, into Westhill Wood. Down the water, through Hartford Cleeve into Haddon, but almost immediately crossed the valley to Storridge, and kept on through Butter Ball and Swine's Cleeve to the Exe Valley; thence over Court Down to the Barle, all up the bottom from New Invention to Ashway Hat, and as daylight was beginning to wane and only two or three horses up it was thought advisable to stop the hounds on Ashway Side. A finer run

1857. could not have been wished for than that as far as Haddon, and it is doubtful if we changed there, for there was no appearance of a change. If the same deer went to the end she was a wonderful creature.

August 24th, SANDYWAY.—No stag in Long Wood, so went straight to Badgworthy. Found a single hind, laid on, and away to the Lynton road and Farley Bottom and into the brake. Here hung for some time in cover. Hind viewed in a cornfield on top; doubled back into cover and away to Badgworthy, and turned towards the Warren. Here the hind, apparently much distressed, jumped up under the fence, and made to the Exe; down the combe, turned to the right by the Gallon House and Sheardon Hutch towards Long Wood, leaving Sandyway on the left. Then turned over Twitchen Common again into the bottom by Sandyway, and on by Willingford Water to Hawkridge. Last seen crossing Jekyll's enclosures in the direction of North Barton. Not a soul with the hounds from the fresh find on the Warren.

September 4th, TWO GATES, BRENDON COMMON.—Found a single hind under Tomshill. Went away over Pinford Bog to the Lynton road; across the Chains by Exe Head to Mole's Chamber, turned to the right over Showsbarrow Castle by Challacombe to the Bray Covers. Beat up the water, and after crossing the next range of covers (Bratton) was finally taken in a small stream at Stoke Rivers, about four miles from Barnstaple. Only four or five at the end.

September 18th, CLOUTSHAM.—Bad slotting, hot day, and long uncertain draw. Found a stag at 1.30—a big 'un—who took a turn over the hill, but almost immediately afterwards returned into cover and started another in his place. This cunning old file was seen to turn the other out and deliberately lie down in the very spot from which he had roused him; and though the other had moved away towards the Forest, and a run was now a certainty, it was with some

reluctance that those who had witnessed this curious but not un-1857. frequent occurrence in the life of a stag, could tear themselves away from scrutinising as closely as glasses would allow the movements of this extremely independent old gentleman under the broom bush, while he looked at us across the valley with apparent indifference and contempt. Meanwhile the other stag had gone away by Stoke Church. Pack laid on at 1.45. Away up Long Stream Combe to the Culbone road, on behind Larkbarrow over Oare Common to Badgworthy Water. Up the stream and hit the line the other side; up the combe to the Lynton road and into Farley Bottom. Up the stream a little way into Cheriton Combe. Here a check, and fresh found him; back over the Forest to Badgworthy Water, down under the wood, and finally took him at Malsmead. Time from lay on, three hours. Hoped to save him, but he had broken a blood-vessel. Head given to Mr. Knight.

October 9th, CLOUTSHAM.—Ran a deer (supposed a hind) from Parsonage furze in forty-five minutes to Badgworthy Wood, where he was taken and saved—a young male deer.

October 16th, LARKBARROW.—Found a herd of six or seven deer, and laid on a single tufter. After much hard riding singled out a hind and laid on by Buscombe. Ran over to the Lynton road and over Blackpits (nasty ground); then instead of going down Farley Bottom turned up over the Chains (still more nasty), and away as straight as a line. Crossed by Exehead through the enclosures to the Challacombe and Simonsbath road by Huxtable's house; came to a check at the small stream here joining the Barle, where a good half-hour was lost (the pack had overrun it a long way), till a holloa brought them back and put them straight again. Carried on the line across the road over awful ground to Mole's Chamber, leaving this a little on the left, crossed Showlsbarrow Castle and down the combe

1857. under Challacombe Church to Bray Water. Another check, and a holloa on the opposite hill. Cast down the water three miles without success, then up, and now the only thing to be thought of was the best way home, three hours having been occupied at this check. On the way the master took an unaccountable fancy to a little patch of gorse just above where the deer first came to the Bray. Tried it accordingly, and out came the hind. Now that we had found her, we wished we had not been in such luck. Our horses were beat, and it was too much of a good thing. Crossing the water she made straight for the moor; up to and along the north side of Showlsbarrow Castle, across the road, over Challacombe Common, by Pinkworthy Pond (terrible ground to ride over) to Cheriton, and over to Farley, across the Lynton road, leaving Scobhill to the left, and by Millslade into Brendon. It was now pitch dark. The hounds hunted up and down the water for some time, and the deer finally broke up through the covers by Brendon Church, where she saved herself. Hounds here lost her, and everyone was right glad of it.
1858. *April 16th*, HARTFORD.—Found six deer in Hartford Cleeve, ran into Haddon Wood and down to Bury, where fresh deer were started. Eventually a hind and calf went away to Brockhole Wood. After some delay got the pack on and hit the line into Upper Stockham Wood, across the road, through Stockham Plantation over Court Down and North Combe Farm to Loosehall Wood; through this, Baldneck, Marsh, and Ashweek Woods, touching the water under Shircombe Slade, and after crossing Mountsey, again under Brewer's Castle. Hence hunted her all up the water to Three Waters, a little above which the calf left her. The young one in great jeopardy for a time. The hind broke up over Ashway Ham and up the water under the Hat; a curious double through the cover, and then over Ashway Side and Winsford Hill (the hill all enveloped in fog) towards the Allotments. A check of some minutes; and finally hit the line over

Edbrooke's Farm and on to Redcleeve, down the water to the Stag's 1858. Head, then up over Kent's, above Daw's Wood and through Brock-hole Wood again to the Exe ; down the water, but a long check, till the deer broke out of the water under Baronsdown Lodge, and hounds hunted her up and down through Hele Wood and Exe Cleeve like a hare. Deer viewed up the water ; ran to the upper end of Stockham Wood. Fresh found in Broford Copse—nearly done ; down again through Stockham Wood into the water. One more splash in and out again, and a kill. Three hours and fifty minutes from the lay on.

April 21st, CLOUTSHAM.—One tufter found a hind and calf in Sweetworthy. Separated them going towards the Forest. Laid on the pack on the hind. Leaving Larkbarrow to the left, reached Badgworthy Wood *in exactly thirty minutes*. Crossed up through the short copse below the wood over Blackhill to the Lynton road, into Farley Bottom, turned up the water, along Cheriton ridge, across the Chains by Exehead, over Cornham Farm enclosures to the Challacombe road, then turning upwards over the common pointed for Challacombe, just short of which turned to the right for Chapman's Barrow as if for Brendon (time to this point, one hour and forty minutes), then sharp to the left as if again trying for the Bray covers, kept on between Parracombe and Woolhanger, leaving the former on the left for Martinhoe, and on to Woody Bay. Here the hounds fresh found their deer in the stunted oak coppice. Deer viewed, dead beat. One last effort and over Freeth Gap (about 400 feet) into the sea, and smashed to atoms, "Warrior" following. Time, two hours and twenty minutes, over a wild country, without a check from beginning to end. Distance from thirty-two to thirty-five miles. Heat awful ; pace tremendous. Nine men up (including master and whip), and nine couple of hounds. The calf joined the hind again on Porlock Common, left her on Blackhill, and was killed by three

1858. couple in Badgworthy Water—a male. A day of slaughter; the hind, her calf, a hound, a sheep, which went over the cliffs soon after the hind, and four horses.

September 14th, CULBONE.—Found a stag immediately. Ran him across to Larkbarrow; across Oare Common and Badgworthy into Farley Bottom, down the water to Ball's Pond (here a check; time so far an hour and a half); hit off the line again across the road from Ilford Bridges, ran him over the common above on the western side of the valley; again to water, and down the Lyn to Lynmouth and the sea, where he was taken.

October 22nd, HAWKRIDGE.—Found a single hind immediately on the south side of the ridge. Crossed the top of Buckminster Wood over Anstey Common to Liscombe Brake, Armour Wood, and Bere Farm, to Harraford Bridge, down the valley to Brushford, across by Llangollen, Rock, and Riphay, to the Exe. Thence over the hill by Combeshead, leaving Bampton to the left, pointing as if for the Exe again. However, scorned to go to water again, crossed the Batherham a little to the left of the Exeter Inn, and along the top of Cove Cliff. From this turned away to the left as if for Huntsham, but, leaving this to the right, to Dipper Down Copse near Shillingford. Scent up to this point very bad. In this copse, however, fresh found her, and she broke away towards Haynemoor Wood, leaving this to the right crossed the enclosures parallel to the turnpike road to Wiveliscombe, and broke from them at Petton Cross; went through the Chapel Yard to the stream below, where she was viewed and pulled over immediately. Time from the lay on, three hours and fifty-five minutes. A first-rate hunting run. Hounds did their work admirably.

November 9th, CLOUTSHAM.—Found a hind and yearling in Horner Wood. They went away unseen by Stoke Church, and tufters were

not stopped. Laid on the pack, and ran by Alderman's Barrow 1858. behind Larkbarrow to Oare Common. Here she was viewed with the tufters close to her in the first combe going down to Badgworthy Water; over Badgworthy to Brendon, along the head of the covers by Brendon Church to the water. Tried down to below Watersmeet, then up and fresh found her; then down again and up through the covers as if for Countisbury; but came down again to the water below Watersmeet, down the stream, and after a check fresh found her, and took her half a mile above Lynmouth. Two hours and a half from the lay on.

April 11th, HADDON.—Found several deer in Deer Park. After 1859. some hanging about the cover a single hind was driven over to the Exe. She was seen to be a Cheshire deer, but it was thought a burst would do her no harm and the pack a vast deal of good; no one dreaming she would ever leave the covers. Pack laid on at 4 p.m. Ran her straight through Exe Cleeve, over Heatheridge, North Combe enclosures, and Court Down to Loosehall Wood, and up the bottom under Highercombe; thence, crossing over Draydon, through Marsh Wood and Ashweek Wood to the Barle. Here beat the water for a few yards, and then turned up through Shircombe Slade, crossing North Moor along the head of Hindham enclosure, and finally out over Anstey Common; breaking the fence dividing that and Molland Common, on near the cottage by Lishell Court, and running parallel with the Danesbrook, passed midway between Molland Post and Willingford Water, and broke into the rough enclosures on the right, where the hind was run into in the open in front of Sandyway House. Scent was bad at first, but on getting on to Anstey Common they raced. One hour and twenty minutes from the lay on.

August 26th, CULBONE.—No deer in the Culbone covers, so trotted off to Larkbarrow. Five deer reported on the North Forest

1859. by the Warren. Roused them, and laid on three couple of tufters. After a scurry into Farley Bottom (some distance) one came back single. Laid on in Hoccombe, and in the next bottom fresh found him—a three-year-old with only one horn. However, it was too late to stop them now or think of anything else. Ran him towards Brendon, then turned round along the top of Blackhill, and down by the wood to Badgworthy Water. Up the small combe towards Oare, and up Oare Water as if for Culbone, then turning away to the right to Whitstones, ran into Shilletts, and down the bottom, immediately afterwards breaking the cover into Lucott enclosures. Here a short check among some sheep, and forward again down the Hawkcombe bottom towards Porlock; turned up over Leigh Hill into Horner, and brought him to bay in the Millstream. Up and down two or three times and a kill. Awfully hot. Down wind from the turn on Blackhill. Time, two hours and twenty-five minutes.

October 7th, SIMONSBATH.—Three deer on Prayway. Got the pack close to them on the Exe side, and laid on, driving them over the enclosures to the Gallon House, across the road, and to the Barle by Sheardon Hutch and up to Cow Castle. Here they separated, the youngest going over the common towards Withypool, with two or three hounds, which were stopped. The second deer went up the Barle to Simonsbath, with five hounds and Babbage.

The big stag had now got rid of his attendants, but he had still eight and a half couples of hounds to dispose of. He came back from Cow Castle by the Gallon House to the Exe, beating that stream all the way up to the Warren (hounds close to him), where he broke out for Badgworthy, crossing Hoccombe to the water, and down it to the Wood; then up over Blackhill and away by the enclosure above Millslade to Brendon; along the head of the covers on the right side of the Lyn, disdaining to come to water, and finally astonishing us all by going straight over the hill to Countisbury and

down towards the sea. Here he stood for some time on a precipice 1859. one hundred and fifty feet above the beach, then dropped on to a ledge twenty feet below whence there was no return, and finally went out over, and was of course killed.

Babbage and his lot ran the younger stag up the Barle and over Horsen and the deer park behind Emmett's, then back by Cornham and Exehead to Blackpits, when he was taken and at once released.

May 4th, JURY KENNEL.—Found a male deer and a hind in 1860. Westhill Wood, but could do nothing with them, so after some time went to Storridge Plantation, where found a single hind, which went through Padwell Plantation to the Exe Valley. A hind of such a sporting disposition was not to be dreamed of, and accordingly most of the field pronounced it a male deer. Laid on some time behind her at Barlynch Abbey. Ran up the bottom to Upper Stockham, from whence she doubled back along the head of the cover to Exe Cleeve, and down through Hele Wood to the drive; through Rook Wood, under the Park Farm enclosures, behind Ware and through Puzzlecombe towards Exe Bridge; leaving the bridge to the right broke up over the high ground towards Morebath, and down the valley to Dummet Water, following the stream till close to Bampton; leaving the town to the right crossed to the Batherham and Ford Mill, and up over the hill. Here a check in the road. (Having got thus far with what was so confidently asserted to be a hind, the wise-acres now consoled the field by pronouncing it, by the slots, to be a male deer.) Hit it off further down the road, and over Bampton Down to the enclosures by Huntsham Court. Wretched scent; another check; hit it off again, and now a view of our deer crossing an orchard before us. Ran her up through Huntsham Wood and down the stream that skirts it (two miles or more) towards Uploman. Turned away by Stag's Mill and Fusselford into a deep

1860. bottom, the deer now viewed on the other side apparently fresh and strong as possible. Out over Chescombe Barton Farm pointing for the Exe; leaving Fairby Ponds to the right, beat the stream below. Here another slight check; the deer being apparently headed, doubled back through Custorn Wood, skirting the covers and disdaining to try the river. Passed through Fairby and down to the Exe, where she jumped into a muddy place, and was caught by the hounds before she could reach the water. A good hunting run of three hours and twenty minutes.

August 21st, SIMONSEBATH.—A large meet, but few subscribers. No news of a stag nearer than Blackbarrow. Trotted thither, and found him lying in the bottom between Larkbarrow and Alderman's Barrow. Laid on at 1.15; ran over Blackbarrow to Perryman's Path, then to the left across Oare Water, and over Oare Common to Badgworthy Water. Up Pinford Combe and straight over the North Forest and the Warren to the Brendon road. On over Blackpits, the Chains, *through* Pinkworthy Pond (a pretty sight) and along the ridge by Woodbarrow to Challacombe. Here the deer turned up the combe behind the village as if for Parracombe, but turned out soon after on the western side toward the church; crossed the road, and here a check, owing to sheep dogs. Soon hit off the line again; leaving Challacombe Church to the left, ran him over Leigh Ball, Bratton Down, by Leworthy Post to Stoke Rivers. A momentary check at the stream below Stoke Wood; fresh found him and hunted him all down the water in full chorus, and took him at Hakeford, near Chillham Bridge, after a run of three hours, the only check being that at Challacombe. Distance about twenty-eight miles.

August 31st, WHITSTONES.—A very fast run from Hawkcombe Head to Badgworthy and over the Lynton road to Yarnar Mill, where he was taken after an hour and a half.

September 18th, CLOUTSHAM.—No stag in Horner. Found a hind 1860. on Leigh Hill; ran her by Parsonage Side and away by the south side of Dunkery. Laid on at 2.20. A short check in Long Stream Combe, then up over and across Acmead to Oare Common, and to water under Tomshill. Hit off the line up Pinford Combe, and so into Orchard Combe, through the furze brake and back by the Larkbarrow corner into Longcombe, and down the water towards Badgworthy. Up the combe between Tronthill and Badgworthy nearly to Two Gates, turning away over the North Forest (here fresh found her) and round again to Hoccombe; across Hoccombe and on to Withycombe Ridge, Brendon Common, and Brendon covers, by Millslade (here fresh found her); ran her through the fields on the head of the covers as if for the Channel, down again to the water and through the covers to Brendon Church, pointing for Farley; short to the right, and down to Watersmeet; here a long check; fresh found her under the path by Watersmeet, ran her down the valley, over the awful shingle to the combe leading to Countisbury, crossing a grass field in view to the top, and going apparently straight to sea. She skirted the Lynmouth road, however, turned back over the hill to the Lyn, left the water again at once, crossed the hill almost on the same line as she had first taken, and was gone to sea directly. A boat went out from Lynmouth at 6.10. The pack had been running her three hours and forty minutes, and the tufters fully thirty-five minutes more. Pace very great—moor very heavy—field pretty well choked off. Only three at the end besides the master and whip.

October 5th, JURY KENNEL.—A very hard day with a stag from Haddon, about the covers on the Haddeo and the Exe. He was finally killed under Broford, after a run of six hours. Scent very bad.

November 19th, MARSH BRIDGE.—Went at once to Hawkridge,

1860. and after some trouble with stags, drove a hind over the ridge to Anstey Common. Pack laid on here. Ran her over the common to the Molland fence, and over it on to the enclosures; through Girt Wood, breaking at the lower end, across Bere Brake to East Lee Cleeves, and to Middle Lee. Here she was blanced by Mr. Daniel's harriers (whose field immediately joined), and came back into Exe Lee Wood in view. Over Pulworthy to East Lee Cleeves, soiling in Zealwood lime pits, thence under Kingswood to Oak Moor and to Kerscott North Down, crossing the South Molton road to Port, thence to Little Hele, on to Avercombe and through Oak Mill to Quince Brake; thence to Yardwood and over Beera Farm to Irishcombe Plantation, over Meshaw Moors, and on to Drayford Bridge, where she was taken and killed. Two hours and eighteen minutes from the lay on, over the most beastly country (deny it any who know it) that ever was ridden over to hounds.

[In the course of the year 1860 Oare Common was divided, and Lord Lovelace's new plantations above Culbone were enclosed with wire fencing.]

1861. *April 22nd*, FROGWELL LODGE.—Found a hind in Deer Park; ran her to Bury and back by Westhill and Upton to Deer Park, where three hinds came up together. One crossed the road, so laid the pack on her. Fresh found her at once inside the Allotment fence, and ran her back over the hill to Wynne Corner, through Haddon Wood, Hartford Cleeve, and Huscombe; up the bottom turning towards Holworthy, and round into the extreme end of Westhill Wood. Hence she broke up the bottom towards Woolcot Brake, doubled back to Withiel Bottom and up it for about a mile; then to the left over King's Brompton Farm towards Exton village; then back over the old Minehead road, past the Heath Poults Inn, into Hart Cleeve, and down the bottom. Fresh found her, and took her in a deep ravine near Cutcombe. Two hours and a quarter.

August 30th, LARKBARROW.—Found six deer in Oare Common, 1861. but could not separate them, so trotted off to Brendon Barton Wood. Found a hind, which went down to Watersmeet, then up the valley and over Scob Hill (where laid on the pack), Brendon Common, Badgworthy, Trouthill, and Tomshill, to Oare Common, and on to Blackbarrow; then short to the left to Wear Water, and back over Oare Common to Badgworthy Water and down to Malsmead. Fresh found her, and run her up to the top of Badgworthy Wood, down again to water and killed her. Two hours and five minutes—a rattling fast run.

September 13th, HADDON.—The annual stag-hunting dinner had taken place on the previous evening, and the morning opened with heavy showers, such as might have been rather refreshing to some of the field after the last night's proceedings. Found two stags close to Hartford Cleeve at 11.45. After much trouble with the best of them, and considerable dodging about the covers, he turned out a fresh stag, which went away at 1.24. Up the bottom under Down's, and across Upton Moor, over Little Down and Cooksley to Brendon Hill Farm; then to the right across the road by Roborough Gate, over Browndown and Tripp Barrow to Fryan Brake and Holcombe Waterhead. Across the road by Raleigh's Cross Inn to Colton Pits, all down the bottom to Pond Woods, and through the ponds to Great Wood and Ashspear Wood. Here a long check, and cold hunting. Eventually fresh found him in a furze brake on the top of the hill and ran him on by Combe Cross and Rowden to Escott, and (leaving Combe Sydenham to the right) to Kingswood Water and Heddon Oak. It was now 4 P.M., and scent failing rapidly. The deer was evidently failing, as he could not jump the fences, but hounds could not hunt him. He was slotted along the road under the West Somerset Railway bridge, and some distance further, but a double threw the slotters out. A holloa came from forward, and the

1861. hounds hunted him up to Thorncombe Plantation, where *the goal having been reached*, the pack was stopped and taken home.

The master's eye, and *his alone*, viewed the deer safe on to the Quantocks, to his immense gratification; and thus was established, after an interval of fifteen years, the communication between Haddon and this recently accepted portion of the Devon and Somerset country.

October 29th, WHITSTONES.—Found six hinds in Shilletts, all except one going towards the Forest. Laid the pack on the single one, but they at once divided, the bulk of them going straight across the road to the open by Hawkcombe Head. With much trouble got the rest on after them. Away over Wear Water to Blackbarrow, Oare Common, and Badgworthy Water; up the combe, over the North Forest by the head of Buscombe, to the right over the Forest Wall, just below Two Gates, over Brendon Common to Scobhill, and down the water under Brendon Church; up over Horner's Neck and to water again below Watersmeet, then up the water to Ilford Bridges, and up over Wattlebury Wood and East Lyn Farm to the West Lyn. Here a good deal of hunting up and down the water, the hind trying several times to jump the stone wall by Barbrick Mill, and each time failing. Here she was eventually taken: two hours from the lay on, and pace tremendous. Mr. W. Chorley (who had got a good start trying to stop the hounds) the only man *near them*.

1862. *September 19th*, HADDON.—Found a good stag in Haddon Wood. He turned up another from which hounds were stopped. Then drew Westhill Wood, and found another fine stag at 3 P.M., which after a turn round the covers broke away by Hele Wood and Exe Cleeve to Heatheridge. Laid on on Court Down, where a long check. Hunted it slowly into Loosehall Wood, and so over Baldneck and through Marsh Wood to the Barle at New Invention. He followed the water to Ashweek Ham and broke up into Hindham Wood, at the top of

which he was viewed away (having evidently loitered) at 5 P.M. Away ^{1862.} best pace across Hindham enclosures and Anstey allotments towards Ringcombe, as if for Combe Wood, but still held the common, crossing the fence into Molland, and straight on by the Poulting House over the next fence into Cuzzicombe allotments and down to Pulworthy Water. Over Pulworthy Barton to Natty Cleeve and down the water to the meadow under West Molland Wood. Here a check, but the pack required no help; they soon found out the deer was not before them and turned back, fresh finding him in Natty Cleeve Wood and running him in view over the meadows and down the water to Ward Mill. Here again they got up to him, and he tried to break over Kerscott North Down, but immediately came back to the water and so up the stream, where he was taken by Ward Mill Bridge at 6.20.

He was saved, and turned out the same evening on Anstey Common, in the hope that he might show such another brilliant run. He had a fine head, somewhat hooped, with B. T. 2 on both sides. (Killed on September 4, 1863, after a ringing run. A very fine stag, with B. T. 3 on one horn and B. B. T. 3 on the other.)

October 7th, CLOUTSHAM.—Found a stag in Sweetworthy Brake. He tried for Horner, but was headed and went away towards the Forest. Pack laid on at 2 P.M., and ran away down into Long Combe and over Porlock Road and Common to Kittuck and Oare Common. Here backed it over Blackbarrow to Wear Water, and up Perryman's Path to Hawkcombe Head; through Bromham enclosures and across the bottom to Shilletts' side, along the head of the cover towards Porlock; then across the valley through Hawkcombe Wood and over Leigh Ball and Doverhay Hill to Horner Water; down the water to the Ball and up the East Water almost to the road under Aldercombe; thence through the furze (here fresh found him) into Luccombe Plantation and on along the side of Dunkery towards Wootton

1862. Courtenay; through the Alderbed and over Holt Ball to Tivington Plantation; through this to the north-east end, then broke out and doubled back after crossing two fields; finally across the road, leaving Bratton Court to the right, to Heydon Down and through Little Heydon Plantation, over the enclosure to North Hill Common, where hounds ran up to him by the stone fence. On over the hill a mile and a half towards Minehead, where hounds again got up to him, ran him in view to the fence at Woodcombe, where he was taken and killed. Three hours and twenty minutes from the lay on. (A five-year-old deer, imported from Templeton in the previous year.) B. T. 2 on both sides.

November 21st, HADDON.—Found a fine young hind at 12.45. Ran her about the covers for some time with indifferent scent, and away by the fir trees in Upton Wood. Pack laid on at 2.50. Across Upton Bog to Hanstown, where a long check. Hit the line across Heyne to Luttraw Cross, and on by Godham's through Bittescombe Wood, Auctioneer's Brake, and Shute Copse to Huish Cleeve. Across Heydon to Middlehill and down Drewcombe Bottom to the water, turned to the right under Bulland Lodge to Wadham's, crossed the Tone to Yaw, on to Plead, Nunnington Down, Cote, Parsonage, to the West Turnpike Gate at Wiveliscombe, into Hawkin's Orchard, and keeping close to the back of the town on to Hutswell Park Farm, Fry's, and Quaking House, by Milverton, where stopped hounds at 5.25, it being quite dark. Half an hour more daylight would have accounted for our deer.

1863. *September 11th, DULVERTON.*—A stag harboured in Greystone Wood. Found him, a splendid deer, at 1.6. He broke over the top and down through Well Wood, across the water, along Bradley Ham Side as if for Winsford Hill, but crossed the water again, through the little plantation on the other side and over Well enclosures to Withypool Common. Pack instantly laid on. Raced him over the

common and over higher Hawkridge Common allotment (leaving 1863. Porcheſter Post on the left) to Sandyway (here a view), across the enclosures to the right and down to water under Baker's farm on Sheardon; all up the valley to Darlick Corner, over the road and down across Shortacombe; over North Radworthy and down the bottom under Long Wood to Heasley Mill; through Mine's Wood to North Heasley, over Bampfylde Hill to Flitton, Rabbiscott, and down the valley to the Bray (leaving Brayley Bridge to the right) at Embercombe; down the water to Castle Hill Deer Park fence, then to the left through Bremridge Wood, and down through the Deer Park to water again. Fresh found him in the water at 2.57. He tried to jump the park railings, but failed once before he succeeded, and made for the river again in Filleigh Mill Weir, where for nearly half an hour he swam up and down with the hounds all round him, during which he managed to pierce one of them through the right ear, and towed him up and down by his left brow antler for full ten minutes before he was lassoed and taken. Three only (the master one of them) saw this from find to finish, two hours and twenty minutes. A very fine run, and a splendid stag with all his rights and three on top both sides. On this day, curiously enough, the statue of Hugh, second Earl Fortescue, was unveiled at Exeter. He had been practically master of the staghounds from 1812—18. It was also Dr. Collyns's birthday, the last he lived to see. (This deer was saved and turned out. Found again in the Hawkridge valley on September 2, 1864, and killed in three hours and a half without ever leaving the covers. He bore then the same number of points, but a heavier horn as well as a heavier body.)

September 29th, ALDERMAN'S BARROW.—Trotted on to Horner, but on the way the hounds suddenly broke away under Stoke Pero Church, had found a hind, and were running hard down the Horner valley in a moment. Up over Cloutsham Ball and across to Alder-

1863. combe to Luccombe Plantation and round Dunkery towards Wootton Courtenay, on by Dunkery Gate and then away to Forest. Hopeless to stop them, so there was nothing to be done but to follow. On over Chescombe Head and Acmead to the water, up over Oare Common and to the left to Badgworthy Water; over Withycombe Ridge to Farley Combe and down to the enclosures. Fresh found her here, and back over Blackhill to Badgworthy Wood, at the lower end of which she was taken after a run of three hours. She was saved and turned out again.

November 20th, HADDON.—Found a hind in Haddon Wood. Laid on by Blackmore's house at 1.10, and ran with bad scent down to the stream at the bottom. Here a check of three-quarters of an hour. After much fruitless casting, fresh found her in Deer Park. It looked very like a male deer, but the knowing ones all pronounced it a hind, so the master let them go. Away to Haddon End, and from this to Middle Hill on Heydown as straight as the crow flies and as fast. Down to Washbottle Mill and doubled back, then to the bottom again by the mill and away. Over the Wiveliscombe road, and over Jew's Farm and Cording's Ball to Hudford Farm, and on by Brompton Ralph to Rook's Nest and Elworthy Gate; straight on over the enclosures of Preston, Wood and Escott Farms (Stogumber to the right and Monksilver to the left), to Yellow Wood Farm and Aller; then, leaving Capton to the right, to Orchard Wyndham, crossing the lawn to a small stream, when the pack ran into *him* at 4.30; but he was cleverly saved, with no further injury than that which the breed seems to get over very easily—being half drowned. As generally happens, the "fine hind" found in Deer Park proved to be a male deer. A most splendid run, two hours and a half from the fresh find without a minute's check. (This deer was ear-marked and turned into Colton Pits, but has never been accounted for.)

December 21st, HADDON.—Found a hind which broke from Deer 1863. Park over the hill to Surridge allotments, and away. Laid on at 12.10. Away straight as a line over Haddon End and Upcott Bottom to Little Heydown, Middle Hill, and Washbottle Mill. Here doubled (as the young male deer had done on the 21st of November) back to the top of Maundown, but on again over Raddon by Greenaway to Grant's, across the Wiveliscombe road by Ford Milestone to Castle, and down the meadows to Cotcombe Mill and into Cotcombe Wood. Thence across to Fitzhead, and on by Halse to Webb Hill Farm, close in front of Heathfield Parsonage, and over Burge Farm (crossing the West Somerset Railway) to Dean Farm. Bearing to the right she skirted the B. Lydiard and Taunton road, till she reached Norton Manor, then crossing these grounds close by the house she turned down towards Norton village, and along the meadows for a short distance, then crossed the Bristol and Exeter Railway (main line) and the Canal, pointing for Bishop's Hall, and after crossing the Tone (close by Netherclay Hall) was taken in the garden of the New Inn at Bishop's Hall village at 2.50, a little less than three hours from the find!! From Fitzhead to Taunton the whole country was in a wild state of commotion and excitement, and the footpeople took the hind before the hounds came up. She was quite uninjured, and being so far on her way to the Quantocks, was ear-marked and turned into Bagbro' Plantation. (Never accounted for.)

September 9th, CLOUTSHAM.—Blackmore had two stags harboured 1864. opposite Wilmotsham, "as sure of them as if he had them in a bag;" but they were not to be found. At last a stag was seen on Leigh Hill, and the pack was laid on at 5.15 (!). Down to the bottom by Horner Gate, and up the Valley to Stoke Wood and away by Stoke Common, up Longstream Combe to Porlock Common, and on between Blackbarrow and Alderman's Barrow to Oare Common,

1864. where a short check. Then down to Badgworthy Water by the old houses and down to the Wood ; breaking the fence just short of it, and so up over Withycombe ridge, across the Brendon road and into Farley Bottom ; down the water, then up through Farley Brake and the adjoining copse, down to water again at Bridge Ball, and up over Cheriton ridge as if turning for Ilford Bridges, but crossed the next ridge on Willaway ; and here the hounds first came up to him. But it was now nearly 7.55 P.M., and a dark night, except for a little moon. There was no certainty that the deer would not go on for another hour, and no one left with the hounds knew the country. They were therefore stopped (thanks to a ticklish scent) and taken home.

September 16th, TWO GATES, BRENDON COMMON.—Heavy rain all night, and no harbouring possible this morning. Pack kennelled at Brendon Barton, and tufters taken to Broadwayfoot. Suddenly a stag was seen just under Brendon Church at 12.20. The pack was brought and laid on in cover at 12.55. Bad scent in cover, but they rattled him out again above Watersmeet, running him through the cover by Ilford Bridges and Bridge Ball, and up Farley Combe to the Simonsbath road. Here stopped the hounds to get the pack together, and a heavy storm of rain came on, which lasted at least twenty minutes. But the harder it came down the faster they ran ; over Brendon Common, to the right to Withycombe ridge, and Hoccombe, and round towards Exehead ; then to the left over the Warren, North Forest, and Trouthill, leaving Larkbarrow to the left. Over the Forest Wall, across Potlock Common and Alderman's Barrow to Mill Water, and down the combe. On across the Exford and Lucott road, and along the side of Dunkery to Sweetworthy Combe. On down the combe, and out over the plain to Aldercombe, thence out over Luccombe Barrows and down to the base of the Cutcombe side ; crossing the small stream under Stiledown, and the

hill above by Elsworthy into the Timberscombe valley; across the Minehead road and up over the opposite hill by Slade and Beasley Farm, leaving Bickham to the left; across the valley just above Timberscombe village on to Croydon Hill; along the head of and through Avill Wood to Boniton and Longcombe, turning out over the top of King's Wood into Dunster Park. We had had to encounter the bogs of Exmoor, the stones and rocks of Dunkery, and now had a third element to grapple with, perhaps the most dangerous of the three—the rabbit holes at the head of Dunster Park. However, these were safely passed, and the hounds took the line beautifully through the fallow deer, hit off a fresh scent on the lower side of the park, through the palings into a small hanging wood below, at the upper end of which they fresh found the deer, running him over the lawn to the stream, where he was taken at 4.50, three hours and forty-five minutes from the lay on by Brendon Church. Very fast over the moor, though slow over the enclosures. Ten at the end of this glorious run, including master and whip. Jack Babbage had a bad fall on Badgworthy, dislocating his shoulder and breaking his collar bone. Many pulled up at Horner who had cast shoes. [Very common in all great runs.—ED.]

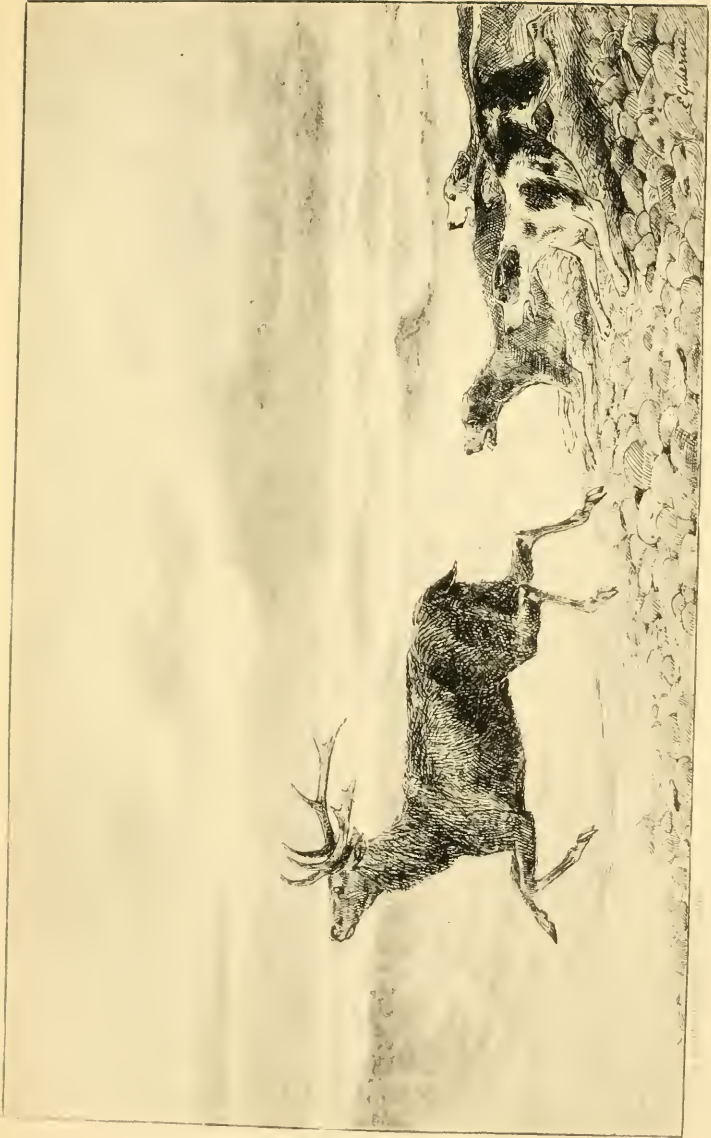
September 27th, CLOUTSHAM.—A good hunting run from Cloutsham to Badgworthy, Brendon Common, the East Lyn, to Glenthorne, back to Brendon and to sea by Lynmouth. He returned to shore, and was seen on the cliffs, but it was too dark to follow him. Laid on at 2.30, and ran to sea at 6.5. Thus we missed this deer for this day, but on

October 11th (CLOUTSHAM), found the same stag in Yelscombe, and laid on under Cloutsham Ball at 1.33. Away over Dunkery and across the common to Mill Water, over Mill Hill and Blackbarrow to Chalk Water, over Oare Common and down to Badgworthy Wood. Here all but five hounds broke away after a young hind, but were after a

1864. time stopped. The deer went up the water to Tomshill Wall, and turned up the smaller water on to the North Forest, and was viewed on Buscombe. Brought the pack on ; ran him over Buscombe and the Warren to the Brendon road, over Blackpits and down Farley Combe to the enclosures ; up to Brendon Parsonage and down through Farley Wood to Bridge Ball, up through the cover again, over the enclosures and through the covers to Watersmeet ; hit off the line by the stone bridge leading to Countisbury, and up by the cliff towards Glenthorne. It was now 5.15, and hounds were stopped, but news was brought soon after that the deer had been seen to lie down. Laid on the pack in the darkness, and finally drove him still further towards Glenthorne, and down from crag to crag of the cliff and to sea, with the pack at his haunches all along the beach. A boat was brought round but could not find him, and so this gallant stag (which the master had already determined to save) saved himself once more. He had been on foot five and a half hours. (Mr. Bellew held the horn this day, and throughout the time that Babbage was disabled.)

October 25th, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Found a hind in Shilletts, laid on at 2.45, and ran very hard into Farley combe (thirty-six minutes), thence over Scobhill to the Brendon covers, and spent the afternoon badgering her up and down between Millslade and Ilford Bridges, where at 6 P.M. the hounds were stopped and taken home.

1865. *September 12th*, DUNKERY HILL GATE.—No stag in the Cutcombe covers, so went at once to Cloutsham. Fog stopped all attempt to hunt till 1 o'clock, when it cleared off altogether. Found at once in Wilmotsham Wood, and ran twice up and down the valley between Poole Bridge and Cloutsham Ball, and then away. Laid on in Poole enclosures at 3.5. Ran across the fields and common above, then up Nutscale Combe and over the Culbone road by Colley





Water Head, leaving Blackbarrow to the right, to the Forest Wall on 1865. Chalk Water, up the combe between the wall and Oare Common, and out over the latter to Badgworthy by the lower Deer Park Gate; down the water to the wood, broke from it about two-thirds of the way down, and up through the wood, over Brendon Common. On about half-way to the Simonsbath road, then to the right to Scobhill, over it and down by Brendon and through Brendon Wood to Broadwayfoot. Here a long check. Cast down to Watersmeet, then back to Broadwayfoot, then up along the head of the covers on the Countisbury side; at last came a holloa at Ilford Bridges, where hit the line back into the Brendon covers, and across the Ilford Bridges stream over the hill (Wattlebury) opposite. They set him up going round the cliff to Lynmouth, but he went on the side of the cliff towards the Glenthorne path bridge, and to water. Ran him up and down the water for ten minutes or so, and took him at 5.45, two hours and forty minutes from the lay on. A fine run and a good stag. B. B. T. 2 on both sides.

September 26th, CLOUTSHAM.—Found a brace of stags in Horner, and laid the pack on the best of them above Parsonage Side. Hunted it with poor scent almost to Luckwell Bridge, but could make nothing of it. News was brought that a deer had gone away from Sweetworthy half an hour previously, and the pack was laid on, in direct contradiction to the master's order. Ran to Alderman's Barrow, Blackbarrow, and Badgworthy, to Malsmead and over the hill to Glenthorne, where he was killed on the beach—a three-year old.

October 3rd, CLOUTSHAM.—Found two stags in Stoke Wood at 11.40. The best of them went over the hill to Luccombe Plantation, and away. Laid on at 12.40; ran round by Hannacombe and Bincombe to water under Blagdon Wood and down the bottom. Here some delay, owing to three fresh deer, but a holloa brought hounds to

1865. the right line under North Hawkwell Wood, and thence they ran to Hannacombe, and round the hill to Hollowcombe, down to Horner and up the valley to Poole Bridge and above. Left the water under Lucott and to water again under Nutscale Brake, then up the combe and over Blackbarrow to Chalk Water, and over Oare Common to Badgworthy Wood. Up through the Scrubbits and over the hill toward Millslade; down to water above Millslade, and up the stream nearly two miles to Malsmead, and into Southern Wood, where the pack bayed him for a few minutes; but he broke bay, and went back along the top to above Millslade, where he came down to water, and tried for the sea, but his strength failed him, and coming to water again at Broadway Foot he beat up once more, and then down again in view to Broadway Foot, where he was taken and killed at 5.45; five hours and five minutes from the lay on, and an hour more from the find. B. T. 3 on right horn, B. B. T. 2 on left.

October 27th, MOUNTSEY HILL GATE.—No news of deer, so went to Haddon. Found a hind and male deer in Whimble Ball. They divided in Hartford Cleeve, and the hind turned back over Hadbarrow by Blackmore's house. Laid on the pack at 1.20. Ran her into the bottom, and into Deer Park, back again down the bottom and up through Westhill Wood. A long check in Holworthy Water, then across through Easter Wood and down to Hartford; up through the Cleeve and Haddon Wood to Clammer and down the water. Along the bottom of Birch Wood and Haddon to Wynne Corner, along the side of the hill and Haddon enclosures, and back by Chapple Farm to Blackmore's, up under Deer Park, and up the water to Downe's Lodge. Here a check, but she was viewed coming back over the hill into Upton Plantation. Through Upton enclosures to the higher end, from which she now broke a second time, to Withiel Water, and up Holworthy Bottom and away by the road up at Blake's. Thence to Cooksley Farm, where a long check, and

slow hunting to Swansea Farm, and on over the common to the ^{1865.} right of the Iron terminus, as if for Clatworthy Wood, but bearing again more to the left the hounds hunted her into Friern Brake, where they fresh found her; running her across Holcombe Water towards Round Hill, leaving Colton Pits to the left; down into the covers below, and down the stream to the first Combe Sydenham pond, where they caught a view, and raced her to the next pond, where after hounds and hind had been swimming together for some minutes, they drowned her, in spite of all efforts to save her, at 4.15. A good hunting run.

November 7th, CLOUTSHAM.—After much trouble with stags and young deer got a good hind away from Parsonage furze, across to Hollowcombe and away by Langcombe Head. Laid on at 1.40. Ran half-way to Alderman's Barrow, then to the right for Nutscale; then short to the left over the hill as if for Hawkcombe, and finally over the wet ground to Forest; leaving Blackbarrow on the right, skirting Kittuck, over Oare Common, leaving Deer Park to the left, across the new enclosure at the head of Copple Wood; then to the left through Cloud Wood to water and up the opposite side into Southern Wood; then along the head of the cover, and back up the bottom and up the cleave as if for Countisbury, but being headed she turned to the right and then broke by Broomstreet enclosures, into Culbone Wood and down to sea. One hour and fifty minutes from the find. On reaching the beach it was discovered to be a young male deer, so the hounds were called off. The pace was tremendous to Malsmead, and no one knows where we changed.

September 28th, HADDON.—Thick fog for some hours. Found a ^{1866.} splendid stag in the long copse under Haddon Wood at 2.15. Ran up over and back towards Huscombe. Pack laid on after long delay at 3. Fresh found in Huscombe Wood, ran along towards

1866. Deer Park, then down into the bottom and along the head of Upton Wood to water under Downe's Lodge. Here went right away over Haddon End to Bittescombe Wood, through the pond and up over the hill to Heydown and Middle Hill, and down to water under Maundown; up the bottom to Washbottle Mill, and back up through the cover towards Heydown, along the side of Huish Cleeve, short to the left (the fog again very thick), and fresh found in the hedge trough at the head of Middle Hill; to the left straight for Bulland Lodge, and down into the bottom towards Waterow. Here he was viewed in the water apparently beat, but he had other thoughts in his head, and now took us over a perfectly strange country. Leaving the water at Waterow Mills he crossed Yea Farm on to Walridge Farm, and on across Spier's Lane to Hurstone Wood; thence to Hellinge Cross, over Hawthorne and Kittesford Farms to Stawley Nap, down the road some way towards Stawley Vicarage (hounds still racing as if on grass), and turned again to the Tone and on to Stawley Mills, jumping the leat five minutes before the hounds. Leaving the water he turned up towards Stawley village, and on in the direction of Apley, going to water just short of it and beating down to Trace Bridge. He went down further, but we were here led away by false information that he had been viewed into a small cover, and when the mistake was found out it was too late to do more. A very fast run throughout, but the pace from the fresh find on Middle Hill to Trace Bridge was tremendous.

October 5th, DUNKERY HILL GATE.—Found in Bincombe at 1.23. He went down the bottom, through Blagdon Wood and over the hill towards Quarme. Laid on above Blagdon at 1.58. Away over Hill Quarme and down the valley to Lower Quarme; here short to the left as if for Lype and Luxborough, but back again and down the valley on the Winsford side to Quarme Bridge, and on through Wick and Hollam Woods to Red Cleeve, down the small water under

Broford Wood to the Exe, and through Broford Wood across the 1866. Cleeve into Broford Plantation, along the head of the cover into Halsecombe Bottom and over the hill and Court-down into the Highercombe Bottom; up this and over Mountsey Hill Common and Slade enclosures to water under Ashway Hat, and down to Ashway Ham ford. Here a long check. Tried down to Three Waters, when a tally up the valley proclaimed that the deer had just left the water above Ashway ford and gone into South Barton Wood. Laid the pack on, and through South Barton, North Barton, and West Water Woods to Worth Wood; through this and Greystone Wood to Bradley Ham, and along the side of the Ham into the bottom under Uppington as if for Comer's Gate; a short double to the water and up the stream by Keene's to Withypool. Then after a double about the road over Room Hill to the Exe, past Nethercott and over the Exford road to Staddon Wood. Fresh found him here; ran to the water and took him under Larcombefoot at 4.52. Saved, earmarked, and turned out. A small bodied deer, and only a four-year-old. This was the third deer in six days that crossed between Dunkery and the Dulverton country. (Never accounted for.)

October 9th, CLOUTSHAM.—Found a stag in Stoke Wood. He went towards Cloutsham Ball, broke into the field, and so over the next meadow (taking the fence close by the Court Gate), across the road, into the bottom and up Hollowcombe (pack laid on instantly at 12.12), and lay fast in the combe; fresh found, and down past Eastwatersfoot towards Horner Mill; up through Yelscombe to the top and down to Poole Bridge; up the water to Nutscale, over the hill and Exford road to Blackbarrow, over Chalk Water and Oare Common, leaving Deer Park to the left, to Badgworthy Water; up this nearly to the hunting gate, on to Withycombe ridge, over the cleeve to the right, and on to Farley Water. Down to Bridge Ball, up the road some distance towards Brendon Parsonage; then to the left into

1866. the cover, and down again to water ; crossed it, and up the cover on the Combe Park side, and down again to water below Ilford Bridges, where he was taken at 2.27, two hours and twenty-five minutes from the lay on. "Factor" was dangerously wounded by this deer in the chest and flank.

October 12th, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—News was brought that a heavy deer had just left a soiling pit under the new fence on Oare Common. Hit the line at 12.58, and picked it out very slowly to Badgworthy Wood, and fresh found at 1.37. Up as if for Brendon, then down, through Cloud Wood and back over Deer Park above the water to the fence ; then away to the left to Chalk Water, over Blackbarrow to Chescombe Water, and down Longcombe to the Green Path ; up the opposite side to the Exford road, and along the side of Dunkery, close above Sweetworthy (one hour to this point from Badgworthy), into Aldercombe and down to Eastwatersfoot. Fresh found in the fern under Cloutsham Ball, down to Horner Mill, then up round Leigh Hill and lay fast in the furze above Horner Mill. Fresh found again, down the water towards Bossington, leftward towards Porlock, and thence to Avon Pool ; turned up the small stream to Bossington, where hounds ran up to him and drove him into a thicket, where he stood at bay. He was forced out, and finally taken in an orchard close by, at 3.51. An old deer by his face, though carrying only B. T. upright on each side. Head given in 1877 to the Rev. Jack Russell.

October 26th, HADDON.—Found three hinds in Haddon Wood, ran one down to Bury and back by Wynne Corner to the clump by Frogwell Lodge : scent so far infamous. Pack laid on at 12.35. Once over the furze adjoining Steart enclosures and down to the meadows under Upton Wood, owing to a marvellous change of scent, hounds literally flew. Up the meadows under Deer Park to Downe's, up

the bottom between Rinsbury and Upton Farm, over Upton Moor 1866. by the chapel, and on over Catford Farm to Rowbarrow; on up to the plantation adjoining Beverton Bottom, at the back of the Iron-work terminus; across the road directly afterwards and along the sloping ground on the lower side, coming up to the road again in front of Raleigh's Cross; then over the common ground short of Beacon Hill into Colton Pits, and all down the bottom through Combe Sydenham Ponds; to the right over the nap, into the valley, and out over the opposite side, pointing for Stogumber. Then down over Wood Farm to the stream by Stogumber, left the village to the left, and away short to the right at the back of Hartrow, passing close in front of Willett House to Coleford Water; all down the valley to lower Vexford: here turned to the right and crossed the Watchet railway by the level crossing, and over Heathfield enclosures (leaving Crowcombe to the right) to the Taunton and Williton road. On as if for Triscombe, but could not face the hills, so came back to the stream in the combe, and was taken at 2.50—two hours and fifteen minutes from the lay on, at racing pace; hounds carrying a wonderful head. Deer saved and turned out, but found drowned in a reservoir next day.

September 3rd, EGGESFORD STATION.—Found in Winkleigh Wood 1867. and killed in the Torridge below Heanton Satchville—about two hours and a half.

September 10th, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Three stags harboured in Shillets. Got one away and laid on by Whitstones at 12.24. Away over the hill to Wear Water, up the stream a little way and over Blackbarrow to Chalk Water, up it to the new fence on Oare Common, and over the common to Tomshill floodgate; down the water, up over Hoccombe into the next bottom, and along it to the Brendon road, and down into Farley Combe; over Cheriton ridge to

1867. the water (Willaway), down stream some little distance, then up over Furze Hill and down to Furze Hill Farm, away to the left to Sadler's Stone, hence to the right and over Butter Hill above Woolhanger and Horsey Moor to Swincombe Cleeve; across it and up to Worthycombe, and over Rowley Down to Westland, down the bottom under Twitching and turned to the right for Arlington; crossed the Barnstaple and Lynton road into the Arlington covers: here a fresh find, and down the water to Cot Bridge, below which after a little hunting up and down he was taken at 3 o'clock. As fine a run as mortal man need wish to see. Two hours and thirty-six minutes, and twenty-three miles from point to point.

September 15th, HIGHERCOMBE.—Found a stag in Bury Castle at 1.45. He broke into Pixey Copse, and the pack was laid on in the road below it at 2.13. Through Pixey Copse and along the top of the hill towards Buckleigh Wood, turning to the right down Timewell Hill, and below Morebath House, across the bottom by Keene's Mill to the Wiveliscombe road; up over the round hill above the road and down to Ford Mill; over Cinderleigh Farm and Venments, crossing the higher end of Bampton Down to Van post; through Long Hayne Court and over Barton Hill to Allers Farm, from this to the right across the bottom to Knightshayes and down to Bolham; turned to the left across the rifle range to the road, from which point the deer was viewed out of the Exe, and up over the South Molton turnpike road. Lifted the pack over the river, and well in front of the field; thence breaking from the road crossed over the hill by Prescott's to Hensleigh, on to Seven Crosses, and down under Stirling's Brake to the Dart above Worthy Bridge. Here slotted the deer in the lane, and hunted him down to the bridge, where a long check. Cast along the head of Thouglsleigh Wood, where they at once hit it, carrying the line along the chain of covers overhanging the Dart, and finally fresh finding their deer, a mile or

less short of Bickleigh Bridge, running him down to Bickleigh across the river and over one or two fields, then back to water, where he was finally taken and killed at 6.5. B. B. T. 2 on both horns; a short head with small beam. 1867.

November 29th, QUANTOCK FARM.—Found in Ashley Combe at 12.10; ran into Ramscombe and down to the stream at the bottom, up through Lord's Ball and over into Cockercombe. Then over Blackhill, back into Cockercombe, and broke at head over Bagborough Hill. Laid on at 12.55. Ran over the hill to the head of the plantation, bearing to the left and skirting the fence to Rock Lane, then through the old plantation, through Crowcombe covers to Lydiard Hill and into Birch's Plantation; then short to the right, skirting the top of Tilbury into Cothelstone Woods, and down through them almost to the church. Along the side of the hill above Toulton and Cows Huish, gradually rising as if for Buncombe, but suddenly short to the right across through Tetton grounds, and over Tetton Farm by Perkin's farmyard to Tamfield, right across the lawn and along the side of the Taunton road to Pyrland. Short to the right across the road, and after a slight check straight over the enclosures to Oak Lease. Here again to the right (towards Staple Grove), to Whitmore, where a check of several minutes, she having doubled about a good deal. Fresh found her in a small cover, and away as hard as they could go for Taunton. Across the lane in front of Hope Corner House, through Greenaway and on nearly to the railway, crossed it some way to the right, over the canal at Rough Moor, and into the Tone at Netherclay, and on to Langaller Mills, where she again soiled. Thence over Upcott and Heal Farm and across the Wellington road over Castleman's Hill, Hurswell and Cutsey Farms, to the borders of West Buckland; and here to the left over Budleigh to Angersleigh. While checked at this point the hind was viewed at Lowton fish ponds. Hoping to save her the master

1867. had the hounds kept back, but she was roused again and came right back into the middle of the pack, who ran her in view to Higher Howleigh, and back to the ponds, where she was pulled over at 3.45, before any one could save her.

1868. *September 15th*, CLOUTSHAM.—Found a good deer in Luccombe Plantation. Laid on by Nutscale. Away over Lucott Common to Blackbarrow and Chalk Water, following the wall between Kittuck and Oare Common, where hounds divided on a young deer roused near this point. Got them on the big one and ran to Badgworthy Water by the Deer Park wall. Down to the wood, and up through it towards the Lynton and Simonsbath road. Here again changed on the young one, but got on the right line again by Fullinscott enclosures, ran down to the Brendon Water and up over the ridge to the cliffs, where he was set up, driven over, and killed.

October 13th, EGGESFORD STATION.—Found a young male deer in Fox's Meadow, and after a slow hunting run of five hours lost him by Worthy Bridge. Scent bad and the deer a long way ahead.

November 13th, RALEIGH'S CROSS.—Drew Roundhill Plantations and Tilsey blank, and then trotted off to Haddon. Found some deer in Whimble Ball and forced a hind to separate from the rest. She lay down in the fir clump by Blackmore's where the pack was laid on her back. Away to Wynne Corner and down through the enclosures and Birch Wood to water; up it to Clammer, then up to Lyncombe Lakes, through Lyncombe Wood, over Butterball and Padwells, and away behind Baronsdown, through Brockhole Wood, to the Exe. Through Higher Stockham Wood, back along the top, over one or two enclosures to Heatheridge; through the plantation above Hollams and down across the bottom, and over Mount Sydenham to water. Down the bottom under Burridge Wood, through the gardens at Battleton, through Battleton Wood and over the

enclosures to Combe, and down the bottom; over Nightcot and 1868. Venn to Hawkwell Moor, across Whitmoor and Blackerton to Shapcott, and on over Allerborough to Knowstone Wood, on to Knowstone Mill, and through the covers to West Kidland Farm. Here the hounds, which had been alone for some time, were found at a check; it was now dark (5.15), and it seemed hopeless to do more, when the hind was suddenly found to be lying on the roof of a linhay close by. Attempted to lasso her here, but she jumped off, and in spite of all endeavours some of the hounds broke away after her. Stopped all we could reach and were going home, when it was announced that the hind was on the roof again. This time we dazzled her eyes with lights, and so took her safely without a scratch. She was turned out on Hawkwell Moor the same night, duly ear-marked.

This same hind was found again in Haddon on the 26th of December, and went away over Haddon Farm. Crossed Buckley and Hayne Farms, Burston and Wilsend, leaving Exe Bridge to the right. Came to water a little below, and followed it without touching a bank to Oakford Bridge (two miles and a half at least), then broke out, leaving Oakford village to the right, to near Higher Mill; then to the right through Town Wood, leaving Spurway Mill to the left; over Nethercott Farm and over Pinkworthy Farm to Combe stream, where hounds caught a view. She went back almost as she had come to Oakford Bridge, from which she turned over Loosemore Farm to East Tapps Wood, then to the right over Heightley Farm and through Heightley Wood to the Weir, and down the water to Heightley Mill, where she was taken and saved. Turned out a few days later apparently all right, but found at the end of January, 1869, by a shooting-party and captured. She was badly injured and had to be killed.

August 17th, CLOUTSHAM (Opening Day).—Found in Yelscombe. 1869. He went down to the water, where the whip (who had started even

1869. with him at the top and galloped down Stag's Path) met him, and fairly forced him away up the valley to Nutscale. Laid on at 12.15 on Wilmersham Common, and hunted slowly up the water by Nutscale and over the hill to Blackbarrow; across Acmead to Chalk Water and up the combe towards Tomshill. Lifted them to a holloa at the floodgate, and hitting the line on the other side of the water they raced over Trouthill, the North Forest, and the Warren to Exe-head; over Blackpits and all down the water to Farley, where fresh found him under the green path on the Cheriton side at 2.4. Away over Cheriton ridge into the next combe by Willaway and through some cornfields to the right, heading for the West Lynn, but turned away leftward over Furzehill enclosures, the hounds almost in view; then over the heather as if once again for Loxhore, but failing he sank the bottom under Woolhanger. Was once more fresh found and run in view towards Ilkerton Farm, where he was taken at 2.45 and killed. B. B. T. 2 on both horns. The haunches were sent by Sir Thomas Acland by special messenger to Lord Devon and Sir Stafford Northcote, for the benefit of the members of the British Association, then visiting Exeter.

September 28th, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Reports of eight stags in different places. Tried first for three said to be in Tamlyn's Copse—blank. Then drew Old Wood, and at 1.45 found two fine stags, which went away together to water under Nutscale. Laid on at 2.23. Ran down to the water and up the combe to the left of Nutscale, over the wet ground to the Porlock Road and all down the combe to Wear Water. Turned to the left by the green path over Blackbarrow to Chalk Water, where they changed on to a hind and calf, and killed the calf by Oare Ford. Came back, and hit the right line to Deer Park at the north-east corner, half-way down the combe to the water, where fresh found both stags. Crossed the water half-way between the old houses and the wood, bearing to the right along the side of

the combe between Withycombe ridge and Blackhill, then over ¹⁸⁶⁹. Brendon Common, bearing towards Scobhill, and over the new enclosures to Brendon Barton, and down towards Ilford Bridges; beat the water a short distance, then down the path to Watersmeet and round the point for a short distance; then doubled back and beat down the big water, tried for Countisbury and failed, and finally went to sea at Lynmouth at 3.46. A boat went out, and he was taken. Saved, ear-marked, and turned out on the 30th at Oare. (This deer was found in Stoke Wood on 16th of August, 1872, and ran by Leigh Hill, Hawkcombe, Mill Hill, and Deer Park to Badgworthy Water, where he was killed. Two hours and a quarter from the lay on. He was a warrantable deer in 1869, and in 1872 carried B. B. T. on off horn, B. B. on the near, and uprights.)

October 29th, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Found several deer in Shillets. A single hind went away by Whitstones. Laid on at 11.53. She at once crossed into Lord Lovelace's plantations at Pitt Combe and ran along the ridge to the western end, when she broke out and went down to water under Southern Wood. Straight up through the wood, and away to Badgworthy Wood; through the Scrubbits to water, up through the wood and again to water at the higher gate; up stream to the Doone's ford, then up the combe to the left, over Oare Common, Kittuck, and Blackbarrow to the Porlock road; over Lucott Common to Langcombe Head and along the top of Codsend Moor, as if for Cutcombe, but turned to the left into Hollowcombe (at 1.25), down the bottom to East Water, and Horner Water down almost to the mill; short to the right through Parsonage furze and over the hill as if for Wytchanger, through Luccombe Plantation, across the road into the enclosures, and all down the valley in front of Holnicote to Bossington and Avon Pool, the hounds carrying the line over the beach to the sea at 2.30. The hind had gone to sea about ten minutes before them; she came ashore and

was driven again to sea, where a boat that was waiting for her picked her up and brought her safely to shore. Saved, ear-marked, and turned out same evening in Hawkcombe. (Never accounted for.)

1870. *August 23rd*, CLOUTSHAM.—Found a fine young stag in Parsonage furze. He went away along the south side of Dunkery to Langcombe Head and away. Fresh deer all over the place, and much delay in laying on the pack in consequence. Got away at 12.53 over Snow's path and back to Longcombe, then over the head of Acmead, across the combe in front of Larkbarrow, and over the North Forest to the Exe under Prayway. Here a long check and a holloa at Simonsbath, but hounds could hardly own the line, and at one time quite lost it. By a clever piece of slotting on the part of Mr. Chorley, recovered it, and ran on to the Barle by the old iron mine. Cold hunting over the South Forest by Wintershead, as if for Longwood; but crossing the Forest wall, turned to the left to Sandyway and over North Molton Common, as if for Twitchen. Short to the left and over Molland bog by Whitepost, and over Moorhouse ridge to the Danesbrook, where he was taken and killed, being thoroughly exhausted. Three hours and forty minutes. B. T. 3 on off horn, B. T. 2 on near.

August 26th, MOUNTSEY HILL GATE.—Found a good stag in the Allotments, Winsford. He put up a younger but runable deer. Laid on this last on Winsford Hill at 12.15. Slow hunting to South Hill; then ran like wildfire over Ashway Side to the Hat, and through it and across the Ham to Rowdown; through Rowdown Wood, over the north side of Anstey Common and on over Molland Common into Girtcombe; down the valley to Stone Farm, through Pulworthy Wood and Kingswood to Sheepwash and Rew Farm; down the new line of railway to Galliford Bridge, on to Newtown and into Hayne Plantation. Very fast to this point, but now scent grew

bad. Hunted it slowly from Hayne Plantation past Bishopsnympton ^{1870.} village, across Trotsham Farm to Radley; and here another long check. Tried down the water to Alswere Bridge, where, in the little Alder bed adjoining, old "Finisher" fresh found him, and they pulled him down then and there at 3.50. B. B. T. 2 on off horn, B. T. 2 on the near. Head given to Mr. Granville Somerset.

September 6th, HADDON.—Found nothing but young deer in Haddon, so moved to Exe Cleeve, where found another young male deer. Laid on him in despair at 4 P.M. He crossed into Barlynch Wood, and from Swines Cleeve into Butterball, where a fine stag suddenly jumped up in the middle of the hounds. Along the head of Lyncombe Wood and over the meadows to Storridge, then across by Hartford Quarry to Haddon, up the water and across Hartford Cleeve, into Huscombe Wood and to water under Easter Wood. Here fresh found; the deer apparently about beat, but crossed to Westhill Wood, Upton Wood and plantation, and away. Straight to Blake's and over the enclosures to the left of the Brendon Hill road, and through Withiel Florey as if for Goosemoor; over Luxborough Common into the bottom between that and Langridge, crossing the hill above Pooletown and to water where the road turns up through Slowly Wood; up through the cover in view and over Blackhill to Longwood, to the left as if for Timberscombe, but short to the right into Avill Wood and down the meadows towards Dunster. Tried to face Grabbist, but came back and was taken in the old convent at the edge of Dunster town. B. T. 3 on both sides. (Taken as a two-year-old in 1860.)

September 16th, MOUNTSEY HILL GATE.—Found two stags in the Allotments. The best doubled back, and was fresh found at 11.55. Laid on at 12.25. Straight over the hill for Punch Bowl, across it, along the head of Ashe Wood, to the right across the bottom; over

1870. Great Ashe Farm, along the whole length of Kirk Cleeve, and to water under Court Hill, below Lyncombe Farmhouse. After a false cast forward hit the line on the other side, leaving Staddon to the right, to Highercombe, between Stone Farm and Stetfold Rocks, across the Luckwell Bridge road and over the hill to Codsand, up the bottom, under Kitnor Heath, and through Codsand enclosures to Dunkery and Langcombe Head. Here short to the right (the pace, slow since the check, much improving) across the higher end of Bagley Combe and Sweetworthy Combe, and down Hollowcombe to the East water. Crossed into Horner, up through Yelscombe and Wreacombe and over into Hawkcombe; down again and over the enclosures to sea, midway between Porlock Weir and Bossington, at a few minutes past three. A boat went out, and he was taken and killed. B. T. 3. B. B. T. 2.

October 11th, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Trotted off to Oare Common. Found an old stag with a hind and calf in Hoccombe. Roused them, and after some running separated them, the stag going down Badgworthy Water towards the wood. Laid on the pack at the ford by the old houses at 1.30, and fresh found the deer at the head of the copse, where it turned out to be nothing but a young one with only his uprights. Nevertheless, let the pack go on. While crossing the goyal between the wood and the scrubbit a very fine stag was viewed crossing the heather above the wood, and many waited expecting to see the hounds come after him. But the pack meanwhile ran over Brendon Common into Farley Combe, crossed Cheriton ridge to Hoar Oak Water, where a momentary check. Then over Furze-hill enclosures and down the bottom under Woolhanger, pointing as before for Chapman's Barrow and Challacombe, but turned short to the right for Parracombe, round the village considerably to the north of the church; then again to the left, skirting Martinhoe Common, to Middleton, and through Kentisbury Down to Kentisbury village;

across the churchyard and on over Mattock's Down by Berry Down 1870. Cross to Stowford Barton. From thence to Huish Down, crossing the new enclosures, and finally took him under Bittadon Ball, in the stream dividing Bittadon and Marwood parishes, close to the half-way house between Barnstaple and Ilfracombe. Head given to Mr. Knight, who was one of the few who saw it to the end, in spite of a rib broken in the course of the run. A brilliant wind-up to a brilliant stag-hunting season. This was the tenth deer taken in ten consecutive days.

October 14th, CLOUTSHAM.—Found several deer in Sweetworthy and Aldercombe. Got away a single one by Webber's Post and laid on at 12.14. She dodged in and out of cover till with indifferent scent they hunted up to her, and fresh found her in the furze. Then to Hollowcombe, and over the wet ground back along the top of the hill to Hannacombe, Bincombe, and round towards Sweetworthy again, but turned to the left and away over Exford Common to Chescombe Water; on under Alderman's Barrow, over the Larkbarrow wall and across the Combe to the North Forest, pointing for Prayway. Turned to the right, over Trouthill, to water below Tomshill, all down the water to Badgworthy and below it, where they caught a view; up over the Oare side to Cloud Wood, down to water again at Malsmead and over the meadows to Southern Wood; still down about a quarter of a mile on the Countisbury side, and killed her at 2.30.

August 15th, CLOUTSHAM.—Found in Stoke Wood. Ran up the head of the covers to Cloutsham Ball, over it to Sweetworthy, across Bagley Combe and away. Laid on at 4.5. Down to Long Stream Combe and up the other side, across the Porlock road, and skirting Acmead, across Kittuck to Oare Common and into Deer Park, and to water. Down stream to Badgworthy Wood and up over the hill 1871.

1871. on to Brendon Common, as if for Farley, but turned short to the right to Southern Wood and down to the water; up to Oare Court, and then to the left up the combe to Lord Lovelace's plantations, and through them to Pitt Combe; thence across the road by Whitstones and into Hawkcombe, down the bottom some way and over Lucott enclosures to Whitebarrow Wood, and all down the Horner Valley to Stoke Wood, where a check. Cast down to Eastwatersfoot and then up, and hit a line into Horner Wood. Fresh found him and raced him down to Horner Mill, behind which he was taken in a hedge trough at six o'clock. A young deer. B. T. 2 on both horns. Head given to Mr. James Turner.

September 12th, MOUNTSEY HILL GATE.—Found a stag in Worth Wood. He went up the valley, through Greystone and Well Woods, and out over, but doubled back again and down the valley to Westwater Wood and the water, and all up the valley to Bradley Ham, going straight away by Comer's Gate. Pack laid on at 1.30. Crossed the corner of Winsford Hill to Great Ashe enclosures, down to the Exe, up the water to Lyncombe, breaking up a field short of it as if for Staddon, but turned to the left, leaving Peen Quarry to the right; over Highercombe to the Cutcombe road, leaving Stone Farm to the left; to Quarme Water below Higherhouse and over Codsand Moors to Dunkery; over the hill between Rowbarrow and the Beacon to Sweetworthy, down to water by the lower gate, and down stream some little way, round Cloutsham Ball and into the Horner bottom, up the water and by Stag's Path to Leigh Hill, ran a ring round it and back to water below Poole Bridge; up stream some little way and to the left through the covers, and over Poole enclosures and Wilmersham Common to water above Blackford; up the water above Nutscale and up the fence on the higher side, lying fast under it. Fresh found him, and over Lucott Common to Hawkcombe Head and into the plantations; down, leaving Culbone Church

to the left; and finally pulled over dead beat on the road to Ashley. 1871. Combe at four o'clock. The pace from the first was tremendous, and there was but one momentary check under Cloutsham Ball. B. B. T. 2. B. T. 2. Head given to Mr. Froude Bellew.

September 22nd, HADDON.—Found nothing but young deer in Haddon, so went to Marsh Bridge. Found above North Moor House, and broke at once for Shilstone Gate and Anstey Barrows. Laid on above Northmoor at 3.30, a quarter of an hour after the find. Raced over the enclosures and East Anster allotments, and down Yamsden to the Danesbrook, into Hawkridge south side above Drucombe Gate. Fresh found him in the nap among the rocks. Up the bottom to Slade Bridge, going nearly to the head of the little combe under Anstey Barrows; to the right, along the side of the Middle Common and West Anstey Common, to Lishell; short back, crossing West Anstey Common straight for Ringcombe, but just touching the corner of Molland Common broke over the enclosures to Girt Wood, and down to Bottreaux Mill; all down the valley to Kipscott and Hall Woods, parallel to the railway to Ward Mill, where he at last crossed the line. (Racing pace to this point, deer in view and said to be beaten); then to the left, and over North Kerscott Moor and Kerscott Farm to Port Farm; over Little Hele and Broad Hele enclosures to water above Ash Mill; over Week and Wood's Farms to Pudmarsh, and through Honeycleeve Wood to Kidland; skirting Knowstone Wood, on to Babel Hill and Haresdown; up the stream under Little Comfort, and over Rackenford Moor and Sideham Farm to Drucombe enclosures, as if for the Exe, but turned to the right over Warsbrightly and on to Rafton Wood. It was now seven o'clock and pitch dark, and no one knew the country; the deer dead beat, but dodging backwards and forwards all over the place. However, from Rafton Wood this night-hunting continued; across the valley to Rull, then to the right towards Washfield, coming round to the

1871. left in the direction of the Exe, by Mr. Daniel's iron bridge to Custom Wood, and back to Bellbush, where they fresh found him, the deer running in and out and round about, above and below Mr. Daniel's drive. Hounds set him up again and again, till at last we took him at Dryhill at 8.30. An extraordinary run of five hours, through twelve parishes. Eight at the end, including young Westcott of Hawkridge, riding bare-backed and in his shirt-sleeves.

October 27th, DUNKERY GATE.—Found a fine hind in Langcombe Wood, which, after beating the covers for some time, broke away over Dunkery. Laid on at 12.20. Over the hill to Sweetworthy, where a check in the bottom. Finally away over Stoke Common to Long Combe, Alderman's Barrow, Acmead, Oare Common, and Deer Park. At Alderman's Barrow eight fresh deer were up and the pack divided, but the huntsman kept on with seven couple after the hunted hind to Badgworthy Wood, and over Withycombe ridge to Farley; back up the Blackpits fence to Two Gates, along the wall between Hoccombe and the North Forest, up to the left over Hoccombe to Badgworthy Water; down stream to the wood, then back over Deer Park into Langcombe, where a deer, said to be the hind, jumped up before them, going back to Badgworthy, and then over the North Forest towards Horner, to the right into Orchard Combe, all up the water to Exehead, over the Chains, along the ridge to Woodbarrow, and fresh finding in a hedge close to Challacombe village, ran *him* down to the stream and killed him. It turned out to be a young male deer. No one knew where they changed. Hounds were running hard over four hours.

1872. *January 16th, HADDON.*—Found a single hind in Deer Park, which crossed the valley to Upton Wood and came back to Downe's Lodge, and away by Haddon End. Laid on the pack. Straight away for Bittescombe Ponds, turning down the valley to Raddington

Mill; again to the right, over the hill as if for Skilgate, but once 1872. more leftwards to the valley close to the new D. and S. Railway; down the valley some little way, to the right of the Bampton Road, towards Shillingford; then across the road over Rhyll Farm to Hayne Wood, and beat down the stream towards Shillingford; then to the left over the hill for Huntsham, but round again by Ford Mill; then over the hill by Bampton Down, back to the right over Barton Farm, crossing the Huntsham Road and Batherham Water, leaving Bampton close to the left, to Birch Down Wood and Fleet's Hill; then to the left, over Coldharbour Farm, Grant's, Wonham Moor, and through Wonham Wood to the Exe under Heightley; crossed the Weir into Heightley Wood and over the Heightley Farms to East Tapps Wood; then up the valley under Langridge, on to Nightcott, over Venn Moor to Hawkwell, and across Anstey Barton Farm to Armour Wood; up the valley from Bucket's Hole, through Highertown Meadows (home by the kennel), to Twitchen Plantation; over Twitchen Farm and Common to West Anstey Common, and down to the Danesbrook, where she was killed at Zeal ford, after three hours without a check.

September 10th, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Found in Park Wood at one o'clock. He crossed the road into the bottom of Hawkcombe, when laid on the pack at 1.10. Beat the cover all the way up to Bury Castle and broke out over Lucott Moor to the Exford road, by the trackway to Alderman's Barrow, and by the very head of Wear Water to Acmead; over Kittuck to Stowford and over Oare Common to water by Tomshill floodgate. Here a check. Hit the line up the small water under Pinford Bog, carrying it over the North Forest and the Warren to the Simonsbath road to Blackpits, and over that to Farley Combe; down the combe for nearly a mile, and over Cheriton ridge to Hoar Oak Water, as if for the Chains. But his strength failed him, and the hounds catching a view ran him down the valley

for a mile and a half, he fighting hard to the last, till he was taken at 2.55. B. T. 3 on both sides. The moor very heavy; never known in such a state in September.

1873. *September 25th*, MOUNTSEY HILL GATE.—Drew Bradley Wood blank, and went to the Allotments. Found there a youngish deer at 2.40, which broke in the direction of Naplock. Laid on at 2.54. Ran along the head of Spire enclosures and Naplock Bog to Great Bradley, and into the Ham at the corner by the Pond; down through the furze to the water, to the cover on the Withypool side adjoining Well. Broke from the water up through the cover to the top, and to the right over the enclosures to Withypool Common, along the head of the enclosures over Brightworthy to water a little below Sheardon Hutch. Crossed the lower corner of Lanacre Common up along the fence, over the Forest wall, and on leaving Honeymead to the left, over the Simonsbath road to the Exe, up over the opposite side over the Warren to the North Forest. Turned to the right along the North Forest fence, and across Longcombe in front of Larkbarrow over Porlock Common to the head of the long hill from Chescombe Water, and over Lucott Moor to Hawkcombe; down under Shilletts, then up to Hawkcombe Head and into Pittcombe; turning to the left about half-way down into the plantations (Lord Lovelace's), and on over Yarner enclosures and those adjoining to Silcombe. At this point the hounds fairly beat off every soul that was following them. The pace had been throughout tremendous, and few had reached even Lucott Moor; the huntsman had missed his second horse, and the master was left alone to cast down to Culbone Wood, where he picked up several hounds. The deer had gone to sea below it, and he was captured by a boat, brought in, ear-marked, and turned out behind Porlock Weir. (Never accounted for.)

November 29th, CLOUTSHAM.—Found nineteen deer of all kinds on

the south side of Dunkery, and then moved away to Selworthy, 1873. where found a hind in Holnicote Combe. She came down to Allersford, then up Lynch Combe to the hill, over the ridge to the long deep combe under Meen. Up out of the combe across the hill, and down across the valley past Bratton Court to Grabbist, and over that hill to water in front of Knowle House. Here fresh found her, and raced her over the meadows towards Dunster, and along the base of Croydon Hill, through the bottom of Longwood into Broadwood, and across the valley to the head of Dunster Park; through the park to the stream under the Castle and back by the fence, breaking out close to the gate on the Carhampton side. From this point she was evidently out of her country, and she beat every hedge up and down like a rabbit, but she eventually passed on to the right of Carhampton, and to the beach at Blue Anchor; back along the beach to the mouth of the stream from Dunster Castle, up it almost to the road, then over the marshes towards Minehead and back along the beach to Blue Anchor once more; then crossed the railway embankment and on between it and the road to old Cleeve village, where she was killed in the road at 4.20. A fine yeld (barren) hind. She had been afoot four hours and a half.

November 14th, CLOUTSHAM.—Took six couple of tufters and found 1874. a brace of hinds in the furze opposite Cloutsham Ball. The biggest went away by Webber's post, hounds hard at her haunches. Round Dunkery above Wootton Courtenay, across Hannacombe and Bincombe into the enclosures by Dunkery Gate, but came on to the hill again, and along the fence to the Exford road. On to Alderman's Barrow, where she doubled, but turned away over Downscombe, and by Wellshead Farmhouse down the lane to the Exe at the ford. Up stream a little way and then over the hill to the Simonsbath road, leaving the Gallon House on the right, across Ashett's enclosures and over Lanacre Common to the Barle, under Lanacre Brake, up the

1874. water to Sheardon Hutch, and up the Sheardon Water half-way to Darlick Stone, then to the left to Sandyway, and again to the left by the road and fence above Hawkridge Common to Porchester Post, as if for Hawkridge Plantation, but turned again to the left by Worth enclosures and Withypool Common to the Barle, under Well Wood; cast down the water to Bradley, then up under Bradley Ham and Uppington, and finally up the Mill stream, where fresh found her, and killed her at 12.35. Two hours and twenty minutes. The pack was never laid on, and the six couple did all the work.

November 20th, CLOUTSHAM.—Took seven couple and found five hinds in Sweetworthy at 10.15. One went away with five and a half couple, by Langcombe Head, Chescombe Water, Great Hill, Blackbarrow, Chalk Water, Deer Park, Badgworthy Wood, Withycombe ridge, and Hoccombe, to the fence just below Two Gates, where checked. Along under the wall by Blackpits, and down Farley Combe, between the floodgate and the wall (the fence being newly wired) on to Cheriton ridge, back by Exehead to North Forest, where they divided after any number of deer in all directions. Meanwhile the whip was running a hind, with two and a half couple, all over the Horner covers wall and Dunkery, and on the huntsman's return from Farley took the pack out, and after much running of divers deer between Luccombe Allers and Poole Bridge, killed a hind at 3.7 by Horner Mill. Whether it was *the* hind or not no one knows, for deer were swarming.

1875. *August 20th*, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Found in Smallacombe (Lord Lovelace's plantation). He went through the covers to Pitt Combe, and crossed the road at Pitt Combe Head. Pack laid on at 12.28 (found at 12.15). Crossed the common to Perryman's Path, and over Porlock Common to Alderman's Barrow, and to Chescombe Water as if for Horner, but turned back to the Barrow, and down

the combe in front of Larkbarrow to Tomshill ; over Truthill into 1875. Badgworthy, and up Hoccombe for Brendon Two Gates. Broke the fence into Blackpits, just beyond the gate, and across the Chains, leaving Pinkworthy Pond to the right, crossed the Barle at the usual place (Driver Cot), over the rough enclosures to the Mole's Chamber road, down over Whitefield Common, to the right by Muxworthy, and down the valley to Wort Wood ; thence over the hill towards Brayford, but turned to the left to Barton Wood, and to water below it. Cast down and got on a hind in Molland Wood. Stopped them, and tried up Hole Water, where fresh found him, and raced him down the water almost to Newtown Bridge, then up to Hole Water, and killed him in one of the Withygate meadows, under Barton Wood. As fine a run as is often seen ; the moor very heavy, but the deer picked the best ground that could have been chosen. Two hours and fifty minutes from the find, but one hour and a quarter to the Barle. About twenty up, nearly all old hands. A young deer ; B. T. 2 on both sides.

September 7th, POLTIMORE ARMS, YARD DOWN.—Found in East Down Wood at 12.26. Up through Kedworthy and Muxworthy Combes to Mole's Chamber. Laid on the pack on Whitefield Common, short of the road, a little west of Mole's Chamber, at 1 o'clock. Turned to the right over the Allotments, over the Simonsbath road, leaving Pinkworthy Pond to the right, over the Chains to the head of Hoar Oak Combe, down it nearly to the enclosures, then to the right over Cheriton ridge to Farley Combe, up to the Brendon road, going down the Combe between this and Withycombe ridge to Badgworthy Wood, turned away at the bottom over into the next combe, across the water to Oare Common, turning into the combe next the Deer Park fence, straight up it and over Deer Park at the higher corner on the north side, over Oare Common to Stowford, then over Mill Hill to Wear Water, beating up Colley Water

1875. above Perryman's Path, and along the fence to Hawcombe Head; over the hill pointing for Whitstones, where many thought he was going to sea, and sank the hill, never to see them again. Short of Whitstones turned across Shilletts, and along the head of Holmbush Wood into the bottom, up the other side by Bucket Hole, and over the enclosures to Whitebarrow Wood, and down the valley to Poole Bridge, here in view, and killed him about 150 yards below, at 3.5. A great and fast run; the great feat—a run from Bray over the moor, and a kill—done at last. About a dozen at the end, including the master, who had driven by Simonsbath to the Warren, and ridden down over Lucott Moor. A young deer; B. B. T. 2, B. B. T. 1. Head given to Mr. Arthur Fortescue.

September 10th, MOUNTSEY HILL GATE.—Found a heavy deer at 1.42, in a bit of furze by Northway track to the Exe. He went to Bye Hill (two foxes following him, much to the whip's amazement), when the pack was laid on at 2.8. Ran along the side of Bye Hill towards Larkcombe foot, and down the valley to Winsford Rectory, beat the water up to Ashe Cleeve (where he had been found) in view, and killed at 3.4. B. B. T. 3, B. T. 3. Head given to Mr. S. Warren.

Then drew Bradley Ham, and found a second stag at 4.8. He looked to be rather too much of the galloping order for a second deer, but nevertheless laid on in the meadow on the opposite side of the river at 4.21. Down the valley and across to Greystone and West Water Woods, and all down to Marsh; up through Marsh Wood and over Baldneck into the valley under Loosehall Wood; up the Highercombe Valley to Mountsey Common, *through* the gate (which was open) and over South Hill to Redcleeve, Broford Wood and Plantation, and over the ridge into Halsecombe; across into Higher and Lower Stockham Woods, along the bottom under Exe Cleeve and down the water. Broke out short of Baronsdown Lodge into Barlynch Wood, and over into the Haddon covers and down to

Clammer; up the bottom and into Hartford Cleeve, and over the ¹⁸⁷⁵ hill for Wynne Corner. It was now dark, and hounds a good bit scattered. Got them together, and took them homewards along the bottom, trying the water as far as Clammer, when there being a good moon the master decided to try it on to Bury. Fresh found the deer in the water at 7.40. Another turn up the bottom and into Hartford Cleeve, pointing for Haddon Wood. Again got them together, and homewards down the bottom, where again fresh found him in almost the same place. He was now getting beaten, but the hounds also had had almost enough. Up the valley to Clammer and down to Bury, and dodging up and down for some time; but at last, after a hard struggle, he was driven under Bury Bridge and killed, at 9.15 P.M. A wonderfully strong deer, and not at all what had been looked for for an afternoon run. B. T. 3 and 2. Head given to Mr. William Karslake.

September 14th, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Found a stag which, in jumping across the road, broke both forelegs, and was at once killed. He had not been on foot five minutes, and hounds were not fairly on his line. Another deer was then seen to come out of Park Wood and break across the Lynton road for Hawkcombe Head. Over the fence and the hill to Wear Water, down it a little way and along the side of Mill Hill, above the water, for some distance; then up over, and to Chalk Water by Stowford, and skirting the fence between Oare Common and Kittuck, broke the fence to Tomshill, and down the water to the floodgate; up over Truthill and all up Buscombe to the Badgworthy Wall; over it just below Two Gates, and down the Brendon side of Farley Combe to the enclosures; up the water for a mile, over Cheriton ridge, and to the head of Hoar Oak Combe; all down the water to the enclosures, and killed him at the meeting of the two waters just behind Combe Park. One hour and fifty minutes. A fine deer with a fine widespread head. B. B. T. 2

1875. and B. T. 3. These heads were given to Lady Gertrude and the Hon. Mark Rolle.

October 8th, HADDON.—Found a stag in Haddon Wood at 1.30. After running down Bury he broke by Lousie Gate to Baronsdown and the Exe. Laid on at 2.55. Through Lower and Higher Stockham Woods, across into Halscombe, up over the hill towards Highercombe, and into the bottom under Loosehall and Highercombe; through Draydon enclosures, close past the farnhouse, and down over the cleve to water below Draydon ford; across up the steepest part of Shircombe Slade to the Summer House, under it and round by New Invention, immediately behind North Moor House, where fresh found him. From here it was a race to the end. Crossing along the head of Shircombe Slade Wood the deer broke over Hindham enclosures, on across Durham enclosures, pointing for Whiterocks, but turned up the Shilstone Gate trackway, crossing Cockram's, Bellew's, and Lord Portsmouth's allotments to Anstey Common, under the Barrows and over West Anstey Common to the north of the road; crossed to the south side about midway, and on to the Molland fence. Short of it he turned down into Bramblecombe, and all down between it and Ringcombe, under Combe and Girt Woods, Combe Farm, and Bere to Bottreaux Mill, where he was killed at 4.5. A very large slot, but not a heavy deer. B. B. T. 2, B. B. T., and a blunted upright. Horns very smooth, and every appearance of an old deer except that his tusks were not much worn.

1876. *January 18th, EXE BRIDGE.*—Found a stag and a hind in Wonham Wood with the pack. The hind went down the valley and crossed the Exe into Stuckeridge Wood, and over the enclosures on the top, leaving Stuckeridge Wood to the left; then to the right on to Higher Mill and Spurway Mill, and across the water, over Washleigh Farm, to Gibbet Moor. Here turned short to the right as if again for

Spurway, but again leftwards to Sideham and on to Cruwys Hays 1876. Lodge; thence to the right over Rackenford Moor, Hazen, and Middle Hill to Ratcham, crossing Shapcott Barton Farm on to New Moor Plantation; over New Moor to Bommer Moor, Bulliford, Kipscott, Hall Wood, Oak Moor, and Kerscott Farm to Molland Station. Turned away to the left over Kerscott Farm to Port, and again to the right over North Hayne Farm, and across the Devon and Somerset Railway by Mornacott Bridge; up the valley by Weatherbye and Sheepwash to Woods Moor, over Abbotspark, Westlea to Bid dybrook, and down the stream to Bottreaux Mill, where killed her after three hours and fifteen minutes. Fast, great part of it very fast. Twenty-three and a half out of twenty-four and a half couple up. Hounds had a narrow escape from a train, but the engine-driver stopped in time.

October 6th, HELE BRIDGE.—Found a stag in Exe Cleeve at 1.2. He dodged about Stockham Wood for some time, and went down to water, where he bayed the tufters. He broke finally into Dawes Wood, and the pack was laid on in Houndwell Lane at 1.30. Up through Winslade Wood, into Hoo Wood, and to water; down stream a short way, then into Broford Wood, and up through Red Cleeve, over South Hill and Ashway Side, to Tarr Steps, and down stream into Ashway Hat. Doubled back across the water, and up through South Barton Wood, over the top into North Barton Wood, through Westwater and Worth Woods to water; up the stream, breaking to the left under Well, over the enclosures and small covers upwards on this side, and again to water under Blackmorelands, and up stream to Uppington. Here the pack caught a view, drove him right up the water through Withypool on to Withypool Common, and up through the enclosures to Lanacre Bridge. Still up the valley to Sheardon Hutch, and up Sheardon Water, where hounds again caught a view, and he turned to bay under Ferny Ball, where, after a few

1876. turns up and down, he was killed at 3.35, more blown than beaten, for he had run a strong deer all the way, and was now very savage, pinning three different hounds to the bank and holding them there. Head very upright, neither widespread nor hooped. B. B. T. 2 and offers on off-horn; B. B. T. 4 on the near. Given to the Rev. Jack Russell, as a memento of his eightieth birthday and sixty-third stag-hunting season, on the 1st of May, 1877.

October 13th, MOUNTSEY HILL GATE.—Found two stags in Exe Cleeve, the biggest breaking across into Dawes Wood and Winslade Wood. Laid on in Houndwell Lane at 12.50. Through Winslade Wood, and all up the combe under Shircombe and Howetown, fresh finding in the furze on Howetown Nap. Over the hill into Howe Wood, down and across the Exe into Broford Wood, up through Red Cleeve, and on to South Hill; over South Hill at racing pace, and to Ashway Side, into the Hat, and down the bottom to Three Waters; over the ridge to Danesbrook, by Drucombe Ford, up over Yamsden and Venford allotment to West Anstey Common; on to Lishell Wood, to the left over Molland Common, and into Girt Wood; down the valley under Combe, over Combe and Well Farms, coming round again to Bid dybrook, and down to Bottreaux Mill; then to the left over the railway, over West Barton, Bommertown and Wadham Farms, down the stream into Knowstone Wood, crossing Babel Hill and the adjoining enclosures for Rackenford, but turned to the right down the valley to Creacombe Parsonage, where hounds got a view. Up and down stream for a little, then a last effort by crossing Parsonage Farm for Crowdhall, but turned back to the same stream, and was killed under the Parsonage at 3.22. Two hours and thirty-one minutes from the lay on, at racing pace and without a check. Few at the end. A light deer, one of the old galloping sort. B. T. 2 on both horns. Head given to Mr. William Halse. A very brilliant wind up to the indifferent stag-hunting season of 1876.

November 10th, CLOUTSHAM.—Took seven couple, and got on a 1876. line in Old Wood. Away to Nutscale, where eight hinds and a stag were before them ; over Lucott Moor (where the stag left them), and on over Mill Hill to Chalk Water (here settled on a hind and yearling), and over Oare Common to Deer Park, down to the left to Badgworthy Water, down it to the foot of Longcombe, up it some way, then back over Deer Park, just as they had come, to Chalk Water ; over Mill Hill and Porlock Common to Alderman's Barrow, on toward Wellshead, short to the right over to Acmead Water (here they jumped up in view), over Porlock and Lucott Commons to Blackford, up the water to Nutscale, and to the left over Wilmersham Common to Old Wood. Here the yearling turned down the bottom, and hounds killed it before they could be stopped. Took them back to the line of the hind over Stoke Common and on to Sweetworthy, where fresh found her ; crossing the combes on Dunkery south side to Luccombe Alders (six couple of fresh hounds laid on by the road), back through Luccombe Plantation to Horner Mill, across to Wreacombe, and over Leigh Hill into Hawkcombe, then back and over Leigh enclosures to Whitebarrow Wood and down stream to Stokeford, to the right over Wilmersham enclosures and Common to Blackford, up the water to Nutscale and over to Longcombe Head, over the wet ground and along the south side of Dunkery and into Hannacombe. Down the bottom to the right over Harwood enclosures, and then to the left over Barrow Farm to the valley below, and to Timberscombe and Knowle. Here hounds caught a view and raced her down the meadows for another mile, killing her just under Kitswall. Four hours and forty-five minutes. Almost certainly the same hind throughout.

December 8th, LARKEARROW.—Found four hinds at the head of Badgworthy Wood ; over Brendon Common and to the left over the North Forest (where two of them got out of the way), and round to

1876. Deer Park, thence over Oare Common to Chalk Water, Mill Hill, and Blackbarrow, short back by Larkbarrow to Chalk Water and back to Deer Park, on to Badgworthy Wood and Brendon Common, back over the North Forest to Tomshill, up Trouthill Water, over the North Forest and Brendon Common again to Badgworthy Wood, away to Chalk Water, and back to Deer Park, killing her finally at Malsmead. Going down the valley her companion was seen standing in the water with a broken leg, and she too was killed. A few hounds that could not be stopped from the other hinds killed a third in Trouthill Water. Thus ended the Porlock country campaign of 1876. Twenty meets at Cloutsham, one at Hawkcombe Head, and one at Larkbarrow; nineteen hinds killed, four saved and turned into the Quantocks; three young male deer killed, two saved, and one stag killed.

December 22nd, HADDON.—Found some hinds in Deer Park. After running about the covers for a long time got a hind away by Baronsdown. Laid on at 1.35. Slow hunting through Brockhole Wood and to water, where a long check. Lifted them to a hollow on Court Down and ran into Loosehall Wood; here another long check. Hit it at last in the watercourse on the Draydon side, and out over the hill by Draydon Farmhouse into Draydon and Ashweek Woods to the Barle, below Hindham Clammer; up the water, into Buckminster Wood, and over the Hindham enclosures for Durham Plantation, but turned short to the left up to the Venford road close by Shilston Gate, right over all the allotments north of the ridge road on Anstey Common to Anstey Barrows, over Woodland Common to West Anstey Gate, slanted West Anstey Common to Molland Gate, and down the fence almost to Lishell Wood, but crossed Langcombe enclosures to Moorhouse ridge; on to Whitepost and nearly to Sandyway, but turned to the right, and skirting the very higher part of Hawkridge Common and a bit of Brightworthy Down, crossed the

north side of Withypool Common and Blackmoreland Farm to the Barle; tried down to Tarr Steps without success, and it being now dark hounds were taken home. Three hours from the lay on, the last hour very fast.

September 18th, CULBONE STABLES.—Found a splendid stag in 1877. Pitt Combe, but missed him. Laid on one said to have two on top, which crossed the Lynton road above Oareford, at 1.30. Down to Wear Water, along the hill-side and over Mill Hill to Blackbarrow and Alderman's Barrow; along the fence to the Exford road and over Bendle's Barrow and Codsend Moor to water, down it some way and fresh found in Codsend Farm Plantation at 2.43; up the stream some way and over Kitnor Heath and Stone Common to the Exe, under Stone Farm, and all down the water to Winsford (three miles) without touching a bank; fresh found, and went up over as if for Burr Wood, but came down and was killed a little further up the stream at 4.24. A mere three-year old with B. T. and uprights. So much for two on top both sides.

September 28th, HELE BRIDGE.—Found a stag in Gardner's Copse and killed him at Bury, after beating the covers for an hour and a half—evidently an injured deer. Then tried for another and found in Storridge Plantation. Crossed to Haddon Wood, round to Wynne Corner, and away by Swinescleeve, at 3.40. Pack laid on at 4.4, and fresh found at once. He came back to Haddon and up the valley, finally breaking by Upton Church; turned to the left for Four Chimneys, into and up the bottom under Withiel Florey, on to Goosemoor, Lype Common, and down the combe towards Pooletown; just soiled in the higher end of Chargott Ponds, up through Chargott Wood, over Newcombe Farm, skirting Lype Common towards the Heath Poulton Inn, over the large Hill enclosures above Hart Cleeve for Wheddon Cross, but turned down to the left by Harespath, over

1877. the enclosures to the left of the Minehead road, past Bushell Bridge to Quarme, crossed the water and valley to Nurcott Hill, and down to the Exe under Nurcott Farm, up the water to Larkcombefoot; and here stopped them, it being seven o'clock and quite dark, though the deer was dead beat. A first-rate run with an unlucky end.

October 2nd, YARD DOWN.—Found in Kedworthy Wood at 11.55, and laid on at once. Down the bottom to Hole Water and up Beera Wood to the moor, breaking at the head of the combe at 12.7. Crossing the road immediately at the head of Sherracombe, the deer went down over the big allotments above Kensford to the Barle, and by Cornham brake to Simonsbath, crossing the road facing the house and along the head of the plantation on the South Forest side for a mile below Simonsbath; beat down in and out to Cow Castle, nearly to Sheardon Hutch, then to the left by Picket Stone to the road from Lanacre Common, and the Exford road (leaving the Gallon House to the right), and over the hill to the Exe, under the Warren; down stream a little way and over the Warren allotments, across the head of Longcombe (leaving Larkbarrow to the left), over Kittuck to the stream from Acmead, and down to the floodgate at the head of Stowford; down Chalk Water a mile or more, then to the right over Mill Hill, hounds catching a view and racing him down to water by Oareford; beat up the stream to Perryman's Path and down again, killing him just short of Wear Wood, two hours and fifteen minutes from the find. Only four besides the huntsman saw the deer first turn to bay. B. T. 2 and 3. Not a heavy deer.

October 26th, MOUNTSEY HILL GATE.—Drew Naplock Wood and found a young hind which beat the covers for an hour or more. Then drew Greystone Wood and found, at 2.3, a hind, which went down the valley to North Barton Wood, up to Well Wood enclosures, down the valley again, up again, and finally away by Comer's Gate;

laid on here at 3.8. Along the hill above Ashe Wood, into the bot- 1877.
tom, crossing Ashe enclosures to Bye Hill and down the water to
Nethercott ; up the opposite side as if for Staddon Wood, but passed
along the head of the wood, and just under the farmhouse as if for
Larkcombefoot, but turned away to the left over the hill, down to
water under Peen, over the enclosures into the Higherhouse Bottom,
up over Codsend Moors to Dunkery, over the wet ground under the
Beacon and round the south side to Wytchanger and Parsonage
Side, down the bottom under Wreacombe and Halscombe, and down
the water almost to West Luccombe ; here broke over the meadows
to the right and over the hill into the Holnicote Bottom, and on
through Holnicote Great Wood up to Selworthy Church, not abso-
lutely into the churchyard but into the rectory garden, where she lay
down and was fresh found ; down through Holnicote Great Wood to
the stream in Holnicote Meadow, where killed her at 5.20. A fine
wild run.

September 20th, DUNKERY HILL GATE.—A stag was supposed to 1878.
be in Mansleigh Combe, and at the time of meeting Mr. Norman
sent one of his men to see, and out went the deer. Laid on at 11.27,
a little below the Beacon, and ran round the hill into Sweetworthy ; up
the bottom and down under Cloutsham, where he pushed up another
and younger deer, which led away all the pack but a single hound.
The young deer went up to Leigh Hill, doubled about a bit, and
came back to cover by Horner Gate. The old one dodged the
single hound all through the cover till he finally broke along the
head of the wood on Leigh Hill, going straight for Poole Bridge and
Whitebarrow Wood. He had been gone about ten or fifteen minutes
when the young deer came back to Horner Gate down to the bottom,
along to Poole Bridge, through Poole Wood and enclosures and the
common to Blackford, and over the hill adjoining Nutscale Brake to
Lucott Moor, where Mr. Nicholas Snow stopped the hounds, and

1878. four gentlemen with him took after the deer as hard as they could ride. The pack was now let go on and ran across the Porlock road to Wear Water, and down the combe some way. Just at the same moment the big deer had broken the fence on to Porlock Common, and was viewed making towards Stowford Bottom. The hounds with the other deer turned over Mill Hill to Chalk Water, where they must have come across the line of the big deer who had been viewed down Badgworthy Water and into Badgworthy Wood. The pack was now lifted to the wood and fresh found him, running over Brendon Common into Farley Combe by the enclosures, and down to water. Hounds came up to him in the water and ran him down to Ilford Bridges, where he was taken and killed at 2.19. A fine stag with B. B. T. 3 and an offer on one horn, B. B. T. 4 on the left. Head given to Lord Doneraile.

October 11th, HADDON.—Took six couple (new pack), and found a good stag in Storridge Plantation at 11.50. After beating the covers he went away by Baronsdown, when the pack was laid on at 12.46. Down to the Exe by Stockham Ford, where a long check, the river being very high. Tried up and then down, finally hitting the line into Stockham Wood, where he had loitered and was viewed. Over Court Down to Loosehall Wood, and through Lower Baldneck into Marsh Wood, Draydon Wood, and to water by Draydon ford; up stream and into Ashweek Wood, and through Mountsey Castle to water by Castleford; up it to Brewer's Castle, to the left up to the Danesbrook, and up the water to Drucombe Ford. Doubled right back through Whiterocks, turned away over Durham Common and on towards Venford Quarry, sharp to the left into Venford old enclosures, and finally across above Yamsden, and to water under West Anstey Middle Common; up the water and through Zeal Brake, skirting the bottom of West Anstey Middle Common, on to Molland Common, and along the whole length of it to the further end against

Cuzzicombe. Here the hounds crossed Mr. Smyth's harriers in full cry, cannoning and flooring half of them. Down over Cuzzicombe to Twitchen Mill, on through Twitchen Mill Wood to Millbrook, where he was headed and turned to the left by Pitt, turning again to water in the Mole under Sannacott; down it to close by the railway, when he was fresh found at 4.23. To the general astonishment he crossed the line in front of the fast afternoon train (which considerably pulled up), and went away over Johnstone Moors to water below Bish Mill. Tried all down the stream under Blastridge Wood, and viewed the deer in one of the meadows. This view nearly lost us the deer, for the current being very strong hounds were cast all down to Alswear and below it, and the new pack was not quite up to the water work like the old one. A hound was now seen trying to make out a line upwards, and by dint of slotting the pack hunted up to him, and fresh found him in Blastridge Wood. Marvellous again to every one he broke from the water, and over the hill to Great Hele, and was finally run into Broomhill Farm, Georgenympton, at six o'clock. B. B. T. 2 and 2. Long clean points. Head given to Mr. Kendall. (This deer was on foot six hours and ten minutes, and must have covered an enormous distance, the two points being twenty miles apart as the crow flies, and as the deer ran between thirty and forty.—ED.)

February 21st, TRISCOMBE STONE.—A good deal of snow everywhere this morning. Found two hinds in Bagborough Plantation at 11.30; killed one very quickly, and laid the pack on two more, which had been viewed up the water under Great Wood. All up the stream to the top of Ramscombe, and checked, but fresh found on the top of the cover on the western side. Raced her over the hill to Sogs, down the bottom under Butterfly, turning to the left out of Hayman's Combe over Harenaps, and skirting the top of Adderscombe over the hill into Crowcombe Park; down the water as usual

1879. to the ponds, and round by the house, the hind now appearing on the top of the park at the eastern corner, and going all along the park fence, and over the hill to Steart, Somerton, and Birchen Wood, and all down the bottom to Holford; skirting the side of the hill above Holford into Sherbis Wood, across the road by Castle Comfort, into the valley by Doddington and Durborough, leaving Fairfield on the left and Stoke Courcy to the right, to Honeybeare Barton, Shurton Mill, and Wick; now bearing to the right by Farrington Hill, and on by Wick Park to Stockland and Otterhampton; across the lawn at Hill House, and on towards Combwitch, but was almost immediately after run into, and killed in a deep gully below at 4.8.

April 4th, HADDON.—Found several deer in Deer Park. Got a hind away towards Bittescombe by Haddon end. Laid on at 1.24. Ran her down the bottom towards Bittescombe Mill; broke to left from the lower corner of Bittescombe Wood, and turned back again; broke again from the top towards Middle Hill, and again back to cover above Lutley Water, bent apparently on going back to Haddon, but she turned down the valley again, and away. Passing Berry House, and crossing the Devon and Somerset Railway, she went on by Petton Chapel and on towards Clayhanger; over Crosse's Farm and Cudmoor to Huntsham, and all down the valley to Uploman; now turned to the right by Chevithorne, and round again to the Loman at Crazeloman, down the bottom to Goosebay and the gasworks, close to Tiverton Station. Here turned to the right across the Loman by Elmore, over Cowley Moor to Bolham, across the Exe to Worth, and by Washfield and Loxbere to Gibbet Moor, where she was killed in a gully near Combe Mill in Templeton parish, at twenty minutes after five.

September 19th, HELE BRIDGE.—Found a stag in Storridge Plantation which broke to Bittescombe, and thence to Maundown, and

down the Tone, under the railway viaduct to Trace Bridge; thence ^{1879.} by Holcombe Rogus and down the canal opposite Burlescombe village, and on across the Wellington and Wiveliscombe road to Slough, where fresh found, and killed him about a quarter of a mile from Tiverton Junction. Four hours and a half. A good deer, with all his rights and three on top, both sides.

September 22nd, BRENDON TWO GATES.—Two stags harboured in the Doone Valley—a new name. It *used to be* the combe between Hoccombe and Withycombe ridge. Rode them up and they went into Farley Combe, where laid the pack on by the road about 11.30. Across Farley Combe and over Cheriton ridge to the head of Hoar Oak and the Chains, then back by Blackpits to the North Forest towards Trouthill, where they divided. The pack stuck to one that turned away to the right by Pinford and along the Blackpits fence towards Longcombe; across the bottom to Larkbarrow, over Acmead and Porlock Common to Blackbarrow and Wear Water by Greenpath, and over the common to the left of Hawkcombe Head into Pitt Combe and through the plantations to Smallacombe. Here a long check and a fresh find (? fresh deer), and on along the length of the plantations, over the Lynton road a little west of the stables and down to Robber's Bridge; on into the next combe, across Chalk Water, over the enclosures above Oare to Deer Park and Badgworthy Water, up stream nearly to Tomshill and over the North Forest and Brendon Common as if for Scob Hill, but turned into Farley Combe and down to Ilford Bridges. Here he was headed, and went up the Cleeve as if for the West Lyn, but came down to the East Lyn and lay fast in the water; cast down to within a mile of Lynmouth, and then, fresh finding him, killed him at 2.30. A young deer. B. T. 2 and 1. Head to Mr. Knight.

November 29th, CLOUTSHAM.—Found a hind in Horner and ran

her by Alderman's Barrow to Badgworthy and back to Blackford (below Nutscale), where killed her. One hour and forty minutes racing without a check.

1880. *September 20th*, YARD DOWN.—A stag reported in Bray Ball Wood, but could find nothing save a hind and calf and a three-year-old male deer. After much assertion on the part of many that a stag had been found (probably only the male deer above mentioned, which was viewed at different points up the valley), the pack was taken out and laid on at 2.40, an hour after finding, but could hit no line before reaching the head of the cover facing Gratton Barton. From this slowly up the valley to the bridge under Leworthy, and over the large enclosures above Fullaford (where he had been viewed) and Showlsbarrow Castle to Mole's Chamber, and over Challacombe Common to the Barle; thence over the road and the Duredown enclosures to the Chains and down to Exe Head. Here two deer of the same sex and age were afoot, probably both from the Bray covers. They went on together along the edge of Blackpits to Brendon Two Gates and down the combe on the North Forest side of the wall, and here were fresh found in the stream. Now over Hoccombe to Doone Valley, where hounds again ran up to them, the deer still keeping together up Badgworthy Water to Trouthill flood-gate, whence they broke on to Manor allotment and separated. The hunted deer went on over Kittuck and Blackbarrow to Wear Water under Perryman's path, up it some way and over Porlock Common to the Exford road; down over Lucott Moor some way, then to the left into Hawkcombe crossing the centre of Shillets, over Porlock Hill (the deer attempting on the way to soil in a moist spot on the road) to Westcott Farm and over the enclosures to Furnace Wood, thence to Ashley Combe and through the line of Culbone enclosures into cover under Broomstreet, on to Yanworthy, and down to sea at Glenthorne about 5.55. He was taken by the Glenthorne boat and

killed. B. T. 2 and 2, beam light and points short. This was a 1880. great run, and few ever got to Porlock Hill out of a large field that was crying out for a run over the moor. Two only, Mr. Lindham and a Challacombe farmer, followed them through the covers to the end, the rest making sure he had gone to sea at Porlock Weir.

September 29th, YARNOR LODGE.—Found a fine stag in the plantations by Smallacombe ; he went on to Pitt Combe and broke over the Lynton road at 12.29. Pack laid on at 12.45. Away over the enclosures to Wear Water, up across it to the right over Mill Hill, where three more deer (all males) jumped up and went on with him to Chalk Water and Stowford Bottom, three going here to Manor allotment and a single one to Deer Park. Hounds were stopped for the moment and taken to Deer Park. They now hunted a line over the high ground overhanging Badgworthy Water, round to Langcombe, some three couple bringing a youngish deer over Manor allotment and across to the North Forest ; but the bulk of the pack was not with them, and this was certainly not the hunted deer. After much delay got the pack on the line and ran slowly to the Warren, across Orchard Combe and the Exe, up over the steep to the left of the Gallon House, across Chibbett Water's Head and by Honeymead and Picket's Hill to the Barle, crossing it under Cow Castle ; up over the South Forest, leaving Horsen and Winter's Head to the left, and over the enclosures by Emmett's to Filedon ridge ; away to the right over Yard Down, and down over the Filedon and Twitchen enclosures as if for Hearsley Mill, but turned to the right over the hill for Huntston and down by Loudy Cleeve to the Bray, under Reapham Wood. He had been viewed here five minutes before, but hounds could never hit the line again, though they were tried first down to Castle Hill deer park and then up to Newtown Bridge. The day was very hot, and the line lay over all the steepest combes on the moor ; the run altogether trying the hearts of all to the utmost

and astonishing some of the foreigners. All the horses had had enough, and some too much. (This deer took the line over the South Forest, which is so often found in the old records; being, in fact, the old line between Porlock and Bray. Only two deer have taken it in these later times; this, and that of October 2nd, 1877.—ED.)

October 13th, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Found a stag in Deer Park and ran by Chalk Water, Blackbarrow, Porlock Common, Nutscale, and Hoar Moor Post to Codsand House, Luckwell Bridge, and Little Quarne, where he was killed in one hour and twelve minutes from the find.

[Throughout the winter there were many good runs with the hinds between Badgworthy and Cloutsham. Up to 31st December, 1880, forty-six deer had been killed.]

1881. *February 9th*, HADDON.—Laid six and a half couple on three hinds in Hartford Cleeve. After driving them about the covers for nearly half an hour one broke at Wynne Corner and came round to Frogwell Lodge, where laid on the pack. Away over Skilgate allotments to Bittescombe Ponds, down the valley to Bittescombe Mills, to the left by Berry House and on by Venn Cross to the Waterow Viaduct, and down the valley a little way. Then to the left, parallel with the railway, on the south side of Wiveliscombe towards Milverton, crossed the railway and over the hill between Fitzhead and Preston Bowyer. Here the pack caught a view, and raced her on to Datscombe Plantation, near Bishop's Lydeard, where she was taken, dead beat, in a large enclosure adjoining. About three hours, very fast.

March 9th, HADDON.—Laid seven couple of hounds on a brace of hinds in Haddon Wood. After beating the covers some time they broke across Hartford Cleeve, and over the hill to Wynne Corner, down through Birch Wood and into the bottom, where they divided,

one going away by Baronsdown to the Exe above Barlynch. Over ¹⁸⁸¹. Court Down to Loosehall Wood and through Baldneck Marsh and Draydon Woods, to the Barle. Up through Hindham Wood and enclosures to Durham Plantation, and over the head of Whiterocks, Venford allotments, and Anstey Common to the Danesbrook, under Zeal. Up over Anstey Common towards Molland Gate, down to Bramblecombe and over into Combe Wood; over Guphill and Woods Farm and down the West Anstey bottom to Yeo Mill, and nearly to Molland Station, where hounds caught a view. Up again to Yeo Mill, over Kingsland and Dursley Farms to East Anstey Station, crossing the railway, and over the Parsonage Farm to Hawkwell and Venn Farms. Now down over the railway to the water under Nightcott and down the bottom nearly to Broxbridge, where hounds again viewed and raced her up to Brushford Green and the Combe road, where she was killed, after three hours without a check. Wonderful scent and a fine hind.

March 25th, YARNOR LODGE (the last day under Mr. Bisset's mastership on the forest).—Found a single hind in Smallacombe; she went down into Pitt Combe, doubled back to Smallacombe, and on to the western end of the plantations. Back again, crossed the Lynton road by Lillycombe, round and back by Deddycombe Cot, on over Yanworthy Common to County Gate, above Glenthorne to Wingate, and along the cliffs to Kipscombe. Then up over Countisbury Common, across the Lynton road to Wilsham, and back again to Countisbury Foreland, where she tried for the sea, but could not get down; and here hounds caught a view, running her on to Countisbury Church, and down Lynmouth cliff almost into Lynmouth, but here turning to the left she crossed the Lyn just above the town, and broke up over Lyn Cleeve to Barbrick Mill, and on to Furze Hill, where they checked, and there being no one with them but strangers, lost their deer. [Mr. Bisset was out but seldom during

1881. this hind-hunting season, and the accounts of the last three runs here given were copied by him from the reports of Arthur Heal, the huntsman. Mr. Bisset, however, hunted himself on the Quantocks from March 29th to the 6th of April, 1881, which latter day was the last of his mastership. On this last day a hind was found in Bagborough Plantation, and driven to sea at Lilstock after one hour and fifty minutes. She came ashore and was killed; and the records end with the words, "She too was ear-marked; the same as had been taken," with a blank after this sentence which was never filled up.]

On Mr. Bisset's resignation Lord Ebrington (the present master) took over the pack, killing his first stag on the 9th of August, 1881, the opening day of the season.

September 7th, YARD DOWN.—Found directly with three couple of tufters in Grattan Wood. The stag went up the bottom to Wallaford, then to the right by Withycombe and almost reached Longstone, but being hard pressed by the tufters (which could not be stopped) he came down over Whitefield (Mr. Crang's) to Buscombe, where after a bit of a bay he was taken and killed. A splendid stag, with all his rights, and three on top of both horns. *Dressed and clean* (of course without his head) he weighed twenty stone. In Arthur Heal's opinion the finest stag altogether that he ever killed. (Probably the finest ever killed in the country.)

Then came back and drew Grattan Wood again. Found a young stag and a young male deer, and laid the pack on the former in the bottom. He went up to Office Wood, then down almost to Brayford village, where he turned up over the hill to the East Bray, went up the bottom under Beera, and away up Little Comfort Combe for the forest. Across Vintcombe to the Barle, just above Driver (Dryford) Cot and out over to the Chains, to the right across Hoar Oak Combe, just above Exe Head, over Exe Plain to the Brendon road, about

five hundred yards short of Two Gates, and down Hoccombe to Badgworthy Water; down the valley to the Scrubbits, where he turned up and across the north side of Brendon Common, just outside the enclosures almost to Scob Hill, then to the left, and came to Farley Water by Peghill ford, down it to below Bridge Ball, where fresh found and killed him just above Ilford Bridges. Two hours and twenty minutes, very fast, with but one check—on Brendon Common. A four-year-old deer with B. B. T. 1 and 2. Very few at the end. 1881.

September 12th, HADDON.—Found in Haddon End Wood. Laid on about three-quarters of a mile south of Haddon End on the road. He broke over Gamblyn Farm as if for Haddon, turned to the left by Skilgate village to Skilgate Wood, down that to Morebath Wood, and back from it to Haddon by Brockhall and Leigh Farms and Chapple Wood. Turned to the left through the Haddon covers, almost to Wynne Corner (barely out of view), and back by Hartford Cleeve to Downe's Lodge. Here broke out to the right across the Allotments (in one of which he was fresh found), and on to Bittescombe Ponds. Up over from these without dwelling to the Middle Hill covers, and to water in the Tone by Washbottle Mill, up it to Tuck Mill, where he broke out to the east side, and went along the side of the valley past Clatworthy to Holcombe Bottom. Up that and to the right to Elworthy Barrows, down Elworthy Combe, and down the valley almost to Combe Sydenham, short of which he turned to the right, leaving Monksilver to the left, to Rowden and Escott Farms, and by Vellow over the West Somerset Railway to Woolston Moor, in a field adjoining which the hounds set him up. He broke bay and jumped into the road, but could not jump out, and was there taken and killed. Four hours and a half from the find. Scent was not good, and hounds could never really press him. A good deer, with B. B. T. 2 on each horn.

1881. *September 16th*, ANSTEY BARROWS.—Found in West Molland Wood, and ran by Hawkridge, Draydon, and Court Down to Stockham Wood, under which killed him, after two and a quarter hours. A good deer, with B. T. 3 on each horn.

September 21st, YARD DOWN.—Ran a deer with poor scent from Popham Wood to Mocombe Plantation, and on by Leworthy Cleeve, Westland Pound, and Chapman's Barrows, almost to Sadler's Stone, where lost him. He crossed the racecourse where Bratton races were going on, and spoilt a race.

September 23rd, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Found in West Porlock Combe, and ran by Leigh Hill, Horner, Dunkery, Stoke Common, Lucott and Porlock Commons, to Wear Water, and over the hill to the cliffs below Broomstreet, where the master, who had scrambled down after the hounds (who were in view), found the stag lying at the bottom of a frightfully steep place, with three hounds standing over his body, the rest not caring to face the steep where he came down. He was alive, but apparently too beat to be able to move, so was killed there. An old and somewhat heavy deer, with B. T. 2 and B. B. T. 2. A good run, and fast.

1882. *January 4th*, HADDON.—Found several deer in Haddon, and after working them about a bit got a hind away by Lonsie Gate, Hele Bridge Wood, Exe Cleeve, and Stockham Wood, to Court Down, where laid on the pack. Down through Loosehall Wood, up under Highercombe Meadow, and across Ashweek enclosures, Mountsey Hill, and Ashway Side, to the Barle below Tarr Steps. Here a long check, trying up nearly to Bradley without hitting the line, then down, and hit it at once into South Barton Wood, from the top of which she broke, by Parsonage and Westwater Farms, to Westwater and Withypool Commons, as if for Sandyway, but turned short to the

left, by the Molland track, to Willingford, down the valley and 1882. through Lishell Wood to Zeal; then to the right, up over Anstey Common, through Woodlands, crossing Churchtown to Badlake, and to the right, above Yeo Mills, to the main road; then westward nearly to Bommertown, fresh finding her by the road; then to the railway by Leigh, and on by it to Hall Farm, where killed her after a run of five hours. They raced her over the open, but over the enclosures scent was bad, and but for slotting we should hardly have got up to her. A young hind.

January 9th, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Found a hind at once in Lord Lovelace's plantations; through them to the western end, across the road down to Oare ford, and back to the plantations again to Twitchen. Broke over the Lynton road again, and over Porlock Common, nearly to Alderman's Barrow, and to the right over Kittuck, Manor allotment, and Deer Park, to Badgworthy Water below the wood, where killed her.

On the road home a single hind crossed from Tomshill across Kittuck close to the pack. Laid them on, and they ran over Mill Hill to the green path; up Wear Water, and across the Porlock road, to Great Hill and Chetsford Water; thence to the right, by Alderman's Barrow, Porlock Common, Kittuck, Manor allotment, and Deer Park, to Badgworthy Water. Down stream, and out to the left, over Badgworthy and Brendon Commons, to Farley Combe; down the water, and over by Farley Farm, to Hear Oak Water; up it a mile and a half, and to the left, back by Brendon Two Gates and over Brendon Common, towards Malsmead, but turned short to the right over Badgworthy Common to the water, and up it to the shepherd's cottage, where killed her. Hounds raced all day. (There were many fine runs with the hounds between Farley and Horner in the course of this season, which was a wonderful one for sport in autumn and winter alike.)

1882. *September 6th*, YARD DOWN.—Found at once in Bray Barton Wood. Laid on in the road above Bray School, and ran up to Leworthy Cleeve, where all but seven and a half couple went away after another deer. These, however, stuck to the hunted one, and brought him back to Hole Water, where killed him. A very fine stag, with B. B. T. 2 and B. T. 3.

The remainder of the pack (fifteen couple) ran on to Leworthy Post (Mr. C. H. Basset, of Pilton, taking command), and to the left to Moccombe Plantation, and on towards Kembland Cross, near which they set him up in a small cover, and he broke away in view straight for Stoke Rivers, and went down nearly to Chelpham Mill, but short of it turned to the left to Tree Beech, and down the valley to Goodleigh, crossed by the back of Willesleigh House, and over the Devon and Somerset Railway at the back of Landkey; then alongside the Landkey and Barnstaple road to Mount Sandford, across it, and over Coddon Hill, straight for Newbridge. Here the hounds checked, and the whip, who had gone in pursuit, stopped them and brought them back, but the huntsman coming on with the rest of the pack, the master decided to return, and the hounds recovering the line at Fishaton carried it through Hall nearly to Hawkridge Wood, and fresh found in a spinney by the Taw, opposite Umberleigh House. Raced him in view over the marshes below, and killed in the stream dividing the Wrey and Basset properties at 6 P.M. Scent was good and the pace very great. A four-year-old deer, with B. T. 2 on each horn. Head given to Mr. C. H. Basset. Hounds did not reach kennel till midnight. (The line taken by this deer was not unusual in the old days. This was the first deer driven *across* the Taw from the Bray or Bratton covers since September 25, 1818.—ED.)

September 28th, YARD DOWN.—A good stag reported in Bray Ball, but he either stole away unseen or was never found; so, not to lose a day, laid the pack on the line of a young stag (said to have two on

top) in Molland Wood at 3.50. He had been roused more than an hour before, and the hounds could only hunt it very slowly through Higher Molland Wood and across the enclosures south of Yard Farm to Span Wood, and up the combe to the road from Poltimore Arms to Simonsbath, as if for Mole's Chamber; but here he had followed the road for a quarter of a mile and across Kensford allotment to Kensford Water, and all the way down it to Sheardon, only leaving the stream now and then to jump a fence or cut off a bend in the water. Very pretty hunting. Just above Sheardon Farm he had waited and broke in view from Barcombe Plantation behind Sandyway, and now the pack began to race. Away, leaving Sandyway a little to the right, by Litton Foot to Willingford Water; out to the right below the higher bridge and over Soggy Moor (where he soiled in a bog pit) and Molland Common pointing for Molland, but swung to the left above the enclosures as far as the Brimley Bottom, down it some way and over to the left to Girt Wood and Combe Wood, and up the bottom under the latter, where the hounds got up to him. He turned round and came back, and was killed in the ditch that parts West Anstey and Molland parishes, a little below Bramblecombe Farm, at 5.40. Two hours and fifty minutes from the lay on. A young deer with B. T. and uprights. (This, again, was formerly not an unusual line, but this was the first deer that had taken it for a great many years.—ED.)

December 28th, VINNIFORD CROSS.—Drew Tivington Plantation blank, then Bratton Court Plantation and found six deer. Got a single hind away and laid on the pack. Ran over the hill above Hopcote Brake, keeping to the right across Grabbist, Knowle Hill, and the Minehead road by Avill and through Whitewood into Harewood. Then back to Boniton, by Dunster Park to Withies, over Aller Hill to Withycombe Hill, from thence to Combe Farm and Sherwood cover; leaving Rodhuish to the right on to Sandell Farm

and Billbrooke, pointing for the sea at Blue Anchor. But, puzzled by the railway line, she turned to the right through Old Cleeve, Stoate's Plantation, and Bye Farm nearly to Kentsford, and on the west side of the railway to Watchet cliffs, where she went over and was killed on the beach. A very fast run of two hours without a check ; and a very fine hind.

[There were as usual many good runs with the hinds over the moor, and one was run from Haddon Wood to Sandyway and back to Willingford, where she was lost in the dark.]

1883. Stags being very numerous the hounds hunted four days a week from the 9th of August to the 13th of October, 1883.

August 13th, PITT COMBE HEAD.—Ran a young stag from Pitt Combe to Wear Water, Blackbarrow, Lucott Moor, Nutscale, over the whole length of Dunkerry, on over Grabbist, and killed him in Minehead town. Two hours and forty minutes fast over the open, but slow hunting over the enclosures. He carried brow and two on top on each horn—a peculiar head.

August 18th, PITT COMBE HEAD.—A good run from the Plantations to Blackbarrow, Larkbarrow, Deer Park, Farley, Hoar Oak, Furzehill, and almost to Sadler's Stone, where hounds were stopped, being on a hind and calf. Deer all over the place.

August 22nd, YARD DOWN.—Found a stag in Kedworthy Wood and ran very fast over the open to Simonsbath and to the Exe by the Warren, killing him just above Exford. Fifty minutes fast.

September 10th, HADDON.—Drew the covers up and down in pouring rain till 4.30, when found four stags in Easter Coppice. They ran one (an old stag) across the valley, over Haddon Hill and away by Pixey Copse and on to the Exe by Chain Bridge, losing

him dead beat in the Ironmill Water at 7.45. Hounds did not get home till midnight. Found the same deer on the 11th of October in Haddon Wood, and, after a turn out towards Kingsbrompton, ran him nearly rack for rack on the same line to Spurway Mill, where killed him. On this last day a certain doctor of Dulverton attended woman in a deeply interesting condition on his way to the meet, visited her again when the hounds ran past Bury, went on and saw the stag killed, and then returned in time to assist at the birth of a fine boy. 1883.

September 22nd, PITT COMBE HEAD.—Found a fine stag in Ashley Combe, ran him to Westcott Brake, back across Pitt Combe, and over the Lynton road, a little west of Oare Cross. Laid on at 1.15. Ran along parallel to the road to Metcombe, where a fresh stag jumped up before them, and they ran him into and up Lillycombe, and on below the road to the end of the Plantations, then across to Yanworthy Common and along it, turning down between the Oare road and County Gate to the water, up through Southern Wood (the deer again in view at the head of the little combe going down to Slocombslade), and on to Longcombe, out over the deep ground to the Brendon road, down over to Farley Water, up over Cheriton ridge (the deer again in view), on to Hoar Oak Water and Furze-hill Common, and along Lynton Common, at the head of the waters to the track below Sadler's Stone ; below which the hounds crossed Shallowford Combe, and went on to the Woodbarrow fence. Beside this some way, then out to the right over Chapman's Barrow allotment and into Challacombe parish, then to the left back to the boundary track a mile or so short of the Challacombe road. Thence they slanted the hill, a little to the left of Pinkworthy pond, to Dryford, crossed the Barle, and went up the combe a little to the left of Mole's Chamber to Bray Common, pointing for Kedworthy Wood. Turned to the left short of it, and on into Little Comfort Combe, and

1883. down this to Beera Wood. On by Withygate and Higher Molland Wood to water about half-way down, hit the line out on the east side opposite to Rock's Head, on through the enclosures and covers and along the road under Popham and Walscot, working up to him at last in the water at the top of the meadow above Brayley Bridge. He fought gallantly to the last, but was taken and killed at 3.35 under Embercombe, a quarter of a mile above Castle Hill deer park. One of the finest runs known for some years. Five only (including the master and huntsman) saw it throughout, a few more caught them at Farley, and yet a few more struggled to the end without having seen a hound for the day. A good deer B. T. 3 on each horn.

October 4th, LARKBARROW.—Found a herd with one couple of tufters in the Doone Valley at 11.30. Got a stag away single by Two Gates, and ran him over into the Bray Valley, where lost him. Forty-five minutes from Two Gates to Hole Water.

October 8, PITT COMBE HEAD.—A good run from Mariner's Combe (Lord Lovelace's plantation), by Hawkcombe, Horner, and Cutcombe, to Quarme Water, where killed him. One hour and fifty minutes. A very old deer with a small body, a small slot, and a very peculiar head.

October 13th, CLOUTSHAM.—Found the old one-horned stag at once in Sweetworthy. He crossed the bottom to Cloutsham Ball (where laid the pack on without stopping tufters) down to the water, up over Leigh Hill by Wreacombe, crossed Leigh Combe to Bell's Wood, and to the valley by Bucket Hole, right up it and to the head of Shilletts, out to the left, across Wear Water by Green Path, over Mill Hill and Chalk Water to Oare Common and Deer Park, and down bending to the left to Badgworthy Water at the south-east corner. Hunted him up the Badgworthy, Hoccombe, and Trouthill

Waters to Buscombe, and away over Hoccombe and on to Brendon 1885. Common, close by Two Gates, but could not face the hill westward so came back all but in view down the combe, over Badgworthy Lees to the Doone Valley, where they got up to him and killed him almost at the very place where he had first crossed Badgworthy Water. A race from find to finish, fifty-five minutes from the lay on. Only a dozen with them when they first reached Badgworthy; the rest of the field arriving there by the time he had run to Two Gates and back again.

October 20th, EGGESFORD STATION.—Found in Head Wood, and ran all up the Mole and Bray Valley to Brayford, where killed him. A good stag.

November 14th, DOONE VALLEY.—After finding a herd of fourteen deer, and losing a single hind which was separated from them, laid the tufters at 1.8 on the line of a hind by Brendon road, and ran slowly over Farley to Hoar Oak, where she and a yearling jumped up in view. The tufters settled on the hind and raced her by Two Gates and Hoccombe to Badgworthy Water and Deer Park. On to Oare Common (where laid on the pack) and pointed for Oareford, but turned again as if for Larkbarrow, and finally across Chalkwater by Stowford, over Mill Hill to Wear Water by the Green path, then to the right to Colley Head, Lucott Common, and to water below Nutscale, down the water to Poole enclosures and up over pointing for Old Wood; but being headed, she turned back nearly to Poole House, where she let the hounds come up to her. Raced her down the lane towards Combe, but she distanced them and returned to Wilmersham Common, and crossed it to Langcombe, and breaking at the head of it ran along the south side of Dunkery to the top of Bincombe, and on as if for Hannacombe, but turned to the right to Spangate, followed the fence some way, and crossed the corner into

1883. Hannacombe. Down it nearly to Wootton Courtney, doubled back to the lane by Wootton ford, along it southward some little way, and then through the enclosures under Eames' brake, back almost to Dunkery, but turned to left over the hill to North Hawkwell Plantation, through the meadow up to the farmhouse and up to North Hawkwell, where they hunted up to her in the leat and killed her at 3.38. Two hours and a half from hitting the line on the Brendon road. Very fast as far as Hannacombe, but slower after that. An excellent run. Master, huntsman, Mr. W. Paramore, and Captain Yearsley the only ones at the end.

November 17th, DUNKERY HILL GATE.—A very wild morning of wind and rain. Found four deer opposite Oaktrow Wood and ran up to Dunkery, where, after rousing a dozen more deer, a single hind went away from Hannacombe and away over Dunkery, on by Alderman's Barrow to Badgworthy Water under Manor allotment. Here fresh found her and raced her up Hoccombe, over Badgworthy Lees to Doone Valley, up to the Brendon fence and back over Hoccombe to the North Forest, killing her in the next combe. A very fast run of one hour from Hannacombe. Every hound up.

1884. *January 3rd, DOONE VALLEY.*—Found eight deer on Brendon Common, ran them to Scob Hill, bringing back a single hind from there, which ran by Badgworthy, Hawkcombe Head, and Lucott Common to Horner Mill, where she was killed after a run of one hour and thirty-five minutes, without a check and at racing pace.

January 21st, LARKBARROW.—Found twenty-three deer at the head of Longcombe. Ran towards Farley and brought back five to Two Gates and away over the North Forest to the Warren wall, bringing a single hind back to Longcombe and to Badgworthy Wood, and up Longcombe again. Laid on the pack at 12.45 (having run

with the tufters since 11.40), and away over Brendon Common to 1884. Farley, Cheriton ridge,' and Hoar Oak ; up Hoar Oak Water some way, back to Farley and down to Bridge Ball, where killed her at 1.25. A very fast gallop.

March 19th, TRISCOMBE STONE.—Found a hind in Seven Wells. She came away over Cockercombe to Bagborough Hill, where laid on the pack at 12.30. Through Bagborough Plantation and over the vale by Lawrence Lydiard to Combe Florey, thence back to the left by Cothelstone pond and Tetton, up to the left there and back over Buncombe Hill nearly to Aisholt, then over the vale by Bush, Pightley, Broomfield, Windown, Stream, and Rook's Castle, to Haswell Park. Here a long check, but hit it off and ran through Huntstile and Road Farm to Durleigh, where they caught a view and killed her about a mile from Bridgwater. Five hours and a quarter, nearly all over the vale ; slow, but quite fast enough, the fences being big and frequent.

[As in other years, there were many other good runs with hinds in the course of this season.]

On the 26th of March the hounds brought two beaten deer, a hind and a calf, to Horner mill-stream, and forced both over the mill-wheel. The hind was killed, but the calf, after one night's lodging at Horner Farm, was turned out apparently none the worse.

The opening day of this stag-hunting season was the hottest hunting day ever remembered. The hounds stopped and lay in the water whenever they came to it, and a hound was seen lying close to a stag, which he had been running, in Horner Water, both too exhausted to move. The hound recovered first and drove the stag out. The meet on this day (August 11th) was Holmbush Gate instead of Cloutsham ; the Master wishing, owing to the recent death of Mr. Bisset, to avoid the usual big opening day at Cloutsham.

1884. *August 18th*, PITT COMBE HEAD.—Found a stag in Pitt Combe ; ran him fast to Badgworthy and down to Malsmead, then over the hill to Glenthorne, where he jumped over eighty feet of cliff and was killed. The leading hounds were in view and five of them had followed him before they could be stopped. “Sovereign,” a very good hound, was killed on the spot ; “Foreman,” the best in the pack, and “Rochester” had to be killed where they lay ; “Rufus” recovered but was hopelessly crippled ; but “Latimer” was hunting again before the end of October. A miserable end to a good little run of an hour. A fine stag.

August 25th, TRISCOMBE STONE.—Found in Ashleigh Combe. The tufters could not be stopped and went away with the deer across the Parret, a mile above Combwich Passage. The tufters swam across and hit the line on the other side. The master and two others with him (who had managed to catch them at Brymore) followed in a boat, leaving their horses, and followed them on foot. The deer was captured just below Black Rock by a pilot-boat ; but the pilot-boat was pursued by Mr. Hunt (one of those with the master) and caught at Burnham, where the deer (being thoroughly exhausted) was killed. A fine stag with all his rights, and three on top both sides. Scent was very bad throughout, and the huntsman who had been left with the pack to draw for another deer could do nothing. It would have been absurd to send for the pack to Brymore after the other deer.

September 5th, PITT COMBE HEAD.—Found a one-horned stag in Lillycombe. He went westward to the Lyn below Southern Wood, where laid on the pack. Very slow hunting over the enclosures to Scob Hill, over Brendon Common to Farley, and across Cheriton ridge to Hoar Oak and right up the water to Long Chains Combe. Fresh found here and went back to the Lyn under Southern Wood in thirty-three minutes ; a very fast burst. Then up over to Countis-

bury Common, and back to the Lyn under Brendon Barton Wood, ^{1884.} up over the fields at the head of the cover as if for Farley, down again across the water and on as if for Barbrick Mill, but turned down over Lyn cliff and crossed the hill on the right bank for the sea. They set him up a little east of Lynmouth and drove him at last to sea, where he was soon taken, brought in, and killed. A youngish deer, with B. B. T. 1 on his one horn (the off), the near horn broken off short above the burr. He had been on foot nearly six hours, covering a great distance and giving a very good day's sport.

September 24th, YARD DOWN.—Found in Lower Molland Wood a young stag. Up through Higher Molland Wood, Yard enclosures, Beera Wood, Sherracombe Farm to Little Comfort Combe; up the combe and down beside the wall dividing Stranger's and Acland's allotments to the Barle, down the right bank nearly to Cornham Mills, up by the house and over Titchcombe, crossed the Exe midway between Exehead and the road, on by Blackpits to the Brendon road four hundred yards short of Two Gates, and over Lanacombe, Hoccombe, and Badgworthy Leas to the water. Then up over Deer Park and by the head of Stowford Bottom to Oare Common and Chalk Water. Here they divided on a hind and calf, and only two couple held the right line over Mill Hill to Wear Water, where they were stopped. A very fast gallop of an hour and a quarter from the find to Wear Water.

September 26th, VINNIFORD CROSS.—Drew Heddon Plantation blank and went to Cloutsham. Found a fine stag under Stoke, ran him to Wilmersham Common, back over Cloutsham enclosures to Sweetworthy, and away by Snow's Path, Alderman's Barrow, Mill Hill, Robber's Bridge, and the plantation, to sea by Ivystone, whence we failed to recover him. A very fast run and a splendid stag.

1884. *September 29th*, WINSFORD HILL.—An unlucky day; from Hindham Wood up the Barle valley to Well Wood, and by Bradley over the hill to Burr Wood, and after some ringing to Stockham Wood, where, after persevering some time by moonlight, gave him up at 8.45.

October 3rd, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Roused a stag on Brendon Common, but missed him among the herd, so went to the Warren, where Kingdon, the blacksmith of Simonsbath, was watching a stag for us. Roused him, and away over the North Forest to Brendon Common, over the wet ground to Longcombe, down it a little, then to the left towards Slocombslade, and swinging to the right to water under Southern Wood. A burst of five-and-twenty minutes' racing. Up stream to the higher end of the wood, and over the hill to the Plantations. Through them to Pitt Combe, where he was headed, but he broke by Oare Post to Wearwater, up it to the Exford road, over Lucott Common to Blackford Combe, and through Lucott Brake to water by Stoke Mill. Up the road a little way and back to the valley down to Poole Bridge and below. Up and beside the new path to Horner Gate, down Yealscombe to Horner Green, back up the road to water, round by Cloutsham Ball, over the Eastwater to Parsonage furse. Fresh found him here, set him up at Eastwater's Foot, and down to the Millstream, where he was taken at 4.45. An excellent run, but a young deer. B. T. 1 on each horn.

October 27th, DOONE VALLEY.—Found three hinds and a calf on Badgworthy Common, raced them to Scob Hill and back to Two Gates, where the calf lay down and the single hind went back. Laid on the pack by the Brendon road, on some way to Scob Hill and back by Badgworthy to Horner Water, where killed after one hour and forty-five minutes without a check.

November 8th, CULBONE STABLES.—Found a lot of deer in the

plantations by Oareford. Got a hind away over the road where laid 1884. on the pack. On through the plantation and Westcott Brake to Shilletts, on through Lucott Farm to Blackford, up the water to Nutscale, and on over Wilmersham and Stoke Common to Sweetworthy. Here ran into a herd, but two and a half couple stuck to the hunted hind and ran her by Holt Ball Brake to Tivington Plantation, and on to Bratton Court Plantation, where caught them with the rest of the hounds (which had run to Great Hill and back to Aldercombe), on over North Hill towards Minehead, leftwards down to Greenaleigh, along the north side of the hill to Minehead, across the Station road to the Marshes, where a check. Hit the line forward and ran almost to Dunster Station, where killed her, a fine hind. She had been on foot five hours. The West Somerset Foxhounds were running in Tivington Plantation, and their field nearly all joined the staghounds.

November 15th, DOONE VALLEY.—After a deal of ringing between Brendon Common and Hoar Oak, with a number of deer afoot, the greater part of the pack went away from Brendon Common wet ground, over Hoar Oak Water, by Furzehill, Buttery Mill, and Chapman's Barrows to Highleigh. Fresh found their hind, ran her on to Tennerleigh, pointing for Westland Pound, but turned to the left near Whitefield allotment, and again to the left over Woolhanger, killing her in the dark in Farley Water, high up the combe. Not a soul with them.

February 9th, BRENDON TWO GATES.—A very hard day from 1885. Brendon wet ground to Farley, back to Badgworthy, thence to Nutscale, back to Badgworthy, and thence to Luccombe Plantation, killing our hind just above the church. Five hours; very fast except from Alderman's Barrow to Badgworthy, and from Shilletts to Luccombe.

1885. *February 11th*, MARSH BRIDGE.—Found a hind and a young one in Burrige Wood. They divided in cover, and the hind crossed above the kennels to North Moor. Laid on the pack. She went as far as Summerhouse, and then doubled back to the copse above North Moor, where she was fresh found. Ran her all up the Barle Valley, in and beside the river, to Bradley Ham, where she crossed the water by South Hill Farm to Withypool Common, and along that, parallel to and south of the North Molton road, to within four hundred yards of the Litton allotments; then to the right, to the gate above Lanacre Bridge, and down over to Kensford Water under Ferny Ball. Crossed the Ball, in the next field to the house, to Cow Castle, and thence right up the valley, hounds all but viewing, to Cornham Mills; turned out opposite Ricksy Ball for the Bray, but on reaching the top backed it over Vintcombe to the Barle above Dryford. Here the hounds checked, and a fox jumping up, the tenant of Dryford (never dreaming that the staghounds could have run all the way from Dulverton by one P.M.) cheered the puppies on to him. They soon stopped and were got together, but during this delay the rest had hit the right line up the Barle Valley, turning to the left short of Challacombe, and over the common and enclosures to the Bray under Kipscombe Wood. She was last seen near the Friendship Inn pointing for the Tithecombe covers, with two couple and a half still after her. An unsatisfactory end to a great run. Straight as a line (barring the turn over Ricksy Ball) almost from the mouth of the Barle to its source and beyond; as she ran, a distance of about thirty-five miles. Very fast, reaching Simonsbath in an hour and a half from the find. Most of the field were beaten off at Cornham, and none got beyond Challacombe.

Two very hard days one after another, covering over thirty miles on each.

September 11th, HAWKCOMBE HEAD.—Drew Greenclose Wood, but

found only hinds ; then the plantations from Twitchen Combe east-^{1885.}ward. About 1.40 found a stag, which Miles had harboured on Yarner Nap. He went westward, and the tufters were stopped, and the pack laid on in the plantations fifteen minutes later. From Silcombe, however, he turned up, and crossed the Lynton road to Lillycombe, keeping round the brow of the hill to Metcombe, across Wear Cleeve to Wear Water, and up on to Mill Hill by the path under Black Barrow. The pack had got scattered in the covers, but the leading hounds were stopped here by the master. Laid them on afresh at 2.25, and ran to Chalk Water by Stowford Bottom ; up that and over Deer Park to Badgworthy Water, opposite Doone valley. The deer broke out above Badgworthy Wood, and went up Longcombe, then up over Withycombe ridge, and nearly to Doone valley, running into a herd of hinds just outside the Brendon Common fence, which occasioned a slight check. Then on, parallel to the Doone valley, and by the ponds, to Farley Water by Markaway path ; over Cheriton ridge (when the stag was viewed) to Hoar Oak Water, a little below the Forest wall, which he now broke over for Hoar Oak Hill and the Chains. Passing by Chains Barrow they turned down over Dryford allotment to the east end of Goat Hill and the Barle, five hundred yards above Dryford Cot. Here another slight check, the deer going up stream a quarter of a mile. He then broke out over Roostitchen, and going round the north side of Showlsbarrow came through the enclosures to the road by Five Ways ; down this same way towards Leworthy Bridge, in over Grattan fields, and passing close by the house sank the valley to the Bray under Ovis. Here Miles, who had gone right well on the same horse on which he had been harbouring since daylight, caught a view, and capping the hounds on, they got up to him at Leworthy Bridge. They ran him in view some little way down, then back, and killed him just below the bridge at 4.10. A very fine run. Scent was not first-rate, but they went quite fast enough. About a dozen saw it throughout, among

1885. them five ladies—Mrs. Turner, Mrs. Bellew, Mrs. Byass, Miss C. Halliday, and Miss A. Williams. A fair stag with an honest B. T. 2 on both horns. Three hounds changed on to another deer at Badgworthy and ran it to Hawkridge.

September 16th, PITTCOMBE HEAD.—Drew the plantation on the north side of the road for some time, blank ; then went to the south side and found a stag at 2.30 above Robber's Bridge, which, in spite of all efforts, broke' up into the big plantation. After running here for some time and putting up a male deer, he broke away by Oare Post (having been blanced at Pitt Combe Head), to Wear Cot and Wear Water, up stream to Colley Water, out to the right to Chalk Water, Kittuck, Deer Park, and to Badgworthy Water at the ford above Cloud. Up the water, broke from it up Longcombe and across the Brendon road to Farley Water, by Peghill ford. Cast down to Bridge Ball without success, then back over Cheriton ridge with the same result, so returned to the water, where they hunted the stale line downward till Arthur dismounting made out that he had backed it on his foil and gone up. Cast up accordingly, and at last hit out above Elson Barrow and fresh found their stag in the Cleeve at six o'clock. He at once recrossed the valley and pointed for Scobhill, but could not face the steep and turned down through Farley enclosures to the water, where he was killed a little above Farley House at 6.10. Every hound up. A good bodied deer with a small head. B. T. 2 on both horns.

September 23rd, MOUNTSEY HILL GATE. — Found four stags in Loosehall Wood ; ran one very sharp up the valley and killed him under Withypool. The Revising Barrister was holding his Court at Withypool that day, and he with the whole of the Court rushed out to see the finish ; after which progress was reported and the Court resumed. A second stag was killed this day in Barlynch Weir Pool.

October 2nd, CLOUTSHAM.—A strange scene was witnessed this day. 1885. Two deer, the one the hunted stag (which was fresh found), the other a fresh stag, were roused together in the new plantation in Leigh Combe. The two got together and began fighting, each wishing to make the other do duty before the pack, which was close to them all the time. The question was settled in favour, or rather in prejudice, of the hunted deer by the hounds themselves.

October 8th, CLOUTSHAM.—Found a young stag (sworn to be a portentous animal) in Hollow Girts. Ran him into Horner and away by Yelscombe. Pack laid on at 1.20, fifty-five minutes after finding, and twenty-five behind the deer. Ran up through Halsecombe, and by the head of Doverhay Combe to Leigh Combe and Bell's Wood. Here he made a curious double, and there was a short check. Hit it off under Bucket Hole and crossed to Porlock Side; all up the valley, crossed from Shilletts to Westcott Brake and Smallacombe; broke from this at the top and away to Oare Post and Wear Cot. Down the valley to the enclosures, over Mill Hill to Chalk Water, up to Stowford Bottom, and by Manor allotment to Deer Park and Badgworthy Water by the Cottages. Viewed the deer on the opposite side and clapped hounds on. Away over Withycombe ridge to Longcombe, up it a bit and out below the Withy Tree as if for Brendon Barton, but bore to the left to Farley Water at Peghill ford. Cast up to Elson's Barrow. No use. Then down, and in the second marsh "Clinker" spoke. Fresh found him under Farley, ran down to Bridge Ball, and set him up in a fence. He broke through them and got on to the bridge, where he jumped over the parapet, coming a cropper. "Cardinal" followed him, and alighting on the deer's body escaped unhurt. They worked him down a little way and he broke through them and turned to bay in the doorway of an out-house; but the pack went straight at him and pulled him out. Such a thing was never seen before. Here he was

1885. taken and killed. A capital run. Three hours from find to finish ; two from the lay on, and quite fast enough. A fair deer with B. B. T. 2 on each horn.

October 26th, TRISCOMBE STONE.—Found a young hind in Middle Hill. Ran her into Bagborough Plantation nearly to the north end, then turned and broke into Aisholt Combe ; thence by Plainsfield into Cockercombe, and from that by Seven Wells and Reddon's Hill to Govetts, and away. Crossed Five Lawns to Duke's Plantation and Sherbis Wood, and trying to break from this to Woodlands Hill she was headed ; so now went away across the vale by Woodlands Farm, Fairfield, Shurton, Faringdon Hill, Wick Park, Woolston, Stockland Bristol, Catford Marsh, and Wall Common. Here a long check on the beach, but going on towards Steart we found she had crossed the flats, and was stuck in the mud near Steart Point. She was taken and killed, after a good hunting run of three hours.

November 9th, LYNTON.—Found an outlying hind in Crosscombe, in Martinhoe parish, and killed her in the Lyn under Lyn Cliff. Thus within a fortnight hounds found and killed a deer at Crosscombe and Steart Point, places nearly forty miles apart as the crow flies.

November 13th, HADDON.—After some troublesome work with about eighteen deer, got a single hind away by Westhill Wood to Holworthy Bottom, and by Hill to King's Brompton Farm. The tufters were not to be stopped, but the pack, which was laid on a little after one P.M., ran at a good pace, nevertheless, to Goose Moor, and passing close by the mine there, to Lype Common, skirting the plantation. Now turned to the left to the head of Hart Cleeve, crossed it, on close to Couple Cross, and thence to Stowey House ; thence bore to the right by Beasley, where we caught sight of the

tufters (which had gone round by Timberscombe Wood and Bickham Meadows) in a field above the cottages at the end of Draper Way. Lifted the pack, and caught them in the combe between Harwood and Elworthy; up it to Span Gate, breaking on to Dunkery a little to northward of it. Now ran the whole length of Dunkery to Langcombe Head, keeping nearly on the top of the hill the whole way; up the road a little way, then to the right parallel to Snow's Path, and to Chetsford Water about half a mile below the bridge. Tried down to below Nutscale without success, though they could touch it where she had left the water for a few yards at the bottom of Embercombe; then tried up, but again without success, and at last we had to give it up, fairly beaten by this gallant hind. Scent, which had at first been very good, became catchy on Dunkery, and to this she owed her life. In all probability we left her lying dead beat under some bush or in some patch of rushes. A first-rate run over a very unusual line.

On the 4th of December the huntsman found the remains of a two- or three-year-old male deer near Drucombe Gate. Like Abraham's ram, he was hung in a thicket by the horns, and had perished miserably two or three weeks before he was discovered. There was no reason to suspect foul play in the matter.

December 16th, DOONE VALLEY.—A very fast run from Withycombe ridge to Scob Hill, back to Badgworthy, and again by Scob Hill to Watersmeet; back once more, by Ilford Bridges and Bridge Ball to Hoccombe on the North Forest, down to Southern Wood and up to Malsmead, where killed her. Very fast throughout. Only one besides the huntsman was with them all the time.

January 4th, SCOB HILL.—Found fifteen hinds between Scob Hill and Longcombe. After working them about the common got

1886. one away single by Badgworthy Wood to Deer Park, where the pack (which was kennelled in Doone valley) was laid on. Away over Oare Common to Chalk Water, where a slight check, and on below Stowford Bottom to Mill Hill; thence to the right between Black Barrow and Wear Water (the hind in view), and by Colley Water, to Lucott Moor, Nutscale, Great Hill, and Chetsford Water; on below Snow's Path and some way on the south side of Dunkery; turned short down to Bagley, and down under Sweetworthy, then up the path over Easter Hill, where two deer were before them. From this point not a soul was with them, the huntsman's horse having cast a shoe, and no one else near them. They went on alone to Bincombe, over it and the bottom of Annicombe to Luccombe Alders and Plantations; thence through the enclosures to Blackford, East Lynch, Hindon, and Bratton Court, and over North Hill to Greenaleigh, where the deer went to sea. But it was not the hunted hind, but a male calf. There were deer all over the place, and on Dunkery the pack divided before the bulk of the hounds went down into Sweetworthy, where they divided once more. The huntsman having got his second horse, stopped the hounds running about Dunkery, and did his best to pick up the hunted hind, but without success. A very fine run, the pace tremendous. A foggy day with drizzling rain, which did not make it easier to keep hounds in sight.

February 8th, MARSH BRIDGE.—A very good run from Whiterocks to Sandyway and back to Broford. Only the master and huntsman anywhere near them; and they were beaten off by the pace and patches of frozen ground. Scent was very good on this day, as also on another of slight frost and snowstorms (January 18th), when they ran a very strong hind from South Hill to Haddon, from Haddon to Hawkridge ridge, finally killing her in the Exe under Stockham. Four hours without a check.

February 9th, KEEPER'S COTTAGE, WINSFORD HILL.—Found a hind and a male deer in the Allotments. Separated them and laid pack on the hind at 11 a.m. She broke near Follleys, and went away by Wambarrow to Ashe Wood, Bye Hill, and the Exe; up the water, out short of Lincombe, and over Staddon Hill to Peen and the head of Harespath; down the lane towards Dunkery Gate a little way, then across by Codsend Moors and Higher House to Dunkery, crossed to westward of the Beacon, and then swung round the north side to Red Girts; down by them nearly to Luckham Alders, then to the left just above the enclosures to Horner Mill. One hour so far, best pace. Arthur cast up some little way, but soon returned, and hit the line out below Horner on to Clattery Way. She followed this to Halsecombe, went up that and down again; then on the path towards Doverhay, and backed it by the middle path to Halsecombe, and over Clatters to Doverhay Combe. Down the combe, then up beside the fence and through the new plantation to Hawkcombe Water. Arthur again cast up, but soon returned, and hunted her down almost to the Mill, then up and down the lane and into little Halsecombe. Here at last, after all this short running, he fresh found her, when she came back to the water and down through Porlock town a little way; back and up the road nearly to Peepout, then short back on the other road opposite, and leaving Doverhay on the right crossed the enclosures as if for Bossington, but turned short back up the watery lane, and on the main road as far as West Luccombe. Here she turned short once more and went all down the stream past Breakneck to Lynch Bridge. Fresh found her here, and raced her beside the water to the sea, which she reached just ahead of the hounds, in two hours and twenty minutes from the find. It was quite calm, and most of the hounds swam out after her, but she had the pace of them by sea as well as by land. A boat went out and she was taken and killed. A very fine hind and a very strong one, as may be seen from the foregoing. A grand run

1886. which the master, the huntsman, Miles (the harbourer), and Mr. Glasse had pretty well to themselves.

February 12th, HADDON.—Found five hinds in Deer Park. Ran them to Bittescombe allotment, and after some trouble brought a single one back to Deer Park. Laid the hounds on her, and ran over Haddon Hill to Hartford Cleeve, then back above Deer Park, where she joined five stags, the whole lot going on across Skilgate Common to Surridge allotment. Stopped hounds and rode the hind out, thence ran her back to Huscombe Wood, and through Haddon Wood to Wynne Corner, through Birch Wood, and down stream to Bury. She broke out on the left bank, and turned back over Haddon and Chapple Farms to Murleighs, and past Frogwell Lodge to Skilgate Common once more. Thence to the right, over Surridge Farm for Skilgate Wood, but backed it to the common, and went nearly to Bittescombe Ponds, turning short of them down the valley to Bittescombe and Raddington Mills. After passing the latter she turned up over Bremridge Farm to Gamblyn, then leftward to the railway, which she crossed by Petton; on over Nutcombe Farm to Bowen Gate, passing on to the western side of Clayhanger and on to the Hockford Water. Here they fresh found her, and racing her to Cowling's Farm, killed her a mile and a half below Huntsham. A good run of four hours, very fast. Arthur Heal, the huntsman, rode the same horse all day, having started at 7.45 A.M., and returning to kennels at 8 P.M.

February 26th, HADDON.—Found several deer in Upton Wood. After some trouble drove a hind across the valley to Haddon Wood, and down through Birch Wood to Bury, thence leftward to England's Wood and over Haddon Farm to Murleighs; along the hill by Frogwell Lodge to Skilgate Common, where laid on the pack. Away straight to Bittescombe Ponds, and, after beating down the valley

some way, to Middle Hill. Here they dwelt some time in cover, but 1886. broke away to Chipstable, Huish Champflower, and Jew's Farm : on, leaving Wiveliscombe to the right, to Ford, passing Oakhampton House on the left through Gould's Plantation, Fitzhead, and Halse to Heathfield Rectory and Oak Church, eventually reaching Nynhead, about a mile from Wellington, where stopped them as we found we were on a stag. They must have changed on Middle Hill. Those who went the whole distance were Mr. Kendall, Mr. C. Glasse, Mr. Ward, Miss Ellis, Miles the huntsman, and another. The hounds had thirty miles to go home and reached kennels at midnight, having started at 7.45 A.M. to go fourteen miles to the meet. Arthur Heal again missed his second horse and rode his first (not the same animal as on the 12th) the whole of this very hard day, but the animal was none the worse for the sixteen hours' riding, nor for the distance (probably not far short of eighty miles) that was covered in the course of it.

This season, the fifth of Lord Ebrington's mastership, began on the 31st of July, 1885, and terminated on the 25th of March, 1886 ; in all eighty-five hunting days, wherein seventy-three deer were killed. The stag-hunting was very good, and the hind-hunting about the best on record.

[In order to give some notion of the sport enjoyed in the old days of stag-hunting, the Editor ventures here to insert two runs, which occurred within a week of each other, in the stag-hunting season of 1815. The accounts are taken from the MS. journal at Castle Hill during the mastership of Hugh, first Earl Fortescue.]

Wednesday, September 27th.—Met at Heasley Mill. Tufted South 1815. Radworthy Wood. A deer went out over the Old Park with the

1815. tufters after him, and on the assurance of some of the company that he appeared to be a warrantable stag the pack was laid on in the road above Heasley Mill ; saw him go over the Mines, and, on his then looking like a young deer, tried to stop the hounds, but in vain. Went up Mines Wood for the moor over Filedon ridge ; over the Sheardown Water for the Barle ; crossed it at Cow Castle, then to the Exe at Orchardton, over Lucott Moor to Nutscale Brake, beat down the Nutscale Water into Horner Wood, down the water almost to Horner Green. Here he broke out of the water, having stopped there some time, and went up to Dunkery, all round the hill to Span Gate Corner where he turned down to the left ; through Draperway and Oaktrow Woods in Cutcombe to Harwood in Timberscombe, where he was killed at half-past four. An uncommon fine chase. Lord F., Mr. Chichester, Mr. Lucas, and Captain F. in with the hounds the whole way. A three-year-old deer.

Tuesday, October 3rd.—Met at Cutcombe, and tried the Oaktrow and Cutcombe coverts without finding. Then went over Dunkery and tufted Cloutsham. Found immediately and lay on at Langcombe Head at half-past one. Went off over Oare Common, as if making for Badgworthy. Turned to the left over Lucott Moor to Exe Cleeve, over the Exe, by Honymead to the Barle at Cow Castle, over Sheardown, across the Sheardown Water to Filedon ridge, through the Darlick enclosures into Longwood ; to Mines Wood, Heasley Mill, over South Radworthy Down, and through the Wood to the Mole, up to North Molton town, through the churchyard, across the Heasley Mill road to Venn Bottom. Here the hounds faulted, but soon hit it off along the road, through the Nadrid and Rabscot grounds to Brayley Bridge, down the river to the park, up to the North Gate, through Lower Beer to the quarry, turned to the left through Winslade and the Dark Lane Wood, across the [Castle Hill] lawn, up the broad walk by the arch to the Out Barton, then,

leaving Hudscot to the right to Waterlake Brake, where the scent 1815. growing very cold, and hearing the deer was half an hour before us we despaired of killing him, but while the hounds were at fault we saw him coming towards us (having been blanched by some one forward) and we quickly lifted the hounds; run him to Meath Bridge on the Mole, then down the river to Satterleigh Marsh, when we put him up under a bush and killed him, at twenty minutes after six. The longest chase ever remembered. A four-year-old deer. Nine couple in at the death. [There were only five men in at the death—Mr. Stucley Lucas, Rev. J. Boyce, Mr. Gard, Hon. G. M. Fortescue, (Captain F. of the previous run), and the huntsman, James Tout.]

APPENDIX B.

A TABULATED HISTORY OF THE NORTH DEVON AND DEVON AND SOMERSET STAGHOUNDS.

Year.	Master.	Number of Hunting Days.	Stags killed.	Hinds killed.	Other Deer killed.	Total killed.	Remarks.
1598 ..	Hugh Pollard .	..	..	..	..	..	No record of sport. From 1598, or earlier, to 1775, the rangers were masters of the hounds
1700 *	{ Mr. Walter .	..	..	..	..	..
to	{ Lord Orford	..	..	..	..	..
1775	{ Mr. Dyke . .	..	..	..	..	..
	{ Sir T. Acland	..	..	..	..	..
1775 to	Colonel Bassett	..	..	..	..	..
1784							
1784 to	Sir Thomas	..	73	77	..	150	
1794	Acland (2nd)						
1794 to	Colonel Bassett	..	49	75	..	124	
1801							
1802 to	Mr. Worth . .	..	42	59	..	101	During this period the pack was maintained by subscription
1810							
1811 ..	Lord Graves. .	..	10	30	..	40	There were doubtless other deer besides stags and hinds killed in former years, but till 1812 there is no record
1812 to	Earl Fortescue	204	50	48	10	108	
1818							
1818 to	Mr. Stucley	..	..	..	..	..	The old pack of stag-hounds was sold in 1825
1825	Lucas						
1827 to	Sir Arthur	..	..	..	..	..
1833	Chichester .						
1837 to	Committee. . .	..	..	..	..	..
1841							
1842 to	Hon. Newton	..	..	..	..	..
1847	Fellowes . .						
1848 ..	Sir Arthur Chichester (2nd)	..	..	..	..	..

* Approximately.

Year.	Master.	Number of Hunting Days.	Stags killed.	Hinds killed.	Other Deer killed.	Total killed.	Remarks.
1849 ..	Mr. Theobald	..	..	..	..	3	The first master not a West Countryman
1850 ..	Captain West	..	..	..	..	..
1851 ..	Mr. G. Luxton	..	..	..	..	..
1852 to 1855	Mr. T. Carew	..	..	..	..	..	No records from 1818 to 1855
1855 ..	Mr. Bisset ..	25	2	2	..	4	1 stag taken and saved
1856 ..	"	30	1	4	2	7	2 male deer killed
1857 ..	"	33	5	1	..	6	2 male deer taken
1858 ..	"	33	4	7	..	11	1 stag and 2 hinds also taken
1859 ..	"	35	5	6	..	11	1 stag and 1 hind also taken
1860 ..	"	37	6	7	..	13	Also 2 young male deer taken
1861 ..	"	28	4	5	..	9	1 hind and 1 young male deer taken and saved
1862 ..	"	27	6	..	..	6	1 stag and 3 hinds taken and saved
1863 ..	"	30	3	3	2	8	2 calves killed, 3 stags, 3 hinds, and 2 male deer saved
1864 ..	"	30	3	4	3	10	1 stag and 1 hind taken and saved
1865 ..	"	33	6	3	..	9	1 stag and 1 hind taken and saved
1866 ..	"	37	6	5	..	11	2 stags and 2 hinds taken and saved
1867 ..	"	33	12	5	..	17	1 young male deer also taken
1868 ..	"	40	3	4	3	10	2 young male deer, 1 stag, and 2 hinds also taken
1869 ..	"	43	8	4	2	14	1 stag, 2 hinds, and 2 young male deer also taken, and 2 young male deer killed
1870 ..	"	36	12	6	..	18	2 hinds also taken
1871 ..	"	50	12	9	5	26	2 hinds and 2 young male deer taken, 4 young male deer and 1 young hind killed
1872 ..	"	47	14	16	10	40	10 young and crippled deer killed, 3 young male deer taken
1873 ..	"	51	9	19	6	34	3 young male deer and 3 calves killed, 1 hind saved
1874 ..	"	51	16	12	7	35	4 young male deer and 2 young hinds killed, 2 young male deer saved

Year.	Master.	Number of Hunting Days.	Stags killed.	Hinds killed.	Other Deer killed.	Total killed.	Remarks.
1875 ..	Mr. Bisset	56	17	16	10	43	6 young male deer killed, and 2 saved
1876 ..	„	52	11	25	3	39	4 hinds and 3 young male deer taken and saved
1877 ..	„	61	14	35	7	56	7 young male deer killed, 1 stag and 3 young male deer taken and saved
1878*..	„	74	17	30	9	56	9 young male deer and calves killed, and 2 taken
1879 ..	„	54	18	15	4	37	3 young male deer and one "nott" deer killed, also 8 more deer crippled or found dead
1880 ..	„	94	15	43	18	75	17 young deer and 1 "nott" deer killed
1881 ..	Lord Ebrington	89	23	57	11	91	Also 10 crippled deer—101
1882 ..	„	93	23	53	8	84	4 young male deer killed, besides 3 cripples, 6 deer taken and saved
1883 ..	„	102	21	49	10	80	8 young male deer and 3 cripples killed, 8 saved
1884 ..	„	92	18	40	10	68	8 young male deer killed, and 2 more saved

* Previous to this year the hounds hunted only two days a week; from 1878 onward they have hunted three days a week, except from August to October of 1883, when they hunted four days a week.

APPENDIX C.

A LIST OF THE EAR-MARKED STAGS KILLED BETWEEN 1855 AND 1885.

Date of First Capture.	Age at First Capture.	Date when killed.	Appearance of Head when killed.
May 11, 1860	2 years	Sept. 6, 1870.	10 points. B. T. 3 on each horn.
May 9, 1861 .	3 years	Oct. 7, 1862 .	8 points. B. T. 2 on each horn. Small but even
Oct. 27, 1863 .	Calf	Jan. 4, 1872 .	Uprights, with <i>no</i> points at all
April 18, 1864	1 year	Sept. 30, 1870	12 points. B. B. T. 3 on each horn
Oct. 30, 1866	3 years	Aug. 22, 1871	18 points. B. B. T. 7 and B. T. 6
Aug. 31, 1868	.. ..	Aug. 31, 1869	9 points. B. T. 2 and B. B. T. 2. Had 2 on top when taken in 1868, "constitutionally wrong"
Oct. 10, 1868	.. ..	Sept. 25, 1869	Same number of points as when first captured, but bigger in beam
Sept. 28, 1869	.. ..	Aug. 16, 1872	7 points. B. B. T. 1 and B. B. 1. Had 2 on top one side, if not both in 1869
Oct. 19, 1870	2 years	Sept. 4, 1874	11 points. B. T. 3 and B. T. 4, points blunted and jagged
Jan. 1, 1872 .	3 years	Aug. 28, 1873	11 points. B. B. T. 2 and 3. <i>A four-year-old stag</i>
Jan. 19, 1875	Calf	Aug. 28, 1882	12 points. B. B. T. 4 and 2. A very fine head
Aug. 13, 1875	3 years	Aug. 1, 1885 .	9 points. B. T. 2 and 3. A fine wide-spread head
Aug. 28, 1876	4 years	Aug. 27, 1880	13 points. B. B. T. 4 and 3
Dec. 2, 1876 .	1 year	Aug. 30, 1883	14 points. B. B. T. 4 and 4. A splendid stag
Dec. 31, 1877	5 years (about)	Sept. 23, 1878	9 points. B. T. 3 and 2
Aug. 13, 1881	2 years	Sept. 1, 1884 .	10 points. B. B. T. 2 on both sides
.. .. .	.. ..	Sept. 7, 1885 .	13 points. B. B. T. 3 and 4, identified (but not from <i>Mr. Bisset's</i> mark) as being 8 years old. Not absolutely trustworthy

In addition to the foregoing, a yearling male deer was taken on November 11th, 1868, and partially castrated in consequence of injuries received. He was killed on August 28, 1872, with two perfectly even horns, carrying 10 points. B. B. T. 2 and 2.

At least as many more marked deer have never come to hand.

B. B. T. stand for Brow, Bay, or Trey; and the figures thereafter indicate the number of points on top.

B. alone means Brow, which antler is practically never missing.

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